

# Mountain View VOICE

JUNE 1, 2007 VOLUME 15, NO. 22

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WEEKEND | P.22



## King of the bike commuters

JACK MILLER PEDALS EVERYWHERE, INCLUDING TO AND FROM WORK IN SAN JOSE

By Alexa Tondreau

For Mountain View resident Jack Miller, riding a bicycle isn't a political statement, a trendy fad or a hobby. It's a way of life, and an enjoyable one at that.

"Bicycling has always been so much fun to me," Miller said in a recent interview. "It started as a way to be cool and independent when I was kid, and I guess I never really transitioned out of that."

Miller, who has called Mountain View home for 16 years, recently was named the Santa Clara County Bicycle Commuter of the Year. The honor coincided with Bike to Work Day on May 17.

In large part, Miller was recognized for his commute to work, which entails a 14-mile ride to downtown San Jose five days a week. His route takes him down the Central Expressway, through the Santa Clara University campus, and he arrives at work — a start-up tech company where he works



**Santa Clara County** Bike Commuter of the year Jack Miller works on one of the 200 bikes that will be donated this year through the Bicycle Exchange.

as a vice president of engineering services— some 50 minutes later.

Most mornings, he is the lone rider on the road.

"I see one coming the other way," Miller said, "and we wave to each other."

His bicycle has been a constant companion to Miller for over 35 years, beginning when he was growing up in Napa.

It was his main vehicle while pursuing graduate studies in Los Angeles and Albuquerque, N.M., and when he lived for a period in Portland, Ore.

He even managed to bring his bicycle along with him when he was in the Navy during the Vietnam War.

"I never got to ride it, but it was nice just to look at it and imagine going somewhere," he said.

Come rain or shine, Miller will be out on his bike.

"I've definitely ridden in the rain. I had to pour the water out of my laptop one morning," he said.

Other people aren't always sure how to take the fact that he would rather bike than drive,

► See **BIKE COMMUTER**, page 8

## Boundary options whittled down

TWO SCHOOL GROUPS VIE OVER DIFFERING PROPOSALS FOR LASD

By Alexa Tondreau

A committee formed by the Los Altos School District to analyze various scenarios for boundary changes made some headway Tuesday evening, when it narrowed the district's choices to three, down from over 10 different possibilities.

Superintendent Tim Justus told the committee, which is composed of teachers, parents and several board members, "There is absolutely no way to make every single neighborhood happy," and he urged the group to make a decision that is best for the district as a whole.

Two of the three scenarios to be considered by the district board were created by Mountain View residents living in neighborhoods potentially affected by district boundary adjustments.

One, dubbed "Scenario Fair,"

► See **BOUNDARIES**, page 16

### INSIDE

*Two LASD parents accuse school board members of violating the Brown Act by copying each other in an e-mail discussion.*

See story, p. 17

## Farm owners threaten lawsuit

CITY ATTORNEY UNFAZED, SAYS COUNCIL CAN ZONE GRANT ROAD PROPERTY AS IT SEES FIT

By Daniel DeBolt

In the days leading up to next week's City Council meeting, the battle over the Grant Road farm has taken on the ugly traits of an intense election, with campaign signs stolen and lawsuits threatened.

When asked Tuesday if there would be a court battle over the city's possible decision to zone for a five-acre farm on the site, the landowners' attorney, Lex Watson, told the *Voice*, "I would think so, yes. The only way to force them [city officials] to do it appropriately would be to bring an action."

Meanwhile, the anti-farm group Defending Our Neighborhood filed a police report after 40 signs were taken from homes surrounding the farm. The signs, designed to show local solidarity against a proposal to carve a five-acre, nonprofit-run farm out of the 15-acre site, read simply, "No Farm."

"This was just an unbelievable act of suppressing our voice, the most egregious I've seen," said Thomas Holmes,

► See **FARM**, page 10

INSIDE

GOINGS ON 32 | MARKETPLACE 35 | MOVIES 25 | REAL ESTATE 41 | VIEWPOINT 19

REDEFINING QUALITY SINCE 1990  
Reading between the emotional line makes the difference between finding a house and a home.

**Ellen & Katie Saviano**



**SUNNYVALE** ■ Gorgeous 3bd/2ba home near Ortega Park with top Cupertino schools. Gourmet kitchen with maple cabinets + granite. Lovely backyard. **\$868,000**

**Chuck & Tori Atwell**



**MOUNTAIN VIEW** ■ Downtown home offering quality touches throughout. 2 bedroom, 1 bath home with huge kitchen + hardwood floors. Roses abound! **\$929,000**

**Mary Marley**



**MOUNTAIN VIEW** ■ Downtown Mountain View. Spacious 2bd/2ba TH with vaulted ceilings, hardwood floors, and inside laundry. Large private yard, + garage. **\$648,000**

**Sharon & Marcella**



**MOUNTAIN VIEW** ■ Historical property. Bring your hammer, nails + imagination to restore this cute Bungalow. 2bd/1ba with LR, DR, kitchen. Detached garage. **\$599,000**

**Ryan Gowdy**



**SUNNYVALE** ■ Great condo with large living room + dining room. 3bd/2.5ba offering updated plumbing fixtures, fresh paint + Berber carpet. 2 parking spaces. **\$598,000**

**Ryan Gowdy**



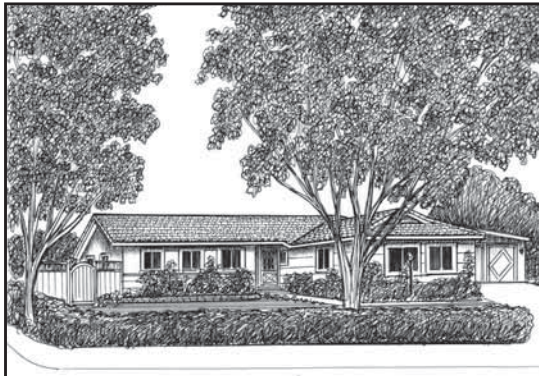
**SUNNYVALE** ■ Recently remodeled 3bd/2ba with spacious family room and kitchen. Cherry cabinets, granite, hardwood floors + more! Private back yard. **\$925,000**

**Ginny Zachow**



**SUNNYVALE** ■ Dramatic 3bd/2.5ba town home in the sought after Traditions complex. This turn-key is a must see. 2013+/- sf. New paint and carpet. **\$705,000**

**Karen Bella**



**MOUNTAIN VIEW** ■ Cuesta Park charmer offering 3 bedrooms, 2 baths + separate family room. HW floors, new carpets + double-pane windows. 1638+/- sf. **\$1,029,999**

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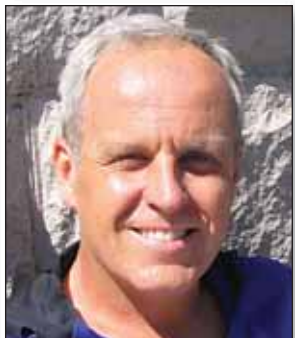
**MOUNTAIN VIEW** ■ Light and bright 1bd/1ba with remodeled kitchen, skylights, Berber carpeting and plenty of storage. 2 patio doors. Great location. **\$380,000**

# Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in Downtown Mountain View. Pictures and interviews by Molly Stenhouse.

## What was the highlight of your Memorial Day weekend?



*"I rode 10 miles around the Baylands near Coyote Hills. It was foggy and windy that day and I enjoyed watching the upset waves moving on the Bay."*  
**Mark Toal**, Mountain View



*"My husband I moved into our first house. We did it all in one weekend!"*  
**Cassie Doll**, Santa Clara



*"My family got together at my place to barbeque short-ribs and chicken. Then we watched the comedy 'Code Name: The Cleaner.' It was a good laugh."*  
**Jimmy Ballard**, Sunnyvale



*"I pulled weeds from my garden and thought about society's issues. That's why I like to use my hands instead of weed killer."*  
**Wess Icenogle**, Auburn



*"We rode our bikes and took pictures around the Stanford campus. It seems like we see something new each time."*  
**Nancy Landford** and **Sandy Marshall**, Sunnyvale

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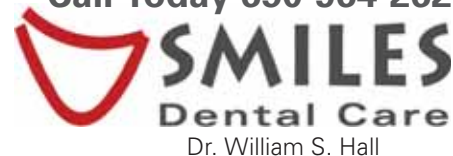
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■ **CRIMEWATCH**

**ARMED ROBBERY, SYLVAN PARK, 5/25**

A man and a woman were robbed by two men, one of them armed, while walking through Sylvan Park on Friday night. The robbers approached the couple and one drew his handgun, demanding the man's money. He gave the suspects his money and the robbers fled on foot east-bound through the park.

Both suspects were described as young men in their late teens or early 20s. The first suspect, described as Hispanic or black, wore a dark hooded sweatshirt and dark pants. The other suspect, described as Hispanic, wore a dark hooded sweatshirt and dark baggie pants. Detectives are investigating the case.

