

Mountain View VOICE

MARCH 18, 2016 VOLUME 24, NO. 8

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MAGALI GAUTHIER

Landlords and residents turned out in force Tuesday night to see if the Mountain View City Council would approve new rules considered a type of "soft" rent control.

City drops rent control from relief package

OPponents DISMISS VOLUNTARY PROGRAM AS "NAIVE"

By Mark Noack

Mountain View's City Council has shot down a version of

rent control that was the centerpiece policy of a package aimed at slowing the rapid growth of housing costs. On Tuesday night, after hours

of public testimony, the City Council decided that whatever short-term relief tenants would gain from rent control would be outweighed by the potential hardship it would inflict on the local housing market.

The decision on Tuesday, March 15, brought to a close a discussion that has dominated city business for the last six

► See **RENT CONTROL**, page 8

MV schools hit with big wait lists

HUNDREDS OF PARENTS SEEK TO GET THEIR KIDS INTO STEVENSON, HUFF AND BUBB SCHOOLS

By Kevin Forestieri

Parents looking to send their kids to some of the city's highest-performing schools in August had better get ready to wait in line. Last week, the Mountain View Whisman School District released the wait lists for kindergarten enrollment for the next school year, showing lopsided demand to get into the district's schools.

The largest wait list by far is for Stevenson PACT, the district's popular choice program

that encourages strong parent participation in the classroom. As of March 10, the school had 129 students on the wait list for next school year's kindergarten class. Wait lists for the school have steadily increased since the district started using an enrollment lottery system in 2009, as more and more parents seek to get their children a coveted spot in the school.

Superintendent Ayinde Rudolph told the *Voice* in an email that the number of families looking to get into the PACT

program this year is particularly high, in part because the number of kindergarten classes varies from year to year. The school will have only two kindergarten classrooms next year, compared with three this year, because of building constraints at Stevenson, Rudolph said. The result is not only longer wait lists at Stevenson, but longer wait lists all over the district.

Things get even trickier for schools like Huff Elementary,

► See **WAIT LISTS**, page 12

Closing the book on Castro Street

STRUGGLING BOOKBUYERS SEEKING NEW HOME AFTER 25-PLUS YEARS DOWNTOWN

By Mark Noack

BookBuyers, the used bookstore that has been a mainstay in downtown Mountain View for more than 25 years, will be closing its Castro Street location in the coming weeks after struggling to overcome lackluster sales. Store owner Hotranatha Ajaya said he fully intends to keep the popular store open, and is searching for a new home for its inventory of more than 300,000 titles.

Ajaya said he recently informed the bookstore's staff of the news and assured them he was working to find a new location. He said moving out of the current location became necessary as the business fell behind in rent.

His landlord has been "unbelievably good" in supporting the business despite its losses, he said.

As it stands, BookBuyers will close its doors in mid-April with plans to be out of the space by the end of May. Ajaya said he had a lead on a potential new space in Mountain View, but no deal had been finalized yet. His business needs a space of at least 5,000 square feet, and he urged anyone with a lead on a new location to contact him.

Most of all, he said he wanted to assure his customers and employees that he would do his best to keep the business going. Always optimistic, he said the "silver lining" is his business had been seeing strong numbers at its



Hotranatha Ajaya

► See **BOOKBUYERS**, page 16



MICHELLE LE

BookBuyers, downtown Mountain View's go-to used bookstore for more than 25 years, is leaving Castro Street and searching for a new home.

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Jerylann Mateo | 650.941.1111



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JUDY KRAMER

Judy Kramer's up-close photographs are on display at Palo Alto's EcoCenter.

'A BEE'S EYE VIEW'

What's the buzz? Nature photographer Judy Kramer and Environmental Volunteers present "A Bee's Eye View: Flowers and Pollinators of the Mid-Peninsula," a visual examination of Bay Area flowers, pollinators and pollinator predators, through May 29. An opening reception with hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be held Saturday, March 19, 1-3 p.m. at The EcoCenter, 2560 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto. Go to evols.org/judykramer.

ZAKIR HUSSAIN & MASTERS OF PERCUSSION

Indian tabla player and composer Zakir Hussain leads an ensemble featuring masters of Indian percussion at a performance on Friday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford. Tickets are \$30-\$95. Before the show at 6:30 p.m., Loren Schoenberg, director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, will discuss connections between jazz and Indian classical music. Go to events.stanford.edu/events/528/52831/

FRENCH FAIR

Attention, mesdames et messieurs: French culture, fashion and food will be feted March 18 and 19 at the 11th annual French Fair. Friday will feature cooking and dance classes for children in the afternoon (\$15 each) and a "Parisian Bistro, Comedy & Music Event" 7-10:30 p.m. (\$50). Saturday's fair is free to attend, and will feature around 40 vendors, a raffle, a food court and more. All events take place at Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Go to frenchfair.org

'THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS'

Mole, Rat and that wild, automobile-driving Mr. Toad take the stage in Peninsula Youth Theatre's adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's "The Wind in the Willows," the classic tale of anthropomorphized animals in a pastoral English setting. The show, part of PYT's "Stories on Stage" series, will be performed Friday, March 18, at 9:30 and 11 a.m. and Saturday, March 19, at 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St. Tickets are \$8. Go to pyt.net.org/boxoffice/the-wind-in-the-willows/#tickets.



COURTESY LYN FLAIM HEALY, SPOTLIGHT MOMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY

Ruby Solomon of Sunnyvale and Daniela Gloster of Mountain View in Peninsula Youth Theatre's "The Wind in the Willows."

CUBBERLEY DAY

Cubberley Community Center will host a variety of activities on Saturday, March 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., including volunteer tree-planting and mulch-spreading with Canopy and Kiwanis; performances by Cubberley tenants; and activities for kids starting at 11 a.m. Food from local businesses will be available and Greenmeadow Community Association will be hosting a bake sale, with proceeds going to Canopy. The event is at 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Go to cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/csd/events/cubberley_day.asp. —Karla Kane

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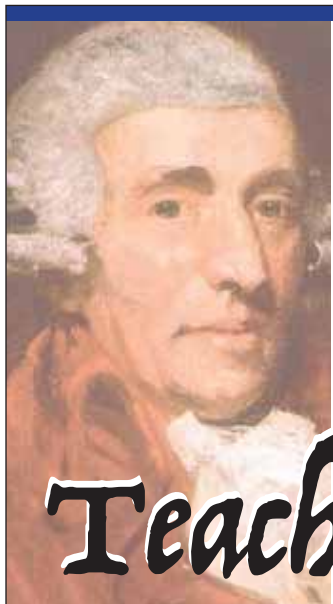
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Order tickets online at mvcpa.com or charge your tickets by phone by calling 650-903-6000; ticket office hours are Wed.- Sat., 12 pm to 6 pm.

Or you can visit the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts ticket office, at 500 Castro Street in downtown Mountain View. Tickets purchased by phone or online are subject to service charges.

CRIME BRIEFS

CAR THEFT ARREST

Police arrested a transient man in Mountain View last week after he was caught driving a truck that had been reported stolen in San Jose in February.

