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WEEKEND | 17

FEBRUARY 20, 2015 VOLUME 23, NO. 4

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MOVIES | 20



MICHELLE LE

Longtime customer Goran Sandell, who says it's "important to have a local and locally owned market" in the neighborhood, makes his way to the cashier at Ava's Downtown Market.

Downtown grocer still struggling, quietly

OWNERS OF AVA'S MARKET SAY DEDICATED PARKING WOULD HELP

By Daniel DeBolt

The owners of Mountain View's only downtown grocery store say it's been no easy task to stay in business since setting up shop in 2011.

Despite having a loyal and outspoken customer base among downtown residents, who had pushed for such a store downtown for years, Ava's Downtown Market and Deli has been running an unusually tight ship to stay afloat, say

owners Anne and Juan Origel, after they were approached by the *Voice* for an interview.

"If we were to be too loose like a lot of other stores are, we would have been out of busi-

► See **AVA'S**, page 11

EPA zeros in on sewer line polluters

FORENSIC INVESTIGATION POINTS TO EARLY 1960S SILICON CHIP MAKERS

By Daniel DeBolt

In the investigation of the toxics found under homes on Evandale Avenue in 2012, the Environmental Protection Agency has narrowed the list of suspected polluters to three companies that had manufacturing plants in early 1960s Mountain View.

The EPA announced last week

that it suspects Silicon Valley pioneer Fairchild Semiconductor, along with Raytheon and Union Carbide, for the "hot spots" of toxic trichloroethylene (TCE) that sat in the groundwater and soil for decades along Leong Drive and Evandale Avenue.

The agency says the soil and groundwater contamination leaked out of sewer lines after

it was dumped or leaked into the sewer by the companies. It caused at least two homes to have elevated levels of carcinogenic vapors inside that had risen from the ground (drinking water was not contaminated).

"EPA knows TCE was released and we know the companies that would have discharged TCE

► See **EPA**, page 14

Concerns raised over superintendent severance

PARENT ASKS BOARD TO DEFEND
\$231,500 PAYOUT TO GOLDMAN

By Kevin Forestieri

The Mountain View Whisman school board is facing scrutiny over the resignation agreement with former superintendent Craig Goldman, signed late last year, which granted him \$231,567 in severance pay.

Goldman's pending departure from the district was announced last November, and the agreement worked out between him and the school board in closed session meetings included a lump sum payment to him equal to 12 months' salary.

The move was announced as a resignation, not a termination.

To Huff Elementary parent Brett Pauly, something didn't seem quite right.

"When I first read this, I thought, 'I've never heard of somebody being paid to quit. How do I sign up for this deal?'" Pauly said.

At the Feb. 5 board meeting, Pauly called into question the district's official story — that Goldman resigned, initiated the resignation agreement and got a severance of nearly a quarter-million dollars. He said the settlement payment means the board either forced Goldman out and compensated him with 12 months of pay, or it gave him way more than what he was entitled to through a mutual agreement.

The only reference in Goldman's employee contract to severance pay pins such a payout to termination without cause; under that circumstance, he

would have been entitled to severance equal to 12 months of pay. In this case, the payout is rooted solely to the terms of the resignation agreement rather than his employment contract, according to board president Chris Chiang.

Although the employee contract does not require the board to give Goldman a payout for resigning, Chiang said, the money is not a gift of public funds, and state law allows for the board to pay Goldman for his work and agreement to the contract.

Chiang said the board granted Goldman the settlement money in exchange for his signing an agreement in November that includes termination of employment, a non-disparagement agreement and a waiving of his legal right to sue the district and the school board.

Chiang approved the settlement agreement with the rest of the board, and said he felt it was important and "in the best interests of the district" for them to get the legal right waived.

Pauly also raised questions over transparency, particularly in regard to whether the district can decide the superintendent's severance in closed session. He said the board's decision to hash out, draft and sign the resignation agreement with a quarter-million dollars of severance attached to it could constitute a Brown Act violation.

It turns out that might be the case, according to Nikki Moore, an attorney for the California Newspaper Publishers Association. Moore said the only legal way to discuss severance compensation is in open session. A caveat to that, she noted, is if

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YOUR HOME AWAITS



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LOS ALTOS \$2,400,000

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PALO ALTO \$2,195,000

4186 Willmar Drive | 3bd/2ba
Cliff Noll | 650.941.1111



LOS ALTOS \$1,749,000

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Angie Galatolo | 650.941.1111



MOUNTAIN VIEW \$1,688,000

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Tori Atwell | 650.941.1111



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MOUNTAIN VIEW \$598,000

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Kirk Mahncke | 650.941.1111



SUNNYVALE \$570,040

454 Costa Mesa Terrace, Unit B | 2bd/1ba
Sue Dumas | 650.941.1111

Voices

AROUND TOWN

Asked in downtown Mountain View. Photos and interviews by Rachel Lee.

What should be done to improve cybersecurity?



"I feel like we can educate people on how to protect their information and whatnot. I feel like there isn't a lot done."

Emily Siu, Toronto



"I suppose better programmers on websites where cybersecurity is required. Awareness is an important requirement for cybersecurity."

Nishant Suneja, Mountain View



"Government agencies should intercept certain organizations and do data mining and piggyback on voice messages and basically find who those hackers are and capture them."

Harsh Panoya, Santa Clara



"Get some technologists in the government instead of having a Congress with 40 people debating cybersecurity and none of which are technologists."

Robert Mayo, Mountain View



"To improve cybersecurity, create a better password."

Chris Howden, Santa Clara

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

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— Anne H. from Los Altos

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(Lunch included, registration & tuition required)

To view the course schedule and to register, please visit:
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■ CRIME BRIEFS

PEDESTRIAN CRITICALLY INJURED

A man is in critical condition at a hospital after he was struck by a vehicle at the intersection of Charleston Road and Independence Avenue on Monday morning, Feb. 16. Police responded to the scene after receiving multiple 911 calls at 9:23 a.m.

According to the Mountain View Police Department, the vehicle pulled out of a shopping center parking lot and headed east on Charleston Road when it hit the man, who was crossing the road in the crosswalk.

The driver of the vehicle remained at the scene, and drugs and alcohol did not appear to be a factor, police said.

Police had no further information about the victim's condition.

The collision is still under investigation, and police are seeking additional information from witnesses. Anyone with more information can call 650-903-6395 (refer to case number 15-0879).

AUDIO STORE ROBBERY

Police are looking for two people who forced their way into an audio hardware store in Mountain View last week using a sledgehammer and made off with audio equipment.

The two suspects parked a minivan in front of the Audio High store at 165 Moffett Blvd. in the early hours of Monday, Feb. 9, at around 2:40 a.m. There, they exited the minivan and forced their way into the store using a sledgehammer, police said.

The two were able to pull apart displays inside the store and remove equipment, which they moved to the minivan before driving off on northbound Moffett Boulevard, police said.

Police are asking anyone who saw the parked van that morning or the suspects inside to contact them at 650-903-6395 — refer to case number 15-0751.

