

Mountain View VOICE



SEPTEMBER 26, 2008 VOLUME 16, NO. 38

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PHOTO COURTESY MOUNTAIN VIEW LIBRARY

This photo was taken in 1985, on opening day of Shoreline Lake. The lake quickly became so popular that the city had to regulate its use.

From garbage to glory

SHORELINE PARK CELEBRATES 25 YEARS THIS WEEKEND

By Daniel DeBolt

This Sunday, Mountain View will celebrate the 25th anniversary of one of its most significant undertakings: over 500 acres of lake, rolling hills, trails and golf links known as Shoreline Park.

City staff envisioned the park in the 1960s, back when the area had mostly “undesirable uses” — a large pig farm, two auto wrecking yards and an old city landfill. John O’Halloran, city manager from 1958 to 1973, said local residents were skeptical that Mountain View, a small city at the time, could afford such a large park. But city staff “knew something should be done out there,”

O’Halloran said recently, and the keys to the park’s success lay in two places: San Francisco’s garbage and federal park money.

“Now it’s almost an international example of how you could take a landfill and turn it into something special.”

KEVIN DUGGAN

In a series of moves that current City Council member Jac Siegel calls “ingenious,” the city saved millions in the building of the park by taking garbage from San Francisco to fill the area, much of which was below sea level. In 1969,

assistant city manager Albert St. Cyr told the press that 7.5 million cubic yards of landfill was needed to create the park’s contours. But the city would get more than just landfill: San Francisco would pay Mountain View several dollars for every ton of garbage.

The garbage was hauled down the old Bayshore Freeway in trucks that made 90 trips per day throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

“That was a courageous thing to do on the part of our City Council,” O’Halloran said. “To have all those trucks coming into town — that’s not something most people wanted.”

► See **SHORELINE**, page 9

District considers hiring private eye

MOUNTAIN VIEW WHISMAN TRUSTEES WANT TO VERIFY STUDENT ENROLLMENT

By Casey Weiss

With elementary school enrollment growing much faster than expected, and around 80 students on a waiting list to attend their neighborhood schools, some district trustees want to hire an investigator to explore whether all students are properly enrolled.

The Mountain View Whisman School District currently has a student population of 4,408, a number administrators had not been expecting to reach until 2011. In part, administrators said during a board meeting last week, the increased enrollment can be explained by a growing number of families at Moffett Field and the expanding technology industry.

But several trustees suspect there may be something else at work, and suggest hiring a private investigator to make sure that all of the enrolled students are residents of Mountain View or have permission to attend the schools.

“It shocks me that today we are at the numbers we thought we would reach in 2011,” said trustee Ellen Wheeler, who initiated the conversation about the investigator.

Students who are not residents within the district are allowed to transfer in, but are not given first priority. The district gives first priority to neighborhood students, then to students living within district boundaries, then to students from outside of the district.

This year more students were transferred from their neighborhood school to another campus, and trustees want to “make sure

we are serving our kids — in-town Mountain View kids first,” said board president Fiona Walter in an e-mail to the Voice.

During last Thursday’s meeting, trustees reached no decision about hiring a “private eye,” but agreed

INSIDE
MEET THE MVLA BOARD
CONTENDERS. Page 11

to continue enrollment discussions on Thursday, Oct. 16. They seemed to be split on the issue, with some arguing the technology industry was the biggest cause of increased enrollment.

“I just want to make sure we are targeting the right group,”

► See **ENROLLMENT**, page 13

Burglar strikes again

By Casey Weiss

Mountain View police believe two more crimes can be attributed to a serial burglar described as a white man in his 50s, bringing his total number of suspected burglaries to 20.

Three more burglaries occurred in the city over the past week, and one of them is believed to be the work of this particular thief, said police spokesperson Liz Wylie. Police also believe another burglary from earlier this year was part of the spree, which has targeted

► See **BURGLAR**, page 6

INSIDE

GOINGS ON 28 | MARKETPLACE 30 | MOVIES 25 | REAL ESTATE 34 | VIEWPOINT 17

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

Susan Enzmann



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Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in Downtown Mountain View. Pictures and interviews by Kelly Truong.

What's the best show you've ever seen at Shoreline Amphitheatre?



"Dan Hicks. It was a long time ago. It was kind of a different style of music at the time."

Bruce Jacks, Santa Clara County



"Aerosmith, when they played on the lawn. They came on the lawn, which was a big security risk."

Melissa Lyn Le, Mountain View



"The Linkin Park concert. I love Linkin Park."

Matteo Sarica, Mountain View



"Probably the Fugees like ten years ago. The music was great, the energy was awesome."

Catherine Fluss, Los Altos



"Download Festival, because The Cure went."

Lizzy Moore, Mountain View

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■ POLICE LOG

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
100 Block Castro St., 9/18

AUTO BURGLARY
Easy St., 9/17
Waverly Pl., 9/17
200 Block Rock St., 9/18
700 Block Cottage Ct., 9/18
YMCA, 9/18
100 Block Solana Dr., 9/19
600 Block Pettis Ave., 9/20
200 Old Middlefield Way, 9/22

BATTERY
Safeway - Miramonte, 9/17
Monte Carlo Club, 9/17
100 Block Linda Vista Ave., 9/17
500 Block N. Shoreline Bl., 9/19
100 N. Shoreline Bl., 9/21
Moffett Bl., 9/21
N. Rengstorff Ave., 9/22

DISORDERLY CONDUCT
Wine Press, 9/18
Subway - W. Evelyn Ave., 9/19

DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE
200 Block Latham St., 9/17

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
100 Block W. El Camino Real, 9/19

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE
W. El Camino Real/S. Shoreline Bl., 9/17
California St./S. Rengstorff Ave., 9/17
Highway 101/Moffett Bl., 9/22

EMBEZZLEMENT
PD Fire Administration, 9/22

GRAND THEFT
200 Block Leghorn St., 9/16
500 N. Shoreline Bl., 9/20
Bush St., 9/22

IDENTITY THEFT
Ormonde Dr., 9/22

LOST PROPERTY
100 Block Amphitheatre Parkway, 9/17

MISSING PERSON - ADULT
100 Block Ednamary Way, 9/19

MISSING PERSON - JUVENILE
500 View St., 9/19
200 California St., 9/21

NON-VEHICLE ACCIDENT
100 Crisanto Ave., 9/20
W. Evelyn Ave./Hope St., 9/21

PETTY THEFT
Jackson St., 9/17
Barbara Ave./Lola Lane, 9/17
San Ardo Way, 9/17
Leona Lane, 9/17
Central Ave., 9/17
Safeway - California Ave., 9/20
Walmart, 9/21
Lozano's Carwash, 9/22

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY
100 Block Brookdale Ave., 9/18
100 Gladys Ave., 9/18
100 Block Morgan St., 9/19
Stierlin Road, 9/21
200 Alvin St., 9/22

ROBBERY
100 Block Grant Road, 9/22

STOLEN VEHICLE
200 Block California St., 9/18
800 Sierra Vista Ave., 9/20
Century 16 Cinema, 9/21
Palo Alto Ave./Snow St., 9/22

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE
100 Block San Luis Ave., 9/19

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/ PERSON
McDonalds - El Monte 9/19
100 Block Waverly Pl., 9/20
Ferguson Dr., 9/21
Farley St., 9/22

TERRORIST THREATS
Castro St., 9/22

TRESPASSING
200 Block W. El Camino Real, 9/18
E. Middlefield Road, 9/22

VANDALISM
100 Block Ednamary Way, 9/16
Barbara Ave., 9/17
Cuesta Park, 9/18
500 Block S. Rengstorff Ave., 9/18
Cooper Park, 9/19

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Tips for staying busy

By Don Frances

THERE'S PLENTY to do this weekend, so maybe you should kick things off with a heaping stack of pancakes.

On Saturday morning the Mountain View Fire Department will hold its yearly Pancake Breakfast, a \$5-a-plate fundraiser with proceeds going to the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation. Hundreds of residents usually attend, making it a great social gathering while you raise cash for a good cause — a win-win.

This Saturday's event will be held from 8 to 11 a.m. at Fire Station 4, located at 229 Whisman Road. Apparently there will be other activities besides eating pancakes, including a demonstration by local soap box derby racers.

AFTER PANCAKES you might go down to San Jose to hear a talk by Al Gore. For some reason that seems appropriate.

