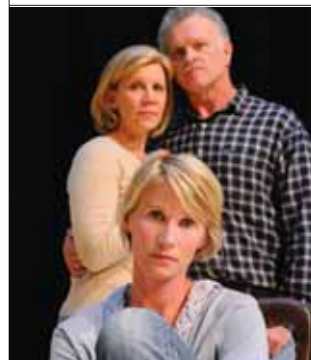


# Mountain View VOICE



**Wake up call**  
Pear Avenue Theatre  
tackles Iraq war in  
'Homeland Prayer'  
A&E | P.22

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INSIDE: HEALTH & FITNESS | PAGE 25

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DARLENE BOUCHARD

Marco Garcia, 33, plays goalie as the kids try to score.

## Local teens run soccer camp for at-risk youth — with a little help from Silicon Valley

By Casey Weiss

As the time neared one o'clock, dozens of elementary and middle school students — all wearing their green and blue camp shirts — leapt off a school bus and ran onto the fields at Bubb Elementary School.

The enthusiastic kids were taking part in "Kick, Lead and Dream," a free soccer camp for underprivileged youths. Now in its second year, the camp has more than tripled in size, and now the coaches — most of whom are local high school athletes with a strong social conscience — are turning to Silicon Valley companies to help fund the two-week program.

The program pairs over 100 mostly Latino campers with 20 coaches to work on soccer and leadership skills. This year the campers and coaches took over the soccer fields for two weeks in late June and early July. The coaches arrived in the morning to plan the day, which normally included drills, the occasional water fight and visits

from inspirational speakers.

Akash Nigam, a camp founder who plays for Mountain View High School's varsity soccer team, came up with the idea for the camp over two years ago while trying to combine his two passions: community service and soccer. Several of his soccer buddies joined in last year to start the camp, and with the help of Nigam's dad, an entrepreneur, the students assembled the two-week camp for about 30 students.

"When I got money for my birthday, I would usually give it to my grandma in India, and she

would hand it out to the poor," Nigam said. This time, "I wanted to do work for my own community."

► See **SOCCKER**, page 13



DARLENE BOUCHARD

Math coach Colleen Purcell, 17, helps Jacob Quevedo, 9, learn the order of operations in a math problem.

## Zone wars

PROPERTY OWNERS ON OLD MIDDLEFIELD REVIVE OFFICE SPACE CONFLICT

By Daniel DeBolt

Old Middlefield Way may only be four blocks long, but it is likely to be a source of great contention during the city's general plan update.

At least 55 property owners on Old Middlefield Way are demanding land use reform. The street's zoning ordinance is too restrictive, the property owners say, and vacancy rates are higher than ever.

They submitted a petition to the City Council outlining proposed changes on June 24. But city offi-

► See **ZONE**, page 8

## Reform in the air for VTA board

By Daniel DeBolt

The Valley Transportation Authority, which runs the county's bus and light rail systems — and which has ambitious plans for bringing BART to San Jose — has long been criticized for the way its board favors San Jose over the county's smaller cities. Next month, in response to these criticisms, cities are being asked to support a new proposal which would reform the way the board is organized.

Meanwhile, state Assembly member Sally Lieber has commissioned a state audit which is due out at

► See **VTA**, page 14

INSIDE

GOINGS ON 28 | MARKETPLACE 30 | MOVIES 21 | REAL ESTATE 34 | VIEWPOINT 15 | WEEKEND 18

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

**Mary Marley**



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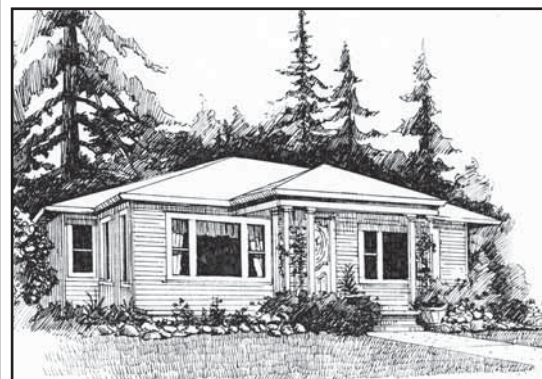
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# Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in Downtown Mountain View. Pictures and interviews by Kelsey Mesher.

## What is your favorite local vacation getaway?



*"Big Sur was — but as everyone knows it's been terribly destroyed. I hope amidst all that horror the Henry Miller museum didn't get destroyed."*

**Richard Oxman and Marcel, Los Gatos**



*"Monterey or Santa Cruz. I surf. I like the people, the energy — everybody's trying to preserve and conserve."*

**Roman Izrallov, Sunnyvale**



*"Sea Ranch. It's next to the beach, just a quiet spot."*

**Emily Nitzberg, Mountain View**



*"Monterey. It's close enough to home and it's a small little town. And there's fish."*

**Jim Garcia, Santa Clara**



*"The tidepools at the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. I love looking at all the sea stars, sea urchins, and especially the anemones."*

**Anita Brown, Sunnyvale**

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THE DANGERS OF FALLING BEHIND

Many vehicle owners may be tempted to skip or delay some maintenance procedures in an effort to save money. The fact is, however, failing to maintain your vehicle properly is not only an exercise in false economy, it can also be downright dangerous. According to the Car Care Council, the annual cost of accidents stemming from unperformed vehicle maintenance is \$2 billion. Compromised safety aside, failure to maintain your vehicle properly is also likely to reduce its lifespan and lead to more costly repairs down the road. To avoid the need for comprehensive brake jobs, engine and transmission overhauls, and other time-consuming repairs, it pays to follow less expensive maintenance procedures that ensure your vehicle's safety and longevity.

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P.S. A well-maintained vehicle (with the records to prove it) is worth more at the time of resale.

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CRIMEWATCH

AUTO BURGLARY AND POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS, 500 BLOCK S. RENGSTORFF, 7/7

A passerby noticed a man break the window of a parked vehicle. The witness scared away the perpetrator and notified authorities. Police then set up a perimeter and rounded up several nearby suspects. The witness helped identify the man responsible for the smashed window. The search of the other subjects yielded cocaine.

One man was booked for auto burglary, the other for possession of narcotics.

POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS, E. MIDDLEFIELD RD./ELLIS ST., 7/5

A vehicle was stopped by an officer for a vehicle code violation, but upon further search of the car the officer found 69.5 grams of marijuana inside one man's backpack. Methamphetamine and paraphernalia were discovered in the purse of a second subject, and heroin-filled syringes belonging to a third suspect turned up beneath the front passenger seat. All three were booked for a variety of felony charges.

POLICELOG

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE  
2600 Block W. El Camino Real, 7/7

IDENTITY THEFT  
3400 Block Woodstock Ln., 7/2

AUTO BURGLARY  
870 Block Heatherstone Way, 7/3  
700 Block Continental Cl., 7/3  
100 Block E. Middlefield Rd., 7/3  
Century 16 Cinema, 7/5  
700 Block N. Shoreline Blvd., 7/6  
700 Block N. Shoreline Blvd., 7/6  
100 Block Calderon Ave., 7/6

PETTY THEFT  
260 Block Andsbury Ave., 7/2  
Neto Café & Bakery, 7/2  
1200 Block Montecito Ave., 7/3  
Rengstorff Park, 7/3  
100 Block Evandale Ave., 7/4  
800 Block Leong Dr., 7/4  
400 Block Castro St., 7/4  
2600 Block W. El Camino Real, 7/6  
1900 Block Latham St., 7/6  
600 Block Alamo Ct., 7/7

BATTERY  
1800 Block California St., 7/1  
W. El Camino Real/Showers Dr.  
Comfort Inn #221, 7/5  
2400 Block Alvin St., 7/6  
500 Block W. El Camino Real, 7/7

POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS  
1000 Block Villa St., 7/6

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY  
Nob Hill Foods, 7/6  
1200 Block Terra Bella Ave., 7/7

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE  
170 Block Miramonte Ave., 7/2

DISORDERLY CONDUCT  
Castro St./W. Dana St., 7/5  
200 Block Castro St., 7/5  
200 Block Hope St., 7/5  
2500 Block Grant Rd., 7/6

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/PERSON  
2500 Block W. El Camino Real, 7/2  
630 Block Lola Ln., 7/2  
Trader Joe's, 7/7  
800 Block E. El Camino Real, 7/7  
Mill Ave./San Antonio Rd., 7/7

DISTURBANCE  
Century 16 Cinema, 7/4  
1900 Block Montecito Ave., 7/5

TRESPASSING  
120 Block W. El Camino Real, 7/2  
Target, 7/6  
200 Block Castro St., 7/7

EMBEZZLEMENT  
300 Block Wildflower Park Ln., 7/2

VANDALISM

GRAND THEFT  
600 Block Showers Dr., 7/2  
700 Block E. El Camino Real, 7/3  
San Veron Park, 7/4  
100 Block W. Evelyn Ave., 7/7

690 Block Barbara Ave., 7/2  
800 Block Emily Dr., 7/4  
2400 Block Wyandotte St., 7/4  
900 Block Barbara Ave., 7/5  
2000 Block Latham St., 7/6

City of Mountain View Summer Teen Events

Community BBQ Night!

