

# Mountain View VOICE

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MOVIES | 20



At the  
table  
WEEKEND | 17



MAGALI GAUTHIER

## RAISING THE BAR FOR LOCAL HOUSING

Like an Amish barn raising, dignitaries from the city and local nonprofits hoisted up the framed wall for Mountain View's newest affordable housing project. The construction being spearheaded by MidPen Housing will expand the Shorebreeze Apartments, located at 460 N. Shoreline Blvd. The 120 apartments, built nearly 40 years ago, are in desperate need of a fix-up. The MidPen project will renovate nearly all the old apartments as well as add 62 new rental units. The new housing will be reserved for those who meet income requirements and who live or work in Mountain View. Twenty apartments will be dedicated for those at risk of homelessness.

## County supervisors calls for federal assault weapons ban

By Kevin Forestieri

Santa Clara County's Board of Supervisors are calling for a nationwide ban on assault weapons, calling it a common sense action to curb gun violence in the wake of three recent mass shootings, including one that killed three people at the

Gilroy Garlic Festival.

The board unanimously passed a resolution Tuesday, Aug. 13, urging Congress to pass legislation banning assault weapons commonly used in mass shootings. The federal ban would target guns used in the six deadliest mass shootings in the U.S. over the last decade, weapons used to

kill more than 200 people and injure nearly 1,000, according to a memo penned by board President Joe Simitian and Supervisor Susan Ellenberg.

The call to action comes two weeks after a gunman opened fire at the Gilroy Garlic Festival,

► See **WEAPONS**, page 15

By Kevin Forestieri

A dispute between PG&E and a Mountain View homeowners' association means the new Jose Antonio Vargas Elementary School will open next week without power, causing an array of challenges that could last for months.

The fight between the utility company and the school's neighbor — the California Station Homeowners Association — has been going on for months, centered on PG&E's usage of a corner property for electrical utilities. The protracted dispute has forced the Mountain View Whisman School District to run Vargas on a backup gas generator, a costly compromise that has been a headache for staff planning to open for the first day of school on Monday, Aug. 19.

Perhaps the biggest problem is that the elevator in the two-story classroom building cannot be powered by the generator. That means the fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms on the second level are unusable for the foreseeable future, displacing teachers into pretty much all of the available space on the campus.

"The whole second floor is useless right now," said Superintendent Ayinde Rudolph.

The generator chugs along during the day, costing \$35,000 per month, and is shut off at 6 p.m.,

meaning food can't be stored overnight in the on-site cafeteria and custodians have to wrap up all the janitorial work before the power goes out. Teachers preparing for the school year have been forced to rely on a backup plan for using the copy machine and accessing the internet, and the district has tapped into bond funds to pay someone to act as 24/7 fire lookout while the fire alarm is without power.

The problem emerged over the summer as construction crews at the school, located at 220 N. Whisman Road, prepared for a power hookup using property across the street — an undeveloped wedge at the corner of Pacific Drive and Whisman Road. That property happens to be part of the nearby HOA, which has not agreed to PG&E's easement and has taken a firm stance to protect the interests of the homeowners against use of the corner property, Rudolph said.

Construction crews have already dug the trench leading up to the utility box and are awaiting permission from the HOA to proceed. District spokeswoman Shelly Hausman said PG&E already has an easement agreement to enter the property from the north side, and all it would take is a one-line

► See **SCHOOL POWER**, page 14

## Committee picks apart Mountain View's rent control law

By Mark Noack

Seeing a chance to rework rent control in the 2020 election, the city's Rental Housing Committee took an opportunity to spitball some ideas for improving the law.

At the Monday, Aug. 13, meeting, committee members expressed enthusiasm for an opportunity to fix various unforeseen problems that emerged from the 2016 law known as the Community Stabilization and Fair Rent Act

(CSFRA). But they also hinted at concern that the push to revise rent control could wind up throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Last month, the Mountain View City Council began preparations for a 2020 ballot measure

to amend the city's rent control program. Exactly what revisions they would make remains unclear, but council members have suggested they would like greater power over rent control policies, including the ability to amend the law's language. They

proposed streamlining the petition process, clarifying the law's murky status for mobile homes and possibly raising the annual cap on rents.

Some of these ideas elicited

► See **RENT CONTROL**, page 6

INSIDE

VIEWPOINT 16 | GOINGS ON 21 | REAL ESTATE 22

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# Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

Asked in downtown Mountain View. Photos and interviews by Nisha Malley.

*Do you think selling marijuana at concert venues should be allowed?*



"I don't really have a preference. I think it should be legal for the most part. As for concerts, maybe just (leave it) up to the venue. As long as they're following regulations."

**Michelle Hill**, Mountain View



"Yes. People will use it anyway."

**Roberta Browne**, Mountain View



"I would say probably no, just because even though in California it's legal and you can do it for recreational use, it still has some effect and people in concerts are already kind of rowdy. If you add marijuana, things can go out of control more quickly. ... Even though it's not allowed, people still find a way."

**Xochilth Aguila**, East Palo Alto



"Personally me, I don't mind because it's a fun place ... but maybe (others) don't want to smell it. I don't have a problem in fun places."

**Hamid Rajaei Rizi**, Campbell



"No, because people are more apt to do stupid stuff when they're already wired on alcohol. Being cross faded is a bad idea, and giving people the option to be on two substances at once legally is going to contribute a greater amount of alcohol and marijuana use."

**Alec Oslund**, Mountain View

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### ■ CRIME BRIEFS

#### TRESPASSING ARREST

A man accused of trespassing multiple times at an apartment complex on Crisanto Avenue was arrested last week, according to police.

Employees at the Park Plaza Apartment complex called police around noon on Tuesday, Aug. 6, after the alleged trespasser, identified as a 19-year-old transient man, was spotted within the complex. Officers found the man taking a shower near the complex's pool and arrested him on suspicion of trespassing, according to police spokeswoman Katie Nelson.

Employees at the complex reportedly asked the man multiple times not to enter the property, and police have been called in the past.

The police report does not state whether the man was among the numerous people living in RVs parked along Crisanto Avenue, Nelson said. Although he has relatives who apparently live in a vehicle, police could not confirm whether he lived there as well, she said.

—Kevin Forestieri

#### BACKYARD BBQ SPARKS FIRE

The residents of a Los Altos Hills home have been displaced after fire spread from a backyard barbecue to a garage and into the attic Monday, Aug. 12.

The Santa Clara County Fire Department was notified shortly after 5 p.m. about the fire at 11000 block of Arroyo Oaks Drive and arrived to find the garage on fire. Two residents who were home at the time had safely evacuated. The blaze was extinguished in about 30 minutes.

The department advises residents to always attend barbecues and keep them at least 10 feet away from a home or other combustible materials.

—Bay City News Service

### ■ POLICE LOG

#### AUTO BURGLARY

1100 block N. Rengstorff Av., 8/6  
1100 block N. Rengstorff Av., 8/7  
500 block W. Middlefield Rd., 8/8  
500 block W. Middlefield Rd., 8/8  
3100 block N. Shoreline Blvd., 8/12  
1000 block Mercy St., 8/12

#### GRAND THEFT

1 block Amphitheatre Pkwy., 8/6  
2100 block Showers Dr., 8/7  
700 block Continental Cir., 8/8  
800 block E. El Camino Real, 8/12  
900 block Castro St., 8/12

#### BATTERY

1300 block Pear Av., 8/9

#### CRIMINAL THREATS

100 block View St., 8/5

#### RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

100 block Whits Rd., 8/6  
2000 block W. El Camino Real, 8/12

### ■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

#### CITY APPOINTS NEW PARKS DIRECTOR

John Marchant, a 20-year City Hall veteran, has been appointed as Mountain View's new community services director, overseeing one of the city's largest departments, which covers parks, recreation and public events.

Marchant replaces former Community Services Director J.P. de la Montaigne, who retired earlier this year. Since then, Marchant has served as the department's interim director.

In a statement, Marchant said he looked forward to using his role to open more city parks in the coming years, and expanding programs at the newly reopened Community Center at

► See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 15

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MAGALI GAUTHIER

**Andrea Ochoa** dumps aluminum cans into a container in the Sunnyvale SMaRT Station's recycling sorting area on Aug. 12. The market for recyclables has dropped, making it harder for cities like Mountain View to meet the goals in zero waste initiatives.

## Mountain View moves toward greener future with zero waste goal

By Nisha Malley

The Mountain View City Council is preparing to adopt a zero-waste plan to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and landfill use, part of the city's goal to achieve a 90% landfill diversion rate by 2030.

The plan lists nearly 40 initiatives, categorized as short-, mid-, and long-term projects investing in the education of residents, improving disposal services for families, businesses

and schools, and environmental policy advocacy.

