

# MountainView VOICE



## LEGOS BY THE BOOK

Local artist toys with Bible stories

A&E | P.25

OCTOBER 26, 2007 VOLUME 15, NO. 42

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## El Camino execs see big salary increases

PAY RAMPED UP TO EQUAL COMPENSATION AT OTHER HOSPITALS

By Susan Hong

Top executives at El Camino Hospital, including CEO Ken Graham, received substantial salary increases ranging from 9 to 42 percent this year, a move board members said was taken in order to match compensation at similar hospitals around the country.

According to Wes Alles, a board member and chairman of the compensation committee, the increases, which average 18 percent (not counting Graham's), cover all members of the executive team. Graham's salary and incentive for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 is \$735,765, but tops \$903,000 when a benefit package based on 29 percent of his base pay is added.

Hospital officials say the benefit package for each member of the executive team could

► See **EL CAMINO**, page 8



## PUMPKIN FUN:

Carlos Marin, 10, Caitlin Livingston, 7, and Mitchell McKenna, 10, check out the pumpkins (top) and zoom down an inflatable slide (left) at Grandpa Kevin's Pumpkin Patch on Monday. Grandpa Kevin's, located at 4249 El Camino Real, is celebrating its 28th year this season as a local Halloween attraction.

HARDY WILSON

## City, Google in hotel talks

COMPANY READY TO GUIDE LONG-ANTICIPATED PROJECT NEAR SHORELINE BOULEVARD

By Daniel DeBolt

For more than 20 years the city has had a goal to build a large hotel with a conference center. Finally, with the help of Google, that goal might be realized.

The city now has an exclusive right to negotiate with Google for what will likely be a 200-room hotel with a 30,000-square-foot conference center. The proposal would be for nine acres on the city-owned "Charleston East." As part of the agreement, Google would build the hotel and hire an operator.

For years, city leaders have said a hotel and conference center could be a good gathering place for large events, such as weddings and conferences. After much discussion, an effort failed to bring in a hotel operator to the same site in 2001.

The site is an open lot just east of the so-called Googleplex, on the corner of Shoreline Boule-

vard and Charleston Road, and has been used for parking at Shoreline Amphitheatre. The other half of the 18-acre site will soon be a 310,000-square-foot Google office building, for which the company is paying the city \$1.7 million a year in a land lease. For the hotel site, on the southern half of the lot, Google could pay the city another \$4 million if projections made in 2006 are still accurate.

*"Now you have the business momentum down there to make the hotel a reality."*

MATT PEAR

When then-council member Greg Perry opposed the hotel idea last year, he questioned its viability, saying there has been no interest from hotel operators since

2001. But today, as the city sees business development advancing at a rapid pace, the previously risky endeavor is ready to happen, said council member Matt Pear.

"Now you have the business momentum down there to make the hotel a reality," Pear said. "And business conditions have changed for hotels."

The project could help Google as well, said city manager Kevin Duggan.

"What they've expressed to us is they have a major investment in that area," Duggan said. "They have a large number of people who visit their site. They realize there is a real advantage to this."

Pear said the deal would be a "win-win" for everybody.

Two years ago, the southern

► See **AUTO SHOPS**, page 10

► See **GOOGLE**, page 8

## Evelyn auto shops booted for housing

By Daniel DeBolt

Proposed projects for Evelyn Avenue are suddenly drawing the attention of downtown residents, who found out last week that several auto shop sites along the corridor are slated for redevelopment

into housing.

Developer Classic Communities plans to build 50 condos and 46 row homes from 209 to 251 Evelyn Avenue, where "Abate's Industrial Square" currently is home to half a dozen auto shops totaling 100,000 square feet. Several other auto shops, along with

Minton's Lumber and La Fiesta Restaurant, are located behind the site. All of these businesses and buildings could be gone soon if their owners decide to sell.

The whole block between Evelyn Avenue,

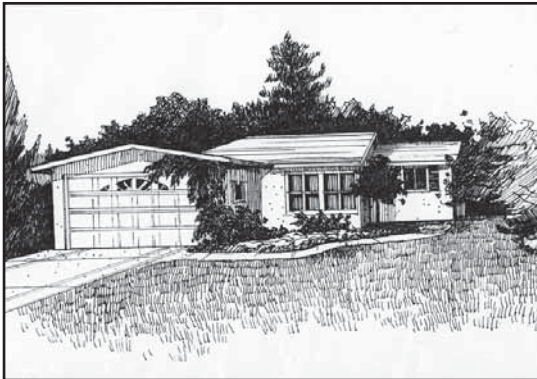
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**MOUNTAIN VIEW** ■ Fabulous opportunity to remodel or build! 21,000+/-sf lot. Existing 3bd/2ba home with separate dining room and family room. Los Altos schools! **\$1,089,000**

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# Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in Downtown Mountain View. Pictures and interviews by Melody Dye.

*What's your favorite idea for a Halloween costume? If you dressed up this year, what would you be?*



*"My favorite Halloween costume was Zorro. My mom was a great seamstress and she made the whole thing."*

**Murray Margone**, San Jose



*"I would dress up as a fairy grandmother because I have six grandchildren under age 6."*

**Helen Bessler**, Los Altos Hills



*"Maybe the Phantom from 'Phantom of the Opera.'"*

**David Devilla**, Mountain View



*"I would dress up as a witch who was running for president."*

**Adrien Oliff**, Palo Alto



*"I went to a one-room school-house. In the third grade I was a pumpkin. My favorite activity was bobbing for apples."*

**Alice Forest**, Los Altos

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■ **CRIMEWATCH**

**POSSESSION OF FIREARM, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, 100 BLOCK N. RENGSTORFF AVE, 10/21**

At about 7:40 p.m. an officer stopped a vehicle that appeared to be following a second vehicle. After searching the car officers arrested the driver, Erik Robles, on charges of driving without a license, possession of a firearm while on probation, possession of burglary tools and possession of methamphetamine.

The driver of the second car, Kristian Young, left the scene on foot. The registration tabs on her car had expired six months before. Officers say they searched her car and discovered more methamphetamine

and a pipe. Young was later found in an apartment and arrested on drug charges.

**ROBBERY, STEVENS CREEK BY CENTRAL, 10/19**

Two 15-year-olds were walking on Stevens Creek Trail when they were stopped by a group of juvenile males. The group convinced one of the teens to follow them down to the creek bed while other one remained on the trail.

The witness heard scuffling and went to investigate. The group had beaten the victim and stolen his wallet. He was taken to a nearby hospital and treated for minor injuries. Officers arrested one suspect, a 17-year-old black male. The other suspects have not been located and an investigation is in progress.

■ **POLICE LOG**

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**DISTURBANCE**  
 600 Block Showers Dr., 10/19

**BATTERY**  
 440 Block Moffett Blvd., 10/20  
 1300 Block Montecito Ave., 10/19  
 Alta Vista High, 10/22

**IDENTITY THEFT**  
 300 Block Wildflower Park Ln., 10/22

**FORGERY**  
 500 Block N. Shoreline Blvd., 10/22

**COMMERCIAL BURGLARY**  
 1900 Block W. El Camino Real, 10/21

**GRAND THEFT**  
 5500 Block W. Middlefield Rd., 10/18

**DISORDERLY CONDUCT**  
 Alberto's, 10/20  
 St. Stephen's Green, 10/20  
 Light Rail-Whisman, 10/20

**PETTY THEFT**  
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## Hot hot hot

By Don Frances

**I**T SEEMS THE issue of climate change has taken on greater urgency of late, a fact not lost on local religious groups, who are taking Al Gore's appeal to "moral imperative" seriously.

So it isn't too surprising to see this regional call for something called the Mid-Peninsula Interfaith Convocation on Climate Action.

According to a press release sent to me by Mountain View resident Lorien French, "On Sunday afternoon, Oct. 28, faith leaders and members of the public from around Silicon Valley will gather ... to educate themselves about how to address climate change."

The event — an "information fair, featuring companies and agencies that provide services to reduce human impact on the climate" — is at Congregation Kol Emeth, 4175 Manuela Ave., Palo Alto. The fair is 2 to 4 p.m., followed by speakers, including Stanford climate scientist Stephen Schneider, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Though free and open to everyone, it is "intended primarily to educate clergy and lay leaders about strategic and practical actions they can take to address climate change," the press release said. But you needn't let that stop you. Visit [interfaithconvocation.googlepages.com](http://interfaithconvocation.googlepages.com) for more.

**SPEAKING OF HEAT**, local Red Cross volunteers are rushing to Southern California to help with the fire catastrophe there, and according to Rosemary Byrne, "As of Wednesday morning, the Palo Alto Area Chapter of the Red Cross will have deployed five volunteers to the Southern California wildfires relief operation, with four more slated to travel on Thursday and Friday."

