

Mountain View VOICE



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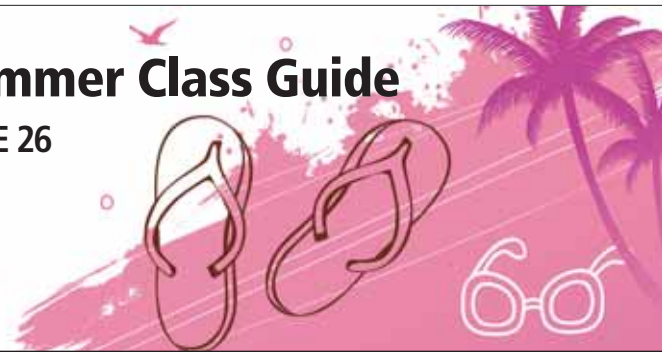
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Summer Class Guide

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Council sets ground rules for future pot shops

By Kevin Forestieri

Mountain View's future looks green, after City Council members agreed last year to open the door to a budding industry of legal marijuana retailers.

And although the nuts and bolts for how many dispensaries to allow — and where they can go — still need to be worked out, council members generally agreed at a Tuesday study session to err on the side of lax regulation, supporting zoning that would allow pot shops to open up in large retail centers, shopping plazas and downtown.

California gave the green light for recreational marijuana dispensaries to open up shop on Jan. 1, 2018 provided they followed regulatory guidelines provided by the state and the Adult Use of Marijuana Act. But council members agreed in December that the city needed more time to craft local regulations on the industry tailored specifically for the needs of Mountain View, and voted to place a moratorium on dispensaries through Dec. 1, 2018.

Council members weighed in on questions Tuesday that would

be critical for the future of the industry in Mountain View, including where storefront retail and non-storefront, delivery-oriented businesses would be permissible in the city, and the total number of permits to approve for dispensaries before

'I don't have a problem with people buying marijuana in Mountain View.'

MAYOR LENNY SIEGEL

taking a pause.

The study session had sparse attendance, with council members Ken Rosenberg absent and John McAlister showing up late and zooming through staff's questions, but there was a clear ideological split on how to best approach the city's foray into marijuana sales. On one side was Mayor Siegel, councilwoman Pat Showalter, and councilmen Chris Clark and McAlister, who

► See **POT SHOPS**, page 6



JAMES TENSUAN

From left: Captain Jessica Nowaski, Officer Jessica Nanez, School Resource Officer Rodshetta Smith and records specialist Amber Wilson talk about Saturday's Women's Day event, which aims to show female role models in a male-dominated field.

Celebrating the women in blue

MOUNTAIN VIEW'S FEMALE POLICE HOST WOMEN'S DAY EVENT SATURDAY

By Kevin Forestieri

Mirroring efforts to promote women in Silicon Valley's thriving science and technology fields, Mountain View Police Department's most influential female staffers are teaming up to show

girls and women that they, too, can succeed in a career traditionally dominated by men.

The department's upcoming event, dubbed Women's Day, aims to put a public face to the dozens of female staff members at the police department — some of whom have served the

city for decades — and give girls a role model they can look up to.

Women make up less than 11 percent of the Mountain View Police Department's sworn personnel, instead comprising the bulk of the less public-facing

► See **WOMEN'S DAY**, page 16

Water district backs \$650 million delta tunnels plan

By Kevin Forestieri

By a narrow vote, Santa Clara Valley Water District board members agreed Tuesday afternoon to back a controversial \$16.7 billion plan to build two massive underground tunnels capable of transporting huge amounts of water from the Sacramento River south to regions across the state.

The 4-3 vote came after two marathon meetings totaling more than nine hours, as board members weighed whether

to participate in the so-called WaterFix project, which would include committing as much as \$650 million dollars to help pay for the design and construction of two, 40-foot-tall underground tunnels spanning 35 miles from Sacramento to Tracy.

Board members at the Metropolitan Water District in Southern California voted last month to pay for \$10.8 billion of the project — about 65 percent of the total cost — breathing new life into a project that faced a lengthy struggle for financial support as

well as opposition from environmental groups. Santa Clara Valley Water District's commitment this week marks the first major sign of support in Northern California for the plan, which has been a major priority for Governor Jerry Brown during the final months of his administration.

Board members Barbara Keegan, Tony Estremera, Gary Kremen and Nai Hsueh voted in support of the project, while board president Dick Santos and board members Linda LeZotte and John Varela were opposed.

Water district staff pitched the project to board members as a key strategy to ensure Santa Clara County has a relatively inexpensive, reliable source of water in the coming decades, particularly during a drought, and said that the proposed project would be capable of transporting more water than current systems can handle during major rainy seasons. The project would also get around periodic water pumping restrictions, which are imposed to protect delta smelt and salmon.

The vote reverses the previous position of the district's board of directors, which voted unanimously in October to reject the WaterFix in favor of a scaled-down version of the project, emphasizing the need for a lower-cost, staged project with just one tunnel. But with major financial support from Southern California on the table, water district staff warned that the project is likely to move forward, with or without the support of Santa

► See **TWIN TUNNELS**, page 7

INSIDE

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1001 PARMA WAY | LOS ALTOS

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OVER ASKING PRICE



1+ ACRE OF INDOOR/OUTDOOR LIVING IN THE HEART OF LOS ALTOS

One of a Kind! Possible Lot Split!

The “heart of resort-like Los Altos” takes on new meaning at this tremendous residence with a rich heritage from its long-time owner, former city mayor and early HP engineer, the late Bob Grimm, who himself has been oft described as the heart of the city. A tour of the home marries a perfect balance of modern updates with preserved midcentury appeal. Public rooms include an open-concept living/dining room, gorgeous remodeled chef’s kitchen, inviting family room, and oversized finished garage currently configured as a recreation room. A charming 1-bedroom 1.5 bath guest house furthers the property’s extraordinary flexibility and unique appeal. Located on more than one sprawling acre, the home’s choices for dining and entertaining continue outdoors with a sun-swept pool, heated loggia, horseshoe pit, custom water feature, and fire pit.

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Naatak brings its comedy show "Improv Masala" to Mountain View's Center for the Performing Arts next Saturday.

IMPROV WITH INDIAN FLAVOR

Naatak, the local theater company whose name means "the drama" in Hindi, is coming to the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts (second stage, 500 Castro St.) at 6 p.m. on Saturday, May 19, to perform something less dramatic and more upbeat: an improvisational comedy program called "Improv Masala."

The 90-minute comedy show is performed in "Hinglish," a hybrid of Hindi and English, and allows the audience to steer the direction of the show with several fast-paced games.

Naatak began in 1995 as a collective of local tech industry employees seeking a creative outlet. Today, it bills itself as the largest Indian-American theater company in the United States, with more than 1,000 performing members over the past two decades. In 2017, "Improv Masala" became the organization's first improv-only production. The improv team is led by cast members Neha Goyal and Abhay Paranjape.

"It's pretty similar to 'Whose Line ...' Paranjape said. "We have 10 games where participants will step forward and perform those games ... One thing we are trying out is scripted sketches, like something you would see on 'Saturday Night Live' ... on current or recent political topics."

As member of Naatak for 22 years, Rajiv Nema manages marketing for the organization in addition to acting.

Nema has used one of the improv team's basic games in his daily life, outside of performing. For Nema, "Yes, and," or the

practice of snowballing an idea and incorporating everyone's additions, is not only a concept of improvisational comedy but a way to lean into his discussions and relationships.

"What I learned was, it's not just used for comedy, but you can use it at work as well as with your family, when you are discussing any ideas for collaboration," he said. "So since I was introduced to it, I use it all the time. There is such a beautiful and positive vibe in the room. It has been a night-and-day difference."

Tickets are \$12; go to tinyurl.com/Naatak-MV

—Chrissi Angeles

MOAH CELEBRATES RECORD PLAYERS

At the Museum of American Heritage's (MOAH) current exhibition, "In the Groove: A History of Record Players," visitors can encounter a variety of models of phonographs, gramophones, jukeboxes and turntables, learn about the history of the technology and even select songs to spin — including, with the help of a docent, the haunting "Aloha Oe" recorded over a century ago.

MOAH's exhibit, running through Aug. 19 and open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday to Sunday, offers a wealth of information and hands-on learning opportunities.

The museum (located at 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto) exhibition has a charmingly homespun look, with images and text printed, cut and posted in the manner of an old-school presentation, and winds its way through the museum's main building.

Go to moah.org for details.

