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FEBRUARY 15, 2013 VOLUME 21, NO. 3

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MOVIES | 21

EPA finds toxic vapors in Evandale homes

RESIDENTS SAY THEY WERE UNAWARE OF THE DANGER AS HIGH LEVELS OF TCE ARE FOUND IN GROUNDWATER

By Daniel DeBolt

Above a much-studied toxic groundwater plume, the Environmental Protection Agency has found something of a surprise: toxic vapors creeping into homes on Evandale Avenue near Highway 101 and Whisman Road.

EPA project manager Alana Lee said that tests of indoor air so far have found two homes with levels of Trichloroethylene (TCE) vapors above the limit allowed by the EPA. Both homes are on the north side of Evandale Avenue, but the exact addresses are withheld. One has had a ventilation system installed to keep the known carcinogen out of the home and the other will have such a system soon, Lee said.

The homes are a stone's throw from one of Silicon Valley's largest collection of toxic sites, an area once home to early silicon computer chip manufacturers such as Fairchild and Intel, which used TCE as a solvent in their manufacturing process during the 1960s and 1970s. The plume left behind was first discovered in 1981. The area is now home to Google

and Symantec, among others. Those buildings now have ventilation systems running at all hours to keep the underground toxic vapors at bay. The collection of Superfund sites is known as the "MEW" because it is bordered by Middlefield Road, Ellis Street Whisman Road and Highway 101.

'Be concerned'

The discovery of high levels of TCE on Evandale Avenue was a bit of a surprise to Lenny Siegel, director of the Center for Public Environmental Oversight in Mountain View. "We've been following the site for 30 years and we all the sudden find new concentrations in a residential area," he said.

Previous testing nearby had not found the underground plume migrating west of Whisman Road.

"There are a lot of people who should be concerned," Siegel said. "But a lot of the homes sampled turned out to be OK."

Information about the health effects of TCE isn't in the flier the EPA is giving to residents,

► See **TOXIC VAPORS**, page 14



Furor erupts over sex, drug stories in school paper

PARENTS BLAST MVHS FOR ALLOWING GRAPHIC ARTICLES TO BE PRINTED

By Nick Veronin

For the second time in less than a month, high school district officials have come under fire from a group of parents upset over articles published in The Oracle, Mountain View

High School's student newspaper.

Those articles, bundled together in two feature packages — the first focusing on student drug use and the second on sex and romance at MVHS — should have never been published, par-

ents argued at the Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District's board meeting, Feb. 11.

While the package of articles on drug use at MVHS drew only a handful of parents to speak at the board meeting, the series

on sex resulted in a veritable deluge. Administrators made several trips to bring extra chairs to accommodate angry parents, who filled all the seats in the board room and overflowed into the lobby of the MVLA offices. During the public comment portion of the meeting, at least 16 people addressed the board. All but one expressed disappointment in officials at both high schools for failing to stop the latest contentious news package, titled "Sex and Relationships," from being printed. During the

discussion, Oracle staff writer Cerys Holstege, admitted that "mistakes were made," while defending her paper's merits in a broader sense.

Parents outraged

One MVHS mother, Sarah Robinson, said she had filed a formal complaint with the California State Board of Education, had called Los Altos Mayor Jarrett Fishpaw to complain and was planning to do the same

► See **SCHOOL PAPER**, page 10

INSIDE

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Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in downtown Mountain View. Photos and interviews by Dominic Fracassa

What do you think of the Post Office's plan to drop Saturday delivery?



"I expect it's the beginning of more downsizing that the Post Office is going to have to do. But it won't impact me all that much, I don't really get all that much mail."

Karen Leshner, Mountain View



"I think it's actually a pretty good idea because the way things are going now... if it saves them \$2 billion-plus a year, it's probably a pretty good move."

Alfred Woo, Sunnyvale



"In this particular area, a lot of people work Monday through Friday, and Saturday is their go-to day to do Post Office things. That's not a good idea."

Weldon Johnson, San Jose



"It's going to be hard, but I think we'll adjust, a lot of places in the world don't get delivery on Saturdays, so we'll have to deal with it."

Dagmar Baker, San Jose



I would imagine most people work Monday through Friday, so I would have to go with the (Saturday) closure being kind of a negative thing."

Robert Fisher, Palo Alto

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COUNCIL BRIEFS

CALTRANS OKS CLARK AVENUE STOPLIGHT

Despite outcry from residents who said it would increase traffic on their streets, Caltrans has decided to move forward with a stoplight at Clark Avenue and El Camino Real.

Caltrans noted the number of collisions that have occurred at the four way intersection as a reason for installing the light. As one of the few signal-free intersections on El Camino Real, there were 27 collisions there between 2001 and 2006, 18 determined to be preventable with a stoplight.

On Tuesday the City Council voted 6-1 to approve restricting left turns from Clark Avenue to help prevent Clark from becoming a thoroughfare, and requested two crosswalks across El Camino Real at the intersection. Member John McAlister voted against the motion without explanation.

Council members and residents were disappointed that Caltrans had not followed the city's request to delay installation of the stop light and instead consider restricting left turns to prevent accidents, which would have reduced traffic in the neighborhood and cost less than the stoplight, estimated at \$500,000. Residents fear that Clark Avenue and nearby streets will become a popular new route to and from Los Altos High School, among other locations, putting their children in danger.

The light was originally proposed along with a nearby Chick-Fil-A which the council rejected last year.

The move by Caltrans against the city's wishes prompted council member Ronit Bryant to suggest the city take control of its portion of El Camino Real from Caltrans, as was done in San Jose.

"It's not as hugely expensive as one would think," she said.

—Daniel DeBolt

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Castro St. and W. El Camino Real, 2/6

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600 block Mariposa Ave., 2/4
1 block Sierra Vista Ave., 2/6
1700 block Villa St., 2/7
1300 block Grant Rd., 2/7
200 block Martens Ave., 2/7
800 block E. El Camino Real, 2/7
1800 block W. El Camino Real, 2/8
1900 block Crisanto Ave., 2/8
1500 block Glen Una Ct., 2/8
2500 block California St., 2/8

200 block San Antonio Rd., 2/8

1100 block Castro St., 2/10

Amber India Restaurant, 2/11

BATTERY

1900 block Colony St., 2/4
900 block Miramonte Ave., 2/7
Quetzal House, 2/8
500 block View St., 2/8
Montecito Ave. & N. Shoreline Blvd., 2/8
2000 block W. El Camino Real, 2/9
Graham Middle School, 2/11

ROBBERY

1000 block W. El Camino Real

STOLEN VEHICLE

700 block W. Middlefield Rd., 2/8
1900 block Latham St., 2/8
1300 block Charleston Rd., 2/8

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Jose Vargas testifies before Senate committee

By Daniel DeBolt

Former Mountain View High School student Jose Vargas gave an impassioned speech before the Senate Judiciary Committee Wednesday morning, Feb. 13.

As Congress weighs immigration reform, Vargas put a human face on the issue, calling himself an “undocumented American.”

“For all the undocumented immigrants actually sitting here, for the 11 million watching, what do you want to do? What do you want to do with us?” he said to applause. “And to me the most important question, as a student of American history, is this: ‘How do you define American? How do you define it?’”

In June 2011 Vargas came out as an undocumented immigrant detailing his life in a New York Times piece where he admits to



Jose Vargas

using a fake driver’s license and social security card to obtain jobs at the San Francisco Chronicle and the Huffington Post, among others. He stepped down from his job as a Pulitzer prize-winning reporter for the Washington Post to run the nonprofit Define American. He started his career as a high school intern with the Mountain View Voice.

“I come to you as one of our country’s 11 million undocumented immigrants,” Vargas said in the speech, which can be seen on YouTube. “Many of us are Americans at heart but without the right papers to show for it. Too often we’re treated as abstractions, faceless and nameless, subjects of debate rather than individuals with families, hopes, fears and dreams.”

In his testimony, he recalls his drive to be a reporter was partly linked to his immigration status.

► See **VARGAS**, page 16

Big office project proposed for North Whisman

By Daniel DeBolt

Well, that didn’t take long. The City Council adopted a new general plan last year anticipating 1.1 million square feet of new offices in Mountain View’s Whisman area by 2030, but new office development could soon surpass that amount.

On Tuesday the City Council was presented with a proposal from RREEF Real Estate that could bring 2,500 more employees to 700 East Middlefield Road

and 1101 Maude Avenue. Two eight-story buildings and two six-story buildings would replace four two-story office buildings occupied by Synopsis, increasing the square footage on the site from 380,000 to 1 million square feet.

And if that isn’t enough office space for you, other new offices in the works nearby total 784,000 square feet, including 625 Clyde Avenue (six stories proposed) and 690 East Middlefield Road

► See **OFFICE PROJECT**, page 11



MICHELLE LE

Barbara Wright, a Crittenden alumna, returned to her old middle school to teach science.

There and back again

FORMER CRITTENDEN STUDENT RETURNS TO TEACH AT LOCAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Nick Veronin

Barbara Wright’s orientation day at Crittenden Middle School wasn’t so much an introduction as it was a refresher course. The seventh-grade science teacher knew the lay of the land pretty well, since she attended Crittenden as a student.

Though much has changed — Crittenden no longer has a fifth grade class, new buildings have been erected, playgrounds have been removed — she says

that in essence, it’s a lot like she remembers it.

“I really like the area,” Wright says. “This is a really good district.”

Wright says she hadn’t planned on returning to the district where she grew up. Rather, she happened upon the position somewhat serendipitously. Though she has lived in Central and Southern California since she was a college student, she happened to attend a Santa Clara County job fair, where she ran into a familiar

face — Stephanie Totter, former assistant superintendent of the district. Wright’s mother, who worked in the district for a time, knew Totter, and by extension so did Wright.

Totter and another former teacher of Wright’s waved her over to the booth, where she put her name down on a list of potential candidates, and she was soon called for an interview.

“They offered me the job,”

► See **THEN AND NOW**, page 8

Traffic plan: Council zeroes in on North Bayshore

By Daniel DeBolt

A host of options for relieving traffic near Google headquarters were presented to the City Council Tuesday, including new freeway ramps, tunneling Charleston Road under Highway 101 and a “cycle track” to make Shoreline Boulevard a bike-friendly street.

The options were presented in a transportation study that is a precursor to a major redevelopment of the area north of Highway 101 by Google, which owns or occupies most of the real estate there. The study recommends \$192 million worth

of transportation improvements over the next 10 years as Shoreline Boulevard is already operating at capacity during rush hour. The area has 17,100 employees occupying 7.3 million square feet of offices north of Highway 101, according to the study.

Traffic could be eased considerably with new street connections, highway ramps and bike lanes, consultants said. The improvements could accommodate additional 3.4 million square feet of development allotted in the city’s new 2030 General Plan, and go even further, accommodating as much as 14.3 million total square feet of office in a “mid growth”

scenario in the study. It still would not accommodate the 17.3 million square feet under a “high growth” scenario, however.

Environmental concerns

Because of the impact on nearby wildlife habitat at Shoreline park, where the rare burrowing owl at Shoreline park is threatened by strays dogs and cats, City Council members were not fans of all the suggested changes to allow growth in the area — especially a bridge Google has proposed over Stevens Creek at Charleston Road where a rare

► See **TRAFFIC PLAN**, page 8



COURTESY CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

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Live stream plan for school board meetings

Nick Veronin

Intent on bringing greater visibility to the Mountain View Whisman School District, recently elected trustee Christopher Chiang is pushing to get all public district meetings streamed live online — an idea generally liked by the rest of his colleagues.

At the Feb. 7 MVWSD board meeting, Chiang kicked off a formal discussion on the idea, proposing that the district could use free online tools to simultaneously stream and record board meetings, which could be viewed live and archived on the web. Several trustees said they were interested in making meetings available online, but cautioned that they wouldn't want to rush the process and risk a sub-par stream.

"It would be very easy to do a very amateur job that no one would want to watch," Trustee Steve Nelson said. Having voiced these words of caution, Nelson continued by saying he was in support of the idea.

He said he would like to see the board allocate sufficient funds to the project to ensure that it is done right. Trustee William Lambert seconded Nelson on this score.

Chiang kicked off the discussion by proposing that the district use "Hangouts" — a free Google+ feature, which facilitates multi-person video chatting — to stream (or broadcast) district board meetings live online. A new Hangouts feature, which allows users to simultaneously record and then log their video chats on YouTube, would make it very simple for the district to make its meetings available both in real time and on demand, he said.

"I think there are a lot of people who would be interested in learning about the school process who can't physically attend the school meetings," Chiang told the *Voice*.

Shelley Wolfe, executive director of Mountain View's community television station, KMVT, is excited by the idea. "I think it's very important that our local government continue to show their transparency to the community that they serve," Wolfe told the *Voice*.

Speaking at the board meet-

ing, Wolfe said she would like to help Chiang achieve his vision and then some. She said that the local channel could help the district assemble the needed equipment — microphones, cameras and other audio and video hardware — as well as pull in its Google+ Hangouts feed, enhance the quality of that feed and then broadcast that on KMVT. At its most basic, she said her proposal would cost the district about \$5,500.