Forrest Linebarger, local green builder and *Voice* columnist, wrote to tell us about West Coast Green, a huge conference and expo on green building coming to Silicon Valley for the first time ever.

"In addition to vendors displaying the latest in green building technology," he wrote, "West Coast Green has a star-studded lineup of speakers that have thought deeply about the environment and green innovation. Al Gore, former vice president and Nobel laureate for his work on 'An Inconvenient Truth,' will be keynoting Saturday morning."

Then on Sunday there's a "Peninsula Green Home Tour," which includes one home in Mountain View — a newly built Craftsman on Eldora Drive — and one designed and built by Forrest's firm.

For more on the speeches, which take place at the San Jose Convention Center, visit www.westcoast-green.org. For more on the home tours, visit www.builditgreen.org/green-home-tours/southbay08. ■



COLLEEN CUMMINS

The Stevens Creek Trail, above, will be the site of the 14th annual Trailblazer Race beginning at 8:30 a.m. this Sunday, Sept. 28.

Get ready for the Trailblazer

FOR 14 YEARS, EVENT HAS CELEBRATED GROWING STRETCH OF STEVENS CREEK TRAIL

By Andrea Pyka

One of Mountain View's greatest assets is its system of trails, and this Sunday its crown jewel, the Stevens Creek Trail, will be celebrated once more in the 14th annual Trailblazer Race.

According to Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, a nonprofit group, having a path run the length of the Stevens Creek corridor has been a goal of

local advocates for more than 40 years. Slowly but surely, local governments and agencies have been chipping away at that goal, and Mountain View has more than done its part: The trail now extends for six miles through the city, running from Shoreline Park to the south side of El Camino Real.

The trail's biggest yearly celebration also is held in Mountain View, hosted at

the Microsoft campus on La Avenida. Participants will begin the Trailblazer from there on Sunday morning, embarking on 10K, 5K and children's races or walks.

The event is a fundraiser for the trail, and Aaron Grossman, executive director of Friends of Stevens Creek Trail, said he hopes the steady contributions and support will

► See **TRAIL**, page 15

Sylas the subject of police hearing

OWNERS IGNORE ORDER TO SURRENDER DOG; POLICE REVEAL ATTACK ON MAILMAN

By Daniel DeBolt

A hearing was held last Friday to determine whether Sylas, the Hope Street husky which neighbors have dubbed the "wolf dog," should be taken from its owners for attacking several small dogs and a postal carrier.

"The dog needs to be brought to Palo Alto Animal Control Services immediately," said hearing Officer Jim Williamson to owners Linda and Audra Rowles at the end of the hearing, after it was brought to his attention that Sylas had not

been impounded. "I implore you to impound the dog. This is very serious issue. Tomorrow, Sept. 20, the dog needs to be brought to Palo Alto Animal Control Services."

As of Wednesday morning the dog had yet to appear, said Sandi Stadler, director of Palo Alto Animal Control Services.

Six neighbors of Old Mountain View gave sworn testimony Friday that the dog has been off its leash regularly for years, threatening people and occasionally attacking other animals, including a small Boston terrier that required stitch-

es earlier this month. But neighbors were surprised when police Officer Kala Thrower revealed that the dog had bitten a female postal carrier in 2004 after charging the carrier in the front yard of its home on the 700 block of Hope Street. The dog was quarantined for 10 days in that incident.

Until then, neighbors said they thought Sylas had only attacked other animals, although he had threatened people.

Linda Rowles cross-examined

► See **DOG**, page 12

Stepping up to the Challenge

GROUP FOR AT-RISK YOUTH INSPIRES NEW TEAM IN SUNNYVALE

By Casey Weiss

Community leaders stepped up to a statewide challenge from the attorney general in 1987, organizing a group of local advocates to address problems facing at-risk youth. And so the Challenge Team was born.

While many similar organizations in neighboring communities folded within their first year, the Mountain View-Los Altos Challenge Team is still working to reduce drug use and gang-related violence nearly two decades later. As its membership hovers around 60, nearby cities and community leaders are turning to the team as a model to tackle similar problems.

"The Challenge Team changes membership, but we try to continue to start different groups and solve youth problems," said Gay Krause, who helped found the organization.

Dozens of community leaders from the public and private sectors, churches and schools meet at the Mountain View Police Department once a month to brainstorm ways to keep at-risk students away from drugs and off the street. Krause, a former Graham Middle School principal, moderates the public meetings, while community advocates take turns each week giving presentations.

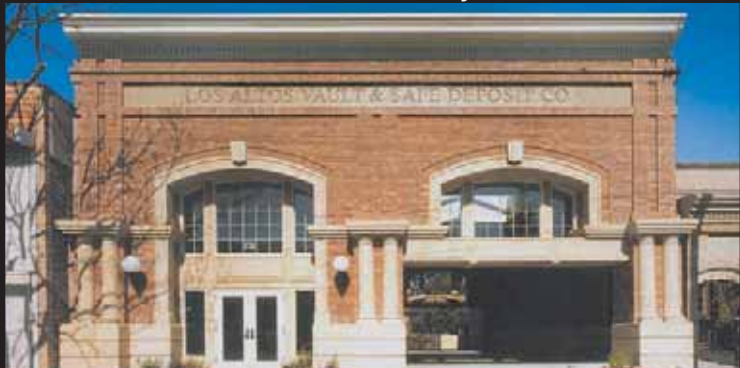
"Once a month you have access to 30 or 40 organizations," said Oscar Garcia, president of Mesa de la Comunidad and a Challenge Team member. "I don't know any other organization that gives you this visibility besides Challenge Team."

During the team's recent meeting on, Sept. 11, a Sunnyvale police officer, Capt. Doug Moretto, spoke about his city's new challenge team, modeled after the Mountain View-Los Altos group.

Following an influx in crime and two gang-related homicides in Sunnyvale last year, city police

► See **CHALLENGE**, page 16

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He has a great passion for the outdoors and can be found surfing, cycling, fly fishing, camping.

He loves spending time with his wife, 2 1/2 year-old daughter and 9 month-old son. His dog, Flint, thinks he's pretty special.

He loves composting and his worm box (yes, real worms).

He loves to see students make connections between the classroom and real world issues, like how recycling and composting helps the planet.

He wants his students to become good stewards for the earth.

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■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

Full moon over Shoreline



Annette Teng of Concord Circle took this picture at Shoreline on the evening of Sept. 14. "The avocets and the curlews are busy feeding before the day's end under the full moon," she wrote. "I always admire the photos that readers submit to the Mountain View Voice, Teng added. "There is so much beauty and activity around Mountain View." 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.

BURGLAR

► Continued from page 1

Mountain View residences over the past six months.

Wylie said there is no way of knowing for certain which of the crimes are connected. However, all of these burglaries "occur in broad daylight when no one is home. The suspect enters through an open window and takes small items."

She said the burglaries are occurring throughout the whole city and not in any specific area.

"I want people in the city to realize it could be happening next door," Wylie said. "The crimes are not localized."

Police believe the man first checks

to see if someone is home by ringing the doorbell. If no one answers he breaks into the house.

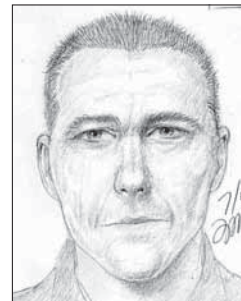
Recently, a resident didn't answer the door, and was home to interrupt the burglar as he broke into the house. The burglar then fled on foot. The resident described him as a white man between 50 and 60 years old, about 5 feet 10 inches

tall, with gray hair, a thin build and wearing a gray sweatshirt.

In the past year, Wylie said, Mountain View has had an average of nine burglaries per month

— higher than usual due to the spree.

There have been similar burglaries at nighttime, when a suspect breaks into a house by removing window screens and also steals small audio devices and laptops. But typically, "Either a suspect will do night or daytime burglaries, not both," Wylie said. She said police are trying to determine if the



daytime and nighttime burglaries are related.

Anyone with information on the burglaries or the suspect is urged to call police at (650) 903-6344. ▣

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Guardsmen back from Ike rescue

MOFFETT-BASED 129TH RESCUE WING SAVED 48 PEOPLE FOLLOWING TEXAS STORM

By Daniel DeBolt and Kelly Truong

Air National Guardsmen from the Moffett Field-based 129th Rescue Wing returned home last week after performing rescue operations in response to Hurricane Ike in southern Texas.

