# Mountain View VOICE

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**Back for some dim sum**

WEEKEND | 16

MAGALI GAUTHIER

***Frida**, 5, walks into her kindergarten classroom at the new Jose Antonio Vargas Elementary on the first day of school on Aug. 19. Although it still doesn't have a power hookup and is relying on a generator, enthusiastic students and parents were in a celebratory mood at the Mountain View Whisman district's newest school.*

## At long last, new Vargas Elementary School opens its doors

*By Kevin Forestieri*

Excitement hung in the air Monday morning as hundreds of kids and parents streamed into the new Jose Antonio Vargas Elementary School, capping off a long-fought community effort to bring a public school campus to a neighborhood that's been without one for 13 years.

Families lined up at the gates of the school to take photos right up until the first minute of class, with a few students getting gently nudged to the correct classroom to avoid being tardy. Some children showed up to school already sporting the school's green T-shirt with a picture of the Vargas Elementary

▶ See **VARGAS**, page 9

## Seeking middle ground on rent control reform, city instead finds a chasm

*By Mark Noack*

Mountain View city leaders could be hurting for allies as they venture down the thorny path of reforming the city's rent control law. In a rare sign of agreement, landlord and tenant advocates each signaled wariness if not outright hostility to the idea of patching up rent control rules, even if it made the law more sustainable in the long term.

At its Monday night meeting, a City Council subcommittee winnowed down a list of proposed changes to Mountain View's rental regulations that could eventually go before voters as a ballot measure sometime in 2020. But for tenants, the final list included little in the way of direct benefits; for landlords, the proposals still might not be enough to change a system of price controls they described as fundamentally flawed.

Among the ideas that percolated to the top, the three-member subcommittee backed the idea of raising annual rent-increase caps to 5% or higher, putting a greater portion of fees on tenants and empowering the City Council to make changes to rent control as its members see fit.

But any one of these ideas would be crossing a red line for tenant advocates. Speaking at the meeting, representatives from Mountain View Housing Justice Coalition delivered a list of "poison pills" that they considered to be deal-breakers in any future measure. If the city's intent is

> ***'I'm trying to find a middle ground for the community so we can put this issue to rest and not let it dominate every election.'***
>
> COUNCILWOMAN MARGARET ABE-KOGA

to water down protections with nothing to gain for renters, advocates warned they would coalesce to fight the city's plan, as they did when Measure V passed in 2016.

"We trust that no council member would want to harm Mountain View's renters," said Edie Keating, speaking for the group. "We'd be happy to discuss a possible ballot measure, but not if it would weaken Measure V."

▶ See **RENT CONTROL**, page 8

## Google pitches plan to restore iconic Hangar One

*By Mark Noack*

The iconic Hangar One at Moffett Field is slated to undergo a five-year restoration effort that would eventually rehabilitate the former airship depot for future use. Under a new set of plans publicized last week, Google's subsidiary Planetary Ventures is proposing an extensive, $157 million operation to purge a variety of toxic compounds and reskin the hangar's 200-foot-tall steel frame.

The announcement of a cleanup plan has been a long time coming. In 2015, Google signed a 60-year lease with NASA Ames to take over 1,000 acres at Moffett Field. As part of that deal, Google officials pledged to eventually restore the Hangar One by cleaning up its structure and reskinning it with new siding.

But ever since the lease was inked, Planetary Ventures officials have been sparse on details

▶ See **HANGAR ONE**, page 10

VOICE FILE PHOTO

***Hangar One** at Moffett Field was stripped down to its frame in 2011 over concerns about toxic compounds. Planetary Ventures last week revealed a $157 million plan to restore the iconic structure.*

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# Voices

## AROUND TOWN

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

*Have you taken any personal actions because of global warming?*

"I try to not drive if I can bike or walk somewhere or eat less meat. I'm a weekday vegetarian."

***Sarah Evensen**, Mountain View*

"No. For me personally, there's not much I can do, I guess. We basically just have to adjust to it, like in the summer."

***Elwin Yu**, Mountain View*

"I did the (May walkout) at Mountain View High School where you didn't go to class and stood out."

***Olivia Andje**, Mountain View*

"Not really, no. I don't feel impacted by it, I guess."

***Eduardo Zaragoza**, Mountain View*

"I've been doing my best to stay away from plastic, so I've been using a lot of compostable items."

***Laura Bonnington**, Mountain View*

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

## CRIMEBRIEFS

### FOUR ARRESTS IN HOTEL COUNTERFEIT OPERATION

Police arrested four men Sunday on suspicion of theft, drug and counterfeiting charges following the theft of a catalytic converter in the North Whisman neighborhood. The suspect's car led police to a counterfeit money-making operation at a nearby hotel, according to a statement by the Mountain View Police Department.

The arrests stem from an initial report of a resident chasing someone from their home on the 800 block of Wake Forest Drive around 4 a.m. before he sped away in a Toyota Camry, police said.

Officers located and pulled over the vehicle nearby on Emily Drive and found the driver, a 21-year-old man, was in possession of a handgun reported stolen out of a Central Valley city, a catalytic converter and several burglary tools. The catalytic converter belonged to a car at the home on Wake Forest Drive, police said.

Later that morning, another officer found that the same Toyota Camry was associated with suspicious activity at the nearby Ramada Inn, police said in the statement. Officers found several people going in and out of two hotel rooms, one of whom was allegedly seen trying to conceal items.

Officers searched one of the rooms and found methamphetamine, meth pipes, counterfeit money, burglary tools and phones.

The man driving the Camry, a Merced resident, was arrested on suspicion of carrying a concealed weapon in a vehicle; carrying a stolen, loaded firearm; receiving stolen property; and attempted grand theft.

The three men found in the hotel, ages 26, 35, and 35, all Merced residents, were arrested on suspicion of forgery and counterfeiting, possession of burglary tools, attempted grand theft and possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia.

Mugshots and names of the suspects are available on the city's website, mountainview.gov/news.

### PHONE SCAMMERS POSE AS COPS

A Mountain View employee reported two phone scams last week in which people fraudulently claiming to be law enforcement officials demanded money, according to police.

The man, a Redwood City resident, told police Monday, Aug. 19, that he received two calls at work in Mountain View, one claiming to be from the FBI and another claiming to be from the Drug Enforcement Administration, according to police spokeswoman Katie Nelson. He told police that the callers had his personal information including his work address and phone number, Nelson said.

The callers requested that the man wire money from his bank account to an overseas bank account, Nelson said. At least one of the two callers accused the man of committing unspecified illegal acts.

▶ *See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 14*

## POLICELOG

**ARSON**
400 block Hedgerow Ct., 8/12

**AUTO BURGLARY**
1100 block N. Rengstorff Av., 8/13
2400 block Charleston Rd., 8/15
1100 block N. Rengstorff Av., 8/15
1400 block N. Shoreline Blvd., 8/16

**BATTERY**
500 block N. Rengstorff Av., 8/14
200 block Escuela Av., 8/15
2500 block Grant Rd., 8/15

**COMMERCIAL BURGLARY**
500 block Front Ln., 8/14

**CRIMINAL THREATS**
1300 block Montecito Av., 8/15

**GRAND THEFT**
600 block Evelyn Av., 8/13
1100 block Grant Rd., 8/17

**RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY**
1 block Paul Av., 8/13
1500 block Montalto Dr., 8/14
2500 block Mardell Way, 8/18

**ROBBERY**
500 block Escuela Av., 8/12

**STOLEN VEHICLE**
100 block Higdon Av., 8/14
1900 block California St., 8/14

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MAGALI GAUTHIER

***Zach Darrah*** *calls for gun control at a rally at the intersection of El Camino Real and Castro Street on Monday night.*

## Residents rally for gun control, not 'thoughts and prayers'

*By Nisha Malley*

In the wake of three high-profile mass shootings, a small but passionate crowd gathered at the corners of El Camino Real and Castro Street on Monday to rally against the country's gun violence epidemic.

