

Palo Alto

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Weekly

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Palo Alto Weekly
HOLIDAY
FUND DRIVE

★

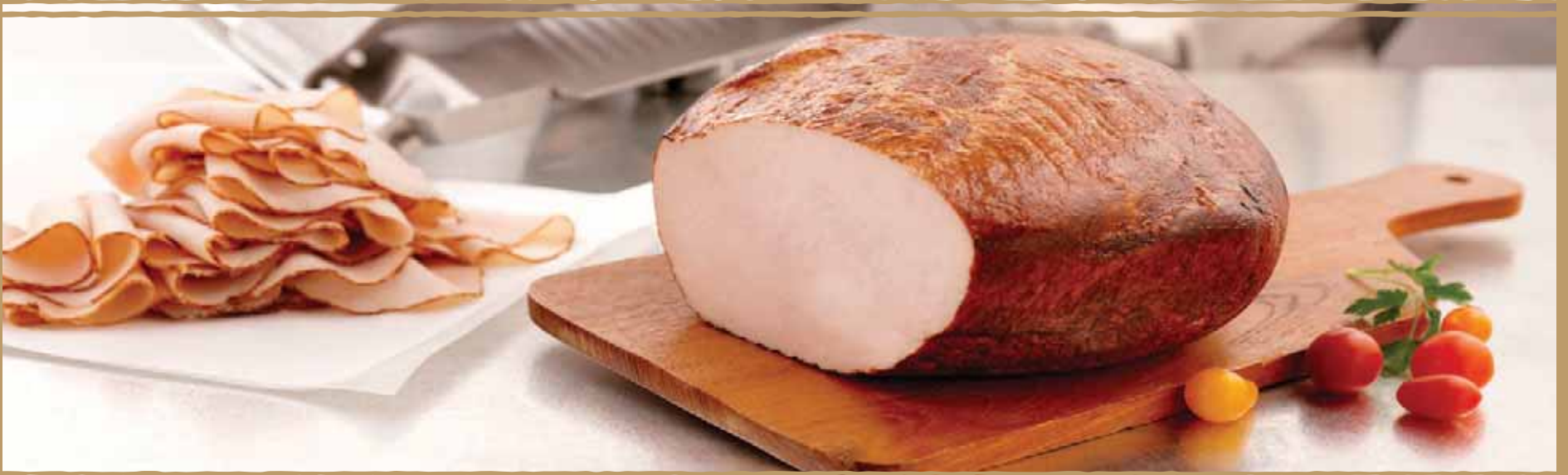
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Upfront

Local news, information and analysis

Palo Alto braces for impacts of global warming

City Council acknowledges hidden costs of fossil fuels, asks next year's council to study effects of climate change

by Gennady Sheyner

In the wee hours of Tuesday morning, a group of elected officials debated the impacts of climate change and ways to prepare for the environmental calamities of global warming.

No, it wasn't Copenhagen, where global leaders have convened for a two-week-long summit on the subject. It was in Palo Alto, where the City Council formally acknowledged the existence of "externality

costs" in burning of fossil fuels and voted unanimously to encourage next year's council to create a task force that would assess these costs and plan for the impact of global warming on the city.

The council voted 7-0 to endorse a resolution on climate change championed by Mayor Peter Drekmeier and co-signed by Councilmen Pat

Burt, Greg Schmid and Yiaway Yeh. The resolution officially accepts the concept of "true-cost pricing," a system in which residents are charged extra for activities and services that negatively affect the wider society.

Such impacts of global warming could include a shrinking snowpack in the Sierras, affecting local water supplies; rising water levels in the

bay; increased risk of wildfires in the foothills; and reduced electric supply generated by hydropower by up to 40 percent.

Drekmeier said accepting "true-cost pricing" would help the city address the "tragedy of the commons," in which individuals choose what's

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Veronica Weber

Melanie Guan, left, chats with a friend while Nika Woodfill, center, does her homework at the Jordan Middle School library on Tuesday.

HOLIDAY FUND

A home for homework

Jordan Middle School's Homework Center provides the environment for learning

by John Squire

The two large rooms of Jordan Middle School's library buzzed with activity. It was 3:45 p.m. and class had been dismissed about an hour before. Joleen Roach, an adult, was flanked on both sides by inquisitive middle-schoolers asking about negative numbers, history and what that green squiggly line is in Microsoft Word.

"Miss Roach is a big help to everybody," eighth-grader Jessie Martinez said.

With the help of a \$5,000 grant from the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund this past spring, the homework center has been able to pay Roach and librarian Anne McQueen and buy school supplies and snacks.

The homework center is largely funded by the Palo Alto Unified School District's discretionary funds. This year, because of budget problems at the state level, there is considerably less money for the discretionary fund. The

grant given by the Holiday Fund helped to bridge the gap.

Roach runs the Homework Center from 3 to 4:30 p.m., three days a week at the Jordan library. Roach, McQueen and several tutors help more than 75 students with a variety of homework questions. Students are provided with 30 computers with Internet access, calculators and a space where they can concentrate.

"I'd spend hours on homework at home and not get anything done," sixth-grader Cleneisha Turner said.

Eighth-grader Mario Pulido agreed. "At home you got sports, church. You're busy with things to do," he said.

Mario said that since he started going to the homework center,

he has been able to concentrate more on his assignments and said his grades have improved "from C's to A's."

The homework center started in 1999 with the goal of providing assistance and the after-school activities that many students need.

Almost half of Jordan's students who are enrolled in Ravenswood City School District's Voluntary Transfer Program attend the homework center regularly.

Philip Lally started tutoring at the homework center after his church enlisted him. He has tutored science at the center for four years.

On Tuesday, he was teaching

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EDUCATION

New chancellor rises to Foothill challenge

Arizona college president seeks alternative resources to stabilize budget

by Chris Kenrick

Training local residents for "green" jobs, educating returning war veterans and serving Baby Boomers who seek "encore careers" are among the goals of Linda Thor, named Monday as the new chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District.

Thor, president of Rio Salado College in Tempe, Ariz., since 1990 and a 35-year veteran of community-college administration, will start her new job Feb. 16.

She said Wednesday that she has not yet set a strategic direction for the community college district.

"I need to spend some time understanding the history, culture and community," Thor said.

"That said, without a doubt all higher education institutions and especially those in California have severe budget problems that have to be dealt with. But while you're dealing with those you have to not sacrifice the future.

"You have to continue to innovate, to partner and to look for alternative resources and alternative ways to accomplish the mission of the institution."

She said she hopes Foothill-De Anza will attract returning war veterans taking advantage of the new Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, which offers tuition, housing and other benefits to veterans.

"It offers very extensive and excit-

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Upfront

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“

We're certainly not going to volunteer to pay more money for something.

”

—Larry Klein, Palo Alto city councilman, on accepting the “true costs” of global warming. See story on page 3.

Around Town

HONK HONK ... Drivers may have noticed a bit more congestion than usual on the stretch of Embarcadero Road near the driveway to Palo Alto High School. On Nov. 24, the city installed a new traffic light on Embarcadero to coincide with the recent opening of **Trader Joe's** in the adjacent Town & Country Village. The traffic light was supposed to include technology that detects approaching vehicles and synchronizes the signals along Embarcadero accordingly, city Traffic Engineer **Sam Peiris** reported this week. But by the time Trader Joe's opened, the city still had not received all the necessary vehicle detectors, controllers and cabinets. So the city instead installed a generic traffic light, which operates on fixed timing and, according to Peiris, causes some delays during peak commuter hours. Peiris estimated the city will receive the new signal equipment by Dec. 22.

BYE, BYE BEAR ... Castilleja School students and alumnae are planning a “joyous celebration” to salute and bid farewell to “Uncle” **Bear Capron**, a beloved drama teacher at the school for two decades. Despite a well-organized protest from devoted parents, students and alumnae, Castilleja Head of School **Joan Lonergan** last week announced that she and Capron “have mutually decided that he will not be returning to the school in favor of his taking early his well-deserved, school-approved sabbatical to conclude his Castilleja career.” Capron's sudden and unexplained disappearance from campus in the midst of directing Castilleja's fall play in October sparked a chorus of protest, letters to trustees, threats of withholding donations and a 500-plus-member Facebook group. “He really deserves this party — the sendoff he should have gotten from the school,” one alum wrote.

TOUGH BARGAIN ... After more than 30 meetings, Palo Alto and **Stanford University** are still at odds over Stanford's ambitious plan to expand its medical facilities. The \$3.5 billion project includes a rebuilt Stanford

Hospital and Clinics, a major expansion of the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, a renovation of Stanford School of Medicine and a small addition to Hoover Pavilion. Altogether, it would add about 1.3 million square feet of development, far exceeding local zoning requirements. But if Palo Alto allows Stanford to expand, what will Stanford do for Palo Alto? That's the question the City Council wrestled with Monday night, during a study session on “Project Renewal.” Stanford has offered the city a list of what it calls “community benefits,” which includes health care subsidies for low-income Palo Altans, improved bike paths, Caltrain Go Passes for hospital workers and a \$23.1 million payment toward the housing fund. City officials maintain that most of the “benefits” cited by Stanford are actually measures that the entity would already have to provide under state law. “I think it's great that Stanford is addressing transportation, but I don't consider it as a ‘community benefit,’” Deputy Manager **Steve Emslie** said Monday, referring to the Go Pass proposal. Negotiations over the development agreement will continue over the next few months.

MORNING HUMOR ... It was well past 1 a.m. Tuesday when the City Council plunged into the final topic on its extensive agenda — a contract extension for golf services. Two council members, **Jack Morton** and **John Barton**, had already said their farewells and retired for the night. Mayor **Peter Dreke** commented, repeatedly, on the yawns emanating from city staff. Public speakers on the previous topic were greeted with, “Good morning.” But a few weary department managers remained in the audience, waiting to answer questions on the new golf contract. Then, just like that, everyone was dismissed. The council approved the contract in less than 30 seconds, without a single question, observation or concern. “The staff can't decide whether to go happy or angry,” City Manager **James Keene** quipped in the waning moments of the seven-hour meeting. ■

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LAND USE

College Terrace Centre clears final obstacle

Palo Alto City Council approves controversial development featuring JJ&F market, nearly 40,000 square feet of office space

by Gennady Sheyner

The beloved JJ&F Food Store will remain in Palo Alto's College Terrace neighborhood, but it will soon have a new building and a host of new customers.

The City Council voted 8-1 Monday night to approve the College Terrace Centre, a controversial project that includes a new JJ&F market along with close to 40,000 square feet of office space, 5,580 square feet of other retail and eight units of affordable housing.

The vote followed months of public hearings on the dense development, which pitted the neighborhood's desire to keep the beloved grocery store in College Terrace against its opposition to adding a dense new office complex on the block.

The extensive debate concluded Monday night after hours of discussion when the council ruled that the new office space is a price worth paying for keeping JJ&F around.

"This is a council that's worked to treasure and keep our hometown businesses and community organizations," said Councilman Sid Espinosa, who proposed approving the project. "I think the council worked hard to keep JJ&F."

Vice Mayor Jack Morton, who in the past has been critical of dense new developments, also praised the project as one that offers a major public benefit — the continued operation of JJ&F.

"I think we owe it to this community to move forward with this project," Morton said.

Councilman Larry Klein said he was skeptical about the agreement between property owner Chilcote Trust and JJ&F owner John Garcia. Klein added a condition to the approval mandating that the two parties sign a lease that would be enforceable against each party.

The lease must also assure that the grocery store remain in continuous operation at the site. It would have to be approved by the city before any building permits are issued.

Councilwoman Yoriko Kishimoto voted against the project, calling the office space excessive.

"We're saying that this is moving toward a mixed-use zoning, but we're moving away from mixed-use to one that is much more tilted toward office use," she said.

The council approved the developer's request for a Planned Community (PC) zone, which allows greater density than the city's zoning ordinance allows. In return, the developer is expected to provide "public benefits" — in this case a neighborhood grocery store, affordable housing and a \$5,000 contribution toward planting trees at the site.

Applicant Patrick Smailey said the project has evolved and improved over its long crawl through the city's approval process. He called the final product "absolutely superior" to the one originally proposed.

John Garcia, owner of JJ&F, said he was excited and relieved after Monday night's vote. He noted that his current store on College Avenue would remain in operation while design work is finalized for the store's future location.

"We have a project, program and design that carefully balances the needs and desires of the College Terrace neighborhood and the city as a whole," Smailey said. "College Terrace Centre will be an exemplary mixed-use project that preserves an invaluable institution, JJ&F."

"It is the right project at the right time." ■

Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be e-mailed at gsheyner@paweekly.com.

Homework

(continued from page 3)

eighth-grader Ramon Mendoza about the solar system.

"I think it primarily gives students the opportunity to do homework and get some help," he said.

"It helps them from getting stressed out," Ramon added.

Volunteer tutors keep a regular schedule so students can come on a specific day and get help with particular subjects.

"Two people I'm thinking of are engineers, and they have such a depth of knowledge. It's great because they can help kids apply ideas to the real world," Roach said.

Some tutors are even homework-center alumni. Roach said that she has students from Palo Alto High School come back to Jordan to vol-

unteer at the center.

Another resource the center has is McQueen, Jordan's librarian. She stays on after school and helps students take full advantage of the library. Roach said McQueen is one of the best resources the students have.

Students also have each other to rely on. Groups of friends sit together and work through assignments. Roach emphasized the importance of students feeling comfortable at the center.

According to eighth-grader Tim Tran, who has been going to the center, it's a simple equation: "It's a nice environment to get work done. It's like a classroom." ■

Editorial Intern John Squire can be contacted at jsquire@paweekly.com.

For more information about donating to the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund, see page 17.

COMMUNITY



Visually impaired instructor Nancy Hey rewards horse Claudius with a carrot after his post and rail jumping exercise. Hey has relocated her horses to Portola Valley's Rancho Viejo Stables.

Michelle Le

Horses and trainer, evicted from Stanford Red Barn, find new home

Stanford University to bring in Olympian as head of equestrian program

by Sue Dremann

One-time Stanford Equestrian Team trainer Nancy Hey and her horses have found a new home.

Hey was asked to leave the Stanford University Red Barn earlier this fall to make room for a new trainer, Olympian William "Buddy" Brown, who will take the reins at the barn starting Jan. 1, 2010.

Hey boarded her 11 horses and those of 14 private owners at the Red Barn for 38 years under the auspices of Strideaway Farms and taught English riding and dressage to children as young as 4 and adults.

Generations of families — perhaps 1,000 clients — learned under her tutelage at the Red Barn, she said. A former speech pathologist, Hey was introduced to horses as a child, riding ponies at Griffith Park in Los Angeles.

But on the morning of Oct. 21, Hey, 64, received a call from Ray Purpur, Stanford's deputy athletic director, who requested a meeting at 5:15 p.m. that afternoon.

During the meeting, Purpur said the horses would have to go.

Red Barn staff sent Hey's clients an e-mail at 5:44 p.m. notifying them of the change.

"I asked for extra time and they said no — and there was no appeal. Before I even got to my car, (they) had already sent an e-mail to my clients and invited them to stay on with the new trainer," she said.

Vanessa Bartsch, the barn's manager, said the equestrian center's mission statement designates the Red Barn as a training and education facility for the equestrian team and Stanford students.

Alumni and students lobbied Stanford Athletics to renovate and

resume management of the barn when the lease was up in 2004, promising that if the Red Barn was allowed to be a home for students, student-based programs would flourish.

Since the renovation, the number of student-owned horses has risen from one to 23, she said.

Stanford's equestrian team has ranked in the top 10 in the country in the last four years, reaching third place last year, she said.

"Several riders have the potential to make an Olympic team or compete at the highest level. This requires them to have access to professionals at the top of the sport, stalls for horses, and time in the arenas," she said.

The equestrian center is also starting an education program for children that will begin in summer 2010, she added.

"We have huge respect for Nancy and the services she has provided to children in the community, but as a private business with almost 30 horses, we ultimately needed the space to provide services to Stanford students," Bartsch said.

Hey said she remains on good terms with Stanford.

"It's a shock and disappointing for sure. In the end, it's turned out fine. I will miss some parts of Stanford — it's where I spent more than half of my life," Hey said.

But she didn't let the situation get her down for long, she said.

Legally blind since age 13 from uveitis, an auto-immune disease, Hey is used to challenges, she said.

On Nov. 29, Hey and all of her clients moved their horses and gear to Portola Valley's Rancho Viejo Stables, which is owned by Ed and Donna Cohn.

The transfer took three trips, but everything was out by mid-morning.

The horses — and Hey — have settled in just fine, she said.

"The other night we saw this beautiful pink sunset. It's nice to be someplace where you're wanted," she said.

Stanford's new trainer, Buddy Brown, 53, competed in the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal. He has won several medals, including the Dublin Grand Prix, with a still unbeaten record. He is also a renowned course designer.

His wife and partner, Vanessa Tuss Brown, is a medal-winning competition rider and has trained notable winning horses, according to the couple's website.

"It would give us great pleasure to play a part in advancing a student's abilities towards an Olympic goal, and it is not inconceivable that this could happen in the future," Vanessa Brown said by e-mail.

"As Buddy has Olympic and other international team experience, he has a firm grasp on what it really takes to get there and he will be an asset to anyone with those kinds of goals."

Hey reflected on a life with horses and what she likes best in the creatures.

"You have to be disciplined to get the most out of them, and you have to be patient. It's like having the best dancing partner. When it all goes right, you become one with the horse. It becomes a great partner."

"They give back to you just like you give to them," she said. ■

Staff Writer Sue Dremann can be e-mailed at sdremann@paweekly.com.

CityView

A round-up of Palo Alto government action this week

City Council (Dec. 7)

Stanford Hospital: The council held a study session on Stanford University's planned hospital expansion. Staff updated the council on the status of negotiations with Stanford over a development agreement and the Environmental Impact Report for the project. **Action:** None

College Terrace Centre: The council approved a request by the Chilcote Trust for Planned Community (PC) zoning at 2180 El Camino Real. The new zoning would allow the construction of College Terrace Centre, a development that includes 39,980 square feet of office space, a rebuilt JJ&F Food Store, eight affordable-housing units and 5,580 square feet of other retail space. **Yes:** Drekmeier, Klein, Burt, Morton, Schmid, Espinosa, Yeh, Barton **No:** Kishimoto

Climate change: The council acknowledged the existence of "externality costs" relating to fossil fuels and recommended that the 2010 mayor and City Council form a task force to study the impacts of global warming. **Yes:** Drekmeier, Burt, Schmid, Klein, Espinosa, Kishimoto, Yeh **Absent:** Morton, Barton

Board of Education (Dec. 8)

Board officers: The board elected Barbara Klausner as president and Melissa Baten Caswell as vice-president for the coming year. **Yes:** Unanimous

Parcel tax election: The board discussed a staff recommendation to seek replacement of the current annual \$493-per-parcel tax with a six-year, \$589-per-parcel tax to fund school programs. **Action:** None

Planning & Transportation Commission (Dec. 9)

Private streets: The commission voted to revise the zoning ordinance to change the definition of "private streets," aiming to make the definition consistent with the goals of a recently-passed initiative, which specifies the minimum width for private streets in new developments. **Yes:** Unanimous

Comprehensive Plan: The commission discussed the city's ongoing Comprehensive Plan Amendment and identified chapters of the Land Use chapter for further study. The commission also discussed the city's update to the Housing Element and the city's need for more senior and low-income housing. **Action:** None



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

Public Agenda

PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL ... The council is scheduled to hold a site review and a consider a tentative map for a hotel and 26 residential units at 4301 and 4329 El Camino Real, current site of Palo Alto Bowl; and to receive the 2009 Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report and hear a report from its ad hoc committee on the high-speed rail. The meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 14, in the Council Chambers at City Hall (250 Hamilton Ave.).

PALO ALTO BOARD OF EDUCATION ... The board is scheduled to hold a public hearing on a staff proposal to replace the current annual \$493-per-parcel tax with a \$589-per-parcel tax to support educational programs. The board will then decide whether to hold a special election on the parcel tax in April. The meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 15, in the board room of school district headquarters (25 Churchill Ave.).

PALO ALTO FINANCE COMMITTEE ... The committee is scheduled to discuss an ordinance authorizing the closing of the Fiscal Year 2009 budget, consider re-appropriation requests and transfers to reserves and continue its discussion on closing the city's budget deficit. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 15, in the Council Conference Room at City Hall (250 Hamilton Ave.).

PALO ALTO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION ... The commission is scheduled to discuss last month's community meeting on recreation opportunities for dogs and dog owners and changing the name of Lytton Plaza to Thoits Plaza, and review its recent retreat. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 15, in the Council Chambers at City Hall (250 Hamilton Ave.).

PALO ALTO ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD ... The board is scheduled to discuss 2995 Middlefield Road, a request by Hayes Group for an architectural review of demolition of a vacant gas station and construction of a two-story, 7,000-square-foot commercial building with offices and ground-floor retail. The meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 17, in the Council Conference Room at City Hall (250 Hamilton Ave.).

PALO ALTO POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE ... The committee is scheduled to discuss criteria for a proposed prevailing-wage policy and receive an update on the city's contract with the independent police auditor, and to discuss the city's social-networking policy. The committee is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 17, in the Council Conference Room at City Hall (250 Hamilton Ave.).

COMMUNITY

Lighting at train tracks gets go-ahead

Slower trains rejected by Caltrain, but safety workshops, media education part of deterrent plan

by Sue Dremann

New lighting is being installed to illuminate the West Meadow train crossing in Palo Alto, an effort to dissuade people from taking their lives on the tracks, according to city and Caltrain officials.

The crossing has been the focus of discussion since the summer, due to the deaths of four Palo Alto students. In October, residents volunteered to watch the intersection, and in November the city hired security guards.

Caltrain approved the request for new lighting, which is being installed by the City of Palo Alto, last week.

Caltrain also plans a safety workshop for security guards and volunteer track-watchers and a possible media-education program to help reduce journalists' use of language that professionals say encourages suicide, according to spokesperson Christine Dunn.

Four light poles at West Meadow are already in place, according to Tom Marshall, Palo Alto's assistant director of utility engineering.

At least one is on Caltrain property, Dunn said. The agency conducted a safety study to make sure the lights would not impair the vision of train conductors, she added.

Marshall said an existing 100-watt light fixture was replaced with 250-watts and an additional 100-watt fixture was added to another pole on the El Camino Real side of the tracks. Two other 100-watt lights on the Alma side are

expected to be installed as soon as Caltrain approves an encroachment permit. Those fixtures should be operational within a couple of weeks, he said.

Each fixture will illuminate an area of 20 to 45 feet, he said.

"There was nothing there. We're working with Caltrain on a long-term solution. We're talking with Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority about putting in (additional) permanent light fixtures there," he said.

In addition to the city's request to install new lighting, a group of residents calling themselves Slow the Trains presented a petition with 111 signatures to Caltrain officials on Dec. 3 asking that trains slow to 5 mph between the West Meadow and Charleston Road crossings.

However, Caltrain's board of directors took no action on the petition at its meeting last Thursday.

"We don't believe what they are proposing would be effective. At 5 mph, a train is still a deadly weapon. A train weighs a million pounds," Dunn said, adding that scheduling would be disrupted as well by slower trains.

Petitioners also assume that a suicidal person is standing on the tracks and visible to conductors. Frequently, that is not the case, she said.

"Our experience is the person sometimes deliberately conceals themselves. People have thrown themselves or walked into the side of the train, and the engineer cannot

see them," she said.

Jean Znidarsic, a member of the track-watch group who spearheaded the petition, said she realizes it's much to ask of Caltrain to slow the trains. But track patrols are not enough, given that members aren't supposed to intervene if they see someone on the tracks.

"It takes a long time if you see someone by the tracks to get police out there if you call 911," she said.

Despite Caltrain's rejection of the idea, Znidarsic said, "We are still asking."

She supports the improved lighting and the city's contracting with a security firm.

