

MountainView VOICE

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MOVIES | 20

2014: THE YEAR IN PHOTOS



MICHELLE LE

There was big news at **NASA Ames** in 2014, as Google sealed a deal to lease a large portion of Moffett Field, the space agency's local outpost celebrated its 75th anniversary with an open house that drew tens of thousands and a robotics competition in August gave students like Terell (above) from the Boys & Girls Club the opportunity to suit up and aim for the stars. For more of the year's best images, see page 14.

CSA takes on growing homelessness

DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY'S HELP ON THE RISE IN MV

By Kevin Forestieri

More people are couch-surfing and sleeping in cars in Mountain View, as the high cost of living in the Bay Area puts a strain on families barely making ends meet. But Community Services Agency, a local nonprofit, is working overtime to make sure homeless people have the resources they need to get back on their feet.

Despite the national message that job creation is up, homelessness rates are down and the local economy is booming, the number of people without a home in

Santa Clara County has gone up in recent years. The number of homeless people living in Mountain View skyrocketed from 37 in 2011 to 139 in 2013, according to census data from the county.



As a result, there's been a spike in need for its homeless services, according to Tom Myers, executive director of CSA. The organization provides services

to homeless people in Mountain View and Los Altos, and there's been in high demand this year, he said.

CSA's homeless services currently helps more than 400 people to find a new place to live that fits their budgets, and provides supplies, food and even financial assistance for those in need. The organization is also one of seven local nonprofit organizations that benefit from the Voice's annual Holiday Fund, and donations will go towards funding these services and programs.

► See **HOLIDAY FUND**, page 11



Luscious kebabs, delicate curries

WEEKEND | 17

Mountain View's top stories of 2014

THE HOUSING CRUNCH, BIKE IMPROVEMENTS AND NEW FACES ON CITY COUNCIL

By Daniel DeBolt

In 2014, much of the discussion and civic debate in Mountain View focused on the city's future. Skyrocketing rents caused concern about the city's development priorities, office space for as many as 42,000 jobs was in the works, North Bayshore housing advocates were elected to the City Council and Google's growth expanded with a lease of 1,000 acres of Moffett Field that includes the restoration of historic Hangar One.

Housing crunch takes center stage

A major shift in local politics made itself felt at the start of the year as residents felt the effects of two years of skyrocketing rents. The city's worsening housing shortage amidst exploding job

growth — known as the jobs-housing imbalance — became a serious issue, and not just among lower-income residents. A group of middle class families with solid jobs at Apple and Google spoke out about their fears of being displaced by looming rent increases and their inability to afford to buy a home within their school district. Community members lamented the city's loss of human relations commissioner Nilda Santiago, who moved with her husband to Washington to be able to buy a home.

Longtime residents said they couldn't afford to stay in Mountain View — in just the past two years, the price for a two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment rose from \$2,250 to \$2,981. There were even some calling

► See **TOP FIVE**, page 7



JAMES TENSUAN

Yury Kuznetsov picks up produce at the Community Services Agency's food pantry on Tuesday, Dec. 30.

INSIDE

YEAR IN PHOTOS 14 | VIEWPOINT 16 | GOINGS ON 23 | MARKETPLACE 24 | REAL ESTATE 25



Season's Greetings



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As the Holiday Season approaches, our hearts focus on those in our community and surrounding areas. With that in mind, we have searched for ways to make the holiday season (and beyond) a little merrier for all. If you also feel the giving spirit, particularly at this time of the year, we invite you to join us in contacting one of the organizations below to find ways to give back to our community. Whatever your talents may be, there is someone in need!



The Almost Eden Project
www.almosteden.org



Family Giving Tree
www.familygivingtree.org



www.build.org



Downtown Streets
www.streetsteam.org



Silicon Valley Bicycle Exchange
www.bikex.org



HandsOn Bay Area
www.handsonbayarea.org



American Red Cross
www.redcross.org



Full Circle Farm
www.fullcirclesunnyvale.org



Community Services Agency
www.csacares.org



Learning Ally
www.learningally.org



RAFT – Resource Area For Teachers
www.raftbayarea.org



VolunteerMatch
www.volunteermatch.org



Second Harvest Food Bank
www.shfb.org



Silicon Valley Faces
www.svfaces.org



Salvation Army
www.salvationarmyusa.org

We understand that there are MANY, MANY worthy causes and organizations in our area. These are just a few that we found and wanted to share with you.

May this holiday season be filled with fond and lasting memories in the years to come!

Judy, Sheri and Cindy

Vintage Voices

AROUND TOWN

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

What is your New Year's resolution?



"To quit smoking and to lose weight. I'm doing it for my kids."
Ileana Meneses, Sunnyvale



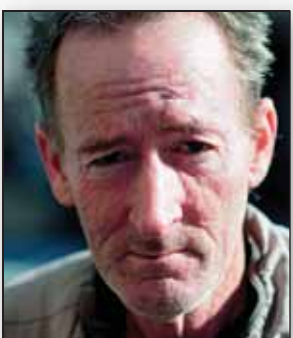
"I didn't make any New Year's resolutions. I don't feel they're really necessary."
Mary Meredith, Mountain View



"To get kids off the street and give them something fun and positive to do."
Kevin Nguyen, San Jose



"I'd like to get off my Top Ramen and chocolate diet because it's all I've been eating for the past year."
Stephanie Del Carmen, Mountain View



"To try and get a job so I can make money and get an apartment."
Steven Doyle, San Jose

This **Voices Around Town** column originally ran in the Jan. 7, 2011 issue.

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— Kay P. from Palo Alto, Subaru owner

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Community Health Education Programs



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

January 2015

New Year, New You

Jan. 7, 6 – 8 p.m.

Kim Carlson, M.D., and Aarti Srinivasan, M.D., PAMF Internal Medicine

In this class, we'll give you the tools to achieve your goals, whether it's to lose weight, get off your diabetes pills, or have enough energy to chase your grandchildren around. The new year is a great time to reevaluate where you are health-wise and set goals for where you'd like to go. Our mission at this class is to give you the tools you need to achieve those goals, whether it's to lose weight, get off your diabetes pills, or just have enough energy to chase your grandkids around.

PAMF Mountain View Center

701 E. El Camino Real, Conference Room C, Floor 3, Mountain View • **Register online**



Dementia Caregiver Education Series Financial Planning Tips

Jan. 15, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

Tom Bromm, Financial Consultant

Sunnyvale Center

301 Old San Francisco Road, 2nd Fl. Conference Center, Sunnyvale • **(408) 730-2810**

Dr. Marvin Small Memorial Parent Workshop Series Bye-Bye Diapers: Toilet Training

Jan. 20, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Heidi Emberling, Parents Place

Like many lessons in life, learning to use the toilet is not one that we can really teach children. However, there are ways that we can help them teach themselves. This workshop includes information that helps you understand how to create an environment and an attitude that will guide and promote your child's progress. You will learn how consistency with a routine can help your child feel more in control and gain independence.

Sunnyvale Center

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Food Allergies and You

Jan. 26, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Rajashri Shuba Iyengar, M.D.

PAMF Allergy and Immunology

San Carlos Library

610 Elm Street, San Carlos • Call Rhea Bradley at **(650) 591-0341, ext. 237**

LocalNews

■ CRIME BRIEFS

ELDER ABUSE ARREST

Police arrested a man over the weekend after an alleged physical altercation between him and his 83-year-old mother in their Mountain View home left the elderly woman with injuries.

Police received a report of an argument at a residence in the 1800 block of Villa Street on Dec. 27 at around 1:30 p.m. The woman had injuries to her neck, face and ear, including red marks and bleeding, according to Sgt. Saul Jaeger of the Mountain View Police Department.

The woman told police that her son struck her several times during an argument, which the man allegedly denied. Jaeger said based on the injuries and the mother's statements, 50-year-old

► See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 9

■ POLICE LOG

AUTO BURGLARY

700 block Continental Cir., 12/23
2500 block California St., 12/23
100 block Del Medio Av., 12/23
700 block Continental Cir., 12/24
400 block San Antonio Rd., 12/26
100 block Calderon Av., 12/29

BATTERY

600 block Showers Dr., 12/24
1000 block Space Park Way, 12/25
1900 block Grant Rd., 12/25
400 block W. El Camino Real, 12/26
100 block Huntington Ct., 12/27

INDECENT EXPOSURE

Farley St. & Montecito Av., 12/23
1000 block Grant Rd., 12/24

GRAND THEFT

2600 block W. El Camino Real, 12/24
300 block Showers Dr., 12/27

ROBBERY

900 block Bay St., 12/24
500 block Sylvan Av., 12/26

STOLEN VEHICLE

1300 block Montecito Av., 12/24
400 block Sierra Vista Av., 12/25
300 block Burgoyne St., 12/26
2200 block California St., 12/26

THREATENING A POLICE OFFICER

100 block Franklin St., 12/27

■ CORRECTION

The article "MV council members eye Gordon's Assembly seat" incorrectly stated Margaret Abe-Koga's profession. During her tenure on the City Council, she has worked as an event organizing consultant and most recently as foundation/corporate relations manager for a nonprofit. The article also misstated her position on housing development proposals, saying she "often" opposed housing projects rather than saying that she had opposed some significant proposed housing developments.

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Please email your resume and cover letter to Frank Bravo, Director of Information Technology, with "Computer Systems Associate" in the subject line.

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MICHELLE LE

Seventh-grade students at Crittenden Middle School present their product to help people with asthma to a panel of judges during their "Shark Tank" presentation.

Seventh-graders jump in the 'Shark Tank'

FROM ROBO-WHEELCHAIRS TO KIDNEY STONE-PREVENTING ICE POPS, CRITTENDEN STUDENTS TRY TO SELL INNOVATIVE MEDICAL IDEAS

By Kevin Forestieri

Coming up with a new invention is tough, but selling it can be a real challenge. That's what Crittenden Middle School students in Barbara Wright's seventh-grade science class learned recently as they tapped into their entrepreneurial skills and

knowledge of medical science to pitch their idea for a new product.

Over the last two months, students brainstormed and designed medical technology that would help people cope with or prevent diseases. Then they had to pitch their ideas to a panel in a style mimicking the reality show Shark Tank. In the

show, an inventor pitches an idea to potential investors.

And Wright went out of her way to give students an experience as close to the real thing as possible, with cameras rolling and a panel of five people, including a school nurse and a systems analyst at Stanford

► See **SHARK TANK**, page 13

Bill would make DUI offenders use 'ignition interlocks'

SEN. JERRY HILL SAYS DEVICES WOULD PREVENT HARM FROM REPEAT DRUNKEN DRIVING OFFENDERS

By Sue Dremann

First-time DUI offenders would be required to install "ignition interlock devices" in their cars that will test their breath for alcohol before starting the car, if a new bill introduced by state Sen. Jerry Hill passes in Sacramento.

