

# Mountain View VOICE

JUNE 19, 2009 VOLUME 17, NO. 24

INSIDE: WEEKEND | PAGE 16

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THE VULNERABLE TIME

HEALTH & FITNESS | P.21



MICHELLE LE

**Samuel Pilli** worships during a Sunday Mass at Abundant Life Christian Fellowship. Pilli heard Pastor Paul Sheppard on the radio years ago, and since then comes from San Bruno to attend Sunday service.

## Megachurch outgrows its Mountain View home

ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP SEEKS NEW SPACE FOR GROWING 6,000-MEMBER CONGREGATION

By Daniel DeBolt

Sunday morning is the busiest time of the week on Leghorn Avenue, when Christians from far and wide pour into every crevice of every parking lot around the big-box stores, auto shops, and industrial buildings to attend Abundant Life Christian Fellowship church.

The church moved to Mountain View about four years ago, after a giving its current home, a former plastic wares factory behind Costco, a \$12 million transformation that included balcony seating and huge TV monitors behind the pulpit. Today, Abundant Life holds three services every weekend, with each one attended by over a thousand people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, mostly African-American.

Few are late for the gospel music that kicks off every service. Young children are shuttled into kids' rooms, protected by a unique security system involving photo identification and bar codes (a measure to prevent kidnapping). After a professional-quality video presentation of the week's church news, pastor Paul Sheppard steps up to the pulpit.

On May 24, amid words of worship and encouragement, Sheppard told his congregation a bit of surprising news: The church has outgrown even its current location, and will soon need a larger home.



MICHELLE LE

Pastor Paul Sheppard

"In order to reach thousands more we're going to have to build one more time," Sheppard said. "In a few weeks the elders will assemble a church committee to search the land" for a new location.

Sheppard said some have asked him, why

not "call it quits in terms of trying to reach more people? But that doesn't resonate with me at all. If there are still unsaved people in Northern California, I should not assume God is through."

### Charismatic pastor

Originally a pastor in Philadelphia, Sheppard, 51, says that 20 years ago he received a call from God to come to the Bay Area and form a new church, and he answered that call. Setting up shop in Menlo Park with only 34 worshippers, Abundant Life today claims more than 6,000 members in its Mountain View location. The church is in the process of adding a fourth weekend service, which appears to be the maximum that space the church can handle.

Abundant Life's recipe for growth involves a certain tolerance for diversity, both ethnic and political. For example, the church does not take political positions on issues such as gay marriage or abortion, because they can be "incredibly divisive," explained assistant

► See **ABUNDANT LIFE**, page 12

## Neighbors clash with council on Minton's project

By Daniel DeBolt

Reflecting a more pro-growth stance since November's election, the City Council differed with about a dozen neighbors Tuesday about the merits of building 214 apartments across the street from the Caltrain station.

"This is almost the epitome of a walkable development in the community," said council member Mike Kasperzak, who helped tilt the balance when he was elected along with John Inks.

Prometheus Real Estate hopes

► See **MINTON'S**, page 8

## Whisman trustees contemplate magnet model

By Casey Weiss

As elementary school trustees talked this week about what they want the district to look like within the next decade, some said they could envision building separate magnet schools for students interested in music, arts or technical vocations, or creating a charter school for at-risk students.

The discussion came as Mountain View Whisman School District trustees prepare to pass

► See **WHISMAN**, page 13

INSIDE

GOINGS ON 25 | MARKETPLACE 27 | MOVIES 19 | REAL ESTATE 31 | VIEWPOINT 14



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# Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in Downtown Mountain View. Pictures and interviews by James Tensuan.

## Are high school students too stressed? Why or why not?



*"Yes, the standards are too high and the norm is to exceed. It's just too hard to manage."*

**Andy Ting, Fremont**



*"Yes, with all the current suicides, I would say so. I believe the students' stress mirrors the same stress that their parents are facing."*

**Pat Solari, Sunnyvale**



*"No, being stressed out prepares you for college; if you cannot handle it now you won't be ready for the future."*

**Akila Subramanian, Palo Alto**



*"Yes, they put too much into their work schedule. They have too many assignments to do in one week."*

**Rachel Fortin, Columbus, Ohio**



*"No, I didn't feel stressed in high school. Stress only comes from yourself, and nothing else. It also depends on the classes you are taking."*

**San Wong, Mountain View**

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 0 block W. El Camino Real, 6/15  
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**BATTERY**  
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 100 block Castro St, 6/10  
 0 block Ada Ave., 6/14  
 0 block W Middlefield Rd., 6/14

**STOLEN VEHICLE**  
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 100 block California Ave, 6/10  
 Castro St/W Dana St, 6/13  
 200 Fayette Dr., 6/14  
 0 block W. Middlefield Rd., 6/15  
 100 block Villa St., 6/15

**BURGLARY/RESIDENTIAL**  
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**COMMERCIAL BURGLARY**  
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 0 block Fairchild Dr., 6/14

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**FALSE IMPERSONATION**  
 Ednamary Way/El Monte Ave, 6/10

**SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/ PERSONS**  
 Central Liquors, 6/12

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 0 block N Whisman Rd, 6/10  
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 300 block Fairchild Dr., 6/13  
 200 block W El Camino Real  
 100 block Latham St., 6/15

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## Mump and circumstance

By Don Frances

**M**OUNTAIN VIEW residents are normally an easygoing bunch. Rarely does something on the pages of the local newspaper get them too riled up.

It's true they take their schools seriously, as they should. And issues like, say, high speed rail are cause for concern. But compare that to Palo Alto, where residents held angry protests at the prospect of high speed rail running through their town.

That's why I was surprised at the visceral reaction to last week's Graduation Day coverage. Although our story covered both of the major regional schools — Mountain View High and Los Altos High — the photo coverage was only of Los Altos High, which touched a nerve with some readers.

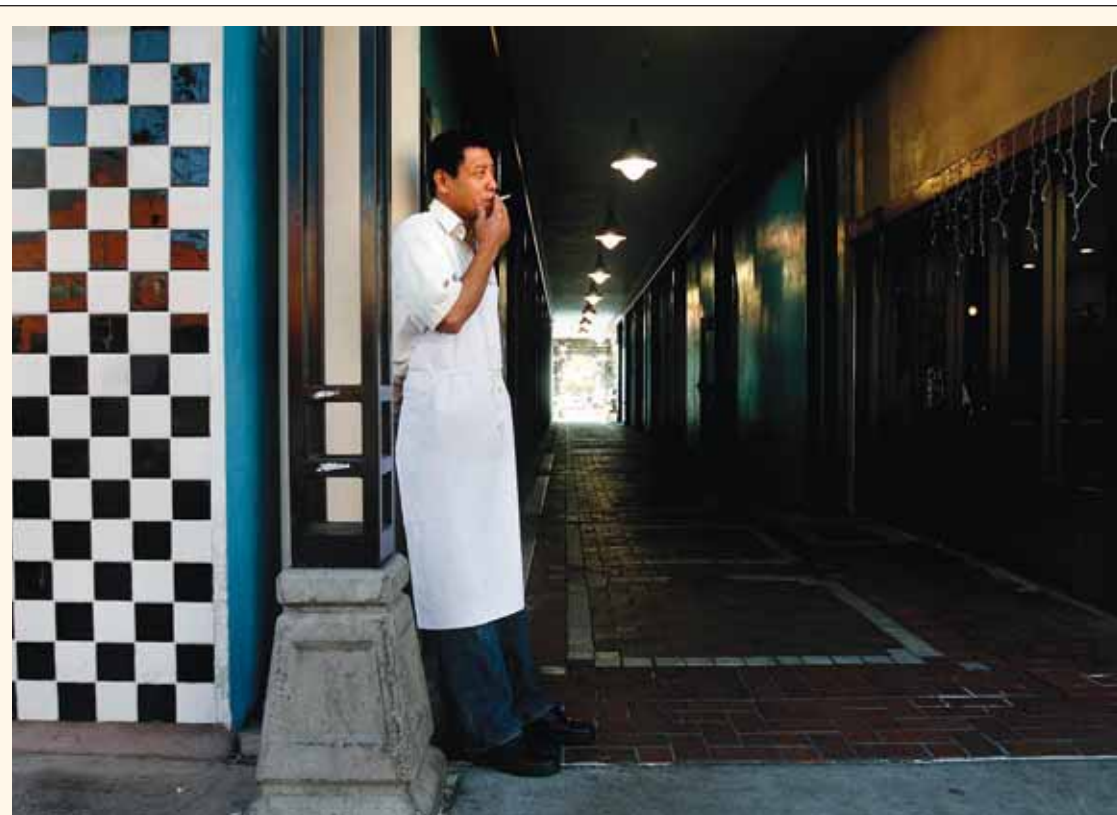
Several phone calls were made about it, and since staff cutbacks at the *Voice* have reduced our ability to cover the phones, many had to content themselves with leaving voicemail messages. And man, did they leave them. Generally the messages were spitting mad and went as follows:

"Good friends of mine's children just graduated from Mountain View High School. I cannot believe on the front page of the *Mountain View Voice*, there's a picture of Los Altos High School. That is just so tacky!"

Or: "I wanna know why Los Altos is always in our *Voice*. It's the *Mountain View*, not Los Altos, *Voice*. And I resent the fact that you keep putting in Los Altos, where in the heck is our Mountain View students' pictures. And it's always Los Altos. Please, stop it! It just doesn't make sense, why we always have to have Los Altos."

There were others along those lines. One woman reached me in person last Friday, and she too was beside herself with anger, calling

► See **EDITOR'S DESK**, page 6



## THOUGHTFUL MOMENT:

A Chef Liu Mandarin restaurant employee takes a break between shifts on Castro Street.

MICHELLE LE

## Controversial teacher reassigned to Graham

PATTY POLIFRONE RETURNING IN THE FALL TO TEACH SIXTH-GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS

By Casey Weiss

**A** former fourth-grade teacher at Huff Elementary School, who left the school last spring after some parents complained that she was "verbally abusive" to her students, will be returning to the district this fall to teach sixth graders.

The district has confirmed that

Patty Polifrone will begin teaching language arts and social science at Graham Middle School when class resumes in August.

Parents told the *Voice* in March that they had been complaining for months to Mountain View Whisman district administrators about Polifrone's teaching style. At the time, during a school board meeting at Huff, some parents said they

did not want Polifrone to return, and a few said their children were scared to go to her class. But other parents defended the teacher, saying their children had learned a lot from her and that she was a "strict teacher but fair."

Following the meeting, Polifrone left Huff. Administrators said only

► See **POLIFRONE**, page 13

## New principal selected for PACT

STEPHEN GILBERT WILL LEAD PARENT PARTICIPATION PROGRAM AT ITS NEW CAMPUS

By Casey Weiss

**T**he Mountain View Whisman School District has selected the first principal to run PACT — the popular parent participation program which until recently was housed at Castro School — from its new solo campus near the district offices.

Stephen Gilbert, who served as Castro's part-time assistant principal this year, is the new part-time principal of PACT (short for "Parent Child Teacher") and will oversee the program at its new campus on San Pierre Way

beginning in the fall. The campus, which administrators are now calling "Stevenson School," is currently being renovated.

PACT started in the district 13 years ago, but has never had its own campus. Three years ago it moved to Castro Elementary School, but with that school facing overcrowding, trustees decided to move the program once more.

Gilbert has been an educator for more than 19 years and was a principal in the Gilroy School District. He received a bachelor's degree from UC San Diego and a master's from CSU Hayward.

Gilbert retired from the Gilroy schools before serving as assistant principal at Castro this past year.

"Mr. Gilbert is an educational leader who possesses outstanding qualification to meet the needs of Stevenson's students, parents and community," Superintendent Maurice Ghysels said in a press release.

Now that Castro's student population is smaller, the school no longer has a part-time assistant principal position. All other principals and administrators are scheduled to keep their positions in the upcoming school year. ▣

## New Bullis spat headed to court

CHARTER SCHOOL DEMANDS DISTRICT PROVIDE SPACE FOR SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

By Casey Weiss

**B**ullis Charter School officials have filed a lawsuit against the Los Altos School District for not providing the school with adequate facilities, which they say is required by law.

The lawsuit, filed June 10, capped off a series of letters between the two parties after they failed to reach an agreement over Bullis expansion plans.

The charter school's board of directors had asked the district for more space to expand its academic programs, and in November the county allowed the school to add seventh and eighth grades.

But according to Bullis board president Ken Moore, the charter school has not been able to add these grades because LASD has not provided proper facilities.

"We have to get to the end of going back and forth without any response," Moore said. "We need a clear common framework where both sides understand the law."

Moore said the lawsuit will ensure that LASD comply with the law and provide facilities and field space for Bullis. He said he also wants the charter school and district to have a "common framework."

On June 2, Bullis' lawyer sent a letter to the Los Altos School District saying they must respond by June 9 or else the charter school would file a lawsuit.

The district's attorney, John Yeh, responded by letter on June 9, saying "There is no indication that [Bullis] is actually intending to add 7th grade for the 2009-2010 school year."

Later in the letter, Yeh disputes the charter school's interpreta-

► See **BULLIS**, page 13

■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

# Swallowtail on Bougainvillea



**Ed Perry** of Franklin Street sent in this striking image of the well-known butterfly. "It drank heavily from the nectar of our 'society garlic' plants before resting and recharging in the sunlight of our bougainvillea, where we caught its image. Obviously a butterfly of great taste!"

If you have a photo taken around town which you'd like published in the *Voice*, please send it (as a jpg attachment) to [editor@mv-voice.com](mailto:editor@mv-voice.com).

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### EDITOR'S DESK

► Continued from page 5

our coverage "despicable."

I tried to explain that the graduation ceremonies at both schools were happening at the same time, and we only had one photographer available. I tried to explain that, even though Los Altos High has the words "Los Altos" in its name, we don't consider it to be only for that city, since half its student body lives in Mountain View. (According to this year Los Altos High was 50 percent Mountain View residents, and Mountain View High was 48 percent Los Altos residents.)

I also noted that the story covered both schools. And I mentioned the other graduation events we covered this year (such as our Alta Vista High School story) whose ceremonies took place at Mountain View High.

She wasn't interested, saying basically that Los Altos has its school and we have ours. She said her piece and hung up.

There are two issues at play here, and the first — the one where Los Altos has its school and we have ours — doesn't trouble me too much, because I think it's misguided. And I bet the hundreds of Mountain View families whose kids are Eagles would agree with me.

But the second does have me troubled, because it follows a larger pattern that can be summarized as: Why don't you do all those things you used to do?

Last year the *Voice* ran every graduate's name in the paper. Why not this year?

Last year you ran several photos from both schools. Why not this year?