"Zero Waste is a holistic approach to managing the flow of resources through society," according to a June 11 staff report from the public works department. "(It) includes designing products and packaging to minimize waste, fostering producer and consumer responsibility, investing in recovery facilities, and building community collaboration."

The city projects diverting 28,000 tons from landfill

annually and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions to 37% below 2005 levels by 2030 and 80% below by 2050.

The program's known costs are expected to amount to \$389,000, but nearly half of the initiatives' prices are currently undetermined.

The public works department consulted with Abi and Associates, a firm that has worked with cities such as Los Angeles and Boston to draft similar zero

► See **ZERO WASTE**, page 10

## Staffing shake-up at Bullis Charter School

FOUNDING SUPERINTENDENT,  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR DEPART

By Kevin Forestieri

Bullis Charter School's board of directors quietly agreed over the summer to transition its longest serving administrator — founding superintendent Wanny Hersey — to a new position overseeing "strategic initiatives."

The change is part of a staffing shake-up that includes the hiring of a new interim superintendent on Aug. 5 and the departure of longtime administrator Jennifer Anderson-Rosse. A worldwide search is planned for a permanent replacement for Hersey, according to Bullis board president Joe Hurd.

In an email sent only to Bullis families and school community members on July 25, charter school officials announced that Hersey would be moving to a new role that would focus on ways to "share BCS' program locally, nationally and internationally," along with creating professional development opportunities for teachers. Hersey was picked to lead the charter school 16 years ago during the founding of Bullis, first as a principal and later as a superintendent.

"Wanny's work will be integral to the future of BCS, and she will continue to report to the BCS Board," according to the announcement. "Though Wanny will be transitioning out

of day-to-day school operations, we are thrilled she will still be helping the school in strategic and important ways."

Hersey's new job includes working with the Santa Clara County Office of Education and other nonspecific "multilateral" partners and sharing educational best practices developed by the charter school, Hurd said.

Replacing Hersey is Brian Köhn, who began his new role as interim superintendent for the 2019-20 school year on July 29. The plan is to launch the search for a permanent replacement for Hersey next month, according to Hurd.

The leadership changes appeared on the board of directors' Aug. 5 agenda, which included the approval of an interim superintendent contract and closed-session discussion on the founding superintendent. Speaking to the *Voice*, Hurd dismissed the need to formally make a public announcement about the changes, and said the people who need to know about the leadership changes already know.

"It's not a big deal to the community," he said. "You may want to make it into a big deal."

Though Hersey has led day-to-day operations at Bullis since its founding, Hurd said Bullis

► See **BULLIS**, page 11

## VTA board members support reforms after scathing grand jury report

By Mark Noack

If VTA board members can agree on one thing, it's that something needs to change.

A new VTA subcommittee began discussions on potential tweaks to the governing board that would improve effectiveness at the beleaguered agency at a meeting last Friday.

Overshadowing these talks was a scathing grand jury report released in June that called out VTA as one of the most inefficient transit agencies in the U.S. That report noted that operating costs had skyrocketed while ridership

was dwindling, yet the board seemed intent on expansion.

In particular, the report took aim at the county's light rail system, which it proposed dismantling entirely.

Much of the blame for these cost overruns was placed on the 12-member VTA board of directors. Among the problems, the grand jury members found the transit agency's board suffered from a lack of training, time and experience. The VTA board consists entirely of appointed elected leaders from city or county governments in Santa Clara County.

On Aug. 9, a recently

appointed VTA Board Enhancement Committee took up the grand jury report, and members discussed how to respond to the grand jury's conclusions. VTA board Chairwoman Teresa O'Neill proposed some kind of screening process before someone can join the VTA board. Appointees should know in advance what kind of commitment it would take, she said.

"We should be asking people 'Do you have the bandwidth?'" she said. "Can you spend 10 hours a month related to this board assignment?"

San Jose City Councilman

Chappie Jones suggested VTA staff needed to make it easier to digest complicated board packets, which routinely exceed 300 pages. Other committee members proposed some kind of boot camp orientation to bring new members up to speed.

It was clear that committee members had some specific individuals in mind when they discussed board members who lacked training or interest in VTA business, although they made it a point not to call out anyone by name. When he was a member of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, Ken Yeager missed five of VTA's

monthly board meetings just in 2018, according to the meeting minutes. County Supervisor Cindy Chavez, Morgan Hill Councilman Larry Carr and San Jose Councilman Johnny Khamis each skipped at least three board meetings over the last two years. Most VTA board seats have a designated alternate member to fill in if the regular appointee can't make a meeting, but this substitute is typically less familiar with the agency's operations.

But just looking at meeting attendance doesn't really

► See **GRAND JURY**, page 8

# Los Altos district kicks off the school year with budget cuts

TRUSTEES MAY CUT DOWN ON GROWING EXPENSES WITH MEASURE N BOND MONEY

By Kevin Forestieri

As schools start up this week following the dormant summer months, Los Altos School District's board of trustees will be ringing in the new school year with a round of spending cuts.

Employee wages and benefits are among the top reasons why expenses blew up by an additional \$890,000 since the 2019-20 budget was originally adopted in June, turning the previously balanced budget into \$100,000 in deficit spending, according to a district staff report.

The bad news comes despite higher-than-expected property tax growth that generated \$166,000 in extra money, and cuts made to professional development and new library and instructional materials.

Another round of spending cuts are planned at a future date, with a goal of bringing down annual spending by \$370,000.

The changes to the 2019-20 budget, reviewed and passed by

the board on Monday, Aug. 12, mark the latest update in a lengthy battle to keep the Los Altos School District solvent. The district's financial position has weakened over the years despite the strong local and state economy, with costs rising faster than revenue and more than \$8 million in deficit spending since 2014, according to a report by the district's Citizens' Advisory Committee on Finance.

The committee added that the lengthy economic recovery since 2011 is bound to turn into a recession at some point in the near future, which would make matters worse. Absent a plan to get the budget back on track, the report found the district's reserve fund could dry up by the 2021-22 school year without even a single pay raise for its employees.

The tight budget is caused by numerous factors, including the fact that a big portion of the district's funding — parcel tax revenue and contributions from the district's education foundation — is flat and doesn't rise

with increasing costs. Another worrying trend, according to the committee, is that the district is spending a growing portion of its budget on non-academic costs, repairing and maintaining aging classrooms and school facilities that haven't been updated in more than a decade.

The budget has been so tight that district teachers agreed in May to not receive a salary increase for the 2018-19 school year, which would have been mostly retroactive, foregoing the pay raise in exchange for a guaranteed 2.5% salary bump in the following 2019-20 school year. Classified employees agreed to a similar arrangement for a 2% pay raise, ratcheting up staffing costs by an annual \$897,200.

One of the solutions is to start using bond funds. Los Altos School District voters passed the \$150 million Measure N bond in 2014, which has sat dormant for years pending plans for a new school. The district's Budget Review Committee (BRC) recommended using \$10 million of the money for

upgrading and repairing aging facilities to replace deferred maintenance costs coming out of the annual operating budget. The recommendations also call for using \$2.8 million in bond money to pay off debts on capital leases, which will save \$800,000 in interest costs through 2029.

Outside of using money from Measure N, the committee recommended several small spending reductions for public relations and communications (\$25,000), school color copiers (\$75,000) and leaving vacant a technology specialist position (\$60,000), which could further bring down the district's costs. The BRC is also seeking to cut a virtual reality-based education program created by the local tech company zSpace for \$35,000 in annual savings.

Board member Bryan Johnson said he wanted some type of post mortem for why zSpace was getting axed, and whether it was because it was too expensive or somehow failed to meet expectations.

As of Monday night, it was clear

that the district may not be able to part ways with its tech specialist after all — at least not yet. Assistant Superintendent Randy Kenyon said the district has relied on having one staff member managing technology and providing tech support at each school, and that dissolving one of the positions likely means completely revamping the way the district handles its technology staffing.

"I would say right now this item is probably not going to happen," Kenyon said. "We're probably not going to be able to cut this position, at least not for this year."

Some of the BRC recommendations, like \$85,000 in cuts to professional development and \$50,000 in reduced spending on instructional materials, have already been wrapped into the adopted budget and saved the district \$150,000 this year. The full list of recommended cuts amount to \$370,000 in cuts to the district's operating budget, which district officials see as necessary following the pay raises for the 2019-20 school year. ■

## RENT CONTROL

► Continued from page 1

a little head-scratching at the Rental Housing Committee's meeting. While the council described rent control as too rigid and inflexible, the law actually had some degree of latitude baked into it, pointed out committee member Emily Ramos. The City Council members would benefit from learning a

little about the committee before they start changing its duties, she suggested.

