

Mountain View VOICE



All the world's a drum

A&E | P.23

MARCH 14, 2008 VOLUME 16, NO. 10

INSIDE: WEEKEND | PAGE 19

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NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

Volunteers at Hidden Villa walk to the farmhouse after an afternoon of planting grape vines.

On the green path

This week, the *Voice* introduces a new section, *Going Green* (p. 25), which focuses on the myriad ways residents of Mountain View and the Peninsula are working to conserve resources and reduce greenhouse gases.

One way is through “community supported agriculture programs,” in which small farms apply age-old concepts regarding local participation in the growing of food — and the way that food’s personality varies from place to place. One such program is hosted at Hidden

Villa, the community farm in Los Altos Hills that is a favorite of Mountain View residents.

Local governments are also getting in on the act. At the county level, mass transit agencies have noted how increased gas prices lead to increased ridership. And in Mountain View, the first-ever Environmental Sustainability Task Force has convened, and is already identifying ways the city can curb greenhouse gas emissions.

Going Green will next appear in April — just in time for Earth Day.

City promotes downtown vision

HOTEL ON CASTRO, NEW RETAIL IN MIX IF DEVELOPERS STEP UP

By Daniel DeBolt

The city’s downtown could look dramatically different in the years ahead if backers can be found to fulfill its vision. On Tuesday, that vision was promoted by economic development director Ellis Berns during a presentation broadcast from City Hall.

Among other hints to developers during the presentation, the city sent a message that the timing may be right for a six-story hotel on the corner of El Camino Real and Castro Street, now that the former Bike Spring bike shop has been vacated.

Jessica von Borck, Mountain View business development specialist, suggested that the parcel could be combined with the city’s adjacent “gateway park” on the corner of El Camino and Castro to make way for a huge hotel structure. The bike shop space is only for lease at this point, however.

The pitch for downtown was made to developers, retailers and real estate brokers in City Hall’s first-ever Web cast, broadcast live on the city’s Web site. During the presentation, Berns showed off Mountain View’s downtown — a place where the city has

spent more than \$200 million on revitalization, where the median age is 34, the median family income is \$98,000 within a three mile radius, and 20,000 vehicle trips are made daily up and down Castro Street.

Possible sites for major developments mentioned during the presentation include the Wells Fargo lot on Church and Castro streets, which is zoned for a “rather large” building. But more consequential would be the redevelopment of a strip of small shops for sale at 702-738 Villa Street on the corner of Hope Street.

► See **DOWNTOWN**, page 9

Shifting fortunes in murder cases

SUSPECT RELEASED, ANOTHER AVOIDS ARREST IN SHOOTING OF JEFF JOHNSON

Staff Reports

Police say at least some of their case against three young men in the shooting death of 20-year-old Mountain View resident Jeff Johnson is falling apart due to lack of evidence.

Although their first suspect to be arrested, 19-year-old Nathan Talarico, remains in jail, the second suspect, 19-year-old Jose Romero, has been released, according to police spokesperson Liz Wylie. A third suspect is known to police, however he is not being arrested due to lack of evidence in the case.

► See **JOHNSON**, page 11

POLICE SATISFIED WITH THEIR SUSPECT IN SHOOTING OF JOSE MERALES

Staff Reports

Police now say they are satisfied they have the right man in the shooting death of 17-year-old Jose Merale, and are ready to send their suspect to trial for his murder.

San Jose resident Hugo Garcia, 19, is charged with shooting Merale on Feb. 26 near his Mountain View home. Merale’s body was found on the sidewalk of the 100 block of Higdon Avenue near Villa Street, a few buildings away from his own apartment building. Neighbors said they heard several shots at 6:15 that evening.

► See **MERALES**, page 11

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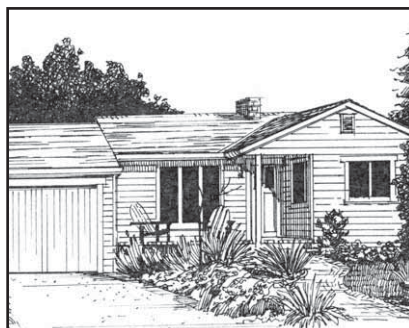
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* Based on 10% average appreciation in a normal market, and 15% average appreciation in a bull market

** Source: DataQuick 1997-2007

Some Bay Area communities performed even better than this. The fact is, all real estate markets are local, and the Bay Area is a highly desirable, thriving real estate market where home ownership has historically represented a positive investment.

If you're considering selling or buying a home, call us. Get the facts. And make your decision based on Bay Area market reality.

Historical performance and data provided is not necessarily an indication of future performance.

Square footage, acreage, and other information herein, has been received from one or more of a variety of different sources. Such information has not been verified by Alain Pinel Realtors. If important to buyers, buyers should conduct their own investigation.

Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in Downtown Mountain View. Pictures and interviews by Nicole Baldocchi.

What was your favorite class in school?



"I loved home economics in sixth grade, because I learned how to bake and they never ran out of ingredients."

Carole Garabedian, Mountain View



"Science, because you learn experiments."

Ethan Garabedian, Mountain View



"History, because it's nice to know where we're from. It's always good for us to know our background before we can move forward."

Caroline Cota-Murphy, Santa Clara



"English, because I like to learn new languages. I would like to learn Arabic too."

Carlos Ramirez, Palo Alto



"Psychology. I like to know people."

Paul Lu, Sunnyvale

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LocalNews

CRIMEWATCH

ROBBERY, BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO, GRANT ROAD, 3/3

A man robbed a clerk at the video store with a knife. He took money and left in an old black Acura. He was described as African American, 6 foot 3 inches tall, 200 pounds, wearing a black jacket, black shoes, a black ball cap and a blue bandana over his face with holes cut out for his eyes.

ROBBERY, 2600 BLOCK CALIFORNIA ST., 3/5

A man with a handgun stole cash from the Kragen Auto Parts before fleeing on a blue sport motorcycle. He was described as African American, 6 feet tall, 200 pounds, wearing a black helmet with face guard and black bandana underneath. He had a black jacket on, a black backpack, dark jeans and black boots.

POLICELOG

AUTO BURGLARY

200 Block Escuela Ave., 3/4
1900 Block California St., 3/5
2100 Block Old Middlefield Way, 3/7
500 Block Walker Dr., 3/8
100 Block N. Whisman Rd., 3/8
500 Block W. Middlefield Rd., 3/8

PETTY THEFT

300 Block S. Shoreline Blvd., 3/6
200 Block Mercy St., 3/6
Graham Middle School, 3/6
800 Block E. El Camino Real, 3/7
2100 Block Wyandotte St., 3/9
Safeway, N. Shoreline Boulevard, 3/9
700 Block N. Shoreline Blvd., 3/9
Gold's Gym, 3/10
700 Block N. Shoreline Blvd., 3/10
500 Block W. Middlefield Rd., 3/10
200 Block Calderon Ave., 3/10
3500 Block Truman Ave., 3/10

BATTERY

1700 Block Rock St., 3/4

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

200 Block Castro St., 3/10

DISORDERLY CONDUCT

California Street/Castro Street, 3/6
Trader Joe's, 3/6
W. El Camino Real/S. Shoreline Boulevard, 3/6
Central Expressway/N. Rengstorff Avenue, 3/8

ROBBERY

2600 Block California St., 3/5
2500 California St., 3/10

STOLEN VEHICLE

2200 Block Latham St., 3/4
1000 Block Villa St., 3/5

DISTURBANCE

800 Block E. El Camino Real, 3/9
100 Block Laurel Way, 3/10

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/PERSON

500 Block W. Middlefield Rd., 3/4
2200 Block California St., 3/6
500 Block N. Shoreline Blvd., 3/7
Cuesta Park, 3/7
200 Block Mariposa Ave., 3/9

GRAND THEFT

100 Block Bryant St., 3/4
300 Block Hope St., 3/6
1600 Block San Luis Ave., 3/7
2400 Block Grant Rd., 3/10
200 Block Castro St., 3/10

TRESPASSING

100 Block W. El Camino Real, 3/5

PETTY THEFT

500 Block Showers Dr., 3/4
1800 Block Drew Ave., 3/6
Gold's Gym, 3/6

VANDALISM

1000 Block Villa St., 3/5
1600 Block W. El Camino Real, 3/8

CORRECTION

A story in last week's Voice, "Happy birthday, little leapers," misstated the percentage of the world's population that was born on a leap day. The number is .068 percent.