At two recent Parent-Teacher Association meetings on the upcoming Measure G projects — at Crittenden and Graham middle schools, respectively — officials from the board and the district office experimented with two methods of capturing video. At the Feb. 12 Graham meeting, Chiang used his laptop to simultaneously stream and record video with Google+ Hangouts. The

same day, at Crittenden, district officials used a video camera to record the event and subsequently uploaded the video to YouTube.

Ideally, Chiang said, the district will be able to use the Google+ feature. Not only does he favor live streaming over recording and then uploading video; Hangouts has built-in social media applications, so the district would, in theory, be able to field live comments from virtual board meeting attendees.

"I do have a long-term view that more interactivity is the future for all districts," Chiang said. "Right now people think it's high tech if you have video online. But to be able to engage in real time — that would be amazing."

MVWSD Superintendent Craig Goldman said he sees "advantages and disadvantages" to video taping, streaming and broadcasting board meetings. The obvious upside, he said, would be reaching out to people who otherwise wouldn't engage.

On the other hand, he mused, the mere presence of cameras has the potential to change the way people act.

"Ultimately," he said, "my personal position is that it's the board's decision." ■

'It would be very easy to do a very amateur job that no one would want to watch.'

STEVE NELSON

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Crittenden club says goodbye to robot

By Dominic Fracassa

The Crittenden Middle School LEGO Robotics Club varsity squad gathered after school on a Wednesday afternoon to bid a sentimental farewell to their friend, NELSEN, before dismantling him for the year.

Though it took only minutes for the eight-member team to break the LEGO robot down into its component pieces, NELSEN was the product of months of research and experimentation as the Crittenden Pantherbot team prepared to enter this year's First LEGO League (FLL) tournament.

Since 1999, the international competition has invited student teams from all over the world to collaborate in an effort to help solve a real-world problem using science and technology.

Emma van Geuns, a Crittenden sixth-grader, said she signed up for robotics club after seeing demonstration put on by Google at the school last year.

"Google came in with a bunch of robots. They gave you a robot with a bag of attachments and they want you to build something for that period. I thought, 'That's really cool,' and I wanted to do that again," she said.

This year, the tournament's competitive elements revolved around the theme of "senior solutions," challenging students to come up with ways to improve and maintain the quality of life for senior citizens in their own communities. NELSEN, Crittenden's "Networking, EverLasting, SENior" robot is meant to do just that.

While it may have been just a prototype, NELSEN was the centerpiece of the Pantherbot's research into the needs of senior citizens, which involved field trips to health professionals



COURTESY CRITTENDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Adam Ortiz from the Crittenden team gets a hug from PR2, a service robot designed at Willow Garage in Menlo Park.

at Stanford, and interviewing residents at the Mountain View Senior Center. NELSEN, in his fully fleshed-out form, could help seniors with tasks like identifying medications using color sensors, and would have an extendable arm to help grab hard-to-reach objects.

Along with an assessment of the clarity and completeness of their research presentation, students are also judged on the sophistication and design of their competition robots, used in the most visible portion of the tournament, the robot games. The students meticulously construct and program these autonomous robots to complete a number of delicate tasks, like lassooing a tiny LEGO chair, in two-and-a-half minutes.

But effective teamwork, and an adherence to the tournament's

core values of learning, innovation and sportsmanship are given equal weight as well, and it was here that the Pantherbots excelled at this year's regional tournament. The team took second place out of 48 teams in the teamwork category at the Peninsula District FLL Championship Tournament in Redwood City earlier this month.

Agnes Kaiser, a Crittenden math teacher and former engineer, has coached the Pantherbot team alongside Dave Offen, an engineering consultant, since the robotics club was formed seven years ago. Charlie Federmann, Crittenden's media arts and computer technology instructor provides guidance as well. The coaches said they take special care to leave the direction of the research and the problem solving to the students.

"Coaches aren't allowed to build or program the robot, so it's left up to the students. We coach them on specific skills that they can apply, but we don't actually solve any of these missions for them. If they're having trouble, we try to ask leading questions without giving away the answers we are suggesting," Offen said.

Aside from showing kids that robotics, science and mathematics can be "really cool," Crittenden Principal Geoffrey Chang, who coached an FLL robotics club during his time as a teacher in Brooklyn, said he sees potential in the way that the club approaches problem-solving.



COURTESY CRITTENDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Pantherbots' competition robot was entered into the Peninsula district championship.

► See **ROBOT CLUB**, page 16

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The Mountain View Mediation Program is now accepting applications from volunteers who live or work in Mountain View, or who own property in the City.

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Saturday, February 23, 2013

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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For more information about the project, please visit the Water District's website at

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If you have any questions, please contact Jacqueline Solomon, Assistant Public Works Director, at (650) 903-6311.

TRAFFIC PLAN

► Continued from page 5

colony of egrets lives.

"We have 17,000 employees there and we are already clearly at capacity," said council member Ronit Bryant of the roads in North Bayshore. "How will we possibly add another 10,000 under the 2030 general plan scenario? It seems to me the high growth and medium growth are impossible if we want to protect what we have in terms of wildlife along the bay."

Better bike route

A Shoreline Boulevard cycle track — a two-way bike lane along the west side of the street — was a popular option among council members, but plans showed it veering off Shoreline Boulevard and up Terra Bella Avenue — where Google owns property suggested for an "intercept" commuter garage — before hitting a bridge over Highway 101. The study recommends that it be built within six years at a cost of \$11 million. After ten years, shuttles going between Google and downtown could follow the same route over a new transit bridge to avoid the busy Highway 101 and Shoreline Boulevard interchange.

Bryant questioned the route of

the cycle track.

"I think people like to go in a straight line rather than go side-ways and do detours," she said.

The study suggests financial incentives for transit users and bike riders, including cash payouts to employees in exchange for not using company parking spaces, free bike maintenance and bike valet parking. It presents a goal of having 8 percent of the area's employees bike to work, though some council members wanted the goal to be even higher as a third of the area's employees live within biking distance.

New roads, ramps, tunnels

A majority of council members expressed interest in capping the number of car trips allowed in and out of the area. "No net new vehicle trips into North Bayshore" is a very clear statement to make," Bryant said.

"There's no way to not increase traffic a little bit in the short term," said member Chris Clark. "I think it's important we have realist goals in that sense. I think we can set a goal — we cap net autos and bring that down over time with various strategies."

To accommodate all the employees expected to come in on Caltrain, the study suggests a bridge over Central Expressway

to allow shuttles to avoid downtown traffic, picking up employees at a stop on the north side of the expressway. It recommends spending \$10 million within six years and \$40 million within 10 years on improvements to the train station shuttle stop.

For cars and buses, a slew of changes to the area's road network are proposed to improve access and circulation within North Bayshore. A slight modification to an existing off ramp could allow Highway 101 traffic to go straight onto La Avenida, relieving traffic on the busiest portion of Shoreline Boulevard, and providing a new way for 1,700 Microsoft employees to get to work.

New streets could run around the perimeter of Google's properties near Space Park Way, Shorebird Way and Stevens Creek, keeping traffic off of gridlocked Shoreline Boulevard.

"The idea of having a ring road in North Bayshore at the edge of the park itself is very unattractive to me," Bryant said. "I see no reason why we need to make it really easy for buses or for cars to drive around North Bayshore."

New on ramps and off-ramps for high occupancy vehicles could run from the carpool lanes on Highway 101 directly up to new stoplights at the top of free-

way overpass for San Antonio Road (in Palo Alto) and another could go in at the Ellis Street overpass for shuttles going to and from the south.

A tunnel under Highway 101 to bridge the ends of Charleston Road could provide a much needed third road connection between North Bayshore and the rest of Mountain View. Such a tunnel wouldn't be needed for 10 years, however and the cost is not listed in the study.

The cost of a tunnel and many of the other projects is likely to run into the hundreds of millions, paid for from various, city, state and federal sources and from Google and other North Bayshore companies.

'No new bridge'

Some council members were still hesitant to move forward on allowing Google to study the environmental impacts of a bridge over Stevens Creek. Google officials have asked to begin the study soon, as a delay of even a few months could keep it from opening the year Google's new campus is finished on the other side of the creek. Council members said two weeks prior that they wanted to wait until the transportation study was done to see what options need to be examined in the environmental study.

Council member Jac Siegel went as far as to say, "No new bridge."

Member Margaret Abe-Koga said the city might have to find other ways to fulfill its obligations to provide fire and police services to the new Google cam-

pus on the east side of the creek, as the bridge would connect the area to a nearby firehouse.

"I am personally very cautious about creating access and allowing more vehicles into the Shoreline area, especially (with) the wildlife sensitivity in the area," Abe-Koga said.

Some members said they wanted to know more about the impact of the bridge and how it may be used.

"It's not just small project, it could change North Bayshore completely," Bryant said of the bridge. "The more we talk about it, the more it seems like it is a major deal. It needs serious analysis. People are already talking to me from Sunnyvale about how we can improve the bridge so they can use it."

City Manager Dan Rich chimed in, saying "that's what an environmental study does, it provides detail and analysis. We can't really do that on our own."

"I'm frustrated by the sense of, 'It's a hot potato, what do we do with it?'" said council member Mike Kasperzak of the bridge. "We've got to deal with it, so let's stop putting it off. We have the transportation study."

Faced with plenty of options to consider, council member couldn't come to a clear direction forward after the four-hour study session, and decided to have another meeting on all the issues, to "get some clarity as to what we're doing," as Bryant said.

Email Daniel DeBolt
at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

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THEN AND NOW

► Continued from page 5

Wright says. "I thought about it and I thought that it would be cool to go back to Crittenden."

Wright spent most of her childhood and adolescence living just a short walk from Theuerkauf Elementary School, which she entered as a first-grader. She started at Crittenden as a fifth-grader in August of 1995, and graduated from Los Altos High School in 2004.

And although she has been living outside the Bay Area for about eight years, she says it felt as if she never left — with the exception that there is now much more traffic than she remembers.

"I feel very connected to the experiences I had as a child," she says. "Even though things have changed, it's still generally the

same town."

This connection to her home town helps her feel as if she understands her students, although she doesn't make a point of telling them she grew up down the street. For Wright, the most important thing is that she likes the people she works with. She isn't sure if that has



**'I feel very
connected to the
experiences I had
as a child.'**

BARBARA WRIGHT

anything to do with the location of the school, but whatever the reason, she is happy to be teaching here.

"Honestly, I really like Crittenden from the staff side," she says. "That means more to me than the name 'Crittenden Middle School.'" ▀

COMPROMISE

IS THE FIRST STEP

BULLIS CHARTER SCHOOL AGREES TO SPLIT-CAMPUS AS A SHORT-TERM SOLUTION



BULLIS CHARTER SCHOOL

102 West Portola Ave.

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Inspiring the Individual



Dear Community Member -

The Bullis Charter School (BCS) Board of Directors wishes to update residents and parents in the Los Altos School District about our school and our students.

In case you're not aware, Bullis Charter School was founded about nine years ago as a public school. We started with a little more than 140 kids and today we have well over 500.

As a Silicon Valley startup, BCS is constantly innovating. Many BCS program elements have later been adopted by other District schools, benefiting the entire community. BCS embraces core Silicon Valley values, like retaining high performing teachers with merit-based bonuses, while replacing weaker teachers to improve the classroom experience. Since our start, BCS enrollment has nearly quadrupled and we receive more than 700 applications each year.

There's a lot of misinformation out there about who we are and what we do. We are proud to be ranked as one of the top 10 public schools in California. Our hardworking staff and dedicated parent volunteers deliver a unique experience far beyond State standards.

At our simplest though, we are a public school that seeks to provide options to parents in the Los Altos School District.

Our school exists on the corner of Egan Junior High School and has since 2004. Currently, we share facilities with District schools and make use of portable classrooms. We constantly strive to ensure that our kids have equal onsite access to all the standard things we expect at each public school site (library, assembly room, school nurse, school office, specialized classrooms for art, music, science, computers). We ask for no more than the rest of our community gets, but expect our kids to be treated equally.

We are very aware of the controversy within our community.

With that in mind, late last month we announced a compromise with the Los Altos School District. To help resolve this conflict, the BCS board has agreed, as a short-term solution, to split our school across two campuses.

We are hopeful that the District will work with us to modify its current facilities offer to provide the core facilities we outlined in our compromise offer for next year, and to find a permanent home for BCS sufficient to allow more local children the opportunity to attend BCS.

If you have any questions about BCS, we encourage you to visit www.bullischarterschool.com.

Thank you,

Bullis Charter School Board of Directors



SCHOOL PAPER

► Continued from page 1

with Mountain View Mayor John Inks.

"We're not here just because we want to air our concerns tonight," Robinson said forcefully, her voice wavering in what sounded like anger and frustration. "We are here because we want to see the board and administrators act. I hope you understand that I and other parents are committed to bringing this district leadership and administrators under real scrutiny until we see real change."

As parents walked up to the podium over the course of the evening, many expressed support for Robinson's assertion, saying that they wanted to see school officials take meaningful action and ensure that articles like the "Sex and Relationships" package, never again find their way into the pages of the Oracle.