**TERRORIST THREATS, 1900 BLOCK HACKETT AVE., 5/21**

Two mothers, whose children play rough together, have been involved in an ongoing dispute. One mother, angered over the rough play, threatened to harm the other mother if any more harm happened to her child. The DA's office is reviewing the case.

**GRAND THEFT, RITE AID ON SAN ANTONIO ROAD, 5/24**

A woman had her wallet stolen as she shopped in Rite Aid. The victim left her purse in the shopping cart and turned away for a minute. When she turned back, she noticed her wallet was missing from the purse.

■ **POLICE LOG**

**ATTEMPTED SUICIDE**

1000 Block Space Park Way 5/23  
1900 Block California St. 5/23  
100 Block Calderon Ave. 5/25  
2000 Block Marich Way 5/26

**AUTO BURGLARY**

700 Block Continental Cr. 5/21  
2900 Block Fairchild Ave. 5/23  
2200 Block Latham St. 5/23  
800 Block Independence Ave. 5/23  
800 Block Cuesta Dr. 5/24  
2100 Block Old Middlefield Way 5/25

**BATTERY**

W. Dana Street/Franklin Street 5/26  
1500 Block Hollingsworth Dr. 5/27

**BURGLARY**

Costco 5/25

**COMMERCIAL BURGLARY**

2400 Block Charleston Rd. 5/21  
300 Block Moffett Blvd. 5/23  
600 Block S. Rengstorff Ave. 5/23

**DISTURBANCE**

Lozano's Carwash 5/22  
1900 Block San Luis Ave. 5/26

**DISORDERLY CONDUCT**

Wal-Mart 5/21  
400 Block San Antonio Rd. 5/22  
1100 Block W. El Camino Real 5/22  
Rengstorff Park 5/22  
Castro Street/Dana Street 5/24  
10 Block S. Rengstorff Ave. 5/24  
1200 Block La Avenida 5/24  
Rengstorff Park 5/26  
Molly MaGee's 5/26

**DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE**

500 Block Moorpark Way 5/22  
Evelyn Street/Bush Street 5/22  
2600 Block W. El Camino Real 5/27

**DISTURBANCE**

200 Block S. Rengstorff Ave. 5/12

**GRAND THEFT**

Walgreens, El Camino Real 5/21  
500 Block Central Ave. 5/21  
Amphitheatre Pkwy. 5/24  
800 Block San Antonio Rd. 5/24  
2700 Block Preston Dr. 5/27

**IDENTITY THEFT**

500 Block W. El Camino Real 5/23

**MISSING PERSON**

300 Block Sierra Vista Ave. 5/23

**PETTY THEFT**

200 Block Castro St. 5/21  
600 Block Showers Dr. 5/21  
2400 Block Hospital Dr. 5/21  
1000 Block El Monte Ave. 5/21  
Bubb School 5/21  
600 Block Calderon Ave. 5/23  
Sherland Avenue/Tyrella Avenue 5/24  
1000 Block Grant Rd. 5/24  
Library 5/25  
1900 Block Colony St. 5/25  
2000 Block Old Middlefield Way 5/26  
1000 N. Rengstorff Ave. 5/27  
600 Block Cuesta Dr. 5/27  
100 Block Preston Dr. 5/27

**POSSESSION OF DRUGS**

Calderon Avenue/W. El Camino Real 5/23  
Central Expressway/N. Rengstorff Avenue 5/25  
1900 Block W. El Camino Real 5/25

**ROBBERY**

Sylvan Park 5/25

**STOLEN VEHICLE**

700 Block Continental Cr. 5/25  
Castro St. 5/26  
1900 Block California St. 5/27

**SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/PERSON**

2200 Block W. Middlefield Rd. 5/21  
Post Office, Hope St. 5/23  
100 Block Kittoe Dr. 5/25  
Century 16 Cinema 5/25  
1000 Block Space Park Way 5/28

**TERRORIST THREATS**

1900 Block Hackett Ave. 5/21

**VANDALISM**

1000 Block Mercy St. 5/21  
Mountain View High School 5/21  
2000 Block Latham St. 5/24  
10 Block Mariposa Ave. 5/27

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## News on the news

By Don Frances

**RETURNED FROM** a vacation Tuesday to learn some terrible news: The *San Francisco Chronicle* is drastically cutting its newsroom staff. Dozens of journalists, as many as 100 of them, will be out of a job in the next few weeks.

After the *Mercury News* got swallowed up by Dean Singleton a few months ago, I'd been referring to the *Chron* as the last serious daily in the Bay Area. But since then they started putting ads on the front page — and now this. I wonder how substantial the paper will be a few months from now.

On Tuesday, an op-ed piece in the *Chron*, written by a UC Berkeley journalism professor named Neil Henry, had this to say about it:

"The fact is there will be nothing on YouTube, or in the blogosphere, or anywhere else on the Web to effectively replace the valuable work of those professionals."

Henry's article, titled "The decline of news," went on to blame this decline on the super-powered, Web-based corporations — chief among them Mountain View's Google — which distribute the newspapers' content without compensation. He then offered up a few solutions which sounded to me more like charity from Google than real solutions.

I think it's silly to blame Google, and even sillier to blame Craigslist, for the decline of big-city journalism. But the decline itself is real enough. The once great dailies are literally falling to pieces, while the newly great Web content providers like Google are profiting on an unheard-of scale. The affect has arguably been most noticeable in smaller cities and towns which lie outside the dailies' ever-shrinking range — including, perhaps ironically, Mountain View. When's the

► See **EDITOR'S DESK**, page 14



KELLEY COX

### LITTLE HELP

**August Tynefield** gets a push from Levi Zavala at Cuesta Park in Mountain View last Friday.

### ■ CITY COUNCIL

## City's ranks growing grayer

OFFICIALS WORRY THAT MANY COULD RETIRE WITHIN NEXT FEW YEARS, INCLUDING TOP BRASS

By Daniel DeBolt

**T**he City Council was given some alarming numbers last Tuesday by Nadine Levin, assistant city manager. Nearly 50 percent of the city's non public safety employees are 50 years old or older, meaning that half will be eligible for retirement in a few short years, at age 55.

Furthermore, almost a third of the employees are already retirement age, including Levin herself. City manager Kevin Duggan is also eligible for retirement.

What exactly will happen when the "retirement bubble" bursts isn't clear, but city officials worry about what skills will be lost, how many people will leave and how quickly it will happen. The city does not require staff to say when they will retire.

"It's going to affect the quality of services all of our constituents get," Duggan said. "It's really an industry-wide discussion and it has been for several years."

Because of its aging workforce, the city has begun to focus on making jobs attractive to those in the region who want to work in city government.

"We'd like Mountain View to stand out as the place to come," Duggan said.

The city has proposed \$350,000 in next year's budget to recruit new staff and provide internships. Mayor Laura Macias said she thought it was necessary to get young people into city government through internships so they could realize that they could actually do the job.

► See **COUNCIL**, page 18

## Water rates on the rise

NEW LAW MAKES FIGHTING RATE HIKES POSSIBLE, BUT HIGHLY UNLIKELY, FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

By Daniel DeBolt

**I**n the unlikely event that 10,000 residents protest Mountain View's proposed utility rate increases by June 8, the city could find itself in an unprecedented financial pickle.

Because of a new state law, Proposition 218, a majority of property owners can now stop a water rate increase dead in its tracks though written protest. But to do so would not be easy. About 10,000 owners, a majority of the 19,000 parcels, would have to write to the city by June 8. A public hearing to announce the results is scheduled for June 12.

As the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission is increasing its water rates, the city has proposed an 8 to 10 percent water rate increase for customers starting July 1. And Palo Alto is charging the city more for sewer services, so

sewer rates will increase by 11 percent. For single family home owners that translates to another \$4.32 a month, according to Mountain View officials.

Furthermore, a 3 percent increase in garbage rates will add another 45 cents to the monthly bill for a single family home.

While some residents may feel the rate increases are one of many ways they're being "nickel and dimed" by the government, city officials say the increases are necessary to prevent a "decline" in the maintenance and operation of sewer systems. If the increase were rejected by property owners, utility rate increases would have to be even larger in the future, city officials say.

"I think water rates have gone up every year," said Mike Kasperzak, former council member and board member of the Bay Area Water

Supply and Conservation Agency. "What a lot of people don't remember is that Mountain View buys its water from the SFPUC, and their rates go up. Cities have to pass that cost of water onto consumers."

City officials are also warning that the water rate increases may not be enough to compensate for the rate increases it will receive from the SFPUC this year, because those rates are currently unknown. The city is required to make its increases before the SFPUC's decision, so the best the city can do is guess, said city manager Kevin Duggan.

A large reason for the expected increase is a lack of snow pack in the Sierra Nevada mountains this year, which is where much of the SFPUC's water comes from via its massive Hetch Hetchy aqueduct. With less water to sell, there is less money to be made, but the SFPUC

must still be able to maintain its operating budget.