The protest, organized by the social advocacy group Together We Will Palo Alto/Mountain View, drew roughly 20 people, who held signs reading "Remember Sandy Hook," "Enough is Enough," "Mitch McConnell: Kids not guns" and "You ask why I march? How can I not?"

Many passing drivers honked their horns in support. The *Voice* identified at least one person who attended to oppose the event, but he declined to speak to the press.

The Raging Grannies performed at the rally, singing original lyrics such as "It's time to tell the NRA" and "Walmart: Stop selling guns" set to traditional American tunes such as "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "God Bless America."

"It is patriotic to want sensible gun law reform," said Ruth Robertson, singer for the Raging Grannies.

Zach Darrah, 27-year-old resident and alumnus of Mountain View High School, said he protested alone at the same corner following the shooting in Dayton, Ohio. A few weeks later, he contacted Together We Will to organize and drive support for Monday's rally.

Darrah listed requiring universal background checks and closing gun show loopholes as immediate solutions to gun violence. He also pressed the need for Democrats to take control of the Senate and White House in the next election in order for

▶ See ***GUN CONTROL***, *page 8*

## Fears of fentanyl exposure may be overblown

LOS ALTOS POLICE EXPOSURE TRIGGERED HAZMAT RESPONSE, BUT NO OFFICERS HAD OPIOID SYMPTOMS

*By Kevin Forestieri*

Last week, the Santa Clara County Fire Department responded to an emergency at the Los Altos Police Department's headquarters. Three officers were processing evidence and had accidentally been exposed to a powerful synthetic opioid called fentanyl.

A hazmat team was called to quarantine the area, and one of the officers was taken to the hospital after reportedly falling ill.

It's the latest in a string of similar stories in the Bay Area. A Sunnyvale police officer was hospitalized in February for handling a small package suspected of containing fentanyl, which prompted an evacuation. In March, two guards at the Santa Rita Jail in Dublin were taken to the hospital after handling a dark substance suspected of being fentanyl, even though both had been wearing protective gloves. Both were treated with Narcan, a life-saving drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose.

But a growing body of evidence and advice from the medical community is finding that the fear of fentanyl among first responders is unfounded, or at least greatly overblown. Touching the drug or breathing in airborne powder is unlikely to cause a reaction, let alone a life-threatening overdose. Symptoms described by law enforcement personnel exposed to fentanyl do not bear a resemblance to the symptoms of an overdose, and in the case of the Los Altos incident last week, all three affected officers were asymptomatic, meaning they had no symptoms of an overdose.

Fentanyl and similar synthetic opioids are potent drugs, much stronger than morphine and heroin, and illicit use of the painkillers has been linked to a dramatic increase in opioid-related deaths across the country. The toll grew from 628 deaths in 2013 to 19,413 deaths in 2016, according to data from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). More recent data shows fentanyl-related deaths in California continued to rise through 2018, and forensic labs on the West Coast received more evidence testing positive for fentanyl in the first half of 2018 than in all of 2017.

But the risk of overdose among opioid users doesn't necessarily translate into a major safety hazard for the police and fire crews who encounter fentanyl during drug busts or medical emergencies. Despite the power of fentanyl, the risk of clinically significant exposure for emergency responders is "extremely low," according to a joint statement released by the American

▶ See ***FENTANYL***, *page 6*

## MVLA High School District kicks off new year with new leaders and lots of construction

DISTRICT WELCOMES ITS BIGGEST-EVER FRESHMAN CLASS, STARTS SIX-YEAR BUILDING PROGRAM

*By Kevin Forestieri*

The Mountain View-Los Altos High School District kicked off the first week of school Monday by greeting its biggest freshman class yet — 1,165 students — along with new administrators who will lead the district through a busy six years of construction to accommodate the growing student body.

New and returning students had precisely one day of class before demolition and construction activities began at Los Altos High School on Tuesday, Aug. 20, for a new two-story classroom wing. It's the first of many projects in a six-year plan that will replace and fix up large portions of the Mountain View and Los Altos high schools, the last major expansion before both campuses run out of space.

The district, for its size, is the fastest growing in Santa Clara County at a time when public school enrollment is largely on the decline, with total enrollment now at 4,462 students, according to district officials. Although previous enrollment figures greatly exaggerated growth projections, the budget passed in June was nearly flawless — it anticipated 4,464 students.

The school year also marks a big transition in leadership, with Superintendent Nellie Meyer replacing former Superintendent Jeff Harding in July. Meyer hails from Mt. Diablo Unified School District where she served as superintendent for six years.

Though she presided over a much larger K-12 district, Meyer said her passion has always been for high school. In an interview with the *Voice* in June, Meyer said she was a high school teacher and administrator in San Diego, where she spent many years

▶ See ***MVLA***, *page 14*

## FENTANYL

▶ Continued from page 5

College of Medical Toxicology and American Academy of Clinical Toxicology.

Nitrile gloves should generally do the job when handling the drug, according to the statement, and N95 respirator masks could offer protection in "exceptional circumstances" where the drug has been aerosolized. Law enforcement officers who believe they had a dangerous encounter with fentanyl described symptoms that don't match with those of an opioid overdose, which include slowed breathing and unresponsiveness.

That's in stark contrast to the symptoms often reported by emergency responders, which can include hyperventilating, tingling and alteration of the senses, similar to the symptoms of a panic attack.

"Reports of emergency responders developing symptoms after contact with these substances have described nonspecific findings such as 'dizziness' or 'feeling like body shutting down,' 'dying' without objective signs of opioid toxicity such as respiratory depression," according to the statement.

### 'Great wave of paranoia'

So what is behind the apparent hysteria? The U.S. Justice Department began sending alarming notices and videos to emergency responders on the dangers of fentanyl a few years ago, according to Mike McEvoy, editor for the Journal of Emergency Medical Services (JEMS). Advice released in 2016 stated in no uncertain terms that fentanyl can be absorbed in the skin and kill you — a statement that was later contradicted in advice released in late 2017.

Add in the constant media coverage of someone coming in contact with these high-powered opiates and getting sick, he said, and it's caused a "great wave of paranoia" that's unwarranted and misinformed.

"The Justice Department has backpedaled on this considerably, but the damage has been done," McEvoy said.

Adding to the absurdity of warning that touching the powder could be fatal, McEvoy said that drug companies have been trying for years to speed up the administration of fentanyl in hospital patients without the use of injections. The best they can do is a fentanyl patch, which takes a full 24 hours of skin contact before a reasonable amount of the drug makes it into the bloodstream. Similarly, inadvertently breathing in puffs of the powdered drug hanging the air is a highly unlikely way to get sick, he said.

"It's possible they can get a low dose of the fentanyl and it made them a little woozy, but that's like drinking a beer — the quantity you would have to inhale would just be astronomical," McEvoy said.

Fentanyl is used every day in hospitals, providing fast pain relief through injections and patches, and medical staff don't take any special precautions when handling the drug, said Dr. Mark Adams, chief medical officer for El Camino Hospital. Penetration through the skin is a tall order and requires quite a bit of chemical force, he said, which is why patches are packed with the opioid in liquid form. Breathing in fentanyl could conceivably be a risk for emergency responders, but it would be highly unlikely.

"You have to have a huge concentration in a very closed space, some current stirring it up or a device that aerosolizes it, but it's not something that just happens," he said. "It takes a lot of effort to get aerosolized enough to get serious absorption."

### Risk to K-9s

Adams said police should be cautious when handling any unknown substances they encounter in the field, including meth labs that have harmful, toxic chemicals, and that officers should be equipped to protect themselves in cases where they don't know what they're handling. Synthetic opioids do pose a credible risk specifically to drug-sniffing K-9 dogs, Adams said, and Narcan is often carried by DEA agents specifically for resuscitating dogs.

"They get a lot closer to (the drugs), they get their nose in it, and then it gets into their mucous membranes," Adams said. "There are instances when police dogs will pass out."