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July 25th—Eagle Park  
652 Franklin St., Mountain View  
Aug. 1st—Heritage Oaks  
Portland/Miramonte, Los Altos  
Aug. 15th - Grant Park  
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## Experts: Stay inside, away from the smoke

By Casey Weiss

Even though the fires within Santa Clara County are under control, health officials say Mountain View residents should be careful about exposing their lungs to smoke as dozens of fires continue to burn in neighboring counties.

Local allergy and respiratory specialists say they've seen an increase in lung problems since the wildfires began. The bad air quality is affecting patients with respiratory conditions, includ-

***"We can always tell when there will be an increase [in respiratory ailments] based on weather."***

PAM CARPER

ing nasal and sinus allergies, at both El Camino Hospital and Camino Medical Group, doctors say. They worry that the problems will increase as the Bay Area enters a heat wave late in the week.

"We can always tell when there will be an increase [in respiratory ailments] based on weather," said Pam Carper, lead respiratory therapist in El Camino Hospital's pulmonary lab.

Although Mountain View doctors report an increase in respiratory symptoms, Joy Alexiou, spokesperson for the county department of public health, said the number of patients seeking help for breathing problems in the emergency rooms of six county hospitals has remained steady. She said this could be because patients are mostly going to their primary physicians, and added that people should remain cautious about air quality.

"If they can smell or see smoke in

► See **FIRE**, page 6



PHOTO COURTESY OF LINDA BALDACC

## Still chuckling at 100

ERL LANDSNAES HAS CALLED CITY HOME SINCE 1957

By Kelsey Mesher

The United States celebrated its 232nd birthday last Friday, July 4, and Mountain View resident Erling Landsnaes celebrated his 100th.

When Landsnaes moved to

Mountain View in 1957, at age 49, he couldn't have known he would up end spending more than half his life here, in the same Cuesta neighborhood house he moved into more than half a century ago.

"I don't think it's changed very much," he says of his

home on Begen Avenue. "It's the same nice place to live as when we moved here."

Though his eyesight is now fuzzy, his sense of humor is sharp; and the centennial man stays busy keeping up with the

► See **LANDSNAES**, page 11

## Gang expert Marco Garcia leaves schools to join force

By Casey Weiss

After two years of helping combat gang activity at Graham Middle School, Marco Garcia traded in his suit and tie for a police uniform this week.

The former "at-risk intervention supervisor" was to begin training with the police academy on July 10. After getting to know students and the community through his position in the Mountain View Whisman School District, Garcia said it was the perfect time to make the

transition to police officer.

"Working at the district has helped me get to know the community in depth," he said. "I

***"Our problems with gang issues significantly lessened over the last two years. I am sure that Marco contributed to that reduction."***

MARY LAIRON

know the families and their children, and it will definitely help with my police work."

Garcia, who grew up in Moun-

tain View, came to the district several years ago after the city experienced an increase in gang activity. He worked with at-risk youth, identifying middle school students who were in danger of becoming involved with gangs.

Becoming a cop has been a goal of his, he said, ever since he was a student at Graham and met the police resource officer there.

Administrators said they will miss Garcia, who helped reduce behavioral

► See **GARCIA**, page 13

### ■ CITY COUNCIL

## Voters won't decide on carbon emission goals

By Daniel DeBolt

A wide-ranging City Council meeting Tuesday included discussions on global warming, office developments and Rengstorff Park, among other things.

In the first issue, some members of the city's environmental sustainability task force proposed putting a referendum on the ballot allowing voters to decide whether the city should set targets in reducing greenhouse gases. The council decided against putting the referendum to voters.

The proposed ballot measure, modeled after a Berkeley measure passed in 2006, would have asked Mountain View voters if the city should push for an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and create a plan for the next 10 years to meet that goal. It would have cost the city \$25,000 to put the measure on the November ballot.

The task force steering committee had not unanimously approved the idea, with six of its 12 members in favor; three were opposed, one abstained and two were absent.

Steering committee member Cynthia Kapphahn was one of those opposed.

"The council should take leadership, it should not be looking behind to find out if the community supports it," she said.

The council also declined to vote on the idea itself, noting that it and the task force will decide on emissions reductions targets later this year.

"It is one of the recommendations coming out of

► See **COUNCIL**, page 14

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■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

## Hannah and the fire truck



*This photo of Hannah Jane Lesti was taken by her mother, Usha Lesti of Judson Drive, during last week's Thursday Night Live event downtown. Usha noted that her daughter "just turned 6 years old." 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), and include your street name.*

**FIRE**  
► Continued from page 5

the air, they need to take precautions," Alexiou said.

To avoid lung conditions and other allergy problems related to the fires, doctors suggest residents stay inside until the fires die down, although they say it will take a while for the air quality to improve.

If residents go outside, they should use circulated air conditioning in their cars, doctors said. For those exercising outside, wear masks and try to work out in the morning, "when it is cooler and the air is a little cleaner," Carper said.

And when going back inside, doctors say, use a nasal saline.

"As soon as you come in, you want to wash all that stuff away," said Steve Rubinstein, an allergy and immunology specialist with Camino Medical Group in Mountain View.

Carper said it's important for all residents, even those without a history of respiratory problems, to take care of themselves during the current weather conditions. ▣

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## Mountain View woman accused of torching parents' house

By Daniel DeBolt

A 52-year-old Mountain View woman has been arrested for allegedly trying to burn down her parents' Los Altos home early Saturday morning.

Police said three people were inside the house, located just behind Mountain View High School on the 1700 block of Hawkins Drive, when the fire broke out at 2 a.m., but no one was injured. The fire was substantial enough that the house has become "uninhabitable," according to the county fire department.

Police say the suspect, Jann Gilkey, was stopped by Los Altos

police as she drove from the scene of the fire with her car's headlights off. She was not arrested at that time because the officer was concerned with the fire. "His interest was if he had to do any evacuations," said Los Altos police agent Mark Laranjo.

She was later arrested at her house on the 2200 block of Latham Street. She is being charged with burglary, arson and multiple counts of attempted murder.

"We believe it [the motive] to be financial in nature," Laranjo said. He added that "I believe she was adopted."

Gilkey has been booked in county jail without bail. ▀

## Moffett-based helicopters help fight wildfires

Bay City News

Two helicopters from the California Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing are fighting wildfires in Northern California after being modified to carry 660-gallon water buckets, a spokeswoman said.

According to Capt. Alyson Teeter, two of the rescue wing's HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters have been modified, with a third scheduled to be modified in the near future. Two of the wing's flight crews have been trained to use the buckets for fighting wildfires.

"We have two crews ready

to go. One crew is up in Chico and the other crew is in Ukiah," Teeter said.

The wing's normal duty focuses on combat search and rescue, and the flying involved in wildfire fighting can help the crews prepare for future combat search and rescue missions, according to Lt. Col. Daniel Lapostole, 129th Rescue Squadron commander.

"Joint firefighting operations are analogous to the joint combat search and rescue operating environment our crews will experience in combat environments. The training value is unmatched," Lapostole said in a statement. ▀

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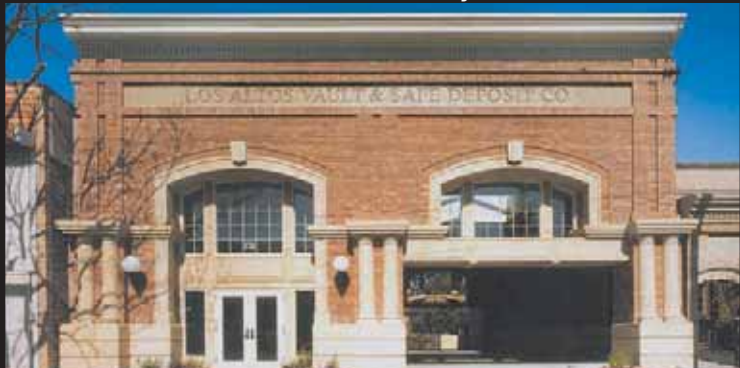
In his highly acclaimed *Translations* (hailed by Charles Isherwood in *The New York Times* as "nothing short of glorious" in its 2007 Broadway revival), Friel lovingly evokes 19th-century Ireland before the famine, placing the passion of young love against the realities of colonial rule. *Translations* explores the tensions that arise when British army begins to map the Irish countryside, translating Gaelic place names into standardized English.

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LocalNews



CITY GRAPHIC

**ZONE**

► Continued from page 1

cial and auto shop owners say the restrictions are there for a reason.

The dispute echoes back to the late 1990s, in a fight that local auto shop owner Larry Moore remembers well. His landlord had done the math, he said, and realized he could get over \$5 a square foot for the space Larry's Auto Works had inhabited for 26 years on Old Middlefield Way. But first, he had to convert the land to office space.

It was a sure bet, as the dot-com industry was booming and startup companies would pay top dollar for any available space. When his lease came up, Moore was told that the \$1.30 per square foot he was paying would quadruple.

"People who are in offices can afford to pay more than those in auto repair shops," Moore said. "It drove auto repair out."

The council eventually moved to reaffirm Old Middlefield Way's "Commercial Service," or CS, zone in 2001, establishing new

restrictions to prevent offices from pushing auto shops out.