Kasperzak noted that, ironically, drought rationing could lead to increased water rates because the SFPUC will have sold less water and must recoup the lost revenue somehow.

Water rates may also increase as the SFPUC begins major maintenance to the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct. The agency is currently going through an environmental review process for the project, and minor repairs have already begun.

"Nobody likes it when prices go up, but we live in a world where with everything except technology, prices go up," Kasperzak said.

More information is available at the city's Web site, [www.ci.mtnview.ca.us](http://www.ci.mtnview.ca.us). ■

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at [ddebolt@mv-voice.com](mailto:ddebolt@mv-voice.com)

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## ■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

### Colorful oriole



A few weeks ago, wrote Marti Wright of Sunnyview Lane, "I noticed the first hooded orioles have returned to Mountain View from their winter home in Mexico. They will have their babies here and you may see them nesting in dense palm fronds, in very tall trees. They feed on insects and nectar. Here is a young male sitting on an oriole feeder in my back yard."

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](mailto:editor@mv-voice.com).

## ■ NEWS BRIEFS

### TWO KILLED IN CRASH REMAIN UNIDENTIFIED

As of press time, two people killed in a roll-over crash on the San Antonio Road off-ramp from Highway 101 early Monday morning have not yet been identified by the Santa Clara County Coroner's office.

One victim was a 46-year-old man from Mountain View and the other was a 24-year-old man from an unknown city, according to the California Highway Patrol.

The driver sustained minor injuries in the crash and was transported to Stanford Medical Center. He is a 23-year-old man from Sunnyvale who has been charged with felony DUI and vehicular manslaughter. The CHP has not released his name.

The blue Hyundai was northbound on the freeway about 2:40 a.m. when it attempted to exit at San Antonio Road but traveled off the ramp, rolling over three times down a slight embankment. The right side of the car, where the front- and back-seat passengers were sitting, was crushed.

Any witnesses or those with information are encouraged to contact the Redwood City area CHP office at (650) 369-6261.

— Palo Alto Weekly

### DRUNK DRIVING DEATHS, ARRESTS UP THIS YEAR IN BAY AREA

Arrests for drunken driving offenses in Bay Area cities and counties were up sharply this Memorial Day weekend compared with last year, authorities reported.

Between midnight Friday and 11:59 p.m. Monday, 125 Bay Area law enforcement agencies arrested 529 people for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, according to the California Highway Patrol. Last year there were 340 DUI-related arrests during the same period.

Five DUI-related traffic fatalities were reported between midnight Friday and 11:59 a.m. Monday. Last year saw one DUI-related death within the four-day enforcement period. This year's tally includes the two deaths at the San Antonio Road off-ramp early Monday morning.

— Bay City News

# Google proud of its green tech

HUGE SOLAR ARRAY JUST PART OF COMPANY'S 'FROOGLE' ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS

By Daniel DeBolt

While Google employees are usually media-shy, they did not hesitate to show off the company's attention to global warming in a presentation to the environmental planning commission last month.

Google employees Deb Henigson and Anthony Ravitz said they see evidence of the green practices everywhere they go. When they arrive at work the carport roofs are made of solar panels. When they walk into an empty room lights are turned

on and off by motion sensors to save electricity. When eating lunch the food is often grown locally. Paper is shredded for easy recycling, because "recycling equals security." Even the company's supply of pens is made from recycled plastic.

"Working at Google is somewhat of a unique experience," said Ravitz, coordinator for Google's recent solar project

Google's solar panel setup, installed last month, is the largest on any corporate facility in the country. Taking up nearly every square inch of roof space on eight buildings are 9,212 panels producing 1.6 megawatts. Contractor Energy Innovations claims the pollution prevented per year is the equivalent to taking a car off the road for 4.2 million miles.

Henigson, director of corporate environmental programs, said she is happy to see that Google is already being outdone in Sunnyvale, where Applied Materials is about to install a 1.9 megawatt system.

The best part for the "froogle" company is that the solar panels will pay for themselves in seven years.

As Google plans to build several new buildings in the Bayshore area, city manager Kevin Duggan said the company is "very interested in meeting state-of-the-art environmental standards, but exactly what that means is hard to determine."

Duggan said the company is planning to build on six acres along Charleston Road near its

existing campus and is also planning for a major new campus on over 40 acres in the Shorebird Way area around the corner. Duggan said he had the impression that Google's plans to build a major campus at Moffett Field are still in the works as well.

City officials say Google squeezes more people into its office space than most other companies. Ravitz said the high density provides a more collaborative, vibrant work environment and less of an environmental impact.

When asked what Google would like the city to do for the environment, Ravitz and Henigson recommended more high-density development because of the environmental

rewards. Smart growth and housing needs, Ravitz said, "are the biggest things we face on the Peninsula."

The company offers several incentives to get people out of their cars. Electric scooters and bicycles are placed around the campus, for anyone to borrow using the honor system. Every day an employee bikes to work, \$5 is donated to the charity of their choice. And if an employee who bikes to work needs a car during work hours, they can borrow one of several Toyota Prius hybrids converted to be even more environmentally friendly as "plug-in" hybrids.

Also, a network of biodiesel-powered shuttles takes workers to and from homes as far away as San Francisco.

Even at home Google employees are given incentives for being green. An employee buying solar panels for his home will not only get the federal and state tax benefits, but a reward from Google as well.

"We do love technology; this is a technology company," Ravitz said.

The recent solar panel project has "boosted the pride of employees," Ravitz said. "I'm really proud to work with Google." ▀

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at [ddebolt@mv-voice.com](mailto:ddebolt@mv-voice.com)

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**BIKE COMMUTER**

► Continued from page 1

he said, especially at companies in Silicon Valley where his co-workers pack the parking lot with SUVs and sports cars.

"I was probably seen as eccentric, or just kind of odd. That's been the case at many companies. It takes awhile for them to get used to it, but everybody has been generally supportive," he said.

For the record, Miller does own a car and a motorcycle, but uses them for long trips or when he needs to haul something.

Miller, who has three daughters, does most of the family's errands on his bike around town in Mountain View, and finds the approach to be "terribly practical."

Besides not having to deal with traffic or waste time searching for parking spots, Miller said most people would be surprised at just how quickly they can get places on their bike.

"People should try to get over the notion that it's hard or inconvenient to pedal, and just try it," he said.

He recommends going to "a real bike shop, not a discount store," to be fitted for a bike. Even better, he said, hit up a garage sale or go to Craigslist to find a used bike.

"I'm a big promoter of recycling bikes and getting them back on the road," Miller said.

In fact, Miller hasn't purchased himself an off-the-assembly-line bike since the first mountain bike he owned in high school. His current collection includes a German Centaur, a 1954 English three-speed, and the only new bike in

his collection, a Sirrus, which he won at a raffle in support of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.

His desire to recycle bikes goes beyond his own personal use and extends to his involvement as co-coordinator of the Mountain View Bicycle Exchange. The group, which was formally under the auspices of Mountain View's Community Services Agency, is currently supported through the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.

A group of volunteers meets on the second Saturday of every month to repair broken children's bicycles, which are then distributed to needy families in the area. Used bicycles can be dropped off at the exchange program warehouse on Leghorn Street in Mountain View.

Miller also wants to promote safety issues for bicycle riders. While he has never been seriously hurt himself, he said it's important for riders to not create dangerous situations by riding irresponsibly.

"You have to act like you're driving a car, and the California Highway Patrol is watching you. California law requires bicycles to follow all the same rules as cars do," he said.

"There are as many kinds of riding as there are people," he advises. "Don't think you have to go out and get new clothes to ride a bike. There are so many fun things around for people to do."

For more information about donating a bike to the Mountain View Bicycle Exchange, visit [www.romp.org/bicycle-exchange](http://www.romp.org/bicycle-exchange). ▀

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



NOTICE OF JOINT PUBLIC HEARINGS OF THE FOLLOWING GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES TO REVIEW THE FISCAL YEAR 2007-08 PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGETS, PROPOSED WATER, WASTEWATER AND SOLID WASTE RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL RATES AND VARIOUS CITY FEES:

- CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW
- BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MOUNTAIN VIEW REVITALIZATION AUTHORITY
- BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MOUNTAIN VIEW SHORELINE REGIONAL PARK COMMUNITY
- BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FINANCING AUTHORITY

Notice is hereby given that Tuesday, the 5th day of June, 2007 at the hour of 7:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard in the Council Chamber, 500 Castro Street, Mountain View, has been set as the time and place for a public hearing to receive citizen input on the use of funds in the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Proposed Annual Budget; on the use of funds for the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Capital Improvement Program and Community Development Block Grant, on proposed water, wastewater and solid waste recycling and disposal rates and various city fees. In addition, the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Capital Improvement Program is scheduled for final adoption on Tuesday, June 5, 2007. A separate public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, June 12 at 6:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard to receive citizen input and collect ballots from owners of property located within the City limits regarding the proposed increases to water, wastewater and solid waste recycling and disposal rates. The budget is scheduled for a final public hearing and adoption on Tuesday, June 12, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard. If you are unable to attend these meetings but would like the City Council and staff to know your views, please send a letter to the City Council, P.O. Box 7540, Mountain View, California 94039, or an e-mail to [city.clerk@mountainview.gov](mailto:city.clerk@mountainview.gov) by Wednesday, May 30, 2007 for the June 5 public hearing or Wednesday, June 6, 2007 for the June 12 public hearing.