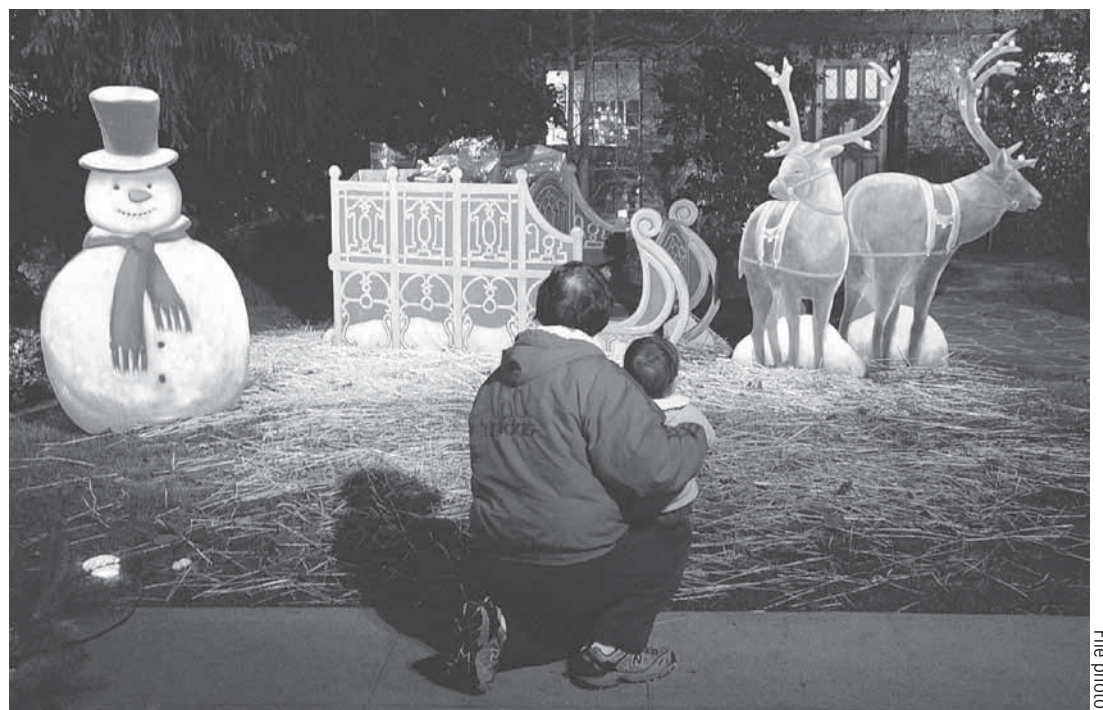
"Anything we can do that would call attention to intervention at this location would be important," she said. "As a track watcher, it's made a huge difference to know they hired a guard. It's added a sense of community."

The group believes they might have deterred at least one person from taking his life at the nearby Charleston Road crossing, she said.

"Another track watcher saw someone come and when he saw her he turned away and took off," she said.

Caltrain plans to host a safety workshop late next week for the security guards and the volunteer patrol, Dunn said. The workshop is not open to the public or the media, she added. ■

Staff Writer Sue Dremann can be e-mailed at sdremann@paweekly.com.



File photo

Christmas Tree Lane to open

Palo Alto's Christmas Tree Lane on Fulton Street will light up Saturday and will stay lit from 5 to 11 p.m. daily through Dec. 26. The Lane, featuring sparkling, lighted trees and other festive decorations, is a Palo Alto tradition dating back to 1940. Young carolers from Keys School will celebrate the opening night by singing holiday songs, beginning on the corner of Fulton and Tennyson Avenue. More information is available at www.christmastreelane.org.

Global warming

(continued from page 3)

cheaper over what's better for the environment — and the society at large bears the hidden costs of environmental degradation.

In their colleagues' memo, the four councilmen rely on projections from the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which suggest that "ocean and bay levels will rise 16 inches by 2050 and 55 inches by 2100, threatening low-lying coastal areas such as much of Palo Alto."

These impacts are also addressed in a newly released state report, the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy. The report, composed by a coalition of state agencies and unveiled last week, cites a University of California Berkeley study that suggests that of the state's \$4 trillion in real-estate assets, \$2.5 trillion is "at risk from extreme weather events, sea level rise and wildfires." It recommends a broad range of emergency-response preparation strategies and stresses the need to conserve water and energy.

"The intention is to begin a dialogue in our community that, hopefully, will expand to other communities and the state and even beyond that," Drekmeier said. "The way to really drive the best environmental practices is through a fair-market economy where nothing is subsidized."

But as this week's late-night and early-morning discussion demonstrated, even the greenest minds often have trouble thinking alike when it comes to climate change. Much as in the global debate, council members and concerned residents acknowledged the risks of global warming, but had to scramble to reach a consensus on anything.

Councilman Larry Klein, typically a leader on environmental initiatives, found himself in rare opposition to the proposed resolution, which he characterized as both too vague and too ambitious. He only voted in favor of the proposal after the rest of the council agreed to delete wording signifying the council's "support" for true-cost pricing and add words indicating that the council "acknowledges and accepts" the concept.

"I think it would take multi-million or billion dollars to figure out what true-cost pricing really is," Klein said.

Even if the city gathers the necessary data, Klein said, it would be difficult to determine what to do with the information, particularly if it demonstrates that the city needs to pay substantially more for energy to cover the externality costs.

"We're certainly not going to volunteer to pay more money for something," Klein said.

The council also heard from four members of the public, each of whom cited a different argument

for why the council should pass the resolution.

Peter Holoyda, founder of Renewably First, a nonprofit that promotes zero-emission vehicles, urged the council to tap into the community's expertise and to accelerate its green efforts. Now is the perfect time, Holoyda said, to address the subject of global warming and consider switching to electric vehicles.

Craig Lewis, an expert in renewable-energy policy, lobbied the council to adopt a "feed-in tariff," a price structure that provides incentives to companies generating renewable energy.

David Coale, who sits on the board of directors of the environmental nonprofit Acterra, asked the council to consider both the impact of fossil fuels associated with energy generation and with transportation.

Bryan Long, a researcher who served on the city's Compost Task Force, urged the city to adopt true-pricing policies even if those policies lead the city to pay more. The city's actions, Long argued, could encourage other cities and states to follow suit.

"It's better to take a small disadvantage ahead of the crowd in the direction that all must follow eventually and, therefore, gain the advantage of leadership, than it is to suffer a larger misfortune and suffer with all because no one had the courage to act unselfishly," Long said.

The council also voted to encourage the 2010 mayor and council to "consider creating a task force to assess the potential impacts and costs of climate change on Palo Alto using existing data." Councilmembers did not delve into how much staff time the task force would require, but the liaison role would presumably be filled by Debra van Duynhoven, the city's assistant to the city manager for sustainability.

In January, the council will welcome four new members to replace Drekmeier, Yoriko Kishimoto, Jack Morton and John Barton. Burt and Schmid will both continue on the council next year.

Burt said the city's new position is entirely consistent with the state's plan for adapting to climate change and the various national studies focusing on the impacts of global warming.

"It's basically a part of recognition that, regretfully, as hard as we may be working as a nation and as a global community to try to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and global warming, it's almost a certainty that we're going to experience it," Burt said. "The international community is starting to shift gears to put more resources to look at how to contend with these impacts."

"It's just sound planning in my book." ■

Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be e-mailed at gsheyner@paweekly.com.



LET'S DISCUSS:

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Lytton Plaza re-opens next week
 Wayne Walker puts finishing touches on bicycle arcs, which will be part of the refurbished Lytton Plaza, at the corner of University Avenue and Emerson Street. The plaza's grand re-opening is set for Friday, Dec. 18, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., with a ribbon-cutting by Palo Alto Mayor Peter Dreke at 12:30 p.m. Festivities will continue from 5 to 8 p.m. The plaza project, designed by architect Gary Laymon of the Guzzardo Partnership, Inc., includes a water fountain, wooden benches and tables (as well as moveable and stationary seating), planter boxes, a grove of pistache trees, high-efficiency lighting and the egg-shaped sculpture 'Digital DNA,' which was repositioned to the Emerson side of the plaza. The City of Palo Alto and Friends of Lytton Plaza split the \$800,000 cost.

Veronica Weber

News Digest

Resurfacing San Antonio Road begins

Work began Tuesday on resurfacing Palo Alto's San Antonio Road stretch that is part of an overall re-landscaping and tree-removal project funded in part by federal stimulus funds.

Traffic will be restricted to one lane each direction in areas where the repaving is underway, according to Senior Engineer Elizabeth Ames of the city's Public Works Department.

The narrowing from four lanes will cause some traffic delays during the 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. repaving schedule. One lane each way is being kept open to minimize traffic disruptions, Ames said.

There is no fixed date for completion as the work depends in part on the weather in the next few weeks, she indicated.

The repaving will include San Antonio Road and the frontage road between Alma Street and Middlefield Road. The replanting and concrete divider work was completed earlier this year.

The project has its own website at www.cityofpaloalto.org/sa. ■

— Palo Alto Weekly staff

School board members say tax renewal is critical

Members of the Palo Alto Board of Education made it clear Tuesday night that renewal of the district's parcel tax is critical if the district is to continue offering a high-quality program to its 11,565 students.

The current \$493-a-year-per-parcel levy generates \$9.4 million a year, about 6 percent of the district's operating budget. It expires in 2011.

Superintendent Kevin Skelly has recommended seeking replacement of the current tax with a \$589-a-year-per-parcel levy in an election in April. The new tax would have a six-year life span and carry an optional exemption for seniors as well as a 2 percent per year growth adjustment to keep up with enrollment growth and cost increases.

On Dec. 15, the board will hold a public hearing on Skelly's proposal and vote on whether to hold an election in April. Once that vote is taken, campaigning on the measure is taken over by privately funded campaign committees.

Regardless of the fate of the parcel tax, the school district faces a multi-million dollar "structural deficit" for the 2010-11 school year because of state budget cuts.

Skelly said the district already has achieved some savings through an informal hiring freeze, tighter staffing at the secondary level, cutting food budgets, closing school swimming pools between sports seasons and "incrementally" increasing K-6 class sizes.

Even so, "We're probably going to have to make some choices that are really tough, that we don't want to have to make," board member Melissa Baten Caswell said. ■

— Chris Kenrick

Deficit-hit SamTrans cuts service, hikes fares

Due to a \$28.4 million budget deficit there will be a 7.5 percent cut in Samtrans bus service starting Dec. 20, Samtrans officials announced Wednesday.

SamTrans has laid off 45 drivers and administrative staff to achieve the cuts.

An across-the-board fare increase will go into effect Feb. 1, 2010, with an adult local fare increase of 25 cents.

SamTrans General Manager Michael J. Scanlon said more cuts are expected "unless the economic climate improves significantly."

Six express routes to San Francisco and one local route in Millbrae will be dropped, and six other routes will see reduced service, he said.

According to SamTrans, the deficit was caused by a drop in revenue from local sales tax, reduced ridership and a loss of \$11 million in state funding.

A new SamTrans schedule is available at www.samtrans.com. ■

— John Squire

Medical groups to launch new SM County clinic

A new medical clinic, the "Peninsula Medical Group," to serve San Mateo County residents is being created by the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and Burlingame-based Mills-Peninsula Medical Group — in part because of a physician-recruitment challenge.

The new PMG clinic will launch with 40 physicians and will be based in Burlingame, but is expected to grow to about 200 physicians, officials said. Both PAMF and Mills-Peninsula are affiliates of Sutter Health, a network of hospitals and clinics in Northern California.

Physician recruitment is an important motivation for creating the new clinic, according to Brian Roach, M.D., current president of the Mills-Peninsula group and future president of a new PAMF division: the Mills-Peninsula Division, which will oversee the new clinic.

"Our primary-care physicians are aging just as the population is aging and it has been difficult to recruit new primary-care physicians to the community," Roach said. ■

— Palo Alto Weekly staff



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 - For Boys: Mondays, January 25 & February 1

▶ GRANDPARENTS SEMINAR

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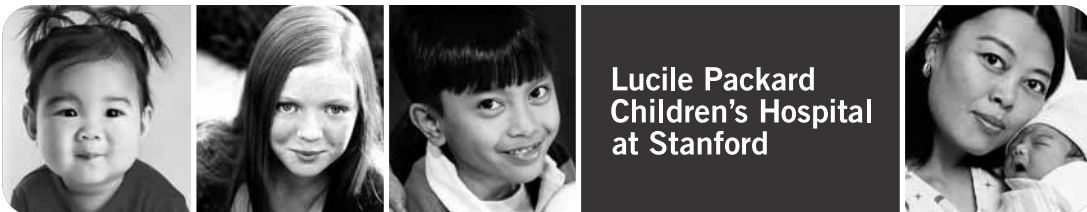
- Sunday, January 31: 1:00 - 3:00 pm

▶ PEDIATRIC WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAM

Start the new year with a family-based, behavioral and educational weight management program that promotes healthy eating and exercise habits for overweight children and their families. More than 80% of children achieve long-term weight loss through this program — and parents lose weight too!

The new session starts soon. Please call (650) 725-4424 to register. Spaces are limited.

Call (650) 723-4600 or visit www.lpch.org to register or obtain more information on the times, locations and fees for these and other courses.



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Online This Week

These and other news stories were posted on Palo Alto Online throughout the week. For longer versions, go to www.PaloAltoOnline.com/news or click on "News" in the left, green column.

VIDEO: Palo Alto Vignettes

Alice Crenshaw and her family became the first to move into Palo Alto's Greenmeadow neighborhood, built by Joseph Eichler, in 1954. Now 93, Crenshaw reminisced about the neighborhood's early years at a storytelling event last Sunday sponsored by the Palo Alto Historical Association. Her tale — and three others' — are now posted at www.PaloAltoOnline.com. (Posted Dec. 10 at 1:32 p.m.)

Founder of Palo Alto Bicycles dies

Bernhard J. (Bernie) Hoffacker, original owner of Palo Alto Bicycles, died Dec. 5, a few days short of his 92nd birthday, from complications from a broken hip. (Posted Dec. 10 at 8:58 a.m.)

Slain officer's family speaks out at trial

Family members of East Palo Alto police Officer Richard May, who was fatally shot in the line of duty almost four years ago, told jurors during the penalty phase of his killer's trial Tuesday how difficult their lives are without him. (Posted Dec. 9 at 3:53 p.m.)

Klausner selected as school board president

Outgoing Palo Alto Board of Education President Barb Mitchell passed the gavel Tuesday night to Barbara Klausner. Klausner, a lawyer who has worked as a math specialist in the school district, was unanimously chosen by her colleagues to lead the board for the next year, effective immediately. (Posted Dec. 9 at 7:27 a.m.)

Morning fire scorches Team Clean in Menlo Park

Fire investigators are looking for possible causes of an early morning fire in a couple of tubs used to store mops at a commercial laundry in a single-story commercial building at 560 Oak Grove Ave. in Menlo Park Tuesday. (Posted Dec. 8 at 12:23 p.m.)

Authorities urge caution during cold spell

As freezing conditions continue to grip the Bay Area, residents are being warned to take precautions on roadways, protect their pets and insulate exposed water pipes. (Posted Dec. 8 at 10:17 a.m.)

Son of Barry Bonds arrested in Menlo Park

The son of Barry Bonds, who holds the lifetime and single-year Major League home run records, was arrested in Menlo Park Saturday after an argument with his mother, the Associated Press reported. (Posted Dec. 8 at 10:06 a.m.)

Apple buys Palo Alto-based Lala music startup

Lala Media, Inc., a "cloud-based" music-streaming startup based in downtown Palo Alto, has been purchased by Apple Computer, Apple spokesman Steve Dowling confirmed Sunday. (Posted Dec. 7 at 7:38 p.m.)

Police nab suspect in Stevens Creek Trail assault

Mountain View police have arrested the man they believe is behind last week's attempted sexual assault of a jogger on Stevens Creek Trail, and behind at least two other recent attacks as well. (Posted Dec. 7 at 2:32 p.m.)

East Palo Alto shooting victim, 35, hospitalized

Police are seeking witnesses who may have seen a man get shot in his torso early Saturday morning in East Palo Alto. (Posted Dec. 7 at 9:06 a.m.)

Recendes to stand trial for 2002 rape, beating

A gold necklace and a single hair are enough evidence to try Roberto Recendes for allegedly beating and raping a 94-year-old woman in Palo Alto, a judge has ruled. (Posted Dec. 5 at 10:14 p.m.)

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New chancellor

(continued from page 3)

ing opportunities for veterans," she said.

Thor's institution has been a pioneer in online "distance learning" and in partnering with local employers to offer corporate training.

For example, she said, every new employee of Phoenix-based U.S. Airways becomes a Rio Salado College student and receives training in the company's standards and a college certificate in airline operations.

In addition, more than 7,000 Phoenix-area students in 54 high schools take classes at Rio Salado. The college also offers courses at nearby Luke Air Force Base and in area prisons, where it trains inmates for jobs in the construction, culinary, horticulture, furniture manufacturing or computer industries.

About 38,000 of Rio Salado's 60,000 students are "online only." Others are served in the college's education centers, which are spread across the Phoenix area.

"While I'm a big proponent of online learning, I don't necessarily think that all of higher education should be online," Thor said.

"There are individuals who learn best in a traditional face-to-face classroom. There are those who benefit from a hybrid approach — some in person, some online. Then there are those particularly disciplined individuals who will do very well in the online environment," she said.

"There have been numerous studies, repeated over and over, that show no significant difference in learning between online learning and in-person learning."

Foothill and De Anza currently have a "great" mix of in-person, hybrid and online learning, she said.

The two colleges also have one of the nation's highest rates of successful transfers to four-year institutions, she said.

"The millennial generation that's coming out of high school right now really prefers the on-campus or blended approach because they do need that socialization," Thor said.

However, a "typical" Rio Salado student — a 29-year-old, working single mother — "is really not too focused on the football teams and the clubs" and needs the online option.

Thor said she is "thrilled" with President Barack Obama's American Graduation Initiative now working its way through Congress, which could provide \$12 billion to community colleges.

"In my 35 years in community colleges, I've never seen that kind of presidential attention," she said. "I see significant opportunities for Foothill-De Anza to seek federal support."

Thor was selected by Foothill-De Anza trustees following a national search to replace former chancellor Martha Kanter, who resigned in June to become U.S. undersecretary of education.

"Passion for education is what we look for in any college leader," said Foothill-De Anza board president Betsy Bechtel, a former mayor of Palo Alto.

"Linda Thor's driving passion is student success, and that is evident in every conversation with her. I

am confident she will help us continue to advance our commitment to quality education for every student. We are very pleased to have her join us."


Before moving to Arizona, Thor, a native Californian, headed West Los

Angeles College in Culver City.

She will be the sixth permanent chancellor since the Foothill-De Anza's founding in 1957. ■

Staff Writer Chris Kenrick can be e-mailed at ckenrick@paloaltoonline.com.

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www.PaloAltoOnline.com

COURTS

Slain officer's family speaks out at trial

Wife of late East Palo Alto police officer Richard May says he was 'our protector'

by Bay City News Service

Family members of East Palo Alto police Officer Richard May, who was fatally shot in the line of duty almost four years ago, told jurors during the penalty phase of his killer's trial Tuesday how difficult their lives are without him.

"We used to talk about everything," said May's daughter Deanna May, who was 13 when May was gunned down on Jan. 7, 2006. "Now I don't even remember the sound of his voice."

May's wife, Diana May, said her husband was "our protector" and her "beloved husband."

"I never imagined when I told Rich goodbye the night before (he died) that it would be forever," she said.

Jurors convicted 26-year-old Alberto Alvarez on Nov. 25 of first-degree murder with the special circumstance of killing a peace officer for May's death.

The special circumstance makes Alvarez eligible for the death penalty, which prosecutor Steve Wagstaffe told jurors during opening statements of the penalty phase is the "appropriate" punishment.

May's stepdaughter Brittany Cofield, who said May raised her since she was 5 years old, told jurors that the holidays are particularly difficult because May is not around for family traditions like buying a Christmas tree or making cookies.

On the last Thanksgiving before he was killed, "Rich said he was thankful for the four girls in his

life," said Cofield, now 21.

May's youngest daughter, Lauren May, now 13, said her father always supported her soccer games and that sometimes she still can't believe he is gone.

"My dad is not there to watch me play soccer," she said. "Sometimes I think it's all just a dream. I no longer have anyone to help me with sports."

Alvarez's defense attorneys, Charles Robinson and Eric Liberman, have asked the jury to choose the lesser sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Robinson and Liberman said outside the courtroom Tuesday that Alvarez was crying during May's family's statements and that their client understands the pain May's

family feels.

Liberman also said he thinks 15 people testifying on behalf of the prosecution in the penalty phase has indicated that there have never been more than eight witnesses allowed to testify for the prosecution during the penalty phase of a trial in California.

Robinson said Alvarez's family and friends will speak during the defense's turn but that Alvarez likely won't make a statement.

"I know he feels terrible," Liberman said. "He understands the loss he has caused. But we also recognize, based on his testimony in the trial, that the jury has rejected him and what he has to say."

Alvarez testified during the guilt phase that May shot him first, and that he only fired back because he feared for his life.

Robinson said Alvarez has an IQ of 84 and, educationally, has the mental skills of a 9- to 15-year-old.

"He's not Charles Manson," Liberman said. "He's not a rapist or a mass murderer. Yes, he was convicted of first-degree murder but

it's not like he sat at home for days thinking he would kill a police officer."

The emotional testimony delivered by May's family and friends spanned two days, ending just after 11 a.m. Tuesday.

East Palo Alto Police Chief Ron Davis, who was the first to testify Tuesday morning, said he will always remember the call he received notifying him that May had been killed.

"Rich's loss was very impactful to the community, the Police Department and the entire law enforcement profession," he said.

Following the defense's presentation, the case is expected to return to the jury late next week. ■



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December 13: Santa Lucia Festival
5:30 p.m. Potluck Smörgåsbord
7:00 p.m. Santa Lucia Program and Reception

December 20: A Festival of Lessons and Carols
4:00 p.m. Choir, Organ, and Brass
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Palo Alto Weekly

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Pulse

A weekly compendium of vital statistics

Palo Alto

Dec. 1-7

Violence related

Attempted suicide	1
Battery	3
Child abuse	1
Other/misc.	2

Theft related

Checks forgery	2
Grand theft	2
Residential burglaries	2
Petty theft	4
Shoplifting	3
Other/misc.	1

Vehicle related

Abandoned auto	2
Auto recovery	1
Driving with suspended license	1
Hit and run	3
Misc. traffic	1
Theft from auto	22
Vehicle accident/minor injury	9
Vehicle accident/prop. damage	4

Alcohol or drug related

Drunk in public	2
Possession of drugs	3

Miscellaneous

Animal call	1
Found property	2
Lost property	4
Misc. penal code violation	1
Missing person	1
Noise ordinance violation	6
Other/misc.	8
Vandalism	5
Warrant/other agency	9

Menlo Park

Dec. 2-8

Violence related

Assault w/ a deadly weapon	1
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Theft related

Fraud	2
Grand theft	5
Petty theft	5
Residential burglaries	3
Shoplifting	2

Vehicle related

Driving w/ suspended license	5
Driving w/o license	2
Parking/driving violation	1
Theft from auto	3
Vehicle accident/mjr. injury	1
Vehicle accident/ prop damage	3
Vehicle tow	1

Alcohol or drug related

Drug activity	1
Drunk in public	2
Possession of a controlled substance	1
Registrant	2

Miscellaneous

Disturbance	3
Info. case	4
Lost property	2
Missing person	2
Vandalism	3
Warrant arrest	8
Other/misc.	7

Atherton

Nov. 30-Dec.7

Violence related

Theft related

Burglaries	1
------------	---

Vehicle related

Bicycle stop	2
Suspicious vehicle	2
Theft from auto	3
Vehicle accident/ no detail	1
Vehicle accident/ prop damage	3
Vehicle code violation	1
Other/misc.	2

Miscellaneous

Be on the lookout	2
Citizen assist	3
Lost property	1
Meet citizen	2
Outside assistance	4
Shots fired	2
Suspicious circumstances	1
Suspicious person	2
Welfare check	1
Other/misc.	2

Palo Alto

400 Pasteur Drive, 12/2, 7:55 a.m.; battery/simple.

180 El Camino Real, 12/2, 4:04 p.m.; sui-

cide adult attempt/misc.

El Camino Real, 12/5, 1:31 a.m.; battery/sexual.

Varian Way, 12/5, 4:05 a.m.; domestic violence/battery.

San Antonio Road, 12/5, 8:39 a.m.; family violence/misc.

Guinda Street, 12/5, 8:10 p.m.; child abuse/neglect.

Tennyson Avenue, 12/6, 7:30 p.m.; family violence/misc.

Menlo Park

1000 block Valparaiso, 12/5, 9:57 a.m.; assault with a deadly weapon.



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Transitions

Births, marriages and deaths

Founder of Palo Alto Bicycles dies

Innovative athlete Bernie Hoffacker played pro ball, started bicycle businesses

Bernhard J. (Bernie) Hoffacker, original owner of Palo Alto Bicycles, died Dec. 5, a few days short of his 92nd birthday, from complications from a broken hip.