But in the process, property owners say they took a major hit. That year, "we entered, without question, the worst leasing period we've experienced in 35 years," said a property owner on Old Middlefield Way at a recent June 24 council meeting.

Another property owner added that "we've got vacant office buildings all over the place."

**No offices, sort of**

Starkly exemplifying the problem are five vacant office buildings totaling 31,946 square feet at 1916-1928 Old Middlefield Way.

"The office problem is a problem city staff helped create," said city attorney Michael Martello. "Offices were never allowed in that zone."

City staff had been loosely interpreting the CS zoning ordinance to allow the offices, and some had taken spaces that were once suited for automotive work and other industrial uses.

Now the property's owners, and prospective tenants, don't want to pay to change the buildings back.

While some have had success with other uses for the buildings, some owners want to lease their office type building as office space. They are demanding that the city allow offices to take up more than 25 percent of a property.

Old Middlefield Way is a protected area. Auto shops, wholesalers, storage yards, building supplies and printing houses are permitted uses. Offices are not allowed, unless it's for an architect or engineer.

But property owner Charles Gardyn believes that times have changed.

"Of the uses that are permitted, most are obsolete, phased out businesses," Gardyn said. "Auto shops are a permitted use, one of the few still active. But as time goes by more people go to dealers. Cars are getting more technically advanced; not just anybody can open a shop anymore."

Moore disagreed with that point, saying auto dealers won't always work on older cars and actually have lost 5 percent of the auto repair

► Continued on next page

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The center will offer full day and part-time care for children Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**Who has priority enrollment?**

Low income Mountain View residents have first priority, followed by general City of Mountain View residents. Remaining available spaces will be offered to those employed in the City of Mountain View.

**What age groups will the center serve?**

The City of Mountain View Child Care Center offers care to children six weeks through five years of age.

**When will the center open?**

The City of Mountain View Child Care Center will open in September 2008. Enrollment from lottery will begin in May followed by a waiting list.

**How did this center come about?**

The center is made possible through a partnership with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the City of Mountain View and CCLC.

**What are the teacher-to-child ratios and group sizes?**

The City of Mountain View Child Care Center offers the following teacher-to-child ratios:

Age Group	Age Range *	Ratios	Group Size
Infants	6 wks. - 12 mo.	1:4	8
Toddlers	12 mo. - 24 mo.	1:4	8
Jr. Preschool	24 mo. - 36 mo.	1:7	14
Preschool	3 yrs. - 4 yrs.	1:10	20
Pre-K	4 yrs. - 5 yrs.	1:10	20

\*Approximate ranges

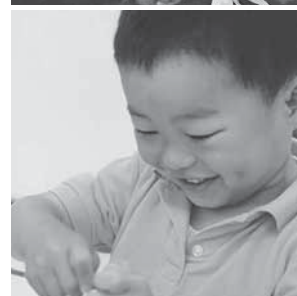
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► Continued from previous page

market to independent shops over the last few years nationwide. But even the independent shops need all the help they can get.

"When I started business in 1972 we charged 17 dollars an hour [for labor]," Moore said. "In 36 years, if the shop rate had gone up with cost of living, it would have gone up to \$200 an hour. The average today is just over \$100 an hour. Profits in auto repair have been squeezed and squeezed."

**A changing tide**

Gardyn is a leader among the property owners, and owner of the most recognizable building in the CS district: the one on the corner of Rengstorff and Old Middlefield Way which houses the popular La Costena Taqueria, among other businesses.

Last year one of his building's tenants, tax accountant Octavio Barboza, was told by the city that he had to leave, in part because the office use was not allowed. Gardyn says Barboza hasn't been able to reopen his business elsewhere.

"I feel sorry for the man, he was there 15 years," Gardyn said. "There's no way he could fight the system."

City attorney Martello said Barboza was caught up in a dispute between the city and Gardyn over multiple code violations on the building. Barboza's office was an illegal add-on that blocked a main entry and exit during an emergency, Martello said.

"Some people say, 'You're just trying to run small businesses out of town,'" said council member Jac Siegel. "Why would we do that?"

DeeDee's Indian store also had to leave Old Middlefield Way to make way for a housing development. When the store's owners looked at another site at 2218 Old Middlefield Way, the city refused to issue a conditional use permit because it lacked parking. The building remains vacant almost a year later. (DeeDee's eventually relocated to Moffett Boulevard.)

To make it easier to attract tenants, property owners want to rid the district of the expensive and time consuming "conditional use permits" in favor of a longer list of permitted uses. They say they've seen the city use the permits as a tool to control land use, creating a feeling of uncertainty that is bad for business because the permits can be taken away.

**Auto shops floating**

European Auto Works is among a dozen auto shops getting the boot at Abate's Industrial Square on Evelyn Avenue, which is slated for housing development. Naturally, many of those shops are looking to the CS district — but manager Ralph Foglein says he hasn't been able to find a space on Old Middlefield Way that suits him.

"A lot of office-type uses have been installed in those auto shop spaces," on Old Middlefield Way, Foglein said. "Availability was very limited."

Moore said the issue boils down to good city planning.

"Once it's gone it's gone," Moore said. "There is almost no auto repair in Palo Alto — they go to Mountain View. They need to leave an area zoned for that." ▣

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**LANDSNAES**

► Continued from page 5

49ers, visiting his great-grandchildren and catching up with friends at a local coffeehouse each morning.

Landsnaes was characteristically low-key about the July 4 milestone — “I give everybody a day off on my birthday,” he jokes — but for his family, including 73-year-old daughter Linda Baldacci, there couldn’t be a more important day, or a more deserving dad.

“He’s a very kind, gentle, friendly, and appreciative man,” she said.

“He’s very family oriented, and has said ‘I want to be known as a family man.’”

Though he insists he “never did anything special” in his life, Landsnaes’ story paints a different picture. He grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., the son of immigrants from Norway. An active child, he loved to play sports, especially tennis, and to spend time with his brother Ralph. He kept up with his studies, eventually taking night classes and putting himself through Fordham Law School.

With his degree, Landsnaes was able to leave his job in the ball bearing business to join the FBI. He served as a special agent during World War II, and was once assigned to the beaches of Long Island, searching for Nazi saboteurs emerging from submarines off the coast.

After seven years with the FBI,

Landsnaes returned to work at Bearings Specialty Company. His work in that industry moved him from New York to Los Angeles to Michigan and, eventually, to Mountain View.

Over the years, Landsnaes has learned to give up certain things. He quit driving at 95, and no longer plays golf — though he has fond memories of playing the Santa Teresa Golf Club with his late wife of 71 years, Dorothy Quimby.

“I enjoyed it, loved it, played a lot — but life goes on, things change, and suddenly you’re not playing golf anymore,” he said.

“But I don’t regret any of it. You can’t regret things.”

Landsnaes’ birthday celebrations have evolved to include several family traditions. First, he places an American flag on the front of his house. Then his great-grandchildren (ages 9 to 23) march to Kate Smith’s “Stars and Stripes Forever” before the cake is served.

Some years have special themes. His 80th was “Around the World in 80 Days.” On his 85th, a plane flew overhead carrying a banner: “Happy Birthday Erling Landsnaes!”

Last Friday, he celebrated his 100th surrounded by family and friends. Though still in some disbelief, he is content with how his first 100 years have gone, preaching that the key to long life is simple: “Just don’t eat anything that’s good for you.”

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**SOCCER**

► Continued from page 1

Nigam and his three soccer friends — Robby Gamble, Jordan Coff and Tom Canty — worked with the Mountain View Police Department's Police Activities League and the elementary school district to find a field and bus.

While Nigam and Gamble's parents help pay for the camp, the children do all the hard work, organizers say.

When the camp more than tripled in size this year, with new siblings and friends showing up each day, several of the camp leaders joined forces with another friend, Rohan Weigel, to start a side business, Pizza and Dollars, to help pay for the rising costs.

Although they originally wanted to buy a car with their earnings, the coaches decided there was a better way to spend it.

"We decided we didn't need the car," Nigam said. "We wanted to fund [the camp] ourselves."

The students have been running their business in the mornings, and directing the camp in the afternoons, totaling more than a 50-hour work week for some coaches. They say this is especially important since two of the founders' sisters, Sonia Nigam and Allie Gamble, both students at Blach Middle School in Los Altos, started their own camp to work with elementary school campers.

"It was difficult having all the kids in one camp, because they didn't have all the same skills, Sonia said.

The camp has become more than just soccer drills. Campers take breaks for quick water fights, or to participate in raffles to win pro soccer jerseys. Motivational speakers — Stanford athletes and community leaders — come talk to the campers.

"The coaches are nice and this place is so fun," said Kevin Herrera, who will start fifth grade at Bubb this fall.

And coaches say the camp has helped them to understand different cultures. Before the camp started, they met with Marco Garcia, the former at-risk inter-

vention supervisor at Graham Middle School, to discuss stereotypes and cultural sensitivity since the campers come from many different backgrounds.