Hill, flanked by representatives from Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) and nearly a dozen law enforcement officials from cities in San Mateo County and the San Mateo and Santa

Clara county sheriffs, introduced the bill (Senate Bill 61) on Monday morning, Dec. 29, during a press conference at Redwood City's Courthouse Square.

The bill would mandate a five-year pilot program that requires installation of the ignition interlock on DUI offenders' vehicles for six months for the first offense, with an escalating period for each subsequent conviction. Drivers would not lose their licenses while using the device, which Hill said has been a major stumbling block to the state's current voluntary

program. Under current California law, only about 20 percent of people who have a choice of installing the device or driving on a restricted license opt for the device, he said.

Reducing recidivism is key to reducing DUI-related fatalities and injury, he said. Legally impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes were eight times more likely to have a prior driving-while-impaired conviction than drivers involved in fatalities who

► See **DUI**, page 12

City joins coalition calling for Proposition 13 reform

CITY COUNCIL SAYS TAX BURDEN SHIFTED ONTO HOMEOWNERS

By Daniel DeBolt

The Mountain View City Council joined a growing number of California cities and school districts backing reform to California's Proposition 13. The 1978 ballot initiative was pitched to California voters as a way to rein in taxes on home ownership, but has allowed commercial property owners to escape paying their fair share, reformers say.

The proposition is "a 36-year experiment that unfortunately has had some fairly grave consequences," said Emil Margolis, organizer with Evolve, a nonprofit pushing for Proposition 13 reform. "Schools are underfunded and have some of the highest class sizes in the nation," he told the council.

Schools and city governments lose out on between \$6 billion and \$10 billion in tax revenues from commercial properties because of Proposition 13, Margolis said. Chevron alone saves \$1 billion annually because of the tax law.

Proposition 13 capped property tax at 1 percent of assessed value, and limits annual increases to property tax assessments at 2 percent, unless a building is sold or substantially renovated. When a home is sold, for example, it is reassessed at its sale price, boosting property tax revenues. Since most commercial properties seldom change hands, remaining in the possession of a corporation, the assessed values can remain well below current market prices for decades.

On Dec. 16 the council voted 6-1, with John Inks opposed, for a resolution expressing "general support for reforms to Proposition 13 related to commercial properties." The resolution adds that "regularly reassessing nonresidential property could generate billions of dollars in additional revenue for California and shift the tax burden from

residential property owners to corporations and commercial landholders."

"The thing that's clear is the revenue derived from property taxes has shifted over the years," said council member Mike Kasperzak.

Before Proposition 13, "40 percent of local property tax revenue came from nonresidential commercial property," said a city staff report. "Today, commercial property accounts for only 28 percent of California's property tax revenue, while home and apartment owners pay the remaining 72 percent."

Member Inks was opposed, citing concerns about financial impacts to businesses. He said that if a new stream of revenue is opened up, it will "upset that fiscal balance we are finally seeing in Sacramento. We are better off preserving the protections we have for businesses in this state."

The council's vote didn't support any particular legislation or ballot measure. City staff said the state's voters would have to make any change to Proposition 13, as it was approved through a ballot initiative.

Google's frequent purchasing of offices in Mountain View has been a boon to local schools and the city because of the associated reassessment of property values and the rise in property tax revenue. But "those properties are not going to get reassessed, maybe forever," Kasperzak said. "We are going to be caught in that vise. A substantial portion of our property may well never be reassessed again."

While she didn't vote against the resolution, member Margaret Abe-Koga expressed concern that reform could be complicated. "I don't know what the best way to do this is," she said.

Among the 12 California cities that have passed similar resolu-

► See **PROP 13**, page 11

■ A & E BRIEFS

Performance vs. Learning

Homework's no good. Neither are standardized tests or the Common Core. Those are among the controversial stances of Alfie Kohn, education and parenting author and outspoken critic of schools' emphasis on academic performance rather than learning. This **Thursday, Jan. 8, at 7:30 p.m.**, Kohn will give a talk at Palo Alto's JCC (3921 Fabian Way). Titled "Performance vs. Learning — The Costs of Overemphasizing Achievement," Kohn's lecture is aimed at parents and teachers and will be geared specifically toward the academic pressures faced by local students. The question students should be asking themselves, Kohn suggests, isn't "How am I doing?"

so much as "What am I doing?" Kohn's latest book, "The Myth of the Spoiled Child," overturns conventional wisdom about over-indulged kids and helicopter parents. For more about his work, go to alfiekohn.org. Tickets to the event are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. Go to tinyurl.com/kzdhqw8 or call 650-223-8664.

Yiddish Art Trio

The word "klezmer" probably doesn't make you think of contemporary music. Well, New York's Yiddish Art Trio intends to change that. Founded in 2009 by three acclaimed young klezmer musicians, the group is about to release its self-titled debut album. On **Wednesday, Jan. 7, at 8 p.m.**, Yiddish Art Trio will give an exclusive



COURTESY YIDDISH ART TRIO

The Yiddish Art Trio has toured throughout Europe, and is coming to Mountain View.



PALO ALTO WEEKLY FILE PHOTO

The historic house and gardens of Filoli needs volunteers.

house concert in Mountain View. Artists Patrick Farrell (accordion), Benjy Fox-Rosen (double bass and voice) and Michael Winograd (clarinet) have played their music around the U.S. and Europe, performing and recording alongside such luminaries as Yo-Yo Ma and Itzhak Perlman. The trio draws on the musical legacy of the Ashkenazi Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, but aims to bring a contemporary sensibility to traditional harmonies and forms. Some of their arrangements also incorporate Yiddish poetry. To learn more about the band, visit yiddisharttrio.com. To

reserve a ticket for \$20, and to receive directions to the concert location, email concerts@instantharmony.com or call 650-947-9669.

Filoli

Looking for a creative way to make a contribution in the New Year? Consider attending the volunteer recruitment session at Filoli on **Saturday, Jan. 10, from 9:30-11:30 a.m.** Located in Woodside just off Interstate 280, the historic house and gardens of Filoli attract more than 100,000 visitors every year. Though the 654-acre beauty spot is celebrated for its grounds, volunteer opportuni-

ties range from playing piano in the ballroom to helping with public relations, member services and docent-led tours. You won't be the only one who finds the nonprofit an ideal place to donate your time; Filoli currently boasts a team of more than 1,300 volunteers. The recruitment session will take place at Filoli's Visitor & Education Center, 86 Cañada Road, Woodside. The event is free, but reservations are required by 4 p.m. today: Friday, Jan. 2. To reserve a spot, email volunteer@filoli.org. To learn more, go to filoli.org and click on volunteer.

— Elizabeth Schwyzer

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TOOLS FOR POSITIVE AGING

TOP FIVE

► Continued from page 1

for rent control, a topic Mountain View hadn't broached for decades.

In March, longtime community activist Lenny Siegel launched the Campaign for a Balanced Mountain View, which sought to educate residents about the "social, environmental and economic disaster" caused by the housing shortage, as more people commute from further away. An analysis by the *Voice* found that new office development in the works could accommodate as many as 42,000 new jobs, while council-approved zoning for new housing would bring only 8,000 new homes by 2030. Residents sounded off at City Council and Environmental Planning Commission meetings to express concern about the worsening jobs-housing ratio. City Council members didn't offer much relief, backtracking on a move to allow more housing than offices in the San Antonio area, and continuing to oppose zoning for as many as 5,000 homes in North Bayshore, saying it could impact job growth and endanger the rare burrowing owls at Shoreline Park.

City Council election

The city's jobs-housing imbal-



MICHELLE LE

Steve Rasmussen enlisted a vocal group of customers and supporters in his fight to save his Milk Pail Market from development that would force it to close down.

ance also took center stage during the City Council election. Three of the five candidates who took the issue on most aggressively won seats on the Mountain View City Council: Pat Showalter, Ken Rosenberg and Lenny Siegel. In the crowded field of nine newcomers for

three open seats, candidates who opposed North Bayshore housing lost.

Also notable during the election was an influx of outside money. Over \$75,000 was spent by the shadowy "Neighborhood Empowerment Coalition" on mailers and polling in support

of Ellen Kamei, Showalter and Rosenberg. All three said they kept to the city's \$22,689 voluntary campaign expenditure limit, and had not cooperated with the independent group, which appeared to be backed and funded by various real estate groups. The National

Association of Realtors also independently spent \$26,000 on mailers and polling to support Rosenberg.

Big changes for key areas

After spending years developing new zoning laws in a general plan approved in 2012, in November and December council members finally approved more detailed blueprints for future development for three major areas of the city: the El Camino Real corridor, the large North Bayshore office park north of Highway 101 and the area in and around San Antonio shopping center. After some false starts, Merlone Geier made a deal to save the Milk Pail Market with a shared parking agreement, signed just before the council approved its movie theater, hotel, retail and office development at the corner of California Street and San Antonio Road. LinkedIn is expected to move into new offices at the development.

El Camino Real was rezoned for higher densities to encourage redevelopment throughout the corridor, particularly at key intersections, and plans for more crosswalks and bike lanes

► See **TOP FIVE**, page 8

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MICHELLE LE

City Council candidates fielded a lot of questions about offices and housing at election forums.

TOP FIVE

► Continued from page 7

were approved.

A great deal of public interest focused on the North Bayshore plan, which will allow 3.4 million square feet of office space, mostly above retail along North Shoreline Boulevard. Council members and housing advocates sparred over whether there was a "mandate" from voters who elected new council members supporting the inclusion of housing in the plan, something that would likely reduce the amount of new office space. The issue is likely to come up again in 2015 when the new members take

their seats on the City Council this month.

**Big improvements
for transit, bikes**

With all of the new development in the city came new requirements aiming to help people get around without cars.

Office developers were asked to form the Mountain View Transit Management Agency, which on Jan. 12 will launch the MVgo commuter shuttle to ferry commuters and the general public between the downtown train station and the city's office parks. A shuttle that aims to help residents get around town will be launched on Jan. 5 and

was approved by the City Council in October. The city shuttles are due to a partnership with Google, which donated electric shuttles, a goodwill gesture in a year that saw irate protesters blocking Google's buses in San Francisco as the Bay Area grappled with the growing impacts of tech company dollars.