Todd Adams, a local father, said he wondered if some of the content in the sex series might be considered sexual harassment, and said he feels that printing of the articles in question suggests that the district tacitly approves of the behavior they described.

"A school newspaper that publishes articles like these gives the idea that the institution is behind and supportive of the type of behavior that happens in schools that can be considered by some as (sexual harassment)," he said.

While some articles in a special "Focus" section of the newspaper discussed typical "High School Relationships," such as "the couples that celebrate anything and everything over Facebook" and "couples who are constantly on again — off again." Another article, "What they teach you in health, and what you really need to know," went into great detail about where MVHS students could find contraception, the so-called "morning-after pill," and quoted a doctor from Case Western Reserve University who posited that "masturbating women tend to have higher self-esteem and significantly less physical and emotional stress."

The point of the article, according to its author, Abbie Cuniff, was to explore "topics briefly covered in sex education classes that I felt needed more specificity to be relevant to student life."

"To the parents who feel that my article was vulgar, explicit, and disrespectful to the MVHS community, I am saddened that they feel I wrote with malevo-

lence. The intention of my article was to promote safe, healthy sex for those who wish to become, or already are, sexually active. I don't think my article did anything to persuade or affect students who are decidedly against sexual activity, because mainstream media and other teenagers do a much better job than I do. I only wanted to provide information for those who want to know more about having safe, healthy sex," Cuniff said in a statement she sent to the *Voice*.

Many of the upset parents took issue with Cuniff's attempt to educate, as well as portions

of other articles, which they found to be lurid, overly graphic and often inappropriate. Many who shared passages they found offensive quoted from Cuniff's piece, and some emphasized that it was their right's

as parents to educate their children — not Cuniff's or the district's — about the subjects covered in her article.

Round two

Robinson was one of three women who addressed the board at its Jan. 21 meeting — when she called for district officials to do a better job of enforcing current rules, and appealing for more to be done in order to prevent drug and alcohol abuse both on and off campus.

During their presentation to the board last month, Robinson and two other mothers, Christy Reed and Tabitha Hansen, said the district needs to do a better job of enforcing existing rules, which they said were being broken over and over again, without consequence. Music with profane language is being played at school dances, where students are dancing provocatively, students and teachers use profanity in class, and drugs were being used before school dances and during school dances, they claimed.

"We feel it's worth a second look at how effectively the behavioral standards are being enforced" at district schools, Reed wrote in an email to the *Voice*. "No doubt there is some enforcement, but the consistency and level of that enforcement we feel is worth the district board examining."

The women also recommended that the district consider having drug-sniffing dogs at every dance.

At that meeting, the women called the board's attention to the package of drug articles, which included a story about parents who allow their teenagers to smoke marijuana at home, a col-

Students' same-sex mock wedding raises hackles among parents

By Nick Veronin

The "Sex and Relationships" special feature was not the only thing parents at Monday's Mountain View-Los Altos board meeting were upset about. A few parents expressed concerns over an event scheduled to be held on Valentine's Day at the Mountain View High School.

The Queer-Straight Alliance, an MVHS club, announced plans to hold a "Mock Wedding" on Feb. 14 out on the school's quad.

A description of the event in the high school's daily bulletin reads: "Got that special someone on your mind? Think love is love, regardless of gender? Then come out to Queer-Straight Alliance's Mock Wedding on Valentine's Day next Thursday to tie the knot with whomever you choose! Have your marriage officiated by the queer, get a wedding certificate and rings, and then celebrate with sparkling apple cider! Costumes and a photographer will be provided."

Three parents took issue with

the event at the Feb. 11 board meeting.

Jody Hulse, the mother of an Mountain View high student, said she was concerned with the — primarily because of the event's planned location. While saying that she believes the Queer-Straight alliance, as a club, has the right to hold such an event, she said it was "upsetting" to learn that the event would be held in the quad during the school day. "(My son) belongs in different groups, different clubs. They don't bring it out for everybody — they don't rub it in everybody's faces," Hulse said. "That's fine if they want to have a club, they're allowed, but I also feel that they need to keep it in their group."

Hulse argued that it is her right as a parent "to instill my values in my child."

Dan Racine, the father of an MVHS student, seconded the comment, noting that it he believes the clubs his son belongs to aren't allowed to go out into the campus and hand out fliers.

Melanee Nelson read from an email she sent to MVHS Principal Keith Moody —

an email she said was never responded to.

"I feel that this event, and the way that it is being promoted, goes against the structure through which high school students should have their opinions heard on issues concerning themselves and their peers."

She said the club was intended to create an "inclusive environment for students to support each other, to educate and raise public awareness about diverse issues, fight discrimination and harassment, and promote equity and unity." She read the definition of the word "mock" — "to treat with contempt and ridicule."

"To me it's pretty clear that (those two definitions) are in direct conflict with each other," Nelson said, continuing by asking whether an invitation was extended to clubs with members who hold divergent views. "What about equal time?" Nelson asked. "Was an invitation extended to any student group or organization that believes and supports that marriage should be between a man and a woman?" ▀

lection of informational graphics on what illicit drugs are popular in the Bay Area and where they originate, along with a piece on "Weird Drugs."

In her public comment to the board of trustees, it was clear Robinson did not feel that district officials took her group's previous presentation clearly — so she made formal complaints to the State Board of Education and the heads of both Mountain View and Los Altos high schools, which she said she initiated because the district was not "enforcing behavioral guidelines and allowing articles promoting illegal and obscene behavior to repeatedly be printed in the school newspaper."

District's response

District Superintendent Andy Groves told the *Voice* that he had read and would consider the recommendations made by the women at the Jan. 21 school board meeting, but added some caveats.

A study that the women used in an effort to demonstrate that drug use within the district was

disproportionately high compared to other districts had been conducted in 2009; secondly, he said, comparing MVLA to districts in Palo Alto and the Los Gatos-Saratoga area was an imperfect comparison; third, Groves said, some of the information the women used to draw their conclusions was gathered through a survey of "only 34, non-randomly selected students" out of the approximately 3,600 in the district.

However, if Groves and the rest of the board did not take much action last time around, the superintendent said he has plans in the works to talk to the students at the Oracle, as well as Oracle adviser and MVHS English teacher Amy Beare.

"Mistakes were made," Groves said at the meeting, echoing Oracle staff writer Cerys Holstege, and board members assured the audience that action would be taken in response.

"I think there were things in the paper that, upon reflection, should not have been published," Groves said in a follow-up interview with the *Voice*. Groves said that the language used — espe-

cially one crass turn of phrase in the concluding parenthetical sentence of the article, "What they teach you in health, and what you really need to know" — was especially regrettable. However, Groves added, that he was mainly disappointed with the words chosen in certain instances throughout the series of articles, "not the topic necessarily itself."

For all lines that were crossed and for all community standards that were violated, Groves said he takes ultimate responsibility. "As superintendent I'm responsible for everything that happens within the school district, so it's my responsibility to ensure that everything that we publish is accurate and meets community standards."

Groves would not say whether anyone would be censured for not stopping the series of articles from being published. He said he could not discuss personnel matters.

One parent who spoke up at the meeting, Dave Boyce, said he couldn't say what would be an appropriate response for the district, but he added, as the CEO of his own company, if something akin to the sex package were printed with his business' name at the top of it, that he would "put people on notice." ▀

'Mistakes were made.'

SUPERINTENDENT
BARRY GROVES

Google may leave Moffett for SJ airport

By Daniel DeBolt

After plenty of difficulty in dealing with their federal government landlords at Moffett Field, Google's leaders are nearly set to build a facility for their planes at Mineta San Jose International Airport.

A San Jose City Council vote in April is set for the plan recommended by airport director Bill Sherry. It beat out two other proposals for the 29 acres along Martin Avenue and would place an \$82 million facility at the airport in a partnership between Signature Aviation and Google's leaders, represented by Blue City Holdings, San Jose, LLC. The 270,000-square-foot facility is designed to achieve LEED gold status and would serve other private planes besides Google's fleet, which include several Gulfstream jets and two former airliners made by Boeing.

The plan comes after NASA and the White House did not embrace a proposal in late 2011 for Google's executives to restore and lease Hangar One at Moffett Field for their fleet, an endeavor estimated to cost over \$45 million.

"They are doing this because NASA didn't say yes," to restoring Hangar One, said Lenny Siegel, a member of the San Hangar One committee. "This is an indication that the proposal got rejected."

The proposal for Hangar One from H211 LLC - the company formed to operate the Google fleet at Moffett — was considered a blessing by those who had been fighting to preserve Hangar One for years and could not get Congress, NASA or the Navy to fund its restoration. The iconic structure was recently stripped to its bare frame in an environmental cleanup.

"I think this is a the equivalent of a great gift falling out of heaven right in our laps," said Congresswoman Anna Eshoo at the time. "There is not any other option on the table today to preserve Hangar One."

The proposed terminal would apparently be a boon for the San Jose Airport, which will see \$2.6 million a year in a 50-year lease, plus as much as \$700,000 a year in taxes and fuel fees.

"We're pleased that the evaluation process for the development of Mineta San Jose International Airport's West Side is now complete, and the recommended outcome will prove to be incredibly prosperous for SJC, the City of San Jose, and Silicon Valley," said Sherry, San Jose airport director of aviation, in a statement.

The airport's \$1.4 billion upgrade to the terminal area, completed in 2010, opened up a significant amount of land on the west side, he said.

"Now, our focus must be the proposed private development and \$82 million investment of the West Side by Signature Flight Support, to support the private aviation needs of local high-tech and other companies, most notably the personal aircraft of the principals at Google," Sherry said.

Since 2007, Google's leaders have housed the fleet at Moffett Field, paying \$1.3 million a year to rent Hangar 211 from NASA, which has struggled to pay for airfield operations. But the deal has been controversial one, drawing bad publicity.

Critics have called it favoritism for Google's executives, who are able to use a federal airfield usually reserved for used by the government and govern-

► See **GOOGLE**, page 16



MICHELLE LE

JOYOUS START TO A NEW YEAR

Wendy Hoang performs the "Chao Tung Happy Song" with fellow members of the Fire Phoenix dance troupe during Lunar New Year celebration at Avenidas Rose Kleiner Center in Mountain View, Feb. 11. The event included a Tai Chi demonstration and a Chinese chorus group, said Avenidas spokeswoman Kari Martell. Celebrations ushering in the Year of the Snake began on Feb. 10, with festivities continuing around the world for the next two weeks. San Francisco's annual Chinese New Year parade is set for Saturday, Feb. 23.

OFFICE PROJECT

► Continued from page 5

(five stories under construction and Synopsis' future home).

Council members decided to wait to discuss the project along with the other office buildings slated for the area on Feb. 26. A new environmental impact report (EIR) may be needed to consider the proposal's impact as the proposal exceeds what was considered in the EIR done for last year's general plan update: only 1.1 million new square feet of office in the neighborhood.

Explaining the need for a new EIR, city planners said in a report, "The (general plan) EIR was initiated in 2009 and was based on an estimate of projected growth based on historical trends within Mountain View, not the theoretical maximum buildout," before the city began to experience the increased office demand of the past two years.

It turns out that the "theoretical maximum buildout" is what developers want in Mountain View's current office boom.

"We've certainly seen big spikes before," in development activity, said planning director Randy Tsuda, "It's not uncommon. There's these big spikes of development, then the economy bottoms out."

An example is 690 East Middle-

field Road, approved during a similar boom before the recession that is now finally under construction.

Architect Thomas Yee said the buildings proposed for 700 East Middlefield would be easily seen from Highway 237 and that by building up instead of out, more space could be made for common open areas — 40 percent of the 24-acre site would be open space. Special efforts are being made to remove parking lot asphalt and preserve trees on the site, though their numbers would be reduced from 267 large trees to 156.

Council member Ronit Bryant questioned the usefulness of so much open space, noting that she toured Moffett Towers in Sunnyvale, which is slightly taller and also in an isolated location. "There was plenty of open space. I don't think it was useful," she said.

The project also includes a pair of parking garages that are four stories tall and back up to Sunnyvale housing complexes. None of those residents spoke Tuesday, but Kelley Ketchmark, of the Wagon Wheel Neighborhood Association, representing residents west of Whisman Road, expressed concerns.

"We feel this is just too much for this area," Ketchmark said. "The square square footage (is) two-and-half times what's there now. More and more workers are coming to the area on a daily

basis," she said, noting that the number of employees on the site would increase from 1,500 to 4,000.

"The freeways are already jammed with traffic." She said the light rail line within a five minute walk "is not going to solve the problem" and "doesn't make it a transit-oriented area — that's why Google has their own shuttle buses."

The city's new 2030 general plan allows for a near tripling of allowed building densities to what it known as a 1.0 floor area ratio for "transit oriented" development — if developers pay towards transit improvements. City planners are pushing for more transit improvements to justify the project's density, such as "improvements leading to the transit station on Middlefield," said zoning administrator Peter Gilli.