The same article misreported the amount of planned induced labors at El Camino Hospital on Friday, Feb. 29. There was one emergency cesarean section that day.

We've just added another

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All hail Athena

By Don Frances

EVERY YEAR, locals gather at Michaels at Shoreline to give out the award for “Outstanding Woman of the Year in the Mountain View business community,” better known as the Athena Award.

This year’s ceremony and luncheon, held on Tuesday, was a typically convivial affair, with the Athena Award going to Erin Brennock of Synopsys.

This was the 17th annual Athena Awards ceremony in Mountain View, and let it be known that previous recipients include Kate Wakerly, founder of the *Voice*, who was recognized in 1997 for her contributions to the city.

As it happens, Tuesday’s event was attended by three other *Voice* Athenas—Diane Martin, Pooja Bhardwaj and Anna Mirsky — and they tell me the place was packed this time around. Attendees included county Supervisor Liz Kniss, superintendents Barry Groves and Maurice Ghysels, lots of real estate people and a whole gaggle of Synopsys employees, there to cheer on their coworker.

Brennock reportedly kept her speech short, because she didn’t want to bore anybody. This is in keeping with George Burns’ rule of thumb: Have a good beginning and a good ending, and keep them as close together as possible. ■

Don Frances is editor of the Voice. He welcomes any and all questions or comments, on any topic, which can be sent to dfrances@mv-voice.com.



DANIELLE VERNON

Maya, a 7th grader at Girls’ Middle School in Mountain View, placed second in the girl’s advanced skateboard contest held on campus last week.

Dogtown and Z-Girls down at GMS

By Casey Weiss

Cynthia Zawilski spends most Friday afternoons practicing at the skateboarding ramp behind her school, the Girls’ Middle School, working to change the image of the male dominated sport.

Last Friday, the eighth grader brought home her third gold medal from the annual Girls’ Middle School skateboarding competition, and scored second in her first co-ed competition, also hosted at GMS. The school invited boys from other Bay

Area schools to participate in its first annual mixed competition on Friday.

“It is a unique sport and rare for girls,” Zawilski said. “I wanted to change the way it is seen.”

► See **Z-GIRLS**, page 6

Montecito blaze deemed suspicious

By Nicole Baldocchi

A three-alarm fire that started in a parked car last Friday morning and burned a Montecito Avenue apartment complex has been deemed suspicious by investigators.

The blaze at 1335 Montecito Ave. was reported at 4:26 a.m. on March 7. It was brought

under control nearly two hours later, a fire dispatcher said, but not before two more alarms were called and the complex was evacuated.

The fire appears to have started in a vehicle parked in a first-story carport and run up the structure’s wall, according to Mountain View Fire Department spokesman Lynn Brown.

No injuries were reported in the blaze, although Red Cross officials said two families have been displaced by the fire. Local Red Cross volunteers worked to guarantee the families were provided for.

Mountain View police spokesperson Liz Wylie said the fire

► See **BLAZE**, page 16

■ EDUCATION

Parcel tax present: \$166,000

SCHOOLS WOULD BE DEVASTATED WITHOUT IT, SAY MV WHISMAN OFFICIALS

By Casey Weiss

Mountain View Whisman school officials searching for ways to compensate for expected cuts in state funding will get some relief from their own parcel tax, which is showing a surplus of \$166,000 in unspent funds this year.

The unused revenue from the tax — approved by Measure J in 2004 — is due to the late start of some programs and to price changes for some services and programs, a representative from the parcel tax’s oversight committee told board officials at last week’s meeting.

“Normally we try to spend all the money, so we can say to the public we spent it as planned,” committee member Steve Sherman told the board. Still, he said, “It’s hard to be upset about that during the current circumstances.”

Sherman added during his presentation that the tax funds went to programs already approved by the committee, and that less than 1 percent of the tax revenue was spent on administrative costs associated with Measure J.

► See **PARCEL TAX**, page 13

Plymouth Street resident, wanted in bank robbing spree, turns himself in

Staff Reports

Police last Friday evacuated and cordoned off the 2000 block of Plymouth Street and called in a SWAT team, believing that an alleged serial bank robber living there had barricaded himself in his home.

According to Mountain View police spokesperson Liz Wylie,

the San Jose police department had gotten a warrant for his arrest and found out his home address on Plymouth.

The suspect, however, wasn’t home that day, police said. He later turned himself in voluntarily to the Palo Alto Police Department.

Police would not reveal the suspect’s name, saying only

that he was wanted for robbing 13 banks around the Bay Area in at least five cities. Wylie later said that his name cannot be released because the FBI has taken over the case.

Residents in the area wondered what all the activity was about last Friday afternoon. In an e-mail, one neighbor said police “told me they had

evacuated everyone from the neighborhood, and that they weren’t letting anyone in or out, and that they were searching for someone, and that they’d called in a SWAT team.”

He said police had arrived there at 3 p.m. on Feb. 29, and that they eventually cleared out “sometime between 10 and 11 p.m.” ■

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■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

Shoreline Lake scene



"I took this photo at Shoreline, where the colorful water sports equipment seemed anxious to get out into the water," wrote Birgit Starmanns of Pacchetti Way.

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.

Z-GIRLS

► Continued from page 5

GMS athletic director Matt Cole started the school's skateboarding and surf programs four years ago, and holds annual skateboarding competitions for

his students to show off their skills in brackets for beginner, intermediate and advanced athletes.

He says it is rare for a school to have a skateboarding program for girls, and that a quarter of the school's students take advantage of the program dur-

ing physical education classes.

No girls from other schools responded to the open division invitation, but male students from Hillsborough and Half Moon Bay came to Mountain View for the competition.

"My girls killed it in the open division," Cole said.



Former NAS Moffett Field Site 22

Final 2008 First Five-Year Review Report Now Available

The final 2008 First Five-Year Review Report for Site 22 at former Naval Air Station Moffett Field documents the implementation and performance of the Navy's selected remedy during the past five years. Site 22 is a closed landfill where the Navy constructed a cover in 2003 as part of the remedy.

The final 2008 First Five-Year Review Report is available for public review in the information repository:

**Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin Street
Mountain View, CA 94041; Telephone: 650-903-6337**

For more information regarding Site 22, please contact Mr. Darren Newton, Navy BRAC Environmental Coordinator, at (619) 532-0963 or darren.newton@navy.mil.

'Monte Carlo Night' sold out — but there's a waiting list

Staff Reports

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's plan to cut 10 percent of the state's budget will hit Mountain View's elementary schools particularly hard, lending extra weight to this year's "Monte Carlo Night."

That might explain why the fundraiser, to be held this Friday, March 14 at Microsoft's Mountain View headquarters, is sold out. Through the fundraiser, local parents will boost funding for the Mountain View Educational Foundation, which supports the school district. "Monte Carlo" is the foundation's biggest

fundraiser of the year, and features music, dancing, dinner, games and a live auction.

"This year we are funding \$300,000 in programs," said Kathy Thibodaux, president of the Mountain View Educational Foundation. "Despite the troubling financial climate, we are setting high goals and this event is essential to achieving those goals."

Although "Monte Carlo Night" is currently sold out, those interested in attending can put their names on a waiting list by visiting www.mvef.org. The event is this Friday, March 14, from 7 to 11 p.m. at the Microsoft campus, 1065 La Avenida.

Mountain View youth gets her wish for art studio

By Nicole Baldocchi

Melinda McDonald discovered that creating artworks helps her in coping with her illness.

McDonald, an 18-year-old Mountain View resident, suffers from Ewing's sarcoma and says that her art has served as a way to express herself in all that she is going through.

In response to her need, the Greater Bay Area Make-A-Wish Foundation met with McDonald and saw her accomplished portfolio. McDonald had asked the foundation for an art studio in her back yard, with art supplies, and the foundation complied, constructing and furnishing a studio with supplies. Members of the community also

helped with donations.

"The response to our request for supplies will enhance this wish in a way that the Foundation would not have been able to do otherwise," said Patricia Wilson, executive director of the foundation's Bay Area chapter. "From books, patterns and rubber stamps to ribbon, beads and stencils, Melinda has the raw material to let her creativity soar."