"At school a lot of stereotypes evolve," co-founder Robby Gamble said. "You come here and see they are nice kids, and maybe didn't get as lucky with the situation they were born in." ■

E-mail Casey Weiss at [cweiss@mv-voice.com](mailto:cweiss@mv-voice.com)



VOICE FILE PHOTO

**Childhood friends** Marco Garcia (left) and Arturo Noriega worked together as at-risk intervention supervisors at Graham and Crittenden middle schools. This week, Garcia is leaving the district to join the police force.

**GARCIA**

► Continued from page 5

problems on campus and in the community. They plan to fill his position at Graham for the next school year.

"He was able to work directly with students and make sure that they felt welcome in the school as well as making sure they understood the consequences of any misbehavior," said Mary Lairon, associate superintendent, about Garcia. "Our problems with gang issues significantly lessened over the last two years. I am sure that Marco contributed to that reduction."

While he enjoyed his time on campus, Garcia said he is ready to move on to the police department, where he will make more money. He did research on gang activity on his own time, and patrolled on the weekends and late nights with the police department.

Garcia began the application process in February, and after passing a PolyGram, an interview with the police chief and a physical, he will begin a 10-month course at the police academy. ■

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**VTA**

► Continued from page 1

the end of the month, and says she's hoping to generate a stronger proposal to fix the longstanding dispute once and for all.

Under the current system, San Jose has six members on the VTA's 13-member board, while the other cities have five between them. The two remaining seats go to county representatives.

"For Mountain View it's tough because we get to be on the board once every six years," said Margaret Abe-Koga, Mountain View's representative on VTA's policy advisory committee. She explained that representatives from each city are, to some degree, competing for VTA resources.

But under the new proposal, which the VTA board plans to vote on in August, the agency's policy advisory committee, or PAC, would have the power to select the five non-San Jose mem-

bers of the board. The PAC is a 16-member board with a seat for every city, plus one member who represents the county.

Abe-Koga believes this system could result in better representation for Mountain View, though it may not be a permanent fix. On Tuesday, the Mountain View City Council unanimously supported the proposal, calling it a stopgap measure for a board that does not properly represent the smaller cities in the county.

But some City Council members called on the state for help in reforming the VTA board, and Lieber is looking at ways to do just that before her term ends this year. She believes the board should be elected by the public, possibly in a way similar to how county supervisors are elected.

"There should be a longer, fuller discussion of what's gone on," Lieber said. "Many of the community advocates that have been watchdogs for a number of

years feel these proposals come out in a very ad hoc way."

Another proposal made earlier this year, which was rejected by Sunnyvale and other cities, would have organized the board by geographic regions. But under the new proposal, geography would be a factor only as much as the policy advisory committee wants it to be.

The proposal would mean that PAC members would often be voting for themselves, because the PAC is often a training ground for future VTA board members, Abe-Koga said.

The problem of figuring out how to fairly represent the smaller cities was highlighted by an audit of the VTA by the Hay Group last year. A month later, Lieber commissioned a state audit.

"I was disappointed in the Hay Group's audit," Lieber said. "It didn't have the hallmarks of an independent audit that I would be looking for. It seemed to be

an audit commissioned by the board — that's why we've asked the state to conduct one. This auditor is looking at the processes in selecting the board members and really trying to get at how we can improve the structure so it's not just a staff-driven agency."

The audit is due at the end of July, just before the VTA is expected to make a decision on board reorganization in early August. It seems that some at VTA are trying to cut Lieber off at the pass, Abe-Koga said.

Mountain View rotated off the VTA board last year after council members Laura Macias and Greg Perry each served for one year. The city is now counting on Palo Alto Mayor Yoriko Kishimoto, Los Altos council member David Casas and Santa Clara council member Dominic Caserta to represent "Group Two cities" on the board — a group which also includes Sunnyvale and Los Altos Hills. ■

**COUNCIL**

► Continued from page 5

the task force anyway," said council member Margaret Abe-Koga. "If we really wanted to do it we could do it a different time."

Bruce Karney, task force chair, supported the referendum, saying it would make clear that residents want the city to take the lead in reducing emissions, rather than wait for the state or federal government to do it.

But Mayor Tom Means questioned the usefulness of such a measure. "People tend to vote yes because they aren't faced with a cost choice," he said.

**Development planned near train station**

Former San Jose City Council member Linda LeZotte spoke for PSAI Realty Tuesday night in support of a large office development at 100-200 Evelyn Ave., just across from the downtown train station parking lot. The council praised its design and gave city planners the green light for a major up-zoning.

A pair of two story office buildings, about 10 years old and once known as the Tech Farm, will have a third constructed in between — a three story building totaling 34,000 square feet — along with a 46,000-square-foot parking garage.

**Positive activities for youth?**

The City Council exchanged blank looks Tuesday night when asked for a definition of one of its top goals for the year: "positive activities for youth." The council voted to have its members on the youth services committee take up the discussion.

"I'm not sure why it's a council goal if you can't define it," said council member Jac Siegel.

**Rengstorff Park to be studied**

Another top goal this year is to address safety and walkability issues at Rengstorff Park, and the council decided Tuesday to have an interdepartmental group, including police and parks officials, study crime, safety and cleanliness issues at the park and report back for a study session discussion.

"I think its time to do this, there have been problems in Rengstorff Park for quite some time," said council member Ronit Bryant. ■

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

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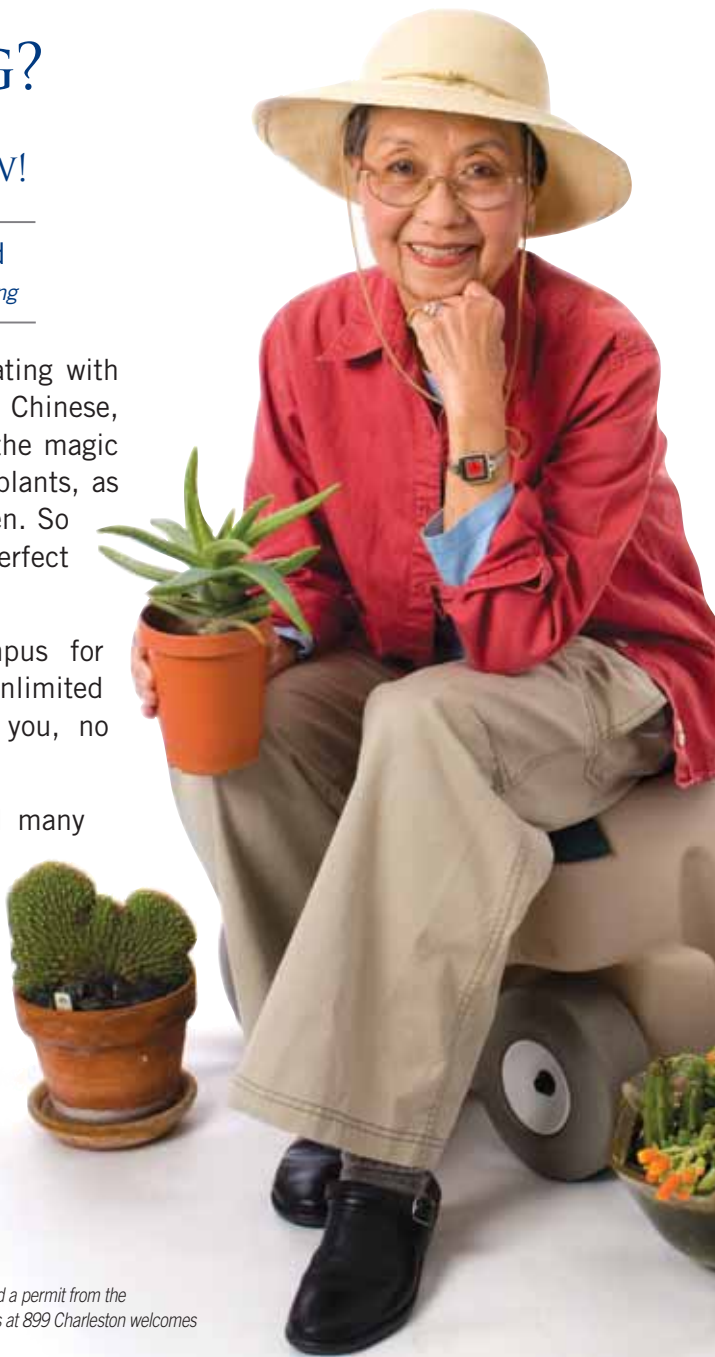
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- YOUR LETTERS
- GUEST OPINIONS

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Member, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce

### ■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

## More oversight needed for freewheeling tow companies

The sad tale of a Mountain View resident who returned from vacation to find that his car had been towed shows why we need better regulation of towing companies — especially when they auction off cars under questionable circumstances.

In this case, the 2004 Honda Civic was towed from his apartment to the company's yard, allowed to sit for a short period and then, despite its Blue Book value of over \$10,000, sold at "auction" for \$2,280. By an amazing coincidence, this was the exact amount the company, Auto Ambulance of Santa Clara, was charging the owner in tow and storage fees.

It gets better. The new owner of this marked-down Honda, who happened to be an Auto Ambulance employee, immediately put the car up for sale on Craigslist. His asking price: \$8,500.

And that's where the original owner found his car: on Craigslist, with a photo showing it sitting in the tow company's yard.

