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urban forest
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Good news, bad news for Chinese-immersion efforts

Grant for elementary program denied, but high-school classes underway

by Alexandria Rocha

While Gunn and Palo Alto high-school students learn Chinese-language characters and tones, the district has hit a road block in its quest to bring Chinese studies to younger children.

The district's application for a federal Foreign Language Assistance

Program (FLAP) grant, which would have been used to implement a proposed Mandarin-language immersion program, was recently denied. Seventy-five other districts nationwide will receive the grants this year, and 48 are planning to implement or augment Chinese programs.

Officials said the district barely missed the grant. Districts needed to receive a score of 92.5 on the Joint National Committee for Languages review, and the Palo Alto district scored a 92.

"It was very competitive," Grace Mah — a parent who founded Palo Alto Altans for Chinese Education (PACE) four years ago — wrote in a message to PACE members. "We were very close but didn't make the cut."

Superintendent Mary Frances Callan said the district will resubmit its application "at a future date."

In May, the Board of Education voted 3-0 to research implementing a Mandarin-immersion program — including cost, curriculum, location and staffing — at an elementary school by fall 2007. Board Vice President Camille Townsend and members Barb Mitchell and Dana Tom supported the study, while

member Gail Price dissented and President Mandy Lowell abstained.

Two district administrators and one outside consultant working on the study are scheduled to submit a plan to the board in December. The three include the district director of elementary education, Becki Cohn-Vargas; Paly's instructional supervisor of world languages, Norman Masuda, who is also teaching a pi-

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Norbert von der Groeben

Dramatis personae

Skye Lawler and Philip Wong, from Bentley School in Lafayette, perform a drama at the LUDI Octobres Latin festival at Castilleja School Saturday afternoon, where approximately 400 students from the Bay Area participated in activities such as a Latin spelling bee, Latin Lacrosse, et cetera.

YOUTH

Parents cited for teens' drunken weekend partying

Mother — a local elementary-school teacher — still on the job, district officials say

by Alexandria Rocha

A Palo Alto teacher cited by police for hosting an alcohol-infused Halloween party for minors Saturday was still teaching third-graders at Palo Verde Elementary School this week, according to district

officials.

Assistant Superintendent Scott Bowers said he has consulted with the district's attorneys on what steps to take. But unless the school board takes action, Bowers said, the district will not

disclose its steps because it is a personnel matter.

"Part of it with this is we have the (police) reports, but there is a big difference between being cited and being charged than being convicted," Bowers said. "We certainly want to honor the system of innocent until proven guilty."

The teacher, Lisa Swagerty, and her husband, Richard Stovel, a research and development engineer in Stanford University's department of genetics, were both cited for contributing to the delinquency of minors for "supervising" what police said was a free-flowing-alcohol party in

the Midtown neighborhood Saturday night.

Bowers said Swagerty is a veteran teacher with the district. A secretary at Palo Verde Elementary School deferred inquiries to the school-district office.

"Obviously this is a serious situation. We certainly will be talking with the teacher and following through as is appropriate," Bowers said. "We are concerned, yet at the same time we don't monitor the private lives of all of our employees."

At 10:30 p.m. Saturday, Palo Alto police responded to reports of a loud party in the 800 block of

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LAND USE

Elks secure heavyweights to finish project

Arrillaga, Baer, Keenan sign on; SummerHill Homes the likely builder

by Molly Tanenbaum

The end is in sight for a project that the Palo Alto Elks Lodge hopes will finance and revitalize their 80-year-old organization.

In the past few months, the Elks have brought on three new Palo Alto development gurus to jumpstart their plans to sell off four more acres of their land on El Camino Real to Palo Alto-based SummerHill Homes and to build a new lodge on the property.

SummerHill is looking to build 49 single-family homes behind the new lodge.

"We're all thrilled," said Palo Alto Elks' Exalted Ruler Rod Norville. "We're going to be inundated with new members and I'd like them to start coming right now."

Chop Keenan and John Arrillaga will "help what's been brewing into what's going to be a reality in a pretty rapid time frame," said developer Jim Baer, who will also be assisting the Elks through the city's approval process.

That "rapid time frame" — which includes submitting plans for both the homes and the lodge by the end of the year — contrasts with the slow-moving process that has preceded it, due to internal disagreements over the 8.2-acre property's fate.

Previously, some members wanted to sell the entire parcel, which the Elks own, and find a new location for a lodge. Others wanted to stay on the land at 4249 El Camino Real and sell off parts of it — first the front half, then the back half.

At one point several years ago, when the lodge was "more polarized" and losing money, the Grand

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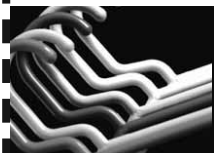


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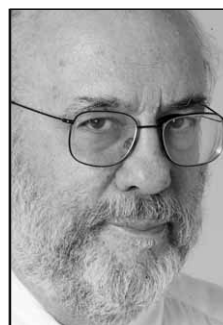
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Our Town

by Don Kazak

Stanford's hidden 'legacies'

How hard is it to get into Stanford?

The university had 22,332 applications for 1,650 freshman openings this fall. Having 4.0-plus high school grade-point averages and perfect SAT scores didn't ensure success. Only 35 percent of the 359 applicants matching that profile were admitted.

What may help is having a parent who attended Stanford.

Such students are called legacies, and it is the part of the college admission process that many universities, including Stanford, are reluctant to talk about.

A new book, "The Price of Admission" by Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Golden, argues that the privileged and wealthy have an edge in getting their children into the country's elite universities.

Golden, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his 2003 series of newspaper stories on the issue, claims that between one-third and one-half of freshman at top universities are there in part because they have "preferences of privilege."

Those "preferences" includes legacies, sons and daughters of faculty, sons and daughters of celebrities or wealthy parents, and star athletes.

So the college admission process isn't entirely merit-based.

Stanford takes pride in how many racial minorities it admits and the high percentage of students who need financial aid, as the university's admission process is "need-blind." But "need-blind" does not mean universities are "wealth-blind," Golden writes, with donor families having an edge.

Stanford releases much information about its first-year students. It provides data on gender, race, home state, high school grade-point averages, SAT scores, private versus public high schools and chosen college majors.

But Stanford releases no data on its legacy students.

Anna Marie Porras, Stanford's former admissions director, told Noah Weiss of the Stanford Daily in 2005 that Stanford admits less than half of the legacies who apply. But she declined to say how many students apply as legacies.

Porras added that legacy information could be used as a tie-breaker between equally qualified candidates but "is never enough to admit a student who would not be com-

elling in our process without such consideration."

Richard Shaw, the current dean of admissions, said the Stanford policies are unchanged.

Legacies have a much higher acceptance rate than non-legacies. Weiss wrote in the Daily that the legacy acceptance rate for Harvard was 40 percent three years ago. And even if the Stanford acceptance rate is less than 50 percent for legacies that could still mean the admission rate is 30 or 40 percent, compared to the 12 percent acceptance rate for all students last year.

Rachel Wolf, a Palo Alto High School student, wrote a column last June for the school newspaper, the Campanile, in which she criticized legacy admissions. She noted that legacy families are much more likely to be financial donors to their universities.

Golden's book may put more attention on the admission practices of top-tier universities, especially for legacy admissions. Most premier universities have close communication between their fund-raisers and admissions officers to identify applicants from donor families, Golden writes.

One university, Texas A&M in 2004, decided to no longer consider legacy status of applicants in its admissions process. Texas A&M declared that legacy considerations are "not consistent with a merit-based admissions policy."

No other university has ended legacy considerations.

"I think if you dug deep you would find some anxiety among our members," said David Hawkins, the director of public policy for the National Association for College Admission Counseling in Alexandria, VA.

The best-known person to speak out against legacy admissions is one of the best-known of legacy admissions: President George W. Bush attended Yale following his father and was admittedly a mediocre student, which he has joked about.

Legacy admissions should be abandoned by universities, he told a conference of minority journalists in 2004.

"I think college ought to use merit in order for people to get in," he said. ■

Senior Staff Writer Don Kazak can be e-mailed at dkazak@paweekly.com.

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Mandarin

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lot Mandarin course this year; and retired assistant superintendent, Irv Rollins, who is now a district consultant.

Mah said PACE has already given the district more than \$65,000 to conduct the feasibility study, which should only cost about \$50,000.

Supporters say the study and proposed program are not dependent on a FLAP grant.

Mah said the grant would have only provided additional funds for curriculum, teacher development and technology.

The debate over including a Mandarin-immersion program in Palo Alto has heated up since the board agreed to study the program's implementation. Opponents say the program would only benefit a small number of children. They also ask why a district that has been under tight budget constraints is studying such a costly endeavor.

Members of PACE, however, say they have agreed to fund the

program. According to the proposal, start-up costs are estimated at \$135,000. Parents also paid the start-up costs of the district's Spanish-immersion program.

If Mandarin-immersion were to be adopted, the district would be one of many systems across the country adding Chinese-language programs to their offerings.

Such programs, especially those of Mandarin, are gaining popularity as districts attempt to help students compete in a global world. Earlier this year, three U.S. senators introduced a bill to spend \$1.3 billion over five years on Chinese-language programs and cultural exchanges to improve ties between the United States and China.

"A lot of people are taking Spanish, but a lot of jobs are in China, so I thought it would be helpful to know," said John Olson, 14, a Paly freshman who is taking Masuda's Mandarin course.

Both Gunn and Paly are piloting two beginner courses in Mandarin this year.

Sarah Du, the Mandarin teacher at Gunn, said the College Board

is offering an advanced placement Chinese-language exam for the first time this spring. The idea is to add a higher-level course each year until students can take four years of Chinese and the AP exam.

Masuda's students are not allowed to speak English during his course, a guideline that started on the first day.

"I thought it would be really confusing. But after a while, you get the hang of it," said Paly freshman Sarah Powell, 14.

On Friday, students in Masuda's course played a pronunciation and writing game and were awarded Tootsie Rolls for their efforts. In Du's class that day, she pulled various classroom items out of a bag and teens shouted out the names.

"China was a very closed country politically and socially before," Masuda said. "Now there is so much trade and people can study there. A lot of students look at that, or they're interested in Chinese culture, and want to take the class." ■

Staff Writer Alexandria Rocha can be e-mailed at arocha@pawebly.com.

Elks

(continued from page 3)

Lodge even shut down the Palo Alto Elks temporarily, Norville said.

Even as recently as this summer, one of the Elks Lodge's officers disagreed with the direction plans were headed and unsuccessfully tried to persuade the group's property-development committee to change course.

Now, however, the Elks are ready to move forward with a plan to sell a total of five of the 8.2 acres for housing and to construct a brand new, 42,000-square-foot, two-story lodge on El Camino on the remaining land.

A part of that process is already underway.

The rear one acre of the property is zoned R-1 and will become five single-family homes — developed by Redwood City-based Juniper Homes — to mirror the houses across the street on Wilkie. The city's Architectural Review Board will review three of the five homes on Thursday.

In an earlier plan, the Elks had intended to sell the portion of the land along El Camino — which is zoned for denser housing than the back — and to retain the back portion for a new lodge. But the city — and Charleston Meadows neighbors — recommended the reverse to provide a smoother transition from single-family housing along Wilkie Way up to the new lodge along El Camino.

Prior to Keenan and Arrillaga coming on board, the Elks had worked with Palo Alto consultant Nova Partners for two years. Nova facilitated the sale of the back acre before the Elks decided to make some personnel changes with the project.

Norville would not explain the reasons for not renewing a contract with Nova. However, internal documents show a disagreement over a \$500,000 environmental-impact report that Nova recommended the lodge pursue.

This week, however, Norville simply said: "Once we felt Nova was not a good fit for us, we asked people in the industry who was the best person that we could get to sell the property. That was unanimous. It was Chop Keenan."

Keenan began working with the Elks four months ago and Arrillaga two months ago, Baer said. Arrillaga will facilitate the team that will design and build the new lodge.

The three are working at no cost to the Elks, said Norville.

With Keenan's help, the Elks found a buyer — SummerHill Homes — for the middle four acres of their property.

"They know Palo Alto. They have exceptional architects and land planners, and they did a great job in downtown Palo Alto, so why reinvent the wheel?" Keenan said.

If SummerHill and the Elks Lodge gain approval from the city for the overall plan for the property, SummerHill will turn the four acres into 49 small, single-family, detached homes — instead of the maximum of 60 allowed on the land — with one-third of an acre left for a public park.

The 49 SummerHill houses and the five new Juniper houses in the back of the Elks Lodge property will neighbor DR Horton's 185 new units on the former Rickey's Hyatt site, also on El Camino.

The Elks will use the much-needed income generated from the sale of five out of the 8.2 acres of land — about \$28 million — to build the new lodge and family recreation center on the remaining three acres, and have money left over to sustain the organization in the future, Norville said.

The fraternal organization hopes the updated facilities will attract new members and serve the organization well into the future. The current lodge is 55,000 square feet and was built in 1942.

Membership has declined over the years from 3,500 in 1968 to the current membership of about 800, but Norville is confident that the contemporary building on El Camino

Real will be a huge draw for new blood.

"We're gonna have probably the best damn lodge in all 2,000 lodges in the country," Norville said. "We expect to fill up pretty rapidly."

Baer said plans for both the new lodge and the small, single-family homes will be submitted to the city before the end of the year. ■

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

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It's not easy to be an urban tree.