Copies of the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Proposed Budget, the Fiscal Year 2007-08 Proposed Capital Improvement Program, supporting documentation for proposed water, wastewater and solid waste disposal and recycling rates and various city fees will be available for review after 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 31, 2007 at City Hall in the City Clerks Office, 500 Castro Street, 3rd Floor, Mountain View, Monday through Friday, and at the Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St, Mountain View. The documents can also be found on the City's website at [www.mountainview.gov](http://www.mountainview.gov)

Dated this 15th day of May, 2007.

Robert F. Locke  
 Finance and Administrative Services Director

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# Larry's Knows...

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## GETTING THAT MUCH NEEDED SPARK

Vehicle manufacturers make much of the fact that their products come equipped with extended-life spark plugs that can maintain a precise gap for 100,000 miles. However, before you wait that long to replace them, you should bear in mind that plugs that hit the 80,000-mile mark are four-fifths worn. As the gap in the plug widens, engine performance and gas mileage begin to suffer. In addition, spark plugs that have remained in place for tens of thousands of miles have a tendency to seize in the cylinder head. Once this happens, it can be a potentially costly job to remove them. Since your vehicle's spark plugs are going to require replacement sometime, better to do it sooner rather than later.

There are few parts that affect performance as much as spark plugs, so constant vigilance is required to protect the gas mileage, and overall performance the spark plugs allow your vehicle to have. At Larry's AutoWorks, we can evaluate your spark plugs, and replace them, if necessary, with quality parts designed for your specific vehicle. If your car, truck, or SUV needs service come see us right off the 101 Freeway on Leghorn between San Antonio and Rengstorff in Mountain View. Take the Rengstorff exit south, then right on Leghorn.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Neighbors say as many as 40 of these signs were stolen Sunday night from the Preston Drive area.

## FARM

► Continued from page 1

organizer of Defending Our Neighborhood.

The opposing group in the debate, Mountain View Farmlands Group, which made the original proposal to preserve a smaller farm on the site, denied any involvement in taking the signs.

SummerHill Homes, which plans to put 55 homes on the

entire 15-acre site, has resisted the Farmlands Group's proposal from the start. An attorney hired by SummerHill, Alex Faber, had also cautioned the city in a letter written for the council before the May 8 study session on the farm. Faber said the city could be violating the takings clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, and said that in several cases cities have lost in

► Continued on next page

## Let Us Hear From You...

Letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome.

Mail your comments to:  
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P.O. Box 405, Mountain View, CA 94042



**Len Tillem Esq.**

Len Tillem & Associates  
Host of KGO's "Legaltalk"



**Michael Gilfix, Esq.**

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# KGO's Len Tillem & Michael Gilfix

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► Continued from previous page

court for “expropriating property.”

But city attorney Michael Martello was not bothered by talk of a possible lawsuit.

“Any zoning decision can be taken to court by the property owners and residents,” Martello said. “Not much zoning is done in court, but lots of people try.”

In a “Land Use 101” workshop earlier this year, which the farm owners attended, Martello noted court decisions that discourage courts from overturning zoning decisions made by cities.

Vicki Moore, a Farmlands Group organizing member, said the threatened legal actions were

*“Any zoning decision can be taken to court by the property owners and residents.*

*Not much zoning is done in court, but lots of people try.”*

MICHAEL MARTELLO

probably just a scare tactic.

“In my experience working in the land use field for a dozen years, this type of tactic rarely succeeds,” she wrote in an e-mail. “In this case not only is there no legal merit, but it may, as in other cases, further the resolve of the decision-makers to make a decision in the best interest of the community.”

Farmlands Group member Robin Iwai said that Defending Our Neighborhood had spurned requests that the two groups participate in city mediation. “We are all going to continue being neighbors regardless of what happens to the property,” Iwai said.

Holmes responded, in an e-mail to city mediator Bob Jacobson, “Upon reflection and consultation with the group we feel it is inappropriate to meet with Robin’s group at this time. Please thank her for her time and input and [tell her] that we wish her well.”

On Tuesday, June 5, the City Council will provide direction for zoning the property, though no formal action will be made. Public comments were heard on May 8. ▣

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at [ddebolt@mv-voice.com](mailto:ddebolt@mv-voice.com)



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## CENTRAL COAST CHAMPS

High school athletes from throughout the region met last Friday to see who goes to the state championships, and a few local athletes made the cut. All of them finished among the top three at the Central Coast Section championships at Gilroy High.

**Top to bottom:** Los Altos senior Eric Hersey won the 110 high hurdles in 14.22 and later the 300 intermediate hurdles in 37.67, making him the CCS leader in both events. St. Francis senior Andy Vargas finished third in the boys' shotput at 55-11 1/4, earning him the state meet by 3/4 of an inch; he is headed to San Jose State to play football. St. Francis senior Natasha Barthel finished second in the girls' pole vault at 12-8; Barthel, who is headed to Stanford, was also selected CIF 2007 female scholar-athlete of the year.

Also last Friday, Mountain View senior Robbie Reid, not pictured, ran second in the boys' 800 meters in 1:55.28, a season best for him. All four athletes are competing at the CIF State Track & Field Championships this Friday and Saturday at Hughes Stadium in Sacramento.

PHOTOS BY KEITH PETERS



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EDITOR'S DESK

► Continued from page 5

last time you saw decent coverage of Mountain View in the Merc?

(In fact, these days your *Mountain View Voice* is pretty much the only game in town — but I'll get to that in a minute.)

The craziest part of all this often goes unsaid: Newspapers still provide content that nobody else can (not bloggers, not YouTube, not even TV news) and which most people will pay for. Why does this fact continually translate into failure?

One big answer has to do with how the dailies manage their content. They don't have to give it away for free on the Web. Why not put the freshest news — say, up to a week old — behind a pay wall? After a week the stories would open up into a free archive, but before then all those millions of Google News surfers won't have read these hard-earned stories for free.

STRANGELY ENOUGH, small community papers like the *Voice* are still doing well. As mentioned, there's little competition anymore. And Mountain View's many community-minded people still need their information gathered somehow.

They also need a forum to discuss this information, which segues nicely into an important announcement: The *Voice* has revamped its Web site, [www.mv-voice.com](http://www.mv-voice.com), to include several interactive features which we believe take the "New Media revolution" or whatever by the horns.

Biggest of these features is "Town Square," located at the top-left corner of your screen. Here, anybody and everybody can add their comment to a discussion, or start a new discussion on any topic they like. There's also searchable restaurant and movie sections, and soon, I'm told, we'll have a sports section where locals can announce games, post scores and photos, and more.

I'M ESPECIALLY excited for that sports section, since so many of you parents and coaches are clearly needing a better outlet than we can currently provide. But I try. ... For example, Joe Seither wrote to announce CYSA Soccer U9B fall tryouts:

"The MVLA Pythons (under-9 boys) is growing beyond one team next fall and is on the lookout for fired-up players ready to kick their soccer game up a level. Fall tryouts will be held Saturday, June 9 at 9 a.m. sharp at Grant Park in Los Altos." Contact Seither at (650) 269-3935 or [joseither@yahoo.com](mailto:joseither@yahoo.com). ▀

Don Frances can be reached at [dfrances@mv-voice.com](mailto:dfrances@mv-voice.com).



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## Condoleezza Rice visits Moffett Field, Menlo Park

Staff reports

Students from the Center for a New Generation at the James Flood Magnet School in Menlo Park gathered around Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice snapping pictures with their cell phones last Thursday, May 24.

Rice met with sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students from the after-school enrichment program that she co-founded in 1991 when she was a Stanford University professor.

*Rice's mother taught Willie Mays when he was a high school student.*

She stopped by the school on a visit to the Bay Area accompanied by Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer.

Earlier Thursday, Rice and Tom O'Leary of Tesla Motors test drove an electric sports car from NASA Ames Research Center, Hangar N211, at Moffett Field. The car reached speeds of more than 100 mph on the Moffett Field tarmac.

During her visit, Rice also toured Hewlett-Packard labs in Palo Alto, and took in a Giants game with Downer. Baseball legend Willie Mays joined the secretary of state during the game. (According to one report, Rice's mother taught Mays when he was a high school student in Birmingham, Ala.)

Rice flew back to Washington, D.C. on Friday of last week.