—Karla Kane

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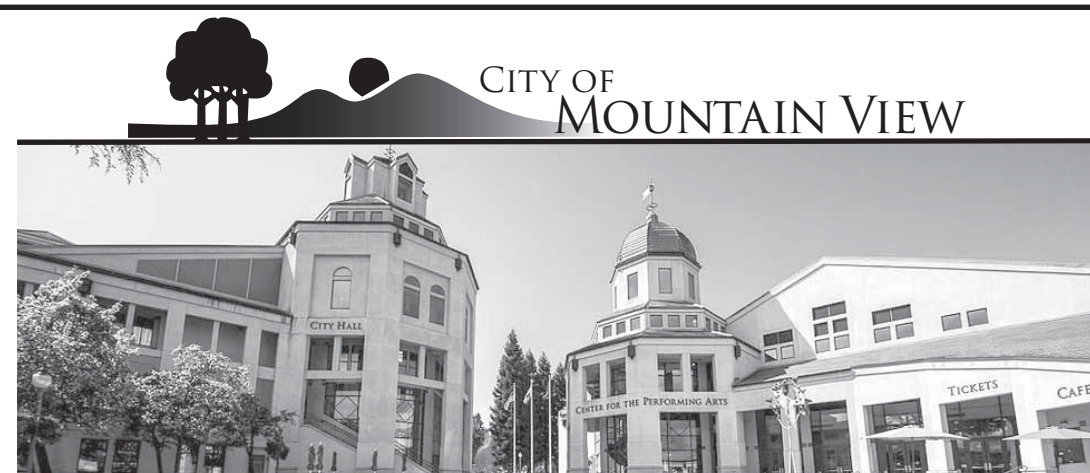
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The City of Mountain View is accepting applications for appointments to the:

- Human Relations Commission
- Senior Advisory Committee

Applications will be accepted until 4:00 pm on June 1, 2018 in the City Clerk's Office at 500 Castro St., Mountain View, CA 94041

- The Council Advisory Bodies are volunteer positions and serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council.
- Appointments are available on an equal opportunity basis.

Applications are available in the City Clerk's Office, or online at: www.mountainview.gov

Please contact the City Clerk's Office at 650-903-6304 for further information.



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Go to www.svos.org for a complete list of artists and their locations.

CRIME BRIEFS

MVHS TEACHER SENTENCED FOR LEWD TEXTS

A longtime Mountain View High School teacher was sentenced to three years' probation Thursday after he sent inappropriate text messages to a female student, according to the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office.

Evan Smith, who taught math and was the junior class adviser last year, pleaded no contest in March to a misdemeanor charge of annoying or molesting a child under age 18. In addition to the three-year probation sentence, Smith must also register as a sex offender, surrender his teaching credential and resign from his job at the district.

Smith was arrested on Nov. 7 after a female student reported that Smith had sent her inappropriate text messages, which began over the summer and persisted for several months. She reported the texts to school officials, who referred the information to the Mountain View Police Department. Officers arrested Smith the next day.

Smith was immediately put on administrative leave following the arrest. A joint press release at the time stated that law enforcement was able to take swift action because of the willingness of the victim to come forward and report the inappropriate exchange.

► See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 6

POLICE LOG

ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON

600 block Showers Dr., 5/4

AUTO BURGLARY

600 block W. Dana St., 4/30
 200 block Hope St., 4/30
 700 block Continental Cir., 5/2
 2000 block Old Middlefield Way, 5/2
 100 block Calderon Av., 5/2

BATTERY

1300 block Bryant Av., 5/1
 1800 block Ednamary Way, 5/1
 2600 block Charleston Rd., 5/5
 600 block Rainbow Dr., 5/5

CAUSING A FIRE

Grant Rd. & South Dr., 4/29

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

600 block Calderon Av., 5/2
 100 block W. Dana St., 5/4
 600 block Tyrella Av., 5/7

GRAND THEFT

2000 block Montecito Av., 4/30
 400 block Hope St., 4/30
 500 block Showers Dr., 5/4

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

700 block W. Middlefield Rd., 5/3

STOLEN VEHICLE

1000 block Crestview Dr., 5/1
 700 block Continental Cir., 5/2
 1800 block Peacock Av., 5/4

VANDALISM

2500 block Leghorn St., 4/30
 2000 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 5/1
 100 block Pacchetti Way, 5/2
 700 block W. Evelyn Av., 5/3
 600 block Showers Dr., 5/3
 Dierix Dr. & Lubich Dr., 5/4
 100 block Franklin St., 5/4
 500 block Castro St., 5/7

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

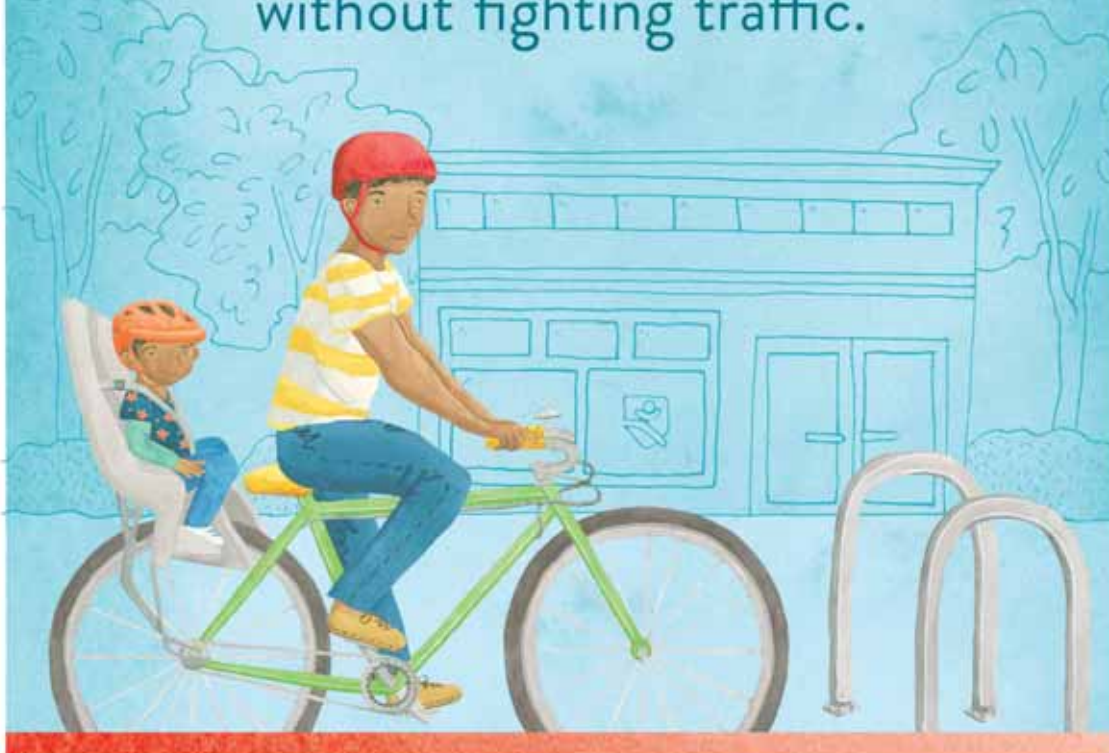
NEW LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Mountain View officials have hired a new director to lead the city's library. Tracy Gray, who currently heads the Sonoma County Library System, will start her new position at Mountain View Library in July. She replaces the current library director Rosanne Macek, who is retiring.

Gray takes on the new job with more than 15 years experience working at libraries. At her former job in Sonoma County, she managed a 13-branch system and more than 200 employees. Prior to that, she worked at the city library in Tempe and a community college library in Maricopa County, both in Arizona.

—Mark Noach

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JAMES TENSUAN

PRETTY UTILITARIAN

Thanks to a pilot project, some of Mountain View's utility boxes are looking less utilitarian and more whimsical. The city commissioned artists to decorate a half-dozen of the unglamorous structures and held an unveiling of the last one on Friday, May 4, at the corner of Castro and Mercy streets.

Googler drops injury claim against city

By Mark Noack

A Google employee is dropping a six-figure claim against the city of Mountain View for a knee injury he suffered at the Center for Performing Arts. The claimant, Steven Muller of Los Altos, said that his sole intention was to prod the city to provide better safety training at the event space.

"(My attorney) thought the

best way to highlight the potential ramifications of this training issue was by submitting a claim form as per the City of Mountain View process," Muller wrote. "I would not accept a single dollar from the City of Mountain View in any event."

Muller was injured while carrying a chair down a flight of stairs at a December ballet performance of "The Nutcracker," according to his claim. His family of four had purchased

box seats for the performance, but they found only three chairs when they arrived.

After unsuccessfully complaining to the ushers, Muller tried to bring a wooden chair down the stairs on his own. He ended up slipping on one of the stairs and twisting his knee, an injury that later required surgery, according to his claim.

Last month, Muller's attorney

► See **GOOGLER**, page 7

School board mulls relocating hundreds of students

TASK FORCE STRIPPED OF ITS ROLE FOR NEW GRANDFATHERING POLICIES

By Kevin Forestieri

Big changes in school attendance boundaries and transfer policies could mean that as many as 800 students — one-fourth of all elementary school-age kids in the Mountain View Whisman School District — may be forcibly moved from their schools in fall 2019.