”

—Catherine Martineau, executive director of the nonprofit Canopy, on the need to protect and preserve trees. See story on page 14.

Around Town

DOG GONE . . . It's every dog sitter's nightmare — losing the pet you've been entrusted with. Sunday at 5 p.m., a **black Yorkshire terrier** crawled under the courtyard door of a south Palo Alto home, where it was being cared for while its owners are away. The female dog hasn't been seen since. Complicating matters, said the caretaker, the canine needs twice-daily drugs to prevent seizures. Six-year-old Poet, whose owners live in San Jose, was lost in south Palo Alto around East Meadow Drive and Middlefield Road. She is wearing a spiked collar with a piece of green tape reading "Poet" and tags listing contact phone numbers. Anyone who has seen Poet should call Laurie 650-856-4383.

community center, rebuilding the library north or south of the community center, or constructing a joint use facility with either 132 or 168 parking spaces. Parks and Recreation commissioners favored the joint facility, which could range between 42,000 and 52,500 square feet and would offer the opportunity to share some spaces, such as public restrooms, the consultant said. Underground parking would add \$5 million to the final cost of the project. Consultants are adding cost estimates to the project this month. The Library Advisory Commission will meet Nov. 16 and its recommendations for the future of the city's libraries will be presented to the City Council Dec. 4.

GOLDEN OLDIES . . . Town Square, PaloAltoOnline.com's popular community forum, struck a chord with local residents Thursday when **Andrew L. Freeman** of College Terrace posted his childhood memories of Palo Alto. In addition to listing "\$4.00 tickets at Frost Amphitheatre to see Santana, Grateful Dead and Tower of Power" and "Riding our Stingray bicycles down Matadero Creek," Freeman notes some of the more, ahem, delinquent activities of his youth. Those included "sneaking out at night with friends and swimming at Chuck Thompsons or alternatively ice-skating at the Winter CLUB." More than 20 other Palo Altans (and former residents) have joined in to reminisce about everything from old schools whose names have changed to the old drive-in movie theater along West Bayshore Road. Penny of Professorville neighborhood recalls the time when a busy commute down U.S. Highway 101 consisted of five other cars on the road. Now that is memory lane.

GOING GREEN . . . Can businesses remain profit-oriented and help the environment? The Palo Alto **Chamber of Commerce** thinks so and is kicking off the Palo Alto Business Goes Green program to spread the word. The program will make it easier for businesses to learn more and become certified as a Santa Clara County Green Business. A Nov. 8 luncheon featuring guest speaker **Stephen Schneider**, a world-renowned Stanford climatologist, and an expo of businesses and services will launch the program. Admission is \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members. It will be held from 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Arril-laga Alumni Center, 326 Galvez Ave. on the Stanford campus. For additional information visit www.paloaltochamber.com/focus or call 650 324-3121.

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR . . . **The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District** will host a meeting Nov. 8 to talk about its "good neighbor" policy, which has been revised from the original 1996 policy after a series of four public meetings. The policy governs how the district interacts with its mostly rural and hillside residential neighbors. The "good neighbor" meeting will be at 7 p.m. in the district's Skyline Field Office, 21150 Skyline Blvd., La Honda. ■

A LOOK AT LIBRARIES . . . Preliminary site sketches for **Mitchell Park Library and Community Center** have hit the street. Previewed to Parks and Recreation and library commissioners last week, the five options include expanding the library without altering the

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Party

(continued from page 3)

Fielding Drive. Police Agent Dan Ryan said the party had spilled out into the yard and street, with teens drinking in the street.

Arriving officers were shocked to find two parents at the home, Ryan said.

Stovel, 62, and Swagerty, 50, were charged with contributing to the delinquency of minors, a misdemeanor.

Some of the young people, students at Palo Alto High School, were so drunk they couldn't stand up unassisted, Ryan said.

The juveniles were released to their own parents. Most had driven to the party and some would have tried to drive home if police had not been called, Ryan said.

Police found beer and liquor "strewn throughout the home," Ryan said. Many of the young people had vomited throughout the house and yard.

In July 2005, Nim Steiner, a Gunn High School teacher's aide was also charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor after she failed to stop minors from drinking alcohol at her son's New Year's Eve party six months earlier.

A 17-year-old boy who had been drinking at that party drove away and crashed into a tree. His blood-alcohol level was 0.17, more than twice the .08 limit for driving a vehicle.

That same year, a former Gunn star athlete died when he sped northbound on Middlefield Road at more than 100 miles an hour, hit a small rise at a bridge and careened into the Midtown Safeway parking lot.

Some friends later reported that the boy had been "out of control" drunk at a party earlier that night. ■

Staff Writer Alexandria Rocha can be e-mailed at arocha@paweekly.com.

Awaiting fiber's future

More than 100 firms express interest in providing Palo Altans with high-speed Internet access

by **Becky Trout**

Broadband fiber may actually make it to Palo Alto homes, despite years of debate and delay. Companies interested in constructing and operating a network capable of providing Palo Alto residents with high-speed access have until Nov. 28 to submit a proposal to the city.

More than 100 companies have expressed interest, but no proposals have been received yet, said Kathy Bradley, the city's contract manager for the project.

The request for proposals leaves most of the details up to the companies but requires a 100-megabit per second service, data, video and telephony capabilities, and city ownership of the physical system. In January, the City Council gave the green light to solicit bids from potential network operators. The proposal details were ironed out over the summer and the request was released Sept. 27, Bradley said.

The proposal also emphasizes the city's aversion to financial risk and intent to promote competition between service providers.

Although anyone can download the request for proposals from the city's Web site, firms that have expressed interest in the project include AT&T, Cisco Systems, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Motorola and Verizon, according to a city spreadsheet.

The city gained a reputation as a communications leader in 1998 when it constructed a fiber network, called a ring due to its circular configuration, to pro-

vide Palo Alto businesses with high-speed connections.

Then, in October 2001, 70 residents in the Community Center neighborhood were given the option to try out fiber-to-the-home. The council discontinued the trial in December 2005, and the city's efforts to bring the system to all residents seemed stalled.

But in January, the council, over the no-vote of Councilwoman LaDoris Cordell, urged staff to draft a plan for private companies to accept most of the responsibility for broadband fiber installation and operation. In an e-mail, Cordell said Monday she is not opposed to fiber-to-the-home, she just doesn't feel it should be a top city priority right now.

It is possible the city could choose to push back the deadline if bidders appear rushed, Bradley said, although there is no indication now that may be necessary. Then, a review team proposed by city staff and approved by the City Council will review the applications and select finalists, Bradley said. If all goes well, a network manager could be selected by February 2007, she said.

"We'll see what comes in," said longtime fiber activist Martin Lee, who expressed guarded optimism about the city's fiber future.

Fiber-optic cables have the ability to transmit large amounts of data at high speeds. ■

Staff Writer Becky Trout can be e-mailed at btrout@paweekly.com.

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Wednesday, November 8, 2006 • 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
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La Honda Creek Master Plan Workshop

Thursday, November 16, 2006 • 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
La Honda Elementary School, 450 Sears Ranch Road

**Sierra Azul-Bear Creek Redwoods
Master Plan Workshop**

Tuesday, December 5, 2006 • 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Los Gatos Neighborhood Center, 208 East Main Street

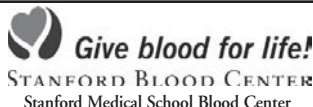
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MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Correction

In the Oct. 6 edition of the Weekly, the home sale at 988 N. California Ave., was incorrectly listed. It was sold by the Stotz Trust to Y. Xiao for \$1,340,000. To request a clarification or correction, call the managing editor at 650-326-8210, or write to P.O. Box 1610, Palo Alto 94302.



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News Digest



Laura Bergerol

Fire destroys Palo Alto garage

A fire destroyed a garage in Palo Alto's Barron Park neighborhood Tuesday morning, but quick work by firefighters kept the blaze from spreading to the adjacent home. The fire occurred about 7:30 a.m. at a home on Georgia Avenue near Abel Avenue.

Neighbor Laura Bergerol said the owner lost a brand-new computer and her prized orchid collection. The owner also said that her husband uses oxygen for medical reasons, and the oxygen, which is very flammable, was stored in the garage. ■

—Don Kazak

Senior substance-abuse lecture Thursday

Substance abuse — one of the fastest-growing health problems among adults ages 60 and older, according to medical professionals — will be the topic of a lecture at Stanford on Thursday. Institute on Aging Director of Education Patrick Arbore will discuss the growing problem at 7 p.m. at Fairchild Auditorium, 291 Campus Drive West, Stanford Medical Center. The lecture is free. To register, call 650-498-7826. ■

— Sue Dremann

EPA police stop car, find a shooting victim

East Palo Alto police discovered the victim of a shooting Sunday afternoon after pulling over a car that was leaving the area where shots were reported fired, East Palo Alto Police Sgt. John Chalmers reported.

Police were responding to a shooting in the 700 block of Schembri Lane around 4:20 p.m. when they saw a white car coming out of the area.

Police pulled the car over as it headed westbound on University Avenue, just west of U.S. Highway 101, Chalmers said.

The victim, identified only as a man from East Palo Alto, had been shot once in the lower arm and once in the left bicep.

He had been shot in a different vehicle in the 700 block of Schembri Lane, Chalmers said. The man's relatives then picked him up and were on the way to the hospital when stopped by police.

The man received treatment at the scene for non-life-threatening injuries and as of Sunday night was in stable condition at a local hospital, Chalmers said.

An investigation is ongoing, Chambers said. ■

— Bay City News Service

Stanford gets grant for wireless research

Stanford and three other universities have been given a \$6.5 million grant to improve wireless communications for soldiers and emergency first responders. The work could also improve wireless communications in general.

Associate Professor Andrea Goldsmith will work with 11 other researchers at Stanford, M.I.T., the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the California Institute of Technology to learn more about how ad hoc wireless networks work and how to improve their performance. ■

—Don Kazak



LET'S DISCUSS: Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues at Town Square at www.PaloAltoOnline.com



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POLICE CALLS

Palo Alto

October 23-29

Violence related

Battery	1
Child abuse	1
Domestic violence	1
Family violence	1
Strong-arm robbery	1

Theft related

Commercial burglaries	3
Grand theft	6
Petty theft	11
Residential burglaries	3

Vehicle related

Abandoned auto	3
----------------	---

Auto theft	2
Driving w/suspended license	12
Hit and run	6
Misc. traffic	11
Theft from auto	3
Vehicle accident/minor injury	5
Vehicle accident/property damage	10
Vehicle impound	11

Alcohol or drug related

Drinking in public	4
Drunk in public	8
Drunken driving	4
Possession of drugs	7
Possession of paraphernalia	2

Miscellaneous

Animal call	1
Found property	8
Lost property	4
Misc. penal code violation	2
Noise complaint	6
Outside investigation	1
Psychiatric hold	3
Vandalism	5
Warrant arrest	2
Warrant/other agency	7

Suspicious circumstances	1
Vandalism	2
Verbal altercation	1
Violation of court order	3
Warrant arrest	4

Atherton

October 23-29

Violence related

Assault	1
---------	---

Theft related

Fraud	1
Grand theft	2
Residential burglaries	1

Vehicle related

Parking problem	7
Suspicious vehicle	13
Theft from auto	1
Vehicle accident/property damage	2
Vehicle code violation	5
Vehicle tow	2

Miscellaneous

911 hang-up	3
Animal call	7
County road block	2
Disturbance	3
Disturbing/annoying phone calls	1
Fire call	1
Follow up	1
Found property	2
Hazard	3
Info. case	3
Juvenile problem	8
Medical aid	4
Meet citizen	2
Outside assistance	8
Patrol request	1
Prowler	1
Suspicious circumstances	7
Suspicious person	7
Town ordinance violation	7
Trespassing	1
Warrant arrest	1
Watermain break	1
Welfare check	2

Menlo Park

October 23-29

Violence related

Assault w/a deadly weapon	1
Attempted suicide	1
Battery	1

Theft related

Forgery	1
Grand theft	1
Petty theft	9

Vehicle related

Auto recovery	3
Driving w/suspended license	1
Driving without license	1
Hit and run	3
Theft from auto	3
Tow request	1
Vehicle accident/minor injury	1
Vehicle accident/property damage	1

Alcohol or drug related

Drug activity	4
Drunk in public	2
Drunken driving	1
Possession of drugs	1
Under influence of drugs	1

Miscellaneous

Animal call	1
CPS referral	2
Disturbance	1
Disturbing/annoying phone calls	1
Fire call	1
Found property	4
Info. case	2
Prohibited weapons	1
Property for destruction	1
Psychiatric hold	3

Crime Spotlight

Unlisted block Barry Lane, Atherton, 10/23, 7:21 a.m.

Police received a call from a woman stating her caregiver had spotted what they thought was a mountain lion in the backyard. After referring to wildlife photos, it appeared the animal was actually a fox.

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- Sunday, November 5

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- Wednesday, November 15

* FATHERS OF DAUGHTERS: THE JOYS & CHALLENGES OF ADOLESCENCE

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- Wednesday, November 15

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Transitions

Births, marriages and deaths

Deaths

Lauren Faxon Brooks

Lauren F. Brooks, 58, of Old Greenwich, Conn. died Oct. 12.

Originally from Palo Alto, Lauren graduated from Cubberley High School and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. She met her husband, Torrey, while she was the registrar at the Stanford Business School. They married and settled in Greenwich, Conn. in 1985. She was a member of The Museum of American Heritage in Palo Alto, a member of Greenwich Country Club, a Realtor and a board member and vice president of education of Time for Lyme, Inc., a nonprofit.