## Condi con Tesla

**U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice** came to Moffett Field last Thursday and took a spin in a Tesla, an all-electric sports car built by Tesla Motors in San Carlos. The \$98,000 car, which goes zero to 60 in about 4 seconds with a top speed of over 130 mph, was driven by senior sales manager Tom O'Leary to 110 miles per hour on the Moffett runway.

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**BOUNDARIES**

► Continued from page 1

was created by the North of El Camino Neighborhood Coalition to address boundary adjustments in the Crossings, Showers Drive, Monroe Park and Del Medio neighborhoods that fall in the northernmost sector of the district.

Scenario Fair would keep the mostly Mountain View students who live north of El Camino Real at their current schools, Santa

Rita and Almond, and would require about 100 students who live south of Santa Rita and Almond to attend Bullis-Purissima and Covington elementary schools.

The other scenario created by Mountain View residents, "Scenario M," will also be considered by the board. It was created by residents who live between Hollingsworth Drive and Gilmore Street, made up of approximately 68 students, all of whom attend Almond Elementary which is less than a half mile from their homes.

The Scenario M proposal makes most of its adjustments in the neighborhoods north of El Camino, sending 100 students to Bullis and 135 to Covington.

Elizabeth Gardner, who helped draw up Scenario M, said the primary idea behind it is to move the smallest number of students to new schools.

"We clearly sympathize with any family that is forced to change schools and any student who lives far away from their school," Gardner said, "but we think the best attendance area boundary plan for the district as a whole is

to minimize disruption, move the least possible number of kids and impact the fewest schools."

Scenario M, drawn up after Scenario Fair was presented to the district, is appealing to many because it also keeps Springer Elementary, located in the city of Mountain View, intact with an equal mix of students coming from both Los Altos and Mountain View.

"There is quite a contingent of people who want to retain that mix," district demographer Jeanne Gobalet said.

But for Mountain View resident Tanya Raschke, a member of

the North of El Camino Neighborhood Coalition, the scenario — which she deemed her "least favorite" — unfavorably singles out those who live in her neighborhood.

"It basically is saying the majority of the movement district-wide will be borne solely by north-of-El Camino," Raschke said. "They really are trying to push the solution north of El Camino."

Gardner thinks part of the solution will be for the district to provide additional resources to affected families.

"The district should be paying more attention to the possibility of providing bus services," Gardner said, adding, "but other creative ideas may also be worth considering."

Scenario Fair, which seeks to distribute the impact of boundary adjustments equally throughout the district, moves students in the Hollingsworth and Gilmore neighborhoods out of Almond Elementary, which is a half mile away, to Springer Elementary, which is nearly three times that distance and would require more parents to drive.

During closing comments, Tom Campbell, a member of the district's finance committee who is also sitting on the attendance advisory committee, said that "Scenario M suffers from the defect of sending people north of El Camino to Bullis."

The district board commented at its last meeting that it was moving away from sending students north of El Camino to Bullis, and would rather see them move to Covington or Springer.

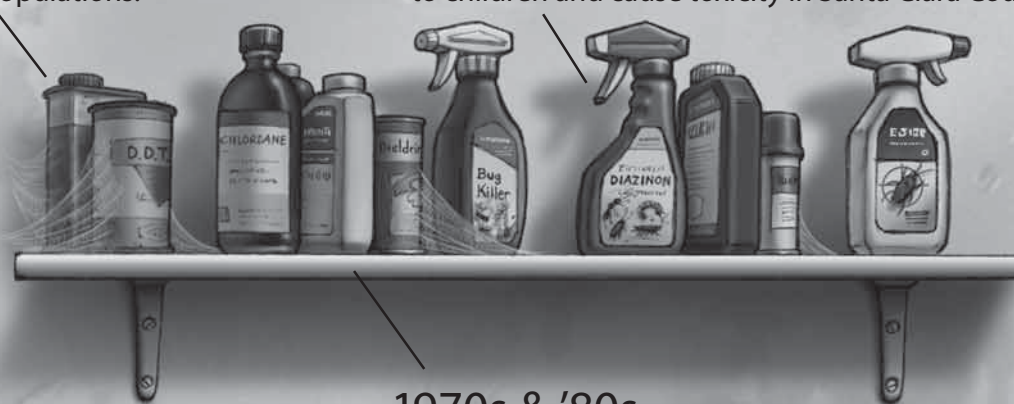
The third scenario the board will consider takes 122 students north of El Camino and assigns them to Covington. It also moves the students between Hollingsworth and Gilmore out of Almond and into Springer.

After nearly three hours of debate Tuesday night, Superintendent Justus urged the committee to stop weighing the pros and cons of each scenario, and to leave it to the board.


"Three [scenarios] seem to rise to the surface," he said. "Let the board have the opportunity to debate at their level."

The board will discuss the scenarios at a meeting June 4, and will vote sometime later in the month. ▀

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



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# The Brown Act's gray area

CRITICS SAY LASD MEMBERS OUT OF LINE IN E-MAIL DISCUSSION,  
BUT CIVIL RIGHTS EXPERT SAYS ISSUE IS MORE COMPLEX

By Alexa Tondreau

Amid the high emotions of boundary changes within the Los Altos School District, an e-mail exchange between a parent in the district and a board member is generating controversy for its possible violation of state law.

Amanda Aaronson, a Mountain View resident and district parent, exchanged e-mails with board member Mark Goines two weeks ago regarding Aaronson's belief that Goines should recuse himself for the June vote on boundary adjustments in the district, based on the fact he lives in an area potentially affected by the outcome of the vote.

Aaronson wrote in an e-mail to Goines, "It has come to my attention you have a conflict of interest in this matter, as your daughter is in the second grade at Santa Rita, and you live in the southernmost area, and your child would be asked to attend Bullis."

In response, Aaronson received an e-mail from board president Bill Cooper, who said that, with the exception of member Margot Harrigan, all of the other board members had children in district schools.

Cooper listed Egan, Springer, Loyola, Santa Rita and Covington as schools attended by board members' children.

Aaronson replied back, "to the best of my knowledge they aren't in an area of flux."

Board member David Pefley later joined in on the discussion, saying that "Many schools are likely to be impacted by the boundary changes, some more than Santa Rita."

"Covington [would be] the most impacted school under many scenarios," he continued.

All five board members were copied on the e-mail exchange, according to parent Matt Raschke who, along with Aaronson, is part of the North of El Camino Neighborhood Coalition, which has proposed its own boundary adjustments to the board for consideration.

Raschke believes the members of the school board engaged in

a "virtual" private meeting by exchanging e-mails on the matter, thereby violating state law under the Brown Act, which requires elected officials to hold their meetings in public view.

**"It's not a good idea for the majority of any Brown Act-regulated board to be together when they're going to be discussing the business of the district."**

PETER SCHEER

Not so, said board member Margot Harrigan, who received electronic copies of the exchange, but doesn't think they constitute official board business.

"There was no discussion of a public policy or a vote. At no point did anyone say, 'How are you going to vote?'"

Board president Bill Cooper agreed, saying, "We were not lobbying each other, pressing an agenda item or pushing a point of view."

Peter Scheer, executive director of the California First Amendment Coalition, said e-mail among a majority of board members is a gray area in the law.

"It's not a good idea for the majority of any Brown Act-regulated board to be together when they're going to be discussing the business of the district," he said. "The best advice is to assume the more stringent rule applies."

But Scheer added that participating in a conversation between board members means more than just being copied on an e-mail correspondence.

"It would take more than just being the recipient," he said.

Harrigan said board members copy each other on e-mails regularly, so as to keep each other in the loop.

"If there's been a volatile e-mail and someone writes a response,

they will copy us so we know what's said. And I appreciate that. But it doesn't constitute voting."

Additionally, Harrigan doesn't see any conflict of interest for Goines to vote.

"My personal feeling is that all of us are very capable of taking ourselves out of the parent role and seeing what's best for the interests of the district. We all know how to put our 'district cap' on. And I think if he really felt he couldn't vote fairly, he'd recuse himself."

Goines refused to comment for this article.

Cooper said the board has no plans to formally discuss a potential conflict of interest at the next board meeting, but would answer any questions on the matter from the audience. He added that the district's legal staff said there were no legal implications if Goines votes. ▀

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

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SPEAKING UP  
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**COUNCIL**

► *Continued from page 5*

Duggan told members that the council itself could be an attraction for city employees. He said council goals can make for interesting work for staff members.

“Our goals are very much of interest compared to cities in maintenance mode,” Duggan said. “You [the council] can be a competitive advantage.”

Council member Matt Pear joked that the council’s attractiveness could change during any election cycle.

“I have confidence in the voters of Mountain View,” Duggan replied.

Of all non-safety employees, 48 percent are age 50 or older and 29 percent are over 55 and eligible for retirement. If police and fire employees are included the numbers drop to 35 percent above age 50 and 21 percent above age 55.

With 21 of the city’s 64 department heads eligible for retirement, the city is “over-hiring” for some of these positions, which means doubling up on a position so a newer employee can learn the ropes and take over when the first employee

retires.