"There's a feeling that the council doesn't really know what we do," Ramos said. "There's a lot of wiggle room where the Rental Housing Committee can adjust things as needed. That's important for the council to know."

Calls to fast-track the petition process could also be tricky. This process allows landlords

to request an additional rent increase beyond what is normally allowed if they can prove that they had to make essential repairs or maintenance to their apartments. Ever since the law passed, landlords have complained that the petition review was too cumbersome and required painstaking documentation of all bookkeeping.

For more than a year, the Rental Housing Committee has struggled to facilitate this process, and the new opportunity to rewrite the law didn't make it much easier. Across the board, the rental committee members favored a streamlined process, but they weren't so sure what kinds of petitions should be accelerated. The one exception: everyone agreed that petitions attached to residential seismic retrofits should be swiftly approved, especially if the city makes earthquake upgrades mandatory in the future.

Committee member Julian Pardo de Zela suggested severely reducing the burden of proof on all petitions. In turn, Chairman Matthew Grunewald proposed making petitions approved by default on the condition that the city could later audit any questionable claims.

"The system right now is too punitive, and I don't think that's inadvertent," Pardo de Zela said. "I don't see anything from this except making life miserable for landlords. We've tried one way, so maybe now the pendulum

should shift the other way."

A majority of the committee favored extending rental protections to mobile homes parks, a long-sought goal for mobile home residents. Last year, rental housing committee members demurred on including mobile homes because they believed the CSFRA was too vague, and it would spur a legal challenge. But if the city leaders were going to bring the law back to voters, then it made sense to specifically cover mobile homes, Grunewald said.

Several speakers also urged the city to consider looking again at the whether duplexes should be covered under the law. Residents pointed out that multiple duplex properties in Mountain View were operating just like apartments, but they were ineligible for rent control because of a technicality in the policy language.

Committee member Vanessa Honey was firmly against any expansion of rent control coverage, and instead she sought ideas that would limit the financial costs for landlords. She proposed a hard \$100 cap on the annual fees collected to fund the rental housing program, and she suggested some of that cost should fall on tenants.

Politically, the push to reform rent control seems destined to struggle at winning allies due to how polarized the issue has become. Tenant advocates have been wary that the city's

grab-bag approach to amending rent control would end up watering down the law to the detriment of renters. At a prior meeting, a City Council committee proposed raising the annual cap on rent increases, and giving city leaders some level of authority to change the law as they see fit.

"There's a lot of troubling parts of what's being recommended," said Alex Nunez, a Mountain View Tenants Coalition member. "This is not going to benefit tenants; this is just an opportunity to weaken protections in favor of landlords."

Landlords have been even more hostile in their reaction to the city's possible a ballot measure. With their own ballot initiative planned for 2020, landlord groups see the city's measure as unfair competition that could siphon off voters.

"The fact of the matter is the entirety of CSFRA should be repealed," said Curt Conroy, a Mountain View landlord who frequently spoken on the issue. "Proponents have little sense for what an affront this is to the free market. If they did, they would realize this is one more nail in the coffin for housing development."

The city will attempt the daunting task of trying to bridge those differences next week when they have scheduled a stakeholder outreach meeting. ■

Email Mark Noack at [mnoack@mv-voice.com](mailto:mnoack@mv-voice.com)

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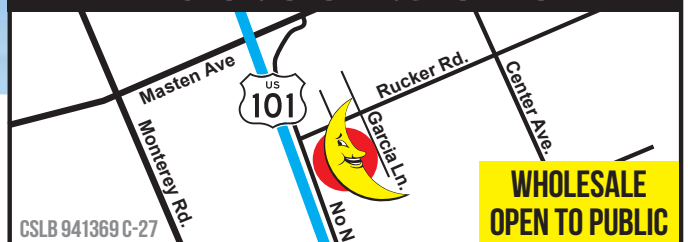
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## GRAND JURY

► Continued from page 5

convey the scope of the problem, said Mountain View Councilman John McAlister, who chairs the VTA Board Enhancement Committee. A subset of VTA members will routinely leave meetings early, barely participate in discussions and basically phone it in, he said.

"Some board members just sit there, and you can't tell if they're participating or not," he said. "VTA is only as good as the people who get appointed to its board."

O'Neill described it as a twin-headed problem. Professional politicians appointed to the VTA board from the county and San Jose have greater institutional knowledge and experience, but they are juggling a wide range of priorities, she said. Meanwhile, representatives from smaller cities are constantly being swapped out, making them less effective in the long run. For the most part, committee members agreed with the grand jury's findings that politics were at the core of VTA's dysfunction.

To fix this problem, the grand jury report proposed

restructuring the agency's governance by having VTA board members directly elected by voters. VTA officials are already planning to commission an independent study to evaluate its governing system and how it compares to other transit agencies.

In contrast to the proposed governance changes, VTA officials were more defensive toward their management of light rail service and its future expansion. The grand jury report implied that transit should operate like a business, and that was misleading, said Jim Lawson, VTA chief of external affairs. He blamed conservative think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute for spreading the idea that transit was too reliant on subsidies. By its very nature, mass transit requires public money and would never break even financially, he said.

"If you won't support transit because it costs taxpayers money, then you'll never do it," Lawson said. "It ain't easy to do without subsidies. The cost is a deliberate decision that taxpayers made."

His argument touched on the tight corner that the VTA board finds itself in when it

comes to light rail. During the 2000 election, voters approved a sales tax to pay for expanding light-rail service to East San Jose, San Jose International Airport and other areas.

Nearly 20 years later, VTA is almost ready to begin construction on a \$450 million line to the East San Jose even though ridership projections are pretty dismal. To the grand jury's criticism of East San Jose expansion, committee members kept their response concise: It was a voter-approved project, they noted.

Yet VTA officials say they are also on the hunt for new transit technologies that could be used to upgrade the aging light rail system. In particular, the transit agency is pinning its hopes that it can find what might be called a holy grail for transit: a cutting-edge system that can be built above roadways for a low cost. The agency's staff say they are currently preparing a request for proposals that should be ready by next month.

The full VTA board of director is expected to approve a final response to the county grand jury report by early September. ▣

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## ZERO WASTE

► Continued from page 5

waste plans, and stakeholders including interested residents, local businesses and members of the Environmental Sustainability Task Force to develop the plan. It also conducted a waste characterization study to assess the current disposal patterns of Mountain View residents.

It found that single-family residences placed the majority of recyclable and compostable materials into the correct cart. However, most households struggled to compost food and paper, with 78% and 88% of materials, respectively, landing in the trash.

With commercial businesses, 71% of materials placed in the trash were either compostable or recyclable.

Multifamily residents, such as apartment dwellers, account for 20% of Mountain View's waste stream and do not have access to composting services.

A mandatory participation ordinance would require all businesses and residents to recycle and compost under the zero waste plan, paired with outreach programs to provide training and, potentially, fines and penalties for those who don't.

The city also aims to expand

its existing pilot program, which has provided composting at five apartment complexes since last October, to the more than 600 complexes in Mountain View, according to Lori Topley, solid waste program manager.

Other proposed initiatives include increasing the price of plastic bags, supporting commercial and residential food donations, advocating for sustainable packaging and placing bans or fees on hard-to-recover materials.

Several initiatives seek to encourage material reuse by promoting reusable containers at stores and communal sharing and rental programs.

The plan comes at the heels of China's 2018 policy banning most plastic waste imports, resulting in soaring costs and limited options in the United States for recycling programs.

"Cities found themselves landfilling plastic products that previously had been sent to be recycled," said Bruce Karney, a member of the Environmental Sustainability Task Force and chairman of Carbon Free Mountain View.

On Aug. 5, the California recycling center chain RePlanet shut down, closing its 284 sites and laying off its entire workforce. The company cited increasing

operating costs and sinking prices for aluminum and plastics as reasons behind the decision.

According to Karney, members of the task force advised city officials to prioritize recycling materials locally. One long-term initiative in the zero waste plan proposes developing a recycling market within the community.

City departments would identify opportunities to buy reused, recycled or compostable content. In addition, the city would collaborate with state and national organizations to support eco-friendly businesses and nonprofits that manufacture products using reused or recycled content.

"A lot of the things we have later in the plan are collaborative," Topley said. "We can't just do them on our own."

The city will also soon have the opportunity to renegotiate its decadeslong landfill, collection and processing contracts, all of which expire in December 2021.

Mountain View sorts and processes its recycling and composting at the SMaRT Station in Sunnyvale. The remaining waste is sent to the Kirby Canyon Landfill in Morgan Hill.

"It's very difficult to site new landfills, so we want to preserve what little space we have left," Topley said. ▣

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**BULLIS**

► Continued from page 5

Charter School has had interim superintendents in the past. Hersey has gone on sabbatical for as long as 18 months.