That includes Mountain View's Rada Ford, "who was visiting

► See **EDITOR'S DESK**, page 8



NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

**Carlos Ochoa (left) and Hip Telmont** enjoy the company of their fellow members of the Fraternal Order of the Eagles. The local chapter, now in its 61st year, is headquartered on Castro Street in downtown Mountain View.

## Let the Eagles soar

AFTER DECADES IN MOUNTAIN VIEW, LOCAL CHAPTER IS STILL GOING STRONG

By Daniel DeBolt

**I**n this age of foundations with billion-dollar budgets, a service organization like Mountain View's Fraternal Order of Eagles can seem almost obsolete. But last Monday the club was lively as ever, and members say it continues to grow every year.

Locals often pass the tidy downtown headquarters — "Eagles' Aerie 2356," located at 181 Castro St. — and wonder what's going

on inside. (The place is closed to the general public.) So the Eagles invited the *Voice* to step in earlier this week to meet with members and hear about what they do.

First of all, there's the social-club aspect. Inside 181 Castro St., the atmosphere is of a sleepy small-town bar where time stands still. On any given afternoon one will find a group of people, most of them over 40, watching sports or playing pool. Members say the place gets packed on Friday and

Saturday nights and during the regular karaoke night. There's also food, free to members, cooked in the on-site kitchen.

There are never any problems at this bar because, as member John Bolero said, "We screen who comes in." If your guest causes trouble, he added, "we make you responsible."

Besides "social club," members had numerous other ways to

► See **EAGLES**, page 13

## Michelin Guide grants Chez TJ two stars

By Daniel DeBolt

**M**ountain View foodies were elated earlier this week after hearing big news about a small local restaurant.

Chez TJ, located in a Victorian house at 938 Villa Street, is now ranked among the very best restaurants in the Bay Area — the top seven, in fact — according to the 2008 Michelin San Francisco Bay Area & Wine

Country Restaurant Guide.

The restaurant was given one star last year, but with its upgrade to two stars, Chez TJ's French cuisine is now worth a "detour" for travelers and food lovers, according to the guide.

The Michelin Guide is the most prestigious of all restaurant guides, and can significantly affect a restaurant's business. Guide reviewers reportedly visited eight times before awarding the stars.

The only other Silicon Valley

restaurant with two stars was Manresa in Los Gatos. There are two others in San Francisco and two more in Napa Valley.

Only one Bay Area restaurant, the French Laundry in Napa Valley, received three stars this year. Twenty-seven Bay Area restaurants received one star.

At Chez TJ, guests will pay \$110 each for a selection of 11 small dishes cooked by master chef Christopher Kostow — a good deal, according to reviews. ▀

► See **RUIZ**, page 6

## Local mom Kelly Ruiz killed in SoCal crash

DRIVER FACES MAN-SLAUGHTER CHARGES AFTER PLUNGE FROM OVERPASS

Palo Alto Weekly

**T**he victims of a horrific car crash in Santa Barbara County earlier this month included a young woman from Mountain View, Kelly Marie Ruiz, whose mother said the incident "sounds like a murder."

The early morning crash on Sunday, Oct.

14 in Montecito that killed Ruiz, 26, and another passenger "made everybody's life terrible," Ruiz' mother said last



Kelly Marie Ruiz

Thursday. Ruiz, herself the mother of a 9-year-old boy, and Sara Elizabeth Pezzimenti, 21, of Palo Alto, were passengers in a Chevrolet Camaro being driven by Beau James Robertson, 29, of Palo Alto. According to the California Highway Patrol, Robertson was driving at about 2:15 a.m. on a road that parallels U.S. Highway 101 and attempted to make a right turn onto an overpass.

He lost control of the Camaro, the CHP reported, and the car jumped the curb and sidewalk, knocked out a metal railing and plunged off the overpass onto southbound 101.

It landed on its right side in the left lane, where it was struck by a Honda sedan occupied by a family of five, according to CHP Officer Don Clotworthy.

Ruiz and Pezzimenti were thrown from the vehicle, and both were killed instantly, the CHP reported. Robertson suffered head and internal injuries and was taken by ambulance to the Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. Three passengers of the Honda were also injured. Their injuries are not believed to be life-threatening.

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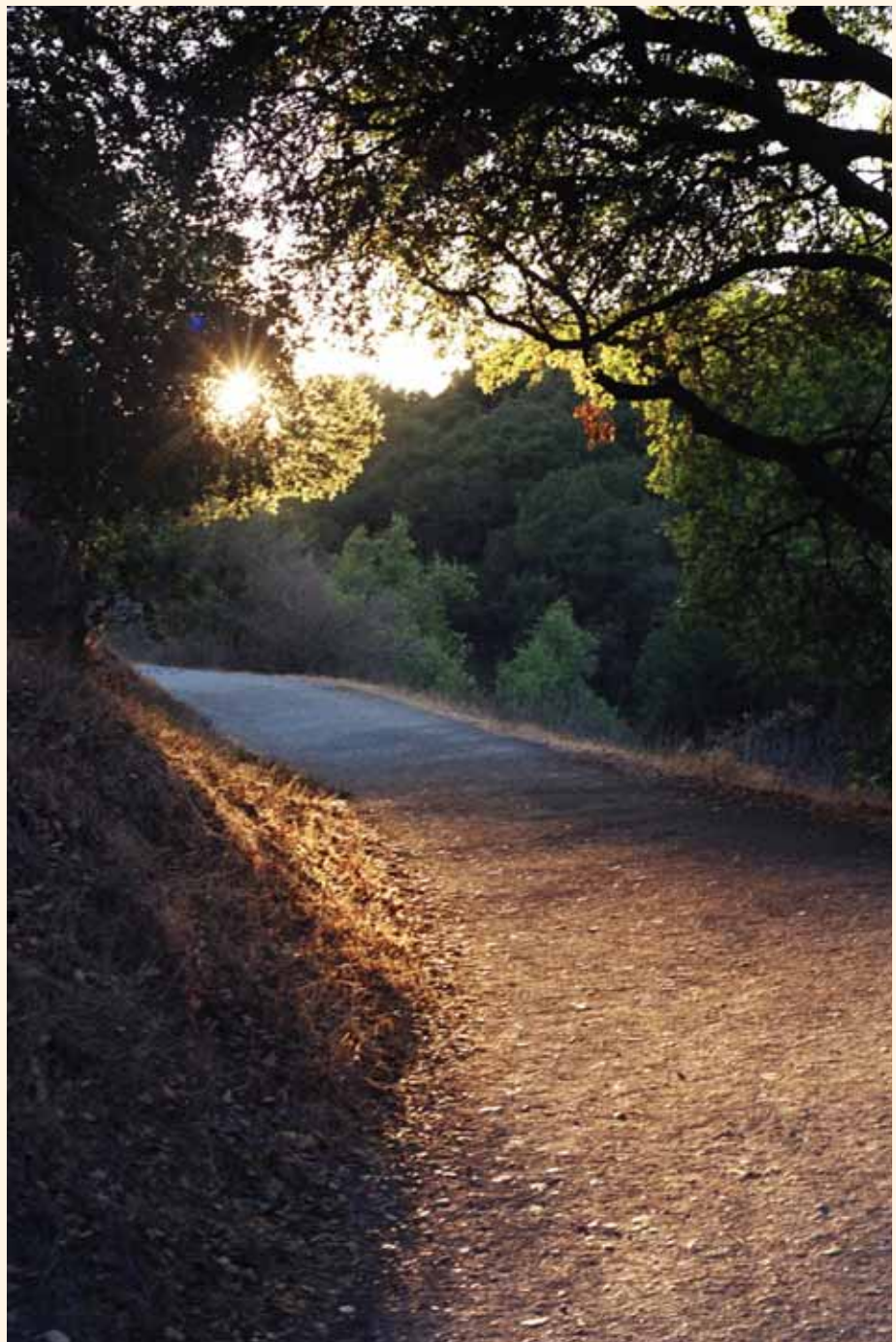
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## ■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

# Road less traveled



*This lovely shot* of an inviting path in Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve was taken on a recent clear fall evening by Bob Corman of Carol Avenue.

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).

## RUIZ

► Continued from page 5

Robertson, now said to be in "fair" condition, faces charges of felony driving under the influence and felony gross vehicular manslaughter, according to a CHP press release.

Weaving between anger and grief, Ruiz' mother, Anita Henley, said she has "lost my precious little girl, and her son is losing his mother. This is all terrible."