Google's security reported to police at around 3:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 9, that a suspicious man — later identified as 29-year-old Christopher Owen — was spotted riding a Google bike on the company's campus, and was later seen driving around in a gray Ford truck. Officers later located Owen near the intersection of Shoreline Boulevard and Terra Bella Avenue, where he was found riding a bike that was different from the one described by Google security. Once stopped, Owen allegedly admitted to taking drugs earlier that day, prompting a police search, according to police spokeswoman Katie Nelson.

Officers reported that when they searched Owen, they found burglary tools, drug paraphernalia and keys to the truck he had been driving. They later found the truck parked a short distance away from the Google campus, Nelson said. The truck was determined to be a vehicle that was reported stolen in San Jose in late February, she said.

Owen was arrested on charges including possession of a stolen vehicle, prowling, possession of burglary tools, possession of drug paraphernalia and an outstanding warrant from Sunnyvale. He was booked into Santa Clara County Main Jail on a \$41,000 bail.

WOMAN ARRESTED AT HOSPITAL

A 35-year-old woman was arrested at El Camino Hospital last week after she refused to leave the hospital during early morning hours on March 9.

Talina Chaffin, a Sunnyvale resident, was transported to the hospital but later refused treatment from hospital staff, according to police spokeswoman Katie Nelson. Officers met with her outside of the emergency room around 1 a.m., but she allegedly refused to leave, even after refusing treatment.

Chaffin was arrested on trespassing charges and was transported to the Santa Clara County Main Jail.

—Kevin Forestieri

CHILD MOLESTATION ARREST

Mountain View police arrested a transient man on suspicion of groping several women and a child at a downtown bookstore on March 1.

Police said they received a call at about 8:49 p.m. that a man at Books Inc. at 301 Castro St. was inappropriately touching female customers, including a 10-year-old girl. Police said other

► See CRIME BRIEFS, page 16

POLICE LOG

AUTO BURGLARY

2600 block Terminal Blvd., 3/9
600 block San Antonio Rd., 3/9
600 block Sierra Vista Av., 3/9
100 block W. El Camino Real, 3/11
500 block San Antonio Rd., 3/11
500 block San Antonio Rd., 3/11
900 block Marilyn Dr., 3/11
500 block San Antonio Rd., 3/15

1900 block Crisanto Av., 3/15

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

2000 block Latham St., 3/15
3400 block Truman Av., 3/13

STOLEN VEHICLE

1600 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 3/9
1900 block Crisanto Av., 3/11
1600 block Villa St., 3/12

BATTERY

Central Expressway & N. Shoreline Blvd., 3/13

TRESPASSING

2500 block Grant Road, 3/9

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

500 block W. Middlefield Rd., 3/11

VANDALISM

2200 block W. El Camino Real, 3/9
2600 block W. El Camino Real, 3/11
600 block Showers Dr., 3/11
Colony St. & Sierra Vista Av., 3/14

GRAND THEFT

500 block San Antonio Rd., 3/9

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MICHELLE LE

A new roadside memorial was placed in honor of the birthday of **Michelle Montalvo**, the Los Altos pedestrian killed in a crosswalk by an SUV in October.

City mulls tweaks to fatal crash site

REVIEW OF OPTIONS PLANNED FOR MARCH 30 MEETING

By Mark Noack

Mountain View officials have started making minor safety upgrades to the intersection at El Monte Avenue near Marich Way, the site where a pedestrian was killed in a crosswalk last year. But city officials can't yet say whether public demand for significant changes, such as a new traffic signal or a road diet along the corridor, will get a green light.

In recent days, city employees have been repainting nearby crosswalks and modifying streetlights along the stretch,

said Public Works Director Mike Fuller. Both measures should improve visibility for drivers to see crossing pedestrians. Poor visibility is believed to have been a main factor in the October crash, he said.

The Oct. 22 accident that spurred these changes took the life of a woman who was hit by an SUV heading northbound on El Monte. The victim, 54-year-old Michelle Montalvo of Los Altos, was reportedly walking a marked crosswalk at the time, but the driver apparently did not see her.

So far, police have not released the identity of the

driver, and it remains unclear whether the person will face criminal charges for the accident. Mountain View Police officials say they have forwarded their report on the crash to the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office for review.

In the long term, the El Monte intersection where the crash occurred could someday be equipped with a stoplight, Fuller said. The city's public works staff are nearly finished with an analysis of traffic patterns to see whether a signal at

► See **CRASH SITE**, page 6

Teen mental health program expanding

ASPIRE GROWING TO INCLUDE MIDDLE SCHOOLERS, YOUNG ADULTS

By Kevin Forestieri

An intensive El Camino Hospital program designed to teach high school students how to cope with serious mental health conditions is set to expand later this year, opening the door to middle schoolers and young adults.

The hospital's After School Program Interventions and Resiliency Education (ASPIRE) program is an eight-week course

where high school students meet four times a week to learn techniques for stress management, mindfulness and coping skills through dialectical behavioral therapy and expressive arts. The program is an outpatient service hosted on the hospital site, and is intended to help teens who are struggling with depression and anxiety, and are showing significant behavioral and emotional symptoms.

Since its inception in 2010, the

ASPIRE program has been tailored specifically for high school students, but that's about to change. Recent research on brain development has shown that early signs of behavioral health disorders can show up much earlier than originally thought, according to Michael Fitzgerald, executive director of behavioral health services at El Camino Hospital. That means mental

► See **MENTAL HEALTH**, page 6

Hospital expansion to increase traffic woes

EL CAMINO PLANS ADD MEDICAL OFFICES AND PARKING, BUT ALSO BUMP UP GRANT ROAD CONGESTION

By Kevin Forestieri

The city of Mountain View is soliciting feedback on major expansion plans at El Camino Hospital, which call for hundreds more parking spaces and a new, seven-story medical office building at the heart of the campus.

The draft environmental impact report for the project, released by the city last week, will be available for public review and comment until April 22. No public hearing has yet been scheduled, and the City Council is expected to have a meeting on the report sometime before its summer recess.

Hospital officials revealed their plans last year, which include a new 56,000-square-foot behavioral health services building, a seven-story, 265,000-square-foot medical office building with an adjacent parking garage, and an expansion of the current parking structure on the northwest end of the campus. All told, the campus is expected to add 611 parking spaces — a roughly 30 percent increase in the available parking.

When the plans were presented to the City Council in February last year, council members raised concerns about worsening traffic on Grant Road, a busy thoroughfare that gets congested in both directions during peak traffic periods. The draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the project, which was released to the public last week, mostly confirmed those worries.

The new medical office building is expected to add about 120 new employees, increasing the number of daily vehicle trips to and from the hospital during peak traffic hours by between 269 and 331. This assumes that the hospital will pursue traffic management measures aimed at getting employees to take alternative modes of transportation.

The biggest impacts of the hospital expansion will be felt at intersections along Grant Road near the hospital, according to Lindsay Hagan, an associate planner with the city. The two intersections expected to take the brunt of the extra traffic are the

Grant Road/North Drive/Eunice Avenue intersection, as well as the Grant Road/Phyllis Avenue/Martens Avenue intersection.