And why don't you guys answer the phone anymore?

Well, the answer is an unhappy one. As you probably heard, news-

papers have hit hard times lately, and the *Voice* is no exception. Resources have dwindled, and the newsroom staff is asked to do more with less.

Last year we had two photographers available to us. This year we had only one.

Even so, next year is another chance, and I intend to make it up to these jilted readers. Which leads me to issue the following promise: Come next year, we'll do our best to take pictures of both high school graduation ceremonies.

Of course, this promise only applies if your *Mountain View Voice* hasn't shriveled up by then and blown away on a light wind. Then you can complain about the terrible lack of coverage at both schools. At least there will be parity. ■

Don Frances can be reached at [dfrances@mv-voice.com](mailto:dfrances@mv-voice.com).

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# Arrest made in South Bay bank robbery spree

ALLEGED ROBBER WHO ESCAPED BY TAXI CAB IS SPOTTED BY SHARP-EYED OFFICER

By Daniel DeBolt

Police arrested a man at the Pacific Inn last Wednesday who they say robbed five South Bay banks in recent weeks, three of them in Mountain View — and at least in one case using a taxi cab as a getaway car.

With the help of surveillance footage and an observant police officer, Peter Pearson, a 53-year-old transient, was arrested without incident in his room at the Pacific Inn at 7:18 p.m. Wednesday evening, police said. Police say that he robbed Bank of the West on Castro Street on May 30, Wells Fargo on Castro Street on June 2 and California Bank and Trust at 700 W. El Camino Real on June 8. Pacific Inn is located on the 1900 block of W. El Camino.



Peter Pearson

Pearson is also alleged to have robbed a bank in Santa Clara and one in Sunnyvale, plus another attempted robbery in Sunnyvale.

Police spokesperson Liz Wylie said Pearson wore a baseball cap in each robbery to keep him

from being identified by overhead cameras. But police were able to obtain surveillance footage taken from a liquor store near one of the banks that they believe caught an image of his face.

Wylie said Mountain View police Officer Mike Magana was able to identify Pearson in the surveillance footage as a man he had seen at the Pacific Inn after the June 8 robbery.

That was the robbery in which Pearson allegedly used a taxi cab as a getaway car, and police located the taxi after the incident, learning that the driver had dropped the suspect off at the McDonald's near El Monte. With this in mind, Magana had been doing a search of the area and saw Pearson at the Pacific Inn, not yet knowing he would be the suspect.

Upon seeing the surveillance footage, "Magana said, 'That's the guy I saw at the Pacific Inn,'" Wylie said. "Sure enough, he was. He was on parole for prior narcotics possession. Police found numerous pieces of evidence in his hotel room and arrested him."

Pearson was arrested on charges of five counts of robbery, attempted robbery of a second Sunnyvale bank and for violating his parole. He was booked in the county main jail. ▽

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NEWS BRIEFS

**ARMED ROBBERS STORM APARTMENT ON SAN VERON**

Police are looking for two men who they say robbed four people at gunpoint in their San Veron Avenue apartment Monday.

The holdup occurred at around 10:30 p.m. in an apartment building on the 800 block of San Veron, where two of the victims lived. Police say the residents, a man and a woman, both 21, were hosting two male guests. When someone came to the door they answered it, expecting more friends.

But instead two armed men entered, one wielding a shotgun and the other an automatic weapon, according to police spokesperson Liz Wylie. They

took cell phones and an undisclosed amount of cash from the four victims and then left.

The men were well disguised, Wylie said, and the victims "did not recognize them or their voices."

Both men were described as Pacific Islanders in their late teens or early 20s, wearing black pants and black hooded sweat-shirts and with fabric covering their faces. Both were around 6 feet tall, and one was about 200 pounds, while the other was about 250 pounds, according to the victims' descriptions.

Anyone with information is urged to call police at (650) 903-6344.

— Casey Weiss

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# Council on taxis: Let the market decide

MEMBERS RECEPTIVE TO POLICE DEPARTMENT EFFORT TO RELINQUISH OVERSIGHT OF CITY'S TAXI SERVICE

By Daniel DeBolt

An ordinance created in the 1960s that limits taxi service in Mountain View to two companies may have outlasted its usefulness, City Council members agreed during a discussion Tuesday night.

As the city faces major budget cuts, the Mountain View Police Department has come up with a money-saver: The department wants to stop using its resources to conduct annual taxi cab inspections, as well as criminal background checks and fingerprinting of taxi drivers.

In response, the City Council on Tuesday appeared supportive of using something else to ensure taxi service quality: the free market.

If the council's discussion Tuesday turns into policy, it could mean a larger variety of taxi cabs parked in front of the downtown train station. Current restrictions only allow two taxi companies to pick up customers in Mountain View: Yellow Cab Company Peninsula and Checker Cab of Silicon Valley.

City Attorney Michael Martello said the restriction was a holdover from the days when cities had to promise cab companies a territory or there would be no taxi service.

Though the police department has not received any complaints about a lack of taxi service in the city, dozens of cab companies have applied to do business here over the years. Many spoke Tuesday evening, including one man who said he was using a limo to get around the regulations and was charging less than taxi service in Mountain View. Many taxi services in the phone book regularly turn away customers who call from Mountain View.

The city's taxi ordinance allows only 34 taxis in the city at a time, a restriction which caused council member Jac Siegel to ask why the free market couldn't be trusted to regulate how many taxis were needed. "Good question," said police captain Max Bosel.

"Are there any other businesses we regulate this much?" Siegel asked.

"The most comparable would be massage parlors," Bosel said.

Bosel said that under the current ordinance, taxi drivers who have been arrested for battery, for example, are not be able to work in the city, and others have been turned away for other past crimes. Under the Police Department's recommendation that would no longer be the case. However, Bosel said that cities including Milpitas and Redwood City have not had any problems as a result of such practices.

One cab company owner from southern San Mateo County, where there are few regulations on taxis, said that "what really works is taking care of customers. The bread and butter of our business is repeat customers. I think it takes care of itself."

A potential Mountain View cab operator offered to charge \$2.50 a mile for service rather than the \$3 currently offered. He also offered a 25 percent discount to seniors. He said he would be willing to pay a \$500 franchise fee to work in Mountain View. (Mountain View currently charges a \$114 franchise fee, while San Jose, for example, charges \$8,500).

Opponents to deregulation included Larry Silva, owner of Checker Cab, and a handful of taxi drivers. Silva said "deregulation" of taxis was dangerous and

appears to be "bleeding" to the west side of Silicon Valley. He said he wants the city to keep requiring drug tests of drivers.

Council member Tom Means, a libertarian and economics professor at San Jose State University, asked Silva why he was using such strong language. Silva said that without some rules, taxi drivers may start to engage in fights and bidding wars for customers as they once did at San Jose airport.

"At the end of the day it doesn't make for a good cab industry," he said.

Currently, taxis that park at the Caltrain station appear to have organized a system so there are no fights over who picks up the next customer. But that may change if the city is opened up to almost any cab operator, said council member Mike Kasperzak.

"We don't have that much business as it is," said one Mountain View taxi driver.

Mayor Margaret Abe-Koga and council members Means, Siegel and John Inks supported allowing other cab companies to come into the city.

"Competition — that's the key to customer satisfaction," Inks said.

