

Mountain View VOICE

MARCH 16, 2007 VOLUME 15, NO. 11

INSIDE: WEEKEND | PAGE 22

650.964.6300

mv-voice.com



MARJAN SADOUGH

Persians celebrate Chahar Chanbeh Souri by leaping over flames in Mountain View on Tuesday evening.

Happy Persian New Year

TRADITIONAL
CEREMONY CELEBRATES
HEALTH, RENEWAL
WITH A LEAP OVER
THE FLAMES

By Alexa Tondreau

The coming of spring marks the beginning of a new year on the Persian calendar, and in keeping with tradition Mountain View locals gathered on Tuesday at Rose International Market to participate in the Chahar Chanbeh Souri, an ancient tradition in Persian culture that is the last celebration of the year.

Chahar Chanbeh Souri dates back thousands of years to the time of Zoroaster, the Persian prophet. The ceremony celebrates the force of good overcoming evil, and acts as an opportunity for renewal in the coming year. Fire is used as the primary symbol of

► See **PERSIAN**, page 13

Salt pond project opens Bay Trail

GROUP SAYS AREA
NORTH OF MOFFETT
COULD BE OPEN BY
NEXT YEAR

By Daniel DeBolt

As early as next year, people will finally be able to walk the salt ponds and marshes just north of Moffett Field from Sunnyvale to Shoreline Park, a Bay Trail spokesperson said Friday.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for South Bay residents," said Laura Thompson, project manager of San Francisco Bay Trail — an offshoot of the Association of Bay Area Governments which strives to connect the trail throughout the region. "This is a gap that many people have been working on for many years. I can't tell you how excited we are."

The news came as the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project released its environmental impact report this week, another

step towards the largest salt pond restoration project on the West Coast — a \$1 billion, 50-year project to restore 16,500 acres of former Cargill salt ponds throughout the Bay Area. The environmental impacts of several Bay Trail gaps were studied as part of the report.

Archival records show that there were informal trails in the area above Moffett Field up until 1999, when Cargill closed off the area. When the salt ponds were sold by the company in 2003, it presented an opportunity to reopen a formal trail, but the route was too close to munitions storage at Moffett Field.

"We are working with them [NASA] on moving the munitions," Thompson told the *Voice*.

The environmental impact report for the final project will be complete this fall, Thompson added. "There's

not much to designing this trail," she said. "This could be open in 2008."

Not everyone is as excited about the new trail, however. One potentially problematic aspect is the impact human activity could have on wildlife and plants in previously closed areas.

A case in point is the western pond turtle, a state and federal "species of concern" which was thought to be locally extinct until 1999, when it was found in the ponds and channels adjacent to Moffett Field's northern edge.

"It does scare me that this area will be opened to the public,"

*"It does scare me
that this area
will be opened to
the public."*

NASA wildlife biologist
Chris Alderete

Enrollment dwindles in ESL classes

SCHOOL OFFICIALS CITE IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWNS, ECONOMY AS POSSIBLE REASONS

By Alexa Tondreau

At a Mountain View Los Altos district board meeting Monday night, school officials found themselves pondering some unusual numbers.

From the elementary level to the Adult School, the enrollment of English language learners, pri-

marily Hispanic, is on the decline in the district's various ESL programs.

The dwindling numbers come despite rigorous support for English language education in both the elementary and high school districts here. Just this year a new program was created for elemen-

tary school students, the "newcomer class," which immerses students in grades three to five in a full year of language instruction. District records show that 15 percent of students at the elementary school level speak Spanish at home.

But Barry Groves, MVLA dis-

trict superintendent, said the program hasn't filled up as expected.

"They allocated 25 spots," he said, "but apparently they only have 12 students."

Groves indicated that Moun-

► See **ENROLLMENT**, page 6

► See **TRAIL**, page 17

INSIDE

GOINGS ON 27 | MARKETPLACE 34 | MOVIES 25 | REAL ESTATE 41 | VIEWPOINT 20

Shirley Bailey



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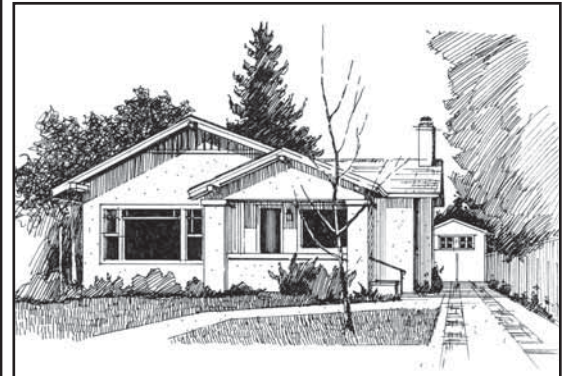
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Marc Roos



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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.

Are you happy about Daylight Savings Time coming early this year?



"Yeah. I get to stay out later."

Jaleesa Deloch
Mountain View



"Yes. I don't mind it. I enjoy the extra bit of sunlight."

Mary Guzzo
Toronto, Canada



"I am indifferent."

Paula Staeth
Mountain View



"Yes, because it is lighter later."

Denise Dolliver
Fremont



"It's too early to get up and too early to sleep too."

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PIRC is a free community service that can address common health care issues and offer child care advice. Speak with one of PIRC's experienced pediatric nurses if you have any questions about your kids. Call (650) 498-KIDS (5437) or (800) 690-2282 from 12 pm to 8 pm on weekdays, and from 8 am to 8 pm on weekends. Translators are available.
- * INFANT MASSAGE**

Learn the techniques of infant massage to relax and soothe a baby, to relieve the temporary discomforts of gas and soreness of vaccination sites, and to stimulate a baby as he or she grows into an active child.

 - Thursdays in March
 - Saturday, March 17 (One-Day Intro Class)
- * INFANT AND CHILD CPR**

Conducted by a certified instructor, this interactive class is geared for parents, grandparents and other caregivers of newborns to school-aged children. The course includes presentation, video, text, practice on infant models and a certificate of completion.

 - Saturday, March 24
- * PRENATAL YOGA**

Join other expectant mothers in a prenatal Yoga program designed with an emphasis on meditation and balance. Beginners are welcome!

 - Saturday, April 14

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



CALL TODAY TO SIGN UP FOR CLASSES (650) 723-4600

LocalNews

■ POLICE LOG

AUTO BURGLARY

300 block Sierra Vista Avenue #25, 3/8
200 block Tyrella Avenue, 3/9
200 block Jessie Lane, 3/10

BATTERY

200 block San Antonio Circle, 3/5
400 block Moffet Boulevard, 3/9

BURGLARY SHOPLIFT

2600 block W El Camino Real, 3/9

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

2600 block N Shoreline Boulevard, 3/7

CHILD MOLESTATION

1500 block Lilac Lane, 3/8

DISTURBANCE

600 block Moorpark Way, 3/5
2700 block Winfield Road, 3/9

DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE

600 block Escuela Avenue, 3/10

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

500 block W El Camino Real, 3/11

GRAND THEFT

100 block Huff Avenue, 3/5
800 block California St., 3/7
1300 block Terra Bella Avenue, 3/7
2600 block W El Camino Real, 3/8

NARCOTICS POSSESSION

Highway 101 / N Rengstorff Avenue, 3/7

PETTY THEFT

Longs El Monte, 3/5
1300 block Grant Road, 3/5
500 block E Evelyn Avenue, 3/5

500 block Showers Drive, 3/7
100 block Church St., 3/8
2600 block W El Camino Real, 3/11

DRUG POSSESSION

500 block E Washington, 3/7

ROBBERY

Castro St. / W Dana St., 3/9

STOLEN VEHICLE

200 block Polaris Avenue, 3/5
2200 block Latham St., 3/5
2200 block Latham St., 3/7

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/PERSON

California St./Chiquita Avenue, 3/5
Crittenden School, 3/5
2400 block Old Middlefield Way, 3/5
500 block Walker Drive, 3/7
California St. / Escuela Avenue, 3/7
500 block Castro St., 3/8
1900 block Colony St., 3/8
1600 block Amphitheatre Parkway, 3/9

THEFT BY FRAUD

100 block E El Camino Real, 3/5

VANDALISM

200 block Polaris Avenue, 3/5
Castro School, 3/5
Mercy St. / Stevens Creek Trail, 3/5
1900 block California St., 3/5
Devonshire Avenue / N Whisman Road, 3/5
Linda Vista Avenue / Moonbeam Drive, 3/5
100 block Castro St., 3/5
Library, 3/8
2600 block California St., 3/11
2400 block WE CR, 3/11

■ CRIMEWATCH

ROBBERY, CASTRO ST. / W. DANA ST., 3/9

On Friday at 9 p.m., a 58-year-old San Jose resident was walking down West Dana Street when he was approached by a man who grabbed his neck, pushed him to the ground and told him to hand over his possessions.

The victim offered his backpack, from which the man took prescription medication, \$50 in cash and a cell phone. The robber then fled on foot, heading eastward on Dana Street. He is described as a Hispanic male with black hair and eyes, a mustache, approximately 30 years old, 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighing 150 pounds. The suspect was wearing a black T-shirt, blue jeans and white tennis shoes at the time.

VANDALISM, MOUNTAIN VIEW LIBRARY, 3/8

On Thursday at 3:45 p.m., a Mountain

View Library employee looking out from a window noticed a young girl writing graffiti on a light post with a Sharpie pen. The employee managed to bring the girl inside the library and called police. Upon investigation, police discovered numerous incidents of similar graffiti in the area totaling \$50 in damages. The suspect, a 12-year-old Mountain View resident, was handed over to her father.

VANDALISM, 100 BLOCK CASTRO ST., 3/6

On Mar. 6, the owner of King of Krung Siam Thai restaurant opened the shop to discover three lamps broken in the back patio. In addition, electric wires had been pulled out. The victim has claimed \$1,000 in losses. There are no suspects.

SPEAKING UP
SINCE 1992

THE
MountainView
VOICE



Cool cities unite

By Don Frances

THE “COOL CITIES Campaign,” begun by the Sierra Club to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a city-by-city basis, is kicking off this weekend with a rally in Redwood City, and Mountain View advocates are taking the train (naturally) to get there.

Our own “Cool Cities” team is about a dozen strong so far, with another 20 or so “interested members,” said local organizer Jennifer Anderson. The group plans to catch the 1:19 p.m. train this Sunday, March 18, from Mountain View’s downtown station, which should get them to the event with time to spare.

The rally goes from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Sequoia High School’s Carrington Hall, 1201 Brewster Ave., Redwood City. My favorite detail (besides the image of everyone on the northbound platform, waiting for Caltrain No. 433) is of the three speakers anchoring the event: Carl Pope of the Sierra Club, Carl Guardino of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, and Linda Craig of the League of Women Voters.