She said she did not know the driver, but "I hope they throw the book at him. I hate him. It sounds

like a murder. I'm angry. I feel sorry for that guy's parents, but this guy, he made everybody's life terrible."

However, Robin Pezzimenti, mother to Sara Pezzimenti, said Robertson was a good friend to her daughter. She said Sara had been in the Santa Barbara area to celebrate Robertson's birthday.

"I'm sure he would have never intentionally hurt her. It was an accident, and that's what I hope people remember," she said.

Henley describes her daughter as an exuberant woman with many friends.

"If you were down she always brought you up," Henley said.

Ruiz loved music and star emblems — on jewelry and other decorations — because "She wanted to be a star," Henley said.

Ruiz, who lived all but about two years of her life in Mountain View, was to start a new job as an administrative assistant this week, Henley said.

A memorial service for Ruiz was held Sunday at Spangler Mortuary in Mountain View.

Family, friends and coworkers are setting up a family and college fund for Ruiz's 9-year-old son, Tyson Garcia, at the Palo Alto Credit Union, 616 Ramona St., No. 3, Palo Alto, CA 94301. ■

# The many faces of intelligence

CHILDREN MUST BE ENGAGED IN DIFFERENT WAYS IN ORDER TO LEARN, EXPERT SAYS

By Susan Hong

Every child has at least eight kinds of "smarts," according to Leslie Shelton, but schools only develop two of them.

In a talk at the Mountain View library last Thursday, Shelton, director of the Learning Center at Skyline College, said all children have natural levels of different intelligences — social, spatial, language, nature, self, body, logic/math and musical. However, she said, schools emphasize and test only the language and logic/math categories.

With schools putting fewer resources into music, art and physical fitness, Shelton said parents should nurture development of their whole child and tap into his or her unique smarts. In fact, she believes the lack of attention to all the areas of a child's intelligence is one of the primary causes of childhood depression.

"Research shows that babies' brains are wired to learn," she said. Furthermore, many children blend two or three intelligences together to learn more effectively.

"The most effective learners use all of their intelligences," she said. "When they are pretty well developed in six out of eight — those are the [children] that succeed the best. What's unfortunate are the kids who could just use a little bit of help to overcome issues around spelling or writing. They get so discouraged that they lose interest in school."

Each area of intelligence operates in distinct areas of the brain, Shelton said. The best way to determine strengths is to observe children on their own, when they display the intelligences they favor the most. These are the strengths they will use for the rest of their lives, she said.

Shelton went on to describe the categories of intelligence:

■ A child with strong social intelligence will often want to talk a lot, enjoy group activities, have lots of friends, and

is good at sensing how others feel. The child learns best in social environments.

■ Self-intelligent children like to work alone, are aware of their feelings and can talk about their experiences with insights, Shelton said. Things must have personal meaning before a self-intelligent child fully engages.

■ A body-intelligent child has excellent motor skills. The child has to move around a lot to learn, and may become bored in school because children there are often told to be quiet and sit still. The best way to teach a body-intelligent child language is through games such as Scrabble, where the child can move letters around on a board to form words, as well as crafts, sports and mechanics.

■ Musically intelligent children learn through songs, Shelton said. For example, if a child is having difficulty remembering an idea, turn the memorization into a song or a tune. Such children are sensitive to pitch, rhythms and tones.

■ Language-smart children enjoy puns and rhymes. A language-smart child can tell a detailed story that makes sense, enjoys reading, and likes to play word games.

■ A nature-smart child loves to be outside and is often fascinated with bugs, birds, animals and dirt. This child easily remembers the names of fish, birds and dinosaurs.

■ A math-intelligent child enjoys counting and likes to organize toys and blocks. These children notice numbers and patterns and often make up their own experiments.

■ Spatially smart children are good at visualization. They also like blocks, Legos, paints and clay and enjoy taking things apart and putting them back together again.

"Everybody is unique," Shelton said. "The picture of your intelligence is as unique as your face." ▀

E-mail Susan Hong at [shong@mv-voice.com](mailto:shong@mv-voice.com)



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## EL CAMINO

► Continued from page 1

be compared to a cash fund, from which the costs of various health and retirement benefits are deducted. If money remains after the deductions are taken, it can be invested in a capital accumulation account, they said.

Cecile Currier, vice president of professional, corporate and community health services, received the biggest increase, a 42 percent jump to \$254,400 this year.

The jump in compensation this year came as a result of comparison studies done by two consulting firms, Clark Consult-

ing based in Minneapolis and Sullivan, Cotter & Associates with offices in San Francisco, Alles said.

The consultants compared job descriptions, responsibilities and cost of living for executives working at 70 hospitals in California and around the country. Salary ranges starting from the 25th percentile on the lower end up to the 75th percentile were then recommended, Alles said.

Executive compensation guidelines at El Camino Hospital require the board to pay executives around the 50th percentile plus 10 percent, Alles said.

“We don’t want any of our executives to be outside of that range of the comparison, the midpoint comparison plus the

10 percent,” he said. This range gives the hospital a balance between attracting and retaining talented people and rewarding them for good work, Alles said.

“This is an expensive place to live,” he added, but executives want to work at El Camino Hospital because of its reputation and because of a collegial working environment.

“You’re working in an environment that has quality people at all levels and the work dynamic is one of trust. It’s a collegial environment and you don’t find that everywhere,” he said. ■

E-mail Susan Hong at [shong@mv-voice.com](mailto:shong@mv-voice.com)

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### Hospital executive compensation

Executive	Title	Fiscal Year 2006-07 (Base+ Incentive)	Fiscal Year 2007-08 (Base+ Incentive)	Percent Increase in Base + Incentive	Benefit Package Dollar Equivalent	Total Compensation
<b>Kenneth Graham</b>	Chief Executive Officer (11 months, without incentive pay)	\$543,000	<b>\$735,765</b>	35.5	<b>\$168,492</b>	<b>\$904,257</b>
<b>Eric Pifer, MD</b>	Chief Medical Information Officer (hired this year)	n/a	<b>\$375,000</b>	n/a	<b>\$108,750</b>	<b>\$483,750</b>
<b>Marla Gularte</b>	Chief Financial Officer	\$348,000	<b>\$410,860</b>	18.0	<b>\$97,323</b>	<b>\$508,183</b>
<b>Ann Fyfe</b>	VP, Business Development	\$281,000	<b>\$307,275</b>	9.0	<b>\$72,686</b>	<b>\$379,961</b>
<b>Diana Russell</b>	VP, Patient Care Services	\$279,000	<b>\$338,949</b>	21.0	<b>\$79,400</b>	<b>\$418,349</b>
<b>Jon Friedenberg</b>	El Camino Hospital Foundation President and Hospital Vice President	\$262,000	<b>\$291,301</b>	11.0	<b>\$69,589</b>	<b>\$360,890</b>
<b>Ken King</b>	VP, Facilities Services	\$228,000	<b>\$271,338</b>	19.0	<b>\$63,800</b>	<b>\$335,138</b>
<b>Charlene Gliniecki</b>	VP, Human Resources	\$229,000	<b>\$267,645</b>	16.8	<b>\$64,055</b>	<b>\$331,700</b>
<b>Joan Kezic</b>	VP, Payor Relations	\$195,000	<b>\$217,108</b>	11.0	<b>\$50,759</b>	<b>\$267,866</b>
<b>Cecile Currier</b>	VP, Professional, Corporate and Community Health Services	\$179,000	<b>\$254,400</b>	42.0	<b>\$59,276</b>	<b>\$313,676</b>

El Camino Hospital's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30 of the following year

## GOOGLE

► Continued from page 1

four acres of the Charleston East site had been zoned for “cultural” and “educational” uses. As part of his opposition to the hotel, Perry called for the city to look into possibilities for that area involving a park, museum or ball fields.

All aspects of the deal are still

subject to council approval. If it goes through, Google would own the hotel building and bring in an operator. As part of its negotiations with Google, the city wants to make sure a “four star” hotel is the result, Duggan said.

Explaining the failed 2001 effort, Duggan said the travel and hotel business took a hit after 9/11, causing hotel operators to pull their bids. Operators were interested only if the city

would agree to build the estimated \$6 million to \$16 million building, but Duggan said the city has no interest in owning a hotel.

Pear also said that in 2001 at least one operator pulled out because of a clause in the agreement to encourage a labor union, pushed by then-council member Sally Lieber. ■

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

## EDITOR'S DESK

► Continued from page 5

family in Riverside County on the weekend and voluntarily reported to the Riverside Chapter of the Red Cross.”

Visit [www.paarc.org](http://www.paarc.org) for more, or call (800) RED-CROSS to donate.