The delay motorists would face in getting through the Grant Road intersection with North Drive and Eunice Avenue, for example, would deteriorate during the morning commute hours from 54 seconds to 64 seconds, according to the report, dropping it to an "E" rating for level of service — just one step above a failing grade of "F."

Hospital officials have maintained that the medical office space is badly needed at El Camino's Mountain View campus.

Proposed changes to the intersection to improve traffic flow include re-striping Eunice Avenue to include a 100-foot protected left-turn lane onto Grant road, with an additional westbound lane for turning right or heading into the hospital campus. The alternative to the Eunice improvements would be to add a 100-foot right-turn "pocket" along southbound Grant Road leading up to the hospital's entrance. The latter option would be a little more tricky, Hagan said, as the city would need to relocate a traffic signal pole, a fire hydrant and electrical equipment.

"It would also involve removing trees and widening the street," Hagan said.

The DEIR also suggests that El Camino Hospital pay fees to the city for improvements at the Grant Road, Phyllis Avenue and Martens Avenue intersection, which include pedestrian improvements, protected left-turn lanes and removal of the free right-turn lanes to reduce

► See **HOSPITAL**, page 16

Water district names interim CEO

An interim chief executive officer was named to the Santa Clara Valley Water District as it conducts a national search to permanently fill the position.

The district's board of directors during a Tuesday, March 8, meeting at its San Jose headquarters appointed Norma Camacho to temporarily lead the agency.

"Ms. Camacho has the experience and know-how that we need to steer this ship while we search for a permanent replacement," board chairwoman Barbara Keegan said in a statement. "We believe that the day-to-day operation of this organization is in good hands," Keegan said.

Former CEO Beau Goldie left in January. After Goldie's departure, the district's chief operating officers rotated as acting

CEO, starting with Jim Fiedler for a month and followed by Camacho, according to agency officials.

Camacho has been with the district for four years in charge of the watersheds division, where she was responsible for leading a team on multiple projects including completing the Evelyn Bridge Fish Passage, district officials said.

Camacho also helped make "significant progress" on projects at the San Francisquito, Permanente, and Upper Llagas creeks, according to district officials.

"I look at this as a team effort with myself and all the chiefs. I think it's going to take all of us to work together in collaboration to get through this gap period, to continue all the good

work of the district, and to push forward on the large projects that ... are going to be facing us in the future," Camacho said in a statement.

Goldie left amid controversy in January. Although his departure was officially billed as a retirement and resignation, he received severance pay that, according to his contract, he was only entitled to if he was terminated without cause. In other words, the board had to fire Goldie for him to be entitled to the payout.

A clause in Goldie's original CEO contract from 2009 stated that he could choose to resign if the board decided to fire him in closed session and still retain the severance package.

—*Bay City News Service. Mountain View Voice staff contributed to this report.*

CRASH SITE

► *Continued from page 5*

this spot would fit guidelines set by Caltrans.

"Based on the results of that, we may recommend either a traffic signal or other improvements," Fuller said.

New stoplights at the intersection would likely cost \$300,000 to \$500,000, and that expense would need to be added to the city's capital-improvement list, Fuller said. Building and installing the signals would likely take a year or more, he said.

As possible alternatives, that location could still be equipped with a pedestrian-activated signs or lighted crosswalks, Fuller said. The options for the Marich Way/El Monte Avenue intersection will be laid out in a staff report for the city's Bike/Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for March 30.



MICHELLE LE
Michelle Montalvo was walking with her sister when fatally struck by a car at the intersection of Marich Way and El Monte Avenue in October.

So far, he said the possibility of a road diet — when a street is redesigned to slow vehicle traffic and make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists — at this location have not been fully studied by staff. ▣

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MENTAL HEALTH

► *Continued from page 5*

health experts are re-assessing the importance of intervention starting as early as middle school.

The same adolescent brain development that takes hold in middle school extends well beyond high school, creating two fronts where behavioral health issues can become a serious problem.

"We realized that adolescence is a much longer period than we previously knew. It pretty much starts in junior high and continues until age 25," Fitzgerald said.

Local schools are becoming increasingly familiar with the ASPIRE program, Fitzgerald said, and the hospital get calls regularly referring students to the program. He said there have been a growing number of requests by superintendents and school counselors to expand the program into middle school, when mental health problems begin to crop up and early intervention could play a significant role. The middle school ASPIRE program, which is expected to start on April 18, would be the first of its kind in the area.

"I don't know of any other intensive outpatient programs in the region for middle-school students," Fitzgerald said.

The middle school ASPIRE program will have a lot of similarities to the high school program, with a strong focus on emotional regulation and learning how to tolerate stress. Parents are expected to play a stronger role, including

getting advice on effective parenting, the importance of downtime for their children, and preparing for the high school environment.

At the same time, Fitzgerald said the hospital is working on creating an ASPIRE program designed for young adults ages 18 to 25 at El Camino Hospital's Los Gatos facility, set to begin in June. Young adults have higher rates of suicide than high school-aged teens, he said, and serious behavioral issues can become bigger problems once they start driving and have access to firearms.

Young adults are different from the other groups of students in that they have to deal with stress associated with having a job, being in a relationship and managing societal and personal expectations — all of which can really weigh down on a person struggling with a mental health disorder.

"It is really tough. This population often feels that they don't measure up, they may have siblings (who) are doing well," Fitzgerald said. "The anxiety issue can be crippling at times."

This is also around the time that substance abuse can really take off, Fitzgerald said, and young adults can become increasingly isolated from their friends and family.

"This really feels like a group where, if we can get in there and do effective intervention, we can really make a difference," he said.

The ASPIRE program for all three age groups will more or less share the same format, with

small groups of about eight students working together, sharing their thoughts and practicing techniques to manage stress and anxiety. Students rotate in and out, and oftentimes a teen enrolled in the program will encourage new-comers and reassure them that the program really does work, Fitzgerald said.

Despite the intimate environment, wait lists are rarely an issue. Fitzgerald said any waiting period to get into the program has less to do with overwhelming demand, and more to do with students who aren't quite ready to jump into the program. The intensive four-day-a-week program focuses on managing mental health crises. There are plans underway to develop an ASPIRE-readiness program with individual sessions, teaching students about crisis skills and medication management prior to jumping into the full program.

It's a little challenging to get feedback from students after they complete the program, but follow-ups three and six months after the program have shown students are still using coping strategies and stress management techniques regularly, and even automatically. Fitzgerald said that's a good sign, as the skills are now an integrated part of how they manage their behavioral health.

"The responses that we have heard are good," Fitzgerald said. "They are continuing to use those skills to manage crises." ▣

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

Los Altos council dumps new school site committee

COUNCIL MEMBERS SAY CITY-OWNED LAND IS NOT IDEAL FOR A NEW LASD CAMPUS

By Kevin Forestieri

The Los Altos City Council overwhelmingly agreed last week to stop working with the Los Altos School District, which is seeking a site for a new school on city-owned land. That takes roughly 18 acres of city-owned land off the table, and marks the latest setback in a years-long struggle to find a suitable location for a tenth school.

The council unanimously agreed at the March 8 City Council meeting to suspend the Public Lands Subcommittee, a group of city and school district officials tasked with seeking a shared-use land deal.