WHEN I FIRST heard that barbershop singers The Peninsulaires had expanded, I wondered, how does a barbershop quartet expand? Seems they’d be pretty much stuck with four members.

But then I read more closely: The Peninsulaires are a 30-member barbershop *chorus* — the Palo Alto-Mountain View chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society — which means they can not only expand, but can outgrow their previous headquarters and wind up in a larger venue in a completely different city.

So it came to pass that the old-style harmonizers have begun their “2007 expansion plans” by taking up residence at the First

► See **EDITOR’S DESK**, page 10



NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

St. Francis High School track team members perform a skit for the local Zimbabwe Run benefit and fundraiser.

Run for the orphans returns

ZIMBABWE ORPHANS RUN
AND FAIR NOW IN
ITS EIGHTH YEAR
AT ST. JOSEPH

By Zunaira Durrani

The news out of Zimbabwe lately has not been good — perhaps underscoring the ongoing need for Ellen Clark’s fundraising efforts.

For the past eight years, Clark has been raising money to support African orphans like those of Zimbabwean activist Gift Tandare, who left three children behind when he was killed during a recent demonstration there.

The fate of Tandare’s children now rests in the hands of the orphanages there caring for Zim-

babwe’s 900,000 orphans. On March 25, Clark will coordinate the 8th Annual Run for Zimbabwe Orphans and Zimbabwean Fair at St. Joseph School in Mountain

“Children say they receive love, art and music when they take part in the run.”

ELLEN CLARK

View, with all of the proceeds going to help one of those orphanages.

Local students will give and

receive in a big way, said Clark. “Children say they receive love, art and music when they take part in the run. Monetarily, it’s a drop in the bucket. But for all our children who have been touched by the experience, you can’t measure the learning.”

On the day of the run, the field is abuzz with young athletes competing, mascots cheering them, a Zimbabwean band playing and others browsing through the cultural displays. Besides Mountain View, students at the run come from Los Altos and Watsonville. The running events are conducted separately for kindergarten through eighth grade students, followed by an open run for adults.

Each run, which is timed to last

► See **ZIMBABWE**, page 8

Hospital rebuild on target

PROJECT IS DUE TO FINISH BY 2010

By Alexa Tondreau

El Camino Hospital’s new earthquake-safe facility is 15 percent complete and is on schedule to be completed in December 2010, hospital personnel said in a special board meeting last week.

Ken King, vice president of facilities services, presented the

five-phase plan for building the retrofitted facility. The hospital is currently in the third and fourth phases of construction, with a majority of the steel in place and welding 25 percent complete. The perimeter walls and foundation are complete, King said.

King was able to deliver good news to the gathered hospital officials, including CEO Ken Graham



COURTESY IMAGE

An artist’s rendering of the main entrance.

and board members Ed Bough and David Reeder: Owing to a mild winter with few rainy days, the construction is currently ahead of schedule.

“They are so ahead of schedule,” King said, “the production of fabrication couldn’t keep up.”

► See **HOSPITAL**, page 10

■ CITY COUNCIL

Huge Whisman project on deck

UP TO 1,300 HOMES
COULD REPLACE
INDUSTRIAL,
AGRICULTURAL LAND

By Daniel DeBolt

This Tuesday, the City Council will hold a study session on what is by far the largest project in the city’s backlog of 3,000-plus units: up to 1,300 homes on 48 acres just north of Whisman Station.

Mayor Laura Macias opposed the gatekeeper request for the huge development in August, which was approved. But now the developer, Regis Homes, faces three new council members, who, along with Macias, have provided some stiff opposition to high-density housing this year.

Traffic and economic analysis of the project, done by city hired David Powers and Assoc., will be presented Tuesday. So far, Regis Homes said it has committed \$750,000 to the city for staff time and an environmental impact report,

► See **WHISMAN**, page 9

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SEEN AROUND TOWN

Mayfield Trees



This photo, sent in by Laura Kostinsky of Elka Avenue, was taken at the site of the proposed Mayfield project. "Urban forests improve the aesthetic appeal and air quality of our city," Kostinsky wrote. "This urban forest has over 200 heritage trees as well as an abundance of other trees of various species. Let's preserve these trees and their lasting benefits."

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.

ENROLLMENT

► Continued from page 1

tain View High School also had a smaller group of ESL students this year. But in particular the Adult School, which offers a high school diploma and GED program as well as vocational training to students 18 years and older, has seen reduced numbers.

"There is a decline in the ESL population," Laura Stefanski, director of the Adult School, told the board. Previous years had seen such a swell of ESL students that Stefanski said there was "a logistical nightmare of placing people." But now, she said, "I think it's flattening out."

Officials could only speculate on why the numbers have decreased this year. Stefanski thought that because of "lots of immigration

issues and policies being debated" recently, some illegal immigrants were hesitant to get involved in school programs. Instead, she said, they wanted to be "more invisible."

Though it is not clear to what extent this is the case in Mountain View, recent events in Redwood City reflect that theory. In the past several weeks, federal agents have

**"All Castro students
are regularly
attending school."**

CASTRO PRINCIPAL
CARMEN MIZELL

gone on raids to round up illegal immigrants for deportation, and district officials in Redwood City confirmed to local and national press that parents of illegal status have kept their children home

from school out of fear.

At Castro Elementary, which has the most ethnically diverse campus out of all of Mountain View Whisman's elementary schools, there has been no noticeable decline in student attendance.

In an e-mail to the *Voice*, Castro Principal Carmen Mizell said, "I have not heard any 'buzz' among my Hispanic parents that this is a concern; nor have I noticed a decline in enrollment among our Hispanic population."

She continued, "All Castro students are regularly attending school."

Stefanski said the Adult School has no intention of changing any of its programs, and will proceed with adding a GED at-home course as planned. She added that perhaps the ebb of the economy has something to do with the decrease in numbers as well. ▀

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

SPEAKING UP
SINCE 1992

THE
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VOICE

Moms get tutorial on child care

By Alexa Tondreau

For Mountain View resident Olga Melo, Friday nights have been virtually transformed since the Community in Action Team (CAT) set up a child development class earlier this year.

Held at Castro Elementary School every Friday evening, the course is taught in Spanish and delves into the essentials of child rearing, psychology and healthy family practices. Melo said that the instruction has given her tools she can apply to her own life.

"I like it because it is really helping me to understand how to act and what to do with my kids," she said.

Melo, who is also a member of CAT, a Mountain View-based community nonprofit, said she is particularly happy to be part of the class "because we worked so hard to get it here."

The course came about this year as a response to a survey distributed to Hispanic families in Santa Clara County by the county Department of Health. The findings showed overwhelmingly that the community wanted more education concerning child development.

CAT's president, Marilu Delgado, said many parents feel their children aren't receiving adequate care from babysitters during the day when they are away at work.

"A lot of the ladies in the area, they barter with each other to take care of the kids, so they can earn money for the family," she said. "And they felt there wasn't quality care, that their kids were just being put in front of the TV," she said.

Currently there are 35 students in the class, 25 of whom live in Mountain View, with ages ranging from early 20s to late 40s, Delgado said. The class gives a priority to families living in the Castro neighborhood.

The course has thrived through the financial and curricular assistance of a variety of organizations: The Mountain View Whisman school district provided the classroom, Santa Clara's First 5 of San Jose helped with funds, and the Mexican Consulate jumped in to provide a free supplemental reading and writing class for students

who weren't literate enough in their native language to participate.

Also, De Anza Community College helped in a big way by providing the curriculum and instructor. The class can be taken for college credit, and acts as a stepping stone for students looking to get started in their college career.

For some, Delgado said, the course offers a way to secure better positions and better pay as child care providers.

"They tell me that during the interviews they feel more professional, that they know more," Delgado said.

Melo agreed. "I'd like to work at a day care, and the class makes it easier to find a job," she said.

CAT makes it easier to attend the class by providing day care at the site for students' children. Delgado said there are usually as many, if not more, children in the child-care room as students in the actual classroom.

Melo's 12-year-old daughter Diana goes to Castro Elementary every Friday night with her younger brother. And in the spirit of community cooperation that prevails here, she has been recruited to help out.

"I bring in projects for the younger kids," she said. "There is a lot to do and it's really entertaining."

Delgado said the positive reaction from students, and continued interest from the local Hispanic community, ensure that it will be offered again next semester. In part, Delgado said, the class is popular because it is working with familiar territory.

"Here you have a population with many obstacles in their path, but they do have knowledge and they do have something to offer. This is building from their knowledge. Parents are the first teachers," she said. ■

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

■ INFORMATION

For more on the child development course, contact Marilu Delgado at (650) 559-6277.

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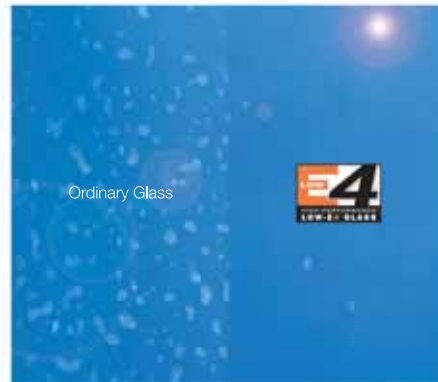
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ZIMBABWE

► Continued from page 5

15-20 minutes, is given a colorful name and dedicated to the project's patrons. For instance, the post-high school run is a Giraffe Mile dedicated to the memory of the late Kate Wakerly, a founder of the *Voice* and formerly an active contributor to the run.

Students have taken part in Zimbabwe Run since 1999. This year, St. Andrews eighth graders are going a step further by organizing a shoe drive for their Zimbabwean counterparts. The school-wide shoe drive is ongoing from March 13 to 23. There is a morning curbside drop-off at St. Andrews.

Roger Adams, who has taught at St. Andrews for 32 years, said he has encouraged his students to take part since the first run eight years ago.

"It also gives them a chance to compete in a relaxed situation, and it gives them an idea of where they are presently with their fitness levels," he said.

Proceeds are generated from a \$5 entry fee, \$10 T-shirts and corporate sponsorship. Last year, the event raised \$20,500, which the orphanage used to give the teachers a raise, purchase three cows and acquire some much-needed cutlery. Clark, a physical education teacher at St. Francis High School, also persuades friends in the community to support one orphan each for an annual amount of \$350.

Clark has made many friends in the course of her philanthropy. One of them is Mountain View resident Girley Tegame, who arrived from Zimbabwe six years ago to work at Stanford University.