Although council member Laura Macias was absent, all those present agreed that it didn't make sense to have highly paid sworn police officers doing the various background checks and cab inspections. Abe-Koga said she wanted the city to begin regulating taxis through business license requirements instead, which could include some form of outside inspection of cabs. ▀

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## MINTON'S

► Continued from page 1

to build 214 one- and two-bedroom apartments on 3.3 acres currently occupied by Minton's Lumber. The development would feature two large buildings above an underground parking garage, with the buildings split by a promenade and courtyard similar to what Prometheus built at Park Place on Castro Street.

The buildings would be about two stories high on Villa Street but increase to four stories at Evelyn Avenue. A new public road would run along the eastern edge of the site. The frontage along Bush Street would be three stories.

The project would probably mean

the end of Minton's, which is still open for business but whose owners are ready to sell. The lumber supplier has been in business for almost a century.

The neighbors who spoke Tuesday night attempted to point out every possible flaw with the project. They said it would add to the area's traffic problems and "horrendous" parking problems by providing only 1.5 parking spaces per unit (2.3 is usually required), and that it had a "boxy" design. Their biggest peeve: the appropriateness of allowing a project about twice as dense — at 60 units per acre — as what's allowed by current zoning, which caps homes at 25 units per acre and three stories in height.

"I can't see any benefit, or if you live in this neighborhood, how this

is good for you," said one neighbor.

"Why isn't two stories good enough?" asked neighbor Steve Harrison. "Frankly, it's unfair."

But Mayor Margaret Abe-Koga called it "probably one of the best places to put a high-density project" because of its proximity near the train station.

"Larger scale development makes sense and is justified," agreed Inks.

Council member Tom Means said he was disappointed that the city previously passed on a chance to build higher density homes directly across from the train station.

The Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association has supported

► Continued on next page

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## NEWS BRIEFS

## CITY'S 2009-10 BUDGET IS APPROVED

The City Council passed a general fund budget last week with only \$4 million in cuts to services to fix a \$6 million deficit, which was temporarily shored up with \$2.2 in reserves.

Council members will begin to plan for next year's budget process later this month. It is also when the city manager expects to be able to report on how talks are going with the city's labor unions, who may be forgoing a portion of their pay raises. Though pay and benefits for public safety and many other positions is average compared to local cities, the city's personnel costs rise by a total of \$3.8 million a year, while tax revenues are projected to remain flat. The city projects \$86.6 million in general operating fund revenue for 2009-10.

To fix its problems, the state may also take as much as \$5 million from the city's tax revenue over the next year, including \$2.5 million from the general fund property taxes, \$1.8 million in Shoreline district property taxes and a possible \$850,000 in gas taxes.

"We're being naïve if we think things are going to get better," said council member Tom Means. "It could be another \$5-\$6 million we need to cut."

## COUNCIL OKS HOME LOANS FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

The City Council has approved a program that may provide an incentive for city employees to live in Mountain View.

The program will make 20

low interest home loans available worth \$100,000 each, which will compliment a primary home loan. The goal of the program is to better prepare the city for an emergency by having more "first responders," usually thought of as police and firefighters, in the city. But last week the council declared all city employees to be first responders.

If the success of such programs in other cities is an indication, only a handful of employees will use the program.

To pay for it, the city will use \$1 million in below-market-rate housing funds, which can only be given to lower-paid city employees, and \$1 million in general fund reserves, which are not restricted.

The program will be administered by Neighborhood Housing Services Silicon Valley, the state's only nonprofit home loan lender.

## CUESTA TENNIS CENTER GETS NEW OPERATOR

Todd Dissly and his partners are set to start a new chapter for the Cuesta Tennis Center, after the City Council selected them from a pool of four prospective operators.

City staff recommended Mountain View Tennis, comprised of Los Gatos community tennis operator Dissly along with Nick Fustar and Brian Eagle, who operate the Santa Clara University, Mission College and West Valley College tennis courts. Staff said the company's proposal showed a strong understanding of the city's "community model," which seeks to make the courts accessible to everyone.

Dissly said he plans to extend the center's hours to 8 p.m. on Fridays and to provide more programs for youth.

Mountain View Tennis will

sympathized with neighbors who moved in believing there would never be a tall building at the end of Bush Street.

"I wouldn't worry about the density. Density on Evelyn makes sense," said council member Ronit Bryant, who lives nearby on Dana and Bush streets.

While others had problems with the architectural style, a mix of contemporary and classic design, Bryant said that didn't bother her.

"What makes downtown is not the style, it's the walkability of it, the doors facing the street, the stoops, the street trees and the planting strips. The precise details of the architecture are not as important to me. More and more people walk in the neighborhood. That level needs to be friendly and not a blank wall." ▀

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replace operator Tim Foley, who was popular with many in the tennis community at Cuesta but failed to live up to his contractual obligations, according to the city.

## OLD MIDDLEFIELD OFFICES FREED FROM ZONING REGS

Property owners of office buildings on Old Middlefield Way will be able to keep their buildings as offices, the City Council decided last week.

Though the street was zoned to provide a protected area for auto shops and supply houses, the zoning in that area, dubbed "CS zoning," was misinterpreted by the city in previous years to allow office development, which drove out some auto shops during the dot-com boom. The city's response to fleeing auto shops was to restrict office use, but that led to newly converted office buildings sitting vacant.

After property owners petitioned for help, the council approved an ordinance at its meeting last Tuesday allowing 45 percent of multi-tenant buildings to be filled by an office use. An amendment by council member Mike Kasperzak to change the

ordinance to 35 percent failed to gain support.

The ordinance also allows buildings currently used as offices to remain that way until 2040.

## UTILITY RATES GO UP

To compensate for increased water, garbage and sewer costs imposed on the city, the council has raised utility rates.

Single-family homes will see an average increase of \$1.15 for

garbage service and \$1.15 for sewer service per month. Water services for a household that uses 250 gallons per day would have its water bill increase from \$31.18 to \$32.74.

Last week's council vote for the increases was unanimous and came with little debate. City staffers said nine protest letters had been filed in opposition to the rate increases.

— Daniel DeBolt

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► Continued from previous page

the project, and even sent the council a letter saying they would support the "exploration" of higher densities at the site.

Roy Hayter of Advocates for Affordable Housing said the project would help make up for the loss of apartments in the city over the years due to condo conversions. The last apartment project anyone could remember was Avalon towers on El Camino Real. Donna Yobbs said the League of Woman Voters was pleased that the project was including a portion of below market rate units.

Council member Jac Siegel appeared to be the only strong opponent of the project's density. Member Laura Macias was absent.

"The current plan allows high density. This is very high density. I think that could be somewhat of an issue," Siegel said, adding that he

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MICHELLE LE

**Pastor Paul Sheppard** speaks to congregants at Abundant Life Christian Fellowship. Below: a worshipper raises his hands during the service.

## ABUNDANT LIFE

► Continued from page 1

pastor Tilden Fang.

Sheppard's message of tolerance and diversity is reinforced in his radio show, "Enduring Truths," which is broadcast over 500 radio stations. He recently wrote a book about improving relationships between diverse churchgoers called "Build a Bridge and Get Over it!" (His popularity is so great that he is requested for speaking engagements at Christian conferences all over the country during the week — which is why, his assistant said, he would be too busy for an interview with the *Voice*.)

Sheppard's sermons are humorous and sometimes theatrical. On May 24 he talked about how being a Christian was sometimes a struggle requiring that you get up and fight

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***"It is not uncommon to find someone with a Ph.D. worshipping next to someone who just got their GED, or someone who just came out of prison."***

TILDEN FANG

---

when beaten down. He used boxing as a metaphor, and at one point stretched out on the stage like a knocked-out boxer for dramatic effect, riffing on what must go through a boxer's mind when he's been knocked down on cable TV.