It was clear that representatives from both parties were not seeing eye to eye. School board members heavily favored using a portion of the city's civic center site, including the Hillview Community Center, as a site for a new school, whereas council members felt existing school campuses, such as Covington and Egan, had more than enough room to fit a second school.

Part of the problem, according to Los Altos Mayor Jeannie Bruins, is that school officials have been willing to move around city facilities in order to fit a school onto city-owned land, but haven't shown the willingness to do the same for existing school sites. Proposed plans by school district staff for how to orient a new school at Egan simply shoe-horn a new campus into cramped, existing space already occupied by Bullis Charter School, Bruins said, and moving the district office and day care services off the Covington campus to make room for a second school has been left out of the conversation.

Since voters in the Los Altos School District passed the \$150 million Measure N school bond in 2014, Superintendent Jeff Baier

has repeatedly said that expanding the district's footprint and acquiring acreage is an important step in handling growing enrollment. For Bruins, this adds to the feeling that school district officials are not acting in good faith and are unwilling to look at its own 116 acres of land for a solution.

"It puts a question in my mind as to whether we're really going to get an objective look at their own properties," Bruins said.

The decision to drop the conversation entirely came as a surprise to school board member Tamara Logan, who noted that they had reached an agreement in February to continue meeting. The next subcommittee meeting was scheduled for March 21. Logan said she wanted to keep the discussion going, and said the committee never really got an opportunity to see what kind of options are available on the city's land.

The city's 18-acre site, bordering Hillview Avenue and San Antonio Road, can be broken down into four rough areas: the civic center, the main library, the city's history museum, and the 8.2-acre Hillview Community Center. Prior to the November election last year, Hillview was excluded from the committee discussion while the City Council attempted to pass a \$65 million bond measure to renovate the community center. The measure needed a two-thirds majority, and garnered less than 29 percent of the vote.

Council member Megan Satterlee said she was firmly against using city-owned land for a school unless it was a last resort. To her, the school district's interest in acquiring more land means any deal inked between the city and the school district would likely mean the city will have to

cede some of its acreage.

"If their top priority is to make use of our land, we're on two different pages and we're never going to agree," Satterlee said. "Because I will never agree to using city land when we haven't exhausted using LASD land."

School board member Vladimir Ivanovic, who served on the committee, told the Voice in an email that he was disappointed with the council's decision. He said he wanted a substantive conversation about the feasibility of a school sharing the Hillview center's site, which he said could be mutually beneficial for both parties — the city could get its community center makeover, while the district would finally have a tenth school site to accommodate fast-increasing enrollment.

'If their top priority is to make use of our land, we're on two different pages and we're never going to agree.'

LOS ALTOS COUNCILWOMAN
MEGAN SATTERLEE

Ivanovic said it felt as though the city council members on the committee were not acting in good faith from the outset. He said each challenge the city had with putting a school at the civic center and Hillview sites was treated as a roadblock rather than a hurdle, prompting doubts that the council had any intention of meeting the district halfway.

"I never got the feeling that the council truly wanted to see how to make co-locating a school on

city property a reality," Ivanovic said.

City concerned with Bullis school

One of the city's top priorities is to make sure Bullis Charter School gets a permanent school site. The charter school operates on two school campuses out of portable classroom buildings, and has been in and out of bitter lawsuits with the Los Altos School District for years. Many of the lawsuits hinged on whether the district has provided adequate facilities for the charter school.

In recent years, the district and the charter school signed off on a five-year agreement that would end all litigation and put aside disputes regarding adequate facilities and enrollment projections.

Bruins said if the city pitches in for a new school site, the building plans had to contribute to a "permanent solution" for Bullis that would be acceptable to that school's community.

"We were entering into this not because we had excess land," Bruins said. "If there's a role for us to play in healing the community, we need to make sure that we, in fact, do heal the community (with) a permanent BCS solution."

District administrators and board members have not decided whether Bullis would be housed on a new, tenth school site. But if the charter school were moved to city-owned property, Bruins said, the city would need to make sure Bullis representatives are at the table throughout the process. Providing equitable facilities under state law has been a lightning rod of controversy and lawsuits between the district and the charter school, and Bruins said the city ought to do everything it can to avoid getting involved.

"At the end of the day, the district is in a moratorium with BCS," Bruins said. "We really need BCS at the table to agree, because I personally don't want to have the city be in a position where we are party to lawsuits that they start all over again."

Dwindling options

With no publicly owned land left on the table, the school district now has to choose between buying expensive, private land or building another school on an existing campus — neither of which was the preferred option when Measure N passed.

"The board has not decided or even discussed how and when to consider the larger question of what to do absent cooperation with the city," Ivanovic said in an email.

The school district has been in and out of real estate negotiations since March 2015 in an attempt to buy land in both Mountain View and Los Altos. But the cost of land in the ideal location for a new school — north of El Camino Real in Mountain View — could eat up more than half of the Measure N funds. Buying a 5-acre school site in the area would cost between \$75 million and \$85 million, according to a staff report.

Building a new school wouldn't be cheap, either. A campus that supports students from kindergarten through eighth grade would likely require multi-story construction on a small campus, meaning an extra \$75 million in costs. That could entirely deplete the bond funds, with nothing left for improvements at the district's existing school campuses.

District staff have asked the board to decide on whether to buy land for a new school by the end of the school year in June. ▣

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RENT CONTROL

► Continued from page 1

months and packed the City Council chambers like no other issue. In that time, scores of renters and landlords have made the case that their respective livelihoods were at stake.

Parents working low-wage jobs described how they would need to pull their children out of local schools to move hours away because they were being priced out of their apartments. On the other side, local seniors explained how they invested their entire nest egg in an apartment project thinking it would provide them with a stable income.

By all accounts, it was a situation with no easy answers, and the council admitted as much in front of the overflow crowd on Tuesday.

“No other issue has caused me to lose more sleep — this is one vexing topic,” said Councilman Ken Rosenberg. “I fear the fabric of our community of Mountain View is being ripped apart in front of our eyes ... yet rent control remains a bad policy.”

Formal rent restrictions were just one piece of a much larger and complex program of rental policies being considered Tuesday night.

In December, the last time the topic was taken up, a majority of the council signaled support for designing a three-stage process to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants. This program would start with a step called conciliation, an informal phone conversation brokered by the nonprofit housing group Project Sentinel to discuss tenants’ complaints and see whether a resolution was possible.

If that step failed, tenants could bring the dispute to stage two, mediation, which would bring in a trained mediator to encourage a compromise.

The rub of the meeting was the

possibility of a third step, formal arbitration managed by a third-party who could dictate a binding resolution to the conflict.

In a dispute over a rent increase, for example, an arbitrator could rule on whether a tenant’s rent increase fit the city’s criteria. Landlords could make their case for why a big rent increase was justified, but in the end the arbitrator was authorized to throw out rent hikes deemed excessive.

This system would have had plenty of differences from rent control in the formal sense, which normally means that a city sets a hard cap on the size of rent increases. But for many in attendance on Tuesday, the proposed binding arbitration was tantamount to rent control.

