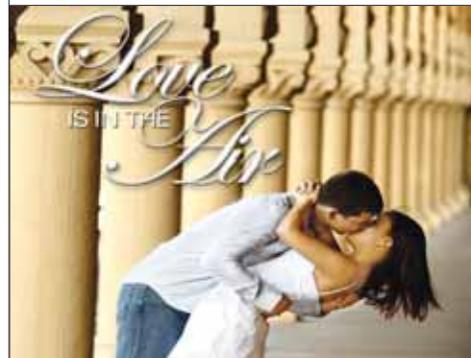


Mountain View VOICE



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| P.25

FEBRUARY 13, 2009 VOLUME 17, NO. 6

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MountainViewOnline.com

Homeless numbers on the rise in Mountain View



By Daniel DeBolt

The sound of breaking glass fills the air as Sarge and Carlos, two local homeless men, stand in line at the busy recycling center at San Antonio Shopping Center.

The two are about to cash in on their latest stockpile of bottles and cans for \$15. With about a dozen people waiting, the line is longer than it ever was before the recession, workers say.

"I've been out here in the wind for 38 years now," said Sarge, a Vietnam veteran who

wears a camouflage jacket with a U.S. flag patch. Carlos, 53, lives nearby in his truck, which is due to be towed away soon because it has sat there for two years. He has been on the streets for 10 years and suffers from occasional seizures, forcing him to rely on other homeless people like Sarge to make sure no one is in danger when they occur.

On Wednesday, Sarge entered rehab for alcohol abuse at the VA Hospital. If he gets clean, he will find it much easier to

► See **HOMELESS**, page 8

A homeless man who goes by the name of "Sarge" weighs in his bottles and cans for cash at a Mountain View recycling center on Tuesday. Sarge said he has been homeless for 38 years, and planned to go to the VA Hospital in Menlo Park later this week for rehabilitation.

MICHELLE LE

Youth get activities, but not at the Senior Center

MAYOR PULLS PROPOSAL AT LAST MINUTE

By Daniel DeBolt

Once again, the Mountain View Senior Center was spared the fate of having teens using its facilities in the evenings.

On Tuesday the City Council instead approved a \$50,000 four-month pilot program for a set of youth classes and events that will be held at local high schools and other locations.

The new program does not address the original goal of providing activities for at-risk youth in the Rengstorff neighborhood — a goal that last month led the council to entertain thoughts of letting teens use the Senior Center at Rengstorff Park. The idea was proposed after years of controversy over increased gang activity and the lack of an adequate teen center in the city.

But it failed to gain the support of council members John Inks, Laura Macias and Jac Siegel. And seniors worried that teens would be disrespectful to them and their building, despite the fact that city staffers would have provided a structured environment for teens and



The Mountain View Senior Center

the building would only be used when seniors were largely absent.

Staffers, council members and the city's Youth Advisory Commission worked quickly to come up with the alternative plan, which uses Los Altos and Mountain View high schools for after-school tutoring and classes like as yoga and kickboxing. Special events, such as concerts and open mic nights, would be held at places like the Graham Sports Pavilion, the Community School of Music and Arts and the Rengstorff Community Center, though that's often in use.

► See **SENIOR**, page 14

Owner: High density housing at San Antonio is a 'pipe dream'

By Daniel DeBolt

Fred Thoits, one of two major owners of San Antonio shopping center, injected a dose of reality into the public discussion over what should happen to the ailing San Antonio shopping center during an interview with the *Voice* on Tuesday.

Thoits leveled criticism at the City Council, city staff and the *Voice* for not informing the public that a Santana Row-style mixed use development is not possible at the shopping center. San Antonio will be a focal point as the city revises its General Plan over the next two years, and in General Plan "visioning" hearings, residents have expressed desire for such a development, saying they want "walkable" and lively streetscapes with housing situated over retail.

"We can envision the Taj Mahal too — it's not going to happen," Thoits said. "If [Santa Row] is their vision we

► See **SAN ANTONIO**, page 15

INSIDE

GOINGS ON 28 | MARKETPLACE 30 | MOVIES 22 | REAL ESTATE 34 | VIEWPOINT 17

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Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in Downtown Mountain View. Pictures and interviews by Andrea Nott.

What money saving tips can you share?



"I actually read the Safeway circulars that come in the mail now instead of throwing them away. I think they understand [the problem] and have decent sales on the necessities."

Tanya Landsberger, Mountain View



"My main one is actually having a budget. But within my group of friends, we all have to come up with something fun to do together for \$20 or less a person."

Jennie Durkin, Dublin



"I monitor my insurance policies. I took out our homeowners, auto and life insurance policies five years ago. A month ago I looked back at them and substantially reduced our insurance costs. We should look at them more often."

Jeff Brown, Danville



"I never grocery shop hungry, because you end up spending money on junk food you didn't mean to buy."

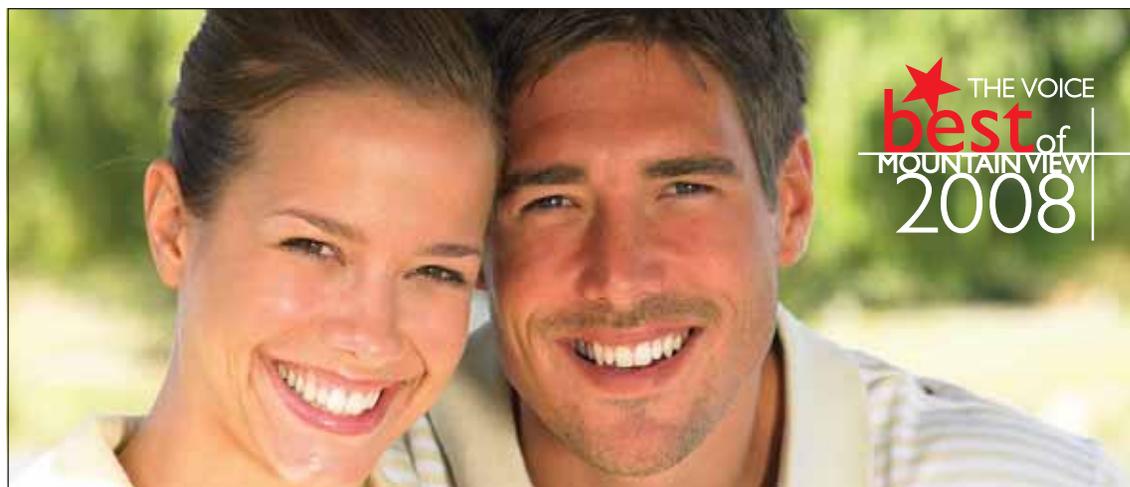
Blanche Shaheen, Los Altos



"Don't invest in the stock market. It's a sure way to lose it."

Ed Moravick, Palo Alto

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Poet didn't know it

By Don Frances

IN THIS ECONOMY, you've got to keep yourself open to all opportunities. That's why I thought I'd apply to be Poet Laureate of Santa Clara County.

At first glance the position, created last November, looks like a plum job. Here's some info from the county press release on it:

"The Poet Laureate's role is to elevate poetry in the consciousness of Santa Clara County residents." Nowhere to go but up.

"The Poet Laureate will be an honorary two-year position." This is better job security than most people have these days. However: "The Poet Laureate will not be considered an employee of Santa Clara County and will continue to have individual pursuits." These pursuits may include gardening, jazz, sipping espressos or launching your own startup.

So far so good, but reading further I noticed a few snags. For one, the Poet Laureate's duties include reading "appropriate works at the annual State of the County ceremony and at least four selected county-sponsored events, dedications, or memorials per year." Did they say *appropriate* works? Because that really cuts into my writing style.

Pay was another issue. I was hoping for something on the order of \$120,000 a year — you know, the normal wage needed to get by in this county. But an aide to Supervisor Liz Kniss told reporters the job comes with a \$4,000 stipend. While this is more money than anyone hitherto has ever made writing poetry, it still doesn't quite cut it, given the bohemian lifestyle I was planning on taking up.