Loved ones recalled her as a wonderfully humanitarian, kind and gentle spirit with an unwavering commitment to helping family, friends and those in need. She was a gracious woman with a boundless sense of humor and compassion.

She is survived by her husband, Torrey, and two sons, Brody and Brandon, of Old Greenwich, Conn; her mother, Ernestine Faxon of Palo Alto; her sisters and brothers-in-law Robin and James Yurash of Mountain View, and Teri and Matthew Peters of Gilroy.

She was preceded in death by her father, Bill Faxon, and sister, Kendra.

Memorial donations may be sent to Time for Lyme, Inc., designated for the Lauren F. Brooks Memorial Fund at P.O. Box 32169, Greenwich, CT 06831. A memorial gathering will be held at The Faculty Club, Stanford Campus, on Nov. 5 from 2 to 4:30 p.m.

Romayne R. Ponleithner

Romayne R. Ponleithner, 78, died Oct. 1 in Palo Alto.

She was born July 2, 1928, in Chicago, Ill. She graduated from Hyde Park High School in 1946 and then attended Wilson Junior College in Chicago. She received a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1950 from the University of Illinois, where she met her future husband. She was an editor at Commerce Clearing House, Inc., Chicago, and the University of Illinois Press before moving to Palo Alto in 1966.

She loved books, old movies (especially Errol Flynn and Jeannette Macdonald and Nelson Eddy movies) and studying the Civil War. Her interest in writing and editing was sparked when she won her first statewide writing contest in 8th grade.

She edited most of the early Quicken and QuickBooks manuals for Intuit, as well as editing for Netpulse Communications and the Alliance to Revitalize California. She worked for many years at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

She was an editor for Charles Hill, a lecturer in International Studies at Yale University and a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. Over the past 15 years, she edited many

of the speeches and writings by George P. Shultz, former Secretary of State. She was an integral part of the team that worked with Shultz on his memoir, published in 1993.

She was an active member of the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Palo Alto.

She is survived by her husband Henry Ponleithner of Palo Alto,


whom she married Aug. 11, 1951; her daughter, Alice Collins of Palo Alto; and her sons Paul Ponleithner of Menlo Park and Thomas Ponleithner of Carmel; a twin sister, Nancy Boyd, of Villa Park, Ill.; an older sister, Barbara Haisler, of San Antonio, Texas; and five grandchildren. Her youngest son, David Ponleithner, died in 2004.

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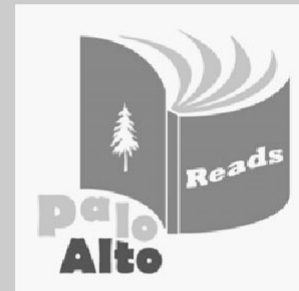


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BONNIE JEAN STIVERS

Bonnie Jean Stivers, 92, a third generation Californian and longtime Palo Alto resident, loving mother of four, grandmother of eight and great grandmother of one, died after a long illness.

Bonnie Jean was born August 26, 1914 in El Monte, California where she attended elementary and high school. She later moved with her parents and her 4 siblings to Colusa, California where she finished high school at Colusa Union High School. In 1937 she graduated with a degree in Bacteriology from the University of California at Berkeley. Bonnie then moved to Bakersfield, California where she worked for the Kern County Hospital as a Bacteriologist. It was there she met her husband, Theodore Paul Stivers.

Bonnie Jean and Ted were married in 1941 in Bakersfield and then moved to Philadelphia and Chicago where they were stationed during WWII. After the war they lived in Manteca, CA, and finally settled in Palo Alto where they raised their four children. Bonnie enjoyed gardening, sewing, cooking and was a member of two bridge groups. In addition, she was a member of the AAUW and the First Congregational Church.

Bonnie Jean and Ted became fast friends with many families in Mexico with whom they hosted student exchanges. She hosted

over twelve students in her home and three of her children went to Mexico to live with those families and learn Spanish. She felt it was extremely important that her children experience cultural exchanges with people outside the United States. Because of this she also became involved with the American Field Service, an international exchange program, helping high school students achieve selection for the program.

After her children were grown, she traveled all over the world with her husband until his death in 2000. The last years of her life she spent at home in Palo Alto. She is survived by her children, Paul Stivers of San Jose; Jim Stivers of Coto de Caza, California; Alan Stivers of Palo Alto; and Ann Pianetta of Palo Alto, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Services have been held. Burial took place at Alta Mesa Memorial Park in Palo Alto. The family would appreciate donations in her name to the following charities in lieu of flowers: the ALS Association, the Alzheimer's Association or Rosener House in Menlo Park, California.

PAID OBITUARY

Book Talk

"FUNNY IN FARSI"...A month-long series of events focused on "Funny in Farsi" by Palo Alto author **Firoozeh Dumas** nears conclusion Nov. 8 with an evening book discussion group at the College Terrace Library. Persian treats and tea will be served at the event, which begins at 7:30 p.m. The library is located at 2300 Wellesley St. The Palo Alto Reads event is sponsored by the Palo Alto Library and co-sponsored by the Weekly and Palo Alto Online. More info is available at www.cityofpaloalto.org/library.

AWARD-WINNING...Local writer **Viola Canales** has won a 2006 PEN USA Center Literary Award for children's literature for her book, "The Tequila Worm." The book was included in a round-up of children's books in the July 6, 2005 Weekly.

MANY AUTHORS ... The 15th annual CAR authors' luncheon will be held Saturday, Nov. 4, at the Crowne Plaza Cabana Hotel in Palo Alto beginning at 10:30 a.m. A luncheon will be noon to 2 p.m. and book sales and author signings will be 2-3 p.m. Proceeds benefit the Community Association for Rehabilitation. Participating writers include **Marla Frazee** ("Walk On! A Guide for Babies of All Ages"), **Michael Lewis** ("The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game"), **Susan Straight** ("A Million Nightengales") and **Jacqueline Winspear** ("Pardonable Lies").

WHOLE EARTH ... Stanford University will host a symposium Nov. 9 on "From Counterculture to Cyberculture: The Legacy of the Whole Earth Catalog." **Stewart Brand**, founder of the catalog, will be one of the speakers at the event, 7-8:30 p.m. in Cubberley Auditorium in the School of Education. **Kevin Kelly**, former editor of Wired magazine, will also participate.

AUTHOR, AUTHORAuthor events at Kepler's Books in Menlo Park this month include novelist **Richard Ford** ("The Lay of the Land") at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 11. Local writer Antoinette May ("Pilot's Wife," her first novel) will appear at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 18.

MORE AUTHOR, AUTHOR... Artist **Anna Coulter** (not ANN Coulter) will have a book signing for "Transformations," her book of butterfly paintings, at the ART21 Gallery at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 10. The gallery is located at 539 Alma St. in Palo Alto. *Items for Book Talk may be sent by the last Wednesday of the month to Don Kazak, Title Pages editor, Palo Alto Weekly, P.O. Box 1610, Palo Alto, CA 94302 or emailed to dkazak@pawweekly.com.*

Title Pages

A monthly section on local books and authors, edited by Don Kazak



Norbert von der Groeben

Carly Fiorina, then the CEO of Hewlett-Packard Co., rings a ceremonial bell at the company's Palo Alto headquarters to open trading on the New York Stock Exchange on May 6, 2002, the first day that HP stock traded under its HPQ designation after its merger with Compaq.

CARLY FIORINA TELLS HER STORY

Former Hewlett-Packard CEO writes revealing memoir

"Tough Choices" by Carly Fiorina;
Portfolio Books; 319 pp.; \$24.95

By Don Kazak

Think of "Tough Choices," the memoir by former Hewlett-Packard Co. CEO Carly Fiorina, in part as "The HP Pretexting Scandal: The Prelude."

For a book that was written in 2005, "Tough Choices" has some inside stories that puts the Palo Alto company's 2006 scandal into context. Two of the key figures in the boardroom leaking story, Tom Perkins and Jay Keyworth, also played key roles in Fiorina's ouster from HP in February 2005, and she has a lot to say about them.

A piece of that puzzle is understanding how Fiorina and HP were affected by boardroom leaks to the media going back to September 2001 when HP and Compaq announced a merger after nine months of intense, private

negotiations.

The story of the merger—actually, HP bought Compaq—was leaked the night before to the Wall Street Journal and New York Times.

Later, the HP board held a three-day meeting in January 2005, the details of which were again leaked to the media. At that point, Fiorina authorized an internal investigation into the leaks.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Three former HP executives and three outside private investigators have been charged with four felonies each.

But the stage was set by a bickering board divided by those wedded to the memories of Bill Hewlett and David Packard, the company's almost mythical founders, and those trying to move the company forward.

In fact, one of the most revealing things about "Tough Choices" is how far the company had fallen in the late 1990s and the disarray it was in when Fiorina took over in early 1999. The board told Fiorina she was being hired as a change agent. The two former CEOs, John Young and Lew Platt, had been fired in 1990 and 1999.

So was Fiorina, five years later.

She and the board flew to Chicago in February 2005 to have a board meeting away from inquisitive reporters. After she gave a detailed, impassioned defense of her stewardship (printed in the book), the board told her to go upstairs and wait for a call.

The call took three hours. When Fiorina went back downstairs, only three other people were in the room.

"In the end, the board did not have the courage to face me," Fiorina wrote. "They did not thank me and they did not say goodbye. They



Norbert von der Groeben

did not explain their decision or reasoning.”

“Tough Choices” is a memoir from the author’s viewpoint. But it is candid, in parts self-critical and has the ring of truth. Fiorina stayed silent after her firing to tell her story in her words, and it was worth the wait.

She grew up in Ohio, attended Stanford as an undergraduate while realizing that graduate school would determine her career, although she didn’t know what that career would be. So Fiorina first went to work as a secretary at the Palo Alto real estate firm of Marcus & Millichap, just down the street from HP’s corporate headquarters. Later, she received a MBA from the University of Maryland.

Fiorina worked for AT&T and its corporate spin-off, Lucent Technologies, as a manager and then corporate executive for almost 20 years. She became famous at Lucent. When Fortune magazine named the 50 most powerful women in business in the fall of 1998, Fiorina beat out Oprah Winfrey for the top spot and got her photo on the magazine’s cover. Fiorina had mixed feelings about the recognition. “I said although I was flattered and honored, the list was a bad idea,” she wrote.

In fact, Fiorina’s recognition as a famous business woman would shadow her through her time at HP, from the very opening news conference to announce her hiring. Suddenly, her clothes, hair and spersonality were journalistic fodder instead of her business acumen.

“When I arrived at HP, I was keenly aware I was leading more than a company; I was leading an institution of special significance,” she wrote.

But Fiorina encountered the ghosts of Hewlett and Packard. She had read Packard’s book, “The HP Way,” several times before being hired and came to believe that the company didn’t live up to those ideals any more. In response, she and a few other HP executives wrote an internal document, “Rules of the Garage,” that tried to counter the idealized memory of the founders.

That memory had almost crippled the company’s attempt to move forward and adjust to a changing marketplace, she thought her predecessor, Platt, had set up four semi-independent companies within HP. She tried to change that.

“Everyone at HP, starting with the executive team, had to learn to think about the company as a whole, not just his or her business,” she wrote. “We needed to be inspired by something beyond the memory of Bill and Dave.”

She saw the Compaq merger as an inevitability of the consolidation of the computer industry. But Walter Hewlett, son of Bill, led a bitter and divisive proxy fight among shareholders to try to block it.

In the end, Fiorina’s time at HP was an almost Shakespearean tragedy with a full and colorful cast, including loyal retainers and the prince of the dead king (Walter Hewlett).

She had told her husband, Frank, after she took the job, “I think this is going to be a high-wire act without a net.”

That proved prophetically true. ■
Senior Staff Writer Don Kazak can be e-mailed at dkazak@paweekly.com.



Judith Schwartz, author of the novel “Doublethink,” in her Palo Alto home.

Fearing for the future

Palo Alto writes novel of frightening possibilities

“Doublethink: A Tale of Unintended Consequences” by J.E. Schwartz; Raise the Bar Press; 212 pp.; \$14.95

by Jennifer Deitz Berry
Palo Alto writer J.E. Schwartz’s novel, “Doublethink: A Tale of Unintended Consequences,” takes a look into the future, imagining what Palo Alto and Silicon Valley might be like if the Bush clan and the Republicans were to keep hold of the White House for another eight years.

It is a world where the haves and have-nots are sharply divided. Taxes have been cut while Homeland Security has expanded into an operation nearly on par with George Orwell’s Big Brother in “1984.”

No one is safe from arrests and property seizures for alleged links (however tenuous and substantiated) to terrorist organizations. The religious right and Fox News dominate. Gay rights have been abolished along with nearly all public services, including funding for schools, roads, police and fire departments.

The novel revolves around the main character Joe Winston, who is living a secure, luxurious life in Atherton as a well-paid corporate attorney. But Joe’s happy-go-lucky life soon takes a turn for the worse when he becomes the victim of corporate downsizing. Just after losing his job, his donation to a charity for orphans is flagged by Homeland Security as having possible links to terrorists.

Losing access to the millions in his bank accounts, failing to find work, and in turn after turn falling victim to each of the conservative policies he had once supported, Joe is gradually forced to come to terms with his own “doublethinking” and the error of his ways.