In November the council approved plans for a bike boulevard on Church and Latham streets as part of the El Camino precise plan, which could include diverters for car traffic to encourage cycling on the street. Bike lanes extending the whole length of El Camino Real were deemed too dangerous and difficult to cre-



MICHELLE LE

Kay Boynton protests for affordable housing outside Mountain View City Hall.

ate, though portions of El Camino Real from the eastern border to Calderon Avenue will have bike lanes soon because of the lack of alternative routes for cyclists.

In 2014, developers were increasingly asked pay for “public benefits” that often included new infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians nearly everywhere a large project was approved. Through a new development fee, Google is likely to fund much of a plan to transform the North Shoreline Boulevard and Stierlin Road corridor into a bicyclist- and shuttle-friendly path between the downtown train station and Google headquarters north of Highway 101, with protected bike lanes and a shuttle-only lane down the center of the street.

Hangar One saved, Moffett Field leased

After many years of making headlines, the fight by residents to save Moffett Field’s landmark Hangar One came to a close when it was announced that Google finalized a deal with the federal government to lease the structure, along with 1,000 acres of runways and two other large hangars at Moffett Field. The lease saves NASA \$6.3 million a year in operation costs for the federal airfield, which is expected to remain largely closed to private use.

In February the federal government announced that Google’s Planetary Ventures won the bid

and would conduct “research, testing, assembly and development” of emerging technologies related to space, aviation, rovers and robotics in the large hangars. In November, the deal was finalized, pending an agreement with environmental agencies overseeing groundwater contamination cleanup on the site, and it was reported that Google would pay \$1.16 billion over 60 years to lease the site. Hangar One, the iconic 200-foot tall structure that once housed the USS Macon airship, will be restored at an expected cost of over \$40 million.

Planetary Ventures will also

provide a 90,000-square-foot building initially slated as an incubator and museum space. Shortly after the deal was finalized in November, the nonprofit Earth, Air & Space Educational Foundation announced that it is receiving seed money from Google to create an interactive museum called the Earth, Air & Space Collaboratory at Moffett Field.

Email Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

CRIME BRIEFS

► Continued from page 4

Konstantin Tolstov was arrested on charges of elder abuse and booked into San Jose Main Jail.

MAN FOUND BLEEDING

A Sunnyvale man was found bleeding shortly after midnight on Friday near Sylvan Park. Police are asking the public for information on the incident.

Police received a report at 12:10 a.m. on Dec. 26, that a man was bleeding on Sylvan Avenue near the park. Officers found the 24-year-old man and transported him to a local hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

Anyone who witnessed the incident or may have information about the suspects is encouraged to call Detective Kevin Galloway of the Mountain View Police Department at 650-903-6395.

People who want to leave an anonymous tip can call 650-961-5800 or text 274637 — include MVTips in the body of the message.

Kevin Forestieri



MICHELLE LE

Construction on a new office building at 250 Bryant St. was well underway in June.

Mountain View Whisman School District

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Mountain View Voice

Holiday Fund

How to Give

Your gift helps children and families in need

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched dollar for dollar to the extent possible and will go directly to the nonprofit agencies that serve Mountain View residents. Last year, more than 150 Voice readers and the Wakerly, the William and Flora Hewlett and the David and Lucile Packard foundations contributed more than \$115,000, or more than \$16,000 each for the nonprofit agencies supported by the Voice Holiday Fund. We are indebted to the Silicon Valley Community Foundation which handles all donations, and deducts no administrative costs from your gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law. All donations will be shared equally with the seven recipient agencies.

Donate online at
[www.siliconvalleycf.org/
mvv-holiday-fund](http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/mvv-holiday-fund)

This year, the following agencies will be supported by the Holiday Fund:

Day Worker Center

The Day Worker Center of Mountain View provides a secure place for workers and employers to negotiate wages and work conditions. It serves an average of 60 workers a day with job placements, English lessons, job skills workshops or guidance.

Mentor Tutor Connections

Mentor Tutor Connections matches adult volunteer mentors with at-risk youth in the Mountain View, Los Altos and the Los Altos Hills area and offers tutoring to many students, including some in high school and beyond.

Community School of Music and Arts

The Community School of Music and Arts provides hands-on art and music education in the classrooms of the Mountain View Whisman School District. Nearly 45 percent of the students are socio-economically disadvantaged, and 28 percent have limited English proficiency.

Mountain View RotaCare Clinic

The RotaCare Free Clinic provides uninsured local residents with primary care and many specialty care services. The clinic is frequently the last resort for this underserved demographic group.

YWCA Support Network for Domestic Violence

This group operates a 24-hour bilingual hotline and a safe shelter for women and their children. It also offers counseling and other services for families dealing with domestic violence.

Community Services Agency

CSA is the community's safety-net providing critical support services for low-income individuals and families, the homeless and seniors in northern Santa Clara County, including Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills.

Community Health Awareness Council

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

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Thank you for donating to the Holiday Fund

HOLIDAY FUND

► Continued from page 1

This winter will be particularly grueling for people without a home. The Sunnyvale Armory that used to serve as a homeless shelter for anywhere from 125 to 135 people at a time during the cold winter months was shut down last March. With the reduction in shelter space, Myers said there's increased pressure on CSA to serve the local homeless population.

The closure makes the already-bad problem of low homeless shelter space in the county even worse. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Santa Clara County ranks second worst in the country based on the percentage of homeless population that goes unsheltered, meaning they live in places "not meant for human habitation, such as the streets, abandoned buildings, vehicles or parks."

"Shelter is turning into a big priority," Myers said.

In October, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved \$1.1 million in funding to fill the gap left by the closure, which includes a motel voucher program, expanded shelter services in Palo Alto and San Jose, and "inclement weather outreach" to the county's homeless population.

The original plan to set up a new homeless shelter in the North County by Thanksgiving, similar to the armory, fell through after the county was unable to secure a new facility due to a "tight real estate market," according to a press release by Supervisor Joe Simitian's office.

Simitian urged the county to act fast going into the cold winter months, which can have tragic consequences on the homeless population.

"Last year, we lost four lives in a week during an unexpected cold spell. That can't be allowed to happen again," Simitian said.

The armory closure means there are no longer any homeless shelters in Mountain View or Sunnyvale, and the ones close by are not "drop-in" shelters where people can show up and expect to get in. Instead, Myers said they have to frequently refer homeless people to shelters in San Jose, which can be a challenging endeavor for someone



JAMES TENSUAN

Karen Campbell, right, sorts produce at the Community Services Agency before clients come to pick up food.

without a car.

CSA staff works with people who come in seeking homeless services, and explains how to get to the San Jose facilities via public transportation. Myers said they also make sure that anyone who comes in is able to get to the RotaCare clinic for medical care, if needed, and reminds anyone seeking emergency services that they have access to food at any time through CSA's food pantry.

Two weeks ago, Myers said a family came in and needed shelter "right away." He said CSA was able to get the family food and other essentials, and helped them get to the Georgia Travis Center in San Jose.

He said CSA is also putting together "homeless backpacks," which contain clean clothes, blankets, medical kits and tarps for the rainy winter weather, giving people enough supplies to fulfill the bare-bones needs of living on the street.

Myers attributes the up-tick in homelessness, in large part, to the high cost of living. It's putting pressure on people who have housing but can't afford the rent increases, causing people to "fall out of housing." The cost of rent in Santa Clara County has gone up over 12 percent in the last year, and the average price for a two-bedroom apartment is nearly \$2,000, according to the CSA website.

"Our rents are so high, people are really being squeezed," Myers said.

He said it's difficult for people to understand that the homeless population is not just a small group of people who are drug-users or are mentally impaired

— it's made up of people you see at work everyday.

"(CSA) serves people who go to work and have jobs. They leave when everyone else leaves the building, but instead go out to live in their car and have to find a place to take a shower," Myers said.

People who come to CSA for homeless services are in "all kinds of situations" according to Myers, whether living in their cars, in an encampment, behind buildings or staying with friends or relatives. He said there are also "varying" levels of homelessness, and services they provide need to fill specific needs. In some cases, using CSA's food pantry is enough of a financial relief for clients that they can afford to pay the rent again.

Others need financial assistance, like a single month's worth of rent — which CSA can provide as well, but with some strings attached. In order to get that kind of financial help, they need to prove they have a stable income and a place to live that they can afford.

"You have to show that this isn't going to be a chronic situation," Myers said. "There has to be some way of showing that this isn't good money going after bad."

Of the homeless people who come to CSA looking for help to find a new place to live, 20 percent manage to find an affordable place in the area. To Myers, 20 percent is a big success.

"Twenty percent, in this area, with the rents the way they are, that's definitely a good thing," Myers said.

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

As of Dec. 26, 2014, 62 donors have contributed \$53,475 to the Mountain View Voice Holiday Fund

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PROP 13

► Continued from page 5

tions calling for Proposition 13 reform are Palo Alto, Oakland, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Among the 90 state school districts that have passed such

resolutions are the Sunnyvale, Los Altos and Foothill-DeAnza districts.

"We believe it's important to send a strong message," Margolis said. "It is unacceptable to continue to live in a state where we now have the highest

sales taxes in the country while Chevron, for example, still saves \$1 billion every year in property taxes that will never be reassessed, because they're not going anywhere."

Email Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

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Register online at:
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DUI

► Continued from page 5

had not been drinking, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

And the casualties are daunting: In the past 30 years, more than 50,000 Californians have been killed by drunk drivers and more than 1 million have been injured, Hill said. Repeat DUI offenders account for about a third of annual DUI convictions.

Hill said it pains him that a preventable cause of injury and death is not being fully addressed. Conservative estimates show that a first-time convicted offender has driven drunk at least 80 times prior to being arrested, he said.

"California needs to do a better job of reducing deaths and injuries from drunk drivers," Hill said. "We must take action to prevent more drunk drivers."

The bill is a bipartisan effort, he added.

Ignition interlocks have reduced repeat drunk-driving offenses by 67 percent, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. A 1999-2002 study funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that in New Mexico, which has the nation's highest rate of per capita ignition interlock installations, DUI rearrest rates were 66 percent

lower for persons using the device than rates for those without ignition interlock devices.

A second New Mexico study found recidivism was reduced by 75 percent, and alcohol-related crashes declined 31 percent between 2002 and 2007, according to Impact DWI statistics.

Currently, 24 states have laws requiring all first-time offenders to use ignition interlocks. In states that require the devices, ignition interlocks have reduced DUI fatalities by more than 35 percent; in Oregon, the reduction is more than 42 percent, Hill said.

In California, a pilot program is underway in Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento and Tulare counties. The devices, which look like walkie-talkies with a plastic tube on top (Drivers must blow into the tube), blocks the car's ignition from starting if the device detects a blood-alcohol level exceeding a pre-set limit. The driver is periodically prompted to pull over and blow into the device again to help prevent gaming the system, Hill said.

