

Mountain View VOICE



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THIS ISSUE

Our
Neighborhoods
2020

DECEMBER 20, 2019 VOLUME 27, NO. 47

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Vargas Elementary finally has electricity

DISPUTE, DELAYS LED TO COSTLY USE OF
GAS GENERATOR TO POWER NEW SCHOOL

By Kevin Forestieri

A dispute between PG&E and a Mountain View homeowners' association meant Vargas Elementary School opened in August without a permanent power supply. Halfway through the school year and one week before students took off for the holiday break, district officials announced that the school is finally hooked up to the grid.

In an announcement to families earlier this month, Mountain View Whisman School District Superintendent Ayinde Rudolph said the school district was "cautiously optimistic" that PG&E would finish installing utilities and supply Vargas Elementary with a permanent source of electricity for the first time on Monday, Dec. 16. District officials confirmed on Monday that the school now has power, and no longer needs to rely on a rented gas generator to keep the lights on.

"I am thankful for the MVWSD board of trustees and district staff members for their tireless,

behind-the-scenes advocacy and coordination with PG&E," Rudolph said in the announcement. "They have worked daily to ensure the power connection work continues."

Vargas Elementary, a new campus on N. Whisman Road, had a rough start to its inaugural year when construction crews hit a snag trying to hook up the school to a power supply. The original plan was to have PG&E power the school through an existing vault across the street, only to discover that the route was completely full.

The workaround was to approach the power supply from the other side, encroaching on private property owned by the neighboring California Station homeowners association. What came next was a monthslong dispute between the utility company and the HOA over PG&E's right to use the wedge of undeveloped land at the corner of Pacific Drive.

At the time, representatives from the neighborhood

► See **VARGAS**, page 8



MAGALI GAUTHIER

Eileen Denué holds a "vote to impeach" sign as demonstrators lined all four corners of the intersection of Castro Street and El Camino Real in Mountain View Tuesday night calling for Congress to impeach President Donald Trump. The event was one of more than 600 "Impeachment Eve" rallies held across the United States.

Huge crowd gathers to support impeachment

By Mark Noack

More than 200 people from across the South Bay flocked to downtown Mountain View on Tuesday evening in a show of support for impeaching President Donald Trump.

Gathering at the intersection of Castro Street and El Camino Real, the rally and candlelight vigil was part of a nationwide "Impeachment Eve" movement intended to put pressure on the U.S. House of Representatives ahead of a vote on two articles of impeachment scheduled for

Wednesday, Dec. 17.

The Mountain View protest was one of more than 600 pro-impeachment rallies organized for Tuesday night by the liberal advocacy group MoveOn.org.

Standing along the curb of

► See **RALLY**, page 15

Mountain View's top employee says goodbye to City Hall

CITY MANAGER DAN RICH RETIRES, ENDING 30 YEARS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

By Mark Noack

Early in his public service career, Dan Rich thought he had his dream job laid out. As a young ambitious college graduate bouncing between assignments in Washington, D.C., he aspired to someday be a White House chief of staff.

He liked the idea of wielding

tacit power, whispering in the president's ear, and making things happen behind the scenes without the baggage that comes with elected office. It seemed the perfect role right at the "intersection of policy and politics," he said.

Instead, life took him in a different direction. The stakes were exciting, but the federal work cycle soon turned into drudgery.

After five years on Capitol Hill, he returned to California to relearn the basics of government administration at a local level. It was a very different kind of politics, but the allure of having a seat at the table was all the same, he said.

"I never thought my career or schooling would bring me to be city manager, but looking back, it was the perfect job for me,"

Rich said. "What I love about my job here is every day is different. That's what I love: the unpredictability and variety."

After eight years in Mountain View and more than 30 years in public service, Rich formally hangs up his hat this week as the city manager, ending his tenure as Mountain View's top employee. Stoic, straight-laced

and subdued, he has been a quiet force behind essentially all of the major events and policies that have come through City Hall in recent memory.

"Dan led by example and set high standards for the organization," said Mayor Lisa Matchak. "He created a positive,

► See **DAN RICH**, page 11

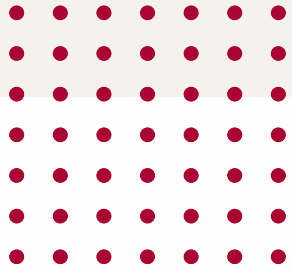
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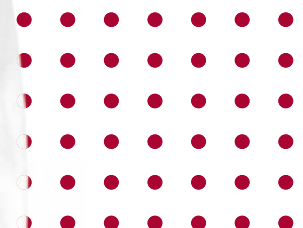


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COURTESY OF BETHLEHEM A.D.

Bethlehem A.D. features a costumed cast and live animals in Redwood City, Dec. 21-23.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

If the holiday rush has you longing to put your feet up and be entertained for a few hours, there are plenty of events left to enjoy on the Peninsula. Here's a sampling for the coming week.

Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir

What: The OIGC will perform a concert of gospel and spiritual holiday music.
Where: Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View.
When: Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m.
More information: tickets.mvcpa.com.

Winter Solstice at Hidden Villa

What: Hidden Villa's all-ages celebration of the winter solstice will include outdoor play, crafts, refreshments, solstice stories from around the world and singing.
Where: 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills.
When: Dec. 21, 1-3:30 p.m.
More information: hiddenvilla.org.

Big Band Christmas: 'All the Classics'

What: Gary Vecchiarelli Productions-Las Vegas presents a 17-piece big band featuring hits from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.
Where: Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St.
When: Dec. 21, 2 and 7 p.m.
More information: mvcpa.com.

'Winter Wonderland'

What: Ragazzi Continuo presents a concert of songs inspired by winter weather.
Where: St. Ann Chapel, 541 Melville Ave., Palo Alto.
When: Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m.
More information: ragazzicontinuo.org.

'Winter's Gifts: Spirit'

What: The Choral Project and

the San Jose Chamber Orchestra present their annual "Winter's Gifts" concert with a theme of "spirit."

Where: First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto, 625 Hamilton Ave.
When: Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m.
More information: choralproject.org/2019-20-concerts.

'From Pole to Pole: Christmas in the Three Americas'

What: San Francisco Choral Artists will offer musical traditions from South, Central and North America.
Where: St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Ave., Palo Alto.
When: Dec. 21, 8 p.m.
More information: sfca.org/2019-2020-season.

Bethlehem A.D.

What: Bethlehem A.D. is a free, family-friendly experience recreating the town of Bethlehem on the night of the first Christmas, including live animals and a large cast of costumed, community-volunteer actors.
Where: 1305 Middlefield Road, Redwood City.
When: Dec. 21-23, 6-9:30 p.m.
More information: bethlehemad.com.

'Robot Chanukah'

What: Chabad Palo Alto sponsors an "interactive Chanukah robot show" and immersive virtual reality experience, plus a buffet dinner and doughnuts.
Where: Mitchell Park Community Center, 3800 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.
When: Dec. 22, 3:30-5:30 p.m.
More information: chabadpaloalto.com.

'It's a Wonderful Life'

What: The annual screening of Frank Capra's holiday movie masterpiece, "It's a Wonderful Life."
Where: Stanford Theatre, 221 University Ave., Palo Alto.
When: Dec. 24, 4 and 9 p.m.
More information: stanfordtheatre.org

Menorah Lighting at City Hall

What: A Hanukkah celebration in front of Palo Alto's City Hall, sponsored by Chabad Palo Alto.
Where: Palo Alto City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave.
When: Dec. 29 at 4:30 p.m.
More information: chabadpaloalto.com.

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Karla Kane at kkane@paweekly.com.

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■ POLICE LOG

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800 High School Way, 12/9
400 block Castro St., 12/9
700 block Continental Cir., 12/9
400 block View St., 12/10
1100 block N. Rengstorff Av., 12/10
700 block N. Shoreline Blvd., 12/10
2400 block Charleston Rd., 12/10
900 block High School Way, 12/11
800 block N. Rengstorff Av., 12/11
1300 block Pear Av., 12/11
300 block View St., 12/12

BATTERY

200 block Castro St., 12/7
1500 block N. Shoreline Blvd., 12/13

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

600 block Ellis St., 12/9

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Mountain Shadows Dr. & N. Shoreline Blvd., 12/9
200 block Bryant St., 12/14

GRAND THEFT

600 block Showers Dr., 12/10
500 block Showers Dr., 12/13

INDECENT EXPOSURE

400 block W. Evelyn Av., 12/10

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

2600 block Yorkton Dr., 12/9
100 block Franklin St., 12/10

ROBBERY

200 block W. El Camino Real, 12/10
600 block Showers Dr., 12/11

STOLEN VEHICLE

200 block S. Rengstorff Av., 12/6
1900 block Mount Vernon Ct., 12/9
Castro St. & Sonia Way, 12/12

■ CRIME BRIEFS

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY REPORT LEADS TO ARREST

A Livermore man was arrested last week on an outstanding warrant after he was found during a manhunt for a residential burglary reported in the Waverly Park neighborhood. Police could not immediately confirm if he was the man involved in the burglary.