Anderson-Rosse, who worked at Bullis as a teacher for five years before becoming an administrator in 2014, also appears to have exited her role at the charter school. Although still listed as staff on Bullis' website, her LinkedIn profile shows she began a new job as a curriculum and instruction specialist for the South San Francisco Unified School District last month.

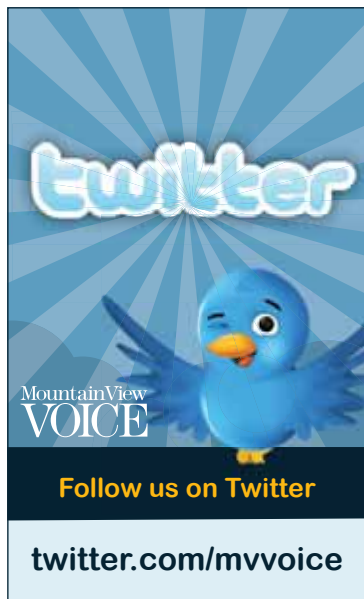
Anderson-Rosse spearheaded an effort earlier this year to create Bullis Mountain View, a second and mostly separate school from Bullis Charter School that sought to open a campus in the Mountain View Whisman School District. In early 2019, Anderson-Rosse told the *Voice* that most of her time was spent on the creation of the school rather than her administrative role at Bullis Charter School.

Bullis Mountain View's charter petition was approved by the Mountain View Whisman School District's board of trustees, but was later revoked before the school was scheduled to open its doors this month.

When asked about Anderson-Rosse's employment at Bullis Charter School, Hurd was cryptic, telling the *Voice* that her contract had expired but she had not been replaced.

Bullis Charter School, which is housed on public school campuses in Los Altos, serves students throughout Santa Clara County, with priority enrollment granted to students residing in the Los Altos School District. The district's sprawling boundaries encompass Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, a portion of Mountain View and a small part of Cupertino. ■


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## SCHOOL POWER

► Continued from page 1

addendum to the existing agreement between the two parties to hook up utility from the south side. To date, the HOA has declined.

With the next-best location also encroaching on the HOA's property, Rudolph said there's no good alternative, leaving the district scrambling to get the homeowners to acquiesce. School board members, district staff, the district's construction manager and PG&E have all tried over the last month to get power hooked up by the first day of school, but to no avail, Rudolph said.

"We're back on the phone with them saying these kids are coming from your community, and that we're putting in a traffic light," Rudolph said. "They still refuse to budge."

California Station HOA president Shirley Sutton told the *Voice* in an email that the HOA shares the district's concern that Vargas Elementary School won't have power when it opens next week, and that the HOA leadership continues to work toward an agreement. But she said it hasn't been easy working with PG&E, which notified the HOA

representatives in late June to say that they had a role to play in getting power to the campus.

The area appears torn up, with caution tape and a trench covered in plywood, because PG&E contractors started hooking up power on the property without permission or an easement agreement, Sutton said. On top of that, she said HOA leaders were left in the dark on what exactly the utility company wanted to install at the corner until just last week. Taken altogether, she said it feels like PG&E expected to be given full control of the corner without objection.

"PG&E wants us to sign an easement agreement that, once signed, would give PG&E unlimited access to our property, to build whatever it wants at any future time, any time they say they need it, and without any accountability on their part," Sutton said.

The HOA has provided PG&E with multiple "draft" easement agreements aiming for compromise, Sutton said, including provisions that would require the company to provide notice of intended work and consult with the HOA's landscape contractor for restoration of damage to the property. The

company has rejected these offers, Sutton said, claiming it would be difficult to comply with both requirements.

"Any easement agreement must protect the HOA homeowners and must allow the HOA to maintain and preserve its property, as it is legally obligated to do," Sutton said. "We remain committed to finding a fair solution to this, and we encourage PG&E to work with us in the spirit of community and compromise on finding that solution."

PG&E spokeswoman Megan McFarland told the *Voice* the company is still negotiating with the HOA on a possible agreement, but is simultaneously looking at "alternative" courses of action. This could include a significant redesign of the electric layout at the school with a power hookup located in a spot without restricted access.

"All the options are on the table," she said.

When asked about the specific sticking points between PG&E and the HOA, McFarland said the company likely won't be able to disclose details on the easement agreement due to privacy concerns.

In the meantime, three classrooms designated as "flex"

space have all been converted into classrooms to make up for the loss of the second floor, displacing programs run by YMCA and the after-school program Right at School. The district's Response to Instruction (RTI) classes — which provide remedial and enrichment activities for students — will have to operate out of the library, Rudolph said. The school's field space was intended to be completed in October, but the power delays have pushed that out until January at the earliest.

Then there's the generator itself. On top of making sure it doesn't run out of gas, Rudolph said the district has to be mindful of how much noise and air pollution is coming from it during the day and how it affects the nearby apartments. The district sent out a notice apologizing for the generator, he said, but conceded that there is no other option.

It's still unclear where the school's newly created PTA will be able to meet at night — limited use of the generator during the evening may be an option, Rudolph said.

Plans for Vargas Elementary School have been in the works for more than three years, prompted by a school board

vote in 2015 to open a school somewhere in the Whisman and Slater area of Mountain View. The decision prompted a complete revamp of the district's attendance boundaries and special accommodations to fit construction of a new school in an already tight capital budget. After all that work, Rudolph said, the hope was that the school would have a smooth opening.

"We remain hopeful that the HOA will allow PG&E to have a simple easement," he said. "While I get their concerns ... I think the safety of the kids should really be at the forefront on everyone's mind."

If PG&E is allowed to move forward, Vargas Elementary could have power in as little as a week and a half if the electrical work is placed on an accelerated schedule. If not, the hookup work typically takes six weeks, Rudolph said. ▣

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**WEAPONS**

► Continued from page 1

killing three people and injuring 13. Later that week, another gunman shot and killed 22 people at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, followed by a third shooting the next day in Dayton, Ohio that left 10 people dead including the shooter.

“Despite the thousands of miles that separated these tragic events, they are united by one simple, undeniable fact: an assault weapon enabled and exacerbated the violence that stole so many lives,” supervisors wrote in the memo.

At the meeting, Simitian argued that a federal ban is necessary after the tragedy in Gilroy. Although California has restrictive gun laws banning the sale and ownership of automatic and semi-automatic weapons, the perpetrator in Gilroy was a resident of Nevada and purchased his gun legally in the neighboring state. Simitian said it wasn’t the exception to the rule either — the assailant could have gone to Oregon and Arizona and legally acquired the same gun.

“If we want to be safer by reducing the number of these weapons in everyday ownership, we are going to need to see some action

at the federal level,” Simitian said.

Though the majority of gun deaths are inflicted by handguns used in suicides, supervisors Ellenberg and Simitian wrote in the memo that the high number of mass shootings in the U.S. are enabled by guns that are designed to “inflict harm as quickly and efficiently as possible,” at a scale one might expect from a war zone.

**‘A federal assault weapons ban is more than common sense. It is a moral imperative.’**

JOE SIMITIAN AND SUSAN ELLENBERG, COUNTY SUPERVISORS

“In the face of evidence like this, a federal assault weapons ban is more than common sense. It is a moral imperative,” the supervisors said.

Action at the federal level this year includes an assault weapons ban introduced by U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein in January. In February, the House of Representatives passed a bill requiring universal background checks on

gun sales, though it’s unclear whether the Republican majority in the Senate will support the bill or even allow it to be debated.

The statement released Friday does not delve into details on precisely what the federal legislation should prohibit, though it does credit the now-expired federal assault weapons ban that was in effect from 1994 to 2004 for reducing the probability of mass shooting fatalities. This is likely in reference to a 2019 study reviewing mass shooting data, though previous studies concluded it had no significant impacts on homicide rates.

An anonymous source told the San Francisco Chronicle last week that the gun used in the Gilroy Garlic Festival shooting was a WASR-10 semiautomatic rifle, which is legal to purchase in Nevada but illegal to bring to California. Law enforcement officials shortly after the shooting described it as an AK-47-style semiautomatic rifle.

Supervisor Dave Cortese, who supported the resolution, said he was okay with the language being vague as to what kind of guns ought to be targeted — whether it be loosely defined “assault-style”

weapons or the ability of a gun to fire bullets like that of an automatic weapon — and that the distinction should be figured out by federal lawmakers.

Supervisors agreed to solicit support from individual cities within Santa Clara County, encouraging elected officials to sign on to the resolution, which will be sent to members of Congress who represent county residents. Last week, more than 20 Bay Area mayors — including Mountain View Mayor Lisa Matichak — signed a letter to U.S. senate leaders calling for “immediate” action on gun violence legislation.

