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WEEKEND | 25

NOVEMBER 7, 2014 VOLUME 22, NO. 41

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Showalter, Rosenberg and Siegel win council seats

ELECTION AN APPARENT VICTORY FOR ADVOCATES OF HOUSING IN NORTH BAYSHORE

By Daniel DeBolt

Mountain View may eventually see some big changes to its landscape as a result of Tuesday's City Council election, which creates a new council majority that favors allowing a large new residential neighborhood development near Google headquarters.

As results rolled in for the most competitive and unpredictable City Council election in years, residents and candidates eagerly watched the results Tuesday night to see who would take three open seats vacated by Jac Siegel, Margaret Abe-Koga

and Ronit Bryant.

Pat Showalter, Ken Rosenberg, and Lenny Siegel held the lead as the ballots were counted and election night parties were held across the city. The trend continued until all precincts reported their results Wednesday morning, but a number of provisional and mail ballots have yet to be counted.

Showalter topped all the candidates with 16.6 percent of the vote. Rosenberg held 14.8 percent and Siegel had 13.3 percent. Trailing them was Lisa Matichak with 11.4 percent, Greg Unangst

► See **COUNCIL VOTE**, page 14



MICHELLE LE

Pat Showalter rejoins the election night party after giving a live interview at KMVT.

Walter, incumbents win high school district race

BOARD MEMBERS AND FORMER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER HAVE BIG LEAD IN MOUNTAIN VIEW-LOS ALTOS DISTRICT

By Kevin Forestieri

Two incumbents and a former Mountain View Whisman district trustee are the top three vote-getters in the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District board election. Election results as of Wednesday morning show challenger Fiona Walter in the lead, closely followed by incumbents Debbie Torok and Joe Mitchner.

There were seven candidates for three seats on the school board, and the initial barrage of election results Tuesday night showed a comfortable lead for Walter, Torok and Mitchner.

Walter appears to be the biggest winner in the election,



Fiona Walter



Debbie Torok



Joe Mitchner

receiving 6,868 votes and just shy of 20 percent. Right behind her was Torok with 6,181 votes (18.5 percent) and Mitchner with 6,044 votes (18 percent).

Candidates Sanjay Dave and Dana Bunnett tracked at 4,650 (13.9 percent) and 4,408 (13.2 percent), respectively. Trailing them were Doug Moore at 2,936 (8.8 percent) and Kevin Kramer with 2,386 (7.1 percent).

Fiona Walter was cautious-

ly optimistic with her early lead as she attended an election night party at Steins Beer Garden and Restaurant with

Walter said she was thrilled with the election results, and wanted to give a "huge thanks" to the team effort that people put into her campaign. She said she didn't run a top-down campaign with leadership roles, a treasurer or a campaign manager, and

► See **MVLA VOTE**, page 18

Measure N school bond too close to call

By Kevin Forestieri

Early election results show Measure N is just shy of the 55 percent of the vote needed to pass the \$150 million Los Altos School District bond in the Nov. 4 election.

Election results Wednesday morning put the bond at 5,004 yes votes, or 54.9 percent with all precincts reporting — losing by only eight votes. Because there are still more ballots yet uncounted, it is too early to determine whether the bond will succeed.

Absentee, provisional and last-minute vote-by-mail ballots could tip the balance, as the Santa Clara County elections office continues to verify and count votes this week.

Associate Superintendent Randy Kenyon said it was a difficult

election night because results came in at a slow pace, and the bond struggled to make the 55 percent of the vote.

"It was disappointed to see the results of Measure N because it's so close," Kenyon said.

The results may come as a surprise to the "Yes on N" crowd, which out-organized and out-spent the opposition and put more than \$100,000 into the effort to pass the school bond, including a \$5,000 donation from the Parent-Teacher Associations of each school in the district.

In contrast, there were several "No on N" campaigns that spent less than \$1,000 each, according to school district resident David Roode.

Kenyon, along with Superintendent Jeff Baier, both said

► See **MEASURE N VOTE**, page 6

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Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in downtown Mountain View. Photos and interviews
by Madeleine Gerson and Natalia Nazarova.

*If you could create a startup
company, what problems would
you try to solve?*



"I would promote more bike commuting to lower the impact on the environment and get people in better shape and save them some money."

Zach Buechler, **Santa Clara**



"I would make a media application oriented to (foreign workers). I've tried to find a warm home here but it's so different here."

Grace Liu, **Santa Clara**



"I'd create a company to make people more aware of their thought patterns. They will become more aware of how to become happier throughout their day."

Rony Krell, **Mountain View**



"There has hardly been any noise since the time of Ford. So, I would definitely do what Elon Musk is doing with Tesla."

Guatam Madaan,
Mountain View



"I'd like to create a platform which can securely share all the medical documents of patients across borders. People can start learning algorithms so that we can have more people trying to take a whip at a problem."

Vekatesh Arivazhagan,
Mountain View

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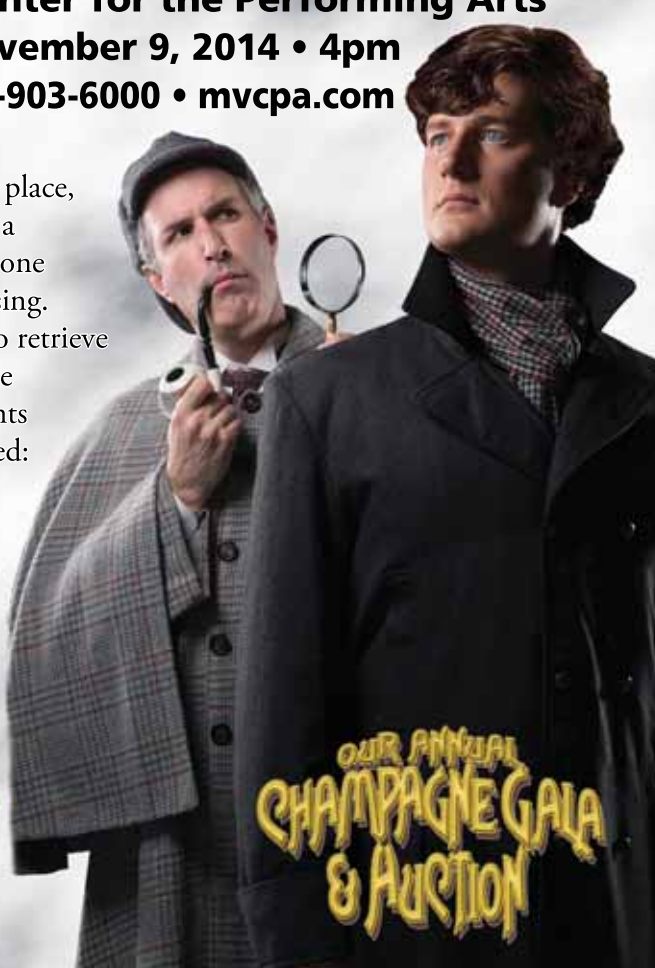
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LocalNews

■ CRIME BRIEFS

ARREST IN PURSE-SNATCHING

A 24-year-old Palo Alto man was arrested on Halloween night after he allegedly grabbed a woman's purse and made off with it into the men's bathroom at Molly Magee's in Mountain View.

According to police, Daniel Esquivel took the purse from the counter area of the bar and entered the bathroom with it just after noon on Friday, Oct. 31. Security staff was already in the bathroom confronting Esquivel on the alleged theft before the victim, a 41-year-old Redwood City woman, realized her purse was gone.

Police say Esquivel fought with security staff and was taken into custody when officers arrived, where he continued to be "uncooperative" and fought with police officers during the arrest process, according to Sgt. Saul Jaeger of the Mountain View Police Department. There were no injuries, and the purse was returned to the woman.

Esquivel was arrested on charges of petty theft, battery and resisting a police officer. Police said he was also in violation of his probation and received a probation hold. Esquivel was booked into San Jose Main Jail without bail.

Esquivel was previously arrested in June after he allegedly attacked and robbed a group of five teenagers at a parking garage in Palo Alto. The group of teens told Palo Alto police they were throwing small, white "noise-makers" off of the parking garage roof and hit Esquivel with one. Police said Esquivel confronted the teens and shoved one of them, demanded money from another and threatened to throw them off the roof.

Kevin Forestieri

■ POLICE LOG

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 1000 block N. Rengstorff Av., 10/30
 2400 block Charleston Rd., 10/30
 700 block E. El Camino Real, 10/31
 1100 block Castro St., 11/3
 200 block W. Dana St., 11/3
 500 block W. Middlefield Rd., 11/3
 1000 block El Monte Av., 11/3
 700 block E. El Camino Real, 10/31

BATTERY

1400 block Plymouth St., 10/29
 200 block Castro St., 10/31

COMMERCIAL BURGLARLY

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 700 block W. Dana St., 10/31
 400 block Ellis St., 11/2

GRAND THEFT

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 800 block Church St., 10/29
 1100 block Rose Av., 11/3

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600 block Tyrella Ave., 10/29
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MICHELLE LE

Candidate Margaret Abe-Koga talks with Melton Wong at an election party held at Steins Beer Garden and Restaurant.