In order to enrich their lives and reduce their suffering, the Make-A-Wish Foundation helps grant the wishes of children and young people with life-threatening medical conditions. For more information or to refer someone for a wish, call (800) 464-9474 or visit www.makewish.org.

FREE LECTURE

"New Zealand's Gardens of Significance"

March 18th 3:00 pm – 4:30pm

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Inspirations

A Guide to the Spiritual Community

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Day Worker Center eyes new location

ESCUELA AVENUE SITE NOT FAR FROM FORMER HEADQUARTERS AT CALVARY CHURCH

By Daniel DeBolt

At long last, the Day Worker Center of Mountain View has a lead on a permanent home: an abandoned cinder-block building near the train tracks at 117 Escuela Ave.

"It's a once in a lifetime opportunity," said director Maria Marroquin about the building, which the center is in contract to buy for \$300,000. While it is in need of renovation, the building is structurally sound according to inspectors, and has "a lot of potential," Marroquin said.

She was enthusiastic enough to say that the site could become "the best day worker center in the world."

The building was a dry cleaner until several years ago, recalled council member Matt Pear. The space is only two blocks away from the center's longtime location at California Street and Escuela Avenue, which the center moved from last year into the



DANIELLE VERNON

This building on Escuela Avenue is where the Day Worker Center hopes to relocate.

current location downtown at the Trinity United Methodist church on Hope and Mercy streets.

The center's board president, Steve Olsen, said they have already raised much of the \$300,000 to buy the space.

But there are some caveats. For one, Olsen said, the site is zoned

residential and requires a conditional use permit from the city. The zoning was changed at some point to encourage residential development.

The site is also short on parking, but a paved city-owned lot next door could fix that problem if the City Council allows its use.

City manager Kevin Duggan said the lot was "unused at this point," adding that the small buildings on the northern edge were once used for Hetch Hetchy water fluoridation.

Regarding the city's help in acquiring the building and using the lot, council member Pear seemed opposed on both counts.

"If they are expecting the city to finance, that's not a small item," he said of the purchase of the building.

"We don't just give city assets over to various groups for their own benefit," he said of the lot.

The Los Altos Hills city council has reportedly been discussing funding the Worker Center purchase, and was scheduled to discuss it again on March 13, after the *Voice* went to press. Mayor Craig Jones said he was open to helping with funding if Mountain View would pitch in as well.

"We're surprised that's there's

discussion at other councils at this point," Duggan said. "It is a relatively new topic for us. We don't have a letter or any formal request." Duggan also noted that the center does not need the city's permission to buy the building.

Olsen said he hopes to have some idea of whether the city would support the purchase, because the center's board will make a decision on whether to buy the building by April 30. The center would close escrow by the end of May, he said, and has already had donors pledge about \$250,000 so far.

"We have some pledges that we need to firm up," he said. "We have a two month period where we need to get all our ducks in a row."

"We're quite confident this is going to happen," Olsen continued. "It seems like the timing could not be more perfect." ▀

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

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Another stop on the line for train depot

By Daniel DeBolt

Plans for a restaurant at the train depot recently fell through, and after five years of being vacant, the space at the end of Castro Street is back up for grabs.

The train depot was built in 2002 to be a replica of the historic train station of 1888, and has been mostly vacant ever since, used primarily as a break room for VTA employees.

Most recently, applicant Judith Green was to operate a restaurant there, but several issues became deal breakers, including a request to move the bathrooms and install a grease interceptor underground in Centennial Square. A full-service restaurant would also need more garbage receptacles than a smaller cafe.

Dennis Drennan, real estate property manager for the city, said that during recent negotiations the City Council realized the 1,100-square-foot space doesn't lend itself well to being converted to a serious restaurant.

"The building wasn't designed or built for a full-service kitchen operation," Drennan said. "It was really starting to change the character of the building. We're looking for a tenant with a less

intensive use."

The city has been accepting new applications for a month, and the deadline for applicants is March 28. Proposals so far include a wine bar, coffee shop, yogurt shop, photography studio and office space.

"We're hoping the entrepreneurial mind will come up with something that will complement the downtown," Drennan said. "An enterprise that will succeed over the long term. I'm sure there are people out there with good ideas."

The city's goal is to gain revenue from the train depot's lease. In December 2006, the city held meetings with several prospective tenants, including Gary Hick for The Passing Track Cafe, Jennifer Ayre for Savvy Cellar and Mike and Firoozhi Sadenghi for Rising Loafer.

Tenants would also get a 520-square-foot patio area in front of the building, which is suitable for outdoor seating. The only requirement is that the bathrooms on the site would have to be completed by the tenants, since they have only been "rough plumbed." The bathrooms will be open to the public. ■

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

DOWNTOWN

► Continued from page 1

A structure of up to four stories could be built there according the downtown precise plan, possibly booting out the small businesses currently at that location — Bangkok Spoon restaurant, Plumeria women's clothes, Carmen's Legal Resource Center, Salon Finesse, A Minute Man Shoe Repair and Vintage Collectible Cameras.

The asking price: \$2.6 million.

The presentation also revealed how much some downtown businesses pay for rent. A 900-square-foot space near Posh Bagel had an asking price of nearly \$5 per square foot, or nearly \$5,000 a month rent.

Neither are the city's free parking lots immune to redevelopment, with zoning in place to encourage public-private partnerships on a few lots, though the city's precise plan mentions requirements to maintain some public parking on the lots in underground garages.

In pitching the merits of down-

town, Berns mentioned the \$100 million the city spent in the 1980s and '90s for the city's library, City Call and performing arts center, which boasts 60,000 patrons every year. Also mentioned was the new parking garage on California and Bryant streets which houses Longs on the bottom floor, described as a new "focal point" for the community.

Berns said the city is actively trying to encourage more retail downtown for a more lively mix of businesses. Only 11 percent of businesses are retail, Berns said, but 24 percent are restaurants and 35 percent are office buildings.

The presentation was broadcast on the Web to support the city's environmental sustainability initiative, Berns said. Rather than have all those developers, brokers and retailers drive their cars to Mountain View, the city can reach a wider audience this way, he said.

Web casts will be archived at city's Web site at www.mountainview.gov. The March 25 City Council meeting will be the first council meeting to be Web cast. ■

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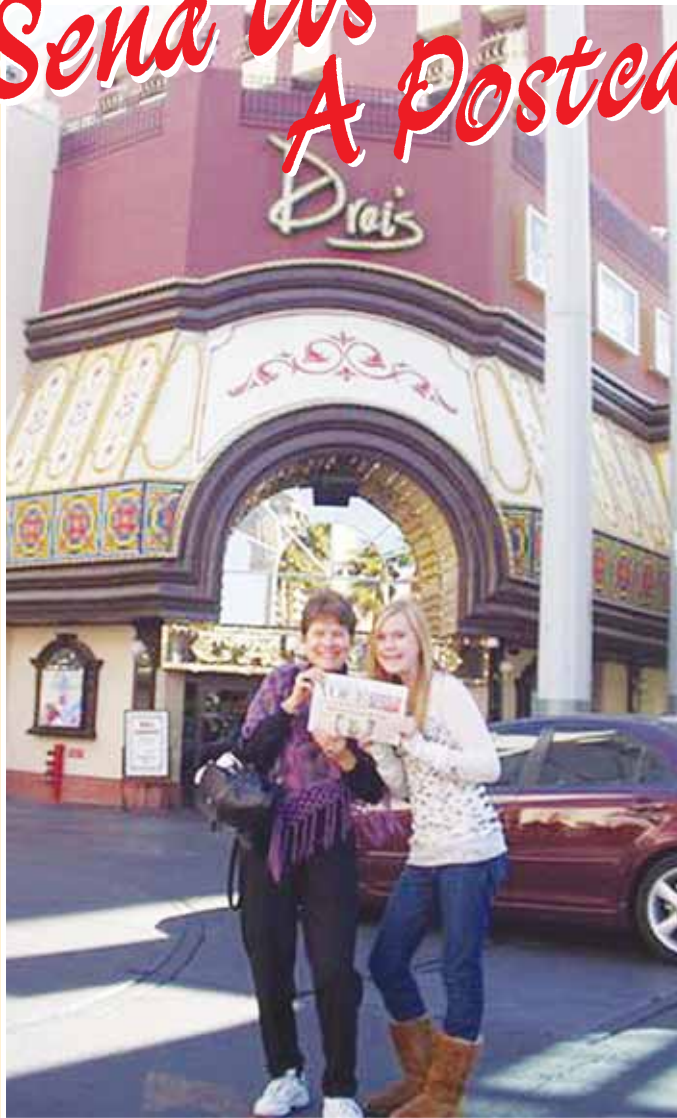


Photo of Denley Rafferty of Mountain View and granddaughter Lauren Hersey of Danville having fun in Las Vegas, Nevada

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JOHNSON

► Continued from page 1

According to an affidavit filed by FBI agent Mark Dixon, Johnson was murdered on Feb. 7 during a marijuana deal in the parking lot of the Happi House restaurant at Ehrhorn Avenue and El Camino Real. The FBI agent, citing a witness who was with Johnson, reported that the murderer was one of three men who arrived to take part in the deal. Also taking part were another group of three young men in a separate car, and Johnson and a passenger riding in Johnson's white Ford Explorer.

