

Mountain View VOICE

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LOOKING BACK AT 2019

A fresh perspective can make all the difference, whether it's at a playground or a protest, in a wrestling ring or an RV. We take a look back at 2019's biggest stories as seen through the lens of visual journalist Magali Gauthier, who captured this image of Lucia and a friend playing on the monkey bars at Mountain View Parent Nursery School, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in March. Our picks for the top photos of the year start on page 12.

Number of high school students seeking therapy spikes

TEENS REPORTED STRUGGLING WITH ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

By Kevin Forestieri

The number of students referred for mental health counseling services in the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District jumped significantly for the first quarter of the 2019-20 school year, with the bulk of the increase coming from Los Altos High School.

The trend, revealed in recent annual reports from both Mountain View and Los Altos high schools, underscores the ongoing challenge of providing mental health support to teens in a school environment. The district spends more than \$1.3 million each year to maintain

an in-house team of therapists — paid for partially by outside organizations — which received more than 650 referrals from the start of the school year through October.

The biggest increase was at Los Altos High School, where 282 students were referred for counseling through October — up from 202 around the same time the prior year. The 40% increase means that an average of 94 students per month are being referred for services. Mountain View High School had 371 referrals, up from 350 last year. Anxiety, depression, academic difficulties and issues with family and peers were consistent

problems for students at both schools.

The high school district has spent the past several years publicizing its counseling program as a way to support students showing symptoms and behaviors associated with mental health disorders. The bar for seeking help is set intentionally low, giving anyone the ability to anonymously refer students.

Referrals are essentially a starting point for therapy and other types of mental health support, and in many cases students will either decline services or simply “check in” with staff on how

► See **THERAPY**, page 7

Airbnb hosts ignore new city rules

ONLY 1 IN 14 SHORT-TERM RENTALS COMPLYING

By Mark Noack

Mountain View's new regulations on Airbnb and other short-term rental services are off to a sluggish start.

Under the new rules launched in September, hundreds of short-term rental hosts in Mountain View were supposed to obtain business licenses and register with the city. But new numbers provided by the city indicate most Airbnb operators are not complying: Only 56 hosts have registered, according to the city's database.

This fall, city staff reported there were about 850 short-term rental listings in Mountain View spread across platforms including Airbnb, VRBO and Booking.com. For years, these services have been tacitly allowed to proliferate with no oversight or tax burden as city officials waited to adopt formal regulations. As the cottage

industry grew, Mountain View was essentially forgoing about \$1 million annually by not collecting any taxes.

After years of consideration, city officials in 2018 passed a short-term rental ordinance meant to rein in hosts who were subverting the city's housing supply by turning homes into de facto hotels. Effective in September, short-term rental hosts are supposed to register with the city, obtain business licenses and pay a 10% fee on bookings.

Following a public records request by the *Voice*, city officials last week provided initial data showing that not many hosts are registering with the city. The city's listings show a total of 61 units, all of which are owned by small operators running one or two rentals.

► See **AIRBNB**, page 17

Referendum petition to overturn RV ban succeeds

By Mark Noack

Mountain View elected leaders will be forced to retract a citywide large-vehicle ban that was accused of being a thinly veiled crackdown on the homeless.

Last month, officials with the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters announced that a referendum petition had successfully collected enough signatures to overturn the vehicle ban. If a majority of the Mountain View City Council wishes to pursue the ordinance to ban large vehicles, it must go before voters to decide.

The announcement was hailed as a victory by members of the

Housing Justice Coalition and the Silicon Valley Democratic Socialists of America. The two groups had coordinated a campaign in November to collect the needed signatures in less than a month.

While many Mountain View residents are deeply troubled by the area's growing homelessness, they also don't want a superficial solution that just pushes poverty elsewhere, said former Councilman Lenny Siegel, speaking for the Housing Justice Coalition.

“The community is split on what it means to have people living in vehicles, but most people in Mountain View want a real

► See **RV BAN**, page 8

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COURTESY OF FOOTHILL MUSIC THEATRE

Foothill Music Theatre's "Cinderella" provided a modern twist on the Rodgers & Hammerstein classic.

THE YEAR IN THEATER

Most memorable moment of 2019 for local theater fans? No doubt one of them was TheatreWorks Silicon Valley winning the Regional Theatre Tony Award, an enormous feather in the cap of founder Robert Kelley (who was also honored with a local Lifetimes of Achievement award) as he went into his final season as artistic director of the company. But TheatreWorks never rests on its laurels, offering another fine year's worth of productions, including a stellar version of the hilarious Hitchcock spoof "The 39 Steps," a wonder of comic timing.

"Archduke," which was workshopped at TheatreWorks' New Works festival a few years back, drew mixed audience reactions. I, however, called its regional premiere "moving, bold, strange and empathetic," in addition to very humorous. Back at the year's start, theater critic John Orr gave rave reviews to "Frost/Nixon," calling it an "astounding, not-to-be-missed 110 minutes of theater."

Its current offering, the world premiere of Paul Gordon's new musical adaptation of Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" (another New Works alum) has audiences swooning for this fresh, funny take on the centuries-old romantic comedy.

Dragon Productions Theatre Company had a big year, its first under the leadership of new co-artistic directors Bora "Max" Koknar and Alike Spencer-Koknar, who took over where founder Meredith Hagedorn left off (Hagedorn also gave a very endearing performance as doomed queen Marie Antoinette in "The Revolutionists" in January). The little downtown theater that could offered many fine productions over the course of the year but perhaps most surprising to me was its intimate and visceral Second Stages version of William Shakespeare's "Macbeth." In addition to its main stage productions, the space has been enhanced by ongoing circus series, festivals (some in cahoots with Fuse Theatre), comedy, open-mic and music nights, children's programming and more.

Broadway by the Bay in March this year offered a near-perfect version of the pop-rock opera "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," a dreamy, rainbow-hued riot of music, comedy and dance.

Over at Mountain View's Pear Theatre, Artistic Director Betsy Kruse Craig announced she was stepping down at the end of the year but plans to remain involved as an actor and director. Orr named actor Fred Pitts' performance in "Sweat" at the Pear as one of the year's best. He also enjoyed the quickfire character changes by the cast of the theater's annual "Pear Slices," which showcases original shorts by local writers. More recently, Janet Silver Ghent called the Pear's ambitious one-woman production of "You/Emma" "imaginative," "well-crafted" and "poignant."

It was a good year for updates on some lesser Rodgers & Hammerstein classics. Foothill Music Theatre this summer presented a charming version of "Cinderella," updated for modern tastes by making Cinderella a much more active heroine. Kuo-Hao Lo's scenery, too, was sublime, and the result was a family-friendly treat.

Palo Alto Players mounted an updated R&H production of its own with David Henry Hwang's rewrite of "Flower Drum Song." By keeping most of the songs but jettisoning most of the cringe-worthy aspects of the stereotype-laden original script, this production was a funny, touching and very welcome story of the Chinese American experience. Another favorite this year from Palo Alto Players was the screwball comedy "One Man, Two Guvnors."

Over to the west, Los Altos Stage Company went bold with shows, including the comedies "American Night" and "Admissions," which tackled prescient issues with wit and aplomb. The former was a surreal trip through one would-be citizen's dream, while the latter took on the sometimes-hypocritical world of elite education, and both seemed at times to slightly baffle and rattle their audiences; a risk well worth taking.

—Karla Kane

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■ CRIME BRIEF

'DRUG DEN' ARRESTS

Mountain View police arrested four people last week on drug charges after serving a search warrant at an Old Mountain View home, finding a large stash of methamphetamine, marijuana and psychedelic mushrooms.

The search of the home on the 500 block of Church Street on Tuesday, Dec. 24, caps off weeks of investigating the home, which officers believe was being used as a hub for drug sales, according to a statement released Monday by the Mountain View Police Department. The four people inside the home were arrested and booked into Santa Clara County jail.



Kathleen Polito



Mark Nietert

► See **CRIME BRIEF**, page 6

■ POLICE LOG

ASSAULT WITH DEADLY WEAPON

1700 block Miramonte Av., 12/24

AUTO BURGLARY

1 block Mercy St., 12/18
2400 block Charleston Rd., 12/18
2400 block Charleston Rd., 12/18
300 block Hope St., 12/21
100 block E. El Camino Real, 12/23
100 block N. Rengstorff Av., 12/23
1000 block El Monte Av., 12/24
700 block E. El Camino Real, 12/24
900 block High School Way, 12/24
1100 block N. Rengstorff Av., 12/26
2400 block Charleston Rd., 12/26
1100 block N. Rengstorff Av., 12/28

BATTERY

Castro St. & Villa St., 12/19
200 block Castro St., 12/21
700 block E. El Camino Real, 12/26

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

E. El Camino Real & The Americana, 12/20

W. Middlefield Rd. & N. Shoreline Blvd., 12/22

Jane Ln. & N. Rengstorff Av., 12/26

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

1200 block W. El Camino Real, 12/21

GRAND THEFT

500 block Walker Dr., 12/19
600 block San Antonio Rd., 12/20
100 block Franklin St., 12/22
2500 block W. Middlefield Rd., 12/24
600 block Showers Dr., 12/26

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

700 block W. Middlefield Rd., 12/22

STOLEN VEHICLE

Del Medio Av. & Silva Av., 12/20
800 block San Veron Av., 12/23

ROBBERY

1900 block W. El Camino Real, 12/20

VANDALISM

600 block Showers Dr., 12/18
300 block Moffett Blvd., 12/19
200 block Pamela Dr., 12/22

■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

NEW VTA ROUTES, SCHEDULES

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority launched a new higher-frequency route plan on Saturday, hoping for increased ridership by offering several days of free rides.