That's according to a new demographic report, released by the district last week, that shows new boundaries and enrollment policies could uproot 637

students currently enrolled in the district's six neighborhood elementary schools. Add the incoming kindergarten class, which would also be subject to forced moves in the 2019-20 school year, and that number jumps to about 800.

It's a prickly issue that the district's Enrollment Priorities Task Force has chewed on since October of last year. On the one hand, three of the district's elementary schools are more than packed, struggling to house students even with temporary portable classrooms clogging

up play areas. A new school on North Whisman Road is also set to open in the 2019-20 school year, and a successful opening means it needs a full complement of students attending on day one.

The school district adopted new attendance boundaries last year to help balance out enrollment between its campuses and fill up the new school, which are supposed to take effect in fall 2019. But how hard to enforce those boundaries right out the gate has turned into a political football, with parents

from affected neighborhoods advocating for a grandfathering policy and demanding carve-outs and exceptions whenever possible.

Parent Lindsay Phillips encouraged trustees at the May 3 board meeting to take a lenient approach to enforcing the new boundaries and minimize the number of children who will have to relocate to a new school next year. Students from certain schools — particularly Bubb, Huff and Landels elementary schools — would have to weather the brunt of the changes, with

127 students currently attending Bubb who would potentially have to move to Landels for the 2019-20 school year.

"I'm doing what any parent and educator would do, which is advocating for minimal disruption for my kids' and all kids' education," Phillips told board members.

Shoreline West parent Jason Taylor, who lives in a community that would be subject to forced transfers from Bubb to Landels, said the district's data

► See **SCHOOL BOUNDARIES** page 9

O'Malley's ordered to remove outdoor patio

DECISION STEMS FROM SERIES OF NOISE COMPLAINTS

By Mark Noack

Following a string of noise complaints, Mountain View officials are clamping down on O'Malley's Sports Bar, ordering the pub to remove its outdoor patio.

The decision on Tuesday came as the result of a drawn-out feud between the industrial district bar and its nearby residential neighbors. For years, some of the surrounding residents had complained that the pub was causing a racket with its live entertainment and rowdy patrons.

For the most part, Mountain View officials agreed with those concerns. Since the bar opened in 2015, city officials in several departments have compiled a long list of code violations at the bar. Police officials counted eight times last year they had to respond to the bar to remind workers to keep their back door closed to dampen the noise. Fire inspectors say they had to revisit the bar 14 times to perform inspections due to repeat violations, such as the bar obstructing or blocking the rear door. Building and planning officials also piled on with more infractions.

Stephanie Williams, the city's acting zoning director, said her staff had been trying to get the bar into compliance, but the O'Malley's owners had essentially "disregarded" their efforts.

In addition, the bar had an unpaid tab — about \$4,500 in city fines resulting from false

calls from their security alarms being triggered. O'Malley's also has about \$3,000 in city fines for keeping its back door open, according to the owners.

In an interview, O'Malley's owner Flor O'Sullivan was clearly frustrated, saying it was basically one neighbor who was behind most of the noise complaints. He described the city's orders as "impossible" to deal with, saying it would result in more noise and further complaints.

"I've been out thousands of dollars through all this, and I've been fighting this for three years," O'Sullivan said. "Between giving the city money for their fines, they tell me to (take) down the patio, and then in the same sentence they say I need a permit to do that."

Last October, the city's zoning administrator ordered O'Malley's to take down the bar's outdoor patio, which she said was illegally modified without permits. The bar owners later decided to appeal this decision.

At the May 8 appeal hearing, an attorney representing O'Malley's warned the city had followed improper procedure and was violating his client's property rights. Under the city's rules, by just having customers walk in through the front door, the bar could be technically violating noise restrictions, he said.

"They have a right to do business and make an earning,"

► See **O'MALLEY'S**, page 9

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POT SHOPS

► Continued from page 1

mostly supported less restrictive policies on retail stores, while councilwomen Margaret Abe-Koga and Lisa Matichak often spoke up for strong regulation.

City staff asked the council to weigh in on the size of the “buffer” between marijuana stores and schools, day care facilities and child care facilities — a topic where the city has pretty huge discretion. The state’s default buffer is 600 feet, but the city could increase or decrease that amount or implement restrictions on a case-by-case basis. The city of Pacifica, for example, reduced the buffer for child care and day care facilities down to 200 feet, according to a city staff report.

Council members Showalter, McAlister, Clark and Siegel all sought to stick with the 600-foot buffers for schools and reduce the child care and day care facility buffers, noting that it’s highly unlikely that kids younger than age 5 in a monitored environment would wander over to a nearby dispensary. Matichak and Abe-Koga argued in favor of ratcheting up the buffer to 1,000 feet from schools — a move that would be commensurate with tobacco retailers but would severely reduce the number of places marijuana sales could take place in the city.

When asked how many retail marijuana stores should be allowed to open up from the outset, Showalter and Clark suggested a range between five

and six, while Siegel questioned why there should be any limits at all. Abe-Koga and Matichak supported having only one or two, while McAlister advocated for “starting slowly” but did not specify a maximum number. Clark said he felt it was important to have a limit up front, given that the city needs to take a cautious approach to a business the city has, up until this point, prohibited outright.

“This is new territory for us, and I think it’s important that we have a checkpoint, whether it’s a year in or whatever it happens to be,” he said. “I was thinking that we would initially limit it to about five and see how things go.”

From the outset, Siegel said he advocated for the “most permissible approach” in all of the options laid out by staff during the study session. Although he said he has never used marijuana himself, he argued that it is a normalized activity that many of the city’s residents enjoy. He said the city shouldn’t stigmatize the industry and treat marijuana retailers any different than other businesses in the city.

“I don’t have a problem with people buying marijuana in Mountain View,” he said.

Among the long list of questions, a majority of four council members supported allowing retail marijuana storefronts in downtown, in major retail centers including El Camino Real, San Antonio and the Grant-Phyllis shopping center area and in areas zoned for general industrial purposes. East Whisman,

North Bayshore and strip malls and plazas throughout the city are also under consideration for allowing retail marijuana.

The same majority — Siegel, Showalter, McAlister and Clark — also agreed that the city should not try to create a buffer between marijuana stores and residential areas. Siegel warned that could stymie future housing growth, while Clark said it would be an odd restriction given that he could live next to — or even right on top of — a store that sells alcohol.

“I don’t think we need to consider that in the ordinance,” he said.

Rosenberg, through submitted comments, took a similar approach to the council majority, arguing in favor of downtown cannabis retail, reduced school buffers and imposing an initial cap of five to six permits for pot businesses spread throughout the city. He said storefronts might be best suited in well-established commercial and retail centers in what he described as “gateway” locations — including San Antonio, East Whisman and the Charleston and Rengstorff areas — that would be easy to access from bordering cities.

“Because adjacent cities are not presently adopting a permitting process allowing dispensaries to be established, it is likely people who desire to purchase (marijuana) products will be entering Mountain View from good distances away,” he said. ▀

Email Kevin Forestieri
at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

CRIME BRIEFS

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KIDNAPPING, VEHICLE THEFT ARREST

A transient man was arrested at a Mountain View KFC early Saturday after he allegedly got into a man’s car in San Jose and demanded that the driver take him wherever he wanted to go, according to a statement by Mountain View police.

Police say the incident began in San Jose, near 14th and Santa Clara streets, around 3 a.m. when the 21-year-old suspect reportedly opened the door of the victim’s car and got inside. The man reportedly demanded that the driver take him “anywhere” he wanted to go, and threatened to harm him if he didn’t comply, police said.

After traveling north to the KFC near the corner of El Camino Real and Castro Street in Mountain View, the suspect allegedly tried to rob the driver, who got out of the car and fled, police said. The suspect reportedly got into the

driver’s seat and began driving a way, but opted instead to get out of the vehicle and chase the victim across El Camino.

Officers arrived after police received two requests for help, and found both the suspect and the victim along El Camino, police said.

The suspect, who was detained without incident, was arrested on suspicion of kidnapping and vehicle theft charges. He is also accused of making criminal threats, driving on a suspended license and violating a protective order. He is being held in Santa Clara County Main Jail with a bail set at \$166,000.

MAN ARRESTED IN THEFT, HIT-AND-RUN

Police arrested a 54-year-old man on suspicion of theft and hit-and-run last week after he allegedly tried to steal a phone from a construction site, got into a getaway van and struck the victim while driving away.

The victim, working at a construction site on the 600 block

of Calderon Avenue, told police that he spotted the suspect inside the building around noon on Wednesday, May 2, and followed him in an attempt to deter the suspect, according to police spokeswoman Katie Nelson.