According to the affidavit, the

three suspects were acting strangely, and one claimed to be "coked up."

As Johnson and his passenger, becoming nervous, tried to flee the scene, one of the three suspects shot him in the chest, the affidavit says. Johnson drove away down El Camino Real, but crashed soon after. He was pronounced dead at El Camino Hospital.

Police say the three suspects then got in their car and chased the other party of three young men, resulting in a violent car chase and shootout



Jeff Johnson

on city streets and Highway 85. During this encounter, one of the passengers in the fleeing vehicle was shot in the leg, police said.

The investigation seemed to move quickly at first, with the first suspect, Talarico, apprehended while getting off a bus in Mobile, Ala. thanks some investigative help from the FBI. The second suspect, Romero, was later apprehended as he exited the Jack in the Box on El Camino Real near Ehrhorn Avenue — only a few yards from where the Feb. 7 shooting took place.

Police are still actively investigating the murder. Anyone with information is urged to call (650) 903-6344. ▀

MERALES

► Continued from page 1

According to police spokesperson Liz Wylie, police have developed enough evidence to consider Garcia their only suspect. They are not looking for any other suspects in the shooting.

Until the sudden break in the case last week, police said they had no leads, and City Council members held an emergency meeting to boost the reward to \$10,000. In the end, however, investiga-

tors made the arrest without any outside help, and no one will claim the reward.

In a press release, police said they had been working "around the clock to identify and follow up on leads, which was made difficult due to a lack of eyewitnesses to the homicide." Wylie said that during the investigation, police



Hugo Garcia

obtained physical evidence linking Garcia to the crime, and last Thursday they asked him to come to the station for questioning.

"He wasn't here to turn himself in," Wylie said. "He came here on his own accord. When he was here, at some point we developed enough evidence to place him under arrest."

Even though Merale allegedly was affiliated with the Surenos, "This particular crime doesn't appear to be motivated" by gang activity, Wylie said. ▀

Residents organize symbolic clean-up of Rengstorff Park

By Daniel DeBolt

As gang activity and violent crimes seem to have increased over the last few months, many users of Rengstorff Park are pushing back by making sure park users report gambling, drinking and other illegal activities to police.

Early next month, as part of their organizing efforts, the residents are holding a clean-up day at the park.

On Monday evening, the park users gathered at the Senior Center in a meeting organized for low-income residents by a group of local nonprofits calling themselves "Provider Connection." Many attendees, most of them Spanish-speaking parents, were there to learn about enrollment at the city's new child care center at Rengstorff Park. But resident Ana Madril had another subject to address.

Madril said she has had to deal with problems at Rengstorff Park first-hand. For example, while

hosting a party there, some of her guests were harassed by other park users who had been drinking and gambling.

"The problems will get bigger and it's going to continue," she said through an interpreter. "We need to send a message that we care — this is our park."

"One person can make a change, but if there is more than one, we can do better," she said. "If we don't speak up, nobody is going to listen."

After conversations with police, Madril said she realized that police do not have the resources to patrol the park, and that they need help in building a case against regulars who cause problems.

The Rengstorff Park clean-up will be held on April 5 from 9 to 11 a.m.

Monday's meeting was organized by First Five of Santa Clara County along with Palo Alto Community Child Care. ▀

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AT STANFORD



PARCEL TAX

► Continued from page 5

The leftover funds will help the district as it faces a \$100,000 shortfall this year and a possible \$2.7 million in cuts for the 2008-09 year.

“When you budget, you are making an estimate,” said Craig Goldman, the district’s chief financial officer. “This is not unusual. In fact, we prefer to be under budget.”

Mountain View voters passed Measure J during the last state budget crisis in 2004 to help pay for after-school sports, send fifth graders to science camp and retain small class sizes. Under Measure J, residents paid as little as \$75 a year for smaller properties of up to 8,000 square feet, ranging up to \$600 a year for properties over 44,000 square feet. The tax is set to expire in June 2009.

Some of the savings from the tax were a result of the district spending less money than planned for teachers on special assignment, “zero elective periods” and English language learner programs. Fourth, fifth and sixth grade class size

reductions started later than expected, and the district did not spend more than \$100,000 put aside for these programs.

Goldman said he is also investigating why the district did not use the \$17,000 allocated to purchase string instruments, but thinks the instruments were purchased with other funds.

“Let the parcel tax raise money for things one no one else wants to,” trustee Ellen Wheeler said during the board meeting.

Measure C campaign begins

The report comes after board members agreed to put a new parcel tax measure, Measure C, on the upcoming June ballot.

School officials said that if Measure C is not renewed, local elementary and middle schools would be devastated by budget cuts.

That is why district supporters have already started to campaign for Measure C, which will tax local property owners to raise close to \$3 million for teacher retention, school libraries, small classes and music and art programs.

School officials also plan to raise school bus fees and cut back on supply costs, but have

not finalized cuts.

“Clearly we need to get cuts under control,” Goldman told trustees at last week’s board meeting.

Friends of the district are starting to recruit volunteers and seek donations. The group is planning campaign tactics with Tramutola, an Oakland-based consulting firm that worked on the original parcel tax. Meanwhile, volunteers will begin door-to-door voter outreach, mailing and phone calls in April, according to organizers.

“We are going to need to raise money to pay for mailings and lawn signs,” said Charles Heath of Tramutola.

Under Measure C, residents receiving supplemental security income and senior citizens would be exempt from the tax.

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Maundy Thursday (3/20 | 7pm)
Good Friday (3/21 | 12pm & 7pm)

Easter

Easter Vigil (3/22 | 7pm)
Easter Sunday (3/23 | 8:30am, 10:45am)
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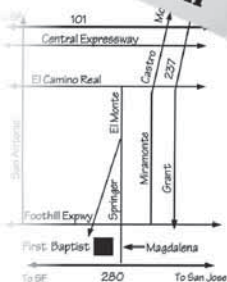
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Mar. 21 – Good Friday Service
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MAUNDY THURSDAY, March 20th

7:30 pm Choral Eucharist with Foot Washing and Stripping of the Altar

GOOD FRIDAY, March 21st, 7:30 pm

EASTER VIGIL, March 22nd
7:30 pm Eucharist with Plainchant. Reception Following

EASTER MORNING, March 23rd

9:00 am Easter Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt
10:30 am Celebratory Choral Eucharist with Ensemble of Organ, Strings and Trumpets

Easter Sunday Schedule at Los Altos Union PC

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Palm Sunday, Mar. 16:

8, 9:30 & 11:00 AM worship times.
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7:00 PM. Dramatic Presentation of "Have You Seen My Son?"

Friday, Mar. 21: 7:00 PM Choral Tenebrae

Easter Sunday, Mar. 23:

8 & 9:30 AM Breakfast Worship Services

11:00 AM Sanctuary Worship Service

■ EDUCATION BRIEFS

FIVE MVLA ADMINISTRATORS WIN REGIONAL AWARDS

The Association of California School Administrators has awarded five administrators of the Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District for their contribution to public education.

The regional branch recognizes top administrators in the county each year, but Superintendent Barry Groves said it is unusual for the district to receive so many awards at once.

The recipients are Wynne Satterwhite for Secondary Principal, Hilarey Davis for Special Education, Principal Bill Pierce for Continuing Education, Director Laura Stefanski for Adult Education and Steve Hope for Administrator of the Year.

LOCAL SCHOOLS NAB GARDEN GRANT

Local elementary and middle schools won their second grant to continue garden education. The \$20,000 Morgan Family Grant allows the Mountain View Whisman school district to expand its curriculum, offering consistent garden education programs to all schools.