**THREE LOCAL** musicians, including a young singer from Mountain View, are taking part in a show this weekend dedicated

to helping find missing persons.

Lisa Montes (whose Web site describes her music as “Country/Pop/Latin”) is joining fellow Bay Areaans Katie Garibaldi and Eoin Harrington on the Squeaky Wheel Tour, which Garibaldi described as “the second annual grassroots effort to gain international attention for missing people and bring loved ones home.”

“At the concert, the other artists and I will be profiling four missing people from the Bay Area, distributing flyers and getting the

word out,” Garibaldi wrote. “Last year, 10 people profiled during the SWT were found.”

The show is Sunday, Oct. 28 at The Little Fox, 2209 Broadway, Redwood City, beginning at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$14 at the door. Visit [www.foxdream.com](http://www.foxdream.com) for more. For more on Montes, visit [www.lisamontes.com](http://www.lisamontes.com) or [www.myspace.com/lisamontes](http://www.myspace.com/lisamontes).

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**AUTO SHOPS**

► Continued from page 1

Calderon Avenue, Villa Street and Bush Street has been zoned for housing since a precise plan for Evelyn Avenue was adopted in 1994. Because the zoning fits, a lengthy series of meetings is not required for approval of Classic Communities' project. The council could approve it as early as Nov. 27.

Some worried over the prospect of Minton's Lumber, which has supplied the wood for decades of city growth, also being swallowed by the housing development.

"The next thing is you push Minton's out," said council member Jac Siegel. "We are encroaching too much on our retail. I think that's gone too far."

After the Voice went to press on Wednesday, the city's zoning administrator was to decide whether to recommend that the council approve the project.

Ralph Foglein, owner of European Auto Works, said the whole industrial square would be out on expired leases by June 2008.

"We don't have a place to go yet," Foglein said.

"We have so many customers who use the train or walk downtown," said employee Cliff Greenman. "You can't beat the convenience."

But the location is also why the City Council decided in 1994 to change the zoning to accommodate housing growth. Due to its location near the train station, the Classic Communities project is considered "smart growth" because it encourages residents to use the train rather than cars. It's also near Highway 85.

Council member Ronit Bryant was torn about the decision.

"Downtown is a very good place to add residents — it's the obvious place," Bryant said. "Yet we want to keep the diversity and not turn ourselves into a bedroom community."

Downtown resident Andrew Holbrook said it was good to have the auto shops near his neighborhood and the Caltrain station.

"After dropping off my car, I could easily walk home or take public transit to work," Holbrook said. "Transit hubs don't have to be entirely residential."

Downtown resident Lenny Siegel, director of the Center for Public Environmental Oversight, was also concerned about the loss of the businesses — as well as the traffic increase that would result from the new homes.

A look at the minutes from the 1994 meeting found only a handful of residents opposed to the rezoning. The Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association

► Continued on next page

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► Continued from previous page

steering committee has endorsed the project, said Scott Ward of Classic Communities.

Classic Communities has already built dozens of homes nearby, including those on View Street and Evelyn Avenue and the new homes just across Villa Street from Minton's lumber. The lower density of those projects reflected the times, Ward said. These days, there is more support for high density housing, especially near a rail line, he said.

Ward said three-story condos are proposed along Evelyn Avenue with the town homes along the back of the property. The project will include a centrally located piece of open space, he said.

Directly behind Abate's square, on the corner of Villa and Calderon, is North Star Corvettes, where owner David Bonar wonders if he's being "painted into a corner." Classic Communities has asked him and his partners to sell, but he isn't quite ready to give up his livelihood. Neither are the owners of La Fiesta, a popular restaurant a few hundred feet down Villa.

"If it wasn't them, it would be someone else," Bonar said about Classic Communities, which, ironically, is owned by car enthusiast John Mozart. Development is "how he's built his empire," Bonar said.

The rest of the block could decide to sell to residential developers, but when that will happen is unknown. The lumber yard is already surrounded by homes on two sides. But Minton's general manager Debbie Schulz said the Classic Communities developments have actually used the company's lumber for construction.

"In our opinion it's been good for business," she said.

At Tom's Auto Repair on Evelyn and Calderon, the owner said he has to be out next month. He has not found a new place, but claims he isn't worried yet. Meanwhile, the machine shop in the square is moving to Sunnyvale, and the smog shop is expected to stay longer than anyone else. The two homes between Tom's Auto Repair and North Star Corvettes appeared to be vacant.

Foglein said he is searching for another place in Mountain View, but San Jose is much cheaper. The city has told him he can move to Old Middlefield Road or Yuba Drive, the last two remaining areas for auto shops — places where the lack of space has driven up rents.

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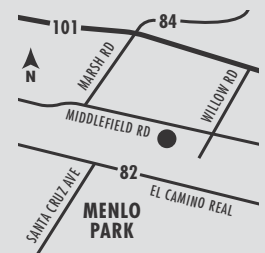
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## ■ CITY BRIEFS

### DAY WORKER CENTER DECISION DELAYED

A decision on whether to approve a permit for the Day Worker Center's new downtown site was postponed by the zoning administrator two weeks ago so more public input could be heard.

Center director Maria Marroquin said more and more employers are using the center as they become accustomed to its new location at Trinity United Methodist Church, located at Hope and Mercy streets. Workers have also been helping to paint the church and put up a fence around the playground, which will soon be replaced.

Zoning administrator Peter

Gilli said a decision on the center's permit will be made sometime in November.

### GREEN LIGHT FOR TRAIL OVERPASS AT MOFFETT

The city council voted Tuesday to go to bid on a \$4.9 million Stevens Creek Trail over-crossing at Moffett Boulevard, the last street-level crossing on the trail.

No questions were asked by the council about the project, and it slid through quietly on the consent calendar. Aaron Grossman, executive director of the Friends of the Stevens Creek Trail, praised the project, saying that "This will complete making this a safe trail."

— Daniel DeBolt

### EAGLES

► Continued from page 5

describe the group, including "service group," "a controlled environment" with a "personable aspect," and a "friendly atmosphere" where "nobody is a stranger."

One of the group's main roles is to donate money to worthy causes, said Sean O'Malley, chairman of the group's community relations committee. Often it's the small causes that get overlooked, he said, like sports equipment for the high school baseball team, or helping a local resident pay for a medical procedure. The group has also sent money to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The group currently claims 480 members — with some, members say, as young as 21 — and that includes 160 women, some of whom were seen on a recent afternoon chatting and watching a cooking show on one of the TVs.

Members said they worked for such companies and organizations as GTE, Lockheed and the US Geological Survey. Most were engineers, managers or small business owners. Hip Telmont, for instance — a 70-year resident who is also a member of the Mountain View Historical Association — said he worked for a trucking company.

The Eagles were quick to boast about their group's growth, attributing it to the open, friendly atmosphere there. To highlight that, O'Malley compared Eagles Chapter 2356 to the Elks Lodge in Palo Alto, which has dropped from 3,300 to 800 members in the last 17 years. And the Odd Fellows club across the street — possibly Mountain View's oldest organization, established in 1872 — is at 27 members today.

#### Sixty-one year history

The local Eagles formed on March 28, 1946, with 180 members. It is Chapter 2356, meaning 2,355 other chapters came before it, the

first of which was in Seattle.

There are a few familiar names listed on the charter among the group's first members, including Vidovich, a relative of the John Vidovich who now owns the Sahara Village mobile home park. There is also a John Lubich, who once owned orchards where the Waverly Park neighborhood now exists. Lubich Drive near Mountain View High School is named after him.

Also listed is the Wagner of Wagner's Drug Store at Villa and Castro streets. The original Eagles building was above the drug store.

In October 2002, a faulty electric sign at 181 Castro St. caught a bar stool on fire, causing the group's building to burn down. No one was injured in the early morning fire, but much of the group's old photos and memorabilia were lost. It cost \$550,000 to rebuild — 60 percent of which has been paid off, members said. Bolero said the group should have the mortgage paid in a few years, even as the group continues to donate to its various causes and sponsors its Little League baseball team, also known as the Eagles.

Members' dues are little more than \$50 a year, but larger donations are made — and apparently the juke box and pool table are big money-makers.

Each chapter is asked to meet a 10 percent quota every year to recruit new members, which the local chapter says it has already met this year. Its next big event is an Oktoberfest-themed dinner dance, which can be attended by guests of the members.

You have to know somebody to become a member, or get two members to vouch for you. Or, even if you don't know a member, you can sometimes join the group by being that rare person who simply comes in "through the front door," O'Malley said. ▀

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## Ghysels: Cost of living driving teachers away

*By Susan Hong*

Superintendent Maurice Ghysels told city officials last week that the region's high cost of living is scaring away some of his best teachers.