The final blow came when I read the following: "The indi-

► See **EDITOR'S DESK**, page 10

MVHS runners in fast lane

CROSS COUNTRY TEAM DOMINATES CCS, RANKS HIGH IN STATE COMPETITION

By Casey Weiss

Knowing it was going to be a big year for the Mountain View High School cross country team, dozens of the school's other runners waited at the finish line this winter at the Central Coast Section championship in Monterey.

They painted themselves in black and yellow, the school's colors, waved signs and cheered as 14 varsity runners made Mountain View High history, winning CCS by 89 points and sending much of the team on to the state competition. Junior Garrett Rowe won the boys' race and senior Mary Reynolds placed second in the girls' competition.

"This is the best Mountain View team there has been in history," Rowe said.

The team's success did not end at CCS: The boys' team came in third at the state championships and the girls came in fourth.



MICHELLE LE

Mountain View High School cross country runners Kristine Talbot, left, and Allison Sturges practice on Monday.

Rowe ran the 5-kilometer race in 15:03, making him the 13th fastest runner in the nation.

"We were just hoping he would be in the top half, and out of 200 he was 13th," said Evan Smith, the school's cross country coach. "We just have a lot of talent."

Months after the season ended, the athletes still are running

up to seven days a week. They've started their track season and are now training for the mile and two-mile races. Each day after school they meet at the bleachers to practice together, and have pasta parties before meets to load up on carbohy-

► See **CROSS COUNTRY**, page 12

Binkley gets six months in state hospital

By Daniel DeBolt

Army veteran Sargent Binkley, convicted of using a gun to rob a Mountain View pharmacy for pain pills in 2006, will serve six months in a state hospital for his crime, a judge ruled last Thursday.

Last month a jury found the 34-year-old Los Altos High School graduate not guilty by reason of insanity after psychiatrists testified that he suffered from PTSD, sleeping problems and depression. They said the problems stemmed from

things he saw while serving in Honduras and Bosnia, and that he also suffered from an untreated hip injury he received in Honduras.

Judge Linda Condron sentenced Binkley to 180 days at Atascadero State Hospital. Binkley faces no probation or prison time in Santa Clara



Sargent Binkley

County.

Binkley now faces a trial in San Mateo County for a similar robbery of a Walgreens pharmacy in San Carlos. His attorney, Chuck Smith, says a verbal agreement has been made with San Mateo County prosecutors that will keep Binkley from facing prison time for the second robbery, but he could face five years' probation.

Binkley was scheduled to be in court in San Mateo County on Friday, Feb. 13. ■

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

Mandatory water restrictions on the way

Bay City News

Santa Clara County residents will face mandatory water rationing this spring, although it is not yet clear exactly when, or how much, residents and businesses will have to cut their water usage.

The Santa Clara Valley Water District board of directors voted Tuesday to impose rationing measures on the county's 1.7 million residents.

Board members will determine the specifics of the restrictions at its March 24 meeting. At that time, the district will have more information, including updated rainfall measurements and water allocations from the federal Bureau of Reclamation.

"Unless a miracle happens, we're going to go to mandatory rationing at some point," said Sig Sanchez, chairman of the seven-person board.

The board's vote went against recommendations from staff and area water companies. Many individuals present at this morning's meeting wanted to wait until March to determine whether restrictions were necessary at all.

Keith Whitman, deputy operating officer of the district, said that if February and March see average rainfall levels, the restrictions could be unnecessary.

"Historically we have seen some very wet months and some very dry months," he said.

Representatives from several of the county's eight water retailers also noted the cost of implementing water restrictions, and the risk of losing credibility with the public if a plan is announced and then canceled at the last minute.

► See **WATER**, page 7



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■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

Mustard blooms



According to Glenn Stewart of Woodstock Lane, "The old farm on Grant Road was a popular spot today with amateur photographers trying to capture the winter/early spring views while we still can."

Stewart sent in the above photo, while Mountain View resident Janet Tuttle sent in the one below, which she took earlier in January. Both were taken on Levin Avenue near Grant Road.

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.



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Stanford offers 'Facebook for Parents' course

Bay City News

A new course that begins next week at Stanford University aims to bring parents into the relatively unfamiliar realm of social networking sites in order to make them more aware of what their kids are up to online.

The four-part course, titled "Facebook for Parents," is being co-taught by BJ Fogg, associate professor at Stanford and the author of "The Psychology of Facebook," and his sister Linda Phillips, whose background is business and marketing.

The three main objectives of the class, Phillips explained, are to keep kids safe online, help parents monitor the information their children reveal online, and teach parents that social networking sites can actually help their kids learn important life skills.

The hands-on classes, Phillips said, will offer a starting point for parents unfamiliar with the format of social networking sites.

Parents will be taught how to create their own Facebook pages, send "friend requests" to their kids, review the content on their pages, view who their kids are friends with, and monitor their kids' activities in the site's "News Feed" feature.

Phillips, who has several children ranging in age from 10 to 25, said she is "friends" with all of her kids on Facebook and said the site has helped her become familiar with her children's friends.

"This is responsible parenting, knowing who their friends are and who is involved in their life," Phillips said. "We're ineffective as parents if we are naive and ignorant."

Phillips said she has received mixed reactions to the idea of parents joining Facebook.

One young adult initially complained that she felt like her mother only intended to spy on her, but her attitude changed when she realized that her mother just wanted to be involved in her life, Phillips said.

Phillips said that when parents go online, many teens and young adults initially feel their space is being invaded — especially at an age when they crave autonomy and independence.

This is something for parents to keep in mind, she said, and to be careful and respectful of the idea that their kids have a life separate from their families. Parents should simply use the site as an opportunity to establish rapport and trust with their children, Phillips said.

"Social networking is not going away. It is important that parents understand that and get up to speed," she said.

The "Facebook for Parents" course is free and open to all parents. The course begins on Feb. 19 and runs through April 2. More information about the course is available online at www.facebookforparents.org. ▣

WATER

► Continued from page 5

Whitman said restrictions will likely call for water use reductions between 10 and 20 percent, depending on precipitation. The valley has seen three excessively dry years in a row, causing a shortage in the county's supply of surface water.

Until now, the district has asked water providers within the county for a voluntary 10 percent reduction in water use. However, the average right now is closer to 6 percent, according to board member Rosemary Kamei.

Tuesday's decision puts local municipalities and water com-

panies in a challenging spot, as they must prepare for upcoming restrictions without being able to tell their customers when these will begin, or how they will be structured.

In many cases, restrictions must be enacted by a vote from local city councils, and water companies must inform customers and change their billing practices to impose higher rates on customers who go above their allotted water usage.

Once details are finalized at the March meeting, Whitman said, water providers will need between six weeks and three months to make the water restrictions a reality. ▣

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HOMELESS

► Continued from page 1

get into special housing for the homeless. It's a big incentive for him to complete rehab this time, he says. There is a chance, however, that the two local affordable housing projects that take in the homeless — San Antonio Place in Mountain View and the Opportunity Center in Palo Alto — will have no more space when he gets there.

A newly formed local group, the

North County Homeless Housing Coalition, hopes to fix that problem. Forty people showed up to the group's first public meeting last Monday. Their goal is to build housing or convert existing housing to be used by the chronically homeless in Mountain View.

"This is a very serious attempt at ending homelessness," said Duncan McVicar, a Community Services Agency board member who helped start the coalition.

Carlos and Sarge are among an estimated 300 homeless people in Mountain View who live in cars, motels, around vacant office

buildings, or sleep on friends' couches or in encampments along Steven's Creek. While an official count is not due until April, all signs point to a major increase in

At the CSA, the number of people who show up for a free grocery program, open to anyone, has increased from about 200 a day to about 300, with a line stretching around the parking lot.

local homelessness ever since the worldwide economic recession began last year. The county, which counts the homeless every two years, put the number of homeless in Mountain View at 122 in 2007.

McVicar says a new program to deal with homelessness called "Housing First" has been shown well-documented success in other cities. With Housing First, the chronically homeless — those who have been homeless for a number of years, rather than temporarily — are given affordable or free subsidized housing and assistance with getting employment or government aid to pay the rent.