As to environmental friendliness, RREEF proposes a LEED Gold building, though city planners are pushing for platinum. There's long-term bike parking inside the building and showers for bike commuters, as well as bike paths to encourage biking to and from the site.

On March 19, the council is set to discuss the office buildings proposed for 625 Clyde Avenue. ▀

Email Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

■ OBITUARIES

SALVATORE "SAL" NAPPO

A memorial service for Salvatore Nappo is set for 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 16, at the Peninsula Bible Church, 10601 N. Blaney Ave., Cupertino.

Better known as "Sal" to his friends and family, he died Feb. 4 at the age of 87.

A Mountain View resident for 61 years, he was born on Nov. 12, 1925 in New York City. At age 17, he joined the United States Navy, and served for four years during World War II. After the war, he ran a successful painting

business with his wife, Charlene. His family said that he loved to fish and watch his San Francisco Giants, and his quick wit, kind heart and generous hugs will be missed.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Charlene Nappo; daughter Letty Baldaro of Glendale; son Larry Nappo of Portland, Ore.; and his grandsons Aaron and Dustin Baldaro.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to either Peninsula Bible Church or NAMI, 1550 E. Colorado St., Glendale, CA 91205.

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MICHELLE LE

NOTICE TO PROSPECTIVE CONTRACTORS

Notice is hereby given that for the purpose of pre-qualification, sealed Responsibility Questionnaires will be received by the Board of trustees of the Mountain View – Los Altos Union High School District up until the close of business on the date indicated below for:

Project Descriptions:

Classroom Building Renovations at Mountain View High School and Los Altos High School

Pre-Qualification Packages Due Date and Time: February 18, 2013 at 2pm at Kramer Project Development Company, Inc., attention Matt Hannigan, 4040 Moorpark Avenue, #128, San Jose, CA 95117.

Pre-Qualification of Trade Contractors

In order to receive plans and bid, Trade Contractors must possess a current and active license to perform the work listed, submit and certify the required Responsibility Questionnaire information and be pre-qualified by the District. All contractors must have substantiated K-12 public school project experience to be prequalified.

A.	General Trades	A or B license required
B.	Electrical and Low Voltage Trades	C-7 and C-10 licenses required
C.	HVAC and Plumbing Trades	C-20 and C-36 licenses required
D.	Cabinet and Millwork Trades	C-6 license required

Only Pre-Qualified Contractors will be permitted to bid. Pre-Qualified Contractors will be required to attend a mandatory Pre-Bid Conference scheduled for Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 2pm in the Board Room at MVLA District Office, 1299 Bryant Avenue, Mountain View, CA. Opening of the sealed bids submitted by pre-qualified bidders is **tentatively** scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2013 at 2pm. Bidding documents will be available to pre-qualified contractors on or about February 26, 2013. Pre-qualified contractors are advised to verify dates and times of the mandatory pre-bid conference and bid opening prior to the above listed dates. Responsibility Questionnaires and instructions for submission can be obtained by calling Matt Hannigan at (408) 246-6237 or by email matt@kramerpdc.com. Contracts will require a 100% performance bond, a 100% Labor and Materials Bond and a Bid Security in the amount of 10% of the submitted bid. These projects are subject to the State Labor Code. Labor Code 1720-1816 regarding the payment of prevailing wages and submission of certified payroll statements will be enforced. Contractors are allowed according to PCC sec. 22300 to submit securities in lieu of retention

TOXIC VAPORS

► Continued from page 1

even though in 2011 the EPA issued its Final Health Assessment for TCE, calling it “carcinogenic to humans by all routes of exposure” and that inhalation can cause “hepatic, renal, neurological, immunological, reproductive, and developmental effects.”

Probes placed under the street on Evandale Avenue have found unusually high TCE groundwater concentrations, as high as 130,000 parts per billion of TCE near Pepperwood Court. The allowed limit is 47 parts per billion. Those results were used to create a map of a “priority testing area” which contains about 30 homes, Lee said. A flier with a map was delivered to homes on the street with a request that residents get in touch with the EPA.

Despite the outreach effort, three residents within the priority testing area told the *Voice* they were unaware of the situation on Monday or did not know whom to contact.

“We are really concerned and we want to know who to call,” said Alicia Balmonte, a resident of the apartment complex at 190 Evandale Avenue since the 1970s. She said it would be nice to find out if there is TCE in the apartment “because my daughter is pregnant.”

Link to cancer

While it is nearly impossible to prove that exposure to TCE pollution caused someone’s cancer, several longtime residents are left to wonder.

Balmonte said she was diagnosed with cancer of the lymph nodes in 2004, which was successfully treated. She said it was different from non-Hodgkin lymphoma, which also attacks the lymph nodes and is linked to TCE exposure.

The Bay Area Cancer Registry recently studied historical data and found nearly twice the regional average rate of non-Hodgkin lymphoma in northeastern Mountain View between 1996 and 2005, but refused to release any detail that could show how many cases were found on a street like Evandale Avenue.

Across the street at 207 Evandale Avenue, Angelica Garcia wonders if there was a connection between her son’s leukemia and the toxic plume. She said she had lived in her apartment — which sits in the priority testing

area — for 12 years. Five years ago her son was diagnosed with leukemia when he was 4. “He’s done with his treatment and he’s fine. The cancer is in remission,” she said.

Unaware of the danger

Another resident in the priority testing area on the south side of the street said he was entirely unaware of the issue. Ali, who only gave his first name, shares a home with an infant, a high-schooler and two other adults. He told the *Voice* he was concerned “not for myself but for my baby sister, you know, more than anything else. If there is something serious I think we should be notified so if we should get out of here, we can get out of here. So many people have died in my family because of cancer it’s a joke now. It’s crazy.”

He added that when he talked to the workers drilling into the street, “they said they were just testing the water and that’s it.” They even placed a tank inside his home — apparently testing the indoor air — without explanation,” he said.

Garcia said she received similar treatment. She talked to workers but, “I don’t recall them saying anything about any danger.”

For its part, the EPA says its staff is knocking on doors to try and reach every resident.

“We have gone door-to-door in the impacted residential areas and tried to reach every resident in the impacted neighborhoods,” said EPA press officer Rusty Harris-Bishop in an email, adding that fact sheets, access agreements and sampling results are provided in Spanish “where needed.”

A transforming street

Evandale Avenue is a mix of apartments, duplexes, condos and townhomes. It is home to some of the area’s poorest residents, but is also to a growing number of tech employees as Google moves in nearby on Whisman Road. Despite being located near the priority testing area, one condo dweller was happy to report that his neighbor had put his three-bedroom unit up for sale a few weeks ago and in three days 300 possible buyers walked through. “It was pretty astonishing. Some large fraction of them must have been Google employees.”

The drive for housing in the area spurred an investor to renovate a former slum at the corner of Evandale Avenue and

► Continued on next page

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Whisman Road. The EPA's Lee said the owner of the 64-unit complex refused to allow testing of the units, formerly known as 291 Evandale Avenue, now known as 600 Whisman Road. The crawl spaces under the units passed air tests before they were renovated, Lee said. Nevertheless, one resident of the complex said she would prefer to know for sure that her home was safe.

TCE pathway a mystery

Siegel said there is some suspicion that there is a pathway under the street allowing TCE to migrate from the MEW under Evandale Avenue. The EPA had tested on Devonshire and Fairchild Drive before, and had not found evidence of the plume migrating very far past Whisman Road. "Hopefully it is just gravel around the sewage line or something," Siegel said.

The latest discovery is proof that "to prevent intrusion (of vapors into homes) you need much denser sampling," Siegel said. "That's what we asked for and that's what we got."

The plume of TCE in the groundwater — which is not used as drinking water — slowly shifts overtime, mostly flowing towards the Bay. But more sampling of the groundwater would require permission from landowners. "It's harder to get permission to sink a probe into private property," Siegel said.

The EPA says it will continue to seek permission for such tests on private property.

'There are a lot of people who should be concerned.'

LENNY SIEGEL

Residents in the priority testing area are asked to contact the EPA for indoor air testing. The indoor air tests are voluntary and renters who want the tests need to get permission from their landlords. Lee said in some cases that was an obstacle, but the EPA was eventually able to get permission for the tenants.

If indoor air is above the limit, ventilation systems are installed at the expense of the polluters, but in a situation where a renter wants such a system, "The owner certainly has to agree," Lee said.

A meeting between the EPA and the Wagon Wheel Neighborhood Association is set for Sun-

day March 3. A time and location was not available by press time.

For more information, contact the EPA:

Alana Lee
EPA Vapor Intrusion Project Manager
Lee.Alana@epa.gov
415.972.3141

Penny Reddy
EPA Groundwater Project Manager
Reddy.Penny@epa.gov
415.972.3108

Leana Rosetti
EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
Rosetti.Leana@epa.gov
415.972.3070

Email Daniel DeBolt
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Mountain View Whisman School District



WE NEED YOUR INPUT ON THE FUTURE OF OUR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

MVWSD invites parents and community members to share desires, priorities, and concerns regarding the use of Measure G funds to modernize and enhance Crittenden and Graham Middle Schools.

Participants can provide input and share suggestions during meetings and online on the prioritization of facilities at Crittenden and Graham.

For more information on Measure G, visit www.mvwsl.org/Measure-G. For more information on the District's Master Plan (Student Facilities Improvement Plan), visit www.mvwsl.org/sfip.

Opportunities for Input

PTA Meetings:

February 12, 7- 8:30 p.m.,
at Crittenden Middle School,
1701 Rock Street
Or

February 12, 6:30 - 8 p.m.,
at Graham Middle School,
1175 Castro Street

Additional Community Meetings:

February 19, 6:30 - 8 p.m., at Graham Middle School, 1175 Castro Street
Or
February 20, 6:30 - 8 p.m., at Crittenden Middle School, 1701 Rock Street

Board of Trustees Study Session

February 28, 7 p.m.,
at MVWSD Board Room,
750-A San Pierre Way

The Board will share its priorities, hear additional comments from community members and review the findings based on the community meetings and survey.

Spanish interpretation will be provided at all meetings.

Online

We encourage you to share your comments and suggestions online at www.mvwsl.org/Measure-G/survey

VARGAS

► Continued from page 5

He recalls thinking, "What if my byline was in the paper? How can they say I don't exist if my name is on newspapers and magazines?"

He recalls one of his earliest memories in America, singing the national anthem at Mountain View's Crittenden Middle School at age 13, though he said he was a little unclear on the lyrics. "I thought it said, 'Jose, can you see?'"

Vargas mentions that sitting in the audience at the hearing

are the former Mountain View High School administrators who "encouraged and protected" him over the years, Pat Hyland and Rich Fischer, as well as Jim Strand, the man who for years had anonymously funded a scholarship that he received.

Vargas' 75-year-old grandmother was also in the audience, Leonila Salinas, whom he calls his "Lola." In a recent New York Times opinion piece, Vargas writes, "At least once a day these past few months, Lola calls me and says, 'Malapit na ba?' Translation: 'Is it close?' That's her

way of asking me if immigration reform is close to happening. She wants to know if I will ever have a solid status in this country, if I'll be able to, among so many other things, go on vacation with her to the Philippines and — most important — come back home to the United States."

In his testimony, Vargas notes that "I am the only one in my extended family of 25 Americans who is undocumented. When you inaccurately call me illegal, you are not only dehumanizing me, you are offending them."

He blames rules against

grandparents being able to petition for their grandchildren's green cards as the reason he was documented when his mother decided to send him to the U.S. He writes that his family "assumed I would find a woman and get my legal residence through marriage. But I came out as gay in high school, which considerably complicated matters," as gay marriage is not recognized by the federal government. ▀

Email Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

GOOGLE

► Continued from page 11

ment contractors. The lease has been justified though the use of Google planes for NASA's research, including the gathering of data from the atmosphere and observing meteor showers, but it is unclear how often or how consistently the planes are used that way.

Siegel said H211 is still interested in using Moffett, possibly in addition to San Jose's airport. But he and former NASA Ames administrator Bill Berry expect Hangar One and the Moffett runways to be declared excess property by NASA soon. Siegel says the community should be ready for such a move by creating an advisory board on possible future uses for Moffett.

H211 director Ken Ambrose did not respond to requests for comment.

ROBOT CLUB

► Continued from page 7

"By empowering students to think critically about solving a problem and empowering them to think that they can solve it, I think that's super powerful," Chang said.

Kaiser said that the club has grown since its inception seven years ago, and now boasts enough students to necessitate both a varsity and junior varsity team. Currently, budget restrictions prevent the junior varsity squad from formally entering the tournament, but Chang said he's open to the idea of expanding Crittenden's robotics program even further.

"I really hope to see it grow next year and beyond," Chang said. "It would be awesome if, one day, we could turn it into a full-fledged class. I don't know if logistics and the budget will allow it, but it's certainly something on my radar."

The club received a \$1,000 donation from Stanford last year, which helped to cover the tournament's entrance fee and purchase new equipment, but Kaiser said she'll be on the lookout for more funding for next year.

"Some of our laptops are starting to go, and the hardware is where the most expensive pieces are," she said. "We need the support of the community so that these programs keep going. It really teaches a lot of very important skills."