"The Zimbabwe Run brings comfort and hope to the future of those orphaned by HIV/AIDS, given that we have thousands of child-headed households," said Tegame, who works with her friend, Zimbabwe native Angela Gora, to raise funds to test provide HIV testing for pregnant women in Zimbabwe. At the March 25 run, Tegame and Gora will set up a booth for their project. ▀

■ INFORMATION

What: The 8th Annual Run for Zimbabwe Orphans and Zimbabwean Fair

Where: St. Joseph School, 1120 Miramonte Ave., Mountain View

When: The event begins at noon on March 25

Info: Call Ellen Clark at (650) 941-9206, e-mail her at info@zimbabweparaguay.org, or visit www.zimbabweparaguay.org

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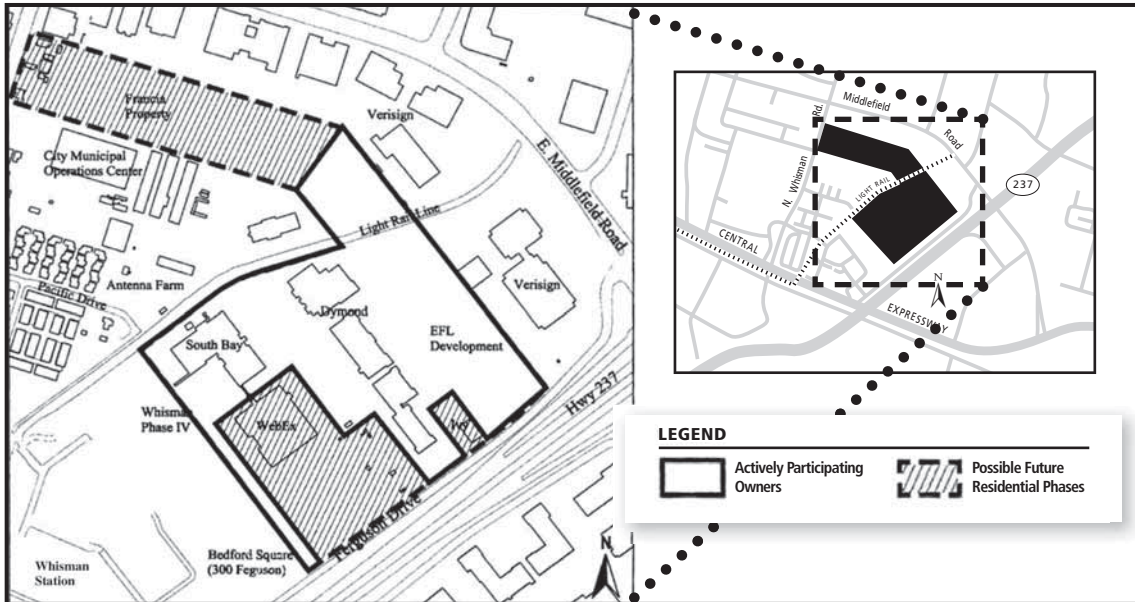
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WHISMAN

► Continued from page 5

which is not yet complete.

The project would rezone three industrial parcels just northwest of the intersection of Central Expressway and Highway 237, including a nine-acre tract formerly occupied by General Dynamics. The plan could also wipe out the last orchard in Mountain View, a 10-acres stand on Whisman Road owned by the Francia family.

New council members Jac Siegel and Ronit Bryant have expressed opposition to the plan because it would irreversibly and substantially rezone industrial land, an important source of tax revenue for the city, they say. But the previous City Council determined that the area, which is on the northern border of Whisman station, was fit for conversion after a series of public hearings.

Current plans would bring 600 to 800 units to the 28-acre site, more units per acre than the controversial Mayfield project. If two more parcels — one currently used by Webex Corp. and the other by the Francia family — join the plan, it could mean 1,000 to 1,300 homes on a total of 48 acres.

"We're very passionate about our project," said Drew Hudacek of Regis Homes. "It's a very good project for residents, for our city and for the environment. We continue to hear tremendous support in the community for this project."

Regis Homes said plans for the development include a mix of podium-style row homes on the southern end similar to neighboring Whisman Station. To the north would be multi-floor residential units over retail with density similar to downtown's Park Place, which is four and five stories high.

The new council briefly discussed the Ferguson Drive project at its goal-setting workshop Feb. 28.

"The more they proceed with it, the more they are spending

money," Macias said, emphasizing that the developers needed council direction soon.

Council member Nick Galiotto questioned the project's possible demise with the new council.

"Why should we stop right now?" he said.

Council member Tom Means was supportive, saying the industrial buildings in the area had been empty for some time, and indicating that it wasn't a good area for industrial zoning anymore.

Regis Homes agrees.

"This area is an obsolete area for

"It's a very good project for residents, for our city and for the environment."

DREW HUDACEK

industrial and office," Hudacek said.

"During the height of the dot-com boom we could not get a tenant to move to this location," he said of the vacant nine acres at 500 Ferguson Dr.

In response, Siegel said, "Maybe they asked too much money for it. I don't buy that argument. I don't buy that at all."

Siegel said the project was a knee-jerk reaction to what was a slow market for commercial real estate a few years ago.

Macias said she hasn't seen a market for commercial space this strong since the mid-1990s during the tech boom. But she conceded that the Mountain View housing market hasn't slowed much either.

Whitney McNair, a contract planner for the city, said the study found that traffic would be improved by residential replacing industrial zoning at the site, decreasing traffic at 15 nearby intersections. But two sections of freeway would be impacted during morning rush hour — northbound Highway 101 between Shoreline Boulevard

and Rengstorff Avenue, and northbound Highway 85 between Central Expressway and Highway 101.

The economic impact study found that only a small amount of neighborhood retail would be economically viable as part of the project, McNair said. Last August, council members lamented that a grocery store would not locate near the area.

Light rail trains run along the western border of the site, but no major bus lines.

The Francia orchard is still unincorporated county land under the Williamson Act, which provides tax breaks for agricultural use but makes it difficult to re-zone the land without stiff penalties or a several-year waiting period. An August city staff report said the Francias had designated Standard Pacific Homes as the site's developer, but the firm said it had no formal agreement, and had only expressed interest in developing the land for the Francia family.

McNair said Webex is not a part of the project, but is involved in making sure there are adequate buffers around its building, which protrudes into the site.

Another buffer may be needed with the city's own municipal operations center near the orchard on Whisman Road, where mechanics work on heavy equipment in the early morning hours. Firefighters also have a training site there.

Hudacek said a 4.5-acre park is part of plans for the first phase, and would be built long Ferguson Drive to make it accessible. More park space in the area would also serve Whisman Station and Evandale Avenue residents.

In August, city staff members presented three alternatives for development, but the council directed that only the lower-density alternative be considered, effectively killing off plans for as many as 1,500 homes at the site.

The study session will be held Tuesday, March 20 at 6:30 p.m. on the second floor of City Hall. ■

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

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HOSPITAL

► Continued from page 5

The presentation worked as both an update and a look at some of the more astonishing figures that come with an undertaking of this size.

For instance, the amount of steel required: 8,100 tons, King said. There's a lot of concrete in the structure as well, in the range of 20,500 yards. And the amount of welding wire required to hold the place together: 30 tons.

Through it all, the hospital must adhere to strict building codes that dictate standards for seismic safety. Among the requirements is that the hospital has enough fuel to power generators and sustain itself during an extended power outage. Therefore the hospital is currently excavating and remodeling two underground fuel tanks, allowing it to store 40,000 gallons of diesel fuel below ground.

The meeting also provided a glimpse at the building's appearance. It is shaped like a semi-circle, with large windows. The color scheme relies mostly on sand-blasted beige and grey colors, with window and fix-

► Continued on next page

EDITOR'S DESK

► Continued from page 5

United Methodist Church in Sunnyvale. The weekly rehearsals held there are open to the public, as are the group's many community performances. To find out more, visit www.barbershop-harmony.org, or call (650) 618-8600.

(Here's a nugget from the Web site: "Ten out of ten barbershoppers agree; it's the most fun you can have standing up!")

SOLAR UPDATE: Bruce Karney was apparently on TV last night — KPIX, talking to Tony Russomanno — about the solar project he's spearheading. Good show, Bruce.

Meanwhile, "About 55 people attended the information meeting on March 10," he wrote. "Twenty-five households have signed up, representing 81 kW. This puts the Co-op at 46 percent of its goal of 175 kW."

SolarCity also is making a presentation to Google employees on March 20, and a final community meeting is being planned for sometime in early April.

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



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Ernie was a carpet installer, and years of lifting and working bent-over had taken their toll. His MRI's revealed massive disc and joint degeneration. The surgeons he consulted were not optimistic about the outcome of surgery, given the extent of damage to the discs of L4 and L5 that had protruded and were pressing against the nerves causing his pain.

This was clearly a case for Spinal Decompression, a method of reducing the pressure on the disc, reducing the bulge and allowing the nerves to heal.

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► Continued from previous page

ture accents in olive greens and bronze.

The building's total expected cost is \$480 million, with \$79 million spent so far. King said that 79 percent of the total budget is under contract, leaving the remaining 11 percent undesignated for possible cost increases.

But current projections show that the project may come in under budget, at \$441 million. Overall, the financial risk for the hospital is on the decline, King said.

"When we began in 2002 our risk was very high when we didn't know what we would end up with. Our risk came down because we know more about what our project would be," he said.

Funding for the new hospital comes from a combination of the hospital's cash reserves, a capital

fundraising campaign and \$250 million in tax exempt and general obligation bonds approved by voters.