The book is a quick-moving, easy read. J.E. Schwartz’s writing is clear and sharp and clips along from scene to scene. Joe’s progression from an out-of-touch-with-the-masses Republican to an increasingly sensitive and compassionate liberal-minded soul is handled adeptly and convincingly.

And the author’s imaginings of the worst-case-scenario if an extremist Republican administration came to power is at once plausible and creative enough to make for

good fictional fodder. One of the best moments in the novel has Joe negotiating to rent a small, converted office cube in one of the buildings along Page Mill Road that have been vacated due to international outsourcing and now serve as makeshift low-income housing units.

“Doublethink” will probably be the most fun for readers who are familiar with Palo Alto and the surrounding neighborhoods, since Schwarz makes great use of local details. Kepler’s gets a quick mention and the hero even makes a quick stop at JJ&F grocery store in College Terrace.

It’s too bad that “Doublethink” wasn’t set further in the future and rooted more in metaphorical rather than literal comparisons to the present day. The frequent references to current figures and events—from Valerie Plame to Hurricane Katrina—make the book feel oddly dated even as it attempts to depict a world in the future. The other disappointment is the rigidity of the storytelling. “Doublethink” shares similarities with other immensely popular books that are striving to teach the reader a lesson.

Just as Harriet Beecher Stowe is sometimes credited with helping turn the tide of popular opinion against slavery with “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” prior to the Civil War, Schwartz is clearly on a mission to convince her readers that the current Republican platform is flawed and that a more liberal approach to government is the way to go.

For this genre of fiction, “Doublethink” is a solid success. Schwartz creates a sympathetic character in Joe Winston, and most readers will be rooting for him to learn his lessons and switch from red to blue. Yet there is also a constant sense of the author’s hand shaping the characters into mouthpieces for her most passionately-held moral and political beliefs. As such, the story becomes so black and white with so much of an agenda behind the writing that it’s hard not come away from the experience of reading this book feeling a little bit manipulated. ■

Jennifer Deitz Berry is a freelance writer for the Weekly. She can be reached at jenberry2@AOL.com

NEW & RECOMMENDED

This month’s picks by Frank Sanchez, head book buyer at Kepler’s Books, include a childhood memoir from a funny writer, a wonderful book about recipes and writers, a book about a writer going undercover as a high-school student, and more.

“The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid” by Bill Bryson is the author’s look back at his childhood in Des Moines in the 1950s. Bryson, author of “A Short History of Nearly Everything,” is “laugh-out-loud funny” according to former TV newsman Tom Brokaw. The title refers to a sweater he had with a thunderbolt over the chest which gave him, he remembers, magical powers.

“Kafka’s Soup: A Complete History of World Literature in 14 Recipes” by Mark Crick is a book based on a wonderfully inventive idea. The author imagines what recipes 14 of the greatest writers would like, and writes a short chapter about each of them. The writers include Franz Kafka, Jane Austen, Raymond Chandler and Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

“High School Confidential: Secrets of an Undercover Student” by Jeremy Iversen is about the 24-year-old writer posing as a transfer student during a semester at a Southern California high school. Iversen, a Stanford grad, finds that drugs and sex were very popular at the high school. He even graduated.

Mendel’s Daughter: A Memoir” by Martin Lemelman is a touching book that tells the story of the author’s mother, a Holocaust survivor from Poland. Lemelman is a children’s book illustrator so the book is his mother’s words brought to life by his drawings. Lemelman has produced a powerful and poignant book.

“The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2006” edited by Dave Eggers is an eclectic collection of short, often humorous pieces. One chapter consists of the best headlines from the Onion, the online humor newspaper. Comic strip artist Matt Groening of “The Simpsons” provides a list of books that “will keep you up late at night when you are supposed to be sleeping or making love.”

“Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance” by Ian Buruma is an account of the 2004 shooting death of Dutch filmmaker and grand nephew of painter Vincent van Gogh by a Muslim man. The book examines the unease in Holland over the immigration of Muslims and the difficulties that tolerant country is going through.

“We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live” by Joan Didion is a publishing event of some note. This book is a collection of Didion’s seven books of nonfiction, going back to her 1968 essays, “Slouching Towards Bethlehem,” which was about the counterculture and the mood of that turbulent era. Didion has written about her home state of California in “Where I Was From” and about the Cold War, Reagan, the media and Clinton.

“The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire” by Walter Benjamin is a collection of essays about the 19th century French poet written in the 1930s by the late author. Those essays redefined how the French poet was thought of and understood as more of a modern thinker than someone from the late Romantic period.

—Don Kazak

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Palo Alto's urban forest has earned it recognition as a "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Trustees for the trees

Palo Alto residents, arborists work to protect heritage trees

by Molly Tanenbaum
Photographs by Veronica Weber

When Bruce and Dara Knoblock bought property on Forest Avenue three years ago, they got more than a house.

They became the caretakers of a 50-year-old redwood tree — both an honor and a burden.

To preserve the unusual tree — a deciduous dawn redwood — the Knoblocks spent upwards of \$70,000 extra to build a special, tree-friendly foundation for their new home.

The redwood is one of Palo Alto's seven official "heritage" trees. It received the designation in 1999 — joining the ranks of El Palo Alto and an old oak in Rinconada Park — because it is a unique species and second in height only to a dawn redwood near the downtown post office.

For Palo Altans, a majestic, mature, shade-giving tree can create a beautiful landscape, lower utility bills and improve the environment. But with large city-protected trees comes a responsibility to maintain the tree's well-being.

"The city arborist laid down some strict requirements working around the tree area," said Knoblock. "We had to have an arborist come out every few weeks."

Because of that obligation to protect the tree, some prospective buyers of the Crescent Park home — hoping to tear it down and replace it — were turned off.

"A couple people looked at the property and passed on it because the redwood tree was there. It would have been very inconvenient to have the tree where it is (and build a big house)," Knoblock said.

In addition to the unique, deciduous redwood, the Knoblocks' lot also has a mature oak, which city code also protects.

Since the heritage designation "runs with the land," said City Arborist Dave Dockter, a new property owner would have to ask the City Council to remove the label in order to take the tree down.

Ever since Stanford University professors and other newcomers settled in Palo Alto in the late 1800s, residents have cherished the diverse green blanket that shades the city.

But it took a century before Palo Alto tree lovers could honor and protect unusual, ancient and large trees. The city now regulates seven heritage trees, 32,000 street trees, trees on commercial land and mature oaks and redwoods on private properties, according to Dockter, who created the city's first Tree Technical Manual to establish regulations for preserving city trees.

Despite Palo Alto's green tendencies, its protection of trees on private property came nearly two decades after Menlo Park and San Mateo and nine years after Mountain View.

Before 1997, "anyone with a magnificent valley oak tree could cut it down at their whim," said Susan Rosenberg, board chair of Canopy, a Palo Alto non-profit that plants trees and educates the public about the value of the urban forest.

Dockter attributes the delay to the fact that Palo Altans were doing a good job at caring for their trees — until property values spiked.

"The real estate boom of the 1990s saw rampant demolition of older homes and large, old, grandfather trees with it," he said.

"Unless there's a law, it's just not going to be protected," said Rosenberg, who had participated in a City Council task force that pushed for increased protections for private trees 10 years ago.

City Arborist Dave Sandage, who has worked for 25 years for the public-works department, said Palo Alto was resistant to regulating private property. He had helped author San Mateo's tree ordinance two decades before Palo Alto adopted one.

"(Palo Alto)'s conservative backbone shows through liberal clothing sometimes," Sandage said.

In 1997, the city began guarding two types of native oaks under the category "protected trees" — the coast live oak (with thicker, waxier leaves) and the valley oak (with lobed leaves) — and began allowing people to apply for heritage status for their trees. Three years later, native coast redwoods gained the same status.

Heritage trees must fulfill certain criteria: being "an outstanding specimen of a desirable species"; "one of the largest and oldest in Palo Alto"; and "possessing distinctive form, size, age and location," according to city code.

In addition to El Palo Alto, the Knoblocks' redwood and the Rinconada oak, the city's collection of heritage trees includes a coast redwood, a silver maple, an American elm and an Aleppo pine.

"We reserved No. 1 for the granddaddy," Dockter said, referring to El Palo Alto, the millennium-old redwood on the edge of the San Francisquito Creek.

In exchange for a tree's aesthetic and environmental contribution to Palo Alto, it is repaid with extra protections from the city. That means that new construction must be built to accommodate the tree.

In asking for a tree to be designated as heritage, in a sense residents are inconveniencing themselves and their neighbors by "burdening the property with requirements," Dockter said.

Cutting down or drastically pruning a heritage tree is off-limits, even to the property owner, after designation is given.

The very first family to apply for heritage status for a tree in 1999 did so to save its life.

Franklin and Jean Olmsted had a century-old redwood on their property.

The application can take about four months, Dockter said, because it requires an arborist's report and must come before the City Council for a decision.

"You do it because you're afraid some pressure is going to get them, like development," Jean said. "It was a process."

The Olmsteds were worried that their next-door neighbor's construction of a new house on La Donna Street in Barron Park would kill the 125-foot coast redwood in their backyard.

"They weren't interested in protecting the roots of the tree. We just didn't want people hacking on it," Jean said.

Stepping into the backyard of the Olmsted's small cottage feels like a hike through Big Basin State Park. The cooling effect of the giant redwood is striking. It takes four people to reach all the way around the tree, whose leaves drop to the ground and create soft, rich mulch.

Jean said she has given the mulch to neighbors for their own gardens.

"We're trying to turn it into a tree that belongs to all of us," she said. "They're community trees."

Other than doing the paperwork to get their redwood approved, the Olmsteds have kept their tree low-maintenance.

"We're not pruners. It's like sending your firstborn to the barbershop and the curls go," Jean said with a shudder.

For other property owners, taking on the duty of caring for a heritage or protected tree can be costly, with pruning expenses in the thousands of dollars. One must be committed to a tree — emotionally and financially — to request heritage status.

Like the Olmsteds, Mary and Donald Starnier applied to have their silver maple protected as a heritage tree in 2000 to keep it alive.

Because Palo Alto only guards oaks and redwoods on private

(continued on next page)



The magnificent seven

Palo Alto has seven heritage trees, which range from 50 to 1,000 years of age and soar up to 125 feet tall.

The first two are public trees: El Palo Alto redwood and a 200-year-old oak in Rinconada Park. The remaining trees are on private properties throughout Palo Alto, including a silver maple, an American elm, two redwoods and an Aleppo pine.

The next contender for heritage status, according to City Arborist Dave Dockter, is a Moreton Bay fig tree on Ramona Street and Homer Avenue.

"It's a sublime specimen of vigor, character, umbrella shade, and has the most interesting root system in any tree in all of Palo Alto," he said. ■

—Molly Tanenbaum



Derek Sproat prepares to section off a portion of a carob tree for pruning last week. The city employs 10 crews weekly to prune trees and clear branches interfering with telephone lines.



Palo Alto City Arborist Dave Dockter looks at the root structure of a Moreton Bay fig tree, which may become the city's next heritage tree



Donald Starnier cranes his neck looking up at the 55-year-old silver maple in his yard, which was designated a heritage tree in 1999.



The Rinconada Oak, a two-centuries-old coast live oak in Rinconada Park, towers 75 feet high and spreads out to nearly 120 feet in diameter. It was named a heritage tree in 1999.

(continued from previous page)

properties, there is nothing protecting other species of trees.

"Some of these trees hang way over and could be killed by an adjacent neighbor putting a basement in," Dockter said.

The Starners' 50-year-old maple — whose 90-foot, spiky-leaved canopy spans almost the entire length of their Edgewood Drive house, keeping it cool — is nearly on their property line.

Despite neighbor protests, the council named the Starners' maple Palo Alto's fifth heritage tree in March 2001.

"We're so happy we went through the process. It means so much to us," Mary said, adding, "Al Gore would approve."

Mary said she spends between \$5,000 and \$8,000 every few years to groom the silver maple — the largest of its kind in Palo Alto, valued at \$30,000.

"On a retirement income, that's considerable . . . to deal with a tree of that size and keeping it healthy and balanced and everything else," she said.

Daniel Pitt spent \$2,000 a few weeks ago on maintenance for two trees on his property on Fulton Avenue.

"Pruning costs for the redwood and the wisteria were shocking to me," Pitt said. "It's a lot of money to keep these things up. They own us. We don't own them."

But the Starners have seen a payoff in never having to use air conditioning because of the shade the maple provides.

"I think it adds to the property value to have it," Mary said.

Pitt has experienced similar benefits and also said he enjoys watching birds and squirrels that inhabit his redwood.

"It also makes the neighborhood look wonderful," he said.

Because the city now regulates trees on private properties, homeowners must be their caretakers. But in some instances, a house will win out over a tree.

When Mike and Lena Saporov decided the redwood in the front yard of their Kipling Street home needed to go, they had to apply through the city to have it removed.

The tree's roots had already raised and buckled the cement driveway when they moved in three years ago. But things have worsened.

"It's raising the floor in our house," Mike said.

The giant redwood is one of two in the front yard that are less than eight feet from the Saporovs' 30-year-old house. Because of the tree roots, the Saporovs' front hall is slightly slanted, a closet door can't close all the way, and the toilet has plumbing problems.

"The tree is great. It's the roots that are the problem. . . . I just don't like damage on the house," he said.

Because the redwood is a protected tree, the Sapo-

rovovs are prohibited from taking any drastic action without a city permit. In late September, the couple filed an application to have the tree removed. They are waiting to hear back from the city.