Ghysels, speaking during a meeting between City Council members and officials of the Mountain View Whisman School District, said he was concerned about the district's ability to attract and retain talented teachers due to the great expense of living in Silicon Valley.

"The cost of living in the Valley is astronomical," he told council members. "And when you look at the salaries of wages for teachers — not just starting, but teachers with master's degrees at the top of the schedule — it's just heartbreaking because we can't compete. They cannot afford to buy a home in Mountain View or the near vicinity, so we just lose a lot of teachers."

Ghysels said even the highest paid teachers have a difficult time finding affordable homes. Many say they may have to leave for greener pastures — cheaper areas farther inland in California, or in other states — to pursue the American dream of owning a home.

Recently, Ghysels said, he had an emotional talk with one math teacher at Crittenden Middle School regarding the challenges teachers face.

"She's just an outstanding math teacher and she told me a couple days ago almost with tears in her eyes that she loves the team, she doesn't want to leave, but she can never figure out how she's ever going to buy a house unless she moves to the San Joaquin Valley or Oregon," he said. "And that's where she's probably going to head."

"It's tough, but we work with what we can work with," he added.

The district's attrition rate is about 10 percent a year, according to Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Totter. "This attrition results from teachers moving due to job transfers for spouses out of the area, cost of living and housing availability, and some teachers are released from employment," she said.

A beginning teacher's salary is \$44,609 and a mid-range salary, with eight years of experience and a master's degree, is about \$59,000, according to Totter. The district also pays full-time teachers the full cost of premiums for medical,

dental and vision insurance and a life insurance policy, she said.

In a separate interview, Ghysels said teacher salaries across California are similar, but housing is more affordable elsewhere.

"Schools have a big correlation with the health of the community in a number of cofactors, such as housing and safety," he said. "I also think that any organization, whether it's a school or a high-tech company, talent is key, and I worry about it."

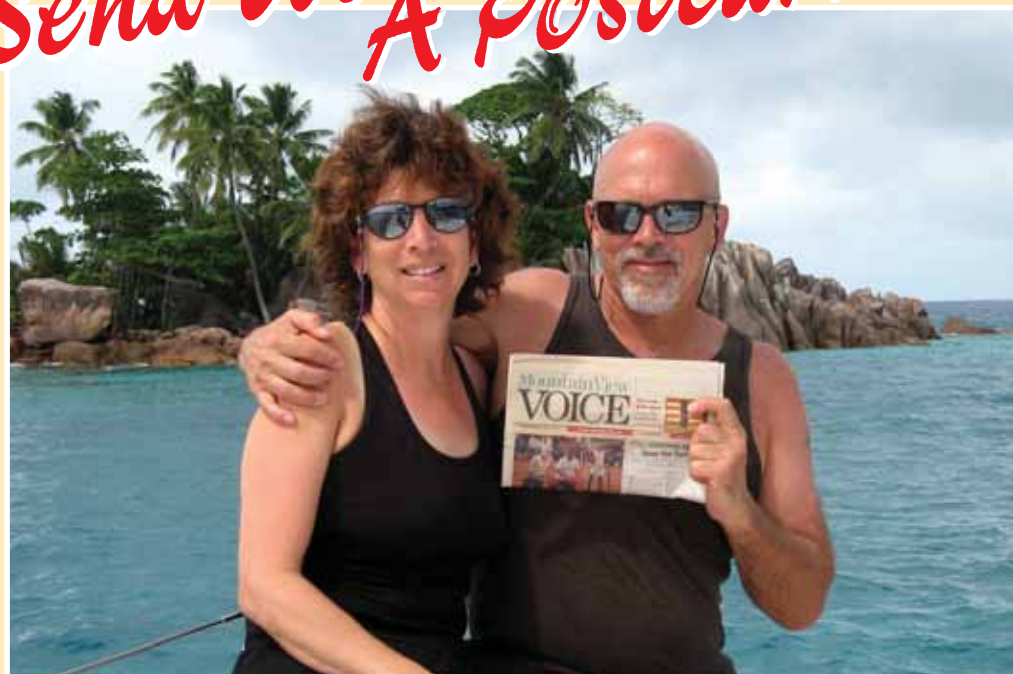
However the school is still able to attract good talent, he said. The district recruits at job fairs and colleges, and has agreements with several universities for student teachers and intern placements which sometimes result in full-time teaching positions.

"Teachers go into teaching for much more than money," Ghysels said. "They go into it with a sense of purpose and meaning."

Even so, he said, teachers "still want and deserve to have a piece of the action of housing the United States, and in some cases they leave or talk about leaving." ▀

*E-mail Susan Hong at  
shong@mv-voice.com*

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*Photo of Bob and Shellie Adams  
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### COMMUNITY BRIEFS

#### NAVY MEDIC LAUDED FOR VALOR

Mountain View resident Shawn Nirdlinger was honored on Sunday for his heroic actions in Iraq.

While a crowd clapped in a Navy gymnasium in San Jose, Nirdlinger was accepted into the Navy's Combat Meritorious Advancement Program. He is now one of about 100 sailors recognized for displaying uncommon valor and leadership during active duty. As part of the achievement, he was made a hospital corpsman second class.

Officers said Nirdlinger saved several lives after mortar fire wounded 21 Marines he was with and killed another.

Nirdlinger, 32, has spent much of the past year in a hospital bed. He received the Purple Heart in 2006 after an explosive device went off under his Humvee near Martini, Iraq. Everyone in the back of the Humvee died except Nirdlinger, who later woke up from a coma in the VA Hospital in Palo Alto.

#### CHAMBER TO HONOR BUSINESS PEOPLE

On Nov. 9, more than 200 Mountain View movers and shakers will flock to the Microsoft campus for an award ceremony honoring the city's outstanding businesses, business leaders and one nonprofit organization.

This year, Larry's Auto Works is being recognized as the outstanding small business, Heritage Bank of Commerce is the outstanding large business and the Palo Alto Chapter of the American Red Cross gets outstanding organization. Pamela Martello, wife of city attorney Michael Martello, is outstanding business person of the year as general manager of Foothill Disposal.

Mike Kasperzak of the Silicon Valley Mediation Group is emceeding the event. The reception starts at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$100 and can be purchased by calling the chamber office at (650) 968-8378. Please RSVP by Friday, Oct. 26. soon be replaced.

— Daniel DeBolt

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

### SCHOOLS VOLUNTEER RECOGNIZED

The Mountain View Whisman School District recently awarded Patricia Castro, a Los Altos resident, with an Education for the World Ahead Commitment to Excellence Award.

For the last 14 years, Castro operated a refurbishment center out of a rented warehouse on Old Middlefield Way, using it as a foundation to repair and replace objects in the schools' science kits, said Mary Lairon, associate superintendent.

Castro also supervised dozens of volunteers over the years who wanted to work on the kits, contributing thousands of dollars of service to the district. But ever since the dot-com bust, donations to her foundation dried up, and the volunteers got older and retired. She gave up her lease earlier this year.

The district is in the process of setting up its own refurbishment center with paid staff, and will have to purchase new science kits which can cost anywhere between \$500 to \$1,000 per kit, Castro said.

### MOUNTAIN VIEW TEACHERS HONORED

Two Mountain View teachers were among three high school teachers from the South Bay awarded MIT Alumni Association Inspirational Teacher Awards, given for inspiring excellence in students from their schools. They are among 30 teachers recognized nationwide this year.

Dr. Katie Thornburg, coordinator of the science department and a chemistry teacher at Mountain View High School, was nominated by Jocelyn Chin, a junior at MIT majoring in chemical engineering. Chin thanked Thornburg for the challenging curriculum she went through while at Mountain View High School.

Chihiro Ikezi, a physics teacher at Saint Francis High School, was nominated by Annika Larsson, a senior at MIT majoring in materials science and engineering. "Without his motivation and belief in me, I would not have attempted to attend MIT," Larsson said.

### SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE THROUGH EL CAMINO

El Camino Hospital Auxiliary and the Foundation are offering scholarships to

students wishing to become health professionals.

Graduating high school seniors and full-time college students enrolled in accredited California colleges or universities may apply. Applicants must be U.S. citizens and permanent residents in the El Camino Hospital District.

The deadline to apply is Jan. 25, 2008. Forms are available at [www.elcaminohospital.org](http://www.elcaminohospital.org) — click on "Volunteer Opportunities," "Auxiliary," then "Auxiliary Scholarship." Applications are also available at high school career centers, local college financial aid offices, libraries and at the El Camino Hospital Auxiliary Office. For more, call (650) 940-7214.