But while funding may still be up in the air, the Crittenden LEGO Robotics Club enjoys an ample amount of enthusiasm from students. When they were asked how many of them would be returning to the team next year, all but the graduating eighth-graders immediately put up their hands. ▀

YOUR VOTE AT WORK

Year 11 of your program

This year marks the completion of the 11th year of the Clean, Safe Creeks and Natural Flood Protection Plan, a 15-year countywide special parcel tax to fund Santa Clara Valley Water District initiatives to protect homes and businesses from floods, add recreational trails, and safeguard creeks and watersheds.

As part of the plan, voters approved the formation of an Independent Monitoring Committee (IMC) to oversee the plan's progress and ensure outcomes are met in a cost efficient manner. The IMC has recently published its Annual Oversight Report detailing our independent, annual review of the program.

In November 2012, the voters of Santa Clara County overwhelmingly passed Measure B, the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program. The voters of Santa Clara County clearly recognize the importance of a safe, reliable water supply. They value wildlife habitat, creek restoration and open space. They want to protect our water supply and local dams from the impacts of earthquakes and natural disasters, as well as invest in the levees protecting our shoreline and vigilantly prepare our streams for major storms.

With the continuation of the work first outlined and funded through the Clean, Safe Creeks and Natural Flood Protection Plan, the water district will be able to make progress on these critical projects with local funds, should securing federal infrastructure funding continue to remain a challenge.

We are eager to see the implementation of the many worthwhile, community-supported projects included in the Safe, Clean Water measure and will continue to provide oversight of the transition from the original measure to the new one over the coming year.

The full Fiscal Year 2011-2012 oversight report, as well as previous reports, can be downloaded at valleywater.org. We hope you find this report overview helpful and informative and welcome your questions or comments.



Flood protection: Guadalupe River



Before

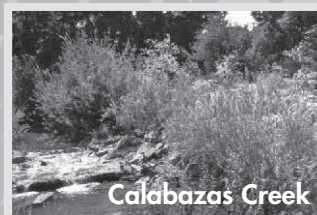


After

Preservation and Restoration



Coyote Ridge



Calabazas Creek

New trails



Stevens Creek



Lions Creek Trail

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EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

Local donors ante up for Holiday Fund

Donors to the *Voice* Holiday Fund contributed \$70,906 this year, joining the long-standing campaign to care for the less fortunate in our community.

Donations came in from more than 150 readers and several other sources that will be split evenly among seven nonprofit agencies that serve residents in Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills.

The Fund received large donations from several foundations, including the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Wakerly Family Foundation, and the Hewlett Foundation.

The Holiday Fund is a partnership between the *Voice*, the foundation donors and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, which processes all contributions. No fees or other charges are assessed to any Holiday Fund donation; 100 percent of all funds raised go directly to the participating nonprofit organizations, which will receive just over \$10,000 each, compared to slightly more than \$12,000 last year.

Here are the agencies that will benefit from the Holiday Fund this year:

COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY

CSA assists homeless families and seniors with short-term housing, medical care, and more. The nonprofit is a cooperative effort of 17 faith-based communities in Mountain View and Los Altos.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AWARENESS COUNCIL

CHAC serves Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and seven school districts. Among other things, it offers school-based programs to protect students from high-risk behaviors, such as drug and alcohol abuse.

MOUNTAIN VIEW ROTACARE CLINIC

The RotaCare Clinic provides uninsured local residents with medical care and medications and is frequently the last resort for this under-served demographic.

DAY WORKER CENTER OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

The Day Worker Center provides a secure place for workers and employers to negotiate wages. It serves 50 or more workers a day with jobs, English lessons and guidance.

YWCA (FORMER SUPPORT NETWORK BATTERED WOMEN)

Now operated by the YWCA, this group operates a 24-hour bilingual hotline and a safe shelter for women and their children. It also offers counseling and other services for families dealing with domestic violence.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND ARTS

CSMA provides hands-on arts and music projects in the classrooms of the Mountain View Whisman School District. Nearly 40 percent of the students are low-income, and 28 percent have limited English proficiency.

PARTNERS FOR NEW GENERATIONS

Partners for New Generations matches adult volunteer mentors with at-risk youth in Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills area.

LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

BOARD MEMBER REPLIES TO HIS CRITICS

A guest opinion from Sam Player and a letter from Cynthia Greaves last week brought the following response from Mountain View Whisman school board member Steven Nelson:

Of course I'm playing politics. As was Cynthia when she endorsed Jim Pollart and Peter Darrah in their campaigns. As were outgoing district trustees Fiona Walter and and Steve Olsen when they endorsed Pollart and Darrah. As did the *Voice* when they endorsed Pollart and Darrah.

But the electorate decided that my promise of "whistle-blower" was more important than those four endorsements. I am not the leader of either the district or the board. I've just been hired, by the district's owners, as the team coach of "Open & Public."

If we are actually still getting public and teacher input on facilities, I've hardly 'lost the argument' that hasn't yet started.

Dear public: Participate, voice your priorities, your concerns. Judge for yourself, relative to the city of Mountain View process, if your opinion is valued. I beg you, come play citizen politics.

*Steve Nelson, trustee
MV Whisman School District*

LET PUBLIC SEE BERLIN WALL FRAGMENTS

After reading Denise Salles

("Appalled at reception of Berlin Wall") and Bob Sims ("City should be proud to mount Berlin Wall Display") letters in the Feb. 1 *Voice* I got in my car and drove to the office park at 2685 Marine Way to view the two wall sections.

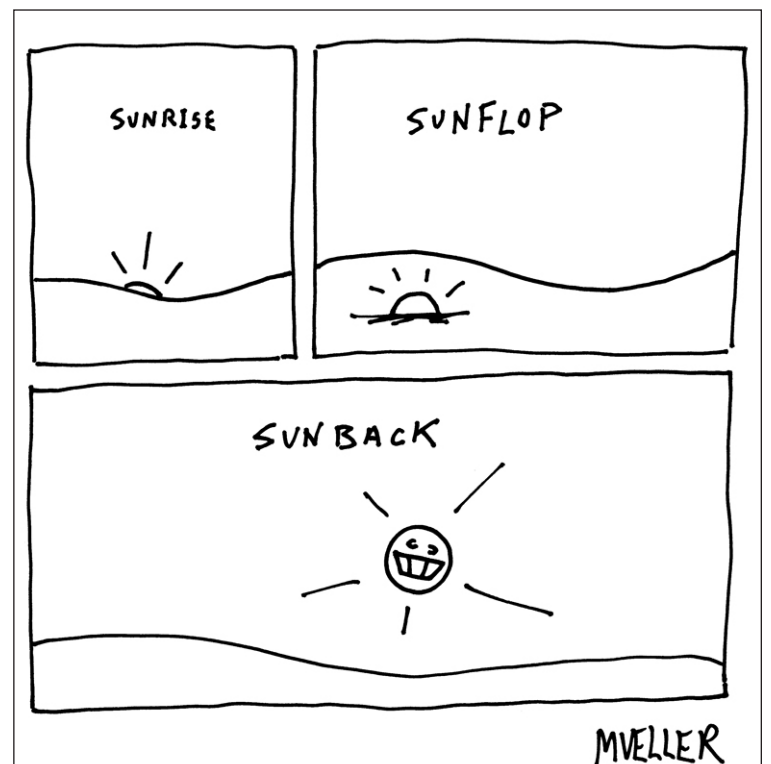
Looking at these pieces was moving, particularly the section with exposed rebar. Knowing where these came from and what they represented for so many years transformed their appearance from mere walls to haunting monoliths, triggering everything I dread about war. I've seen many memorials in our nation's capital and parks but rarely something as contemporary. The fact that they are resting in a parking lot is beyond absurd.

I went back to the Jan. 18 *Voice* to read the article, "No home yet for Berlin Wall sections."

When I read council member Ronit Bryant's comment, "If you look at them (wall sections) objectively, they are two very large pieces of ugly cement. What you put in a park is a tree or plant or an object of beauty," I had to pause. Bryant's definition of "beauty" appears to be something that could be shoehorned into a car ashtray.

I hope the City Council doesn't sweep this piece of history under the carpet as is being done with the Pearson House.

*Phil Cali
N. Rengstorff Avenue*





Le Petit Bistro's medallions de porc aux champignons is pork tenderloin in a mushroom demi-glace with veal reduction sauce.

VERONICA WEBER



Vidal Guerra prepares the medallions de porc aux champignons.

VERONICA WEBER

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

Cozy, classic, French

LE PETIT BISTRO DOES IT THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY: HAPPILY

By Dale F. Bentson

Not that long ago (OK, in light years) the culinary landscape was dotted with French restaurants. Most Americans didn't know much about food beyond casseroles, Lazy Susans and meatloaf at the time.

Julia Child led a cooking revolution with her "Mastering the Art of French Cooking" in the 1960s. All the average housewife had to do was grasp an array of techniques, procure mostly unobtainable ingredients, and dedicate most of a day to making stocks and sauces, deboning and braising.

It was far easier to drive or walk

a short distance to the neighborhood French restaurant and leave the technique to a trained chef. French restaurants were everywhere, casual to formal, rustic to fine dining. Most are gone now, swept away by changing tastes and the onslaught of appealing ethnic alternatives. Even French cuisine has veered away from its classical roots in favor of faster preparation with simpler ingredients.

Le Petit Bistro in Mountain View has managed to elude change and maintain its traditional heritage. No high-tech here, no nouvelle cuisine, no molecular reconfiguration of food, no kale. Guest checks are still hand-written.



The mousse de foie de canard comes from a family recipe for duck liver pate.

VERONICA WEBER

It's old-school but not outmoded, with an exacting code of beliefs that owner/chef Jean-Michel Peuvrelle has carried with him throughout his life. Born in Pas-de-Calais in the northern

tip of France, Peuvrelle is the son of a charcutier (butcher). He apprenticed in Strasbourg while earning a degree in accounting.

"It takes more more than being a good chef to run a restaurant,"

Peuvrelle said.

His family relocated, first to Dallas, then to the Bay Area where they owned four different French restaurants from 1976 to 1989. When his parents retired, Jean-Michel opened his own restaurant.

Now in his 24th year at Le Petit Bistro, Peuvrelle still cooks the old-fashioned way, six days per week. Veal, duck and fish stocks, made fresh daily, simmer for up to six hours; complex sauces are born, tasted, adjusted and allowed to marry in well-seasoned pots for hours.

While the kitchen is fastidious, the dining room is casual. The decor is simple, spotless and homey. Daily specials are hand-written on a whiteboard near the front door. On a recent visit, the waitress told us to take a look before being seated. The specials were neither printed nor repeated.

The menu was simple enough, five appetizers including bisque de homard (\$10) an intensely flavored lobster bisque. Did I say simple? The bisque was made with leeks, fennel bulb, tomatoes, carrots, onions, garlic, parsley, vermouth, pastis, fresh herbs and a sprinkle of chili-pepper flakes. The stock was slowly cooked for three hours then strained. A roux was made to thicken the bisque along with cream and a splash of cognac. The results were delicious, with a depth of flavor that left the palate craving more.

The mousse de foie de canard



VERONICA WEBER

Aline Tilet pours wine for Diana Stumm in Le Petit Bistro's dining room.

(\$10) was from a family recipe. The slightly grainy, fresh-tasting duck pate was served with celery root, carrots, tomato, lettuce and olives. This was not foie gras, but pate made from un-inflated duck livers.

Dinner entrees included coq au vin, duck, beef, coquille St. Jacques and a vegetarian puff-pastry dish.

The black pepper-sauteed lamb chop au jus (\$29) with Provençal herbs was sauced with a

veal-stock reduction, shallots and sun-dried tomatoes. Green beans, carrots and potato rounded the plate. While the chops were an unusual cut, the meat was fork-tender and the sauce layered with flavors.

Medallions de porc aux champignons (\$19) in a mushroom demi-glace was also sauced with a veal reduction, mushrooms and a flurry of other ingredients. The meat was high

► Continued on next page

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NOTICE OF WATER SYSTEM FLUSHING

The City of Mountain View will be flushing the water system north of Central Expressway and bordered by Palo Alto and Sunnyvale. Flushing will begin the week of February 18th. Flushing helps to maintain water quality by removing accumulated sand and sediment from water lines. Signs and barricades will be posted in neighborhoods the day before flushing begins. Flushing north of Central Expressway is anticipated to be complete by the end of May 2013.

If you would like more information about the City's water system flushing program or have questions or concerns while City personnel are in your neighborhood, please contact the Public Services Division at (650) 903-6329 or visit the City's website at www.mountainview.gov.

VERONICA WEBER
Creme brulee is one of several house-made desserts.

► Continued from previous page

on the flav-o-meter, and the sauce made me reach for the baguette to mop up every drop.

The traditional desserts were all house-made. The mousse au chocolat (\$7) was made with rich Belgian chocolate and cream — and, that night, a splash of cognac.

The warm tarte tatin (\$7) was caramelized apple pie with a squiggle of stiffly whipped cream on the side. Chef Peuvrelle told me later the apples had been too squishy that evening. The flavors didn't suffer. It was a comforting dish to conclude the meal.