Police received a call shortly before 6 a.m. on Dec. 9 from a woman on Yorkton Drive stating that she woke up and saw a man in her bedroom, according to police spokeswoman Katie Nelson. She told the man to leave, which he did, before calling police and providing a description.

A man matching the suspect description was found at the intersection of Grant Road and Oak Drive, and was detained. The 36-year-old man had an outstanding warrant from another Bay Area law enforcement agency, Nelson said. Footage from neighbors was also provided to the police department.

In a potentially related case, officers received reports of an incident shortly before the burglary — around 5:20 a.m. — nearby on the 300 block of South Drive. A man allegedly attempted to open a woman's car door while she was sleeping inside. The woman in the car knocked on the window to let him know the vehicle was occupied, and he ran off, Nelson said.

The suspect description in that case also matched the Livermore man. As of Dec. 12, the department was still investigating whether to file criminal complaints against the man.

HAZMAT INCIDENT AT ROBOTICS COMPANY

Five people were hospitalized Dec. 12 after a hazardous materials incident at a robotics company in Mountain View, fire department officials said.

Firefighters received a call at 12:41 p.m. reporting that an odor from a car was making people sick. They found people who reported feeling ill at two locations operated by the company Nuro:

► See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 7

■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

RENT CONTROL, SCHOOL BONDS ON MARCH BALLOT

Mountain View's bid on the March ballot to reform the city's rent control program now has a title: Measure D.

Last week, the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters applied labels to dozens of proposed initiatives for the March 3 primary election, including several that will be of interest to local residents.

Of those items, the Mountain View City Council's proposed tweaks to the rent control law are certain to remain in the spotlight in the coming months. Among its provisions, Measure D calls for raising the annual rent cap to 4% and allowing higher increases for certain housing improvements, such as seismic safety upgrades. The measure needs a simple majority to pass.

The Foothill-De Anza Community College District is proposing measures G and H, both of which would raise funds. Measure G would issue \$898 million in bonds to build and repair college facilities, which would be raised by charging property owners \$16 per \$100,000 of property valuation. Measure G requires a 55% majority to pass.

The college district's Measure H would also raise funding through a new property tax. The measure would raise about \$27 million by levying a \$48 parcel tax on all property owners within the district. This money could be used for a wide variety of purposes, including teachers' salaries, science and tech instruction, or programs to aid homeless students. The only exception in the measure is it explicitly pledges that no funding will go toward administrator salaries. To pass, Measure H needs

► See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 10

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House Sharing Program is a County of Santa Clara program, operated by Catholic Charities. It is a free matching service to help match people looking for a room to rent with someone who has a spare room in their home.



MAGALI GAUTHIER

Carol Mellberg, CHAC's clinical director of school-based services, meets with development director Lyn Balistreri at the nonprofit mental health care provider's office in Mountain View. CHAC is one of seven local agencies that benefit from donations to the Voice's Holiday Fund.

CHAC struggles to keep up with rising mental health needs

By Kevin Forestieri

Last month, Marsha Deslauriers lucked out. The executive director of the Community Health Awareness Council, a mental health provider in Mountain View, didn't have to ask for help clearing out buckets of rainwater dripping from the nonprofit's ceiling.

Replacing the leaking roof was a big step for the nonprofit, which has kept a laser-sharp focus on its mission to provide mental health care for local



North County children and families for decades. It was one of the small but meaningful upgrades CHAC can eke out as it grapples with an unprecedented rise in demand for affordable counseling and therapy services.

Families that can't afford private practices; frustrated Kaiser patients who can't get a timely appointment, low-income

residents who are uninsured — thousands of people are finding themselves at CHAC, with nowhere else to go. The nonprofit is taking them in, regardless of cost, but the open-door policy is getting harder to sustain.

It gets more difficult each year to support the growing number of people coming to CHAC for help, Deslauriers said. Homelessness, poverty and lack of affordable care elsewhere in the county means that CHAC

► See **CHAC**, page 7

Divisive state housing bill wins county support

SB 50 GAINS CONDITIONAL BACKING OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY SUPERVISORS

By Mark Noack

The divisive housing legislation state Senate Bill 50 has won the tentative support of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, albeit with conditions.

In a 4-0 vote on Tuesday, Dec. 17, the county supervisors endorsed state Sen. Scott Wiener's high-profile bill that would make local housing project approvals mandatory in areas near transit stops or large employers. The lone dissenter was North County Supervisor

Joe Simitian, who pointedly abstained from the vote, saying he lacked confidence in the bill and how it could be rewritten as it returns to the state Legislature.

"Frankly, I'm skeptical of a top-down solution from the state," Simitian said. "Just because people are saying something has got to be done, that doesn't mean that something doesn't work, or that something that doesn't make sense should be done."

SB 50 has become a lightning rod of controversy, driving a

wedge between the typical alliances of community and advocacy groups across California. The bill was first introduced nearly two years ago under a different name, but it faced mounting pressure from stakeholders as it worked through the state Legislature. In May, the bill was shelved before it could go to the state Senate for a vote.

With the bill due to come back in 2020, Santa Clara County supervisors argued the time was right for them to demonstrate

► See **HOUSING BILL**, page 16

Students, parents complain that dress codes target, humiliate girls

SCHOOL BOARD OPTS TO REVISE POLICY

By Kevin Forestieri

After students and parents protested that school dress codes are outdated, unfair to girls and inconsistent, the Mountain View Whisman School District will spend the next three months exploring ways to revamp its policies.

Board members agreed at the Dec. 16 meeting to reconsider the dress code policy, which sets an overarching framework but leaves it up to each of the 11 schools to set rules and restrictions. Middle school students and district parents slammed the existing rules for being unrealistic, and enforced in a way that shames girls for seemingly arbitrary infractions.

Students reported feeling embarrassed when pulled aside to talk about inappropriate attire in front of their peers.

"It is shaming, it is humiliating, it is embarrassing," said Graham parent Jasmine Teleki.

The board policy, adopted in 2003, is short and broad, essentially stating that students' clothing should be neither a hazard nor a distraction to others. The rest of the rules dictating what students can or cannot wear, from hats to sandals, are handled differently at each school. At Graham Middle School, low-cut tops, tube tops and tank tops with straps less than 2 inches wide are not allowed, as are the less-defined "oversized clothing" and "sagging pants."

At Graham, shorts, skirts and dresses must be at least "fist length" when the student's arms are down at their sides, whereas at Crittenden Middle School the length must reach below the fingertips. Both schools do not permit shirts that expose the torso or midriff.

There has been a student-led effort at Crittenden to get the rules changed over the last year, said district parent and staff member Shanna Bengtson, which she said began when four eighth-grade girls approached her and expressed frustration over the existing dress code policy. To drive the point home, they made a presentation to

Principal Sonia Gomez while all wearing the same outfit, showing that various body types can either violate or conform with the fingertip test.

"It was different for each girl," Bengtson said. "We are policing bodies — different body shapes — using this standard, and obviously that can be problematic."

Seventh grade Crittenden student Adriana Eden told board members that almost none of her shorts actually follow the dress code, but she's never been called out by school staff when wearing them. Other girls might be targeted for the same clothes, she said, raising equity issues for students based on factors like the length of their arms.

Teleki, who raised the issue to trustees in the past, said some of the existing rules across the district are absurd, particularly tank tops that must have straps that are at least 2 inches wide — about the thickness of the straps on a men's XXL basketball jersey. Pulling students aside and asking them to cover up or change into less revealing attire is more distracting than the clothes themselves, she said, and arguably gets in the way of the district's educational mission.

"The dress code policy is an opportunity for us as a community to reinforce radical inclusion rather than, 'Your education is the most important thing, unless you're wearing a spaghetti-strap tank top,'" Teleki said.

The level of dress code enforcement and number of students pulled aside to talk about inappropriate clothing is not tracked, and the most recent dress code-related violation that led to a disciplinary action was in 2013, said Superintendent Ayinde Rudolph. That could still mean that students are being regularly confronted about their clothing, but the district has no way of knowing whether girls or other specific groups of students are being targeted.