“Call it binding arbitration; call it rent control; call it rent stabilization — it’s picking an arbitrary number without basis and deciding that’s the amount that rents can increase in a year,” said Jessica Epstein, government affairs director with the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors. “You don’t need to go to this extreme policy so early in the process.”

A large contingent of landlords at the meeting repeatedly emphasized to the council that restricting rents would give owners less reason to maintain their properties. As in other meetings, public speakers warned of slums, sewage leaks and renters who would abuse the system.

“This process would be confusing and cumbersome for small property owners, and ultimately it would discourage maintenance beyond the bare minimum,” said Roger Strom, president of Strom Properties.

But there were plenty of exceptions to the restrictions the city proposed to impose. City staff members noted in their report that any arbitration process had to take into account that property owners deserved a “reasonable rate of return” and that the cost of property maintenance could



Evan Ortiz looks for a volunteer to continue reading his testimony after he hit the 90-second limit on public comments at the City Council meeting on rent relief efforts.

MAGALI GAUTHIER

generally be passed onto the tenants.

For that matter, many apartment complexes would be unaffected. Under the state Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, California cities can restrict rents only on apartment buildings occupied before 1995.

Tenants’ advocates repeatedly reminded the council that voluntary measures would do little to curb rents that have been rising wildly out of proportion to many people’s incomes. They urged the city to go further by including protections so tenants won’t have to fear eviction if they raise complaints.

“We’ve taken one step forward only to find ourselves two steps back from where we started,” said Evan Ortiz, an organizer with the Mountain View Tenants’ Coalition. “Anything less than full protections will actually leave renters more vulnerable than ever.”

As the discussion came to the council after a lengthy public comment period, it soon became clear that many council members had misgivings about the rental package as proposed by staff. To varying degrees, a majority of members came out swiftly against the idea of binding arbitration, saying they had fundamental disagreements with anything resembling rent control.

“You don’t go from the free market environment to price controls in one fell swoop,” said Councilman Chris Clark. “The art of policy-making is disappointing everyone in the room at a rate they can accept.”

Clark and councilmen Mike Kasperzak, John McAlister and Ken Rosenberg each explained that they favor a mandatory mediation process that would encourage, but not compel, resolution for disputes over large rent increases, maintenance issues and other matters. The real remedy for the skyrocketing rents was to add more housing to the region, they argued. They were joined in opposition by Councilman John Inks who said he was also against any mandatory process for landlords, saying it was still a form of rent control.

In the minority were Mayor Pat Showalter and Councilman Lenny Siegel, who described the local rental crisis as a “cancer in the community” that needs a short-term fix. If the city leaves its rental policies entirely voluntary, very few landlords would have any real reason to limit their rent increases, Siegel said.

He blasted the majority’s preferred plan as “naive,” saying few tenants would risk angering their landlords for a futile mediation hearing.

“Landlords will go to mediation and say, ‘Thank you, but I don’t need to do anything.’ There’s no incentive for mediation to work,” he said. “I’m going to oppose anything short of binding arbitration. It’s pretending we’re doing something that’s not going to work.”

With binding arbitration out of the picture, the council faced a second contentious question of what the rent-increase threshold should be for mandatory mediation. More than one coun-

cil member said that setting a number would be an arbitrary decision. After taking a total of seven votes, the council finally zeroed in on an agreement to set the threshold at a 7.2 percent rent increase. At Clark’s request, the council indicated that the 7.2 percent could be spread out over two increases over a given 12-month period.

To staff the new beefed-up mediation program, the city allocated \$70,000 to help finance extra staff time at City Hall and Project Sentinel. Landlords would be required to register for the new program and pay \$7 per housing unit annually to defray the city’s costs. All apartment complexes with three or more units, including those built after 1995, would be affected by the new program and its fees.

The council agreed to review the progress for the new rental housing program within six months and again in one year. They added a “sunset” clause that would require the program to be reconsidered in September 2019.

Closing the discussion, Showalter said the city may be hearing more about these issues much sooner. She wondered if tenant advocates would prepare a voter measure seeking rent stabilization since the City Council seemed unwilling to take stronger action.

“This is better than nothing, but I don’t think it’s going to be nearly seen as good enough,” Showalter said. “That does sadden me. We had an opportunity to go a little further here.”

Email Mark Noack at mnoack@mv-voice.com



MAGALI GAUTHIER

Council members John McAlister and John Inks listen to testimony at the March 15 meeting.

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WAIT LISTS

► Continued from page 1

where students living within the school's boundary may not even be able to attend their own neighborhood school. Wait lists show that 11 students zoned for Huff are on the wait list for kindergarten, and 11 more students are seeking intradistrict transfers into the school. Bubb Elementary had 13 students requesting enrollment from other areas of the school district. Rudolph said that last year the district was able to eventually place all of the students in the Huff area into the school within the first few weeks of the term.

School board member Greg Coladonato called the wait lists at schools like Huff and Bubb a major problem that needs to be addressed, particularly when students are unable to enroll in the school that they've been zoned for by the school district.

"If the number of people we assign to a neighborhood school don't fit, I consider it an acute problem that we need to address immediately," Coladonato said.

While it's typical for Huff and Bubb to experience wait lists, Landels is a bit of an anomaly this year. The school has nine students on the wait list in the neighborhood, according to the

district, and has had 20 requests for intradistrict transfer across the rest of the district. Rudolph said that the lack of space at Stevenson created a "domino effect" that prompted more demand for enrollment at Landels.

"It's important to know that there are spots in our schools for all registered students," Rudolph said in an email. "(The district) does its very best to honor families' requests, but we are limited by building capacity."

But the issues go beyond building capacity. Huff Elementary is nearly busting at the seams with enrollment of nearly 600 students, and recent efforts to bring that number down with new school boundaries fell flat last year. Huff Elementary boundaries include the area around the school, as well as a noncontiguous chunk of the northeastern end of the city, known as the Wagon Wheel neighborhood. The area has 149 students, of which 69 go to Huff Elementary.

An attempt to rezone the area to the closer school, Theuerkauf Elementary, didn't go over very well. Test scores at Theuerkauf are significantly lower than Huff, and a survey last year showed just about every prospective parent in the area would apply for intradistrict transfer, send their kids to

private school or leave the area entirely rather than have their student attend Theuerkauf.

Another solution would be to increase the capacity of the PACT program, giving more families an opportunity to have their children attend the popular school. As of last year, 368 students were enrolled in Stevenson Elementary, which is relatively low compared with neighborhood schools in the district. But Mountain View Whisman board members have signaled that they would be reluctant to support a big increase in enrollment. Last year, board member Bill Lambert said at the Dec. 10 board meeting that there needs to be a cap on choice schools in order to make sure enrollment remains steady at all the other schools. In other words, too many families may flock to the higher-achieving PACT program across the city rather than stick to their own neighborhood school.

Coladonato, who has a child attending Stevenson, said it would be entirely unrealistic to meet the demand for kindergarten at Stevenson, which would require the district to add an extra five kindergarten classrooms this year. Instead, he said, it would "behoove" the school district to survey parents and find out what

is drawing parents to the school. It could be the parent participation, the project-based learning or other philosophies that could be exported and used to attract families to other schools.