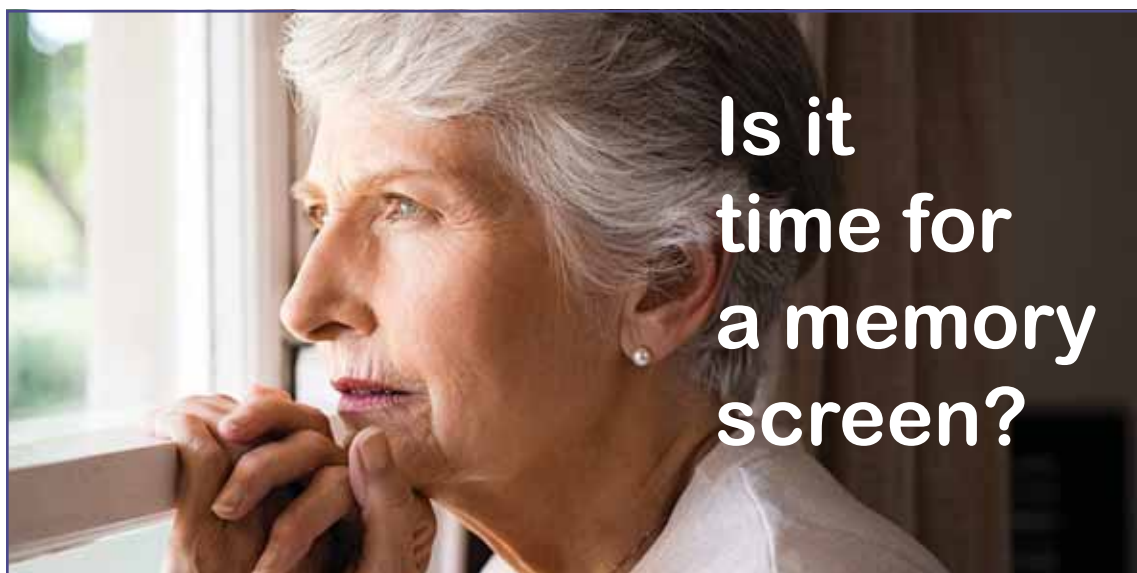
VTA offered free rides systemwide on all buses and trains until about 5 a.m. Jan. 1, said Brandi Childress, spokeswoman for VTA.

"We wanted to make it easy for people to try our service and really say thank you for the patience everyone has had as we roll out our newly-designed transit service," Childress said.

"As we were preparing for the new BART system, we knew this would be a good opportunity to look at the system and find areas where we can improve frequency and connect bus routes that would help the regional service," Childress said.

VTA's new "frequent routes" plan has 20 bus and light rail routes said to pick up every 15 minutes or less during weekdays

► See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 7



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SAMMY DALLAL

Felicitas Lopez, left, watches **Diana Olivares** at a sewing class held at the Mountain View Day Worker Center on Dec. 17. The center offers job placement and training, and is one of seven nonprofits that benefit from donations to the Voice's Holiday Fund.

Day Worker Center deftly threads the needle amid increasing changes

CENTER OFFERS PROGRAMS TO SERVE AN ARRAY OF WORKERS

By Heather Zimmerman

The hum of sewing machines underscores the late afternoon bustle of ringing phones and conversation at the Day Worker Center. The center has been open since 7 a.m., with day laborers on hand to fill temporary jobs helping local homeowners, business owners and contractors with anything from housekeeping and



moving to yard maintenance and construction. Job placement wraps up for the day at 3:30 p.m., but worker training — another of the center's key services — continues into the early evening in a multipurpose room. At the moment,

a sewing class is taking place.

Volunteer Diana Olivares answers questions from Felicitas Lopez and Ricardo Rodriguez, who are seated at sewing machines, seaming small pieces of fleece. Nearby, a colorful stack of little garments slowly grows: sweaters for pets to be sold, with proceeds going to the workers who sewed them.

"The center was having a

► See **DAY WORKER**, page 8

Slammed by critics, VTA strives to fix leadership

TRANSIT AGENCY CONSIDERS DOZENS OF IDEAS TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE

By Mark Noack

Pretty much everyone seems to agree that the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority desperately needs a leadership fix — but where to start?

For one glimpse of the problem, take a look at the results of a recent public survey on the performance of the transit agency's 12-member board of directors. About 70% of respondents gave the VTA board low marks, particularly for being ineffective and clumsy at communication. Other withering feedback came from a recent civil grand jury report, which primarily blamed poor board leadership for causing VTA to become one of the most inefficient and dysfunctional transit agencies in the U.S.

VTA directors are now facing an immense challenge to prove they are steering the organization back in the right direction, especially as voters are expected to decide in November on another transit tax. In the meantime, the transit agency's directors have taken some of the criticisms to heart, and they've been trying to figure out how to get better.

On that matter, the VTA directors recently commissioned an independent review to evaluate ways to improve the transit agency's governance. The independent report, conducted by the consulting firm RSM, indicated that VTA's complex problems require some complex solutions — the review analyzed nearly 30 ideas to facilitate VTA's governance.

This included simple fixes, such as better scheduling practices to ensure fewer missed board meetings, and also some more difficult proposals like reconfiguring the entrenched political system for appointing VTA directors.

Mountain View Councilman John McAlister, who serves on the VTA board and chairs the committee overseeing the report, said he agreed with pretty much everything.

"VTA has a lot of work to get done," he said. "There's just this sense that the people who are getting appointed aren't the best, and if you don't have good people, then you don't get good results."

Previously, it has been nearly impossible to get board members to reflect on their own effectiveness. In 2016, transit agency staff sent out a survey questionnaire to board members, but only two members reportedly took the time to fill it out. A similar self-assessment survey sent out earlier this year reportedly received feedback from about half the members.

One key problem is the lack of engagement on the VTA board, which consists entirely of political appointees serving on city councils or the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. Often, board members face a steep learning curve, and it doesn't help that they usually lack any experience in transportation, finance or management.

Many appointees also have a hard time separating their

► See **VTA**, page 17

With recycled water deal signed, attention shifts to contentious Baylands site

By Gennady Sheyner

Hailing it as a "historic" agreement, Santa Clara County's primary water supplier, Valley Water, enthusiastically approved on Dec. 10 a 76-year deal with Palo and Mountain View to construct a water purification plant in the Baylands with the intent of greatly expanding use of recycled water.

Under the approved terms, Valley Water would pay \$16 million for a water purification

plant that would be built near the Regional Water Quality Control Plant in the Palo Alto Baylands. The facility, which has an estimated price tag of \$20 million, will reduce salinity in treated wastewater and allow more commercial customers to hook up to the city's "purple pipes."

The cities and Valley Water are also looking at potentially building a larger and more advanced purification facility in the future, possibly in Palo Alto. That regional plant would effectively convert wastewater

to potable water.

But while the water district and the two cities lauded the deal as a perfect example of agencies working together for a common good, the agreement leaves open one critical question: Where exactly would the regional plant be located? The answer to that question may rest with Palo Alto voters.

City officials have proposed using a 10-acre site at Byxbee Park that was initially designated as parkland but that voters "undecided" in 2011 when they

approved Measure E. That measure made the site available for a waste-to-energy facility such as an anaerobic digestion plant. Since the vote, however, the city has agreed to ship out its sewage sludge for treatment in Merced County and Fairfield facilities rather than build a local plant.

The measure requires a public vote for any use of the site beyond what was approved in 2011. It also specifies, however, that the "undedication" is only valid for 10 years. After that time, the council will have the option of

dedicating it as parkland.

The contract between the three agencies specifies that if Valley Water determines that the Measure E site is the best location for a regional plant, and no "extenuating circumstances" have been identified by the city, Palo Alto staff will recommend that the City Council place a measure on the ballot to allow for this use. It would then be up to local voters to either advance or push back against the regional plan. If

► See **BAYLANDS**, page 6

BAYLANDS

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Valley Water opts not to move ahead with a water plant Palo Alto, the contract allows it to convey effluent to another location in the county for treatment.

Walter Hays, a local environmentalist who was one of the leading proponents of Measure E, said he supports changing the rules for the 10-acre site to allow the construction of a water treatment plant. At the Dec. 10 meeting of Valley Water board of directors, Hays said he and other supporters of the measure would be happy to work on a voter initiative to authorize the purification plant.

Hays said that in the years since Measure E, he and others learned that it was “more practical” to ship out sewage sludge and have it treated through anaerobic digestion elsewhere.

“So that site is available now

for other environmental purposes and those of us who worked on anaerobic digestion would love to see the advanced treatment plant there,” Hays told the Valley Water board.

A report from Palo Alto’s Utilities Department suggests that not everyone shares this view. The city hosted a meeting in April to discuss the partnership with the Valley Water. While many community members supported the goals of reducing the city’s reliance on imported water and enhancing water conservation, they also “expressed concern with the use of the Measure E site for a Valley Water regional purification facility,” the report states.

Despite this unresolved issue, Valley Water’s board unanimously supported the deal, which Palo Alto and Mountain View had approved on Nov. 18. The contract also allows the water district to transfer half of

Palo Alto’s treated wastewater to an “advanced water purification center,” which could be built either in the city or elsewhere in the county. The plant would convert wastewater to potable water.