Drivers must pay about \$100 to \$150 for the device, plus a \$50 monthly maintenance fee. The manufacturer will provide the devices at no cost to people who cannot afford them, he said.

Tony Chin, technical supervisor for manufacturer Smart Start,

said the device logs whether alcohol is present, its amount and the duration. Drivers in the program must return the device for service every 30 days and to have the data downloaded. When warranted, technicians can employ cameras and GPS to instantaneously download the information.

Hill said that people convicted of a DUI would be required to install the devices in their vehicles for six months. Second-time offenders would use the devices for one year; with a two-year requirement for third-time offenders and three years for anyone with four or more DUI convictions.

Tom Gallagher, assistant San Mateo County sheriff, said he fully supports the bill.

"Each year we make about 300 DUI arrests; we've had 315 so far this year. I definitely believe it will make San Mateo County a safer place," he said.

Nina Walker, representing MADD in San Diego, spoke to the very real tragedy caused by DUI drivers and the group's support for the bill.

"It's time for California to do the right thing. My life was changed when my 22-year-old daughter, Ginger, was killed in a DUI crash. Ginger left behind a 3-year-old son, (who) my husband and I are now raising," she said. ■

Marriage & Family



Do you feel annoyed and frustrated? Does loneliness overwhelm you? Do you find it difficult to connect with other people? Do you feel pain and bitterness in your heart? Are there people in your life who feel you are not sensitive to their needs? Are you thinking about separation or divorce? Do you have problems with anger? Would you like to experience a more intimate relationship with God and your loved ones?

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Dr. Quispe is an international speaker. With a dynamic, honest, and entertaining style, he shares divine principles and real stories that inspire and transform. His doctorate is in Psychology with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Counseling. He is a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors and the National Council of Family Relations.



Rene Quispe, Ph.D.

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Mon. 12	7:00pm	"Please, Understand me"
Tues. 13	7:00pm	"Parenting for Eternity"
Wed. 14	7:00pm	"Free from Toxic Anger"
Thurs. 15	7:00pm	"Healing from Trauma"
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SHARK TANK

► Continued from page 5

Hospital, listening intently to each idea — ultimately choosing one to be the winner.

Some inventions focused on preventative medicine. Rather than try to tackle better ways to pass a kidney stone, one group proposed an ice pop with ingredients that would block kidney stone formation altogether. The product, called “Kidney Pops,” would include citrus fruit juice including lemon, orange and mango juice.

Would it work? Some evidence has shown that citrus juices can increase the level of citrate in the kidneys, according to John Hopkins University. The calcium in kidneys binds the citrate instead of oxalate and phosphate, preventing the formation of stones.

One student in the group has a father who has had trouble with kidney stones multiple times, and would have taken advantage of food marketed for kidney stone prevention.

Other students designed projects to better cope with diseases. Two groups designed electric wheelchairs with moving components that could act as mechanical legs, giving people with muscular dystrophy the ability to stand up, run, and jump.



Veteran teacher Steve Grayson watches a presentation at Crittenden Middle School.

Wright said that by using the format of the show, students got to show off what they learned about the human body and medical technology without the need for a long, dry presentation. She said students also had to use critical thinking to come up with their own ideas for how to solve problems, giving their research context in the real world.

“It’s the whole idea of having them invent a product or redesign an old one (that) made them think about the box,”

Wright said.

The added complexity of the project is that students didn’t have to just invent a project out of thin air — they had to sell it, too. They had to distinguish their invention from things already on the market, give it an aesthetic appeal and name a reasonable price without compromising the product.

One group proposed an automatic insulin injector, which exists on the market already, designed as a bracelet that could

be worn as a “stylish” way to get insulin. Other groups with inventions to help diabetics manage their blood sugar inevitably had to shoulder a higher cost because insulin is not cheap.

An authentic audience

The medical technology project is just one of many months-long endeavors throughout the district to bring project-based learning to classrooms. One of the goals of project-based learning is for students to take their

research and classwork over two to three months and use it to make a presentation to an “authentic” audience composed of people who work in the field — in this case, science, medicine and technology.

With the help of former Crittenden teacher Steve Grayson, Wright said she was able to cobble together an outstanding panel of “sharks” to listen to the students’ ideas, ask questions and judge which group had the best idea.

“I sent out emails to literally anyone I could think of that could be related in any way to medicine, technology or innovation,” Wright said.

Although the panel made students more nervous when they presented, Wright said it was instrumental in getting students to go the extra distance for their presentation. Multiple cameras were recording the event too, but Wright said it was less about recording the event to watch later, and more about giving students that “live production” feeling they’d get if they were really on the TV show. Wright said it definitely had an effect.

“If they presented in front of a classroom of their peers, they wouldn’t feel that same need to rise to the occasion,” Wright said.

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Clockwise from top left: Dominic Ware rallies protesters asking for higher wages outside the Mountain View Walmart on May 9; Google employee listens during a student-led rally for black Civil Rights at Eagle Park on Dec. 10; Monta Loma Elementary School second-graders check out the winter wheat in the school's "Living Classroom" on April 15; Crittenden Panthers' Emily Klemm cleans up teammate Alysia Capote's eye-black before their home game starts on Sept. 24; Francisco Tizol dreams of leaving the violence of Guatemala and returning to Mountain View with his family; Y Combinator's hack-athon in August generated virtual reality projects like "Tabletgod;" and Nabor Reyes attends the annual May Day march for immigration reform.



NATALIA NAZAROVA



What was 2014 like in Mountain View? There were protests and presidential visits, hack-athons and a housing crunch, along with everyday scenes like softball games and students harvesting school gardens. It was a year in which the immigration debate took on new urgency as unaccompanied children from Central America sought shelter and Santa Clara County officials offered to help house them. The cost of living loomed large for many residents, as home prices and rents both soared, workers agitated for a living wage at Walmart and the Mountain View City Council passed a law boosting the city's minimum wage. On the other end of the spectrum, the economy boomed for the local tech industry, with well-heeled workers snatching up new luxury apartments at record rental prices. National stories about police killing unarmed black men resonated with Mountain View teens, who organized a peaceful protest that drew residents, teachers and Google employees.



2014

THE YEAR IN PHOTOS

PHOTOS BY MICHELLE LE

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GUEST OPINION VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Put blood donation on resolution list for 2015

By Loren Magana

I know what you're thinking: The holidays are almost over and in 2015 you want to lose 10 pounds or possibly quit smoking. Or maybe you are looking to support a charitable cause. Good will can come in many forms, but people often forget about the one form of giving that can have an immediate and direct impact on another person's life, the priceless gift of blood.

This year, Stanford Blood Center (SBC) is asking that you please include becoming a blood donor to your New Year's resolution list.

Most people have no idea how much need there is for blood. Every two seconds in the U.S. someone needs blood and just one donation can save up to three lives. However, of the 60 percent of Americans eligible to donate blood, less than 5 percent actually do, and in the Bay Area, only 3 percent donate.

Stanford Blood Center, one of the main suppliers of blood to the Bay Area, reports that over the holidays the blood inventory is often reduced due to illness, vacations and holidays; however, the demand for blood products stays steady.

In addition, due to school closures, an important source of blood derived from high school blood drives is temporarily unavailable, leaving centers with critically low inventory.

"January is a particularly challenging period for us here at SBC as we come out of the holidays and must meet the continued needs of local patients," according to Regina Driscoll, director of donor services at Stanford Blood Center.

Consider that every day in the U.S., approximately 39,000 units of blood are required in hospitals and emergency rooms but only 38,000 donations are received, which frequently leaves most facilities a mere two days away from running out.

Unfortunately, one never knows when it might be their turn to be the recipient of a life-saving procedure that requires blood donation.

Imagine how you would feel if it was your family member who required blood and his or her blood type was in short supply. That's why it's so important to give.

All blood types are needed and the entire process takes only about an hour. Potential donors should be in good health, with no cold or flu symptoms. They must eat well and drink fluids prior to donation and present photo identification at the time of donation.

Afraid of needles? Many people share the same fear but still find they can give blood. Most first-time donors say the initial quick pinch pales in comparison to the feeling of accomplishment they get at the end of a successful donation!

Don't want to go alone? Try donating together as a family and create a new tradition. Start a trend and make 2015 the year you finally roll up your sleeve to give by including blood donation on the top of your resolution list. Happy New Year!

SBC has three convenient donation centers in Mountain View, Palo Alto and Menlo Park, and hosts several mobile blood drives throughout the Bay Area. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit bloodcenter.stanford.edu or call 1-888-723-7831. ■

Loren Magana is the communications and public affairs specialist at the Stanford Blood Center.

LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

PROCEED WITH HEALTHY SKEPTICISM

There are some serious misconceptions about replacing car lanes with bus lanes on El Camino.

"Resident and bike advocate Janet Lafleur said the VTA's report showed minimal impacts to drivers" (The Voice, Dec. 19). VTA's claim that auto travel time through the corridor will increase only three to four minutes is clearly implausible. One lane on El Camino handles 950 cars per hour. VTA is not assuming those drivers will jump on a bus.

If you read the full report, instead of just looking at the glossy charts, you'll see that VTA's plan assumes those drivers would divert to alternate routes — e.g., Foothill or Central, which are already at capacity.

As the council noted, this would have a major impact on residential streets, as frustrated drivers cut through neighborhoods. The VTA report includes a section on "diversion," listing areas where diverted traffic would cause problems. "The issue seems to have divided older, more established residents ... against younger residents and employees with different preferences and environmental concerns."

Making this a generational issue is counterproductive. It's not just the young who have environmental concerns. Many of us have been actively supporting environmental causes before millennials were born.

Cars idling in stalled traffic will generate even more greenhouse gases. If not sitting on El Camino with engines running, they'll divert through residential streets bringing exhaust fumes — plus added traffic dangers — to kids and pedestrians in quiet communities with narrow streets.

Approach the VTA hype with healthy skepticism.

*Pat Marriott
Los Altos*

A RECOMMENDED TEST FOR HIGHER OFFICE

The Voice reported on Dec. 26 that two members of the Mountain View City Council have expressed interest in running for our state Assembly seat in 2016 when the incumbent is termed out. For some of us, a good test of whether a council member should be elevated to higher office is what, if anything, he or she has done to protect and advance the legitimate concerns of local residents.

The regional plan for dedicated bus lanes on El Camino Real (from San Jose to South San Francisco) is an example of special interests running over local concerns. In Santa Clara County, the bus-only lanes are being imposed by a bureaucracy called the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), with most of its oversight board consisting of politicians elected in San Jose.