> ***'Because we see all those people who are near dead ... it creates this mindset that this is really bad stuff, and even a little bit of it could do the same to you.'***
>
> MIKE MCEVOY, JOURNAL OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

JEMS, for its part, has been trying to bring the EMS community back to reality, making recent posts on the "facts and fiction" of fentanyl exposure and the true risks it can pose. That isn't to say the substance is inert or harmless — fentanyl is 50 times stronger than heroin — but that exaggerating the risk of exposure may act as an impediment to helping drug users get medical help.

"There have been reported incidents of overdose patients not being provided appropriate medical care; hazardous materials response teams are being activated erroneously; or criminal charges being leveled against individuals based upon the belief that their actions endangered responders. This must stop," according to a post by the group in May.

Officers in the Mountain View Police Department have yet to report adverse symptoms caused by fentanyl, Lt. Frank St. Clair said in an email, though the department has prepared for the possibility. Gloves and masks are available to police who come in contact with powerful synthetic opiates including fentanyl, and officers have quick access to Narcan both at the station and in the field. Officers have been trained on how to identify and treat someone suspected of an overdose, which has already come in handy.

"We have had successful applications of Narcan since 2018 by officers for people experiencing opiate related overdoses," St. Clair said.

As a precaution, Mountain View officers no longer test any suspected narcotics themselves out in the field, which was seen as a protective step to increase officer safety when handling unknown substances that could be dangerous, St. Clair said.

"With the lethality of fentanyl, we do not believe the risk should be downplayed," he said. "In most situations, officers can safely deal with unknown substances by taking precautions and remaining vigilant. But it should be noted that fentanyl is at its most dangerous before officers become aware of its presence at a scene."

The most up-to-date safety recommendations from the DEA suggest that the guidelines have been loosened to better represent the true threat of fentanyl exposure to emergency responders, stating that skin contact is "not expected to lead to harmful effects" if the exposed skin is promptly washed. The guidelines also state that fentanyl has been subject to "misinformation and inconsistent recommendations" that have resulted in "confusion" in the first responder community.

When asked about what that misinformation was, a spokeswoman for the DEA provided the *Voice* with a press release that quotes former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein calling fentanyl and similar drugs "one of the most dangerous threats facing law enforcement officers."

McEvoy said the fears among first responders may have to do with the growing number of drug overdoses, and police and fire personnel witnessing people who are nearly dead because of the drugs they injected or swallowed.

"Because we see all those people who are near dead — and some who are actually dead — it creates this mindset that this is really bad stuff, and even a little bit of it could do the same to you," McEvoy said. "But they don't know how much they need. The guy who is using the stuff and sticking the needle in his arm knows how much they need."

*Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com*

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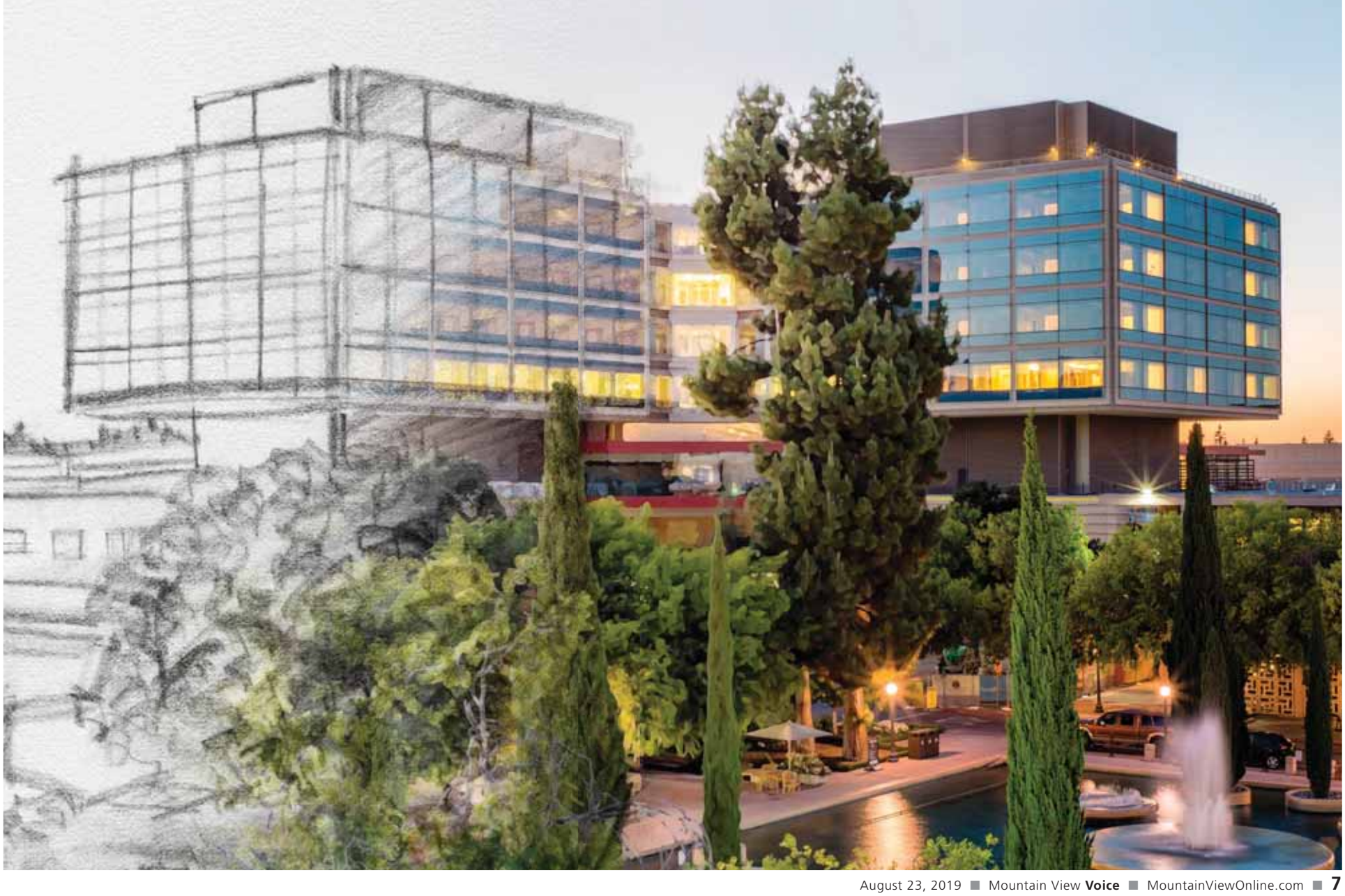

## GUN CONTROL

▶ Continued from page 5

gun control legislation to have a chance of success.

"It's unacceptable that we're okay as a nation with thousands of Americans dying every year," Darrah said. "The time has passed for inaction. The time has passed for thoughts and prayers. We need substantial bills passed."

Organizer Christine Welter decried the widespread access to assault weapons and rising waves of hate speech, a motivating factor in the El Paso, Texas, shooting that left 20 dead and dozens injured.

Despite enjoying hunting as a pastime, Welter, who grew up in Germany but has lived in the United States for 30 years, said she would take a more "radical" approach and supports the repeal of the Second Amendment.

"What's going on here, I think, is just unbelievable," Welter said. "It's the only place in the world where anyone can just go out with an assault weapon and shoot."

Welter said that the mass shooting at the Gilroy Garlic Festival felt personal because a co-worker of hers knew one of the victims.

Billie Norman, who attended the rally dressed as the Statue of Liberty, expressed similar thoughts.

"I'm from Ohio and I know the family of someone who died in Dayton," Norman said. "For me it hits too close to home. It's real. I'm just tired."

***Billie Norman,*** *dressed up like the Statue of Liberty, sings during a rally for stricter gun control at the intersection of El Camino Real and Castro Street on Aug. 19.*

MAGALI GAUTHIER

## RENT CONTROL

▶ Continued from page 1

Speaking for the landlords, Joshua Howard of the California Apartment Association said they remained focused on passing their own 2020 ballot measure, which would neutralize most rental protections under Measure V except in extraordinary circumstances. Following him, several Mountain View apartment owners laid out their grievances, particularly that rent control doesn't provide enough for their property upkeep.