The Opportunity Center in Palo Alto is an example of this kind of housing. When it opened in September 2006, one couple, homeless for five years, told the *Palo Alto Weekly* that "this is exactly what we needed to get back on our feet."

"Somebody who is only very briefly homeless usually finds some other way out of homelessness," McVicar said. "People who have been homeless for a while find their way into this program."

Rehab first

Much of the money for such projects comes from the government through grants and tax credits, McVicar said, though a portion will have to be raised from foundations and individual donors. Corporations that donate can receive substantial tax credits. "This is really a special form of an affordable housing project," McVicar said.

At the coalition meeting last week, many attendees were "enthused about the possibility of converting an apartment building," among other ideas, said Julie Barton, a founding member of the coalition.

McVicar says the new housing would likely be studio apartments for individuals, not families. The housing would not be appropriate for homeless people with mental problems or substance abuse problems, he said. For them, a rehabilitation program would be a prerequisite.

"There will always be a few people who would turn down an opportunity to be at this place" and instead continue drinking or doing drugs, McVicar said.

"It's a big decision."

The coalition's founding four members, McVicar, Barton, Sue Schaffer and Giseal Daetz, are all from Los Altos. McVicar and Daetz are board members on the CSA. Barton and Schaffer worked with the rotating, church-based Alpha Omega Homeless Shelter program before it closed in 2006.

By the numbers

The number of homeless people who receive special services at the CSA, such as housing assistance and financial aid, has nearly doubled since the recession began last year, said Tom Myers, CSA's director.

While not an indicator of population, "it definitely indicates there are more homeless in the community," Myers said.

The CSA's special homeless services program assists the homeless "with getting benefits, applying for food stamps, general assistance, social security, medical benefits, financial assistance, dental, vision, food, clothing, employment assistance and finding shelters," said Nadia Ilieva, the CSA's homeless services specialist.

In the last half of 2008, more than 300 people used CSA's homeless services, compared to about 175 in the first half of the year. But those numbers don't include the family members of each person the CSA counts, McVicar said — for example, a mother coming in on behalf of her family only counts as a single homeless person, even though her whole family might be homeless.

On the other hand, not all of the people the CSA sees are without a roof over their heads. Many stay with friends or in motels.

"About one half of all homeless people CSA sees are housed," McVicar said.

At the CSA, the number of people who show up each day for a free grocery program, open to anyone, has increased from about 200 a day to about 300, with a line stretching around the parking lot, said Ladrea Clark, CSA's nutrition and health education assistant. ■

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

■ INFORMATION

For more information or to join the North County Homeless Housing Coalition, contact Julie Barton at (650) 961-8806, Gisela Daetz at (408) 738-4726, Duncan McVicar at (650) 962-8053 or Sue Shaffer (650) 967-0558.



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Photo of Michael Kahl standing on the Bund of Shanghai with the view of Pudong in the background.

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EDITOR'S DESK

► *Continued from page 5*

vidual [must] be a Santa Clara County resident of at least five years who has been published or recognized for poetry and literary contributions." For me this is a "no" on all counts. Although I could probably arrange to get "published or recognized" for my poetry pretty quickly (there are perks to being an editor), I'll never manage to live within

Santa Clara County for five years by the application deadline, which is next week.

It's too bad, especially since I was going to treat you to my latest work. It begins, "There once was a man from Nantucket ..."

Still, there are sure to be plenty of qualified applicants out there. Those interested in becoming Santa Clara County's first-ever Poet Laureate can obtain information and applications from the county Web site, www.sccgov.org (look for the link in the category labeled

"Hot Items"), or by calling (408) 998-2787 or writing laureate@artscouncil.org. More information also is available at www.artscouncil.org.

The application deadline is 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17. The Board of Supervisors — noted for its literary criticism — will make its selection by March 24. ▣

Don Frances is accepting your poetry submissions. He can be reached at dfrances@mv-voice.com.

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Palo Alto approves Mayfield project

Palo Alto Weekly

A developer's proposal to bring 45 homes to the former Mayfield Mall site in south Palo Alto met rave reviews and swift approval from the City Council on Monday night.

The council voted 7-0, with Councilman Sid Espinosa and Vice Mayor Jack Morton abstaining, to approve a plan by Pennsylvania-based Toll Brothers to build 45 homes along the city's border with Mountain View. The development is part of a nearly 500-unit Toll Brothers residential community expected to stretch across the city's border with Mountain View. The Mountain View City Council already approved the map for the rest of the development.

The Palo Alto council had nothing but praise for the project at 200 San Antonio Road, near Central Expressway. It includes public streets, a private park and a tunnel for pedestrians and bicyclers leading to the Caltrain station. Mountain View had approved its portion of the project late last year.

Palo Alto's Architectural Review Board and Planning and Transportation Commission both recommended approval of the proposed development.

Councilman Greg Schmid said he was very impressed with the proposal and praised the plan for conforming with the city's Comprehensive Plan, which lays out the city's vision for development.

"Congratulations on the project," Schmid said. "I'm very impressed."

The plan had already gone through about 30 public hearings at the two cities. Palo Alto's endorsement was the last phase in the approval process.

Palo Alto's portion of the project would consist of 45 multi-family units housed in stacked flats and townhouses. ■

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OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

January 27, 2009

Dear Santa Clara County Residents:

This year marks the completion of the seventh year of the **Clean, Safe Creeks & Natural Flood Protection Plan**, a ballot measure that received strong support from Santa Clara County voters in November 2000. As part of the plan, implemented by the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water), voters approved the formation of an Independent Monitoring Committee (IMC) to monitor the plan's progress and ensure the outcomes of the plan are met in a cost efficient manner. Consistent with that objective, the IMC carefully evaluates the progress of promises made and publishes an annual oversight report, which is available online or by request. The annual oversight report details the status of each of the four major outcomes promised to voters in 2000.

1. Homes, schools, businesses and transportation networks are protected from flooding

There are nine flood protection projects planned to protect approximately 16,000 homes, businesses and schools. Valley Water also removes sediment from creeks to maintain stream capacity so flood waters are conveyed safely to San Francisco and Monterey Bays.

2. Clean, safe water in our creeks and bays

Valley Water is implementing projects to improve the quality of water in our creeks and bays as well as remove trash and graffiti from our stream corridors.

3. Healthy creek and bay ecosystems are protected, enhanced or restored

Initiatives are underway to enhance the health of creeks and the surrounding habitat. These efforts go beyond a waterway's banks to reflect the conditions throughout the watershed, including the health of its birds, wildlife and fish.

4. Trails, parks and open space along waterways

Valley Water works to create trails and open space within surrounding watersheds, stream corridors and on flood protection levees, for the community to use and enjoy.

Members of the IMC take this voter-mandated task very seriously. The IMC meets as a full committee bi-annually and relies on five working subcommittees to review the plan's progress, address concerns and assess all activities within each outcome, including projected financial challenges in future years.

I am pleased to report activities within the plan are on schedule for their targeted completion over a 15-year period. For more information or a copy of the annual reports, please contact Karna DuQuite at (408) 265-2607, ext. 2944, or visit Valley Water's website at www.valleywater.org. I would also like to extend an invitation to members of the public to attend our next meeting on May 7, 2009.

Sincerely,

David Ginsborg, Chair
Independent Monitoring Committee

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CROSS COUNTRY

► Continued from page 5

drates.

Rowe and Ian Myjer, another top runner, say the boys put 50 to 70 miles under their belt each week. Senior Kristine Talbot said the girls run between 30 and 40 miles a week.

"Running is not a sport for the weak of mind," Talbot said. "Someone who runs isn't going to be anyone who slacks off."

Talbot hopes to run next year at either Pepperdine or Santa Clara University, and many of the other runners say they're looking to compete at Ivy League schools. These practices and busy schedules, the runners say, help to keep them motivated and on top of their school work.

"It's been good for stress levels," Rowe said. "To go out and run."

When the runs get hard, Talbot said she just focuses on the finish line. "It's all about the return you get afterwards," she said.

