

Mountain View VOICE

JUNE 6, 2014 VOLUME 22, NO. 18

www.MountainViewOnline.com

650.964.6300

MOVIES | 24



BRANDON CHEW

The southbound Caltrain platform in Mountain View is packed with commuters.

Urban design critic joins debate over city's development

COUNCIL MEMBER, CRITIC DISAGREE ABOUT CALL FOR HOUSING IN NORTH BAYSHORE

By Daniel DeBolt

Google's hometown of Mountain View has quickly become a flash point for the debate over Silicon Valley's resistance to allowing new housing for its exploding workforce, and on Sunday,

the San Francisco Chronicle entered the fray.

In a column by respected urban design columnist John King, it is noted that Mountain View is home to a thriving downtown and many of the country's most "innovative addresses" such as Linke-

dIn and Google, but King says "when it comes to mapping a future with housing options for the talented people who work within its boundaries, the South Bay city of 75,000 is stuck in the past."

► See **NORTH BAYSHORE**, page 13

Police chief leaving for private security post

By Kevin Forestieri

After 28 years in law enforcement, Mountain View Police Chief Scott Vermeer announced Tuesday that he will leave his career in public safety for a high-ranking job at Security Industry Specialists (SIS), a company that provides security to Google and other high-tech firms in Mountain View and beyond.

Vermeer began his career in 1986 at the Redwood City Police

Department, where he rose to the rank of captain before becoming chief of the Menlo Park Police Department, where he stayed for three years. In January of 2002 he became chief of the Mountain View Department.

At 15 years, Vermeer spent a long time as chief of police, in part because he was very young when he was first hired as chief of the Menlo Park department. He said a lot of people reach the rank of chief at a much older age, and consequently don't stick around

for long. At 34, he was the youngest police chief in the state.

But Vermeer said those years blew by quickly for him.

"I wanted to be a police officer when I was a kid, and I got my dream," Vermeer said.

During his time as police chief in Mountain View, Vermeer said he saw a lot of changes in the community. He said the city is definitely safer now, with some of the lowest recorded crime rates

► See **CHIEF VERMEER**, page 12

Farm to play WEEKEND | 21



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MOVIES | 24

Council may push for new gun laws

By Daniel DeBolt

City Council members took a small step last week towards following Sunnyvale's lead in cracking down on illegal guns and large-capacity ammunition magazines.

Council member Mike Kasperzak prodded a majority of the council at the end of the May 28 meeting to request a memo about the legal status of Sunnyvale's new gun laws, which are being challenged by lawsuits. Kasperzak said he was spurred by the recent shooting in Santa Barbara and by former Mountain View mayor and state legislator Sally Lieber, who gave a speech on the issue at the start of the meeting, and organized a rally in Mountain View to promote new local gun laws several months ago.

"We're experiencing a public health epidemic of shootings that are both criminal and accidental every single day," Lieber said after the meeting. "I, like many other people, feel that we have to make some progress on this issue. We just can't accept anymore that people, including a large number of children, are

going to get shot on any given day, month or year in the U.S. Many of us are very frustrated waiting for Congress. I think it's a case of Congress being bought off by the gun manufacturers. So we want to see progress at the state level and the local level."

"I think we in the community should have a discussion about these issues," Kasperzak said on Monday. "No amount of gun control laws will bring everything to an end, but are there things you can do to limit it?"

While John Inks said no during his 2013 term, Kasperzak signed onto Mayors Against Illegal Guns during his 2012 mayoral term. Inks opposed the request for the staff memo, saying the information requested was readily available and "You could go get it. I could go get it and bring it here."

In November Sunnyvale's voters passed Measure C, which requires gun stores to keep a log of everyone who buys ammunition in Sunnyvale, bans the possession of ammunition magazines holding more than

► See **GUN CONTROL**, page 14



MICHELLE LE

Gun sellers in Mountain View could be affected if the city adopts new gun control laws.

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1973 Wimbledon Place, Los Altos

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BY APPOINTMENT



4249 Manuela Avenue, Palo Alto

Rare Find - Lighted Tennis Court

Truly resort inspired this sophisticated residence is uniquely appointed with unmatched detail. Mostly rebuilt in 2002, this 5BR/3.5BA home features approximately 5,126 square feet and includes an executive office with custom built-ins, large gourmet kitchen with 9-foot island and breakfast nook, and family room with 2-way glass fireplace shared with the outdoor terrace. The private setting of almost one acre features a sparkling pool and spa and elevated terrace overlooking a lighted tennis court. Adding to the appeal is the home's close-in location convenient to Palo Alto and Los Altos as well as access to top-rated Palo Alto schools.

Offered at \$5,388,000 | www.4249ManuelaCourt.com

Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in downtown Mountain View. Photos and interviews by Kayla Layaoen.

If you could travel back in time, what advice would you give yourself?



"I would tell myself to go back to school, instead of being home-schooled."

Chris Hackmann, Sunnyvale



"I would tell past me to be more confident in my choices and in myself. I would say not to let people push me around. I should've started creating those good character traits earlier."

Jasmine Salik, Los Altos



"I would try harder not to procrastinate."

Javier Suarez, Palo Alto



"I wish that I had listened to myself and drowned out the external noise. Above all, believe in the person that you have become. You will always be your own biggest supporter."

Megan Oza, Cupertino



"I know I wouldn't listen to myself anyway."

Monica Salazar, Mountain View

Have a question for **Voices Around Town**? Email it to editor@mv-voice.com

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Best of Mountain View 2013


PALO ALTO WEEKLY BEST OF 2013

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— Anita M. from Palo Alto, Subaru owner

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— Kay P. from Palo Alto, Subaru owner

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Saturday, June 7, 2014 NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS DAY: WISDOM TO LIVE BY

A Fun Day of Celebration for the Entire Family!

Saturday, June 7, 2014 | 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

El Camino Hospital, Mountain View Campus
2500 Grant Road, Mountain View, CA 94040

*The event will take place on the ground floor of the main hospital:
registration tables between the base of the staircase and the cafeteria.*

Join us at this great event for wellness activities, skin cancer screenings, uplifting lectures, Kid's corner, community partner tables, games, yoga and Qigong demonstrations and MORE!

Activities All Day:

- Free Healing Touch energy sessions
- Kid's Corner – crafts, snacks, games and music
- Community Resource Tables
- Games, Row 2 Row Recovery demo
- Ice Cream Social – Served by Cancer Center Clinical Team and Staff

"Loving Life – the Cancer Survivors New Perspective"

By Heidi Garland

Heidi Garland is wife, mother to two sons, CEO of Guild West Agency, a San Jose based marketing firm and Breast Cancer Survivor. Heidi's cancer battle gave her an unmatched zest for life. She has since appeared in five Pink Glove Dance videos, El Camino Hospital's patient stories, and on NBC Bay Area News. Heidi has been quoted in countless local and national newspaper and magazine articles on the subject of breast cancer.

"Cancer is a Family Affair"

By Kathie Sutherland, M.D.

Dr. Kathie Sutherland is an OB/GYN with over 30 years of experience, Medical Director of the Genomic Medicine Institute at El Camino Hospital and 19 year breast cancer survivor. Her goal is to build awareness through the use of family history and genetic screening to help overcome the devastations of cancer.

"Movement for Life"

By Joanna M. Losito, RN MSN FNP-c AOCNP

Joanna Losito is a Medical Oncology Nurse Practitioner and RN with over 25 years' nursing experience. She helped create the Exercise for Energy class in partnership with the Palo Alto Medical Foundation with 30+ weekly participants and helped to develop the Better Breathers exercise group at El Camino Hospital. She has a special interest in survivorship, symptom management and wellness promoting behaviors.



Learn more and register online at:
www.elcaminohospital.org/SurvivorDay

CRIME BRIEFS

ATTEMPTED MURDER VERDICT

A jury on Tuesday found 53-year-old Laura Jean Wenke guilty of attacking her husband with a knife and stun gun.

Wenke, a Los Altos resident who now faces life in prison, was found guilty on charges of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, assault with a stun gun and domestic abuse, according to the San Mateo District Attorney's office.