Kevin Forestieri

■ POLICE LOG

AUTO BURGLARY

1100 block Castro St., 2/12
 500 block Showers Dr., 2/13
 1100 block Castro St., 2/13

BATTERY

200 block Castro St., 2/13
 2500 block Grant Rd., 2/15
 200 block Castro St., 2/15

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

200 block N. Bernardo Av., 2/13
 500 block N. Whisman Rd., 2/13

GRAND THEFT

1000 block N. Rengstorff Av., 2/13

800 block Wake Forest Dr., 2/16

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

200 block Tyrella Av., 2/11
 400 block Kentmere Ct., 2/12
 100 block Centre St., 2/12

STOLEN VEHICLE

800 block California St., 2/11
 500 block Central Av., 2/15
 1600 block N. Shoreline Blvd., 2/15

VANDALISM

1000 block Farley St., 2/14
 300 block Sierra Vista Av., 2/16

Food bank fundraiser

Taste of Champions, a food bank fundraising event featuring food, entertainment, celebrity athletes, and live and silent auctions, will be held at Levi's Stadium on March 1. The event is set for 2 to 5 p.m. in the Yahoo! Fantasy Football Lounge.

The fundraiser will include food prepared by Levi's Stadium Chef Santana Diaz and music performed by Santana lead singer Tony Lindsay. Television journalists Vern Glenn and Thuy Vu will emcee the event.

Second Harvest Food Bank

of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties and the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano are hosting Taste of Champions to raise money for their efforts to bring more nutritious food to community members in need. Both food banks deliver and distribute fresh produce and food, and seek to reduce food waste, feed hungry people, and raise public awareness of issues related to food and hunger with the help of volunteers. Tickets can be purchased at tasteofchampions.eventbrite.com

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Teens prepare for robot season

MOUNTAIN VIEW STUDENTS CREATE 6-FOOT ROBOT TO COMPETE IN TOURNAMENTS

By Kevin Forestieri

While most students were itching to get out of school last Friday to kick off their long-anticipated winter break, dozens stayed behind, knowing they would likely stay deep into the night. Stationed in a classroom near the back of the campus, they worked fervently to finish a six-week-long effort to create a 6-foot tall robot that they believe will earn them a top prize.

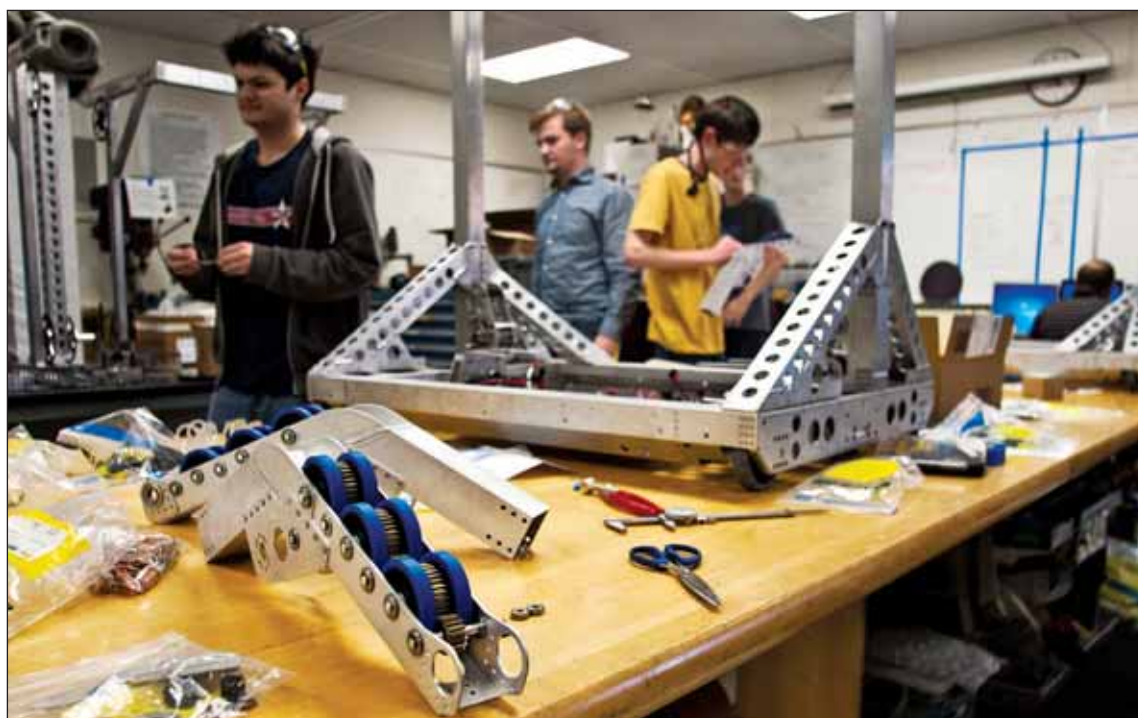
It's that time of year again. Students all across the Bay Area have been working tirelessly to design and construct robots tailored for the FIRST robotics competition, an international tournament, and the Spartan Robotics team at Mountain View High School is no exception.

The team spent last week in the final stretch of the "build"

phase, working into the late evening hours to wire, solder and construct every last component they needed to make a top-notch robot. The team came close to winning last year's event, and aims to win this year.

The competition, which changes every year, requires robots to stack heavy totes and bins on top of one another as quickly and efficiently as possible. Whether the robot lifts, pushes, carries or drops objects is up to the students, but competition will be fierce as hundreds of teams across the country and around the world vie to out-stack one another.

Mountain View High School's robot, which has yet to be named, is a towering creation that will be able to extend piston-powered arms to grab objects, pull them



MAGALI GAUTHIER

A nearly assembled part of the robot created by the Spartan Robotics team at Mountain View High School.

► See **ROBOTICS**, page 6

Rash of home burglaries hits Waverly Park neighborhood

NUMBER OF HOME BREAK-INS LEADS TO THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN JEWELRY, CASH STOLEN

By Kevin Forestieri

Police are urging residents to lock their doors and be vigilant following numerous home burglaries in the normally quiet Waverly Park neighborhood over the last few weeks.

Ten homes have reportedly been burglarized in the area — bounded by Highway 85, Grant Road and Bryant and Sleeper avenues — since late January. Losses are still being tallied, but some residents tell police they've lost as much as \$20,000 — mostly in jewelry, electronics and cash, according to Sgt. Saul Jaeger of the Mountain View Police Department.

A home on the 2400 block of Porterfield Court was reportedly hit on Jan. 30 between 4 and 6 p.m. when burglars entered and stole \$18,000 in jewelry as well as \$3,000

in cash. There was no sign of forced entry, Jaeger said, meaning there was likely an unlocked door or window.

Around the same time that day, a house on the 3300 block of Brower Avenue was burglarized as well. This time the thieves broke a window to get inside and made off with jewelry valued at about \$7,250 as well as \$300 in cash.

One resident on Porterfield Court said the influx of crime had police cars flooding the neighborhood cul-de-sac on multiple occasions, with officers knocking on doors and checking backyards for anything suspicious. She said the burglaries have her worried, and she's considering getting deadbolts on her doors.

"We're very, very concerned about what's going on in our neighborhoods," she said. "We have been here for 40 years,

and never, ever had an incident (before). Nothing."

Other Waverly Park residents reported home burglaries on Beaumont Square and Shady Springs Lane in the last three weeks.

Jaeger said police do not know if the burglaries are connected. He said that while detectives are working leads to find the culprits, none of the incidents has yielded video footage or suspect descriptions.

In response to the burglaries, police have also upped patrols in the area, looking for anyone acting suspicious or driving "weird" throughout the neighborhood, Jaeger said.