The rescue personnel saved a total of 48 people and 13 dogs in the Galveston area, which had been flooded by the storm. "I was expecting to see shingles blown off, and instead I see houses gone," said Tech. Sgt. Luiggo Romanillo.

The contingent of 80 Moffett-based airmen had originally been deployed to Texas in response to Hurricane Gustav, but shifted focus after receiving forecast information about the incoming Hurricane Ike. "We moved on the fly," said Romanillo.

Maj. Rhys Hunt said he knew last Saturday that things would be busy after more than 200 calls were made to 911. Amid the destruction, Hunt saw the Galveston airport under water and 70 to 80 beach homes "completely sheared right off" their stilts.

"As far as natural disasters, this is about the worst natural disaster I've ever flown over" except for Hurricane Katrina, Hunt said.

The airmen performed last-minute evacuations, taking brief shelter in San Antonio to avoid the eye of the storm before returning to the scene.

Hunt piloted a helicopter in 50 mph winds, slowly trolling over flooded areas in Crystal Beach and Gilcrest on the Bolivar peninsula, hoping that people in need of help would come outside and flag them down. Many did, including a trio of elderly people who had run out of their medication and needed to get to a hospital, Hunt said.

"Some people were hysterical,

their homes had been devastated," Romanillo said. "One guy with a stroke had to be taken from inside his house with a hoist."

To rescue the 48 people and 13 dogs, the 129th worked with the 106th and 176th rescue wings, from New York and Alabama, respectively. According to Romanillo, many people were less concerned with their own well-being than they were with that of their pets. "The first thing that they said was, 'Can you take my five dogs?'" he said.

After flying the evacuees to Texas City High School, Hunt's crew returned to find a man and a woman wading through flood waters. They informed Hunt of others who needed help: an elderly man, his son and his daughter-in-law who were stranded in their home with their dog. The crew used a hoist to pluck them from the rising waters as well.

"All you can do is think to yourself, 'Man, I feel sorry for these people and if I don't do this, no one else will,'" said Romanillo. "We were happy to get out the people we could."

"This professional and highly skilled team of citizen airmen demonstrated our unit's life-saving capability to respond anytime, anywhere," said Col. Amos Bagdasarian, 129th Rescue Wing Commander, in a press release. "This is exactly why we're consistently called upon to perform rescue operations in natural disasters, such as fires, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes."

Hurricane Ike rescue photos are available at www.129rqw.ang.af.mil/ photos, and video clips at www.youtube.com/129thRescueWing. □

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com and Kelly Truong at ktruong@mv-voice.com

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Photo of the Los Altos Mavericks in Cooperstown, New York. The team is comprised of LA-MV Pony League twelve and under players.

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Community mulls latest plan for Cuesta Annex

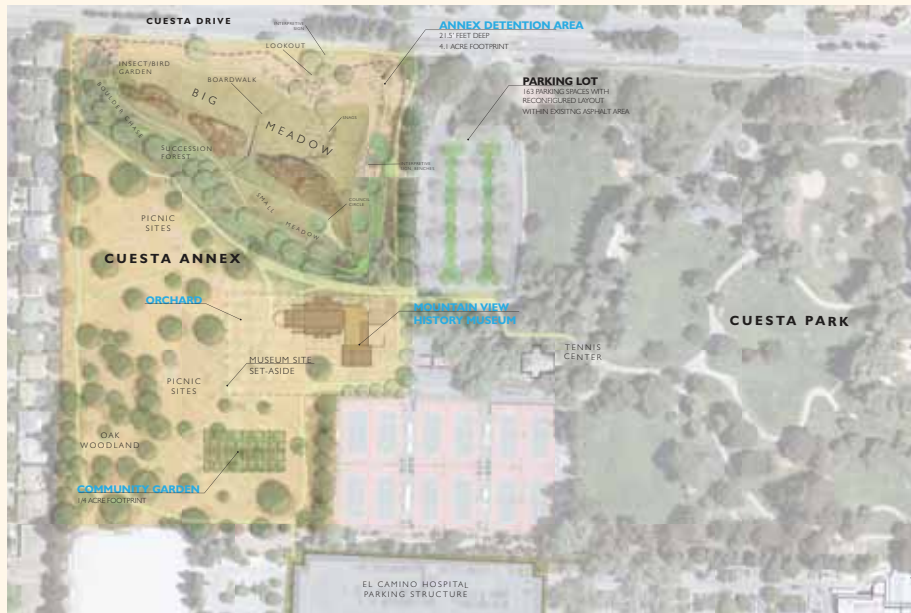
By Daniel DeBolt

Almost 100 community members assembled in the Senior Center on Monday night to discuss the latest plan for the Cuesta Annex — the undeveloped area next to Cuesta Park which the city intends to make into a public open space doubling as a flood basin.

The latest refinements still leave much of the 12-acre Annex untouched, but include details for the 4.1-acre flood basin along with a history museum, orchard and community garden.

Before bringing it to the public Monday night, the city's "refined proposal" was created with input from key stakeholders, said public works director Cathy Lazarus. Those stakeholders presented their visions at the start of the meeting.

History Association President Bob Weaver talked about the history museum planned for a spot just north of the Cuesta tennis courts, an idea which the City Council has already supported. Master gardener Marcia Fein addressed the proposed community gardens, saying that they should be even larger and include a space for a children's garden. Kevin McBride, representing local group Save Open Space, spoke as a supporter of the



Draft Cuesta Annex Master Plan

Santa Clara Valley Water District's flood basin at the front of the park — a proposal SOS once opposed.

In a phone conversation, McBride explained that the basin would be 21.5 feet deep in some places, but "gently tapering down in different levels, with some variation in the contours."

Of about a dozen residents who spoke, almost all were supportive of the basin, saying it was apparent that a lot of work was being done to make it add to the park's beauty. But one speaker said the city could say "goodbye to the heron," a large bird that hunts the gophers that live where the basin is planned. Another

speaker, who said she had lived in the city for 72 years, questioned the need for the additional flood protection.

Afshin Rouhani of the water district explained that the flood basin is part of a system of flood retention basins proposed for Permanente Creek. The Annex would only be needed in a "50-year flood," which has a 2 percent chance of happening annually. Water would have to fill the basin proposed for Blach School in Los Altos before it would begin to fill the Annex, arriving through a pipe that would run under city streets and enter at the southeast corner of the basin.

The water would flow out of the northwest edge of the basin after one or two days, Rouhani said.

Other speakers were concerned about the impacts of a history museum on the Annex. Currently, they said, the Annex's charm is due to the fact that nature has been allowed to take over there.

"I can see the mountains without any man-made structures in view," said one speaker, who called the Annex his "refuge." "There will be a building that will destroy that for me." ▀

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



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Santa Clara Valley Water District



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SHORELINE▶ *Continued from page 1*

When the park plan moved forward, environmental groups decried the loss of wildlife habitat. The Army Corps of Engineers held a meeting on the park plan, and invited every environmental group around. O'Halloran presented the plan, and remembers someone rallying the audience by asking, "Who is more important, people or birds?" The audience of 1960s environmentalists shouted, "Birds!"

The memory makes O'Halloran chuckle, especially since there are more birds at Shoreline now than there were before the park was built.

His biggest concern at the time was how to deal with the enormous quantities of garbage. He said he joked with his staff, in private, that Mountain View's official bird would be the fly. He admits this now only because it's a concern of the past — the garbage is safely under clay caps and methane gas systems.

"Fortunately they did a good job in managing the technical aspects of it," said Kevin Duggan, the current city manager, who had his first internship with O'Halloran in the 1970s. "Now it's almost an international example of how you could take a landfill and

turn it into something special. We're just happy to continue building on the vision that started all those years ago. I have so much respect for the folks that got it going."

"It's an important anniversary and I'm glad we're going to recognize it."

Plans for the park were approved by the state and federal government in 1966, allowing \$1.2 million in federal funding to be added to \$600,000 from the city and \$600,000 from the county to build the park. It was seen as a benefit not just for Mountain View, but for the whole Peninsula, according to the Shoreline Park Historical Outline, written by local historians.

The park officially opened on July 17, 1983.