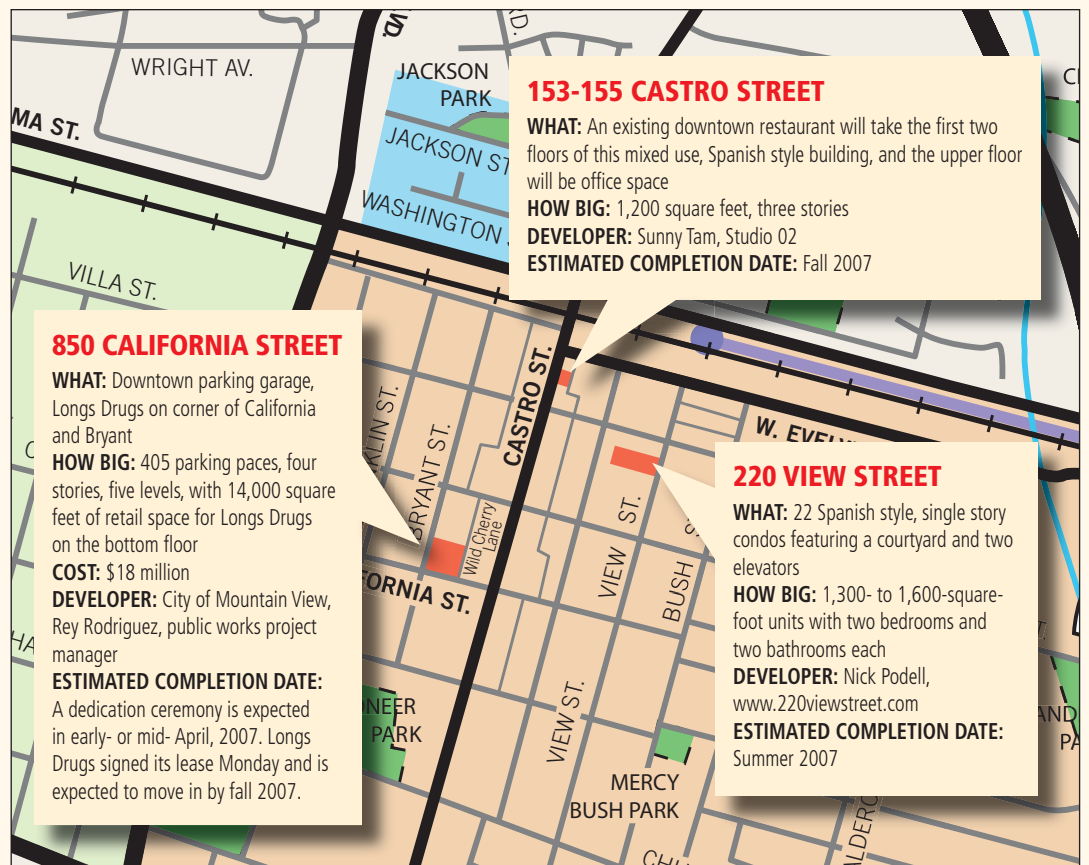
Recently the hospital hired a certified public accounting firm, Gallina LLP, to verify that the hospital has used public funds appropriately. The firm will present a detailed summary of its findings on June 30.

Another firm will be hired soon to oversee the construction, with an eye towards policies, procedures, protocol and cost management.

And despite a few minor setbacks — such as cracks found in some of the steel continuity plates and the skyrocketing cost of copper — King said that "Everything is thumbs-up so far." ▀

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

Pardon the noise



Those who have been downtown lately have probably noticed quite a bit of construction going on. Parking lots,

sidewalks and streets have been closed off temporarily while the city makes way for another restaurant, 22 more condos and a

five-level parking garage. Above is a look at the work going on at the three biggest construction sites.

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War memorial returning to Civic Center

By Daniel Debolt

A temporary war memorial will be constructed Sunday at the Civic Center Plaza to mark the fourth anniversary of the Iraq War and honor the 3,200 soldiers killed since fighting began.

The memorial will list the names of fallen troops on a wall, and dog tags will represent the 331 soldiers from California who have died. Every soldier's name will be read by members of Mountain View Voices for Peace. Among the readers will be Karen Meredith, the Mountain View mother whose son died during a firefight in Iraq and who has become a focal point locally for the anti-war

movement.

As Congress attempts to use its "power of the purse" to stop the war, said MVVP member Lenny Siegel, "This is a crucial time in U.S. war policy. We have an opportunity to speed the end of U.S. combat in this senseless war. Politicians are listening, but without continuing public pressure, they'll be reluctant to take dramatic steps toward peace."

Construction of the memorial will begin at 11:30 a.m., and the event will end at 4 p.m. Civic Center Plaza is downtown at the corner of Castro and Mercy streets.

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

PERSIAN

► Continued from page 1

health and vitality.

Chahar Chanbeh Souri is always held on the last Tuesday evening of the year, but preparations begin earlier in the day as families collect piles of wood and brush from the streets and parks.

At Rose Market, located at 1060 Castro St., the ceremony was held in the parking lot. While the assembled group was fairly small, Rose Market owner Javad Mehransar said that in past years the

celebration has included a band, dancing, tents and lots of food.

As the tradition dictates, families and friends gather at sunset in their backyards, at parks, beaches or other outdoor areas, and light the piles of brush on fire. Then they line up, and one by one each person jumps over the flames.

All the while, people sing "Sork-heeyeh toe az man, Zardeeyeh man az toe," which translates to "I give my paleness to the fire and take fire's red healthy color." Paleness signifies sickness or pain in the song, and red signifies health.

As Mehransar explained, "They

want to get the wellness from the fire into their life, and throw all of the bad things that might surround them away."

Traditional foods are served during the ceremony, including noodle soup and a mixture of dried fruit and nuts. Fireworks often accompany the celebration.

The Persian New Year, or *norooz*, is held on the first day of spring. This year it will be celebrated on March 20th. ▀

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

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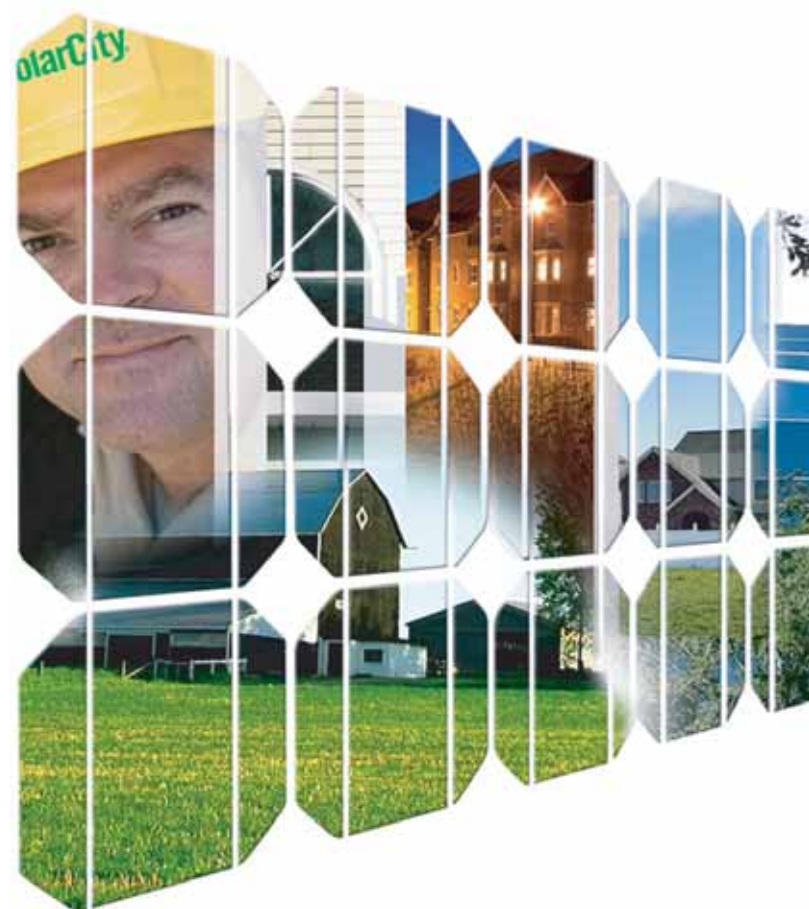
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SAM TENNEY

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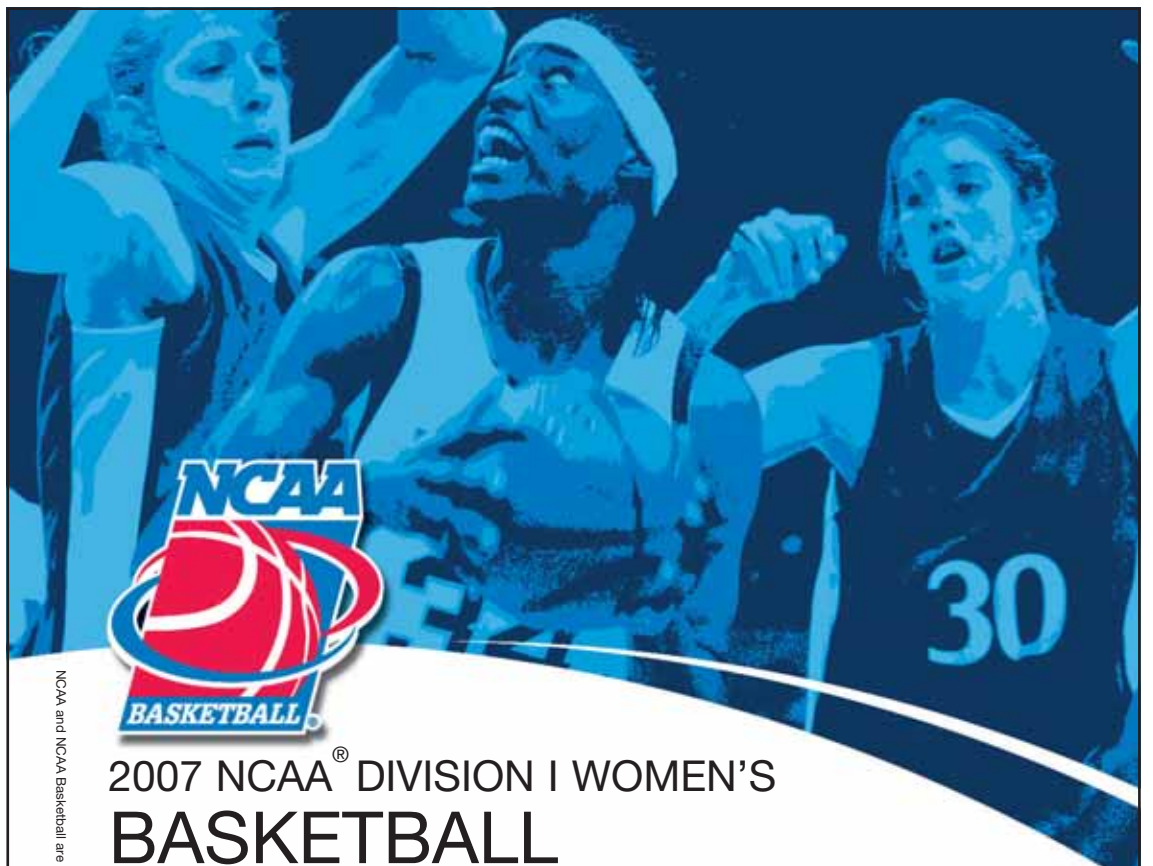
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Navy delays Hangar One report

By Daniel DeBolt

Last week, during the regular Moffett Field Restoration Advisory Board meeting, the Navy gave an impromptu update on Hangar One, saying there has been a significant delay in the release of the hangar's revised environ-

mental cleanup report — the report that may decide the historic building's fate.

Navy spokesman Rick Weissenborn said the revised environmental evaluation and cost analysis would no longer be released in late spring or early summer, but "sometime this

year." The report would provide a cost analysis of alternatives for cleaning up the "dangerous source of contamination," as Weissenborn put it — the PCBs and other chemicals in Hangar One's skin which are slowly leeching into the surrounding environment.

Navy alternatives range from demolition to restoration to leaving only the frame intact.