Board member Tony Estremera, who made the motion to approve the agreement, lauded staff from the two cities and the water district for confronting and overcoming the various obstacles that stood in the way of the agreement.

“This is the Silicon Valley way: not just to look at problems and whine, but to look at problems and step in, confront them and come up with solutions,” Estremera said. “That’s why we have a 76-year agreement. Where on the globe do you find a 76-year agreement? That doesn’t even exist in the United Nations!”

His colleagues agreed. Board member Gary Kremen, who represents North County, said it’s been an “honor” to work on the deal, while board member Barbara Keegan said she hopes to see other cities forge similar agreements with Valley Water in the years to come.

“I look forward someday to be able to say nice things about the city of San Jose and city

of Santa Clara, when we enter into similar partnerships with them,” Keegan said. “But they will not have that special place that the communities of Palo Alto and Mountain View have of being the first to the table, so to speak.”

The deal also gives Palo Alto the option of buying water from the water district. Today, the city is one of about two dozen that buy their water from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which relies on the Hetch Hetchy system.

Elected leaders from Palo Alto and Mountain View similarly lauded the effort. Palo Alto Mayor Eric Filseth said in a statement that the partnership will “increase the resiliency of our vital water supply.” Mountain View Mayor Lisa Matichak said the deal will improve the quality of recycled water in Mountain View and Palo Alto.

“As a long-time recycled water user, Mountain View looks forward to significantly increasing consumption while concurrently supporting the city’s sustainability efforts and saving potable water for our important non-irrigation needs,” Matichak said in a statement. ▀

Email Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@pawebkly.com

CRIME BRIEF

► Continued from page 4

Among the illicit substances found inside, police reported there was nearly 20 grams of methamphetamine, meth pipes and several grams of psilocybin, commonly known as psychedelic mushrooms. In order to conduct the search, officers had to air out the home, which was filled with a heavy cloud of smoke from recent meth use, according to the statement.

Mountain View residents Mark Nietert, 64, and Kathleen Polito, 64, were both arrested on suspicion of operating the home as a drug den and possession of narcotics and drug paraphernalia. Polito is also suspected of possessing a pound of marijuana, which is more than legally permissible under the state’s Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA).

The other two suspects, a 61-year-old Mountain View woman and a 45-year-old man from Clearlake, were arrested on suspicion of being under the influence of a controlled substance.

—Kevin Forestieri



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SCAN ME



THERAPY

► Continued from page 1

they're doing. Historically, nearly half the students are referred for therapy by district staff or referred to an outside provider, including the Community Health Awareness Council (CHAC) in Mountain View and Children's Health Council in Palo Alto.

Who refers the students shifts every year. During the fall quarter at Los Altos High School, for example, the highest number of students referred themselves — a total of 103, or about 38%. Referrals from therapists (13.2%), school staff (13%) and administrators (12.5%) trailed, followed by peers, counselors and parents. Self referrals were also the most common at Mountain View High School, followed by school staff, other therapists, and special education staff that conduct Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Mountain View High has grappled with the deaths of two students by suicide since August 2018, putting local mental health professionals on high alert about possible "contagion," previously described as a suicide cluster in which students are at higher risk.

Though the deaths have been a topic of concern for both school staff and even city officials, the problem has been steadily growing for a while. When school staff began carefully tracking its mental health services about six years ago, the district was

receiving about 200 referrals each year, which quickly climbed to more than 800 in 2017 and inundated counselors with difficult caseloads.

Mountain View High School Principal Dave Grissom said the numbers are "alarming" at first, but could be a sign that the school's culture is evolving in a way that students aren't ashamed to seek help from mental health care professionals.

"The concern for others is greater, and there is an understanding of 'how' to refer (students) that I don't think was there before," Grissom said.

Surveys conducted at Mountain View High show that 24% of freshmen students and 33% of juniors reported feeling "chronic" sadness or hopelessness in the last year, and 16% of freshmen and 20% of juniors reported seriously considering suicide. Though not far from the state average, school staff is vowing to bring down those numbers over the next five years. The school's annual report calls for bringing the number of students feeling chronic sadness and hopelessness down to 15% among freshmen and 20% among juniors.

Other school districts may soon follow in the footsteps of Mountain View-Los Altos. In October, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors agreed to explore ways to expand the availability of school-based mental health services, arguing that placing mental health staff in all of the county's

32 school districts could be an effective way to create a "baseline" level of support for students. The program would likely focus on prevention and early intervention — screening students for signs of behavioral disorders or depressive symptoms before they get worse.

County staff is expected to spend the next several months researching the best way to implement such a program, including a comprehensive analysis on the unmet mental health needs of children in the county. National studies have found that roughly 1 in 5 teens ages 13 to 18 suffer from a mental health disorder, but few have actually met with a mental health care provider. The reasons why are manifold, including a dearth of available child psychiatrists and psychologists, and a failure on the part of commercial insurance companies to provide mental health services at the same level as physical health care.

If the county's school-based mental health program comes to fruition, it could tap into funding recently made available by the state. California is currently accepting applications for \$75 million in grant money available to counties and school districts that team up on "increasing access to mental health services in locations that are easily accessible to students and their families." Just under half of that money will be available to "large" counties, which includes Santa Clara. ▀

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

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at stops throughout the county.

"This is the most significant transit service change that VTA has implemented since 2008," VTA said in a news release. "Not only has service been redesigned to accommodate the addition of BART service, but it will give more people more frequent and reliable transit options."

The change was made with community input over 18 months and will shift low rider-ship routes so that 90% of the service is focused on high rider-ship areas, according to VTA.

Silicon Valley residents still await Santa Clara County BART extensions to BART's Berryessa and Milpitas stations, which were supposed to open before the new year and have since been deferred without a new opening day.

VTA began running bus routes to the would-be extensions on Saturday, Dec. 28.

More info on the new service routes can be found at newservice.vta.org.

—Bay City News Service

STATE SENATE CANDIDATES TO DISCUSS CLIMATE CRISIS

A coalition of local environmental nonprofits have organized a forum to be held on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at which local voters can get more information on how District 13 state Senate candidates stand on environmental issues.

The nonpartisan forum is scheduled for 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Menlo-Atherton High School performing arts center at 555 Middlefield Road. Admission is free, though people are encouraged to register.

District 13 covers the Peninsula between South San Francisco and Sunnyvale, including the Coastsides. There are seven candidates: Josh Becker, Michael Brownrigg, Sally Lieber, Shelly Masur, Annie Oliva, Alexander Glew and John Webster. All but Webster are expected to attend the forum.

Participating candidates will provide opening statements, then respond to questions from the event's cosponsors: 350 Silicon Valley, Acterra, Citizens'

Climate Lobby, and Sustainable San Mateo County. There will also be questions from the audience.

Other supporting organizations are Canopy, Carbon Free Silicon Valley, Climate Reality-Santa Clara County, Cool Block Palo Alto, Cool Planet First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto, Elders Climate Action-NorCal, Fossil Free Mid-Peninsula, Friends of Caltrain, Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, Friends of Huddart & Wunderlich Parks, Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action, Sea Hugger, Sustainable Silicon Valley, Sunrise Movement-Palo Alto Hub, Thrive Alliance of Non-profits in San Mateo County, and Youth Climate Action Network. Register online for the event at eventbrite.com/e/california-senate-district-13-climate-and-environment-forum-tickets-83574199681.

—Kate Bradshaw

express

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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.

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DAY WORKER

► Continued from page 5

problem with lack of jobs for people who were over 60, 70 years old. So we were thinking of teaching a new skill where (workers) can learn to make their own clothes and sell them. That's where the idea came from," said Olivares, who uses patterns for the class from her own online store selling clothing and accessories for pets.

Olivares said there are tentative plans to hold a craft fair at the center, and then sell the pet clothing through local boutiques, animal shelters and other area festivals. The sales would help workers earn money, plus raise awareness about the center and reach possible employers.

"If they are buying the clothes, they are actually helping out people who have been working here and giving back to the community," she said.

Sewing classes are the latest of many programs offered at the Day Worker Center. Other services include health clinics and classes on a broad range of topics such as English as a Second Language, computers and art.

The center, entering its 24th year, serves 650 workers each year, according to Executive Director Maria Marroquin. About 65 workers come to the center every weekday; Marroquin said that the seasons, in part, determine how many of them find jobs each day.

"In the spring and summer, we are getting short on workers," Marroquin said. "Also, most of

the jobs that workers perform are outside."

Winter tends to be slower, though workers help staff events such as the German Holiday Market or the Kiwanis Club's Christmas tree lot, and those add up to about 1,000 hours of work each, Marroquin said.

The center operates on a budget of \$400,000 — funded largely by private donors and the faith community. The Day Worker Center is one of seven local nonprofits benefiting from the Voice's annual Holiday Fund. Donations to the fund are divided equally among the organizations, and, thanks to the support of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, 100% of the donations go directly to the seven recipient agencies.

Serving an increasingly diverse population is shaping up as one of the more recent major challenges for the center, as it has meant stretching already limited resources further.

"That is a precious gift from God because we are able to serve a diverse community, but it's also very challenging, because culturally the thing that's appealing for you may not be (as appealing) for others. It's really a privilege to be working here and serving the community, but it's not easy," Marroquin said.

Many more homeless people have sought work at the center, according to Marroquin, who noted that homeless workers can face additional hurdles in finding employment, such as inadequate sleep or limited opportunities to bathe.