Fung, Reeder win Healthcare District seats

REEDER RETURNS FOR FIFTH TERM, FUNG JOINS AS THE ONLY HOSPITAL PHYSICIAN

By Kevin Forestieri

Incumbent David Reeder and neurosurgeon Peter Fung won the two seats up for election on the El Camino Healthcare District board, both taking a sizable lead over Councilwoman Margaret Abe-Koga.

As of Wednesday morning's vote tally, Fung led the race at 36.3 percent of the vote, followed by Reeder at 35.4 percent. Abe-Koga took 28.3 percent of the vote.

As a practicing neurologist



Peter Fung



David Reeder

for over 35 years, Fung said he wanted to focus on improving access to medical care in the district, address mental health issues and curb the rate of obesity and lack of physical activity. He also said the district

needs to commit more money towards promoting health programs throughout the district, and bolster funds that go into the RotaCare Free Clinic in Mountain View.

Reeder, who has spent 16 years on the board, said throughout his campaign that he wanted to stay on the board and implement ambitious hospital projects. He said El Camino Hospital is trying to create a "continuum" of care where the

► See **EL CAMINO BOARD**, page 17

Kremen wins Santa Clara Valley Water District seat

CHALLENGER OUTS INCUMBENT SCHMIDT IN SURPRISINGLY EXPENSIVE RACE

By Sue Dremann

The founder of Match.com, Gary Kremen, has won a seat on the Santa Clara Valley Water District board, with 51.62 percent of the vote to incumbent Brian Schmidt's 48.38 percent, with all 212 precincts reporting. The seat represents the cities of Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Gatos.

While provisional ballots are

yet to be counted, Kremen led all Tuesday night as votes were tallied. He had garnered 18,063 votes as of Wednesday morning to Schmidt's 16,926.

Schmidt said early Tuesday evening that he was hoping the percentage would shift as more returns were counted. On Wednesday morning, he had provisionally congratulated Kremen, he said.

"It's highly likely he's won. But

20 percent of absentee ballots have not been counted," he said. Theoretically, something could change, but it's unlikely, he said.

Schmidt said he does not have any plans to run again.

"It's a very different campaign from the one I ran four years ago. And quite frankly, I need to earn more than \$32,000 a year. This was a significant pay cut from

► See **WATER DISTRICT**, page 17

Incumbents ahead in Mountain View Whisman race

by Kevin Forestieri

Residents in Mountain View appear to have voted both incumbents back onto the Mountain View Whisman school board Tuesday. Ellen Wheeler and Philip Palmer both are poised for re-election with early leads over the two challengers for two seats on the board.

As of Wednesday's election results, Wheeler kept a commanding lead at 36.5 percent of the vote. Palmer came in a distant second at 23.5 percent, with a slim lead over challenger Greg Coladonato, with 22.5 percent. Challenger Hafsa Mirza got 17.5 percent of the vote.

Coladonato is the president of the Slater neighborhood association and serves on the board facilities committee. Mirza is the president of the Los Altos Mountain View PTA Council.

Wheeler attended the election night event at Steins Beer Garden and Restaurant along with candidates for other races, and said she was happy with the election results thus far. She said people knew her for all the work that she's done for the school district over the last 12 years when they voted her for re-election.

"People respect the district and what they've done," Wheeler said, noting that test scores have gone up significantly since she joined the board.

Wheeler ran a modest campaign and spent less than \$1,000 throughout the election season. She made fliers and walked them around door-to-



Ellen Wheeler



Philip Palmer

door, and bought a lot of signs to get the word out, which she said was an important part of running for re-election.

"People want to see that you're out working for their vote," Wheeler said.

Coladonato said he gave his bid for the school board his best shot, but trailed Palmer by a little over 100 votes. He said what struck him about the results was the low voter turnout. After polls closed, the vote tally hovered just over 10,000 votes, compared to over 40,000 in the last school board election.

State officials predicted that California could see a record low in voter turnout this year. There are still votes remaining to be counted in Santa Clara County, so there is a small possibility that Coladonato and Palmer's positions could change in the final tally.

The district has been a hotbed for contentious issues throughout the election season, as the school board grappled with the debate on teacher compensation and the teachers union's dissatisfaction with what the district was willing to offer. Parents and teachers also questioned the district's ample

► See **VOTE**, page 11



MICHELLE LE

Gary Kremen waited for election night returns at a party at Steins Beer Garden in Mountain View.

Voters OK City Council pay raise

By Daniel DeBolt

After council members complained that they are paid less than minimum wage, Mountain View voters gave their elected representatives a raise on Tuesday.

Measure A, which would raise City Council pay from \$600 a month to \$1,000 a month with automatic raises, was favored by 60 percent of voters, according to election results Wednesday morning. It was a wide margin compared to a 2006 effort to

boost the salary to \$1,500 which failed 52 percent to 48 percent.

Council members said their \$600 a month equaled \$5 an hour at 30 hours per week, which was the average number of hours members said they spent on the job.

"I think the voters overwhelmingly decided it was time to adjust council compensation for inflation to make it a somewhat more realistic wage in recognition of the work City Council members do," said longtime council member Mike Kasperzak. "I think it puts

to rest this notion that public service is a voluntary service. The president of the U.S. is a public servant, he doesn't work for free. Police officers are public servants they don't work for free. Why are public officials expected to give away their time? City Council members are making more important decisions than highly paid staff people."

Kasperzak said he suspected the Palo Alto City Council would follow suit in raising their pay to \$1,000 a month soon.

The only vocal opponent to

the raise was local attorney Gary Wesley, who argued that council members receive other benefits, including health benefits, expense accounts, travel reimbursements and stipends for attending regional board meetings. He said they also have the ability to restrict housing supply and approve office growth to drive up the prices of their own homes. All seven homeowners on the council are "benefiting handsomely," he wrote.

"It's less about the money and more about being able to attract a diverse array of candidates," said Mayor Chris Clark a year ago, joking that his salary on council

pays his monthly dry cleaning bill, with a "little left over."

Some council members said a raise would allow renters and people who have to work for a living to be on council, as current members are either retired, supported by spouses or are business owners or business leaders.

Council pay will now also rise automatically every based on a formula to match inflation, not to exceed 5 percent a year. Any other raises would continue to require voter approval under a provision in the city's charter.

Email Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

MEASURE N VOTE

► Continued from page 1

they knew it was going to be a close one, and will be watching election results closely going forward.

The \$150 million school bond would help the school district build a new school and new facilities to deal with fast-growing enrollment that is already exceeding target enrollment numbers at most of the nine district campuses. District administrators attribute the high quality instruction, in part, to the

smaller school sizes which they say could be compromised if the bond does not pass.

Leading up to the election, board member Doug Smith painted a picture of what it might look like for the school district if the bond did not pass, saying the district would likely need to relocate the Bullis Charter School to an existing school site by the 2018-19 school year. The relocation could cause student enrollment at some elementary schools to jump to over 750 students.

"Picture the traffic jams at West Portola, except they'd occur

at every site in the district. That doesn't even touch on the decline in program quality," Smith said.

Property owners in the district would pay a maximum of \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed value annually for the bond.

The school board emphasized time and again at board meetings that the No. 1 priority is to find and build a new school site with the bond money. Still, the district received criticism over the \$300 million list of possible bond expenditures, much of it focused on projects not related to a new school. Others said the bond lan-

guage was not specific enough in how the money would be spent, and compared it to writing a blank check to the school district.

Roode said the vote is so evenly split because of the district's "lack of truth and clarity" in requesting the bond money. He said the district, over the last decade, has provided substandard facilities to Bullis Charter School and has not addressed the needs of 400 to 600 students in the San Antonio Area, and has not expressed a willingness to address the issues in the past.

The district still has not landed

on a specific spot to put the new school, but board president Tamara Logan said the school would ideally be in Mountain View, north of El Camino Real, where student enrollment is high and projected to continue growing. The San Antonio area would not be the easiest place for a school, however, as there are no parks or other public land the city could easily offer to the district as a potential school site, and private land in the area could prove to be "prohibitively" expensive, according to Mountain View Mayor Chris Clark. ■

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DANIEL DEBOLT

A Mountain View Walmart shift manager talks with union leaders and Walmart employees after receiving a petition asking for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and full-time hours for employees.

Workers petition for \$15 wage at MV's Walmart

By Daniel DeBolt

Mountain View's Walmart was one of many around the country where workers, on Oct. 29, presented management with a petition asking for \$15-an-hour minimum pay and access to full-time work, promising massive Black Friday protests if there is no response.

After a string of high-profile protests, including demonstrations in front of the homes of members of the Walton Family (owners of Walmart), "The workers have their attention now like they never have before," said Simone Mock, lead organizer for the local United Food And Commercial Workers union.

In mid-October Walmart board chair Robert Walton promised to do away with paying minimum wages to Walmart employees, but

members of group have dismissed the promise as "pretty vague."