"We do not have any data whatsoever," Rudolph said. "It doesn't mean students aren't being talked to or addressed by

► See **DRESS CODE**, page 16

Mountain View Voice

Holiday Fund

How to Give Your gift helps children and families in need

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched dollar for dollar to the extent possible and will go directly to seven nonprofit agencies that serve Mountain View residents. Last year, more than 150 Voice readers and the Wakerly, Packard and Hewlett foundations contributed a total of \$72,000. We are indebted to the Silicon Valley Community Foundation which handles all donations, and deducts no administrative costs from your gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law. All donations will be shared equally with the seven recipient agencies.

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This year, the following agencies will be supported by the Holiday Fund:

MayView Community Health Center

The MayView Community Health Center in Mountain View offers primary care services to low-income and uninsured patients in northern Santa Clara County. No patient is turned away for inability to pay for services, which include prenatal and pediatric care, cancer screenings and chronic disease management.

Mentor Tutor Connection

Mentor Tutor Connection matches adult volunteers who serve either as mentors with under-served youth in high school or as tutors to students in elementary and middle schools in Mountain View and Los Altos school districts.

Community School of Music and Arts

The Community School of Music and Arts provides hands-on art and music education in the classrooms of the Mountain View Whisman School District.

Day Worker Center

The Day Worker Center of Mountain View provides a secure place for workers and employers to negotiate wages and work conditions. It serves workers with job placements, English lessons, job skills workshops and guidance.

YWCA Support Network for Domestic Violence

This group operates a 24-hour bilingual hotline and a safe shelter for women and their children. It also offers counseling and other services for families dealing with domestic violence.

Community Services Agency

CSA is the community's safety-net providing critical support services for low-income individuals and families, the homeless and seniors in northern Santa Clara County, including Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills.

Community Health Awareness Council

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CHAC

► Continued from page 5

is serving more people and getting reimbursed less for services. The cases themselves are getting harder as well — clinicians are often faced with having to untangle a complex web of depression, PTSD and other disorders that take a long time to resolve.

“CHAC has always served the underserved, but the number of underserved is growing,” she said. “We are seeing the people who don’t qualify for Medi-Cal or choose not to have Medi-Cal, all the way to the people who can’t afford a private practice at \$180 to \$250 per hour.”

CHAC relies on a lean, cost-effective strategy to maximize counseling services for as many children and young adults as possible. Close to two dozen clinical supervisors oversee a workforce of 92 “interns,” mostly psychology graduates and marriage and family therapists looking to fulfill academic requirements, who work at school campuses in Mountain View, Los Altos and Sunnyvale. The end result is that CHAC can do more with less, while simultaneously serving as the largest training agency for therapists in the area, Deslauriers said.

CHAC is one of seven local nonprofits that benefit from donations to the *Voice* Holiday Fund. With the support of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, 100% of donations go directly to these nonprofits.

There’s no single cause for the increase in demand, nor is there a prototypical client. Deslauriers said they serve everyone from young, unaccompanied children recently arriving from the Mexican border to teens reeling from academic stress, anxiety, cyberbullying and substance abuse. Local concerns over youth mental health have risen to the fore after two teens from Mountain View High School have died by suicide since August last year, prompting debate over what the city of Mountain View can do to help.

Data collected by the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District shows a four-fold increase in

referrals for mental health counseling between 2013 and 2018, some of which are handled in-house by a team of district-hired therapists and others referred to CHAC staff. Serving students on campus is the preferred option, leading Mountain View and Los Altos site administrators to use everything short of broom closets for private, discreet counseling spaces.

Outside of schools, programs hosted at CHAC’s headquarters on El Camino Real encompass substance abuse and addiction services, family-based services and counseling tailored for LGBTQ and Latinx clients. The Latinx program currently serves over 150 families each year, Deslauriers said, some of whom suffered through severely traumatic experiences prior to coming to the U.S. and need some kind of mental health support.

At the moment, CHAC’s \$3.8 million budget is small but flexible. Counseling programs run by the nonprofit do not receive funding from the state or the county, and can therefore be offered to anyone who walks through the door regardless of insurance, qualifications or ability to pay. It also means clients can be seen as many times as needed to resolve the challenges they’re facing, rather than getting cut off after a set number of weekly visits.

The downside of the flexible budget is that CHAC’s funding is limited and leaves barely enough for everything else, such as fundraising, administrative costs and capital upgrades to keep its building standing. The leaks may be gone, but the children’s room on the second floor — dubbed the Magic Kingdom — has a couple of missing ceiling tiles and exposed fiberglass insulation.

When the City Council discussed potential youth mental health strategies on Dec. 10, Deslauriers said CHAC really didn’t have the wherewithal to have a presence at the discussion. “Everybody is at the max here, so even getting to council meetings to inform them is a burden,” she said.

The threadbare budget and the way CHAC does business

has to change, Deslauriers said, which could come in the form of large philanthropic grants or a long-awaited foray into county partnerships, so long as it doesn’t tightly constrain who CHAC can serve. The nonprofit also receives limited funds from local cities and school districts through a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) agreement, which could lay the groundwork for increased staffing that could clear waiting lists for services.

“We are in a phase of mental health crisis,” she said. “It is going to take a collaborative effort to solve that. CHAC wants to be at the table to do that and work with the county.”

Locally and nationally, it is estimated that about 1 in 5 adolescents with a mental illness do not receive services from a mental health professional, whether by a psychologist or a psychiatrist, despite research showing that close to half of all mental health conditions begin by age 14. Access to timely appointments and the appropriate level of care is often strained, with or without insurance coverage, even though federal and state legislation mandates that insurance companies must provide access to mental health services at the same level as medical services.

Earlier this week, thousands of Kaiser Permanente mental health workers began striking over what they describe as a failure to honor health care parity laws. The National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW) announced in a statement Monday that patients are routinely forced to wait six to eight weeks for therapy appointments, and clinicians — faced with the shortage — have resorted to working after hours for patients who can’t wait.

Some of those patients are ending up at CHAC.

“The way they schedule appointments is a month out,” Deslauriers said. “You share intimate challenges and then the provider can’t see you again for six weeks. It’s a huge burden challenging the ethics of the licensed clinicians and it’s totally inappropriate for the client.” ■

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

CRIME BRIEFS

► Continued from page 4

1300 Terra Bella Ave. and nearby at 1340 W. Middlefield Road.

Witnesses and patients reported that a Toyota Prius was being charged in an enclosed space at the West Middlefield Road address and said an odor was coming from its battery.

The smell was first reported to Nuro management at about 10:30 a.m. and the building

was evacuated, the Prius was unplugged and the battery was removed from the vehicle, fire officials said.

The building was declared safe by management for re-entry after lunch, but some people reported symptoms of illness at about 12:30 p.m. and the fire department was called shortly afterward.

The fire department’s hazardous materials team conducted tests and quickly determined the building was safe for occupancy.

Nevertheless, five Nuro employees were taken to hospitals, while four others were evaluated but refused further care, fire officials said.

Mountain View fire spokesman Robert Maitland said crews could not determine what might have prompted the employees to feel ill.

Officials at Nuro later said the car’s battery overheated, creating the smell.

—Bay City News Service

VARGAS

► Continued from page 1

association said they were sympathetic to the needs of the school district and were willing to work with PG&E to craft an easement agreement, but that PG&E had been both slow to respond and unwilling to agree to the HOA's terms for use of the property. As of August, HOA representatives said they were still in the dark on precisely what PG&E planned to do with the property.

Shortly after the start of the school year and a *Voice* story about the dispute, district officials said they were done waiting for a resolution, and instead sought to hook up at an alternate location. Slower and more expensive than the original plan, PG&E had to install a new power vault, run an electrical conduit and test the lines over several months, according to the district. The electricity to the school switched on for the first time over the weekend.

Vargas Elementary had been operating on a gas generator, a costly alternative that came with a host of logistical challenges. The school's elevator could not operate on a temporary power source, meaning the second-story classrooms at the school could not be used, due to accessibility requirements. Three rooms designated as



MAGALI GAUTHIER

Teacher Anne Hanneman reads to kindergartners on the first day of school at Jose Antonio Vargas Elementary. The school has gone four months without an electrical hook-up, costing the district more than \$150,000.

“flex” space had to be converted into classrooms, displacing after-school programs and the YMCA-run child care.

Because the gas generator was shut off at night, food had to be stored off-site instead of in the school's cafeteria, and janitorial work had to be completed early. The district also had to hire someone to act as a fire lookout while the fire alarm system was without power.

Tallying up all the costs of extra construction, operating the generator and hiring a fire watch, the district spent an estimated \$156,703, according to district spokeswoman Shelly Hausman. Even though it took several

months, district officials say that it took advocacy work on the part of trustees and help from state Assemblyman Marc Berman to expedite PG&E's construction work through the fall.