"I've looked at who I'm renting to, and I'm subsidizing a bunch of Google employees and a bunch of Facebook employees," said landlord Jeff Zell. "Why do they need rent control?"

The lukewarm reaction seemed ominous for the measure's prospects at the ballot box. Early on in the discussion, Councilman Lucas Ramirez commented that the city's measure faced a major political challenge as it tried to carve out a middle ground on a deeply polarizing issue. Was any stakeholder going to champion it?

> ***'We trust that no council member would want to harm Mountain View's renters.'***
>
> EDIE KEATING, MOUNTAIN VIEW HOUSING JUSTICE COALITION

"There needs to be a constituency that supports this measure, and as we take input, it's increasingly hard for me to see what that constituency will be," he said. "We have to be very careful with this process."

Even some natural supporters for reforming rent control seemed to be turned off by the city's latest changes. Mobile home advocates for years have been urging Mountain View leaders to extend rent control protections to them, and the upcoming ballot measure seems a perfect opportunity to press their cause.

But at the Monday meeting, the city subcommittee declined to include mobile homes, on the basis that it would be a crude fit under the rent control provisions. Councilwoman Margaret Abe-Koga promised the City Council would take up the issue on its own as a separate ordinance in the near future.

"It's not that we're not doing anything; in fact, we're going to look at it comprehensively," she said. "I really believe that mobile home parks have some distinct differences that creates a different scenario."

Similarly, council subcommittee members insisted that they needed some level of extra authority over the Rental Housing Committee, even though they acknowledged the group has done a good job so far in administering the city's rent control. By design, the 2016 rent control law was written to exclude the City Council from influencing its implementation.

City leaders favored poking some holes in this firewall. Councilman Chris Clark suggested the council should have the discretion to tweak the rent control provisions as needed, but those changes should have a "high threshold," such as a supermajority vote. He also proposed giving the council the final say for how much landlords can recoup from capital improvements, such as adding seismic upgrades, landscaping or solar panels. The council subcommittee agreed it needed authority to make changes because it was too cumbersome to go back to the voters every time an alteration was needed.

Perhaps the most important issue of the night, the council discussed increasing the annual rent cap, which is currently based on the Consumer Price Index and hovers around 3%. That amount simply wasn't enough money to support apartment owners, Clark said. In addition, the measure could require renters to pay a portion of the city's annual apartment fee that funds the rent-control program, which is currently paid entirely by landlords.

"It's hard to justify CPI being a reasonable rate of return," Clark said. "For a long-term perspective, when we talked about a sustainable rent control measure, we have to come up with some better rate of return."

The subcommittee discussed a possible rental assistance program to provide aid for any tenants who couldn't afford these higher costs.

Asked about the measure's prospects after the meeting, Abe-Koga told the *Voice* that amending rent control is the only way to sustain it for the long term. If modest reforms aren't implemented, then the California Apartment Association would persist in trying to overturn the law in every future election, and the community would remain deeply divided, she said.

For tenants, who comprise nearly 60% of the city's population, she said she believed they would see the benefits in creating a more stable program that prevented displacement and provided more flexibility.

"I'm trying to find a middle ground for the community so we can put this issue to rest and not let it dominate every election," Abe-Koga said. "I hope the tenants understand that CAA's measure is much more severe than anything the council is suggesting for reforms and will be willing to work with us to come up with a compromise."

Tenants advocates were less sanguine. While some reforms may make sense, the city's push to increase the costs carried by renters was simply a non-starter, said Keating of the Housing Justice Coalition.

"There is no need to find a common position if we are presented with an initiative that we need to oppose," Keating said. "If the council supports rents that grow faster than renter paychecks, that does not inspire confidence to give the council greater authority."

*Email Mark Noack at mnoack@mv-voice.com*

# VARGAS

▶ Continued from page 1

mascot, the golden owl.

Principal Vern Taylor, outside navigating foot traffic and handing out high-fives to every kid in his path, said it's the first time he's been to a school on its opening day. He said it was a little more frenetic than usual, but that it had been a positive experience so far.

"It's a whirlwind, but it's a good whirlwind," he said.

Vargas Elementary is the result of three years of planning and two years of construction to bring a public school to an underserved area of the district, roughly bounded by Central Expressway to the south and Highway 85 to the west. The area previously had two schools — Whisman Elementary and Slater Elementary — but both were closed due to declining enrollment and financial problems.

Without a neighborhood school, families in the area were rezoned to attend Huff, Landels and Theuerkauf elementary schools, fracturing neighborhoods in the area and making it nearly impossible to walk to school.

Despite worries that the first day of school would bring a traffic and parking nightmare, the majority of families arriving Monday appear to have walked. Getting to Vargas on foot will only get easier with time — the plan is to install a traffic light at North Whisman Road and Pacific Drive, making it less tempting to jaywalk across a busy thoroughfare.

Though construction at Vargas was largely complete this week, there were signs of missing plants and play structures, and the future field is still an active construction site with large trucks and mounds of dirt.

The school is also contending with a dispute between PG&E and a nearby homeowners association over a utility hookup to the school, forcing the district to rely on a gas generator to keep the school powered. Several classrooms on the second floor of the campus remain dark and empty, pending a PG&E power hookup that will allow use of the elevators and make the second floor comply with ADA accessibility requirements.

Bringing the community together under the banner of Vargas Elementary has been a top priority for several months, said Sarah Reginaldo, Vargas' first PTA president. Juggling the first-day photos, managing PTA membership sign-ups and hastily shuffling around a small utility cart with supplies Monday, Reginaldo told the *Voice* that she jumped on the opportunity to bring together the previously fragmented neighborhoods under the banner of a new school.

"I said let's try to make it the best it can be on day one," Reginaldo said.

MAGALI GAUTHIER

***Sean Dechter** welcomes his new third-grade students to the first day of class at Jose Antonio Vargas Elementary School on Aug. 19.*

Leading up to the first day of school, Reginaldo and founding PTA members hosted play dates aimed at uniting the area, kicked off by a "May Fest" social on May 4 when more than 300 people showed up. Besides in-person meetups, she said they used snail mail and word of mouth — pretty much everything short of door-to-door solicitations — to prepare families for the new school, she said.

Fundraising and financing school programs through the PTA is still a work in progress, and will likely include a mix of new and existing programs from schools like Huff and Landels, where a majority of parents came from. It may take a while to emulate programs that have been established for decades at other schools, she said.

"They're going to want what they had at their schools, and I'm not sure we can get there yet," Reginaldo said.

Though the school has a lot of new staff members— six new teachers and one rehired teacher — five teachers from elsewhere in the district volunteered in March to reassign themselves to Vargas for its first year. Sean Dechter, a third-grade teacher at Vargas who switched from Monta Loma, told the *Voice* he was excited to be a part of the new school.

"As a child, I started as a kindergartner at a brand-new elementary school in Oceanside, (California)," he said. "I thought this was a great opportunity for me as a teacher to start at a new school."

On Aug. 15, the district hosted a dedication ceremony at the new campus honoring Jose Antonio Vargas. A former Mountain View resident who lived a short jaunt from the school after emigrating from the Philippines as a child, Vargas went on to become a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker and an outspoken immigrant rights activist. Vargas was a teen when he discovered he was an undocumented immigrant, and announced his status in a 2011 New York Times Magazine story after hiding it for years.

Speaking to a packed crowd in the sweltering multipurpose room,Vargas stressed the importance of community and breaking down barriers through the power of storytelling, which has helped him communicate with people across the country with different points of view. He said he effectively has two families in the United States — direct family members and the thousands of friends and acquaintances he's made over the years.

"I wouldn't be the human being I am without community," he said. "The school, our school, represents the power of community."

Vargas was on hand Monday morning, greeting new students and parents.

### Big changes across the K-8 district

The 2019-20 school year has been marked on calendars for years as a critical moment for the Mountain View Whisman School District, setting in motion plans to open Vargas and completely redraw school attendance boundaries. Aiming to accommodate a new school and bring relief to chronically overcrowded campuses south of El Camino Real, the school board agreed in 2017 on new attendance boundaries with a goal of keeping schools between 400 and 450 students.