There are several things wrong with this scenario, including the clear conflict of interest when a tow company employee gets dibs on a towed car. But one aspect in particular — the gross undervaluing of the Honda — looks like it could be a direct violation of the law.

State Department of Motor Vehicles rules say any vehicle valued at more than \$4,000 cannot be sold so quickly by a tow company; instead, the company must follow a 90-day procedure (at minimum) before putting it on the block. By apparently undervaluing the car, Auto Ambulance circumvented this rule, allowing it to flip the car quickly.

Some observers may say the Honda's owner got what he deserved. After all, it was his own carelessness which led to the car being towed in the first place. (Though he paid his registration fees, he forgot to put on the new stickers; the old ones expired while he was away.)

But what's really at issue is what happened after his car was towed. Even when vehicles are towed for good reasons, tow companies must recognize that the vehicles' owners still have rights over their property. If the companies are unwilling to respect those rights, as Auto Ambulance seems to be, they should be forced to do so — or suffer the consequences for any lost or damaged property.

Once we've made sure that tow companies are following the laws already on the books, our city, county and state legislators should reexamine those laws for inequalities. Here's one to start with: Why should cars worth more than \$4,000 get special treatment, while cars worth less than \$4,000 can be summarily resold? Such a rule makes low-income residents into second-class citizens, and has no place on California's books.

Unlike San Francisco, which has seen major scandals over its deals with tow companies, Mountain View does not seem to have an endemic problem. But we wouldn't be surprised to learn that, if there is a problem here, it's the poorer residents suffering the most from it. We encourage any local residents with stories to tell to send them to editor@mv-voice.com.

At this point, the car owner's only recourse is to sue the tow company. But he deserves better. Vehicle owners should receive clear protection under the law.

### ■ LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

#### HOW TO REDUCE PLASTIC AT THE FARMERS MARKET

Editor:

I'm a regular patron of the Mountain View Farmers Market, and, as someone who is very concerned about the overuse of plastic bags, containers, etc., I was pleased to note that Triple Delight Berries has started selling their blueberries (which they previously sold only in relatively small, single-use, clam-shell plastic containers) in bulk as an alternative.

I urge Voice readers to visit them on one of the next two Sundays, as their selling season is coming to a close. Be sure to bring your own container (so they don't have to use a plastic bag), and thank them for taking the worthy steps to reduce plastic container usage. As market vendors take such steps, more are likely to follow suit.

I also encourage readers to contact the California Farmers Markets Association (doug@cafarmersmks.com) and ask them to actively research and implement ways to reduce or, even better, eliminate plastic bag usage at the Mountain View Farmers Market. There is nothing sold at the market that requires plastic bags if patrons bring their own cloth bags (cloth produce bags are available from Reusable-Bags.com), and sealable containers for meat and fish products.

Bruce England  
Whisman Station Drive

#### CAN VOICE COME WITHOUT PLASTIC BAGS?

Editor:

Plastic bags are a huge problem to our environment. Is it possible to deliver the Voice

without being in a plastic bag?

Papers were delivered for many years without being in a plastic bag, and we got along fine. It seems like a good idea, especially in the dry climate of California.

Dorothy Schafer  
West Dana Street

#### HERITAGE TREE STATUS LENDS NO PROTECTION

Editor:

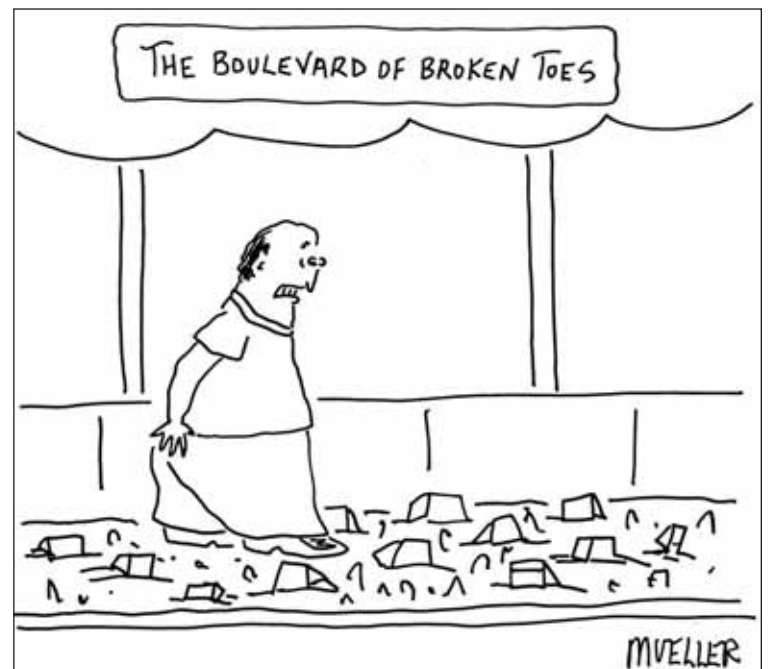
Although we received notice of a public meeting concerning killing heritage trees in order to develop housing on Pettis Avenue, the public meeting was scheduled for 2 p.m., June 19. While that may have been convenient for the city review committee and the property developer, it is hardly a time that allows most of the public to attend.

It's possible that the proposed development is a great addition or improvement, but we were not really given a chance to learn that. No tree in Mountain View is actually protected by being called a heritage tree. There appears to be a rubber stamp procedure for their "removal."

Trees increase property values and reduce air pollution, in addition to improving the appearance of homes and businesses. At a time when the rest of the world is recognizing the great value of trees to human health and welfare, Mountain View's capitulation to owners who don't want to have to clean up the fallen leaves (yes, I did hear that at a public meeting) or prune the trees is shortsighted indeed.

Leslie Friedman  
Mountain View Avenue

► See LETTERS, page 16



### ■ WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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## LETTERS

▶ Continued from page 15

**COUNCIL SHOULD RESTRICT 'PODIUM PUNDITS'**

Editor:

When you put out food for wildlife on a regular basis you get a crowd in no time. When you put out an opportunity to speak to the City Council and be on local TV, you'll get a crowd even faster.

The courtesy extended to the public to speak to the council on non-agenda items is being abused by a plethora of speakers in search of an audience. Perhaps the worst are those speakers asking the council to pass resolutions about the Iraq war. As a strong opponent of the administration's handling of the war myself, I also strongly believe our City Council should not be spending time even lis-

tening to topics outside of their realm of responsibility.

The high value we place on listening to the "voice of the people" has led us past the balance point of meaningful dialogue vs. podium punditry. It's mostly just hogwash and we all know it. The time has come to institute a useful filter on podium presence. The voice of the people is not always intelligent. Sometimes it is tyrannical as are all power centers. It needs to be balanced against the greater good.

Perhaps we could allow a written submission by all, but verbal presentations only by those selected by an "editor," as newspapers do, that fit within a total time allowance. After all, we elect our council to represent and decide for us. Let's stop wasting their time in stroking our public egos.

**Allen Price**  
Velarde Street

**WONDERFUL DINING AT THE SENIOR CENTER**

Editor:

Last week I had the pleasure of visiting the Senior Center in Mountain View for lunch. The room was completely filled with diners, all thoroughly enjoying their meal.

When I sat down, a server came immediately to my table and greeted me, bringing along a cup of soup, a set of silver, and a carefully folded napkin. The main course and remainder of the meal was then served, prepared to perfection. Each person at the table was served in an equally considerate manner.

I would like to compliment Laura Schuss, who I understand is responsible for the elegant experience of providing midday dining at its very best. Her choice of menus is flawless, her supervision of the kitchen staff is finely honed, and her serving staff is considerate and gracious. Her accomplish-

ment of serving a large group of people is perfection. Pricing is realistic, and it was remarked that one could not find a public eatery that could serve that well for that price and in that manner.

Her reward was the expressed appreciation of all the diners. It is my pleasure to patronize the dining room of the Mountain View Senior Center with Laura in supervision. I, along with my fellow diners, intend to return often.

**Eloise Danto**  
Sylvan Avenue

**CLIMATE CHANGE, THEN AND NOW**

Editor:

"The Great Warming: Climate Change and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations," by Brian Fagan, published in 2008, is one of several books he wrote that deal with the relationship between climate and civilization from an archaeological point of view.

Numerous other works have made the same point: Climate change impacts civilizations.

Al Gore, in "An Inconvenient Truth," and numerous others make the reverse point: During the past century and more, the world's civilizations have increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to the point that civilizations are causing the very climate change, global warming, that will harm us all.

My interpretation of these works is that, on the whole, the impact of global warming is so great that we can't afford to just let it happen, and we can't fix it with just a few years and a few billions of dollars. As Fagan put it, global warming "requires not a short-term response but massive intervention on a truly international, and long-term, scale."

We can't afford President Bush's head-in-the-sand approach, but we will have to pay an enormous sum. I'm convinced that if we start now with preventive measures like taxing greenhouse gas emissions and subsidizing less harmful alternatives such as solar and wind power, the cost will be less in the long run but it will still be enormous.

And the cost is not just reckoned in money; people will die because of our past and current folly. Let's not make things worse.