Despite concerns by Waverly Park residents that the burglaries may be targeting Asian and Indian families, Jaeger said it's not clear whether any specific

► See **BURGLARIES**, page 10

Students challenge their brains with math

LEARNSTORM PROGRAM BY KHAN ACADEMY REINFORCES THE 'GROWTH MINDSET'

By Kevin Forestieri

Teaching students that their mind can grow and learn more effectively through "brain exercise" has become a focal point for Bay Area educators and researchers at Stanford. The nonprofit Mountain View-based Khan Academy has been supporting the idea through its You Can Learn Anything campaign, and now seeks to up its game through a new math event.

The latest program encouraging this "growth mindset" is LearnStorm, a Bay Area online math program designed by Khan Academy to test student math skills and push children to struggle and work through difficult problems. It's through these hard problems that kids are able to improve their ability to learn, and distance themselves from the idea of fixed intelligence, according to James Tynan, Partnerships and Community lead at Khan Academy. LearnStorm kicked off earlier

this month, and participation is already far above what Khan Academy was expecting. Tynan said they were hoping to get 1 percent of all Bay Area students signed up by the end of April, which comes out to about 13,000 students. As of this week 34,000 students have signed up.

In LearnStorm, students in 10 Bay Area counties can sign up to take math lessons and gain points for successfully completing problems. Tynan said the students can accrue points and represent their school on a leaderboard on the Khan Academy website, which gives the event a competitive edge as students vie to show off both their math skills and their perseverance through the trickiest of math problems.

The leaderboards are based on two types of scores: mastery points and hustle points. Mastery points are based on student performance on various math skills, which gives students who are already

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ROBOTICS

▶ Continued from page 5

inward and lift them up in the air in a three-motion action. This allows the robot to pick up and stack objects by itself without the aid of other robots — a design decision made by the team, according to Natalia Frumkin, one of the team captains. She said unlike last year, where team play was important to maximize their score, this year the plan is to perform the best they can solo.

What gives Spartan Robotics the edge, one student said, is that team members go out of their way to make complex and ambitious designs that do a whole lot. This year, the refrigerator-sized robot has six systems of moving parts that all need to be synchronized in order for it to operate properly, including rollers, intake lifters and independently-controlled flippers, according to Edward Pursifull, a robotics team mentor.

As with any complex design, things can go wrong. Because the robot is both heavy and huge, it could be susceptible to falling over, and students have been working on ways to make sure it stays balanced when speeding up and slowing down.

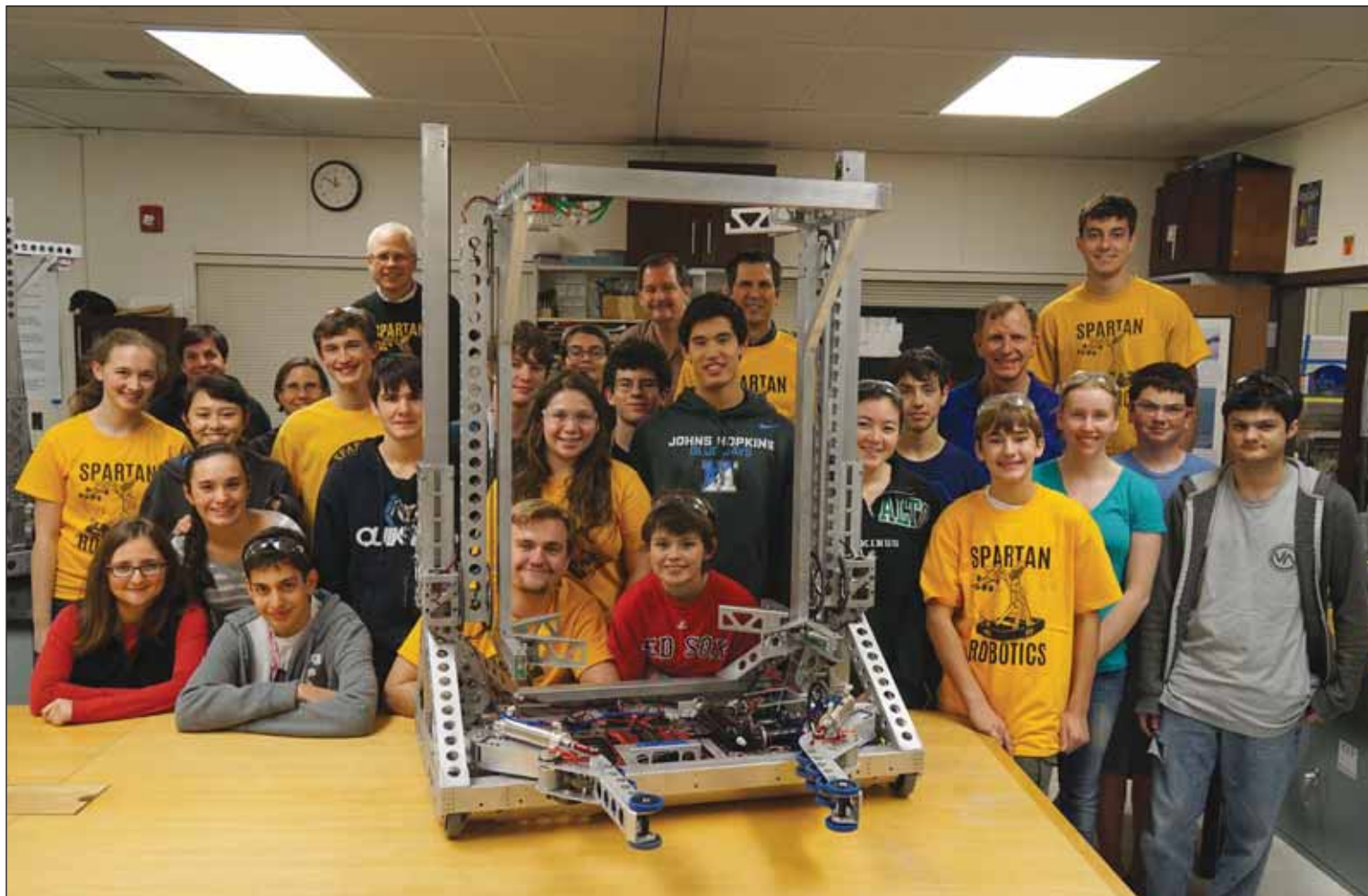
Students are given six weeks to hammer out a design for their robot, both conceptually and in a computer-modeling program, order the parts and build it from scratch before “bagging” it and sending it off for its first competition. The team won’t feel too much separation anxiety though — they built an entire duplicate robot to continue practicing and tinkering between competitions.

The short period to get everything done creates a huge time commitment from the team’s 40 members, who have to work around the clock to get everything done. Frumkin said she spent about 40 hours every week working on the robot, two-thirds of it at the school. Meetings were scheduled five days per week and consumed weekends and after-school evenings, and Frumkin said it was not unusual for team members to stay until midnight and even until sunrise to wrap up a part of the project. It’s during those long stretches, she said, that they get things done.

“You can really commit to something and finish it,” Frumkin said.