Weissenborn said he was personally "frustrated" with the delay. The temporary coating on the hangar to stop the run-off of toxic PCBs was only supposed to last three to five years. "We're at five," he said.

"My personal goal is to get this done before my beard turns white," he said, having grown a beard since the last meeting.

Weissenborn also revealed that if the Navy were to leave the historic structure in place after cleanup, it would no longer be "useable."

The Navy, he said "won't make it useable. What has to be done to make it useable has to be done" by someone else.

Weissenborn has said that in order to clean the frame of all contamination it would have to be partially disassembled. He also said the Navy is considering using a fabric to stretch over the frame, similar to what is used at the Shoreline Amphitheatre.

Council member Jac Siegel attended the meeting. Drawing on his own experience as a former government contractor for Lockheed Martin, he questioned the process used to analyze the cleanup costs. Weissenborn said a contractor was preparing a work-order to detail the costs of cleanup for the report, but questioning by Siegel revealed the contractor would not be allowed to actually make a bid on the project, meaning the actual bid amounts from other contractors could be much different.

"There could be surprises with the cost," Weissenborn said.

The Navy decided to revise the EE/CA last year after receiving harsh criticism for apparently underestimating the costs of demolishing the hangar and not detailing how it had come to its conclusions.

"This time we'll take you there. ... We'll be a lot closer this time," Weissenborn said. ▀

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BAY TRAIL

► Continued from page 1

said NASA wildlife biologist Chris Alderete, who discussed the rare turtle in a presentation about wildlife management at a Moffett Field Restoration Advisory Board meeting last week.

"I want the trail, but this is one of the places not opened to humans. ... There's been little access over the years," Alderete said.

One of the western pond turtle's biggest threats are humans, who in the past have snatched them up to be taken home as pets. The introduction of non-native species, including other turtles, to their habitat has also hurt their numbers.

NASA found more than 50 of the rare turtles while removing contaminated soil from a channel in the area. The turtles survived a temporary relocation to the golf course pond nearby.

In the 193-page section of the report dealing with impacts to wildlife, the turtle is said to be "uncommon along the inshore side of Pond A3W" at Moffett Field. The report also says the turtle "May occur rarely in freshwater and brackish creeks and sloughs elsewhere in the study area."

Other area species at risk, identified by NASA, include the western burrowing owl, the salt marsh harvest mouse and the California clapper rail.

Another controversial aspect of the project is the possible consequence for several bird species that have made a home in the salt ponds. It is undecided how many salt ponds will revert to marshland, but the percentage will be somewhere between 50 and 90 percent, according to the environmental impact report. The Mountain View areas to be restored are part of the Alviso restoration complex, which includes 7,363 acres of salt ponds and 1,607 acres of marshes.

Mountain View wetlands to be restored include the areas between the mouths of the Adobe, Permanente and Stevens creeks in Shoreline Park. ▀

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

■ INFORMATION

Anyone wishing to comment on the environmental impact report has until April 23. Comments can be made online at the Restoration Project's Web site (details below) or mailed to:

Clyde Morris, USFWS
Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR
9500 Thornton Ave.
Newark, CA 94560.

A public hearing will be held March 28 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Moffett Field in the Eagle Room of Building 943, just outside the main gate.

For more on the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, or to read the environmental impact report, visit www.southbayrestoration.org. For more on the Bay Trail, visit <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>.

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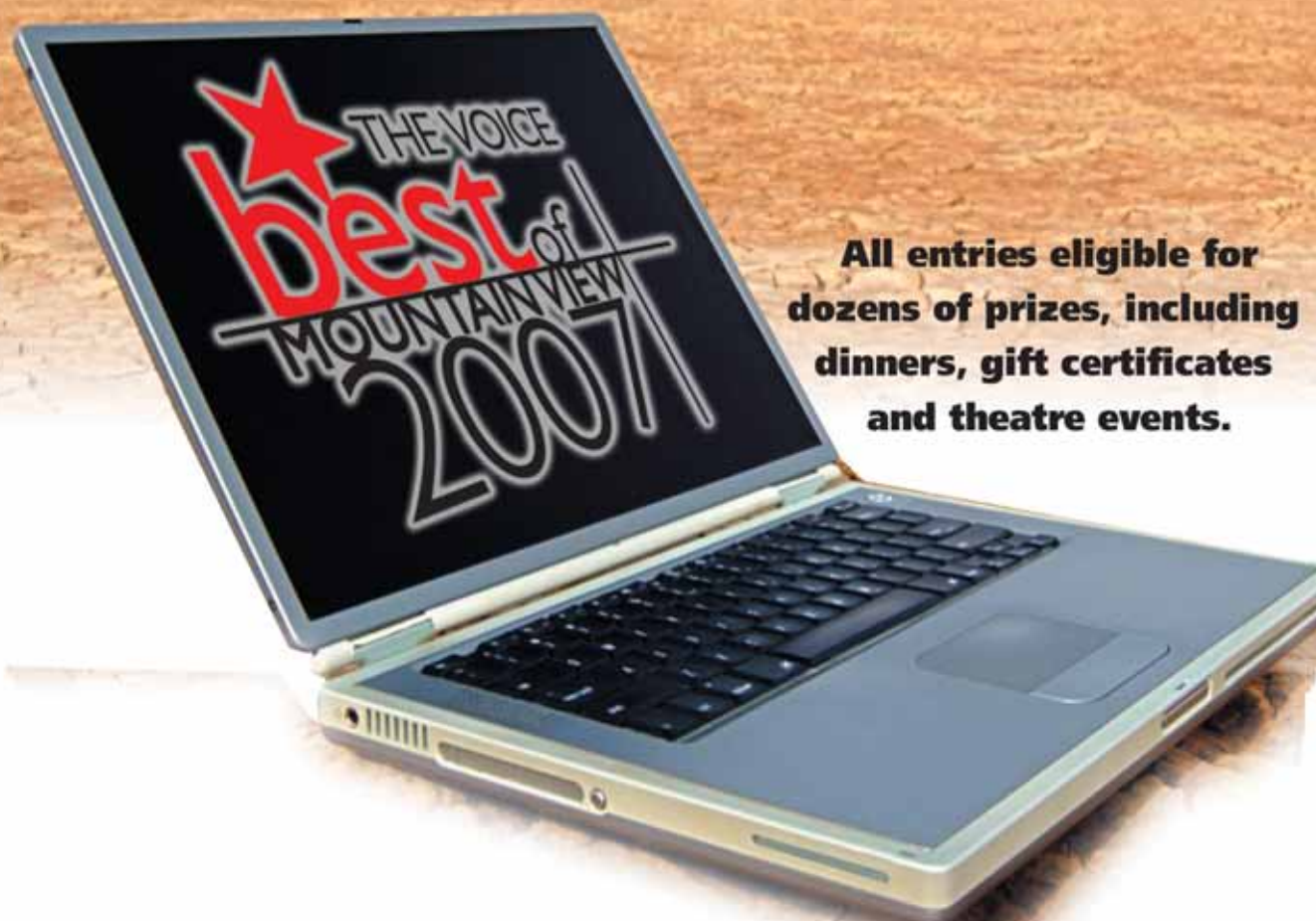
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■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SHORELINE RUN FOR INDIA'S NEEDY

Community members are invited to join Asha for Education — a nonprofit which raises funds for underprivileged children in India — for its Spring Run at Shoreline Park this weekend.

Aside from prizes for marathon winners, all runners will receive goodie bags and participate in raffle draws. The 5K to 10K Spring Run is organized by Team Asha, a part of the larger nonprofit which describes itself as “one of the premier endurance sports training programs in the United States.”

All runners are welcome; according to the group's Web site, more than 80 percent of its runners are new to running or any form of endurance sports, and 40 percent of them are women.

The event begins at Shoreline Park, 2600 N. Shoreline Blvd., this Sunday, March 18 at 9 a.m. For more information about the Spring Run, contact Raman Kumar Kathuria at (408) 464-9114 or rkkathuria@gmail.com. Details of the event are also available at www.ashanet.org/siliconvalley/marathon//5k.

PANEL TO DISCUSS JUVY LOCK-UP ALTERNATIVES

Justice experts will discuss alternatives to dealing with Santa Clara County's juvenile delinquents this Saturday at Mountain View City Hall.

The League of Women Voters Los Altos-Mountain View is organizing the discussion, titled “Children at Risk: Where do we go from here?” as a follow up to the passage of Measure A in 2006.

Experts on the panel include presiding judge of the Juvenile Court Richard Loftus, chief probation Officer Sheila Mitchell, public defender Mary Greenwood, and county Supervisor Blanca Alvarado. Several panelists serve on the county's Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council, according to the League.

“Children at Risk” takes place on Saturday, March 17 from 10 a.m. to noon at the City Hall Council Chambers, 500 Castro Street. The event is open to public. For more information, call (650) 941-4846, e-mail the League at info@lwvlamv.org, or visit www.lwvlamv.org.

— Zunaira Durrani

EL CAMINO OFFERS TALK ON LYME DISEASE

El Camino Hospital will host a presentation entitled “The Truth about Ticks” this weekend which will include information about Lyme and other tick-borne diseases and their occurrence locally.

Presenters will include UC Berkeley entomology Professor Robert Lane as well as officials from the state Department of Health and Santa Clara County Vector Control.

The general public is asked to donate \$10 for the presentation and refreshments. Medical personnel who attend can receive three continuing educational units and are required to pay a \$25 application fee at the door.

The event is this Saturday, March 17, from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the back of the cafeteria at El Camino Hospital, 2500 Grant Road.

NASA TO HOST SUMMER SPACE PROGRAM

NASA has announced that the International Space University Summer Session Program in 2009 will be held at the Ames Research Center in Mountain View.

The Summer Session Program is an intense nine-week course for postgraduate students and young professionals. It is the first time in the program's history that it will be held at NASA-Ames.

Key factors in the center's selection were Ames' location in Silicon Valley, its world-class scientists and its ongoing collaborations with academia and the entrepreneurial space community.

The session runs from mid-June to August 2009, and approximately 120 students from all over the world will participate. An international team of distinguished professors will teach the classes. The curriculum covers the major space-related fields, both technical and non-technical, and ranges from engineering, physical sciences and satellite applications to life sciences, policy, management and humanities.

For more information about the International Space University, visit www.isunet.edu.

— Alexa Tondreau

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EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

Council rudderless on big projects

After the ruckus generated by neighbors of the proposed 560-unit Mayfield Mall housing project over the last two years, it would seem that the city ought to be very careful before opening the door to an even larger project.

That advice will be tested next week when Regis Homes' proposal to build 600 to 800 new homes on Ferguson Drive will arrive at a City Council study session. And from advance comments by council members, the reception may be icy — at least from Mayor Laura Macias and members Jac Siegel and Ronit Bryant.