One of the side effects is that the school still does not have field space, which was supposed to be completed in October. District staff members were reluctant to remove temporary portable buildings located on the future field, fearing that the space might be needed pending a resolution between PG&E and the HOA. The plan is to have the field done by February, but that hinges on good weather this winter, Hausman said. ▣

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School board elects president for second year, breaking precedent

By Kevin Forestieri

The Mountain View Whisman School District took the rare step last week of electing its board president for a second term, a break with tradition while the board is amid complex deals to handle student growth, contracts to construct teacher housing and other major endeavors that will carry into the new year.

Trustees voted to appoint Tamara Wilson to be board president next year on a 5-0 vote at the Dec. 12 board meeting. Board member Devon Conley was elected to serve as vice president, and board member Jose Gutierrez was elected as the clerk. Though the leadership role typically lasts a year and rotates between board members, they agreed that continuity was more important than holding to tradition.

The idea was first floated last month, with board member Ellen Wheeler arguing that it would be helpful to have “familiar faces” during negotiations with other agencies. The school district has been working with the city of Mountain View and

private developers to prepare for a huge increase in students caused by residential development, negotiations that have proved challenging in recent months. If development were to cease today, district officials say they would still have to find ways to house an estimated 1,000 additional students in the coming years — a roughly 20% increase in enrollment.

In planning for enrollment growth caused by major residential zoning changes in the North Bayshore and East Whisman areas of the city, Mountain View City Council members adopted a so-called Local School District Strategy, requiring developers of large projects to provide funding, land or other resources to Mountain View Whisman to offset the impact on schools. But implementing those plans requires the school district to broker agreements with private developers, which has been a challenging task outside of the typical purview of a school district.

The school district launched a three-way agreement earlier this year with the city and developer Fortbay to build a 716-unit

apartment complex on Middlefield Road, which will include a building with 144 units that would all be leased to the school district for use as subsidized teacher and staff housing.

Wheeler said the best way to avoid disrupting the multifaceted cross-agency collaboration would be to “freeze” the board officer roles for another year, even if it is a little unusual.

“I don’t want to become a board that normally has two-year terms for the president, but I’m also somebody who believes in exceptions,” she said at the Nov. 21 board meeting.

Wilson told the *Voice* in an email that she was surprised by the decision to re-nominate her as president, and had no idea it was coming. It does entail a lot of extra work and doesn’t have quite the allure that others might think, but she accepted the nomination last week.

“I am humbled and honored that the trustees chose to support a second year with me in this leadership role,” she said.

In addition to speaking on behalf of the school board and working with staff on board agendas, Wilson has been a

frequent face as a representative of the school district at City Council meetings, advocating on behalf of the district’s interests as council members approve large-scale zoning changes promoting new residential construction. Most recently, she raised concerns that zoning for 5,000 residential units in the primarily commercial East Whisman area of the city would be a mistake without a clear plan for financing schools for the children who will live in the area.

Wilson pointed out that the district has done its part for planning — urban school visits, hiring architects and planning for dense schools on minimal acreage — and that what the district needs now is a joint-session meeting with City Council members and a sense of surety that schools won’t be left out as the city expands.

Wheeler said the board has not had a president serve two terms in at least 17 years, though it’s not unheard of. Other school districts in the county have two-year presidential terms, and the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors had two of its members, Dave Cortese

and Joe Simitian, serve two-year terms as president. The justification for county supervisors was largely the same — greater continuity in tackling complex problems and minimizing the “start-stop, about-face changes” that come with a major leadership change.

Unlike the county, however, the change of pace is not intended to be permanent for Mountain View Whisman. ▀

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

► Continued from page 4

a two-thirds majority.

The Mountain View Whisman School District is also floating a funding initiative, dubbed Measure T. If passed, the measure would issue \$259 million in bonds to build and upgrade school facilities. This money would come from charging \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed value on each property within the district. The measure needs a 55% majority to pass.

—Mark Noack



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DAN RICH

► Continued from page 1

team-oriented, fun culture and took the time to know every city employee.”

Rich, 56, was first hired at Mountain View in 2011, stepping into the role as the city was bouncing back from the Great Recession. Prior to taking on the job, he served a similar role in Campbell, but those years were marked by recessionary belt-tightening.

The Mountain View job he considered to be more more difficult. Cost-cutting was relatively straightforward, but running a city during surplus years meant tougher choices because every department was fighting over the extra money. On top of that, the development pipeline that had dried up during the recession came surging back like a fire hose. City staffers had their work cut out as building proposals came streaming in. As development boomed, the city also moved to update precise plans and other land-use policies.

The job of running a successful city should have been easy, but prosperity actually created more problems. Jobs were abundant, but housing was scarce. As a result, rents skyrocketed and the city faced increasing



SAMMY DALLAL

Dan Rich, who has led Mountain View city staff through the past eight years, is retiring this week.

pressure to do something.

“Sometimes I half jokingly say the best thing we could have now is another recession. It would take away many of these challenges,” Rich said. “The perils of prosperity are surprisingly challenging.”

Listing off his proudest accomplishments, Rich points to instances when the city took unorthodox approaches to widespread problems. He cited the North Bayshore Precise Plan, the city’s road map for building a mixed-use tech mecca with offices and about 10,000 homes. The plan took about eight years to develop, due in part to the

changing set of priorities from elected leaders. While visionary, the precise plan still hasn’t led to housing construction, and it will likely be years before that happens.

“It’s a unique document as far as what’s all in there, it would totally transform an office and industrial area to a mixed-use neighborhood,” he said. “Obviously it hasn’t come to fruition yet, but we’ve laid the groundwork for it.”

Similarly, he singled out an agreement signed earlier this year between the city and the Mountain View Whisman School District, in which the city helped dedicate affordable housing exclusively for teachers and district staff. Under that deal, about one-fifth of the subsidized apartments required as part of a 716-unit housing project at 777 W. Middlefield Road will be reserved for school employees.

Most of all, Rich is proud of his efforts to create an uplifting City Hall culture with a “work hard, play hard attitude.” To foster this, Rich encouraged employee engagement programs and “fun grants” to provide workers with funding for party or event ideas they dreamed up. Among the ideas, the city hosted a game night and a pingpong tournament. One year, the city planners invited

everyone to an escape room.

“The important thing is to let off steam and realize when you’re working so hard that it’s important to have that fun side too,” Rich said. “It’s the little things that create a sense of community.”

Rich insisted that he has no regrets from his eight years. Well, except for one: homelessness, which he described as the most vexing issue he has ever faced in his career. Despite spending thousands of staff hours and more than \$1 million, Mountain View officials acknowledge they have barely moved the needle, and more people wind up living on the streets with each passing year. It’s a problem that Mountain View shares with all its neighboring communities, yet Rich said each city is pretty much acting on its own without collaborating across the region.

“If there’s a regret that I have, it’s that there hasn’t been a county-wide city approach,” he said. “It’s essentially a whack-a-mole problem. You prohibit it here, but then it goes there.”

Any answer to the homelessness problem has to come with carrots and sticks, he said. The city has to provide some alternative, but at the end of the day the streets are not meant for living, he said.

Rich is more sanguine about the city’s improved ties with

its resident tech giant, Google. When he joined the city, that relationship was icy. Google still had the mentality of a start-up, and community relations and government affairs were largely seen as a problem of marketing, he said. Rich began having regular monthly breakfast meetings with David Radcliffe, Google’s vice president of real estate. At those meetings, they would usually talk about lighter subjects, like their families, just to build a rapport. Later on, Rich said he was describing the city’s transportation program at one breakfast meeting, and Radcliffe quickly promised to help. That was origin of the city’s Community Shuttle program, which Google has promised to bankroll through 2024.

Now 56 years old, Rich is retiring at a relatively young age, and he says that will find some kind of vocation to stay busy in the near future. For the next six months, he plans to “be selfish,” and take an art class or two, and do some traveling. In fact, as of Wednesday he is zipping off to New Zealand.

“I’ll see where the winds take me,” he said. “Long term, I’ll certainly do something again, and in some way, shape or form it’ll be related to public service, but I imagine it will be something different.” ▣



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VTA Light Rail Changes

Light Rail will now have three distinct lines, which will be color-coded, and the new Orange Line will connect Downtown Mountain View to the Milpitas Transit Center. During weekday peak hours, service will be every 15 minutes and weekend peak hours will be every 20 minutes.

Orange Line – Alum Rock to Mountain View

- Transfer at Baypointe for the Blue Line
- Transfer at Champion, Lick Mill, Great America or Old Ironsides for the Green Line

Blue Line – Santa Teresa to Baypointe

Green Line – Winchester to Old Ironsides

Other Changes to Light Rail

- The light rail segment from Ohlone/Chynoweth to Oakridge will be discontinued and will now be served by Route 64a.
- I-880/Milpitas station renamed to Alder Station
- Montague Station renamed to Milpitas Station
- New Route 60 will serve SJC, Valley Fair/Santana Row, Downtown Campbell and Milpitas Transit Center.
- Only passengers boarding from SJC will board Route 60 for free.