In fact the runners have a tendency to work too hard, and Smith said he has to pay close attention. This fall, for the first time during his seven years at the school, two runners got stress fractures.

"Sometimes I need them to rest," Smith said. "With these kids, I



MICHELLE LE

Coach Evan Smith talks to his runners prior to track practice on Monday.

need to pay attention to not have them overwork themselves."

Still, Smith says the high level of dedication makes him confident about the next school year, even though many of his top runners are heading off to college. The younger athletes look up to the

older ones on the team, he said, and learn a good work ethic from them.

"They see these guys aren't just surviving on talent," Smith said. "They want to win."

Three of the top girls are seniors, but Smith said the team has "some

younger runners who fill in quite nicely."

As for the boys' team, with Rowe and Myjer coming back next year, Smith said, "The sky's the limit." ▀

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

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EDUCATION BRIEFS

LASD BOARD REJECTS PARCEL TAX

Los Altos School District trustees rejected a proposal for a new parcel tax during their regular meeting earlier this month after community members, parents and teachers said the tax would be too expensive during the economic downturn.

Trustees had discussed putting the parcel tax on an upcoming ballot as the district's schools face \$2.6 million in cuts in 2009-10 under Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's current budget proposal. A consultant who surveyed local residents about the parcel tax said the district could have taxed between \$148 and \$168 per parcel. But during their Feb. 2 meeting trustees decided not to pursue the tax after receiving negative feedback from the community.

Residents said they cannot afford another tax due to the current state of the economy. The district also would have had to pay \$260,000 to hold the election in May or \$450,000 in June, and residents said these costs were "excessive."

Property owners within the LASD district currently pay another parcel tax, first approved in 1989, which costs them just under \$600 a year per parcel of land.

After the board rejected the parcel tax, administrators, community members and teachers started discussing possible cutbacks, including a reduction in employee compensation, program eliminations and layoffs, according to a district-wide letter from Superintendent Tim Justus.

MVLA EXPLORES GREEN BOND

The Mountain View-Los Altos High School District may sponsor a bond measure next year to raise money to make its campuses more environmentally friendly, administrators said at the board meeting earlier this week.

The general obligation bond would pay for \$14 million in solar panels at Los Altos and Mountain View high schools and possibly more energy efficient pools. Administrators said the solar panels could save the school \$400,000 to \$500,000 a year, almost as much as their total energy bill.

The amount of the tax was not disclosed at the meeting, and school administrators did not return calls seeking comment by press time. The district would put the bond on the ballot in June or November 2010, and it would require 55 percent of voter approval to pass. The proposal is for a "no-tax rate-increase" bond, meaning the district could extend the bond but not increase its amount, said Superintendent Barry Groves.

District administrators shared the proposal with board members during their meeting on Monday, and plan to survey the community for additional feedback.

ADULT SCHOOL OFFERS HEALTH CARE TRAINING

The Mountain View-Los Altos Adult School will offer additional health care training classes this March at its new health care facility in Mountain View.

The district begins leasing the building, located at 2462 Wyandotte Street, this March. It will have a hospital bed, sink and lab space for students as they learn basic medical skills. The school plans to share the new facility with a cosmetology program and the Palo Alto Adult School.

The Adult School currently offers two health care classes, but will

expand its curriculum to train for certified nursing assistants, medical assistants, medical office assistants and pharmacy technicians. For more information on the new courses, visit www.mvlaae.net.

GRAHAM TEACHER HONORED

A Graham Middle School teacher received a \$500 grant to broadcast daily news updates to the whole student body and implement other technology projects.

The Silicon Valley Education Foundation awarded the money to Tom Sayer, a social studies teacher at Graham, for his use of technology in the classroom. The foundation has awarded 316 grants since 2006 for teachers who plan unique educational opportunities for their students.

— Casey Weiss

NEWS BRIEFS

ROBBERS HOLD UP ART SUPPLY STORE

Mountain View police are looking for two men who robbed an art supply store at gunpoint early Tuesday morning.

The two men entered Michael's, located at 2415 Charleston Road, through an open door at 7:45 a.m. on Tuesday, before the store had opened. Employees had just unlocked the safe and were setting up for the day. The robbers showed a gun, demanded that the employees get down on the floor and then fled with over \$1,000 dollars from the safe, according to police spokesperson Liz Wylie.

The employees did not see if the robbers left by car or foot, but described both as short black males with medium builds, wearing all black, one in his mid 20s and the other 18 to 20 years old.

Anyone with information should call Mountain View police at (650) 903-6344.

ANOTHER BAR FIGHT ON CASTRO

In the third fight in just over a week on Castro Street, a 28-year-old man from Hercules was slashed with a knife across the back early Monday morning, police said.

The fight started at the Buddha Lounge just after midnight and continued in front of St. Stephen's Green, where the victim received a superficial 8-inch-long cut. He became enraged and damaged patio furniture, police said, and later refused treatment for the wound. The stabber fled and remains at large.

— Casey Weiss

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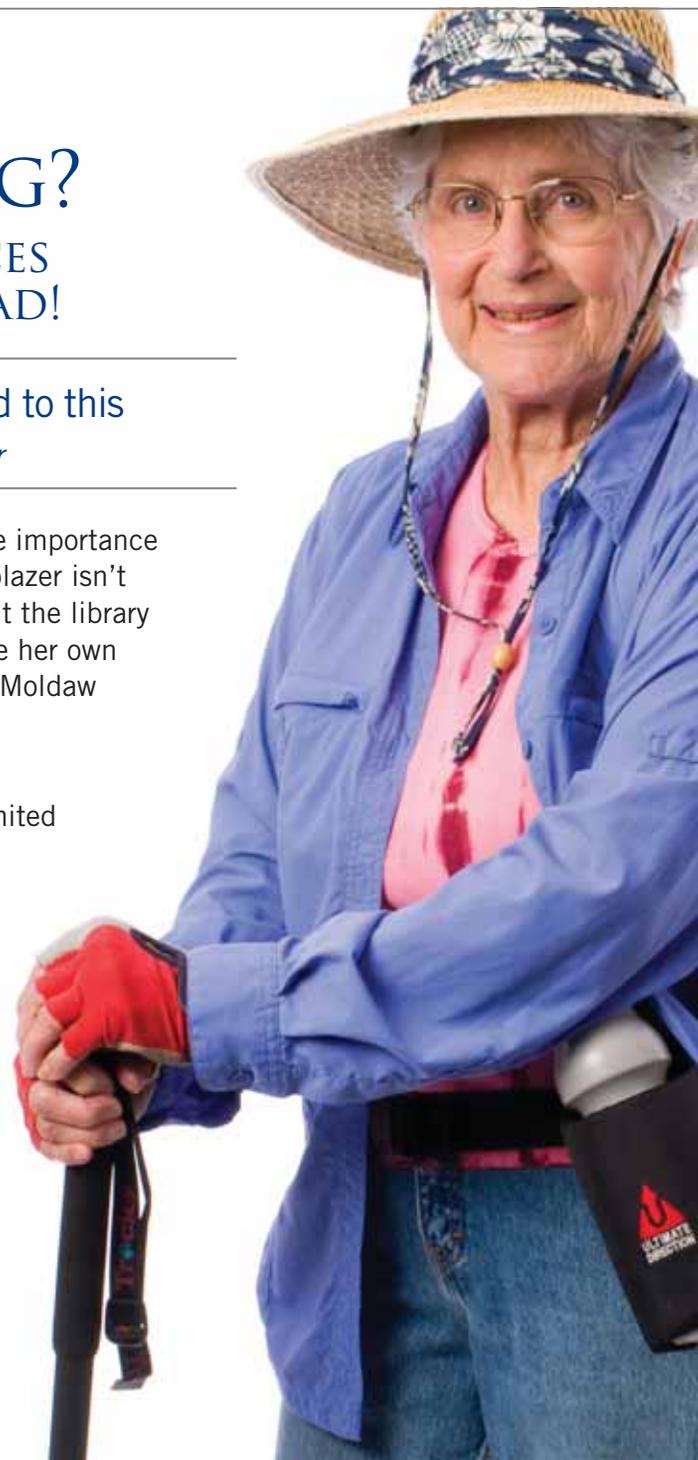
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SENIOR

▶ Continued from page 1

Several of the programs would be directed towards selected at-risk youth.