In 1985 the park's sailing lake opened, and became so popular the city had to lay down restrictions on who could use it for windsurfing and boating.

That was also the year the city struck a deal with Bill Graham to build the Shoreline Amphitheatre. The amphitheatre was built just outside the park, also on garbage landfill, and the 22,000-seat venue held its first show in June 29, 1986, when Julio Iglesias performed. ▣

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

■ FUN FACTS

Shoreline came close to being something else entirely — a major auto raceway. It was a serious proposal, but the City Council voted it down, O'Halloran remembers. There was also a small chance it would become high-density housing. During negotiations to buy 200 acres of the park, former owner Leslie Salt Co. told the city it wanted to develop housing there.

According to several local newspaper reports, Shoreline Golf Links personnel used to shoot the small, duck-like coots which, to this day, inhabit the course in huge numbers, destroying the greens by eating the grass. In 1985, 374 of the birds were shot in a three-day effort to rid the course of the birds, raising the ire of animal rights groups.

During a Santana concert on Aug. 17, 1986, the first of several legendary "great balls of fire" incidents was reported when a Berkeley man reportedly dropped a match and flames burst out of the ground. People in the audience scattered, with some trying to put the fire out with blankets. The fire marshal eventually determined that methane gas, escaping from the landfill below, could catch fire if a flame was held less than three inches off the ground. The landfill's clay cap was repaired in places and a new system to catch the methane gas was eventually installed before the 1987 concert season.

■ SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Several events are scheduled for this Sunday, Sept. 28 at Shoreline Park:

8:30 to 10:30 a.m. — 14th annual Trailblazer Race, held by the Friends of the Stevens Creek Trail. Call (408) 255 5780 for more info, or see story, page 5.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. — "Wally's Swing World" plays music from the 1940s and 1950s on the lawn area north of the boathouse.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. — Free children's activities on the lawn area north of the boathouse.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. — Environmental docent-led walks will depart from Rengstorff House every hour on the hour.

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. — Free sailboat rides and windsurfing lessons; self-guided tours of art in the Bayshore area (handout available from the information booth next to the Lakeside Cafe); Rengstorff House guided tours; police and fire displays in the sailing lake parking lot.

11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. — Rengstorff House garden tours.

11:45 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 12:45 p.m., 1:15 p.m., 1:45 p.m., 2:15 p.m. — A burrowing owl video and discussion will be held at Michaels at Shoreline.

12:30 p.m. — Commemorative ceremony on the lawn area north of the boathouse.

1 p.m. to 2 p.m. — Community bike ride. Meet at kite flying area just inside park entrance.

1 p.m. to 4 p.m. — BBQ chicken sandwiches available from Michaels at Shoreline for \$6; also, pre-ordered lunches available at the Lakeside Cafe (call 965-1745). Saturday and Sunday, all day: Shoreline Golf Links hosts the Mountain View City Championship (\$150 entry fee; entry form available at www.mountainview.gov).



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Tearful test score celebration

MOUNTAIN VIEW
 WHISMAN HONORS
 STUDENTS FOR RARE
 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

By Casey Weiss

Crying parents and teachers crowded the elementary school district office earlier this week to celebrate a group of students for their academic accomplishments.

These 119 students raised their standardized test scores by two levels this spring, helping the Mountain View Whisman School District increase its overall results and meet some targets for the first time. Trustees and administrators recognized the students during an hour-long ceremony on Thursday, Sept. 18.

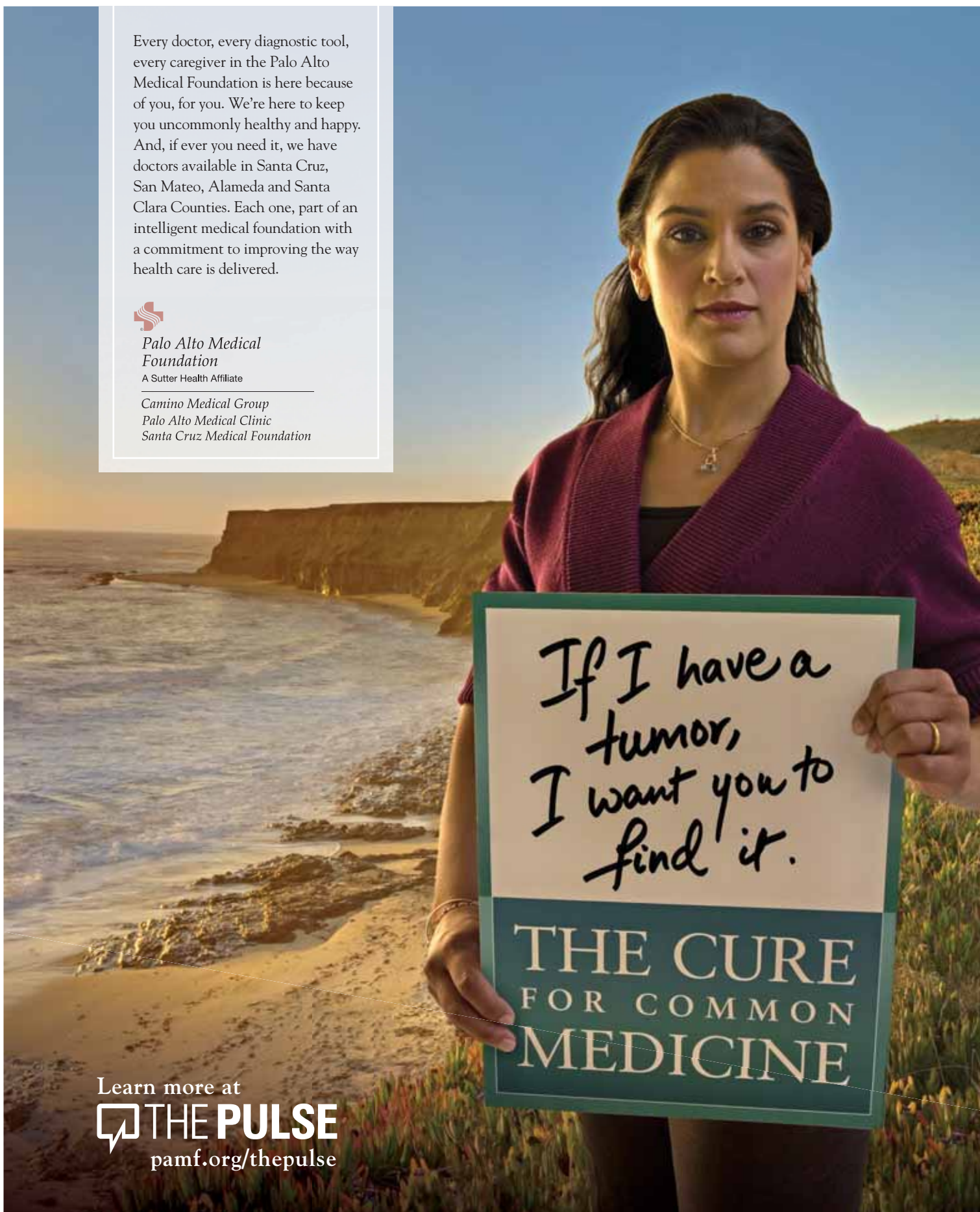
"You achieved one of the highest academic honors in the district," Mary Lairon, associate superintendent of educational services, told the students.

Every spring, the 4,400 local elementary school students take the California Standards Test in math and English language arts. Depending on their scores, these students are categorized into five levels ranging from "far below basic" to "advanced." To meet targets, students must score proficient or advanced.


Teachers and administrators recognized these 119 students week for raising their scores two levels in math or English language arts, with three students jumping two levels in both subjects.

Trustees said they would hold a similar celebration later in the fall for students who scored at the top of their grade level. ▀

E-mail Casey Weiss at
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MountainView VOICE

Three candidates, two spots on MVLA board

By Casey Weiss

After 10 years of uncontested elections in the high school district, Mountain View residents will get to choose this November between two incumbents and a challenger as the three candidates vie for two open seats.

Challenger Colin Rudolph and incumbents Susan Sweeley and Phil Faillace all say they want to further the education of students in the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District. During interviews last week with the *Voice*, the candidates said trustees should help narrow the achievement gap for underrepresented students, while still challenging high- and middle-level students. But they disagreed on the best methods for approaching these goals.