The wine list had more than four dozen options, few pricey, and all were geared to complement the food. I particularly liked seeing aperitifs of Lillet, Dubonnet and sherry; drinks we used to drink, or saw our parents drink (sigh).

Le Petit Bistro is an old-fashioned but not antiquated dining experience. Classic, refined flavors from thoughtful preparation, using enduring techniques, have kept enthusiastic diners returning for nearly a quarter of a century. Vive la France. ■



DINING NOTES

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Valentine's Weekend

Valentine's Weekend Menu – February 14th thru February 17th

Appetizers

Bruschetta Al Pomodoro
Toasted slices of Oven Baked Bread topped with Roma tomato cubes marinated with Olive Oil, Garlic and Fresh Basil

Crispy Zucchini Cakes
Served with marinated cucumber & mint yogurt

Salad

Summer in Sorrento
Watermelon topped with Feta cheese square, Arugula, fresh figs, Sicilian olives with Vidalia onion dressing.

Strawberry Fields
Crisp Mixed Lettuce, Fresh Strawberries, Toasted Pecans, Gorgonzola Cheese and served with our tangy Vidalia Onion Dressing

Entrees

Filet Mignon
Marinated with herbs served with in a mushroom sauce with spinach. Served with broccoli and a risotto cake filled with blue cheese.

Braised Short Ribs in a light red wine sauce
Served with Polenta and seasonal fresh cut Vegetables.

Linguine Pescatore
Fresh salmon, snapper, clams, mussels and prawns in a spicy tomato sauce.

Heart shape Ravioli
A Portobello & Shitake mushroom filling with Roma tomatoes and fresh spinach, in a light Marsala cream sauce.

Grilled Salmon
Served with sautéed spinach wild rice and vegetables.

Dessert

Tiramisu
Italian dessert, consisting of alternating layers of coffee-soaked lady fingers and sweet mixture of mascarpone cheese, eggs and sugar.

Linzar Hearts Cookies & Gelato
Old fashioned ground nut dough cut into hearts and sandwiched with raspberry jam served with your choice of vanilla or chocolate gelato.

MOVIE TIMES

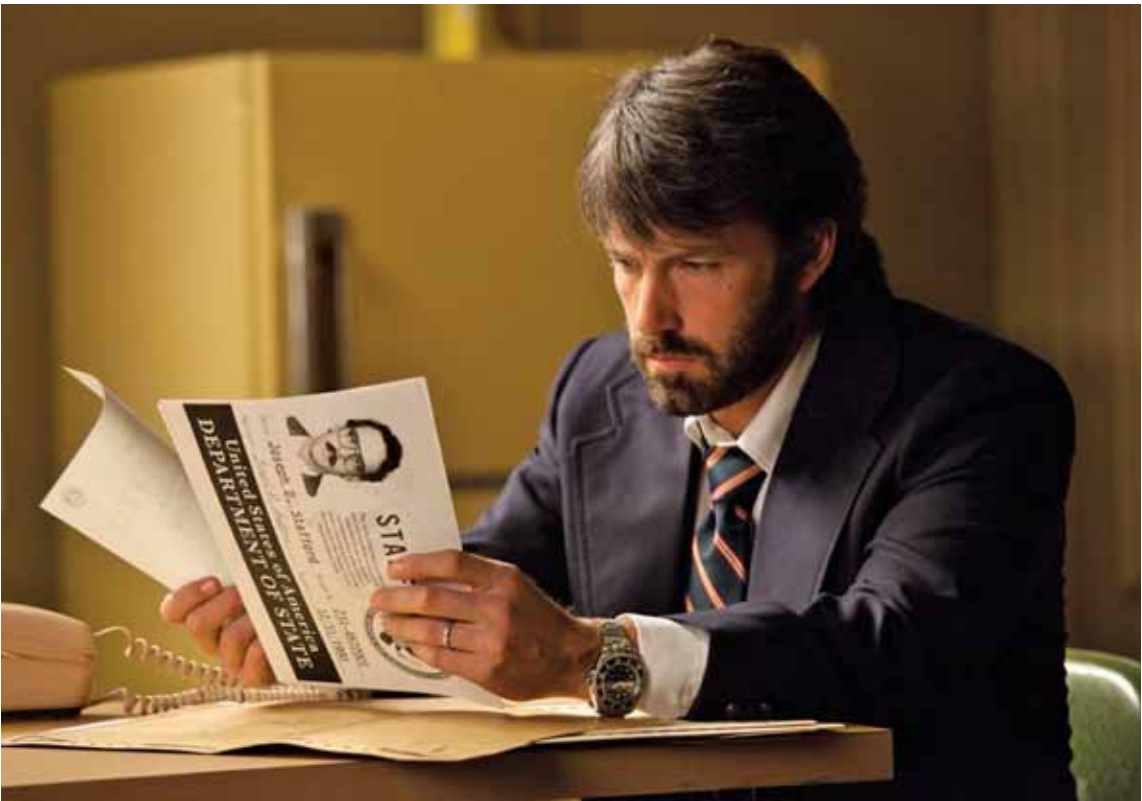
All showtimes are for Friday through Sunday only unless otherwise noted. For other times, as well as reviews and trailers, go to mv-voice.com/movies.

A Good Day to Die Hard (R)	Century 16: Fri.-Sat. 11 & 11:50 a.m., 12:40, 1:30, 2:20, 3:20, 4:10, 5:10, 6:10, 7:10, 8:10, 9:10, 10 & 10:45 p.m. Sun. 11 & 11:50 a.m., 12:40, 1:30, 2:20, 3:20, 4:10, 5:10, 6:10, 7:10, 8:20, 9:20 & 10:15 p.m. Century 20: 11:40 a.m. and 1:20, 2:15, 3:50, 4:45, 6:20, 7:15, 8:55 & 9:45 p.m. In XD at 12:30, 3, 5:30, 8:05 & 10:40 p.m.
Amour (PG-13) ★★★★★	Aquarius Theatre: 1:45, 4:45 & 7:45 p.m.
Argo (R) ★★★★★1/2	Century 20: 11:15 a.m. and 2, 4:45, 7:35 & 10:20 p.m. Palo Alto Square: Fri.-Sun. 1:10, 4:10, 7:10 & 9:55 p.m.
Beautiful Creatures (PG-13)	Century 16: 12:20, 3:30, 7 & 10:20 p.m. Century 20: 11:05 a.m. and 1:55, 4:50, 7:45 & 10:40 p.m.
Cinderella (1950) (G)	Century 20: Sat.-Mon. 3 p.m.
Cinemark Oscar marathon	Century 20: Sat. noon.
Cinemark Oscar Shorts	Century 20: Fri. noon and 4 & 8 p.m.
Django Unchained (R) ★★★	Century 16: 11:40 a.m. and 3:50 & 8 p.m. Century 20: Sun. 11:10 a.m. and 2:50, 6:25 & 10 p.m.
Escape from Planet Earth (PG)	Century 16: 11:15 a.m. In 3D 1:40, 7 & 9:40 p.m. Century 20: 11:45 a.m. In 3D at 2:10, 4:35, 7:05 & 9:35 p.m.
Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters (PG-13)	Century 20: 11:05 a.m.
Identity Thief (R) ★★1/2	Century 16: 11 a.m. & noon & 1:50, 3, 4:40, 6:10, 7:40, 9:10 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: 11:40 a.m. and 2:25, 5:05, 7:45, 9:10 & 10:25 p.m. Fri. also at 12:50, 3:40 & 6:20 p.m.
Lady and the Tramp (1955) (G)	Century 20: Sat.-Mon. 1 p.m.
Life of Pi (PG) ★★★★★1/2	Century 20: 1:25 and 7:15 p.m. In 3D 4:20 and 10:20 p.m. Palo Alto Square: 4 and 10 p.m. Fri. & Sun. also at 1 p.m.
Lincoln (PG-13) ★★★★★1/2	Century 16: 11:25 a.m. and 2:40, 6:05 & 9:20 p.m. Century 20: 12:20, 3:35, 7 & 10:15 p.m.
Oscar-Nominated Short Films 2013: Animated	Aquarius Theatre: 12:30, 2:30 & 7 p.m.
Oscar-Nominated Short Films 2013: Live Action	Aquarius Theatre: 4:30 & 9 p.m.
Peter Pan (1953) (G)	Century 20: Sat.-Mon. 5 p.m.
Quartet (PG-13) ★★★	Century 20: Noon and 2:30, 4:55, 7:25 & 9:50 p.m. Guild Theatre: 1, 3:30, 6 & 8:30 p.m.
Rebecca (1940)	Stanford Theatre: 7:30 p.m. (plus 3:20 Sat. and Sun.)
Rigoletto at the Met Opera	Century 20: Sat. 9:55 a.m.
Safe Haven (PG-13)	Century 16: 11 a.m. & noon & 1:40, 2:50, 4:20, 5:30, 7:30, 8:40 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: 11:15 a.m. & 12:40, 1:55, 3:25, 4:40, 6:15, 7:25, 9 & 10:10 p.m.
Secret Agent (1936)	Stanford Theatre: Fri 5:55 & 9:05 p.m. Sat 5:55 & 9:05 p.m. Sun 5:55 & 9:05 p.m.
Side Effects (R) ★★★	Century 16: 11:20 a.m. & 12:10, 1:50, 2:40, 4:30, 5:10, 7:20, 8:10 & 10:10 p.m. Century 20: 11:25 a.m. and 12:30, 1:55, 3, 4:35, 5:35, 7:10, 8:10, 9:45 & 10:45 p.m.
Silver Linings Playbook (R)	Century 16: 12:10, 3:10, 6:20 & 9:20 p.m. Century 20: 11:15 a.m. and 2, 4:50, 7:35 & 10:25 p.m.
Stand Up Guys (R) ★★	Century 20: 2:15, 4:40, 7:05 & 9:30 p.m. Sat 2:15, 4:40, 7:05 & 9:30 p.m. Also 11:55 a.m. on Fri. and Sun.
Suspicion (1941)	Stanford Theatre: 5:40 & 9:50 p.m.
Warm Bodies (PG-13)	Century 16: 11:30 a.m. and 1:55, 4:20, 7:10 & 9:50 p.m. Century 20: 12:40, 3:05, 5:30, 8 & 10:40 p.m.
Young and Innocent (1938)	Stanford Theatre: Fri 7:30 p.m. Sat 4:20 & 7:30 p.m. Sun 4:20 & 7:30 p.m.
Zero Dark Thirty (R) ★★1/2	Century 16: 11:50 a.m. and 3:40 & 7:40 p.m. Century 20: 11:10 a.m. and 2, 4:50, 7:35 & 10:25 p.m.

AQUARIUS: 430 Emerson St., Palo Alto (266-9260)
CENTURY CINEMA 16: 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View (800-326-3264)
CENTURY 20 DOWNTOWN: 825 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (800-326-3264)
CINEARTS AT PALO ALTO SQUARE: 3000 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (493-3456)
STANFORD THEATRE: 221 University Ave., Palo Alto (324-3700)

★ 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.



Ben Affleck in the Oscar-nominated “Argo.”



MOVIE REVIEWS

AMOUR ★★★★★
(Aquarius) Life can change in a heart-beat. An elderly, cultured Parisian couple (Emmanuelle Riva and Jean-Louis Trintignant) have their worlds fall apart when one of them suffers a pair of debilitating strokes. Seeing these French iconic actors in their 80s is shocking in itself, and director Michael Haneke also creates a story and a world that is one of his most difficult to watch. The film is also one of his most masterful. As the couple’s life together unspools in flashbacks, moving toward the painful present day, Haneke unblinkingly and compassionately presents universal truths, while revealing the illusion of film-making and our role as spectators. *Rated PG-13 for mature thematic material including a disturbing act, and brief language. In French with English subtitles. Two hours, seven minutes.* — S.T.

ARGO ★★★★★1/2
(Palo Alto Square, Century 20) The Ben Affleck of old has been shed like a husk, and what remains is a sharp and thoughtful filmmaker who is still in the embryonic phase of an impressive career. Sure, Affleck the actor is also along for the ride, but his skill behind the camera is what shines. After the assault on the U.S. Embassy in Tehran on Nov. 4, 1979, 52 Americans are taken hostage as Iranian revolutionaries storm the embassy, but six manage to escape amidst the turmoil and hide out in the home of Canadian Ambassador Ken Taylor (Victor Garber). Back in the U.S., CIA operative Jack O’Donnell (Bryan Cranston) tasks “exfiltration specialist” Tony Mendez (Affleck) with hatching a plan to get the six Americans safely out before their true identities and whereabouts are discovered: Mendez conceives of a faux movie production that would make the six part of his filmmaking team. “Argo” is a nail-biter from beginning to end, and one of the year’s best films. Affleck and his crew do a phenomenal job capturing the time period and casting actors who both look

like their real-life counterparts and have the thespian chops to hit all the right notes. *Rated R for language and violent images. 2 hours.* — T.H.