City staff also presented a long list of sites that didn't fit the bill, including Saint Athanasius Church on Rengstorff Avenue and the small teen center on Escuela Avenue.

The council voted 5-1 Tuesday in favor of the new plan, with member Ronit Bryant absent and John Inks opposed. Inks later explained that he was concerned the \$50,000 would exacerbate the city's budget problems.

Because the proposed plan was less than ideal and the city was in a hurry to start the program before the end of the fiscal year, Margaret Abe-Koga was set to propose that the council revisit the idea of using the Senior Center. She decided not to, however, after complaints from the council's own Senior Advisory Task Force that the idea was never formally brought to the group's attention.

Before the meeting, Senior Advisory Task Force chair Elna Tymes said her group could have helped the council gain traction with the senior community. Instead, Tymes said, "What I got the most umbrage about was that nobody asked the seniors what they thought of this. We think that is bad form."

There was talk that dozens or even hundreds of seniors opposed the Senior Center plan, but only one spoke out against the plan Tuesday: Don Letcher. Letcher submitted a letter with 74 signatures from seniors opposing the plan. The council chambers was largely empty by the time the agenda item came up at around 10 p.m., and some seniors had left to go to bed, Tymes said.

Several seniors spoke and wrote letters about how little the Senior Center was used on certain nights, including Fridays and Saturdays.

Former Mayor Jim Cochran said he supported the plan to use the Senior Center. But like most seniors, he was unaware that it was on the council's agenda in January. So he watched the meeting on the city Web-site, after the fact.

"I found myself talking to the screen," Cochran said. "It had absolutely no effect so I thought I'd come down tonight and try to tell you what I was saying. I think if the seniors understood what this is for — if seniors' programs stopped at 6 p.m. and teen programs started after that — it would work very well. If the teens tear up the billiard table or lose

▶ Continued on next page

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► Continued from previous page

all the ping pong balls that would be another problem.”

“The seniors really don’t have the story,” Cochran said. “They hear teens would be running up and down the hall and that’s not good. These youngsters are somebody’s grandchildren. If there is something seniors can appreciate, it’s grandchildren.”

Local youth leader Eduardo Olmos, 17, said after the meeting that he was “just happy we’re getting somewhere.” There are kids who “need something right now,” he said. But he was also disappointed that the Senior Center couldn’t be used, as it would have been more accessible to the city’s Rengstorff neighborhood, often thought of as home to the city’s most at-risk youth.

“We might be able to revisit the issue of the Senior Center but we need to have a really open conversation about that,” said council member Laura Macias. “We’re just a very involved community — we all like to know what’s going on.”

Olmos told the council that he hoped the city would use modern media to alert teens of the new programs and events.

North Whisman housing discussed

A plan for up to 800 homes along Ferguson Drive came into clearer focus during a Tuesday night study session where the council discussed a draft environmental impact report for the project.

Though the EIR discusses over 1,000 units on the 18-acre site, Drew Hudacek of Regis Homes said there would be a maximum of 560 homes in the first phase of the plan, along with a 2.6-acre park.

During the discussion, a representative of Cisco said the company’s server farm on the southeast corner of the site, known as the Webex property, would remain a commercial use indefinitely.

Asian-American month

The council voted 5-1 in favor of Mayor Margaret Abe-Koga’s proposal for an Asian American Heritage Month celebration to be sponsored by the city and funded with \$3,500.

Council member John Inks said his vote against the celebration symbolized his concern about the city’s budget problems, while member Mike Kasperzak expressed concern that it would set a precedent for other ethnic groups to ask the city for money to fund celebrations. ■

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

SAN ANTONIO

► Continued from page 1

just can board up the stores and look at vacant property with no revenue and no sales tax.” That’s because such a development is not “financially feasible,” he said.

Thoits added that “high density residential is the farthest thing from our minds.” For the owners, the goal is to “establish a precise plan for the next 20 years to give us flexibility” in how the site is developed.

“If 15 years from now there’s a huge demand for residential, we can include that.”

City planning director Randy Tsuda didn’t totally disagree, but said housing has not been ruled out for the site.

There is a “possibility of housing and office,” Tsuda said. “But retail would still be a major use on the site. It would be tough to create a Santana Row on that site. It wouldn’t be realistic. We have to see what’s feasible there.”

Much of the problems Thoits cites revolve around Walmart, which is the shopping center’s largest tenant. Thoits said Walmart, which is on property owned by San Antonio Center LLC, has a lease for 50 years or more.

The shopping center has 16 landowners in all. So far, only the two largest owners of the center, Thoits Brothers Development and San Antonio Center LLC, have proposed redevelopment. Thoits indicated that two key owners, Diana M. Santos and Machado San Antonio Parts LLC, have yet to join the fray. The four owners control 50 of the center’s 57 acres.

“We talked with the developer of Santana Row — we’ve talked to some very large developers,” Thoits said. “One hundred percent of them have told us with 16 owners you can’t possibly do a Santana Row-type project. With Walmart in your backyard nobody in their right mind would.”

“Agents, lenders, everybody has told us that site is not big enough. It’s just a pipe dream. To get the community thinking Santana Row will be in the shopping center ... It’s a disservice to us to get the community stirred up.”



San Antonio Center, with Thoits properties in blue and San Antonio Center LLC properties in pink.

Still sore over Home Depot

Last year the City Council rejected a proposal for a Home Depot at San Antonio Shopping Center to replace the Sears, which is on property Thoits owns.

“That cost the family \$85 million,” Thoits said. “That was the revenue we would have had with this Home Depot lease for 35 years. The city cavalierly denied the project and said ‘We want a Santana Row here.’ Now no major retailers are doing deals and Sears is about to go under we think.”

“They weren’t addressing reality,” Thoits said of City Council

members. “We’re pretty frustrated, quite frankly.”

Thoits said he was especially miffed when the city released a report on the city budget two weeks ago that identified “building materials” as one of the top two areas of “retail leakage” in the city, which means that the city is losing significant sales tax revenue to hardware stores outside of the city, like Home Depot.

Council member Ronit Bryant continued to be optimistic last week about the opportunities for redevelopment at San Antonio. Council member Jac Siegel was as well, saying the shopping center was a “gateway” to the city on El Camino Real and should look the part.

“San Antonio Shopping Center is clearly underutilized at this point,” Bryant said. “Mixed use would

be great. That’s as far as I’ve gotten. I’m thrilled that some of the owners, Thoits included,” want to redevelop, she said.

“It seems clear to me it could be used better and bring in more revenue for the owners. Let’s go forward, let’s go forward.”

Mountain View currently faces a \$6 million budget deficit in 2009-10, and the January report points to new retail development as a major

strategy for increasing the city’s revenue stream in the long term.

“These are not good times,” Thoits said. “There could have been a brand new Home Depot in that center generating a lot of business and a lot of sales tax. It’s frustrating to see the city come out now with all these findings.” ■

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

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MAIL to: Editor
Mountain View Voice,
655 W. Evelyn, Suite 3,
Mountain View, CA 94042.

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

■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

Pay to play

In the past, Mountain View has prided itself on providing excellent fields for local soccer, baseball and other sports leagues without imposing a charge. In better times, the maintenance costs for these fields came out of the city's general fund.

But better times are gone. Today, with a \$6 million budget deficit looming as revenues decrease and expenses go up, the city has been looking for ways to improve its financial outlook. And so the city is considering assessing local leagues an hourly fee to defray maintenance costs of its fields.

City recreation manager Dave Muela said he surveyed nearby cities and found they charge an average fee of \$6 per hour for sports field maintenance. At a Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on Wednesday (after the *Voice* goes to press), the city plans to propose a much lower, \$2 per hour fee for field use, Muela said.

At the \$2 an hour rate, if a team's game or practice lasted three hours and involved 20 players, the per-player share would be 30 cents; for a three-hour game involving 40 players, each player's share would be 15 cents.