The Regis proposal is the first development proposed in a package that could add up to 1,300 homes on a triangular block on Ferguson Drive at Highway 237 and Central Expressway. It eventually could engulf the 10-acre Francia family orchard that lies behind a mix of commercial buildings on Middlefield Road.

Just the size and density of the projects — more than twice the size of the hotly debated Mayfield Mall project at Central and San Antonio Road — will bring intense scrutiny from this new council, which has not been shy about criticizing large proposals already a good way through the planning process.

Just two weeks ago some council members were openly critical of the Mayfield project, and later said they were not sure the Home Depot store set to take over the Sears location at the San Antonio Center fit their vision for this “gateway” to Mountain View.

The Ferguson Drive proposal, which would require a zoning change from industrial to high-density residential, again points out the need for the city to update its general plan so developers and residents know what is acceptable in various neighborhoods around the city.

Mayor Macias sought a building moratorium last month to do just that, but found little support, even from her colleagues who often side with her in development issues. But while there may not be political will for a building moratorium, it makes sense to at least look at the city on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis and determine what types of development would be appropriate in each place. As the process exists today, the council is flying blind and must make up zoning law as it goes.

Just last week, the council heard that it has a surplus of \$32 million to spend this year, although much of that sum should be used to pay off the unfunded liability for retirees' health care benefits. Another option mentioned by the city staff suggests that some funds be used to rewrite the city's general plan, an idea we urge the council to seriously consider again.

Regardless, the housing element of the general plan is required to be updated within the next few years. Perhaps the city should start work on that ASAP.

LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

PARK SPACE NECESSARY IN WHISMAN PROJECT

Editor:

I am a resident of Whisman Park and a member of the homeowners association. In light of the ongoing debate over high-density housing here, I'm curious as to what the city is doing to accommodate Pulte Homes' requirement to include a public park in its Bedford Square development project.

The city's open space policy is being completely obliterated by the current City Council. If Mountain View builds to the capacity they suggest, no one will want to live here anymore — it will be as ugly as San Jose or Sunnyvale, with nothing but concrete to stare at.

As park space diminishes, crime rates and gang activity increase, because children no longer have a place to play. I am a therapist for families and children in East Palo Alto, and can personally testify to this fact. Ask the residents there if increasing housing and reducing open space areas per capita has been successful. Ask that council what crime is costing their community and school systems.

This is what Mountain View's council members are consigning us to with their negligent policies. Tom Means, for example, suggests that residents cannot recognize the city's true housing needs — that we are less capable than he of seeing the big picture. Means should look at the sta-

tistics on high-crime areas with minimal park spaces. Then he can calculate the expense to the city and its residents when crime rates increase.

In fact, it is the residents who are invested in their community who see the big picture.

Sandra Surace
Paseo Court

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT HOUSING

Editor:

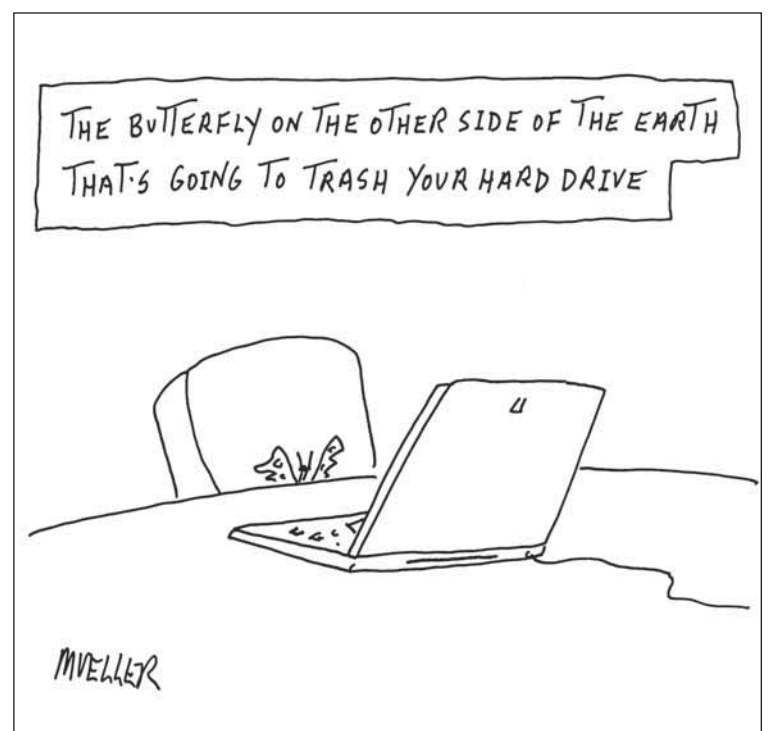
Recently the Voice in its editorial asked the question, “How big is too big”? The question posits population growth to take Mountain View's total population to around 80,000 as a maximum in the years 2008 or 2009.

With nearly 3,600 units in the present pipeline — resulting in an estimated 8,000 additional residents — the city would need a further 24 acres of parks and open space to meet the criteria of providing a minimum of three acres of open space per 1,000 residents.

Whilst the need to increase housing stock for workers is important, so is the need to create adequate parks, community facilities, recreation programs and neighborhood services in the near term — 2008-09. It is my belief that you cannot have one without the other.

Ivan John
California Street

► See **LETTERS**, next page



LETTERS

► Continued from page 20

MAYFIELD PROJECT IS ATROCIOUS

Editor:

Until your recent article and editorial, I had no idea how preposterous and damaging the proposed Mayfield project actually is. Four- and five-story huge condo buildings? I wouldn't call them "fortresses," I'd call them "prison blocks."

Clearly, our previous City Council made an unpardonable mistake when it approved this monstrosity — over the objections of even our far-too-liberal Environmental Planning Commission, which recommended fewer units.

The City Council should vote that the density, housing mix, and maximum heights of the Mayfield project be equivalent to, or less than, the housing development at The Crossings. There should be only rows of condos and townhouses, and no huge monoliths. If Toll Brothers doesn't think this would be economically viable, then they can abandon the project and try to find a more gullible city.

My personal feeling is that this site is best suited for light commercial, and not residential, development.

William R. Hitchens
Sunnyview Lane

NO CHOICE ON KICKING THE CAR HABIT

Editor:

These days, it seems that everyone is concerned with global warming, the loss of open space to sprawl, and the myriad other ills of our car-dependent lifestyle. And so we have annual rituals of "Spare the Air" days and "Bike to Work" days, in hopes of luring commuters out of their cars and into trying transit, biking, and walking.

The trouble is, whenever some type of housing is proposed that

could make responsible commuting possible — namely dense housing, close to where people work, and in quantities large enough to matter, such as the Mayfield project planned across the street from the San Antonio Caltrain station — it's always "too big" and "too dense" to suit the neighbors, and city councils soon put a stop to it.

So let's stop pretending that commuters can choose a "transportation alternative." Living in far-flung suburbs and driving long commutes isn't a choice — it's the law.

Nicholas Kibre
San Carlos Avenue

ANTI-HOME DEPOT ARGUMENT FALLS FLAT

Editor:

I was very disappointed to see the story "Council cooling to Home Depot" in the March 9 *Voice*. Didn't we just finish dealing with this issue? When I read that council members don't support Home Depot's takeover of the Sears location because its "gateway" location deserves "better," it really makes me wonder where their motivation comes from.

Driving north on El Camino, the gateway to Palo Alto is a car wash; Menlo Park has a car dealership. We've already heard that the Home Depot plan will include significant upgrades to the look of the San Antonio Center, so what does the council really imagine is possible in that location?

The concerns about day laborers are spurious, since they are already standing on the same corner every day. On the Peninsula, we're all in one urbanization anyway, so why should there be an important requirement that people crossing into Mountain View be invited to feel like they're entering a Better World?

I say that if we're going to go through this again, let's just put it up to a vote in the next election and get it over with.

Eric Novikoff
Limetree Lane

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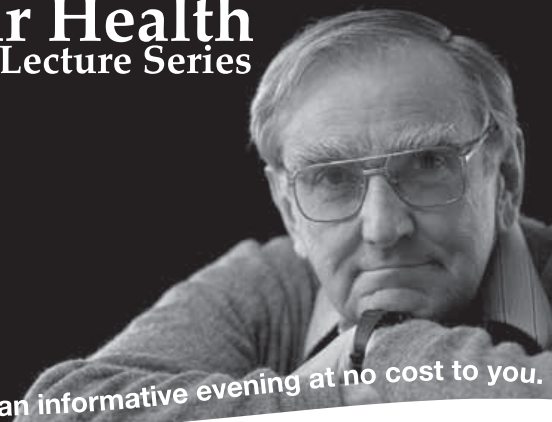
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A plate of Santa Fe Fajita salad at Casa Isabel restaurant in Palo Alto.

MARJAN SADOUGH

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

Restaurante delicioso

CASA ISABEL HAS BEEN SERVING EARTHY, TEMPTING, AUTHENTIC MEXICAN FARE FOR DECADES

By Dale F. Bentson

Mayra Lopez and her husband Francisco took over Casa Isabel, cozily tucked away just off California Avenue in Palo Alto, seven years ago from her late aunt and uncle, Luisa Isabel and Rolando Almanares. They have continued with the same menu, the same appetizing quality and the same homey atmosphere that have kept customers happy since the eatery opened in 1979.

The essence of Mexican cuisine evolved over centuries from the pre-Hispanic traditions — corn-based dishes, chilies, chocolate, tomato, avocado and beans — that melded with the culinary essentials of the Spanish colonists that included rice, beef, pork, chicken, garlic, onions, wine and other European staples.

The result is a tradition known for its intense and varied earthy flavors and colorful presentations. With delightful textures and tastes, Mexican cuisine is

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Mayra Lopez serves a plate at Casa Isabel.

MARJAN SADOUGH

loaded with protein, vitamins and minerals. Mexico is about the best next-door neighbor any food-loving country could have.

Casa Isabel offers no extraordinary culinary creations, no secret ingredients, and does not feature a stylish decor from the latest hot designer. What is offered are simple, well-prepared, tried-and-true authentic dishes.

Mayra herself is likely to be your hostess and waitress. She will immediately bring you a basket of house-made tortilla chips and fresh-made salsa and happily take care of all your dining needs.

The dining area is divided into three small whitewashed rooms reminiscent of many cantinas and small-town cafes in Mexico, with stenciled walls, festive decorations and brassy, south-of-the-border music piped in to complete the ambiance.

The icy margarita (\$5.25 and \$7.95) went down easy, even in the dead of winter. Made with Jose Cuervo Gold tequila, the drink was limey and refreshing (other tequilas are also available). I liked the sangria (\$3.50 and 5.95), and a broad selection of domestic and Mexican beers is also available (\$2.95-\$3.95).