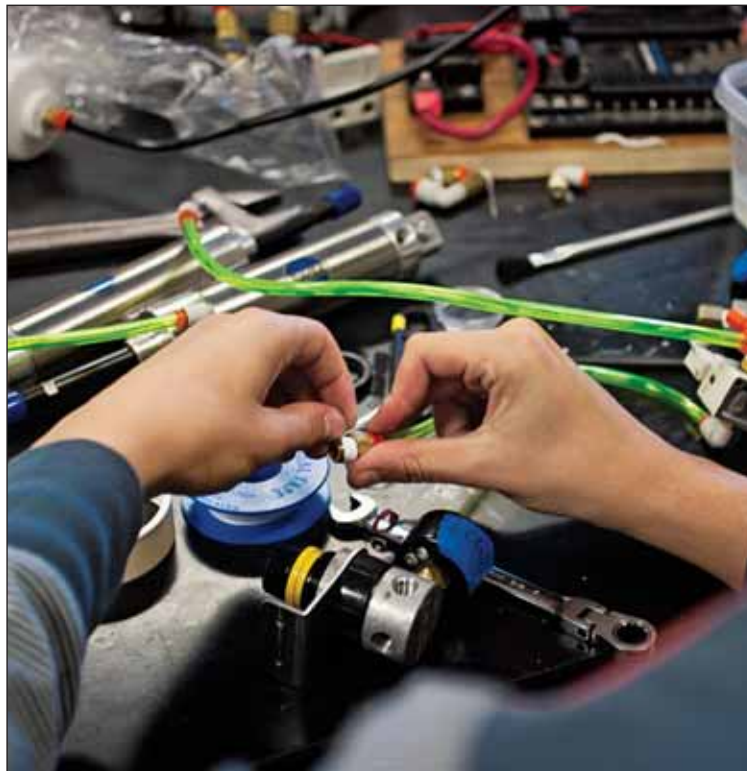
A helping hand

Trying to build a robot from scratch is a monumental task, but the Spartan Robotics team doesn’t have to go it alone. Parents, alumni and former students who just want to help out show up each year to mentor the team and retain some level of continuity and institutional knowledge,



Spartan Robotics team members and the robot they created.

COURTESY OF SPARTAN ROBOTICS TEAM



Left: sophomore Nicolas Menand assembles the robot's pneumatics. Right: senior Daniel Petti assembles part of the robot's claw.



MAGALI GAUTHIER

according to Wyn Schuh, the team’s head mentor.

Mentors range from recent high school graduates to Google employees and local mechanical engineers. While it helps to have highly experienced mentors, Schuh said a mentor can be “anyone willing to help.”

Mentors can offer sage advice, but sometimes institutional knowledge comes from the robot designs of years past. The room where the robotics team was hard

at work last week also served as a small museum, with robots going back several years on display, showing off both the successes and shortcomings of past designs.

One of the robots, called Mammoth, performed very well last year by clasp a large exercise ball and launching it several feet in the air. Schuh said students were able to draw inspiration from a robot Spartan Robotics built in 2008, which also had to

manipulate exercise balls for that year’s game.

Hiding under the table holding up this year’s robot was the 2013 robot, which was used to fire Frisbees. Schuh said the robot was able to fire discs effectively, but had one vulnerability: If a Frisbee accidentally got wedged in the wrong spot on the robot’s front section, it would render the robot useless for the rest of the match.

Beyond competing, Schuh said

the experience of being on the robotics team can be a springboard for future opportunities. She said the hands-on experience with mechanical and electrical engineering puts team members one step ahead of the game if they decide to pursue a career in engineering — as many high school graduates from Spartan Robotics have done.

“If you go on to do engineering, you’ve already done engineering here,” Schuh said. ▣

STUDENTS

► Continued from page 5

good at math an advantage as they breeze through content. But then there are hustle points, which Tynan said serve as an important counterbalance to mastery points in that the focus is on how hard students work on the problems.

Hustle points are gained through students trudging through problems that LearnStorm's lesson algorithm determines is working kids at their edge, according to Isaac Durand, teacher community advocate at Khan Academy.

Tynan said students rack up hustle points by showing perseverance, grit and effort in tackling difficult problems to help build students' metacognitive skills, which is part and parcel to improving how students learn.

On top of hustle points, LearnStorm also introduces weekly challenges that students can participate in to learn more about how their brain works through difficult problems in math and other subjects, and how that struggle turns into growth.

"It could be something like a 10-minute interactive experience where the student watches a video on how the synapses in the brain grow and change

based on the effort they're putting in," Tynan said.

Khan Academy developed these weekly activities with the Project for Education Research That Scales (PERTS) at Stanford University, which focuses research on improved student achievement through academic motivation and the growth mindset — a concept and approach to learning developed by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck. Growth mindset is the idea that intelligence is not a fixed trait like eye color, and that people can learn and struggle through mental challenges to expand and "grow" how smart they are.

The challenge, Tynan said, was trying to weave the message about growth mindset into lessons during difficult work, which would be much more effective.

"We had videos and messages that encourage it, but it was living on our website and we weren't able to turn it into a program until now," he said.

Just as the hustle points are there to encourage everyone — not just the math geniuses — to perform well, Tynan said the goal is to get as many kids signed up as possible. In a traditional math challenge, he said, only a small number of kids are engaged and

the students less-inclined to push themselves in math are excluded. But for LearnStorm, Khan Academy has been reaching parents, teachers, students, school administrators and even individually home-schooled kids who aren't associated with a school at all.

'We employ the importance of making mistakes and that with each mistake we make, our brain grows.'

MATH TEACHER LISA HENNEFARTH

Participation varies widely from school to school, but Durand said Mountain View schools have a fairly high participation rate. Crittenden Middle School, for example, had over 50 percent of its eligible students signed up for LearnStorm as of last week.

Crittenden Principal Geoffrey Chang said he's thrilled the school is a top participant in the city. He said Crittenden as a whole has been pushing for the growth mindset approach

to learning all year, and during Back to School Night the school showed Khan Academy's You Can Learn Anything video.

"Our staff even received T-shirts from me during the holiday season that say "I will make better mistakes tomorrow. #growthmindset," Chang said.

The math teachers at the school had been using Khan Academy lessons, which have been fully aligned with the new Common Core State Standards, in the classroom already, according to Lisa Hennefarth, a Crittenden math teacher. Hennefarth said the growth mindset has had a "tremendous" impact on students and helped them feel positive about their experiences working through math problems and to understand that effort is the most important part of learning math.

"We employ the importance of making mistakes and that with each mistake we make, our brain grows," she said.

Early leaderboard results show Crittenden Middle School and Edith Landels performing the best in total mastery and hustle points in Mountain View, and Loyola Elementary School in Los Altos ranks in the top 10 schools in the Bay Area by both metrics so far.

Durand said he's excited to see

how the pilot program of LearnStorm works out in the Bay Area. He said a similar Khan Academy program called Mathletes was picked up in Ireland last year, and served as an inspiration for LearnStorm.

In Mathletes, schools competed with one another on a similar leaderboard to see which school could accrue the most points. It turns out that one of the top performing schools was not a fancy prep school in a wealthy neighborhood — it was a school outside of Dublin in a standard, working-class environment, Tynan said.

When Tynan went out to Ireland to visit the school, he got to sit down and talk to the top students at the school who went to the grand finals event for Mathletes.

"I asked them 'so, are you the new football stars of the school?' And they said 'no, we're accepted,'" he said.

Tynan said the challenge had changed the social fabric of the school. Instead of having a small subset of kids go off to do a math challenge, the whole school had been immersed in Mathletes, and were still working on their points.

"They saw their math geniuses as carrying a torch for them," he said. ▣

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Enjoy a sustainable yet sumptuous lifestyle in this 4 bedroom, 3 bath home of 2,191 sq. ft. (per plans) on a lot of 5,504 sq. ft. (per city of Palo Alto). Built by James Witt, the home features an eco-friendly design saturated with natural light and embellished with high-end amenities. Sustainable elements include reclaimed paving stones, double-paned windows, a tank-less water heater, and renewable bamboo flooring. Large, open living areas are arranged downstairs with a bedroom that can also be a home office, and three other bedrooms are upstairs. The impeccable chef's kitchen includes quartz countertops, cherry cabinetry, island with breakfast bar, and top-of-the-line stainless-steel appliances. Additional amenities include an internal iPod dock, built-in sound system, automated living room shades, and designer fixtures. The property also hosts a deck, paved terrace, Zen-like outdoor area with fountain, and one-car detached garage. Excellent nearby schools include Briones Elementary (API 941), Terman Middle (API 968), and Gunn High (API 917) (buyer to verify eligibility).