Not surprisingly, the idea of charging for field maintenance did not sit well with league officials. One such official, a Babe Ruth president, said her players already shell out \$100 to \$300 a year just to play. Based on her league using a field 28 hours a week for eight months, a hypothetical \$2 per hour fee would cost her league an additional \$1,766 a season.

While no league official is likely to embrace a field maintenance fee, in our view the city has every right — and perhaps even a responsibility in the current economy — to recover some of its costs to keep fields in top shape for sports leagues. Given the small amounts it would cost each player, we believe most parents would be willing to kick in extra for field maintenance.

Muela also told the *Voice* that the upkeep of the fields costs the city roughly \$247,000 a year for maintenance (including water and utilities), personnel, permit administration, field set-up, materials and supplies and supervision. If leagues paid a \$2 an hour fee it would raise about \$40,000 a year, he said, totaling about 16 percent of the city's annual costs for the fields.

Given the current economic hardships, here is yet another way that our local youth can be taught a lesson in how the economy works. Together, they will see that their nickels, dimes and quarters have a direct impact on keeping their playing fields in good shape.

We hope the Parks and Rec commissioners give this fee serious consideration. We don't think it's asking too much for most leagues — and if some parents or managers believe their players are unable to pay it, a way should be devised to help them do so.

■ LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

FIELD FEE DOUBLE-DIPS ON TAXPAYERS

Editor:

Regarding the city's proposed field use fee, I appreciate the *Voice* bringing this very sensitive issue to your readers ("Leagues abuzz over field fee," Feb. 6). It's important that we expose these unneeded financial impacts on the youth of our community.

If you look at it from the perspective of a taxpayer and father of a youth baseball player, this would be a tax on our youth, not a fee for use. In these uncertain financial times, our city officials should not use our youth as a method of generating more tax dollars. It's shameful that our city officials would use the fields, which we pay taxes to maintain, as another source of revenue. That's called double dipping.

The youth sports organizations provide an invaluable service to our community. They provide a platform for our children and young adults to engage in healthy exercise, and a foundation for youth to learn life lessons. These groups are nonprofit organizations, empowered by community support. If the city passes this fee or tax, they are essentially driving these organizations into closing their doors.

We live in a culturally and financially diverse city. What the Parks and Recreation Department is proposing would put undue financial strain on

the YSOs and families of the community. What we don't need at this juncture is to lose our youth to gangs or crime because their parents cannot afford a significant increase in registration fees.

The small amount of revenue the city would collect from the field use fee will not solve the city's budget shortfall. Our city officials should think long and hard before making a decision to tax the youth programs.

Bill Gibbs
Newman Place

HOW TO PRONOUNCE THEUERKAUF

Editor:

Please permit me to join the discussion inspired by your recent letters regarding correct treatment of local names (the preferred abbreviation of "Mountain" being "Mtn."): The widespread mispronunciation of the name of Theuerkauf Elementary School is embarrassingly out of keeping with the high level of (multi-)cultural literacy that distinguishes Mountain View.

The first syllable of the German name of the school (and according to its office staff that of the donor of the property) is pronounced "TOY." The principal has indicated that she was told that "the community" pronounces it "THERK-off." So I'm appealing to the com-

► See **LETTERS**, page 18





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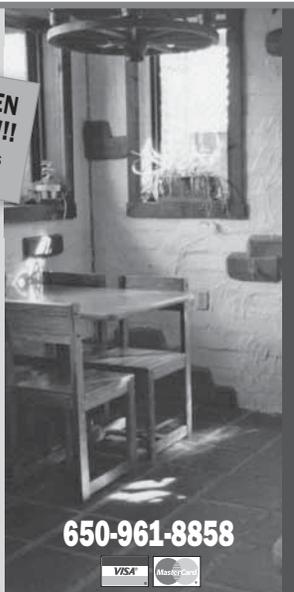
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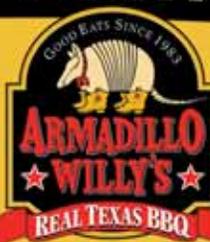
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LETTERS

▶ Continued from page 17

munity to take the lead:

Fellow parents of Theuerkauf students, please take the trouble to encourage your kids to pronounce it correctly: TOY-er-koff.

Ironies: (1) Theuerkauf is used as an example in the Wikipedia article "Pronunciation of English"; (2) the root words of the name mean "expensive purchase," which is precisely what the Theuerkauf family ended up with, if they expected to purchase our remembrance of their name with the generous gift of their land.

Stephan Heumann
Moon Beam Drive

LIEBER WAS NO HELP ON IMMIGRATION ISSUE

Editor:

Your front page article last week about former Assemblywoman Sally Lieber was very interesting to me, since I have only lived in Mountain View for three years and did not know much about her.

I have frequently written to her about two issues that are costing our state and country much money. I believe that children who are not legal residents in California should pay non-resident tuition to all of our public schools. Also, I believe that babies born to mothers who are not legal residents in the U.S. should be citizens of their mothers' countries.

To correct these issues will

require amendments to the state and federal constitutions, and Sally Lieber was in a position to initiate action on such amendments. She did not reply to my requests, so I presume that she thinks it is OK for those children to attend our free schools and to become citizens of our country. I wish she would explain why she believes these issues are good for our state and country.

Charlie Larson
Sylvan Avenue

CITY VOTE ON BAGS BACKED REGIONAL GOAL

Editor:

The City Council voted 5-2 to support a county ("regional") effort to decrease the use of single-use, carryout bags, which generally means the ones given out at a store's cash register.

This support of a regional goal, proposed by the Santa Clara County Cities Association, did not specify the exact means to be used to achieve the goal. The council also discussed the draft ordinance being circulated for comment by the county's Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission, the current form of which suggests a 25-cent levy on such bags.

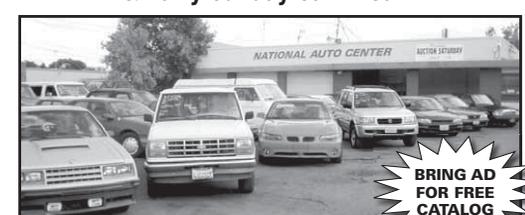
There was no definitive agreement during the council's informal discussion that this is the best method. Council members also sent back to the commission a comment that it's unclear how this would work for farmers markets.

Julie Lovins
California Street

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- RESTAURANT REVIEW
- MOVIE TIMES
- BEST BETS FOR ENTERTAINMENT



VERONICA WEBER

Jean Paul Coupal stands by the Coupa Café's new espresso machine.

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

That certain something

PALO ALTO'S COUPA CAFE OFFERS QUALITY COFFEES, TASTY FOOD AND INEFFABLE APPEAL

By Dale F. Bentson

Coupa Cafe in downtown Palo Alto is one of those places where people instinctively congregate. It has a subconscious, subliminal call that beckons customers from all walks of life. For indefinable reasons, it is a place to see and be seen.

If other restaurateurs could harness that indefinable quality, they would be a more prosperous lot. Coupa Cafe, which celebrates its fifth anniversary

next month, is generally packed even during off hours.

Nancy Coupal and her whirling-dervish family own and operate Coupa Cafe. Venezuelan coffee really is the thing at Coupa, although not the only attraction. The cafe serves everything from breakfast to soups, salads, quiches, sandwiches, desserts and handmade candies. Additionally, a smorgasbord of tasty house-made Venezuelan arepas (corn-

► See **COUPA CAFE**, page 20

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VERONICA WEBER

Lisa Lemke and Brandy van der Heiden chat inside the Coupa Café.

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COUPA CAFE

► Continued from page 19

meal griddle cakes) and Caribbean empanadas are available.

Thirty years ago, Nancy Coupal and her French-Canadian husband, Jean Paul, settled in Caracas. Nancy, a Berkeley native, had earned a master's degree in public health at UC Berkeley. Her first assignment, while working in the public sector of health in Venezuela, was in rural villages. She spoke French and Italian and had to learn Spanish quickly. Inside three months, she was fluent enough.