His sermons are memorable, and quotable: "There is nothing worse to me than a weak-kneed, milquetoast man," he said, adding that "I don't let anything get me down and out."

When offering advice for finding a compatible marriage partner, Sheppard said, "If you want to live a thoroughbred life, you can't mate with a mule."

"Don't send me an e-mail," he added. "I meant exactly what I said."

Sheppard's practical lessons draw people from all sorts of

backgrounds, which is why, Fang said, "It is not uncommon to find someone with a Ph.D. worshipping next to someone who just got their GED, or someone who just came out of prison," who heard Sheppard on the radio.

### The next move

Sheppard says he plans to retire at 65, so he has 14 years to go. He says that "there is no success without succession," which means he is hoping someone will emerge to be the church's next leader. Much is at stake: The church has over 60 different ministries, such as drug and alcohol support groups and marriage counseling programs.

Fang said it was a possibility the church would remain in Mountain View as a "satellite" of a new, larger building leased or built somewhere else. Where exactly the church would set up its new headquarters is uncertain, but Fang noted that land is expensive in Silicon Valley.

Wherever it goes, people are sure to travel to get there. As it is now, churchgoers are drawn from around the larger Bay Area, with some coming from as far as Tracy and Vacaville. Many are from San Francisco and Oakland, and most are from Mountain View, Sunnyvale and East Palo Alto, where the church runs several outreach programs. ▀



MICHELLE LE

**BULLIS**

► Continued from page 5

tion of Proposition 39, a measure passed by California voters in 2000 requiring that facilities be provided to charter schools. He says Bullis' suit "amounts to nothing more than an attempt to game the Proposition 39 regulations to squeeze an additional allocation of space from the district." After receiving the letter, Bullis filed a

lawsuit on June 10.

District representatives have not returned calls from the *Voice*.

"For five years we have been unable to bridge the divide between Bullis and the district," Bullis administrators wrote on their Web site. "At this point the only way to move forward in a positive manner is to seek a common set of facts between the district and our school around the meaning of key provisions of

Proposition 39."

The fights between Bullis and the district date back to 2004, when the County Office of Education helped open the charter school after LASD closed down Bullis-Purissima Elementary School in Los Altos Hills. The Bullis and LASD communities have been debating school policies and jurisdiction ever since. ▀

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

**WHISMAN**

► Continued from page 1

a 10-year master facilities plan by February, and are mapping out special programs and resources they want on their campuses. Some of these programs may need special buildings or equipment, which would be incorporated into the master plan.

During their last meeting of the academic year on Tuesday, trustees agreed on some "easy guiding principles" for the district, such as maintaining "fiscal integrity," maximizing energy efficiency and engaging students in the classroom with existing tools and resources.

"We want principles to guide us," trustee Ed Bailey said as he led the study session.

As trustee Fiona Walter put it, the board is asking, "Where do we want to be in 10 years. What do we see ourselves needing?"

Trustees said they will return in August to discuss larger programs, such as charter and magnet schools, and policies they may adopt for the district.

The board has been discussing the 10-year facilities plan all year, and had originally planned to pass a plan this month. A demographer talked to the board this spring about population trends in the district, and Bill Gould Design, the architectural firm that is helping the district with its master plan, estimated the district needed as much as \$192 million in repairs and

renovations.

Trustees began discussing a potential bond measure to pay for these renovations, and said they could put it on the ballot as early as November. But they decided to slow down the process as the district waits to see how much the state will cut from educational funding as it looks to balance its budget.

Administrators said that, depending on cuts, they may have to sponsor another parcel tax to help pay for educational programs. (Bond measures fund buildings and renovations, and parcel taxes pay for programs.) The district will pass a master plan by February, in time to sponsor a bond on the June 10, 2010 ballot for the gubernatorial primary.

On Tuesday night, Bailey, who is on the master facilities plan committee, said the trustees needed to consider "how much land we need to be successful" for school sites, infrastructure, buildings, classroom set up and programs when preparing to make the master plan.

"These guiding principles will give [Bill Gould] as much help as we can," Bailey told trustees and administrators during the study session.

Trustees quickly agreed on 12 "easy guiding principles," many of which came from the Fresno School District. These include providing safe and secure campuses, engaging students, variety in classroom set up and providing early childhood education in the district.

"If we can agree on the easy principles, let's," Walter said. "But we can't forget about the hard ones."

With these under their belt, trustees started talking about programs and policies they may want to see in the district. They made a list of ideas to think about over the summer recess, including boundaries, magnet and charter schools, libraries and information centers on campuses, and special programs like dual immersion or performing arts centers. Trustees will pass this list on to Bill Gould Design so the architects will have it over the summer to refer back to while the board is in recess.

"There are still going to be some philosophical conversations we need to have," Bailey said.

Trustees said as they plan for their facilities, they need to discuss whether students will get to choose special programs and schools, or if they can only attend their neighborhood campuses. They said this is especially important considering that some schools in the district have substantially higher test scores than others, and they want to provide opportunities for all students without "discouraging people from attending their neighborhood schools," trustee Steve Olson said.

Trustees agreed to continue discussions about these potential policies and programs when they return from their recess in August. ▀

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

**POLIFRONE**

► Continued from page 5

that she was on "personal leave," adding that legally they were not able to discuss the case. School Principal Sharon Burns sent out a letter to parents calling Polifrone's departure "a difficult decision for all involved."

There is a specific dismissal procedure for tenured teachers, according to Dina Martin, a spokesperson for the California Teachers Association. Before his or her hearing, the teacher hears the "statement of charges." Then a decision is made by a three-

member panel composed of an administrative law judge, a school administrator and a teacher who teaches the same subject at a different school.

The accused teacher can then appeal the ruling at the Superior Court level, Martin said.

Superintendent Maurice Ghysels said that as part of district procedure, teachers are assigned to specific schools and classes after administrators make a list of all "personnel placements" and the board approves or rejects this list. The board does not necessarily examine the list on a case-by-case basis: During a June 4 board meeting, a trustee asked about

Polifrone, and administrators confirmed that she will be returning to the district this fall.

At the most recent board meeting on Tuesday, a crying student told trustees that he had traumatic experiences in Polifrone's class at Huff. The student, who is entering Graham as a sixth grader in the fall, said he was scared he might again get Polifrone as a teacher.

Under district policies, a parent can request that a child not have a specific teacher, Ghysels said. The school's principal makes the final decision. ▀

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



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# Viewpoint

- EDITORIAL
- YOUR LETTERS
- GUEST OPINIONS

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### ■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

## A lightning rod teacher returns

Last March the *Voice* ran a story based on charges from a small group of parents saying that a Huff Elementary School teacher was “abusive” toward some of her fourth grade students. The resulting turmoil ended only after the teacher left her classroom for the remainder of the year.

Calling it a “personnel matter,” administrators at the Mountain View Whisman School District said that legally they could not share any details about Patty Polifrone’s departure. But given the wide-ranging comments from parents — some loved the teacher’s brusque style, while others thought she was a verbal abuser — there seemed to be enough controversy to expect that Polifrone would not be teaching again in the district any time soon.

Wrong. Last week, word got out that Polifrone would indeed be teaching in the district, this time to sixth graders at Graham Middle School. The announcement came with little fanfare, and can’t be welcome news for parents who followed the clamor in March about Polifrone’s teaching style.