IDENTITY THIEF ★★1/2
(Century 16, Century 20) Long known for stealing scenes, Melissa McCarthy adds to her jacket by taking on the title role of “Identity Thief.” Seth Gordon’s action-comedy follow-up to “Horrible Bosses” proves far from perfect but ultimately difficult to resist, thanks to McCarthy and co-lead Jason Bateman. Bateman plays Sandy Bigelow Patterson, a Colorado accountant and family man whose life turns upside down when McCarthy’s identity thief goes to town on his credit and gets a warrant issued for his arrest. The ensuing confusion threatens Sandy’s brand-new position as the vice president of a start-up financial institution. That means flying down to Florida, apprehending Diana and hauling her back to face the music. And so what begins as a seemingly fruitful comic premise about identity theft turns out to be two parts “Planes, Trains, and Automobiles” and one part “Midnight Run.” An expert of both verbal and physical comedy, McCarthy is a worthy successor to John Candy, who also had a gift for warming up caricatures with loveable humanity. Despite some pesky tangles, there’s something appealing in how the film amounts to the opposite of a revenge narrative, considering the roots of Diana’s waywardness and extending her measured generosity and chances to earn her redemption. Sure, making Diana cuddly after all is a Hollywood convention, but it also scores one for restorative justice. *Rated R for sexual content and language. One hour, 52 minutes.* — P.C.

LES MISERABLES ★★★★★
(Century 16) One has to admire the ambition of this through-sung play that’s now a big-screen musical. A condensa-

tion of Victor Hugo’s 1862 epic novel, the musical by composer Claude-Michel Schonberg and lyricists Alain Boublil and Jean-Marc Natel achieved enormous popular appeal with its soaring melodies and grasping melodrama. But it’s equally true that “Les Miserables” has never been known for its subtlety, with its storytelling in all-caps and its music thunderously repetitive. None of this changes, exactly, in the film adaptation helmed by Tom Hooper, Oscar-winning director of “The King’s Speech.” And like so many movie musicals, this one’s a mixed bag of suitable and not-so-suitable choices. On balance, though, it’s about as compelling a screen version of “Les Mis” as we have any right to expect. Hugh Jackman stars as Jean Valjean, a parole violator in 19th-century France who lifts himself out of poverty and decrepitude but lives in fear of discovery by his former jailer, Inspector Javert (Russell Crowe). From his new position of power as a factory owner, Valjean becomes entangled in the fortunes of one of his workers, despairing single mother Fantine (Anne Hathaway), and he begins to feel responsible for the woman and her child, Cosette (Isabelle Allen). Jackman is perhaps the only sensible choice to headline the picture, and though he’s able enough, his performance typically feels calculated. The same could be said for Hathaway, who’s given an Oscar-savvy showcase in her single-take performance of the uber-emotive aria “I Dreamed a Dream.” *Rated PG-13 for suggestive and sexual material, violence and thematic elements. 2 hours, 37 minutes.* — P.C.

LIFE OF PI ★★★★★1/2
(Palo Alto Square, Century 20) In Ang Lee’s exhilarating “Life of Pi” — based upon the bestselling novel by Yann Martel — a boy adrift reads a “Survival at Sea” manual. “Telling stories is highly recommended,” it says. “Above all, do not lose hope.” In the hands of Ang Lee, “Life of Pi” elegantly walks Martel’s philosophical line while also brilliantly using every modern cinematic tool to tell an epic yarn. Most prominent among these tools is 3D. Lee joins the ranks of auteurs using new 3D cameras, gainfully employ-

► Continued on next page



Jason Bateman and Melissa McCarthy in "Identity Thief."

► Continued from previous page

ing the technology for its full ViewMaster "pop" effect, but also in more magical ways. Suraj Sharma plays the teenage Piscine Molitor (aka "Pi"), who, having been raised in South India, winds up in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, warily sharing a lifeboat with a zebra, an orangutan and a Bengal tiger. As a boy, Pi (Ayush Tandon) becomes something of a "Catholic Hindu," who sees the gods of various religions as his "superheroes." Pi's spiritual picaresque shifts into a high gear once he's fighting for survival on the "life" boat. Pi's attempts to reach detente with the tiger create a fearful intimacy analogous to some people's experience of God. "I have to believe there was more in his eyes than my own reflection staring back at me," Pi says, but the film's visual motifs of mirrored surfaces might just as well suggest that people under sufficient emotional duress see what they want to see. *Rated PG for emotional thematic content throughout, and some scary action sequences and peril. Two hours, seven minutes.* — P.C.

LINCOLN ★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) Spielberg's "Lincoln" — which focuses on Lincoln's

tragically shortened second term in office, the conclusion of the Civil War and the president's fight to pass the 13th Amendment (abolishing slavery) — plays a bit like a \$50 million history lesson. And while that's a boon for history buffs, the pacing suffers sporadically. Still, Spielberg and his team (including an A-list cast that features a spotlight-stealing performance by Tommy Lee Jones) deserve a wealth of credit for embracing a monumental task and succeeding. The film follows Lincoln (Day-Lewis) as he seeks to outlaw slavery and, thus, end the bloody Civil War. Lincoln juggles nation-changing decisions with personal-life issues: his wife Mary's (Sally Field) migraines, his older son Robert's (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) military ambitions and his young son Tad's (Gulliver McGrath) upbringing. Day-Lewis captures Lincoln as well as any actor could. From his vocal inflections to his mannerisms, it's clear he truly immersed himself in the difficult role. But it's Jones' performance that lends the film the spark it needed and would not have otherwise had. *Rated PG-13 for war violence, strong language and carnage. 2 hours, 29 minutes.* — T.H.

QUARTET★★★

(Guild) In telling its tale of four retired



Suraj Sharmain in "Life of Pi."

musicians, "Quartet" doesn't avoid all of the traps of the cutesy and sometimes condescending old-age-pensioner movie genre, but Director Dustin Hoffman does show good taste, particularly in casting. The setting is Beecham House, a home for retired musicians. It's a rambling estate, well-appointed with amenities and lush greenery, that warmly embraces its residents — all of whom daily practice their vocation. Still, there is trouble in paradise. The residents fret about the home's dwindling funds and the necessity of a boffo success for the home's annual benefit performance. This concern coincides with the arrival of a new resident who throws everyone into a tizzy: bona fide opera diva Jean Horton. Hoffman adds to already sturdy material a few smart touches, such as a well-timed classical montage for the title sequence and a subtle refusal to follow through on genre clichés. One genre expectation remains firmly in place. The senior-citizen movie remains a showcase for elder talent, which Hoffman maximizes not only with stars but also with supporting players who, once upon a time, made theatrical, operatic and musical history. "Quartet" is no classic, but with the talent involved, it's certainly catchy. *Rated PG-13 for brief strong language and suggestive humor. One hour, 39 minutes.* — P.C.

SIDE EFFECTS ★★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Steven Soderbergh toys with drugs, duplicity and their side effects. The message movie grows tiresome in its hammering indictment of Big Pharma's hold on pharmaceuti-

cal research and sales, the efficacy and effectiveness of particular drugs, and the medical community's questionable ethics. Then moments before inducing sleep, the social-issue film surprisingly twists into a noir thriller. Although everyone seems quick to give directors the dubious title of "auteur" and all the credit, the film's distinctive signature belongs to screenwriter Scott Z. Burns as much as to Soderbergh. Emily Taylor (Rooney Mara) prepares for her husband's (Channing Tatum) release from prison after serving four years for insider trading. They have lost everything of the upscale lifestyle that Emily had loved. Psychiatrist Dr. Jonathan Banks (Jude Law) has a pill to stop her brain from sending out so many "sad" signals. Things go terribly wrong. The victim, the investigator, the femme fatale and the psychopath are central figures in noir's twitchy nervous system. The fun is figuring out which character corresponds to which descriptor. Wearing poker faces, the actors never show their cards. "Side Effects" portrays contemporary society as ruthlessly competitive, greedy and devoid of meaningful values. But as the plot unknots, the film itself feels empty — an exercise in narrative gymnastics and a misogynist throwback to 1950s noir. *Rated: R for sexuality, nudity, violence and language. 1 hour, 45 minutes.* — S.T.

STAND UP GUYS★★

(Century 20) It's tempting to give this "Grumpy Old Gangsters" comedy-drama a pass. Noah Haidle's screenplay seems chronically incapable of making smart choices. But that's why you hire Second

City veteran and Oscar winner Alan Arkin: to spin gold from straw. It's also why you hire Oscar winners Al Pacino and Christopher Walken, the former an Actors Studio vet and the latter famed for his refusal to respect punctuation. These guys are so good as to almost make the slight script they're given irrelevant ... almost. Pacino and Walken play BFFs Val and Doc, who reunite when Val walks out of prison after 28 years. Though he owes Val for being a "stand-up guy," Doc finds himself in the position of having to kill his only friend. The characters wander the streets, busting their old wheel man Hirsch (Arkin) out of a nursing home, and getting their drink and prostitutes on. The movie's best bits are surprisingly tender moments between friends. Those moments, sadly, are outnumbered by crass but dumb episodes designed to allow the old men to bond with younger women. The awfulness of the narrative is plain to see, and yet acting junkies probably won't be able to resist the cast. No one can say "Stand Up Guys" lacks personality. *Rated R for language, sexual content, violence and brief drug use. One hour, 35 minutes.* — P.C.

ZERO DARK THIRTY

★★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) By most cinematic measures, "Zero Dark Thirty" is one of the best-made films of 2012. It also probably shouldn't exist. An encore presentation by the team of director Kathryn Bigelow and screenwriter Mark Boal — who collected Oscars for 2008's "The Hurt Locker" — the film recounts the CIA's hunt for Osama bin Laden. By following a fiercely determined CIA officer (Jessica Chastain's Maya), "Zero Dark Thirty" creates an identification with her agony of defeat and thrill of victory along the way, building a rooting interest while otherwise eschewing character development in favor of detail-oriented procedural. While Boal's screenplay is based on journalistic research, one might well say, "Consider the sources." And the calendar. It's fair to suggest that the Hollywood treatment of such politically delicate history comes "too soon," and lacks the historical perspective that comes with time. Instead of dealing with the inherently political dimensions of their narrative, the filmmakers have disingenuously insisted upon the film's apoliticism in its embrace of procedural narrative. *Rated R for language and strong violence including brutal images. Two hours, 37 minutes.* — P.C.

Inspirations

a guide to the spiritual community

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BENEFIT FOR HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Featuring newly formed band Human Parallel, the Occidental Accidentals, and teenage a cappella group Aria. Human Parallel experiments with alternative rock sounds. Aria is a new group of girls between the ages of 13 and 18. Accidentals are from Occidental College. Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m. St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 2094 Grant Road, Mountain View. humanparallel.com

ART GALLERIES

'Love, Love, Love!' Thirty Bay Area artists display work as part of the 'Love, Love, Love' Feb. exhibit at Gallery 9. Painting, photography, print-making, ceramics, sculpture, mixed media, metal work & jewelry inspired by the theme of love. Reception: Feb. 1, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Hours: Tues.-Sat., 11-5 p.m.; Sun., 12-4 p.m. Gallery 9, 143 Main St., Los Altos. www.gallery9losaltos.com

'Rwanda, Land of Reconciliation,' a photographic exhibition by Katie Cooney The exhibit includes "Door of Hope" - 2x3 piece, chromatic print on archival paper, made in January 2012 Kigali, Rwanda - Orphanage for street boys (homeless, abandoned and "Arms of Joy" - 2x3 piece, chromatic print on archival paper, made in January 2012, Rwanda, rural Rwanda, children on the road. Through March 24, CSMA Mohr Gallery, 230 San Antonio Road, Mountain View. Call 650-917-6800 x 306. www.arts4all.org

Journey to World Heritage Photography Exhibit Foothill College presents "Journey to World Heritage: Photography by Kate Jordahl" Jan. 22-Feb. 27 at the Krause Center for Innovation Gallery at Foothill College. Admission is free; parking is \$3. 7:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Krause Center for Innovation at Foothill College, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills. Call 650-949-7318. www.jordahlphoto.com/PDL2012/PDLReport.html

Something Beyond the Obvious Artist Mike Bailey presents new work including his abstracts. Jan. 28-Feb. 23, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Viewpoints closes at 3 p.m. on Sundays. Free. Viewpoints Gallery, 315 State St., Los Altos. www.viewpointsgallery.com

BENEFITS

Nordstrom Charity Fashion Show The show's proceeds benefit Friends for Youth, a mentoring organization that serves local at-risk children ages 8 to 17. The program features a Fashion Show presented by Nordstrom, featuring top 2013 trends. March 3, 8-10:30 a.m. \$65. Nordstrom Stanford Shopping Center, 550 Stanford Shopping Center, Palo Alto. Call 650-368-4444. www.friendsforyouth.org/files/FashionShow/fashionshowhome.html

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Sustainable Vegetable Gardening Master Gardeners will teach attendees to grow a successful, environmentally responsible food garden that produces vegetables every month of the year. We'll cover working with seeds and seedlings, soil, watering, and pests. Register: paadultschool.org or 329-3752. Feb. 5-March 12, 7-9 p.m. \$84. Palo Alto High School, 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto. Call 408-282-3105. mastergardeners.org/scc.html

'Learn to Square Dance' Classes are held by the "Bows & Beaus Square-Dance Club" on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. First class free; \$5 per class thereafter. Loyola School, 770 Berry Ave., Los Altos.