According to the Redwood City Police Department, Wenke and her husband were going through a bitter divorce, and she was upset that her husband had found a new girlfriend. On Sept. 15, 2011 she showed up at her husband's construction business dressed in bubble wrap and a jumpsuit, where she discharged a stun gun into her husband's side and stabbed him in the chest and neck multiple times.

The husband was released from the hospital after several days of treatment. He had a \$2 million life insurance policy with Wenke still listed as a beneficiary, according to police.

Wenke will be back in court for a trial to plea not guilty by reason of insanity. This second phase of the trial will begin on Thursday, June 5.

MOTORCYCLE GEAR, ACCESSORIES STOLEN

Police received a report that someone stole thousands of dollars in motorcycle gear on Continental Circle in Mountain View last week.

► See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 8

POLICE LOG

ATTEMPTED MURDER

200 block Higdon Av., 6/1

AUTO BURGLARY

1 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 6/1

BATTERY

W. Middlefield Rd. & N. Shoreline Blvd., 5/28

800 block San Veron Av., 5/29

1500 block California St., 5/29

2200 block Latham St., 5/30

1 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 5/31

1 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 6/1

1 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 6/1

BATTERY WITH SERIOUS INJURY

1 block Amphitheatre Pkwy. 6/1

1 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 6/1

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

700 block E. El Camino Real, 6/2

GRAND THEFT

100 block Evandale Av., 5/28

700 block Continental Cir., 6/2

1000 block Crestview Dr., 6/3

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

1900 block Latham St., 5/28

3400 block Truman Av., 5/30

1000 block Boranda Av., 6/1

VANDALISM

200 block S. Rengstorff Av., 5/28

700 block E. El Camino Real, 5/28

200 block Castro St., 5/30

Bryant St. & W. Dana St., 5/31

1 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 6/1

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a guide to the spiritual community

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COURTESY OF BRIAN EUGENI

NO GOAL FOR YOU

Michael Eugeni punts the ball away from the goal during AYSO's Davis World Cup soccer tournament over Memorial Day weekend. Michael is the goalkeeper for the Hammers team for boys under age 12, led by coach David Allan and assistant coach Mike Brooker. The Hammers' win this year at the largest AYSO tournament in Northern California follows last year's victory, a first for teams in the organization's Region 45 representing Mountain View and north Los Altos, said Brian Eugeni, the region's assistant commissioner.

Open space bond measure is too close to call

By Richard Hine

Measure AA, a \$300 million bond measure for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, was favored by voters in Tuesday's June 3 election, but preliminary results on Wednesday are too close to determine whether it received the two-thirds approval it needs to pass.

Bay City News Service reported Wednesday that the vote was too close to call since ballots cast in both counties must be added up and San Mateo County's percentage voting for it was 65 percent, just below the required 66.66 percent to pass. Santa Clara County voters have supported it by 67.56 percent so far, according to the Registrar of Voters' website.

With all precincts counted, the yes vote in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, plus a single precinct in Santa Cruz County,

totalled 48,419, which is 130 votes more than the two-thirds' voter approval required for passage.

The vote count by county is:

■ San Mateo County: 17, 167 yes and 9,005 no.

■ Santa Clara County: 31,251 yes and 15,009 no.

In Santa Cruz County, only one vote was cast and it was in support of the measure.

There are still votes to count, including provisional and mail-in ballots dropped off on Election Day.

The district wants the authority to issue up to \$300 million in bonds to improve, preserve and restore its properties, and to purchase land needed to connect trails and preserve plant and animal habitats.

The bonds have a maximum term of 40 years and the annual

tax is predicted to range from \$1 per \$100,000 assessed value (or \$10 for a \$1 million home) in 2015-16 to \$2.90 per \$100,000 assessed value (or \$29 for a \$1 million property) in 2044-45. The highest rate of \$3.18 would be in 2034-35.

Steve Abbors, general manager of the open space district, says the bond measure is the first the district has attempted to pass in its 41 years. The district covers southern and central San Mateo County from the Bay to the ocean, and northern and western Santa Clara County, as well as a small area in Santa Cruz County.

Property owners in the district, except for those on the coast, currently pay \$17 per \$100,000 of assessed property value, or \$170 a year for a property valued at \$1 million. Property owners on the coast will help pay for the bonds if Measure AA passes.

Email Richard Hine at editor@almanacnews.com



New group slams LASD board performance

TRUSTEES DEFEND DISTRICT, SAY ADS ABOUT TAXES ARE MISLEADING AND INACCURATE

By Kevin Forestieri

A new nonprofit group, critical of Los Altos School District leadership and spending, ran ads in the *Voice* and *Los Altos Town Crier* last week highlighting the amount of parcel taxes that LASD taxpayers pay — about \$790 each year. The group, which calls itself Each Student Counts, says it will elevate the dialog about contentious school issues, but Los Altos board trustees and finance committee members question the group's motives, saying the ads are factually inaccurate and lack context.

Each Student Counts is a nonprofit based in Los Altos that says it aims to promote civil, fact-based dialog about priorities and needs in public education, according to the group's website. The site also says the group will provide information about failed leadership and fiscal irresponsibility on the part of LASD board trustees.

"Sometimes emotions and subjective facts dominate the conversation," said Rob Fagen, presi-

dent of Each Student Counts, who has a child who attends Bullis Charter School. "We're just putting out the facts as accurately as possible."

The first round of ads lists the parcel taxes of local school districts, and claims that LASD taxpayers pay anywhere from 1.3 to 10 times more in taxes than neighboring districts. It encourages readers to contact board members and ask what they get for paying more.

"We want people to ask themselves, 'Are we getting what we expect from what we're putting into the schools?'" Fagen said.

But there's a perfectly good reason why parcel taxes are higher in Los Altos, and the ads lack the needed context to understand why, according to Joe Seither, member of the LASD Citizens' Advisory Committee for Finance.

Seither said the Los Altos School District relies on parcel taxes as a major component in the budget — about 22 percent

► See **BULLIS GROUP**, page 15

Smith wins county sheriff's race, Sylva secures judgeship

Sheriff Laurie Smith was re-elected and Julianne Sylva secured the county judgeship in a low-turnout primary election in Santa Clara County Tuesday, according to unofficial results.

Smith garnered almost 60 percent of voter support on her way to a fifth term as sheriff, beating retired Sheriff's Capt. Kevin Jensen, the favorite of deputy sheriff's and corrections deputies unions who had a bit more than 40 percent following an often bitter campaign.

Smith, 61, has said the top challenges for her next term will be managing the state-required transfer of low-level prison inmates to serve their time in the county jail, suppressing gang activity and preventing youths from joining gangs.

After his defeat at the polls

early Wednesday morning, Jensen, 50, said that he was proud to have been endorsed by an overwhelming majority of deputy sheriffs and other law enforcement officers in the county.

Jensen said that Smith does not work well with others and he expects there to be lingering problems during her next term.

"I think that a lot of ground had been made," Jensen said. "I'd like to see the department getting back to serving the public."

"There's just a mandate that she find a new job or retire," Jensen said. "She's lost her way."

Julianne Sylva won by a wide margin, with 80.80 percent of votes compared to Dennis Lampert's 19.20 percent, according to the county Registrar of Voters.

► See **ELECT**, page 16



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MICHELLE LE

Big Burger Freeze on El Camino Real is being torn down and a kidney dialysis center is set to replace it.

Goodbye, Big Burger Freeze

LONG-VACANT BURGER STAND TO MAKE WAY FOR DIALYSIS CENTER

By Daniel DeBolt

It's not without a bit of irony that the growing number of people with a disease caused by poor diet and sedentary living has finally spurred the redevelopment of a long-abandoned fast food eatery.

The tiny and long-vacant "Big Burger Freeze" on El Camino Real may be demolished soon to make way for a new dialysis center — where people with failing livers or kidneys have their blood cleaned and treated during regular visits lasting three to four hours.

Though it never comes up when old timers talk about beloved burger stands of the past — Johnny Macs, Linda's Burgers and Spivey's are much more fondly remembered — the Big Burger Freeze stands as a sort time capsule. Its frosty machines, a bouquet of fake flowers and plastic menu board still exist as if the door was locked one day and no one ever came back.