Earlier in the Aug. 13 meeting, supervisors also agreed in a 5-0 vote to explore an ordinance for safe storage of firearms, which would outline requirements for placing guns in a locked container in a residence. The law would only affect unincorporated parts of the county, and would be similar to ordinances already passed in San

Jose, Saratoga and Sunnyvale.

Supervisors began the Aug. 13 meeting by adjourning to memorialize the three victims killed in Gilroy. Supervisor Mike Wasserman, who represents South County cities including Gilroy, said he had “no words at all” for the senseless act that took place at the festival, a place where thousands of volunteers gather to raise money for charities and to support the less fortunate.

After the adjournment, supervisors raised flags outside that have been flown at half-staff since the shooting. It’s an extraordinary gesture, Simitian said, but it was for an extraordinary tragedy.

“We lower the flags to half-staff of course to memorialize someone’s passing, but I hope that as we raise the flags to full staff today we will take that opportunity to continue to remember those who have been lost, and to keep them in our hearts in the months and years ahead,” Simitian said. ▀

**COMMUNITY BRIEFS**

► Continued from page 4

Rengstorff Park.

“It’s an honor to be chosen as the next community services director,” he said. “I look forward to utilizing my years of experience to continue working with the community, staff and City Council on a number of future projects and initiatives in my new role.”

In his new position, Marchant will earn an annual salary of \$213,000.

**COUNTY CHALLENGES ‘PUBLIC CHARGE’ RULE CHANGE**

Santa Clara County and the city of San Francisco sued the administration of President Donald Trump in federal court Tuesday to challenge a new rule that makes it harder low-income legal immigrants to remain in the U.S.

County Counsel James Williams and City Attorney Dennis Herrera claim the rule is illegal and was also enacted in violation of the requirements of a federal administrative procedure act. They filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court in San Francisco.

“This illegal rule is yet another attempt to vilify immigrants,” Herrera stated. “It makes it easier to unfairly target hard-working, lawful immigrants while sowing fear and confusion in our communities.”

The administrative rule, which goes into effect on Oct. 15, requires immigration officials to consider whether legal immigrants seeking visa extensions or permanent residency have obtained or are likely to obtain government aid for food, housing or health care.

The rule would expand on a decades-long interpretation of a federal immigration law provision that requires officials to consider whether an immigrant would be a “public charge.”

Previously, the provision was interpreted to apply only to immigrants who received cash welfare payments or were cared for in government-funded institutions.

The measure would now extend to immigrants who use or might use food stamps, other nutrition

assistance, subsidized housing or Medicaid.

The lawsuit claims the rule contradicts “the plain meaning, longstanding administrative interpretation, legislative history, statutory context and case law” of the “public charge” term in the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act.

It alleges the rule would force legal immigrants to forgo needed services for fear of jeopardizing their status and would end up requiring local governments to pay more for services.

Acting U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Director Ken Cuccinelli, in announcing the rule on Monday, said it will promote American ideals of self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

—Bay City News Service

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# Viewpoint

- EDITORIAL
- YOUR LETTERS
- GUEST OPINIONS

Mountain View  
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## ■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

# It's past time for a federal ban on assault weapons

The United States has seen 258 mass shooting incidents in the 225 days of 2019, according to data published Wednesday by the nonprofit Gun Violence Archive. That's more than one day on average, meaning it's likely that this grim statistic will be outdated before the ink is dry on this page.

Earlier this month there were three mass shootings in the span of a week in Gilroy, El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio. The latter two incidents happened mere hours apart; we went to sleep mourning the loss of 22 people gunned down at a Walmart and awoke to the horror of another mass shooting and mirrored scenes of police processing crime scenes, of tarps strewn over bodies and panicked loved ones waiting for news.

In the days since, politicians and activists throughout the country have called for action with a renewed fervor. More than 250 mayors, including Mountain View Mayor Lisa Matichak, have signed a letter to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, calling on them to reconvene the Senate to pass bipartisan gun safety legislation. The House of Representatives in February passed two bills, HR 8 and HR 112, that would strengthen background checks. HR 8 would require background checks for all firearm purchases, prohibit unregulated sales and increase law enforcement's ability to trace guns, while HR 112 would extend the background check review period deadline from three days to 10.

Locally, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday unanimously approved a resolution urging Congress to pass legislation banning assault weapons commonly used in mass shootings.

The federal ban would target guns used in the six deadliest mass shootings in the country over the last decade, weapons used to kill more than 200 people and injure nearly 1,000, according to a joint statement by the supervisors. (Supervisors also agreed Tuesday to explore an ordinance for the safe storage of firearms, which would set requirements for keeping guns in a locked container in unincorporated area homes.)

We echo these calls for action and urge those on Capitol Hill to pass a federal ban on assault weapons and existing legislation to close background check loopholes.

The federal ban is necessary for a myriad of reasons, one of them being that it would prevent people from being able to go to another state to purchase semi-automatic and automatic weapons as the Gilroy gunman reportedly did. The proliferation of these guns in mass shootings, combined with how wholly unnecessary they are on America's streets, makes the concept of a ban a no-brainer, as is the proposal to strengthen the background check system. We also support efforts at the local level to address gun safety through a storage ordinance, which would help keep firearms out of the wrong hands and potentially prevent further tragedies. As the supervisors said, this isn't just a matter of common sense — it's a moral imperative that lawmakers take action to reduce the bloodshed.

Although we're grateful to see local leaders speak out against this senseless violence, it will be up to those in the Senate to go beyond thoughts and prayers and pass gun reform. We cannot let National Rifle Association lobbyists stand in the way of stemming this crisis.

## ■ LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

### INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS NEEDED

These comments were triggered by an article written by Kevin Forestieri on Aug. 9, "Permits for new homes sink in Santa Clara County."

In May 2019, the Mountain View Whisman School District (MVWSD) agreed to a partnership with FortBay, a private developer, to share in the land and construction costs in exchange for affordable units being reserved for teacher housing. This was cited by city staff as the primary reason the project remained financially feasible for the developer.

I believe innovative partnerships like the one described above are needed in these challenging times of rising construction costs so that projects are more palatable and the benefits are more appropriately shared among the stakeholders such as the city, commercial entities, the developer and existing and new residents. Why can't a similar deal be reached with the top half-dozen high-tech companies in Mountain View? For example, Google could partner with the

city and developers and share in the housing construction costs in exchange for reserved affordable housing for Google employees. It's not as if these companies lack sufficient monetary resources. In 2018, Google made a profit of \$40 billion, Facebook made a profit of \$22 billion, Apple made a profit of \$60 billion and Intel made a profit of \$20 billion.

These companies are all based in or near Mountain View. Do you think they should bear a larger responsibility for housing their employees, relieving traffic congestion caused by thousands of new employees, expanding mass transit measures, providing parks and other amenities to address the growth impacts to society and such as the resources needed to sustain the existing quality of life and the character of the community?

Dan Shane  
Cypress Point Drive

### MOFFETT FIELD PROPOSAL

UC Berkeley wants to build a huge satellite campus that might bring over 5,000 more people to our area at Moffett Field ("UC

Berkeley plans huge satellite campus at Moffett Field," Aug. 2). Just taking 250 square feet per employee as a number — there could easily be a lot more than 5,000 if they get the more typical 60-square-foot cubicles of modern tech workers. Where is the housing for these people — is UC Berkeley going to build it as part of the development? How are these folks going to

get to and from Moffett — the roads are already beyond capacity at rush hour. Is UC Berkeley going to build us more roads, or mass transit?

Finally, how much tax revenue would come to Mountain View from this development built and managed by a nonprofit?

David Lewis  
Oak Street



FOOD FEATURE



## At the table

### The chefs of Maum talk Michelin stars, mackerel memories and future goals

By Elena Kadvany  
Photos by Veronica Weber

When Meichih and Michael Kim finished eating lunch on a recent afternoon at Orchard City Kitchen in Campbell, each folded their cloth napkins neatly into a proper, compact rectangle.

Exacting attention to detail in both food and service is ingrained in the two chefs who together lead the kitchen of Maum in Palo Alto. They opened the modern Korean restaurant after cooking at some of the country's best restaurants: Meichih at the three-Michelin-starred Per Se in New York City and Benu and Michael Mina's RN74 in San Francisco; Michael at the Michelin-starred SPQR and Namu Gaji in San Francisco; and both at Tom Colicchio's Craft in Los Angeles, where they met.

The Kims are partners both inside and outside the kitchen: They're also married and parents to a 4-year-old boy who loves sushi and market peaches.

Despite their illustrious culinary resumes, the pair seems

genuinely taken aback by the recognition they've received at Maum.