The suspect allegedly threw some kind of liquid at the victim before getting into a white van and backing out of a nearby parking spot, Nelson said. The suspect struck the victim as he was backing out, pushing the victim to the ground. He scraped his knee but did not suffer any other injuries, Nelson said.

The victim later realized that his phone was missing, which was subsequently found on the suspect, Nelson said.

Officers canvassed the area and located the van and the suspect on Mercy Street at around 2:30 p.m. Police arrested the suspect on burglary charges as well as hit and run with injuries. He was booked into Santa Clara County Main Jail with a bail set at \$25,000.

Police could not determine the suspect’s city of residence, Nelson said.

—Kevin Forestieri



GOOGLER

► Continued from page 5

Matthew Haberkorn submitted a \$135,000 injury claim to the city for damages mostly resulting from his inability to work. According to the claim, he needed to take 14 days of paid time off from his job, costing him a total of \$53,500, which included his salary, bonus benefits and equity, according to the claim. The complaint also sought damages for his pain and suffering, and the added burden his injury placed on his wife.

Muller confirmed to the *Voice* that he agreed to have his attorney file the claim, but he said the damages were largely based on estimates of future potential losses. He disputed his characterization as a “Google executive” in a previous article, saying his job as head of business development at Google Play is a “relatively junior” position at the company.

When his attorney filed the claim, Muller said he wanted to pressure the city to provide better staff training. Now confident the city would make that a priority, he said he would immediately rescind his injury claim. ▣

Email Mark Noack at mnoack@mv-voice.com

TWIN TUNNELS

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Clara Valley Water.

The question was simply a matter of whether residents in Santa Clara County wanted to benefit from a secure, upgraded water delivery system and have a say in the governance of the twin tunnels project, water district CEO Norma Camacho told board members at a May 2 meeting.

“To me, Metropolitan Water District’s actions mean that the project will likely move forward whether we are on board or not,” she said. “The question before you today is whether or not our district will choose to support the project, to help shape and govern its development.”

Following the commitment by the Metropolitan Water District, board members Keegan, Estremera and Kremen penned a memorandum supporting WaterFix, noting that the Santa Clara Valley Water District needs to take an active role in the project and its governance now that the full project — two tunnels and all — was going to happen regardless of their vote. Participation would mean one of five votes on a newly formed Joint Powers Authority (JPA) overseeing the design and construction of the project.

“If we want to ensure that Santa Clara County will be provided with a sustainable and the most affordable supply of water as well as protect the interests of Northern California and the environment, we believe that the time to act is now,” the memo states.

Estremera staunchly defended his decision to support the project at both the May 2 and the May 8 board meetings, saying that the district needs to support large-scale state projects alongside local water purification projects and conservation projects. He said if Santa Clara Valley opts not to participate, the twin tunnels project will move forward without any say from outside Southern California.

“It’s a question of whether we participate or we don’t participate, and obviously I’m a person who wants to participate,” he said. “We stand in the shoes of the people we represent, and I’m not about to stand here and watch these guys do this project — do whatever they’re going to do in the delta, construct all these tunnels — and do nothing about it and not participate.”

Kremen, who represents North County cities including Mountain View and Palo Alto, said he still supported a scaled-down version of the project, but he

acknowledged that option is no longer on the table. Although the total cost of the project is subject to uncertainty, he said the district’s analysis of the options

‘WaterFix remains plagued by high costs and mismanagement that justified the board’s prior rejection of this project.’

REP. ANNA ESHOO, D-PALO ALTO

shows WaterFix gives Santa Clara County the biggest bang for the buck — particularly compared to buying water on an emergency basis at a premium during the drought.

“I think at the end of the day, while I’d like it to be one tunnel, I think that this is what’s before us and I think we’re doing better than what we thought before,” he said. “I’m going to support this project.”

Although WaterFix received support from major players in the region, including San Jose

Mayor Sam Liccardo and the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (D-Palo Alto) sent a letter to the board of directors on May 1 asking them to reject the project or delay the vote. The letter raised concerns that the project would likely face significant cost overruns that the water district could be on the hook for, and that it is estimated to increase water rates by an estimated \$10.26 per month.

“In my view, WaterFix remains plagued by high costs and mismanagement that justified the board’s prior rejection of this project, and it’s unclear what has changed in the last six months to ensure that it now meets the criteria the board put forth last October,” the letter states.

Board member LeZotte, who voted against the project, said she had grave concerns that environmental considerations during design and construction of the project would be ignored by the Metropolitan Water District, and she said the Santa Clara Valley Water District simply doesn’t have enough leverage to make sure environmental safeguards remain in place under the JPA framework. ▣

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SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

► Continued from page 5

may not capture just how disruptive it is for kids and families to switch gears and attend a different school. Students build relationships with one another and have friends, which would magnify the effects of boundary changes, he said, and which isn't represented in demographic charts and maps.

But there's pressure to move students sooner rather than later. Superintendent Ayinde Rudolph said portable classrooms — which were meant to be temporary — will continue to crowd out play space at Bubb, Huff and Landels until the boundaries take effect. The district is at a "breaking point," he said, and ancillary services and programs that require flexible space will have to fall to the wayside to accommodate more classrooms.

"We have three schools that are currently reaching capacity," he said. "We can no longer afford to keep putting kids into the schools without adjusting something. Landels is now officially at capacity, and we could not add another class even if we wanted to."

Task force pushed out

The Enrollment Priorities Task Force was supposed to tackle the grandfathering issue and consider changes to the district's intradistrict transfer policies, which allow families to transfer their children to another district school outside of their own neighborhood. But in an unexpected move, district officials decided last month to remove grandfathering from the task force's scope of work.

In an email to task force members on April 27, three days after the last meeting, Rudolph wrote that grandfathering had turned into a time sink that was "dominating" discussion, and that he and Assistant Superintendent Carmen Ghysels decided to "remove this issue from the task force and send it to the board."

District spokeswoman

Shelly Hausman contested the idea that grandfathering was revoked from the scope of the task force, saying that the task force spent plenty of time on the topic and will be handing off its "work and data related to grandfathering" to the board for further consideration in order to focus on intradistrict transfer policies.

"The (task force's) work on enrollment priorities is moving along well," she said in an email. "The last piece — grandfathering — needs deeper consideration by the board."

At previous meetings, task force members had reached a rough consensus that grandfathering of fifth-grade students in the 2019-20 school year would suffice as the only exception to the new boundaries. But the issue took a renewed focus at the April 24 meeting after members of the community were invited to weigh in. They largely advocated for more lax grandfathering policies, input that took up the whole meeting and threw the task force's prior stance into question, said Bill Lambert, a task force member and former district trustee.

Parents who spoke at the meeting, many of whom had children who would bear the brunt of grandfathering policy decisions, felt they weren't being heard and wanted to weigh in on the task force's discussion. But in reality, Lambert said, it was parents insisting on policies that best suit their children rather than any larger constituency.

"It was ostensibly representatives from these interest groups, but what it devolved into was individuals advocating for their own personal interests and own personal needs," he said.

Board members did not take a vote at the May 3 meeting, but did suggest softening the approach to grandfathering. Trustees suggested that families zoned for Slater could be subject to harsher restrictions because they are benefiting from a brand new neighborhood school, or that kids attending schools

with plenty of room — like Theuerkauf, Monta Loma and Castro elementary schools — could be allowed to stay for an extended period without putting pressure on facilities space.

Lambert said the district needs to be fair with everyone, and said making exceptions for one group or one region of the city means exceptions for everyone — perpetuating the uneven enrollment problem for years to come. He estimated that rented portable classrooms, at about \$25,000 per classroom per year, mean delays on implementing new boundaries could come out to \$2 million each year — close to three times the amount of money raised by the Mountain View Education Foundation.

Although the task force had made significant progress, Lambert said the April 24 meeting was counterproductive, and that he's not surprised that Rudolph decided to pull the plug on grandfathering and hand the political hot potato directly to the board.

"We were definitely getting there until this last meeting, until you had the individuals come in and advocate," he said. "It undermined the objectivity of the task force."

Although 637 currently enrolled students may be moved due to the boundary changes, that number represents the high mark for how many children would be affected. If the school board decides to allow families to freely send their children to any campus where space is available, similar to the open enrollment process in place today, the free-flow of students out of neighborhoods could bring the number of forced moves way down. If the board ends or severely limits intradistrict transfers, then it's possible that one-fourth of the elementary school-age students in the district will face displacement.

The school board is expected to make a final decision on grandfathering and transfer policies on June 14. ■

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

O'MALLEY'S

► Continued from page 5

attorney John Kevin Crowley said. "There's a lot of information that's been presented that is inaccurate, mistaken and adversarial to O'Malley's."