Sitting vacant for over a decade, it had become an icon for how difficult some shallow El Camino Real lots are to redevelop. Council member Mike Kasperzak noted the place while urging his colleagues to pass measures to encourage redevelopment on El Camino Real in February: "Do we want to do any favors to people" interested in redeveloping these sites "or do we always want the "(vacant) Tasty Freeze to be on El Camino — and the (vacant) car lot next door?"

Though not clearly marked, the sign on the front actually says "Big Burger Freeze" and a developer called Meridian now

has the green light to tear down the tiny building at 412 El Camino Real. The dialysis center will also replace the vacant used car lot next door.

For a long time the parcels lay vacant as the city tried to assemble adjacent properties for larger redevelopment, an effort which apparently lost steam when Baron Park Plumbing Supply was allowed to move into one of the adjacent properties, having been forced out of San Antonio shopping center by its redevelopment.

New land use policies apparently had little to do with spurring the development. "Like everything else, the economy is booming and people are trying to capitalize while money is available for investment," said Kasperzak, noting that he'd learned of the proposal shortly after his February comment.

"This is an interesting application because it's on El Camino Real and it's a really low intensity proposal for such a prominent location in the city," said zoning administrator Gerry Beaudin before he approved the project May 28, explaining that the "low intensity" nature of the proposal was because the "parcel size is really shallow. There isn't sufficient depth or area on this parcel to accommodate any new development without a shared parking arrangement."

The city may have lucked out in finding a dialysis center for the lot, as it is a rare use that requires little parking. Only one third of dialysis patients are able to drive themselves to their appointments because of disease or old age, while the rest

are dropped off for their long visits, according to a city staff report.

The shared parking arrangement caused a bit of a tiff with the neighboring Mountain View Physical Therapy office, which was being forced by its landlord to share parking with the dialysis center, though city staff reported that parking arrangements would be "more than adequate."

"We've grown and grown to where we do have staff parking on side streets and El Camino Real," said Amy Fowlkes, clinical director of the Mountain View Physical Therapy. Patients such as those with hip replacements "who were already struggling to find parking places will have a more difficult time."

After removing one large "heritage" tree and saving a few others, the project makes room for 49 parking spaces in a new shared parking lot, instead of the 91 spaces that would be typically required. There are 14 spaces for the physical therapy center and 31 for the dialysis center, with four to spare, according to a city staff report.

Staff at the physical therapy building said they would need 27 parking spaces just for patients coming and going from visits with nine physical therapists, but city planner Eric Andersen said he examined Google satellite and street view images and "over the course of last three to four years there were a dozen available dates to view and the most that I saw in that parking lot was 18."

Email Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

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FREE Interactive Workshop

NEXT WORKSHOP

Thursday, May 29

7pm-8:30pm

"Coping with

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Chaplain Bruce D. Feldstein, MD

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Thursday, June 19

7pm-8:30pm

John Lehman,

Linda Sullivan Baity, PhD &

Marguerite Manteau-Rao, LCSW



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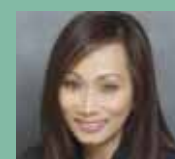


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June 2014

Community Health Education Programs

For a complete list of classes and class fees, lectures and health education resources, visit pamf.org/education.

Mountain View Center

701 E. El Camino Real
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Girls' Night Out Skin Care Seminar

June 11, 7 – 8:30 p.m.
Sandra Odenheimer, N.P.
PAMF Dermatology

Join us for a discussion on how to care for our skin, sunprotection, prevention of photoaging changes and tips for younger looking skin.



Sunnyvale Public Library

665 W. Olive Avenue
Sunnyvale
Registration is not required.

Test Your Eye-Q

June 18, 7 – 8:30 p.m.
Barbara Erny, M.D., PAMF Ophthalmology

An interactive session to learn about eye conditions including macular degeneration, dry eye and cataracts.

San Carlos Library

610 Elm Street
San Carlos
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The Ankle 101 Common problems and their treatments

June 23, 7 – 8:30 p.m.
Andrew Haskell, M.D., PAMF Orthopedic Surgery
Dr. Haskell will discuss a broad range of ankle conditions affecting everyone from the athlete to the couch potato. Find about the anatomy of the ankle, diagnostic tools and non-surgical and surgical treatments options.

Palo Alto Center

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Palo Alto
(650) 853-4873

Medicare Basics

June 30, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
HICAP of San Mateo County

A HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program) community educator will explain the benefits covered by Medicare Part A and B and how to choose a Part D plan that will save you money. Attend the presentation to learn the differences between a Medicare Advantage Plan and Medigap policies.



HICAP is a non-profit organization that is funded by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and overseen by the California Department of Aging. HICAP counselors do not sell or endorse insurance plans, companies or agents but provide objective information about Medicare and your options.

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Surprise pension costs for school districts

GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL WILL HIT DISTRICT BUDGETS HARD IN JULY

By Kevin Forestieri

School districts got a surprise last month when Gov. Jerry Brown announced a new plan to pay for the state's pension shortfall. If the budget revision goes through, school districts will pay millions more for teacher pensions, and could start paying more as soon as next month.

Right now school districts pay 8.25 percent of teacher payroll towards their retirement fund. Under the governor's revision, districts will have to pay 19.1 percent — phased in over the next seven years.

The increase is to help offset the \$74 billion funding shortfall of the California State Teachers' Retirement System, and the governor's plan is to eliminate that unfunded liability by the 2045-46 fiscal year. For local school districts, this means a 1.25 percent increase this year and a 1.6 percent increase every year after that.

At the Mountain View-Los Altos school board meeting last week, Associate Superintendent Joe White crunched the numbers: the school would have to reserve \$340,000 for the increase this year, \$786,000 the next year, and almost \$1.2 million the following year.

"The real crux to it is that this is only the beginning of it, because (Brown) has a seven-year plan," White said at the meeting.

When contributions finally reach 19.1 percent, MVLA will be putting well over \$3 million into pensions on top of what they're already paying — and it may continue to increase after that.

White said for now, students and parents won't have to worry about any new budget constraints or cuts to programs in the 2014-15 school year. However, as costs continue to

increase quickly over the years, the district may need to cut expenses to shoulder the costs.

The Mountain View Whisman School District is in a similar situation. The district will use cash reserves to deal with the initial 1.25 percent increase and there won't be any spending cuts for the coming school year, according to Terese McNamee, chief business officer for the district.

White said the district has been expecting increased pension costs for a long time, but not in a revision just a month and a half before the start of the budget year. He said the 2014-15 increase is still "up in the air," and there's action in the state Legislature for a lower increase this year or a delay until next year.

Despite the weird timing, White said it's good that the governor is finally dealing with the shortfall.

"Should it be funded? Absolutely, the sooner the better," White said. "It would've been nice to have some action back in January, but it's great that it's finally being done."

Along with school districts, teachers and the state will also pay more into pension contributions — albeit smaller increases. Teachers will go from paying 8 percent of their salary to 10.25 and the state will go from 3 to 6.3 percent — both over the next three years.

White said the state wasn't able to increase contributions in the last three or four years because the economy was too bad, and school districts were already struggling without the increased costs. The budget revision is the first big step in the post-recession economy to turn around a retirement fund that's projected to run out of money in just a few decades.

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

CRIME BRIEFS

► Continued from page 4

The victim reported that his pannier bags, motorcycle jacket, front beak, headlamp protector, GPS, tools and other belongings had all been stolen some time between 11:30 p.m. on Monday and 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, according to Sgt. Saul Jaeger of the Mountain View Police Department.

All the property had been taken from the victim's parked motorcycle. The pannier bags and motorcycle jacket are worth \$1,500 and \$1,320, respectively.

The total reported value of all the stolen property is about \$4,400.

Kevin Forestieri

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John Sanders

October 13, 1937 - May 19, 2014

John passed away peacefully at home with family and friends by his side. Born to Fred and Grace Sanders in Bridgeport, AL. John enlisted in the Navy in 1955 and was discharged at the Alameda Naval Base on Dec. 16 1958 and decided to make CA his home. In Feb., 1959 John joined the Los Altos Fire Department where he was employed for 30 years; for 20 of those years he was Fire Chief for Los Altos. He leaves behind his wife Fran of 52 years, sons Jon, Doug and Steve; Granddaughters Denise, Phoebe and Chloe; grandsons Kyran and Kayvon. Family and Friends are what mattered to him the most and after that it was Tuesday golf with his Buddies.