Described as "not only innovative, but open-minded" by Jeff

Selzer, Palo Alto Bicycles store manager, "he had a fascinating life" — including a stint as a professional baseball player.

A Palo Alto High School graduate (1934), Hoffacker excelled in baseball and was inducted in Menlo College's Hall of Fame in 1936.



Bernie Hoffacker

He then played professionally for the San Francisco Seals — for whom he fielded grounders from coach Ty Cobb at Stanford University on weekends and roomed on the road with teammate Dominic DiMaggio.

After retiring from pro baseball in 1941, he coached semi-pro, Babe Ruth and Little League teams.

After World War II, when he and his brother Ed Jr. were running Palo Alto Sport Shop and Toy World, Hoffacker spent much of his time repairing bicycles.

"He was very mechanically inclined," Selzer said.

Palo Alto Bicycles began as a spin-off in the early 1970s to the family-

owned sport and toy shop. He ran it independently until he retired in the mid-1980s and sons Bernhard (Bud) and Neal took over.

In 1975, Hoffacker started what became one of the first bicycle mail-order catalogs, with his sons traveling to Europe to buy hard-to-get parts for racers, Selzer recalled. That business soon begat another: Avocet, which made bike shoes, saddles, tires and the first electronic cyclometer, he said.

But one of Selzer's favorite memories is the store's sponsorship of a bike team in the late 1970s.

"One of the riders was a skinny kid out of Reno. He was a skier who rode bicycles in the summer to stay in shape," he said. Years later, Greg Lemond returned to Palo Alto Bicycles, crediting the team with encouraging him to enter the Tour de France — which he won three times.

Hoffacker is survived by his wife of 68 years, Marjorie, of Palo Alto; his daughter Lyle Caudillo of San Jose; his sons Bud of Woodside, Neal of Portola Valley and Ronnie

(continued on next page)

JEANNE SILVER



Jeanne Silver, 84, passed away peacefully at home on December 6.

As a resident of Palo Alto for 63 years, she raised a family and she blossomed countless flowers in her lovely garden. She volunteered at CAR, where she worked with autistic children for many years.

Born in Colville, WA, she attended high school in Lewiston, ID and took flight training in Spokane, adopting flying as a pastime of her youth.

Jeanne enjoyed traveling and visited Africa, Australia and various parts of Europe with her husband. As an avid gardener, Jeanne served as VP of the Palo Alto Garden Club for a term.

She took pleasure in the responsibilities of keeping her home. She enjoyed animals and the hummingbirds of her garden. She was a loving wife, a caring mother and an inspiring grandmother.

She is survived by her husband James Silver, her son James Kevin Silver and his wife Emily Silver, her brother Bill Lockie and his wife Dorothy Lockie, and two grandsons Lindsay and Dylan Silver. She is preceded in death by her son Gareth Silver in 1970 and her mother and father, Floy and Alma Lockie.

PAID OBITUARY

ARIEL SHAKER



One of the most vibrant and intrepid people, Ariel Elizabeth Feiock Shaker, 21, died from injuries sustained in a horseback riding accident at Harvard University after she was thrown from a horse on October

1, 2009. Ariel succumbed to her injuries on October 7, 2009 surrounded by loving friends and family at Boston Medical Center.

Ariel, born April 21, 1988 lived her life fully. An experienced horsewoman who had ridden and shown horses since the age of 8, Ariel was an all around athlete who participated in many sports. Prior to joining the Harvard University Polo Team in September 2009, Ariel had enrolled at Harvard in 2006 as a member of the women's crew team. A former member of both NorCal and the Oakland Strokes crew teams, Ariel had traveled to London and Amsterdam for the Women's Henley and the United States Junior National Team competitions.

In all her experiences, Ariel impressed all who knew her with her vibrantly warm personality and passion for experiencing life to its fullest.

The many paths Ariel explored in her 21 years, writing, art, basketball, horseback riding, crew and riding her bike cross country one summer with Bike and Build brought her in contact with hundreds of people who miss her dearly, and are forever changed for having known her. Everyone who knew Ariel, knew that they had met someone very special, a one of a kind friend.

Ariel will live forever in the hearts and memories of all who were fortunate enough to know her.

Ariel, it was an honor to know you, all of us are better for having had you in our lives.

"Why must this be?"

The sorrow and the mystery,

We'll know some sweet day...."

Services to celebrate Ariel's life will take place on January 6, 2010 at 6:30pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto at 505 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto, CA. Donations can be made to Bring Me a Book Foundation at www.bringmeabook.org. In addition, there will be a boat naming ceremony at Ariel's crew team, NorCal, on Saturday, January 2 at noon at Bair Island Aquatic Center in Redwood City.

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Answers to this week's puzzles, which can be found on page 61

MEDICAID	SARIS	6	2	7	1	3	4	8	9	5
EVANESCE	IDENT	4	9	5	6	8	7	3	2	1
STANKONIA	MALTA	3	8	1	2	5	9	6	4	7
TIDE	EERIE	5	4	9	3	7	1	2	8	6
AME	HARRY	8	1	6	4	2	5	9	7	3
POTTER		7	3	2	9	6	8	5	1	4
GERMAN	SNEERS	1	5	8	7	9	6	4	3	2
OWNSUP	ETA	9	7	3	5	4	2	1	6	8
BERNIE	MACSHOW	2	6	4	8	1	3	7	5	9
EVO	CARRIE									
PLANON	AGEGAP									
EMPIRE	EARTH									
LOE	PALME									
CAGE										
OPRAH	FORD									
FOCUS										
SAONE	ICANT									
SEE										
INNIE	NONACIDS									

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(continued from previous page)

of Santa Cruz; seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial mass will be held Monday, Dec. 14, at 2 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 751 Waverley St., Palo Alto.

Deaths

Robert Rowe

Robert 'Bob' Rowe, 89, a resident of Menlo Park, died Sept. 26.

He was raised in Rochester, N.Y. He served as an instructor at the Naval Academy in Groton, Conn., during World War II. Following service to his country, he entered Tufts University, graduating summa cum laude in electrical engineering. Upon graduation, he was pursued by a number of prestigious companies, but decided to leave the East Coast for the Bay Area, accepting a position at Stanford Research Institute (SRI).

He set off for California by car with his first wife, Pauline Rowe, and their older daughter, Helena. They had many adventures along the way.

As his professional interests evolved, he worked and consulted for a number of companies locally and nationally, ultimately working for Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) until his retirement at age 60.

He had a wide range of interests outside of his work. He was known for tinkering with everything mechanical. In his off hours, he col-

lected and restored antique clocks, enjoyed home and auto repairs, and shared his talents with friends and neighbors.

Perhaps his greatest passion was the ocean. He was an avid scuba diver and body surfer for most of his adult life.

His love of the sea led to a passion for sailing, which he shared with his wife, Jeanie. They developed their skills over a number of years. He took early retirement to sail the seas with his wife. Ultimately they circumnavigated the earth over the course of 24 years.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him, loved ones said.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanie; his two daughters, Helena Rowe and April Holman; and two grandchildren.

Births

Monica Stoner and Noah Richmond of Menlo Park, a daughter, Nov. 11

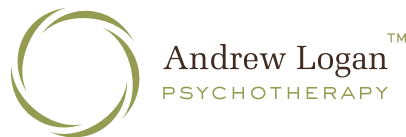
Rebecca and Scott Morrow of Menlo Park, a son, Nov. 21



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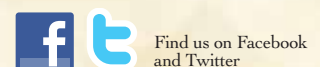


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*Benefits Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

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Charter schools raise the bar for East Palo Alto students



At East Palo Alto Charter School, one of five charters in the Ravenswood City School District, fifth-grade students (including Jorge Paniagua, left, Miguel Barbosa, Cynthia Garcia and Ivan Nava) laugh while playing a warm-up game during their daily morning meeting last week.

by **Chris Kenrick**
photos by **Veronica Weber**

A Stanford banner hung outside the classroom of first-grade teacher Maricela Montoy at the East Palo Alto Charter School.

Inside, a couple dozen children — dressed in the school uniform of khakis and a white polo shirt — sat cross-legged in rows on a rug. All eyes were on Montoy, a recent Stanford University graduate, who stood at the whiteboard.

A small boy named Baltazar, designated as that day's "greeter," rose from the group. Trying his hardest to look a visitor in the eye, he offered his hand and explained that the class at the moment was working on reading — sounding out the word "porcupine," to be exact.

Attention to detail is critical in the labor-intensive enterprise of education. And East Palo Alto Charter School, or EPACS as it is known, seems to have many details right.

The school earned an impressive 842 on California's 2009 Academic Performance Index — better than 80 percent of all California schools and

in the very top tier of schools with similar low-income demographics.

That kind of success has parents flocking to get their children into East Palo Alto Charter, a publicly funded charter school. With more applicants than the 420 available spots, admission is by lottery.

The burgeoning of charter schools and other educational options for children in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park has vastly altered the landscape in a community long known for its less-than-desirable public schools.

Families have more choices than ever before. Those include improved public neighborhood schools, charter schools and private schools where tuition is subsidized or covered entirely by philanthropists. Stanford University has joined the effort, sponsoring two of the community's five charter schools.

Choices also include the court-ordered "Tinsley Program," a 23-year-old desegregation plan that allows 160 non-white kindergarteners each year to enroll in neighboring Palo Alto, Menlo Park and other area school districts as far north as Belmont.

The educational restart in East Palo Alto has attracted a new generation of bright and passionate educators determined to do whatever it takes to make a difference in the lives of students.

"It takes a lot, but don't these kids deserve it?" asked Mike Berman, a Stanford graduate who has spent the past six years teaching, mentoring and counseling at EPACS and its high-school counterpart, East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy, also a public charter school.

"What else are we to do? Why shouldn't this be one of the best schools in the country?"

The reformers have had major, if unintended effects — for both good and ill — on the "traditional" schools, the five elementary and two middle schools that comprise the non-charter portion of the Ravenswood City School District.

On one hand, Ravenswood schools are widely acknowledged to be improving, prodded in part by the competition. On the other hand, the multitude of alternatives for children has drained about 2,100 students from the regular schools, and with them, the accompanying state revenue. (Approximately 3,000

students attend the public neighborhood schools.)

"We're all working toward the same end, but oftentimes it becomes competitive," Ravenswood Superintendent Maria De La Vega said (*see sidebar*).

"I know it's not their intent, but when you take (students) away it makes it more difficult to work through those challenges.

"My role as superintendent is to protect the district and make sure we're left with the ability to provide a quality education."

California has 750 charter schools with an enrollment of 276,000 students, according to a recent report by the San Mateo County Grand Jury.

Five charters operate within the boundaries of the Ravenswood school district. They are the East Palo Alto Charter and its affiliated high school, the Phoenix Academy, both managed by Aspire Public Schools, a nonprofit charter-school operator; Stanford-affiliated East Palo Alto Academy Elementary School and East Palo Alto Academy High School; and the K-8 Edison

Brentwood Academy, operated by the for-profit Edison Learning Inc.

Intended to provide educational choice, charter schools are public schools freed from many of the state regulations that bind traditional schools.

They typically operate under a three- to five-year charter with a sponsoring school district — a kind of performance contract outlining the school's mission, program and metrics for success. They must reflect the racial balance of the surrounding community and also are required to serve special education students.

At the end of a charter's term, depending on academic results as measured by state standardized tests and other conditions of the charter, the sponsoring agency decides whether or not to renew the charter.

Instilling a college-prep culture is a huge priority for most if not all the schools in Ravenswood, and it begins early.

At East Palo Alto Charter and the Phoenix Academy, classrooms are named for colleges. There's UC San Diego, Duke, Occidental, Brown and many more.

"Just naming things after colleges helps push that into the kids' consciousness from the very beginning," Berman said.

"Instead of saying, 'I'm in Ms. Baker's class,' they say, 'I'm in Stanford,' or 'I'm in Longhorns.'"

The college focus also adds cheer to the campus, with colorful banners hanging from every doorway.

The first-graders in Ms. Montoy's "Stanford" classroom are known as "the trees."

At Phoenix Academy, a student who doesn't feel like wearing his or her uniform to school always may substitute college gear without penalty.

At East Palo Alto Academy Elementary, Stanford women's basketball player Sarah Boothe recently visited and stressed to the children that, sports aside, strong academics are essential for students if they are to find a place in the world.

The constant focus on college reinforces that "you have to expect hard work and excellence from yourself," Phoenix college counselor Berman said, sitting in the makeshift campus, a former warehouse. College banners and slogans invoking personal responsibility hang throughout the building.

As he walks the halls, both at Phoenix and its affiliated East Palo Alto Charter, Berman greets every student by name.

"It's really hard for these kids to have high expectations for themselves if their school doesn't have that with them, because their society doesn't. We're fighting an uphill battle when they leave here because out on the street, in their neighborhood, in other communities, people don't expect them to succeed."

Berman tells of a student who was recruited to Phoenix in his sophomore year after the teen failed every freshman class except P.E. at a large public high school.

"Whose fault is that?" Berman asked. "Certainly it's the student's fault."

"But no one grabbed him by the ear and said, 'Come to class. You can do this, and I'm going to make sure that you meet your potential.'"

The student, now a senior and a member of what will be Phoenix's first graduating class next June, was accepted last week to California State University, East Bay.



Mike Berman, director of development and community partnerships for East Palo Alto Charter School, talks to kindergartners Rhonicia Ingram, left, and Kevaghn Bailey last week.

East Palo Alto's own public high school, Ravenswood, was closed in 1976. Today, students from the K-8 Ravenswood district have a 65 percent high school dropout rate after they fan out to various campuses in the Sequoia Union High School District, including Woodside, Sequoia, Carmont and Menlo Atherton.

But East Palo Alto's educational reformers have proven that things could be otherwise.

East Palo Alto Academy High strongly outperforms Sequoia's comprehensive high schools when it comes to graduating students with a college-prep curriculum under their belts. Ninety percent of its students continue their education in college.

Eastside College Preparatory School, a private middle- and high school founded in 1996 by Chris Bischof and Helen Kim, retains most if not all of its students, and 100 percent of its graduates go on to four-year colleges, including some of the most competitive in the nation.

The three-year-old Phoenix Academy will graduate its first seniors next June. So far, every senior has

filed at least four college applications. Acceptances are beginning to trickle in.

"The reason we started our high school is we couldn't stomach any more having kids being really successful here (at East Palo Alto Charter) and then going off to other schools and falling apart," Berman said.

A few years ago, he said, an East Palo Alto Charter teacher got his hands on Carlmont High School's Algebra 1 final exam and administered it to his eighth-graders.

"There were kids who got an A on that test who were placed back in Algebra 1 at Carlmont and failed it," he said.

The difference, Berman and others say, is the level of expectation and the intensive support offered by the hard-working (and mostly young) charter-school teachers and staff.

"We have high expectations, and we kick them in the butt a little bit. You don't lower the bar, but you support them in meeting those expectations."

Phoenix Academy is open for homework help until 6 p.m. every night. And teachers give out their phone numbers in case questions arise later.

"At Woodside, people wouldn't notice me," said Phoenix Academy senior Eduardo Magana, who spent his freshman year at Woodside High School. "Here, a lot of people know who I am."

"If I have questions when I'm doing my homework, I can call my biology teacher and she'll walk me through it."

Cutting-edge educational research and other resources are some of the benefits Stanford is working to offer students at its elementary and high schools, both named East Palo Alto Academy but also known as the "Stanford New Schools."

East Palo Alto students enjoy

(continued on page 16)

A leader's challenge

After sanctions, rebuilding a culture of trust and results

How do you change the culture of a school district?

That is the task Maria De La Vega saw before her when she became superintendent of the Ravenswood City School District four years ago.

The low-performing K-8 district, which spans East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park, labored under government sanctions to change its practices in nearly every arena.

De La Vega, a mild-mannered veteran school administrator, continues to swim in an alphabet soup of regulations.

They include a federal court order to provide "full inclusion" for special-education students as well as federal and state orders to boost academic achievement and improve services to the 73 percent of students for whom English is not their first language.

But things are looking up.

"Historically we know that Ravenswood has not been able to reach its goal of all students succeeding," De La Vega said in a recent interview in her tidy office on Euclid Avenue in East Palo Alto.

"However, we put a strategic plan in place three and a half years ago, and we're definitely on the right path of moving toward what we believe is a journey to excellence."

Other educators attest that De La Vega is moving in the right direction.

"The Ravenswood school system has really gotten a lot better in the last years under Maria's leadership," said Deborah Stipek, dean of the Stanford University School of Education. "She has been a very good and very strong superintendent."

Richard Mojarro, principal of the Stanford University-affiliated East Palo Alto Academy Elementary School, said he respects De La Vega.

"She has a very difficult situation and I feel for her, but I think she's doing a wonderful job maintaining order and accountability for student achievement," he said.

As De La Vega has struggled to comply with federal and state mandates while "trying to rebuild a new school district," academic results, as measured by the state's Academic Performance Index, have inched up over the past several years. The non-charter public schools' test scores showed an average of 4 percent growth in 2009 over 2008, with students at Costano Elementary School achieving a 10 percent increase.

"When I arrived it was sort of an atmosphere of blame, anger, frustration and lack of trust," she said.

"In order to change that, we had to realize that only we could change it, and we had to work together."

"The aim was to develop professional learning communities,

not only among our teachers but among our administrators.

"I feel like a broken record when I speak to staff about the 'three Rs' — responsibility, results and relationships," she said.

De La Vega's relationship with East Palo Alto's charter schools is, predictably, an uneasy one.

Even as the charters siphon off students and their accompanying state revenue, the district is legally bound to accommodate many of their needs, including providing adequate facilities. None of that makes De La Vega's already tough job any easier.

Ravenswood loses about 900 students a year to the court-ordered Tinsley program, a 23-year-old desegregation plan that allows 160 non-white kindergartners each year to enroll in neighboring Palo Alto, Menlo Park and other area school districts as far north as Belmont.

Although the district has not sought to alter the terms of Tinsley, De La Vega questions the fairness of losing 160 kindergartners a year, a number that was set decades ago, when Ravenswood's enrollment was three or four times what it is today.

Another 1,200 Ravenswood students attend K-8 charter schools.

All told, the district loses about 40 percent of its potential enrollment to charter schools or the Tinsley desegregation program, leaving around 3,000 students in the district's seven traditional schools.

"As far as academics go, we're on the right track. Our biggest challenge is the budget and enrollment," she said.

"How long can we hold onto the side of the cliff by our fingertips and hope that the economy gets better?"

De La Vega said she is grateful for the vote of confidence of major corporations including HP and Cisco Systems, which have provided major support to the district.

A reinvigorated Ravenswood Education Foundation, with substantial backing from the membership of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, also has been key in managing outside help, she said.

"Prior to that we had at least 100 different groups who had at one time or another tried to support the district. It becomes quite a managing challenge when you have minimal resources in terms of people."

De La Vega spends much of her time ensuring compliance with the federal and state orders to improve performance.

"We can see we're moving forward and students are benefiting with the changes being made. But it can be difficult to convince the bureaucracy that this takes time," she said. ■

—Chris Kenrick



Maria De La Vega, superintendent of the Ravenswood City School District, stands outside the district's child-development center. She's been tasked with improving students' academic performance.



Sixth-grade teacher Meg Barrager, center, leads a playful vocabulary exercise in which students animate words at East Palo Alto Charter School last week.

Educational rebirth

(continued from page 15)

Stanford student tutors, contact with professors and perks such as holding their graduation ceremonies in Stanford's Memorial Auditorium.

Stanford's commitment, School of Education Dean Deborah Stipek said, "is really university-wide. I've been very touched by the way other deans and other department chairs have really been available to try to provide support and resources to meet the needs of the kids and families we're serving.

"The head of the athletic department said, 'Would your families like to go to football games?' When we found a lot of social-emotional health issues, I went to the chair of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and they had a team of folks down there very soon working with the families.

"These are all resources, and the charter school is the kind of conduit to doing those things."

Stanford entered the charter business in 2001 when, in collaboration with Aspire Public Schools, it launched East Palo Alto Academy High (then named East Palo Alto High School).

Aspire withdrew from the partnership in 2005, leaving Stanford to operate the high school and the three-year-old elementary school.

"I think we're still learning," Stipek said when asked if the elementary school has lived up to expectations.

"We've only been in business for three years. The high school is doing extremely well — we've got 90 percent of our kids going to college.

"In a lot of ways we've been very successful in the kind of emotional support and family support, but our kids' skills are not up to what they need to be. It just takes time to get it right.

"So far I think we've learned more from the community than we've given them, but at some point we'll be able to give back more than we are

now," Stipek said.

The East Palo Alto schools offer Stanford professors "grounding" for their research.

"This keeps us real," she said.

"It really grounds our faculty so that when we're preparing school leaders and teachers, we understand deeply the challenges they face."

Ultimately, the East Palo Alto charters will be a way for Stanford to formulate educational "best practices" it then can share with its network of large urban school districts around the country, Stipek said.

The charter schools also have focused on inculcating habits not measured by the standardized tests.

hired to become the new principal at East Palo Alto Academy Elementary this fall.

"I came here because of Stanford," said Mojarro, previously principal of a 4,000-student high school in Long Beach.

"Stanford has a lot of great researchers that I admire: Claude Goldenberg, Linda Darling-Hammond — these people are rock stars.

"I've never seen a prestigious university like Stanford stake its reputation on the line to serve an underrepresented community.

"That's all I've worked with — underrepresented communities — and that really touched me," Mojarro said.

Mojarro described his school's educational approach as less "rigid" than that of many other charter schools.

"I read the research. I scrutinize it, and then I pick and choose," said Mojarro, who describes himself as a "change agent."

"Changes here are to be research-based instructional practices that work for our kids. We need to be a data-driven organization.

"As a practitioner, I'm always looking out for what we can do better," he added. "We want every one of our students to be college graduates, and we're

making a commitment to make that happen."

A laser-like focus on curriculum is what distinguishes Edison-Brentwood Academy, the district's fifth charter school. It's operated by Edison-Learning Inc., which was launched by entrepreneur Chris Whittle and former Yale University President Benno Schmidt to pioneer the use of private management to transform low-performing urban schools.

On a recent California STAR Test, the K-8 Edison-Brentwood significantly outperformed Ravenswood's traditional schools as well as East Palo Alto Academy Elementary in both English Language Arts



At East Palo Alto Charter School, college flags denote each teacher's alma mater — and classroom.

"We've tried to focus on all the other things not picked up by the accountability systems that are important for success in life, like being able to articulate an idea, to dress correctly, to be on time, shake hands, look people in the eye, present ideas with self-confidence and listen to feedback and take it gracefully," Stipek said.

"These are very important skills we feel our graduates need to have."

In time, the university hopes to bring resources and professional development opportunities into East Palo Alto, not just for its own charters but for the whole district.

Stanford's commitment to East Palo Alto sealed the deal for Richard Mojarro, a seasoned educator



Noel Marcias, a seventh-grader at Costano Elementary School, a traditional public school in East Palo Alto, works on a biology exercise Tuesday. State test results at Costano increased 10 percent this year over 2008.

and Mathematics. The only school scoring better was East Palo Alto Charter.

Principal Tami Espinosa attributes Edison-Brentwood's results to a stable, well-trained staff and ensuring the curriculum is followed "with fidelity." Edison-Brentwood, she noted, uses the same textbooks as the rest of the district: Open Court and Everyday Mathematics.

Edison-Brentwood has operated in East Palo Alto since 2000. As a "dependent charter," it is in a slightly different category than the other four "independent charters," Espinosa said.

Edison-Brentwood also is the only East Palo Alto charter operating under a union contract with its teachers.

"We are a neighborhood school. Our funding goes through Ravenswood and we pay a fee to Edison to manage us. We're given less money because we're paying two bosses, but we have some autonomy," Espinosa said.

"We can choose our own curriculum and choose our own school day. We have a separate agreement with our teachers so we have a longer school day — we're in class from 7:30 a.m. until 2:45 p.m."

Edison-Brentwood also boasts specialized teachers in art, music and P.E., which frees up 45 minutes per day of the regular teachers' time to collaborate.

"It is very structured time for our teachers to have good conversations about best practices," Espinosa said.

"On Mondays they look at academic data, on Tuesdays behavior, and so forth."

All told, the initiatives to improve education in Ravenswood have gained the approval not just of its participants but outside observers as well.