Often, older workers are no longer able to do the physically demanding jobs for which many employers come to the center. Sewing classes, along with catering work, are among the center's programs that aim to address that.

"I insist on the importance of supporting people who are getting older," Marroquin said. "So we're just trying to encourage the idea of entrepreneurial activities. In the meantime, they are waiting here for work, and then later they can sell (the clothing) just to make some money with the time they are waiting here."

Lopez and Rodriguez, who are now brushing up their sewing skills, have worked a variety of jobs through the center. Lopez has done a variety of cleaning, cooking and babysitting, and Rodriguez has done a lot of handyman work, gardening and cleaning gutters. Both Lopez and Rodriguez had some experience in sewing before taking this class, too, but are applying their skills in a new way. Lopez worked in a bridal shop in Mexico before going to nursing school and Rodriguez helped out a friend who had a small business that involved sewing.

His sewing knowledge has come in handy, he said, to mend clothing. "I fix my pants and shirts. And sometimes my friends say, 'fix this.'"

"I don't know, now, maybe it's a business," he added with a smile. ▀

Email Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@pawweekly.com

2020
Wallace Stegner
LECTURES

VOICES FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

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RV BAN

► Continued from page 1

solution," he said. "I'm hoping that we can go beyond the restrictions and come up with something that works for the vehicle residents."

The referendum takes aim at an ordinance passed on Oct. 22 that banned all vehicles more than 7 feet high, 7 feet wide or 22 feet long from parking along most city streets. The ordinance explicitly avoids any mention of homelessness, and it was instead written to focus on traffic safety issues.

Under the proposed rules, this ban is expected to close most of Mountain View's suburban neighborhoods to large vehicles, including RVs and trailers. The city has not released final details on which streets would be affected.

Ever since the parking ban was first proposed, Housing Justice advocates warned they would



Lenny Siegel

work to overturn it. Under city rules, ordinances approved by the City Council do not take effect for 30 days, and they can be overturned through a citizen petition process. To qualify,

legitimate voters.

As part of the certification process, elections officials verify only a fraction of the total names that were submitted — 500, in this case.

'The community is split on what it means to have people living in vehicles, but most people in Mountain View want a real solution.'

LENNY SIEGEL

a referendum petition must include signatures from about 10% of the registered voters in Mountain View, which equates to more than 3,700 individuals.

In November, activists delivered a petition with nearly 5,000 signatures to City Hall. Elections officials say nearly 15% of the signatures analyzed were found to be invalid, mainly because the voter names were not registered. Nevertheless, the petition was still signed by 4,179

The petition results will be considered by the Mountain View City Council at its Jan. 14 meeting, according to City Clerk Lisa Natusch. At that time, the council must decide whether to repeal the ordinance or bring it to voters at the next regular election. Since the deadline for the March ballot has already passed, that means the ordinance would have to wait until November. ▀

Email Mark Noack at mnoack@mv-voice.com



AN EVENING WITH DR. CORNEL WEST

Please join Dr. Cornel West to discuss democracy, race, and justice. The evening will also include a question and answer session with Foothill College students.

Friday, January 17

6:30 PM

Smithwick Theatre

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*Proceeds will benefit
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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.

Donate online at
siliconvalleycf.org/
mvv-holiday-fund

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

CHAC serves Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and seven school districts. Among the services it offers are school-based counseling and programs to protect students from high-risk behaviors.

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MountainView
VOICE

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Thank you for supporting the Holiday Fund

**As of December 23, 120 donors have contributed \$42,843
to the Mountain View Voice Holiday Fund.**

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Michael Kahan.....	180
Herbert Perry	100
Tracy King	500
Ronald Swierk.....	125
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Ellis Berns	200
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* Donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.

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YWCA helps survivors amid spike in reported rapes

NONPROFIT PROVIDES SHELTER, SUPPORT AND
ADVOCACY SERVICES TO VICTIMS

By Kevin Forestieri



For volunteers and employees at YWCA of Silicon Valley, trying to meet the needs of all survivors of sexual assault has been a daunting task. And it's only getting harder.

In three short years, from 2015 to 2018, the number of reported sexual assaults spiked 58% in Santa Clara County. With each report, it falls to YWCA to provide critical, state-mandated assistance to victims, including medical accompaniment and advocacy services. Each step of the way, someone from YWCA is available to act on behalf of the victim and assist with the myriad challenges that often follow a sexual assault — the court dates, counseling, law enforcement interviews, medical exams and housing needs.

Keeping up those comprehensive services amid the rising demand has been difficult, said YWCA CEO Tanis Crosby, particularly with the hands-off approach by the state of California. The nonprofit is the only designated rape crisis center for most of Santa Clara County, including North County cities, and the state penal code requires that these services be available to all survivors.

Available funding earmarked in the state budget to actually pay for these services has been paltry at best: Only \$45,000 in general fund dollars were allocated for rape crisis centers across all of California for the 2019-20 fiscal year, down from \$5 million the prior year. Limited government contracts and a bevy of private donations have kept YWCA afloat in recent years, but the number of available advocates has been stretched thin trying to respond to all calls.

The good news is that 2019 has proven to be a watershed moment for the nonprofit and larger efforts to curb gender-based violence, with sudden and significant support coming from Santa Clara County. Throughout the year, county supervisors have chastised state officials for abdicating their responsibility to fund services for survivors of rape and sexual assault, and agreed to pitch in a combined \$1.7 million in funding to YWCA to bridge

the gap left by the state.

"This is a public health issue, and local leaders responded," Crosby said. "There absolutely has been a pivot point."

The big boost in funding aside, Crosby said there's still work to do, and every dollar counts. Survivors served by YWCA are increasingly desperate and facing tougher hurdles in finding a place to stay amid the regional housing crisis, many of whom have landed in emergency shelters operated by the nonprofit in discreet locations throughout the county. Funds from public agencies are a great help, she said, but are only for specific, direct services. It's up to individual contributions and philanthropic donations to pay for everything else.

"Donors fill the gap that government doesn't fund, and government funding is like Swiss cheese," Crosby said. "Without donor support, we cannot respond to the need of survivors."

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

Data collected by the county shows that sexual assault reports are on the rise by just about every metric, likely in part due to survivors' increased willingness to speak out. County prosecutors are handling more than 5,000 domestic violence cases each year; Santa Clara Valley Medical Center reported a 35% increase in forensic exams in 2019 compared to last year; and local shelter programs had to turn away 2,151 victims of domestic violence due to lack of capacity.

A big milestone in 2019 was a new joint agreement between 22 agencies, including YWCA, police departments, hospitals and forensic examiners that sets clear guidelines for how the numerous

**'Without donor
support, we
cannot respond
to the need of
survivors.'**

CEO TANIS CROSBY

► See **YWCA**, page 16

2019 THE YEAR IN PHOTOS

PHOTOS BY MAGALI GAUTHIER

In 2019, Mountain View residents chose to make some noise. High school students marched out of class to join the worldwide climate strike, NASA Ames employees protested the 35-day government shutdown and Mountain View residents rallied to oppose President Donald Trump's policies targeting immigrants and the inhumane conditions at the nation's southern border. Renters facing displacement, people living in vehicles and homeless advocates demonstrated outside City Hall to draw attention to the housing crisis and people on both sides of the marijuana debate flooded the City Council Chambers. The Mountain View community found quieter ways to stand up for empowerment, from female firefighters who went viral, powerful Bay Area politicians encouraging women to take leadership roles and the lone female Mountain View High School wrestler inspiring other girls to try the sport. Residents mourned the loss of an iconic tree outside City Hall and looked ahead to a salt pond restoration project. Gentrification forced a bicycle-rehabbing nonprofit out of town, Mountain View Parent Nursery School celebrated 50 years of educating the city's little ones and a new school community coalesced at Jose Antonio Vargas Elementary. Foothill College's quirky radio station marked another year of challenging listeners with its offbeat selections and, in a moment of peak Silicon Valley, a guy walking down Castro Street used his laptop as an umbrella. It was the kind of year that brought Mountain View, with its challenges and opportunities, its heartbreaks and its promise, into clear view.

—Andrea Gemmet

SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 14.



Clockwise from above: In January, aerospace engineer Suman Muppidi and his daughter, Asha, join a rally at NASA Ames Research Center protesting the government shutdown, the longest one in U.S. history; Scott Rodvold prepares dinner with his son in the RV they share after losing their Mountain View apartment; a photo of Mountain View's first all-female fire crew went viral in March, and for Capt. Jenna Graham, it was a chance to show that women can be capable firefighters; a huge line of people spilled out of the City Council Chambers on March 5, waiting to speak about plans to allow retail cannabis shops.



Clockwise from top left: Umbelina Martinez calls out for justice during the annual May Day March; the stately cedar at the center of the annual Community Tree Lighting Celebration was cut down in November due to poor health; DJ Cynthia Lombard introduces a song at KFJC, Foothill College's long-running and eccentric radio station, in April; salt pond restoration efforts planned for Mountain View made a visible difference at Bedwell Bayfront Park (restored land is on the left and land yet be restored is on the right); the nonprofit Bike Exchange moved to Palo Alto after losing its space in Mountain View; Paris Harrell, the only female member of the Mountain View High School wrestling team, sits with teammates during a meet against Homestead High in January.