It's still unclear how close the school district will get to those numbers, but it does mean Aug. 19 was the first day at a new school for hundreds of students who were relocated as a result of the new boundaries. Landels Elementary, which took the brunt of the changes, was expected to lose 106 students who will now attend Vargas this year, according to 2018 estimates. In their place, an estimated 76 students from the Shoreline West neighborhood who used to go to Bubb will be at Landels this year.

Fall 2019 also means the end of several straight years of construction that has torn up, rebuilt and renovated every school site in the district. The original Measure G bond passed by voters in 2014 has been exhausted, putting an end to the near-constant presence of hard hats, dust and fencing. The 2019-20 school year brings improved portable classrooms to Bubb, Huff and Landels elementary schools as well as the district's three preschool sites, and an expanded playground and new furniture at the shared Castro and Mistral elementary school site, according to a district staff report.

Although the original construction schedule shows everything was supposed to be completed by July 2019, a few things remain unfinished. Theuerkauf's expanded multipurpose room won't be done until October, and Vargas Elementary's field is tentatively scheduled to be done by March 2020.

## HANGAR ONE

▶ Continued from page 1

for how and when this cleanup would begin. The company issued occasional updates, mostly saying it was continuing to study the project and test out different cleanup methods.

The new 300-page technical report lays out in intricate detail how Planetary Ventures would undertake the complex task of removing lead, asbestos and other harmful chemicals from the massive hangar structure. About 15 years ago, environmental studies determined that these hazardous materials were embedded in Hangar One's paint and siding, and these toxins may have been flaking off and leaching into the nearby baylands.

At the time, a full rehabilitation of Hangar One was estimated to cost around $40 million. Based on that daunting price, U.S. Navy officials in 2011 decided to remove the thousands of panels of corrugated laminate siding covering the hangar, leaving it as a bare steel skeleton. In a controversial move, they also proposed tearing down the structure, describing it as the most sensible plan in light of the immense costs of a full cleanup.

When Google agreed to shoulder Hangar One's restoration as part of the lease, it was celebrated as a huge victory for an impassioned cohort of historic preservationists who regard it as an irreplaceable relic of Moffett Field's military days and one of Silicon Valley's iconic structures. Those advocates will likely be very happy to hear that the cleanup plans are finally moving forward, said Mountain View resident Greg Unangst, who chairs the Moffett Field Restoration Advisory Board.

"People will be amazed at the cost, but they'll be pleased to see that this is finally happening," he said. "Up to this point, a lot of people were getting frustrated over the apparent lack of action."

The new report, prepared by the Burlingame-based consulting firm EKI Environment & Water, examined three options for Hangar One. One option, to do nothing at all, was included only as a baseline for comparison. A second alternative called for recoating the entire structure in a new layer of protective paint that would prevent lead and other substances from chipping off. Going that route and later reskinning the hangar would cost a total of $115 million, but it wouldn't do much to reduce the toxic materials contained in the structure, according to the report.

The authors of the report threw their support behind a third option that would involve something akin to sand-blasting the structure to remove its toxic coating. Under this plan, teams of workers would blast the hangar's steel framework with a copper slag powder that was determined to be the most effective substance to use. To fully clean approximately 1.8 million square feet of surface area on the hangar, the consultant team estimates they will need about 5,000 tons of copper slag to do the job, and occasionally they may need workers to go at certain spots with chemical stripping solvents or hand tools.

The project also calls for a plastic covering to be wrapped around all the exterior of Hangar One and a rubber mat to be spread along the base to prevent hazardous wastes from drifting away. In total, the project expects to collect about 6,500 tons of hazardous waste that will be taken to an offsite disposal facility. This cleanup phase is expected to cost more than $85 million, not counting subsequent expenses for reskinning the structure.

Given Hangar One's massive size, the rehabilitation project would require a vast quantity of scaffolding to be built around the interior and exterior, at an estimated cost of $54 million. In addition, seismic retrofits to the hangar are expected to run about $17 million.

While Google is showing its commitment to saving Hangar One, the company's longer-term intentions for the hangar remain a total mystery, Unangst said. Initially when the lease was signed, the company indicated it would use the site for research and development of robotics and aviation technology. A Google spokesperson said any future use would adhere to the historic status of the location.

While work on Hangar One has been in a holding pattern for years, Google has made some headway in rehabilitating the aging Hangars Two and Three. These twin 171-foot-high structures, both built in the 1940s, today have structural damage as well as toxic contamination in their foundation.

About two years ago, work crews began fixing the giant wooden doors on both sides of Hangar Two. Around the same time, news reports indicated that Hangar Two was being used as the staging grounds for Google cofounder Sergey Brin's side project to build a modern-day zeppelin. According to people involved in the project, the airship was intended to deliver aid cargo to remote locations as well as used for luxury travel.

The fate of Hangar Three is less certain. Structural engineers previously reported that the wooden framework was sagging in certain areas. From his talks with people working at the site, Unangst said he had been told that Hangar Three could be too dilapidated to save.

"There's a possibility that Hangar Three is not salvageable," he said. "From what I know, it's collapsing. It's a wooden structure that's starting to give way. When they fix one section, the next section fails."

A Google spokesman told the *Voice* that Planetary Ventures and NASA are still evaluating the structure of Hangar Three.

The new cleanup plans put together by Planetary Ventures are currently under a 30-day review period for feedback from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

If the plans proceed as scheduled, the cleanup effort would start next year with an expected completion date sometime in 2023. At that time, Planetary Ventures officials expect to begin "recladding" the hangar, covering the steel framing with new paneling.

In a statement, U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo hailed the new plan to restore Hangar One as a crucial next step.

"The Hangar symbolizes the pride and potential of our local community," she said. "I'm so pleased my work along with my California Congressional colleagues, federal partners, advocacy groups, businesses, and historic preservation associations has secured a bright future for the landmark."



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, CA invites public comment on a removal action to manage PCB- and lead-impacted paints at Navy Site 29 (Hangar 1). Removal action alternatives are presented in a document called the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) for Hangar 1.

Environmental data was collected to determine the extent of contamination, evaluate potential risks to human health and the environment and establish protective cleanup goals for Hangar 1. The Draft Final EE/CA, which is reviewed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of California Water Quality Control Board, evaluates alternatives and presents NASA's recommended alternative for cleanup of the steel elements and concrete walls. The public is invited to review and comment on this Draft Final EE/CA during a 30-day public comment period from August 15, 2019 to September 13, 2019. NASA will consider all written comments on the EE/CA received by September 13.

A copy of the Draft Final EE/CA can be found on the NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field website at **http://environment.arc.nasa.gov**.

NASA will host a public meeting on August 27, 2019 to accept written comments regarding the Draft Final EE/CA. This meeting will focus on the EE/CA rather than the recladding effort which will be undertaken after the abatement has commenced.

Public comments should be directed to:

**Garrett Michael Turner, P.E., PMP**
**Restoration Program Manager**
**NASA Ames Research Center**
**M/S 204-15**
**Building N204, Room 102B**
**Moffett Field, CA 94035**

**garrett.michael.turner@nasa.gov**

Public Meeting

**Tuesday, August 27, 2019**
**6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**

NASA Ames Conference Center
Building 3
500 Severyns Rd.
NASA Ames Research Center
Moffett Field, CA 94035

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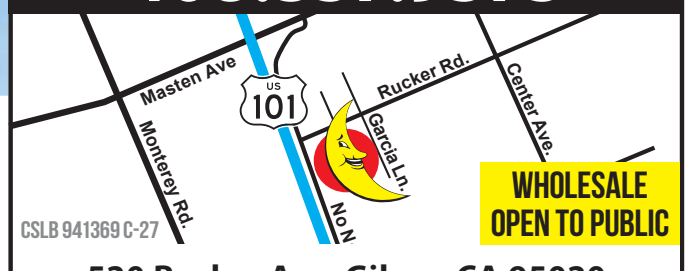


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CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

The community is invited to attend a City of Mountain View Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting to comment on the Draft El Camino Real Streetscape Plan at the following time and location:

**Wednesday, August 28, 2019 — 6:30 p.m.**
**Plaza Conference Room, Second Floor**
**Mountain View City Hall**
**500 Castro Street, Mountain View**

The Draft Streetscape Plan builds on the 2014 El Camino Real Precise Plan and provides design guidelines to improve conditions for all modes of transportation and enhance the experience of those who live, work, and visit along the corridor in the City of Mountain View. If you have any questions, please contact the City of Mountain View Public Works Department at **public.works@mountainview.gov**, or (650) 903-6311.