Trees that cause major property damage may be removed, but minor property damage, such as roots interfering with a fence or a driveway, would mean that the property owner would repair the problem and keep the tree, Dockter said.

The Knoblocks soon realized that moving in with the dawn redwood was a big responsibility — not only to the tree itself, but also to the community.

"People are keenly aware of that dawn redwood — the neighborhood and people who love trees. I do not want to cause any kind of problems or waves with the tree people," Knoblock said.

Since protective rules went into place, Dockter often receives calls from concerned Palo Altans notifying him of tree-code violations that can come from "topping" (removing the top), lopsiding, excessively pruning or removing any regulated tree.

Dockter received one such call — which turned out to be a false alarm — last month.

When Pitt hired a company to prune the 125-foot redwood tree in his backyard, it sent off a scare in the neighborhood. He only intended to cut a few feet off the top.

Pruning the redwood is necessary to prevent potential hazards, according to Pitt's wife, Claudia Bloom.

"We get a little nervous when it's windy," she said. "There have been sizeable branches falling down. We don't want anyone to get hurt."

Seeing tree workers take a saw to the redwood, a worried neighbor alerted the city, sending Dockter over to Fulton Avenue to inspect.

Fortunately for Pitt, the redwood was indeed in need of the work.

"The top was stone dead," Dockter said. "They only removed the diseased portion on the top."

But in other instances, calls Dockter receives from neighbors are legitimate complaints about violations. Owners of protected trees should be familiar with the rules because "one of the things we expect of the Realtor profession is responsible disclosure about regulated trees," Dockter said.

He noted that out-of-town contractors hired for tree maintenance may not be familiar with Palo Alto's tree-care rules and may break them.

Like Knoblock with his heritage redwood, Pitt has sensed that the 125-foot redwood in his backyard is not entirely his own.

"The neighbors have seen the pruners on my redwood tree and recoiled in horror, thinking I'm tearing it down," Pitt said. "I feel I have a neighborhood responsibility to protect the tree." ■

Staff Writer Molly Tanenbaum can be e-mailed mtanenbaum@pawekly.com.

Diversity on the street

From a satellite picture, Palo Alto is a little green dot. Within that green dot are countless trees, from native oaks and redwoods to flowery magnolias to sturdy London planes.

Though redwoods and oaks are the only trees native to Palo Alto, city arborists and urban foresters tend to recommend other species as being ideal street trees.

In working to both enhance Palo Alto's streets and grow as large an urban forest as possible, using purely native trees is not realistic, according to Catherine Martineau, executive director of the non-profit group, Canopy.

"It's not easy to be an urban tree," Martineau said, referencing oaks especially.

Valley and coast live oaks in their natural environment — the hot, dry chaparral — can withstand periods with very little water. When they become part of the landscaping, problems can occur.

"All of a sudden, there is a lawn put around a big, ancient oak, and there's nothing worse than watering an oak in the summer," Martineau said.

Dry summers mean that fungi and molds native to Palo Alto soil are dormant, explained arborist Dave Muffly.

"But when you water the lawn, it wakes up the fungus. The first thing the fungus does when it wakes up is eat oak root," Muffly said.

Palo Alto's view of an ideal street tree has changed over the years. Magnolias that line University Avenue are still the "trademark Palo Alto entrance" tree, City Arborist Dave Sandage said. But their aggressive, thirsty root systems make them difficult street trees.

The city plants 200 to 300 trees a year, including the current street trees of choice, London planes, northern red oaks, silver lindens and American ashes — all big

"It's not easy to be an urban tree."

— Catherine Martineau,
executive director, Canopy

shade trees.

Through the city's public-works department, Sandage must make sure that the city's 32,000 street trees are diverse in both species and age.

"It's good to have them mixed up so if you have a problem, it doesn't devastate a single area," Sandage said.

Diversity can minimize the chances of having a tree disease spread everywhere and make the urban forest more likely to stay around through gradual shifts in weather.

"We're getting more biologically impoverished all the time and we're entering a period of rapid climate change," Muffly said. "Diversification seems like a brilliant move if you want to have something left coming out the other end."

Despite advocating a variety of trees to fill Palo Alto's landscape, Muffly still considers oaks to be his absolute favorite trees.

"I feel a super-affinity for the tree," he said.

With the non-profit Magic, he has helped plant 2,000 acorns on Stanford University land.

And the ardent oak fan has 4,000 more acorns in his refrigerator at home for a yet-to-be-determined purpose.

"Frankly, I haven't totally figured it out yet. I just collected them," he said. ■

—Molly Tanenbaum



Redwood trees, which are protected under Palo Alto's tree ordinance, mix with other species in the city

Counting the benefits

Despite Palo Alto's advanced tree-management program and the Tree Technical Manual — which has been copied and used around the world — city arborists and the non-profit group Canopy hope to move toward more advanced methods of valuing Palo Alto's urban forest.

Last April, the City Council approved an initiative to update the city's street-tree management plan and to define goals for that task prior to City Arborist Dave Sandage's retirement after 25 years in the public-works department.

But Canopy hopes to take that update a step further, making it a comprehensive urban-forestry master plan, said Canopy Executive Director Catherine Martineau.

"Our vision is larger than just street trees," she said. Cities should view trees as a utility that provides "ecosystem services."

A few months ago, Canopy submitted a proposal to the city for a comprehensive tree-management plan, which would include the use of advanced technology — Stratum and Ufore — to analyze and put a monetary value on Palo Alto's entire urban forest, not just the street trees, Martineau said.

"It helps to see the trees as part of the infrastructure and as a utility because resources are performed by the trees," she added.

United States Forest Service tools, Stratum and Ufore can put a dollar value on Palo Alto's inventory of trees, taking into account energy conservation, air quality improvement, carbon reduction, storm water control, and property value increase.

"It helps elected officials make smart decisions," City Arborist Dave Dockter said.

Viewing trees as a city utility is a

philosophical shift.

"Landscapes can no longer be designed to just look pretty," Dockter said. "We want it to be the law that landscapes do double duty."

"Trees are being considered as infrastructure, right up there on par with storm drain, sanitary sewers, roads, police and fire. It's essential," he added.

Though planning and public-works departments both have arborists that work to maintain the city's urban forest, another part of the comprehensive tree-management plan would include the utilities department to prevent work with sewers and electrical trenching from harming tree roots.

"I think many trees suffer and have shortened life spans absolutely because of uncoordinated efforts," Dockter said. ■

— Molly Tanenbaum



Trees, such as the Starners' silver maple, provide not just beauty but also shading and other environmental benefits, city arborists say.

Editorial

Put conflict first in schools meeting

Late night is no time for 'open discussion' of crisis

The decision to schedule an end-of-agenda discussion of how to respond to management's concerns with Superintendent Mary Frances Callan is a disservice to the many staff and parents interested in what has become a major crisis in the district.

The Board of Education has opted to add the hiring of an organizational-development expert to its special meeting Thursday night, where it is scheduled to hear annual "school improvement plan" (SIP) reports from the district's dozen elementary schools plus Young Fives program. The plan is to hire an outside person to interview members of the district's management team and senior administrators and report back to the board.

The board leadership opted to first hear from principals — approximately five- to 10-minute reports — and then to get to the management conflict issue after acting on salary agreements with the teachers' and classified employees' unions.

The fact that the meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. may be a saving grace, board President Mandy Lowell says, in that it could mean the management discussion would come up by 9 p.m. or sooner. Even though past SIP meetings have extended much longer, principals this year have expressed a desire to cover the ground more quickly, she said.

The management conflict relates to a document presented to district top administrators on Sept. 6. It stated that there was a basic lack of trust of key administrators by the 48-member middle-management group of principals, assistant principals, program coordinators and school psychologists. The document conveys serious concerns.

Last week, at the request of trustee Gail Price, the board voted to discuss the matter publicly for the first time, and it was added to Thursday night's agenda rather than wait for a regularly scheduled meeting later in November.

In the absence of a willingness to move the item forward on the agenda, if this item gets pushed past 9 p.m. for whatever reason the board should convene a special meeting next week with this as the sole agenda item. It's that important.

Spectrum

Editorials, letters and opinions

Rosenbaum nails it

Dick Rosenbaum's Guest Opinion (Oct. 25) hit the nail on the head.

Our City Council has sold us down the river by negotiating an unfunded contract with the city employees. The pension plan in particular is an affront to the rest of us who will never have the luxury of such a plan and yet must fund it for them.

The city's financial woes should certainly make it clear that signing off on this level of compensation is absurd in the ridiculous. If we cannot undo what's been done, for heaven's sake, it must be a litmus test next election for anyone who wishes to represent us on the council. Those who supported this or were absent on this crucial vote must be out.

Rosenbaum served on the council from 1971 to 1975 and 1991 to 1999, and here is a quote from him: "These obligations are going to eat us up. Given the circumstances, this is the most irresponsible financial action by a City Council in the 35 years that I have been observing and participating in city affairs."

These are not the words of some neophyte. These huge, unfunded benefits are going to sink the ship. I think those with a voice have to hit these practices/votes over and over again until the voters figure it out.

Carol Gilbert
Byron Street
Palo Alto

ciation meetings. In addition to the paper petitions we created an online petition, located at www.ipetitions.com, and have received about half of our signatures there.

We will continue to collect signatures until the commission presents its final recommendations to the council in early December. We are confident that our petition provides a vehicle for residents to "be loud for our library" and that it is the beginning of what will be a successful campaign.

Please consider adding your voice to ours.

Alison Cormack and
Lynne Russell
Ross Road and Ramona Street
Palo Alto

Critical thinking

Editor,

Do you get the feeling you aren't getting the truth about what happened regarding 9/11 from the Bush Administration or the 9/11 Commission report? If you do have further unanswered questions and things we have been told just don't make sense, there is a new documentary which is called "9/11 Press for Truth: The Coverup Exposed by the 9/11 Family."

It can be seen on DVD now and will be screened around the country to citizens.

In the film, five of the most prominent members of the Family Steering Committee tell their story for the first time on film, providing the most powerful argument yet for why 9/11 still needs investigation. Adapting Paul Thompson's definitive "Complete 9/11 Timeline" (published by HarperCollins as "The Terror Timeline"), the filmmakers stitch together rare, overlooked news clips, buried stories and government press conferences, revealing a pattern of official lies, deception and spin.

These five 9/11 widows after months of lobbying finally got the administration to have a commission to examine what happened. The Bush Administration opposed it until they couldn't avoid it, sending Bush with his minder, Cheney, to be questioned by the commissioners not under oath and in private.

See the film and question the official story. Read "The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11" by David Ray Griffin.

(continued on page 24)

ELECTION '06

The Weekly Recommends

U.S. CONGRESS

Anna Eshoo (D)

STATE ASSEMBLY

Ira Ruskin (D)

SANTA CLARA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Karyn Sinunu

MENLO PARK CITY COUNCIL

Heyward Robinson, Rich Cline, John Boyle

EAST PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL

Ruben Abrica, David Woods

RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL BOARD

Todd Gaviglio, Marcelino Lopez, Larry Moody

MENLO PARK MEASURE J (Bayfront Advisory)	No
MENLO PARK MEASURE K (Utility Tax)	Yes
EAST PALO ALTO MEASURE C (Parcel tax)	Yes
EAST PALO ALTO MEASURE D (Parcel tax)	Yes
EAST PALO ALTO MEASURE E (Rent control changes)	No
SANTA CLARA COUNTY MEASURE A (General plan)	Yes
SAN MATEO COUNTY MEASURE A (Parks)	Yes

STATE PROPOSITIONS

PROPOSITION 1A	Yes
PROPOSITION 1B	No
PROPOSITION 1C	No
PROPOSITION 1D	No
PROPOSITION 1E	No
PROPOSITION 83	No
PROPOSITION 84	Yes
PROPOSITION 85	No
PROPOSITION 86	Yes
PROPOSITION 87	Yes
PROPOSITION 88	No
PROPOSITION 89	Yes
PROPOSITION 90	No

The Weekly's election editorials can be found on www.PaloAltoOnline.com.

Expansion petition

Editor,

On Oct. 26 we attended the Library Advisory Commission meeting to speak in favor of its plan to build an expanded Mitchell Park Library.

We took with us 500 signatures for a petition that simply read, "I am a resident of Palo Alto and support the Library Advisory Commission's recommendation to build an expanded Mitchell Park Library."

Why did we create this petition? In May there were some questions from the City Council about the perceived lack of support in the local community for an expanded Mitchell Park Library. Since we believe the library is overdue for dramatic improvements and know that others share our view, we decided to launch a petition.

The objective of the petition is twofold: First, to demonstrate to the council the community's enthusiastic support for an expanded Mitchell Park Library; second, to begin to lay the groundwork for the upcoming campaign to improve the Palo Alto library system.

On multiple occasions we have stood in front of the library collecting signatures on paper. One man even asked if we could give him a shovel so he could get started right away. We have also taken the petition with us to soccer games, dance rehearsals and neighborhood asso-

YOUR TURN

The Palo Alto Weekly encourages comments on our coverage or on issues of local interest.

What do you think? What is your best "tree adventure story?"

Submit letters to the editor of up to 250 words to letters@pawebly.com or shorter comments to readerwire@pawebly.com. Include your name, address and daytime phone number so we can reach you. We reserve the right to edit contributions for length, objectionable content, libel and factual errors known to us. Anonymous letters will generally not be accepted.