Most schools in the district have gardens, but curriculums vary at each, with some holding lunch lessons and others incorporating garden education into everyday classroom activities. With the new grant, plus an original grant from the California Department of Education, PTA members hope they can hire a coordinator to oversee the project and organize volunteers to lead the garden education programs.

Schools hope to start implementing new programs in the fall.

LATINO STUDENTS ATTEND COLLEGE PREP CONFERENCE

Mountain View school districts recently sent approximately 65 students and their parents to the first-ever Advancing Latina/o Achievement and Success Conference last weekend at San Jose State University as part of the districts' continued effort to promote college opportunities for at-risk and underrepresented students.

Conference participants chose among 20 workshops and panels on financial aid and planning, resources and pathways to college. Three Mountain View Whisman district teachers also

presented workshops to the 2,800 Latino participants from around Santa Clara County.

Graham Middle School Principal David Pribyl said his school promoted the conference to Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) participants and to middle school students who work with the at-risk coordinators.

The conference, organized by San Jose State, county superintendents and the National Hispanic University, was an attempt to reach out to the Latino community about college opportunities. Mountain View students also participated in the Latino youth and parent forums this year, and will shadow Foothill Community College students in May.

READING PROGRAM SEEKS TUTORS

Yes Reading, a Bay Area program specializing in free tutoring sessions for elementary and middle school students not reaching their full reading capabilities, is seeking tutors for its Mountain View center housed at Castro Elementary School.

To become a tutor for a few hours a week, call (408) 945-5720 or e-mail volunteer@yesreading.org. To contact the Mountain View center, call Nora Gonzales de Beltran at (650) 526-3590 Ext. 1860, or e-mail nora@yesreading.org. Yes Reading also has centers from San Francisco to San Jose and two in Oakland.

— Nicole Baldocchi

— Casey Weiss



Peninsula Easter Services

Los Altos Lutheran Church

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- Palm Sunday 9:00 AM, March 16**
Celebration with palms & the passion story
- Maundy Thursday 7:30 PM, March 20**
Jesus washed their feet & said love one another
- Good Friday 2:00 PM, March 21**
Meditating on the mystery of the cross: a service of prayer
- Good Friday 7:30 PM, March 21**
Service of shadow: watching & waiting through the night
- The Easter Vigil 6:30 PM, Saturday, March 22**
Walking into light and life: The first Easter service.
- Easter Sunday 9:00 & 11:00 AM, March 23**
Easter brunch, Sunday School egg hunt and activities at 10:00 AM

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 - Easter Sunday – March 23, bilingual 9:30 AM**
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- Good Friday**
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- Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday**
7:00 p.m.
- Easter Services**
6 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 11:00 a.m.
- Easter Breakfast**
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Maundy Thursday— March 20

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- Good Friday — March 21**
- ❖ Noon to 2:00pm *Seven Last Words Meditation*
- ❖ 2:00 to 3:00pm *Stations of the Cross: A Walking Meditation*
- ❖ 7:30 to 8:30pm *Good Friday Prayer and Meditation*
- Easter — March 23**
- ❖ 5:30am *Easter Vigil, Eucharist & Baptism*
- ❖ 8:00am *Festive Breakfast & Family Easter Activities*
- ❖ 10:00am *Festive Holy Eucharist*

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OBITUARY

MARJORIE A. SCHWENKE

Marjorie A. Schwenke, a Mountain View resident, died on Feb. 19 following a battle with cancer. She was 89.

Born in 1918 in Waldorf, Minn. to Carrie and Andrew Madison, "Marge" was raised on the family farm in New Richland, Minn. She later married Herbert Schwenke, and they were together 48 years until his death.

She was a homemaker most of her life and worked at Emporium-Capwell's for many years. She taught herself seamstress work and enjoyed crafts and volunteering at the Sunnyview Auxiliary.

Schwenke is survived by her daughter Barbara Bartzi; son Robert Schwenke; grandchildren Theresa Stewart, Carrie Kelsoe, Andrew Martwick, Julie Slade, Donna Kanahile, Lisa Trujillo and Amy Schwenke; 14 great-grandchildren; sister-in-law Elaine Riemann; and longtime companion Gilbert Shirck.

A memorial service was held Feb. 29 at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church. Entombment followed at the Skylawn Memorial Park in San Mateo.

Donations can be made to the Sloan Kettering Cancer Research Center, P.O. Box 27105, New York, NY, 10117, or to Pathways Hospice Foundation at 585 N. Mary Ave., Sunnyvale, 94085.

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Ken Rodrigues, Architect. Kenneth Rodrigues & Partners. "I designed the Vineyard and bought one for my business."



Moria and Jimmy Kang, Neocom Marketing Co. "Great long-term investment."



Manav Singh, partner, SOAProjects. "Why pay rent when one can own?"

BLAZE

Continued from page 5

is suspicious, and investigators have not ruled out arson. Further details were not immediately available.

"The fire is considered arson at this point," Wylie said. "It's being actively investigated, but these things usually take a lot of time."

When asked about the arson investigation, Brown said, "I cannot confirm the arson. The fire is suspicious and under investigation." ▣

We've just added another

VOICE... Yours

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Candidates positioned for June election

By Daniel DeBolt

Presidential race aside, it's promising to be a busy year for city, county, state and federal elections, with the June 3 election just around the corner.

Last Friday was the deadline to file papers for the June election, and several seats effecting Mountain View are contested. Anna Eshoo's congressional seat is up for grabs with four challengers running. District seats for the state Senate and state Assembly have several candidates each.

On the county level, District 5 county Supervisor Liz Kniss is running for re-election unopposed, but the sitting Santa Clara Valley Water District director for District 5, Patrick Kwok, is challenged by Melanie Schrader (though she has yet to pay her filing fees).

Numerous judgeships are on the ballot this June, but only one is challenged: Superior Court Office 8, where incumbent Ray Cunningham must defend his seat against six challengers, including former North County supervising deputy district attorney Jay Boyarski.

The nomination period for the City Council's November election starts in July.

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

■ INFORMATION

Following is a partial list of candidates in the upcoming June 3 election:

14th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Anna G. Eshoo, Democrat (incumbent)
David Chapman, Republican
Ronny Santana, Republican
Brian Holtz, Libertarian
Carol Brouillet, Green

13th STATE SENATORIAL DISTRICT
Elaine Alquist, Democrat (incumbent)
John H. Webster, Libertarian
Shane Patrick Connolly, Republican

22nd STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT *
Paul Fong, Democrat
Dominic Caserta, Democrat
Kris Wang, Democrat
Carol L. Percent, Democrat
Brent T. Oya, Republican
Anna E. Song, Democrat