A Celebration Of Life will be held on June 9th 3pm at Callaghan Mortuary, 3833 East Ave., Livermore, Ca 94550

In lieu of flowers we would like donations sent to the Alameda County Community Food Bank in his memory.

PAID OBITUARY

California Estates & Fine Asian Arts Auction

Sunday, June 22nd, 2014 10:30am

Preview: Friday, June 20th 11:00am - 7:00pm: Saturday, June 21st 11:00am - 4:00pm

Sunday, June 22nd 9:00am - 10:30am



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To RSVP, please contact: Ting Conway 650.543.8588

Seminar for prospective clients only, please no real estate professionals.

Where:

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CalBRE# 01903224

Mi Pueblo officially emerges from bankruptcy

NO STORES TO CLOSE IN DEAL APPROVED BY JUDGE;
CHAIN INCLUDES A MARKET ON RENGSTORFF AVENUE

By Sue Dremann

Mi Pueblo Foods, the San Jose-based grocery chain that has a market in Mountain View, announced its formal exit from Chapter 11 reorganization Wednesday.

The company has also appointed a new CEO, Javier Ramirez, who comes with nearly 20 years of experience in the Hispanic food and grocery sector, the company said.

Mi Pueblo San Jose, Inc. had moved closer to exiting Chapter 11 on May 14, when a federal bankruptcy judge affirmed the company's amended reorganization plan. The plan allows the grocer to continue operating after it settled its financial differences with all but three of 29 creditors that had opposed the plan. Mi Pueblo will operate with normalized relationships with investors and suppliers under the plan, which was filed in federal court. No stores are expected to close.

Mi Pueblo received \$56 million in financing from Chicago-based investment firm Victory Park Capital (VPC) as part of the financial restructuring. The firm specializes in non-traditional investments, focusing on credit and private equity in distressed and improving middle-market companies. The company also has experience investing in companies that serve the Hispanic marketplace.

Mi Pueblo began operations in 1991 and eventually grew to its 21-store presence today, with locations in the Bay Area, Monterey Peninsula and Central Valley. The stores offer products and an environment modeled after hometown markets found in Mexico and Latin America.

Mi Pueblo and its real estate firm, Cha Cha Enterprises, filed for bankruptcy protection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in San Jose on July 22, 2013, after the chain was found to be out of



VERONICA WEBER

Diners gather in the brightly decorated taqueria inside Mi Pueblo market in East Palo Alto.

compliance with a provision in its agreement with Wells Fargo Bank regarding profitability ratios. A federal immigration audit required Mi Pueblo to replace workers whose documentation was under review, which caused a substantial increase in payroll expenses, according to court documents. Prior to its bankruptcy filing, on May 25, 2013, Mi Pueblo owed workers more than \$3 million in wages, taxes and benefits, and \$1.5 million for time off and vacations, according to court documents. Mi Pueblo and Cha Cha's combined debts exceeded \$36 million, according to court filings.

Under the reorganization plan, vendors entered into a minimum three-year trade credit plan under which they agree to continue to supply goods. Mi Pueblo paid off its undisclosed debt to Wells Fargo Bank and transferred certain assets from Cha Cha Enterprises to Mi Pueblo, including its check-cashing business.

"We have been a part of our communities since 1991, and thanks to the loyalty and support of our colaboradores (employees), vendors and cus-

tomers during this difficult period, we can say that today marks the beginning of a bright, new chapter for Mi Pueblo," new CEO Ramirez said in a statement. Mi Pueblo founder Juvenal Chavez will now serve as the company's board chairman.

"The road ahead will not be easy and we know that there is much work to be done, but we have already started to implement aggressive initiatives designed to reposition Mi Pueblo as a profitable entity and as a strong contributor to our local Hispanic communities. We are confidently looking forward to this new stage in the company's history and I personally am honored to join and support Mi Pueblo's incredible team of professionals," Ramirez said.

Under Ramirez, Mi Pueblo will focus on enhancing authentic Hispanic products, improving customer service and ensuring that products are sold at fair and competitive prices in the marketplace. The company also plans to introduce several new employee-benefit programs and initiatives focused on supporting local communities, he said.

Email Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com

CHIEF VERMEER

► Continued from page 1

in the history of Mountain View, and that the police department has worked with the community to create a walk- and bike-friendly city.

Vermeer said the police department has a great leadership team,

and he is both hopeful and confident in the city manager's choice for next chief of police.

Vermeer is leaving to become director at SIS, a private security contractor with clients that



Scott Vermeer

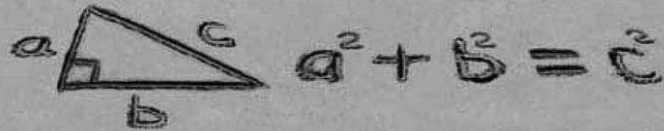
include Google. He said he'll continue to live in the Bay Area, but may not do a lot of work in Mountain View.

Vermeer's last day with the MVPD will be Aug. 3. The department will have a going-away party for Vermeer on July 17. He said it will be a casual event for the community to attend. ▣

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7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

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NORTH BAYSHORE

► Continued from page 1

At the heart of his front-page piece is Mountain View and Silicon Valley's housing shortage. King notes that Google's hometown is planning for 8,000 new homes and 20,000 new jobs by 2030, according to Mountain View's 2012 general plan, (though he doesn't mention that much more than that is in the planning pipeline). There is growing concern that all the job growth — without commensurate housing growth — is driving up housing costs and causing more commuter traffic.

King cuts to a major issue many have had with Mountain View — the city's refusal to build housing aimed at Google employees near its campus north of Highway 101. He writes that "when the city had the chance to strike out in a new direction, it froze." What he's referring to is the 2012 City Council vote against housing along North Shoreline Boulevard.

The council voted against what King describes as "a mixed-use corridor with 1,100 housing units above shops and cafes. The idea was to add a human scale to the clogged artery while creating housing options for younger workers who wouldn't mind small units if they were close

to their jobs, with things to do downstairs." Planning director Randy Tsuda is quoted calling it an opportunity to "prove the concept, see if it can expand."

While many tech employees might prefer to live in a more urban setting near their jobs rather than commute to and from San Francisco, Oakland or San Jose, City Council members Ronit Bryant, Jac Siegel, Laura Macias and Margaret Abe-Koga opposed the North Bayshore housing plan in a 4-3 vote in 2012.

King calls on Mountain View to change course, to be a model for the rest of Silicon Valley's more suburban cities, by building "engaging, inclusive twists on the suburban norm that other regions will seek to emulate — rather than traffic-choked, expensive enclaves that show the perils of sticking our heads in the sand."

King's column did not sit well with council member Ronit Bryant, who was spurred to write an op-ed in response, published in the *Voice* opinion section this week.

"While he has good things to say about our city, Mr. King is unhappy that we are not planning to build housing in North Bayshore, which he (and others) seem to see as some kind of panacea for the housing problems of the Bay Area," Bryant writes.

"Could we in Mountain View ever build enough to lower housing costs on the Peninsula?" Bryant writes. "I doubt it very much."

Bryant suggests that North Bayshore housing would drive away Mountain View's tech companies, though Google strongly supported the original North Bayshore housing plan. "Could we encourage businesses to leave or to stop adding jobs and then flood North Bayshore with housing instead?" she writes. "Perhaps. Would that be good for Mountain View or for our region? I don't think so."

Bryant concludes by saying that the council's chosen North Bayshore plan, without housing, is "more innovative: a magical place along a restored Bay and under the migratory birds' Pacific Flyway, where the landscape and the wildlife are protected and enhanced and high-tech individuals are inspired to greater creativity," She adds, "It will be a place where residents and employees find respite from the built environment" and that employees there will be connected to "services-rich" residential neighborhoods by new bike and pedestrian buildings and transit services.

In response to Bryant's op-ed, King said in an email "why is it an either/or? Why can't you have the flyway and open space AND interesting housing along Shoreline?"