The San Mateo County Grand Jury has urged the Ravenswood school trustees to continue their support for charter schools. (For the grand jury's full report, see www.sanmateocourt.org/grandjury/2008/Grand-Jury-Charter-Schools-to-Judge.pdf.)

"The charter schools that have been operating for five years or more are making solid positive contributions to student performance and have highlighted the importance of parent involvement and maintenance of high student expectations," the grand jury said in May.

"The local charter schools and Stanford University are willing partners with energy, ideas and resources to contribute to district-wide improvement." ■

Staff Writer Chris Kenrick can be e-mailed at ckenrick@paweekly.com.

On the cover: First-graders in Mary Mitchell's class at East Palo Alto Charter School do their best hawk imitations during a phonics lesson last week. Photograph by Veronica Weber.

TALK ABOUT IT
www.PaloAltoOnline.com

What do you think of the rise of charter schools serving East Palo Alto students?



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Support our Kids with a gift to the Holiday Fund.

Last Year's Grant Recipients

Adolescent Counseling Services	..... \$10,000
Art in Action	..... \$5,000
Baby Basics of the Peninsula, Inc.	..... \$1,200
Bread of Life	..... \$5,000
Breast Cancer Connections	..... \$5,000
California Family Foundation	..... \$2,500
Cleo Eulau Center	..... \$5,000
Collective Roots	..... \$10,000
Community Legal Services in EPA	..... \$7,500
Community Working Group, Inc.	..... \$7,500
Downtown Streets, Inc.	..... \$10,000
East Palo Alto Children's Day Committee	..... \$5,000
East Palo Alto Kids Foundation	..... \$10,000
East Palo Alto Youth Court	..... \$7,500
Environmental Volunteers	..... \$3,000
EPA.net	..... \$5,000
Foothill-De Anza Foundation \$7,500
Foundation for a College Education \$5,000
Hidden Villa \$5,000
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Jordan Middle School PTA \$5,000
Kara \$10,000
Midpeninsula Community Media Center \$5,000
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New Creation Home Ministries \$7,500
Nuestra Casa \$10,000
Opportunity Health Center \$10,000
Palo Alto Art Center Foundation	..... \$5,000
Palo Alto Drug and Alcohol Community Collaborative (PADACC) \$10,000
Palo Alto YMCA \$10,000
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TheatreWorks \$5,000
Youth Community Service \$7,500
CHILD CARE CAPITAL GRANTS	
Children's Center \$5,000
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The Children's Pre-School Center \$5,000

Give to the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund and your donation is doubled. You give to non-profit groups that work right here in our community. It's a great way to ensure that your charitable donations are working at home.

Non-profit grant application and guidelines at www.PaloAltoOnline.com



Each year the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund raises money to support programs serving families and children in the Palo Alto area. Since the Weekly and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation cover all the administrative costs, every dollar raised goes directly to support community programs through grants to non-profit organizations ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000.

And with the generous support of matching grants from local foundations, including the Packard and Hewlett foundations and the Peery & Arrillaga family foundations, your tax-deductible gift will be doubled in size. A donation of \$100 turns into \$200 with the foundation matching gifts.

Whether as an individual, a business or in honor of someone else, help us beat last year's total of \$260,000 by making a generous contribution to the Holiday Fund.

With your generosity, we can give a major boost to the programs in our community helping kids and families.

175 donors through 12/10/09 totalling \$56,347 with match \$112,694 has been raised for the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund

15 Anonymous	\$2975	Tony & Judy Kramer	**	In Honor Of	**	Mary Floyd	**
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The Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund is a fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation. All donations will be acknowledged by mail and are tax deductible as permitted by law. All donors will be published in the Palo Alto Weekly unless the coupon is marked "Anonymous." For information on making contributions of appreciated stock, contact Amy Renalds at (650) 326-8210.

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Editorial

A bad initial process on global warming

Palo Alto City Council couldn't have picked a worse time to push through a suggestion for a 'task force' to study local climate-change impacts

In the face of massive budget cuts confronting Palo Alto city officials, the City Council this week took a time out to pass post-midnight actions relating to global warming, its potential impacts on Palo Alto and what the city might do in terms of long-term responses.

"They are doing WHAT?????" one regular observer of city operations reacted in an e-mail. The critic isn't alone.

The actual council motions are vague and harmless. One "acknowledges" the importance of true-cost pricing of goods to include the costs relating to climate change, and the other suggests to next year's council that it create a task force on local impacts of global warming and climate change.

There is little question that over the next 50 to 100 years there could be serious changes in Palo Alto's circumstances, and that some long-term advance planning could help offset the worst impacts of such changes.

These could be very real, such as declining snowpack in the Sierra drastically affecting both Palo Alto's electrical supply and rates and its Hetch Hetchy water supply. A rise in sea level of only a few feet could subject lowland Palo Alto to serious flooding of 20 or 25 percent of its homes and business real estate, as well as key city facilities. The probability of more severe storms resultant creek flooding should be considered.

It would be prudent to identify such impacts and begin to plan to counter them to the extent possible.

In addition, as Councilman Pat Burt points out, it would be an opportunity for Palo Alto to establish stronger collaborative ties with Stanford University and its base of world-class experts in areas related to climate and hydrology.

It is notable that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger also last week announced a statewide initiative to identify impacts of climate change and what might be done to lessen or respond to them on a statewide basis. And the international climate-change conference in Copenhagen is underway.

We have no serious argument with the apparent intent behind the council motions — acknowledging the importance of assigning "true costs" to resources and food and the idea of planning ahead locally for potentially serious changes in climate. The primary "minimal" cost would be in the staff time of Debra van Duynhoven, assistant to the city manager for sustainability, better known as the city's new "sustainability coordinator" — a position that generated criticism when it was created. A fair question is the "negative cost" of what other things won't be getting done by her. It would help if officials used common English, eschewing trendy jargon terms such as "externality costs."

Finally, how this matter was handled itself is significant. Based on a "colleague's memo" late last week from Mayor Peter Drekmeier and council members Burt, Yiway Yeh and Greg Schmid, the matter was quickly added to the council agenda for last Monday night.

Because of other agenda items, it wasn't considered until past midnight Tuesday morning. There was virtually no advance public outreach or attempt to disseminate the memo to the media or neighborhood groups so people would know what was being considered.

This procedure flies in the face of public statements by virtually every council member that they believe in timely advance information on agenda items. Such statements were made in their campaigns for council and in endorsement interviews.

Yet the council members blithely ignored those promises and approved by a 7-0 vote vague non-urgent (even if worthy) motions, apparently just to get on the record as moving ahead on global warming during the tenure of outgoing Mayor Peter Drekmeier and others (Kishimoto, John Barton and Jack Morton) who will be leaving the council. Councilman Larry Klein was the sole exception to quick adoption of feel-good motions, making important modifications.

This is a terrible procedural example to set for the four new members who will be joining the council Jan. 4 — each of whom also has pledged to support early and adequate dissemination of information on upcoming council matters. We and neighborhood observers of city actions will be watching.

In this case, advance outreach could have avoided or minimized negative responses to what could be a good idea. No substantive damage was done because of the harmless, vague nature of the actions — except to the council's own credibility.

Spectrum

Editorials, letters and opinions

Paly traffic light

Editor,

On Nov. 24, the City of Palo Alto activated a new traffic signal at the intersection of Embarcadero Road and the Paly driveway.

This signal was required as part of the approval of the Trader Joe's market. However, prior to opening of the Trader Joe's, the city did not receive all the necessary vehicle detectors, controllers and cabinets. To avoid severe congestion with the new store, the staff used their spare traffic-signal equipment to activate the signal.

Hence, without vehicle detection, the signal can only operate on fixed timings and it will provide all the phases with or without any vehicles. Therefore, it will cause some delays during a.m./p.m. peak hours.

This is an interim situation until the city receives the new equipment. We are anticipating receiving new signal gear by Dec. 22.

After installing with new cabinet and controller we will be able to incorporate into the city's existing traffic-signal system in order to maintain coordination and efficient traffic flow. Furthermore, the new signal will connect with the existing pedestrian signal to accommodate pedestrian activities.

Sam Peiris
Traffic engineer
City of Palo Alto

Holiday materialism

Editor,

The worst contagious disease of all is materialism!

Seeing all the stuff that people would like to have but can't afford to buy, therefore perhaps encouraging them to murmur in their hearts that they can't have it.

I think the commercialization of Christmas by the merchants is hypocritical, with the wrong meaning of Christmas, the wrong purpose of Christmas, the wrong things for Christmas.

The Christmas tree itself even can be made to symbolize the beauty of life and living.

In wintertime the evergreen, even in the midst of death and decay, is sort of a symbol of everlasting life. It's a symbol of eternal living in spite of winter and all that's dead around, the evergreens survive and stay ever-green and continue to be living, green and beautiful all winter long.

Ted Rudow III
Encina Avenue
Palo Alto

Roberts doesn't get it

Editor,

Palo Alto Public Works Director Glenn Roberts apparently still doesn't get it.

Referring to his staff's decision to disregard a clause, written in bold

type on the planning permit, mandating a 14-day waiting period before the destruction of the California Avenue trees could begin, Roberts told the Weekly that "People wanted to make it happen and have it done before the shopping season to avoid disruptions. That was a good intention, but a very misguided intention."

On Sept. 9, following a sustained campaign by a small, determined group of merchants, Roberts signed a contract with a Hayward-based contractor to have the trees cut down.

Shortly thereafter one of Roberts' subordinates asked the contractor to begin work on Sept. 14, a request with which the contractor was happy to comply.

Roberts' behavior and his subsequent comments show that he fails to understand that his is a position of public trust, that it is utterly inappropriate to give a small group of merchants the power to precipitate massive changes in one of the city's signature public spaces, and that it is critical that this principle be understood and appreciated by every city employee who may be in a position to authorize or initiate such

a project.

Roberts is manifestly and dramatically ill-suited for his current position. He should be asked for his resignation.

Seth Knoepler
Cambridge Avenue
Palo Alto

Climate/diet link

Editor,

With this week's opening of the international climate conference in Copenhagen, the world's attention is focused on global warming and the resulting coastal flooding and extreme weather patterns.

An article in the respected World Watch magazine suggests that most man-made greenhouse gases responsible for global warming are emitted not from industrial smokestacks or car exhausts but from meat and dairy production. This represents a substantial increase from the 18 percent contribution estimated by the 2006 U.N. report (see www.bite-globalwarming.org).

Chief greenhouse-gas carbon dioxide is emitted by burning forests to create animal pastures and by combustion of fossil fuels to op-

(continued on page 20)

YOUR TURN

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

What do you think? Does Palo Alto need a task force to study and plan for local impacts of climate change?

Submit letters to the editor of up to 250 words to letters@pawekly.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 Online Editor Tyler Hanley at editor@pawekly.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 the Editor's blog or just stay up on what people are talking about around town!

Board of Contributors

Can the new JCC and Palo Alto YMCA collaborate in 'community building'?

by Jeff Blum

Here is an idea that could get me into hot water with my fellow YMCA board members: How about creating an association (albeit a loose one, a collaboration) with the new Jewish Community Center?



This idea hit me at our last YMCA board meeting. Staff members mentioned needing a gymnasium on a short-term basis for some youth basketball programs. The JCC would accommodate us but for a fee. The idea that these two nonprofits dedicated to doing good deeds for their community would charge one another for use of their facilities troubled me.

What also helped me develop this idea of somehow combining these two organizations was the fact that we spend nearly every YMCA board meeting discussing the challenges encountered by the YMCA in competing with the new JCC.

The YMCA thrives in this more competitive environment because we have many loyal members who have developed special connections with other members through the YMCA. Additionally, it thrives because of our programs and our outreach to the community.

However, the threat to the YMCA from the splashy new JCC will loom for years unless we focus on finding more ways to work together. Our YMCA board meetings could be much more productive if we could devote less time discussing the JCC as a potential threat and more time discussing how we can collaborate. While there is a mood of collaboration

between these two organizations, it is floating around the edges.

There is a natural synergy supporting an association of the YMCA and JCC. Both nonprofits are devoted to bringing people in our community together. What better example of working together is there than having these organizations meld in some significant ways?

This is not a religious thing. The YMCA is no longer the Young Man's Christian Association. It is non-denominational. Similarly, the JCC is open to all. Still, I see nice symbolism in having these two organizations collaborate in major ways.

Need more synergy? Both the YMCA and the JCC have gymnasiums, pools and workout rooms. Both are far more than gymnasiums, however. They are community-support organizations and facilities.

For example, the YMCA offers scholarship programs to teens who are college bound and the YMCA's Youth in Government program trains high school students to be future community leaders. Both organizations promote healthy youths and teens through summer camp programs, swim classes and basketball teams. The YMCA's further outreach to the community includes subsidizing children's attendance in these summer camps and youth programs where there is a financial need. There are also classes for seniors on proper exercise and nutrition.

Would the concept of loosely combining the YMCA and JCC be doomed to fail, like the failed attempt to combine Microsoft and Yahoo? Is it like HP and Compaq, with two different organizational cultures? We'll never know unless we try.

What could it mean to somehow build collaboration between the two organizations?

The YMCA thrives in this more competitive environment because we have many loyal members who have developed special connections with other members.

How about membership cards allowing YMCA members to use JCC facilities up to 15 times a year and vice versa? How about an informal agreement allowing the two nonprofit organizations to use one another's facilities without charge, on an as-needed basis, if the facilities are available?

How about co-sponsoring events, such as speaker's forums, forums on diversity and forums on promoting healthy kids? What about sharing board members on a rotating basis or having periodic joint meetings?

The YMCA just completed a successful process of combining two associations into one. We now have 11 YMCA's operating under one association on the lower Peninsula. The economies of scale allow us to save money and at the same time offer more programs and greater accessibility to these programs and to YMCA facilities.

Perhaps we can use that combining process as a template for creating a collaborative arrangement with the JCC. I suggest appointing a committee from the two organizations to

explore more ways for them to collaborate.

Naysayers may argue that competition is good and I should leave well enough alone. What I propose will not make competition evaporate. If it did it would be because the organizations went the next step and became one. However, I do not envision thereby creating a WalMart monster.

The positive response I anticipate receiving to my YMCA-JCC collaboration concept motivates me to pursue my next idea: Combining Palo Alto and Menlo Park into one municipal entity. This happens to be an idea whose roots go back decades to when longtime Menlo Park Councilman and Mayor Ira Bonde suggested creating a "community of interest" of Midpeninsula cities. That was quickly dubbed "Bonde County" and never taken seriously. Stay tuned. ■

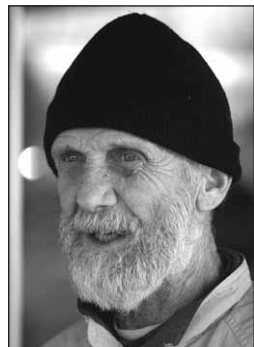
Palo Altan Jeff Blum, a family law attorney practicing in Palo Alto, is on the Board of Directors of the Palo Alto YMCA and a former member of the Palo Human Relations Commission. He can be e-mailed at Blumesq@aol.com.

For information and donations go to www.PaloAltoOnline.com

Streetwise

"What do you think of what's happened to Tiger Woods?" Has your opinion of him changed?" Asked at Molly Stones on California Avenue.

Interviews by John Squire. Photographs by Veronica Weber.



John Waters
Unemployed
Ensign Way, Palo Alto

"I don't think he's as clean as he used to be, but I guess he's human."



Karen Smith
Financial Manager
Park Drive, Morgan Hill

"I just think people should leave him alone. It's a personal matter."



Jim Ashikawa
Retiree
Fernando Avenue, Palo Alto

"He's human. We're all human. We all make mistakes."



Pierce Legrain
Entrepreneur
Cambridge Avenue, Palo Alto

"He seemed like a person that had control of everything. If you dig deep into the veneer of anyone perfect, you shouldn't be surprised finding vast gaps."



Chrissie Bagan
Legal Assistant
Broadway, Los Gatos

"My opinion has changed. I don't think he's a very nice guy, especially with all that's at stake, with his career and endorsements."



PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL
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(TENTATIVE) AGENDA-SPECIAL MEETING-COUNCIL CHAMBERS
DECEMBER 14, 2009 - 6:30 PM

CLOSED SESSION

1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - POTENTIAL/ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
 Subject: Significant Exposure to Litigation against the City of Palo Alto by Summerhill Redwood Gate LLC
 Authority: Government Code § 54956.9(b)(3)(C)

Council Conference Room
7:00 or as soon as possible thereafter
2. Joint Meeting with the Utilities Advisory Commission Regarding Utilities Issues

Council Chambers
8:00 or as soon as possible thereafter
3. Adoption of a Resolution of the Council of the City of Palo Alto Expressing Appreciation to Susie Ord Upon Her Retirement
4. Adoption of a Resolution of the Council of the City of Palo Alto Expressing Appreciation to Anun Arunamata Upon His Retirement
5. Adoption of a Resolution of the Council of the City of Palo Alto Expressing Appreciation to Liz Thomas Upon Her Retirement
6. Proclamation Expressing Appreciation to Sam Yates for His Outstanding Efforts with the Color of Palo Alto
7. Proclamation Expressing Appreciation to Sunny Dykwell for Being Selected as One of the 100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the U.S.
8. Proclamation Expressing Appreciation to Nana Luz for Being Selected as One of the 100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the U.S.
9. Proclamation for the Sustainability Team
10. Approval of an Agreement Between the City of Palo Alto and the Family Resources Foundation in Palo Alto for Mutual Cooperation and Support
11. Approval of a Contract with Elite Landscaping Incorporated, in the Amount of \$1,220,075 for Construction of Greer Park Renovation and Pump Station Replacement - Capital Improvement Program Project PE-09002 *(continued by Council Motion on November 16, 2009)*
12. Approval to Establish a Policy to Extended Producer Responsibility and Initial Action on Plastic Foam Packaging and Adoption of a Resolution for Extended Producer Responsibility Supporting State and National Producer Responsibility Actions
13. Approval of a Cooperative Agreement and Related Matching Funds in an Amount Not to Exceed \$90,000 with the City of Mountain View for the San Antonio Road Bridge Overpass Repair Project – Capital Improvement Program Project PE-06001
14. Approval of Amendment No. 1 to Utilities Public Benefit Contract for Commercial Energy Efficiency Programs with Ecology Action to Allow Up to \$559,166 in Additional Funds Over Four Years and Adoption of an Ordinance Amending the Budget for Fiscal Year 2010 to Provide an Additional Appropriation of \$279,583 within the Electric Fund to Expand Commercial Energy Efficiency Program
15. Adoption of a Budget Amendment Ordinance in the Amount of \$381,583 for Costs Related to Constructing a Temporary Library and Teen Center at the Cubberley Community Center; Approval of a Contract with Johnstone Moyer, Inc., in a Total Amount Not to Exceed \$227,463 to Convert the Cubberley Community Center Auditorium Into a Temporary Library to Replace the Mitchell Park Library (Capital Improvement Program Project PE-09010)
16. Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Letter Approving the City's Participation in a Public-Private Partnership in Wave One's Application for a \$2,500,000 Grant Funded by the California Energy Commission State Energy Program
17. Adoption of Resolution Amending the FY2007-FY2009 Compensation Plan for Limited Hourly Personnel Adopted by Resolution No. XXXX to Revise the Provisions Related to Term of Employment
18. Adoption of a Resolution to Provide a Supplemental Military Leave Benefit to Pay for the Differential Between Regular Salary and Military Pay and to Extend Employee Benefits (as applicable) to Employees Called to Active Duty
19. Adoption of a Resolution Expressing Appreciation to Janice Hall Upon Her Retirement
20. Adoption of a Resolution Expressing Appreciation to Brad Herran Upon His Retirement
21. Adoption of a Resolution Expressing Appreciation to Diana Ward Upon Her Retirement
22. Adoption of a Resolution Expressing Appreciation to Gary Clarien Upon His Retirement
23. Adoption of a Resolution Expressing Appreciation to Doug Fox Upon His Retirement
24. Adoption of a Resolution Declaring Weeds to be a Nuisance and Setting January 11, 2010 for a Public Hearing for Objections to Proposed Weed Abatement
25. Request for Authorization to Increase Existing Agreement with the Law Firm of Duncan Weinberg by an Additional \$140,000 for a Total Contract Not to Exceed Amount of \$200,000
26. PUBLIC HEARING: Approval of (1) a Mitigated Negative Declaration; (2) a Site and Design Review Application for the Demolition of Three Commercial Buildings (Including the Palo Alto Bowl and Motel 6) and the Construction of a Four-Story Building Containing 167 Hotel Guestrooms, and 26 Three-Story Residential Townhomes on a Site Comprised of Four Parcels of Land Zoned RM-1, RM-15 and CS; (3) a Tentative Map Merging the Four Parcels into a 3.62 Acre Parcel for Condominium Subdivision into a Hotel Unit and 26 Residential Units; and (4) a Record of Land Use Action for Approval of the Project Located at 4301 and 4329 El Camino Real
27. Public Hearing: Pursuant to Government Code Section 30061, Title 3, Division 3, relating to the Supplemental Law Enforcement Services Fund, to Consider the Police Chief's Request to Purchase Computer Forensic Software, Global Positioning Devices, Radio Earpieces, Remote Area Lighting Systems, Patrol Team Operation Kits, Replacement K-9 Unit, and Additional Funding for the Crime Scene Evidence Collection Vehicle
28. Public Hearing: Approval of Proposed Participation by the City of Palo Alto the "City" in the CaliforniaFIRST Program of the California Statewide Communities Development Authority. Participation in the CaliforniaFIRST Program will Enable Property Owners to Finance Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Water Efficiency Improvements on Their Property Through the Levy of Contractual Assessments Pursuant to Chapter 29 of Division 7 of the Streets & Highways Code ("Chapter 29") and the Issuance of Improvement Bonds Under the Improvement Bond Act of 1915 (Streets and Highways Code Sections 8500 and Following) Upon the Security of the Unpaid Contractual Assessments. Chapter 29 Provides that Assessments May be Levied Under its Provisions Only with the Free and Willing Consent of the Owner of Each Lot or Parcel on Which an Assessment is Levied at the Time the Assessment is Levied
29. Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report for Fiscal Year 2009 – Annual Report on City Government Performance
30. Finance Committee Recommendation Regarding the Budget Amendment Ordinance for Tech Fund
31. Ad Hoc Committee Monthly Report on High Speed Rail

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Finance Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 15, at 7:00 p.m. regarding 1) Recommendation Regarding Adoption of Ordinance Authorizing Closing of the Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2009, including Reappropriation Requests, Closing Completed Capital Improvement Projects, Authorizing Transfers to Reserves and Approval of Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), and 2) Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Year-End Capital Improvement Program Projects Status Report

The Policy and Services Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 17, at 7:00 p.m. regarding 1) Prevailing Wage Study Criteria, 2) Social Networking Policy, 3) Legislative Program, and 3) Workplan Priority Setting

Letters

(continued from page 18)

erate feed crop, factory farm and slaughterhouse machinery, trucks and refrigeration equipment. The much more damaging methane and nitrous oxide are discharged from digestive tracts of cattle and from animal waste cesspools, respectively.

Whatever the 190 nations' representatives decide in Copenhagen, each of us can help reduce global warming three times a day.

Our local supermarket stocks a rich variety of soy-based lunch "meats," hotdogs, veggie burgers, dairy products and ready-to-eat frozen dinners, as well as a vast cornucopia of more traditional fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Product lists and easy recipes are at www.tryveg.com.

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 Watch them at
www.PaloAltoOnline.com


Arts & Entertainment

A weekly guide to music, theater, art, movies and more, edited by Rebecca Wallace



Nicholas Usich, 4, waits for the train car to come around the bend at Palo Alto's Museum of American Heritage. Charlie Pack, right, created the models from Meccano and Erector-set parts.

Veronica Weber



Veronica Weber

A figure delightedly watches the working model Ferris wheel spin.

Models in motion

METAL CONSTRUCTION TOYS REVOLVE, RAMBLE AND WHIR AT MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HERITAGE

by Be'eri Moalem

The "Meccano-Mania" exhibit at the Museum of American Heritage in Palo Alto opened a few minutes ago, but Charlie Pack is still making adjustments.

Armed with his screwdrivers, he tightens the last of the bolts into place on one metal model. "Well, it looks like it's gonna be OK and the belt's gonna stay on," he says as he puts his tools away.

The exhibit features miniature models by Pack that

move mechanically, producing a crackling clatter of metallic clicks and electrical whirs. There's a revolving rocket ride; a train set entitled "Little Joey" complete with drawbridges; a mechanical cyclist; a merry-go-round; a riverboat called the "Delta Queen"; and a 1/20 model of San Francisco's California Street cable car.