Sweeley and Faillace both said experience and strong relationships between board members are the best ways to address these issues, while Rudolph said the board needs a new perspective.

Phil Faillace

During his 12 years on the board, Phil Faillace said, trustees have formed a "culture" committed to

challenging all students. This collaborative effort has been crucial, he said, especially in narrowing the achievement gap and in making advanced placement classes accessible to a wider range of students.

"You cannot just focus on students underachieving or overachieving, you have to challenge them all," he said.

Traditionally, advanced placement classes had a raft of prerequisites which kept the majority of students out. The MVLA board first opened these courses to more students in 2002, a controversial move (only a few other districts in the state offer such access). But trustees say the program has been successful in challenging many more students.

Faillace, who owns a software company, grew up in a working class neighborhood, where he said people worked hard to create high-quality public schools. He moved to Los Altos about 30 years ago, and became involved in local education when his two daughters started school.

As the high schools continue to struggle with an achievement gap for underrepresented students, Faillace said teachers should have access

to students' test scores so that they can cater to individual needs. Since many in the Latino community tend to be more transitory, he said, a statewide or nationwide database would be useful for quick reentry into the school system.

Colin Rudolph

Although the district has a strong academic foundation, Colin Rudolph said, the board could use a fresh perspective as it continues to address the diverse needs of district students.

"This is not a scenario where we have to change or fix things, maybe just look at them from a different perspective," Rudolph said. "The schools are really good; we just don't want to be stagnant."

Rudolph, a Los Altos resident who grew up on the Peninsula, returned to the Bay Area after college and now works as an account executive in the high-tech industry. He said the problem-solving and people skills he uses every day in his career will help him tackle district issues from a different angle.

He has two daughters, ages 4 and 6, but said he does not want to get too involved with his children's elementary school. He decided to run

for a position on the high school board to "lay the groundwork for when they get there."

"I think step number one is to work with educators," Rudolph said. "They are the ones who will be able to identify the issues — is it a family issue? A language issue?"

Rudolph also said that, as a trustee, he would look at other school districts in similar situations for ideas to help local Latino students.

To address the needs of high- and middle-achieving students, Rudolph wants more programs like Middle College, an alternative high school program for district students that operates through Foothill College.

Susan Sweeley

Because the local high schools have such a diverse student population, said Susan Sweeley, it's important for trustees to work one-on-one with students at all levels.

Sweeley told of her own experience mentoring a disadvantaged local student, and said it has helped her, during her eight years on the board, to address students' needs through programs and policies.

"I thought being a trustee was

about hiring and firing the superintendent and passing policy," she said. "It is about so much more. I want to serve the high-achieving kids and the ones who are underrepresented and the ones in the middle."

Sweeley first started volunteering with the local schools about 20 years ago when her children began elementary school in Los Altos. Sweeley, a real estate agent, joined the high school board in 2000, and said it took her a full four-year term to learn the ropes.

Since then she has stated a tutoring program, joined the local and statewide school board associations and participated in the Challenge Team and CHAC.

Several years ago, Sweeley said, she began tutoring a Latino student who was involved in gangs and addicted to methamphetamine. Although the student still faces some problems, she said, he is now off drugs and taking classes at Foothill College.

The district can never completely close the achievement gap, she said, but through one-on-one interactions of this kind educators will make great progress in narrowing it. ■



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- Children's Activities
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Shoreline at Mountain View
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DOG

► Continued from page 5

some of her neighbors, asking why they had never talked directly to her. Neighbors said they didn't feel safe approaching the house. Others said they assumed the owners knew what was going on.

"His aggressive behavior is escalating," said David Halford, a police officer who had plenty of time to observe Sylas in July. During a Thursday Night Live event that month, he had to corner the dog for 30 minutes to keep it from making

its way into the crowd on Castro Street. Halford happens to be a dog expert who trains and raises cattle-herding dogs for a living.

"He's a male dog and he's doing what male dogs do," Halford said. "He's territorial. He thinks the neighborhood is his territory."

Halford also said the dog was a "fear biter," and would attack out of fear, making him a "liability" and a "hazard."

Police also revealed that Linda Rowles often had outstanding warrants because of the dog, and often failed to appear in court. Meanwhile, post office officials had asked

Linda to sign a paper saying the dog would never return to her home on Hope Street, but she refused.

"I could not state that honestly — that he would not be there," she said.

So the post office stopped delivering the mail, four years ago.

Audra Rowles, Linda's daughter, said she had gotten the dog around her 18th birthday. It was originally licensed to her mom, but that license lapsed several years ago.

"My daughter Audra and I, we both own the dog," Linda said.

Deputy city attorney Lynn Dobson disagreed. "From all the records I see, you are the owner," Dobson said.

Linda said her son, Eli, is often left with the dog on Hope Street, and admitted that he has some mental problems.

Audra said she felt bad about Sylas biting the postal carrier, but added that she had never seen him act aggressively to anyone else and had never heard complaints from neighbors. Her boyfriend agreed, saying the dog had never acted aggressively to their cat.

Linda said she wanted the dog

to stay at Struggle Mountain, the Los Altos Hills commune where she spends some of her time.

Dobson criticized Linda Rowles unsparingly in her closing remarks.

"She doesn't renew the dog's registration, she doesn't pay citations, she doesn't appear in court. This is not someone who is a responsible dog owner."

Williamson, who acts as judge and jury on such matters, would not say what sort of options he had for a ruling. He said his decision, due within 15 days of the hearing, would be final. ■

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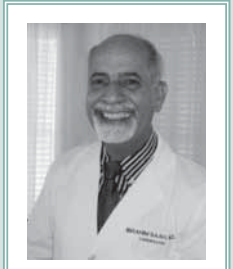
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ENROLLMENT

► Continued from page 1

said trustee Ed Bailey.

Administrators said enrollment was up 47 students from last year — an unusually high number compared to enrollment several years ago. Most of the elementary schools are close to reaching full capacity, they said.

To address increased enrollment, trustees and administrators are considering moving PACT, a program that encourages parents to participate in the classroom, off the Castro campus and onto the district site. They are also planning to hold a new demographics study; the last such study was done in 2004.

“The demographic study will give us data that will need to be reviewed and then [we can] determine next steps,” said director of administrative services Stephanie Totter.

Balancing class size

California has a class size reduction program which Mountain View Whisman participates in, meaning the district must keep classrooms below 21 students in order to receive

funding. This year, because classes had reached this capacity, the district waitlisted 84 students who wanted to attend their neighborhood schools.

“When a classroom exceeds its maximum, we look at the last student put in the classroom and move them to another classroom that is below the maximum,” Totter said. “We try very hard not to move a student out of the school.”

The waitlist also includes 112 Mountain View residents who want to transfer schools, and 64 students who want to transfer into the district. There are also nine families who have an older child at one school but have to send younger siblings to another school due to over-enrollment.

“This has been an anxious time as they wait to see what happens,” Totter said of those families.

Private eye

Typically, the district verifies students’ addresses through electricity bills, lease agreements and home visits, and this year, administrators said, they have already found several families who lied about their address. But some trustees now say they may want to take more drastic

measures.

For the last several years, Mountain View-Los Altos High School District administrators have worked with a contract employee to help them verify students’ addresses. The elementary school district trustees said this may be a good solution.

Joe White, associate superintendent of business services, said the system works well for the high school district. “When there is a document they want to verify, they call this person up,” he said.

The high school district is a basic aid district and receives the majority of its funding from property taxes, meaning it does not get more funding for increased enrollment. The elementary school district, by contrast, is a revenue limit district and receives funding depending on average daily attendance.

Even though the Mountain View Whisman district benefits from increased enrollment, trustees said they want to verify that students are properly enrolled out of fairness to those students being moved around. ▣

E-mail Casey Weiss at cweiss@mv-voice.com

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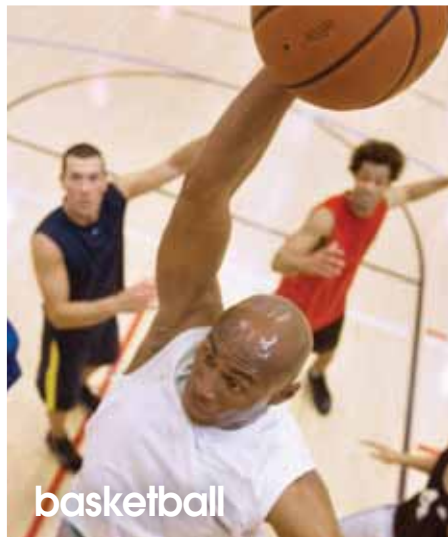
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TRAIL

► Continued from page 5

eventually be enough to extend the trail all the way to Cupertino.