2019 THE YEAR IN PHOTOS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13.



SAMMY DALLAL



Clockwise from top left: A Tesla drives past a row of RVs along Crisanto Avenue in October, when the City Council voted to pass a large-vehicle parking ban that would force homeless RV dwellers off most Mountain View streets; demonstrators splashed with red paint protest Vice President Mike Pence while he tours NASA Ames in November; Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Anna Eshoo spoke at a women in leadership event at NASA Ames in August; a man uses a MacBook Pro as an umbrella on Castro Street on a rainy day in January; third-grade teacher Sean Dechter greets students on the first day of school at the new Jose Antonio Vargas Elementary; Los Altos High School student Montserrat Mendez holds up her "Climate change is not cool" sign as she and her classmates participate in the worldwide Climate Strike on Sept. 20.



JANUARY SEMINARS

Presented by the DeLeon Team



Tax Strategies for Owning and Selling Silicon Valley Real Estate



Tuesday, January 14, 2019
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM



Oshman Family JCC
Freidenrich Conference Center
3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto, CA



Michael Repka, Esq.
CEO, Managing Broker, & General
Counsel of DeLeon Realty
LL.M (Taxation)
NYU School of Law DRE #01854880



Making Provisions to Buy a Home Under Market Value in 2020



Saturday, January 18, 2020
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM



Mitchell Park Community Center
Adobe Room
3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, CA



Ken DeLeon
Founder of DeLeon Realty
DRE #01342140



How to Determine Optimal Pricing & Strategy When Selling a Home



Thursday, January 23, 2020
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM



Oshman Family JCC
Freidenrich Conference Center
3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto, CA



Michael Repka, Esq.
CEO, Managing Broker, & General
Counsel of DeLeon Realty
DRE #01854880

Appetizers & refreshments will be provided.

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Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program



The Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program is a voter-approved, 15-year program to ensure uninterrupted water resources services in Santa Clara County.

Notice of Public Hearing

What: Public Hearing on proposed modification to the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project

When: Jan. 14, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

Where: Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Boardroom, 5700 Almaden Expressway, San José, CA 95118

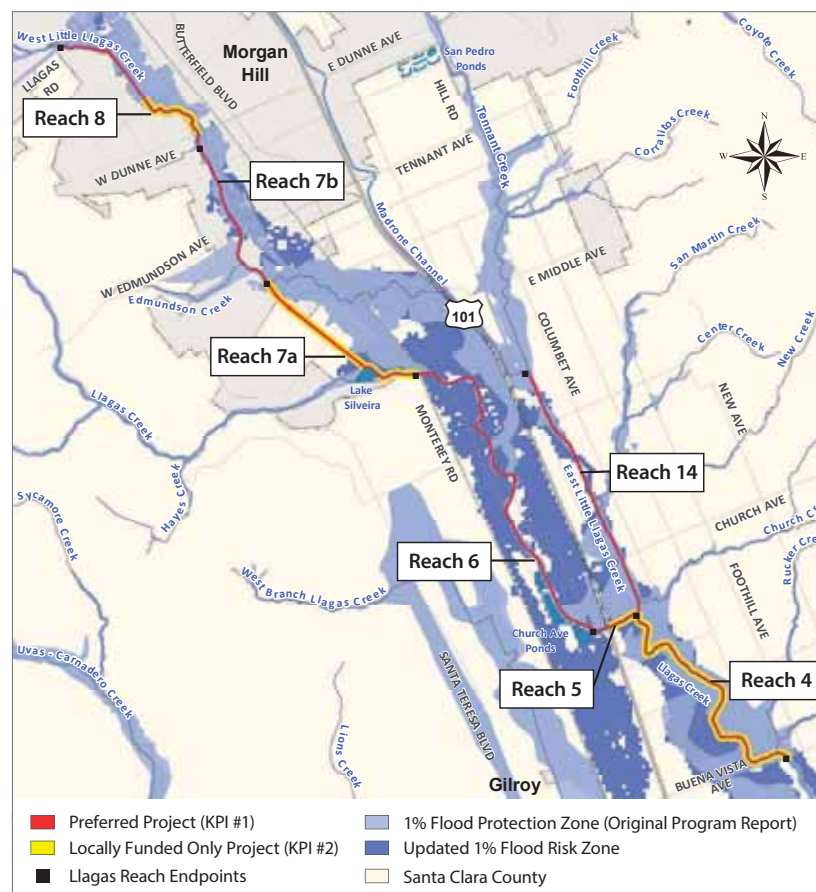
Modifications to the voter-approved program require a public hearing. The proposed modification is for the locally funded Key Performance Indicator of Project E6, the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project.

Project E6: Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection

The primary objective of the project is to plan, design and construct improvements along 13.9 miles of Upper Llagas Creek from Buena Vista Avenue in Gilroy to Llagas Road in Morgan Hill, including West Little Llagas Creek in downtown Morgan Hill.

The proposed modification is for the locally funded Key Performance Indicator of the project. The modification increases the length of the project to be built with local funds from approximately 2.9 miles to 4.9 miles in addition to constructing the onsite compensatory mitigation. Besides getting the most out of the available local dollars, this approach keeps the project moving forward, shortens the construction window without inducing flooding downstream and maximizes the potential for external

Project E6: Upper Llagas Map



funding opportunities. This modification also reflects improved collaboration with regulatory permitting agencies that require early mitigation for the project impacts.

Proposed modification to the Key Performance Indicator:

With local funding only: Construct flood protection improvements along Llagas Creek from Buena Vista Avenue to Highway 101 in San Martin (Reaches 4 and 5 (portion), Monterey Road to Watsonville Road in Morgan Hill (Reach 7a), approximately W. Dunne Avenue to W. Main Avenue (portion of Reach 8), and onsite compensatory mitigation at Lake Silveira.

For more information

The board agenda memo regarding this hearing will be available on January 3, 2020 at www.valleywater.org. For more information on the public hearing, contact **Meenakshi Ganjoo** at mganjoo@valleywater.org or (408) 630-2295.

organizations involved in assisting sexual assault survivors are supposed to work with one another. The so-called Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) protocol, adopted in September, is meant to break down the siloed approach and ensure that patients are appropriately treated every step of the way, whether at the scene of the crime or in an emergency room. It goes so far as to include flow charts for what specific actions police officers, nurses and YWCA advocates should take depending on each scenario.

Crosby said she believes the SART protocol will likely increase demand by spurring more people to report sexual assaults, which she said is a good thing — it means fewer people are falling through the cracks.

A majority of the domestic violence cases handled by YWCA don't have a criminal justice component — meaning they are not reported to the police or victims do not seek to press charges — so the number of survivors seeking help far exceeds how many cases are tracked by local law enforcement agencies. Crosby said it's great that the district attorney's office is seeking justice for survivors, but the inclination is to check off each conviction as a victory. For YWCA, the priorities are different.

"What YWCA is concerned about is that the survivor is okay, and how they are doing on their healing journey," she said.

In the coming years, YWCA will be on the forefront in providing support services for students at Stanford University in a new partnership with the school, and will bring essential advocacy services to all patients who arrive at Stanford Hospital for sexual assault forensic exams. Patients currently have to travel to Valley Medical Center in San Jose for the exams, but a recent deal struck between the hospital and the county means patients can be treated by Stanford's emergency department starting in 2020.

Crosby said the help from donors also gives YWCA more time to work on "lasting change" that only comes through public policy and advocacy, and the proof was apparent in 2019. It was through tireless work by advocacy groups and even the survivors themselves to make clear that something had to change, which helped galvanize the county to respond with a hefty investment, she said. ▀

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

AIRBNB

► Continued from page 1

In recent years, certain types of short-term rental operations have riled up neighborhoods in Mountain View, spurring complaints of noise, garbage and loss of parking. Some neighbors have criticized hosts who convert residences into cheap “hacker house” dormitories for dozens of tech workers. Other landlords have converted swaths of older apartments into Airbnb rentals to circumvent the city’s rent control rules. There is no sign that any of these large-scale hosts have signed up with the city, according to the city’s data.

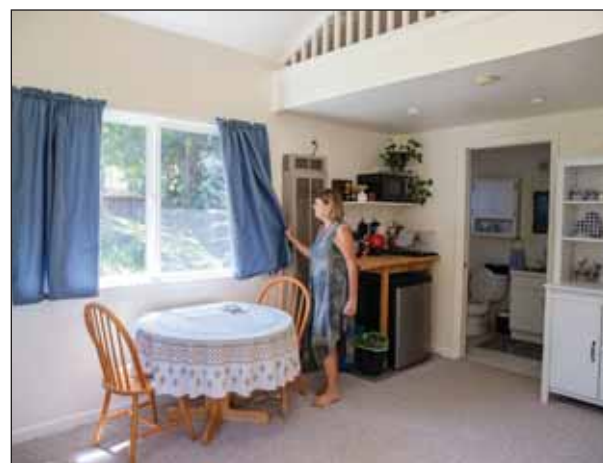
City officials familiar with the short-term rental program could not be immediately reached for comment. Previously, the city manager’s office reported that staff would focus on educating hosts rather than enforcement at this early stage.

Additionally, hosts are supposed to comply with rules to ensure they aren’t taking affordable housing off the market in order to turn an easy buck. Unoccupied housing can be rented out through Airbnb and other services for no more than 60 days per year under the city rules. Under the city’s ordinance, any hosts who fail to abide by the regulations will be given a warning, and

then fines of \$500 or more could be imposed.