The Frequent Bus Network

will operate every 15 minutes or better on weekdays between 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. and every 15 to 30 minutes on weekends.

- Rapid 500** San Jose Diridon Station to Downtown San Jose
- Rapid 522** Palo Alto Transit Center to Eastridge Transit Center
- Rapid 523** Lockheed Martin Transit Ctr to Berryessa Transit Ctr
- Route 22** Palo Alto Transit Center to Eastridge Transit Center
- Route 23** De Anza College to Alum Rock Transit Center
- Route 25** De Anza College to Alum Rock Transit Center
- Route 26** West Valley College to Eastridge Transit Center
- Route 57** Old Ironsides Station to West Valley College
- Route 60** Milpitas Transit Center to Winchester Transit Center
- Route 61** Good Samaritan Hospital to Sierra & Piedmont (via King/Mabury)
- Route 64** Almaden & Crown to McKee & White
- Route 66** Kaiser San Jose to Milpitas/Dixon Landing Road
- Route 68** Gilroy Transit Center to San Jose Diridon Station
- Route 70** Eastridge Transit Center to Milpitas Transit Center
- Route 72** Senter & Monterey to Downtown San Jose
- Route 73** Monterey & Branham to Downtown San Jose
- Route 77** Eastridge Transit Center to Milpitas Transit Center



Improved Bus Routes

- Route 20** Sunnyvale Caltrain Station to Milpitas Transit Center; 15-minute frequency during commute periods and 30-minute frequency in midday.
- Route 21** Stanford Shopping Center to Santa Clara Caltrain station; a merger of Routes 32 and 35 into a single route.
- Route 51** Moffett Field to West Valley College; hourly service on weekdays.
- Route 56** Lockheed Martin Transit Center to Tamien Station; 30-minute service on weekdays and weekends.
- Route 59** Old Ironsides Station to Valley Fair Transit Center; 30-minute frequency on weekdays and hourly on weekends.

Bus Routes that have been discontinued or changed: Bus Routes that have been discontinued or changed: Routes 17, 34, 45, 58, 88; Limited Routes 304, 321, 328 and 330; Express Bus 120, 140, and 180 will be discontinued. Express Bus 181 will continue to operate until BART service opens. Contact VTA for other options.

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Message from El Camino Healthcare District Board of Directors

The El Camino Healthcare District Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the District's mission is accomplished and for providing public oversight of District business affairs. This includes exercising certain retained authority over El Camino Hospital and determining the use of tax revenue for community benefit programs and other uses. The strong financial performance of both the District and Hospital is essential to meet the evolving health needs and challenges of our community.

As part of the District's transparency efforts and good governance, an annual Independent Auditor's Report of the El Camino Healthcare District is prepared and certified by the public accounting firm of Moss Adams LLP and made available to the public. The report covers all six entities of the District, of which El Camino Hospital is the largest, and includes balance sheets and financial statements of revenues, expenses, and changes in net assets. This audit also provides important information on the spending of District funds and how they are being used to improve care facilities and address community health needs. Request a copy of the Independent Auditor's Report by calling 650-940-7300 or download a copy at www.elcaminohealthcaredistrict.org/2019audit.

Learn more about our Community Benefit Program and its impact at www.elcaminohealthcaredistrict.org/CommunityBenefit

If you would like to learn more about the El Camino Healthcare District, we invite you to attend one of our board meetings or watch online.

El Camino Healthcare District COMMUNITY BENEFIT FY2019 HIGHLIGHTS

\$7,336,563 Invested in Grants & Sponsorships

75,136 Community Members Served Through Grants & Sponsorships

El Camino Hospital FY2019 HIGHLIGHTS

3,463 Employees

19,681 Inpatient Visits

205,727 Outpatient Visits

\$3,713,787 Invested in Community Benefit Grants & Sponsorships

139,595 Community Members Served Through Grants & Sponsorships

www.elcaminohealthcaredistrict.org

RALLY

► Continued from page 1

El Camino Real, crowds of protesters waved signs decrying the Trump administration. For many people who came out, it was their first political rally.

The breaking point for San Jose resident Amereek Singh was when he heard comments last weekend by Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham (S.C.), dismissing the notion that he had to be a “fair juror” when articles of impeachment come before the U.S. Senate. A couple of decades ago, Graham was urging unbiased bipartisan support for investigating then-President Bill Clinton, he said. That’s when Singh decided to attend his first political rally.

“It’s utter hypocrisy,” Singh said. “At this point, you have to come out and give your voice. We have to show them this is what America is about.”

Standing nearby on the street corner, Diane and Pete of Los Altos, who declined to give their last names, said this was probably their sixth or seventh anti-Trump rally so far.

“You need to stand up and make your voice heard,” Pete said.

“Otherwise if you don’t, then you’re the one who is complicit,” Diane said.

While the outrage was abundantly clear among the crowd, participants were less sanguine about the prospects for an impeachment trial once it reaches the Senate.

“There’s a chance that this will all split on party lines, but we still have to try,” said Tim Taylor of San Jose. “Voting is not enough, making contributions isn’t enough, this is when people have to make their voices heard.”

In downtown Palo Alto, a crowd of hundreds gathered at Lytton Plaza, a block away from Democratic Rep. Anna Eshoo’s office, to sing songs about impeachment.

“Jingle bells, something smells, something in D.C.,” protesters sang, as members of the social justice activist group, Raging Grannies, led the impeachment choral.

Palo Alto resident Emilie Cappella came with her mother and 4-year-old daughter because the rally was a family event they needed to witness, she said.

“Tomorrow is an important day,” she said. “I want my mother and my daughter to share that



MAGALI GAUTHIER

Demonstrators at the corner of Castro Street and El Camino Real held candles and waved signs, getting honks of support from passing motorists.

moment with me.”

After the songs, a 12-foot balloon of “Chicken Trump” was inflated in the plaza for people to take pictures with and poke at. The chicken was paid for by residents of Palo Alto and Los

Altos, according to Vara Ramakrishman, an active member of Vigil for Democracy, which is responsible for storing the chicken. ▣

Lloyd Lee contributed to this report.



2019 ANNUAL FLUSHING PROGRAM

The City of Mountain View continues its annual water system flushing program. Flushing will be complete by approximately March 2020.

The City understands the importance of saving water, but flushing the system is a critical component of maintaining water quality. Water main flushing is a process used to clear water lines of sand and sediment that may have accumulated during the last year. Signs and barricades will be posted in neighborhoods the day before flushing is to take place to alert residents.

If you would like more information about the City’s water main flushing program, or have questions or concerns while City personnel are in your neighborhood flushing water mains, please contact the City’s Public Services Division at 650-903-6329, or visit our website at www.mountainview.gov.

HOUSING BILL

► Continued from page 5

local support was most needed for SB 50. By taking a side now, they said that Santa Clara County would get a seat at the table when it came to suggesting amendments to the bill.

Supervisor Dave Cortese, who brought SB 50 to the county board for endorsement, said the legislation is needed fix to state housing standards that lack any enforcement. Housing advocates have blamed this so-called "local control"

for decades of stymied housing growth. While local cities are required to plan ahead for residential growth, they have no obligation to actually grant the building permits allowing it to happen.

While many details still need to be determined, SB 50 is the best solution to date for adding "teeth" to state housing requirements, Cortese said.

"The devil's in the details, but I want to be on board saying, 'Yes, continue to be bold,'" Cortese said. "The closer we get to introducing this bill and hitting

the nail on the head, the better off we all are."

But even supporters acknowledged that the bill could be improved. County staff drafted a list of proposed amendments that would add flexibility to parking requirements and height limits on housing built near transit stops.

Also in the proposed changes, county staff urged stronger guidelines to track "jobs-rich" areas with high employment where housing would be nurtured by the bill. Prior versions of the bill left it unclear how job-rich areas would be defined, leaving it up to state officials to figure this out.

Santa Clara County supervisors indicated they had plenty of misgivings about the bill, and they acknowledged concerns that circumventing local development review could result in gentrification. But given the depth of the housing

crisis, they said supported SB 50 as a general idea.

"The concept of the bill makes sense," said Supervisor Cindy Chavez. "We're not committing to a bill we haven't seen; we're committing to leadership that we can support."

The county supervisors' conditional support was a rare vote of confidence from a local municipality for the controversial housing bill.