Of the two council members talking about running for state Assembly, Margaret Abe-Koga has been an advocate of the bus-only lanes and Michael Kasperzak has never been quoted (that I have read) as having any position at all. Council members should be organizing a campaign against the bus-only lanes — perhaps even placing advisory measures on the local ballot in affected cities.

So far, it appears that no Mountain View council member has done anything to head off the VTA's plan to get folks out of their cars and into buses that will transport them nowhere they need to go.

*Gary Wesley
Continental Circle*





ZAREEN'S SERVES UP FRESH PAKISTANI AND INDIAN FARE

LUSCIOUS KEBABS DELICATE CURRIES

REVIEW BY SHEILA HIMMEL // PHOTOS BY NATALIA NAZAROVA

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

In the wide world of kebabs, many of us still think first of marinated squares of meat, usually chewy, grilled on a stick. Yet at Zareen's, a contemporary Pakistani halal and Indian cafe in Mountain View, delicate Pakistani kebabs occupy the opposite end of the spectrum: mildly spiced, ethereally soft patties of finely ground meat with fresh herbs and spices.

Since March of this year, Zareen's has been located in a Mountain View strip mall of restaurants, just off Shoreline Boulevard and surrounded by Google buildings. There are 15 seats inside and a smattering of picnic tables outside. Bustling with action in the kitchen and customers coming in and out, Zareen's has a city feel. Warm,



Above: Zareen Khan, chef and owner of Zareen's in Mountain View, cooks chicken in the restaurant's kitchen. **Top:** Gola kebabs made with minced beef are a specialty at Zareen's, which serves Pakistani and Indian dishes.

tomato-hued walls are lined with tables scrunched close together. The decoration consists mainly of a chalkboard menu and books hanging from strings, ranging from Malala Yousafzai's "I Am Malala" to "The Poems of Emily Dickinson."

Upping the comfort level, the staff is very welcoming in person and on the phone. They offer complementary sweet chai tea while you wait.

The other important thing to know about Zareen's: It's a small place where food is cooked to order. If you're in a hurry, call ahead or order online.

Zareen's contemporary take on meat-focused Pakistani cuisine embraces vegetarian options and

► Continued on next page



The Rizul and Sarwaz families sit down to a meal at Zareen's.

► Continued from previous page

local produce, with nothing sitting around. As one enthusiast noted, you taste the food, not the oil it was cooked in.

One of our favorites was the Madras paneer wrap (\$7.99). Each bite offered a variety of ingredients: cubes of fresh cheese, curry rice, corn, carrots, cucumber, herbs and lentils wrapped in a light yet sturdy paratha flatbread.

Plain griddled paratha (\$1.50), with its crinkled skin and buttery flavor, is also a joy.

Also terrific, the Punjabi chicken burger (\$7.99) is a succulent patty of free-range chicken with chutney, onions, cilantro, tomato and iceberg lettuce sandwiched by a ballpark-type bun. It comes with spicy fries or a side salad. If you aren't eating immediately, get the salad. It's a lightly pickled, slightly spicy mix of cucumber, carrots, corn and cilantro.

This refreshing salad accompanies all the curry and kebab meals, which also come with rice, naan, a dab of daal and a yogurt raita. The chicken in the chicken tikka masala meal (\$8.99) was cooked and spiced nicely, but there wasn't much of it. The naan came wrapped in foil, which kept it warm but also steamed and

DINNER BY THE MOVIES AT SHORELINE'S

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Greek Salad
Made with cucumber, roma tomatoes, kalamata, olives, red onions, topped with crumbled feta cheese and bell peppers. Served with lemon vinaigrette.

Filet Mignon
Filet mignon in a red wine reduction. Served with broccolini and a risotto cake filled with blue cheese.

Grilled Lamb Chops in a Lemon Vinaigrette Sauce
Served with Swiss chard, and Roasted Potatoes.

Sausage and Honey Pizza
Made with tomato sauce, mascapone cheese, honey, Italian sausage, sarrono peppers, with fresh basil.

We serve local and organic mixed greens along with daily fresh seafood.

Executive Chef Antonio Zomora





Above: The Pakistani halwa puri brunch is served only on weekends.
Right: The grilled chicken boti is served with rice, naan, chutney and a lightly pickled salad.



chewy, as if microwaved.

Beef gola and shami kebabs (\$7.99) are signature dishes. Gola kebabs are large, round and pillow-soft, tenderized with papaya. Shami kebabs involve a reduction of lentil stew, pan-fried like crabcakes.

Pakistani kebabs are hard to get right. They easily come out very dry or too fat, or they fall apart. Zareen's owner, Zareen Zhan, grew up on Burns Road in Karachi, Pakistan — a district famous for its food stalls. She knows a good kebab when she tastes it. After moving to the Silicon Valley to work in product management, she started teaching cooking classes in

her own kitchen, her recipes merging Pakistani halal foods with sustainable ideals including compostable containers and menu items marked free of gluten, nuts, dairy and eggs. Zhan began selling her kebabs, fresh or frozen, and then moved into corporate catering. Now the catering is done from the tiny Mountain View kitchen.

Zareen's has no beer or wine, yet the beverage offerings are strong. Besides the luscious chai, Zareen's mango lassi (\$3.80) is particularly light and fresh, not goopy. And there are calorie-free treats such as fennel water (\$1.80).

For many, the biggest treat

comes on weekends, with the Pakistani halwa puri brunch (\$8.99): a platter of aloo bhujia (potato curry), choley (chickpeas), crispy puri-paratha (fried bread) and sweet semolina halwa dessert. The brunch platter is available until 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sundays — no exceptions.

Finally, there's a 10 percent surcharge for dining in. This presumably covers the cost of real utensils, metal trays and table service.

There are a couple of areas for improvement. The samosas (\$3.99) could be less greasy, prices seem to vary and the website may not be exactly up-to-date. ▣

DINING NOTES

Zareen's

1477 Plymouth Drive, #C,
Mountain View
650-641-0335
zareensmountainview.com

Hours: Sunday-Thursday,
11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., 4-9 p.m.;
Friday-Saturday, 11:30 a.m.-3
p.m., 4-10 p.m.

Reservations: ●

Credit cards: ✓

Alcohol: ●

Children: ✓

Takeout: ✓

Catering: ✓

Outdoor dining: ✓

Party and
banquet facilities: ●

Parking: Parking
lot

Noise level: medium



CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW SEEKING PARK SITES

The City of Mountain View is seeking properties in residential neighborhoods, primarily north of El Camino Real, for possible acquisition and development of neighborhood parks. The ideal site is one or more properties totalling greater than 17,500 s.f. of land area. For more information, please contact Dennis Drennan at (650) 903-6633, or by e-mail at dennis.drennan@mountainview.gov.

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THE YEAR IN FILM

WE REVISIT THE BEST, THE WORST, AND THE MOST MEMORABLE MOVIES OF 2014

By Peter Canavese

This year at the movies — like all years at the movies — was the best of times and the worst of times: an age of wisdom (mostly at the art house) and an age of foolishness (mostly at the cineplex).

As usual, the best films of the year were those that writ large questions about the nature of human existence (“Boyhood,” “Only Lovers Left Alive”), the purpose and function of art (“National Gallery”) or timely social conundrums like income inequality (“Snowpiercer”) and the role of government in our lives (“Citizenfour,” “Levia-

than”). Meanwhile, the CGI beat went on (and on) in multiplexes churning out superhero movies, animated kiddie spectacles and relatively thrifty (if brain-cell-costly) comedies.

There were moments in 2014 when art and commerce conspicuously met, as with the nimble, witty comic-book movie “X-Men: Days of Future Past,” the surprisingly subversive “The Lego Movie,” the mind-trippy psychological horrors of “Oculus” and “The Babadook,” and a not-entirely Disneyfied take on Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine’s thoughtful musical,

“Into the Woods.” One film — Alejandro González Inarritu’s “Birdman” — even took as its subject the art vs. commerce debate, which comically worked at tearing apart Michael Keaton’s semi-autobiographical character.

Between the extremes, 2014 offered plenty to enjoy and admire, including Luc Besson’s gonzo sci-fi actioner “Lucy,” the pop-fueled high-flying fantasy “Guardians of the Galaxy” and the unexpectedly mature kiddie sequel “How to Train Your Dragon 2.” We watched a modern-day Romeo and Juliet tussle with cancer (“The Fault

in Our Stars”), madcap hotel employees dash about Europe (“The Grand Budapest Hotel”) and even the life and death of a film critic (Roger Ebert in “Life Itself”): something for everyone.

In contemplating the year, a critic also smiles to recall the humble pleasures of films destined not to find wide audiences: the plucky punk girls of Swedish dramedy “We Are the Best!,” the wonder of posthumously “Finding Vivian Maier,” the magisterial performance of Irrfan Khan in “The Lunchbox,” the heady theatrical dialogue of “Venus in Fur,” the heartwarm-

ing gay domesticity of “Love Is Strange,” the arrival of a fresh new voice with Justin Simien’s “Dear White People,” a pop star’s long goodbye in “Glen Campbell: I’ll Be Me” and even “Palo Alto” proving ready for its close-up.

Yes, it’s been quite a year for film. Consider the following lists an invitation to hit the theaters, fire up Netflix, rattle the Redbox or clip and save this article for the next time you’re in the mood for a movie. Let’s meet back here next year to exchange notes, and in the meantime, Happy New Year.

THE TOP TEN FILMS OF 2014

10. ‘Snowpiercer’

Genre filmmaking of course has its place (and potential for artfulness), and this blisteringly entertaining science-fiction actioner has the benefit of capturing the zeitgeist. Bong Joon-ho’s first English-language feature is a movie-lover’s movie, with edgy cred and a vivid dystopian vision that, while ostensibly futuristic, speaks harshly to the class divide already defining us. “Snowpiercer” has energy to burn in its eye-popping design and photography, its narrative momentum and the delirious joy we share with Tilda Swinton in her performance of a grotesque villain.

9. ‘Inherent Vice’

Paul Thomas Anderson’s ambitious adaptation of a Thomas Pynchon novel (the first to make it to the screen) proves ticklish and thoughtful, indulging goofily in a purposely impenetrable Philip Marlowe-style private detective mystery, commenting about the powers

that be in American culture along the way, and arriving at a heartfelt intimacy as concerns its recognizably befuddled hero (Joaquin Phoenix, masterful as usual). And there’s no underestimating the pleasure of one of the best ensembles of the year (including Josh Brolin doing Jack Webb, woman-on-a-pedestal Katherine Waterston, and the always brilliant Benicio Del Toro adding another addled lawyer to his resume).