“There is a desire to have an environmentally sensitive trail, where people can see the creek and wildlife without negatively impacting the creek,” Grossman said.

A small but important extension of the trail was completed only five months ago, when the city of Mountain View, at a cost of \$3.5 million, tunneled the pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly path under El Camino Real.

More improvements are on the way. Since May, Mountain View Public Works has been constructing a pedestrian and bicycle overpass at Moffett Boulevard. (Between 30 and 40 percent of trail users are bicyclists, according to Grossman.)

All these improvements add up to even more respite for trail users, who say Stevens Creek

Trail provides them with a place for exercise, commuting and simple peace and quiet.

“I walk a minimum of five miles a day,” said Mountain View resident Evan Scott. Standing in

“People and the local government are realizing that urban trails are a benefit in so many ways.” Grossman said. “It’s open space, it’s recreation, it gets people out of their cars, and if it’s done right, it’s a real boost for the environment.”

Walking the trail “is a nice contrast from being at work,” said Microsoft employee Katarina Ling. “You always meet interesting and friendly people. I hope

that it stays that way.” ■

“People and the local government are realizing that urban trails are a benefit in so many ways. It’s open space, it’s recreation, it gets people out of their cars, and if it’s done right, it’s a real boost for the environment.”

AARON GROSSMAN

the trail on a recent weekday, wearing comfortable walking shoes and carrying a book, Scott said the trail makes for a perfect setting to enjoy nature.

“The new extension of the trail is nice,” he added, “because you can get around the El Camino without getting hit by a car.”

Many teenagers frequent the trail after school hours, coasting their bikes up and down the maze of man-made sand dunes along Mercy Street. Parents take their children to the parks attached to the path, such as Creekside Park on Easy Street.

■ **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**

FREE VARIETY SHOW FOR SENIORS

Participants at Avenidas Rose Kleiner Senior Day Health Center will hold a free variety show this Sunday to kick off the 25th Year of National Adult Day Services Week.

The show will feature a range of performances, including a barbershop quartet, pianists and an impersonator of the late country comedian Minnie Pearl. The event includes free tours of the facility, and the center will serve dessert after the show.

The show will begin at 12:30 p.m. this Sunday, Sept. 28 at the Health Center, located at 270 Escuela Ave., Mountain View. Those interested in attending may reserve seats by calling (650) 289-5499.

SALLY RIDE SCIENCE FESTIVAL RETURNS

The Sally Ride Science Festival, designed for students and parents dedicated to encouraging girls’ interest in science, math and technology, is returning to NASA Ames this Saturday.

The event, open to upper elementary and middle school girls,

will feature discovery workshops on topics varying from solar technology to volcanic eruptions. Parents and teachers may attend separate workshops on supporting student interest in science and math.

Students also will have the opportunity to meet with local scientists and engineers, including astronaut Wendy Lawrence, a veteran of four Space Shuttle missions. The event will culminate in a street fair with hands-on activities, booths, food and music.

Sally Ride, America’s first female astronaut, founded Sally Ride Science to promote science education through student programs, with a special emphasis on increasing the number of girls in the field. The group has held festivals all over the country since 2001, as well as science camps and after-school programs.

The festival will be this Saturday, Sept. 27 from 11 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. at NASA Ames Research Center, located at Moffett Field. Those interested in attending must register in advance at <http://sallyridescience.com>.

—Kelly Truong

■ **INFORMATION**

What: The 14th annual Trailblazer Race

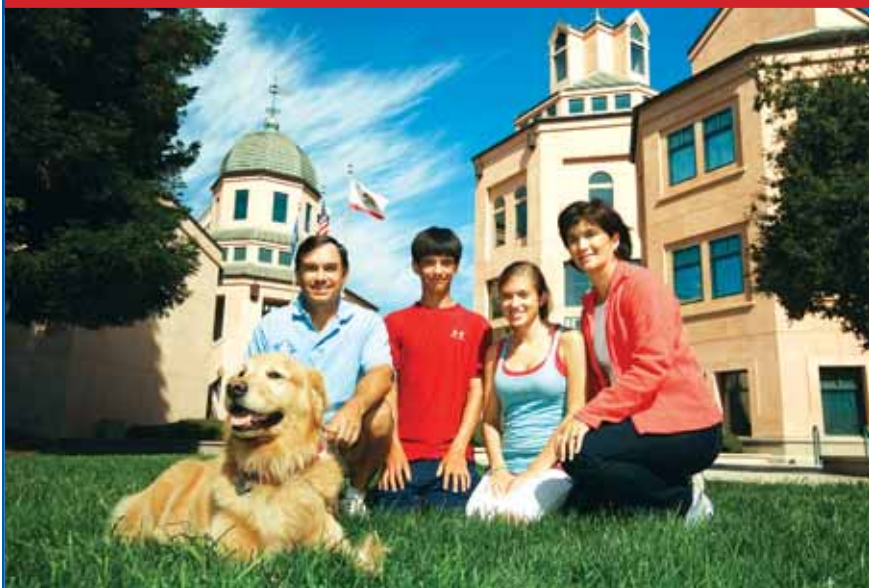
When: Sunday, Sept. 28. Registration begins at 7 a.m. Sunday, and the first race is at 8:30 a.m.

Where: The Microsoft campus, 1065 La Avenida Ave., Mountain View

Info: For details, including maps, race times and information on how to register or volunteer, visit www.stevenscreektrail.org/trailblazer or call Aaron Grossman at (408) 255-5780

VOTE

JOHN MCALISTER
CITY COUNCIL



- ✓ Neighborhood Preservation
- ✓ Financial Strong City Government
- ✓ More Parks, Open Space & Sports Facilities
- ✓ Strong Business Sector

I have lived in Mountain View for over **50 years**. I attended Mountain View schools, graduated from **UC Berkeley in Business Administration** and obtained my **CPA certificate**. As a business owner of the **local Baskin Robbins**, I not only understand commerce but also the importance of education which is why I support the local schools. My wife and I are raising two children who attend Mountain View High and Graham. I served on the School Site Council, Treasurer for the PTA, and coached youth sports. I’m currently on the **Environmental Planning Commission**. I would appreciate your support and vote.

Top Priorities:

Neighborhood Preservation

- Appropriate Growth
- Keep neighborhood character

Financial Strong City Government

- Provide quality and essential city services while being prudent with the budget

More Parks, Open Space, and Sports Facilities

- Increase sports fields, new park in Mountain View
- Leverage new development to increase park sizes

Strong Business Sector

- Improve and maintain business districts to help generate sales tax dollars to fund quality services, and not raise taxes and fees.

All of the above help improve the quality of life.

If you would like to share your thoughts, find out more information, or help out, please see:

www.johnmcalister.org

E-Mail: john4mv@johnmcalister.org

Paid for by John McAlister for City Council FPPC#1309928

Hangar One hearing draws out stories, passions

FEDERAL PRESERVATION GROUP MAKES RARE TRIP TO BAY AREA

By Daniel DeBolt

Over 100 people attended an unusual hearing on Hangar One last week that was organized by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a federal body which reports directly to the president and rarely holds meetings outside of Washington, D.C.

Held in the Computer History Museum last Thursday, the meeting took on a different, more wistful tone than previous discussions as locals came forward to share their memories of Hangar One and its historical importance as a defining structure of Silicon Valley.

The Advisory Council will consider the input when it makes an official recommendation to the Navy and the president on Hangar One.

"Our comments are taken very seriously," said Susan Barnes, Advisory Council vice president. "We report directly to the president."

Having flown in from around

the country, four members of the Advisory Council sat at the front of the museum's large auditorium, while dozens of people from various backgrounds — veterans, military base cleanup experts, architecture enthusiasts, airship enthusiasts and even government officials — spoke in support of saving Hangar One.

The visiting officials had also toured the hangar earlier in the day, something few have been allowed to do in recent years.

One of the first to speak was Jonathan Allen, a representative of Congresswoman Anna Eshoo's office, who read a letter in support of restoring Hangar One signed by all 12 of the Bay Area's federal representatives.