In contrast, Wiener's bill received an icy reception in his home district earlier this week when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted 10-1 to oppose it. It was the third time San Francisco elected leaders took a public vote to oppose the bill since it was introduced last year. Several other cities, including Los Angeles, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale and Cupertino, have also come out against SB 50. ■

Email Mark Noack at mnoack@mv-voice.com

DRESS CODE

► Continued from page 5

teachers, but when the district pools the data, we can't see that there's any suspensions or incidents that are being logged under dress codes."

Board members generally agreed, without taking a vote, that the dress code should be updated to reflect the changing sentiments over appropriate school clothing, but left open the possibility for site-specific dress codes rather than a one-size-fits-all approach at the district level. One potential example for the district to follow is the Alameda Unified School District's 2018 dress code update, which broadly expanded what students could wear on campus.

The Alameda policy states students are allowed to wear hats, hoodies, yoga and other fitted pants, as well as midriff-baring shirts, ripped jeans and tube tops. While Mountain View Whisman trustees were amenable to some of Alameda's more liberal dress code, a few of the allowed clothing types seemed a little over the top. Board president Tamara Wilson questioned whether pajamas were appropriate at school, while board member Laura Blakely questioned allowing tube tops.

Certain types of clothing are almost guaranteed to stay banned in the revised policy. Rudolph said gang paraphernalia, including bandannas that frequently serve to represent gangs, will likely be prohibited in accordance with state laws. State education code does not explicitly call for a ban on bandannas, but does permit local school boards to prohibit gang-related apparel that could constitute a hazard to health and safety.

Blakely said she would want any revised dress code policy to include the option for individual school communities, if they chose, to have school uniforms exempted from the district's regulations. Doing so requires at least six months' notice to parents and enough resources to help low-income families afford the new uniforms.

Rudolph said the district will aim to update the dress code policy by the end of the 2019-20 school year, and that students will get a chance to give input during the process. ■

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

SEAPHOENIX
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: FBN660730
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
SeaPhoenix, located at 690 Picasso Ter., Sunnyvale, CA 94087, Santa Clara County.
This business is owned by: An Individual.
The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):
CHEN FENG NG
690 Picasso Ter.
Sunnyvale, CA 94087
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara County on November 18, 2019.
(MVV Nov. 29; Dec. 6, 13, 20, 2019)

RACHEL'S HEART THERAPY
RACHEL NOVA
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: FBN660321
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) Rachel's Heart Therapy, 2.) Rachel Nova, located at 1049 El Monte Ave., Ste. C #651, Mountain View, CA 94040, Santa Clara County.
This business is owned by: An Individual.
The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):
RACHEL ELIZABETH HOWARD
1950 Stockbridge Ave.
Redwood City, CA 94061
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara County on November 4, 2019.
(MVV Nov. 29; Dec. 6, 13, 20, 2019)

24 HOUR FRIENDLY HOME CARE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: FBN660995
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
24 Hour Friendly Home Care, located at 530 Showers Dr., Ste. 7, #422, Mountain View, CA 94040, Santa Clara County.
This business is owned by: An Individual.
The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):
LONGOMOLOTO TUKITOA
6 Newell Ct.
Palo Alto, CA 94303
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara County on November 27, 2019.
(MVV Dec. 6, 13, 20, 27, 2019)

997 All Other Legals

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF:
JEFFERY L. TYSON
Case No.: 19PR187149
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of JEFFREY L. TYSON. A Petition for Probate has been filed by: ERIC L. TYSON
in the Superior Court of California, County of SANTA CLARA.
The Petition for Probate requests that: ERIC L. TYSON be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on January 13, 2020 at 9:01 a.m. in Dept.: 13 of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, located at 191 N. First St., San Jose, CA, 95113.

If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58 (b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Petitioner:
Eric L. Tyson
1532 Todd St.
Mtn. View, CA 94040
(707) 920-1139
(MVV Dec. 20, 27, 2019; Jan. 3, 2020)

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■ WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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Town Square forum

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

Call the Viewpoint desk at 223-6531

■ LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

RENT CONTROL FEES

Let me get this right. The Rental Housing Committee balks at trying to collect the rent control fee from the deadbeat large apartment complexes that are rolling in dough (“Dozens of landlords have unpaid rent control fees,” Dec. 6)! You’ve got to be kidding me. Then you’ve got the mom and pop small complex owners that somehow find a way to pay their rent control fees?! Well guess what? Why should we pay ours when the city is allowing the big dudes to slide on their \$100K in fees?

Rental Housing Committee, I suggest you grow a pair and find a way to collect those fees from the larger complexes, or perhaps the mom and pops will also jump on that bandwagon. What’s fair is fair.

*Muriel Sivyver-Lee
Velarde Street*

COOKING WITH GAS

In light of our City Council’s desperate effort to achieve climate change goals via a natural gas ban (“Council approves natural gas ban, electric car requirements,” Nov. 15), I am dismayed by their disregard for information available regarding the actual effect of such a ban.

I take exception to the allowance for commercial restaurant chefs to cook with natural gas, but as a home chef, cooking with natural gas in the future would be forbidden in new homes. I wonder if members of the City Council cook meals at home?

Cooking with fire, to me, is intrinsic to our human experience. It is the mode of cooking, globally. It is deeply ingrained in our beings, as is the “coming home” experience of a walk in the forest. It is systematic to all cultures anthropologically.

Let’s not forget the rain forests being burned in South America that contribute to carbon emissions, the bombs we drop that result in conflagrations, and the fossil fuel consumption of air travel we take for granted. Also, not to be overlooked, the emissions of our refuse disposal sites that exceed cattle ranch manure methane gas production!

The silver lining, I suppose, is that the market for tenancy in older buildings will command higher rents, so landlords may be less inclined to tear them down!

*Tere Clair
Victor Way*

NATURAL GAS BAN

I believe that the ban on new gas appliances is an important “consciousness raising” method. Gas is not “clean,” it is a hazard to the environment. It’s cheap, in part, because of fracking, which compounds this hazard.

I agree that we should also pursue more impactful policies; such a ban is an important reminder of the importance of weaning ourselves off fossil fuel.

*Bill Michel
Redwood City*

MARCH BALLOT

On the March 3 ballot in Mountain View are candidates to succeed our termed-out state Sen. Jerry Hill (thanks for your service) and the following measures:

■ A statewide \$15 billion school bond (i.e., request to borrow money by selling bonds repayable with interest)

■ Another bond proposed by the Foothill-De Anza Community College District — this one \$898 million

■ A five-year parcel tax to increase revenue to the Foothill-De Anza district by a total of \$27.5 million

■ Another bond in the Mountain View-Whisman School District — this time for \$259 million, and

■ A City Council-proposed set of amendments to the part of the city charter that established limited residential rent control (Measure V adopted by voters in November 2016).

Oh yeah, there are also candidates to succeed Donald Trump as president. March 3 is “Super Tuesday,” with presidential primaries in some 15 states.

I previously wrote the *Voice* about a proposed amendment to Measure V (promoted in subcommittee by Vice Mayor Margaret Abe-Koga) that would have empowered the City Council to permit the eviction of all tenants protected by Measure V in exchange for relocation payments fixed by an ordinance to be enacted by the City Council.

That proposal disappeared after my letter — almost as fast as Trump released military assistance to Ukraine after he got caught! The chief selling point for the council-proposed changes to Measure V (currently headed for the city ballot on March 3 as Measure D) is that maybe its

approval would inspire the two official proponents of the petition-initiated “sneaky repeal” of Measure V (headed for the Nov. 3 ballot) to withdraw that petition.

How about withdrawing the petition now — before we vote on Measure D. A new state law that took effect just two months ago (elections code section 9266.5) permits proponents of an initiative charter amendment to withdraw the petition even after it has qualified for the ballot.

With regard to suing over the City Council’s placement of its proposed set of amendments on the March 3 primary, while the action was likely unlawful under the government code and elections code section 9255 (without the landlord initiative on the same ballot) and elections code section 1415, I do not now intend to sue.

*Gary Wesley
Continental Circle*

PRESIDENT SAURON

In the Tolkien fantasy “Lord of the Rings,” the evil tyrant Sauron rules over the dark land of Mordor.

I find eerie parallels between Sauron and our current president. As Sauron casts a malevolent far-seeing eye that targets his enemies from afar, so does Donald Trump spew venom via Twitter to zombify the brains of his followers.

As evil wizards do, he takes vicious rumors and toxic innuendos and pulls them into our reality by publicizing the most vile conspiracy theories in order to besmirch his enemies.

Finally, his policies of environmental destruction echo Tolkien’s description of the land of Mordor “where the shadows lie.” I just hope we don’t go “full Mordor” before we can end his evil actions.

*Ed Taub
Devoto Street*

What’s on your mind?