The tasting-menu-only, 16-seat restaurant garnered lots of buzz when it opened last summer after running quietly as a private dining space. Then, in June — less than a year after opening to the public — the Kims won their first Michelin star. Last week came a favorable review from the San Francisco Chronicle's new restaurant critic, Soleil Ho, who described Maum, which means "from the heart," as upending our assumptions about Korean food in a "sincere, nostalgic" way.

"We're always surprised when people are like, 'We've heard so much about you,'" Michael said, laughing. "I'm like, 'From who?'"

True chefs, their minds are inside the kitchen more than anywhere else — except maybe, as young parents, at home with their son.

I had lunch with Meichih and Michael recently for the inaugural feature of "At the table," a new series for my Peninsula Foodist newsletter. I'll be interviewing local chefs over meals at restaurants of their choosing. The Kims

chose Orchard City Kitchen in Campbell, a more casual project from fine-dining chef Jeffrey Stout.

Over tater tot poutine doused in Japanese curry, budae jigae and an arugula-stone fruit salad, we talked at length about how and why they got into cooking, their creative process, where they eat on their days off, how they balance the restaurant with parenthood and, of course, that Michelin star.

*Michael, what part of Los Angeles did you grow up in?*

Michael: I was born in east LA. When I was 7, I moved to Diamond Bar, which is kind of a suburb of LA — a big Korean and Asian community.

*I assume that food was a big part of your upbringing.*

Michael: It always was. My dad and his family was such a food-oriented family so it was always a big part of my life. ... It was always based around fish. We would sometimes go really early in the morning to the Newport Beach fish market where they

would pull up the boats and then sell fish. I remember doing that with my grandparents and my parents at least once a month. There's a Korean mackerel dish that's braised in gochujang. We would get fresh mackerel from the market and we would make that. (At Maum), we serve a mackerel for our no-meat option in kind of an homage to that. We do either a grilled or braised version.

*Meichih, was food a big part of your upbringing? (Meichih was born in Shinjuku, Tokyo, but grew up in Southern California and is of Taiwanese descent.)*

Meichih: More eating out.

*So what drew you to cooking as a career?*

Meichih: After college, I took a desk job. I did that for two years. I couldn't see myself moving forward and being ambitious in that area. So I decided to apply to go to cooking school at night.

What actually happened was, I was in college and I wanted to recreate a dish my mom made at home. It was katsudon. I called

her up ... From that point on it was like, I really like doing this. I like working with my hands.

Michael: It takes a special person to be a cook. In the sense of ... it doesn't necessarily translate to going to school or anything like that. I think you have that innate skill where you just go into a kitchen and you find the flow. You understand how everything works, or how everything should work. I didn't really enjoy school. When I was in college, I was a hospitality major. There were portions of that education where it didn't really mesh. Once I got into the culinary aspect of it, it was like riding a bike. You just know what's happening.

*Where were your first-ever cooking jobs?*

Michael: I worked in a Japanese-French restaurant in Pasadena, (Maison Akira). It's one of the mainstays in that area. (The chef, Akira Hirose) was a Japanese chef who trained in Paris under Joël Robuchon. (He was) one of the innovators of that Japanese nouveau (cuisine) of the late '90s,



**Orchard City's** tater tot poutine includes Japanese curry, Muenster cheese, bacon and green onion topped with a fried egg.



**Budae jigae**, also called "army stew," is made with kimchee soup, Spam, Lit'l Smokies sausage, ramen noodles, tofu, mushrooms and American cheese.

early 2000s. I worked with them for about a year.

Meichih: Per Se. Most cooks start very young. They don't go to college. I worked for a few years after college. By the time I started cooking I was already in my mid-20s. I vocalized that I really wanted to work there and work hard.

*What was that kitchen like?*

Meichih: As a first job it was very stressful. Everybody's looking behind you ... Because the menu was constantly changing, you would feel comfortable with something and then it would change.

*When you opened Maum, were you thinking about getting a Michelin star?*

Michael: Internally, yes. At the end of the day if you open an ambitious restaurant you want to be validated with good reviews or accolades. ... (Although) that was kind of on the back burner for us, especially in the beginning. We were like, 'Let's just get it up and running.'

Meichih: No. (She laughs.)

*How significant was that moment to you?*

Meichih: Internally I always had a goal to have a restaurant by the time I was 35. I just turned 40. When that didn't happen ... you have goals you want to attain and when you don't it's a little (disappointing). But for things to happen the way they did so fast ...it's been a blessing.

Michael: At the end of the day you want something like that, of course. It was a huge achievement professionally and personally. You're in a group of very decorated chefs.

*After the Michelin stars were announced, did you see a surge in reservation requests?*

Michael: We're usually booked two weeks out. Now we're over a month. There's a lot more inquiries day of, 'Do you have extra seats?'

*Maum was the only Peninsula restaurant included on the San Francisco Chronicle's new Top 100 Restaurants list. Did you know when restaurant critic Soleil Ho came in?*

Michael: No. At the end of the day, we serve 16 people at once. It needs to be perfect. It doesn't matter (who the diner is) ... The product is all the same.

*How do you think critics who are not well-versed in Korean food should approach writing about Korean restaurants?*

Michael: There's so much literature out there, history. You can always experience these restaurants in Santa Clara, San Francisco minimally, Oakland, even LA. (By dining out), you can get a CliffsNotes version of what traditional Korean food is. Even just (go to) Korean markets.

*Is there anything growing at Maum's private farm in Los Altos Hills right now that you're really excited about?*

Meichih: Tomatoes, all different varieties. We're seeing things you wouldn't be able to purchase, like a squash leaf. Last year we made a chip out of it. (This year, they're using it in the ssam course instead of a perilla leaf.) (Being a seasonal restaurant) forces you to be more creative and not replicate. Part of my experience at Per Se was not to replicate ingredients on a menu.

Michael: The Korean squash are amazing. They're so sweet and fragrant. I always look forward to those.

*What is your process for developing new dishes? How much of it is done together or separately?*

## Craving a new voice in Peninsula dining?



Every other week, top local food reporter Elena Kadvany provides insight into the latest openings and closings, what she's eating that she's excited about, interviews with chefs and the trends affecting local restaurants.



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Meichih: It's all done together. We bounce ideas off each other. It takes time. We'll actually conceptualize a dish and then you have to work on it. You tweak it and you come back to it, whether it be the flavors or tasting, plating it. It's nonstop. We're telling our cooks all the time, 'Taste. Taste. Taste everything.'

*Tell me about a dish that went through that process.*

Michael: We do a freshly milled buckwheat noodle. It's a play off naengmyeon. We make a white kimchi. We were originally going to do it with chicken stock. The chicken stock was so rich and gelatinous that the liquid — we try to serve it ice cold and it was thick. So we changed it to a combination of dashi and chicken stock. (The final dish is a tangle of chilled buckwheat somyun served in mulkimchi broth and ice.)

*If you had no financial constraints, what would your dream restaurant project be?*

Meichih: I would love to do a rice spot that's Taiwanese — comfort food, something that people can eat every day but with higher, better quality. ... Also, I love egg sandwiches. It's something I always eat.

Michael: I'd open up a grilled fish restaurant in Jeju island (in Korea). You can see it on our menu — it revolves a lot around seafood. It's one of our favorite things.

*What do you think in general of the Peninsula dining scene?*

Michael: I think it's up and coming. With Anthony (Secviar) at Protégé (in Palo Alto) and Robbie (Wilson) at Bird Dog (in Palo Alto), Greg (Kuzia-Carmel) at Camper (in Menlo Park) ... these restaurants didn't exist five years ago.

Meichih: They have more personality. ...I guess the other question is also, as more restaurants pop up my first thing is, where are they going to find the labor for it? The shortage is everywhere.

*On your days off, do you go out to eat more than you cook at home?*

Michael: Yeah. We just don't like cleaning. We have our regular places: Great China (in Berkeley), Pho Hanoi in San Jose, Hamano in Noe Valley, Thien Long (in San Jose), Los Carnalitos (in Redwood City).

*Have you seen a shift in how people perceive and receive Korean food in the Bay Area since you started Maum?*

Michael: It's a mixed crowd. We had a guest the other day be like, 'I've tried things today that I've never tried before in my life.' That's great.

Meichih: But then some people are like, 'What is this?' But, you know, we're not trying to play it safe.

*Why did you choose Orchard City Kitchen for our lunch?*

Meichih: It has been on our list of places to go for a while now. Cyrus Schultz, the general manager and part owner, is a former colleague of mine when we both worked at Benu. It is important for us to support friends when we know how tough running a restaurant can be. Also, we're always trying new places to add to our list of go-to's in the Peninsula. ▣

*This interview was lightly edited and condensed for clarity and length. Email Elena Kadvanly at ekadvanly@paweekly.com To subscribe to her Peninsula Foodist newsletter, go to mv-voice.com/express/foodist.*

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MOVIE OPENINGS



Tim Roth, Kelvin Harrison Jr. and Naomi Watts star in "Luce."