You can also participate in our popular interactive online forum, **Town Square**, at our community website at www.PaloAltoOnline.com. Read blogs, discuss issues, ask questions or express opinions with you neighbors any time, day or night.

Submitting a letter to the editor or guest opinion constitutes a granting of permission to the Palo Alto Weekly and Embarcadero Publishing Co. to also publish it online, including in our online archives and as a post on Town Square.

For more information contact Editor Jay Thorwaldson or Assistant to the Editor Tyler Hanley at editor@pawebly.com or 650-326-8210.



Check out Town Square!

Hundreds of local topics are being discussed by local residents on Town Square, a reader forum sponsored by the Weekly on our community website at www.PaloAltoOnline.com. Post your own comments, ask questions, read Diana Diamond's blog or just stay up on what people are talking about around town!

In a democracy people need to educate themselves and use critical thinking.

Edith Groner
Parkside Drive
Palo Alto

Reminders of Vietnam

Editor,
Amidst sobering news from Iraq, President Bush and his cheerleaders are patting one another's back, proclaiming, "The men and women of the armed forces have never lost a battle in over three years in the war." Commander General Casey proudly concurred, "That is a fact unprecedented in history."

This reminds me of Henry Kissinger, who is now actively advising our dear leader, "Victory is the best exit strategy."

In case you have forgotten, Henry "Stay-the-Course" Kissinger and then dear leader President Nixon architected the "Peace with Honor" strategy in Vietnam that prolonged the ugly and tragic war for many years, resulting in an additional 1.5 million deaths in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and we suffered more than 20,000 unnecessary losses.

Yes, with overwhelming firepower we probably had won most, if not all, battles in the Vietnam War, too.

Thanks President Bush, I feel much better now.

Simon Chiu
Talisman Court
Palo Alto

Arms-length relationship?

Editor,
I compliment the Weekly for its endorsement of Karyn Sinunu for District Attorney (Oct. 4).

Sinunu's opponent in this race,

Guest Opinion

An urgent need for 'open-source' voting systems

by Arthur Keller

The principle of voting in the United States is that votes are cast in secret but tallied in public.

This principle is incompatible with the current practice of using voting systems whose inner workings are trade secrets owned by the voting-machine vendors. Those same vendors pay for their systems to be tested, and the results of those tests are also trade secrets — you guessed it — owned by the vendors.

Something is terribly and urgently wrong.

The usual claims for secrecy are that it somehow enhances security. The evidence for security through obscurity in software is quite limited. Some argue that the Apache web server, the software that powers 60 percent of the world's Web sites, compares favorably to Microsoft's Web server because the Apache source code is publicly available.

Although Microsoft does not publicly release its Web server's source code, Microsoft will make the source code available to large customers under license. In contrast, the source code of voting systems is not available for inspection even by counties that purchase these systems and certainly not for inspection by you or me.

We're all familiar with how the excuse of military security is often used to cover up embarrassing information that has little security value. Why wouldn't vendors use trade secrets as an excuse to cover up flaws in their systems or merely shoddy workmanship? In fact, the exposed Diebold e-voting source code has shown embarrassing details.

We do not know what lurks in the programming of the other vendors. Fortunately, ES&S and Sequoia have promised San Francisco and Alameda counties that they will cooperate with source code disclosure rules if the state requires it. Unfortunately, the current California secretary of state opposes such disclosure rules. The Open

Voting Consortium (www.openvoting.org) is creating a registry where vendors can publish voting systems technology. This registry will include requirements for what must be disclosed, such as software source code, specifications, documentation and hardware designs. While vendors may retain proprietary rights to the software, vendors must allow testing, experimentation, analyses and publication by anyone.

While anyone will be allowed to inspect the software, of course not everyone has the skills to do so effectively. But individuals or groups will be able to hire the expert of their own choosing and to publish their analyses. Today the only experts allowed are those chosen by the vendors themselves or by election officials, and their analyses are usually kept secret, and when released, are heavily redacted (censored).

This secrecy makes voting systems vulnerable to inaccuracy, or worse, fraud. In turn, voters lose confidence that their votes are counted as cast and cast as they intended.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was enacted in 2002 in the aftermath of the 2000 Presidential election, when it became clear that our current voting systems were inconsistent, unreliable and unfair. However, the post-HAVA federal standards were not created until late 2005, and these are voluntary and do not require paper ballots or paper trails, auditing or adequate testing.

No wonder most computer scientists have grave concerns about existing voting systems.

Are the newly purchased systems that we'll use on Nov. 7 also inconsistent, unreliable and unfair? We just don't know.

While some claim that there is a risk in publishing software developed in secret and not designed to be published, continued secrecy is not the solution. Rather, the solution is replacement of secret software too fragile or embarrassing to publish with a more robust, open-source voting system, where anyone can inspect the software.

Just as the security of Apache is enhanced by its publication, the publication of an open-source voting system will help ensure that the system is secure and reliable.

It is a myth that anyone can make changes to open-source software such as Apache. Certainly anyone can download Apache, make changes to it and run the changed version. But changing the official version of Apache can be done only by a small number of people in a carefully controlled process.

Anyone can report a bug in Apache or a suggested improvement. But any suggested improvement will go through levels of analysis and scrutiny before it is adopted. And that scrutiny is far higher than voting-system vendors, testers or inspectors can muster.

In a variety of industries, the government has sponsored research and development work that has produced systems later adopted by industry. Military-funded research leads to the creation of products and services that the military can buy. It is time for the government to fund the creation of an open-source voting system that vendors can adopt to provide more choices to election officials to buy on behalf of the voters.

Open-source voting systems will mean additional choices available not only for the initial procurement of voting systems but also for ongoing maintenance and support, and for auditing and reporting systems.

It is reported that years ago an IBM salesman said to a prospective customer, "Be careful not to get locked into open systems." But now IBM is one of the biggest proponents of open systems.

It is time for our election officials to become proponents of open systems, too — and for the public to demand them. ■

Arthur Keller is a founder and board secretary of the Open Voting Consortium and a precinct inspector in Santa Clara County. He can be e-mailed at arthur@openvoting.org.

Streetwise

It's the Halloween season, so what scares you the most?

Asked in front of Whole Foods in Palo Alto. Question and interviews by Dan Shilstone. Photographs by Veronica Weber.



Harry Cantwell
Comic-store employee
Ramona Street

"Disease. I'm kind of a hypochondriac. And tidal waves. Tidal waves are scary."



Frank Entriken
2nd grader
College Avenue

"A snake that I don't even know if it's poisonous or not!"



Vika Kreitz
High School junior
Cowper Street

"Spiders, because their legs are all nasty."



David McBay
Tree doctor
Webster Street

"I would have to say uncertainty — fear of the unknown — because you can't prepare for it, and that makes me nervous."



Elijah Gwin-Kerr
2nd grader
Churchill Avenue

"The thing that scares me the most is surgery with no anesthesia. That would be scary."

VOTE NO ON PROPOSITION 90!

To preserve the ability of local and state government to regulate land use and protect the environment, we strongly urge our fellow citizens to Vote NO on Proposition 90.

Proposition 90 has rightly been called the most deceptive and destructive proposition to appear on the California ballot in years.

If passed it would effectively prohibit local and State government from enacting new laws to protect the environment or change zoning for the good of the community.

A similar law was passed a few years ago in Oregon and has resulted in more than 2,200 claims for 5.6 billion dollars being filed against governmental agencies.

We are sufficiently alarmed by the damage that Proposition 90 would do to Palo Alto and other local governments that we have taken out this ad and paid for it personally.

Judy Kleinberg, Mayor
Yoriko Kishimoto, Vice-Mayor

John Barton
Bern Beecham
LaDoris Cordell
Peter Drekmeier
Larry Klein
Jack Morton
Dena Mossar

**This broad coalition of California organizations
also urges a NO vote on Prop 90**

Sierra Club
California Chamber of Commerce
California Farm Bureau
California Labor Federation
California Nurses Association
League of Conservation Voters
California Taxpayers Association
California Building Industry Association

and these newspapers.

San Jose Mercury
Los Angeles Times
San Francisco Chronicle
Sacramento Bee

Diana Diamond

Downtown disappointment?

by Diana Diamond

When Palo Alto's Business Improvement District (BID) was first proposed in late 2003, there were grandiose plans on how it would help improve the city's downtown.



By charging all downtown businesses an annual fee ranging from \$50 to \$500, great things would happen — there would be downtown landscaping, new decorative lights, improved signage, a concerted marketing effort, special events — all resulting in attracting more shoppers and providing renewed enthusiasm about the downtown.

Unfortunately, those plans never really panned out.

Some merchants are now complaining about BID, renamed the Palo Alto Downtown Business and Professional Association, asking what is happening to the money they have paid. Good question.

And some of the merchants and downtown businesses have refused to pay. Last week some 75 to 100 businesses out of the approximately 750 downtown received notices from a collection agency, demanding that they pay. The businesses range from major retailers to sole proprietors.

The original idea for forming an improvement district had some merit. Several prominent downtown merchants had been spending a lot of time volunteering to organize promotional events to encourage people

to come downtown, and it was a lot of hard work. They had done it for a number of years and were tired.

By forming a business improvement district, supported by a tax of downtown businesses, they could hire a paid staff to do their work, guarantee funding and presumably the downtown would benefit.

That's not the way it worked out. There were several miscalculations.

A budget was developed — \$101,000 for the first six months, and expectations of at least \$200,000 a year thereafter. The first executive director upped that income figure to the \$300,000-plus range, figuring some BID-sponsored downtown events could improve the cash flow, according to Sherry Bijan, the current executive director.

"The numbers were grossly miscalculated. It was a big-time error," Bijan said.

In reality, the association now has a fixed \$122,000 a year budget — minus the amount merchants have not paid this fiscal year — an estimated \$15,000 to \$20,000 still outstanding she said. And the association is also out approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000 in uncollected fees from previous years, she said.

So the district is operating this year to date on about \$102,000 in collected taxes. Bijan gets paid \$50,000, there's a part-time hourly office assistant for data entry and bookkeeping, the association had to pay the collection agency \$5 a letter for its first effort (\$500 or so), and the agency will keep 25 to 30 percent of whatever is collected. The city will be sending out the annual bills to downtown businesses next year, and it is unclear whether it will

Dine at any of these restaurants on Thursday, November 2. The restaurant will donate 10-25% of your bill to Palo Alto Community Child Care to help provide quality child care to low-income working families. Eat, laugh, have a good time, and support our children and families. Couldn't be easier!
www.paccc.com/dineforkids



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- Café Sophia Afghan Cuisine
- California Café
- California Pizza Kitchen
- Celia's
- Chantilly
- Compadres
- Create It!
- Hobee's Palo Alto South
- Indochine
- Mandarin Gourmet
- Ming's Chinese Cuisine
- Old Pro
- Round Table Pizza (3 locations)
- Sundance Steakhouse
- Thai City
- The Counter

Thursday, November 2, 2006

DINE FOR KIDS

charge the district for that service. There are other expenses, such as supplies, telephone and printing, that eat up the money pretty fast and leave little to spend on any project.

And some of the events previously sponsored, such as the prix fixe "Dine Downtown" Monday night dinners some restaurants were offering, cost the district money. Only recently, Bijan said, has the district broken even on this effort.

"There were initial over-projections on the amount of money these events would bring in," she said.

Bijan, to her credit, is realistic about what the district can do.

"It's important for the merchants to understand that we can't do much except some small projects. But we can be an advocate for the downtown and work to get things done," she said.

And she is working with city officials to beautify the downtown by getting decorative lights on both Hamilton and Lytton Avenues, working with the city's Public Works Department to improve downtown landscaping — initially around the University Avenue underpass and then along Alma Avenue from the downtown to the railroad tracks near Stanford Shopping Center.

All of this will take a long time to accomplish.

Bijan said she will take "baby steps," doing "a block at a time," to improve the downtown. She hopes to work more with the Chamber of Commerce and city staff to get things done. Bijan and her staff are also going door-to-door to find new members, hoping to boost revenue.

She's enthusiastic — but also realistic, and is aware of the challenges that lie ahead.

Of course the ultimate question is whether merchants will want to continue to pay these annual taxes to support what essentially is a cheerleader for the downtown.

My guess is they will for awhile, if for no other reason than disassembling the business district is a cumbersome process. It would require letters from 51 percent of the approximately 750 members objecting to the district. And the BID certainly won't be waging that campaign.

A footnote: One of the more successful projects of the association has been hiring the homeless — "the Downtown Streets Team" — to clean up the downtown, in exchange for food and clothing vouchers.

That effort has resulted in 18 of the homeless getting full-time jobs, and seven finding housing, according to Eileen Richardson, the team coordinator. The district spent \$20,000 on this effort last year, in large part because the biggest problems in the downtown, according to a previous BID survey, were the homeless problem and dirty streets and sidewalks.

This "Downtown Streets Team" was separated out in October 2005 as an independent nonprofit organization, no longer a part of the association, Richardson said. ■

Diana Diamond is a Palo Alto resident. Her e-mail is Diana@DianaDiamond.com.

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Letters

(continued from page 21)

Dolores Carr, is endorsed by police associations (per Mercury News editorial, May 21, and elsewhere), and this is troubling. Police organizations are free to endorse whomever they wish.

The fact that the police and the DA's office have a formal working relationship, however, should present some professional and ethical restraints on such endorsements. The relationship between the two in the political arena should be arms-length.