The interest among city leaders to raise Mountain View's minimum wage to \$15 was part of what spurred a few Walmart workers from the East Bay to join Mountain View Walmart worker Pam Ramos in delivering the petition. Ramos — who talked about her situation in detail earlier this year — has been unable to pay for housing as a Mountain View Walmart employee for the last four years because of her low pay and unpredictable part-time schedule. She broke down in tears before the Mountain View City Council meeting in October before the council voted to increase the city's minimum wage to \$10 an hour next year and made it a goal to raise it to \$15 by 2018.

A few members of the group prepared to enter the store

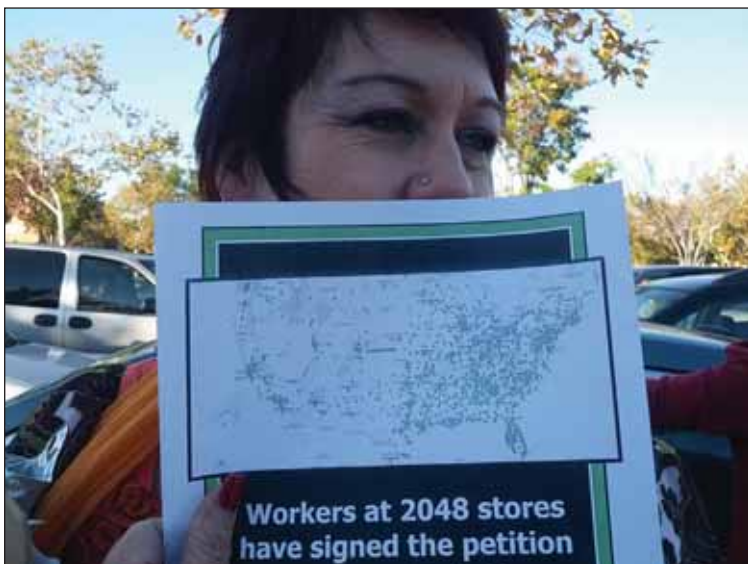
despite a court injunction that limits union organizing activity — the result of several disruptive protests that were held inside Walmart stores in recent years. "We're so intimidating to Walmart we aren't even allowed to have a piece of paper" inside the store, Mock said. "They are so afraid we might pass something to employees, we're not allowed to take in a bag — that includes all supporters."

The group was surprised to be greeted by a smiling shift manager named Mansour outside the front door. He gave Ramos a hug and said, "Nice to see you." He added that the petition was "not my business" but that he would make sure his bosses knew about it.

The petition for "\$15 and full time" stated: "The Waltons are robbing America. Workers are fighting back." It addresses the owners of Walmart, saying, "If you fail to respond by Black Friday (Nov. 28), the biggest shopping day of the year, we will hold massive protests nationwide."

Mock said the petition was signed by community members at more than 3,000 stores nationwide and by Walmart employees at more than 2,000 stores.

Before the petition was delivered, several former and current Walmart workers gathered in the parking lot, and at one point complained that Walmart policies discourage them from taking sick leave. One local supporter of the effort, Mountain View resident Alison Hicks, expressed disgust: "I don't want to go into a store where employees are sick while stocking things." ▀



UFCW organizer Simone Mock holds up a flyer showing where the Walmart petition has circulated.

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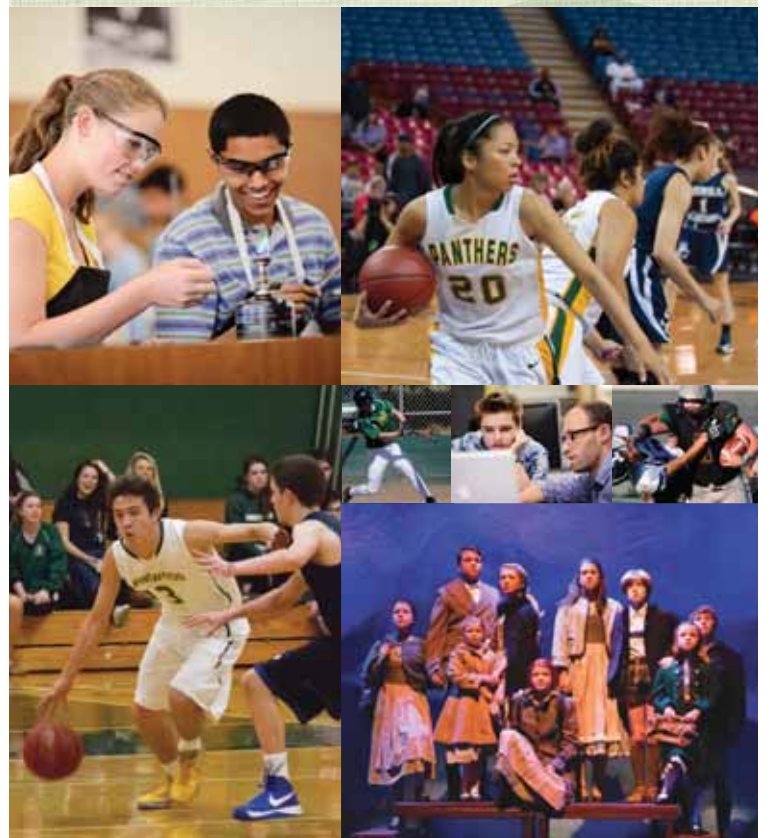
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Architect leads the way in sustainable schools

PRESENTATION SHOWS WAYS MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL CAN 'GO GREEN' FOR CHEAP

By Kevin Forestieri

In an effort to get away from dark, dreary classrooms and stuffy gymnasiums, the Los Altos School District modernized its facilities and outfitted them with energy-efficient features and innovative ways to use daylight. Now schools in Mountain View have the opportunity to follow suit, and got tips from the same architect who worked with the Los Altos district on how to make it happen.

Lisa Gelfand works as a principal at Gelfand Partners, a San Francisco-based architectural firm. In an Oct. 30 presentation to the Mountain View Whisman district's Board Facilities Committee, Gelfand said one of the key ways to reduce energy usage and improve the classroom environment is to use daylight, but that it has to be used right in order to work.

"Direct light from the sun (produces) a ton of glare and heat," Gelfand said. "People tend to pull blinds and it becomes something of a problem."

She said that many architects use big sections of glass in their structures, which looks nice but doesn't necessarily handle the direction of daylight. Instead, her firm makes sure that light coming into buildings has to "bounce" off something first, whether it be a bookcase or a wall, before reaching the people inside.

"It creates diffuse, soft light that's comfortable. It doesn't bring in glare, it doesn't bring in heat," Gelfand said. "It gives you this radiant space."

The result is not only a more comfortable learning environment, but a lower electrical bill

as well. On average, schools that are considered Collaborative for High Performance Schools — a building rating system similar to LEED — tend to spend half as much on energy costs compared with non-CHPS schools. That could amount to big savings for the district, which spends somewhere between \$800,000 and \$900,000 per year on electrical costs, according to committee member Patrick Neschleba.

Gelfand said kids in day-lit classrooms also perform better, and that people in general tend to work more effectively in buildings with daylight rather than fluorescent bulbs. She said people are "oriented" to like daylight, and her goal was to get rid of any dark space in the classroom.

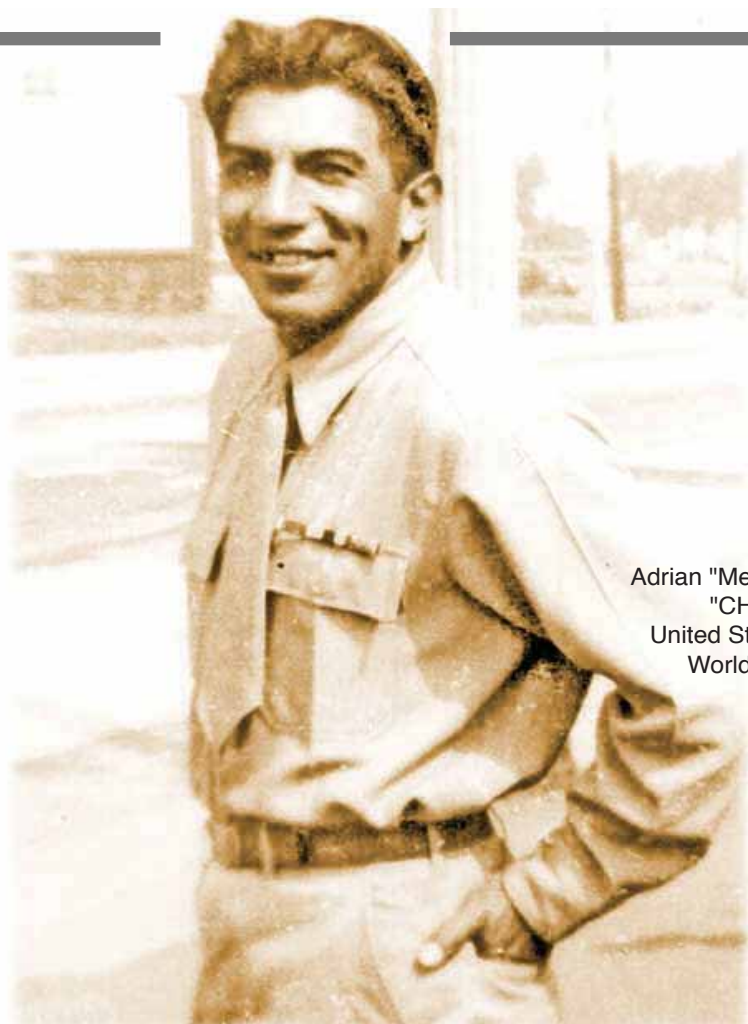
District board members and administrators wouldn't have to look far to see examples of Gelfand's designs in action. She and her firm worked on a number of schools in the Los Altos district, including the gym at Blach Intermediate School. That building has windows on all four sides that are angled based on the direction they're facing: The south side has windows that face down and takes in light that bounces up and into the gym; window panels on the east and west sides are vertical and face north to avoid the glare.