The City of Mountain View B/PAC agenda packet will be available Friday, August 23, 2019, after 4 p.m. at **www.mountainview.gov**, in the Public Works Department and City Clerk's Office at City Hall at 500 Castro Street.



## MVLA

▶ *Continued from page 5*

working on college and career readiness programs.

Meyer said the high school district was already on her radar after a valued employee from Mt. Diablo switched to Mountain View-Los Altos, and that the description given by the recruiter soliciting applications for superintendent felt like the right fit.

"They started to describe the community and the students, and I thought, 'Okay, I think I can bring something to this,'" she said.

When asked whether she sees herself as a visionary or a steady hand on the tiller, Meyer opted for the former — always looking at the "big picture," big ideas and bringing people together, she said. Meyer said she planned to be mindful of the district's good work to date, and avoid inadvertently replacing programs and services that ought to be preserved.

"What I've learned with already having experience as a superintendent is to be humble about what you don't know and to kind of come to understand the good things that are happening without imprinting your ideas right away on top of something," Meyer said.

Meyer will be joined by several new staff members this year, including Mountain View High School Assistant Principal

MAGALI GAUTHIER

***Nellie Meyer**, Mountain View-Los Altos High School District's new superintendent, started work in July.*

Daniella Quiñones, who replaces Carmen Gomez. Quiñones, introducing herself to the school board at a meeting last week, said she had a bilingual, bicultural upbringing in San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, and relocated to the Bay Area seven years ago. She played several roles in the San Mateo Union High School District including as Spanish teacher, instructional coach, technology coordinator and data assessment coordinator.

She was part of a team that in 2015 received a $30,000 grant to rebuild a Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) program, which previously lacked textbooks, training and curriculum to meet the needs of traditionally underserved students. The grant was an important tool for recruiting underrepresented students into AP classes, Quiñones told the board, which has been a priority in Mountain View-Los Altos for years.

Also joining the district office this year is Sumita Gosala, the new assistant director for special education, who comes to the district from Jefferson Elementary School District in Daly City. Her expertise includes working with students with moderate to severe learning disabilities, and she has credentials for working with special needs students with traumatic brain injuries, orthopedic impairments and neurological and physical disabilities.

The district also hired a new IT director, Bob Fishstrom, who previously worked in a similar position at the Sequoia Union High School District. Before that, he served as a principal and vice principal at Carlmont High School in Belmont.

Los Altos High School, now over 2,200 students in size, will see the first groundbreaking project of the $295 million Measure E bond, which was passed by voters last year. Mountain View's equivalent, a two-story classroom wing, was postponed after California's Division of the State Architect (DSA) delayed construction permits due to a "significant work backlog," according to a recent update by the district.

Construction updates are available at mvla.net/page/5191.

■ A+E BRIEF

### THE PEAR'S ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TO BOW OUT

**Betsy Kruse Craig**

After two years as the artistic director at the Pear Theatre in Mountain View, Betsy Kruse Craig will be stepping down in January to accept a new promotion as program director of speech, debate and performing arts for Stratford Middle Schools.

In addition to teaching, which she has been juggling simultaneously with her position as artistic director, she will now oversee the theater directors at Stratford's schools in Milpitas, Fremont and Sunnyvale.

"Picking up the Pear Theatre mantle after Diane Tasca was both an honor and a challenge," Kruse Craig said in a statement announcing her departure. "I'm immensely proud of the new programs we've initiated, as well as the progress we've made in preparing for the ongoing challenges of being a solvent nonprofit arts organization in Silicon Valley."

The Pear Theatre board of directors will conduct a search for a new artistic director over the next six months. Kruse Craig's final season at Pear Theatre includes performances of "An Ideal Husband" by Oscar Wilde, which opens this month, "Sweat" by Lynn Nottage and "You/Emma" by Paz Pardo.

While accepting the new offer was a "tough decision," Kruse Craig said, "being an artistic director takes a lot of time and dedication, and in the end I realized I would not be able to continue with the level of involvement I want to put into that, if I'm working more on the education side." She added, "I'm grateful to the board for their understanding, their confidence in me over these two years, and their support of my efforts there."

The performance dates for Kruse Craig's final shows with Pear Theatre are: "An Ideal Husband," Aug. 23-Sept. 15; "Sweat," Oct. 18-Nov. 10; "You/Emma," Dec. 6-Dec. 15.

*—Maya Homan*

## CRIME BRIEFS

▶ *Continued from page 4*

The man did not send any money, and later met with officers in the police department lobby to report the suspected scams on Thursday, Aug. 15.

The phone calls are similar to a handful of reported scams received by the Mountain View Police Department earlier this year. In a statement released in March, the department said residents were receiving calls from people claiming to be connected to the government or local authorities and demanding that the victims pay money or face consequences, including imprisonment.

Along with asking for money, suspected scammers have also asked for victims to "verify" their Social Security numbers.

Law enforcement officials do not ask for money or personal information over the phone, according to the statement, and residents are encouraged not to pick up the phone when called by an unknown number. Anyone who receives a scam call may report the incident to the Mountain View Police Department or file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.

*—Kevin Forestieri*

# Viewpoint

## Shedding light on the disagreement between PG&E and the California Station HOA

*By Jim Pollart*

**Guest Opinion**

I'm writing about the article in last week's edition of the *Voice* entitled "HOA dispute leaves new school in the dark" about efforts by PG&E to provide electric power to the new Vargas Elementary school.

The article refers to a "protracted dispute" between PG&E and the California Station Homeowners Association (HOA), and suggests that the homeowners association is not acting in good faith to provide the necessary easement to PG&E as quickly as possible. I am a longtime resident of California Station. Many of my neighbors were troubled by the article and suggested that I write a letter to the *Voice* presenting our view of the situation.

I first want to point out that the California Station HOA was not consulted at the time the decision was made to run the electrical lines for the new school through our property. Our HOA was contacted by the school district for the first time this past June — just seven weeks before school was scheduled to start — and informed that the new power supply lines ran through our property, and therefore we needed to provide an easement to PG&E to install and maintain those lines.

Since that time, our HOA board has been working with PG&E to complete the necessary easement. Because the HOA board has a fiduciary duty to protect HOA assets, the HOA board had certain questions that needed to be answered. For example, PG&E didn't specify what they wanted to build on HOA property. Further, PG&E requested unlimited access to HOA property, to build whatever they wanted at any time, without any requirement to notify the HOA prior to starting work. The HOA board has submitted several draft easements to PG&E. So far, all of them have been rejected without comment. This has been perplexing and frustrating, since PG&E seems to be violating precedent they themselves set when they needed access to our HOA property to complete projects in the past. In spite of PG&E's reluctance to work constructively with our board, our board members have been proactive and responsive in an effort to complete the easement as quickly as possible.

Secondly, in hindsight, given that the new school has been planned for more than three years, it would have been helpful to start the easement process earlier to provide time to complete the easement well before the school opening date. Again, our HOA was not aware an easement was required until June. If we had been aware sooner, we would've started working with PG&E sooner to avoid a last-minute fire drill.

In conclusion, the residents of California Station want the community to know that we support our local schools and students. We did not sign on to be involved with the power supply for the new school, but we're happy to do our part. Our HOA board members, and our entire community, look forward to completing the easement as soon as possible so the new school can get power and we can all move on with our lives.