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

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MountainView
VOICE





Ring in the holidays with an epic Christmas cake

Where to find Germany's famed Dresden Stollen along the Midpeninsula

Story by Anna Medina

Stollen. Dresden Christollen. Strutzel. Striezel. Stutenbrot. It may go by many names, but this oblong bread-like cake — dusted in a thin blanket of powdered sugar, dotted inside with colorful nuts, raisins, currants and candied orange and lemon peels — is one of the quintessential German Christmas desserts of the season. When baked, it gives off the heady aroma of cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, cloves, brandy and butter — a distinctive scent that, for many, officially declares the start of the

Christmas season.

Not surprisingly, this annual German tradition has found its way into bakeries and markets up and down the Midpeninsula.

At Esther's German Bakery in Los Altos, making traditional stollen from a secret recipe smuggled out of Germany has been a longtime holiday custom that brings customers from near and far.

For years, master baker Ernst Ruckaberle churned out Esther's famous stollen using a recipe he discovered as a teenager while working at a bakery in Germany.

Ruckaberle took special note



Freshly baked stollen is wrapped for sale at Woodside Bakery in Menlo Park. **Above:** Antonio Mendoza Sanchez kneads the fruit-studded dough at Woodside Bakery.

FEDERICA ARMSTRONG



MICHELLE LE

Ernst Ruckaberle, who recently retired as the master baker at Esther's German Bakery, reportedly used a stolen stollen recipe from a bakery in Germany.

when they were making stollen at the shop. He allegedly wrote down the recipe on the sole of his shoe when no one was looking, eventually bringing it with him to the United States, where his cake quickly garnered a notable reputation.

According to those interviewed in this story, there are as many variations of the fruitcake as there are people who make it. Some recipes use cherry brandy, others use rum. Some cakes substitute apricots for cranberries and vanilla extract for crushed vanilla beans. And in Dresden, Germany — where the dessert has its roots — the stollen that kicks off holiday festivities can stretch as long as 27 feet and weigh as

much as 9,400 pounds.

No matter which recipe one follows, making traditional stollen can be an arduous process.

"Us bakers, we're very proprietary," said Darius Williams, who will be making the dessert during his first holiday season working as a master baker at Esther's this year after taking over for Ruckaberle, who recently retired — and opted to keep his stollen recipe a secret.

With a background in food science, Williams said he is up for the challenge of continuing Esther's famed stollen tradition.

"Stollen will be the No. 1 item we focus on this year," he said, explaining how his cake's raisins are soaked in rum for at least 24 hours and that the dough

contains dried fruits, such as oranges and lemons, and marzipan. Williams described the end result as a dough that's reminiscent of brioche, but less sweet and eggy. It contains more butter than eggs and sugar.

Williams said that, for some, the cake also has a symbolic meaning: The coat of powdered sugar is thought to represent baby Jesus' swaddling linen, a reminder of the Advent season. Williams said people tend to give the cake, wrapped in a festive cellophane paper, as a gift during the holidays.

Jan Sweyer, owner of Woodside Bakery & Cafe in Menlo Park, said that her European-style bakery sells upwards of 600 loaves of

stollen every holiday season. The cake is sold at the bakery, special ordered or purchased from the bakery's booth at the annual holiday market held at the historic Filoli estate in Woodside, Sweyer said.

Cornelia Bohle-Neubrand, the president of the board of directors at the German International School of Silicon Valley who grew up in Germany as a farmer's daughter, said the dessert's fruits and nuts are seasonal ingredients only available in wintertime in Germany.

"The ingredients evoke the feeling of Christmas — the orange peel, lemon peel, almond,

► See **STOLLEN**, page 20



FEDERICA ARMSTRONG

Stollen, a German Christmas dessert, has many recipe variations but traditionally includes dried fruit, spices and plenty of butter.

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STOLLEN

► Continued from page 19

nuts, cinnamon, rum, vanilla. There's a whole set of taste, aroma, perfume that just tastes like Christmas for Germans," Bohle-Neubrand said.

Lisa Toppel, an exchange student from Dresden who is attending the German International School, said that ever since the reunification of Germany, her

uncle, who had fled the socialist regime of the German Democratic Republic via Hungary to live in West Germany, now annually travels back to his hometown of Dresden during the Advent season to purchase the town's famous Christstollen. He fills his trunk with as much stollen as will fit, bringing it home to his family and friends in the western part of Germany.

"We in our family have — traditionally — the first stollen at the first of Advent," Toppel said. "We have stollen together and drink tea and hot chocolate."

Bohle-Neubrand said that the taste of stollen stirs up fond memories.

"Stollen gives us this warm feeling of home, family," she said. ▣

Email Anna Medina at rosales@alumni.stanford.edu.



FEDERICA ARMSTRONG

Jan Sweyer, left, talks to a customer at Woodside Bakery.



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Where to find stollen

Esther's German Bakery

987 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos
Esthersbakery.com

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Woodside Bakery & Cafe

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woodsidebakery.com

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■ NOW SHOWING

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood (PG)
Century 16: Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.

Black Christmas (PG-13)
Century 16: Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.

Bombshell (R) **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun.
Century 20: Fri. - Sun.
ShowPlace Icon: Fri. - Sun.

Cats (2019) (PG) **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun.
Century 20: Fri. - Sun.
ShowPlace Icon: Fri. - Sun.

Dabangg 3 (Not Rated)
Century 16: Fri. - Sun.

Dark Waters (PG-13)
Palo Alto Square: Fri. - Sun.

Ford V Ferrari (PG-13) **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun.
Century 20: Fri. - Sun.

Frozen II (PG) ★★★ **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun.
Century 20: Fri. - Sun.
ShowPlace Icon: Fri. - Sun.

Honey Boy (R) **Palo Alto Square:** Fri. - Sun.

Intermezzo: A Love Story (Not Rated)
Stanford Theatre: Friday

JoJo Rabbit (PG-13)
Palo Alto Square: Fri. - Sun.

Jumanji: The Next Level (PG-13) ★★★
Century 16: Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.
ShowPlace Icon: Fri. - Sun.

Knives Out (Not Rated)
Century 16: Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.
ShowPlace Icon: Fri. - Sun.

Marriage Story (R)
Aquarius Theatre: Fri. - Sun.

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

The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex (1939) (Not Rated)
Stanford Theatre: Friday

Richard Jewell (R) **Century 16:** Fri. - Sun.
Century 20: Fri. - Sun.
ShowPlace Icon: Fri. - Sun.

The Shop Around the Corner (1940) (Not Rated) **Stanford Theatre:** Saturday & Sunday

Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (PG-13)
Century 16: Fri. - Sun. **Century 20:** Fri. - Sun.
ShowPlace Icon: Fri. - Sun.

The Wizard of Oz (1939) (G)
Stanford Theatre: Saturday & Sunday

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

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

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VOICE

■ MOVIE OPENINGS



COURTESY OF WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES

The Resistance faces the First Order in "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker."

'Rise' and ... eh

THE LONG AWAITED 'STAR WARS' EPISODE IX WOOS FANS, FALLS SHORT

★★1/2 (Century 16 & 20, Icon)

Few, if any films in cinematic history, face the scrutiny of a "Star Wars" film, and one can feel the added burden weighing on "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker."

Director J.J. Abrams has returned to the pilot's seat, steering the ship again toward the old-school faces and places of the Star Wars franchise. After launching the current trilogy with 2015's "The Force Awakens" and sitting out Rian Johnson's 2017 "The Last Jedi," Abrams must bring satisfying closure to this trilogy's younger generation of characters — most notably Daisy Ridley's Rey and Adam Driver's Kylo Ren — and their current conflict between the righteous Resistance and the genocidal First Order, while also honoring the previous two trilogies overseen by franchise creator George Lucas.

Post-Lucas production company Lucasfilm reportedly picked Lucas' brain for story ideas before commissioning the film's script, which hasn't stopped the rumor mill from churning with unsubstantiated tales of disastrous test screenings, reshoots and an unused cut purportedly supervised by Lucas. I didn't encounter any of these rumors before watching the film, but they would explain a lot about the disjointed narrative of "The Rise of Skywalker," which at times feels wet with spackle. The inclusion of previously unused Carrie Fisher footage, while welcome, sets the film's awkward tone with General Leia Organa appearing to have been Photoshopped into her scenes.

More than ever, "Star Wars" ostensibly exists for the fans, those who care deeply about the sprawling mythology, its worlds and its characters. Any rube could have walked into 1983's trilogy-ending "Return of the Jedi" as their first "Star Wars" movie and had a popcorn-munching good time, but in this era when peak-TV has become cinematic, and cinema has become episodic, "The Rise of Skywalker" plays to the well-informed blind-faithful.