One point of contention was over the bar's live entertainment. To limit noise, the city restricts the bar to host live acts only on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Police officials say the bar has clearly been flouting these rules, and they pointed to

advertisements from last year promoting comedy shows every Tuesday night at the bar. O'Sullivan insisted that a free comedy act should not be considered entertainment.

"This is freedom of speech ... this is a local artist who performs free of charge," he said. "If a political campaigner came in and made a speech, would that be considered live entertainment?"

With minimal discussion, the City Council signaled they were going with the staff recommendation to scale back O'Malley's

permit. The changes would force the bar to remove its outdoor patio, which should resolve most of the complaints, according to staff.

"I'm always cautious about zapping someone's business ... but I can't find any compelling reason not to adopt the resolution," said Councilman John McAlister. "There's enough here to awaken (O'Malley's) to follow the rules."

The council voted 6-0 to reject the appeal with Councilman Ken Rosenberg absent. ■

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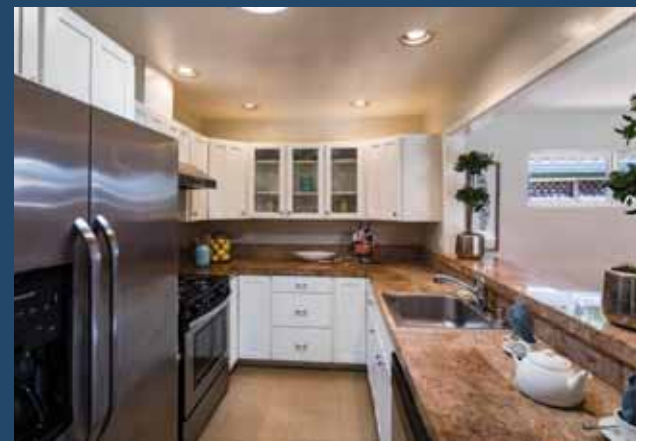
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As recall vote nears, judge defends his record

AARON PERSKY SPEAKS OUT ABOUT JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE, SENTENCING FIRST-TIME OFFENDERS

By Elena Kadvany

It was almost three years ago that Judge Aaron Persky handed down his highest-profile sentence in a windowless Palo Alto courtroom.

The six months in jail that he gave to former Stanford University student Brock Turner, who had been convicted of sexually assaulting an unconscious and intoxicated young woman on campus the year prior, set off a firestorm of public outrage so strong that he is now facing a recall election on June 5. His opponents argue he has demonstrated pattern of bias against women in sexual and physical violence cases. His supporters say Persky followed the letter of the law in those cases and contend that the recall, if successful, will do irreparable damage to judicial independence.

As a sitting judge, Persky is barred from publicly commenting on open cases he presided over or on the recall itself. After launching his official retain campaign in 2016, he released a short statement but has otherwise declined to speak publicly. (Behind the scenes, Persky has tried through legal means to block the recall; his third attempt was denied by the California Supreme Court last week.)

But now, with less than a month left until election day, he is venturing back into the

public eye to make a final plea to voters. He is granting media interviews for the first time and holding a 30-minute press conference in Palo Alto today, May 8.

In an interview with the *Voice's* sister paper, the Palo Alto Weekly, on Friday, Persky argued that the recall will set a dangerous precedent for judges, who pledge to make decisions independent of public opinion.

"I trust that my colleagues on the bench will keep their promise, their oath," he said. "But ... will Jane Q Public, looking at what's happened to Judge Persky, think, 'OK, (in) the next tough sexual-assault sentencing, is this judge going to be able to step into that case and completely tune out what's going on around her?'"

"We're required under the code of judicial ethics to promote public confidence in the judiciary," he continued. "I think the recall will shake that confidence and that's why I'm against it."

Persky said that while he doesn't dispute the right to recall a judge — a relatively rare provision in existence in just nine states — he believes recalls based on the decisions a judge has rendered are inappropriate.

"Substantively I think that recalls are appropriate where judges are either incompetent or commit misconduct, but when recalls are based on judges'

decision making, I think that is a step too far," Persky said. "It really runs the risk of putting judges out there in the political arena and making them subject to that type of political pressure."

Persky pointed to a 2015 study of social science research by the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law that found that proximity to re-election made judges more likely to impose harsher and longer sentences.

Persky supports eliminating the judicial recall provision in California, arguing that there are already well-established systems to hold judges accountable for misconduct: the appellate process and the state's Commission on Judicial Independence, an independent body charged with investigating complaints against judges and disciplining them.

In response to thousands of complaints and a petition with close to one million signatures, the commission investigated Persky but ruled that the judge did not abuse his authority nor exhibit bias in the Turner sentencing or in five other cases that the recall campaign asserts show a "pattern" of bias. In its ruling, the commission pointed to other judges who have been disciplined for misconduct as being in "stark contrast" to Persky, including a judge who referred to a rape victim as a



Judge Aaron Persky

"horse's ass." The recall campaign contends the commission's ruling was based in part on factual inaccuracies.

Persky also criticized the process by which recalls are put on the ballot, saying it is too easy for a well-funded campaign to gather the needed signatures to qualify the measure by paying signature gatherers. The recall campaign gathered close to 100,000 signatures, far beyond the 58,634 valid signatures required. The campaign spent about \$350,000 to \$400,000 on the signature-gathering effort, according to chair Michele Dauber.

"To get 90,000-plus signatures on a volunteer-only campaign is a truly Herculean task," Persky said. "To raise enough money to get a signature gathering company to round up the itinerant signature gatherers to come to Santa Clara County is not as Herculean."

The recall campaign has raised \$1.2 million, according to Dauber.

Persky's campaign has raised about \$271,000 since January 2017, according to his campaign finance reports, plus more than \$350,000 in legal services from San Jose law firm McManis Faulkner. The separate "No Recall" campaign, recently formed by a group of Persky's local supporters, raised about \$137,400 in the first four months of 2018, plus close to \$100,000 to date this year from a single individual for consulting, advertising and other services, according to finance reports.

Persky's career

Persky, a graduate of Stanford University and Berkeley Law, was a criminal prosecutor in the the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office before he became a judge in 2003. His time on the bench has been varied, from overseeing general misdemeanors and drug court to family court and civil trials. From 2003 until 2008, he worked as a criminal judge

before moving to a three-year assignment in family court. In 2011 he moved to civil trials and then probate court.

He arrived in Palo Alto in January 2015 to hear criminal cases, the same month that Turner was arrested for sexual assault. After an onslaught of criticism for his decision in that case, including jurors reportedly refusing to serve on a separate trial in his courtroom, Persky requested to be reassigned to civil cases in August 2016.

Persky estimated that he presided over at least 1,000 cases during his time in Palo Alto, with about 30 cases on different calendars for drug or sexual offenses, for example, rotating every few weeks.

Persky is now working from home as a night judge, a position he volunteered for due to the climate around the recall campaign.

Persky's sentencing philosophy

Persky described his sentencing philosophy for first-time offenders, like Turner, as bending toward rehabilitation, within the rule of law.

"Having been a DA and then having been a judge for a while and seen a number of criminal cases, you get to the point where you think, 'OK, how do we stop this person from coming back?' because you see violations of probation and you just see people coming back over and over and over again," Persky said.

Persky's supporters have argued that in several of the sentences cited by the recall campaign, he properly applied the law and followed the recommendations of the Santa Clara County Probation Department.

In fact, Persky told the Weekly, the leeway that a judge has in sentencing is not large. The vast majority of cases in the criminal justice system are resolved through plea bargains between the prosecution and defense as they negotiate a plea to a lesser or fewer charges. Judges are "supposed to respect that bargaining process," Persky said, and it's rare for a judge to object to a plea deal on his or her own accord.

Judges have the most sentencing discretion in jury trials, he said, when they have heard the full scope of the evidence.

"That's really the true measure of the judge's discretion: post-jury trial," Persky said.

If voters approve the recall, Persky will be replaced by one of two candidates who are also on the June 5 ballot: Santa Clara County Assistant District Attorney Cindy Hendrickson or civil attorney Angela Storey.

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Peninsula leaders split over transportation measure

By Gennady Sheyner

Few would dispute that the Bay Area urgently needs relief from the traffic jams plaguing area bridges, highways and expressways.

But reasonable people are finding much to disagree about when it comes to Regional Measure 3 (RM3), a proposal to raise \$4.5 billion for transportation improvements by raising tolls at seven Bay Area bridges by \$3 over the next six years, up to \$8. If approved by the voters of nine counties, including San Mateo and Santa Clara, RM3 would fund 35 capital projects — among them the extension of Caltrain to downtown San Francisco, expansion of BART to San Jose and Santa Clara and new express lanes, buses and ferries throughout the chronically congested region.