*Jim Pollart is a longtime California Station resident.*

## LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

### DISCUSSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo,

Having read your Mountain View town hall summary ("Eshoo tackles impeachment, health care at town hall meeting," July 26), it came as a surprise to me that climate change was not discussed, and I decided to attend your Redwood City town hall meeting. Again I was most disappointed by the absence of climate change. Regrettably, I was not given an opportunity to speak.

I will not waste much time about the urgency of this matter, other than to say that the outlook to recover from climate change is most distressing.

Climate change is by no means a new concept. It was well understood at the international level through the 1990 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. Yet we have decided to ignore the issue. As a generation, we have utterly failed to take action. Even when we had a presidential candidate like Hillary Clinton who suggested that we can address the issue by installing millions of solar panels, I cringe. She failed to understand the issue. In fact, it was not until I recently heard the new European Union president, Ursula von der Leyen, speak in Brussels, that I finally heard a top politician that ranked and addressed the issue as it should — the No. 1 priority issue!

You may feel at loss as to how to address the topic. That is understandable. But it simply cannot be swept under the rug for another day. It must be brought out at every opportunity, and people must be reminded.

*Mogens Lauritzen*
*Pilgrim Avenue*


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***Dim sum offerings*** *from Fu Lam Mum in Mountain View include (clockwise from left): mushroom dumplings; sautéed green beans; shrimp dumplings; beef and cilantro noodle rolls; and shrimp and pork dumplings.*

# Back for some dim sum

***A lengthy remodeling project*** *left the main dining room at Fu Lam Mum with a clean, contemporary design.*

## AFTER A LENGTHY REMODEL, POPULAR FU LAM MUM REOPENS ON CASTRO STREET

*Story by Edward Gerard Fike | Photos by Magali Gauthier*

In the restaurant business, an industry marked by high turnover and fast-changing fortunes, "closed for remodeling" can often signal "closed for good." As the early 2017 shutdown of popular Mountain View Chinese restaurant Fu Lam Mum neared the two-year mark, locals began to wonder if the dim sum darling, a Castro Street stalwart for nearly two decades, would ever reopen.

Fu Lam Mum finally reemerged last November. Proprietor Ben Quan, who owns the building at 153 Castro St., was unfazed by the lengthy delay. He took the long view of the ambitious project, which entailed a flashy facelift of the main dining room and the addition of a second floor to replace the mezzanine-level banquet area.

"It was like building a house within a house," he said.

Quan converted the new upstairs to office space after concluding that the former restaurant layout, which contained a staggering 360 seats, was no longer viable in an era of rising costs. (One clear benefit of the slimmed-down, 155-seat floor plan: The noise level is no longer ear-splittingly loud.)

The renovated space looks terrific. The clean, contemporary design

***Decorative cutouts*** *and airy screens separate smaller dining areas while preserving an open feeling at the downtown Mountain View restaurant.*

features a large central dining room with comfortable furnishings and oversized circular light fixtures. Screens sporting a bamboo leaf motif near the entry and on both sides of the restaurant provide discrete spaces for large parties. Decorative cutouts in the screening create a feeling of openness while preserving an intimate ambiance for guests seated in the alcoves. Nine large fish tanks containing live seafood selections form a striking, illuminated rectangle inside the far back wall.

Fu Lam Mum specializes in traditional Cantonese dim sum, serving shareable, bite-sized portions of food in small steamer baskets or plates. Dim sum is customarily paired with tea, and I savored the floral, slightly sweet chrysanthemum flavor ($1.95) during one visit. The restaurant augments the menu with traditional Chinese specialties, which tend to be most popular with dinner guests. During prime weekend brunch and lunch hours, carts containing freshly made dim sum are wheeled from table to table.

A dim sum restaurant's reputation rests on the quality of its dumplings. Fu Lam Mum aces this test. The stretchy, translucent skin of each dumpling I sampled was delicately pleated, revealing the chef's prowess and creating a pleasing presentation. Shrimp dumplings ($5.95) showcased plump, juicy crustaceans while the mixed mushroom dumplings ($4.95) were an earthy treat. The piquant housemade hot sauce enhanced the flavor of both.

The steamed barbecue pork buns ($4.95), a dim sum staple, were superb. The soft, snow-white buns were light and doughy. Each bite yielded a satisfying serving of juicy, lightly seasoned pork. I was tempted to polish off the entire order, but wisely moved on to the luscious beef and cilantro noodle rolls ($5.95). This memorable dish was composed of silky, slightly chewy rice noodles wrapped around thin layers of tender beef.

I had mixed results when veering from the dim sum core of the menu. I relished the sautéed string beans ($13), which were sprinkled with tasty bits of garlic and bursting with freshness and flavor. Stir-fried noodles ($14) were cooked to crunchy perfection and paired well with a medley of top-quality vegetables. A pair of poultry options, however, underwhelmed. The bountiful strips of golden-brown lemon chicken ($16) were marred by a weak, watery dipping sauce. Meanwhile, the sliver of roasted duck ($13) was barely discernible amid thick layers of fat and bone. I did not have the patience or chopstick dexterity to dissect this disappointing dish.

Food was delivered promptly in short, steady intervals. Service was efficient, though waitstaff failed to engage much beyond order-taking. If you're unfamiliar with the cuisine, I recommend researching dim sum's greatest hits online. Otherwise, you may find that employees are ill-equipped to walk you through the expansive menu.

***Green tea*** *flavors this bite-sized dessert that's filled with black sesame paste.*

***Mango pudding****, a brightly colored sweet made with puréed mango and condensed milk, is one of more than a dozen desserts on the menu.*

Despite the stocked, full bar near the entry, Fu Lam Mum is currently limiting alcohol choices to beer and wine. Those options are neither suggested nor promoted. During one evening visit, a request for a glass of chardonnay drew a puzzled look from my server. A brief investigation revealed that there were no white wines available. I ended up ordering a pleasant cabernet and pondered the restaurant's missed opportunity for high-profit liquor sales. (Quan said that he plans to add a cocktail menu at an undetermined future date.)

Fu Lam Mum offers over a dozen modestly portioned desserts, including coconut and mango pudding, steamed pumpkin rolls and sweet tofu with syrup. I indulged in the warm, crispy sesame balls ($3.95). The mild sweetness of the red bean paste filling combined nicely with the nutty-flavored sesame seed topping.

Though weekend brunch commands lengthy wait times, Fu Lam Mum was never more than one-third full during my three weekday visits. Quan is unconcerned, insisting that growing word of mouth will lure former fans and curious newcomers to the refurbished space. He points out that the restaurant now reaches capacity with less than half the customers needed to fill up the old space. That's a dim sum equation that adds up.

## DINING NOTES

**Fu Lam Mum**
153 Castro St., Mountain View
650-967-1689

**Hours:** Closed Monday. Lunch: Tuesday-Friday 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dinner: Sunday-Thursday 5-9:30 p.m.; Friday-Saturday 5-10 p.m.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Reservations** | ✓ |
| **Credit cards** | ✓ |
| **Happy hour** | ● |
| **Children** | ✓ |
| **Takeout** | ✓ |
| **Outdoor dining** | ● |
| **Parking** | *Street and nearby lots* |
| **Alcohol** | *Beer and wine* |
| **Corkage** | *$15 (limit two bottles)* |
| **Noise level** | *Moderate* |
| **Bathroom cleanliness** | *Excellent* |

■ **MOVIE**OPENINGS

# Runaway movie

'WHERE'D YOU GO, BERNADETTE' VENTURES IN INTERESTING DIRECTIONS

**★★1/2 (Century 16 & 20, Icon)**

Expectations are rarely a film's best friend. When I saw a trailer advertising "Where'd You Go, Bernadette," I scratched my head. Isn't this the adaptation of Maria Semple's bestselling novel, in which the title character pulls a vanishing act on her family? So why is this trailer emphatically spoiling that mystery by revealing her hideout?