8. ‘Citizenfour’

Laura Poitras’ exemplary Citizenfour shares with us the privileged access whistleblower Edward Snowden granted to Poitras and Guardian reporters Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill, thereby humanizing a man previously seen mostly in iconic terms. The resulting extraordinary “you are there” document of history unfolding evokes the paranoid thrillers of the post-Watergate years while offering a fresh perspective on our national debate over

justice as it concerns NSA overreach, the government’s almost entirely unchecked power over the individual and our complicit acceptance of those terms.

7. ‘Stranger by the Lake’

This unblinking look at gay sexuality in its specificity, and sexual desire in general, gradually takes the shape of a thriller. Writer-director Alain Guiraudie is unsparing in his dissection of sexual politics, which become the filter through which he and we view and understand the characters at a lakeside cruising spot: a gay man (Pierre Deladonchamps) content to fulfill his appetites without attachment, the self-professed straight man (Patrick D’Assumçao) who befriends him, and a killer who mirrors for both men the dark undercurrents neither wishes to contemplate.

6. ‘Mr. Turner’

Ever-brilliant character actor Timothy Spall outdoes himself as curmudgeonly painter J.M.W.

Turner in Mike Leigh’s latest lived-in period piece. Impeccably researched and realized — while leaving room for impro-

visatory spontaneity — this portrait of the artist captures his contradictions, particularly his capacity for tenderness (most



SANDRO KOPP/SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Tilda Swinton in “Only Lovers Left Alive.”

Above: “Into the Woods;” “Foxcatcher;” “Citizenfour;” and “The Boxtrolls.”

(INTO THE WOODS) WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES
(FOXCATCHER) SCOTT GARFIELD/FAIR HILL, LLC.
(CITIZENFOUR) RADIUS-TWC
(BOXTROLLS) LAIKA INC./FOCUS FEATURES



SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

Ellar Coltrane in "Boyhood."

notably toward his father) versus his tendency toward grunting self-absorption. Cinematographer Dick Pope paints with light his own astonishing landscapes as we ponder the wellsprings of Turner's genius.

5. 'Only Lovers Left Alive'

Just when you thought there was nothing left to say with vampiric metaphors ... Writer-director Jim Jarmusch delivers another eccentric, profoundly personal but broadly fascinating statement about the wacky ways we live. Both drily funny and earnestly accusatory about the state we've put the planet in, this Romantic tale of two vampires (Tom Hiddleston and Tilda Swinton, both superb) just trying to live their eternal lives amid the "zombies" that are modern citizens amuses, scares and moves while arguing that only love and art are worthy pursuits to fill our hours.

4. 'Under the Skin'

Yes, Scarlett Johansson gets naked in this adaptation of Michel Faber's 2000 novel, but she also gives one of her finest performances as an alien among us. Director Jonathan Glazer mirrors her cool observation with his unnervingly calm approach to the alien's serial hunting of horny men and his understatement when it comes to the meaning we're meant to derive from it. The result hybridizes science fiction and nature documentary, regard-

ing the animalism of predatory consumption and sexual drives, but also the ineffable spirituality of love, which plays its own mysterious role in the survival of the fittest.

3. 'Leviathan'

Andrey Zvyagintsev's drama inspired by the Book of Job specifically depicts modern Russia's runaway corruption but also captures universal fears about the shaky ground on which we construct our lives. A family's home stands in the way of the building plans of a corrupt mayor (Roman Madyanov). The struggle over the property shares time with other causes for despair (infidelity, loss of loved ones), with no one emerging unscathed — if only from Zvyagintsev's savage social satire (keep an eye on that pompous priest). Gorgeous cinematography seals the deal of this haunting look at how power corrupts within cities and within personal and business relationships.

2. 'National Gallery'

With typical rigor, 84-year-old documentarian Frederick Wiseman turns his lens to the London museum. Like last year's "At Berkeley," "National Gallery" works brilliantly as a prismatic look at an institution but also a deeply thought-provoking Socratic lecture on the role and function of some key issue in our social fabric (then: education; now: art).



STUDIOCANAL

Scarlett Johansson in "Under the Skin."

Three hours of all-access footage reveal closed-door meetings and behind-the-scenes restoration work, as well as views of the displays and docents and programs that are the Gallery's public face. Without ever making overt commentary (the film pointedly lacks narration), Wiseman forces us to abandon assumptions and consider what's useful and meaningful about the Old Masters and what's best and worst about the inherently compromised preservation and presentation of them.

And the best film of 2014 goes to:

1. 'Boyhood'

The deceptively simple idea behind Richard Linklater's magnum opus was to shoot a few days a year for twelve years, and thus capture the growth and development of a middle-class everyboy (Ellar Coltrane) and his family. Linklater's restrained but lyrical approach captures the rhythms of life as well as the rhythms of conversation (the writer-director's career-long stock-in-trade), eschewing melodrama in favor of the deeply relatable. Patricia Arquette proves particularly moving in her embodiment of modern American motherhood: complicated by career struggles, financial woes and divorce, but defined by unwavering love. Above all, "Boyhood" gently presses us to reflect on the relentless passage of time and the accretion of our own character.

Runners-up

"Listen Up Philip," "Two Days, One Night," "The Babadook," "Jodorowsky's Dune," "Whiplash," "The Tale of the Princess Kaguya," "The Grand Budapest Hotel," "Foxcatcher," "A Most Violent Year," "X-Men: Days of Future Past"

The bottom five

5. 'The Other Woman'

I can't speak for the women in my life, but I suspect they would be offended by the ones depicted in this Cameron Diaz starrer. On the one hand, they get the equal opportunity — like the men in Judd Apatow movies — to behave like overgrown children, but the power they give their cheating man to occupy all their waking hours makes this comedy more sad than funny. If this is girl power, we're experiencing rolling blackouts.

4. 'Labor Day'

This 2014 film suggests that one long weekend is enough time for a boy not only to



BARRY WETCHER/TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

Leslie Mann in "The Other Woman."

become a man but also to experience a lifetime's worth of "father-son" bonding (with an escaped-convict stranger, no less). It also offers the offensive stereotype of a female basket case who, more than anything, needs a strong man — preferably a bad-boy hunk with an easy touch for her and a slow hand for a Swiffer. The result is gooeey as the pie in Kate Winslet and Josh Brolin's widely mocked food-porn scene.

3. 'Winter's Tale'

If you collect cherub posters, this one might make your Top Ten list, but for the rest of us, it's a hard pass. Spiritual cinema doesn't have to be stupid (see "Wild"), but writer-director Akiva Goldsman apparently didn't get that memo. In this "Bored-walk Empire," love conquers all, especially if you have a magic flying horse. among its features are an unintentionally funny love scene, Jennifer Connelly as a food journalist with a cancer-ridden kid, Colin Farrell as a thief who fulfills his destiny and a miracle proving we're all starlight. Zzzzzzzz.

2. 'Blended'

It wouldn't be a "worst list" without an Adam Sandler movie. This one, a "Brady Bunch" pastiche, compounds its badness by dragging sweetheart Drew Barrymore into its muck. As coarse and nauseating as a Big Mac someone dropped on the ground, then served you.

And the worst film wof 2014 goes to:

1. 'Wish I Was Here'

Wish I wasn't, but I was — so you wouldn't have to be. Zach Braff's vanity writing-directing-starring project about an L.A. family in crisis features lead-balloon humor; eye-rolling; naked attempts at tearjerking; and a general lack of charm,

believability or taste over a long, long two hours.

Of course, there's plenty more to remember beyond 2014's highest highs and lowest lows. Read on for our take on the best good guys, the worst baddies, the top documentaries and the most magical animated movies.

The best heroes

5. Ellar Coltrane in "Boyhood"
 4. Princess Kaguya in "The Tale of the Princess Kaguya"
 3. Chris Pratt in "Guardians of the Galaxy" and "The Lego Movie"
 2. Michael Keaton in "Birdman"
 1. Marion Cotillard in "Two Days, One Night"
- (Honorable mention: Gore Vidal in "Gore Vidal: The United States of Amnesia," Alejandro Jodorowsky in "Jodorowsky's Dune" and Edward Snowden in "Citizenfour")

The worst villains

5. Meryl Streep in "Into the Woods"
 4. Jake Gyllenhaal in "Nightcrawler"
 3. Sheila Vand in "A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night"
 2. Eva Green in "300: Rise of an Empire"
 1. Tilda Swinton in "Snowpiercer"
- (Honorable mention: Angelina Jolie in "Maleficent" and Godzilla in "Godzilla")

The top documentaries

5. "The Internet's Own Boy: The Story of Aaron Swartz"
 4. "Art and Craft"
 3. "Magician: The Astonishing Life and Work of Orson Welles"
 2. "Particle Fever"
 1. "The Kill Team"
- (Honorable mention: "Happy Valley," "The Case Against 8," "Life Itself")

The animated winners

5. "The Boxtrolls"
4. "Ernest & Celestine"
3. "Big Hero 6"
2. "How to Train Your Dragon 2"
1. "The Lego Movie"

MOVIE TIMES

Annie (PG) Century 16: 9:45 a.m., 12:50, 3:55, 7:10 & 10 p.m.
Century 20: 10:20 a.m., 1:05, 4:25, 7:20 & 10:10 p.m.

Big Eyes (PG-13) ★★★ Aquarius Theatre: 1:45, 4:30, 7:20 & 9:45 p.m.
Century 20: 10:50 a.m., 1:35, 4:20, 7:05 & 9:45 p.m.

Big Hero 6 (PG) Century 16: 9 & 11:40 a.m., 2:20, 5, 7:45 & 10:25 p.m.
Century 20: 10:40 a.m., 1:25, 4:05, 6:50 & 9:30 p.m.

Birdman (R) ★★★
Palo Alto Square: 1:15, 4:15 & 7:15 p.m., Fri & Sat 10:05 p.m.

Exodus: Gods and Kings (PG-13) ★★1/2
Century 16: 9 a.m., 12:25, 3:50, 7:15 & 10:40 p.m.
Century 20: 12:15, 3:40, 7 & 10:25 p.m.

Foxcatcher (R) ★★★1/2
Aquarius Theatre: 1:15, 4, 7:05 & 9:55 p.m.

The Gambler (R) ★★★ Century 16: 9 & 11:45 a.m., 2:30, 5:15, 8 & 10:45 p.m.
Century 20: 11:35 a.m., 2:25, 5:10, 8 & 10:45 p.m.

The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG-13) ★★1/2
Century 16: 9:15 a.m., 12:30, 3:45, 6:10, 7:15, 9:30 & 10:40 p.m. In 3-D at 10:20 a.m., 1:40, 5:05 & 8:30 p.m.
Century 20: 10:35 a.m., 1:55, 5:15 & 8:30 p.m. In 3-D at 12:30, 3:50, 7:10 & 10:30 p.m.