The result is that sunlight gets in from all sides without the glare that normally comes with it, which Gelfand said is important for a gym. She said it's common for the upper level of gyms to have large open windows with direct sunlight at the worst possible angle for people playing basketball, forcing them to have to look directly into blinding light as they shoot for the basket.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GELFAND PARTNERS

Angled windows on the Blach Gym face different directions to provide diffuse light inside.



Adrian "Mel" Melendez
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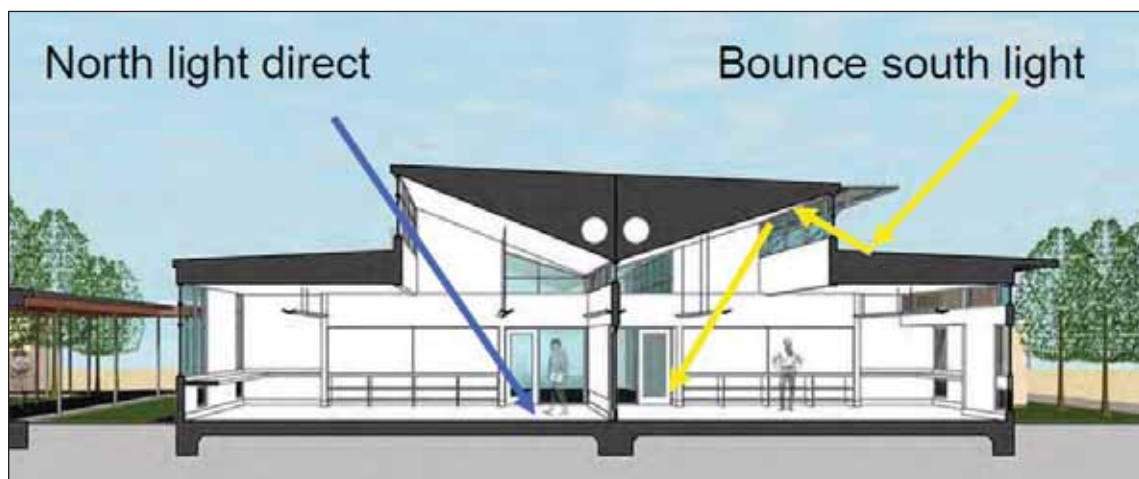
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Lighting techniques show how daylight can bounce off surfaces to avoid glare and direct sunlight.

Greg Coladonato, the committee's vice president, said the presentation was an interesting look into school designs that are more attractive and energy efficient, and that provide a more effective learning environment. And while schools could stand to save thousands every year on energy-cost reductions, Coladonato said, the improvements wouldn't cost much.

"These are features that cost no or little more than the regular cost, but work much better," Coladonato said.

He said the use of daylight through reflective surfaces would significantly cut down on lighting bills and have an added benefit on student performance.

Superintendent Craig Goldman of the Mountain View Whisman School District noted that Gelfand and her architectural firm's approach to school modernization and construction is "very similar" to what the school district and its current architects are already doing in terms of reducing utility costs and using natural light.

But discussion on how to go above and beyond in terms of sustainability is limited at Mountain View Whisman school board meetings. During the Oct. 23 board meeting discussion on the new "innovation centers" at Crittenden and Graham middle schools, discussion on energy efficiency was limited to what was mandatory by the state and compliant with the state energy code.

Discussion on sustainability kicked off when community members on the Board Facilities Committee specifically requested "outside" sources of expertise on what sustainability options are available. Neschleba said during a Sept. 23 committee meeting that there is a potential to focus on reducing the district's electrical spending and get the biggest bang for the buck with outside lighting.

If things go according to plan, Sharon Danks, CEO of Green Schoolyards America, will speak to the facilities committee. She is

likely to talk about ways in which the school district could move from the traditional asphalt and turf school yard towards "green" school yards.

The doubleheader of environmental speakers shows an interest in green, environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient buildings, but it remains to be seen if that enthusiasm will be shared by district administrators and the school board.

Board member Ellen Wheeler said she enjoyed the presentation by Gelfand and her emphasis on sustainability in her school building designs. Going forward, Wheeler said, she would like to expand the existing gardens at the elementary schools into more "robust" gardens as Measure G projects continue to change the face of Mountain View schools.

"I think sustainability and gardens go hand in hand," Wheeler said.

Vicki Moore is the executive director of Living Classroom and spearheaded the effort to plant edible and native gardens at all district elementary schools. She was at the facilities committee meeting and spoke on the importance of school gardens, according to Wheeler.

Moore said the Measure G construction could displace the existing gardens at the schools, and that they could use the opportunity to expand the gardens and include more space for native plants. She said the existing native gardens are too small to create a "real habitat area" and give the campus a "natural" area.

"The Bubba and Huff school gardens are the smallest, although Monta Loma, Landels and Stevenson native gardens are also quite small," she said.

Possible upgrades could include outdoor seating within the gardens that could accommodate an entire class, an outdoor kitchen area, compost areas and greenhouses. Moore admits that if the district decides to build greenhouses or additional compost areas, it would need to find volunteers outside of Living Classroom to maintain it.

Saving solar for another day

Many school districts are not ready to adopt solar power in their schools because of the high cost, but as prices drop more and more schools are finding it prudent to install solar panels on classrooms. Gelfand said the emphasis right now is to be "ready" for solar, and that means constructing buildings that could easily accommodate solar power at a later time.

Solar ready, in this case, means open space on the roofs and wiring for the solar panels that, if prices continue to decline, will be on the rooftops in the coming years. Gelfand said schools could reach "zero net" energy usage if the buildings are efficient enough and renewable energy is enabled.

To Wheeler, this reaffirmed what Goldman and the middle school Measure G architects were saying to the board all along — that they want to be ready when solar prices drop enough to be cost-effective. The Los Altos School District has also not installed solar panels at its schools, but does have solar power installation on the list of possible projects for Measure N spending.

Unlike the two elementary school districts, the Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District has poured millions of dollars into solar power, including a solar canopy project that put solar panels above the parking lots at both Mountain View and Los Altos high schools. The district saved an estimated \$764,000 in energy costs as of October of last year, according to a district press release.

Gelfand said solar power is an important way to incorporate renewable energy for schools, but will not have quite the striking impact of energy-efficient heating and ventilation, and of "daylighting" the buildings.

"That's going to have an immediate effect on the kids," Gelfand said. "There's a real difference in how kids feel in a beautiful classroom (as opposed to) a really, dark dismal one." ■

Albin Joseph Slakis

July 5, 1925-October 30, 2014

Albin "Al" Slakis, a resident of Palo Alto and Mountain View and formerly of Illinois, died on October 30 in Palo Alto, California. He was 89.

Al was born on July 5, 1925 in Chicago, Illinois. He served in the US Navy during World War II as a hospital corpsman. Al later graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in Food Technology and worked in both the pharmaceutical and food industries, including Abbott Labs and US Army Natick Labs. After his retirement, he and his wife moved to Mountain View, California to be close to their grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Ann Slakis, and his children Susan (Slakis) Paul of Palo Alto and her husband John, his son Tom Slakis of Danbury Connecticut, and his two grandchildren, Emily Paul and John Michael Paul.

A Memorial Mass in celebration of his life will be held on Saturday, November 8th at 11 am at St. Joseph's Church, 582 Hope St., Mountain View, CA 94041.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to Catholic Charities of San Jose <http://www.catholiccharitiesscc.org/how-to-donate>

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AAD

NEC finances 'toilet water' attack ad in Water District race

By Daniel DeBolt

While the Neighborhood Empowerment Coalition continues to independently spend money on mailers in the Mountain View City Council election, the group has also spent \$30,500 on a mailer attacking water district incumbent Brian Schmidt.

In his campaign to oust Schmidt from his seat on the Santa Clara Valley Water District board, Gary Kremen got some help from the NEC with a \$30,500 talking mailer. It attacks Schmidt's support for "potable reuse" — cleaning recycled water to drinking water standards — in order to help conserve potable water from other sources.