However, Levin said that lower level staffers are often hesitant to take on the higher level positions when they open. Budget cuts several years

ago reduced the number of middle management positions that used to act as a transition for staff from low- to high-level positions.

The city had its recruitment problem in mind when it cut a deal with its unions last year to change its pension contribution from 2 percent to 2.7 percent per year, which will increase retirement payouts by over 30 percent.

The city is also considering a plan that would pay retired employees to come back to work for the city. Council member Tom Means criticized the plan, saying it could lead to some “perverse incentives”

where an employee retires to get his pension, takes the additional paycheck and makes out even better than before he retired.

To aid in recruitment, the city may consider incentive programs for its employees, such as first-time homebuyer assistance programs. That same night, council member Margaret Abe-Koga argued that the city should use the child care center planned for Rengstorff Park to provide free or subsidized child care to city employees. ■

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

***The city is also considering a plan that would pay retired employees to come back to work.***



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- YOUR LETTERS
- GUEST OPINIONS

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### ■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

## Set course for a green city

The issue of global warming split the City Council last week during a discussion on how deeply the city should be involved in changing the so-called carbon footprint of its workforce and residents.

In the end, council member Jac Siegel broke a tie and made the right choice — to support a “place-holder” appropriation for up to \$173,000 for a full-time staff member to guide the city’s effort to reduce greenhouse gases.

Mayor Laura Macias and council members Ronit Bryant and Margaret Abe-Koga were ready to support the position, but members Nick Galiotto, Matt Pear and Tom Means had balked at paying for a position before they knew exactly what the city would get out of it.

In this case, Siegel did the right thing in designing “contingency” funding that will be available only if a definite plan for the job and the city’s involvement emerges. It is entirely proper for the council to want more detail before signing off on what could

exceed \$300,000 in expenditures over two years. There has to be more to the effort than joining the Sustainable Silicon Valley group and adopting the U.S. Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement.

After all, the city is hardly a novice when it comes to investing in alternative energy sources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The council agreed several years ago to include a solar array atop the new California Street parking garage, and the city’s fleet includes biofuel vehicles.

Much more could be done, both inside and outside city buildings. For example, green planning and technology can be incorporated in new construction projects to reduce heating and cooling costs. And recycled construction materials can be used for new city developments.

But perhaps the most useful contribution that a full-time “global warming” staff member could make would be to lead and facilitate a citywide conversation about the many ways commercial enterprises and private citizens can work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Already, Google and Microsoft have installed enormous solar panel arrays atop their Mountain View offices. And many homeowners recently signed up for a promotional rate offered by SolarCity for reduced-price solar installations.

All signs point to significant interest among Mountain View residents in addressing global warming, be it through the car they drive, the electricity they generate or the materials they use. With an aggressive public outreach campaign, the city could spark even more interest in the subject, and lead Mountain View toward a goal of becoming one of the greenest cities in the state.

*All signs point to significant interest among Mountain View residents in addressing global warming.*

### SIEGEL'S REMARK RECALLS IGNOBLE PAST

Editor:

In reference to the Grant Road property article in last week’s Voice (“City attorney opens door for farm”), council member Jac Siegel said:

“The key operative is, we can do whatever we want.”

During World War II, Japanese Americans had their properties confiscated through government decree and given to others who had no vested interest in the properties.

Now, we have councilman Siegel saying that this same travesty should be repeated with some Mountain View citizens because someone has wealth? What has happened to the American values of integrity and fairness? What say you councilman Siegel? Should we be considering a recall election?

Thomas E. Holmes  
Preston Drive

### SIGN-STEALERS SET BAD EXAMPLE

How nice some of us were lucky enough to inherit our childhood homes in Mountain View. Nice for some, but not for Pauline or Betty. When you inherit something you must pay the taxes. If you must sell to do that, so be it. Instead of being an heir to your family’s estate you now become a land developer to satisfy your tax bill.

In this case a group of residents want to take 35 percent of the land for a farm. No benefits for the owners, just more penalties while the discussion goes on.

Many “Save the Farm” signs and flyers are around. And many

residents around the farm who are *not* in favor of a farm put up signs of their own. Mysteriously, all but a few of the “No Farm” signs were removed in the middle of the night.

What a great way to show our children, visitors and neighboring cities how some of our residents behave when they’re not getting their way! I am embarrassed by what is taking place. Adults should act like adults and set a better example.

This is not what Mountain View is, we are a good community. My family will miss the farm too, but it’s time to move on.

Marcia Vierra  
Yorkshire Way

### CITY SHOULD OFFER COUNCIL PODCASTS

Editor:

Has the city View ever considered creating and posting podcasts of council meetings? If it hasn’t, it should.

With the exception of attending council meetings in person, only residents who subscribe to cable TV are currently able to view council meetings. Making podcasts available could offer Mountain View residents several advantages:

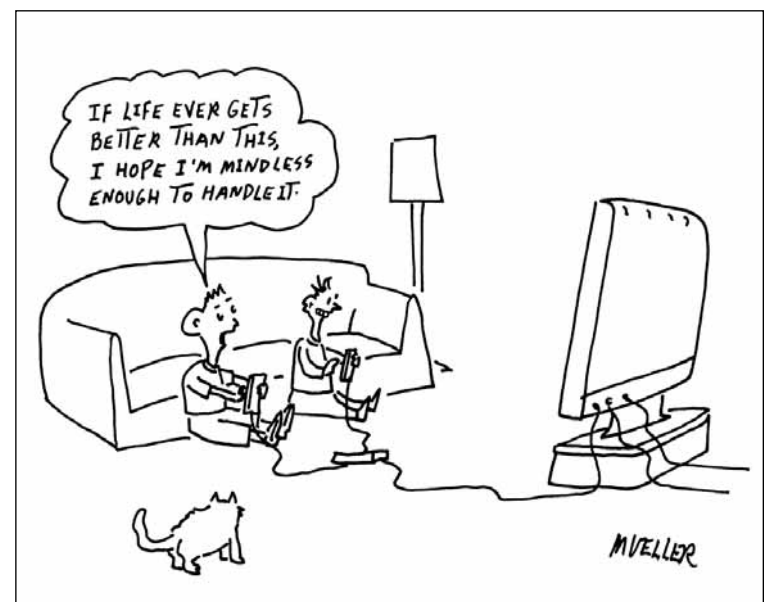
■ A greater number of residents could observe city government in action;

■ Residents could view or listen to council meetings, at their convenience, at home or on the go, via an iPod or personal computer;

■ Video recordings are relatively inexpensive to make, and audio recordings are even cheaper.

When you think of how many

▶ See **LETTERS**, page 20



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## Viewpoint

### LETTERS

► Continued from page 19

people own personal computers and iPods — not to mention access to free citywide wireless service — creating podcasts of City Council meetings may be an idea worth considering.

Tim Orlando  
Marilyn Drive

### CHEERS FOR SUPPORT OF CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES

Editor:

I would like to applaud City Council members Margaret Abe-Koga, Ronit Bryant, and especially Laura Macias for their support of Level 3 climate change initiatives at last Tuesday's City Council meeting.

It's encouraging to think that Mountain View can hopefully make even greater progress, and join other forward-thinking cities in the Bay Area to save money, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and decrease emissions of climate-changing greenhouse gases.

I was rather dismayed, however, when one council member compared climate change to other, less serious environmental issues we have faced, such as MTBE. It turns out that this particular council member was unfamiliar with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, which is based on more than six years of work, from 2,500 scientific expert reviewers, with 800 contributing authors from over 130 countries. He had never seen the reports on the risks of climate change to our very own state of California, summarized in a report from the California Climate Change Center.

I would encourage all citizens of Mountain View to visit the California Climate Change Portal at <http://climatechange.ca.gov>, and take a look at "Our Changing Climate: Assessing the Risks to California." Another authoritative source of information regarding climate change can be found in the IPCC reports at [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch).

As responsible citizens, all of us, especially our city leaders, should at least be familiar with the information available from leading scientific authorities on climate change.

Mike Voytovich  
Montebello Avenue

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## ■ GUEST OPINION

# New ways to end local hunger

By S. Andrew Starbird, Ph.D.

In 2006, Second Harvest Food Bank of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties completed its analysis of hunger in our community. We found that all the agencies (federal, state, county and private) involved in anti-hunger efforts were meeting only about half of the overall need. This means there are still thousands of chronically hungry children and adults in our schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces.

In light of these findings, Second Harvest has evaluated its existing programs and is in the process of developing new programs that address three goals: improving quantity, quality, and access. Quantity refers to the amount of food distributed to our neighbors in need; quality is a measure of the nutritional value of the product we distribute; and access means that the food we distribute has to be easy for our clients to get even if they are living in isolated communities, struggling with limited

mobility, or working an unusual schedule.