Tostadas Jardin (\$12.95) is two crispy corn tortillas, laden with beans and strips of tender beef topped with a pile of crunchy lettuce, house-made fresh salsa, shredded cheese, guacamole and pico de gallo (a relish of jicama, onions, oranges, cucumbers and chilies). This dish was also available with chicken or as a half

order (\$8.25).

The chimichangas (\$12.25) were my favorite. Two tortillas had been filled with fork-tender shredded pork (also available with chicken or beef), then fried to a golden brown and topped with guacamole and a dab of sour cream. Served with beans and rice, it was a fiesta on a plate.

("Chimichanga" is considered a nonsense word, a Mexican version of "whatchamacallit" or "thingamajig." Whatever you call them, they were delectable at Casa Isabel.)

Chile Verde (\$12.25) had generous chunks of slow-cooked pork loin wrapped in a green sauce of bell pepper, tomatillo, garlic, onion and black pepper. The chile verde was plated with beans and rice, warm tortillas and green salad. In Mexico, instead of bell peppers, poblanos or jalapenos are used.

Enchiladas Poeblanas (\$11.95) is a chicken mole dish stuffed inside tortillas. Casa Isabel's version of mole was made with five different chilies, ground peanuts, pumpkin seeds and Mexican chocolate. The enchiladas were topped with melt-

► See **ISABEL**, page 24

MountainView
VOICE

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ISABEL

► Continued from page 23

ed cheddar and jack cheeses. Rice, beans and salad accompanied.

Casa Isabel uses California rice, probably because of its lower moisture level which prevents the cooked rice from taking on the shiny, rounded look valued in other cuisines. The rice is cooked with threads of saffron, vegetable oil, onion, garlic and bell pepper. It remains grainy and flaky and is ideal with beans, cheese and the thick sauces of Mexican cooking.

Burrito grande (\$9.25) was a delicious large flour tortilla filed with beans, rice (Spanish rice in this case), and chile verde. I could have opted for either beef or chicken instead of the chile. It was topped with melted cheese and sour cream. The zippy red sauce was made with tomatoes, chili powder, black pepper, garlic, Mexican oregano and cumin.

Chicken Santa Fe (\$11.95) was a tasty boneless chicken breast that had been marinated in tame but tasty Southwest spices. It was accompanied with rice, warm tortillas and a side salad.

Other offerings included two versions of fajita (\$14.95) and a dozen different combinations of enchiladas, burritos, chile rellenos, tacos and tamales (\$6.25-\$13.95).

There were but two desserts on the menu. The ubiquitous Mexican flan (\$4.25) of egg custard topped with caramel glazing laced with brandy and Kahlua was *un tipico postre*.

The Bunuelos (\$4.95), on the other hand, were a delicious surprise. Large, slightly puffed



MARJAN SADOUGH

A plate of buñuelos with fried sweet puffs, served with honey and ice cream.

pastries were topped with Mexican candies, honey, cinnamon, orange and vanilla ice cream. It was reminiscent of a slightly raised flatbread that was drenched in sweet, gooey, yummy morsels.

Take-outs are welcome at Casa Isabel, and orders are placed in reheatable aluminum trays rather than those awful Styrofoam containers that impart an artificial taste to food. ▣

■ DINING NOTES

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MOVIE TIMES

300 (R) ★★**★1/2** **Century 16:** 11 a.m.; noon, 1, 1:50, 2:50, 3:50, 4:40, 5:35, 6:40, 7:30, 8:20, 9:25 & 10:20 p.m. **Century 20:** 11:30 a.m.; 12:25, 1:20, 2:15, 3:10, 4:05, 5, 5:55, 6:50, 7:50, 8:45, 9:40 & 10:35 p.m.

AMAZING GRACE (NOT RATED) ★★**★1/2**

Century 16: 12:50 & 3:55 p.m. **Century 12:** 12:40, 4, 7:40 & 10:25 p.m.

THE ASTRONAUT FARMER (PG) ★★

Century 20: 11:55 a.m.; 2:25, 4:50, 7:20 & 9:50 p.m.

BECAUSE I SAID SO (PG-13) ★★**★1/2** **Century 12:** 7:45 & 10:15 p.m.

BLACK SNAKE MOAN (R) ★**★1/2**

Century 12: 12:20, 4:15, 7:15 & 10:05 p.m.

BREACH (PG-13) ★★**★** **Century 16:** 7:20 & 10 p.m. **Century 20:** 11:40 a.m.; 2:25, 5, 7:40 & 10:15 p.m.

BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA (PG) **Century 16:** 11:40 a.m.; 2:15, 4:35, 6:55 & 9:15 p.m.; Sun.-Tue. also at 11:15 p.m. **Century 20:** 11:30 a.m.; 12:55, 1:55, 3:15, 4:35, 5:45, 7:10, 8:10 & 10:30 p.m.

CHARLOTTE'S WEB (G) ★★**★1/2** **Century 12:** 12:15, 2:50 & 5:15 p.m.

DEAD SILENCE (R) **Century 16:** 11:15 a.m.; 1:35, 3:45, 6, 8:15 & 10:30 p.m. **Century 20:** 12:15, 1:05, 2:30, 3:30, 4:45, 5:50, 7:15, 8:15, 9:30 & 10:30 p.m.

DREAMGIRLS (PG-13) ★★**★** **Century 20:** 1:10, 4:05, 7:05 & 10:05 p.m.

GHOST RIDER (PG-13) **Century 16:** 11:10 a.m.; 1:45, 4:20, 7 & 9:35 p.m. **Century 20:** 11:45 a.m.; 2:30, 5:15, 7:55 & 10:25 p.m.

THE HOST (R) ★★**★** **Century 16:** 10:30 p.m. **Century 20:** 7 & 10 p.m.

I THINK I LOVE MY WIFE (R) **Century 16:** 12:10, 2:40, 5:05, 7:40 & 10:05 p.m. **Century 12:** Noon, 1:10, 2:20, 3:40, 4:50, 6:15, 7:20, 8:45 & 9:50 p.m.

THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND (R) ★★**★1/2**

Century 20: 1:15, 4:25, 7:15 & 10:10 p.m. **Aquarius:** 1, 3:45, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.

LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA (R) ★★**★1/2**

Century 20: 12:30 & 3:40 p.m.

THE LIVES OF OTHERS (R) ★★**★** **Guild:** 2:30, 5:30 & 8:30 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 11:30 a.m.

THE MESSENGERS (PG-13) **Century 20:** 9:35 p.m.

MISS POTTER (PG) ★★**★1/2**

Aquarius: 2:30, 4:45, 7 & 9:15 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 12:15 p.m.

MUSIC AND LYRICS (PG-13) ★★**★** **Century 16:** 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45 & 10:10 p.m. **Century 12:** 1:20, 4:40, 7:35 & 10:20 p.m.

THE NAMESAKE (PG-13) **Palo Alto Square:** 1:30, 4:30, 7:30 & 10:30 p.m.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM (PG)

Century 20: Noon, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45 & 10:20 p.m.

NORBIT (PG-13) ★★ **Century 20:** 12:20, 2:55, 5:25, 8 & 10:35 p.m.

THE NUMBER 23 (R) ★ **Century 12:** 12:10, 3, 5:30, 8 & 10:30 p.m.

PAN'S LABYRINTH (R) ★★**★1/2** **Century 16:** 11:10 a.m.; 1:55, 4:45, 7:25 & 10:15 p.m. **Century 20:** 11:35 a.m.; 2:20, 4:55, 7:30 & 10:10 p.m.

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

THE QUEEN (NOT RATED) ★★**★** **Century 16:** 12:40, 3:40, 7:10 & 9:55 p.m. **Century 20:** 12:10, 2:40, 5:05, 7:25 & 9:45 p.m.

RENO 911!: MIAMI (R) **Century 20:** 11:50 a.m.; 1:50, 3:55, 6, 8:05 & 10:20 p.m.

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW (R) **Guild:** Sat. at midnight.

STARTER FOR 10 (PG-13) **Palo Alto Square:** Fri., Mon. & Tue. at 2, 4:45, 7:20 & 10 p.m.; Sat. at 11:30 a.m.; 2, 4:35, 7:20 & 10 p.m.; Sun. at 11:30 a.m.; 2, 4:45, 7:20 & 10 p.m.

THE ULTIMATE GIFT (PG) **Century 12:** 12:30, 3:30, 7:10 & 10 p.m.

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

ZODIAC (R) ★★**★1/2** **Century 16:** 11:45 a.m.; 3:10, 6:45 & 10:15 p.m. **Century 20:** 11:40 a.m.; 12:50, 3:05, 4:10, 6:30, 7:35 & 10 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

300 ★★**★1/2**

(Century 16, Century 20) The first ground-breaking film of 2007 explodes on the screen courtesy of up-and-coming director Zack Snyder ("Dawn of the Dead") and acclaimed comic creator Frank Miller. Snyder adapts Miller's sparse graphic novel about the Battle of Thermopylae with the same devoted verve that Robert Rodriguez brought to "Sin City." Miller's fantasy-infused account of the clash between the Greeks and the Persians in the year 480 B.C. revolves around King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) of Sparta. When a massive Persian army led by the effeminate and self-proclaimed "Man God" Xerxes (Rodrigo Santoro) threatens to enslave Greece, Leonidas and 300 of his most devoted soldiers travel to the narrow mountain pass of Thermopylae in an effort to hold off the approaching horde. Some viewers may scoff at the thin character development or macho dialogue, but the entrancing visual power and unparalleled imagination of "300" cannot be ignored. The 300 Spartan soldiers wanted glory, and they got it. *Rated: R for graphic battle sequences, some sexuality and nudity. 1 hour, 57 minutes.* — T.H.

BLACK SNAKE MOAN ★**★1/2**

(Century 12) Christina Ricci is the definition of wrong-side-of-the-tracks as Rae, a white-trash 20-something renouncing her abusive childhood by playing the two-bit nympho. On a collision course with a dirty destiny is Lazarus (Samuel L. Jackson), recently divorced and consumed by the hurt. On the side of a country road, he finds Rae — the bruised victim of a low-life who lets his extremities speak for his brain. With a truckload of unease the God-fearing Lazarus tends Rae, prepping ice baths to bring down her fever. But Rae's heat isn't a medical matter, no sirree: she's got the burn *inside* of her. Forced to face the fact that Rae has demons, Lazarus endeavors to "save" her by chaining her to the radiator and preaching scripture, thus preventing her from late-night wanderings and the devil within. Craig Brewer, who helmed 2005's critically acclaimed "Hustle and Flow," weaves the essence of the Deep South into every frame of "Moan" but pitches his bluesy sensibilities straight into the gutter, resulting in a tawdry B-movie melodrama. *Rated: R for nudity, language, sexuality and violence. 1 hour, 56 minutes.* — J.A.