"Brian Schmidt wants my family to drink water from the toilet?" says a woman's voice that plays from the audio card, adding: "Say no to toilet water; say no to Brian Schmidt." It reads in part, "EWWW!"

In a response he posted on YouTube, Schmidt claims that Kremen also supports potable reuse, though not publicly. He points out that potable reuse is already in practice on the International Space Station. "This is astronaut water we are talking about, if it is healthy enough for them, it is healthy enough for us."

"I disavow the mailing and people who mail it," Kremen wrote in a Facebook post. "In fact it mistakes my clear position (on) reuse."

Kremen, the founder of sex.com and Match.com, has spent more on his campaign than any other water board candidate in memory — over \$397,993 as of Oct. 18 — to take over Schmidt's post representing residents of District 7, which encompasses

Mountain View. Schmidt has spent a more typical sum: \$17,229.

In its latest available campaign finance report, dated Oct. 18, the NEC reported spending a total of \$210,661, most of it in the water district and Mountain View council races. In addition to the \$30,500 toilet water mailer, another \$5,000 was reportedly spent on Kremen by the NEC for "consulting."

The NEC appears to have been created primarily as a way to help special interests anonymously funnel money into the Mountain View council election, enabled by the 2010 Supreme Court decision known as Citizens United, which the Mountain View City Council opposed in a 2012 resolution.

The NEC counts landlords and PG&E as the only funders that have a well-known interest in Mountain View, among many others that do not appear to have a local interest. It lists Long Beach campaign finance attorney Gary Crummit as its only member, although it claims on its website that it is a coalition of community members. It has spent at least \$83,000 on this year's City Council race between Oct. 7 and Oct. 25, backing a trio of council candidates: Ken Rosenberg, Pat Showalter and Ellen Kamei.

The NEC sent out a total of six mailers in support of Rosenberg, spending \$34,748. Another \$22,455 was spent on five mailers backing Showalter, and another five mailers supported Kamei at a total cost of \$26,192.

The NEC lists several funders previously unreported by the Voice: Steven Humphreys, a Portola Valley resident and CEO of Upstart Mobile, contributed \$20,000; Carlsbad attorney Timothy Dillon contributed \$20,000; and another \$25,000 came from the Pharmaceutical Research

and Manufacturers of America. As previously reported, other funders of the NEC include several Indian tribes, unions representing iron workers and ship builders, a DMV software contractor, PG&E, and the California Apartment Association (CAA), which represents landlords.

A deeper look at the CAA's political action funders finds significant contributions from Prometheus Real Estate Group, which owns at least four large apartment complexes in Mountain View and is set to build others at 100 Moffett Blvd. and 1720 El Camino Real. Among many others there are also contributions from Archstone Communities, LLC, which proposed 333 apartments for 870 El Camino Real.

All of the outside money in this year's election has spurred several residents, including Christopher Chiang and David Lewis, to call for supporting a new state law requiring that the top three funders of a mailer be disclosed on the mailer itself to help prevent the rise of "dark money" in elections. Senate Bill 52, the "Disclose Act," was drafted by state Sen. Jerry Hill and reportedly died in the state Assembly over the summer after passing the Senate.

The California Association of Realtors has also started spending money on council candidates in final weeks, making direct contributions to council candidate campaigns. Rosenberg reported \$1,000 from CAR, while Kamei and Lisa Matichak each reported \$500 contributions.

All City Council candidates have agreed to the city's voluntary spending limit of \$22,689 for their own campaigns and have stayed under it, as of Oct. 31.

Email Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

OBITUARY

PAULINE AUGUSTINE SOUFFRONT

Pauline Augustine Souffront, a Mountain View resident, died Oct. 29 at Mountain View Healthcare Center with her family by her side. She was 94.

Born on Dec. 1, 1919 to Beatrice and Eustace Durant on Peter Island in the British Virgin Islands, she was the oldest of 12 children. She left school early to help the family, and lived and worked on Tortola. She married Louis J. Souffront and left the island for St. Thomas, Virgin Islands where she raised a family

of three children — Louis, Carmelite and Roy. Her home became a sanctuary not only for family members but also for strangers who needed help, her family said.

An exceptional cook, Pauline was known on St. Thomas for her baked ham and turkeys, fruit cakes, sweet breads, tarts and Vienna cakes, her family said.

In 1979, Pauline came to



Pauline
Souffront

Mountain View to visit her daughter and decided to make her home there. Soon after, she was joined by her son and his family. Pauline was a doting grandmother to her 14 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, her family said.

She became active in her Anglican Church community and worked at the after-school program. She later joined the Peninsula Bible Church community where she made many good friends.

Local services have been held, and the burial will take place in her native Virgin Islands.

Logan, Peruri win in LASD election

RACE FOR THIRD SEAT TOO CLOSE TO CALL

by Kevin Forestieri

The Los Altos School District had a lot of potential for new faces in the leadership arena and big changes this election, with three seats on the school board up for election and only one incumbent running.

As of Wednesday morning, incumbent Tamara Logan held onto her seat with 25.1 percent of the vote, followed by challenger Sangeeth Peruri at 23 percent. Vying for the third open seat in a race too close to call are John Swan, with 17.6 percent of the vote; Vladimir Ivanovic, with 17.4 percent of the vote and about 30 votes away from Swan; and Martha McClatchie, with 17 percent of the vote and fewer than 90 votes behind Ivanovic.

Logan, who spent election night at First and Main Sports Lounge in Los Altos, said she was happy with the results but that the victory celebrations were dampened as Measure N, the Los Altos district's school bond measure, struggled to get the 55 percent voter approval needed to pass. "The (celebration) was tempered somewhat because we're not sure which way it will go," Logan said.

The election was much more competitive than previous school board races, Logan said, adding that she had to run a busy campaign for months.

As the only incumbent, Logan

said her success in the election showed that district residents want to see the schools continue their success. "More and more students are coming in," she said. "We have a great set of schools."

Going into election season, the school board worked out a five-year agreement that would settle a number of long-standing disputes between the district and Bullis Charter School, including school enrollment projections, shared use of facilities and an end to litigation

rent board member Doug Smith, the Huttlinger Alliance for Education and Friends of Los Altos.

John Swan, dubbed by many as a "BCS" candidate, was one of the first families to enroll his kids at Bullis Charter School a decade ago. He took part in the task force that made recommendations for how to accommodate student enrollment growth, which is a key issue for the school district and the rationale behind Measure N. Both Smith and the Huttlinger Alliance encouraged voters not

Celebrations were dampened as Measure N, the Los Altos district's school bond measure, struggled to get the 55 percent voter approval needed to pass.

between both parties.

Peruri, a Covington parent, frequently attends school board meetings and speaks up during public comments. He was one of the many community members who spoke in favor of preserving Rosita and McKenzie parks in Los Altos, rather than considering them as possible sites for a new school.

Peruri said he has spent an "immense" amount of time working with the district, and that he'll continue to do that in a different capacity as a school board member.

Peruri was endorsed by cur-

to choose Swan.

McClatchie, who spoke at the election night event hosted by KMVT, said she went door-to-door during the election season and talked about school district issues, including the proposed Measure N school bond. She also said she met with the Mountain View and Los Altos city councils, and said it was important to foster a good relationship with both if the district wants to pursue a new school site, particularly for a campus north of El Camino Real.

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

VOTE

► Continued from page 5

reserve fund, and whether that money could go into programs or teacher salaries.

Despite the loss, Coladonato

said he wants to continue to stay involved with the local school district.

"I look forward to working with trustee Wheeler and Palmer over the next four years," Coladonato said. "I want

to focus on influencing policy in a positive direction now."

Palmer and Mirza were not immediately available for comment.

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

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COUNCIL VOTE

► Continued from page 1

with 10.7 percent, Ellen Kamei with 10.3 percent, Margaret Capriles with 9.9 percent, Mercedes Salem at 6.8 percent, and Jim Neal with 6.3 percent.

The city's growing jobs-housing imbalance was a key issue in the election, and Showalter, Rosenberg and Siegel were among those who promised the most aggressive measures to close that gap in an effort to preserve the city's affordability and diverse character.

Siegel led the charge as founder of the Campaign for a Balanced Mountain View earlier this year, and benefited from the name recognition his activism has created since he moved here in the 1970s. That has included his job running the nonprofit that oversees toxic cleanup efforts in Mountain View, and efforts to save Hangar One at Moffett



Lenny Siegel is congratulated by Ed Brennan at Siegel's election night party.

Field and to stop cargo flights at Moffett in the 1990s. He also spearheaded two failed efforts to bring rent control to the city decades ago, and was an antiwar activist with the local group Voices for Peace.

"Some of the candidates had

slogans about preserving neighborhoods, but to me that was just verbiage," Siegel said, addressing the group of supporters and neighbors that packed his home in the Old Mountain View neighborhood Tuesday night.

As a council member, he said, he would call on the jobs-rich cities in the area to form a regional body to address the area's jobs-housing imbalance. He criticized candidates who seemed to be saying that Mountain View employees need to live in San Jose. "How can anybody trust us if we don't put our own house in order?" he said.