The flight of families away from lower-performing schools and toward Huff, Bubb and Stevenson has been an ongoing concern for the school district. Kindergarten requests from recent years show that just over a third of families in the Theuerkauf, Castro and Monta Loma attendance areas had requested their own neighborhood school for kindergarten enrollment. None of the three school has a wait list for the upcoming year.

Lambert's notion that the PACT program may be sapping enrollment from nearby schools was mostly validated last year, when former Interim Superintendent Kevin Skelly revealed that well-to-do families in the Theuerkauf Elementary attendance area were flocking to other nearby schools.

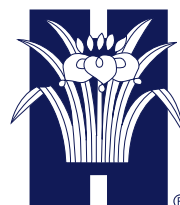
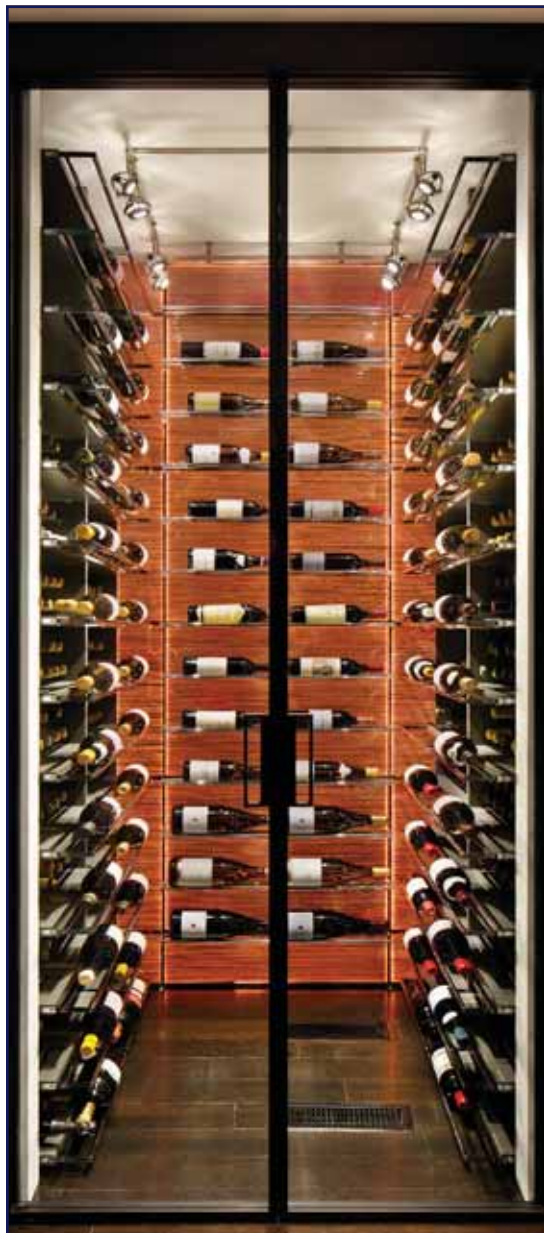
In a memo, Skelly said that the number of economically disadvantaged students within Theuerkauf's boundaries represented about 45 percent of children living in that area, but the number of economically disadvantaged students at the school

itself jumps to 69 percent of student enrollment. Sharing the campus next door to Theuerkauf is Stevenson Elementary, where the latest data shows that only 7 percent of the students are economically disadvantaged. A 2014 demographic study showed that 109 students from the Theuerkauf attendance area attend Stevenson, making it the largest migration away from a zoned school to the PACT program.

The constant pressure to enroll more students in Huff, Bubb and Stevenson prompted community members on the Boundary Advisory Task Force last year to question whether school boundaries were really the primary problem. Some parents wanted the district to explore why parents are choosing to send their kids to anywhere but their neighborhood school, and go from there to find a strategy to even out enrollment. District administrators said analyzing parent preference was beyond the task force's role, and did not study it any further.

A new boundary task force is expected to convene later this year to talk about redrawing school boundaries, and it's likely that the problem of school preference will bubble to the surface again. ▀

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Big acting, small fish

'TOKYO FISH STORY' SERVES SUSHI AT THE STERN

By Jeanie K. Smith

Kimber Lee's new play "tokyo fish story" (mounted at the Lucie Stern Theatre by TheatreWorks) brings us sushi on stage — and a small slice of urban life in modern Tokyo. It's a familiar tale of clashing generations, the need for changing with the times, and ambition. It doesn't say much that's new on those subjects but does unfold with a sweet, engaging mystery. Superb acting and production values provide depth that makes up for what the play lacks, and if you love Francis Jue's acting, you'll want to see him light up the stage again.

Takashi (James Seol), nearing 40, works as assistant sushi chef to master chef Koji (Francis Jue), in the tiny restaurant that Koji made famous years ago with his reputation for superb sushi. But Koji's restaurant is declining in popularity, competing with fast-food sushi and the new chain Boku Wa Sushi ("I Am Sushi") across the street catering to newer palates and playing American pop music. Takashi would love to introduce new menu items and techniques to try to revive the restaurant, but Koji refuses to consider it.

Underling chef Nobu (Linden Tailor) praises Takashi's talent and wants him to succeed, if only so he can keep his tenuous position. Hip-hop and Star Wars-loving Nobu also has to deal with the disastrous raw recruit Yuji, hired as the least offensive of a string of applicants (all played by Arthur Keng). Exception: A young woman, Ama (Nicole Javier), wants the job but is told by Takashi that women don't belong at the sushi bar.

We see Koji dealing with the local fish monger (also Arthur Keng), suggesting that even the fish aren't like they used to be, and lamenting the apparent takeover of the world by the very young. There are increasing hints that Koji's mind is slipping into dreams of the past. He "sees" a woman repeatedly, and begins acting erratically, ultimately requiring rescue by none other than Ama. And could it be that Takashi is more than just his assistant?

The resolution of all these plot threads is fairly predictable and not writ large, but in the skillful work of excellent actors, it's enjoyable to watch. To call something a "fish story" is to label it sheer fabrication, an exaggeration beyond belief. In the case of Lee's play, it may refer more to the illusions we carry in our

heads, the fish stories we tell ourselves that prevent us from seeing the truth. Koji must abandon his illusion of a still-prosperous restaurant in order to see what he needs to do for Takashi and the future; and in a sense each character has to let go of illusions in order to move forward.

Jue, a local favorite who has gone on from his early days with TheatreWorks to star on film, TV, and national stages, brings touching depth to Koji in an utterly believable performance. He's partnered well with Seol as Takashi, who rises above the stereotype of obedient son and yet embodies a reverence for excellence that is palpable.

Tailor provides fun and welcome comic relief as Nobu. His character has to contain understanding of the contemporary world and the past, and Tailor shows this with ease. Keng must wear a dozen different costumes and manages to become vastly different characters in each one; it's delightful to see him morph so quickly and with such aplomb.

Javier manages to give Ama more dimensionality than is on the page, making her more of an equal in Takashi's realm. Her dreamy appearances as The Woman are haunting and timeless.

The inventive set by Wilson Chin includes floating elements that contrast nicely with the solidity of the sushi bar, but even that floats in and out. Authentic costumes by Alina Bokovikova and gorgeous lighting by Dawn Chiang are complemented by Jeff Mockus' sound design that marries old with new. Kirsten Brandt's direction keeps the action as lively as possible, given the relatively static nature of some of the scenes.