### MOUNTAIN VIEW HIGH RECOGNIZED

Mountain View High School has been selected as one of 569 public schools in California to receive the title of "2007 Honor Roll school," the district announced Tuesday.

To receive this distinction from California's business community, schools must demonstrate consistent high student-academic achievement and make significant progress toward closing achievement gaps among all their students, according to the district.

The award was given by the California Business for Education Excellence Foundation and Just for the Kids-California.

### FOOTHILL SEEKS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE APPLICANTS

The Foothill-De Anza Community College District Board of Trustees is seeking applicants who live within the district for four seats on its Measure C Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee.

Foothill-De Anza's Measure C, a \$490.8 million general obligation bond measure, was approved by 65.69 percent of the voters on June 6, 2006. Each member of the committee will be appointed to represent a particular constituency, making sure the bond money is being used as promised.

The deadline for applications is Nov. 9. For more information, visit [www.measurec.fhda.edu](http://www.measurec.fhda.edu), call (650) 949-6100 or e-mail [chancellor@fhda.edu](mailto:chancellor@fhda.edu).

— Susan Hong

# Simon Schama

University Professor of Art History and History, Columbia University

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Managing Editor Don Frances

Staff Writers Daniel DeBolt, Susan Hong

Intern Theresa Condon

Contributors Angela Hey, Sheila Himmel, Forrest Linebarger, Elaine Rowland

Photographers Norbert von der Groeben, Marjan Sadoughi

#### Design & Production

Design Director Raul Perez

Designers Linda Atilano, Laura Don, Nancy Hwang, Eric Kinnaird, Joanne Lee, Gail Thoreson

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Member, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce

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All views must include a home address and contact phone number. Published letters will also appear on the web site, [www.MountainViewOnline.com](http://www.MountainViewOnline.com), and occasionally on the Town Square forum.

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### EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

## More pain from ICE raids

The pain caused by the oppressive immigration raids being conducted here and elsewhere in the country was clearly evident at the recent vigil for Lucio Casiano-Miranda, a longtime volunteer at St. Athanasius Church on Rengstorff Avenue, who was caught up in a recent ICE operation even though agents were looking for another person.

Unfortunately, Lucio answered the door when the plainclothes ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officials knocked at his Sunnyvale home. When he told them the person they were seeking was not there, agents asked for his papers, which he admitted he did not have. As a result, he was arrested and transported to an immigration holding tank elsewhere in the state, at least until funds raised at the church vigil could be used to bail him out.

Now, unless Lucio puts on an incredible defense or draws a sympathetic judge, there is a good chance he will be deported back to Mexico, a tremendous loss for our local church and the young men and women he counsels about staying away from drugs and gangs.

The ICE raids have a serious impact in Mountain View, along with any other community that is home to a significant number of illegal immigrants. During the Oct. 15 vigil attended by more than 500 parishioners, signs on the church walls read, "Lucio today, me tomorrow." One person said, "We are all Lucio. ... We are also representing all who are in Lucio's position tonight — the immigrants who came to the United States to fulfill that dream."

More than most border states, California is a beacon to millions of immigrants who cannot resist entering the U.S. to escape poverty in their own countries. This exodus, and the immigrants' easy acceptance into the U.S. labor force, has set a precedent that our federal government seems desperate to eliminate, through ICE raids and stepped-up border enforcement.

And although some in Congress are eager to swap our current failed policy with an amnesty program, other members have stopped action on any meaningful legislation. This stalemate has left the illegal immigrants, many of whom have been contributing members of their communities for years, in limbo, and fearful that they will be swept up in an ICE raid any day.

Mountain View is home to thousands of immigrants, both legal and illegal. How is it helping U.S. policy to selectively roust them out, put them in jail and then summarily send them back to their country of origin?

This is not a problem that a handful of nasty arrests is going to solve. It is a much larger issue that needs to be resolved in Washington, as soon as possible. We wonder if there is anyone in power there who is listening and has the courage to do the right thing.

### LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

#### IMMIGRANT DELIBERATELY BROKE THE LAW

Editor:

Lucio Casiano-Miranda intentionally, deliberately, openly and brazenly broke the laws of the United States ("Church rallies for leader snared in ICE raid," Oct. 19).

Mayor Laura Macias, when she supports his breaking of our country's laws, sends a message that the Mountain View City Council has established two criteria: non-Hispanics have to obey the law, while Hispanics can pick and choose which laws to obey.

I support immigration reform. Our current laws are obsolete and place unreasonable barriers on many people, and I have communicated my feelings to my representatives in Congress. However, we should obey the laws until they are changed, and not deliberately, openly and brazenly break them.

Konrad Sosnow  
Trophy Drive

#### REFORM NEEDED FOR IMMIGRANTS LIKE LUCIO

Editor:

Lucio Casiano-Miranda's apprehension by ICE is a reminder of what happens when our government fails to enact a comprehensive immigration reform. Good people, who give generously of their time to better our society, are being entangled in ICE raids.

Did Lucio break the law by entering this country illegally? Yes. Should undocumented sex offenders, drug dealers, murder-

ers and other hard-core criminals be deported? Yes. Do our current immigration laws work? No.

My wife and I attended, along with nearly 600 others, last week's rally in support of Lucio. It was a diverse group of supporters. The message repeated that night was, "We are all Lucio." Why? First, like Lucio, almost all of us are either immigrants or descended from immigrants. Secondly, like Lucio, many of us believe in a strong work ethic and that America is the land of opportunity. Thirdly, Americans are very generous and giving, like Lucio, and have the desire to prosper and positively impact the lives of others.

Rather than deport people like Lucio, our government should reform our immigration laws so more people like him can come to this country — and so that, of the immigrants already here, more of them can step to the forefront of our society and make an impact, like Lucio.

Oscar Garcia  
Mesa de la Comunidad

#### CONSIDER HIDDEN COSTS OF RELOCATION

Editor:

I have been impressed with your series of articles following the events at 291 Evandale Ave. and elsewhere involving relocation expenses and the situation facing the displaced families ("The one household that made it," Oct. 19). Hopefully they will help to raise awareness in the community, and to increase under-

► Continued on next page



## Viewpoint

► Continued from previous page

standing of the lack of affordable housing in this and other cities.

A related question that staff has not yet been able to answer regards the time and expense spent on the one family so far that qualified for relocation expenses. I suspect that, between CSA and the city, much more than \$3,000 in BMR funds has been spent in administrative overhead. If so, this is not exactly an example of the wise and efficient use of public funds.

**Roy Hayter**  
Yale Drive

### DISTRICT-WIDE FOREIGN LANGUAGE A GREAT IDEA

Editor:

To those members of the Mountain View Whisman School District board, as well as other educators who are considering adding a foreign language program to our districts schools, I would just like to say gracias, merci and grazie ("Trustees put foreign language on table," Oct. 12).

Please be the district in California that really believes in teaching languages, and doesn't just make it a mandatory class in high school. There is no other school subject offered at the lower grade levels that isn't encouraged and supported in high school besides foreign languages. Yet as it is, our smart and talented 14-year-olds get to high school and have to take two or three years of a foreign language without the opportunity to explore or learn about this subject prior.

If California's Education Department is truly serious about future

generations learning a second language — the better to engage our multicultural state — then maybe our children will be too. Let's be the district that starts the movement!

**Melody Taylor**  
Post Street

### KUDOS TO POST OFFICE FOR QUICK ACTION

Editor:

As a new resident of New Frontier Mobile Park in Mountain View, I recently discovered that residents in the park were experiencing a loss of privacy. This was because our mailboxes, located at the curb in front of our homes, were being used by park personnel to deliver leaflets, rent notices and so on.

Convinced that no one except a postal carrier had the right to use our mailboxes, I delivered a letter of complaint to the Mountain View Post Office. The response was incredibly fast. The practice of using mailboxes for that purpose was stopped instantly, and proper "tube" receptacles were installed beneath each mailbox.

I write this letter on behalf of all residents who want to publicly express thanks for the prompt action by our post office in Mountain View.

**Al Stuetzle**  
Sylvan Avenue

### A BRIEF HALLOWEEN MESSAGE

Editor:

I'm having Pumpkin Patch withdrawals!

**Barb Cochran**  
Wellesley Court

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■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

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NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

Yellow chicken curry from Amarin Thai in Mountain View.

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

## All Thai'd up

AMARIN THAI IS STILL MAKING GOOD FOOD, BUT SERVICE NEEDS TO STEP IT UP A NOTCH

By Elaine M. Rowland

For years, Amarin Thai has been one of Mountain View's favorite Thai restaurants. These days, however, it seems to be suffering under the weight of its own reputation. The food is still generally very good and the restaurant attractive, but eating during busy times in the New-York-style, elbow-to-elbow main room, with little to no waiter attention, can feel more like dining in a cafeteria than a restaurant.