"Our constituents have overwhelmingly supported a re-skinning of Hangar One during the public comment period," the letter reads, "and it is critical that we do everything possible to see that Hangar One is restored so that it remains an icon in the Bay Area." The letter goes on to say that "the hangar has proven to be

tremendously versatile in use and we believe it will be again, once cleaned and restored."

Leaving the hangar as a bare skeleton "would be a travesty," said Carl Honaker, Moffett Field's last executive officer before the Navy left in 1994. "It's no different than bulldozing it as far as I'm concerned."

Other speakers said the hangar has several historical structures inside of it that were never meant to be exposed to the elements. One bathroom still features a light switch specially built so that it could not ignite explosive gases should the Navy have ever decided to use hydrogen in the USS Macon airship instead of helium.

"It's almost the way it was back in the 1930s," said one speaker. "Once you tear it apart it never goes back together the same way."

Moffett Field Restoration Advisory Board co-chair Bob Moss expressed his concerns.

"The mere act of taking the walls down could cause severe damage to the structure," he said. "What happens to the Valley

without its iconic structure?" asked Larry Ellis, a member of the Save Hangar One Committee. "It starts to look like Los Angeles, and a lot of other places."

Raymond Reck, a former Navy mechanic who once worked inside Hangar One, said he had traveled to some of the greatest cathedrals in the world, but inside the Hangar "there is just an awesome feeling you will not recreate in any building."

Another man spoke of seeing it from the freeway as a child when it was one of the only structures in the area. He said he always knew he was halfway home when he saw it.

Several speakers noted that the Advisory Council should consider how much larger the turnout that night might have been, had it not been for major traffic due to a concert at Shoreline Amphitheatre. Some reported sitting in traffic for almost an hour just to move a few blocks. ▀

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

CHALLENGE

► Continued from page 5

there turned to Mountain View-Los Altos Challenge Team leaders for help, he said.

"All of [the violence] pointed to one thing, and that was Latino street gangs," Moretto said. "We saw the wonderful model of the Mountain View-Los Altos Challenge Team and said something like that could work here."

With a little help from Garcia and Krause, and funding from a local church, Moretto and Sunnyvale police Chief Don Johnson started that city's challenge team just over a year ago.

"If we lose the youth in our community, we lose our community," Moretto told Sunnyvale Challenge Team members during their first meeting.

In the year since, he said, the Sunnyvale Challenge Team has sponsored a boxing league and started mentoring at-risk youth. Moretto said crime rates have significantly reduced throughout the city since then, and he credits some of this to the new team.

"Not to say it is a direct impact, but it seems we made a difference," Moretto said. "Each step of the way, we have gone to Gay [Krause] and she has provided behind-the-scenes guidance." ▀



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Member, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce

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CALL the Viewpoint desk at
964-6300, ext. 26.

■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

The green grocer

It was good news for downtown residents when the City Council supported a plan last week that could maybe, just maybe, bring a new grocery store downtown. As council member Ronit Bryant noted, it's something downtown residents have wanted for many years.

The city-owned, 1.5-acre lot along Bryant Street, between California and Mercy streets, currently is used for parking. But if the plan goes through, it will become high-density housing atop retail space. And according to several council members who spoke on the subject last week, that retail space should be a new grocery store.

Unlike the recent effort to put a Zanotto's in the Bryant Street parking garage, this time around, several City Council members seem confident that a grocery store would be financially feasible.

Currently there is a grocer on Castro Street — the New Mountain View Market, a Chinese grocery store on the 300 block. But there's definitely room for more, and the area would be greatly improved by more retail of this kind, allowing people who live downtown to walk or bike somewhere close for their groceries.

By now, it should be obvious why it's better for a community to have its retail and other resources close by. Besides being better for the environment, it's cheaper and more convenient not to require a car for such basic needs. And of all the places to develop such a "walkable" community, downtown may be the most viable: Besides its mix of residences, businesses and restaurants, there's already access to the city's most important transit hub, where Caltrain, light rail and buses converge to take people to and from work.

Less tangibly, having more (and more diverse) retail downtown will make the community a safer, more interconnected place, where people meet on the sidewalks and shop together at the stores. Currently, half a dozen grocery stores are spread out around the edges of town. How often do downtown residents see their neighbors while picking up milk and eggs?

When people care about the place they are living in, they are more likely to intervene in a crime or call the police, the same way more people using sidewalks decreases the chance of a violent crime there. For these reasons, a new grocery store would help solidify downtown's status as a place people want to move to, not move away from.

And let us consider the same treatment for the rest of Mountain View, every part of which deserves a solid, cohesive neighborhood to make it stronger and safer. Such neighborhoods are built brick by brick — and a new downtown grocery store would be one such brick.

Currently, half a dozen grocery stores are spread out around the edges of town.

■ LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

FAIR CONTRACT NEEDED FOR HOPE EMPLOYEES

Editor:

I am an instructor for people with developmental disabilities at HOPE Services. I also provide care for my 84-year-old mother and my disabled brother.

Right now, we employees at HOPE have started negotiations with management. The issues that concern us are staff retention and maintaining client services. We care deeply about our clients and feel pride in helping them learn new skills and build self-confidence.

In order to continue to take care of our clients, we need management to take care of staff. I made \$9 an hour when I first started at HOPE. It's been eight years and today I make only \$12.50. Salaries have not kept up with inflation, and for many folks, if a more equitable salary scale isn't adopted, we will not be able to afford to stay with HOPE and care for the clients we love.

We urge HOPE to do what's best for the community and seek a fair contract quickly, so that we may continue to provide care for our clients.

Dolores Herrera
San Jose

CONSIDER MEANING OF CONSTITUTION DISPLAY

Editor:

On the front page of the Sept. 19 Mountain View Voice is a photo

of a library display of the United States Constitution — a Constitution that is not being observed or respected by the Congress or the Bush administration.

If the display causes people to think about the balance of power and the role Congress was intended to play in that balance, the display will be worthwhile.

It is time that we quit pretending that there is a document that protects us from the tyranny of our government.

Phillip P. Pflager
Palm Avenue

SIDEWALKS NOT THE PLACE FOR SEGWAYS

Editor:

Don Frances' column, "The way of the Segway" (Sept. 5), describes the city's considerations for allowing Segways on our trails and sidewalks very well. The Council Transportation Committee met last week to take up the issue, and will shortly present their recommendations to the full City Council.

Although I'm very much in favor of any changes within the city that get people out of their gas-powered vehicles, I have strong reservations about Segways being permitted on sidewalks, which is one allowance now being discussed.

Incredibly, at least as implied by current Mountain View City Code,

► See LETTERS, page 18





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Viewpoint

LETTERS

► Continued from page 17

bicycle riding is allowed on sidewalks, except in the business district. In my observation, bicyclists take to the sidewalks all too often in Mountain View, and their presence there poses both a real and perceived hazard for pedestrians who encounter them. Allowing Segways as one more mode of transport on sidewalks will exacerbate an already present use conflict and will send the wrong message to all bicyclists, skateboarders, scooter riders, etc. who ought to be using the shoulder of the road for such transport. If they do not feel safe there, then this is an issue for the city to explore and improve if possible.

Segways weigh over 100 pounds each, even more with cargo. When Segway riders encounter those with strollers or in wheelchairs, will they be required to hoist their vehicles out of the way? Similarly, for those walking dogs, which are likely to be startled by an approaching Segway, will the rider be required to stay clear of the animals?

So far, everyone I've spoken with in Mountain View is not in favor of allowing Segways on sidewalks, and all of the correspondence I saw addressed to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee took the same view. Granted, these details don't provide scientifically sound results, but they do suggest that Segway riders are alone in asking for these new allowances. And given that there are far more pedestrians, or potential pedestrians, in Mountain View than there are Segway riders, I believe that pedestrian interests should prevail.

Bruce England
Whisman Station Drive

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■ GUEST OPINION

Turnaround at Alta Vista

STORY OF JAIME RODRIQUEZ SHOWS HOW THE RIGHT EDUCATION CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

By Barry Groves

Jaime Rodriguez is a public education success story. He graduated from Alta Vista Continuation High School in June of 2008 with a 3.8 grade point average and over \$13,000 in scholarships to attend college. The staff chose Jaime as a graduation speaker because of his dedication, strong work ethic, and academic success. However, the road to educational success was not always so bright for Jaime.