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LocalNews

GOLDMAN

► Continued from page 1

there is anticipated or potential litigation that could arise from discussion over severance negotiations; but if that's the case, the closed-session agenda notice must cite those litigation concerns. No closed-session agenda leading up to the resignation, however, mentions litigation.

Greg Dannis, a lawyer with the Dannis Woliver Kelley law firm, helped facilitate the district throughout the resignation process. Dannis maintains that the school board did not violate the Brown Act in discussing Goldman's resignation and voting on the resignation agreement in closed session.

"Boards settle lawsuits (and) employment matters in closed session all the time," Dannis said.

Chiang said the district plans to consult with additional attorneys to ascertain whether there had been a Brown Act violation in the way they approved the resignation agreement. He acknowledged that the board has been split on whether to handle personnel issues, such as Goldman's resignation, in or out of closed-session meetings.

Board member Steve Nelson, regularly a proponent of open meetings and transparency, said he believes there is no issue with the settlement agreement or the way the resignation was discussed in closed session, which is how the board handles most personnel issues.

"All contracts, union contract, real estate contract, employment contract, are usually done in closed session," Nelson said.

The timing on Goldman's announced resignation was also dubious, Pauly said. He pointed out that discussions over the former superintendent's resignation had been going on in closed session for about a month prior to the announcement, despite no closed-session agenda reflecting that it was happening until Nov. 13.

"Even though you knew all of this was going on for a month, you didn't say anything until after the November election," Pauly said. "If you don't think this would have been a hot issue in the November election, you are sorely mistaken."

Some state lawmakers are contesting the idea that superintendents should be able to secure severance deals for as much as 18 months of work through contract termination. State Assemblyman Luis Alejo proposed a bill earlier this month, AB 215, that would put a strict cap on how much money a superintendent can get when employment is terminated.

"The combination of high-paying salaries and high superintendent turnover is an issue that does not receive enough attention," Alejo said in a statement on his website. "The two factors combined create a problem of excessive severance packages at the expense of students and taxpayers."

Alejo attempted in 2013 to pass a bill that would restrict severance payouts to just six months, but the bill was defeated. It was opposed by the Association of California School Administrators. ▣

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

BURGLARIES

► Continued from page 5

ethnicities are being targeted.

He said homeowners should lock their doors and windows in order to protect themselves from thieves, and that many of the burglaries in Mountain View are crimes of opportunity — meaning unlocked doors and unsecured windows are a welcome mat for burglars who would likely leave the house alone if there's no easy way in.

"They're not looking up blueprints of the buildings or anything. They're crimes of opportunity," Jaeger said.

He said it's also a useful deterrent to make it look, or seem, like someone is home.

"If you're home and you hear a knock, let them know you're there even if you don't answer the door," Jaeger said. "Nine times out of 10 it's OK, but sometimes it's a burglar knock-

ing to see if anyone's home."

Most of all, he said, it's important for people to report anything they think is suspicious activity in their neighborhood. If a resident sees anyone going door to door trying doorhandles, climbing over gates or looking through windows, Jaeger said, the resident needs to call the police.

Increased police patrols and more community involvement have likely had a marked effect already, Jaeger said. Since the spike in burglaries, police have received reports of suspicious vehicles on Eunice Drive and the corner of Franklin Drive and Sleeper Avenue. Police also received a report of a suspicious person over the weekend on Saint Giles Lane, but it turned out to be a woman going door-to-door selling pies. ▣

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MICHELLE LE

Juan Origel, who with his wife Anne Origel owns Ava's, prepares freshly cut Korean style ribs at his downtown grocery store.

AVA'S

► Continued from page 1

ness a long time ago," Juan Origel said. "If it wasn't us, it would be somebody else who would be in the same predicament."

To save money, the Origels manage the store themselves from 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on most days, while also raising a family.

They've held off on replacing the store's large aisle-length freezer, which has been out of commission for months. They added outdoor seating, a Marianne's ice cream bar and a deli that serves sandwiches to office workers at lunch time.

So far, it's not paid off the way the Origels hoped, after mortgaging their home to start the business. But they don't really want to complain about it either. Juan is known for his friendly demeanor, despite his long hours.

"Juan works incredibly hard," said downtown resident Jeff Segall. "I go in there probably five times a week. He's almost always there."

The situation is unique in that residents and city officials had once been publicly enthusiastic over the idea of bringing a "neighborhood serving" grocery store downtown. In 2011 there was talk of spending \$2 million to lure a grocery store to a building that was to be built on the city lot at the corner of Bryant and California streets. Prior to that, residents held a candlelight vigil when the city chose CVS over a grocery chain to lease the first story of the garage at Bryant and California.

The city commissioned a study in 2011 to see if bringing a grocery store downtown was worthwhile. It concluded that, despite there being 19,000 people downtown, competition from 10 other grocery stores in the city would make it a "challenging" endeavor. "The city may need to provide financial assistance to

help ensure the sustainability of a downtown grocery store" it said.

City staff said the only type of store that might work would be a small independently owned store that "offers a variety of products as well as having a strong prepared-food take-out business." A few months later, the Origels took over the former Asian market at 340 Castro St., starting the slow transformation towards becoming the sort of store that city staff had described and residents said they wanted.

'The greatest thing the city could do is add more parking. It would definitely benefit the whole downtown community.'

CO-OWNER JUAN ORIGEL

Adequate parking is key to the success of other downtown grocery stores on the peninsula, according to the study discussed by the City Council in November 2011. Ava's appears to be the only small grocer around that operates with no dedicated parking. Because there's little convenient parking, the Origels say most of their customers walk or bike to the store. It probably wouldn't take much for the city to dedicate parking to Ava's in the public garage behind the store.

"The greatest thing the city could do is add more parking," Origel said. "It would definitely benefit the whole downtown community."

The other downtown grocers that were studied — including Bianchini's in San Carlos and Draeger's in Los Altos — had several other advantages too: wealthier customers and more

established locations, and low overhead from low rents or decades of building ownership.

Nevertheless, there are many downtown residents who are loyal patrons of Ava's.

"I like walking to the store so parking isn't an issue for me," said Segall. "I like Juan and his family so I want to support them. Juan tries to source stuff locally that's organic. He's responsive to what people ask for and I appreciate that. It just feels like it's more a part of the community than Safeway is."

In 2012, the Origels had asked for help from the city to replace the store's aging refrigeration equipment. Despite having considered spending \$2 million to lure a grocer downtown, city officials said they no longer had a source for the \$300,000 Ava's needed after the state closed the downtown revitalization district in Mountain View and other cities around the state. That also seemed to kill the possibility of the store's getting city funds for a face-lift that might have helped it stand out through the city's downtown facade replacement program.

City Council members have said there may not be enough housing downtown to support a grocery store. In plans for North Bayshore and the Whisman area, council members have fretted over whether there are enough homes to support a grocery store within walking distance, but that goal may not have been achieved in the city's own downtown.

The store has made downtown more appealing and village-like for Segall and others, while raising the "walkability scores" and possibly even the property values of homes nearby. Despite the appeal, there hasn't been enough business to give the Origels a break.