For example, recently I arrived with a friend — early enough to avoid the noon crush on Castro Street — and was warmly

greeted and seated. Soon after the waitress took our order, the trickle of customers swelled to a mass of diners on all sides, and we never saw our waitress again.

Our food arrived at different times via different people, and no one asked how we were doing. The wait staff was obviously hustling to keep up, and it was extremely difficult to catch anyone's eye for dessert, or a replacement utensil. Then the check showed up on the table: buh-bye.

Not everybody cares about these things, though, and I'm sure regular diners who know

► Continued on next page

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NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

A cup of tea at Amarin Thai.

## AMARIN THAI

► Continued from page 19

fyngly simple broth with a few veggies and some tofu. Though not as exotic, I felt it held its own against another of Amarin's soups, the hot and sour mushroom, which packed a sour punch and used bold amounts of fresh cilantro.

Unlike some Silicon Valley restaurants that hop at lunch and snooze through dinner, Amarin has plenty of dinner customers. The sparkly decor is date-friendly and attractive, with traditional Thai garments on some staff adding to the exotic flavor. And what's not to like about pulling off your shoes and playing a little footsie under the sunken tables — one of three dining options along with the main room and outdoor seating.

Still, crowds can dampen the level of service, and for such a popular eatery, Amarin is oddly

disorganized about seating. On a recent Friday evening, clueless patrons waited longer than aggressive ones, and a lone hostess hurried back and forth to seat people while patrons crammed the doorway, either waiting or trying to leave.

This is a small annoyance for a party of two with time to kill, and a pain for bigger groups or people with children. But if you love the green curry scallops with eggplant, coconut milk and basil (\$13.95) — and they were fresh and delicious — then you may put up with it. Try reserving a table.

The beef Mu-Sa-Mun curry (\$8.95) with potatoes, carrots, pineapple and coconut, however, was not worth a wait. It looks like a Western beef stew, but unlike stew, the beef here wasn't cooked until tender.

At dinner, drinks were a bit of a mystery. We saw people drinking, but no mention on the menus. We asked for and ordered beers but, again, had to nearly tackle someone to get a refill. ▣

## ■ DINING NOTES

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**THE DARJEELING LIMITED (R)** ★★★ Century 20: 12:30, 3:05, 5:35, 8:05 & 10:30 p.m. Palo Alto Square: 1:40, 4:20 & 7 p.m. Fri. & Sat. also at 9:40 p.m.

**DEATH AT A FUNERAL (R)** ★★★★★ Century 20: 12:05, 2:20, 4:55, 7:10 & 9:35 p.m.

**ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE (PG-13)** ★ Century 16: 12:25, 3:05, 6:45 & 9:35 p.m. Century 20: Noon, 2:40, 5:20, 8 & 10:35 p.m.

**THE GAME PLAN (PG)** Century 16: 1:10, 3:55, 7:15 & 9:55 p.m. Century 12: 12:50, 3:50, 7 & 9:45 p.m.

**GONE BABY GONE (R)** ★★★ Century 16: 12:55, 4:10, 7:25 & 10:10 p.m. Century 20: 1:05, 4, 7:20 & 10:10 p.m.

**THE HEARTBREAK KID (R)** ★★1/2 Century 20: 1:20, 4:20, 7:25 & 10:15 p.m.

**HOW TO COOK YOUR LIFE (NOT RATED)** Aquarius: 1:45, 4:30, 7 & 9:20 p.m.

**IN THE SHADOW OF THE MOON (PG)** ★★★★★ Century 20: 7:35 & 10:05 p.m.

**INTO THE WILD (R)** ★★★★★ Century 16: 1:15, 4:35 & 7:55 p.m. Century 20: 12:25, 2, 3:35, 5:25, 6:50, 8:40 & 10:05 p.m.

**THE KINGDOM (R)** ★★★★★1/2 Century 20: 1:15, 4:30, 7:15 & 9:50 p.m. Palo Alto Square: 1:30 & 4:15 p.m. Wed. also at 7 p.m.

**LARS AND THE REAL GIRL (PG-13)** ★★★★★1/2 Century 20: 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:45 & 10:20 p.m. Palo Alto Square: 1:45, 4:30 & 7:15 p.m. Fri. & Sat. also at 10 p.m.

**THE LOST BOYS (R)** Aquarius: Fri. & Sat. at midnight.

**LUST, CAUTION (NC-17)** ★★★ Guild: 12:30, 4:15 & 8 p.m.

**MICHAEL CLAYTON (R)** ★★★★★1/2 Century 16: 1:25, 4:25, 7:40 & 10:25 p.m. Century 12: 1:15, 4:15, 7:10 & 10:05 p.m.

**MUSIC WITHIN (R)** Century 20: 12:10, 2:25, 4:45, 7:05 & 9:30 p.m.

**OUTSOURCED (R)** ★★★ Aquarius: 2:15, 5, 7:30 & 9:45 p.m.

**RATATOUILLE (G)** ★★★ Century 20: 1:30 & 4:15 P.M.

**RENDITION (R)** Century 16: 12:20, 3:15, 6:55 & 9:50 p.m. Century 20: 12:50, 3:55, 7:10 & 10 p.m.

**RESERVATION ROAD (R)** ★★1/2 Century 16: 1:05, 4:15, 7:10 & 9:40 p.m.

**RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION (R)** Century 20: 9:20 p.m.

**SAW IV (R)** Century 16: 12:35, 2:55, 5:20, 7:45 & 10:15 p.m. Century 12: 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30 & 10:30 p.m.

**THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING (PG)** Century 20: 12:15, 2:45 & 5:10 p.m.

**STARDUST (PG-13)** ★★1/2 Century 20: 7 & 10 p.m.

**SYDNEY WHITE (PG-13)** Century 20: 12:05, 2:35, 5:15, 7:55 & 10:25 p.m.

**THINGS WE LOST IN THE FIRE (R)** ★★ Century 16: 12:45, 3:40, 7:20 & 10:05 p.m. Century 12: 12:35, 3:35, 7:45 & 10:35 p.m.

**TIM BURTON'S THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS 3-D (PG)** Century 16: 12:20, 2:30, 4:45, 7:05 & 9:20 p.m.

**WE OWN THE NIGHT (R)** ★★ Century 16: 1:40, 4:50, 7:20 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: 12:55, 2:15, 3:45, 5, 6:35, 7:50 & 10:30 p.m.

**WHY DID I GET MARRIED? (PG-13)** Century 12: 1:45, 4:45, 7:35 & 10:20 p.m.

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

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

★ 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

THINGS WE LOST IN THE FIRE ★★

(Century 16, Century 12) Audrey and Brian Burke (Halle Berry and David Duchovny) are the happy, loving parents of two cherubic youngsters who live in stylish, movie-worthy digs and dream of a rosy future. The only fly in their ointment is Brian's childhood friend Jerry (Benicio del Toro), a heroin addict to whom Brian is inexplicably loyal. A senseless accident leaves Audrey a widow and Jerry without his support system. Sooner rather than later Audrey steps into the void, reaching out a hand to honor Brian's memory but resenting the hell out of Jerry's persistent presence. All the predictable notions apply — the rebuilding, the recovery, the setbacks — while Audrey struggles to make sense of God's Big Plan. The unlikely duo of widow and junkie form a foundation based on something akin to love. Cue the violins. *Rated: R for language, violence and drug use. 1 hour, 59 minutes.* — J.A.

GONE BABY GONE ★★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Ben Affleck steps behind the camera to adapt one of Dennis Lehane's provocative PI novels. Affleck's baby brother Casey stars as crack private investigator Patrick Kenzie, who assumes a professional and personal relationship with partner Angie Gennaro (Michelle Monaghan). The pair is drawn into a missing-child case when the girl's aunt (the excellent Amy Madigan) approaches them for help in locating her niece. In true Lehane fashion there's ugliness under the neighborhood's sturdy veneer. The missing girl is the product of an unstable mother (Amy Ryan as Helene McReady) who's far more interested in the source of her next fix than nurturing her fetching 4-year-old. Gennaro balks as the duo uncovers unsettling evidence of emotional abuse and police corruption at the hands of case detective Remy Bressant (Ed Harris). Fissures open to chasms with unsettling alacrity. "Gone" is grim, scratching the grime from the cracks while managing homage to the people and places on the underbelly of the Freedom Trail. *Rated: R for excessive violence, drug use and language. 1 hour, 54 minutes.* — J.A.