Not only does this unfortunate embrace happen at the county level, it also exists at the state level and has for years. These relationships are not in the best interest of police organizations, the prosecutors' office and most importantly, the people.

Henry Organ
Euclid Avenue
Menlo Park

More on A

Editor,

It was disappointing but not surprising when I read the Weekly editorial on Measure A (Oct. 25). The Weekly's unwillingness to sit down with people on both sides of the issue led to inaccuracies that deserve a response.

The minimum parcel size set by Measure A for hillsides would be 40-160 acres, depending on slope, not 40 acres. Measure A will not protect Gilroy farmland, because the initiative does not protect medium- and large-scale agriculture. These are the areas at the highest risk of being developed.

The proponents of Measure A have claimed that the valley floor area is "suitable for high-density development" if Measure A passes.

The editorial gave no credit to the hard work put in by farmers, environmentalists, ranchers and public officials who together drafted and enacted strict environmental protections and development guidelines in the areas affected by Measure A that are currently in place.

The current regulations protect farms, view sheds and watersheds. These tough protections would be replaced by Measure A's poorly written, untested provisions, drafted without any public comment or review.

The "disheartening" hillside development cited in Fremont would not be allowed under the current Santa Clara County General Plan, but would be encouraged under Measure A since property owners would certainly pursue annexation of hillside property into adjacent cities, permitting much higher density development.

Farmers, ranchers, vintners and hillside families have been good stewards of the land and are committed to preserving the agricultural heritage of Santa Clara County. They will be the groups directly and negatively impacted if Measure A passes, so please join them in voting no.

Jenny Derry
Santa Clara County Farm Bureau
Tennant Avenue
Morgan Hill



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PenStyle

A monthly section on Peninsula lifestyle and fashion, edited by Marc Burkhardt

A LOT OF CROC



Lilli Corny, 3, mother Jessica Roth and Hanna Corny, 5, show off their Crocs at Paul's European Cobblery.

Norbert von der Groben



They're not pretty, but Crocs are the hottest shoes around

They're audacious, clumsy and look like Swiss cheese. But they're irresistible.

An early hit with gardeners, athletes, nurses and chefs because of their comfort, arch support and slip-on-ability, Crocs are a new fashion staple.

Ask most wearers of the rubber sandal about the shoes and you'll think they're part of the Colorado company's marketing team.

Take Barbara Anderson, who between sips of coffee with a friend at the Stanford Shopping Center, couldn't stop raving about the black

Crocs she picked up for a month-long trip to Eastern Europe.

"I had two other pairs of shoes with me that I thought I'd wear more but I wore these 25 out of the 28 days of my trip," said Anderson of San Jose, pointing at her feet.

She wore them with and without socks, for long days of hiking and sight-seeing.

"Your foot kinda sinks into it. They don't slide or slip," she said.

"The people I traveled with were tired of me talking about how great they are," she added.

With Crocs — as with Ugg boots — comfort has triumphed over looks.

Unlike \$100 Uggs or Dansko clogs, Crocs are relatively affordable at \$29.99 for adults and \$24.99 for kids. And there are plenty of colors to choose from for men and women. The standard "Cayman" style comes in a wide array of hues from neon pink to army green.

However, because the wide-toed sandals—originally intended for boating in Boulder, Colo. —are clownesque, they were originally worn like other unsightly shoes: house slippers and gardening slip-ons.

That's all changed, said Donya Disperati, shoe sales manager at Nordstrom in the Stanford Shopping Center, where Crocs are big sellers.

"Now, it's more casual wear," she said.

When deciding on a new pair of shoes, buyers must determine their needs along the look-good/feel-good continuum. It's rare to find both extremes in one shoe, and Crocs are up there with other hideous-comfy shoes like duck boots and aqua socks.

But even the trendiest trend-seekers are having trouble ignoring them.

At the Stanford Shopping Center last week, Thais Barrocas, 15, in Ugg boots and a miniskirt, said she was tempted to buy Crocs.

"They're ugly but they're comfortable," she said, adding that one of her friends already owns them in four different colors.

Crocs have become the most popular shoe at Paul's European Cobblery on California Avenue.

When a Crocs representative approached owner Jessica Roth about carrying the strange sandals at her family's shoe store, her initial reaction was: "Oh, no thank you. They're really kind of funny looking."

But she soon changed her mind. Clad in brown Mary Jane Crocs last week, Roth said she's had them in stock for the past year and estimates to have sold about 600 pairs.

"Right now, if I put in an order, I won't get it until 16 to 18 weeks. That's unheard of in the shoe business."

What began as a shoe for adult outdoor enthusiasts has become a must-have for kids.

Barbara Salinger, of Menlo Park, has given her 3-year-old son, Danny, two pairs of Crocs—navy and khaki—because he wears them so much.

"He always requests wearing them," she said, adding that many of his friends also have them.

The initial attraction for curly-
(continued on page 25)



Norbert von der Groben

They may look like Swiss cheese, but Crocs are currently the hottest shoes on the market.

Foot fetish

Local designer challenges Manolo Blahnik aficionados

by Carol Blitzer

Growing up in Sao Paolo, Brazil, Eza Americo de Souza never imagined herself as a shoe-designing entrepreneur. But at barely 29, she's already created a line with 55 original designs and six months ago opened her flagship boutique, Yasmin Deluxe Couture, in downtown Palo Alto.

For spring, she's planning a bridal line, a new shoe collection — not to mention coordinating handbags. Not one to rest on her laurels, she's scouting space to expand her boutique to San Francisco.

Americo de Souza is a bright, bubbly, sunny young woman with more energy than most, who has parlayed her original \$5,000 nest egg into a going concern. Today, she has investors backing her expansion plans and a loyal following of repeat customers, who purchase

her \$300 shoes as quickly as she can churn them out. For those who favor Manolo Blahnik or Salvatore Ferragamo, they're a bargain.

Before beginning her shoe endeavor, Americo de Souza came to the U.S. as an exchange student at 17, returning to Texas to study pre-med (following in her father's footsteps). But she interrupted her college studies to seriously pursue a modeling career, where she specialized in displaying bathing suits and lingerie. Along the way she also studied interior design.

Eventually Americo de Souza realized her 5-foot 8-inch stature was too short for continued success, so she started considering her next steps.

Today Americo de Souza said she has a calling: "I woke up in the middle of the night. I didn't know

how to design a shoe, or how it was built," she said, but she quickly found a Manolo Blahnik book and started sketching. Then she looked for factories to make her designs.

"For the past two years, the factories I have worked with have put me through shoe manufacturing school," she said of her steep learning curve. She can talk at length about the angle of the last and the height of the heel and how it can affect one's center of gravity.

She's very concerned with fit — "It will make you or break you," she said, adding that "customers will hate life if they won't be able to wear them more than an hour."

Today she carries samples of her couturier shoes that are feminine, delicate-looking, mostly high-heeled, yet comfortable. She also carries seasonally produced ready-to-wears. Her new fashions, with one or two pairs in sizes four through 11, will be available in mid-November.

Most of her shoes are no higher than 3 inches, but appear higher because of their slender design. Her most popular shoe last season was



Nicholas Jensen

Eza Americo de Souza and one of her designer shoes.

"Audrey," a navy and white concoction with double ankle straps that she described as "sexy but not vulgar." It went for \$345. This season she's offering "Terrie," a suede and lambskin almost flat (with a 1-inch heel) in camel and chocolate suede, contrasted with espresso lambskin, topped off with a bow. The little stacked heel is leather that looks like wood. Another popular style is "Moura," a black-patent pump with a 3 1/2-inch heel, topped with a velvet bow. "I call it a cross between a pump and a Mary Jane," she said.

Americo de Souza's customers range from the affluent 28-year-old to women in their mid-50s. "Most of my repeaters are in their mid 40s," she added.

Customers can custom-order shoes — choosing color, fabric and design. Sometimes a client has had a shoe in mind for years, but could not find it. Americo de Souza sketches the fantasy, then reviews it with the client. Cost of the high-fashion shoe ranges from \$300 to \$500, depending on the materials chosen. The shoes take four to six weeks to be manufactured.

"If I already have the last, it is less expensive," she added, noting that the more development from scratch, the higher the cost. Although she's willing to customize one of her designs or create an original, she doesn't make orthotics. All of her shoes are made in medium width,

but she can use memory foam that molds to the foot shape to create a better fit for narrow feet. She's giving some thought to how she could accommodate up to size 13, or extra wide, sizes.

For the past year, Americo de Souza has been working on overdrive, designing shoes, arranging for their manufacture, finding her Palo Alto boutique location (and personally designing it, from applying the purple Venetian-plaster walls to laying the laminate flooring and upholstering wall panels), running the shop, meeting one-on-one with customers and thinking about the future. She now has help keeping the store open with regular hours (Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday by appointment) and is turning to more designing.

Her first collection was inspired by Brazil's Carnival, but she doesn't plan to limit herself to a theme any more. "I get my inspiration from women. They come in all shapes, sizes and colors, and so do my shoes," she said.

In five years, she hopes to be known internationally, with boutiques in the U.S. and Brazil. Her line is already available in San Francisco, San Diego, Long Beach, St. Louis, Florida, and soon, near Rodeo Drive in Los Angeles. And her objective is for the wholesale operation to support the boutique stores. "I want to keep the personalized atmosphere," she said.

As for bringing her dream to reality, Americo de Souza admits to being overwhelmed at times. But, she adds, "I've never been shy. I have a close group of friends who encourage me." ■ Assistant Editor Carol Blitzer can be e-mailed at cblitzer@pawebly.com.

Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce 2006 Upcoming Events

P.A.C.E.: Palo Alto Connection Exchange

NOVEMBER: Sponsored by The Palo Alto Weekly and Hewlett-Packard Company

Speaker: IDEO Senior Member, Dennis Boyle
"Technology and Branding Success"

IDEO – Learn about their decision making model, branding tips and managing creativity.

Build a Culture of Innovation and get updated on recent trends.

Friday, November 3rd; 7:45 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

**The Sheraton Palo Alto Hotel; 625 El Camino Real
Reception Room, First level next to Poolside Grill**

FEBRUARY: Sponsored by Borel Private Bank & Trust Co. & Alhouse King Realty, Inc.

Speaker: New Mayor Elect Yoriko Kishimoto
"Position Your Business for Profitability"

Friday, February 2nd; 7:45 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

**The Westin Hotel; 675 El Camino Real
Siena / Carrara Room**

Focus Palo Alto 2006: Palo Alto Business Goes Green

Title Sponsor Lockheed Martin

Luncheon, Lecture & Expo

Professor Stephen H. Schneider, Ph.D., Stanford University; Co-Director Stanford Center for Environmental and Science Policy: "Business & Climate Change: Challenges & Opportunities."

Wednesday, November 8, 2006; 11:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

McCaw Hall, Frances C. Arrillaga Alumni Center; 326 Galvez Street, Stanford University

Business Networking Mixers:

November

15th – Borel Private Bank & Trust Co.; 245 Lytton Ave., Ste.# 175

Join us for a wealth of networking opportunities as well as a chance to meet the team at Borel and tour their newly remodeled office.

December

13th – The Cardinal Hotel Holiday Mixer; 235 Hamilton Avenue

Give yourself the gift of networking and bring a donation to the toy drive for Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

January

24th – Maddalena's Continental Restaurant & Café Fino; 544 Emerson Street.

Experience this Palo Alto treasure and keep the season glowing by meeting new business community members.



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A lot of Croc

(continued from Page 23)

haired Danny, Salinger said, was the friendly cartoon crocodile on the shoe.

Crocs' selling points—for mother and son—have been their affordability, “the ease of a 3-year-old being able to put them on himself,” the fact that they can be hosed down when they get muddy and most of all, “just the fact that he likes them,” Salinger said.

But mom admits that Crocs have a downside.

Danny's preschool won't allow them—only enclosed shoes on the playground. And when he plays in a park that has sand or woodchips, his feet are vulnerable to splinters and irritation, Salinger said.

“Right now, if I put in an order, I won't get it until 16 to 18 weeks. That's unheard of in the shoe business.”

—Jessica Roth
Paul's European Cobblery

Though they do provide comfort — with an orthotic foot bed and an anti-microbial, slip-resistant material that molds around the wearer's feet — they may not have the staying power of Dansk clogs.

Gail Moore, a nurse at Stanford Hospital, says her black Caymans have worn out over time.

“After about a year and a half, there's not a lot of support left,” said Moore, who stands in them for 10 hours a day.

She still prefers her “Birkies” to the Crocs she sees all over the hospital.

“I think there are more comfortable shoes out there,” she said.

And there are more attractive shoes. But fortunately, Crocs has made strides in the appearance department.

The company has expanded its line of shoes — adding the narrower, more feminine Mary Janes and “Prima” ballet flats. Roth says styles to come are: high-heeled Crocs, Stanford Crocs and Disney Crocs.

Croc wearers can also accessorize their sandals with “Jibbitz,” little \$2 charms used to adorn the holed top of each Croc. Jibbitz charms come as ladybugs, skulls, flowers, jewels and other collectable shapes.

“We've had a customer buy 90 Jibbitz in one transaction,” Disperati said.

During the chilly months, Crocs don't have to hide in the closet next to the flip-flops. Roth recommends slipping Crocs over a pair of furry fleece socks for extra warmth.

The company also sells enclosed rain boots and is coming out with other cold-weather shoes.