"We've done all we can inside" the store, said Ann Origel, adding that she hopes residents and city officials step up their support soon. ▣

GraphicDesigner

Embarcadero Media, producers of the Palo Alto Weekly, The Almanac, Mountain View Voice, Pleasanton Weekly, PaloAltoOnline.com and several other community websites, is looking for a graphic designer to join its award-winning design team.

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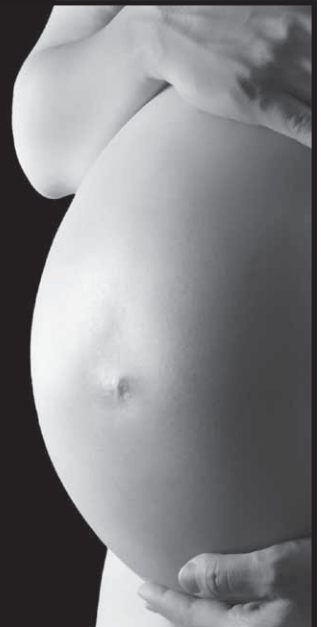
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A gem of an opera

WEST BAY OPERA DEBUTS MOZART'S FIRST COMIC OPERATIC MASTERPIECE

by Mort Levine

Die Entführung aus dem Serail" may be an incomprehensible mouthful for non-German speakers — not that its translation, "The Abduction from the Seraglio," tells you a lot more. Stories of escapes from the harems of Muslim pashas have been told since the Crusades first pitted the Christian West against the mysterious Near East.

In the creative hands of Palo Alto's West Bay Opera, this rarely performed forerunner of all of Mozart's greatest theatrical works proves to be a little gem of an opera. It isn't in the grand opera tradition, but its arrival on the Vienna scene in 1782 changed the world of opera forever.

The first of many surprises is the fact that a "singspiel" (German dialogue interspersed with music and song) can keep an audience's rapt attention for over three hours. That is a tribute to Mozart's magic in using the orchestra to advance the story with charm, depth of feeling and wit. The WBO pit orchestra and

its unseen but vital percussion section (working from monitors in the basement) is a genuine Turkish delight, performing with great endurance — and at times some manic speed.

Another surprise is the way this low-budget company working on a tiny stage can attract a truly outstanding cast of singers. Perhaps part of the reason "Abduction" is not often mounted is the need for five superb vocalists plus the elegant but non-singing Pasha Selim.

The story is simple and straight-forward. Belmonte, son of a Spanish nobleman, sails to Turkey to rescue his beloved betrothed, Konstanze, from the pasha's harem (she and her English servant, Blonde, have been captured and sold by pirates, along with Belmonte's valet, Pedrillo). Only one problem: The pasha has given Blonde to the fiercely protective Osmin, his chief enforcer who is also a talented comic. Belmonte passes himself off as a "baumeister" (or architect) to gain admittance to the palace. His plan to escape back to the West is foiled at the

last minute, and the two couples are seized and threatened with death. The pasha then learns that Belmonte's father is the same man who was the cause of his ruin leading to his conversion to Islam. Rather than be brutal in return, Pasha Selim grants their freedom to return home in order to show his humane wisdom and compassion. His wise and generous decision is hailed by all (except a disgruntled Osmin) in a joyous finale.

West Bay Opera's truly stellar cast includes Kevin Thompson as Osmin. Thompson is a former Adler fellow of San Francisco Opera with the physique of an NBA ballplayer and a powerful bass voice. He towers over the insouciant Blonde, sung by high soprano Chelsea Hollow. Belmonte is sung by tenor Michael Desnoyers; his love, Konstanze, is coloratura soprano Nikki Einfeld, a former member of the Merola Opera Program. Tenor Tapan Bhat sings Pedrillo, while Pasha Selim is portrayed by Eugene Brancoveanu who also directed the production.

An outstanding baritone, Brancoveanu is making his debut as a director. He proved an outstanding Papageno in West Bay's "Magic Flute" last year.

WBO general director Jose Luis Moscovich chose to present "Abduction" in part because of its challenging but luminous score. He evidently didn't agree with Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II



OTAK JUMP

Michael Desnoyers is Belmonte; Nikki Einfeld plays Konstanze in West Bay Opera's production of Mozart's "The Abduction from the Seraglio."

that the opera had "too many notes." Citing the opera's "crash course in early multi-culturalism," Moscovich noted the proximity of the Ottoman empire to Austria: in Mozart's time, it was a very threatening presence on the Austrian borders.

"The Abduction from the Seraglio" is full of hints of the composer's future great works. In the opera's great showpiece, "Märtern aller Arten" ("Tortures of All Kinds"), Konstanze sings in no uncertain terms that she will endure any pain or torture rather than give up her love for Belmonte or succumb to the pasha's advances. The nine-minute aria has a long introduction of solos by flute, oboe, violin and cello. Einfeld's acrobatic coloratura runs are dazzling.

The work has a dozen show-stopping musical highlights, each winning enthusiastic applause.

The finale of each act is particularly resounding, as is the concluding ensemble with chorus and all the principals.

The creative team includes many veterans of WBO: Jean-François Revon's sets are evocative of 18th century Turkey, projections by Frédéric O. Boulay augment the staging, Edward Hunter's lighting design gives an exotic atmosphere and Callie Floor's costumes are convincing. Bruce Olstad's chorus has little singing except in the finale but are omnipresent throughout.

Mozart's innovations are everywhere in the opera. For the first time, the singspiel has the humorous aspect of the Italian "buffa" operas; it has romantic love interests and recognizably sympathetic characters. It effectively uses the tuneful music and offers a clear and happy moral resolution.

Goethe, who wrote a number of singspiele, said the "Abduction" turned the world of German opera upside down. Only the genius of Mozart was able to express the extremes of life, affirmation, despair, sensual pleasure and bleak emptiness all in brief but highly effective musical phrases.

All in all, WBO's "The Abduction from the Seraglio" is a most satisfying performance of musical theater. ■



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■ INFORMATION

What: Mozart's "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" ("Abduction from the Seraglio"). In German with English supertitles.

Where: Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

When: Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8p.m.; Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2 p.m.

Cost: \$40-\$75

Info: Go to westbayopera.org or call 650-424-9999.



Snow Trees and Shadows, a watercolor by Maria Klawe.

A colorful blend of art and science

ART EXHIBIT AND TALK BY MARIA KLAWE HIGHLIGHTS THE ARTISTIC CONNECTION WITH MATH AND SCIENCE

By Rachel Lee

Layers of transparent pigment bleed together to depict blankets of snow, the twisting of trees, and the splashing of waves against rocks in Maria Klawe's collection of watercolor paintings currently on exhibit in Mohr Gallery located at the Community School of Music and Arts (CSMA) in Mountain View.

Klawe, the president of Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California, will be visiting Tateuchi Hall at CSMA on Thursday, Feb. 26, to hold a talk titled "My Double Life: From Artist to Mathematician and Back."

Klawe's talk will be focused on her experiences with math and art and how they have impacted her life and career. Mathematics, computer science and watercolors have all found secure niches in her life. From an early age, Klawe said, she was able to forge a connection between the various subjects. She recognized how patterns and structures in art could be linked to solving algorithms and theories in mathematics.

In one of Klawe's paintings, "Lake O'Hara Reflections (2010)," puffy clouds and a blue sky are reflected onto a glassy lake peppered with rocks and pine trees. This painting and many of her other works revolve around three themes: water, terrain, and trees. Klawe said she drew inspiration from photographs, the Canadian Rockies, and the Ganges Delta to create her nature-based paintings.