* Held by outgoing Democrat Sally Lieber

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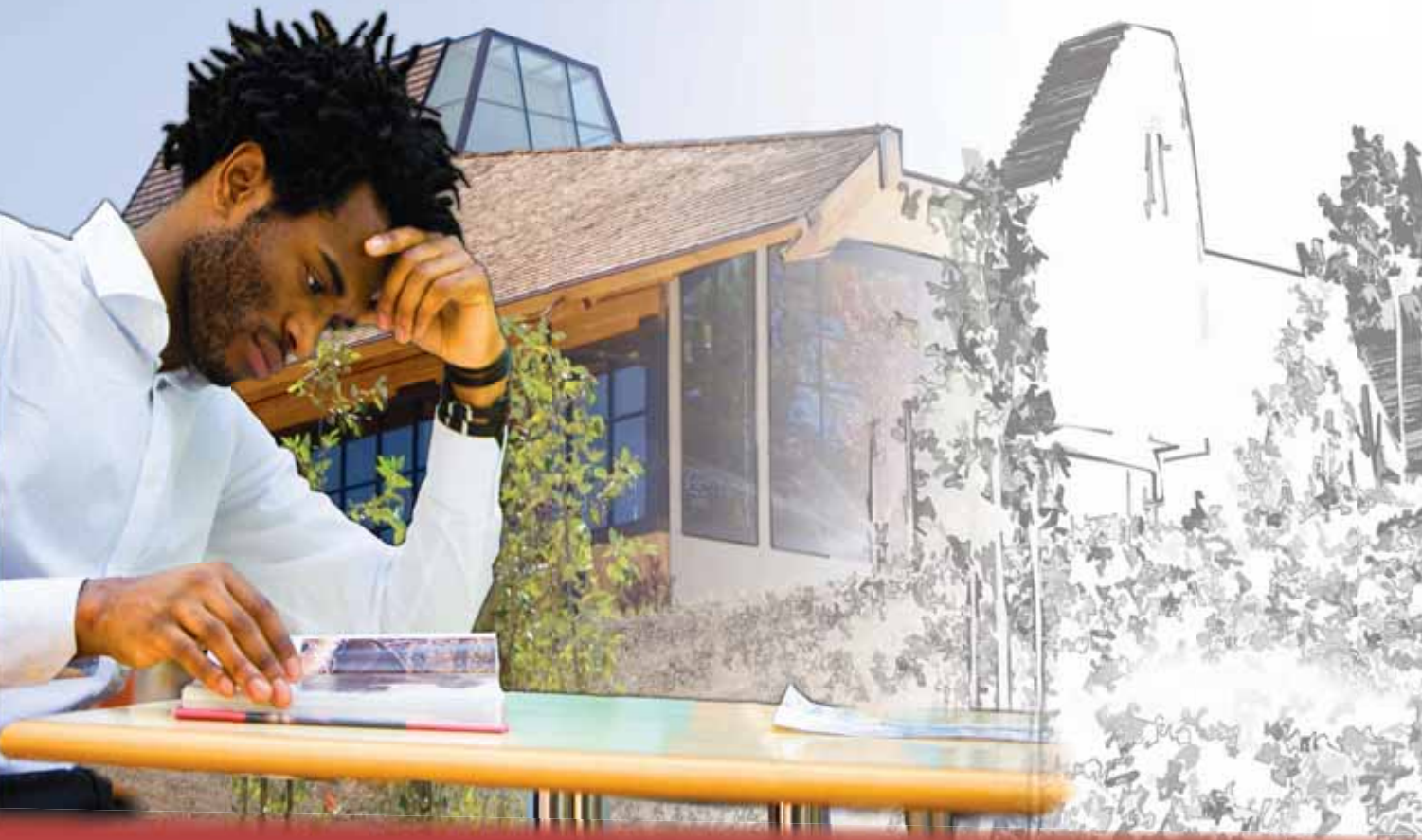
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■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

Schools between rock and a hard place

Local education officials are feeling like pawns in a state budget battle that is setting up between Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democratic legislative leaders over how to close the state's expected \$16 billion budget shortfall next fiscal year.

In Sacramento, the skirmishes already have begun, with the two parties using the same tired lines that have brought the state to its financial knees many times in recent years. And this time around, the governor has recommended suspending Proposition 98, which is designed to guarantee minimum funding for schools, unless the Legislature, by a two-thirds vote, agrees to suspend it.

The scenario this year is familiar: A small group of Republican legislators, backed by the governor, will insist that Prop. 98 must go, and that the budget must be balanced without a tax increase. The Democratic majority says they will refuse to accept a \$4 billion blow to education, and instead argue that up to half the budget shortfall should be paid for by increasing taxes. Republicans have just enough votes to block any new tax initiative and have no qualms about creating a budget stalemate.

For Mountain View Whisman and many other districts supported by the state, the budget standoff puts them between a rock and a hard place. The district cannot set its budget until the state lets them know how much money they will receive. And right now, the \$4 billion state cut is expected to translate into a loss of about \$3 million to the local elementary school district. No layoffs have been announced, but many programs could be in trouble if the governor's budget is adopted.

The only lucky card in the budget debacle is the expiration of the district's parcel tax next year. Trustees have not only decided to renew it, but have tacked on an additional assessment that is expected to produce an extra \$1.3 million starting in June 2009. The measure goes to the voters this June. Coupled with other measures, and some significant program cutbacks, Mountain View Whisman can survive what looks like a very painful budget year, district officials say.

In contrast, the budget crunch is much lighter at the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District, which receives the majority of its funding from local property taxes. Barring any unforeseen shortfalls, the district will lose only \$800,000, although nothing can be certain when a majority of the state's schools are expected to hemorrhage so badly.

Like many school districts, Mountain View Whisman trustees sent the governor a letter protesting his plans to suspend Proposition 98. We echo that position, and hope that legislators from both parties will work together to find a sensible middle ground in the budget battle — one that will ease the draconian budget cuts now planned for thousands of California schools, including those in Mountain View Whisman, whose districts may have little choice but to lay off teachers and slash programs.

■ LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

MISGUIDED GRANNIES

Editor:

This is in response to the piece by the Raging Grannies ("Why we protest at recruitment centers," March 7). I know they are well intentioned, but from my perspective, they are as misguided as the isolationists were in the 1930s.

We all know how unprepared we were for WWII. Our folks were practicing with sticks while the Italians, Germans and Japanese were honing their skills in Ethiopia, Spain and China. It cost us and our allies millions of lives for not standing up to the "triangle of evil."

I have written numerous times before on various subjects, but this one touches my heart. I'm from a military family of long standing — back to the Civil War — and a war veteran (Sgt. U.S.M.C., 1954-1960, Lcdr. U.S.N. Retired, 1963-1977), and I understand the sacrifices we have made to keep this country free.

As a thoughtful grandpa, I think the Grannies would serve us better if they directed their energies to the inner cities and the rampant killing of our children.

Thomas E. Holmes
Preston Drive

TWO SIDES TO DWELL HOME DEBATE

Editor:

I find myself agreeing with parts of both the opinions expressed in the March 7 paper regarding the Dwell home. Mountain

View is a new innovative community, which should not fear seeing innovation in its housing, especially changes focused on environmental sustainability. However, I also agree that an architectural review board is important in a community with an increasing amount of wealth.

I grew up in another community where many new residents flush with money begin "mansionizing" their homes. Our homes can negatively impact our neighbors. Yet, when it comes to green housing, what may negatively impact one neighbor brings benefits to the wider neighborhood in a more livable and more inspiring environment.

Chris Chiang
Latham Street

FED UP WITH CALTRAIN MESSAGES

Editor:

Caltrain needs to be taken to task for their fear-mongering messages on the electronic signs about "suspicious packages." They're annoying their customers (i.e., riders) and making fools of themselves.

Instead, Caltrain should be using the electronic signs for what they're intended: providing information about train schedules and the time. I'm fed up with these messages, and I hear a lot of other passengers saying the same thing.

Tim Mather
Showers Drive



■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

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The jewel of Ramona Street

THE WINE ROOM IN PALO ALTO COMBINES ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE, LUSCIOUS WINES

By Dale F. Bentson

Imagine the agreeable surprise (or terror) I sensed at being one of only two males in The Wine Room early one evening last week. Pairs of ladies were chatting away at the bar, in cozy nooks and around the fireplace. "As evenings progress, the male/female ratio does balance out, though," owner Michael Garcia promised.

Open since November on Ramona Street in downtown Palo Alto, The Wine Room is a

safe haven for females to meet friends over a glass of wine and perhaps share a nibble from the light-fare menu. The inviting ambiance is sedate, sophisticated and non-threatening.

Native son Garcia boasts a food-and-beverage resume that spans 23 years. Born in Palo Alto, he majored in food science at Cal Poly and worked his way through college in kitchens, eventually turning a job into a profession.



MARJAN SADOUGHI

A view of the "romance room" at The Wine Room.

► See **WINE ROOM**, page 20

Sports Page

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WINE ROOM

► Continued from page 19

"I've done it all, at one point or another: waited tables, flipped burgers, been a prep cook, a sous chef, bartender, wine buyer, manager," the affable Garcia said. "I've worked in pool halls; I managed the original Village Pub in Woodside; built the wine program at Left Bank and worked at Lavanda until I opened The Wine Room.

"The Wine Room is a concept I had in mind for years because after 10 p.m. in Palo Alto, there isn't any place for adults to go. The scene is too loud

and rowdy in most spots, not places for adults to relax and have a nice conversation.

"I don't serve beer, either, and that cuts down on a certain element. It's a nice group of people who come here. I have great customers."

The Wine Room is housed in an architectural gem at 520 Ramona St., designed by artist and craftsman Pedro de Lemos, according to the National Register of Historic Places. Developing buildings in the 500 block of Ramona Street, de Lemos incorporated Spanish and early-California styles with tile roofs of varying heights, wrought iron, graceful archways and courtyards. In 1985, the area was designated as a Historic District in the National Register.