"The riverboat consists of 5,409 pieces," says Pack in an

(continued on page 28)



Veronica Weber

Model rocket ships whiz by in the museum exhibit.

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Here are some good reasons to shop at locally owned businesses this holiday season and all year:

- It keeps dollars in our economy. For every \$100 a consumer spends, local businesses give back \$68 to the local economy, chain stores only give back \$43.
- It makes us unique. There's no place like the Peninsula! Homegrown businesses are part of what makes us special.
- It creates local jobs. Local businesses are the best at creating higher-paying jobs for our neighbors.
- It helps the environment. Buying locally saves transportation fuel. Plus you get products that you know are safe and well made, because our neighbors stand behind them.
- It nurtures our community. Studies show that local businesses donate to community causes at more than twice the rate of chains.
- It conserves tax dollars. Spending locally ensures that your sales taxes are reinvested where they belong, right here in your community.

www.hometownpeninsula.org

This message is brought to you by Hometown Peninsula,

an alliance of locally-owned independent businesses. We strive to maintain our unique community character, to educate local residents that purchasing locally creates a strong local economy and bring back the vibrant hometown to our communities that is being displaced by national chains and online stores.

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Holiday Calendar

WAYS TO GIVE, MUSIC, THEATER,
FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Sounds of the season

Viva la Musica!

Choir, orchestra and soloists will present Bach and Holiday Lights in concert under the direction of Shulamit Hoffmann.
Dec. 19, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Carrington Hall, 1201 Brewster at Broadway, Redwood City
www.vivalamusica.org

Gryphon Carolers Holiday Concert

Innovative holiday songs from the Gryphon Carolers.
Dec. 12, 7-10 p.m. Premium seating is \$25 for adults and \$18 for seniors and children under 12.
Spangenberg Theater, 780 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto
www.gryphoncarolers.com

'Twas the Night Before Christmas' ballet

The Dancers Repertory Theatre and Menlo Park Academy of Dance present an "alternative to 'The Nutcracker.'" The 75-minute ballet includes costumes, sets and the familiar cadence of the "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" poem.
Dec. 12, 4 and 7 p.m.; Dec. 13, 1:30 and 4 p.m.
\$20 general, \$12 for seniors and children under 12
Woodside Performing Arts Center,

Woodside High School, Churchill Avenue and Woodside Road, Woodside
www.twasthenight.org

Ballet America's "Nutcracker"

Ballet America presents the classic holiday story of "The Nutcracker."
Dec. 11 and 12, 7-9 p.m. \$20 - \$35.
Carrington Hall, 1201 Brewster Ave., Redwood City.
www.balletamerica.org/

"A Civil War Christmas"

TheatreWorks presents the West Coast premiere of "A Civil War Christmas," a musical. Fact and fiction, old-time carols, and traditional tunes entwine in a saga of a divided nation longing for hope.
Dec. 2-27, \$26-\$62.
Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.
www.theatreworks.org

Winter Fairy Tale

Fairy tale set to the music of Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov in the Russian Ballet style.
Dec. 20, 5-7 p.m. Tickets: \$33 adults; \$28 seniors/children (12 & under).
Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View.

Local Businesses

PROVIDING EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR HOLIDAYS COMPLETE!



As we plan for the holiday season, we reflect upon the fine selection of local businesses that serve our community's needs so well. Palo Alto boasts a wide variety of retail stores that offer gifts to meet the tastes and budgets of just about everyone... from shops located in neighborhood centers to California Avenue and Downtown to our regional shopping centers that provide unique one-of-a-kind art pieces to high-style designer clothing... and holiday decorations and cards to the most delectable baked goods or special ingredients for your family celebrations. It's all here in Palo Alto.

Since the holiday season is one of the busiest times of the year, it's a great time to take advantage of Palo Alto's many restaurants... to save time for yourself or to entertain friends and family. No matter where you shop in Palo Alto, you'll find eateries to satisfy your hunger.

And when you "shop local" you support your community in more ways than one. Not only do you support the vitality of local

shops, restaurants and their employees, you participate in building community. When you shop Downtown this holiday season, you can participate in one of the many events planned for the renovated Lytton Plaza. You can help the California Avenue merchants support the Toys for Tots drive on Sunday, December 6 at 7:30 p.m. when Santa arrives on the Cal Train. Town & Country Shopping Center businesses will match your food donations to the Second Harvest Food Bank pound for pound starting November 23 and Stanford Shopping Center will support area nonprofits Home and Hope, SV2 and the East Palo Alto Academy through gift wrapping services, gift tag sales and hot chocolate sales through the holiday shopping season.

When you shop, eat and have fun in Palo Alto this holiday season you help to ensure that our businesses will continue to be an integral part of the distinctive character of our home. Thank you for shopping and dining locally!

This message brought to you by:



Holiday Calendar

WAYS TO GIVE, MUSIC, THEATER, FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

www.mountainview.gov/mvcpa/

Songs of Snow and Soul

The Peninsula Women's Chorus present a holiday-concert program contrasting the stark winter landscape with musings on peace, love, and harmony. Program highlights: Edward Elgar, "The Snow"; R Murray Schafer, "Snowforms"; Nicola Porpora, Magnificat; Eric Whitacre, Five Hebrew Love Songs; Franz Gruber, "Silent Night."

Dec. 12 at 2:30 p.m. at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Ave., Palo Alto. Dec. 13 at 4 p.m. at St. Patrick's Seminary, 320 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park. Tickets are \$15-20. <http://www.pwchorus.org/>

Where to give

Community Services Agency of Mountain View and Los Altos.

Volunteers are needed to support distribution programs. Monetary donations are also welcome, as are donations of food, toys and clothing. A schedule of volunteer opportunities is available online. To sign up or to get more information, visit www.cscares.org/html/hsp.html, email



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Cops That Care

The Mountain View Police Department is now accepting new, unwrapped toys and clothing as well as gift cards and cash. This program is designed for families in Mountain View that are unable to purchase gifts for their children this holiday season. Donations can be brought directly to the police department. For more information about this program, contact 650-903-6344. 1000 Villa St., Mountain View.

InnVision

Donations of new books and toys are needed for distribution through the annual "Holiday Toy Shoppe." Donors are also needed to "adopt" families and individual clients through donations of gifts and gift cards. Donations of canned food and coffee are also welcome. Visit www.innvision.org, e-mail donating@innvision.org or call 650-324-5357. Food donations are accepted Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. All food donations can go 425 Hamilton address at the All Saints Church. Toys and other gifts can be sent to the Opportunity Center at 33 Encina Ave, Palo Alto.

Pet Food Express

Raise money for a nonprofit rescue organization and Palo Alto Animal Services on Saturday, Dec. 12, from noon to 4 p.m., by bringing pets to have their pictures taken with Santa Claus. All proceeds benefit Ity Bitty Orphan Kitty Rescue (IBOK) and its emergency medical fund. Photos are \$10 for one, \$15 for two, and all participants receive a free thank-you gift from Pet Food Express. Throughout the month of December, the store is also offering a "giving tree," with proceeds benefiting Palo Alto Animal Services and IBOK. Customers can make donations of foods and toys after selecting ornaments from the store's Christmas tree. Visit www.petfood-express.com or call 650-856-6666. 3910 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

PETCO's Tree of Hope Fund-raiser

Through Dec. 24, PETCO stores are selling ornament cards in denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10 or \$20 to benefit the PETCO Foundation for orphaned animals. Donations may also be made online. Visit www.petco.com or call 650-966-1233. 1919 El Camino Real, Mountain View.

Ronald McDonald House at Stanford

The house has holiday "giving ornaments" (with one needed item listed on each ornament) available for decorating office Christmas trees or other holiday displays. The "wish-list" items are also displayed online. New, unwrapped gifts should be brought to the house. Monetary donations and volunteers are always appreciated as well. For information on obtaining and using the "giving ornaments," contact Olga Corral at olga@ronaldhouse.net or call 650-470-6008. For general information, visit www.ronaldhouse.net or call 650 470-6000. 520 Sand Hill Road, Palo Alto.

St. Anthony's of Padua Dining Room

The St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room needs hams, fresh produce and all the trimmings for its Christmas Meal served on Dec. 25 from

Holiday Calendar

WAYS TO GIVE, MUSIC, THEATER,
FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

noon to 2:30 p.m. to the needy.

New toys are also needed to give away for children 2-14 years of age to be distributed on Christmas Eve. Open hours for donations are 8 a.m. -4 p.m. Monday-Saturday and holiday-food donations can be accepted throughout Dec. Monetary and clothing donations are also accepted, as well as canned goods of all kinds. Visit paduadiningroom.com, 3500 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park or call 650-365-9665 or 650-365-9664."

Support Network for Battered Women

SNBW is seeking gift cards in small denominations for families in critical need. A list of appropriate gift cards is available online. Normal office hours are Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visit www.snbw.org/donate/gift_cards.htm, e-mail snbwgiftsprogram@yahoo.com or call 408-541-6100 ext. 135. 1257 Tasman Drive, Sunnyvale.

Toys For Tots

Through Dec. 18, new, unwrapped toys for children of all ages can be dropped off at local Coldwell Banker offices. The toys will be delivered by the United States Marine Corps Reserve to local charitable organizations, which will do the distribution to kids. Coldwell Banker locations

include 245 Lytton Ave., Ste. 100, Palo Alto; 800 El Camino Real,

Ste. 300, Menlo Park; 116 Portola Road, Portola Valley; 2969 Woodside Road, Woodside.

The Palo Alto YMCA

Through Dec. 14, the Palo Alto Family YMCA will be collecting gifts for The Family Giving Tree, to provide a present for every child, adult and senior who has asked for one. The giving tree will be displayed

in the lobby with cards attached to it, and interested parties can take one or more cards and purchase the gift listed on the card, returning the gift unwrapped to the YMCA, with the card attached. The YMCA will also have blank cards available if individuals would prefer to write a check or give a gift card. To donate to The Family Giving Tree online, visit www.thefamilygivingtree.org.



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Models

(continued from page 21)

interview at the museum, adding proudly, "I counted." The train set and cable car have more than 7,000 pieces each: bolts, axle rods, girders, bearings, washers.

Pack also keeps track of the labor hours for each model. They range from 100 hours for the smaller pre-designed kit models to over 400 hours for the most complex sets. All of the models have moving parts and activate at the push of a button or the flick of a switch. Pack says, "I can't stand to just see it stand there. ... I want to see it move!"

Gwenyth Claughton, the museum's executive director, says the metal models illustrate one of MOAH's main goals of showcasing mechanical and technical innovations, while also providing an educational connection to children. As the construction toys were particularly popular in the early 20th century, they fit in with the museum's home appliances and other artifacts of that period.

Besides housing special exhibits, the Homer Avenue museum also includes a restored kitchen of the 1920s-'30s, a general store and a children's room where kids today can play with the toys of the past. Like the metal models, the toys are simpler but require kids to use their imagination and build something themselves.

Pack builds his models in his 300-square-foot Los Altos Hills garage,



A metal model of the "Spirit of St. Louis" plane is on display with its hangar.

and keeps an inventory of tens of thousands of parts in dedicated rooms in the house. His wife, Kim, is strict about limiting the pieces to those chambers — the hobby is definitely not allowed into the living room.

Originally from New Mexico and Arizona, Pack moved to Silicon Valley in the 1980s and worked in a variety of software companies. At 71, Charlie refuses to classify himself as retired. "Golf, sunny beaches and bingo doesn't appeal to me," he says. Pack is on MOAH's board of directors and serves as the organization's treasurer. An active member of the Pennsylvania-based Train Collectors Association, he has had works featured at train shows in many places, including conventions

in Seattle, Toronto and San Francisco's Exploratorium.

After a model starts to take shape, Kim Pack comes by the workshop bringing tea and aesthetic recommendations. A textile and jewelry designer, she has an artistic eye that Charlie appreciates, saying, "I'm not an artist — I'm an engineer." She also had a say in the placement in some of the artifacts around the museum. Charlie placed a toy truck model right in the center of a shelf. Kim nudged it slightly off center and tilted it diagonally, adding a sense of depth.

Pack has been building Erector and Meccano sets since childhood, but was pressured by his parents and peers to "grow up." He chose to decline that particular bit of advice,

and points out that the hobby has informed his career. "Today's toys don't teach you anything, except hand-eye coordination and shooting bad guys, but it's like autopilot," he says. "Building these sets teaches you to think and solve engineering problems. ... You need to have patience; you learn about gears, pulleys, motors, wiring and imperfect parts."

Pack occasionally has to bend and cut metal when the pieces don't fit exactly in his designs. He also points out little improvements and adjustments that he has made to kit sets. Pack often builds multiple versions of the same model. "By the time the second version works, I realize I can make it a whole lot better in the next version."

The exhibit also features the marketing that was used for the original model toys. Boxes depict tidy fathers and sons working on a set together with phrases such as "Meccano turns a boy's world into a man's world."

According to the Meccano website, Frank Hornby invented the models' "bolts and nuts system" in his Liverpool workshop in 1898. The first Meccano plant opened in 1907, and Meccano sets are still made today. Erector sets were made by inventor A.C. Gilbert's now-defunct Connecticut company from 1913 until 1967; another company bought the name and made the toys for a few more decades, according to Wikipedia.

Pack says that models that once

sold for \$75 in the '30s can now fetch more than \$3,000 on eBay if the box is closed and in pristine condition.

"I mix and match Meccano and Gilbert Erector parts, which serious collectors frown upon," he says. "I'm not a purist."

These days, the "Meccano-Mania" exhibit is open through March 28 at MOAH, where the museum's many volunteer docents are introducing a new generation to the metal toys. One is Barbara Lawson, who has been volunteering at MOAH since 1997, and has seen a variety of exhibits ranging from cameras to music boxes.

She said she's delighted by Pack's models. "They have a personality of their own." ■

What: The "Meccano-Mania" exhibit at the Museum of American Heritage showcases metal construction toys.

Where: 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto

When: Through March 28, open Friday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cost: Free

Info: Go to www.moah.org or call 650-321-1004.

To truly see these toys in motion, check out Weekly photographer Veronica Weber's video from the Museum of American Heritage exhibit. Go to www.PaloAltoOnline.com.

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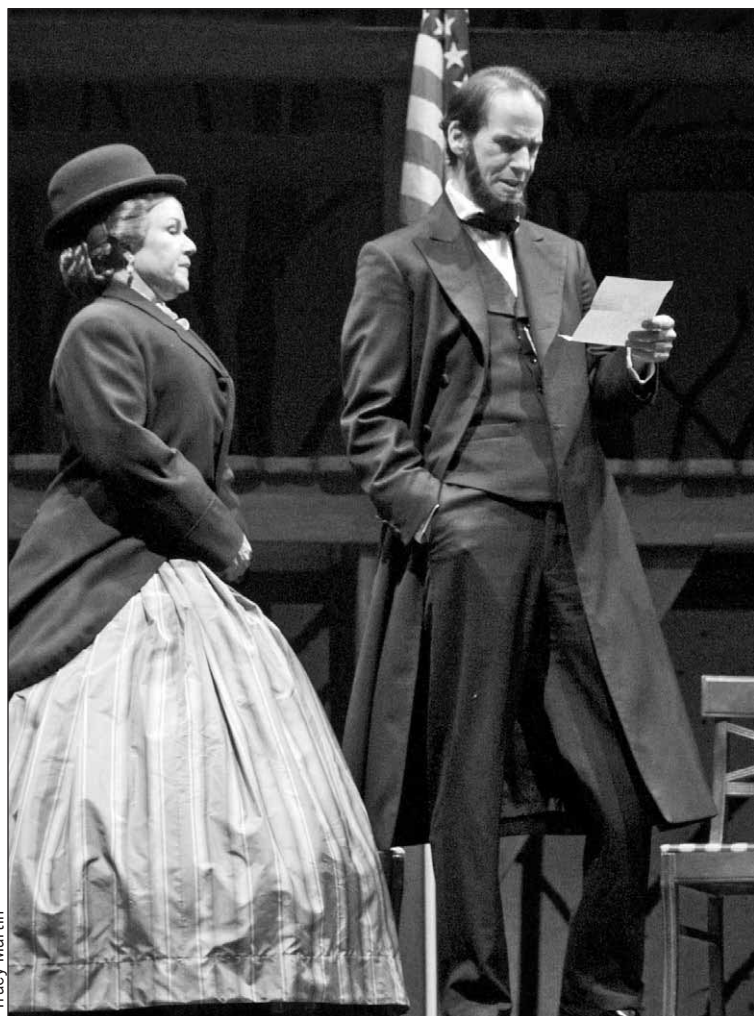
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Tracy Martin

Robert Parsons, right, plays Abraham Lincoln and Elizabeth Parsons is his secretary Nicolay in "A Civil War Christmas."

A Christmas tale without the saccharine

True to form, writer Vogel weaves dark themes and inventive storytelling into Civil War play

by Kevin Kirby

It's easy to make the case for Paula Vogel as America's greatest living female playwright. In the Obie Award-winning "Baltimore Waltz," the Pulitzer Prize-winning "How I Learned to Drive" and a half dozen other notable works, Vogel has tackled a wide range of controversial and dramatically fraught issues, including AIDS, incest, pornography and domestic violence.

Her latest play, "A Civil War Christmas," which is currently receiving its West Coast premiere at TheatreWorks, is set on Christmas Eve in 1864, in the closing months of the American Civil War, and deals with the expected topics: slavery, racism, the imminent assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the terrible human cost of war.

In a departure from her previous work, however, Vogel has consciously constructed "A Civil War Christmas" as a play to which one might bring children. This is not to say that it's a children's play. There are dark themes here, and a dizzying array of plot threads and characters (more than 100 characters played by only 14 actors). But the language is G-rated, the tone of the piece is decidedly educative (more on this later) and Vogel has leavened the evening with a smattering of mid-19th-century songs.

The tunes will be mostly familiar: traditional carols, spirituals and sundry Americana. But "A Civil War Christmas" is by no means a

THEATER REVIEW

musical. The songs punctuate and comment on the action rather than advancing the plot or explicating character. TheatreWorks bills the show as "An American Musical Celebration," but even this may be an overstatement, creating an expectation that the music will be central.

Rather, it is Vogel's inventive storytelling that is central, as she juggles fact and fiction, metaphor and moral. First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln visits wounded soldiers while the president frets over her Christmas gift. An emancipated slave risks everything to get her daughter across the Potomac River to the North and freedom. John Wilkes Booth conspires to kidnap Lincoln as a means of forestalling a looming Union victory. A young teen steals his father's horse and rides off to join the Confederate army. A black war hero vows bloody vengeance for the South's execution of captured black soldiers.

Vogel, who was born and raised in Washington, D.C., where most of the play's action occurs, knows her history. But the Jeopardy trivia of names and dates is merely a backdrop for her story. She is far more interested in educating her audience about the status of African Americans, whether free-born or newly emancipated, during this chapter

in our nation's past. She succeeds on this count, creating a complex portrait of the thorny passage from slavery to freedom.

Since this is a Christmas show, she also delivers a few twists on familiar holiday tropes: the war's leaders cast as the three wise men; a hypothermic child asleep in a bed of straw. If the show sounds complicated, ambitious and a tad unwieldy, well, it is.

It is a testament to Vogel's skill as a playwright (and to the clean, efficient staging of TheatreWorks' artistic director, Robert Kelley) that this mish-mosh of history, music and holiday sentiment succeeds as well as it does. Patient audience members will eventually find their way into the story, and the plot lines do eventually converge.

The strong ensemble cast also deserves credit for keeping the show energized and engaging. A few cast members warrant special mention. Diana Torres Koss is marvelous as Mary Todd Lincoln; her rendition of "Silent Night" (which she sings — oblivious to the irony — to a dying Jewish soldier) borders on the ethereal.

Michael A. Shepperd provides a steady and believable focal point as Sergeant Decatur Bronson, the black Union officer with his sights set on revenge. Shepperd's big baritone voice is also a boon to the production. His powerful lead on "Follow the Drinking Gourd" is one of the first act's vocal highlights.

C. Kelly Wright, who plays Elizabeth Keckley, a former slave who served as Mary Todd Lincoln's dressmaker and confidante, is a sensitive actress and gives a lovely performance of "Balm in Gilead." Jayne Deely and Daveed Daniele Diggs provide comic relief as the gung-ho Confederate teen and his horse, and both do nice work in other roles.

Orchestrator Daryl Waters also does much to make Vogel's construction work. His vocal arrangements of familiar tunes are stirring and often surprising, and his arrangement of "Children Go Where I Send Thee" provides fluidity to a crucial moment in Act II. He has also provided musical accents — often just a single haunting chord — that help the audience navigate some of the playwright's more abrupt jump cuts.

(Waters has also revived a more-or-less forgotten musical form: the quodlibet. Popular in the 19th century, a quodlibet consists of two or more pre-existing folk melodies played together, either in turns or in counterpoint. Waters makes use of the practice several times in the show, as when the chorus begins a Jewish hymn beneath "Silent Night.")

As lovely as most of the songs are, though, several of them seem to have been shoehorned roughly into the script. "The Yellow Rose of Texas" is particularly misplaced, though Shepperd tries hard to sell the number. When he cuts loose, you can almost forget how hackneyed the melody is, and you cringe only briefly at the blatant manipulation — conveniently granting Bronson a backstory with a Texas homestead and a wife named Rose — that Vogel has used to justify the

song's inclusion.

Vogel's storytelling presents similar difficulties. In stitching her disparate stories together, she relies heavily on contrived simultaneity, on coincidence, to link one tale to another. Perhaps it is a conscious narrative device; it's even possible that the introduction of wild coincidence is intentionally Dickensian. Intentional or not, the device ultimately reminds us of the artificiality of what we are watching, pulling us out of the dramatic moment just when we most want to dive in and feel for the characters.

If we want to find hints of Dickens in Vogel's new Christmas show — in the sprawling cast of characters, in names like Erasmus Franklin or Jim Wormley, in the superbly dour costumes by Fumiko Bielefeldt — it isn't hard to do. And "A Civil War Christmas" shares another trait with Dickens: By setting the story in one of the bleakest times our nation has ever known, by telling the stories of soldiers and slaves, presidents and paupers, Vogel has accomplished the nearly impossible task of creating a Christmas tale in which it is

not at all clear that everything will turn out well in the end.

"A Civil War Christmas" is not the most approachable holiday fare out there, nor is it on a par with Vogel's strongest work. But for those with a taste for history, for true ensemble theater, for the simplicity of the old carols, this odd and utterly un-saccharine Christmas tale does hold certain gifts. ■

What: "A Civil War Christmas," presented by TheatreWorks
Where: Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

When: Through Dec. 27, with shows Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m.; and Sundays at 2 and 7 p.m.

Cost: Tickets range from \$26 to \$62 with discounts for students and seniors.

Info: Call 650-463-1960 or go to theatreworks.org.

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Worth a Look

Dance

Smuin Ballet

The annual Christmas show put on by Smuin Ballet could be a perfect fit for this short-attention-span world. The program starts out with classical ballet and then soubresauts all over the place: Eartha Kitt's "Santa Baby," Hanukkah klezmer, Louis Armstrong, tap and swing dance, and a Diana Krall version of "Winter Wonderland," among other directions.

New choreography by Amy Seiwert and Robert Sund is on the bill, with costumes including Christmas tree outfits. Performances happen through Dec. 13 at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts at 500 Castro St., Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 and 8, and Sunday at 2. Tickets are \$41/\$56.

For more, go to smuinballet.org or call 650-903-6000.



Scott Goodman

Brooke Reynolds and Aaron Thayer in Smuin Ballet's "The Christmas Ballet," which is at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts through Dec. 13.

Music

Aux Cajunals

Zydeco, hillbilly swing, R&B and country music come to Tateuchi Hall at the Community School of Music and Arts this Sunday when the Aux Cajunals band plays two free shows.



Suzy and Eric Thompson of Aux Cajunals perform at the Community School of Music and Arts in Mountain View on Dec. 13.

Musicians Suzy and Eric Thompson, with Agi Ban, bring in fiddle, accordion, guitar and triangle sounds as part of the school's free Family Concert Series. Concerts are planned at 2 and 4 p.m. Dec. 13 at 230 San Antonio Circle in Mountain View, with seating first-come, first-served. For more information, go to www.arts4all.org or call 650-917-6800, extension 314.

Music

The Gryphon Carolers

"O Come All Ye Faithful" is transformed into a part-gospel, part-disc number. "Joy to the World" gets sung in bossa-nova style. There's always something different at the annual holiday concert held by the

Gryphon Carolers and All Stars.