Meanwhile, Jean Paul became interested in the coffee business. Venezuela has a long and storied history of growing high-quality coffee beans, and the government is now actively promoting coffee growing.

The two were about two decades ahead of the government. They sought out specialty

coffee growers. Beginning with two small mountain coffee farms, or *fincas*, they now have 20 plantations under fair-trade contract. In the late 1980s, the Coupals established the Arabica Coffee Company, in Caracas, to roast and distribute high-quality beans. Coupa now offers what it bills as the first certified organic Venezuelan coffee.

The best Venezuelan arabica coffee has good body and is complex and flavorful, ripe and sweet, with lower acidity than its Columbian counterparts. This makes for a perfectly balanced cup of coffee.

Arabica is one of two major species of coffee tree. The other, robusta, grows faster and yields more than arabica but many believe it is inferior in taste. Arabica Coffee Company in Caracas roasts the beans for its Coupa locations, packs them in vacuum-sealed bags, and has them flown stateside weekly.

► Continued on next page

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VERONICA WEBER

A *café latte* served at the *Coupa Café*.

► Continued from previous page

The Coupals have three children, all Stanford University grads. The eldest, Yasmine, has her master's in international policy studies and is with Goldman Sachs in New York. Camelia, with a degree in political science and history, manages the Coupa Cafe in Beverly Hills. Jean Paul Jr., who graduated with a degree in economics last year, manages both Palo Alto's Ramona Street operation and the Coupa Cafe inside the Yang and Yamaguchi Engineering Building (Y2E2) on the Stanford campus.

Already operating a Coupa Cafe

compactness in stainless steel filters. The coffee brewing process is quick and precise.

Coupa Cafe offers a tantalizing array of food, most of it made in the diminutive kitchen in the back. Portions are generous. I was intrigued by the arepas, Venezuela's homegrown alternative to bread or rolls. About the size of a hockey puck, arepas are crusty on the outside but airy on the inside and are stuffed with meat, cheese, vegetables, fruit spreads, eggs or fish.

One day I overheard several young women, who were queued up in line waiting to place their orders, engaged in a spirited

Not only is it a workhorse, but the machine is a bit of a beauty itself.

in Caracas, Nancy Coupal established the Palo Alto cafe in 2004, as another adjunct to the roasting company. And why not? With children at Stanford, she was spending considerable time here anyway.

Inside the Palo Alto cafe, the walls are bright mustard yellow with a rough-cut stone-block floor. Decorative tiles are rooted into stucco walls and floor, and wood tables and chairs huddle together. In the back is a delightful fireplace where de Lemos had embedded the Stanford "S" along with cozy, built-in couches for relaxing. There is free WiFi and front patio seating in fairer weather.

State-of-the-art equipment sits behind the counter. The French-made Unic Z4 espresso machine is hugely sophisticated and capable of dispensing dozens of shots of coffee in minutes. Not only is it a workhorse, but the machine is a bit of a beauty itself. Too bad logistics dictate it to be mostly obscured behind the counter.

Adjacent the Unic, several industrial-chic Mahlkonig German grinders pulverize beans that are then tapped to exact

discussion over their preferred Coupa beverages: chai versus tea, hot chocolate versus organic coffee. It's that kind of passion that fuels the business.

Meanwhile, back in Venezuela, Jean Paul Sr. is now the honorary consul of Thailand. In addition to the original Coupa Cafe in Caracas, the Coupals own a Thai restaurant and a pizza restaurant and are currently working with Venezuelan cattlemen to start a "meat" restaurant.

In their spare time, they represent travel for the Caribbean island of Canouan and organize exotic trips to Morocco and Thailand. I'm surprised Nancy Coupal could slow down long enough for me to interview her; perhaps that indefinable something is unbounded energy. ▀

■ INFORMATION

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Guild: Fri.-Sun. at 1:15, 4, 7 & 10 p.m. Mon.-Thu. at 2, 5 & 8 p.m.
- CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) ★★☆☆**
Century 16: 11:45 a.m.; 2:25, 4:55, 7:25 & 10:15 p.m. Century 20: 11:15 a.m.; 12:20, 1:50, 2:50, 4:20, 5:20, 7, 7:55, 9:35 & 10:30 p.m.
- CORALINE (PG) ★★☆☆1/2** Century 16: 11:30 a.m.; 1:55, 4:25, 7 & 9:25 p.m. Century 20: 11:45 a.m.; 2:15, 4:45, 7:15 & 9:45 p.m.
- THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON (PG-13) ★★☆☆1/2** Century 16: 12:10, 4:05 & 8 p.m. Century 20: 11:50 a.m.; 3:15 & 6:45 p.m.
- DOUBT (PG-13) ★★☆☆** Century 16: 11:35 a.m.; 5 & 10:25 p.m.
- FANBOYS (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)**
Century 16: 12:55, 3:15, 5:35 & 7:50 p.m.
- FROST/NIXON (R) ★★☆☆** Century 16: 2:10 & 7:35 p.m.
- GRAN TORINO (R) ★1/2** Century 16: 1:10, 4, 6:55 & 9:45 p.m. Century 20: 1:10, 3:50, 6:50 & 9:30 p.m.
- HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG-13) ★★1/2**
Century 16: 12:45, 3:50, 7:05 & 10 p.m. Century 20: 11:25 a.m.; 1, 2:30, 5:30 & 8:30 p.m. Fri.-Tue. & Thu. also at 7:10 p.m.
- HOTEL FOR DOGS (PG) (NOT REVIEWED)**
Century 16: Fri.-Tue. & Thu. 1:15, 4:15 & 6:50 p.m. Wed. at 12:20 & 2:45 p.m. Century 20: 12:15, 2:40, 5:05 & 7:30 p.m.
- METROPOLITAN OPERA: LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR ENCORE (NOT RATED) (NOT REVIEWED)**
Century 16: Wed. at 7 p.m. Century 20: Wed. at 7 p.m.
- MILK (R) ★★☆☆** Century 20: 3:45 p.m. Fri.-Tue. & Thu. also at 10:05 p.m. Palo Alto Square: Fri.-Sat. & Mon.-Tue. at 1:30, 4:25 & 7:20 p.m. Fri. & Sat. also at 10:15 p.m.
- PAUL BLART: MALL COP (PG) (NOT REVIEWED)**
Century 16: 11:50 a.m.; 2:20, 4:40, 7:20 & 9:40 p.m. Century 20: 11:20 a.m.; 1:40, 4:15, 6:55 & 9:15 p.m.
- PINK PANTHER 2 (PG) (NOT REVIEWED)**
Century 16: 11:40 a.m.; 2, 4:35, 7:10 & 9:30 p.m. Century 20: 12:10, 2:45, 5:05, 7:25 & 9:50 p.m.
- PUSH (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)**
Century 16: 11:55, a.m.; 2:30, 5:05, 7:45 & 10:20 p.m. Century 20: 11:35 a.m.; 2:20, 5, 7:45 & 10:15 p.m.
- RACHEL GETTING MARRIED (R) ★★☆☆**
Aquarius: 1 & 6:45 p.m.
- THE READER (R) ★★☆☆1/2** Century 16: 12:50, 3:40, 6:45 & 9:35 p.m. Century 20: 1:15, 4:10, 7:05 & 10 p.m.
- REVOLUTIONARY ROAD (R) ★★☆☆1/2** Century 20: 11:40 a.m.; 2:25, 5:10, 7:55 & 10:35 p.m. Aquarius: 3:45 & 9:30 p.m.
- SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (R) ★★☆☆** Century 20: 11:15 a.m.; 2, 4:50, 7:40 & 10:30 p.m. Aquarius: 1:15, 4, 7 & 10 p.m.
- TAKEN (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)** Century 16: 12:30, 3, 5:20, 7:40 & 10:05 p.m. Century 20: 12:45, 3:20, 5:35, 8:10 & 10:25 p.m.
- UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS (R) (NOT REVIEWED)** Century 16: 10:10 p.m. Century 20: 10:10 p.m.
- THE UNINVITED (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)**
Century 16: Fri.-Tue. & Thu. at 9:20 p.m. Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 1:45, 4, 6:15, 8:25 & 10:40 p.m.
- WALTZ WITH BASHIR (R) ★★☆☆** Palo Alto Square: 2:15, 4:45 & 7:15 p.m. Fri. & Sat. also at 9:45 p.m.
- THE WILD BUNCH (R) (NOT REVIEWED)**
Century 16: Sat. at 11:55 p.m.
- THE WRESTLER (R) ★★☆☆** Century 16: 1:20, 4:10, 7:15 & 9:55 p.m. Century 20: 11:55 a.m.; 2:35, 5:15, 7:50 & 10:20 p.m.