The measure, which originated as state Sen. Jim Beall's Senate Bill 595, has plenty of local champions, including Palo Alto Mayor Liz Kniss, state Sen. Jerry Hill and state Assemblyman Marc Berman, all of whom see it as a sorely needed investment in the region's transportation system.

Yet the measure also has some prominent Democratic detractors, including Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian and Mountain View Mayor Lenny Siegel. Simitian sees the measure as too punitive toward Bay Area drivers, noting that the toll hike could cost a regular bridge commuter an additional \$750 annually. For Siegel, the measure doesn't go far enough in addressing congestion on the Midpeninsula, particularly around the Highway 85 corridor.

If approved, RM3 would authorize three \$1 increases at the seven state-owned toll bridges: Antioch, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez, Dumbarton, Richmond-San Rafael, San Mateo-Hayward and the Bay Bridge (the Golden Gate is operated by its own district), which would kick in on Jan. 1, 2019, on Jan. 1, 2022 and on Jan. 1, 2025. The series of increases would ultimately raise the bridge tolls from \$5 to \$8, with discounts for those commuters who cross more than one bridge during their commutes.

The regional measure has two precedents: an 1988 measure that standardized fees at state bridges at \$1 and that funded, among other things, a replacement span for the Carquinez Bridge, the new Benicia-Martinez Bridge and the widening of the San Mateo-Hayward



Bridge; and a 2004 measure that added another \$1 to the toll and funded 36 projects, including light rail in San Francisco, improvements to Interstate 80, a seismic retrofit of BART and various bike, pedestrian and transit services in all nine Bay Area counties.

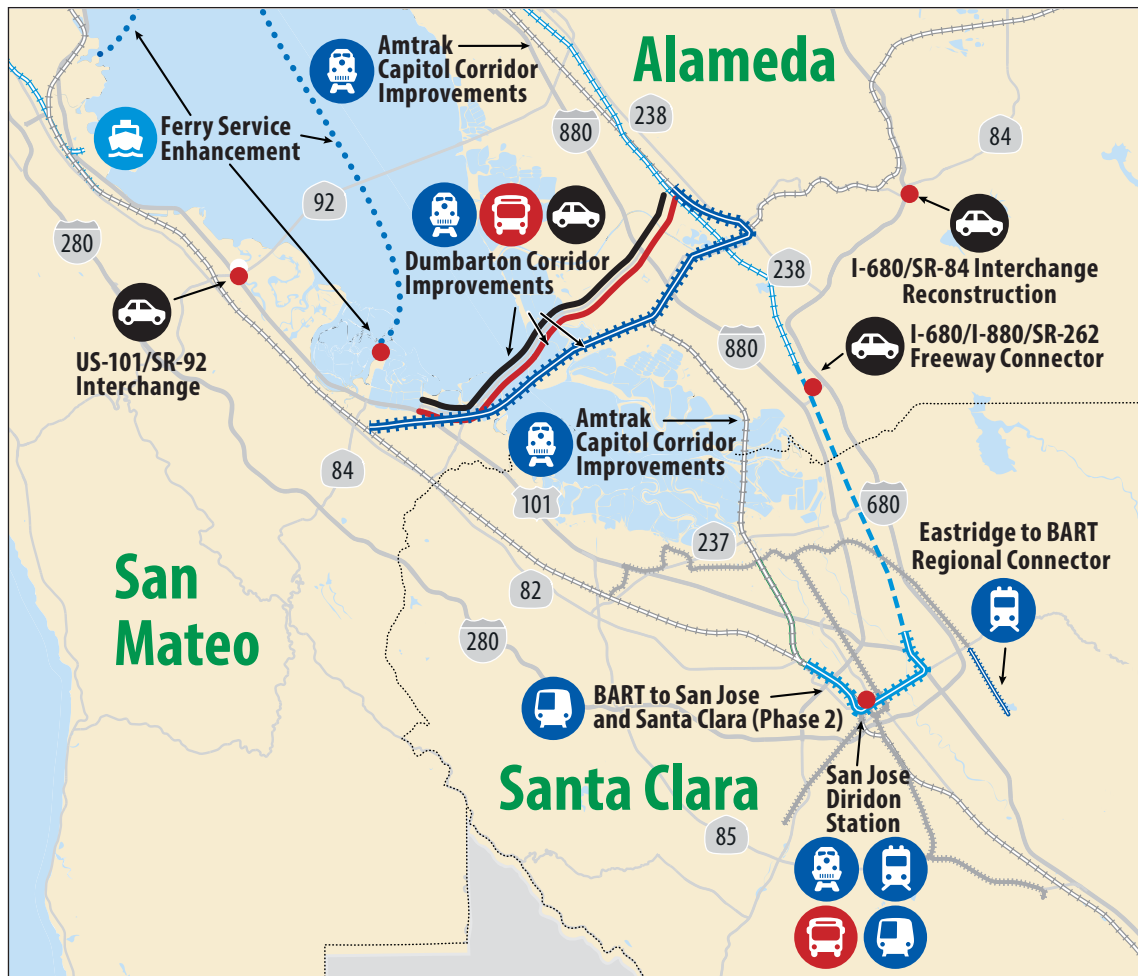
In addition to these tolls, the state Legislature approved a pair of \$1 increases in 1997 and 2007 and the Bay Area Toll Authority added another \$1 in 2010. These hikes were used to seismically retrofit the bridges and complete the placement of the Bay Bridge's East Span, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

But while each of the prior two regional measures called for a \$1 toll increase, the latest proposal would authorize three such hikes. For some critics of RM3, including Simitian, this is too big of an ask. He noted that a \$3 toll increase for the daily commuter translates to an extra \$15 per week and over the course of a year, more than \$750 extra.

"That's pretty steep, and it's regressive, and it hits people who don't have choices, many of whom live in the East Bay and are trying to get to work in San Francisco or in Silicon Valley," Simitian said. "They certainly don't have the option to move here given what our rents and mortgages are, and transit options are still limited and imperfect at best."

Supporters of RM3 counter that while bridge commuters, like much of the population, understandably dislike toll hikes, most of them hate traffic even more. RM3 would combat congestion by funding 35 projects, many of which cross county lines. In the Midpeninsula area, this includes \$130 million for Dumbarton Corridor improvements — which could result in added bus service across the bridge, bus-only lanes on Bayfront Expressway, an Amtrak extension to Redwood City, and improved BART connections in the East Bay, among other potential projects; and \$50 million for ramp improvements at the U.S. Highway 101 and State Route 92 interchange. (The exact projects that would be funded have not been decided upon.)

Carl Guardino, president of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, pointed to a poll conducted by the Metropolitan



SOURCE: METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Regional Measure 3 would fund these nine capital projects, costing about \$985 million if approved by voters in nine counties on June 5. An additional 26 capital projects, plus some operating expenses, are included in the \$4.45 billion measure.

Transportation Commission that showed more than 60 percent of voters at each income level who were surveyed support the measure. Among poll participants, RM3 received support from 61 percent of those making less than \$50,000 a year; from 63 percent of those making between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per year; and from 64 percent of those making more than \$100,000.

Guardino didn't dispute Simitian's characterization of the measure as "regressive" but noted that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission has tried to offset that by giving 50 percent discounts to drivers who cross two state-owned bridge (which would largely apply to Solano County commuters). The organization is also in the process of developing a program to reduce transit fares by 30 to 50 percent for low-income individuals.

Guardino, whose group is advocating for RM3's passage, said the \$4.5 billion is a crucial tier in a layer-cake of funding sources that also includes county, state and federal (admittedly, the last of these is now crumbling). On the county level, voters of Santa Clara County approved in 2016 a sales-tax increase that is expected to bring in \$6.3 billion over the

next 30 years.

And Sacramento lawmakers helped address the state layer last year, when they passed Senate Bill 1, a transportation bill that includes more than \$50 billion for transportation improvements.

The state bill is a critical revenue source, said Guardino, who also serves on the California Transportation Commission, which is charged with allocating SB1 money for transit improvements, highway upgrades and other transportation projects. Just last week, the commission recommended allocating \$253.2 million from SB1 to create toll lanes, known as "express lanes" or "managed lanes," on U.S. Highway 101 in San Mateo County, between Interstate 380 and Redwood City.

But the SB1 funds fall well short of what's needed to solve the Bay Area's transportation problems, Guardino said. RM3 supplements these funds by focusing on projects that "almost entirely cross county lines," he said.

"We're all sensitive to taxes and fees, but if we don't do it in a way that's driven by usage, how else are we going to fund these improvements that cross county lines and that we can't capture in countywide and city measures?" Guardino said.

Local politicians divided

Jerry Hill said he decided to support the bill because he approved of the way the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) developed its list of projects — through its staff. He said he made it clear to the agency that he doesn't want to see politics involved in the decision making, with commissioners trying to get the most for their particular cities.