"If Pat, myself and Lenny are elected, I suspect we're going to see big changes in Mountain View," said Rosenberg at Tuesday's election night gathering at KMVT. It will mean that residents of Mountain View are looking forward to progressive changes, he said.

Rosenberg, a financial adviser and member of the city's human relations commission, called out the current council for "approving lots of office space, or in other words, jobs, and not many homes. Essentially what they are saying is, 'We welcome you to work in Mountain View but not live in Mountain View.'"

When asked about what the results meant, Matichak said, "I think that things have changed in Mountain View and big money and corporations have a lot of influence."

Rosenberg and Showalter were supported by independent spending linked to landlord groups, though Siegel spent little more than \$12,000, raised mostly from individual donations. Little or none of Siegel's funding came from the real estate interest groups that contributed to the campaigns of Capriles, Matichak, Kamei, Showalter and Rosenberg. Rosenberg got the biggest boost in support with \$25,000 in independent funding from the National Association of Realtors.

Election results could change over the next two weeks as 100,000 to 120,000 provisional

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and mail ballots are verified and counted in Santa Clara County, on top of the 235,000 already counted, said Shannon Buchey, registrar of voters.

"Quite a few people will be waiting for results in many races as we process results for the next couple of weeks," Buchey said. Results would be updated every day at 5 p.m., she said.

Matichak didn't want to concede the election, but said on Wednesday, "I don't expect the results to change." Siegel, leading by 408 votes on Wednesday, said he didn't expect results to change either after seeing a clear trend as results came in from all over the city.

Showalter, an engineer for the Santa Clara Valley Water District and a city planning commissioner for most of the 1990s, said what made the election unique and important is "the strong desire to open North Bayshore to housing. There's just been this groundswell of interest in the community."

The possibility of allowing as many as 5,000 homes to be built in the Google-dominated office park north of Highway 101 was the key issue of discussion during the race. It was a concept supported by Siegel, Rosenberg, Showalter, Unangst and Neal, and opposed by the other four candidates.

The election appears to be a dramatic change as the three outgoing council members who had led the four-member majority opposed to a new neighborhood around Google headquarters in 2012 will be replaced by three new members who support the idea. It looks as though there will be six out of seven council members who favor housing in North Bayshore.

Siegel said earlier that if he was elected, he would call on the current City Council to halt its efforts to approve precise plans by year's end that will guide development for North Bayshore

and the San Antonio area, and call on the council to allow the new council members to take on those plans. The North Bayshore precise plan includes allowing 3.4 million square feet of new office development in North Bayshore, bringing as many as 20,000 jobs, but no housing. In the precise plan for the San Antonio shopping center area, council members recently backed away from plans to prioritize housing and are now set to create office space for more jobs than homes.

Unangst said the election could mean Mountain View is embracing a more urban future.

Mountain View is "in a transition from a more suburban place to a more urban place and a lot of people are having a hard time letting go," Unangst said. "I think this election will determine how quickly we move in that direction."

Matichak said she wasn't sure that voters wanted that.

"A lot of folks are very concerned about the pace of growth in Mountain View and wanted to slow it down, so I'm not sure they are all supportive of housing in North Bayshore because that would imply more growth," Matichak said. She said residents were concerned about growth in North Bayshore even though it is out of sight and north of Highway 101. "You still have an impact no matter where the growth occurs," she said.

Kamei, Salem, Matichak and Capriles opposed housing in North Bayshore during the election, saying, among other things, that there isn't enough infrastructure in that area to support a neighborhood, such as a school, transportation options to reduce traffic and a grocery store. Unangst said it was a "chicken and egg" problem because those things would come with or after housing development.

About 8,200 ballots have been accounted for so far with votes on Mountain View issues in the

election, though there are just over 30,000 registered voters listed in the city.

Capriles said in an email, "The disappointing concern I have about the election was the very low turnout. From my perspective this meant that the voters were 1) overwhelmed by the number of candidates and didn't have the opportunity to really get to know them personally or 2) not interested in the one issue of housing that permeated the campaign."

Siegel noted that Unangst, the only candidate in favor of rent control, came in fifth.

"I don't think enough renters voted to put him into office, but I think he's got a future in Mountain View politics," Siegel said. "He might have been elected if I hadn't run."

Salem conceded the race, saying she was grateful for the support she did get.

"I was the newcomer and I came out of nowhere. The people who have won have been working for a better Mountain View for decades," she said. "I plan to stay involved in Mountain View politics and in the Mountain View community, definitely."

"I think that the results indicate that the residents of Mountain View are now ready for far more high-density housing," Neal wrote in an email. "Over time we will see less single family homes and more high-rise apartments and condominiums as Mountain View moves in a direction to accommodate all the people that want to work and live here. The demographics of Mountain View have changed rapidly in the last few years as people have relocated here that have lived in higher density urban areas, so it is not entirely unexpected that the residents voted to move towards more density and urbanization by electing Pat Showalter, Lenny Siegel, and Ken Rosenberg."

Email Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com



Ken Rosenberg receives congratulations as voting results begin to come in on election night.

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— 2014 —

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 11:30 am Berlin Wall @ Library Entrance
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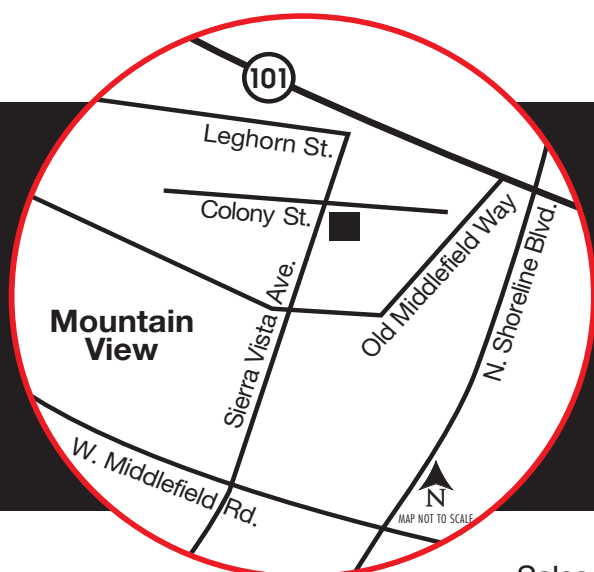


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WATER DISTRICT

► Continued from page 5

doing environmental nonprofit work," he said.

In a race that no one would have predicted to be so contentious, both candidates said the personal nature of the attacks was wounding and detracted from the issues.

"It's been brutal," Kremen said on Tuesday night. "I guess I'm an idiot to do this. All I wanted was to do something about the drought and about water. I didn't think it would get so personal with all of the campaign finance stuff. I got pummeled."

He reiterated on Wednesday that it wasn't the kind of campaign he expected, and its negative nature dissuades people from public service, he said.

"That makes me sad. Water is too important," he said.

The huge discrepancy in campaign funding between the two candidates made headlines.

Kremen, a serial entrepreneur, outspent Schmidt 22 to 1 during the race. As of Oct. 18, Kremen had spent \$397,993 to Schmidt's \$17,229. Kremen's campaign was almost entirely self-funded.

Schmidt predicted that big money will play an increasing role in special-district races.

"I think it's a significant problem," he said. That amount of money detracts from voters getting a fair representation of the issues and amplifies the impact of misleading messages, he added.

"It's not going to be the last time, especially as we see an increase in (economic) inequality," he said.



MICHELLE LE

Incumbent Brian Schmidt and his wife **Karen Coppock** check their phones for election results at KMVT.

Campaign spending is particularly bad for special districts because they don't have the spending limits seen in some other races, such as for county supervisor, he said. A month ago, Schmidt submitted a request for the board to look at spending limits and at the best models it could implement.

Schmidt said he is proud of the campaign he ran and of his wife, who served as his campaign manager, and of his volunteers.

"I'm proud of what I did, running it to a near draw while being outspent 22-to-1," he said.

But he didn't entirely blame losing the election on money. Low voter turnout meant that about half as many people cast ballots for the race as when he ran four years ago. And he would not choose to put a maximum cap of \$500 on legal contributions to his campaign. He could have done another mailing with the extra money, he said.

"I wish I had more time to do more outreach," he added.

Schmidt, an environmental attorney, served on the board since 2010 and is its current vice president.

Kremen, board president of the Purissima Hills Water District in Los Altos Hills, said on Wednesday that he will focus on four main issues: making sure the water district is fully supportive of getting San Francisco Creek fixed in a way that serves all constituents; creating a short, medium and long-term plan for the drought and securing a stable water supply; working to make the California State Water Project tax fair to districts that don't get any benefits and receive equity; and bringing business sense and innovation to the board's \$4 million budget.

"I want to thank my opponent for his service," Kremen said.

Email Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweeekly.com

EL CAMINO BOARD

► Continued from page 5

hospital takes care of patients before and after they enter the hospital, rather than just providing a bed and a procedure.