As before, the district says it is not able to disclose any specific details about how Polifrone was assigned to Graham, leaving it open to speculation. And naturally, this speculation will include a new round of negative comments about this teacher, echoing the parents at Huff who felt their children were abused in her classroom.

It is important to note that Polifrone’s tough-love style had its fans, some of whom said their children learned to handle adversity under her tutelage. These parents seemed to be saying that even though her style was hard on students, their children could overlook the emotional wringer if it taught them about discipline and life in the real world.

Lacking details on the Polifrone dispute, it is impossible to know exactly why and how her reassignment occurred. For example, if the district intended to dismiss her, as a tenured teacher she would be entitled to a formal hearing and could appeal the decision to a Superior Court judge.

Whatever the case, as personnel matters go, she seems to be coming out on top. This may be fair and for the best — district officials continually say they always have the students’ needs foremost in mind, and we have no choice but to take them at their word.

But even if district officials cannot comment on specific personnel matters, it would ease the anxiety of concerned parents if they explained to the public in more detail how such issues generally are addressed. What parameters are set by a teacher’s tenure? Does the union get a say, and if so what weight is it given? What role, if any, does the district board (in closed session) play in deciding a teacher’s fate?

Perhaps district officials feel Polifrone will do better with sixth graders, which may be possible. But we doubt that, if given a choice, many parents of incoming sixth graders would elect to have their child spend the school year with Polifrone.

The best teachers inspire their students by being role models and sharing examples of how good behavior and a positive work ethic can lead to success. The worst harangue and tear down their students. And any teacher whose lessons come with abuse, either physical or emotional, has no place in the classroom.

Some parents put Polifrone squarely in the latter camp. Given that she’s returning to the classroom this fall, we hope they’re wrong — and we wish the district could do a little more to ease parents’ worries about it.

### ■ LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

#### LET BAYSHORE PLAN INCLUDE LESS DENSITY

Editor:

Before deciding we need high density development in Bayshore, I suggest we look at how and where future “employees” are likely to locate as they interact with their “businesses” (“Heavyweights discuss Bayshore’s future,” June 5).

I was a tad surprised that Google and Microsoft didn’t jump on this, since Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) is a highly likely future of enterprise technology. IaaS means that employees can fully collaborate securely, completely and in real-time with their organizations from any location. Employees have all the capabilities they need to work from home or a nearby favorite location as effectively as they work in their current office or cubicle.

So business organizations really do not need the high-density, layered offices and cubicles that seem exciting at first, but often quickly frame a stressful and confining corporate experience. The future of basic corporate value streams is also indicating shifts away from layered offices and cubicles.

In terms of Bayshore, this opens the door to designing smaller buildings that support workgroup needs such as weekly face-to-face meetings, serve as

satellite offices for employees who prefer working outside their homes, offer streamlined “headquarters” for the few services that cannot be handled virtually, reduce exposure to the cost of vacancy during slower business cycles and, ideally, incorporate outdoor space, entertainment and other services for employees and the surrounding community.

This argues for a decreasing need for high density development and an increasing need for high quality development.

Josephine Morrissey  
Wake Forest Road

#### MIXED USE IS BEST FOR BAYSHORE

Editor:

Thanks for the *Voice*’s great coverage of local government and community affairs. I’m writing in response to two separate articles.

First, regarding “Heavyweights discuss Bayshore’s future,” I support the development of denser, walkable, bikeable, mixed-use communities (including housing) in North Bayshore. As part of its General Plan update, the city of Mountain View should zone housing and services, not just jobs.

This will provide two benefits. First, it will help Mountain

▶ See LETTERS, page 15



View address its jobs-to-housing imbalance. The current imbalance of more jobs than housing drives up housing prices, making it difficult for young families to live and work here. Second, providing housing and services along with jobs will help improve traffic and congestion by reducing the need to commute into North Bayshore from outside the area.

Second, in regard to the June 12 article "Join HSR group? City lets it blow by," I applaud the City Council for not joining the narrow-minded Peninsula Cities Coalition. While I generally support high speed rail, more information and analysis are needed before the city can make an informed decision on whether to pursue a stop in Mountain View.

The coalition seems to be dominated by affluent, self-interested NIMBYs rather than open-minded, regional-thinking residents. Aligning with them would have resulted in Mountain View being incorrectly perceived as opposing high speed rail.

**John M. Brazil**  
Loreto Street

**PAT ON THE BACK FOR SCHOLARSHIP DONORS**

Editor:

I would like to thank the local organizations that provided college scholarships to our recent graduates from the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District. Many of these scholarships will support the efforts of first generation college attendees who have a demonstrated need. Without these funds, many of the graduates would be unable to attend college. These grants serve as a positive motivator for our students during their high school years.

The local organizations that provide college grants include the MVL Community Scholars, the Los Altos and Mountain View Rotary Clubs, the Los Altos Masonic Lodge, and the Los Altos and Mountain View Kiwanis Clubs. We appreciate their efforts and their giving back to the community in the form of needed scholarships for deserving students.

**Barry Groves, Superintendent**  
Mountain View-Los Altos  
High School District

**WHERE DOES ABAG GET ITS NUMBERS?**

Editor:

How did ABAG determine that Mountain View should grow 20 percent in the next 20 years? Was it based on a study or was it arbitrary?

Where does ABAG expect to put the 15,000 additional people? Mountain View is the second

most densely populated city in Santa Clara County. I guess that we can always build up and convert our parks to housing locations. Why not build housing in less densely populated areas of the county?

Did ABAG consider the effect that 15,000 additional people will have on our quality of life?

Does ABAG have any suggestions as to how we are going to pay for the police officers, firefighters and other city staff required to support the additional 15,000?

**Konrad M. Sosnow**  
Trophy Drive

**MANY SUFFER FROM CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME**

As the morning sun begins to peak into your windows most will begin yet another busy day. For others it is a different story, an untold story.

May 12 was Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome Awareness Day. Although millions suffer, it is an invisible illness.

The innocent name, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, does a disservice to those afflicted. As I lay here with a heating pad under my achy body, I can tell you first hand that CFS can strip the life out of those it touches. Many become unable to work and maintain friendships. Some are unable to drive, walk or function outside the home. We are all tired at the end of the day, but CFS is different. To compare CFS to everyday fatigue would be like comparing an untamed tiger to a kitten.

The Centers for Disease Control recognizes CFS as a serious illness, and the World Health Organization classifies it as neurological. Exhaustion, body pain, weakness, dizziness, chemical sensitivity, hypoglycemia, spasms, headaches, numbness, poor memory, nausea and a sick flu-type feeling are just a few of its symptoms. Despite this, nobody is talking about it.


CFS is non-transmittable with an unknown etiology. Genetics, viruses, chemicals and Lyme are possible sources.

There are many with CFS, even here in our own community. The sickest ones have no energy or stamina and, as a result, no voice. But with an increase in funding, awareness and research there's hope. By reading this article, you have already begun to make a difference.

Contact our Mountain View support group by e-mailing cfs-bayarea@yahoo.com. For information and contributions to research, visit www.cfids.org.

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CLIFFORD PHAM

Loui Loui Steakhouse's chocolate soufflé is one of their most popular dessert dishes.