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1 (PG-13) ★★1/2
Century 16: 10:25 a.m., 1:20, 4:20, 7:30 & 10:30 p.m.
Century 20: 11 a.m., 1:55, 4:45, 7:45 & 10:35 p.m.

The Imitation Game (PG-13) ★★★ Century 16: 9:55 & 11:25 a.m., 12:45, 2:15, 3:40, 5, 6:30, 7:50, 9:15 & 10:35 p.m.
Century 20: 11 a.m., 2, 4:50, 7:50 & 10:40 p.m.

Interstellar (PG-13) ★★1/2
Century 20: 11:10 a.m., 2:50, 6:30 & 10:05 p.m.

Into the Woods (PG) ★★★ Century 16: 10 a.m., 1, 4, 7:05 & 10:05 p.m.
Century 20: 10:20 a.m., 1:20, 4:25, 7:30 & 10:35 p.m.

Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb (PG)
Century 16: 9:25, 10:40 & 11:55 a.m., 1:10, 2:25, 3:40, 4:55, 7:40 & 10:10 p.m.
Century 20: 11:30 a.m., 2, 4:35, 7:05 & 9:40 p.m.

P.K. (Not Rated) Century 16: 11:30 a.m., 3:15, 7 & 10:35 p.m.

The Penguins of Madagascar (PG) ★★
Century 16: 9:10 & 11:35 a.m., 2, 4:30, 7:20 & 9:55 p.m.
Century 20: 11:05 a.m., 1:40, 4:10, 6:40 & 9:10 p.m.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1957) (R)
Guild Theatre: Sat at midnight

The Theory of Everything (PG-13) ★★
Century 20: 10:25 a.m. & 1:15 p.m., Fri & Sun 4:15, 7:25 & 10:15 p.m.
Palo Alto Square: 1, 4 & 7 p.m., Fri & Sat 10 p.m.

Top Five (R) ★★1/2
Century 20: 11:45 a.m., 2:20, 5, 7:55 & 10:40 p.m.

UFC 182: Jones vs. Cormier (Not Rated) Century 20: Sat 7 p.m.

Unbroken (PG-13) ★★1/2 Century 16: 9:50 a.m., 1:05, 4:20, 7:35 & 10:45 p.m.
Century 20: 11:15 a.m., 2:30, 5:45 & 8:55 p.m. In X-D at 12:45, 4, 7:15 & 10:25 p.m.

Wild (R) ★★★ Century 20: 10:55 a.m., 1:50, 4:40, 7:35 & 10:20 p.m.
Guild Theatre: 1:30, 4:15, 7:05 & 9:40 p.m.

The Woman in Black 2: Angel of Death (PG-13) Century 16: 9:05 & 11:35 a.m., 2:10, 4:45, 7:25 & 10:15 p.m.
Century 20: 10:45 a.m., 12:20, 1:30, 2:55, 4:05, 5:30, 6:45, 8:10, 9:20 & 10:45 p.m.

AQUARIUS: 430 Emerson St., Palo Alto (266-9260)
CENTURY CINEMA 16: 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View (800-326-3264)
CENTURY 20 DOWNTOWN: 825 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (800-326-3264)
CINEARTS AT PALO ALTO SQUARE: 3000 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (493-3456)
STANFORD THEATRE: 221 University Ave., Palo Alto (324-3700)
For show times, plot synopses and more information about any films playing at the Aquarius, visit www.LandmarkTheatres.com

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

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MOVIE OPENINGS



ED ARAQUEL/CTMG

Seth Rogen, right, directs and James Franco stars in “The Interview”.

Hackers, meet hackwork

‘THE INTERVIEW’ TAKES OUT KIM JONG UN — AND SONY

★★ 1/2 (online at YouTube, Google Play and Xbox Video)

How did we get here? Never in the history of movies has there been a situation like the one surrounding “The Interview,” the action comedy scripted by Dan Sterling, directed by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, and starring Rogen and James Franco.

For starters, the flick’s visibility is through the roof: Who hasn’t heard of the comedy about the assassination of real-life North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un that inspired threats of urban terrorism, spurred a devastating hack into Sony’s systems, suffered a canceled release, elicited comments from the President of the United States (who publicly wished Sony hadn’t bowed to terror) and then wound up with a limited theatrical release after all, paired to a video-on-demand online scheme. In the end, we can all watch “The Interview.” The terrorists lose. But do audiences win?

First, the good news. The low-humor high concept — which seems every bit as marijuana-inspired as Rogen and Goldberg’s last collaboration with Franco, “This Is the End” — arguably one-ups “Inglourious Basterds” for pure audaciousness. Rogen plays Aaron Rapaport, producer of a tabloid-gossipy celebrity chat show called “Skylark Tonight.” When host Dave Skylark (Franco) discovers he’s a personal favorite of the thirty-one-year-old “Supreme Leader” of North Korea (Randall Park of “Veep,” cannily unctuous), thick-as-thieves buddies Aaron and Dave make an overture and

score a mind-blowing exclusive: a one-hour sit-down in North Korea with the master media manipulator himself.

Just one hitch: the CIA makes their own overture when Lizzy Caplan’s Agent Lacey “honey-pots” Dave into agreeing to kill Un (think Castro and exploding cigars). The rest is (alternate) history, in a plot that’s been unavoidably spoiled by mass news media coverage of the furor over the film. That does undue damage to the movie, the draggy second half of which might have benefited from some narrative tension.

Rogen is in his usual form: You either find his stoner teddy bear demeanor funny, or you don’t. It’s Franco who does the “high”-wire acting here by throwing himself 1,000 percent into his obnoxious idiot character. At times the in-character riffing and banter with Rogen prove hilarious, but it’s hard to forget the mugging moments when Franco stoops to pull-

ing grotesque faces in hopes of making some lame bit land.

“The Interview” comes on with a burst of comic energy, but it wanes much too soon, with some jokes falling spectacularly flat and a distinct feeling of bloat setting in long before the gory, tonally ugly action climax. This undisciplined frat-bro comedy’s accumulation of innuendos, boner jokes, gay jokes and jokes that tread through racist and misogynist territory works out to less than the sum of its juvenile parts. All the same, “The Interview” knows it’s a (Sky) lark. It’s determinedly silly, and for a while, with its appealing comic performers and crazy premise, that’s enough. Not for nothing, though: If you buy an online rental ... you might want to change your password.

Rated R for pervasive language, crude and sexual humor, nudity, some drug use and bloody violence. One hour, 52 minutes.

— Peter Canavese



ED ARAQUEL/CTMG

Randall Park plays North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un.

GoingsOn

MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE

HIGHLIGHT

NICK BRUEL WITH 'BAD KITTY' AND 'A WONDERFUL YEAR'

Nick Bruel, author and illustrator of the Bad Kitty series, will visit Linden Tree Books to talk to kids about his two new books, "Bad Kitty: Puppy's Big Day" and "A Wonderful Year." Registration is appreciated. Jan. 6, 4-5:30 p.m. Free. Linden Tree Books, 265 State St., Los Altos. Call 650-949-3390. www.lindentreebooks.com

ART GALLERIES

'Ebb & Flow' For this exhibit, plein air pastelist Teresa Ruzzo will contribute new work inspired by the Russian River, Big Sur, the Palo Alto Baylands and the Stanford hills. Dec. 2-Jan. 3, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday til 3 p.m. Free. Viewpoints Gallery, 315 State St., Los Altos. www.viewpointsgallery.com

'Here & There' Gallery 9 Los Altos will have on display a solo exhibition of vibrant watercolor paintings by Suej McCall called "Here & There." An artist reception will be held on Jan. 10 from 2:30 to 5 p.m. Jan. 2-Feb. 1, Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-4 p.m. Free. Gallery 9 Los Altos, 143 Main St., Los Altos. www.gallery9losaltos.com

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Foothill College Winter Quarter registration Registration for Winter Quarter 2015 classes at Foothill College is now open and will continue until Jan. 4, the day before classes begin. Winter Quarter will last until March 27. A search-able class schedule is available. Nov. 20-Jan. 4. \$31 per unit for California residents, plus basic fees. Foothill College, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills. Call 650-949-7325. www.foothill.fhda.edu/admissions.php

CLUBS/MEETINGS

ESL Conversation Club This weekly club at the Mountain View Public Library provides a place to practice English conversation skills with friendly company. All levels are welcome, no registration is required. Wednesdays, year-round, 5-6 p.m. Free. Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. Call 650-526-7020. www.mountainview.gov/library

Mountain View Woman's Club Mountain View Woman's Club is a charitable organization that meets monthly to work on community projects. Guest are welcome at meetings. First Wednesday of each month, year-round, noon. Free. Mountain View Masonic Lodge, 890 Church St., Mountain View. Call 650-965-1570.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

'The Tell-Tale Heart' and other Tales of Murder and Mayhem This Mountain View Public Library story-time event for grown-ups will include readings of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and other stories of horror. Hot cider will be on hand. RSVP is optional. Jan. 13, 7-8 p.m. Free. Mountain View Public Library, 2nd Floor Reading Room, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. Call 650-903-6337. goo.gl/VXczXG

CSA Homeless Outreach Twice monthly a Community Services Agency social worker will come to the Mountain View Public Library to offer assistance to low-income and/or homeless individuals, providing information and referrals to community resources. Second and fourth Tuesday of the month, year-round, 9-11 a.m. Free. Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. Call 650-526-7020. www.mountainview.gov/library

Lego Day During Lego Day at the Mountain View Public Library, adults can enjoy lunch while playing with Legos from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; afterwards, from 1:30 to 3 p.m., all ages can participate. No registration is required. Thursdays, Jan. 15-April 16, 12:30-3 p.m. Free. Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. Call 650-526-7020. www.mountainview.gov/library

Sew Sew Saturday The Mountain View Public Library invites community members to drop by on Saturday mornings to use its four Baby Lock (Grace model) sewing machines and one serger. Appointments are required. Saturdays, year-round, 10:15 a.m.-noon. Free. Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. Call 650-526-7020. goo.gl/TnrYXS

TriCity Business Mixer The chambers of commerce of Palo Alto, Los Altos and Mountain View will hold their annual Tri-City Business Mixer, featuring more than 30 exhibitors. Attendees should bring business cards or resumes. Jan.