"The reason I selected Moun-



MICHELLE LE

A new office development that will be home to WhatsApp at 250 Bryant St. is a flurry of activity on June 3.

tain View for the piece is that Mountain View is a city that really does seem to have such a remarkable set of opportunities," King said in a phone interview. "It does have the transit access, it does have the Bayshore access, it does have a desirability and creativity (to be both) suburban and settled but also be varied and dynamic with lots of places to live and explore."

"Mountain View with North Bayshore has a chance to pull the residential city into the business zone and at the same time use that as a mechanism to restore and improve the Shoreline as habitat," King told the *Voice*.

King suggested that the city reconsider "the idea that we have our life, which is the the way Mountain View has been and always should be, and then there is this thing on the other side of the 101 that generates lots of tax money, and that's terrific, but we'd just assume it isn't there."

"Mountain View has the chance in the North Bayshore area to really create an attractive, exciting sustainable and ecologically cool 21st century version of suburbia," King said. "Why not take the chance to see if it works?"

Lenny Siegel of the campaign for a Balanced Mountain View has personally known Bryant for years, but said her op-ed "misses the point" and took issue with many of her assertions.

"It's no surprise that people elsewhere in the Bay Area are upset at Mountain View," Siegel said. "I believe the council's overall planning strategy dumps problems created in Mountain View

elsewhere in the Bay Area. It sends well paid employees to neighborhoods in San Francisco and the East Bay, causing gentrification."

"It's not just other people (from other cities) being hurt," Siegel said. "People in Mountain View are being driven out or forced to live in overcrowded situations."

Siegel also took issue with Bryant's statement that the city is losing diversity simply because "Mountain View became such an attractive place to live."

"It's so attractive in the sense that it's a place where jobs are," Siegel said. "People will pay a lot of money to live close to where their jobs are. The council isn't hearing the community's concern that our quality of life is not just being undermined, but destroyed."

Bryant also says the North Bayshore housing did not include enough homes to support a grocery store and other services, which is often said to require a community of 5,000 homes. She calls the smaller number of homes in the 2012 plan a recipe for "temporary" housing. At the time, Bryant didn't stress this concern, but did compare the homes to factory dorm housing in China, where employees "do not live happily ever after."

"If indeed the number of housing units proposed for North Bayshore was too few, then they should have considered an option for more, not just less, and considered the environmental and social impacts of it," Siegel said.

Email Daniel DeBolt
at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

GUIDANCE COUNSELING AWARD

Los Altos High School counselor Ariel Rojas will receive the 2014 H.B. McDaniel Excellence in Counseling and Guidance Award on June 7 at an awards ceremony at Stanford University.

Award recipients must demonstrate exceptional leadership skills, significant contributions in guidance and counseling and have created an effective guidance program.

Rojas focuses his work on helping at-risk students, and has improved their retention and graduation rates, academic performance, attendance and discipline. For these students, he developed special academic skill-building classes, according to a press release. In the afternoons, he volunteers to tutor struggling students.

He also developed a program called "LUCHA and El Cafecito" that provides outreach to Latino parents and families. The program includes skill-building and educational workshops, as well as community outreach and parent-student involvement. It won the 2012 Glenn Hoffman Program Award.

He is also involved in the school's home visit program, which is used to reach out to incoming Latino eighth grade students and their families. He is the adviser of LAHS's Latino Student Union. It has become the largest club on campus, hosting events like Latino Summit Day and Cinco de Mayo.

MASTER GARDENER WORKSHOPS

Master Gardeners from the University of California Cooperative Extension are hosting free talks and workshops in Mountain View and Los Altos.

Marianne Mueller will give a talk called "Adding Arboretum All-Stars to Your Garden," about the UC Davis Arboretum All-Stars plants, at the Mountain View Public Library on Saturday, June 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Mountain View Public Library is located at 585 Franklin St.

The UC Davis Arboretum All-Stars are a collection of over 100 water-wise plants recommend for the Bay Area. They are suited to the local climate and require low amounts of water. Many are native to California.

Mueller will discuss different categories of plants, like shrubs and vines, and explain how to plant and maintain them, as well as provide tips for plant groupings.

The full list of Arboretum All-Stars can be found online at arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum. The last 30 minutes of the talk are scheduled for a question-and-answer session about the plants and how to garden in times of drought.

The Los Altos event, "Hot Topics for Gardening in June... and Debunking Garden Myths," will be held at the Los Altos Public Library on Wednesday, June 25, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The Los Altos Public Library can be found at 13 South San Antonio Road. Common gardening myths, like putting rocks and shards at the bottoms of containers to help drainage, will be debunked.

For more information or answers to any gardening questions, contact the UCCE Master Gardeners at 408-282-3105 or master-gardeners.org/email.

—Kayla Layaoen

Shoreline Amphitheatre, the City of Mountain View and Radio Disney Present:

The 4th of July Fireworks Spectacular with the
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Shoreline Amphitheatre Friday, July 4, 2014

Ticket Sales Begin Saturday, May 3

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- * To obtain your free or discounted tickets: **BRING THIS COUPON**, proof of residency (a driver's license **AND** current utility bill with a Mountain View address) or a 2014 Shoreline Resident Ticket ID card with valid ID to the Amphitheatre Box Office.
- Shoreline Amphitheatre Box Office Hours: Monday - Friday 12noon to 5:00p.m., Saturdays 10:00a.m. to 2:00p.m. Box office can be reached at (650) 967-4040.
- Doors open at 5:00p.m. with Radio Disney Family Festival.
- Get your free tickets by 2:00p.m. on Monday, June 23 unless sold out prior to this date.
- Discounted tickets can be purchased up to and including the day of the event.
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Helpful Tips!



- Easy access to the Amphitheatre is available from the Stevens Creek Trail and Permanente Creek Trails.
- Shoreline Amphitheatre will provide supervised bike parking for this event.
- Trail hours will be extended to allow public access after the event to walk or ride home.

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GUN CONTROL

► Continued from page 1

10 rounds (except for those who owned theirs before 2000), requires guns be locked up in a container when not in use, and requires that lost or stolen guns be reported to police within 48 hours. The measure passed with 66 percent of voters in favor.

Shortly thereafter six Sunnyvale residents sued the city for banning their ammunition magazines holding over 10 bullets, which the NRA claims are in fact not "high capacity" but have been sold with millions of guns over the years.

"They are making the claim that the Second Amendment protects their right to large capacity magazines and we disagree with that position," said Tony Schoenberg, an attorney representing the city of Sunnyvale. "And so far our argument has prevailed with the court."

Court rulings upholding the law have been appealed and the case may end up in the U.S. Supreme Court. Schoenberg added, "It is my understanding the NRA (National Rifle Association) is funding the litigation," for the six residents.

Challenging everything else in the ordinance is a second lawsuit against Sunnyvale brought by a Sunnyvale gun store, U.S. Firearms, owned by Eric Fisher, and the National Sports Shooting Foundation. The lawsuit argues that the new laws are in conflict with state laws, including a state privacy

protection law that would preempt the ammunition buyer log. Schoenberg said a county judge denied an injunction to temporarily suspend the portion of the law dealing with ammunition buyer data logs. The case is ongoing.

"It is a way that law enforcement can find people in possession of firearms illegally," Schoenberg said of the required ammunition buyer database. "If they are buying bullets it suggests they have guns."

Mountain View could implement similar laws by a simple City Council vote — or by asking voters to decide at the ballot box.

"Given something as contentious as this (a ballot measure) would be a better way to go," Kasperzak said.

The city would be violating state law, said Lawrence Keane, general counsel for the National Sports Shooting Foundation.

"State law pre-empts local jurisdictions from regulating the lawful sale of firearms and ammunition products," Keane said. "Mountain View would simply be violating state law if it attempted to regulate an area the state Legislature says that it will control to the exclusion of local regulations."

"As we've seen in the recent tragedy, all the gun control laws in the world will not stop the actions of criminals," Keane said, adding that stopping criminals would require "more police officers on the street, more prosecutors in the courtrooms and more prison cells."

If Mountain View were to face legal challenges, legal costs may not be a concern. Schoenberg said his firm is providing its services for free in the Sunnyvale case, and other attorneys may do the same for Mountain View.