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

## Incongruity on University

LOUI LOUI STEAKHOUSE SCORES HIGH FOR CUISINE, LOW FOR RETRO AESTHETICS

by Dale F. Benton

The restaurant space at 473 University Ave. in Palo Alto was built as Cafe Niebaum-Coppola in 2002, with sky-high ceilings, classic wood pillars and hardwood floors. Articulated doors opened across the front, softening the ambiance.

But mediocre food and stiff prices kept diners away, so Coppola segued the space into Cafe Rosso & Bianco, a more casual trattoria. When that didn't work either, Francis Ford pulled the plug.

In March, new owners with roots in both the Bay Area and New York reopened the place as Loui Loui Steak, an Italian-styled steakhouse with

an incongruous name.

That's not all that's incongruous, though. Decorators plastered dreadful wallpaper onto every flat-walled surface. The resultant decor is a 1960s pseudo-psychedelic facade, about as much in tune with an expensive steakhouse as if Alice Waters suddenly redecorated Chez Panisse with Jack-in-the-Box ornamentation.

Further, on a recent visit I observed that one waiter must have bathed in cologne. Fragrance preceded him half a dining room away, a no-no in any eating establishment. Other waiters weren't familiar with many of the wines on the abbreviated list, although

► Continued on next page

## Pizzeria Venti



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#### Ossobuco

- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small onion chopped fine
- 2 carrots chopped fine
- 2 stalks of celery chopped fine
- 4 veal shanks cut about 3 inches thick, each tied tightly cross-wise
- flour, spread on a plate
- 3/4 cup dry white wine
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1-1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup 6 & 1 tomatoes, crushed with their juices
- freshly ground pepper to taste
- salt to taste

#### Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in foil pan. Add the onion, carrot and celery. Cook until the vegetables soften, about 10 minutes then drain the oil.
3. Meanwhile, heat the other 4 tablespoons of olive oil in a foil pan. Dredge the veal shanks in the flour, coating on all sides and shake off the excess flour. When the oil is hot, slip in the shanks and brown them on all sides. This should take about 6-7 minutes per side. Remove the veal shanks and place them in the first pan on top of the cooked vegetables.
4. Add the wine, butter, chicken broth, tomatoes, pepper and salt to the pot. The liquid should come at least two thirds of the way to the top of the shanks. If it does not, add more broth.
5. Cover the pan and place it in the oven. Cook for about 2 hours, turning and basting every 30 minutes, until the meat is very tender.
6. Transfer the Ossobuco to a warm plate and carefully remove the strings.

To serve place Ossobuco on a plate with Risotto Milanese, Orzo or Pastina pasta in herbed olive oil and garlic.

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► Continued from previous page

service was attentive. A steady drone of Otis Redding- and Marvin Gaye-type, male, bluesy music bludgeoned diners with entire albums played indefinitely. For \$30-plus for a steak, I expected more attention to detail.

Surprisingly, the food was terrific. Everything I ordered was perfectly prepared with high-quality steaks, seafood, pasta dishes and appetizers. Desserts were particularly decadent, especially the order-ahead chocolate soufflé. The women I saw trying it nearly rivaled Meg Ryan's deli scene in "When Harry Met Sally."

For starters, the gratin of pear carpaccio (\$7) with asiago cheese, walnuts and arugula, dressed with honey truffle vinaigrette, was unusual, tasty and spirited. The sweetness of the ripe fruit was balanced by the peppery arugula while the walnuts provided crunch. The vinaigrette was sweet and earthy.

Octopus salad is about as Italian as salad can be. At Loui Loui, the grilled octopus (\$11) was lean with firm flesh: acceptably rubbery, mild-flavored and less briny than calamari. The salad came with green beans and sliced potato. Plating was not as startling as it is in Italy; no oozing sucker-

laden tentacles dangling over the edge of the dish. Instead, this was a tamer, well-conceived combination of tender cephalopod and vegetables.

The Maryland crab cake (\$11.50) was chunky and deliciously briny. The texture of Maryland crab is flakier and tastes saltier than Dungeness and makes a great crab cake. The remoulade sauce accented perfectly.

Filet mignon carpaccio (\$12.50) abounded with flavor. The melt-in-the-mouth meat was supported with shaved parmesan and arugula and was drizzled with truffle-infused olive oil with just enough bites to whet the appetite.

Most of the pastas are made in-house. The linguini with Kobe beef meatballs (\$16) featured a generous portion of those marvelously flavor-packed meatballs. Kobe beef is buttery-tender because the meat contains a high percentage of fat. Kobe beef coupled with almost anything is delicious. The linguini and marinara sauce were merely props.

We tried two different steaks. The 8-ounce filet mignon (\$28) was offered two ways, with bear-naise sauce or au poivre (misspelled on the menu). We tried the

► See LOUI LOUI, page 18

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CLIFFORD PHAM

General manager Walter Saltos pours water at Loui Loui Steakhouse.

## LOUI LOUI

► Continued from page 17

latter and the meat was lean, firm-fleshed and decadently tender. Most steaks come with a choice of side dish.

A 12-ounce rib-eye was the special one evening (\$32.50). The tender beef was well marbled and perfectly cooked per my request. The steak was enhanced with a medley of mushrooms sauteed in brown mushroom sauce. The king-sized plate came with a pile of steamed broccoli rabe and toasted polenta. I left with a hefty doggie bag.

Veal chop Milanese (\$29) was pounded flat and dredged in flour, egg, parmesan and breadcrumbs, then fried. The resultant huge piece of veal was succulent, rich and subtle and was presented on a bed of arugula with a chopped tomato salad. Another doggie bag.

Noteworthy were the braised short ribs (\$25), also blanketed with a hearty mushroom sauce studded with chunks of mushrooms. The short ribs had been browned, then slow-cooked with onions, carrots, celery, etc. The meat was fall-off-the-bone appetizing with minimal fat.

Desserts were first-rate. The yummy fried ravioli (\$7) was

filled with bananas and Nutella, topped with a sauce of mixed berries and a scoop of pumpkin ice cream. Forget the calories; just eat it and be happy.

Apple strudel (\$7) was not overly sweetened, allowing the apple flavor to shine. Drizzled with caramel sauce, it was a perfect, if not distinctive, conclusion.

The chocolate souffle needed 20 minutes' oven time. The wait staff came by midway through the entrees and asked if we wanted to order it. Ordering dessert while I'm enjoying something savory has always jarred me, yet I understand the necessity of getting the dessert prepared. The souffle was served in a deep ramekin, enough to share, cakey on top with sumptuously immoderate warm chocolate pudding beneath. Bits of chocolate were still melting into the pool of pudding. To paraphrase Voltaire, so good it should be illegal.

Loui Loui seems somewhat at cross-purposes with itself. The service is conscientious and the cuisine superior and stylish. The decor, though, suggests something more dated, a toned-down version of Art Nouveau made famous at the flamboyant Maxwell's Plum in the 1960s. It just isn't all that appealing in this day and age. ■

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MOVIE TIMES

ANGELS & DEMONS (PG-13) ★★1/2

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 6:40 & 10:05 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 1, 4:10, 7:20 & 10:25 p.m.

AWAY WE GO (R) ★★★★★

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 12:05, 2:40, 5:05, 7:35 & 10:05 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 12:45, 3:10, 5:35, 8 & 10:35 p.m.

THE BROTHERS BLOOM (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)

Aquarius: 4:15, 7 & 9:30 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 1:30 p.m.

DEPARTURES (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED) Guild: 2, 5 & 8 p.m.

EARTH (G) ★★★★★ Palo Alto Square: 2:20 & 4:50 p.m.