The first program being launched to address these three areas is the Produce Mobile. The Produce Mobile brings high-quality, fresh produce to our "Family Harvest" sites, where families with dependent children come to get the food they need. Over the next three years, the Food Bank is going to put six new Produce Mobiles into service, distributing over 1.1 million pounds of fresh produce.

The second program is a Mobile Pantry, which brings pre-packaged, non-perishable products directly to the counties' more isolated communities by truck. The third is an enhancement of our Brown Bag program which reaches low-income seniors. Our goal in this program is to regularly provide one-third of the minimum required daily nutritional needs for seniors. This effort means that we will increase our distribution of calcium-rich dairy products and decrease

our distribution of canned foods that are relatively high in salt and sugar.

Our fourth program is a partnership with Santa Clara County to increase food stamp outreach. Finally, starting this summer, the Food Bank will be sponsoring a Summer Feeding Program, helping to ensure that no child goes hungry regardless of the time of year. ■

*S. Andrew Starbird is a member of the board of directors of Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara Counties. Those interested in making a donation or learning more about Second Harvest can visit [www.2ndharvest.net](http://www.2ndharvest.net).*

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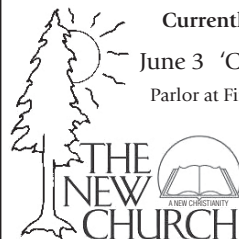
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Ginger crab from Fu Lam Mum, an old favorite Cantonese restaurant.

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

## Fu Lam Mum's the word

MOUNTAIN VIEW MAINSTAY SERVING CANTONESE SEAFOOD FOR 20 YEARS

By Sheila Himmel

Long a culinary hub of Silicon Valley, downtown Mountain View lately buzzes with chic newcomers of the Asian fusion kind. Sometimes you just want the buzzing to stop. That's when the simple pleasures of Cantonese seafood at Fu Lam Mum can be restorative.

Let the new kids on the block, many with nonsensical number names like 3ta and 3eight3, pluck pedestrians off Castro Street. Not to be left behind, 20-year-old Fu Lam Mum just opened a hipper little cafe across the street called Hong Kong Bistro.

The mother ship Mum, with

66 seats and zero decor, still specializes in reasonably priced fresh seafood. From the outside, you wouldn't necessarily think anything good was going on. But this restaurant has servers who know the food and care enough to guide you through a slightly tricky array of menus.

A book-length menu features seafood appetizers, soups, noodle and rice dishes, main dishes and creative spellings such as Shork's Jin and Steamed Squad. Some specials are posted on the wall, in Chinese except for the prices. Same with the preset multi-course dinners, which run \$48 for four people, \$78

► See **FU LAM MUM**, next page

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**FU LAM MUM**

► Continued from previous page

for six, \$108 for 10. If you don't read Chinese, don't worry. Ask your server. Also on the table is a card with English and Chinese names of other daily specials and the rule: "Can only choose 1 item." That's how special they are.

These are not free-range fish. On a recent visit, fish in the tank barely moved, and the crabs were packed like sardines. However, after wok-frying in a light ginger sauce with scallions, the crabs' living conditions become a distant memory. And after scraping every bit of sweet, delicate meat, we wanted to vacuum the shells. Prices change with the catch. Recently a small cracked crab was \$20, and ling cod was \$8 a pound.

In Cantonese style, sauces and spices don't hog all the attention. They just highlight fresh seafood. One night years ago we brought our children to Fu Lam Mum, and a nearby table was treated to the sight of the just-scaled fish they were about to eat. It was so fresh, it flopped off the platter.

Soup also arrives with a flourish. The server sets it down, removes the lid, ladles it out for you, then steps away, arm behind the back,

and says, "Enjoy." And means it.

Fu Lam Mum specializes in shark's fin soup, not an environmentalist-pleaser. The shark's fin soup with chicken (\$20) featured tender white meat in a thick, gelatinous broth made from shark's fin cartilage, the expensive ingredient. The soup arrives in a lidded clay pot over a burner, and for \$20 it should.

House special seafood soup (\$8.75) was more special in its earthy mushrooms than its tiny shrimp and tasteless surimi, the crab lookalike.

But both stars of the shrimp sauteed with fried milk balls (\$10.50) were plump and tasty. Fried milk balls are like sweet, cheesy corn dogs. One or two are plenty.

For something really special, have the Yang Chow fried rice (\$6.95), studded with cubes of aromatic barbecued pork. Clam in black bean sauce (\$8.50) is another go-to dish.

On the other hand, the nightly calamari special (\$7.50) tasted more like its larger cousin, the cuttlefish. Large slices of meat, with no tentacles, were coated and fried. For flavor you had to depend on the accompanying onions, jalapeno and toasted garlic.

► See **FU LAM MUM**, page 24



NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

Thomas Chow, a waiter at Fu Lam Mum, gets ready to serve dinner.

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NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

**FU LAM MUM**

► Continued from page 23

Fu Lam Mum has a good selection of vegetable dishes, including the well-regarded hot braised eggplant (\$7), but be sure to ask about the sauteed seasonal vegetables. Recently available were baby bok choy, Chinese broccoli, green beans, asparagus and pea shoots. The gleaming and healthful pea shoots (\$7.99) got a kick from half cloves of toasted garlic and

hefty slices of ginger.

As for beverages, you may need only the very good brewed tea that comes right away, with the menus. Or have a beer. The wine is abysmal.

At the end of both visits, we received complimentary cups of warm red bean soup.

Families and work groups populate Fu Lam Mum, which stays open till midnight and serves its lunch specials (\$5.95, with steamed rice) from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and again after 9 p.m. ▣

■ DINING NOTES

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MOVIE TIMES

**28 WEEKS LATER (R)** (Not Reviewed)  
 Century 20: 12:30, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05 & 10:30 p.m.

**AWAY FROM HER (PG-13)** ★★★  
 Palo Alto Square: 1:45, 4:30 & 7:15 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. also at 9:50 p.m.

**BLADES OF GLORY (PG-13)** ★★  
 Century 20: 11:50 a.m.; 2:30, 4:45, 7:20 & 9:50 p.m.

**BUG (R)** ★★1/2  
 Century 20: 12:15, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55 & 10:25 p.m.

**DISTURBIA (PG-13)** ★★★  
 Century 12: 4:45 & 10:25 p.m.

**FRACTURE (R)** ★★★★★  
 Century 16: 10:30 p.m. Century 12: 12:45, 3:45, 6:45 & 9:45 p.m.

**GEORGIA RULE (R)** ★  
 Century 12: 12:15 & 7:45 p.m.

**GRACIE (PG-13)** (Not Reviewed)  
 Century 16: 11:20 a.m.; 1:40, 4:10, 7:10 & 9:40 p.m.  
 Century 20: 11:55 a.m.; 2:30, 5:05, 7:40 & 10:10 p.m.

**THE HOAX (R)** ★★1/2  
 Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 2:15, 4:55, 7:35 & 10:15 p.m.

**HOT FUZZ (R)** ★★  
 Century 20: 11:20 a.m.; 2:15, 5, 7:45 & 10:30 p.m.

**KNOCKED UP (R)** (Not Reviewed)  
 Century 16: 11:15 a.m.; 1:15, 2:15, 4:15, 5:15, 7:15, 8:15 & 10:15 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. also at 11:15 p.m.  
 Century 20: 11:35 a.m.; 12:35, 1:35, 2:35, 3:35, 4:35, 5:35, 6:35, 7:35, 8:35, 9:35 & 10:35 p.m.

**THE LIVES OF OTHERS (R)** ★★★★★  
 Aquarius: 1 & 6:30 p.m.

**MR. BROOKS (R)** ★★  
 Century 16: 11:05 a.m.; 12:45, 1:55, 3:45, 4:50, 7:05, 7:45, 9:55 & 10:35 p.m.  
 Century 12: 11:45 a.m.; 1:15, 2:45, 4:15, 5:45, 7:15, 8:45 & 10:15 p.m.

**THE NAMESAKE (PG-13)** ★★  
 Century 20: 1:25, 4:15, 7:30 & 10:20 p.m.

**ONCE (R)** ★★1/2  
 Aquarius: 2, 4, 6, 8 & 10 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at noon.

**PARIS JE T'AIME (R)** ★★  
 Guild: 1:15, 4, 6:45 & 9:20 p.m.

**PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END (PG-13)** ★★1/2  
 Century 16: 11 & 11:30 a.m.; noon, 1, 1:30, 2, 3, 3:30, 4, 5, 5:30, 6, 7, 7:30, 8, 9, 9:30 & 10 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. also at 10:40 p.m.  
 Century 12: 11:30 a.m.; noon, 12:30, 1, 1:30, 2, 2:30, 3, 3:30, 4, 4:30, 5, 5:30, 6, 6:30, 7, 7:30, 8, 8:30, 9, 9:30, 10 & 10:30 p.m.

**THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW (1975) (R)**  
 (Not Reviewed) Guild: Sat. at midnight.

**SHREK THE THIRD (PG)** ★★1/2  
 Century 16: 11:10 & 11:50 a.m.; 12:25, 1, 1:35, 2:20, 2:50, 3:25, 4:05, 4:40, 5:10, 5:50, 6:25, 6:55, 7:40, 8:10, 8:50, 9:25 & 9:55 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 10:45 a.m.; Fri. & Sat. also at 11:10 p.m.  
 Century 20: 11:25 a.m.; noon, 12:25, 1, 1:30, 1:50, 2:25, 2:55, 3:25, 3:55, 4:20, 4:50, 5:25, 5:55, 6:25, 6:50, 7:15, 7:50, 8:20, 8:50, 9:15, 9:45 & 10:15 p.m.

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

**THE VALET (PG-13)** ★★  
 Aquarius: 4:15 & 9:30 p.m.

**WAITRESS (PG-13)** ★★  
 Century 20: 11:20 a.m.; 2, 4:40, 7:25 & 10 p.m.  
 Palo Alto Square: 1:30, 4:15 & 7 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. also at 9:55 p.m.

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

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 For show times, plot synopses and more information about any films playing at the Aquarius, Guild and Park, visit [www.LandmarkTheatres.com](http://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](http://www.mv-voice.com) and click on movies.



MOVIE REVIEWS

**AWAY FROM HER** ★★★  
 (CineArts) Only a superb cast and the most delicate directorial touch could successfully adapt Alice Munro's devastating short story "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" to the screen. Accomplished actor Sarah Polley ("The Sweet Hereafter") found both for her feature debut as a writer-director. With poignancy and maturity beyond her years, Polley deals with Alzheimer's disease and its effect on a steadfast love. But she could hardly go wrong given the remarkable talents of Julie Christie and Gordon Pinsent in the lead roles. The narrative never submits to a simple descent-into-disease formula. Although the ravages of Alzheimer's form the drama's core, the emotional power of the story arises from Munro's construct: What does a devoted husband do when his wife no longer remembers him and falls in love with a fellow patient (Michael Murphy)? Ultimately, "Away From Her" offers a moving, thoughtful drama for adults who have felt abandoned by the movie industry. *Rated: PG-13 for some strong language. 1 hour, 50 minutes.* —S.T.

**BUG** ★★1/2  
 (Century 20) Ashley Judd lays it all on the line as Agnes, a divorced waitress with an abusive ex-husband (Harry Connick Jr.) who's out on parole and coming back for more. A chance meeting with a seemingly gentle drifter named Peter (Michael Shannon) seems like a very good thing indeed, at last a stabilizing force in Agnes' otherwise volatile existence. But Peter has baggage of his own; he's a delusional paranoid with schizophrenic tendencies who's gone off his meds and is on the lam from the head docs who are caring for him. What transpires is hard to imagine much less describe. Peter finds a rogue aphid on the bed where the pair has consummated their affair, a microscopic piece of nothingness that may or may not be a figment of his imagination. Agnes and Peter's crippling co-dependency evolves into suffocating anguish as their imaginary pest-control problem extends far beyond the reaches of Terminex. Both Judd and Shannon reach into the void to draw out raw performances that are alternately gripping and ridiculously extreme. A tough watch and summer's most unmarketable "thriller". *Rated: R for intense violence, language and nudity. 1 hour, 43 minutes.* —J.A.

**GEORGIA RULE** ★  
 (Century 12) Lindsay Lohan flaunts designer threads and a shabby attitude in this messier-than-thou melodrama that's guaranteed to repel. Lohan is Rachel, a spoiled California tramp and one in a long line of screwed-up family females. Antagonism runs rampant between mom and daughter, and mom (Felicity Huffman as Lilly) finds herself at wit's end. The only reasonable solution is to ship Rachel off to her grandmother Georgia (Jane Fonda) who lives a God-fearing life in Hull, Idaho, a paean

► Continued on next page

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► *Continued from previous page*  
to idyllic small-town living. Courtesy the clunkiest dialogue this side of the Mississippi, dark secrets are revealed. Lohan over-plays her hand, not that the role demands

subtlety. "Georgia" never finds its groove, vacillating wildly between pathetic pathos, emotional blackmail and stabs — only stabs — at gentle humor. Skip it. *Rated: R for language and sexual situations. 1 hour,*

*43 minutes.* — J.A.  
**PARIS, JE T'AIME** ★★★  
(Guild) With attitude to spare, 20 respected directors — including Joel and

Ethan Coen, Gus Van Sant and Alfonso Cuarón — craft 18 blithe snippets of what it means to live and love in the City of Lights. Their interpretations are wildly diverse yet never lacking allure. The tales

are connected by honeyed promises and narrative gossamer. Puzzling head-scratchers vie for screen time with profound observations on affaires du coeur while tragedy boldly intersects whimsy. Vampires, terminal illness and abstract musical comedy? Check, check and check. Asymmetrical but appealing from start to finish. Paris herself is an ethereal picture postcard in glorious hues and shades of grey, her celebrated flaws shamelessly played out onscreen. The cast is a melting pot of international celebrity, from Elijah Wood and Natalie Portman to Fanny Ardant, Juliette Binoche and Catalina Moreno, all willing participants in erring human and loving and forgiving divine. *Rated: R for language, sexuality and mature themes. 2 hours. In English and French with English subtitles.* — J.A.

**PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END** ★★★1/2  
(Century 12, Century 16) The Age of Piracy faces extinction because of the East India Company's Lord Cutler Beckett (Tom Hollander) and his desire to control the seas. He has already taken over Davy Jones' (Bill Nighy) ship, the Flying Dutchman. In response, Will Turner (Orlando Bloom), Elizabeth Swan (Keira Knightley), and Captain Barbossa (Geoffrey Rush) team up to bring together the Nine Lords of the Brethren Court, a gathering that is their only hope of defeating him. However, they first need to rescue one of the nine lords, Captain Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp), from Davy Jones' locker. Rescuing Jack, though, is just the beginning. Ultimately, Jack, Will, Elizabeth, Captain Barbossa, and Captain Sao Feng spend the majority of the film devising their own agendas and questioning each others, before they finally have to decide which side they will take. Stick around after the credits to see an additional scene that reveals a crucial element of the plot and the future of the Pirates epic. At least you'll make your movie-going experience an even three hours and leave a little more satisfied than you would have if you decided to leave after the last "yo ho." *Rated: PG-13 for intense sequences of action/adventure violence and some frightening images. 2 hours, 45 min.* — E.O.

**SHREK THE THIRD** ★★★1/2  
(Century 16, Century 20) The ornerly

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ogre brought to life by Mike Myers and DreamWorks in 2001 returns to the screen for his third outing, a fast-paced fantasy rife with witty humor and colorful characters. "Shrek the Third" picks up where "Shrek 2" left off, as Shrek (voiced by Myers) and his wife, Fiona (Cameron Diaz), hunker down in the kingdom of Far, Far Away to help the ailing King Harold (John Cleese). But the king is on his death lily pad, and his dying wish is for Shrek to inherit the crown. The only other possible heir to the throne is Fiona's cousin Artie (Justin Timberlake), a mousy high-school student teased and taunted by the jousting jocks. Shrek and his loyal sidekicks — the chatterbox Donkey (Eddie Murphy) and suave Puss In Boots (Antonio Banderas) — set off to coax Artie into becoming King Arthur. Meanwhile, Prince Charming (Rupert Everett) encourages the villainous patrons of the Poison Apple Tavern to help him assault Far, Far Away and usurp the throne. Some of the picture's comedy may draw more yuck than yuks, such as when Donkey swallows a mouthful of sea-sickness. Still, the third time's certainly a charm for this fairytale family. *Rated: PG for some crude humor, suggestive content and swashbuckling action. 1 hour, 33 minutes.* — T.H.

**WAITRESS ★★★**

(Century 20, CineArts) Jenna (Keri Russell) is a cook and waitperson at cozy Joe's Pie Diner, a woman for whom the

seductive art of baking is an emotional retreat from a bad marriage that stems the flow of her dreams. Jenna spends her time crafting scrumptious recipes for delectable pies while devising a detailed plan to leave her abusive husband (Jeremy Sisto as Earl) and enter a major stakes pie bake-off. A positive pregnancy test brings Jenna back to earth with a resounding thud. A routine visit to the town doctor (Nathan Fillion as Dr. Pomatter) nets her more than her feet in the stirrups when she and the good doctor embark on a torrid affair. To deal with life's bell curve Jenna bakes. And bakes. And bakes some more, a la a series of

tutorials for which Jenna concocts sweet and savory treats with toothsome titles. Russell is the real deal, her guileless baby face belying a fierce intelligence and resounding charm that ushers "Waitress" to a delicious finish yet leaves you hungry for more. *Rated: PG-13 for language and sexual situations. 1 hour, 48 minutes.* — J.A.

■ **MOVIE CRITICS**

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



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