"We do have a network of pro bono firms that we work with and when a jurisdiction needs help, we send out a request to the firms and, frequently, we are able to find one that is willing and able to help," said Laura Cutilletta, a senior staff attorney at the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, in an email.

Such litigation "tends to be expensive," Schoenberg said.

"Our firm is doing this pro bono for the city of Sunnyvale because we think these are important cases," Schoenberg said.

Greg David, owner of Eddy's Shooting Sports in Mountain View and a former City Council candidate, declined to comment about how such laws might affect his business as a gun dealer.

Email Daniel DeBolt
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243 Green Valley Rd., Ste. A

Wed, June 25
Morgan Hill
18511 Mission View Dr., Ste. 120

Thurs, June 26
Fremont
1999 Mowry Ave., Ste. C1

Fri, June 27
Los Altos
658 Fremont Ave.

BULLIS GROUP

► Continued from page 5

of the school's revenue per student. Unlike neighboring school districts, which can rely on commercial property tax or state and federal funds, LASD's budget is almost entirely made up of parcel tax and residential property tax revenue.

The total LASD revenue per student ends up at around \$10,300 per student — significantly less than Palo Alto Unified School District, and a little higher than the Mountain View Whisman School District.

Seither called the ad a non-specific slam against the district. He said if the goal of Each Student Counts is to be factual, unbiased and improve the district, they shouldn't have used the flat parcel tax number without the needed context.

"Are they suggesting we cut the (parcel tax) funding and shift the burden?" Seither said. "Should we lean on the PTA instead? How would we grow commercial tax revenue?"

According to a statement by the Los Altos School District, the ad also misstated the parcel tax of Menlo Park City Elementary School District. The ad claims the parcel tax is \$178 per parcel per year, which is true — for one of the four parcel taxes levied. Added together, the parcel taxes in Menlo Park City are \$809, higher than in Los Altos. The statement calls the miscalculation an "egregious factual error," and criticizes the use of a per-parcel metric to judge fiscal responsibility and outcomes.

Seither said it's curious that the group would attack parcel taxes, which were approved by voters without the use of deception.

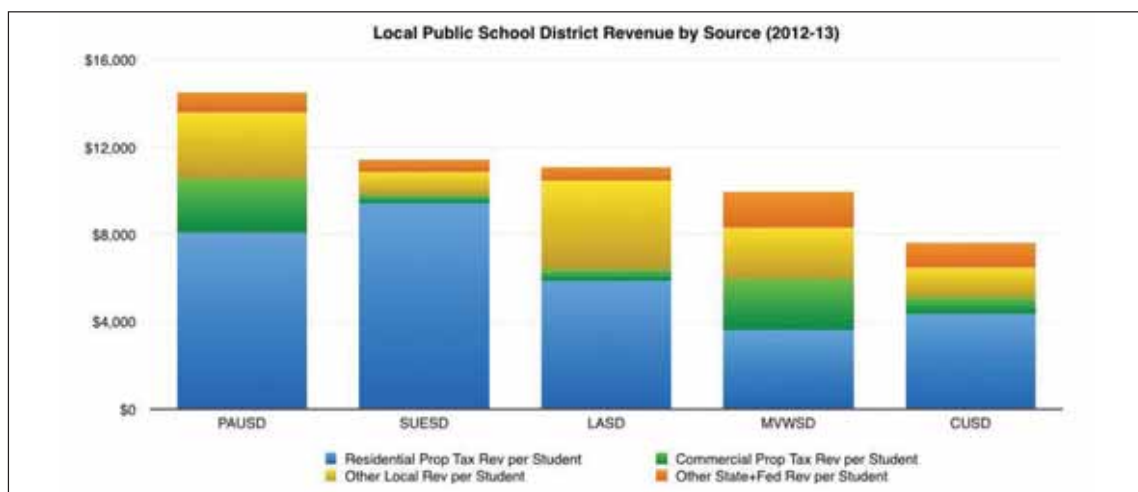
"Nobody is pulling wool over their eyes. People approve the parcel taxes because they want good teachers and a range of programs at the schools," Seither said.

The ongoing debate between Los Altos School District and Bullis Charter School may also be tangentially involved in the conflict as well. Seither said Fagen is a parent of a BCS student and very critical of LASD, and was active in the protests after a facilities dispute led to a student lockout last year.

Each Student Counts says one of its goals is to promote fiscal responsibility and transparency in the Los Altos School District. But the district appears to have a pretty good track record for both, according to Randy Kenyon, the district's associate superintendent. Los Altos has received the Meritorious Budget Award 14 years in a row for its excellence in accurate and transparent budget presentation.

The district was also awarded the Certificate of Achievement of Excellence in Financial Reporting for the last 10 years by the Government Finance Officers Association. The certificate is awarded to local governments for full disclosure and transparency of financial reports. ▣

The sources of funding, per pupil, are shown for local school districts, including Palo Alto Unified, Saratoga Union Elementary, Los Altos, Mountain View Whisman and Cupertino Unified.



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This event is free and open to the public. Please register, seating is limited.



■ A & E BRIEFS

THE KIDS CAN DANCE

Like any proud parent, the, Inna Bayer of the Bayer Ballet Company wants her children — or, more precisely, her students — to have the chance to shine. As such, the Mountain View-based ballet company and school is inviting the public to its “Springtime Novelettes” recital this weekend, so that the community might see just what the young Bayer dancers are capable of achieving.

On June 7 and 8, Bayer stu-

dent dancers, age 6 and up, will perform in a program featuring variations on some of the most celebrated ballets of all time — including Flames of Paris, Le Corsaire, Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty.

These are “masterpieces of classical ballet and unique character dances,” Bayer says through a thick Ukrainian accent.

Bayer says that inviting the community is important. The students could practice all their lives and never demonstrate what

they’ve worked so hard to learn except for their parents and close friends. But what would be the point of that?

Performing before a live audience is part of ballet — and all of the performing arts for that matter — Bayer explains. “This is why we perform. It is good for the students. It makes them happy. It makes them proud.”

It is good for the community, as well, Bayer reasons. It turns other children on to the possibility that they, too, could be

ballet dancers, she says. Plus ballet can be inspiring to people of all ages — no matter the age of the performers. “It’s always a good thing to see dancing youth on stage in beautiful costumes,” Bayer says.

Springtime Novelettes will show twice — on June 7 at 5:30 p.m. and June 8 at 2:30 p.m. — at the Menlo-Atherton Center for the Performing Arts, at 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton. Tickets are \$25. For more information, visit bayerballetacademy.com or call Brown Paper Tickets at 1-800-838-3006.

—Nick Veronin

TheatreWorks’ 2012 production of “Triangle.”

Shively made his Broadway debut in 2010, when he starred as Jean-Michel in “La Cage Aux Folles.” He has also appeared in several movies, including “Hairbrained,” “Syrup” and “Le Poison.”

The Arts Council of the Silicon Valley presented Kelley, who founded TheatreWorks, with the Legacy Laureate award in 2012 for his lifetime of artistic achievement. The Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle presented him with both their Paine Knickerbocker award for lifetime achievement and for his direction of TheatreWorks’ productions of four different performances. After 44 years, Kelley has directed over 150 TheatreWorks productions.

Craig Lucas, the playwright behind “Marry Me A Little,” collaborated with director and producer Norman René in 1981 to create the musical. The two created many more theater productions together, including “Blue Window” and “Prelude to a Kiss.”

The show’s musical director, William Liberatore, is a music and choir teacher at Gunn High School.

“Marry Me A Little,” began previews at the Mountain View Center for Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View, on June 4. The play runs every day of the week, except Mondays, through June 29. For tickets and information, call (650) 463-1960 or visit www.TheatreWorks.org.

THEATREWORKS DOES SONDSHEIM

TheatreWorks is closing out its 2013-14 season with the Stephen Sondheim musical, “Marry Me A Little.”

The musical, directed by TheatreWorks’ artistic director Robert Kelley, follows two lonely New Yorkers — a man and a woman — as they while away their days in separate apartments, thinking about each other. The two have no idea they live just a floor away. Sharon Rietkerk and A.J. Shively play the lead characters, who are only ever identified by the pronouns “her” and “him.”