EASY VIRTUE (PG-13) ★★

Aquarius: 3:30, 6 & 8:30 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 1 p.m.

THE HANGOVER (R) ★★★★★1/2

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 11 a.m.; 12, 1:30, 2:30, 4, 5, 6:30, 7:30, 9 & 10 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 12:30, 1:15, 2:55, 3:40, 5:25, 6:15, 7:05, 7:55, 8:45, 9:40 & 10:30 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 10:45 a.m.

IMAGINE THAT (PG) (NOT REVIEWED)

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 11:55 a.m.; 2:35, 5:10, 7:40 & 10:10 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 11:45 a.m.; 2:15, 4:50, 7:30 & 10:05 p.m.

LAND OF THE LOST (PG-13) ★★

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 11:45 a.m.; 2:15, 4:45 & 7:15 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 12:05, 2:40, 5:15, 7:50 & 10:20 p.m.

MOON (R) (NOT REVIEWED)

Palo Alto Square: 2:15, 4:45 & 7:20 p.m. Fri.-Sat. also at 9:45 p.m.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN (PG) ★★

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 11:05 a.m.; 1:40, 4:15, 7:05 & 9:50 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 11:55 a.m.; 2:30, 5:05, 7:40 & 10:15 p.m.

THE PROPOSAL (PG-13) ★★★★★

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 11 a.m.; 12:10, 1:35, 2:45, 4:10, 5:20, 6:50, 7:55, 9:30 & 10:30 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 11:40 a.m.; 12:50, 2:15, 3:25, 4:50, 6, 7:25, 8:40 & 10 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 10:20 a.m.

STAR TREK (PG-13) ★★★★★1/2

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 1, 4:05, 7:20 & 10:20 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 1:30, 4:30, 7:30 & 10:30 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 10:40 a.m.

STATE OF PLAY (PG-13) ★★★★★

Palo Alto Square: 7:15 p.m. Fri.-Sat. also at 10 p.m.

THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123 (R) ★★★★★

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 11:10 a.m.; 12:30, 1:50, 3:05, 4:25, 5:40, 7:10, 8:15 & 9:55 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 11:25 a.m.; 12:15, 1:05, 2, 2:50, 3:40, 4:35, 5:25, 6:15, 7:10, 8, 8:50, 9:45 & 10:35 p.m.

TERMINATOR SALVATION (PG-13) ★★

Century 16: 9:45 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 1:30, 4:30, 7:30 & 10:30 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 10:30 a.m.

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN (PG-13) (NOT REVIEWED)

Century 16: Tue. at midnight. Wed. & Thu. at 12:30, 3:50, 7:10 & 10:30 p.m.  
Century 20: Tue. at midnight. Wed. & Thu. at 10:30 a.m.; 12:15, 1:55, 3:40, 5:20, 7:05, 8:45 & 10:30 p.m.

UP (PG) ★★★★★

Century 16: Fri.-Tue. at 21:15, 1:20, 2:45, 3:50, 5:15, 7:45 & 10:15 p.m. In digital 3D at 11:30 a.m.; 2, 4:30, 7 & 9:30 p.m.  
Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 11 & 11:45 a.m.; 1:10, 1:40, 2:20, 3:45, 4:20, 4:55, 7, 7:35, 9:35 & 10:10 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 10:35 a.m. In digital 3D Fri.-Tue. at 12:35, 3:10 & 10:45 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 5:45 & 8:15 p.m.

X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE (PG-13) ★★★★★

Century 20: 11:20 a.m.; 1:55, 4:40 & 7:15 p.m.

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

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CENTURY CINEMA 16: 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View (800-326-3264)

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CENTURY 20 DOWNTOWN: 825 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (800-326-3264)

CINEARTS AT PALO ALTO SQUARE: 3000 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (493-3456)

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

SPANGENBERG THEATRE: 780 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto (354-8263)

For show times, plot synopses and more information about any films playing at the Aquarius, Guild and Park, visit [www.LandmarkTheatres.com](http://www.LandmarkTheatres.com)

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

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MOVIE REVIEWS

EASY VIRTUE ★★

(Guild) In sepia-toned footage, fast cars breeze around the French Riviera, and a platinum blonde first crosses the finish line of the Monte Carlo Grand Prix. Her eyes lock with a young Englishman, and soon she's crooning "Mad About the Boy." Both the whirlwind romance and the movie become staid once the impetuous John Whittaker (Ben Barnes) announces his marriage to Larita (Jessica Biel) to his upper-crust family. Mrs. Whittaker (Kristin Scott Thomas) takes an immediate dislike to her American daughter-in-law, whom she labels a gold-digging "floozy." Her disdain escalates for Larita, whose fascination with modern machines, progress and fun conflict with the stultifying British traditions that govern life at the grand English country estate. *Rated: PG-13 for sexual content, brief partial nudity, and smoking throughout. 1 hour, 33 minutes. — P.C.*

THE HANGOVER ★★★★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) Soon-to-be-married Doug Billings (Justin Bartha) wants simply to have fun with his friends before tying the knot. Schoolteacher Phil Wenneck (Bradley) is a smart rambler. Goofy Alan Garner (Zach Galifianakis) is a well-meaning misfit. And dentist Stu Price (Ed Helms) has allowed an abusive girlfriend to quash his sense of excitement. Doug, Phil, Alan and Stu drive to Las Vegas for the bachelor party and an evening of alcohol-fueled debauchery. Stu, Phil and Alan wake up the next morning in a trashed hotel room with no memory of the previous night. They also discover two unusual guests in the room: a crying baby boy and a Bengal tiger. Plus, Doug is nowhere to be found. Panic sets in as the trio tries to piece together the night's events, meeting an array of unusual characters along the way. *Rated: R for some drug material, pervasive language, sexual content and nudity. 1 hour, 40 minutes. — T.H.*

THE TAKING OF PELHAM 1 2 3 ★★★★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Denzel Washington and John Travolta face off in Tony Scott's taut, ticking-clock reboot of the 1974 subway thriller set in New York City. Their star power adds human interest to the adaptation of John Godey's novel about hijackers holding passengers hostage for a huge sum of money that must be delivered within an hour. The "late fee" is pricey: one hostage executed per minute. Scott's edgy direction relentlessly ramps up the tension to Code Red. Typical of most action movies, Travolta sometimes slips into a cartoonish, over-the-top villain, and Washington's attempt to save the day strains credulity. Regardless "Pelham" satisfies as a summer popcorn movie. *Rated: R for violence and pervasive language. 1 hour, 44 minutes. — S.T.*

MOVIE CRITICS

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

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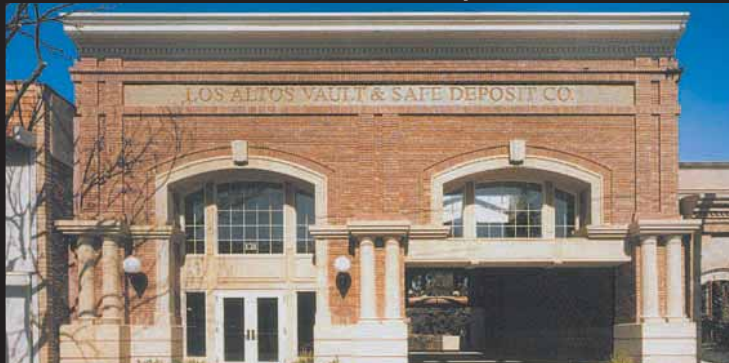
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