Other cities have also experienced tremendous difficulty getting Airbnb hosts to comply with regulations. In San Francisco, fewer than 1 in 4 Airbnb hosts signed up and paid mandatory fees after the city launched a similar registry system in 2015. Significant compliance came about only after San Francisco had issued more than \$1 million in fines and legally forced Airbnb and other short-term rental companies to delist hosts who weren’t following the city’s rules. ▀

Email Mark Noack at mnoack@mv-voice.com



MAGALI GAUTHIER

Carrielynn Haedtler checks the curtains of the guest house she and her husband rent out on Airbnb in Mountain View on Aug. 7.

VTA

► Continued from page 5

responsibility for improving countywide transportation from the local priorities of their political base. In particular, the San Jose City Council, which controls five seats on the VTA board, has been accused of hogging funding to prop up light rail and BART.

Many VTA members admit they’re overwhelmed with too many responsibilities, making it impossible for them to read every staff report or attend every meeting. Some board members have extremely poor attendance — in some cases, members have skipped every meeting of committees they sit on. Supervisor Dave Cortese has attended barely more than 1 out of 4 board meetings since joining the VTA board in 2008, according to the agency’s published statistics, which includes time when he served as an alternate board member.

The independent review found there are several relatively easy fixes that VTA could implement. In particular, the board’s 17 active committees could be consolidated, streamlined or eliminated to save time. Standing committees, which oversee responsibilities like capital projects or congestion management, should be given more authority to approve expenditures without bringing everything to the full board, the report recommended. Similarly, board members should face some minimum requirement for attendance, and consultants recommended each member should get an annual “scorecard” that grades their performance for things like participation, leadership and relevant knowledge.

Other needed board improvements would likely take more work. The consultant report pointed out VTA members needed to draft an updated master strategic plan, and use that to guide their future decision-making.

Most difficult of all, the independent report urged the VTA

board to consider taking its process for appointing directors back to the drawing board. Prospective board members should be first vetted for their qualifications and commitments to ensure they can

fulfill their duties before being nominated for the job, the report said.

The recommendations will be taken up by the full VTA board of directors at a future meeting. ▀

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Time to collect landlord fee delinquencies

By Keating Rhoads

Guest Opinion

In the Dec. 6 edition, the *Mountain View Voice* reported on landlord rent control fee delinquencies. As noted in the article, the fee obligations — \$101 per rental unit per year — are codified in the Community Stabilization and Fair Rent Act (CSFRA, also known as Measure V). The delinquencies are large, totaling over \$100,000.

Forty-thousand dollars of the delinquency is due to non-payment by Carmel Partners, owners of The Village apartments on San Antonio Road. A sample of rents currently/recently on the market shows annual rents of \$44,000 for a one-bedroom and almost \$62,000 for a two-bedroom. Based on the same sample, I estimate annual rental income at The Village, after a 5% vacancy rate assumption,

to exceed \$15 million. In his article, the reporter noted the announcement of the sale of the apartment complex at a value twice the 2015 assessed value and that the delinquencies are not “likely” a matter of inadequate cash flow. The above data leads me to the same conclusion. To Carmel Partners and/or their acquirer, it is past time to pay up — including late fees. This is a legal obligation to the city of Mountain View and its residents.

The Rental Housing Committee (RHC), which administers the city’s rent control program, has been well-managed in its almost three-year existence. As provided in the CSFRA, the city provided start-up funds to carry the RHC until the landlord fees began to be collected.

Since then, 100% of those start-up funds were repaid, and the committee has funded its own operating needs. Said another way, the RHC has not cost the city one penny.

The only management concerns are these uncollected fees. This has all the appearances of normal collection activity. City staff has offered to help the RHC in its collection efforts. The CSFRA explicitly provides for penalties for landlord noncompliance and allows the RHC the assistance of the city attorney if needed. Committee members who are hesitant should bear in mind their fiduciary duty to Mountain View residents. It is not the RHC that is making an issue of the fees, it is the delinquent landlords. Let’s get these amounts, from Carmel and others, collected.

Last, it’s worth noting that the City Council-backed Measure D

to amend the CSFRA is coming up on the March ballot. Under the first three years of the CSFRA, rents have increased an average of 3.5%. Expect two to three times that amount under the council plan, since renters will be asked to share capital costs of occupancy. Note as well that tucked inside that ballot measure is a little item having to do with RHC membership. The council has decided to eliminate the requirement in the current law that committee members be Mountain View residents. Considering the challenges of getting out-of-town owner-landlords to pay their fees, we should not vote for Measure D, which would allow landlords like Carmel Partners, who refuse to comply with our law, to run the RHC!

Keating Rhoads is a Mountain View resident.

■ LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

WISH I WAS THAT CLEVER

I’m impressed with the deal that Federal Realty has gotten from the city of Mountain View and the Los Altos School District (“LASD finalizes \$155M land deal for new Mountain View school,” Dec. 27). Federal Realty is getting, according to my antiquarian mathematics, a rate of return of 156% per year. I wish I could do this well on my investments that typically return 4% to 8%

a year. And this is for property not bought in the depths of the Great Depression, or even property bought in the depths of the Great Recession of 2007/2008, but in the reasonably prosperous era of 2015. But I assume we have to defer to the great economists and business folks on the Mountain View City Council, who presumably know why Federal Realty was paid so handsomely, rather than having its

property seized by eminent domain.

*David Lewis
Oak Street*

CHANGE THE NAME OF OUR CITY

The City Council just greenlighted a seven-story office building on the 1-acre parcel at the corner of San Antonio Road and California Street, where the Milk Pail Market is (“Council

greenlights seven-story San Antonio office project,” Dec. 6). Also, a new giant office building is going in at the intersection of Rengstorff Avenue and El Camino Real, in addition to all of the other tall projects in the works along the El Camino corridor.

So I propose we change the name of our city to No View, which would be an accurate description.

*Ellyn Berner
Fordham Way*

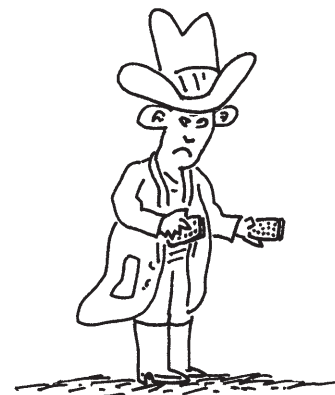
What’s on your mind?

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■ FOOD FEATURE

COCOA POWERED

Local tech entrepreneur's sleek device brings craft chocolate-making to your kitchen counter

Story by Elena Kadvany
Photos by Magali Gauthier

Only in Silicon Valley does a longtime tech startup founder find a second career in a chocolate-making robot.

Nate Saal studied molecular biophysics and biochemistry at Yale University after graduating from Palo Alto High School in 1990. After returning to Palo Alto, he quickly shifted from science to the internet, founding what he says was the first web-based software updating service in 1996. He went on to start more technology companies and later worked for CNET and Cisco.

But these days, he's immersed in chocolate — specifically, chocolate made by a countertop device that he created called CocoTerra. The sleek white device, which looks like a large, futuristic coffee maker, uses algorithms, hardware and a smartphone app to transform cocoa nibs, milk powder, cocoa powder and sugar into chocolate in about two hours.

Saal has high hopes for the

machine, which has yet to be released. In the age of automation, where robots are making pizza and ramen and delivering our food, he sees CocoTerra as doing something different: using technology to deepen rather than disrupt people's connection to how their food is made.

"We're not trying to slap technology for technology's sake on top of that to abstract it away, to take creativity away," he said. "We're trying to actually create a whole new category of people who can now make chocolate."

While Saal's professional career has focused on technology, he has always filled his weekends with homegrown food science, like tending to his vegetable garden, keeping bees and growing grapes and olives to make wine and olive oil from scratch. He's fascinated by the "deep science" of these activities.

Making chocolate, however, was not in his repertoire. It wasn't until he took his brother-in-law, who works in the coffee business, to a chocolate tasting several years ago, and a conversation about

the similarities between the two industries got him thinking. His brother hypothesized that home coffee machines have allowed more people to understand and appreciate coffee in a way that chocolate hasn't experienced. People did make chocolate at home, but it was a lengthy process that required having several expensive appliances, he found.

"There's a bread machine, an ice cream maker and a juicer and a pasta maker and a tea brewer and a coffee maker — every major food category has a home appliance. What I discovered very quickly was there is no such thing (for chocolate)," Saal said.

He educated himself by going to chocolate-making classes, including a boot camp at Madre Chocolate in Hawaii. Back in Palo Alto, he and a team got to work designing several iterations of a device that could combine all steps in the chocolate-making process — grinding, refining, conching for a smooth texture, tempering and molding — in one machine.

► See **COCOA**, page 20



Above: Nate Saal adds cocoa nibs to CocoTerra, the device he created to make chocolate from scratch at home. **Top:** A variety of chocolates, from white to dark, made in a CocoTerra machine.

COCOA

► Continued from page 19

It typically grinds the single-origin cocoa nibs for about half an hour, using stainless steel balls, then refines the cocoa butter, sugar and milk powder before tempering. Tempering, Saal enthusiastically explained, is a chemical process that involves cooling



The first iteration of CocoTerra, which was refined into a sleek, counter-top sized machine, is displayed at the company's headquarters in Palo Alto.

the ingredients to a specific temperature that will create a specific structure of seed crystal in the cocoa butter molecules. The crystals solidify, creating shiny, hard chocolate. A patented centrifuge inside the machine cools and spins the chocolate to remove bubbles.

The final result is a ring-shaped, half-pound mold of chocolate, rather than the traditional rectangular bar.