This year's show is at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, at Spangenberg Theatre at 780 Arastradero Road in Palo Alto. Original arrangements by the group's co-founder, Ed Johnson, will be featured, along with new compositions by fellow founder

the physicians working through the humanitarian aid organization Doctors Without Borders in war-torn countries such as Congo and Liberia. After the film, ABC journalist Elizabeth Vargas of "20/20" will moderate a panel discussion broadcast from New York City. The panel includes Tom Krueger, a surgeon featured in the film, and Sophie Delauney, executive director of Doctors Without Borders.

Local showings are at 8 p.m. at the Century Cinemas 16, 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View; and at the Century 20 Downtown Redwood City, 825 Middlefield Road. Tickets are \$15. For more about the film go to www.livingin-emergency.com.

Art

Holiday fair

Fleece hats and hand-woven scarves may sound especially appealing nowadays in the brisk weather. These are some of the crafts by area artists on sale at the Artifactory Cooperative's holiday fair, set for this Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 11-13, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Other items on offer will include Ukrainian eggs, blown glass, ceramics and candles, decorated gourds, hemp soap, jewelry, silk and micro-fiber clothing and leather items. The fair is at Hoover House (aka "The Girl Scout House"), 1120 Hopkins Ave., Palo Alto. Call 650-625-1736 or e-mail TheArtifactory@aol.com.

Film

'Living in Emergency'

On Monday, Dec. 14, a one-night screening of "Living in Emergency: Stories of Doctors Without Borders" will be shown at movie theaters around the country, including several on the Peninsula.

The documentary film depicts the chaos, danger and sacrifice of



Movies

Movie reviews by *Jeanne Aufmuth, Peter Canavese, Tyler Hanley, Renata Polt and Susan Tavernetti*

OPENINGS

Invictus ★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) Politics and rugby collide in director Clint Eastwood's thoughtful drama about post-apartheid South Africa and two men who helped unite a fractured country. Inspiring messages about equality, forgiveness and understanding resonate thanks to Eastwood's deft hand and standout performances by Morgan Freeman and Matt Damon.

Racial tensions are high in early- to mid-1990s South Africa, following the end of apartheid and the election of President Nelson Mandela (Freeman). Many South African citizens root against the country's national rugby team — the Springboks — viewing it as a symbol of oppression and prejudice. The vocal majority aims to have the team disbanded, until Mandela intercedes and urges solidarity over "petty revenge."

Mandela sees the struggling Springboks as an opportunity to mend fences and meets with team captain François Pienaar (Damon), encouraging the humble Pienaar to lead his team on an improbable Rugby World Cup championship run. A mutual admiration and respect develops between the two men, although Mandela's skeptical bodyguards and assistants question their president's unusual tactics. But with Mandela's unwavering support and Pienaar's steadfast determination, the populace is soon thinking team color over skin color.

Eastwood has cemented himself as one of the great American directors, and his compassionate touch on films like this is exactly why. He brings a quiet sincerity to every scene, whether it's Mandela getting out of bed or Pienaar delivering a motivational speech. Freeman and Damon — both lauded in Hollywood for their skill and professionalism — are perfectly cast and shine in challenging roles, though secondary performers seem to fade into the background.

One of the film's best scenes has Pienaar and his team on a tour of Robben Island, where Mandela spent much of his 27-year imprisonment. Pienaar stands somberly in Mandela's tiny cell, barely able to extend his arms. He sees specters of Mandela's time there and hears his voice recite the poem "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley. While Pienaar's teammates act like wide-eyed tourists, Pienaar himself discovers a deeper appreciation for his president, his country and his own inner strength.

Filed on location in South Africa, "Invictus" features captivating landscapes and exceptional production values, especially sound (the pitch-perfect sound during the rugby matches is particularly impressive). The movie's only obvious flaw is a drawn-out climax that may leave viewers a bit exhausted.

But Eastwood, Freeman and Damon are a team well worth rooting for. Olé! Olé! Olé!

Rated PG-13 for brief strong language. 2 hours, 12 minutes.

— *Tyler Hanley*

Up in the Air ★★

(Century 20) Jason Reitman directs one of the most relevant comedies to come along in years, with dashing George Clooney as his impossibly perfect wingman.

Clooney is professional downsizer Ryan Bingham, a certified "transition specialist" with an arsenal of pretty platitudes (think of this as a re-birth!) at his disposal for doing a company's dirty work and salvaging the wounds of unemployment. Ryan loves his job so much that recycled air, artificial lighting and TSA security checks are warm reminders that he's home. What do you expect from a guy whose lifelong dream is to log 10 million miles on his frequent-flyer program?

Ryan meets his match in Alex Goran (Vera Far-

miga), a sexy mileage junkie equally as turned on by elite status and sleekly wheeled luggage. Theirs is a match made in heaven — and hour-long intervals in Omaha, Modesto and Wichita.

Ryan's carefully crafted cocoon threatens to rupture when savvy supervisor Craig Gregory (Jason Bateman) hires wet-behind-the-ears consultant Natalie Keener (Anna Kendrick) to eviscerate 85 percent of the travel budget and take the company "glocal" — global-turning-local to you and me.

Ryan and Natalie set off for Detroit and a series of test firings to prove their points. His that the proper sack requires face-to-face commitment; hers that a disembodied computer presence combined with a good T1 line is just as effective. Let the games begin!

Reitman gets it right on almost all fronts: the thrills and agony of 270 days a year on the road, the pain of the newly unwaged and the pitfalls of minimizing legal blowback. Add to this a pair of budding friendships rife with drama and a razor-thin line dividing personal from the professional.

Clooney is aces with a glib delivery and killer smile and deserves every one of his year-end plaudits. Farmiga is magnificent — not her fault that the story's weak link comes at her expense. Kendrick is practically perfect as the upbeat, fragile newbie facing life's hardest lessons.

Scripting is wry and sharp — all comic strum and urgency. This one's a winner.

Rated R for language and sexual content. 1 hour, 49 minutes.

— *Jeanne Aufmuth*

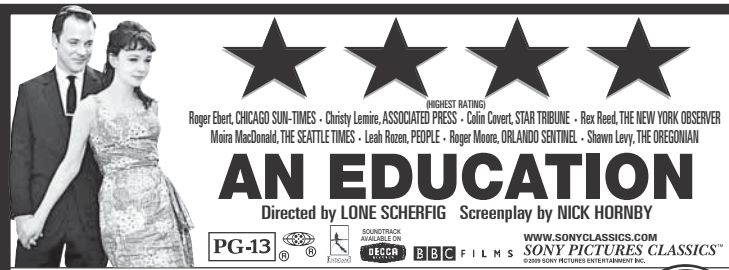
The Princess and the Frog ★★

(Century 16, Century 20) The more things change, the more they stay the same. Plenty of change arises in Disney's musical "The Princess and the Frog": people turning into frogs, love transforming two into one, and the studio returning from CGI to 2D animation after a five-year hiatus. But all the change feels awfully familiar, by (backwards) design, making "The Princess and the Frog" cinematic comfort food, if not great art.

Loosely based on E.D. Baker's "The Frog Princess," Disney's latest literally trumpets another important change: the studio's first African-American princess. Tiana (Anika Noni Rose of "Dreamgirls") doesn't start out a princess; like Cinderella, Tiana is a drudge. With dreams of one day honoring her late father's dream of opening a restaurant in their beloved New Orleans, Tiana works two jobs and keeps her eyes on the prize, while her white friend — debutante Charlotte La Bouff (Jennifer Cody) — moons over her presumptive future husband, one Prince Naveen (Bruno Campos) of Moldonia. As Dr. John sings in the film-launching number "Down in New Orleans," "Rich people, poor people all got dreams./Dreams do come true in New Orleans."

But don't trust the fellow advertising "Dreams Made Real." Voodoo sorcerer Dr. Facilier (the ever-distinctive Keith David), aka "The Shadow Man," expertly manipulates the emotional needs of Prince Naveen and his mutton-chopped, roly-poly valet Lawrence (Peter Bartlett). Chaos ensues, with Naveen turned into a frog and his valet determined to steal his princely life. When Naveen begs a kiss from Tiana, it's not he who becomes human, but she who becomes a frog, forcing the pair to seek refuge in the bayou. After meeting aspiring jazz trumpeter Louis (Michael-Leon Wooley) — inconveniently an alligator — and heartsick Cajun firefly Ray (Jim Cummings), the new friends go off to see the wizard — err, that is, 179-year-old blind voodoo priestess Mama Odie (Jenifer Lewis).

(continued on next page)



HIGHEST RATING
Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES • Christy Lemire, ASSOCIATED PRESS • Colin Covert, STAR TRIBUNE • Rex Reed, THE NEW YORK OBSERVER
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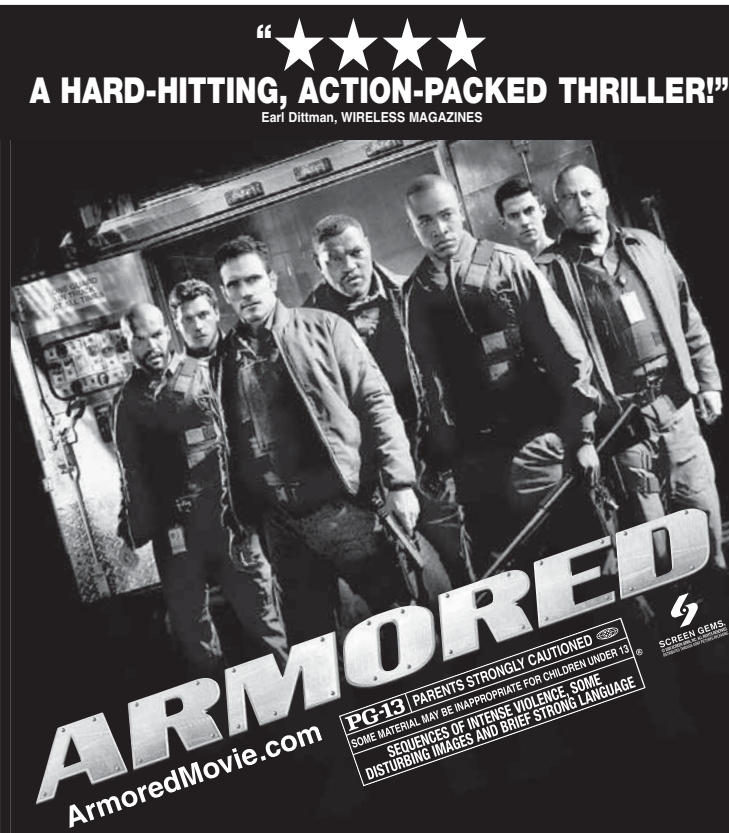
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Movies

MOVIE TIMES

2012 (PG-13) **	Century 16: 11:40 a.m.; 3:10, 6:40 & 10:10 p.m. Century 20: 12:10, 3:35, 7 & 10:20 p.m.
A Serious Man (R) ****	Century 16: 2:30 p.m. Fri.-Tue. & Thu. also at 7:45 p.m.
An Education (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11:15 a.m.; 1:45, 4:15, 6:45 & 9:15 p.m.
Armored (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11:20 a.m.; 1:35, 3:50, 6, 8:15 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: Fri.-Tue. at 11:25 a.m.; 1:20, 3:35, 4:40, 5:50, 8:05, 9:35 & 10:35 p.m. Sat. & Sun. also at 10:35 a.m. Wed. & Thu. at 11:25 a.m.; 1:20, 3:35, 4:30, 5:50, 8:05 & 10:35 p.m.
Avatar (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: Thu in 3D at 12:01 a.m. Century 20: Thu in 3D at 12:01 a.m.
Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans (R) **	Century 20: Fri.-Thu. 9:05 p.m.
The Blind Side (PG-13) **	Century 16: 1:05, 4:05, 7:05 & 10:05 p.m. Century 20: 12:05, 1:25, 3, 4:20, 6, 9 & 10:20 p.m. (No 10:20 p.m. Mon.)
Brothers (R) ***	Century 16: 11:45 a.m.; 2:25, 5:05, 7:40 & 10:15 p.m. Century 20: Noon, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45 & 10:30 p.m.
Disney's A Christmas Carol (PG) ***	Century 16: In 3D at 11:10 a.m.; 1:40, 4:25, 7 & 9:35 p.m. Century 20: 11:35 a.m.; 2, 4:25, 6:50 & 9:10 p.m.
Everybody's Fine (PG-13) ***	Century 16: 11:30 a.m.; 2:10, 4:35, 7:20 & 9:45 p.m. Century 20: 12:20, 2:40, 5:05, 7:30 & 9:55 p.m.
Fantastic Mr. Fox (PG) ****	Century 16: 10:55 a.m.; 1:15, 3:25, 5:35, 7:50 & 10 p.m. Century 20: 1:30, 3:40, 5:55, 8:10 & 10:25 p.m. Fri.-Sat. 7 Mon.-Thu. also at 11:20 a.m.
Invictus (PG-13) ***1/2	Century 16: 11:35 a.m.; 1, 2:45, 4:10, 5:45, 7:10, 8:50 & 10:20 p.m. Century 20: 11:20 a.m.; 1, 2:30, 4, 5:35, 7:10, 8:45 & 10:15 p.m.
Living in Emergency: Stories of Doctors Without Borders (Not Rated) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: Mon 8 p.m. Century 20: Mon 8 p.m.
The Maid (Not Rated) **1/2	Guild Theatre: 3:30, 6 & 8:30 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 1 p.m.
The Men Who Stare At Goats (R) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11:50 a.m. & 5:10 p.m. Fri.-Tue. & Thu. also at 10:25 p.m.
Ninja Assassin (R) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 7:30 & 9:55 p.m. Century 20: 1:45 p.m. Fri.-Tue. also at 7:05 p.m.
Old Dogs (PG) (Not Reviewed)	Century 20: 11:45 a.m.; 2:10, 4:30, 6:55 & 9:15 p.m.
Pirate Radio (R) ***	Palo Alto Square: 1:45, 4:30 & 7:15 p.m. Fri.-Sat. also at 9:55 p.m.
Planet 51 (PG) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11:25 a.m.; 1:50 & 4:20 p.m. Century 20: 11:50 a.m.; 2:15, 5:15, 7:50 & 10:10 p.m.
Precious (R) ***1/2	Aquarius Theatre: 4, 7 & 9:45 p.m. Fri.-Sun. also at 1 p.m.
The Princess and the Frog (G) ***	Century 16: 11:05 a.m.; 12:15, 1:30, 2:40, 3:55, 5:15, 6:20, 7:35, 8:45 & 10 p.m. Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 12:45, 2, 3:10, 4:30, 5:45, 7, 8:15, 9:30 & 10:40 p.m. Sun. also at 10:20 a.m.
Red Cliff (R) ***	Aquarius Theatre: 2, 5:15 & 8:30 p.m.
RiffTrax Live: Christmas Shorts Stravaganza! (Not Rated) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: Wed 8 p.m. Thu 8 p.m. Century 20: Wed 8 p.m. Thu 8 p.m.
The Road (R) ***1/2	Palo Alto Square: 2, 4:40 & 7:20 p.m. Fri.-Sat. also at 10 p.m.
The Twilight Saga: New Moon (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11 a.m.; 12:30, 2, 3:30, 5, 6:30, 8 & 9:30 p.m. Century 20: 11:55 a.m.; 1:40, 3:05, 4:35, 6:10, 7:35 & 10:35 p.m.
Up in the Air (R) ***	Century 20: 11:40 a.m.; 12:35, 1:30, 2:20, 3:20, 4:10, 5, 5:55, 6:45, 7:40, 8:35, 9:40 & 10:25 p.m. Sat. & Sun. also at 10:50 a.m.

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

Aquarius: 430 Emerson St., Palo Alto (266-9260)

CinéArts at Palo Alto Square: 3000 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (493-3456)

Century Cinema 16: 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View (800-326-3264)

Guild: 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park (266-9260)

Century 20 Downtown: 825 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (800-326-3264)

Internet address: For show times, plot synopses, 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 THEATER

The Stanford Theatre is at 221 University Ave. in Palo Alto. Go to www.stanfordtheatre.org or call 650-324-3700.

Roman Holiday (1953) A journalist (Gregory Peck) falls for a runaway princess (Audrey Hepburn) in Rome. Fri. & Sat. at 7:30 p.m. Sat. also at 3:15 p.m.

Sabrina (1954) A playboy (William Holden) and his stuffy brother (Humphrey Bogart) both fall for the charming Audrey Hepburn. Fri. & Sat. at 5:25 & 9:40 p.m.

My Fair Lady (1964) Grumpy linguist Henry Higgins (Rex Harrison) gives a cultural makeover to cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle (Audrey Hepburn) in this classic musical. Sun. & Mon. at 7:30 p.m. Sun. also at 2 p.m.

Funny Face (1957) Fred Astaire plays a fashion photographer who transforms a bookstore clerk (Audrey Hepburn) into a model. Tue.-Thu. at 7:30 p.m.

The Band Wagon (1953) Fred Astaire plays a former Hollywood star trying to make a comeback, with Cyd Charisse as a ballet diva set as his dance partner. Tue.-Thu. at 5:25 & 9:25 p.m.

(continued from previous page)

From its "wish upon a star" opening to its Mardi Gras climax, the beautifully hand-drawn "The Princess and the Frog" keeps up a brisk pace and energy, but only partly achieves the effervescence of a Disney "classic." Directors John Musker and Ron Clements ("The Little Mermaid," "Aladdin") cleverly allude to the entire history of Disney 2D animation, in thoughtfully skewed angles on plot and character formulas and in stylish retro nuances both visual and aural (the bass chorus behind Facilier in the punchy "Friends on the Other Side").

Randy Newman's songs also serve the story well, particularly Tiana's announcement of spirit ("Almost There") and Mama Odie's show-stopping "Dig a Little Deeper." If only the story had sidelined the prince and princess and been the epic battle of the evil Shadow Man

Movies

("The real power in this world ain't magic; it's money!") and Mama Odie ("Money ain't got no soul;/ Money ain't got no heart"), we'd really have something.

Where "The Princess and the Frog" stumbles a bit is in its wan wit — despite strenuous efforts, this isn't a particularly funny movie. Another problem is its sometimes confused insistence on having it all in every regard of plot and theme (e.g., hard work is a core value, but don't be a workaholic, but still achieve your dreams, but don't neglect your family...). For its apparent feminist, anti-"lookism" leanings, the story still ends with — well, I'll let you find out for yourself ... or take a guess.

Rated G. One hour, 38 minutes.
— Peter Canavese

The Maid ★★1/2

(Guild) In just the first few scenes of 30-year-old Chilean director Sebastian Silva's "The Maid," we find out several key facts about the title character, the live-in maid Raquel (Catalina Saavedra). She's 41 and has served the same upper-crust Chilean family for more than 20 years. Her employers, Pilar (Claudia Celedon) and Mundo (Alejandro Goic), treat her with a mixture of affection and condescension. Their four kids, who she thinks adore her, actually behave with a mixture of indifference and dislike.

Raquel is cranky and humorless, and suffers from headaches and dizzy spells. The maid wakes the kids in the morning, serves breakfast in bed to the parents, cleans the two-story house and cooks the meals. Realizing that the work is too much for her, Pilar hires a helper, a young Peruvian, Mercedes. Raquel makes no secret of her dislike for the girl, going as far as to lock her out of the house.

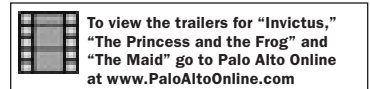
After Mercedes quits, Pilar brings in Sonia, a pit bull of a woman who outdoes Raquel in bitchiness. But Sonia receives the same treatment as Mercedes, and she's soon gone too. It's only after Raquel collapses — not for the first time — that Lucy (Mariana Loyola), a warmhearted free spirit, enters the household, and everything changes.

The role of Raquel is an unrewarding, unsympathetic one, and Saavedra, in an admirable feat of acting, is onscreen in almost every scene. In that sense, "The Maid" is more a character study than the comedy it's been described as; there are smiles, but laughs are few and far between. Other characters, especially that of the father, Mundo, are thinly developed, and we never do find out what the parents' jobs are, something I always feel is pertinent.

Unlike almost all American films, "The Maid" is blessedly devoid of background music, which more often detracts from a film than adds to it. Only in the key final scene do we hear music, and that's for a good reason.

Not rated. 95 minutes. In Spanish with English subtitles.

— Renata Polt



The following is a sampling of movies recently reviewed in the Weekly: NOW PLAYING

Bad Lieutenant ★★

(Century 16) "Bad" doesn't even begin to describe the behavior of New Orleans Police Lt. Terence McDonough (Nicholas Cage), protagonist of Werner Herzog's "Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans." Snorting coke is just the beginning; stealing drugs comes next. And how about terrorizing an old lady by pulling the oxygen leads out of her nose? McDonough is in charge of investigating the murder of five illegal African immigrants connected to the drug trade. "Bad Lieutenant" may sound like a total downer, but it's not. Elements of black humor lighten the depraved tone. However, Herzog and scriptwriter William Finkelstein can't resist piling nastiness on top of nastiness. Rated R for language, some violence, sexuality and drug use. Two hours, one minute. — R.P. (Reviewed Nov. 20, 2009)

The Blind Side ★★

(Century 16, Century 20) "The Blind Side" merges uplifting social drama with uplifting sports drama. Homeless African-American youth Michael Oher (Quinton Aaron) was blessed to get a break from a tony Christian school and then from the Tuohy family, whose spitfire matriarch Leigh Anne takes him into her heart. As Michael in turn teaches the Tuohys the true meaning of family, he becomes the archetype Spike Lee acidly called the "super-duper magical Negro," who lowers his face and steps aside to let the white star have her Oscar clip. Rated PG-13 for one scene involving brief violence, drugs and sexual references. Two hours, eight minutes. — P.C. (Reviewed Nov. 20, 2009)

Brothers ★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Capable Marine Capt. Sam Cahill (Tobey Maguire) and his childhood sweetheart wife, Grace (Natalie Portman), are raising two young girls while Sam does back-and-forth tours of duty as a helicopter pilot in Afghanistan. Sam's latest deployment comes at the same time as his ne'er-do-well brother Tommy (Jake Gyllenhaal) is sprung from prison for his part in a thwarted bank robbery. When Sam's chopper is shot down the military comes calling, declaring him dead. Forced to step up, Tommy becomes a surrogate Dad to Grace's girls, Isabel and Maggie (Bailee Madison and Taylor Geare), and perilously close to a love interest for Grace herself. Meanwhile, Sam is enduring his own personal hell in the Middle East, struggling to stay alive in order to return to his family. Rated R for language and violence. 1 hour, 44 minutes. — J.A. (Reviewed Dec. 4, 2009)

Everybody's Fine ★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Frank Goode (Robert De Niro) is a sympathetic character. After 41 years of marriage and a household busting with four children, he's now alone. He worked hard to provide for his family, while leaving the parenting details to his wife. His nagging regret is having ignored his kids, whom he hopes to get around the same table once again. Scattered across the country, they individually call at the last minute to say they can't attend Frank's much-anticipated family reunion, the first since their mother's death eight months ago. So dad decides to surprise each one with a visit. Artist David (Austin Lysy) lives in a rough New York City neighborhood. He's not home, so Frank slips a mysterious envelope under his door and heads off to visit Amy (Kate Beckinsale), an ad agent in Chicago; musician Robert (Sam Rockwell) in Denver; and Las Vegas dancer Rosie (Drew Barrymore). He begins to realize that all of them are lying to him: Everybody's not so fine. Rated: PG-13 for thematic elements and brief strong language. 100 minutes. — S.T. (Reviewed Dec. 4, 2009)

The Fantastic Mr. Fox ★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Mr. Fox (voiced by George Clooney) has turned from a life of fowl poaching to journalism, where his "Fox About Town" column runs in the Gazette. The clever and charming Mr. Fox has been tamed somewhat by his wife (Meryl Streep). She knows her husband. The family man's sartorial style can't disguise his true nature. How can a fox ever be happy without a chicken in his mouth? Light and uplifting on the surface, the movie has much to say. Insights about relationships, mortality and survival are shaded in a darkness that children won't see. Most of all, the foxy adventure offers a family pack of fun. Rated: PG for action, smoking and slang humor. 1 hour, 27 minutes. — S.T. (Reviewed Nov. 27, 2009)

Precious ★★1/2

(Aquarius) The plight of the protagonist, Claireece Precious Jones, is articulated early on by her school principal: "You're 16. You're in junior high school. And you're pregnant with your second child." And that's not the worst of it: Both children were conceived by paternal rape. Plagued by suicidal thoughts and dreams of fame, fortune and a boyfriend, the overweight Precious languishes in the squalor of a Harlem walk-up, circa 1987, under the thumb of her cruel mother Mary (Mo'Nique). Gabourey Sidibe brilliantly embodies the bitter Precious, who shares her despair through narration. Precious begins her longest journey toward hope at an alternative school, where patient teacher Blu Rain (Paula Patton) makes a difference. Rated R for child abuse including sexual assault, and pervasive language. One hour, 49 minutes. — P.C. (Reviewed Nov. 20, 2009)

Red Cliff ★★

(Guild) Set in Northern China in 208 A.D., "Red Cliff" essays the Battle of Red Cliffs, a major engagement — during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms period — that pits the imperial army against a tentative alliance of rebel warlords. Hawkish Prime Minister Cao Cao (Zhang Fengyi) convinces the Emperor (Wang Ning) to go out of his way to eliminate pockets of resistance. This, in turn, inspires the rebel warlords to band together, at the urging of key advisors like Zhuge Liang (Takeshi Kaneshiro of "House of Flying Daggers") and Zhou Yu (Tony Leung Chiu Wai of "Hero" and "Lust, Caution"). The Chinese version of "Red Cliff" runs over four and a half hours while the international release Americans will see runs only two and a half hours. Still, this version is coherent and the film remains impressive in its scale. Rated R for sequences of epic warfare. Two hours, 28 minutes. — P.C. (Reviewed Nov. 27, 2009)

The Road ★★1/2

(Palo Alto Square) What would you do to ensure your own survival? How far would you go to protect your most precious loved one? At what point is it better to be dead than to be alive? These questions about the very limits of the human experience drive "The Road." Viggo Mortensen plays one of the last good men standing after an unnamed devastating global event. Mortensen's character — identified in the credits as "Man," but called "Poppa" by the "Boy" he keeps in tow — wanders and scavenges to stave off death by starvation. Living under constant threat of the bitter cold and roving cannibals, man and child must also plan for the worst, including the possibility that suicide would be the lesser of two evils. Rated R for some violence, disturbing images and language. One hour, 52 minutes. — P.C. (Reviewed Nov. 27, 2009)

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Read the review, watch a video preview of the movie and read the full menu online at www.frenchfilmclubofpaloalto.org

Established in 1977, the French Film Club is an independent non-profit Organization, open to the public. For full program and archives, go to: frenchfilmclubofpaloalto.org

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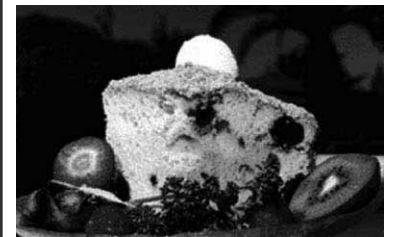
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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW



Veronica Weber

From left, a blueberry biscuit, a cafe Borrone, a cappuccino with a chocolate biscotti and a chocolate-chip cookie are served.