THE DARJEELING LIMITED ★★★

(CineArts) Director Wes Anderson concocts this quirky character-driven film about three brothers' uncommon journey. Infused with rich writing, strong performances and symbolic undertones, "Darjeeling" explores how people behave when living in the moment but out of the comfort zone. It has been one year since the Whitman brothers — Francis (Owen Wilson), Peter (Adrien Brody) and Jack (Jason Schwartzman) — last spoke, just after the accidental death of their father. But eldest Francis is eager to reunite the erstwhile trio and meticulously plans a trek through India, beginning with a train ride on the Darjeeling Limited. The

► See **MINI REVIEWS**, page 23

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COURTESY OF MGM STUDIOS

Paul Schneider, Emily Mortimer and Ryan Gosling in "Lars and the Real Girl."

## This 'Girl' is the real deal

'LARS AND THE REAL GIRL' THROWS VIEWERS, SMALL TOWN FOR A REWARDING LOOP

By Jeanne Aufmuth

### MOVIE REVIEW

Supremely gifted Ryan Gosling inherits a uniquely quirky protagonist in this thoroughly refreshing dramedy.

Titular "hero" Lars Lindstrom (Gosling) is a socially awkward stiff living in a detached garage apartment across from older brother Gus (Paul Schneider) and Gus' perkily pregnant wife Karin (Emily Mortimer).

Karin is anxious to welcome her bachelor brother-in-law into the fold, perpetually throwing out breakfast invites and the like. So it's a banner day for all when Lars announces he's dating, and bringing his new gal pal to dinner.

No one sees this one coming: Lars' squeeze is an anatomically correct silicone sex doll (yes, an actual doll) named Bianca who, according to Lars, is a crippled half-Brazilian missionary from the tropics who was raised by nuns.

Gus and Karin go with the flow, but at first opportunity nip Lars off to the local MD (doubling as a shrink in this snowy Midwest-

ern burg). Dr. Dagmar (Patricia Clarkson) informs them that Lars is working something out, and asks them to play along with his delusion.

And play along they do, together with the whole blessed town, who takes Bianca into their homes and their hearts by dragging her to socials, treating her to spa days and electing her to the local school board.

As Lars, the community, and we viewers learn to love and respect Bianca, humor turns to sorrow. Lars continues to meet the good doctor who subtly peels back layers of psychological wounds to get to the root of Lars' neuroses (he recoils from touch) and tinker with his issues. Lars' measured reconciliation with his own emotional baggage is perfectly and profoundly poignant.

Dramedy is a tricky business; it's not easy striking the right balance of laughter and tears, especially when your heroine is a life-sized synthetic

siren. But director Craig Gillespie gets it right, guiding his actors with a deft touch and choosing plausible pathos over lewd laughs or cloying comedy. Nancy Oliver's scripting is smart and snappy.

Gosling and Schneider are spot-on as brothers coming to terms with their own roles in a shared past. Mortimer is a dream: sweet, sensitive and charmingly astute. Clarkson plays it smart as the voice of reason, and Kelli Garner is marvelously daft as Lars' desperately flirtatious coworker who yearns for more than standard water-cooler stuff.

Kudos to costumer Gerri Gillan for going all-out with an unsightly parade of Midwestern woolery in the form of unfortunate argyles and Fair Isle sweaters.

Tender, thoughtful and distinctive. ▽

### MOVIE NOTES

Stars: ★★★ 1/2

Rating: PG-13 for sexual content

Run Time: 1 hour, 46 minutes

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MINI REVIEWS

► Continued from page 21

brothers are all dealing with their own inner turmoil as their adventure begins. A sojourn to India may be just what these troubled brothers need. Quirky humor weaves its way throughout "Darjeeling" like the winding locomotive it's named for. But viewers who prefer more conventional fare should steer clear — "Darjeeling" is flavored with Anderson's unique ingredients, and it's definitely an acquired taste. *Rated: R for language. 1 hour, 32 minutes.* — T.H.

**ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE** ★

(Century 16, Century 20) In Shekhar Kapur's overwrought follow-up to "Elizabeth," the Virgin Queen's pent-up sexuality seems to explode in orgiastic style. The premise of William Nicholson and Michael Hirst's historically inaccurate biopic hinges on the queen taking a fancy to Sir Walter Raleigh. Cate Blanchett reprises the role of the monarch, who would have been 52 years old at the time. Yet trusted advisor Sir Francis Walsingham (Geoffrey Rush) urges her to marry and bear an heir to preserve the Protestant monarchy. Clive Owen swaggers into court, playing seafaring explorer Raleigh like a raffish cross between Douglas Fairbanks and Errol Flynn. When the icy queen gets around to asking him for a kiss he's already

impregnated her lady-in-waiting (Abbie Cornish). The political plotline adds to the lurid melodrama. The narrative inflames the Holy War between Catholic Spain and Protestant England. Quivering in religious fanaticism, King Philip II wants to set England free of the devil and is in cahoots with the imprisoned Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots (Samantha Morton). From over-the-top emotion to hokey camera-work and CGI effects of an unimpressive armada, "Elizabeth: the Golden Age" is impossible to take seriously. *Rated: PG-13 for violence, some sexuality and nudity. 1 hour. 54 minutes.* S.T.

**LUST, CAUTION** ★★★

(Guild) Ang Lee carefully crafts a hushed political mystery set in WWII Shanghai, where an amateur acting troupe stages an idealistic coup against Secret Service Japanese collaborator Mr. Yee (Chinese superstar Tony Leung). Reluctantly leading the charge is youthful ingenue-cum-resistance fighter Wang Chia Chi (Tang Wei) who is summarily trained in the art of seduction in order to gain Yee's confidence and guide him down the path to a fatal finish. Best-laid plans go seriously awry when Yee abruptly slips from their grasp and the troupe's radical scheme is exposed, resulting in a grisly murder. Several years later the fickle fingers of fate reach out to Chia Chi when she encounters an ex-troupe-member who informs her that Yee has returned to Shanghai. Chia Chi finagles her way back into his orbit and rekindles their liaison,

falling desperately in love — or at least lust — as the couple beds with sadistic abandon. Lee has gone back to his roots and the results are undeniably intriguing. *Rated: NC-17 for graphic sexuality and violence. 2 hours, 38 minutes. In Mandarin, Cantonese and Japanese with English subtitles.* — J.A.

**MICHAEL CLAYTON**

★★★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 12) Michael Clayton (George Clooney) is a "fixer" for slick law house Kenner, Bach & Ledeen, a loyal company cleaner who works behind the scenes greasing the wheels for attorneys and clients alike. He spin-doctors his way through the legal muck: hit-and-runs, shoplifting wives, and the far more urgent matter of the firm's own brilliant senior litigator (Tom Wilkinson as Arthur Edens) who's gone off his meds. And off the deep end. Smooth-as-silk Clayton is dispatched to do damage control, but it appears that Arthur was on to something big before his drugless psychosis: turning the tables on a giant toxic cover-up and \$3 billion class-action lawsuit against K, B & L agrochemical super-client U/North. Soon enough Clayton is going toe to toe with U/North's steely in-house chief counsel (Tilda Swinton) and racing against the clock to pull together the unraveling threads of a massive conglomerate's tapestry of lies. Good old-fashioned drama the good old-fashioned way. *Rated: R for profanity and violence. 2 hours.* — J.A.



COURTESY OF MIRAMAX FILMS

Amy Ryan as Helene in "Gone Baby Gone."

**WE OWN THE NIGHT** ★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Two brothers, as different as night and day, are at the center of this film. Joaquin Phoenix plays Bobby Green, the party-animal manager of the best nightclub in Brooklyn. Mark Wahlberg assumes the work-first, no-nonsense brother role of police captain Joseph Grusinsky. Because Bobby uses his deceased mother's maiden name, the Russian mob dealing drugs at the El Caribe don't know that his police-chief father (Robert Duvall) and sibling are leading the street-crimes unit. Their goal? Win the war on drugs raging in 1988. How? Raid the El Caribe and bust the mafia kingpins. No sooner does Bobby moan, "Of all the places, you gotta come to my place," than he and girlfriend Amada (Eva Mendes) are caught in the crossfire of betrayal, cor-

ruption and bloodletting. Cops haven't bungled operations and looked this inept since the Keystone comedies. As villains, the Russians are cartoon-character sociopaths. But to Gray's credit, he captures the Russian immigrant subculture in the home, humanizing the elderly heads of the crime family. "We Own the Night" aspires to a grandeur that cliché and heavy-handed melodrama hold at bay. *Rated: R for strong violence, drug material, language, some sexual content and brief nudity. 1 hour. 58 minutes.* — S.T.

■ MOVIE CRITICS

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

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