The Gotham Shop, an arts and crafts store, opened at

520 Ramona in 1925, and The Wine Room's outdoor sign is an updated version of the original Gotham Shop design.

The building previously hosted vegetarian restaurant the Bay Leaf Cafe; after it closed, Garcia came along at just the right time, he said. "The owner, Phyllis (Lyons) Munsey (granddaughter of de Lemos), was remodeling the space after Bay Leaf Cafe left. There was a lot of interest in the space but she liked my idea best," Garcia said. "Like being in someone's living room," she said.

The site's back room had been used for storage by both Bay Leaf and Dou-

ble Rainbow ice cream, with the splendid architectural elements unseen but well protected for years. The restoration proved magnificent: Beautiful tiles were uncovered on the walls and archway connecting the two adjoining rooms.

Charming fireplaces grace both rooms, as well as wrought-iron chandeliers and other objets d'art salvaged from the recent restoration work at the Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park, much of which was also designed by de Lemos. The concrete and tile floors and adobe walls are original, refurbished to their unique elegance.

Garcia added overstuffed comfortable chairs, sofas and banquettes; a bar; a tiny but well conceived wine shop; and a small prep

"I don't serve beer, either, and that cuts down on a certain element. It's a nice group of people who come here. I have great customers."

► Continued on next page



MARJAN SADOUGH

Wine Room owner Mike Garcia pours a glass of Cotes-du-Rhone at the wine bar area late last month.

► Continued from previous page

kitchen to assemble food plates.

The Wine Room offers three cheese plates, a charcuterie plate, smoked salmon, olives, hummus and a couple of desserts. Nothing is cooked on-site. Each plate comes with a few "extras" such as crackers, capers, cornichons and quince paste. The presentation is visually appealing, and Garcia is happy to make up something special if asked.

And, yes, there is wine. Garcia continually offers about two dozen reds, whites and sparkling wines plus three wine flights. The wines are a broad sampling from across the globe and served in dazzling Riedel crystal wine stemware.

During my visit, Garcia was

pouring wines from California, Oregon, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Australia and Argentina. The pours weren't skimpy, either, and prices ranged from \$9 to \$15 for table wine (a couple of dollars more for sparklers).

"I adjust the selection a little each night. Soon, I'll move away from the heavy reds into warmer-weather wines, roses and fruitier whites," Garcia said. "After all these years in the business, I know many people well and can get rarer wines not generally available."

The Wine Room is open 4 p.m. until midnight, seven days per week. It's a quiet, sophisticated lounge, the kind one would expect to find in fine hotels with high tariffs and stoic service. This is the best of both worlds. ■

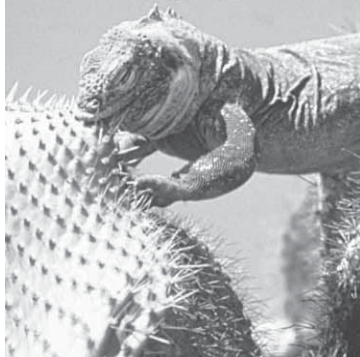
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MOVIE REVIEWS



THE COUNTERFEITERS ★★★1/2

(Guild) Oscar's Best Foreign Film winner plays the concentration-camp drama to dynamic effect. Salomon Sorowitsch (Karl Markovics) is a counterfeiter extraordinaire, a Russian Jew who's the best in the business. False passports and documents are all in a day's work until Sorowitsch's confidence gets the better of him and the Nazis come calling, sentencing him to the Sachsenhausen labor camp in Berlin. The Germans amass a large crew of Europe's most skilled laborers at Sachsenhausen — graphic artists, printers, copper engravers, etc. — with the concept of forging their own English pounds and American dollars and destabilizing those economies by flooding their markets with bogus bucks. Supporting the Nazi war effort is inconceivable but cooperation, and survival, is the inmates' psychological trump card. An ethical tug of war is the crux of the camp's infrastructure as the prisoners battle one another for moral high ground while struggling with harsh conditions and the day-to-day reality of exhaustion and malnutrition. There's not a lot of fresh ground to cover, but what there is is crafted with exacting detail and fervor. *Rated: R for violence, profanity and nudity. 1 hour, 44 minutes. In Russian and German with English subtitles.* — J.A.

MISS PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY ★★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Guinevere Pettigrew (Frances McDormand) is a full-blown failure as a governess: scalding the porridge, losing her young charges in local parks, etc. The nanny service refuses to recommend her, so as a last resort Miss Pettigrew nips a business card off the matron's desk and presents herself at the doorway of one Delysia Lafosse (the enchanting Amy Adams). Delysia isn't looking for a nanny, per se, and there's not a rugrat in sight. Instead the flighty and flirty ingenue is casting about for a proper social secretary to make sense of her hectic agenda. Miss Pettigrew to the rescue! As Delysia flutters through things Cinderella-style, Pettigrew deftly cuts a swath through her jumbled social clutter. Pettigrew also endures an unexpected makeover while skillfully choreographing the hazards of Delysia's romantic roundelay in a manner both madcap and merry. The farce frays a bit at the edges as it telegraphs unmistakable idealisms, a tidy set-to of boy-meets-girl and girl-reserves-the-right-to-equivocate. A spare little trifle, clean and sweet. *Rated: PG-13 for some nudity, language and mature themes. 1 hour, 32 minutes.* — J.A.

MOVIE CRITICS

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

MOVIE TIMES

10,000 B.C. (PG-13) Century 16: 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:15, 4:15, 5:15, 6, 7, 8, 8:45, 9:40 & 10:35 p.m. Sat. also at 10:40 & 11:40 a.m. **Century 20:** 11:25 a.m.; 12:05, 12:40, 1:20, 2:35, 3:20, 4, 4:35, 5:10, 6, 6:40, 7:50, 8:40, 9:15, 10 & 10:30 p.m. Fri.-Mon. also at 7:20 p.m. Sat. also at 10:40 a.m.

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS (PG) ★★★
Century 12: 12:50, 3:15 & 5:40 p.m.

ATONEMENT (R) ★★★1/2 **Century 20:** 7:15 & 10:05 p.m.

THE BAND'S VISIT (PG-13) ★★★1/2 **Aquarius:** 2:45, 5, 7:30 & 9:45 p.m.

THE BANK JOB (R) **Century 16:** 1:20, 4:10, 7:25, 10:05 p.m. Sat. also at 10:35 a.m. **Century 12:** 1:10, 4, 7:15 & 9:50 p.m.

BE KIND REWIND (PG-13) ★★★1/2
Century 20: 12:25, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35 & 10:10 p.m.

CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR (R) ★★★1/2 **Century 12:** 8 & 10:30 p.m.

COLLEGE ROAD TRIP (G) **Century 16:** 12:35, 2:45, 5, 7:15 & 9:35 p.m.
Century 12: 12:10, 1, 2:30, 3:40, 4:45, 5:55, 7, 8:30 & 9:40 p.m.

THE COUNTERFEITERS (R) ★★★1/2
Guild: 2:15, 4:45, 7:10 & 9:40 p.m. Sat. & Sun. also at noon.

DEFINITELY, MAYBE (PG-13) ★★★1/2
Century 20: 1:35, 4:50, 7:40 & 10:25 p.m. Sat. also at 11 a.m.

DOOMSDAY (R) **Century 16:** 2:25, 5:05, 7:50 & 10:30 p.m. Sat. also at 11:30 a.m.
Century 12: 12:30*, 1:40, 3:10*, 4:30, 5:50*, 7:10, 9:20* & 10 p.m. *Spanish subtitles

FUNNY GAMES (R) ★★★1/2
Palo Alto Square: 1:40, 4:20 & 7 p.m. Fri. & Sat. also at 9:40 p.m.

HORTON HEARS A WHO (G) ★★★ **Century 16:** 12:30, 1:15, 2, 2:50, 3:35, 4:20, 5:10, 5:55, 6:45, 7:30, 8:15, 9, 9:45 & 10:30 p.m. Sat. also at 10:50 & 11:40 a.m. **Century 20:** 11:30 a.m.; noon, 12:35, 1:10, 1:45, 2:20, 2:55, 3:30, 4:05, 4:40, 5:15, 5:50, 6:25, 7, 7:35, 8:10, 8:45, 9:20, 9:55 & 10:30 p.m. Sat. also at 10:50 a.m.