It's not such a big fish story, but it's brought to life with great veracity and an obvious love for the material — and, did I mention Francis Jue? ■

Freelance writer Jeanie K. Smith can be reached at jksmith614@me.com.

■ INFORMATION

What: "tokyo fish story," by Kimber Lee, presented by TheatreWorks

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When: Through April 3, with 7 p.m. shows Wednesday; 8 p.m. shows Thursday-Saturday; 2 p.m. matinees on Saturdays and Sundays; and 7 p.m. shows Sundays

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BOOKBUYERS

► Continued from page 1

literary events and other activities, even though that didn't translate into sales.

"We're still committed to keep this going and to increase our community involvement in the process," he said. "Many people are coming in here and this is definitely a happier place. The only thing that's not helping us right now is sales."

BookBuyers' landlord, Leslie Mills, said she has tried her

best to help the bookstore as it struggled in recent years. On two occasions, she said she had agreed to drop the rent to get the business back on its feet. But as the store began falling behind on its payments, she approached Ajaya to see if he would scale down BookBuyers. In the end, they couldn't find a way to make that idea work, she said.

She said she hopes Ajaya, whom she described as "the hardest working guy," will find a way to keep the bookstore going, perhaps with the help of



MICHELLE LE

Left: Ben Liams reads a copy of "Doctor Zhivago" at BookBuyers on March 15. **Right:** A customer browses at BookBuyers on Castro Street. Owner Hotranatha Ajaya says he hopes to find a new location to continue the business.

an outside investor.

"I really would like them to stay, but unfortunately, maybe books are just a thing of the past," Mills said. "If people truly love this place, they need to step up."

Ajaya has long been upfront with his clientele that his book-

store was skating on thin ice. Last April, he announced that BookBuyers was on the verge of closing but he pledged to make a last stand to save the business.

On Monday, Ajaya told the *Voice* that the same philosophy would be behind his efforts to

resurrect BookBuyers in a new location.

"We refuse to give in until it becomes impossible to go forward," he said. "I think these things are forcing us to do what we need to do. I see this as a positive even though it's really nerve-wracking." ■

HOSPITAL

► Continued from page 5

traffic speeds.

Despite the potential increase in traffic, hospital officials have maintained that the medical office space is badly needed at El Camino's Mountain View cam-

pus. Right now, medical offices dominate the second and third floor of the Women's Hospital building. Relocating these offices to the new building means the Women's Hospital has room to grow, and can better handle the increase in demand for maternity services.

The big boost in parking is

also badly needed. Available parking tends to dry up during the peak hours during the day, Ken King, chief administrative services officer at El Camino Hospital, told the *Voice* last year. By boosting parking supply from 1,991 spaces to 2,602 spaces, the hospital will have more than enough parking to handle peak

weekday demand, estimated at 2,230.

The original plans presented to City Council last year stated that 485 new spaces would be added, rather than the 611 being proposed now. Hagan said the increase is not unusual as project proposals get refined over several months.

More information on how to give feedback to the project can be found on the city's website at <http://tinyurl.com/ElCamHosp>. Questions and comments made about the DEIR will be addressed in the final environmental report for the project. ■

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

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 - Loving Where You Live
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CRIME BRIEFS

► Continued from page 4

customers reported that he had indecently exposed himself while in the store.

Officers found the suspect, identified as Max Davidson, 29, down the block from the store. He was arrested on charges including sexual battery, indecent exposure and lewd and lascivious acts on a child under age 14.

He was booked in Santa Clara County's main jail.

—Andrea Gemmet

MountainView ONLINE

LET'S DISCUSS:
Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues at Town Square at MountainViewOnline.com



15195 Becky Lane, Monte Sereno Offered at \$3,988,000

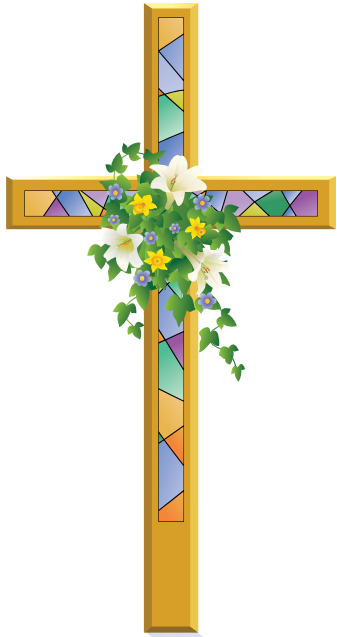
Country Charm and High-Tech Features

Blending rustic charm with high-tech features, this gorgeous 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath home of 5,147 sq. ft. (per appraisal) has a lot of over 1 acre (per county). Ideal for entertaining, the home offers a great room that can double as a home theater, and spectacular outdoor spaces that include a manicured backyard with a breathtaking saltwater pool and waterfalls. Other highlights include a home automation system, a 450-gallon aquarium, and an attached four-car garage. La Rinconada Country Club and top Campbell schools are moments away (buyer to verify eligibility).

For video tour & more photos, please visit:
www.15195Becky.com



Peninsula Easter Services



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH PALO ALTO

- ❖ 6:15pm **Maundy Thursday — March 24**
Monastic Supper & Liturgy of the Word followed by Holy Eucharist & Stripping of the Altar
- ❖ Noon to 2:00pm **Good Friday — March 25**
A service focused on "The Adversaries and Companions of Jesus"
- ❖ 2:00 to 3:00pm *Devotional Labyrinth Meditation*
- ❖ 7:30 to 8:30pm *Tenebrae: The Office of Shadows*
- ❖ 5:30am **Easter — March 27**
Easter Vigil, Eucharist & Baptism
- ❖ 8:00 to 9:30am *Festive Breakfast & Family Easter Activities*
- ❖ 10:00am *Festive Holy Eucharist*

600 Colorado Ave, P.A. (650) 326-3800
www.saint-marks.com



Grace Lutheran Church

3149 Waverley Street • Palo Alto, CA 94306 | www.gracepa.org | 650.494.1212

Holy Week

Palm Sunday
March 20 | 8:30 & 10:45 am

Maundy Thursday
March 24 | 7:00 pm

Good Friday
March 25 | 12:00 & 7:00 pm

Easter Vigil
March 26 | 7:26 PM (Sunset)

Easter Sunday

March 27 | 8:30 and 10:45 am

Easter Breakfast: 9:00 - 10:30 am

Staffed child care available at all services.

Los Altos Lutheran Church



PALM SUNDAY: March 20

9:30 Hot Cross Buns (picnic area) / 10 AM Worship

TRIDUUM: The Three Days

- + **Maundy Thursday** – March 24 at 7 PM
Jesus washed their feet, love one another
- + **Good Friday** – March 25
2:00 PM: *Meditating on the cross, service of prayer*
7:00 PM *Tenebrae: Scripture, Psalms, continuing vigil*
- + **Easter Vigil** – March 26 at 6:30 PM
Candlelight service, gather in patio

EASTER SUNDAY: March 27

9 AM Easter breakfast / 10 AM Worship
All welcome for breakfast, Children's egg hunt after the service

www.LosAltosLutheran.org / 460 S. El Monte Ave.