14, 5:30-7 p.m. \$10 in advance; \$20 at the door. Crowne Plaza Cabana Palo Alto, 4290 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. Call 650-324-3127. www.eventbrite.com/e/tri-city-business-mixer-tickets-14324594247

CONCERTS

'Torment and Triumph' Jeffrey Siegel will perform one of his unique 'concerts with commentary,' this time focusing on the topic of "Torment and Triumph: Romantic Music of Franz Liszt." Jan. 15, 7:30-9 p.m. \$25 member, student; \$30 general; \$35 at the door. Schultz Cultural Arts Hall, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. Call 650-223-8664. paloaltojcc.org/Cultural-Arts/Music

Yiddish Art Trio CD Release Yiddish Art Trio, an experimental group of klezmer and Yiddish musicians from New York, will perform a house concert as part of its CD release tour. Contact the organizers for more details. Jan. 7, 8 p.m. \$20 suggested donation. Private residence, location provided upon registration, Mountain View. Call 917-687-2910. www.yiddisharttrio.com

EXHIBITS

'Beginning with Water' This exhibit will showcase the work of Community School of Music and Arts faculty and students, both adults and youth as young as age 5. Their work incorporates water both as a material and a theme. Dec. 12-Jan. 11, center hours. Free. Community School of Music and Arts, Finn Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. www.arts4all.org/attend/mohrgallery.htm

FAMILY AND KIDS

'Animals, Seasons & Other Musical Fantasies' For the next Music Journeys event with Frank Levy, the Oshman Family JCC will host a concert called "Animals, Seasons & Other Musical Fantasies." Levy will introduce young listeners to music by Copland, Tchaikovsky, Debussy, Beethoven and other composers that is inspired by animals, stars and the moon. Jan. 11, 3 p.m. \$20 advance; \$25 at the door. Schultz Cultural Arts Hall, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. Call 650-223-8664. www.paloaltojcc.org/levy

HEALTH

Free YMCA fitness course This weekly course led by YMCA instructors will lead participants in beginner level strength training to develop balance, flexibility, posture, coordination and fall prevention. Classes are appropriate for all levels and backgrounds. Registration is required. Wednesdays, Jan. 7-June 24, 12:30-1:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. Call 650-526-7020. www.mountainview.gov/library

Jacki's Aerobic Dancing Jacki's Aerobic Dancing classes, held three times per week, lead participants in abdominal work, strength training and aerobic routines. Complimentary child care is available. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, year-round, 9-10 a.m. \$36/month; \$5/class. Mountain View Masonic Lodge, 890 Church St., Mountain View. Call 650-941-1002. www.jackis.com

ON STAGE

'Eurydice' The Palo Alto Players will put on a production directed by Jeffrey Lo of the play "Eurydice," a contemporary re-imagining of the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice that explores themes of memory, love and loss. The play is recommended for viewers ages 12 and older. Jan. 16-Feb. 1, Thursday, 7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. \$31-\$45. Lucie Stern Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 650-329-0891. www.paplayers.org

'Peter and the Starcatcher' TheatreWorks will stage a holiday production of "Peter and the Starcatcher," a Tony Award-winning, adventure-filled sequel to "Peter Pan." See website for specific dates, timing and pricing. Dec. 3-Jan. 3. \$19-\$74. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 650-463-1950. www.theatreworks.org

RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

Author Guy Finley on 'The Secret of Your Immortal Self' Guy Finley, author of "Letting Go," will share some insights from his new book, "The Secret of Your Immortal Self: Key Lessons for Realizing the Divinity Within." Jan. 12, 7:30-9 p.m. Free. East West Bookshop, 324 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 650-988-9800. www.eastwest.com

Insight Meditation South Bay Shaila Catherine and guest teachers will lead weekly Insight Meditation sittings, followed by talks on Buddhist teachings. Nov. 11-Jan. 6, 7:30-9 p.m. Donations accepted. St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Edwards Hall, 2094 Grant Road, Mountain View. Call 650-857-0904. www.imsb.org

LECTURES & TALKS

'Next-Generation Clean Energy' Dr. Dan Arvizu, CEO of National Renewable Energy Laboratory, will discuss the growing demand for alternative energy sources in a public talk called "Next-Generation Clean Energy Technology: American and Global Progress." The event is co-sponsored by the World Affairs Council and the Los Altos Library. Jan. 7, 7:30-9 p.m. Free. Los Altos Youth Center, 1 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. www.worldaffairs.org/events/event/1372#.VJhQ3v8AAMA

Authors Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn on 'A Path Appears' The Oshman Family JCC will welcome Pulitzer Prize-winning authors Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn to read from and discuss their latest book, "A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity," an inspirational book about creating change around the world. Jan. 11, 5 p.m. \$12 advance; \$15 at the door. Schultz Cultural Arts Hall, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. Call 650-223-8664. www.paloaltojcc.org/kristofwuDunn

Brent Sverdlhoff and Sarah Goodwin on 'How Could I Forget You!' Books Inc. in Mountain View will welcome memory instructor and artist Sarah Goodwin to discuss their recent book, "How Could I Forget You! A Creative Way to Remember Names and Faces." Jan. 14, 7 p.m. Free. Books Inc., 301 Castro St., Mountain View. www.booksinc.net/event/brent-sverdlhoff-sarah-goodwin-books-inc-mountain-view



JEANNE TANNER

'2 Pianos 4 Hands' TheatreWorks will put on a production of "2 Pianos 4 Hands," a comic coming-of-age story about two piano students who fall just short of stardom. Featured music will range from Bach and Beethoven to Scott Joplin and Jerry Lee Lewis. See website for specific times, dates and pricing. Jan. 14-Feb. 8. \$19-\$74; discounts available for educators, seniors, those age 30 and under. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 650-463-1960. www.theatreworks.org

Docent lecture on 'Fantastic Worlds'

This talk by SFMOMA called "Fantastic Worlds: Surrealism and Beyond" will explore how a influential group of early 20th century artists — including Man Ray, Rene Magritte and Salvador Dali — incorporated elements of play, experiment and fantasy into their work. Jan. 5, 7-8 p.m. Free. Los Altos Library, 13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. www.scdl.org

Greywater systems talk Alan Hackler will lead a discussion about low-tech, residential greywater systems, through which community members can re-use waste water from washing machines, sinks and baths in their home gardens. Registration is optional. Jan. 14, 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. Call 650-526-7020. www.mountainview.gov/library

Kasia Bryc on DNA analysis For the next Technology and Society Committee Luncheon, Kasia Bryc, a population geneticist at Mountain View-based DNA analysis service 23andMe, will provide an overview of DNA analysis technology, the info contained in an ancestry report and some stories of how people have connected through

the results. Jan. 13, 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. \$12 lunch. Hangen Szechuan Restaurant, 134 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 650-969-7215. tian.greens.org/TASC.shtml

Peninsula Astronomical Society: 'Space Launch System' At January's meeting of the Peninsula Astronomical Society, Faride Khalaf will give a free public lecture entitled "Space Launch System - Our Next Ride into Space." The observatory will be open after the meeting from 9 to 11 p.m., weather permitting. Attendees should park in Lot #6. Jan. 9, 7:30-9 p.m. Free; \$3 parking. Foothill College, Room 5015, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills. www.pastro.org/dnn/

TEEN ACTIVITIES

Author Jennifer Niven with 'All the Bright Places' Jennifer Niven will visit Linden Tree Books to discuss her new young adult love story, "All the Bright Places," which is heading to the big screen in a film with Elle Fanning. Jan. 9, 4-5:30 p.m. Free. Linden Tree Books, 265 State St., Los Altos. Call 650-949-3390. www.lindentreebooks.com

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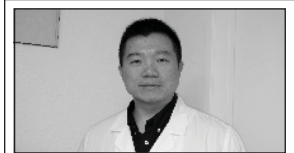
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■ REAL ESTATE MATTERS

Dramatic decrease in Mountain View's housing inventory

By Hadar Guibara

In an article in late November, we looked at the increasing speed at which homes listed in Mountain View were being bought. At that time, there were 13 homes available in this fast-moving market. A review of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) in late December showed only five.

It says a lot about a community the size of Mountain View (population about 74,000) when you can count the number of homes for sale on one hand. Bear in mind, though, that inventories everywhere tend to shrink a little during the winter months, but five total homes on the market is an amazingly low number any time of year.

Also realize that with the aggressive buying cycle happening in this city, that total of five homes today



could become eight tomorrow if a few more new listings show up and then plummet to two listings the next day if buyers continue to lock in offers at a fast and furious pace.

While Mountain View's homes inventory is currently near rock bottom, the same trend is widespread throughout Silicon Valley: lots of qualified and eager buyers fighting for a shrinking number of homes — and paying 5 to 15 percent above the asking prices.

More than asking price

The median list price/median sold price ratio in Mountain View is not as wide as that of a number of other Silicon Valley communities. Still, if you're entering this market, you should be ready to spend somewhat above the figure you see on an MLS sheet.

In the third quarter of 2014, buyers paid a median price of \$1,511,000 for homes with a median listing price of \$1,398,000, for a premium of \$113,000. Here are some other quarters and the positive median price difference homeowners received upon selling

their properties:

Q2	2014:	\$55,556
Q1	2014:	\$172,500
Q4	2013:	\$211,056
Q3	2013:	\$68,767
Q2	2013:	\$141,556
Q1	2013:	\$93,500

Based on how fast homes are being bought, it's possible the inventory will remain low in Mountain View for the foreseeable future. If you look at the trend in average days on the market (DOM), Quarters 3 and 4 of 2011 and the first quarter of 2012, had an average DOM of 33.3. All quarters since then have averaged 18.5 days.

The five homes currently available here range in price from \$399,900 to \$1,999,800. That's more affordable than homes in many other cities in the Valley, but it doesn't mean it's going to be any easier to buy one.

Hadar Guibara is a Realtor with Sereno Group of Palo Alto.

She can be reached at hadar@serenogroup.com.



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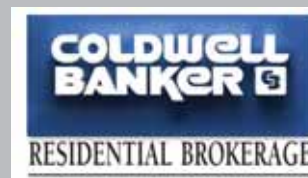
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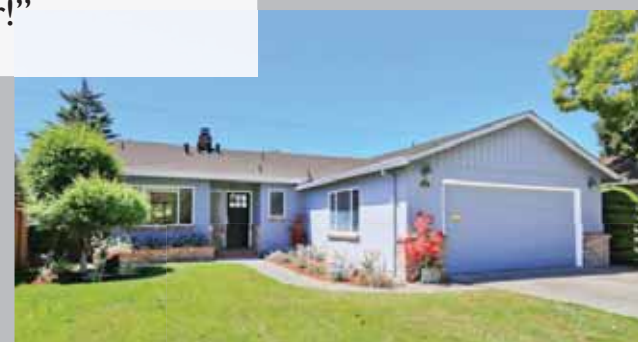
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