"We wanted MTC staff to independently develop what would be the best use of funds in the region and each county," Hill said. "These are not politically motivated; they are the ones most ready to build. Best bang for the buck; not best for a certain area."

But from Siegel's perspective, the commission's failure to get feedback from his city and others in the area is one of the reasons he does not support RM3.

Siegel, who serves on the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA's) Policy Advisory Committee, said he was surprised that his committee — which includes local officials from cities throughout the county — never had a chance to offer its feedback on the list of projects. This, he said, was particularly strange given the

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WOMEN'S DAY

► Continued from page 1

but still essential roles.

National statistics shows that the trend isn't unique to Mountain View, with 2014 data showing that women make up only 11.9 percent of the 627,949 sworn officers in the United States, but make up 60 percent of the non-sworn, civilian jobs in law enforcement.

The unfortunate reality is that, historically, there haven't been a lot of female role models in law enforcement, said Captain Jessica Nowaski, now 23 years into her career. She said inspiring young women and girls means they need to be able to put a female face to the positive aspects of police activity, which is what the event and the department's hashtag, #SeeStrongBeStrong, is intended to convey.

"I want my daughter to be able to see these amazing women that I work with and feel empowered by them," Nowaski said.

Officers who regularly interact with the public throughout the city are overwhelmingly male, leaving it up to people like Rodshetta Smith, school resource officer for the Mountain View Police Department, to break down those stereotypes. Just interacting with kids on campus every day, she said, can be an eye-opening

experience for teens and young children, running contrary to the way society has promoted certain genders in careers.

"Sometimes I get boys who say 'I didn't know a woman can be a police officer,'" Smith said.

The idea for the event was originally proposed by Police Chief Max Bosel, Nowaski said, but he quickly backed away and let the women of the department spearhead the effort. Women in the Mountain View Fire Department will also have a presence at the event, in uniform, to promote careers in public safety.

"It's not so much about showing off law enforcement — that's not what the day is about. It's showing young people, young women, that you can chart the course for your career," she said.

More than a dozen staff members in the department have been planning the event for months, striking a balance between fun community activities and recruitment for anyone interested in a career in law enforcement. The wide range of booths will include everything from nutrition and arts and crafts activities, like T-shirt design and making Mother's Day cards, to crime scene investigation and a table for the SWAT team and its gear.

Attendees interested in joining the police department will

be able to break off for a formal recruitment presentation in the department's auditorium during the event.

The event is also doubling as a chance to clean up the department's image, showing Mountain View residents how the department's services go well beyond arrests, traffic stops and negative contact, said Amber Wilson, a records specialist with the department. Many of the women in the department serve a myriad of roles assisting the community, and are often the first faces people see when seeking permits, reporting a crime, dropping by for fingerprints or requesting records.

All aspects of the department will be represented, said Community Services Officer Jodie Pierce, who said the spotlight will be on women from just about every facet of public service.

"It's about reaching out to the next generation of women to let them know they can do anything they put their mind to," Pierce said. "Despite it being a male-dominated workforce, it's something they are definitely able to do."

The event will be hosted outside of the Mountain View Police Department headquarters at 1000 Villa St. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 12. ▀

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

RM 3

► Continued from page 15

recent Measure B process, in which north county and west valley cities came together to extract some improvements for their regions — most notably, for Palo Alto, Mountain View and Sunnyvale, a \$700 million allocation for grade separations along the Caltrain corridor.

Siegel said his constituents are particularly concerned about the congested State Route 237 corridor, which includes a light-rail system parallel to the highway. Not many people take the rail system today because the trains take too long to get to Mountain View, he said. But there is a plan currently in place to extend the light-rail network and to offer a direct connection from Milpitas to Mountain View.

Siegel said he would have liked to see the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's list include light-rail improvements — including express trains — on the list of 35 projects.

"If we really want to make it easier for people to get to work in Silicon Valley, it should've been on the list," Siegel said.

Liz Kniss, who as a county supervisor served on the VTA board before she was re-elected

to the Palo Alto council in 2012, reached a different conclusion. Kniss said she likes the fact that the measure includes funding for traffic-relief on 101 and for improving the Dumbarton Corridor, which she said has been a "perennial headache."

In addition, she noted that the bridge tolls — while an imperfect mechanism — are unlikely to have a significant impact on Palo Alto, where residents don't take as many bridges as their counterparts in the East Bay and North Bay. Simitian sees this as an unfair burden for bridge commuters, who he noted are being asked to pay for traffic improvements that, in many cases, benefit people elsewhere.

"I want to take the regional view, but the burden is not being shared regionally," Simitian said.

But for Kniss, the fact that her constituents won't be burdened too much by the toll hikes is a good thing.

"It probably brings money into our region for a good traffic-management purpose and, at the same time, probably a lot of people in our county are not going to be paying this on a regular basis," Kniss said.

Email Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@pawebly.com



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Theater Review

'Slices' of life

PEAR THEATRE EVENT SHOWCASES ORIGINAL SHORT PLAYS

By John Orr

The Pear Theatre drew a packed house for the May 4 opening night of "Pear Slices 2018," in which the best of eight new short plays featured the existential philosophizing of three hot dogs endlessly rotating in a convenience store broiler.

In Paul Braverman's 12-minute delight of a play, "Stuck in the Middle," the title hot dog, played by Ariel Aronica, is worried because she can't complete a full rotation — her spindle is stuck, so she keeps turning to the right, then snaps back to face the audience.

The hot dog on her right, played by Kyle Smith, "Sure seems to know a lot about spirituality," as he mounds on about being chosen by "The Tongs of God," and being taken to spend eternity on a bed of dough.

The hot dog on the left, played by Matt Brown, spends a lot of time reading, because every rotation he gets to see covers of newspapers and magazines across the aisle from him. He's worried about getting swallowed in a big, dark hole.

Hot dog on the right only gets to see the corn dogs, and he

doesn't trust them at all.

It's funny, it's clever, and it does what any good short play (or short story) should do: It gets in, grabs attention with something moving or something funny, makes its point, and gets out.

Surrounded by the Googleplex, the Computer History Museum, Microsoft and other big-deal tech companies, some of the Pear Playwrights Guild seemed to have the crush of the brave new world on their minds.

In Leah Halper's "Walk the Plank," a child's pirate-themed birthday party is disturbed when one of the adult neighbors — a systems engineer — tells the hostess, a pediatrician, that her job is being phased out in favor of a computer program and doctors in faraway places.

Couldn't happen? Sure it could. The pediatrician protests that a child needs the care of a doctor on the spot, but the systems engineer says nurses can take that role, until they, too, are phased out.

Alyssa Lupo-Zulueta was chilling as the systems engineer; Nicole Martin was appropriately angry and threatening as the shocked pediatrician; Brown was her husband, the nice-guy nurse.



COURTESY OF MICHAEL CRAIG/PEAR THEATRE

Bill C. Jones, left, Kyle Smith, and Nicole Martin in Evan Kokkila-Schumacher's Old West comedy, "Duelin' for Keeps."

Not as scary, but funnier, was "Housemaster 3000," by Ross Peter Nelson, wherein Aronica, as Jessie, tries to get an advanced version of something like Alexa to give her a cup of coffee.

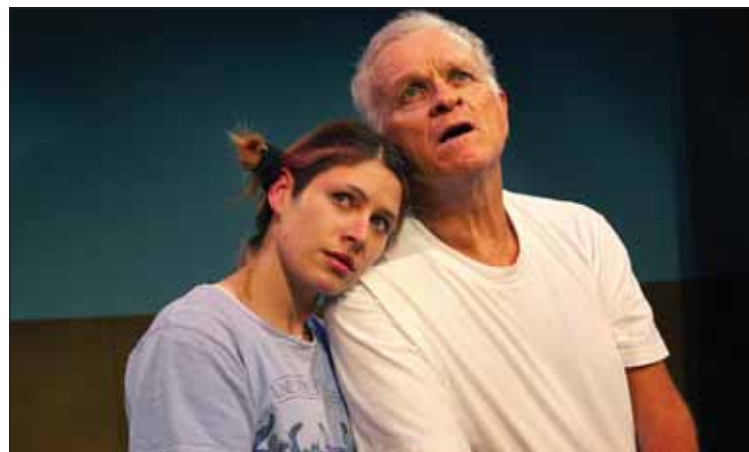
Jessie just spent the night with Cameron, played offstage by Brown. His digital home assistant, bit by bit, gives Jessie an idea of how many other "guests" Cameron has had, that Cameron expects her to pay for her coffee — and other information that eventually leads Jessie to escape. Very funny.

Another, more subtle but serious story is "An Afternoon Tango," by Barbara Anderson, wherein Lupo-Zulueta is an elegant woman sitting alone in an al fresco cafe when an oblivious young couple asks to sit with her. Martin and Smith talk about how they had to leave the city and move to the suburbs because they were so tired of seeing all the homeless people. "These people don't have pride," they say.