The HOPE of EASTER

Palm Sunday Cantata | March 20 at 10:30 am

Maundy Thursday | March 24 at 7 pm

Good Friday | March 25 at 7 pm

Easter Sunrise | March 27 at 6:30 am

Easter Worship at 10:30 am

First Presbyterian Church

1667 Miramonte Avenue | www.fpcmv.org

Immanuel Lutheran Church

1715 Grant Road | Los Altos
650.967.4906 | www.ilclosaltos.com



Come Join Us for Holy Week Services!

Palm Sunday, March 20 at 10 am
Procession with Palms

Good Friday, March 25 at 6 pm
"Stations of the Cross"
Interactive meditation and prayer
A truly moving experience for all ages!

Easter Sunday, March 27 at 9 & 11 am
Festive celebration for the whole family!

Maundy Thursday

MARCH 24

7pm

Good Friday

MARCH 25

7pm

Easter

MARCH 27

9am & 11am

For more info:
650 494 3840 | pbc.org



Peninsula Bible Church
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Palo Alto, CA 94306

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religious services

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To inquire about or to
reserve space, please

email Blanca Yoc

at byoc@pawekly.com

or call 223-6596.

Celebrate
EASTER
@ALCF

RISEN

Easter Sunday

March 27 | 10 AM

Family-Friendly
Celebration with
Choir and Band

Good Friday

March 25 | Noon
Message and
Communion

Palm Sunday

March 20 | 10 AM
Children's Choir



Abundant Life Christian Fellowship

2440 Leghorn St, Mountain View | 650.625.1500 | ALCF.net/EASTER



Viewpoint

- EDITORIAL
- YOUR LETTERS
- GUEST OPINIONS

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■ 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

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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

■ LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

WHY NOT CALTRAIN ALONG 85 CORRIDOR?

It's refreshing to see the Mountain View City Council and some others in the West Valley pushing back against VTA's quick-fix plan to convert the 85 medial strip into express lanes. VTA's fixation on bringing BART to the east side of San Jose has compromised its ability to convince the West Valley cities that it still has the 85 corridor's long-term interests at heart.

Unfortunately, since San Mateo County declined to join BART in the 1970s, there is an impenetrable barrier to getting BART down the west side of the bay. We have instead Caltrain, but actually, that isn't such a bad option.

Since the best way to push back is to come up with a feasible alternate plan, why not extend Caltrain down the 85 corridor? Most European city rail systems (like the S Bahn in Germany) run standard rail equipment (tracks, engines, cars, etc.), and consequently have lower capital costs than the specialized equipment needed to run metro-style systems like BART. Consequently, the "billions of dollars" cited by Johnny Khamis is probably way off. And, if we don't get started, the cost will only continue to go up and the system will never get built.

James Kempf
Foxborough Drive

CITY MUST ADDRESS FLOODING DANGERS

What is Mountain View's plan to mitigate flooding from the rise in oceans (and SF Bay), increase in tidal height, and those impacts on the streams emptying into SF Bay. Experts say it's not a matter of if, but when, flooding will occur.

Especially vulnerable is the North of Bayshore area, the same land that the City Council is planning to give the go-ahead to developers to build large projects on. This will create new hardscape from buildings, roads, and parking lots that will increase run-off of rainwater in an area already vulnerable to flooding.

Will developers be required to set aside monies toward

a flood-mitigation plan to reduce or inhibit flooding or will taxpayers be obligated through city funds or new taxes to protect the businesses and homes now being proposed?

The council needs to address the looming flooding problem and have a mitigation plan before adding to the hazards in the near future in the North of Bayshore area.

Andi Sandstrom
Tulane Drive

COUNCIL ACTION NO HELP TO RENTERS

The mediation ordinance adopted late (Tuesday) night by the City Council does not include binding arbitration (soft rent control) and does not protect tenants from eviction in lieu of a rent increase. Any landlord who wishes to raise the rent more than 7.2 percent per year without triggering the right to mediation and later possible non-binding arbitration can simply evict the tenant(s) and charge any rent to new tenants (the market will bear).

The council did nothing useful for renters and may have added a reason for landlords to simply serve notices to vacate instead of rent-increase notices.

Gary Wesley
Continental Circle

MANAGING TRAFFIC IN NORTH BAYSHORE

This comment is in response to the following Voice editorial comment (March 11, 2016):

"As city leaders well know, planning what is hoped to be a new viable community in Mountain View must be done with care. The city faces a number of challenges, including the need to devise sound transportation management strategies to prevent making Mountain View's already overburdened roads and freeways far worse congested."

The best transportation management for North Bayshore is to design and build it so that people can live comfortably and conveniently without needing to own a personal car. Instead of pressuring people not to drive, design the neighborhood to make driving unnecessary and less convenient than walking or biking.

Five or six stories of apartments and condos over ground-floor retail can provide enough customers to support grocery stores and other needed neighborhood services. Streets can be designed for walking and biking and just enjoying life, not primarily for cars.

Give NBS residents a free transit pass rather than a free parking space. Those who still want their own parking space can pay market value for it.

A modern transit connection linking NBS to the downtown transit center (is needed) so people can access the whole Bay Area without owning a personal car.

There are many details still to be worked out, but let's tell our elected officials we want to explore this opportunity. If we work together we can make NBS one of the best neighborhoods in the world.

Bruce Liedstrand
Former city manager, retired
Bentley Square

A PLEA FOR TREES IN MINI-PARK

I was quite shocked when I finally found the last two paragraphs of the article on mini-parks in the Feb 5 Voice. While the article went on about how the City Council did not want to ban bicyclists or remove trees, it seems their final decision was to agree with SFPUC to remove 27 trees from all the parks over Hetch-Hetchy.

Due to the paper's format, I and several other neighbors missed the conclusion. Needless to say, we are quite dismayed to hear that our little mini-park, the Rex Manor Tot Lot, will be losing its well-established trees — and we weren't informed that it was going to be on the City Council agenda!

These trees have been here for years and are not interfering with pipe maintenance. Why can't they stay? Next thing you'll tell us is that the swings and slides have to go, too.

We are one of those neighborhoods without enough park space; please let us keep our little oasis a peaceful and shaded place.

Valerie Fenwick
Rex Manor

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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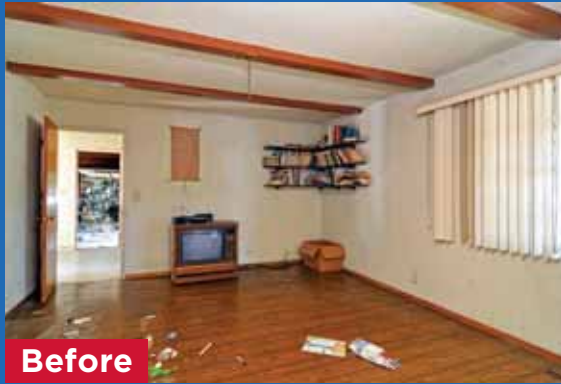
On average, homes in Santa Clara County have sold for **4% over list price.**

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