Prior to enrolling at Alta Vista, Jaime was a student at our 1,700-student Mountain View High School. He was never much of a student in middle school, and became even less of a student during his freshman and sophomore years. He began to miss classes, not hand in homework, and get into trouble. Because of not passing courses, Jaime got behind in credits and was assigned to Alta Vista his junior year.

Something happened to Jaime once he started his new continuation high school. Instead of not attending, he started to go to school regularly and focus on earning credits. The 150-student campus provided a supportive atmosphere for Jaime to thrive. He received individual attention and support from the staff, and soon was on grade level. Alta Vista Principal Bill Pierce remarked, "Jaime is one of the hardest working and most motivated students that I have encountered during my twelve years as principal. Jaime is a role model for us all."

As part of his graduation speech, Jaime extolled the virtues of the Alta Vista staff.

"Without the support of the Alta Vista staff, I would never have made it. They are responsible for who I am today."

I invited Jaime to speak to an audience of over 300 Mountain View-Los Altos High School District (MVLA) staff members as part of our annual district kick-off event in August. He repeated his success story with dreams of college graduation and an optimistic future. Only two years before, Jaime seemed destined to the life of a high school dropout.

There is no "one best system" for every student; different stu-

dents have different needs. Our job as public educators is to find the right fit so that all students can be successful. This is why MVLA offers a myriad of placement

options for students, including an alternative continuation high school that is complementary to our comprehensive high schools.

In addition to Jaime's success, Alta Vista has recently received more good news about its focus on academic achievement. With a 2008 Academic Performance Index (API) improvement of 192 to a score of 700, Alta Vista improved more than any other school in Santa Clara County. Overall, they are the second-highest API ranked continuation high school in the county. This year, Alta Vista has its sights set on creating more success stories like Jaime's, and maybe even becoming the highest ranked academic continuation school in the county.

Barry Groves is superintendent of the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District.

*There is no
"one best system"
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- Tuesday, October 14

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- Thursday, October 23

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COLLEEN CUMMINS

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

Expressive fare, dazzling venue

RED CURRANT AT ALLIED ARTS BRINGS STYLISH CUISINE TO A STYLISH LOCATION

By Dale F. Bentson

The resplendent platter of red, yellow and green heirloom tomatoes was as visually exciting as it was irresistible. There were chunks of fresh mozzarella, pungent arugula, plump kalamata olives and oversized crispy garlic croutons, all drizzled with balsamic-basil vinaigrette.

The tomatoes, plucked that dewy morning from the garden adjacent to the Red Currant bistro, sang with fresh, ripe earthiness. I sopped up the remaining vinaigrette with the artisanal house-made bread that had been

placed on the table along with icy water goblets minutes earlier, while we pursued the menu.

It was dreamy lunching in the Garden of Delight under a California live oak tree at Menlo Park's Allied Arts Guild. Gone for the season were the blooms of roses, purple wisteria, Nile lilies, asters and salvia. But understated hydrangeas still retained their flowers amid bubbling fountains and neatly trimmed gardens, with the long shadows of September silently segueing to autumn. What more charming setting for a midday repast?

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Ayelet and Nir Perry have been the proprietors of The Red Currant bistro at Allied Arts Guild since last November. Ayelet Perry is a self-taught, intuitive chef who grew up in Israel. Her parents were in the restaurant and catering business and she cut her teeth on Mediterranean cuisine.

Nir, who was born in the U.S., had relocated to Israel with his parents. The couple met in high school and have been together ever since, moving to the Bay Area in the mid 1990s.

Ayelet Perry began a whirlwind apprenticeship working with such notables as Wolfgang Puck, Hubert Keller and Pascal Janvier. She has cooked for U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman, the late U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos and the prime minister of Hungary. She is an advocate for organic, sustainable, locally grown products. The Perrys also own Cassis Catering in Redwood City.

The Red Currant is a captivating enclave. The grounds, intricately manicured by master

gardener Kathleen Bryan, are a historical property smack in the middle of Menlo Park. The land can be traced back to a land grant from the King of Spain over two centuries ago.

In the early 20th century, art lovers Delight and Garfield Merner bought 3.5 acres of the land and collaborated with architect Gardner Dailey and artist Pedro de Lemos to create a place where artists would work and folk art would be supported. The Allied Arts Auxiliary took over management of the guild in 1951, and profits go toward the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

Al fresco garden dining is available as weather permits. Indoors, the spacious ambiance of The Red Currant is decidedly Spanish-American with a tile floor, white-washed adobe walls and a muscular fireplace surrounded by paned windows that overlook gardens, fountains and courtyards. Crisp white linen covers tables and softens the

► See RED CURRANT, page 22

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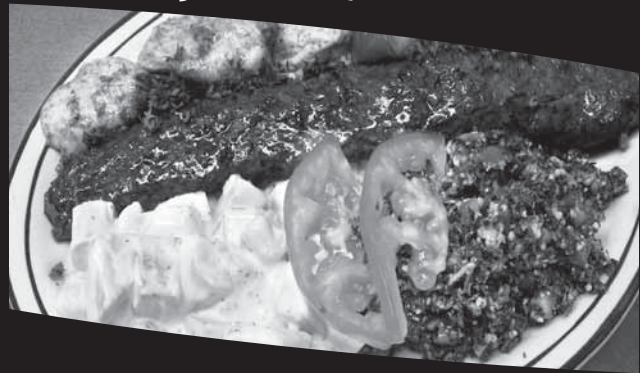
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RED CURRANT

► Continued from page 21

wood chair/wood table motif.

The fish I ordered one mid-day was a wedge of pan-seared salmon, which sat atop a throne of inky forbidden wild rice, and was surrounded by a lush moat of

jazzy mint-yogurt sauce (\$19.95). Chef Perry utilizes the freshest fish available, including branzino, a Mediterranean sea bass. This day, though, it was salmon that was fork-flaky, pink and regal.

The generously portioned, tender hangar steak (\$19.95) was the color of deep rich mahogany thanks to

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the caramelized onions and the syrupy reduction of red wine and balsamic vinegar. The accompanying celery root-potato puree could have been mistaken for whipped potatoes but with more flavor.

Schnitzel (\$15.75) was thinly sliced seasoned chicken breast, which came with celery root-potato puree, sauteed onions and coleslaw. The chicken had been flattened, lightly breaded with herbs, and quickly sauteed. It was so tender that each bite nearly melted on the tongue.

The Middle Eastern platter (\$14.75) featured sweet-potato falafel, hummus, tabula salad and house-made flat bread. The tabula salad was composed of bulgur, finely chopped tomatoes, onions, parsley, mint, olive oil and lemon juice. Everything on the plate was vibrant and refreshing.

Desserts were equally distinctive. Honeydew melon soup with lychee and passion-fruit sorbet (\$8.75) was cool and refreshing. It reminded me of the delicious fruit shrubs (frosted fruit juices and sorbet) served at Colonial Williamsburg.

An airy Italian meringue with fresh cream and berry coulis (\$7.50) struck just the right note. Not overly sweet, the dove-white colored meringue was the perfect nest for the vibrant red berry sauce.

Plum crisp (\$8.25) with a scoop of vanilla ice cream — and the peach tart (\$9) — were still warm from the oven. Both contained chunks of fleshy fruit with light crisp crusts and a wonderful balance between sweet and sharp.

Service was slightly impeded by the distance between the kitchen and the dining area, especially the garden. The competent servers were constantly on the move, but a little patience was necessary. The restaurant is not a venue for a quick meal, but a sensory meal. The ambiance offers something of interest to gaze at, sniff, listen to or touch from every vantage point.

Due to use permit restrictions, The Red Currant is open only for breakfast and lunch Monday through Saturday and is prohibited from serving alcohol. However, patrons can bring a bottle of wine and the restaurant will charge only a nominal fee for use of the stemware.

Evening hours and alcohol are permitted for special events: weddings, business functions and social receptions. Always call for reservations as the restaurant is frequently booked for special events.

Ayelet Perry is an accomplished chef. Add to her skills a unique, beautiful property nestled in the middle of Menlo Park and the results are romantic and languid, approaching utopian. Her menu is nutritious, creative, colorful, fresh and well prepared. What better time of year than now to enjoy? ▣

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