**Doug Pearson**  
Fordham Way

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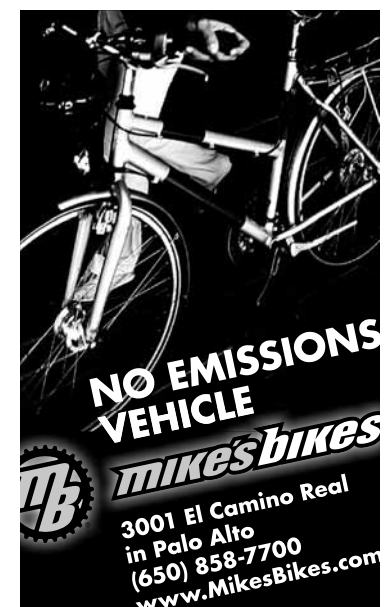
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## ■ GUEST OPINION

## Greater access needed for school board's meetings

By David Casas

I extend my appreciation to the *Voice* for covering the discussions about videotaping meetings of the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District. I believe that the views of the *Voice*, as well as the June 20 guest opinion by former district trustee David Williams, are important contributions to open dialogue. After reading the articles and the opinion piece, I do feel it is necessary to make some clarifications and provide additional context.

For background, issues about videotaping came up during planning for a joint Los Altos City Council/MVLA district board meeting. The events leading up to the meeting became the catalyst for the agenda item on June 9.

Interestingly, in his guest opinion, Williams alleges the Brown Act had been violated. Clearly it had not been. The June 9 agenda for our joint

Silicon Valley, I would appreciate having greater access to decisions that affect my children's education. Unfortunately, due to my schedule, I am not personally able to attend the school board meetings. It is my hope that we can increase public accessibility to all meetings as we collectively strive for maximum community engagement.

Our locally elected bodies are conscientious about doing the people's business in the light of day. I recognize that the idea of greater transparency can be uncomfortable. I also recognize that change can be difficult. Over the past few weeks, board members have put forth seemingly rational justifications for not wanting to televise their meetings. However, having access to video tapings of relevant meetings would be very helpful. As a preferred option, Web-casting, and content-on-demand, would be great for all elected bodies to seriously

*It is my hope that we can increase public accessibility to all meetings as we collectively strive for maximum community engagement.*

meeting, specifically Item 7, included a discussion on televising board meetings, and was posted appropriately.

Next, with regard to financing the videotaping, my company has not agreed to, and is not funding, any taping of the board meetings. However, we are partnering with KMVT to tape a July volunteer engagement by our employees, as they work to restore Bay estuaries.

The decision to install cameras in the high school board room is clearly up to the school board. It is not a council matter. I recognize the idea of videotaping has caused some discomfort and upset with current and former school board members. I take full responsibility for their reaction.

To be clear, I am confident that our locally elected bodies conform to the minimum requirement of open meeting laws. As a parent who lives a busy life like the rest of the

consider adopting.

Local city councils have recently chosen to migrate to Web-casting and online media storage of relevant content. Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills, along with other like-minded communities, are helping to lead the way for greater public accessibility to local civic government.

The high school board members mentioned they have not received much community interest in having their meetings videotaped or telecast. At least two board members have expressed a willingness to consider the idea. If you are interested in sharing your opinion on this matter, I encourage you to reach out to them. To obtain the board members' contact information, go to [www.mvla.net](http://www.mvla.net) and click on "District Office," then "Board of Trustees." ■

*David Casas is a Los Altos City Council member.*



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A plate of vegetable empanadas served in Pampas restaurant in Palo Alto.

MARJAN SADOUGH

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

## Meat and greet at Pampas

BRAZILIAN STEAKHOUSE PUTS ON LUXURIOUS SHOW

By Sheila Himmel

At a time of downsized spending and upwelling concerns about health, what are we to make of a new restaurant in downtown Palo Alto featuring all-you-can-eat meat at \$44 a pop?

First of all, restaurants take a long time being born. Pampas was conceived in a flusher era, and money has been well spent on design. It's a beautiful, soaring three-level space, sculpted into four dining areas and a bar/lounge. One quirk is that the double doors in front aren't the front door. At least on my two visits,

we entered stage left.

Second, Pampas is a theatrical experience. The lobby, if you think of it that way, is handsomely appointed with a black walnut bar, lounge chairs and drop lights.

With Patagonia next door, this strip of Alma Street could be called Little Lower South America. At a steakhouse set to a Latin beat, you may hear "The Girl from Ipanema" in the background. This area works nicely as a place to meet friends.

Then you go in for the show, the rodizio, featuring servers called passadors wielding tall skewers of

► Continued on next page

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► Continued from previous page

hot meat. This type of restaurant, the Brazilian churrascaria (shoo-ras-kar-ia) has touched down elsewhere in the Bay Area, and in cities such as Memphis and Houston. (A similar Pampas in Las Vegas is no relation to Palo Alto's Pampas.) The actual pampas are the grass-covered plains of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, where the tradition of rotisserie meats derives from cowboys and their campfires.

For my dining companion, I drafted an experienced churrasco hand, an Argentinean woman who remembers being astounded by the size of the hunks of meat when her family went to these restaurants. "I wondered if this was the whole cow — or horse — they were putting on my plate," she said.

Pampas' servings are daintier, but unlimited. Hygiene is an important detail. Each meat server comes around with a vertical spit fitted into a drip pan. He slices, you grab, with a little set of tongs.

Servers advise going the whole rodizio route your first time out, so you can see what you like. Well, of course. The side bar is \$27 by itself. If you're spending that much, adding \$17 for your heart's delight of high-quality meat seems almost a no-brainer. As with the way Starbucks prices

its coffee, you can't help but realize that upsizing is a better deal.

The side bar buffet is overwhelming, but is it dinner? If you paid \$27 for a hotel buffet, you'd expect shrimp, prime rib, hot plates and cold plates. At Pampas, all the buffet plates are room temperature.

My expert gave high marks to the signature feijoada, despite the cold plates. The buffet's Brazilian side stars this spicy, smoky black-bean stew, spooned over rice and traditionally served with shredded kale, hearts of palm, orange slices and hot peppers. Sprinkle with farofa, toasted manioc flour.

Among the buffet's 30 dishes, I'd also recommend the grilled peaches topped with mozzarella, tamarind flavored meat balls, smoked trout, charcuterie meats, caramelized onions and a couple of the potato dishes. In two visits, I still wasn't able to try everything. The fixings for green salad are light years from Fresh Choice. There's pasta salad, tabbouleh, fresh fruit and grilled vegetables.

The hot/cold problem came up there, too. Another diner in line complained that the grilled veggies were cold.

When you're done grazing the buffet, turn the hockey puck on your table from its red side to

► See PAMPAS, page 20

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KIMBERLY KING & CASSIDY BROWN IN DOUBT / PHOTO BY DAVID ALLEN

## PAMPAS

► Continued from page 19

green, signaling Rodizio Time. Soon you will hear, "My name is Joe and I'll be your lamb pas-sador tonight." Or it could be tri-tip, pork tenderloin, sirloin filet, linguica, turkey breast wrapped in smoked bacon, skirt steak, chicken legs and thighs, and a few others. We were there over two hours, and didn't see all 14 meats, but we saw more than enough.

At my first visit, the meats were over-salted and therefore less distinguishable. The second time, all but a tough skirt steak were delicious, especially lamb with balsamic sauce, tri-tip and dry-rubbed pork. They ranged from medium-rare to medium-well.

Off the meat trail, Pampas offers four seafood skewers, ranging from \$11 to \$20, and a couple of entrees. Beautiful Alaskan halibut (\$28) was two inches tall, accompanied by shoestring curly fries, snap peas and a luxurious citrus bierre blanc. The vegetarian entree (\$18) is "garbanzo stew with eggplant, tomato, ginger and couscous." It's hard to figure a way these ingredients, stewed, could add up to \$18. Also there's a ribeye steak (\$36) and duck breast (\$29). With all these, add \$12 if you want the buffet.

Pampas' children's menu features chicken fingers (\$9), steak sandwich (\$10), and the rodizio (\$15), soda and ice cream included. If the young person in your group gets bored, a DVD player is available.

If someone in your group has hearing issues, you might mention it when making a reservation. The noise level varies tremendously.

The lunch version of Pampas includes salads, sandwiches, an \$18 buffet and a \$28 rodizio.

Dessert, anyone? The chocolate torte (\$9) is small but memorable, with a scoop of caramel ice cream, and weirdly good bacon Brazil nut toffee. A microscopic line of creme fraiche sauce, described by the server as a reduction, connects toffee to torte. ▣



MARJAN SADOUGHI

Pampas restaurant waiter Selbi Flores serves ham and pineapple from a skewer.