THE HOST ★★**★**

(Century 16, Century 20) "The Host" is straight from the annals of Japan's '50s horror classics, a B-grade creature-feature that does far more than go bump in the night. Dim-witted single dad Gang-Du (Song Kang-Ho) is working his father's makeshift food stand when he spies crowds of rubbernecks anxiously gathering on the banks of the Han River. Suddenly an enormous amphibious creature rises from the water and begins to

► See **MINI REVIEWS**, page 26



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MINI REVIEWS

► *Continued from page 25*

attack the frantic masses. Gang-Du and his middle-school daughter Hyun-Seo (Ko A-Sung) join the fleeing flock, but the slimy thing snatches Hyun-Seo with a flick of its tail and disappears back into the murky depths of the Han. Gang-Du fears the worst but finally receives a scratchy cell-phone call from his daughter, who claims to be trapped by the creature in Seoul's labyrinth sewer system. Thus begins an oddly compelling journey that pits Hyun-Seo's shell-shocked family against the slimy monstrosity. The action is pure high camp, a madcap mix of fear and humor that hits a few slap-sticky skids along the way. A good time at the movies, no matter how you cut it. *Rated: R for excessive gore. 1 hour, 59 minutes. In Korean with English subtitles.* — J.A.

ZODIAC ★★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) David Fincher, the prickly auteur of "Se7en" and "Fight

Club," comes through yet again with a meticulously spare account of the glory days of the Bay Area's own Zodiac killer. It begins with a whimper, a pair of lovers on a lonely road shot point-blank in the dead of night. A month later the killer sends a series of ciphers to the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner and demands that they be published. If not he promises to continue his murderous rampage, which he does anyway. As bloody incidents mount, the pressure in the newsroom escalates. Colorful Chron crime reporter Paul Avery (Robert Downey, Jr.) is the first to fall under Zodiac's spell, followed by mild-mannered newspaper cartoonist Robert Graysmith (Jake Gyllenhaal) and SFPD homicide Inspector David Toschi (Mark Ruffalo). Zodiac continues to taunt the press and police while Avery, Graysmith and Toschi agonize over hot clues gone cold. The trio is consumed by the psychological warfare Zodiac is waging on a horrified public. "Zodiac" is smart and substantial, the kind of project sorely lacking on the current cinematic landscape. *Rated: R for language and disturbing violence. 2 hours, 37 minutes.* — J.A.

MOVIECRITICS

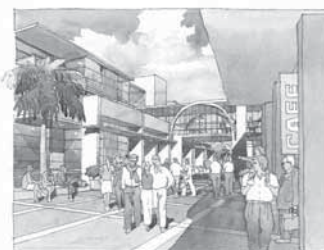
S.T.-Susan Tavernetti,
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SPECIAL EVENTS

EIGHTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM FOR MOTHERS "The Shelter of Each Other: Mothers and Community." Keynote speaker and best selling author, Dr. Mary Pipher will discuss the important role mothers and communities play in rebuilding and strengthening families. March 17, 8:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. \$20. Kresge Auditorium, 555 Nathan Abbott Way Stanford Law School, Stanford. Call 329-8041.

ANTI-WAR RALLY: "OUT OF IRAQ" Featuring speeches from local activist leaders and Sameer Dossani. A march through downtown Palo Alto. March 17, noon-3 p.m. Free. City Hall Plaza, 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. Call 326-8837. www.peaceandjustice.org

POST PRESENTS AUTHOR RICHARD LOUV 14th Annual Wallace Stegner Lecture Series, sponsored by Ambassador Bill and Mrs. Jean Lane. March 22, 8-9:30 p.m. \$22. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 854-7696. www.openspacetrust.org

ART GALLERIES

"CATARACT: A JOURNEY OF SPIRIT" Chinese-style brush paintings by local artist, Patricia J. Machmiller, on display through March 31. Soaring granite, a single pine tree and the mist from a waterfall are some of the subjects rendered in ink on rice paper. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Gallery 9, 143 Main St., Los Altos. www.gallery9losaltos.com

"NOW AND THEN" A solo exhibition by Bay Area artist Albert Smith. Showcasing the transformation in his work since 1975. By appointment through Sun., April 1. Free. Chelsea Art Gallery, 440 Kipling St., Palo Alto. Call 324-4450. www.chelseaaartgallery.com

HAWAII: "UP CLOSE" Views of Hawaii by watercolor artist Sue Lyttle. Through March 31. Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Viewpoints Gallery, 315 State St., Los Altos. <http://viewpointsgallery.com/>

AUDITIONS

"DISNEY'S HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL" Auditions presented by Palo Alto Children's Theatre. Open to ages 13 through high school. March 20-21, 3:45-5:30 p.m. Palo Alto Children's Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 463-4930.

KATE HAWLEY'S "CINDERELLA" PYT invites youths ages 8-20 to audition for this madcap musical. Prepare song and one-minute prose monologue. Bring sheet music or instrumental tape or CD. March 17, 10 a.m. or 2 p.m.; March 18, 2 p.m. \$160. Peninsula Youth Theatre, 2500 Old Middlefield Way, Mountain View. www.pytnet.org

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

FIBER COLLAGE Fiber collage is the art of layering and sewing together small pieces of silks, yarns and threads into a one-of-a-kind fabric. For ages teen to adult. Bring needles, thread, scissors, measuring tape and any fabric remnants; bring lunch. March 18, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. \$100. Community School of Music and Arts at Finn Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. Call 917-6800. www.arts4all.org

GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY WITH MARGARETTA MITCHELL March 24, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and March 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Exploring different approaches to the photography of gardens and plants. See website for full description. \$150 members/\$165 non-members. Gamble Garden, 1431 Waverley St., Palo Alto. Call 329-1356 ext. 0. www.gamblegarden.org/

THE WONDER OF PATINAS For ages teen to adult. Materials list available online. Bring lunch. March 25, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$85 plus \$30 materials. Community School of Music and Arts at Finn Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. Call 917-6800. www.arts4all.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS

PLANT EXCHANGE Sponsored by the De Anza Chapter, American Rhododendron Society, March 21, 7:30 p.m. Bring a plant to exchange. Free. Hillview Community Center, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos. www.deanza-ars.com

CONCERTS

ENSIGN STREET CONCERT Sun., March 18, 7:30 p.m. Vicky Wang, Virtuoso cellist in a concert featuring works by Brahms, Schumann, and Rachmaninoff; Past winner of the Young Artist International Competition. Free. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 3865 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

TRISKELA CELTIC CONCERT Haunting airs from the Emerald Isle, performed by Celtic harpists Diana Stork, Shawna Spiteri and Portia Diwa, known as Triskela. March 17, 8-10 p.m. \$12 advance/\$17 day of event. East West Bookstore, 324 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 988-9800. www.eastwest.com

DANCE

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

TOXIC MATERIALS IN SILICON VALLEY Sheila Davis, executive director of Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, will speak about the history of toxics in Silicon Valley, related legislative issues, and ways to get involved on issues relating to toxics in our community. Mon., March 19, 7-8:30 p.m. Pre-registration preferred. Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, 505 E. Charleston Road, Palo Alto. www.uucpa.org

EXHIBITS

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

ARCHITECTURAL TOURS OF WILLIAMS HOUSE Docent led architectural tours of the Century Old Williams House. Saturdays, through June 2, 2 p.m. Free. Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. Call 321-1004. www.moah.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

IN THE AMERICAN WEST: PHOTOGRAPHS By Richard Avedon. Assertive, controversial, and graphically striking, Avedon's oversized images of working-class Westerners provide the opportunity to reexamine the group of photographs and to explore the realities and myths of the American West. Hours: Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thu., 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Through May 6. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Dr., Stanford. Call 723-3469. <http://museum.stanford.edu>

FAMILY AND KIDS

"TEN MINUTES TILL BEDTIME" Peninsula Youth Theatre will present a Stories on Stage dramatization of the story by Peggy Rathmann. March 23, 9:30 and 11 a.m.; March 24, 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. March 24. Tickets cost \$5-\$7. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. www.pytnet.org

MARIMO-KAI, JAPANESE KOTO ENSEMBLE All-female group blends instruments from the East and West in a repertoire of Japanese classical and modern music. Sponsored by Applied Materials. Suitable for school-age children and adults. March 18, 2 p.m. preschool and young children; 4 p.m. school age children and adults. Free. Community School of Music and Arts, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. www.arts4all.org

FILM

STANFORD THEATRE GUIDE March 16: "White Heat" 7:30 p.m.; "The Body Snatcher" 6 and 9:35 p.m.; March 17-18: "The Bitter Tea of General Yen" 4:10 and 7:30 p.m.; "Flying Down to Rio" 5:50 and 9:10 p.m.; March 19-20: closed; March 21-23: "Hollow Triumph" 7:30 p.m.; "The Seventh Victim" 6:05 and 9:05 p.m.; March 24-25: "Dinner at Eight" 4:05 and 7:30 p.m.; "One Hour with You" 6:05 and 9:30 p.m.; March 26-27: closed; March 28-30: "The Big Clock" 7:30 p.m.; "Bedlam" 6 and 9:15 p.m.; March 31-April 1: "Cleopatra" 3:35 and 7:30 p.m.; "The Gay Divorcee" 5:30 and 9:25 p.m. Stanford

Theatre, 221 University Ave., Palo Alto. Call 324-3700. www.stanfordtheatre.org

LIVE MUSIC

"BRASSY DANCES" Horn quartet Quadre performs original music and arrangements focusing on dance forms throughout history. March 19, 8-9:30 p.m. \$22 adults/\$12 seniors/students. Mountain View Center for the Performing Art, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 969-4242. www.quadre.org

ON STAGE

"ARCADIA" BY TOM STOPPARD Play time-travels between two centuries where characters try to recover the long-lost past. Through March 18. Thu.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. \$10-\$25. Pear Avenue Theatre, 1220 Pear Ave., Mountain View. Call 254-1148. www.thepear.org

"JEANS" THE MUSICAL A musical tale of Levi Strauss and the pants that won the West--and then the world. Created, acted and directed by local talent. March 18, 4:30 p.m. Adults \$15/students and seniors \$10. Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road, Los Altos Hills. Call 559-9505. www.jeansthemusical.com

"MAYBE BABY, IT'S YOU" By Charlie Sharian and Shari Simpson, directed by Bill Starr. 2 actors explore the trials, tribulations and hilarity of dating. Through March 25, Thu.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. \$13-\$25. Dragon Productions, 535 Alma St., Palo Alto. Call 493-2006. www.dragonproductions.net

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