COURTESY NEON

# Race to the top

IN DRAMA 'LUCE,' HIGH-SCHOOL POLITICS ARE — AND AREN'T — BLACK AND WHITE

★★★1/2 (Aquarius)

Julius Onah's dramatic film "Luce" unfolds at Northern Virginia High School — a.k.a. Nova High School — but it's ins and outs deal with more than just education and child-rearing. Adapted by Onah and J.C. Lee from the latter's provocative play, "Luce" tackles race in America and its sociopolitical intersections.

In what should be a star-making

performance, Kelvin Harrison Jr. plays the titular African-American high-school student: an all-star in the classroom, at the debate podium and on the track. A former child soldier adopted at the age of 7 from war-torn Eritrea, Luce was raised by two attentive, caring, well-off white parents, Amy and Peter Edgar (Naomi Watts and Tim Roth). We meet Luce as

he addresses his entire school on "Generals Day." With the smiley, smooth mien of an old-school politician, Luce gets compared to Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama, forming the question at the heart of the film: Does Luce live up to his reputation and, for that matter, could anyone?

Cracks in the facade begin to spread when Luce's history and

government teacher, Ms. Harriet Wilson (Octavia Spencer), red flags an essay written by the boy in the voice of 20th-century activist Frantz Fanon, an advocate of righteous violence. Wilson takes it upon herself to search Luce's locker and discovers another piece of ambiguous circumstantial evidence: a brown paper bag packed with enough fireworks to do some damage. Luce can credibly claim the fireworks aren't his. But Wilson passes along her doubt to Amy, setting off domestic strife, a cold war between Luce and Ms. Wilson, and an existential threat to Luce's presumptively bright future as an American success story.

What follows works on the level of a stalker-y "no one believes me" thriller (amplified by doubt over which one is the instigator and which the victim). Onah's previous film, "The Cloverfield Paradox," showed little sign of the sensitivity and skill the filmmaker applies to this story, which crackles with top-notch performances from its central foursome (with a fine assist from Norbert Leo Butz as the school principal).

"Luce" primarily concerns itself with African-American identity, plagued by withering low-down stereotypes and polar-opposite pressures, reflecting the notion that black children must not only be as capable as their white

counterparts but better, faster, stronger. Onah and Lee constantly present the weight of expectation on Luce, especially from his mother, but also from his teacher and his peers.

In some ways, the film's subtle political satire proves even more distressing. Beyond the film's civil-rights minefield (Onah and Lee are savvy on the issues of active privacy violations as well as the unconscious, passive abdication of privacy on social media), "Luce" hammers away at our self-deluding myths about poster-child perfection: There is no "perfect" when it comes to parenting or personal character, and we must accept the nasty reality that reinvention and rehabilitation must be constants in our lives.

In its scariest moments, "Luce" reminds us that the people we trust to lead us are those best able to perform trustworthiness, to fake the right emotions, to manipulate others openly and behind the scenes. Luce says he loves the "freedom, strength, individuality" Independence Day represents ... plus the fireworks. Thematically and dramatically, "Luce" gives us all that ... and a bag of fireworks.

Rated R for language throughout, sexual content, nudity and some drug use. One hour, 49 minutes.

— Peter Canavese

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Brian Banks (PG-13) Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

Cluny Brown (1946) (Not Rated)

Stanford Theatre: Friday

Dora and the Lost City of Gold (PG)

Century 16: Fri.-Sun. Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

ShowPlace Icon: Fri.-Sun.

The Farewell (PG) ★★★1/2

Aquarius Theatre: Fri.-Sun. Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

The Fast & Furious: Hobbs & Shaw (PG-13)

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Good Boys (R) Century 16: Fri.-Sun.

Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

Heaven Can Wait (1943) (Not Rated)

Stanford Theatre: Friday

Aquarius: 430 Emerson St., Palo Alto (For recorded listings: 327-3241) [tinyurl.com/Aquariuspa](http://tinyurl.com/Aquariuspa)

Century Cinema 16: 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View [tinyurl.com/Century16](http://tinyurl.com/Century16)

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Stanford Theatre: 221 University Ave., Palo Alto (For recorded listings: 324-3700) [Stanfordtheatre.org](http://Stanfordtheatre.org)

The Kitchen (R) ★★★1/2 Century 16: Fri.-Sun.

Century 20: Fri.-Sun. ShowPlace Icon: Fri.-Sun.

The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp (1943)

(Not Rated) Stanford Theatre: Saturday

The Lion King (PG) Century 16: Fri.-Sun.

Century 20: Fri.-Sun. ShowPlace Icon: Fri.-Sun.

Luce (R) ★★★1/2 Aquarius Theatre: Fri.-Sun.

Mission Mangal (Not Rated) Century 16: Fri.-Sun.

Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood (R) ★★★

Century 16: Fri.-Sun. Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

The Peanut Butter Falcon (PG-13)

Palo Alto Square: Fri.-Sun.

Scary Stories to tell in the Dark (PG-13)

Century 16: Fri.-Sun. Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

ShowPlace Icon: Fri.-Sun.

Spider-Man: Far From Home (PG) ★★★

Century 16: Fri.-Sun. Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

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Toy Story 4 (G) ★★★1/2 Century 16: Fri.-Sun.

Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

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Century 16: Fri.-Sun. Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

ShowPlace Icon: Fri.-Sun.

Yesterday (PG-13) ★★ Century 20: Fri.-Sun.

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

For show times, plot synopses, trailers and more movie info, visit [www.mv-voice.com](http://www.mv-voice.com) and click on movies.

# GoingsOn

MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE

## HIGHLIGHT

### EAT, DRINK & BE TECHIE

The Computer History Museum hosts a tech-themed block party at the Cloud Bistro beer garden, with programming on select Fridays for visitors of all ages. Aug. 16, 23 and 30, 5-9 p.m. Computer History Museum, 1401 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View. [computerhistory.org](http://computerhistory.org)

## THEATER

**'An Ideal Husband'** In this play directed by Jenny Hollingsworth, an ideal husband explores political corruption, public persona versus private virtue, and the inevitable disappointments that come with holding others to one's own rigid ideals. Aug. 23-Sept. 15; times vary. Preview Aug. 22, 7:30 p.m. \$15-\$35. The Pear Theatre, 1110 La Avenida St., Mountain View. [thepear.org](http://thepear.org)

**New Works Festival: 'Father/Daughter'** In this play about lovers, fathers, daughters and the fragile bonds between them, two actors play very different generations in the same family. Aug. 16, 8 p.m. and Aug. 18, 3 p.m. \$20 single tickets; \$65 festival passes. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org)

**New Works Festival: 'Iron John'** An Irish housemaid falls for an African American blacksmith. A century later a rebellious white debutante befriends a mixed-race neighbor. Weaving past and present, this poignant new musical explores a haunting legacy of racism buried but not forgotten. Aug. 18, 7 p.m. \$20 single tickets; \$65 festival passes. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org)

**New Works Festival: 'Nan, and the Lower Body'** In this frank and feminist play, good-humored Dr. Pap has great mysteries to unravel and a bright assistant with dark secrets to hide. Aug. 17, 8 p.m. \$20 single tickets; \$65 festival passes. Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org)

**New Works Festival: 'Revival'** TheatreWorks' New Works Festival presents "Revival," a romantic musical drama across the vast prairies of 19th-century Nebraska from the authors of Broadway's "Tuck Everlasting." Aug. 17, noon. \$20 single tickets; \$65 festival passes. Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org)

**New Works Festival: 'The Imperialists'** This broad, madcap farce follows a daughter desperate to rescue her addled dad from his colonial memories. Aug. 17, 4 p.m. \$20 single tickets; \$65 festival passes. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org)

**Pale Fire Theater's 'Hamlet'** Pale Fire Theater, a student-led space for Palo Alto thespians to engage with Shakespeare, presents its inaugural show, "Hamlet." Aug. 16, 17; 7-10 p.m. \$5. First Presbyterian Church Palo Alto, 1140 Cowper St., Palo Alto. Search [facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/) events for more info.