### ■ DINING NOTES

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MOVIE TIMES

- 300 (R) ★★★1/2** Century 16: Sat. at 10 p.m.  
**BLADE RUNNER (R) (NOT REVIEWED)**  
 Century 16: Fri. at 10 p.m.
- THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN (PG) (NOT REVIEWED)** Century 12: 1 & 4:20 p.m.
- ENCOUNTERS AT THE END (G) (NOT REVIEWED)**  
 Guild: 2, 5, 7:30 & 10 p.m.
- FORGETTING SARAH MARSHALL (R) (NOT REVIEWED)**  
 Century 12: 1:50 & 7:35 p.m.
- GET SMART (PG-13) ★★★1/2**  
 Century 16: 11:05 a.m.; 1:50, 4:30, 7:10 & 9:55 p.m.  
 Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 2:15, 4:55, 7:40 & 10:35 p.m.
- GONZO (NOT RATED) (NOT REVIEWED)**  
 Aquarius: 1:30, 4:30, 7:15 & 9:45 p.m.
- HANCOCK (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)**  
 Century 16: 11 & 11:35 a.m.; 12:10, 12:45, 1:25, 2, 2:35, 3:10, 3:50, 4:20, 4:55, 5:30, 6:15, 6:50, 7:25, 8, 8:40, 9:15, 9:50 & 10:25 p.m.  
 Century 20: 11:10, 11:25 & 11:50 p.m.; 12:15, 12:40, 1:05, 1:30, 1:50, 2:15, 2:35, 3:05, 3:30, 3:55, 4:15, 4:35, 5:05, 5:30, 5:55, 6:20, 6:35, 7:05, 7:25, 7:55, 8:20, 8:45, 9:05, 9:25, 9:55 & 10:15 p.m.
- THE HAPPENING (R) ★1/2 CENTURY 12:** 7:40 & 10:15 p.m.
- HELLBOY 2: THE GOLDEN ARMY (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)** Century 16: 11:10 a.m.; 12:50, 1:55, 3:45, 4:50, 6:40, 7:35, 9:20 & 10:20 p.m. Century 20: 11:15 a.m.; 12:10, 1, 2, 2:55, 3:50, 4:50, 5:45, 6:40, 7:40, 8:35, 9:30 & 10:30 p.m.
- THE INCREDIBLE HULK (PG-13) ★★★** Century 12: 1:20, 3:35, 4:30, 7:20, 10:05 & 10:35 p.m.
- INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL (PG-13) ★★1/2** Century 16: 3:40 & 10:15 p.m.  
 Century 20: 11:10 a.m.; 1:55, 4:40, 7:35 & 10:30 p.m.
- IRON MAN (PG-13) ★★★1/2** Century 16: 9 p.m.  
 Century 12: 12:30, 3:30, 7:10 & 10:10 p.m.
- JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH (PG) ★★**  
 Century 16: 11:55 a.m.; 2:20, 4:45, 7:15 & 9:40 p.m.  
 Century 12: Noon, 1:10, 2:30, 3:45, 5, 6:15, 7:30, 8:45 & 10 p.m.
- KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL (G) (NOT REVIEWED)** Century 16: 11:15 a.m.; 1:45 & 4:15 p.m.  
 Century 12: 12:10, 1:30, 2:45, 4, 5:15, 6:30, 7:50, 9 & 10:20 p.m.
- KUNG FU PANDA (PG) ★★★1/2** Century 16: 11:20 a.m.; 1:40, 4:05 & 6:35 p.m. Century 20: 11:20 a.m.; 1:45, 4:10, 6:50 & 9:10 p.m.
- THE LOVE GURU (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)**  
 Century 12: 4:40 & 10:25 p.m.
- MEET DAVE (PG) (NOT REVIEWED)**  
 Century 16: 12:15, 2:40, 5:15, 7:45 & 10:10 p.m.  
 Century 12: 12:20, 1:40, 3, 4:10, 5:30, 7, 8, 9:30 & 10:30 p.m.
- MONGOL (R) (NOT REVIEWED)** Century 20: 11:15 a.m.; 2, 4:45, 7:30 & 10:20 p.m. Palo Alto Square: 1:30, 4:15, 7 & 9:50 p.m.
- SEX AND THE CITY (R) ★★1/2** Century 16: 12:25 & 7:05 p.m.  
 Century 20: 12:50, 4, 7:10 & 10:15 p.m.
- TELL NO ONE (NOT RATED) ★★★1/2**  
 Guild: 1:30, 4:15, 7 & 9:45 p.m.
- THE VISITOR (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)**  
 Palo Alto Square: 2, 4:30, 7:10 & 9:35 p.m.
- WALL-E (G) ★★★1/2** Century 16: 11 & 11:45 a.m.; 12:35, 1:35, 2:25, 3:05, 4:10, 5, 5:35, 7, 7:30, 8:05, 9:35 & 10:35 p.m. Century 20: 11:20 a.m.; 12:05, 12:55, 1:55, 2:40, 3:25, 4:25, 5:10, 6, 7, 7:50, 8:35, 9:30 & 10:20 p.m.
- WANTED (R) ★★☆☆** Century 16: 11:50 a.m.; 2:30, 5:10, 6:45, 7:50, 9:25 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: 11:40 a.m. 12:30, 1:20, 2:20, 3:10, 4:05, 5, 5:50, 6:45, 7:45, 8:30, 9:20 & 10:25 p.m.
- YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)** Century 12: 12:50 & 7:15 p.m.

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

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**CENTURY 20 DOWNTOWN:** 825 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (369-3456)  
**CINEARTS AT PALO ALTO SQUARE:** 3000 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (493-3456)  
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- ★ 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

NOW PLAYING

HANCOCK

★★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) Will Smith delivers a pitch-perfect performance as John Hancock: a grungy, sodden superhero whose dubious rescue tactics are not looked upon kindly by the increasingly aggravated residents of Los Angeles. Hancock is faster than a speeding bullet and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound but suffers from deep feelings of rejection stemming from an 80-year-long bout of amnesia and the fact that he was abandoned at a Miami hospital in the mid-1920s. As the tetchy Angelinos rebuff Hancock he rebuffs back, his slipshod do-gooding resulting in felony destruction and some 600 subpoenas for civil suits. Not your run-of-the-mill superhero. There's a core of vulnerability under that hefty psychological armor and image consultant Ray Embrey (Jason Bateman) is determined to polish Hancock to an amicable shine. Humor is laced with sorrow as Hancock strives to interface with the community and mold himself into an upbeat person, losing his emotional footing time and time again. *Rated: PG-13 for intense action, violence and language. 1 hour, 35 minutes. — J.A.*

WALL-E ★★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) WALL-E (a.k.a. Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-Class) is the last robot left on the depressing dystopia that is Earth, steadily cleaning up superfluous trash while the population has lifted off on Axiom, a state-of-the-art home away from home. WALL-E's days are spent crushing mountains of garbage into controllable cubes, collecting intriguing curiosities and watching and re-watching a battered VHS copy of "Hello Dolly!" That tiresome routine is turned upside down with the arrival of EVE, a fetching, egg-shaped probe sent to Earth to determine its tenuous life-sustaining status. Sparks fly, and how. WALL-E shows off his collection to impress the impenetrable EVE, all beautifully sans dialogue. High-tech hell breaks loose when EVE is beamed back up to the Axiom and a lovesick WALL-E stows away on her transport. As seen from his eyes, the Mother Ship is the ultimate nightmare in technologically advanced. It's best not to dig too deep into "WALL-E's" narrative as much goes unexplained and its dramatic mysteries are shrouded in stunning visuals and the titular hero's search for the perfect love match. But "WALL-E" isn't lacking a social conscience; it passes politically correct judgment on waste,

► See MOVIES, page 23

MOVIE CRITICS

S.T.-Susan Tavernetti,  
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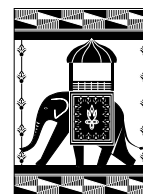
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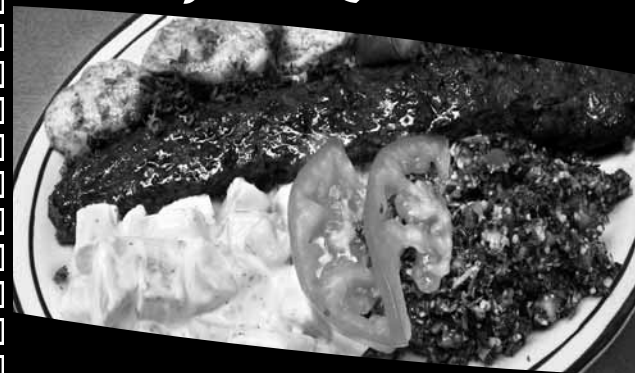
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# Homeland insecurity

FAMILY GRAPPLES WITH IRAQ WAR IN  
PEAR AVENUE THEATRE'S 'HOMELAND PRAYER'

By Alexa Tondreau

About halfway through "Homeland Prayer," currently playing at the Pear Avenue Theatre, I began to feel that watching this heart-wrenching drama of war and grief was a wholly incongruous way to spend a summer day.

With the sun blazing outside on a Sunday afternoon, the Pear's theater space had grown toasty warm (the air conditioner is too loud to run during performances), and the discomfort of the heat, coupled with the generally heavy tone of the production, made me wish for some lighter fare just then.