Reeder spent the election night in Maui on vacation with his wife, which gave him a few extra hours to watch election results, as the time difference makes it two hours earlier in Hawaii. He said he and his wife's plan was to campaign as much as they could up front, and relax during the last week of the election, when most people have either voted or decided how they will vote.

Reflecting on the results, Reeder said it's hard to control or anticipate the election results and all the variables involved, but that he was happy to see he was in the lead. He said people are willing to vote him in again after serving on the board for 16 years because of the way district residents see the hospital.

"The community really appre-

ciates El Camino Hospital," Reeder said.

Abe-Koga, the only Mountain View resident in the race, is a two-term City Council member stepping down this fall due to term limits. She advocated for improved accessibility and affordability of care as well as good hospital governance, but ultimately fell short of the other candidates.

At an election party at Steins Beer Garden and Restaurant, Abe-Koga said she worked hard on her campaign, and told attendees that serving on city council has been a "great experience."

During her time on the council, Abe-Koga served on the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCo) and did a service review for the health care district. The review found that the health care district lacked transparency and accountability in its role and in how it maintained independence from the hospital corporation.

Board members oversee the El Camino Healthcare District, which comprises Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, as well as parts of Sunnyvale, Palo Alto and Cupertino. It's a separate entity from the hospital corporation, and receives tax dollars from district residents. The money is used to invest in the hospital, and a portion of the money goes back into the community through a community benefit program.

Health care district board members have a great deal of clout over how the hospital operates, as every member of the El Camino Healthcare District also serves on the El Camino Hospital corporation board. This "dual board" structure has been the target of critics who say there is a conflict of interest in serving on both boards, and similar health care districts in the Bay Area have opted to relinquish control over district hospitals.

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MVLA VOTE

► Continued from page 1

instead relied on everyone to pitch in with all the groundwork.

Walter said she thinks her success this election comes from both because of her past experience and her effective campaign effort.

"I hope it's because of both my experience on the (Mountain View Whisman) school board as well as the successful campaign," Walter said.

In an email, Torok said she was happy to be in the top three and was hopeful that the results would hold beyond Tuesday night. She said it would be an honor to serve another term advocating for students.

"MVLA high schools are in the top in the nation and I am hopeful that I can continue to be a part of that success," Torok said.

Mitchner said he did not plan to spend the election night at a



Fiona Walter accepts a congratulatory hug at an election night party at Steins Beer Garden in Mountain View. MICHELLE LE

party or event. Instead, he spent election night collecting lawn signs and going out to dinner with his wife, who helped him "a ton" during the campaign. He said the campaign was all-

encompassing for two to three months straight, and he spent time walking precincts and talking to residents.

Following the election results, Mitchner said he was thrilled to

receive the support of the community and continue to work with the district.

"People are pleased with their schools and the direction with which they're going," Mitchner said.

Bunnett said it was great to get to know all the candidates, and that she felt the winners this election would do a good job serving on the board. She said the seven candidates running for school board race put extra attention on the school board and their role in local schools, which she believes is a positive thing.

"People understand how important the (school) board race is," Bunnett said.

Despite the loss to the incumbents, Bunnett said will continue to stay engaged with the school board, and would be willing to try again when seats are up for re-election.

The election was one of only

two contested elections the district has had since the 1990s. Incumbent Judy Hannemann announced her retirement and did not run for re-election, giving the board an open seat. Hannemann endorsed Dave, a fellow Mountain View Rotary Club member, as her choice to replace her on the board.

Some candidates, like former CEO Doug Moore and Yahoo executive Kevin Kramer, said that they would take a more active role on the school board. Moore in particular said the board acted as a rubber stamp for Superintendent Barry Groves, and wanted to see a big turnover in the election. Although Kramer and Moore both attended candidate forums, neither of them raised or spent more than \$1,000 in the election, and neither had a campaign website.

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

■ COUNCIL BRIEF

HOUSING UP FOR COUNCIL VOTE

The City Council is set to vote next week on a pair of housing projects that could add 87 homes to the city's for-sale housing market. The items are on the agenda for a special meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 12.

The council is scheduled to take the final vote on a 52-unit, four-story condo project with underground parking that is proposed to replace Harv's car wash on a 1-acre site at El Camino Real and El Monte Avenue.

A housing project at 450 N. Whisman Road is also up for a vote; an earlier 69-unit iteration of the project died in 2007 after conflict with neighbors over three-story heights. The "Hawthorne Park" development would go in along the Hetch Hetchy trail and would include 37, two-story row houses on 6.4 acres.

The meeting may begin with a study session at 5 p.m. in the plaza conference room at 500 Castro St. The agenda also includes a review of a four-unit housing project proposed to replace a single-family home at 858 Sierra Vista Ave.

— Daniel DeBolt

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Found in translation

THEATRE FLAMENCO SPEAKS THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE OF DANCE

Right:
Carola Zertuche is the artistic director of Theatre Flamenco.

Below:
Alfonso Losa

COURTESY THEATRE FLAMENCO

By Elizabeth Schwyzer

It's no secret that San Francisco in the mid-1960s was a hub of counterculture. Yet the flower children of Haight-Ashbury were just one expression of a massive shift in American society. Out of that same era emerged many forms of creative expression that had hitherto been virtually invisible to the American mainstream — among them the Hispanic arts.

In 1966, a group of artists began to offer flamenco performances in San Francisco. They were the first American company to stage full productions of Spanish dance in the U.S. They called themselves Theatre Flamenco. Today, the company is one of the oldest dance troupes in California. On Saturday, Nov. 8, Theatre Flamenco comes to Mountain View.

Their latest show is "Solo Flamenco," a production that draws together some of the best-known flamenco dancers ("bailaoras"), singers ("cantaores") and guitar players ("tocaos") from the U.S. and Spain. Artistic Director Carola Zertuche, who also dances in

the production, explained that though flamenco originates in the gypsy culture of Andalusia, it is an art form that speaks to artists and audiences across the world.

Born and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico, Zertuche studied flamenco in Mexico City and in Spain and toured internationally before settling in San Francisco and taking the helm of Theatre Flamenco in 2007.

"Flamenco is a very strong art form — it's emotional and personal — so even if people don't understand the lyrics of the songs, they feel the language of the music and the dance," she said.

In selecting artists from across the world to collaborate on a single production, Zertuche has relied on new technology: Digital video footage helps dancers see the choreography and helps musicians know how to complement the energy and expression of the dancers. Real-time video conferencing lets Zertuche talk with the cast across oceans and time zones.

"That's the good thing about this era," she noted, adding that though there is a lot to coordinate in advance, flamenco also relies on improvisation, and each artist

will be given the space to respond spontaneously in the moment.

The name of the show, "Solo Flamenco," indicates Zertuche's focus on traditional flamenco as well as her vision of presenting each dancer in the show as a solo artist. The lineup of international talent is one of the most extensive Theatre Flamenco has yet presented. Among the performers Zertuche will bring to the Peninsula is internationally celebrated Sevillian dancer Manuela Ríos, who is also Zertuche's former flamenco teacher and one of her artistic role models.

"To me, she is the best representation of a female flamenco dancer," said Zertuche of Ríos. "She is super-feminine; she's strong and she's very expressive. When she dances, you can tell she's telling you a story. She stands on the stage, and her presence is so strong that you get goosebumps — and she hasn't even moved."

Joining Ríos and Zertuche onstage will be performer, choreographer and teacher Alfonso Losa, whom Zertuche describes

► See **FLAMENCO**, page 21





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FLAMENCO

► Continued from page 19

as “an elegant” dancer with exquisite footwork,” and Cristina Hall, a San Francisco native now based in Spain who’s a regular Theatre Flamenco collaborator.

In addition to the world-class cast of dancers, Zertuche is bringing to the Bay Area Ismael Fernández and José Méndez, singers from two of Spain’s most famous flamenco families. Fernández is the nephew of Curro Fernández, a patriarch of a flamenco dynasty in Seville, while Méndez hails from the legendary Méndez clan of Gypsy flamenco singers from Jerez de la Frontera. They will be joined by guitarist José Luis Rodríguez, who is considered one of the best flamenco musicians and composers of his generation. Zertuche spoke in glowing terms about Rodríguez’s contribution to the show.

“I have been working with him for three years, and every time he plays a note it’s like you want to cry,” she said, adding that Rodríguez also has an unusual ability to interpret a dancer’s movements and deliver just the right musical tone.

“As a dancer, when you have that support you feel like flying,” she said, struggling to find the right word in English before resorting to her native language. “The word in Spanish is ‘arropado,’ or blanketed, like when you pull up the covers in bed.”

That sensation of being surrounded by the music — or filled



COURTESY THEATRE FLAMENCO

Singer **Jose Mendez** hails from a famous Gypsy flamenco family.

with it — has a special term in flamenco: “duende.” Ask a flamenco artist to define the word, and you’ll get poetic descriptions of connection and focus, a sense of soaring or oneness of spirit.

“Duende is a magic that happens on the stage,” Zertuche said. “It’s when you feel something you’ve never felt before. You are there in your own world with the music and the singing, and then when you finish it’s like you come back to reality.”