On the back end, technology allows a level of customization that CocoTerra's creators hope will make the device as appealing for experts as for novices. A cloud-based recipe system, accessible online or via an app, guides you from start to finish in a recipe. People can either default to CocoTerra's recipes, such as 62% dark chocolate or milk chocolate with almonds,



Nate Saal shows a recipe for white chocolate with peppermint on the CocoTerra app.

or customize them, from level of sweetness and creaminess, to added flavors and ingredients, to the tempering temperature. People can easily control for allergies or dietary restrictions.

CocoTerra will sell the base ingredients directly to customers, focusing on fair trade, ethically grown nibs, or people can use their own. People advanced enough to roast and shell their own cacao beans could still do that, put them into the machine and then create their own recipes.

Producing quality chocolate in two hours is "jaw-dropping" to many in the chocolate industry, Saal said.

"I thought they were totally crazy when I first talked to them on the phone," John Scharffenberger told CNBC. Scharffenberger, who co-founded Scharffen Berger in San Francisco in 1997 before small batch, artisan chocolate was a thing, is an investor and calls CocoTerra "a natural extension of the craft chocolate movement."

The company won't disclose a price for the machine, which they claim is the world's first tabletop chocolate maker. CocoTerra has raised more than \$2 million in investments and is now focused on a larger round to fund the release of the device.

"This is about the evolution of technology to make chocolate. But it's also making it accessible," Saal said. "We're bringing that to people by using smart mechanical engineering and software to make it accessible so that you can actually now focus on things like the flavor and recipe and the look and the design and the craft of it." ▀

Email Elena Kadvany at ekadvany@pawebly.com



Chocolate, which is produced in a ring shape, is embellished with decorative patterns.

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"Avengers: Endgame."

COURTESY OF MARVEL STUDIOS



"Marriage Story."

COURTESY OF HEYDAY FILMS



"El Camino: A Breaking Bad Movie."

COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES TELEVISION

THE YEAR IN FILM

THE BEST, WORST AND MOST MEMORABLE MOVIES OF 2019

By Peter Canavese

This year, the line between the big and small screen, between cinema and television, blurred more than ever. Big-spending Netflix — emboldened by last year's Oscar-acknowledged "Roma" — led the charge again with "The Irishman," "Marriage Story," "The Two Popes," "I Lost My Body," "The King," and "Atlantics," among others, while Hulu continued to program new feature films and Disney+ and Apple+ entered the streaming-service fray. This year, one could watch Willem Dafoe tangle with Robert Pattinson in "The Lighthouse" at the local multiplex, or stay home and watch Dafoe fall in love with his sled dog in Disney+'s "Togo," a big-screen-quality, family adventure film instantly watchable on anything from a phone to a giant-size 4K TV.

What does it mean for cinema when movies as dumb

and/or chintzy as "Stubber" and "The Curse of La Llorona" compete for butts in seats with TV series as smart and/or cinematic as HBO's "Watchmen" and Disney+'s "The Mandalorian?" Choice, of course. Perhaps too much of it.

Truly, there is something for everyone in today's screen landscape. Want blockbuster movies? "Avengers: Endgame" set the new standard by skillfully wrapping up the initial phases of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (before "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker" not so satisfactorily concluded the initial "Star Wars" saga). Want intimate human-scale drama? I've got the Mr. Rogers flick "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" and indie film "The Souvenir" right here. Animated family movies? Have a "Toy Story 4" or a "Missing Link." Foreign film lover? We've got you covered with everything from "Parasite" to "Pain and Glory." "Rocketman" came along to shame those who thought "Bohemian Rhapsody" was the best of musical

biopics, and "Cats" crawled into theaters to face the music with Broadway lovers. Even a good old-fashioned ensemble murder mystery came along in "Knives Out," to tide us over until Kenneth Branagh's Poirot returns.

In other words, not much has really changed (although TV's "Breaking Bad" suddenly became a movie — both streamed and in select theaters). But as the sheer volume of films and television increases, audiences must work harder to dig up the hidden gems (not to be confused with "Uncut Gems," the wild new Adam Sandler dramedy). That's where your Friendly Neighborhood Film Critic comes in, highlighting the most intriguing and, in some cases, the least widely discussed of cinematic options. Pin this list up on your bulletin board or grant it a magnet on your fridge, and you have a road map to 2019's boldest statements, its most adventurous narratives and arresting aesthetics.

In a year of cinematic stunts, like the long-take constructions of "1917" and "Long Day's Journey into Night" (which added 3D into the bargain) and the de-aging of everyone from Robert De Niro ("The Irishman") to Samuel L. Jackson ("Captain Marvel"), the fundamental things apply as time goes by: a dimly lit room, an illuminated screen and a story that appeals to our emotions.

And away we go...

THE TOP 10 FILMS OF 2019



COURTESY OF VICE STUDIOS

"The Mountain."

10. 'The Mountain'

As downbeat as they come, Rick Alverson's rigorous "The Mountain" functions as an eccentric commentary on the horror of historical ignorance and the pain of existence in a world that's gone insane. With just a dollop of deadpan black comedy, Alverson plays out a corrupted mentor-mentee relationship between the emotionally prone, newly orphaned Andy (Tye Sheridan) and a semi-charming lobotomist (Jeff Goldblum) as they travel the backroads spreading traumatic brain injury to the mentally ill and the socially ostracized. The year's most unsettling American self-portrait.

9. 'End of the Century'

Writer-director Lucio Castro's deceptively simple story of chance encounters, possibility and regret provides comment on gay romantic culture (and its sometime collateral damage) and how love and sex play out

on individual but intersecting timelines. In 84 minutes, Castro dramatizes the lovers' two meetings (at either end of a 20-year gap), a flashback and a daydream to clarify the tension between the power of desire and the indifference of reality. Naturalistic performances (by Juan Barberini and Ramon Pujol) and direction make this zen koan on time linger in the mind and heart.

8. 'The Souvenir'

Joanna Hogg's agonizingly honest and mature semi-autobiographical drama explores the agonizing self-delusions and inexperience of youth. As Hogg's stand-in, Honor Swinton Byrne comes to hard-won realizations in her vocational and personal lives, each informing the other as the film student succumbs to the overtures of an older lover (Tom Burke) who's harboring a dark secret (Byrne's mother Tilda Swinton plays along as Byrne's uneasy screen mother). Hogg's understated approach and self-examined privilege accumulate for a distinctive take on the young-adult coming-of-age narrative.

7. 'The Last Black Man in San Francisco'

Joe Talbot's impressive debut serves up a highly personal and locally resonant story that begins as a screed on gentrification but turns out to be a lively and complex salon on family history, friendship, community



COURTESY OF PLAN B ENTERTAINMENT

"The Last Black Man in San Francisco."

6. 'Long Day's Journey Into Night'

In a year of strong Chinese imports (see also "An Elephant Sitting Still" and "Ash is Purest White"), Bi Gan gave us the greatest stunner with his visionary and transportive neo-noir (natively titled "Last Evenings on Earth"). A classic "cherchez la femme" narrative gradually reveals itself to be a meditation on untrustworthy memory, as well as unconscious and celluloid dreams. As

such, an amateur detective's plodding path to find his lost love leads to an astonishing "one-take" 3D dream sequence forming the film's final 50 minutes. A lyrical, gorgeous, but devastating reminder of precious time in the vein of director Wong Kar-wai.

5. 'The Irishman'

Flawed, but still essential, Martin Scorsese's culminative statement on American life through a mobster lens appears at first to be a neat capper to a thematic trilogy formed with "Goodfellas" and "Casino," stories that likewise run on the insider knowledge of mob protagonists, sourced from nonfiction books. But the pivotal truths in question in "The Irishman" may not be true at all, which little concerns Scorsese, star-producer Robert De Niro and ultimately audiences. For here is a Shakespearean history laced with the tragic limits of loyalty. Gifted with great performances, elegantly crafted, innovative and pure, uncut Scorsese.

► See **TOP FILMS**, page 22



COURTESY OF TRIBECA PRODUCTIONS

"The Irishman."

BEST HEROES

5. Marta Cabrera (Ana de Armas) in "Knives Out"
 4. Franz Jägerstätter (August Diehl) in "A Hidden Life"
 3. Jo March (Saoirse Ronan) in "Little Women"
 2. Tony Stark/Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) in "Avengers: Endgame"
 1. Mr. Rogers (Tom Hanks) in "Won't You Be My Neighbor?"
- (Honorable mention [TIE]: Woody (Tom Hanks) and Forky (Tony Hale) in "Toy Story 4")

TOP DOCUMENTARIES

5. "Love, Antosha"
4. "Honeyland"
3. "American Factory"
2. "5B"
1. "For Sama"

WORST VILLAINS

5. Rose the Hat (Rebecca Ferguson) in "Doctor Sleep"
 4. "Adolf Hitler" (Taika Waititi) in "Jojo Rabbit"
 3. Pennywise (Bill Skarsgård) in "It: Chapter Two"
 2. Charles Manson (Damon Herriman) in "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood"; Matt Smith in "Charlie Says"
 1. Joker (Joaquin Phoenix) in "Joker"
- Honorable mention: Red (Lupita Nyong'o) in "Us"

THE ANIMATED WINNERS

5. "Frozen II"
4. "How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World"
3. "I Lost My Body"
2. "Missing Link"
1. "Toy Story 4"

Public Notices

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, 2019; Jan. 3, 2020)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

Case No.: 19CV359097
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: BROOKE ANTONIA MOORHEAD filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: BROOKE ANTONIA MOORHEAD to BROOKE ANTONIA RIGGIO.