COURTESY OF CSMA

Maria Klawe, the president of Harvey Mudd College, will speak about her life as artist and mathematician at CSMA.

Klawe said in a statement that through her work she seeks to bridge the gap between art and mathematics, and foster a space for them to coexist.

"We are thrilled to have Maria speak at CSMA because she is the brilliant computer scientist/mathematician we've been looking for who can describe the connection between the mind of the innovator and the mind of the artist," said Vickie Scott Grove, the executive director of CSMA.

"We hope to highlight the role that art and music and creativity can play in the field of technol-

ogy, engineering, and computer science, and really put on display how those things work together to develop innovation and education — and how it all fits together," said Sharon Kenney, CSMA's spokeswoman.

Klawe's watercolor paintings will be featured in Mohr Gallery at CSMA through March 20. The Feb. 26 event and exhibit are free and open to the public.

CSMA is located at 230 San Antonio Circle. Go to arts4all.org for more information. ▣

Email Rachel Lee at rlee@mv-voice.com

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EPA

► Continued from page 1

in this time frame," said EPA project manager Alana Lee as she presented the investigation results to the Moffett Field Restoration Advisory Board on Feb. 12. "We've identified three MEW (Superfund site) parties: Fairchild Semiconductor, Raytheon and Union Carbide."

The TCE leaked through the city's clay sewer pipe, Lee said.

"The concentrations we are finding are very high, such that it was very likely that when it was discharged to the sewer, there were joints and sags in these lines that TCE would have infiltrated," she said. TCE would have "sat in the clay pipe and would have leaked out."

Key to the investigation were city records that showed the direction sewer lines flowed in the early 1960s.

"What was puzzling the EPA

for a while, was looking at the current sewer flow," Lee said.

Today, the only sewage that flows down Evandale Avenue is from homes on Evandale Avenue. That wasn't the case in the early 1960s, the EPA soon found.

"The city of Mountain View has provided us with a tremendous amount of information about the history of the sewer lines in the area," Lee said.

Fairchild, Raytheon and Union Carbide were the only companies using heavy amounts of TCE, an industrial solvent, in the area between 1961 and 1966, when the Evandale sewer line also carried wastewater from the industrial area where the companies operated. That area is now known as the MEW Superfund site in the area of Middlefield, Ellis, and Whisman roads.

The EPA doesn't suspect companies that operated in the

area only after 1966 of being involved in the contamination. That's because after 1966, sewage from plants in the MEW was carried along a new sewer main that ran along Fairchild Drive, as it does today.

Among the records the EPA found was documentation that TCE had reached the city's sewer plant.

"In 1960 the city identified that TCE had reached this treatment plant, because TCE was killing the bugs (natural bacteria) at the treatment plant," Lee said.

The main danger of the contamination is that vapors rise from the ground and get trapped indoors. Since discovering the hot spots, EPA has sampled the air of over 90 homes, at the request of owners and tenants. The two that were found with TCE vapors above the limit had special ventilation systems installed similar to those used for radon.

"EPA's immediate priority was making sure residents were protected," Lee said.

Homeowners on Leong Drive, across the street from a hot spot in a hotel parking lot, have refused to have their homes tested, Lee said.

"EPA would like to sample more on Leong Drive," she said. "When we offered sampling, they (the residents) didn't want to have their homes sampled."

The EPA reports that exposure to TCE vapors can cause birth defects over a period of weeks, and cancer and a host of other health problems from longer-term exposures.

The investigation confirmed the suspicion that the sewer lines had carried the TCE to the hot spots, as the contamination was at the same depth as the sewer lines. Lenny Siegel and Peter Strauss of the Center for Public Environmental Oversight had raised that possibility shortly after the hot spots were discovered.

"I'm impressed," Siegel said after Lee presented the findings. "That's a pretty good forensic job you seem to have done."

Lee called the investigation "well over 10 years in the making."

Representatives of Raytheon, Fairchild and Union Carbide could not be reached for comment by press time. ■

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LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

FIRE WILLIAMS FOR DISHONORING VETS

As the father of a very troubled Iraq War combat veteran who earned several battlefield commendations for bravery beyond duty, and also being the son of a decorated World War II veteran, I am appalled by the despicable nature of what Brian Williams, the noted TV news anchor, claimed in order to garner some twisted degree of war zone credentials for himself. His bogus claim that he somehow forgot due to "fog of war" that his helicopter wasn't actually hit by an RPG in 2003 is one gigantic crock. Talk about DoubleSpeak!!

Brian Williams should be fired for dishonoring real combat veterans. He does not deserve the benefit of the doubt, and anyone who thinks he does is an idiot. He hasn't lost

credibility; he never had it. I think every combat veteran in America, irrespective of the war fought in, should inundate NBC with petitions to have Williams fired.

*Jeffrey Van Middlebrook
Easy Street*

CAMPAIGN FUNDING HAS CORRUPTING EFFECT

The most corrupting influence in American politics is campaign funding. Despite its current legal status, the corrupting effect is unmistakable.

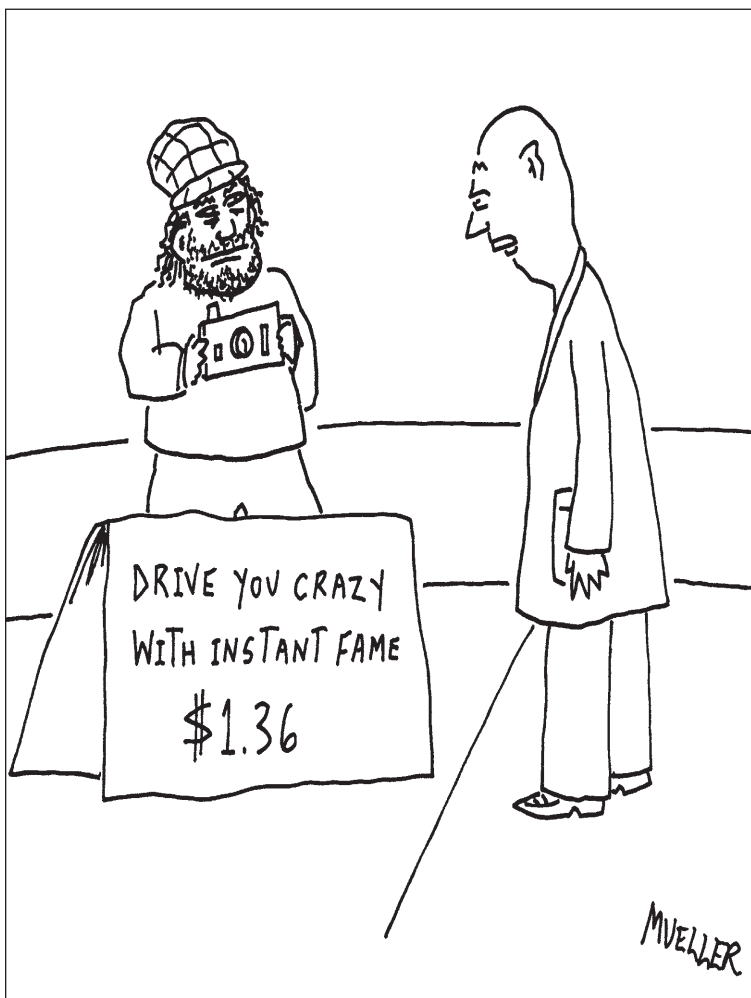
Until our country, and each community, create public funding for campaigns, with no individual, corporate or other donors allowed, we are as corrupt as the many foreign governments to whom we regularly lecture about ethics and morality.