Rietkerk has appeared in musicals with TheatreWorks and other theater companies, like the San Jose Repertory Theatre and Berkeley Playhouse. Some of her past plays include “Little Women” and “Mrs. Hughes.” She worked alongside Shively in



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Los Altos School District Is Not Keeping Up With Our Neighbors

The LASD Board of Trustees has failed to institute a competitive curriculum

	Palo Alto Unified	Cupertino Union	Mountain View Whisman	Los Altos School District
Foreign Language for K - 6	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL <small>No foreign language classes.</small>
Geometry Widely Available in 8th Grade	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL <small>Geometry is not widely available.</small>
Subject Credentialed Teachers for 6th Grade	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS <small>Generalist teachers teach 6th grade.</small>
Magnet, Immersion or Choice Program	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS <small>No Magnet, Immersion or other choice programs.</small>

Contact the Trustees and tell them we all want the best public education for our children.

Tamara Logan (tlogan@lasdschools.org), Doug Smith (dsmith@lasdschools.org)
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Source: www.ed-data.k12ca.us

ELECT

► Continued from page 5

Tuesday’s primary election drew only 20.6 percent of the county’s 805,922 registered voters, according to preliminary data from the county registrar.

That compares to 43 percent of voters who turned out in the previous gubernatorial primary in 2010 and more than 37 percent in 2006, according to the Registrar of Voters’ website.

—Bay City News Service/
 Palo Alto Weekly staff



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■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

As city planners maxed out, housing stalls too

The acknowledgment last week that the city's 13 planners are maxed out and cannot fit any more projects into their pipeline left seven office proposals and a small residential project waiting in line, probably until the end of the year.

This is an unexpected respite in what has seemed like an unending torrent of office development proposals from developers hoping to cash in on what is one of the hottest commercial property markets in Silicon Valley. And there could be much more to come when the spigot is turned on again. In answer to a query from the council about how much of the 3.4 million square feet in the pending precise plan for the North Bayshore has been proposed or approved, a zoning official answered 1.7 million, exactly half of the maximum allowed.

Using a conservative estimate of one employee per 200 square feet, the 1.4 million square feet already proposed and the 300,000 square feet already approved would bring in 8,500 new employees, and if the entire 3.4 million square feet were in place, 17,000 new employees would make their way to the North Bayshore every work day, joining over 13,000 drivers and thousands more shuttle riders who already make the daily commute to this high tech mecca.

A prime example of how quickly and fluid this market has become was evident when the council learned that after it scaled back a 1 million-square-foot commercial project at 700 E. Middlefield to 750,000 square feet, Google reportedly bought the 24-acre property for \$250 million, an unprecedented amount for the area. Council members wanted to know if the purchase meant the project could drop off the Planning Department's docket, freeing up space for projects waiting in the pipeline.

But even amid the huge office project proposals, the council could not muster the votes to approve what in contrast was a tiny request to renovate an older housing complex at 777 W. Middlefield Road, replacing eight units with 46 new apartments. The project had failed in a vote last year, and failed again when some council members said it was outside "change areas" in the new general plan — areas where new zoning would encourage redevelopment.

Council member Mike Kasperzak made an unsuccessful plea

for the doomed housing project, saying, "We've been bombarded with (talk of the) jobs-housing imbalance. Everything we've been talking about is thousands of square feet of office space, and maybe 38 (housing) units."

But his idea to let the project to slip through did not gain enough support, with Mayor Chris Clark saying, "I'm conflicted there. If Rreefs (the developer whose 1 million square-foot office project was turned down) drops off (due to the site's sale to Google) and that really does free up staff resources, I'm not sure it has more merit than some others."

One small upgrade and the net addition of 38 housing units will hardly impact the huge jobs housing imbalance in Mountain View, but it would indicate to developers that there might be a sympathetic ear on the council if good housing projects are brought forward.

Council member Ronit Bryant appeared sympathetic to seeing more housing in the mix, saying the city should find ways to "help these older (apartment) complexes, like the one at 777 Middlefield Road."

"Had the council agreed to let it go through Gatekeeper, we might have found ways to preserve its affordability," she said.

But Bryant's arguments, that preserving older complexes would be better than "losing all the complexes and the open spaces and trees that go with that," failed to gain traction. Other members seemed convinced that renovating older buildings would mean higher rents, which could drive more lower- and middle-income tenants from the city.

Given the council's current make-up, it does not appear likely that the city will revise the 2012 general plan to create zoning for adequate housing any time soon. Which is all the more reason for Mountain View residents to pay close attention to the upcoming race for three open City Council seats in November. If at least one housing advocate is elected, the current no-holds-barred office development might be tempered by badly needed housing. Unfortunately, even if new housing is approved, there is no way for the council to control rent levels, which already are forcing many longtime city residents out of the community. ■

■ LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

DEFORESTATION AT MAYFIELD

The *Voice* article on Google's wanton destruction of Mayfield trees correctly stated that Monta Loma residents who, over many years, opposed developing the site cited "a loss of the site's many trees as a main reason for their opposition."

I am one of the neighbors who attended countless meetings to plead with the developers to spare our urban forest, which was designed to offer something beautiful for every season, from the frilly pink blossoms of spring to fall gold and scarlet to

rival New England's maples.

At the last meeting I attended, in the buyer's on-site trailer, we were told that the neglected trees could very likely be restored with proper care and watering, and that they would save as many as they could. When Google took over the property, we rejoiced, certain that the example of their leafy main campus would extend to the new site. I was out of town at the time of the deforestation, but neighbors told me the cutting took place at 2 a.m., which, if true, sounds pretty underhanded to me. ■

Susan A. Barkan, Laura Lane

FLASH QUORUM



■ GUEST OPINION
VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Council member shares vision for North Bayshore

By Ronit Bryant

Recently John King of the San Francisco Chronicle published an article entitled “Mountain View stuck in past when it comes to housing policy.” While he has good things to say about our city, Mr. King is unhappy that we are not planning to build housing in North Bayshore, which he (and others) seem to see as some kind of panacea for the housing problems of the Bay Area.

As a Mountain View resident of more than 25 years and a two-term member of the City Council, I disagree.

Mountain View, with an area of 12 square miles, is one of the densest cities on the Peninsula. In North Bayshore we host a regional jobs center that contributes to the economic vitality of the entire area. This regional hub, different from the remote office complexes that abound around the Bay, is an energetic 20-minute walk from downtown Mountain View where I live.

Our downtown is a great example of the engaging neighborhoods that Mr. King praises: walkable, desirable, with excellent services (grocery store, elementary school, public library, buses and shuttles, and one of the most heavily used Caltrain stations on the Peninsula).

Downtown Mountain View has a range of housing options (from single-family residences to condos and apartments, new and old) and a population that continues to be diverse in age and income (though probably less diverse than it was before Mountain View became such an attractive place to live). Downtown is also home to a surprising number of start-ups and small high-tech companies, whose employees swarm Castro Street at all hours of the day.

We recently completed our General Plan 2030 (with broad community input) and are now working on precise plans for our identified change areas to turn the vision into reality. In addition to the North Bayshore Precise Plan (which does not include new housing), the city is working on precise plans for both El Camino and San Antonio to encourage vibrant and diverse communities to grow and thrive where neighborhood services already exist. In the near future, I expect many new residents to move into these areas. They will benefit from existing services and make it possible to provide better services (more parks and retail, for example) for current residents.

I cannot predict how many housing units will actually be built — the city’s role is not to

build housing, but to plan how to accommodate growth while preserving what we treasure. Our housing element identifies appropriately zoned areas (not including North Bayshore) that could be developed to meet the

I cannot predict how many housing units will actually be built — the city’s role is not to build housing, but to plan how to accommodate growth while preserving what we treasure

—RONIT BRYANT

housing numbers Mountain View was allocated by the state-mandated regional housing needs allocation process (which takes into consideration the expected growth in households and jobs in the Bay Area). This number (about 2,900 housing units by 2023) includes units at different levels of affordability (not just luxury housing), and we are using all tools legally available to us (and they are not many, including housing impact fees and below market

rate in-lieu fees) to increase our supply of affordable housing.