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING: April 21, 2020, 8:45 a.m., Dept.: Probate of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, 191 N. First Street, San Jose, CA 95113. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE
Date: November 26, 2019
/s/ Julie A. Emede
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(MVV Dec. 27, 2019; Jan. 3, 10, 17, 2020)

Call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578

or email asantillan@paweekly.com

for assistance with your legal advertising needs.

TOP FILMS

► Continued from page 21

4. 'Portrait of a Lady on Fire'

Céline Sciamma's doomed but rapturous romance patiently observes the spark, the fire and the sad extinguishment of love. As William Butler Yeats noted, "love comes in at the eye," dramatized here as a painter (Noémie Merlant) who falls in love with her subject (Adèle Haenel). Beautifully realized, "Portrait of a Lady on Fire" works as a feminist historical drama (foregrounding customarily forgotten late-18th century female painters), but soars as a love story of swoony beauty.

3. 'A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood'

Marielle Heller's finely sensitive Mr. Rogers drama gets the magical appeal of Fred Rogers — children's show host, ordained minister, husband, father and friend to all. As played by Tom Hanks, Rogers could have made the convincing center of a hagiography. Micah Fitzerman-Blue and Noah Harpster's ingenious adaptation of Tom Junod's "Esquire" profile "Can You Say ... Hero?" sees Rogers as the most extraordinary kind of human: capable, like all of us, of succumbing to anger and selfishness, but choosing again and again to look beyond himself and truly see and hear each person he encounters. In doing so, Mr. Rogers helps to heal the temporarily broken (embodied by Matthew Rhys' world-weary journalist).

2. 'Parasite'

The year's sharpest comedy, Bong Joon-ho's "Parasite," examined the economic chutes and



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"Parasite."

THE BOTTOM FIVE

5. 'El Chicano'

This brownsplotation actioner billed as the "first Latino superhero movie" teases itself as a Mexican American "Batman" but has the moral sense of "The Punisher." "El Chicano" wastes a fine actor (leading man Raul Castillo) as it mechanically goes through its painfully dull, occasionally gruesome paces.

4. 'The Art of Racing in the Rain'

One of three — count 'em, three — 2019 films in the increasingly popular genre of soggy dog movies where we hear the pooch's thoughts in voice-over. Dog lovers, start your engines and turn off your brains for this Nicholas Sparks dog tale that will grab at your heartstrings.

3. 'Rambo: Last Blood'

Co-writer/star Sylvester Stallone goes back to the bloody well with this sadistic sequel in his popular vigilante-killer franchise. Mechanical and morally wrong, and long removed from the day when John Rambo was more of a character than an icon, this one's strictly for those who enjoy watching self-righteous murders in bulk.

2. 'Cats'

A special kind of bad, this adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's famous/infamous spandex-and-whiskers stage musical becomes an unintentionally

ladders that drive and plague a capitalist society. Bong mines both the comic and poignant possibilities of his carefully unfolded fable on economic inequality, as family exploits family exploits family. Keen production design, insinuating camerawork, and well-calibrated performances (including that of Bong regular Song Kang-ho) helped this South Korean stunner to cross over as multiplex fare likely to score not only a Foreign Film Oscar but a Best Picture nomination.

1. 'The Lighthouse'

Robert Eggers' blinding vision, set in a psychosexual landscape of a mind on the brink, has everything we go to the movies for: meticulously effective sight and sound, confident storytelling, humor and horror, dream and nightmare. One of the all-time two-handers, "The Lighthouse" pits



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"The Lighthouse."

Willem Dafoe's eccentric lighthouse keeper against his new No. 2 (Robert Pattinson) in what's either an external battle of wills between two men of dubious sanity or an internal battle of Jungian archetypes trapped in a Freudian phallus trapped in a disturbed brain. Eggers' film can be read in a number of equally satisfying ways, each a comment on fraught humanity and its fragile rationality.

■ RUNNERS-UP

"Little Women," "Transit," "Peterloo," "The Farewell," "Luce," "One Cut of the Dead," "An Elephant Sitting Still," "A Hidden Life," "Knives Out," "Rocketman," "Avengers: Endgame," "Atlantics."



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

"Cats."

funny and uncannily unsettling big-screen monstrosity by digitally infecting stars like Dame Judi Dench and Idris Elba with cat-scratch fever. There aren't enough CGI artists in the world to make this work.

And the worst film of 2019 goes to:

1. 'Playmobil: The Movie'

What do you get when you bring together dull animation, charmless characters, unthrilling adventure, flat attempts at humor, and generic-brand songs? This tedious, talent-deficient "Lego Movie" rip-off.

Of course, there's plenty more to remember beyond 2019's highest highs and lowest lows. Read on for our take on the best good guys, the worst baddies, the top documentaries and the most magical animated movies. ■

Email Peter Canavese at pcanavese@bcp.org

GoingsOn

MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE

HIGHLIGHT

LOS ALTOS FIRST FRIDAY

Los Altos First Fridays are community-building events held during the evenings of the first Friday of the month in downtown Los Altos. It is an opportunity to shop, dine and explore what downtown has to offer. Jan. 3, 6-8 p.m. Free. Downtown Los Altos, State Street, Los Altos Hills. losaltoschamber.org

CONCERTS

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, 12:15-12:45 p.m. Free. All Saints Episcopal Church, 555 Waverley St., Palo Alto. asaints.org

Master Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra The Master Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra performs pieces by Respighi, Holst and Mozart. Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. \$15-\$25; discount for seniors and students. Palo Alto High School Performing Arts Center, 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto. mastersinfonia.org

MUSIC

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

TALKS & LECTURES

Kindness Workshop Mentor and coach Priya Kasturi teaches how to bring a community together and practice kindness and connection. Jan. 11, 1-2:15 p.m. Free. Mountain View Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. mountainview.libcal.com

FAMILY

A Day at the Farm Visitors can reserve a day at the Hidden Villa farm and tailor the reservation to include private farm tours for up to 30 people, plus reserve one of three picnic areas. Dates vary through May 23; times vary. \$180-\$275; prices vary between packages. Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. hiddenvilla.org

Walk This Whey Learn about the history of dairy animals, walk with one of Hidden Villa's goats and taste milks and cheeses from different dairy animals. Jan. 4, 10-11:30 a.m. \$25. Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. hiddenvilla.org/

Tremendously Terrific Trees Explore the 3-acre garden with guided tours, nature hunts and other hands-on activities. Jan. 11, 10-11:30 a.m. Free. Gamble Garden, 1431 Waverley St., Palo Alto. gamblegarden.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, 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 mutoscope, vending machines and more. Through Feb. 16; 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, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, 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; times vary. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford. events.stanford.edu

Big Shaker Ride the world's largest mobile earthquake simulator and experience what an 8.0 magnitude quake feels like. Jan. 11, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Los Altos History Museum, 51 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. losaltoshistory.org

DANCE

'Journey of the Simorgh' A dance and music concert by the Simorgh Dance Collective, adapted from Farid ud-Din Attar's Persian epic, "The Conference of the Birds." Jan. 11, 7 p.m. \$35-

\$50. Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center, 555 Middlefield Road, Atherton. journeyofthesimorgh.bpt.me

HEALTH & WELLNESS

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

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Baylands King Tide Guided Walk Volunteers guide a tour of the baylands during the highest tides of the year. Jan. 11, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Free. EcoCenter, 2560 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto. evols.org

HOME & GARDEN

Western Horticultural Society Meeting Guest speaker Aaron Ryan talks about the secret to successful succulent

propagation at this month's meeting. Jan. 8, 7:30-9 p.m. \$10; free for members. Shoup Park Garden House, 400 University Ave., Los Altos. westernhort.org

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Writing Wednesdays A causal writing space for writers of all levels. Jan. 8, 7-9 p.m. Free. Los Altos Library, 13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. sccl.evanced.info

AUTHOR EVENTS

Abigail Hing Wen's 'Loveboat, Taipei' Author Abigail Hing Wen debuts her highly anticipated romantic comedy book "Loveboat, Taipei." Jan. 6, 7-9 p.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. keplers.org

Kiersten White's 'Chosen' New York Times bestselling author Kiersten White sets her second novel, "Chosen," in the world of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." Jan. 11, 3-4 p.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. keplers.org

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Beware of Home Inspection Pitfalls Before You Put Your House Up for Sale

Mountain View - According to industry experts, there are over 33 physical problems that will come under scrutiny during a home inspection when your home is for sale. A new report has been prepared which identifies the eleven most common of these problems, and what you should know about them before you list your home for sale.

Whether you own an old home or a brand new one, there are a number of things that can fall short of requirements during a home inspection. If not identified and dealt with, any of these 11 items could cost you dearly in terms of repair. That's why it's critical that you read this report before you list your home. If you wait until the building inspector flags these issues for you, you will almost certainly experience costly delays in the close of your home sale or, worse, turn prospective buyers away altogether. In most cases, you can make a reasonable pre-inspection yourself if you know what you're looking for, and knowing what you're looking for can help you prevent little problems from growing into costly and unmanageable ones.

To help homesellers deal with this issue before their homes are listed, a free report entitled "11 Things You Need to Know to Pass Your Home Inspection" has been compiled which explains the issues involved.

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your **FREE** copy of this report call toll-free **1-833-929-1261** and enter **2003**. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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from David's Yelp reviews!]

Your home is where our heart is



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