Coffee, tea or a zillion other choices

Cafe Borrone has been dishing up good food, art and music for two decades

by Dale F. Bentson

While adjacent Kepler's Books feeds the soul, Cafe Borrone nourishes the stomach. The two storefronts have been neighbors for two decades, creating the cultural crossroads of Menlo Park.

Cafe Borrone, opened in 1990 by Rose and Roy Borrone, is the most visibly successful eatery in town. Much of the almost always crowded seating is al fresco, in a spacious open-air, Euro-styled plaza. Umbrellas shade tables on glaring days; the broad building overhang keeps patrons safe during inclement weather.

There are a myriad of reasons

why Cafe Borrone remains successful: The food is good, the ambiance energetic and preppy, the staff friendly. Tables are bussed quickly so the place is always clean and inviting. There are some irritating imperfections as well. I'll get to those later.

The restaurant is open long hours, seven days per week, and there is no pressure to ever vacate a table. Students sip coffee, read or tap on their laptops; business people grab quick bites then scurry back to their offices; others meet for breakfast, lunch or dinner and protracted

(continued on next page)



DINNER BY THE MOVIES AT SHORELINE'S Pizzeria Venti

Pizzeria Venti Holiday Menu

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Ossobuco *A classic dish from Milan, features Braised Veal shanks in a White Wine and Tomato sauce over Risotto.*

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Grilled Salmon *over Garlic Mashed Potato and Sauté Mixed Greens.*

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Penne Francesca *Shrimp and Fresh Asparagus Tips in a Garlic Lemon Butter Sauce made with Fresh Sliced Mushrooms. Served over a Bed of Penne Pasta.*

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(continued from previous page)

conversation. It's an ideal spot to watch the medley of humanity that defines the demographics of the area.

Live music is performed on Friday nights, and occasionally other evenings as well: mostly jazz, sometimes swing or Dixieland or bluegrass, sometimes outside, usually inside.

There are ongoing art exhibits hung on the walls, with Marnie Spencer's oeuvre through Jan. 17. The artists are chosen by Roy Borrone, an accomplished artist himself who paints in the abstract figurative genre. Add to all that

the myriad of events at Kepler's and it is no wonder that the corner of El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue is a hub of activity.

Food prices are not inexpensive but not high enough to drive off patrons. There is no table service; it is belly up to the bar to place your order. Quite often, the ordering queue extends well outside the door, and therein lies a bugaboo at Cafe Borrone.

There are no printed menus; the bill of fare is jam-packed onto a series of chalkboards that stretch the width of the broad service area. The boards are difficult to read until you have progressed nearly to the point of ordering,

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Eating Out

or have better than 20/20 vision. It's unnerving unless you already know what you want to order.

Stepping out of line to examine the boards will add many minutes to the procedure and who knows if someone will let you step back in line ahead of them. It just isn't very user-friendly for the occasional customer.

While all the savory dishes and their ingredients are on the chalkboards, many of the desserts and pastries are not listed, nor are they all priced in the enticing glass display cabinets. After an order is placed, the total is announced but there is no printed receipt, so no way of itemizing or checking. You are given a number and best wishes to you on finding a table during busy hours.

The food, though, is good. One morning I ordered a Belgian waffle (\$8.95) with spiced apples and pecans. The waffle was plate-sized and thick, crusty on the outside, soft on the inside. There was no skimping on either fruit or nuts and the maple syrup was the real deal. The butter, however, was an ice cold blob that barely started melting by the time I had finished. As a side, a single Italian sausage link was \$3.95.

The morning pastries were first-rate. I especially liked the blueberry biscuit (\$2.49), which was bigger than most scones. Loaded with blueberries, it is a pastry I will seek out on my next visit. Many, but not all, of the pastries are house-made including scones, muffins, coffee cake, rolls and buns.

There are egg dishes as well, with a half dozen scrambled egg combinations. Also, there are granolas, oatmeal, smoked salmon and bagels, fresh-squeezed juice and an entire menu board of coffee choices. Breakfast is served until noon when the chalkboards are switched out.

The all-day menu features house-made soups, salads, hot and cold sandwiches, charcuterie selections, pâtés, cheese plates, quiches, lasagna, kids' plates and several daily specials. There are many options for vegetarians as well.

According to Roy Borrone, all the ingredients are of the highest quality obtainable with emphasis

on organic, sustainable and locally grown.

The cream of cauliflower soup (\$3.25 cup, \$6.45 bowl) was somewhat of a misnomer; chunky cauliflower chowder would have been more apt. The soup was delicious with large florets of cauliflower in abundance, delicately flavored, warm and creamy.

The Niman Ranch pastrami melt (\$7.25) was stacked high with tender, flavor-packed beef brisket that was smothered with gooey Monterey jack cheese. I also enjoyed the Italian torta (\$8) made with mild Italian sausage, artichoke hearts, eggs, onion and cheese. A torta is a Mediterra-

nean version of quiche with less egg and more cheese. Cafe Borrone's version incorporated loads of both meat and vegetable.


Note: Nothing comes with any accompaniment, so consider adding a side or a dessert when ordering. The long line might deter you from going back for more.

I tried only one dessert, a slice of carrot cake that was \$6. While the cake was spongy, not too sweet and well iced, it was not a particularly big slice for the money.

Wines were available by the glass or bottle, and prices seemed reasonable (\$8-\$13 per glass, \$30-\$52 per bottle). Trying to

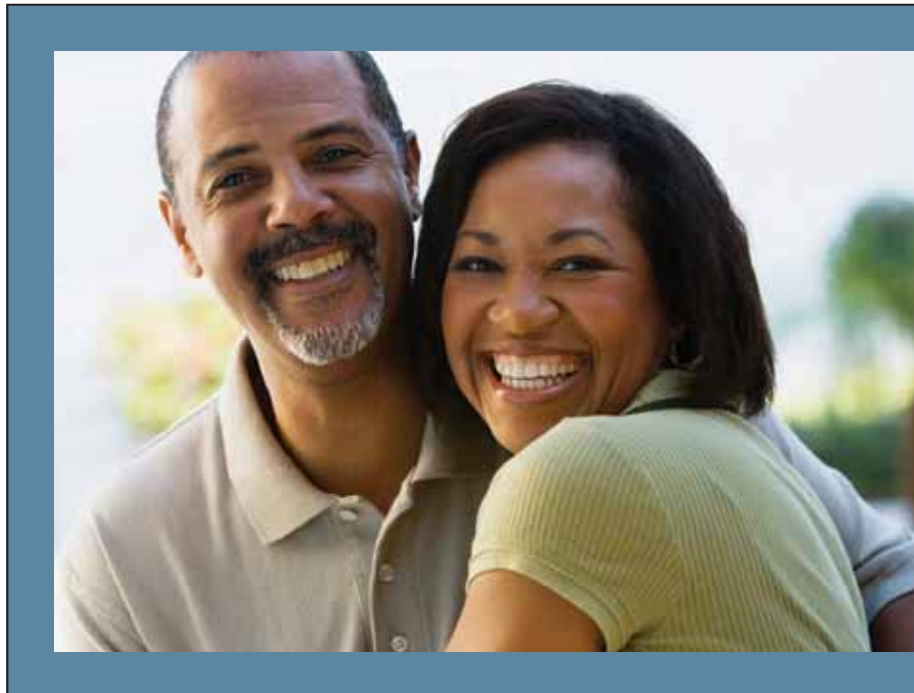
make much sense of a wine list on a chalkboard left me a little befuddled. There were about a dozen or so wines listed, half red, half white, with an array of varietals, mostly from California. It was difficult to absorb it all while standing in the beverage queue.

Cafe Borrone has loads of appeal for those hungry and those just looking for a place to have coffee and hang out. Despite the crowds, the ambiance is upbeat and relaxed. It's a good place for readers, eaters and dreamers — just be prepared to do a little speed reading before ordering. ■



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Book Talk

NOBEL WINNERS' ETIQUETTE

... **Escondido School teacher Anita Laughlin** explains what to expect when your spouse wins the Nobel Prize in "Reindeer with King Gustaf." Nobel laureate William Phillips calls the book "a delightful account of the magical, stressful, surreal, chaotic, enchanting and awesome Nobel experience." Laughlin describes the family's experience when her husband, Stanford University professor Robert Laughlin, won the 1998 Nobel Prize in Physics. She discusses her family's Nobel adventure this week with Michel Martin on NPR's "Tell Me More."

LOCAL AUTHOR ... Palo Alto resident Jacqueline Stewart will discuss her book, "Finding Slovenia," Saturday, Jan. 16, 3 p.m. at Books Inc. in Town & Country Village, 855 El Camino Real, Palo Alto.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR ... Kepler's Books hosts adventurer and author **Greg Mortenson** ("Stones into Schools"), at a sold-out event tonight in the Smithwick Theater at Foothill College. Recounting his "relentless, ongoing efforts to establish schools for girls' in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the book picks up where "Three Cups of Tea" left off in 2003. In January, Kepler's will host at its location at 1010 El Camino Real in Menlo Park **David Thomson** ("The Moment of Psycho: How Alfred Hitchcock Taught America to Love Murder") Thursday, Jan. 7, 7:30 p.m.; **Judith L. London** ("Connecting the Dots: Breakthroughs in Communication as Alzheimer's Advances") Saturday, Jan. 9, 2 p.m.; **Charles Todd** ("The Red Door: An Inspector Ian Rutledge Mystery") Tuesday, Jan. 12, 7:30 p.m.; **Wendy Nelson Tokunaga** ("Love in Translation") Wednesday, Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m.; **Daniel Pink** ("Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us"), Thursday, Jan. 14, 7:30; **John Lescroart** ("Treasure Hunt"), Monday, Jan. 18, 7 p.m.; **Paul Linda** ("Danger to Self: On the Front Line with an ER Psychiatrist"), Tuesday, Jan. 19, 7:30 p.m.

MORE AUTHOR ... Mary Buffett will discuss her book, "Warren Buffett's Management Secrets," Thursday, Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m. at Mountain View's Books Inc., 301 Castro St. Buffett said she gained many of her insights while married to the financier's son, Peter Buffett, for 12 years. ■

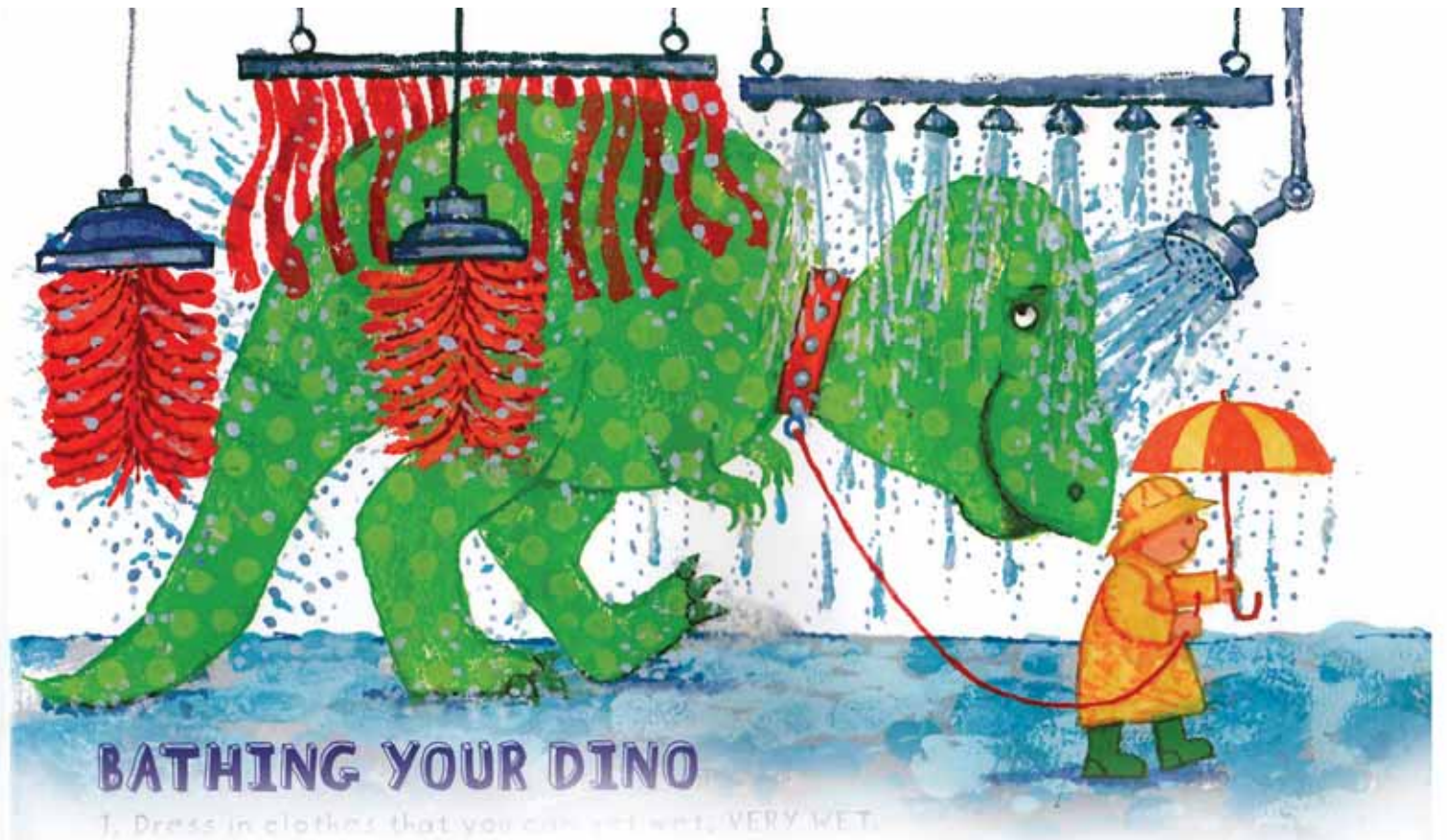
Items for Book Talk may be sent to Associate Editor Carol Blitzer, Palo Alto Weekly, P.O. Box 1610, Palo Alto, CA 93202 or e-mailed to cblitzer@paweeekly.com by the last Friday of the month.

Title Pages

A monthly section on local books and authors, edited by Chris Kenrick

Books and reading: the best gift of all

New books in
time for the holidays



'Tis the season to encourage children to read

Local authors top the list of terrific new books for kids of all ages

by Debbie Duncan

From dinosaurs to the religious implications of evolution, new children's books offer colorful treats as well as intriguing tales.

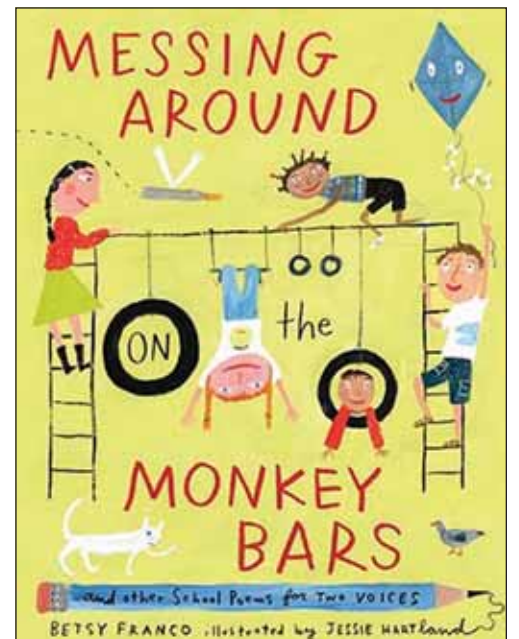
"Buying, Training & Caring for Your Dinosaur," by Laura Joy Rennert, pictures by Marc Brown; Knopf/Random House; \$17; ages 3-8.

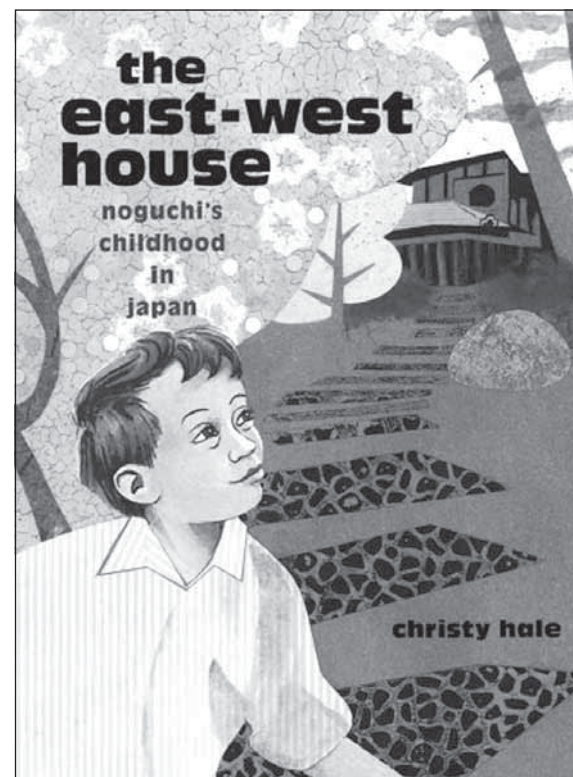
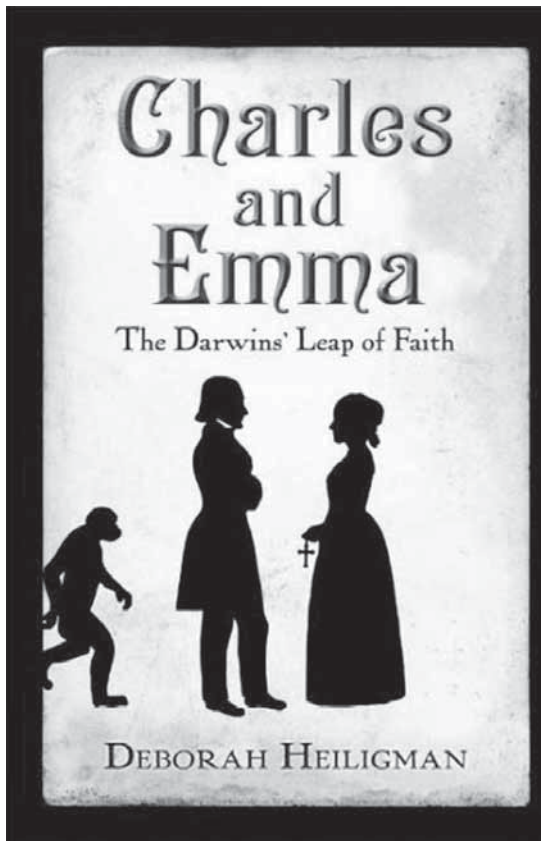
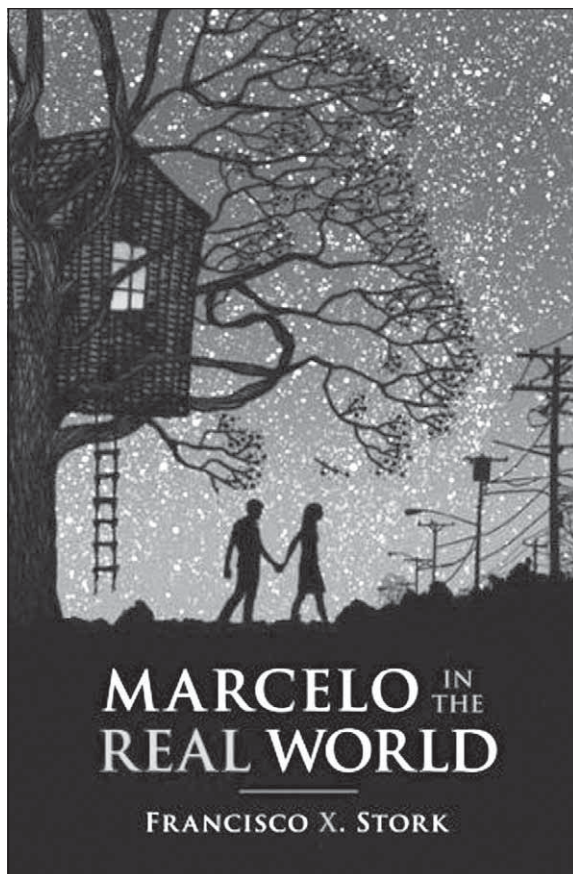
Kids love dinosaurs. Yet with 16,000 dinosaur books already on the market, is there any need for a new one? Yep, when it's as clever and eye-poppingly colorful as this, by Palo Alto author Laura Rennert, illustrated

by Marc Brown ("Arthur"). All the popular dinosaur species are described according to their attributes as household pets. There are tips on purchasing a dino and traveling with one. And for playing — because as all kids know, "Dinos are for fun!"

"The East-West House: Noguchi's Childhood in Japan," by Christy Hale; Lee & Low; \$18; ages 6 and up.

Palo Alto illustrator Christy Hale makes a stunning authorial debut by illuminating the years artist Isamu Noguchi spent as a young boy in Japan. In lyrical prose and gorgeous mixed-media collages, Hale shows how de-





signing and assisting the construction of his American mother's house helps Isamu escape the loneliness and ostracism of a biracial child. It's also the beginning of what would turn out to be an acclaimed career as a 20th-century sculptor and artist who blended themes of East and West.

"Messing Around on the Monkey Bars: And Other School Poems for Two Voices," by Betsy Franco, illustrated by Jessie Harland; Candlewick; \$19; ages 8-11.

Prolific Palo Alto children's book author Betsy Franco visits El Carmelo School every morning for inspiration. The result here is a collection of 19 snappy poems about familiar school activities for two or more voices to read out loud. Vibrant, playful illustrations bring the verses alive.