Yes, screenwriters Abrams and Chris Terrio ("Argo") pack in the requisite lightsaber battles, blaster shootouts, space

dogfights, whooping critters and fretfully chirping robots, but a lugubrious sense of duty hangs over the proceedings as the writers try to rescue the hash Lucasfilm has made of a Lucas-less "Star Wars."

The die-hard fans, who have the best shot of actually enjoying "The Rise of Skywalker," are likely to have some serious complaints, and it's not inconceivable that it may be received as warmly as the finale of "Game of Thrones." A

hard-to-resist but creatively thin nostalgia machine, Abrams' "The Force Awakens" overdosed on comforting call backs, while Rian Johnson's divisive "The Last Jedi" stepped lively in its own direction, with encouraging results. "The Rise of Skywalker" mostly rolls back Johnson's improvements.

"The Rise of Skywalker" nearly gets by on its visual dazzle, toy-line-ready production design, and big action set pieces: The money is definitely all there on the screen (plus, cute banter). But even at its best, this franchise-capper struggles to raise a pulse to make its audience feel or care about the specifics of its complicated plot beyond pre-existing goodwill for "Star Wars" itself and the saga's first female protagonist. For a brief, shining moment, "The Rise of Skywalker" perks up with a Lucas-esque twist of fate and good-evil duality, but the intriguing idea sorta just disappears into the film's creative quicksand along with everything else. Once the initial excitement wears off — and this one takes its place on the shelf — it's probably not going to get the kind of true love its predecessors enjoyed.

If Abrams has topped himself, it's by making a "Star Wars" film that's even more of a multiplex-filling Hollywood widget than his first. It's a product through and through, and no amount of "voices of Jedi past" and unimaginative guest shots can disguise the new trilogy's critical lack of a unifying vision.

Rated PG-13 for sci-fi violence and action. Two hours, 21 minutes.

— Peter Canavese



Tori
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GoingsOn

MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE

■ HIGHLIGHT

BIG BAND CHRISTMAS

A 17-piece big band, featuring vocalists Don Lucas and Laura Ellis, performs holiday hits by Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney, Michael Buble and more. Dec. 21, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. \$33-\$59; discounts available. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. tickets.mvcpa.com

THEATER

'Miracle on 34th Street' The heartwarming holiday classic, "Miracle on 34th Street," is retold in the tradition of a live 1940s era radio broadcast. Dec. 20-22; times vary. \$20-\$38; discount for students. Bus Barn Theatre, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos. losaltosstage.org

'Pride and Prejudice' TheatreWorks Silicon Valley brings literature's most infamous battle of the sexes to life. Through Jan. 4, 2020; times vary. \$34-\$108. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. theatreworks.org

'The Princess and the Frog' Based on the popular Grimm Brothers fairy tale, the Palo Alto Children's Theatre brings "The Princess and the Frog" to the stage. Dec. 21-22; times vary. \$12-\$14. Palo Alto Children's Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. cityofpaloalto.org

CONCERTS

'Winter Wonderland' The Ragazzi Continuo Choir presents "Winter Wonderland," a holiday concert series featuring diverse pieces from texts by Shakespeare to Austrian drinking songs, as well as works by Vivaldi, Mendelssohn, Debussy and more. Dec. 21, 7:30-9 p.m. \$15-\$25; discount for seniors and students. Saint Ann Chapel Anglican Church, 541 Melville Ave., Palo Alto. ragazzicontinuo.org

Charlie Musselwhite Blues legend Charlie Musselwhite puts on a holiday performance, with Valerie Troutt opening the show. Dec. 29, 7:30-10:30 p.m. \$25. Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. eventbrite.com

'Winter's Gifts' The Choral Project and the San José Chamber Orchestra present their 15th annual concert collaboration, "Winter's Gifts," which explores the theme of spirit. Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m. \$10-\$35; discount for students and seniors. First Methodist Church, 625 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. choralproject.org

'Deck the Halls' The Peninsula Cantare choir presents a multicultural celebration of the holidays, with Catalan and Tagalog carols as well as Vivaldi. Dec. 21, 7:30-9 p.m. \$20-\$25; discount for seniors and students. Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 E. Meadow Drive, Palo Alto. peninsulacantare.org

'Hip! Hip! Holidays' The 70-member choir Aurora Singers presents a family-friendly program, featuring joyful songs in pop idioms like "Think Elvis, Brubeck," "Big Band Santa" and "Boogie Woogie Hanukkah." Dec. 21, 7-9 p.m. \$10; children under age 6 free. Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, 505 E. Charleston Road, Palo Alto. uuca.org

Holiday Gospel Concert Terrance Kelly offers his signature gospel arrangements of traditional holiday favorites as he leads the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir. Dec. 20, 7:30-10 p.m. \$34-\$39; discounts available.

Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. tickets.mvcpa.com

MUSIC

Free Organ Recital Weekly noon-time organ recitals on the two Flentrop organs at All Saints Episcopal Church. Each recital will include at least one work by J.S. Bach. Tuesdays through May 26, 2020, 12:15-12:45 p.m. Free. All Saints Episcopal Church, 555 Waverley St., Palo Alto. asaints.org

Open Mic Performers sing in front of a supportive audience and meet fellow musicians and artists during Open Mic Mondays at Red Rock Coffee. Ongoing; Mondays at 7 p.m. Red Rock Coffee, 201 Castro St., Mountain View. redrockcoffee.org/

FESTIVALS & FAIRS

Winter Solstice Celebration Hidden Villa celebrates the shortest day of the year with festive crafts, hot drinks, solstice stories and music. Dec. 21, 1-3:30 p.m. \$15. Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. hiddenvilla.org

MUSEUMS & EXHIBITS

Baylug Lego Holiday Show Bay Area Lego User Group and the Bay Area Lego Train Club co-host the annual holiday show featuring train layouts, Bay Area landmarks, castles, miniature cities,

sculptures, portraits and more, all made out of Legos. Through Jan. 5, 2020, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. \$3. The Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. moah.org

'Cointraptions' "Cointraptions: Classic Coin-Operated Machines" explores what life was like before the era of credit cards with classic coin-operated machines, including gambling devices, a microscope, vending machines and more. Through Feb. 16, 2020; Friday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. The Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. moah.org

Edward Weston and Ansel Adams

This exhibit features landscapes, still lifes, nudes and portraits created by Edward Weston in Mexico and Ansel Adams in the American southwest. Through Jan. 6, 2020; 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive at Museum Way, Stanford. museum.stanford.edu

'Surf Sequence' "Surf Sequence" explores Ansel Adams' relationship with water in different forms with a series of spontaneously captured surf images. Through May 18, 2020; 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford. events.stanford.edu

DANCE

'The Nutcracker' Palo Alto Children's Theatre presents June Walker Rogers'

adaptation of "The Nutcracker," perfect for parents and children. Dec. 20-22; times vary. \$14-\$16; discounts for children. Palo Alto Children's Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. cityofpaloalto.org

'It's a Wonderful Nutcracker' "It's A Wonderful Nutcracker" combines the traditional "Nutcracker" ballet with Frank Capra's classic holiday film into a family-friendly performance. Dec. 21-22; times vary. \$25-\$62; discounts available. Menlo-Atherton High School Center for the Performing Arts, 555 Middlefield Road, Atherton. menlopark.org

FILM

'Waste Land' "Waste Land" follows renowned artist Vik Muniz as he journeys from Brooklyn to Brazil and the world's largest garbage dump, Jardim Gramacho, located on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. Dec. 26, 6-8 p.m. Free. Anderson Collection, Stanford University, 450 Jane Stanford Way, Stanford. arts.stanford.edu

SPORTS

Silicon Valley Basketball Silicon Valley Basketball organizes weekly, year-round, pickup basketball games, welcoming all skills, ages, genders, etc. Ongoing. Sundays at 9:30 a.m. \$1.50 monthly fee. Graham Middle School, 1175 Castro St., Mountain View. facebook.com

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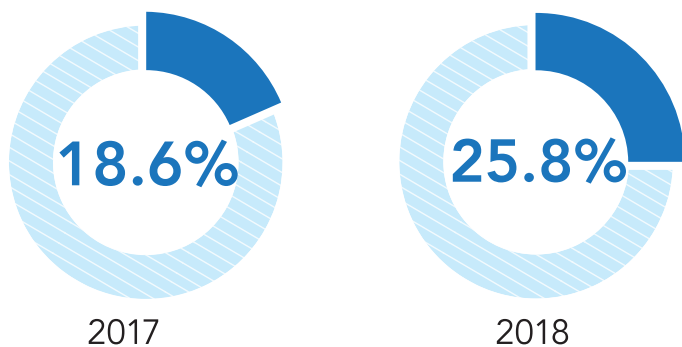
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