Flamenco audience members report a comparable experience of being transported — it’s one of the reasons spectators often cry “Olé!” in the midst of a performance.

According to Theatre Flamenco’s board president and former artistic director Miguel Santos, who at 89 years old remains intimately involved in the company,

duende isn’t limited to flamenco. “Duende is experienced by all kinds of artists,” he said. “It’s a deep feeling that comes from the soul.”

Santos has been with Theatre Flamenco since 1968, two years after its inception. He spoke of his performing career, when he toured internationally, danced in films and even performed in Spain for then-dictator Francisco Franco (“They told us to stop dancing when he walked into the room, so that’s what we did,” Santos recalled).

As Zertuche sees it, having Santos’ institutional memory is a great benefit to Theatre Flamenco.

“It’s motivating,” she said of Santos’ energy and dedication to the company he joined nearly 50 years ago. “If he’s still involved, then I know I need to do better, to keep it going.”

As part of “Solo Flamenco,” Losa and Ríos will teach workshops at Zertuche’s San Francisco school, La Solea. Santos, who still teaches classes himself, plans to attend the workshops.

“I’m almost 90, but I don’t feel that old,” he said proudly. “I’m still jumping around. I can out-dance my dancers.”

Luckily for prospective audience members, neither Santos’ dance ability nor his intimate knowledge of flamenco are required in order to enjoy the performance — or even, if you’re lucky, to experience duende.

Email Elizabeth Schwyzer at eschwyzer@pawebkly.com.

■ INFORMATION

What: Theatre Flamenco presents “Solo Flamenco”
Where: Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View
When: Saturday, Nov. 8, at 8 p.m.
Cost: \$45
Info: Go to mvpca.com or call 650-903-6000. For information on workshops, go to theatreflamenco.org.



COURTESY THEATRE FLAMENCO

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Beyond her years

‘KIMBERLY AKIMBO’ BRINGS BLACK COMEDY TO AGING AND IDENTITY

By Elizabeth Schwyzer

Uber-nerd Jeff McCracken likes to play word games. Take Kimberly Levaco, his high school classmate with a rare genetic disorder causing her to age prematurely. Scramble the letters of her name; rearrange them and you get “Cleverly Akimbo.”

Jeff is the unlikely hero of David Lindsay-Abaire’s 2001 play: a social outcast whose disregard for the superficial and interest in the heart of the matter offer an alternative to suffering and self-involvement.

In the Pear Avenue Theatre’s production directed by Caroline Clark, it’s clear the real dysfunction is in the Levaco family — not in Kimberly’s cells. Her

parents — gas-station employee Buddy (James Kopp) and pregnant Pattie (Gretta Stimson) — hurl insults across the kitchen table of their Bogota (rhymes with pagoda), New Jersey, apartment. Wedged between them sits their teenage daughter, Kimberly (Patricia Tyler), who’s wise as well as old beyond her years.

Lindsay-Abaire wrote “Kimberly Akimbo” shortly before the birth of his first child, and the play has the feel of an extended prenatal anxiety dream — a nightmare spun by a catastrophizing mind. A century after Oscar Wilde’s cautionary tale “The Picture of Dorian Gray” and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s equally disturbing “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,” this dark comedy offers a new angle on

timelessly troubling questions: Does old age render us unlovable? What happens when the ordinary laws of aging and mortality no longer apply?

Subsisting on a diet of takeout, breakfast cereal and beer, the Levacos are too preoccupied with their own struggles to take much notice of Kimberly, their smart, sarcastic teenager who looks (and often acts) more like their mother than their daughter. Buddy (“I’m a good guy”) is trying his best to care for Kim; sadly, his best consists of forgetting her 16th birthday and making up for it by stumbling home drunk at 3 a.m. with a half-squashed cake. Meanwhile, Pattie’s hyperactive hypochondria has her convinced she’s dying of cancer, and recent carpal-tunnel surgery has left her with two bandaged paws and a victim’s attitude. She has to be spoon-fed and have her butt wiped — visceral metaphors for a woman who has abandoned her adult responsibilities. Then there’s Aunt Debra (Kristin Walter), the law-flouting drifter who pops up “like a bad rash” to draw Kim into her latest scheme.

In the midst of this emotional and domestic squalor, Jeff (Anthony Stephens in his debut appearance) is a balm: a dorky boy whose origins are no less grim than Kim’s but who sees her for who she is and likes her for it.

Under Clark’s direction, the tension in the Levaco household hisses and pops like a downed power line, though at its climax (conveniently punctuated by Pat-



RAY RENATI

In “Kimberly Akimbo,” Patricia Tyler plays a teenage girl with a rare genetic condition causing her to age prematurely; Anthony Stephens plays her classmate.

tie's screaming contractions), all that coiled anger seems to fizzle out rather than ignite. Tyler tackles a tough role and conjures up moments of gut-wrenching pathos, particularly when she emerges in an "old woman" disguise yet with the body language of a teen: eyes rolled heavenward, knees hugging each other apologetically.

In addition to directing, Clark does the scenic design, offering up a cramped apartment with nauseatingly bold plaid wallpaper ("It's like you live in a giant thermos," sniffs Aunt Debra, who herself has spent the past 10 days camping out in the public library). Walter's Debra is all swaggering nervous energy and grandiose plans of escape — a thin protective shell encasing her despair. And while Kim sees straight through the childishness of her adult role models, it's Jeff who offers actual alternatives: studying, Dungeons and Dragons and a visit to the safari park. Jeff's antidote to a dead-end life lies in playfulness, fantasy and the lesson of the anagram: Even one's very identity can be rearranged to form something new.

In a poignant scene halfway through the play, the Levacos gather in Kim's bedroom to celebrate her birthday, albeit belatedly and in their own dysfunctional way. It's an oasis of near-normal family warmth. Later, Buddy gets a moving monologue in which he addresses his unborn daughter, expressing not so much hopelessness as hapless disorientation — how did it come to this?

The real wounds in this play have little to do with Kim's illness or her impending death; they come from the absence of healthy family bonds, and ultimately, from Pattie's rejection of her firstborn child whose unusual condition is too stark a reminder of her own mortality.

There's no question this is dark material, but zinging one-liners keep the dialogue zipping along, and though love may not exactly conquer all, like the headlights of the car that finally carries Kim and Jeff into the night, it banishes the darkness.

Email Elizabeth Schwyzer at eschwyzer@pawebly.com.

■ INFORMATION

What: David Lindsay-Abaire's "Kimberly Akimbo"

Where: The Pear Avenue Theatre, 1220 Pear Ave., Mountain View

When: Through Nov. 23, Thursday-Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Cost: Tickets range from \$20-\$30.

Info: Go to thepear.org or call 650-254-1148.



Advancing the Standard of Care for Lung Cancer



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SPEAKERS

Mark Berry, MD

Thoracic Surgery

Max Diehn, MD, PhD

Thoracic Radiation Oncology

Ann Leung, MD

Thoracic Radiology

Kavitha Ramchandran, MD

Thoracic Medical Oncology

Arthur Sung, MD

Interventional Pulmonology

Early detection of lung cancer saves lives, and advanced therapies are offering new hope for patients. Join us to learn about new lung cancer screening guidelines for former heavy smokers, the increasing incidence of lung cancer in non-smokers, and the latest approaches to lung cancer treatment including minimally invasive surgery, targeted medical therapies, and highly precise radiation therapy.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18 • 6:30PM – 8:00PM

Stanford Park Hotel (Woodside Room)

100 El Camino Real • Menlo Park, CA

Free parking

RSVP at: stanfordhealthcare.org/events or call **650.736.6555**. This event is free and open to the public. Please register, seating is limited.



STANFORD
CANCER CENTER

A NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE-DESIGNATED CANCER CENTER

INTRODUCING A COLLABORATION

THAT'S GOOD KARMA

FOR THE ENTIRE SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY.



**THE PALO ALTO MEDICAL FOUNDATION
AND THE SOUTH ASIAN HEART CENTER
ARE JOINING FORCES TO
PREVENT DIABETES AND HEART ATTACKS.**



El Camino Hospital's South Asian Heart Center and the Palo Alto Medical Foundation (PAMF) are now collaborating to provide comprehensive, collaborative care for South Asians. PAMF offers expert medical management, with access to physicians who understand the high risks facing South Asian patients. The South Asian Heart Center offers advanced screening for heart disease and diabetes to identify inherited and emerging risk factors. Participants also receive lifestyle counseling on meditation, exercise, diet and sleep. The two organizations are now linked electronically, so communication, and lifestyle consult referrals from PAMF physicians to the South Asian Heart Center are seamless. It's part of our commitment to delivering personalized care to the South Asian community — a healthy partnership with your wellbeing at heart.

From left:

Ashish Mathur, Executive Director, South Asian Heart Center

Ronesh Sinha, MD, Co-founder, PRANA South Asian Program at PAMF



Learn more: Watch a video about our new partnership at www.goodkarma.org