*Donald McPhail
Hope Street*

What's on your mind?

From City Hall politics and the schools to transportation and other pressing issues, the *Voice* aims to keep readers informed about their community. But we also want to hear from you.

Tell us what's on your mind by sending your letters to letters@MV-Voice.com. Or snail-mail them to: Mountain View Voice, P.O. Box 405, Mountain View, CA 94042.



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Member, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

All views must include a home address and contact phone number. Published letters will also appear on the web site, www.MountainViewOnline.com, and occasionally on the Town Square forum.

Town Square forum

Post your views on Town Square at MountainViewOnline.com

Email

your views to letters@MV-Voice.com. Indicate if letter is to be published.

Mail

to: Editor
Mountain View Voice,
P.O. Box 405
Mountain View, CA 94042-0405

Call

the Viewpoint desk at 223-6528

Parenting Teens Through *the* Challenges of Life

A conference on adolescent mental health and addiction

Saturday, February 28

9am - 3:30pm

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Philippe Rey

Executive Director, Adolescent Counseling Services Palo Alto

Amy Simpson

Award-winning author of "Anxious" and "Troubled Minds"

John Ortberg

Senior Pastor, MPPC

EXHIBITORS AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Register at mppc.org/parentingteens | Cost \$25. Scholarships and childcare available.



CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

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.



CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

NOTICE OF BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

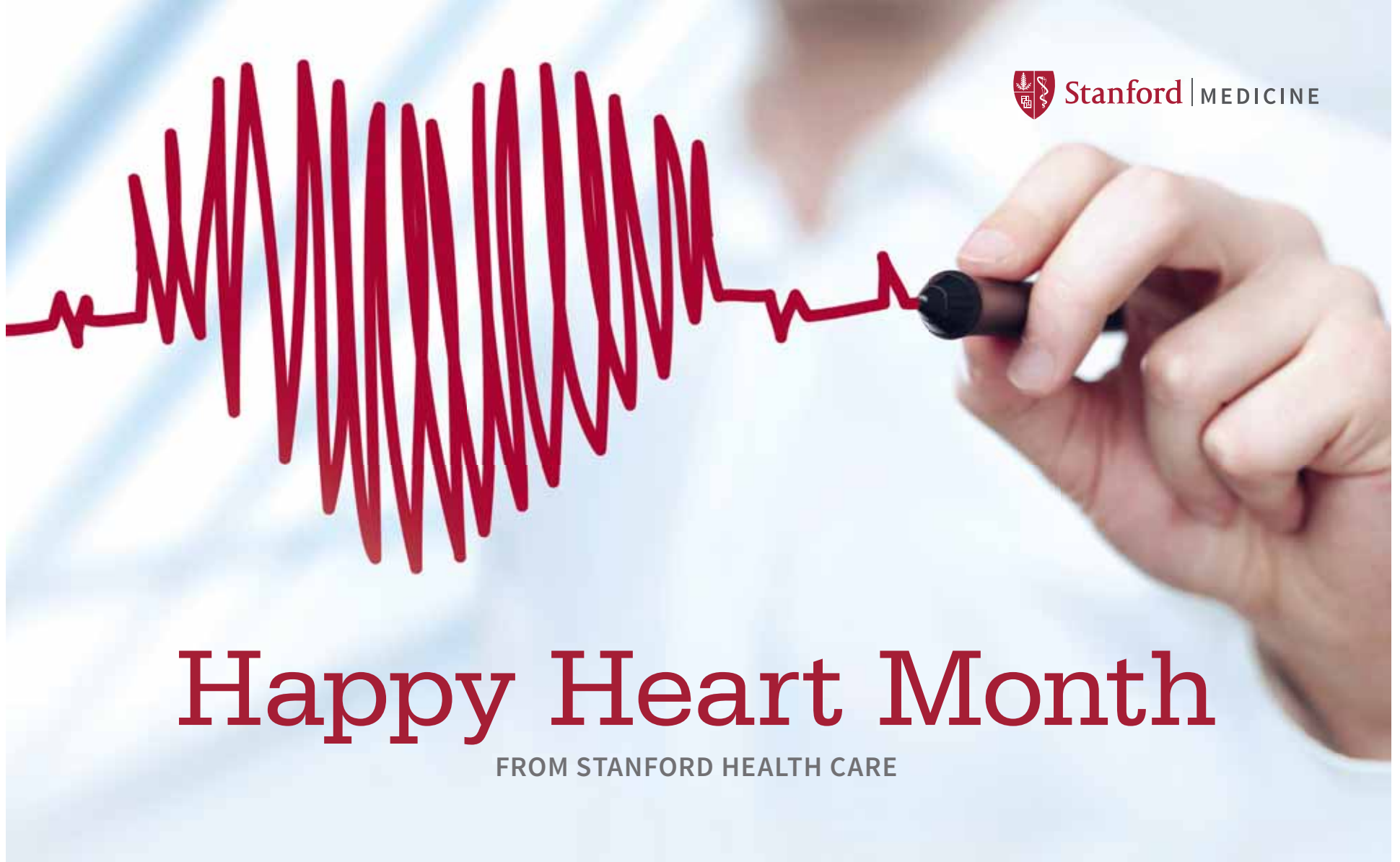
SHORELINE BOULEVARD PATHWAY IMPROVEMENTS (Between Wright Avenue and Villa Street)

The City of Mountain View is proposing to reconstruct the pathway on the eastern side of Shoreline Boulevard from Wright Avenue to Villa Street and install new pathway connections to Jackson Street and the newly constructed sidewalk on Central Expressway. The project includes replacement of the existing pathway for bicycles and pedestrians to meet the standards established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and installation of new curb, gutter, curb ramp, stairs, pathways, pathway lighting, landscaping, irrigation, storm drains, and retaining walls.

The community is invited to attend a Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting to provide input on the project at the following time and location:

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 - 6:30 p.m.
(or as soon as the item can be heard)
Mountain View City Hall
Plaza Conference Room, Second Floor
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, California

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Joy Houghton, Project Manager, at (650) 903-6311 or joy.houghton@mountainview.gov.



Happy Heart Month

FROM STANFORD HEALTH CARE

Saturday, February 28 • 8:30am – 12:30pm

Crowne Plaza Hotel • 4290 El Camino Real • Palo Alto, CA 94306

Celebrate American Heart Month with Stanford Health Care. Join us at the first annual Stanford Heart Fair to be screened for common heart disease risk factors and to ask all of your heart health questions. Learn from Stanford Medicine heart experts at our breakout sessions!

Your Heart Rhythm: Atrial Fibrillation (AFIB) Evaluation and Treatment

Presented by the Stanford Cardiac Arrhythmia Service

9:00am – 10:30am

11:00am – 12:30pm

Topics Dear to Your Heart

Presented by Stanford Women's Heart Health

9:00am – 10:30am

A Partner for Living a Heart Healthy Life in the South Asian Community

Presented by the Stanford South Asian Translational Heart Initiative (SSATHI)

11:00am – 12:30pm

Heart Disease Prevention: What You Need to Know

Presented by Stanford Preventive Cardiology

11:00am – 12:30pm

REGISTER

Seating is limited for the community talks. Please register by calling **650.736.6555** or visit stanfordhealthcare.org/heartfair.

This event is free and open to the public. Free parking is available.