During the General Plan process, we looked at the possibility of turning North Bayshore into a mix of housing and businesses — allowing residential uses while making it possible for our existing businesses to experience some growth without having to move away. North Bayshore businesses and Mountain View residents participated and the City Council was presented with an alternative that included adding about 1,400 residential units along Shoreline Boulevard by the year 2040. This number is not enough to support services like a neighborhood school or a grocery store (researchers usually consider a store to require about 5,000 residents). For me this proposal was a recipe for temporary housing (not necessarily inexpensive housing), without services and separated from the rest of the city by a wide freeway, U.S. 101.

Could we encourage businesses to leave or to stop adding jobs and then flood North Bayshore with housing instead? Perhaps. Would that be good for Mountain View or for our region? I don’t think so. And could we in Mountain View ever build enough to lower housing costs on the Peninsula?

I doubt it very much.

I think the vision that we on the Mountain View City Council have been developing for North Bayshore over the course of many public meetings (and the direction in which the precise plan is moving) is more innovative: a magical place along a restored Bay and under the migratory birds’ Pacific Flyway, where the landscape and the wildlife are protected and enhanced and high-tech individuals are inspired to greater creativity. To achieve this, development will be focused along transportation corridors and pushed back from natural areas. We are discussing trip caps, a focus on active transportation (biking and walking), and human-scaled architecture. There will be green streets, sustainable buildings, restored wetlands. It will be a place where residents and employees find respite from the built environment. And all this connected to services — rich residential neighborhoods by pedestrian and bike bridges (and an improved public or private/public transit system for those who choose to live elsewhere). With the gift that we have in North Bayshore, we can be innovative in our own way. ■

Ronit Bryant is a member of the Mountain View City Council

■ GUEST OPINION
VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Has the council lost sight of ‘balanced’ development?

By Betsy Collard

Dear City Council: Over the past few years there has been a considerable amount of development taking place in Mountain View, and in the process, it seems to me that we have lost sight of the importance of balance in our community.

There are really three issues in this regard that concern me:

■ The lack of balance in the housing being built with the resulting high cost of rents

■ The lack of balance in the types of commercial enterprises being favored

■ The lack of balance between the number of jobs vs. the number of housing units being built.

In regard to housing imbalance, all the new housing being built in Mountain View is high-end. As each new apartment complex is built, the rents quoted

rise — some as high as \$5,300 per month for a two-bedroom apartment. Undoubtedly these units can be filled by the young engineers and technical employees in the area, but at what cost to our community as a whole?

I watch as people I know well are being pushed out of Mountain View because of escalating rents. One friend, a 17-year resident, recently retired only to see her rent increased by 30 percent and thus is having to leave the area. Another friend was evicted from his apartment because the owners were going to redo the units and upscale the building. He now rents a room for an unbelievable amount. Another, a single parent active in our schools who was born and raised in Mountain View has had her rent go up by 20 percent and can’t find a place to rent that she can afford. These are just three friends’ situations but there are

others that I am familiar with that are all too similar.

What has happened to our idea of a balanced community where people from different socioeconomic backgrounds could live? Will there no place for people of modest incomes to live in Mountain View? Where do people go who are in service jobs and whose salaries are not high-tech? Is this the community we want? Are these the values we embrace?

And commercial development in Mountain View threatens to displace the small, independently owned businesses that give this community texture and character. There are a number of examples of such businesses, but the issue comes into sharp focus for me with the new San Antonio Village (hardly a “village”) and the Milk Pail.

With the pending approval of phase two of the San Anto-

nio project there is a very real possibility that The Milk Pail, a 40-year-old, independently-owned Mountain View business, will not survive. Not only does the Milk Pail serve a large number of people from various socioeconomic backgrounds, it is the kind of establishment that provides a valuable counterpoint to large scale developments with chain commercial retail businesses.

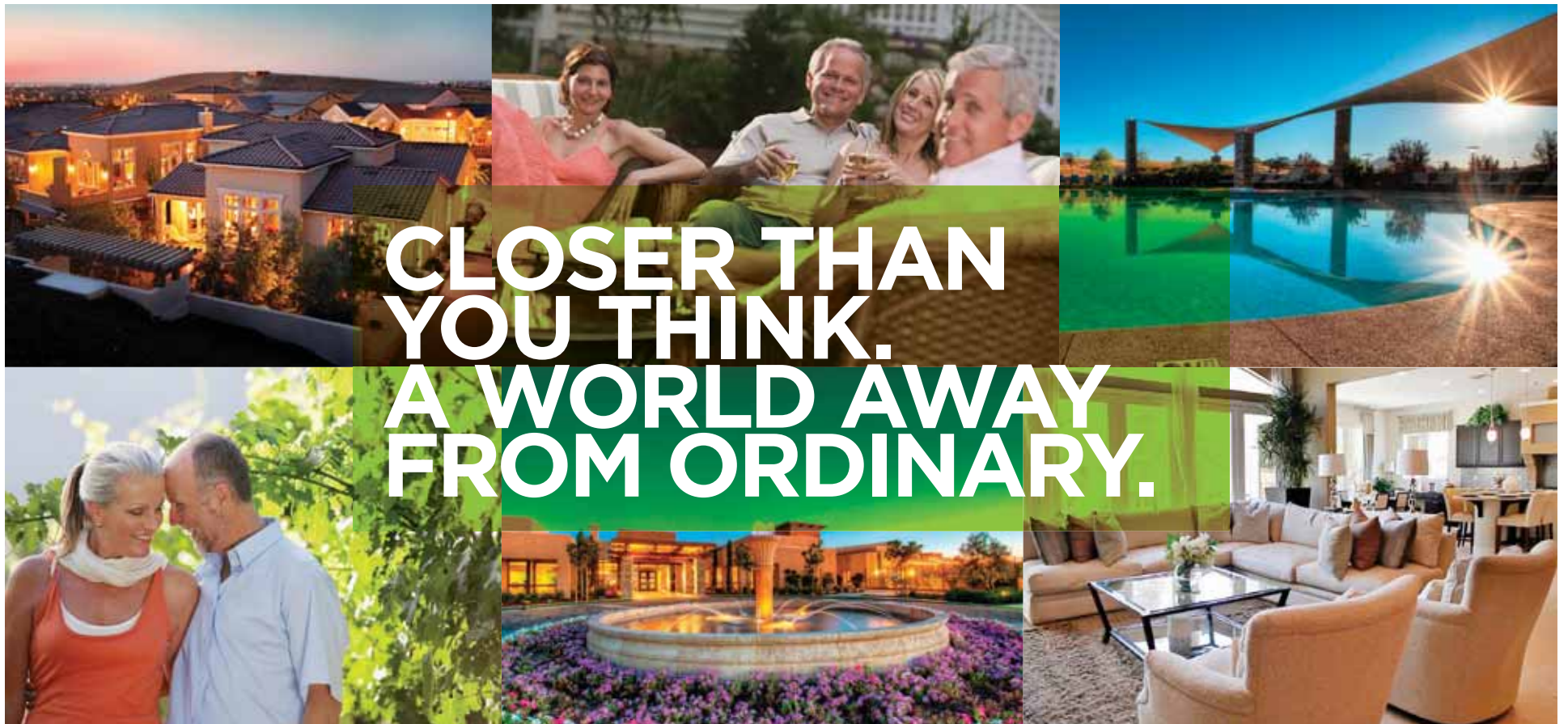
The housing/jobs imbalance is another concern. Currently there are numerous projects coming before the council that would substantially increase the amount of office space in Mountain View (e.g., Merlone Geier, 700 E. Middlefield and the possibility of proposals from LinkedIn and others). If these projects are approved they will increase the imbalance between housing and jobs that already exists in this community. We need housing and it should be built

before any further development of office space. We don’t need more high-end housing, we need thoughtful housing that takes into consideration diversity and traffic, and that will build a sense of community.

To me, above all else, all of this is a question of the soul of this community. Don’t we want a community that recognizes and embraces the importance of balance and diversity — big and small, new and old, wealthy and not so wealthy? I, and I think a whole lot of other Mountain View residents, vote for balanced and diverse.

I urge the Council not to approve phase two of the Merlone-Geier project and instead take the time to develop a plan that addresses our housing needs and our desire for a more balanced community. ■

Betsy Collard lives on Sherland Avenue.



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