Art and Science of Raja Yoga Raja Yoga offers a scientific approach to the spiritual life, with techniques for stilling the mind and expanding the awareness of spiritual realities. It offers techniques for self-mastery in every aspect of life, from calming turbulent emotions to awakening deep compassion and love for others. Wednesdays, Jan. 9-March 27, 6-9 p.m. \$350. Ananda, 2171 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. Call 650-323-3363. www.anandapaloalto.org

Creating a Family Tree Using Geni.com This class is on starting and growing a family tree using Geni.com, and watching it grow. This webinar will be recorded and posted online for additional accessibility. Ages 55+ Feb. 19, 12-1 p.m. LegalForce BookFlip, 323 University Ave., Palo Alto.

eBook Center Those interested in checking out eBooks and eAudiobooks from the Palo Alto City Library can Attend an eBook Center session to find out what the options are and how it works. First Friday of each month through April. 3-5 p.m. Downtown Library, 270 Forest Ave., Palo Alto.

Call 650-329-2436. www.cityofpaloalto.org/library

Foothill College Gospel Choir Foothill College Gospel Choir/AKA PCGC Begins their annual Gospel Festival workshop rehearsals. For Gospel Choir musical. Dates are Jan. 20, 27, and Feb. 3, 10, and 17. Concert Feb. 23, 2013. 4:30-6:45 p.m. \$10 general and \$5 students and seniors. Los Altos United Methodist Church, 655 Magdalena Ave., Los Altos. Call 408-644-9995.

T'ai-Chi A Tai-Chi class that promotes balance, flexibility and mental acuity. Led by Dona Marriot, Foothill College instructor. Mondays, Jan. 7-March 27, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Mounain View Senior Center, 266 Escuela Ave., Mountain View. Call 650-948-1827.

Terrible Adult Chamber Orchestra A friendly and sociable monthly gathering for musicians of all instruments and all levels of skill to play symphony orchestra music together for fun, no performance and no pressure. Music provided, members bring instrument, stand, appetizers to share, and good humor. Register through website. Sundays, Jan. 27-June 30 2-5 p.m. \$10/session or \$25/three sessions. Los Altos Community Center, 97 Hillview Ave, Los Altos. Call 650-793-2218. www.tacosv.com

Valentine Cooking Class In an afternoon with Chef Jay attendees will learn the preparation of five courses alongside a wine pairing. \$150 per couple Includes menu, wine, and tax. Only 17 couples allowed, place a reservation. Feb. 16, 1-4 p.m. Morocco's Restaurant, 873 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 650-968-1502. www.moroccosrestaurant.com

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community Input Meeting, Measure G Parents and community members are invited to provide input on desires, priorities, and concerns regarding the use of Measure G bond funds to modernize and enhance Crittenden Middle School in the Mountain View Whisman School District. Feb. 20, 6:30-8 p.m. Crittenden Middle School, 1701 Rock St., Mountain View. Call 650-526-3552. www.mvwsd.org

Community Input Meeting, Measure G Parents and community members are invited to provide input on desires, priorities, and concerns regarding the use of Measure G bond funds to modernize and enhance Graham Middle School in the Mountain View Whisman School District. Feb. 19, 6:30-8 p.m. Graham Middle School, 1175 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 650-526-3552. www.mvwsd.org

Huge Used Book Sale to Benefit PA Libraries Friends of the Palo Alto Library is holding monthly sales of used books, CDs, and DVDs on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 9-10 and March 9-10. Sale hours: Saturday, Main Sale Room open 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Children's and Bargain Rooms open 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, all rooms open 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 650-213-8755. www.friendspaloaltoilb.org

MLK Jr. Community Disaster Preparedness Fundraiser MLK Jr. Day through February's Black History Month, fundraiser to prevent public and social safety disasters in African American Communities across USA. Sponsored by Ravenswood Gardenkits Products and Free At Last Gardening Club. Ravenswood Community, 265 Tara Road, East Palo Alto. Call 650-461-0276.

Relay for Life Kick-off Event Attendees can learn about Relay for Life and CPS-3 at the Mountain View Relay for Life Kick-off. Relay is on May 18. There will be games, refreshments and information. CPS-3 is a cancer prevention study at Relay that one can be a part of if without having had cancer. Feb. 24, 3-4:30 p.m. YMCA, 2400 Grant Road, Mountain View. Call 408-688-0136. relayforlife/mountainviewca

CONCERTS

Habitat for Humanity Benefit Concert St. Timothy's Episcopal Church of Mountain View will be hosting a concert to benefit Habitat East



Smuin Ballet

Smuin Ballet's 2013 winter program includes Adam Houglund's "Cold Virtues" and a Trey McIntyre work with music from The Shins: "Oh, Inverted World." The program will also contain three works by Michael Smuin; "Starshadows," "Homeless" and "No Vivire." Feb. 20-24, 8 p.m. \$52-\$68. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 650-903-6000. www.smuinballet.org

Bay/Silicon Valley. There will be an evening of music by the Gwen Howard Band and Sugar Jane Band. The event is open to the public and free of cost, although donation is welcomed. Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m. St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 2094 Grant Road, Mountain View. www.habitatebsv.org/Events/Benefit-Concert-at-St-Timothy-Episcopal-Church

Palo Alto Philharmonic Orchestra concert The Orchestra will play Glinka's Overture to Ruslan and Ludmilla, Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 2, and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 with soloist Sandra Shen. Pre-concert talk at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 16, 8 p.m. \$20/\$17/\$10. Cubberley Theatre, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. paphil.org

DANCE

Social Ballroom Dancing Lessons are beginning and intermediate Salsa, followed by general dancing from 9 p.m. to midnight. No experience or partner necessary; dressy casual attire is preferred. Feb. 22, 8 p.m.-12 a.m. \$9. Cubberley Community Center Pavilion, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 650-395-8847. www.FridayatthePav.com

Social Ballroom Dancing Feb. 15 lessons at 8 p.m. are beginning and intermediate West Coast Swing, followed by general dancing from 9 p.m. to midnight. No experience or partner necessary; dressy casual attire is preferred. A \$9 cover includes refreshments. Feb. 15, 8 p.m.-12 a.m. Cubberley Community Center Pavilion, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 650-395-8847. www.FridayatthePav.com

FAMILY AND KIDS

Weekend Preschoolers on the Farm On a series of three fun tours designed just for wee ones, preschoolers can bury their hands in sheep wool, toss corn to the chickens, and discover heaps of new information and ways to use their senses. Ages 3-5 + 1 Adult. Class meets Saturdays, Feb. 2-16, 9:30-10:30 a.m. \$65 Adult and First Child. Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. Call 650-949-9704. www.hiddenvilla.org

HEALTH

JDRF Silicon Valley Summit: Healthcare Reimbursement The summit will review the current state of healthcare reimbursement and examine potential new models for healthcare

payment. Feb. 15, 8:30-10:30 a.m. contact JDRF. Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley, 2050 University Ave., East Palo Alto. Call 415-597-6314. www.jdrfbayarea.org/events/svsymmit

LIVE MUSIC

Bobby Love & Sugar Sweet Bobby Love and Sugar Sweet will come at 8 p.m. for a night of rock, jazz and blues covers. Feb. 15, Morocco's Restaurant, 873 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 650-968-1502. www.moroccosrestaurant.com

ON STAGE

'On Golden Pond' Ernest Thompson's play is about revisiting the past and forging new bonds across generations. Jan. 24-Feb. 17, Thursday-Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 3 or 7 p.m.; and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. \$18-\$32. Bus Barn Theater, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos. Call 650-941-0551. www.busbarn.org

'Princess Ida' In this show, Ida and Hilarion are sworn to marry when they come of age. The time has come but Ida refuses and has gone off to start a women's university where she teaches that man -- not woman, just man -- is descended from apes. Hilarion and two friends disguise themselves as women to enroll. Feb. 16 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 17 at 2 p.m. \$18-52. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 650-903-6800. lamplighters.org

Lucia di Lammermoor West Bay Opera's new production of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, with its famous mad scene. Performed by a cast including Rochelle Bard as Lucia, Vincent Chambers as Edgardo and Krassen Karagiozov as Enrico. Feb. 15-24, shows at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., 2 p.m. \$40-75. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 650-424-9999. www.wboopera.org

Spring Awakening Foothill Music Theatre presents "Spring Awakening." Winner of eight Tony Awards, this groundbreaking musical with its rock score is a universal coming of age story tells the timeless story of teenage self-discovery and budding sexuality as seen through the eyes of three teenagers. Thurs.-Sun, Feb. 21-March 10, 7:30 p.m. \$10-\$28. Lohman Theatre, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills. Call 650-949-7360. www.foothillmusicals.com

RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

Lifetree Cafe Palo Alto Lifetree Cafe offers

weekly conversations that focus on popular life issues. Feb. 17: The Art of Listening. Feb. 24: Hell. Snacks/beverages available. Sundays, 7-8 p.m. 3373 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 408-507-9858. www.lifetreecafe.com

Reinventing Sunday, Reinventing Worship This is a Lenten retreat and workshop with musician Brad Berglund for everyone seeking new ways to be creative in worship. This weekend-long retreat will offer opportunities for group and individual meditation and conversation about the place of creativity in spiritual lives. Feb. 15-17, First Baptist Church of Palo Alto, 305 N. California Ave., Palo Alto. Call 650-327-0561. www.fbc-paloalto.org

SENIORS

CSA Information: Emergency Assistance Community Services Agency's Senior Case Managers will talk about lifeline units, reporting to Adult Protective Services, and local safety net agencies. Appointments required -- Make an appointment in person at the Senior Center Front Desk. Feb. 19, 10-11 a.m. Mountain View Senior Center, 266 Escuela Ave., Mountain View. Call 650-903-6330.

Sending and Receiving Emails A class in which seniors can learn tips and tricks of an email account, including how to send an email, manage and organize emails received, add people to an address book and more. Bring questions. Attendees must have an existing email account for this workshop and register in advance. Feb. 20, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Mountain View Senior Center, 266 Escuela Ave., Mountain View. Call 650-903-6330.

Smile! Dental 101 Patti Chan and her Foothill College students will talk more about a wide variety of oral health issues. This workshop will focus on common problems that older adults encounter such as periodontal disease, dry mouth, and removable appliance concerns. Space is limited. Feb. 22, 10-11 a.m. Mountain View Senior Center, 266 Escuela Ave., Mountain View. Call 650-903-6330.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Free Tax Assistance AARP sponsors free tax assistance, with special attention to those over age 60. Those interested should bring tax information for 2012 and copy of their 2011 return. All tax returns are electronically filed. Call for appointment. Fridays Feb. 1 thru April 12, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Avenidas, 450 Bryant St., Palo Alto. Call 650-289-5428. avenidas.org

Presidential Autograph Exhibition There will be a free exhibition of the original signatures of all 44 U.S. Presidents on letters and documents from 1799 to date. Feb. 17-18, 12 a.m.-4 p.m. All Saints' Parish Hall, 555 Waverley St., Palo Alto. Call 650-323-3496.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Food Addicts in Recovery Weekly meeting on Sunday evenings. Open to all who want to stop eating addictively. 7-8:30 p.m. St. Marks Church, 600 Colorado Ave., Palo Alto. www.foodaddicts.org

TALKS/AUTHORS

Humanist Community Forum Can humanism truly provide a foundation for a society? If not, what would it take to do so? Arthur M. Jackson, president of the humanist community in Silicon Valley, will lay out his best thinking on this topic. Feb. 17, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Palo Alto High School Student Center, 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto. Call 650-964-7576 . <http://www.humanists.org/blog/home/>

VOLUNTEERS

Museum of American Heritage Volunteers are welcome at the Museum of American Heritage in downtown Palo Alto. There are a wide range of opportunities. 11-4 p.m. free Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. Call 650-321-1004. www.moah.org

WHAT DOES A REAL ESTATE ORGANIZATION KNOW ABOUT PARALYZED VETERANS?

The Bay Area & Western Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (BAWPVA) is dedicated to improving the quality of life and protecting the civil rights of Veterans with paralysis. They are committed to the duty of assisting paralyzed Veterans by advocating for unfettered access to the VA health care and barrier-free access to the community.

The Paralyzed Veterans' Palo Alto facility offers a variety of inpatient and outpatient services, programs, as well as a welcoming environment for members to receive physical therapy and participate in group activities. As well, the BAWPVA sponsors members who wish to participate in sporting events such as the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America is supported solely by funding from grants and donations. We are honored to support this valuable program because it gives our well-deserving Veterans a chance to a full life in light of their service and sacrifice for our country.



FOR THE MONTHS OF OCTOBER 2012 THROUGH MARCH 2013, SERENO GROUP LOS ALTOS IS CONTRIBUTING 1% OF OUR GROSS COMMISSION INCOME TO THE BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER OF PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA.

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