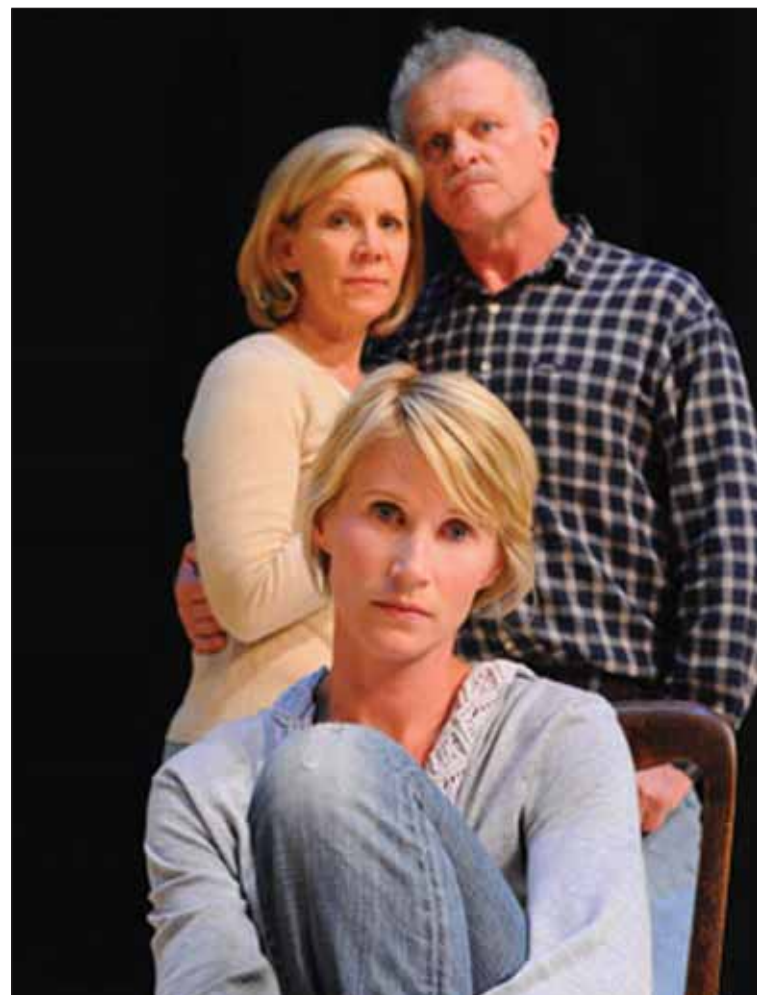
But soon the feeling passed. After all, I realized, the families of fallen or wounded soldiers don't have the luxury of choosing the time or place of their suffering.

"Homeland Prayer" is effective precisely because its themes are so timely. The play tells the story of a Midwestern family pushed to the brink by the return of their severely wounded son from the Iraq war. This story is not about the soldier's experience but rather focuses on the drama that plays out as family members confront each other — and themselves — in the face of terrible loss amidst a controversial war.

As each of the soldier's family members — mother, father, sister and wife — grapple with their grief, doubt and guilt, complex family dynamics play out, and the past (as is expected) rears its ugly head. In this play, acting is all. Events transpire mainly in the confines of the family farm's kitchen, so the restrictions on the setting and tiny increments of the plot's forward movement make the performances all the more important.

The central character is played by Bill C. Jones as the patriarch Darden. His is arguably the most nuanced character, and his powerful performance does justice to playwright Jeff Carter's writing. Jones is haunted, funny, cynical and violently angry. He is easily the most likable character, in large part because he feels familiar. Underlying all of his words and actions is an anger that builds and finally climaxes in one of the play's best scenes. Jones' performance alone is worth a viewing of "Homeland Prayer."

Mary Moore, as his wife Lynn, puts in a solid performance as a mother refusing to believe in anything but the best outcome.



COURTESY PHOTO

Mary Moore, Bill C. Jones and Tanya Dargel in "Homeland Prayer"

My primary complaint here would be less with Moore's performance and more with the writing itself. I wondered at certain junctures how much time Carter — who is building some major traction as a significant American playwright — had actually spent in the Midwest.

For instance, I don't think Midwestern moms spend as much time cajoling their family members to eat donuts and drink coffee in times of hardship as this one does. The obsession with eating food and getting rest and fetching coffee as a balm for the spirit went way too far.

I'm also not sure that being a person of devout Christian faith necessarily implies that one lives in denial or refuses to see the complexity of war. The character of Lynn would have been more interesting had she seemed less like our stereotype of a Midwestern Christian mother and more like a typical person struggling to make sense of things. It didn't surprise me much to learn that Carter — who won the prestigious John Gassner Memorial Award in 2007 for "Homeland Prayer" — hails from the Bay Area.

Even so, we Americans don't

see much real footage from the Iraq war on television, and we rarely, if ever, see a dead or wounded soldier. Missing too from our national discourse are the voices of those who have lost their family and their friends. If "Homeland Prayer" is the only type of remedy to this blatant cultural amnesia, then it's better — much, much better — than nothing at all. ■

## ■ INFORMATION

**What:**  
The Pear Avenue Theatre presents "Homeland Prayer" by Jeff Carter

**When:**  
Thursdays to Saturdays 8 p.m.,  
Sundays 2 p.m., through July 13

**Where:**  
The Pear Avenue Theatre,  
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**MOVIES**

► Continued from page 21

gluttony, instant gratification and global warming. Beautifully executed with a wink and a nudge, "WALL-E" is a film with heart. *Rated: G for good for all audiences. 1 hour, 37 minutes.* — J.A.

**WANTED ★★★★★**

(Century 16, Century 20) The humdrum life is starting to wear on Wesley Gibson (James McAvoy). His boss berates him at every turn, he suffers from overpowering headaches, and his girlfriend

is having an affair with his best pal. Wesley desperately needs an injection of adventure. Enter Fox (Angelina Jolie), a tattooed assassin who disrupts Wesley's monotony to tell him about the murder of his estranged father, one of the world's most dangerous killers. In a flash, Wesley's life goes from mundane to deadly as he's introduced to a secretive assassins' guild called the Fraternity and its leader, Sloan (Morgan Freeman). What's more, it looks like Wesley has inherited some of the almost-paranormal skills his father was known for. But a rogue member of the Fraternity (Thomas Kretschmann as Cross) seems intent on eliminating the world's elite

assassins, and he appears to have Wesley directly in his crosshairs. Simultaneously groundbreaking and breathtaking, "Wanted" is more than just one of the best films of 2008 — it's one of the best action movies ever made. *Rated: R for strong bloody violence throughout, pervasive language and some sexuality. 1 hour, 53 minutes.* — T.H.

**GET SMART ★★1/2**

(Century 16, Century 20) Smart (Steve Carell) is one of the top analysts at CONTROL, the ultra-secret U.S. spy agency whose headquarters are housed beneath a museum and accessed through the iconic long corridor of

clanging, automatic steel doors and phone-booth elevator featured in the television series. Max dreams of being promoted to the exciting life of a field agent — like the much-admired Agent 23 (Dwayne Johnson). His dreams become a reality when KAOS, the crime syndicate led by the cold-blooded Siegfried (Terence Stamp), attacks the central office. Unlike Inspector Clouseau or Mr. Bean, Maxwell Smart is no bumbler. The newly numbered Agent 86 is simply an intelligent man with a steep learning curve. The Chief (Alan Arkin) partners him with the accomplished Agent 99 (Anne Hathaway), who reluctantly heads on a mission to Moscow with him

in hopes of foiling the KAOS operatives (including Kenneth Davitian) and their weapons of mass destruction. You'll have a better time if you don't expect this re-imagined work to resemble the original. The phone shoe does fit Carell, and he wears it well. *Rated: PG-13 for some rude humor, action violence and language. 1 hour, 50 minutes.* — S.T.

■ **MOVIE REVIEWS**

Read more reviews online at [www.PaloAltoOnline.com](http://www.PaloAltoOnline.com).

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AMY RESNICK, ELIZABETH NORMENT, AND CRAIG MARKER IN *THIRD* / PHOTO BY DAVID ALLEN



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# Health Education Highlights

## Lectures and Workshops

### *Making the Most of Your Doctor Visit* *Sunnyvale Senior Center Lecture Series*

Wednesday, June 23, 1-2 p.m.

Sunnyvale Senior Center - 500 E. Remington Dr.

Presented by Emily Riske, Health Resource Center coordinator.

You do not need to be a member of the Senior Center to attend.

*For more information call 408-730-7380.*



### *I Think I Can, I Think I Can, I Know* *I Can (All About Behavior Change)*

#### *“For Your Health” Community Lecture Series*

Wednesday, July 23, 7 - 8 p.m.

Sunnyvale City Council Chambers, 456. W. Olive Ave

Presented by Karen Handy, MPH

*For more information or to reserve your space, visit  
caminomedical.org/healtheducation or call 408-523-3295.*



## Classes and Support Groups



### *Family First Aid*

Monday, July 14, 6 - 9 p.m.

Mountain View Center, 701 E. El Camino Real

Third Floor Conference Rooms

Cost: \$45

*For more information or to reserve your space, visit  
caminomedical.org/healtheducation or call 650-934-7373.*



### *Mind-Body Stress Management*

Begins Monday, July 14, 7 - 9 p.m. (Three part series)

Mountain View Center, 701 E. El Camino Real

Third Floor Conference Rooms

Cost: \$90

*For more information or to reserve your space, visit  
caminomedical.org/healtheducation or call 650-934-7373.*

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