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

AQUARIUS: 430 Emerson St., Palo Alto (266-9260)
CENTURY CINEMA 16: 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View (960-0970)
CENTURY PARK 12: 557 E. Bayshore Blvd., Redwood City (365-9000)
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For show times, plot synopses and more information about any films playing at the Aquarius, Guild and Park, visit www.LandmarkTheatres.com

- ★ Skip it
- ★★ Some redeeming qualities
- ★★★ A good bet
- ★★★★ Outstanding

For show times, plot synopses, trailers and more movie info, visit www.mv-voice.com and click on movies.



MOVIE REVIEWS

CORALINE ★★☆☆1/2
(Century 16, Century 20) Writer-director Henry Selick's delightfully imaginative cartoon delves into another dreamscape. His dark vision conjures a look similar to "The Nightmare Before Christmas" but falls squarely on spunky Coraline Jones. The animated adaptation of Neil Gaiman's 2002 horror novel is a creepy cautionary tale. Eleven-year-old Coraline (voiced by Dakota Fanning) has workaholic parents who write garden catalogues. The trio has just moved into a Gothic old house. Coraline is bored, and her parents (voiced by Teri Hatcher and John Hodgman) shoo her away. She finds a small door that leads to an alternate version of her home. Be careful what you wish for. "Coraline" doesn't serve up sweet dreams for small children. Beware. And enjoy. *Rated: PG for thematic elements, scary images, some language and suggestive humor. 1 hour, 40 minutes.* — S.T.

DOUBT ★★☆☆
(Century 16, Century 20) There is no doubt that Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams and Viola Davis are the three best reasons to see John Patrick Shanley's adaptation of his Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning drama. Their nuanced, naturalistic performances help counter Meryl Streep's more mannered turn that rings so false at the end. Shanley's examination of moral issues is another reason to catch the battle between Sister Aloysius (Streep) and congenial Father Flynn (Hoffman), whom she suspects of pedophilia. No evidence exists that the priest has behaved inappropriately with the parochial school's first black student (Joseph Foster). The narrative construct teeters on the concept of reasonable doubt — and the blindness of those making unjustified accusations. Or are they? *Rated: PG-13 for thematic material. 1 hour, 44 minutes.* — S.T.

FROST/NIXON ★★☆☆
(Century 16, Century 20) An overly confident "Tricky Dick" Nixon accepts "entertainer" David Frost's invitation to televise a series of interviews in 1977 — for the right price. The stakes are high for both the disgraced former president and the underrated television talk-show host. "Frost/Nixon" is more psychological cat-and-mouse game than verbal sparring match. Ron Howard directs the film at a breakneck clip, pausing only to reveal glimpses into each man's character. Engrossing emotionally and intellectually, this showdown shouldn't be missed. *Rated: R for some language. 2 hours, 2 minutes.* — S.T.

GRAN TORINO ★1/2
(Century 16, Century 20) Clint Eastwood stars and directs himself as cantankerous Korean War vet Walt Kowalski with a chip on his shoulder the size of the Matterhorn. He lives alone and has no

relationship to speak of with his adult sons. Walt appears to be surrounded on all sides by Hmong families who keep to themselves. Until a neighborhood teen named Thao (Bee Vang) attempts to steal Walt's prized 1972 Gran Torino. Walt puts Thao to work in his home and yard, grudgingly handing over odd jobs and offering advice on testosterone and tools. A relationship blossoms as Walt breaks out of his shell and Thao feels admiration for the father figure he never had (groan). Overall, a poorly acted and heavily cliched melodrama. *Rated: R for language and violence. 1 hour, 56 minutes.* — J.A.

simple chai server from India's poorest slums came by such arcane knowledge. With serendipitous charm, flashbacks detail Jamal's rise through hardscrabble poverty to survival of the fittest. *Rated: R for violence, language and disturbing images. 1 hour, 56 minutes. In English and Hindi with English subtitles.* — J.A.

WALTZ WITH BASHIR

★★★★ (Cinearts) Israeli writer-director Ari Folman has created a haunting animated feature about the shock-and-awe inflicted on the human psyche by the horrors of war. Folman joins arms

with the great anti-war filmmakers to pronounce that war is hell. And animation isn't just for kids anymore. Snarling black dogs bound like beasts from hell — an opening image that conveys the recurring nightmare of a former Israeli soldier who recounts the dream to Folman, in a bar, in the middle of the night. The army buddies conclude the dream must be connected to their Lebanon War experience. Since Folman seems to have repressed his memories of the 1982 invasion, he sets out to discover the truth by talking with veterans who served with him. *Rated: R for some images of atrocities, strong violence,*

brief nudity and a scene of graphic sexual content. In Hebrew with English subtitles. 1 hour, 27 minutes. — S.T.

THE WRESTLER ★★★

(Century 16) Mickey Rourke plays true to type as a washed-up wrestler perpetually on the verge of a comeback. Randy "The Ram" Robinson doesn't have a lot to live for save for the glory of his 1980s gladiator days. He moonlights at trade shows and wrestles in small halls by night, high on the memories of yesterday's adulation. He's estranged from his daughter (Evan Rachel Wood), eating painkillers like candy and living in a New Jersey trailer

park. Randy befriends a warm-hearted stripper named Cassidy (Marisa Tomei), but she and gently rebuffs his awkward advances. An unexpected medical condition is Randy's wake-up call, the kind of second chance that could be his last. The climax is the ultimate in raw conclusions, leaving a disheartening life in grim perspective. *Rated: R for violence, language, nudity and sexuality. 1 hour, 45 minutes.* — J.A.

■ **MOVIE CRITICS**

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

HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU ★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) Is he into you or not? That's the perennial question nagging this pithy romantic comedy that keeps its troubles airy and close to the surface. Based on the best-selling relationship book of the same name, "Just Not Into You" tangles its large cast of characters and storylines into virtual knots, then tries to unravel them with advice swapping and a kind of misery-loves-company pleasure. An if-beautiful-people-aren't-working-it-no-wonder-I'm-suffering-too kind of vibe. *Rated: PG-13 for language and sexual situations. 2 hours, 7 minutes.* — J.A.

MILK ★★1/2

(CineArts, Century 20) Performances are king in this poignant homage to late great San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk. Sean Penn has a field day portraying the first openly gay man elected to office in the U.S. After several misfires Harvey is elected supervisor and makes a name for himself in the City by the Bay, chumming around with liberal mayor George Moscone (Victor Garber) and trying to making nice with conservative supervisor Dan White (Josh Brolin). The rest is history — a painful chapter in American politics. *Rated: R for language, sexuality and mature themes. 2 hours, 7 minutes.* — J.A.

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

★★★1/2 (Guild, Century 20) Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio are literally at each other's throats as April and Frank Wheeler, the classic 1950s golden couple who suddenly find the luster lost from their white-picket-fence union. Through a series of deft flashbacks director Sam Mendes builds a story of suburban ennui, a stifling boredom compounded by two kids and dead-end jobs. The build-up gains slow momentum but once "Road" finds its rhythm it's positively devastating. *Rated: R for language and nudity. 1 hour, 59 minutes.* — J.A.

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

★★★★ (Aquarius) In present-day Mumbai, Jamal Malik (Dev Patel) sits on the hot seat of India's "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" game show, poised to win the elusive grand prize of 20 million rupees. Refusing to believe that Jamal is coming by his answers honestly, the police get involved, punctuating their brutal torture tactics with questions on how a

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