They offer her some of their chardonnay — it was a bargain, they say, only \$40 a bottle. She accepts, and listens to them babble in their selfish, clueless way. Including about the homeless person's shopping cart they get in a corner.

The point of this short play is evident early on, but is delicately delivered, nonetheless.

The longest play of the set, at 19 minutes, is "Eagles in Heaven," by Barry Slater. It's about a grandfather who is out on what he wants to be his last camping trip with his granddaughter. Bill C. Jones is very good as the old man, funny and touching, and Aronica is excellent as Becky the granddaughter. Grandpa misses his late wife, and Becky misses her absent father.



COURTESY OF MICHAEL CRAIG/PEAR THEATRE

Ariel Aronica and Bill C. Jones, in "Eagles in Heaven" by Barry Slater.



COURTESY OF MICHAEL CRAIG/PEAR THEATRE

Kyle Smith, left, Matt Brown, right, and Ariel Aronica play convenience-store hot dogs contemplating weighty issues in Paul Braverman's "Stuck in the Middle." The short play is part of Pear Slices 2018, which runs through May 20.

Jones is less effective in "A Mind Full of Venom," by Bridgette Dutta Portman, about a meeting between Galileo and a Vatican reactionary. It's a 13-minute look at how church leaders freaked out when Galileo told them the earth was not the center of the universe. Jones has some kind of Western accent, and speaks way too softly in this role, which is not good. Smith is stronger as the church guy.

Jones is great, along with Smith and Martin, in "Duelin' for Keeps" by Evan Kokkila-Schumacher, which is about as silly as a rootin'-tootin' Western story can get.

Jones is a trigger-happy Westerner who is serious about being a gun slinger. Smith uses language elegantly — it's very hot, and he can't stop "glistening." Hilarious. And, he can't stand Jones' use of double negatives, which leads to lots of gun play. It's a fun ending to the set.

The penultimate play is "Helping Out Mrs. G," by Steve Koppman, a kind of slice-of-life story about a teenager (Brown) who helps his friend's mother (Lupo-Zulueta) with a few household repairs.

Lupo-Zulueta is quite moving in the 16-minute play, as she revisits a sadness of her youth while showing the boy some family photos. The boy seems to learn something in the encounter; maybe she did, too.

Directed by Robyn Ginsburg Braverman and Troy Johnson, with minimal costume and set changes, the plays run along fairly quickly, with only about a minute between them.

"Pear Slices" has become very popular among Pear regulars over its 15-year-history, and if opening night was any sign, it would be good to get tickets right away.

Email John Orr at johnorr@regardingarts.com.

■ INFORMATION

What: "Pear Slices 2018"
Where: The Pear Theatre, 1110 La Avenida St., Mountain View
Running time: 139 minutes, one intermission
When: Through May 20
Cost: \$10-\$35
Info: Go to thepear.org, or call 650-254-1148.

Viewpoint

- EDITORIAL
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MountainView
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■ EDITORIAL
THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

No on Regional Measure 3

BALLOT MEASURE TO INCREASE BRIDGE TOLLS BY \$3 OVER NEXT SIX YEARS IS TOO MUCH

When Bay Area cities, especially San Francisco and those on the Peninsula, approve massive additional office development without housing to accommodate all the new workers, the natural result is longer commutes and unbearable traffic.

That is why Bay Area corporate leaders, state legislators and regional and local officials keep turning to voters for money to add highway lanes, extend BART to downtown San Jose, extend Caltrain to downtown San Francisco, improve bus service, and implement other measures to address transportation problems.

Santa Clara County voters have been especially responsive. In 2016, they approved a half-cent increase in the county sales tax for transportation projects that will generate an estimated \$6.5 billion over the next 30 years. Along with previous sales tax hikes that are still in effect, county consumers are currently paying 9.25 percent in sales tax, with 1.625 percent dedicated to transportation improvement projects in Santa Clara County (the bulk of which is dedicated to extending BART to San Jose.)

At the same time these sales taxes are collecting billions of dollars, a statewide 12 cent-per-gallon increase in the gas tax was implemented by the state Legislature last November for transportation projects. That tax will increase by another 5.6 cents next year and will be indexed to the consumer price index starting in 2020.

Now along comes Regional Measure 3, which asks voters in nine Bay Area counties to approve three successive \$1 increases in bridge tolls on all Bay Area bridges except the Golden Gate Bridge. The new tolls will increase tolls from the current \$5 to \$8 by 2025, and will thereafter be increased with the rise of the Consumer Price Index. The new tolls are expected to generate about \$4.5 billion for transportation capital projects throughout the Bay Area. To pass, a majority of voters in each county must vote to approve the measure.

Supporters, which include major business groups and most Bay Area elected officials, consider toll increases to be a way other than tax increases to generate more funding for the 35 identified transportation improvements located in each of the nine counties.

The projects identified that could most directly impact the Midpeninsula are for improvements to the Dumbarton Bridge "corridor," which would receive \$130 million. These could include improved bus service, bus-only lanes on the Bayfront Expressway in Menlo Park and new connecting bus service with Amtrak and BART in the East Bay. It would not fund improvements to the bridge itself.

We join with Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian in opposing Regional Measure 3.

Bridge tolls are a regressive tax that inappropriately target lower-paid service workers who can't afford housing on the

Peninsula (or in San Francisco) but commute here to jobs at restaurants, retail stores, schools, nursing homes and other non-tech small businesses. These commuters, who must pay for their gas and bridge tolls in after-tax dollars, will face the need to make an extra \$1,000 a year to pay, after taxes, just for the increase in bridge tolls.

Funding important regional transportation infrastructure projects should ideally come through state tax revenues, which are progressive in their distribution of the tax burden. That is exactly what was achieved with the passage of SB1 last year by the California Legislature, which will fund more than \$50 billion in transit improvements.

RM3's toll increases, along with the implementation of inflation escalators, ask for too much and attempt to leverage the public's frustration over bad traffic to disproportionately penalize bridge commuters, a small fraction of voters and therefore an easy target.

Bay Area business leaders and their advocacy organizations such as Silicon Valley Leadership Group need to work more on the root cause of our transportation problems — the continued approvals of new commercial development on the Peninsula without the housing needed to accommodate the employees. Until that becomes their priority, taxpayers will continue to be pressured to pay for transportation improvements that seek the impossible: the accommodation of the ever-increasing number of workers commuting long distances from affordable housing. ■

■ LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

END RENT CONTROL

At various times, I have been a renter, homeowner, and landlord in Mountain View. I'd like to correct an error about rent control recently published in the *Voice's* Viewpoint section. Despite what Yobs, Showalter, Rosenberg and Siegel say ("Don't sign the Measure V Too Costly petition," May 4), a 5 percent vacancy does not trigger an end to rent control; it only enables the Rent Control Committee to end rent control if it chooses to, and it might not, nobody knows!

For the business people who are the only ones who will ever truly solve the housing crisis by building and providing more housing, that's a huge problem because you can't base a business plan on the unpredictable whims of a government committee.

Further, much has been made of the fact that landlords rather than taxpayers are stuck with

the cost of operating the Rental Housing Committee, as if this were a good thing. Property owners aren't evil people; why should they pay to run a bureaucracy that harms their investments; disincentivizes maintenance, repairs and upgrade; and discourages new investors from providing housing?

Alas, whether or not the rent control bureaucracy is too expensive or too unpredictable probably isn't even the right question to ask. Instead, let's ask, "What can we do to eliminate rent control and its committee altogether?" When committees, rather than markets, try to "solve" problems caused by market forces, the results are usually perverse. I once heard of a millionaire who kept her rent-controlled apartment in San Francisco because "it was too cheap to give it up," even though she only stayed there a few weeks per year.

Obviously, her actions denied housing to others, but what's to stop this and other perverse outcomes from happening here too?

*Dave Fork
San Rafael Avenue*

SANJAY DAVE SHOULD RESIGN

The *Voice* reported that Sanjay Dave, a MVLA high school district trustee, stated that AP science classes are for the "most serious students" and expressed the belief that they would have to be "adapted" and standards would need to be lowered in order to include more minority students ("MVLA teachers condemn comments about minority students," April 27). Decades of research shows that ethnorracial minority students have unequal access to educational resources; Mr. Dave's views represent the institutional racism that

perpetuates these barriers to education access.

Mr. Dave's comments are also inconsistent with the district's policy about the education of ethnorracial minority students. Mr. Dave should immediately resign from the board. His views do not represent mere poor phrasing, they represent views that serve to perpetuate education inequity that sets up students up for a lifetime of disadvantage.

*Lynn C. Waelde
Doverton Square*

What's on your mind?

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