So, move over, Uggs. Your time is up. ■

Staff Writer Molly Tanenbaum can be e-mailed mtanenbaum@paweekly.com.



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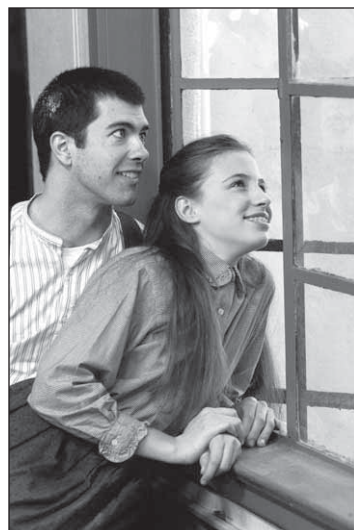
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Weekend Preview



Joyce Goldschmidt

Thom Gorrebeek plays *George* and Lauren Meyer is *Rebecca* in Palo Alto Players' production of "Our Town," which opens this weekend.

Thursday

Smitri Dixit, an Indian artist who incorporates sewing into her mixed-media artwork, has a new exhibit at the ArtsIndia West gallery at 535 Bryant St. in Palo Alto. Her works praise the lord Krishna, and each creation has a different color palette. The show goes through Nov. 17, open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. Call 650-321-4900 or go to www.artsindia.com.

"Brilliant Traces," a Cindy Lou Johnson play about two people thrown together in a snow-bound cabin, opens tonight at the Dragon Theatre at 535 Alma St. It runs through Nov. 19, and tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students and seniors tonight (\$15/\$10 other nights). Call 650-493-2006 or go to www.dragon-productions.net.

The Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra presents a world premiere work — San Francisco composer Jake Heggie's "To Hell and Back" — during an 8 p.m. concert at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts at 500 Castro St. It features Broadway singer Patti LuPone and soprano Isabel Payrakdarian. The program also includes works by Locatelli and Geminiani. Tickets are \$29-\$67. Call 650-903-6000 or go to www.philharmonia.org.

Friday

Cuban guitarist Manuel Barrueco performs with the Mexican string quartet Cuarteto Latinoamericano at 8 p.m. at Dinkelspiel Auditorium at Stanford University, thanks to Stanford Lively Arts. They'll give the U.S. premiere to

Michael Daugherty's composition "Bay of Pigs" and play works by Piazzolla and Sierra. Tickets are \$44/\$40 for adults and \$22/\$20 for Stanford students. Call 650-725-ARTS or go to livelyarts.stanford.edu.

"Our Town" opens at Palo Alto Players, with a paid preview tonight and opening night on Saturday. The classic Thornton Wilder play celebrates small-town America and the value of ordinary moments. Show times are Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2:30, through Nov. 19. Ticket prices range from \$18 for tonight's preview to \$28 for Friday and Saturday nights. The curtain goes up at the Lucie Stern Theatre at 1305 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. Call 650-329-0891 or go to www.palplayers.org.

Brigitte Carnochan holds a reception and book-signing tonight for her new exhibit at Modernbook Gallery at 494 University Ave. in Palo Alto. The Portola Valley artist does painted photographs — gelatin silver nudes and still lifes of flowers and fruit — and has just published a new book, "Bella Figura." The reception is scheduled from 7 to 10 p.m., and the exhibit goes through Dec. 31. Call 650-327-6325 or go to www.modernbook.com.

"Street Fight," a documentary film about the mayoral race for Newark, New Jersey between four-term incumbent Sharpe James and 32-year-old Rhodes Scholar Cory Booker, will be shown at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto at 505 E. Charleston Road. The film raises questions about political machines and democracy, and a discussion will follow. Suggested donation is \$5 to \$10. Go to www.worldcentric.org.

Warren Miller's "Off the Grid," the filmmaker's annual feature film following skiers and snowboarders through steep terrain and big mountains around the world, shows tonight and tomorrow at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts at 500 Castro St. Tickets are \$17, and showings are tonight at 6:30 and 9:30 p.m. and tomorrow at 6 and 9. Go to www.warrenmiller.com.

Saturday

The TOPAZ music ensemble performs with the Hiyas Philippine Dance Company at 7:30 p.m. at All Saints' Church at 555 Waverley St. in Palo Alto. TOPAZ musicians will play original American jazz, and Hiyas will perform dances from several regions of the Philippines. Tickets are \$25 with RSVP



J. Henry Fair

Cuban guitarist Manuel Barrueco joins the Mexican string quartet Cuarteto Latinoamericano at Stanford Lively Arts tomorrow evening.

or \$30 at the door, including a wine, cheese and dessert reception after the concert. Proceeds benefit the outreach ministries of All Saints' Church. Call 650-380-0961 or go to www.topazmusic.org.

The Composers Performance Ensemble (presented by the local chapter of the National Association of Composers) plays a concert of world-premiere pieces, including "Music of the Spheres" by James Lee, a 16-year-old Gunn High School student. The 8 p.m. concert is at the Palo Alto Art Center at 1313 Newell Road; tickets are \$15 general and \$10 for students and seniors. Call 408-269-2301.

The Stanford Theatre will show Hollywood Golden-Age films starring famed African-American entertainers tonight and tomorrow night: "Carmen Jones" (1954, starring Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte) and "Stormy Weather" (1943, starring Lena Horne and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson). Go to www.stanfordtheatre.org.

Sunday

Gelena, a singer, songwriter and pianist who came to America from Lithuania with her family as a teenager in 1993, will perform her music — pop and rock with a European flair — at a concert at 6:30 p.m. at Congregation Beth Am, 26790 Arastradero Road, Los Altos Hills. She'll be joined by San Francisco's Firebird Dance Theatre for a concert that benefits Beth Am's Israel Emergency Relief Fund. Tickets are \$18 in advance and \$20 at the door; call 650-493-4661.

Arts editor Rebecca Wallace's blog goes backstage, peering behind the scenes at productions of "The Laramie Project" and "Forever Plaid." Check it out at www.PaloAltoOnline.com — scroll down to **Ad Libs**.



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Film

A Palo Alto filmmaker follows Cambodian children finding new life in an orphanage after living in a garbage dump.

Music

Singer/songwriter Gelena brings her Euro-American style pop and rock songs — some in English, some in Russian — to a benefit concert in Los Altos Hills.

Movies

Reviews of "Borat," "Babel" and "Flushed Away."



ON THE WEB: Comprehensive entertainment listings at www.PaloAltoOnline.com

Movies

Movie reviews by Jeanne Aufmuth, Tyler Hanley, and Susan Tavernetti


MOVIE TIMES

Note: Screenings are for Wednesday through Thursday only.

Accepted (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 20: 12:50, 3:10, 5:35, 8 & 10:25 p.m.
The Bridge (R) ***	Century 16: 11:40 a.m.; 1:40, 3:50, 5:50, 7:50 & 9:50 p.m.
Catch a Fire (PG-13) **1/2	Century 16: 11:45 a.m.; 2:30, 4:55, 7:30 & 9:55 p.m. Century 12: Noon, 1:30, 2:30, 4, 5, 6:40, 7:40, 9:10 & 10:10 p.m.
Death of a President (Not Rated) *	Guild: 2:30, 4:45, 7 & 9:15 p.m.
The Departed (R) ***1/2	Century 16: 11 a.m.; 12:20, 2:15, 3:45, 5:40, 7:05, 9 & 10:15 p.m. Century 12: 12:40, 2:55, 4:10, 6:25, 7:50 & 9:50 p.m.
The Devil Wears Prada (PG-13) ***	Century 20: 7:15 & 9:45 p.m.
Employee of the Month (PG-13) **	Century 12: 11:55 a.m.; 5:20 & 10:20 p.m.
Everyone's Hero (G) (Not Reviewed)	Century 20: 11:35 a.m.; 2:20 & 4:30 p.m.
Flags of Our Fathers (R) ***	Century 16: 11:50 a.m.; 1:10, 2:45, 4:05, 5:45, 7, 8:45 & 9:50 p.m. Century 20: 11:40 a.m.; 12:55, 2:35, 3:50, 5:30, 6:45, 8:25 & 9:40 p.m.
Flicka (PG) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 12:15, 2:25, 4:50, 7:15 & 9:35 p.m. Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 12:40, 1:50, 3, 4:05, 5:20, 6:25, 7:40, 8:45 & 9:55 p.m.
Gridiron Gang (PG-13) ***	Century 20: 1:25, 4:15, 7:05 & 9:50 p.m.
The Grudge 2 (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:45 & 10:05 p.m. Century 20: 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50 & 10:20 p.m.
The Guardian (PG-13) **1/2	Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 2:30, 5:40 & 8:40 p.m.
The Illusionist (PG-13) ***	Century 20: 11:35 a.m.; 1:55, 4:20, 7:25 & 9:55 p.m.
Infamous (R) ***1/2	Century 20: 11:55 a.m.; 2:25, 5:15, 7:55 & 10:30 p.m.
Jackass: Number Two (R) (Not Reviewed)	Century 20: 1, 3:25, 5:50, 8:10 & 10:20 p.m.
Jet Li's Fearless (PG-13) **	Century 12: 2:40 & 7:55 p.m.
The Last King of Scotland (R) ***1/2	Century 16: 12:55, 3:55, 6:55 & 9:40 p.m.
Little Miss Sunshine (R) ***	Century 20: 11:45 a.m.; 2:15, 4:40, 7:10 & 9:35 p.m. Aquarius: 2:10, 4:30, 7 & 9:20 p.m.
Man of the Year (PG-13) ***	Century 16: 11:25 a.m.; 1:50, 4:15, 6:50 & 9:15 p.m. Century 20: 11:40 a.m.; 2:15, 4:50, 7:35 & 10:15 p.m.
Marie Antoinette (PG-13) *1/2	Century 16: 11:20 a.m.; 2, 4:35, 7:25 & 10:10 p.m. Century 12: 12:15, 1:10, 3:50, 4:35, 7:10, 8:20 & 10:30 p.m.
The Marine (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 12: 1:40, 4:45, 7:05 & 9:40 p.m.
Open Season (PG) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11:35 a.m.; 1:45 & 3:55 p.m. Century 12: 11:50 a.m.; 2:15, 4:40, 7 & 9:30 p.m.
The Prestige (PG-13) 1/2	Century 16: 11:05 a.m.; 12:25, 1:55, 3:25, 4:45, 6:25, 7:35, 9:25 & 10:30 p.m. Century 12: 12:30, 3, 4:15, 6:15, 7:30, 9:20 & 10:25 p.m.
The Queen (Not Rated) ****	CinéArts at Palo Alto Square: 2, 2:45, 4:20, 5:05, 7, 7:45, 9:25 & 10:05 p.m.
Running with Scissors (R) **	Century 16: 11:15 a.m.; 2, 4:40, 7:20 & 10 p.m. Century 12: 1:20, 4:30, 7:20 & 10:15 p.m.
Saw III (R) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11 a.m.; 1:30, 4, 6:30, 8, 9:10 & 10:25 p.m. Century 20: 11:45 a.m.; 12:25, 1:05, 1:45, 2:20, 2:55, 3:40, 4:15, 4:55, 5:30, 6:15, 6:55, 7:30, 8:05, 8:50, 9:30, 10:05 & 10:35 p.m.
The Science of Sleep (R) (Not Reviewed)	Aquarius: 2:50 & 7:40 p.m.
Shortbus (Not Rated) **	Aquarius: 5:10 & 10 p.m.
Step Up (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 20: 12:15, 2:40, 5, 7:20 & 9:45 p.m.
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning (R) (Not Reviewed)	Century 20: 1:10, 3:20, 5:25, 7:45 & 10:05 p.m.

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

Internet address: For show times, plot synopses, theater addresses, trailers and more information about films playing, go to Palo Alto Online at <http://www.PaloAltoOnline.com/>

 ON THE WEB: The most up-to-date movie listings at www.PaloAltoOnline.com

STANFORD THEATRE

The Stanford Theatre is at 221 University Ave. in Palo Alto. Screenings are for Wednesday and Thursday. For more information, go to www.stanfordtheatre.org.

Hangover Square (1945)
Laird Cregar plays a psychopathic composer in the gas-lit mists of London. 7:30 p.m.
The Ghost and Mrs. Muir (1947)
Gene Tierney stars as a young widow who rents a house on the English coast and is romanced by the ghost of a dashing sea captain (Rex Harrison). 5:35 & 9 p.m.

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Suzanne Scott \$3,250,000

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Suzanne Scott \$1,495,000

EAST PALO ALTO

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Gordana Wolfman \$279,000

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Gordana Wolfman \$99,000

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Jami Arami \$1,395,000

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Victor Platinoff \$1,495,000

Lovely 3 BR, 2.5 bath, 11 years new. Soaring ceilings in living/ding room. Open, light & bright kitchen. Family room w/fireplace. 3rd room w/built-ins for home office. Convenient location.

The Clarke Team \$1,295,000

MENLO PARK

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Elizabeth Daschbach \$1,349,000

Charming 2bd/1ba updated home. Large kitchen features all new appliances & beautiful natural stone flooring. Remodeled BA has new fixtures, wainscoting & natural stone tile. Spacious LR w/fireplace, sep. dining room, HDW floors, & private backyard.

Jami Arami \$799,000

MOUNTAIN VIEW

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The Clarke Team \$435,000

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Dory Marhamat \$1,055,000

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Paul Skrabo \$499,000

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Susan Furstman \$1,495,000

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Frank Conrad II \$1,195,000

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