IN BRUGES (R) **Century 20:** 11:50 a.m.; 2:35, 5:15, 7:45 & 10:15 p.m.

JUMPER (PG-13) **Century 20:** 7:55 & 10:15 p.m.

JUNO (PG-13) ★★★ **Century 20:** 11:40, 12:20, 4:45, 7:10 & 9:30 p.m. **Aquarius:** 2:30, 4:45, 7 & 9:20 p.m.

MARRIED LIFE (PG-13) ★★★
Century 16: 12:50, 3:20, 5:45, 8:05 & 10:20 p.m.

METROPOLITAN OPERA (Not Rated) **Century 16:** Sat. at 10:30 a.m. Sun. at noon. **Century 20:** Sat. at 10:30 a.m. Sun. at noon.

MISS PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY (PG-13) ★★★ **Century 16:** 12:40, 3, 5:35, 7:55 & 10:15 p.m. **Century 20:** 12:25, 2:50, 5:05, 7:30 & 9:50 p.m.

NEVER BACK DOWN (PG-13) **Century 16:** 1:50, 4:55, 7:40 & 10:25 p.m. Sat. also at 11:05 a.m. **Century 12:** 12:15, 1:20, 3, 4:20, 6, 7:30, 9 & 10:15 p.m.

THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL (PG-13) ★★ **Century 16:** 1, 3:55, 7:10 & 9:55 p.m. **Century 20:** 11:45 a.m.; 1:30, 2:40, 5:25, 6:50, 8:05, 9:35 & 10:40 p.m.

PENELOPE (PG) ★★★ **Century 12:** 12:25, 2:45, 5:05, 7:40 & 10:05 p.m.

THE PIRATES WHO DON'T DO ANYTHING: A VEGGIE TALES MOVIE (G) **Century 20:** 12:20, 2:30 & 5 p.m.

SEMI-PRO (R) **Century 16:** 12:45, 3:10, 5:40, 7:55 & 10:10 p.m.
Century 20: 12:55, 3:35, 5:55, 8:15 & 10:35 p.m.

SLEEPWALKING (R) ★★★
Palo Alto Square: 2, 4:50 & 7:30 p.m. Fri. & Sat. also at 9:55 p.m.

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG) ★★★ **Century 16:** 4:30, 7:05 & 9:30 p.m. Fri.-Tue. also at 1:45 p.m. Sat. also at 11:15 a.m.
Century 12: 12:45, 2*, 4:35*, 6:30, 7:05* & 9:30* p.m. *Spanish subtitles

STEP UP 2: THE STREETS (PG-13)
Century 12: 12:35, 3:05, 3:50*, 7:55, 9:10* & 10:25 p.m. *Spanish subtitles

THERE WILL BE BLOOD (R) ★★★★★
Century 20: 11:55 a.m.; 3:25, 6:35 & 10:05 p.m.

VANTAGE POINT (PG-13) ★★★1/2
Century 16: 3:05, 5:25, 7:45 & 10 p.m. Fri. & Sun.-Tue. also at 12:40 p.m.
Century 20: 1, 3:15, 4:25, 5:40, 8, 9:35 & 10:20 p.m.

THE WATER HORSE: LEGEND OF THE DEEP (PG) **Century 20:** 5:20 p.m. Fri.-Sat. & Mon.-Tue. also at 2:25 p.m. Fri. & Mon.-Tue. also at 12:10 p.m.

WELCOME HOME ROSCOE JENNINGS (PG-13)
Century 20: Tue. at 2 & 7:20 p.m.

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

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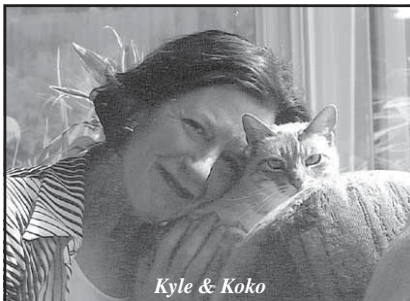
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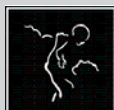
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The world is his instrument

CSMA PERCUSSIONIST, QUADRE HOLD DOWNTOWN PERFORMANCE

By Nick Veronin

Jim Kassis, a percussion teacher at the Community School for Music and Arts, sees the world as one giant instrument.

Kassis said his musical medium is unique, because any object can become a drum, as long as somebody has the mind to start banging on it. "To be able to take any anything — like leaves, rocks — and make a piece out of that ... it's kind of cool," he said.

To illustrate his point, Kassis mentioned one of his musical projects, a "water percussion concerto."

"We're playing instruments in the water — putting gongs in the water and changing the pitch," he explained.

Born in Idaho, the percussionist moved to California to study music at San Jose State University and began teaching at CSMA in 1992. There he met Daniel Wood, founder of the chamber music French horn quartet Quadre.

Wood said he knew he needed to team with Kassis after hearing the drummer play in a jazz combo at the school. Thus, the concept for the forthcoming concert "Feel the Beat" was hatched. Kassis will play with the Mountain View-based Quadre at 8 p.m. this Saturday at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts.

During the concert, Quadre musicians Wood, Nathan Pawelek, Mathew Croft and Lydia Van Dreel will perform



NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

Daniel Wood and Jim Kassis rehearse at CSMA.

original compositions with Kassis backing the group on percussion. Kassis will also perform solo pieces. (Jessica Valeri is also a member of Quadre, but will not play at this concert.)

In addition, amateur performers from Jordan Middle School in Palo Alto will show their chops on the stage.

Wood, who also teaches at CSMA, said that giving young performers a venue to display their talent is a rewarding enterprise. He and Kassis share a passion for teaching, and think about their efforts as more than simply vocational. For them, music instruction is a form of community service.

"Through music you develop relationships with people that can last your whole life," Kassis said. ▣

■ INFORMATION

What: "Feel the Beat," a Quadre concert featuring percussionist Jim Kassis

Where: SecondStage, Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St.

When: 8 p.m. Saturday, March 15

Cost: Tickets are \$17-\$34

Info: Visit www.mvcpa.com or call (650) 903-6000

Fun and 'Comforts' at T'Works

By Jeanie Forte

TheatreWorks brings us another West Coast premiere in Kathleen Clark's sweet ode to love in the latter years, "Southern Comforts."

While the title sounds warm and fuzzy, that's deceptive — Clark delivers an affecting piece that is surprisingly as feisty and funny as it is tender.

Picture a kindly-looking older man — late 60s? early 70s? — futzing around with his storm windows in New Jersey, when inclement weather blows in an attractive older woman, carrying news from church.

Turns out they're both into the baseball game that's on TV, and Gus (Edward Sarafian) is a widower, and Amanda (Karen Grassle) is a widow from Tennessee who is visiting her daughter in town. A rather predictable set-up, yes, but not humdrum or trite.

Both of them are fiercely independent and set in their ways, but the mutual attraction they feel is

stronger than either of them can fight. As the relationship progresses, we learn more about their pasts and their particular quirks.

■ INFORMATION

What: "Southern Comforts," by Kathleen Clark, presented by TheatreWorks

Where: The Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

When: Through March 30, with 7:30 p.m. shows Tuesday and Wednesday, 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, 2 p.m. matinees on Saturdays and Sundays, and 7 p.m. on Sundays

Cost: \$20 to \$56

Info: Call (650) 903-6000 or go to www.theatreworks.org

The story follows their romance through marriage and beyond, with lots of laughs along the way.

The sharp repartee saves the show from getting sappy, and

there are enough clever plot elements to hold our interest. Thankfully, no one gets Alzheimer's, and no one has a heart attack or dies of cancer or some such.

Much credit for the show's success goes to Sarafian and Grassle, both of whom have long resumes from theater and television. Accomplished veterans that they are, their comic timing is impeccable, and their chemistry together superb. Sarafian's deadpan delivery suits his character and endears him to us; he manages to avoid the triteness of the gruff old guy with the heart of gold.

Grassle does a brilliant turn as Amanda, with priceless expressions and body language to match. Her gestures and tone conveyed subtle nuance of character, even in a piece given to snappy dialogue. She reminded me of Meg Ryan, or perhaps where Ryan might arrive in 30 years. Both she and Sarafian make it all look effortless, and yet you know it's made possible only by their years of experience. ▣

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