As it turns out, the film itself pulls the same trick on the audience, even faster than the trailer does. In the opening moments, we see where Bernadette went, then flashback to find out how and why she got there. It's a tactic guaranteed to tick off the majority of the novel's fans (although they know the ending anyway). Those who are arrive at the film with preconceptions in check, because they haven't read the novel — or agree to take this new version of the story on its own terms — may find there's much to appreciate in director Richard Linklater's take on the material.

For starters, Linklater enlisted Cate Blanchett to star as Bernadette Fox, a celebrated architect weighed down by a two-decade slump. The retired Bernadette has more or less succumbed to the very suburban ennui she sought to deconstruct through her art. When not troubleshooting her relationships with her husband, Elgin Branch (Billy Crudup), and daughter Bee (Emma Nelson), Bernadette tinkers with her ramshackle Seattle-area house, a fixer-upper project that seems destined to remain unfinished. Our manic, insomniac hero slips deeper into her own isolation until a sudden crisis prompts Elgin to stage an intervention and, one open bathroom window later, Bernadette's in the wind.

Linklater ("Boyhood") and co-screenwriters Holly Gent and Vincent Palmo Jr. (Linklater's "Me and Orson Welles") necessarily abandon Semple's uncinematic epistolary format: without rewriting the story, they reconfigure the plot. In doing so, they allow for a whimsical and eccentric character study about the artistic personality. It's a personality type that's arguably necessarily selfish since it resists playing by the — and here's that pesky word again — expectations of conventional society. Naturally, Linklater proves sympathetic to Bernadette, but he never shies from how difficult she can be to live with: While her daughter unconditionally loves her, Bernadette's husband more so tolerates her, and her acquaintances — embodied in Kristen Wiig's exasperated, exasperating neighbor and fellow parent — loathe her.

Linklater's approach maximizes his movie star: If you have Cate Blanchett fully on board, you don't shove her to the margins. Instead, we stay by Bernadette's side for the vast majority of the picture, which makes for an emotional and thematically intriguing wild ride through Bernadette's inordinately privileged but fraught life. After the ticklish suburban satire of the first act and before the hopeful uplift of the third, the film's darkest-before-the-dawn middle passage honors the complexity of mental-health struggles for the sufferer and those who, unsure at every step, try to steer their troubled loved one down a path to healing.

Linklater's "Where'd You Go, Bernadette" is hardly perfect: The character's conspicuous privilege threatens to intrude on the audience's sympathies and the storytelling wavers in tone. As such, it's a bit of a mess, one that arguably exposes a navel-gazing narrowness of theme (art about how hard artists have it) and lets its protagonist too easily off the hook for her own solipsistic obsessions and the damage they have caused. But Blanchett's humanization of Bernadette keeps the film relatable and has us rooting for her to get back on track and figure it all out, for her to solve the mystery of sustained happiness.

*Rated PG-13 for some strong language and drug material. Two hours, 10 minutes.*

*— Peter Canavese*





■ **NOW**SHOWING

**47 Meters Down: Uncaged (PG-13)** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (1945) (Not Rated)** **Stanford Theatre:** Friday

**Angel has Fallen (R)** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun. **ShowPlace Icon:** Fri. - Sun.

**The Angry Birds Movie 2 (PG)** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.

**Blinded by the Light (PG-13)** **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun. **Palo Alto Square:** Fri. - Sun. **ShowPlace Icon:** Fri. - Sun.

**The Curse of the Cat People (1944) (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. **ShowPlace Icon:** Fri. - Sun.

**The Fast & Furious: Hobbs & Shaw (PG-13)** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun. **ShowPlace Icon:** Fri. - Sun.

**Good Boys (R)** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.

**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. **ShowPlace Icon:** Fri. - Sun.

**Orchestra Wives (1942) (Not Rated)** **Stanford Theatre:** Sat. & Sun.

**The Peanut Butter Falcon (PG-13)** **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun. **Palo Alto Square:** Fri. - Sun. **ShowPlace Icon:** Fri. - Sun.

**Ready or Not (R)** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun. **ShowPlace Icon:** Fri. - Sun.

**Scary Stories to tell in the Dark (PG-13)** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.

**Spider-Man: Far From Home (PG) ★★★** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.

**Sun Valley Serenade (1941) (Not Rated)** **Stanford Theatre:** Sat. & Sun.

**Tel Aviv on Fire (Not Rated)** **Guild Theatre:** Fri. - Sun.

**Toy Story 4 (G) ★★★1/2** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.

**Where'd You Go, Bernadette (PG-13)** **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun. **ShowPlace Icon:** Fri. - Sun.

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

**Aquarius:** 430 Emerson St., Palo Alto (For recorded listings: 327-3241) **tinyurl.com/Aquariuspa**
**Century Cinema 16:** 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View **tinyurl.com/Century16**
**Century 20 Downtown:** 825 Middlefield Rd, Redwood City **tinyurl.com/Century20**
**CineArts at Palo Alto Square:** 3000 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (For information: 493-0128) **tinyurl.com/Pasquare**
**Guild:** 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park (For recorded listings: 566-8367) **tinyurl.com/Guildmp**
**ShowPlace Icon:** 2575 California St. #601, Mountain View **tinyurl.com/iconMountainView**
**Stanford Theatre:** 221 University Ave., Palo Alto (For recorded listings: 324-3700) **Stanfordtheatre.org**

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

For show times, plot synopses, trailers and more movie info, visit www.mv-voice.com and click on movies.

**HIGH**LIGHT

**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

## 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

**'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

## CONCERTS

**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

**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

**'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 for more info.

**Nelly, TLC, and Flo Rida** Hip-hop artists Flo Rida and Nelly will perform along with R&B singing group TLC. Aug. 30, 7 p.m. $18-$250. Shoreline Amphitheatre, 1 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View. concerts1.livenation.com

**The Smashing Pumpkins & Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds** Alternative rock band Smashing Pumpkins performs along with Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds and AFI. Aug. 31, 7 p.m. $22-$350. Shoreline Amphitheatre, 1 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View. concerts1.livenation.com

**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

**'Along Came A Giant'** Folk singer, storyteller and autoharp virtuoso Adam Miller presents "Along Came a Giant," a free singalong concert for all ages. Aug. 30, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Free. Palo Alto Library, 270 Forest Ave., Palo Alto. folksinging.org

## MUSIC

**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. lcfd.org

**Karen Buck & Matthias Baumhof** Soprano Karen Buck and pianist Matthias Baumhof present "An Evening of German Vocal Music," featuring an array of musical genres in the German language. Art song selections will include German Lieder of Schubert, Mozart, Brahms and Richard Strauss. Aug. 31, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Community School of Music and Arts, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. arts4all.org

**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

## 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

## TALKS & LECTURES

**'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

**'The Chinese and the Iron Road: Building the Transcontinental Railroad'** Editors Gordon Chang and Shelley Fishkin discuss "'The Chinese and the Iron Road: Building the Transcontinental Railroad," which shines new light on the Chinese railroad workers and their place in cultural memory. Aug. 28, 7-8 p.m. $15-$30; discounts for members and book purchases. Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. booksinc.net

## MUSEUMS & EXHIBITS

**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

**'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. losaltoshistory.org

## FILM

**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

## FOOD & DRINK

**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. 23 and 30, 5-9 p.m. Computer History Museum, 1401 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View. computerhistory.org

## SPORTS

**Palo Alto Senior Table Tennis** The Palo Alto Senior Table Tennis Club invites seniors, age 55 and older, to bring a racket and pair of tennis shoes to play table tennis. Every Tuesday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free; suggested $1 donation. Cubberley Community Center, Gym B, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

## 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

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## Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Los Altos Hills.*

*Search Criteria as compiled by BrokerMetrics® using MLS Data: January 1st, 2018 - December 31st, 2018, Los Altos Hills, All Residential Properties

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For video tour & more photos, please visit:
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**Saturday & Sunday**
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**Jazz, Lattes,**
**& Gourmet Snacks**

## Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in the Nation.*

*As ranked by REAL Trends 2019 Team Volume list. Published in the *Wall Street Journal* in June 2019.

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