**'The 39 Steps'** TheatreWorks' acclaimed comedy returns in a spoof of Alfred Hitchcock's silver-screen classic, in which a London man fights to clear his name after stumbling upon a ring of spies. Aug. 21-Sept. 15; times vary. \$25-\$60. Discounts available; pricing subject to change. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org)

## CONCERTS

**Joe Russo's Almost Dead** Stanford Live and GoldenVoice present Joe Russo's Almost Dead, a musical group that performs its own rendition of songs by the Grateful Dead. Aug. 17, 6:30 p.m. \$45. Frost Amphitheater, 351 Lasuen St., Stanford. [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu)

**Lionel Richie** International superstar Lionel Richie performs at the newly renovated Frost Amphitheater. Aug. 24, 6:30 p.m. \$66-\$256. Frost Amphitheater, 351 Lasuen St., Stanford. [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu)

**Luke Bryan, Cole Swindell & Jon Langston** Four-time country Entertainer of the Year Luke Bryan performs with guests Cole Swindell and Jon Langston. Aug. 24, 7-10 p.m. \$40-\$294. Shoreline Amphitheatre, 1 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View. [concerts1.livenation.com](http://concerts1.livenation.com)

**'Music is Magic' Concert Series** In partnership with the city of Palo Alto, the Magical Bridge Foundation presents a summer concert series, featuring local artists and musicians. All concerts are family-friendly and sensory-friendly. Every Friday through Aug. 30, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. Magical Bridge Playground - Mitchell Park, 600 E. Meadow Drive, Palo Alto. Search [facebook.com/events](https://www.facebook.com/events) for more info.

## MUSIC

**Aurora Mandolin Ensemble Performance** Members of the Aurora Mandolin Orchestra will play a selection of songs from around the world. Aug. 17, 2-3 p.m. Free. Mountain View Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. [mountainview.libcal.com](http://mountainview.libcal.com)

**Open Mic @ Red Rock Coffee** Performers sing in front of a supportive audience and meet fellow musicians and artists during Open Mic Mondays at Red Rock Coffee. Sign-ups start at 6:30 p.m.; show starts at 7 p.m. Red Rock Coffee, 201 Castro St., Mountain View. [redrockcoffee.org/livemusic](http://redrockcoffee.org/livemusic)

**Voices of Hope Concert** Performed by the Voices of Hope Humanitarian Choir and the Cal Arte Ensemble, this concert features the "Beatitude Mass for the Homeless," composed and conducted by Henry Mollicone. Aug. 23, 7:30 p.m. Free; donations accepted. St. Simon's Catholic Parish, 1860 Grant Road, Los Altos. [henrymollicone.com](http://henrymollicone.com)

## DANCE

**Hands Four Gender Free Contra Dance** Contra dancing is a called set dance, similar to square dancing, Irish ceili and other traditional folk dances. All dances are taught and no partner or experience is needed. Aug. 23. Beginners' lesson: 7-7:30 p.m.; dancing 7:30-10:30 p.m. \$10; discount available. Saint Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Ave., Palo Alto. [lcfid.org](http://lcfid.org)

## FESTIVALS & FAIRS

**Farmer's Market** The Downtown Los Altos Farmer's Market, where shoppers can find fresh vegetables and fine foods, continues every Thursday through Sept. 26, 4-8 p.m. Free. Located on State Street between 2nd and 4th streets, Los Altos Hills. [losaltoschamber.org](http://losaltoschamber.org)

**Palo Alto Festival of the Arts** During this festival hosted by the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, downtown University Avenue becomes home to 300 fine art and contemporary craft displays, Italian street painting, kids' art studio, sculpture plaza, stage and street entertainment. Aug. 24-25, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Free. Downtown Palo Alto, University Avenue, Palo Alto. [mlaproductions.com](http://mlaproductions.com)

## TALKS & LECTURES

**Chris Cander** Kepler's Books presents writer Chris Cander, who will discuss her new book, "The Weight of a Piano." Aug. 16, 7:30-8:30 p.m. \$7; \$32 with book. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Search [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.

**'Food for the Future' Panel Discussion** A panel of experts will share insights and concerns about how technology can change the way people eat, what people eat and how that food is served. Aug. 22, informal reception at 6:30 p.m.; panel from 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Los Altos History Museum, 51 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. [losaltoschamber.org](http://losaltoschamber.org)

**'Nature Speaks: Art and Poetry for the Earth'** This event explores the artwork and poetry of Deborah Kennedy from her award-winning book, "Nature Speaks: Art and Poetry for the Earth." Aug. 24, 2-3:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. [mountainview.libcal.com](http://mountainview.libcal.com)

**'The Transpacific Experiment: How China and California Collaborate and Compete for Our Future'** Matt Sheehan discusses his new book, "The Transpacific Experiment: How China and California Collaborate and Compete for Our Future." Aug. 19, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. Community Room, 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. [neighborsabroad.org](http://neighborsabroad.org)

## MUSEUMS & EXHIBITS

**Josiah McElheny: 'Island Universe'** Josiah McElheny's "Island Universe" examines both cutting-edge art and physics. The monumental installation of five hanging chandeliers is a visual response to recent theories of the multiverse, an elaboration of the Big Bang theory. Through Aug. 18, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive at Museum Way, Stanford. [museum.stanford.edu](http://museum.stanford.edu)

**Kahlil Joseph: 'BLKNWS'** Kahlil Joseph, a visiting artist in the new Presidential Residencies on the Future of the Arts program, presents his work "BLKNWS," a two-channel video projection that blurs the lines between art, journalism, entrepreneurship and cultural critique. Through Nov. 25, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive at Museum Way, Stanford. [museum.stanford.edu](http://museum.stanford.edu)

**'The Medium Is the Message: Art since 1950'** Using works created since 1950, this exhibition explores the relationship between subject, content and the materials that informed each object's production. Through Aug. 18, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive at Museum Way, Stanford. [museum.stanford.edu](http://museum.stanford.edu)

**Opening Reception: Lynda Benglis** Pace Gallery hosts the opening reception for Lynda Benglis' first exhibition with the gallery since joining in January. Aug. 21, 4-7 p.m. Free. Pace Gallery, 229 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. Search [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.

**'Gadgets Galore! Transforming the American Household'** Los Altos History Museum presents "Gadgets Galore! Transforming the American Household," an exhibit that looks at gadgets and where they originated, on display at the J. Gilbert Smith House. Thursday-Sunday through Nov. 10, noon-4 p.m.

Free. Los Altos History Museum, 51 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. [losaltoschamber.org](http://losaltoschamber.org)

## FILM

**Los Altos Movie Night: 'Ocean's Eleven'** Los Altos Forward, together with the City of Los Altos, several local community organizations and sponsors present a screening of the PG-13 film, "Ocean's Eleven" at the Third Street Green. Aug. 17, 8:30-10:20 p.m. Free. 150 3rd St., Los Altos. [losaltoschamber.org](http://losaltoschamber.org)

**Los Altos Movie Night: 'The Secret Life of Pets' and 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off'** The Los Altos Third Street Green will feature a pop-up park of synthetic turf with chairs, tables and shade umbrellas, open to the public, for a double feature screening of "The Secret Life of Pets" and "Ferris Bueller's Day Off." Aug. 24, 8-11:50 p.m. Free. 150 3rd St., Los Altos. [losaltoschamber.org](http://losaltoschamber.org)

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

**Fall Open House** Blossom Birth and Family hosts an open house where guests can learn about its classes, yoga offerings, library and community resources as well as explore info sessions, find free demos and earn discounts. RSVP requested. Aug. 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Blossom Birth and Family, 290 California Ave., Palo Alto. Search [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.

## SPORTS

**Los Altos Hills vs. Los Altos Softball Game** Los Altos Hills takes on Los Altos in the second annual rivalry softball game. Aug. 17, 1-3 p.m. Free. Rosita Park, 401 Rosita Ave., Los Altos. [losaltoshills.ca.gov](http://losaltoshills.ca.gov)

## TEENS

**Paint Party at Los Altos Library** Teens and adults are invited to celebrate the end of summer with a paint party at the Los Altos Library. No registration is required and supplies will be provided. Aug. 19, 6-8 p.m. Los Altos Library, 13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. Search [facebook.com/events](https://www.facebook.com/events) for more info.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

**Meeting with the Mayor** Mayor Roger Spreen will meet with Los Altos Hills residents to listen to their concerns on an appointment-only basis. Call ahead to the city clerk, Deborah Padovan, at 650-941-7222 to check his availability and make an appointment. Through Sept. 17, 9-10 a.m. Los Altos Hills Town Hall, 26379 Fremont Road, Los Altos Hills. [losaltoshills.ca.gov](http://losaltoshills.ca.gov)

## VOLUNTEERS

**Silicon Valley Bicycle Exchange** The Silicon Valley Bicycle Exchange invites volunteers to help fix bikes. Aug. 16, Sept. 18 and Oct. 18, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Silicon Valley Bicycle Exchange, 3961 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto. [bikex.org](http://bikex.org)

**Silicon Valley Volunteer Fair** Over 15 of the environmental organizations in Silicon Valley will share how they are making an impact in the Bay Area and the volunteer opportunities they have available. Aug. 17, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Palo Alto Baylands Duck Pond, 2560 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto. Search [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.



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