"The Islands of the Blessed," by Nancy Farmer; \$19, ages 10-14, Jackson/Simon and Schuster.

The final volume in award-winning Menlo Park author's "Sea of Trolls" trilogy brings the tale of apprentice bard Jack and shield maiden Thorgil to a romping, satisfying conclusion. Their quest? To take care of a vengeful sea hag and rescue the Bard's daughter. Nonstop adventure, obstacles, multiple sea voyages and characters and places from mythology will keep readers eagerly turning pages 'til the very end.

"When You Reach Me," by Rebecca Stead; Lamb/

Random House; \$16; ages 9-12.

Twelve-year-old Miranda's favorite book is "A Wrinkle in Time." While she puzzles over the mysteries of time travel, a time-travel mystery begins on the sidewalk of her 1970s New York neighborhood. Who's scribbling notes to her? Why is her friend's life in danger? And is he still her friend, anyway? When predictions in the notes come true, what does it all mean? No word is wasted in this brilliant novel destined for distinction as a children's classic.

"Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith," by Deborah Heiligman; Henry Holt; \$19; ages 12 and up.

This National Book Award finalist is a biography that reads as smoothly as a finely crafted novel. It tells of the long marriage and professional partnership between Charles the scientist and Emma the devout Christian, and the struggles each faced about the religious implications of Charles's theory of evolution by natural selection. Heiligman uses letters, diary entries and jottings from notebooks to weave an unforgettable and compelling narrative of love, faith and science.

"Food, Girls and Other Things I Can't Have," by Allen Zadoff; Egmont; \$17; ages 12 and up.

Andrew Zansky weighs 307 pounds. His mom is a caterer, his dad's moved out. He has a crush on April, the

(continued on next page)

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City of Palo Alto ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared by the Palo Alto Department of Planning and Community Environment for the project listed below. This document will be available for review and comment during a minimum 30-day inspection period beginning **December 16, 2009** through **January 15, 2010** during the hours of 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the Development Center, 285 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

This project is tentatively scheduled for consideration by the Planning and Transportation Commission at a **public hearing on Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at 7:00 P.M.** in the Palo Alto City Council Chambers on the first floor of the Civic Center, located at 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

2500 Embarcadero Road (09PLN-00224): Request by Save the Bay, on behalf of the City of Palo Alto, for Site and Design Review for the construction of a new 600 square foot greenhouse and a 625 square foot shed (replacing the existing 400 square foot shed) adjacent to the existing Duck Pond. The project involves the minimal removal of vegetation to accommodate the new structures; existing trees are not impacted.

###

**Curtis Williams, Director of Planning and
Community Environment**

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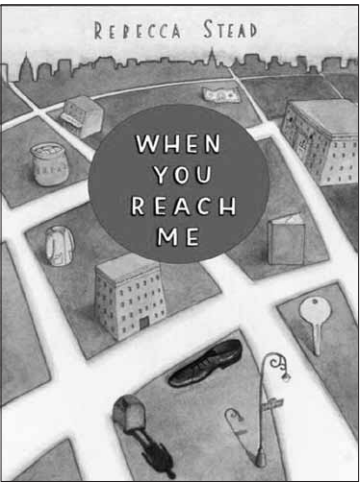
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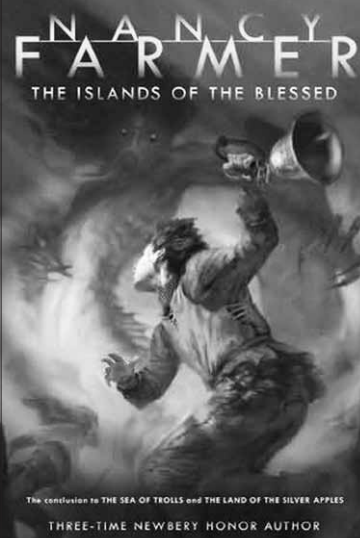


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Kids' books
(continued from previous page)

hot new Korean girl. So after losing his shorts in P.E. in front of 49 sophomores in one of the funniest scenes in young adult lit, Andrew goes out for football. Turns out he's good at it. April pays attention, but to his smarts, not his offensive-line capabilities. Andrew finds out what happens at parties. But is that what he wants? His fast-paced story has loads of teen appeal.

"Marcelo in the Real World," by Francisco X. Stork; Levine/Scholastic Press; ages 12 and up.

Local readers will recognize Marcelo, a 17-year-old with "special interests" as a high-functioning autistic teen. His father wants him to get along in the real world, beginning with a summer job at Dad's law firm. Marcelo learns more than his father envisioned, but never loses his moral bearings — which is more than can be said for some of his co-workers, including his father. ■

Debbie Duncan has been reviewing children's books for the Weekly since 1997. Her complete reviews can be found at www.debbieduncan.com/picks.html.

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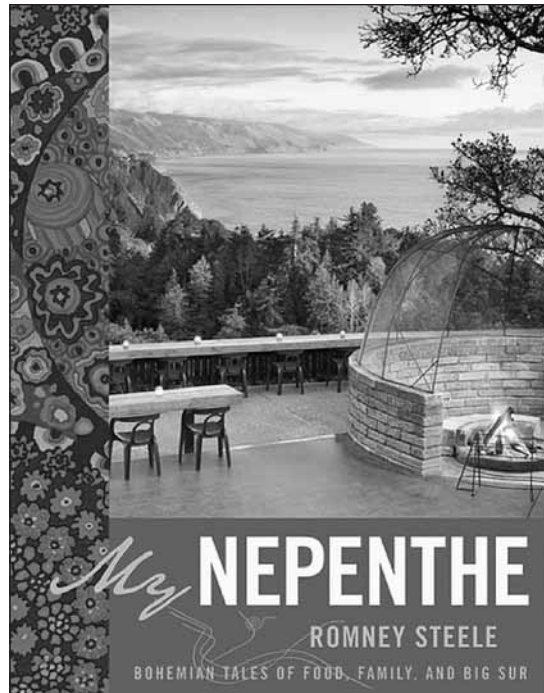
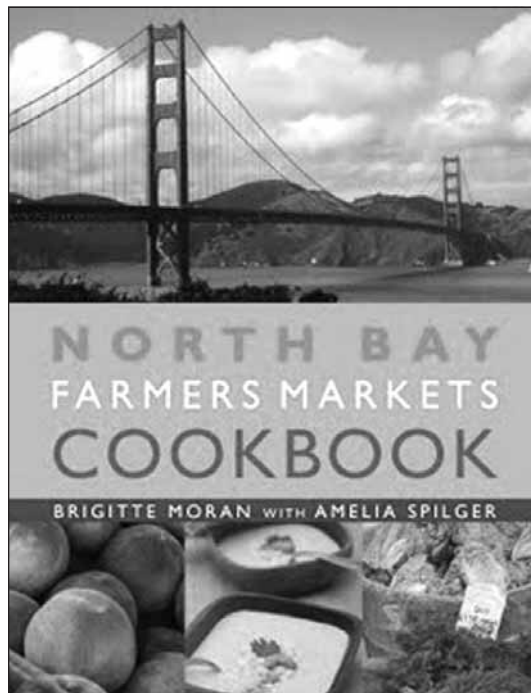


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Today's news, sports & hot picks



A renewed passion for cooking

Julia Child set the stage for taking food seriously

by Anne Sturmthal Bergman

This has to be the year for the rediscovery of Julia Child.

The book "Julie and Julia," which was made into a movie with a gloriously overacting Meryl Streep, and the reissue of her books, have introduced a new generation of readers to this master chef.

She was the tall, ungainly daughter of a Republican from Pasadena who had a love affair with her husband, Paul, and French food. Her longevity (she died at 91) is a testament either to good genes or that cooking with butter shouldn't be anathema to our Lipitor-loving generation. Child remains an eminence grise in the cooking arena, and therefore, I have chosen to review her first.

To me, her most memorable contribution to American home chefs, from the avocado-colored kitchens of the 1960s to the granite, stainless-steel kitchens of today, is "Mastering the Art of French Cooking."

Start by buying butter. Keep your knives and your wits sharp. Plan on spending time cooking — a lot of time, but you can then tell your guests your Julia Child war stories.

"Mastering the Art of French Cooking," Volume One, (40th anniversary edition) by Julia Child, Louise Bertholle and Simon Beck, Knopf, 684 pp., (not including Index), 2001, \$40

This book has none of the glossy photos of the products of today's cookbooks, but does have meticulous directions and instructional drawings, which the authors expect to be followed exactly. I looked for a short and easy recipe and found Gratin Jurassien, p. 524. This recipe includes 4 tablespoons of butter and 1.25 cups of whipping cream, plus the potatoes and grated Swiss cheese. It is, compared to other recipes, brief and easy, but the result belies the simplicity. Pure potato heaven.

This classic book should be in everyone's kitchen. It is a loving, enthusiastic tribute to good cook-

ing and a slower way of life that we may be lucky enough to recapture only on occasion. Volume 2 is also available.

"My Nepenthe: Bohemian Tales of Food, Family and Big Sur," Romney Steele, Andrews McMeel, 2009, 338 pp., \$35

Like many cookbooks these days, this is more a story about a place and time than a cookbook. There are recipes, but the point of the book is to recall the antics of people who visited Nepenthe, the famous restaurant in a spectacular location in Big Sur. This year is Nepenthe's 60th anniversary. The author, who is the granddaughter of the original owners, regales the reader with stories of Kim Novak, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, as well as the locals who made the place their hangout.

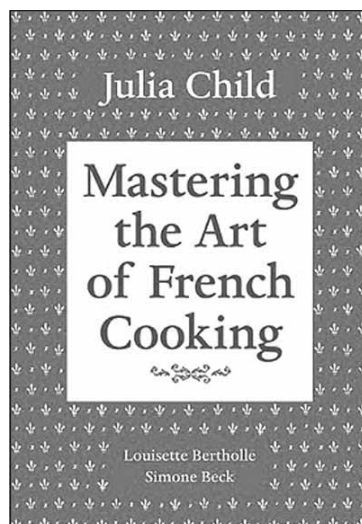
I made Baked Cinnamon-Pecan Apples with Rum (p. 196). It was easy to put together and tasted as good as any baked apples I have had. If you remember Nepenthe and enjoyed it, and are looking for nostalgia, don't mind the recipes, just read the text. Or go visit Nepenthe again and enjoy the view.

"North Bay Farmers Markets Cookbook," Brigitte Moran with Amelia Spilger, Gibbs Smith, 2009, 216 pp., \$24.99

This paperback is a well-presented, easy-to-follow cookbook, using recipes from the local farmers market. We are blessed with markets in Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Mountain View and Redwood City, so there is no excuse for not using fresh ingredients.

I made Vanilla Souffle, p. 181, with only six ingredients. Unfortunately, my soufflé turned out more like a pudding. However, it is possible that my technique was faulty. The Watercress Soup on p. 52 was easy and tasted sharp and delicious.

"Ad Hoc at Home," Thomas Keller, Artisan Books, 2009, 359 pp., \$50



Thomas Keller is well known as the chef at The French Laundry. This cookbook is far more accessible for ordinary cooks than some of his previous work. Well-organized with careful instructions, this book has useful commentary and innovative combinations.

I made sautéed chicken breasts with tarragon (p. 27), which included curry powder and paprika. This was a great combination. The little gem lettuce salad (p. 142) used some citrus as well as pomegranate seeds — which I got already removed from the pomegranate and available at Trader Joe's. The dressing, a mixture of honey, champagne vinegar, canola oil and olive oil, was sweet, complementing the tart citrus and pomegranate flavor.

This cookbook, while expensive, is well worth the money. It was a treat to be able to make things suggested by this great chef. In a review of Keller's "French Laundry Cookbook," I suggested that instead of going to all the trouble to make the recipes, one should simply go to the restaurant. ■

Anne Sturmthal Bergman of Menlo Park is a freelance writer.

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Sports Shorts

ON THE COURT . . . It seems like only yesterday that **Jeremy Lin** was wearing a Palo Alto High basketball uniform and leading the Vikings to the 2006 CIF Division II State Championship in his senior year. Now, he's leading Harvard to its best start (7-2) in 25 years in another senior year. This past week, Lin was at his typical best against some of the top teams in the country. On Sunday, he scored a career-high 30 points and grabbed nine rebounds in a 79-73 loss to No. 12 UConn. Then, in the Crimson's 74-67 upset at Boston College on Wednesday night — the second straight season Harvard has beaten BC — Lin contributed 25 points. So in two games against New England's annual NCAA tournament participants, Lin scored 55 points and shot 64 percent from the field and 80 percent from the free-throw line. Raising the level of his game since high school, Lin boasts an all-around repertoire rarely on display. Last season Lin was the only player in the nation to rank among the top 10 players in his conference in points, rebounds, assists, steals, blocks, field-goal percentage, free-throw percentage and 3-point percentage. This year he is merely second in the Ivy League in scoring (18.6 points), 10th in rebounding (5.3), fifth in field-goal percentage (51.6 percent), third in assists (4.6), and second in steals (2.4).

OF LOCAL NOTE . . . Gunn High graduate **Tara Levens**, a sophomore swimmer at the University of Chicago, recently was named the University Athletic Association (D-III) Athlete of the Week after posting three NCAA Division III provisional qualifying times to help the Maroons win the eight-team Phoenix Fall Classic. . . . The Palo Alto Lightning TC will send two runners to the National Junior Olympics Cross-Country Championships in Reno on Saturday after both qualified at the Region 16 meet, also in Reno. Heading for the nationals will be Palo Alto residents **Kent Slaney** and **Claudia Denoue**.

ON THE AIR

Friday

Women's volleyball: Michigan at Stanford, 7 p.m.; KZSU (90.1 FM)

Saturday

Swimming: Short Course National Championships, 11 a.m., NBC (tape delayed)

College football: Heisman Trophy presentation show, 5 p.m., CBS

Women's volleyball: NCAA regional final at Stanford, 7 p.m., KZSU (90.1 FM) if Stanford is playing

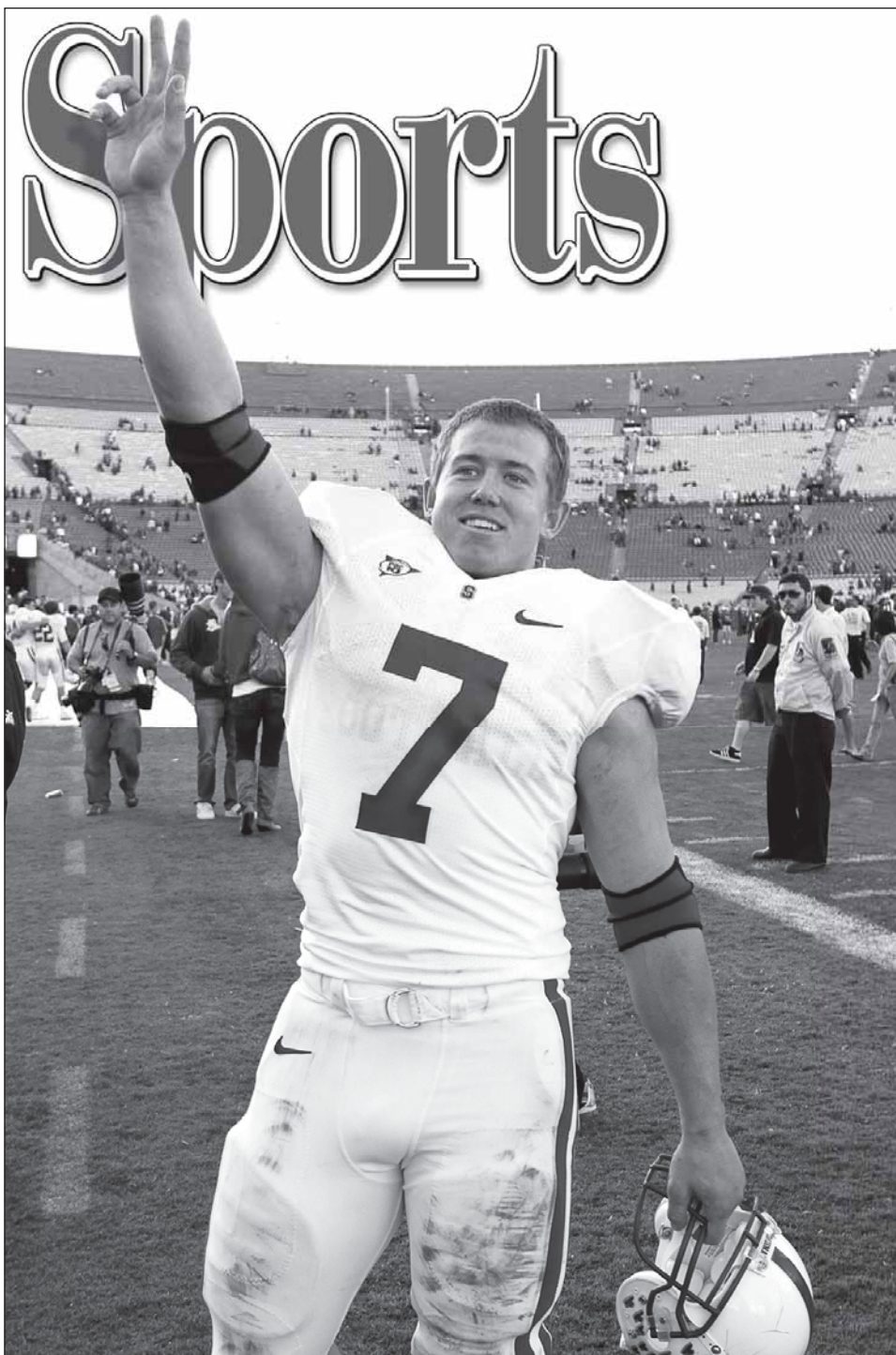
Sunday

Women's basketball: DePaul at Stanford, 2 p.m., KZSU (90.1 FM)

Men's basketball: UC Davis at Stanford 7 p.m.; XTRA Sports (860 AM); KZSU (90.1 FM)

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Matt Savles/Associated Press

Stanford running back Toby Gerhart will discover if he is the 2009 winner of the Heisman Trophy on Saturday in New York City. He'll also lead the Cardinal into the Sun Bowl on Dec. 31 in El Paso, Texas.

STANFORD FOOTBALL

Boyhood dream now a reality for Toby Gerhart

Being a finalist for the Heisman Trophy still hard to believe for Stanford standout

by David Kiefer

Toby Gerhart was 12 years old when he first walked into the Downtown Athletic Club. In the state of New York for a baseball tournament, Gerhart and his football-mad family spent a day sightseeing in New York City. Stopping at the home of the Heisman Trophy was a given.

The wide-eyed boy stared at the portraits of past winners lining the walls, and stared at the trophy.

"I didn't really think I could be one of those guys," Gerhart said. "I never projected myself to do it. I just remember thinking, 'Wow, this is a special place.' To be included would be a dream."



His dream has become reality.

Gerhart learned Monday that he will be among five finalists for the nation's most prestigious and well-known athletic award. He left Tuesday night on an East Coast swing that includes Thursday night's Doak Walker Award ceremony (for college football's top running back) in Orlando, Fla., and Saturday's Heisman presentation.

Gerhart was studying when the finalists were announced, not surprising for someone taking 21 units during finals week. Gerhart, a management, science, and engineering major, took a break to watch the announcement with teammates in the football locker room.

"I was the first one announced," Gerhart said. "Everyone was going crazy."

When former Heisman winner Tim Brown, who announced the finalists on ESPN, was asked for his vote and said "Toby Gerhart," it was even crazier.

Gerhart celebrated by running off to his investment science final.

"I think I did pretty well," he said.

As Heisman finalists go, Gerhart must be among

(continued on page 44)

GIRLS' SWIMMING

PASA surfaces with surprising national title

by Keith Peters

The high school swim season is still months away, but already things are looking good for local swimmers following a remarkable performance at the 2009 AT&T Short Course National Championships over the weekend in Federal Way, Wash.

Some of the top swimmers in America, and the world, were on hand for the meet that included numerous Olympians and Olympic medalists.

The meet also featured swimmers who one day would like to be considered among the best, as well. Among that group were six women representing Palo Alto Stanford Aquatics (PASA). Not only did they compete well against the nation's best, but they swam off with the biggest title in program history.

"It was our first ever national team title," said PASA coach Tony Batis, who was on hand to view the



PASA's team of (L-R) Katie Howard, Julia Ama, Maddy Schaefer (back), Sarah Liang (with trophy), Alicia Grima and Jasmine Tosky.

historic achievement. "We've won junior national titles before, but never a national title."

PASA actually finished third overall, but the top two teams were from Cal and USC and both. The Bears, with Palo Alto High grad Liv Jensen swimming for them, won the

collegiate women's title. Michigan won the men's college title.

"It was neat," Batis said. "It was a good experience for the kids."

PASA captured the team crown by a mere 1 1/2 points, scoring

(continued on page 45)

NCAA VOLLEYBALL

Stanford hopes history repeats in tournament

by Rick Eymmer

Since the NCAA women's volleyball tournament expanded to 64 teams for the 1998 season, Stanford has appeared in nine 'Sweet Sixteen' contests and has won seven of them, including the last four in a row dating to 2004.

Each time the Cardinal has been able to advance beyond the Round of 16 the past 11 years, the team has reached the championship match.

Getting this far, this year, for fourth-ranked and fourth-seeded Stanford (22-7) could be considered quite an accomplishment. There's a parallel to be made though.

The 2004 team, literally, was a team without a court to call its own.



(continued on page 44)



Menlo senior quarterback Danny Diekroeger unleashes one of his four touchdown passes against Carmel in the CCS Division IV championship game last weekend while Brad Eckert (77) provides the protection.

Keith Peters

CCS FOOTBALL

It was a record-breaking year for Menlo football

Diekroeger and his teammates were among the state's best on the way to reaching their first-ever CCS championship game

by Tim Goode

Menlo School quarterback Danny Diekroeger had already had a season to remember during Menlo's 10 regular season games, but the senior quarterback saved his best for last during Menlo's three-game playoff run through the Central Coast Section Division IV title game.

In Menlo's playoff games against Greenfield, Sacred Heart Prep and Carmel, Diekroeger threw for 1,067 yards and nine touchdowns on 62 of 91 passes, increasing his season total figures to 4,187 yards and 35 touchdowns.

The yardage total is the second-best ever in CCS and Northern California history and the second-best effort in the state this season. The season record is 4,323 yards established in 2007 by Jamie Jensen of Gilroy High. California's leading passer in 2009 is Casey Nielson of Gahr High, who has 4,406 yards in 11 games.

Diekroeger's final game of 470 yards and four touchdowns in last weekend's 56-35 loss to unbeaten Carmel also marked a three-game streak without an interception.

Diekroeger's season yardage to-

tal obliterates the Menlo School record of 3,388 yards set in 1982 by John Paye and the 470 yards against Carmel surpasses Jim McKinley's 358 yards set in 1988 against Terra Nova. The 533 yards of total offense Diekroeger gained in the CCS title game also eclipses McKinley's single-game mark of 494 against Terra Nova.

The stratospheric statistics from Diekroeger came with the help of receivers Clay Robbins and Tim Benton, whose pass-catching performance also put them among the state's elite.

Robbins, a senior, caught 83 passes for 1,662 yards to place him second in the state for receiving yards and third in receptions. Both of Robbins' marks are best in the CCS.

Benton, a junior who caught 10 balls for 237 yards against Carmel, finished 21st in the state in yards with 1,190 on 68 catches. Benton's catch total is third best in the CCS.

Diekroeger's records came during Menlo's 13-game season while Paye accomplished his marks in 11 games. Paye, by the way, had a career total of 7,569 yards in 31 games and ranks fourth-best in NorCal history and 30th best in the state an-

nals. Paye's career touchdown mark of 80 is a Menlo record and ranks 22nd in state history and No. 4 in NorCal history.

Jimmy Noriega threw 73 touchdown passes during his Menlo career to rank 37th in state history. His school record of 45 touchdown passes in a season (1990) is No. 19 in state history, ranking ahead of Paye's 41 in 1982. Both Noriega and Paye put up those numbers in 11 games.

Another note in Menlo history is the 25 TD receptions and points (150) in a season by Brandon Stephens in 1990.

This season's Menlo team also put up another big number, 3,366.1. That earned the Knights the CCS Scholastic Championship Team Award for the football team with the best combined grade point average this season, which saw Menlo start the year 3-3 on the field and finish 9-4.

Menlo knew it needed a near-perfect performance last Saturday to defeat unbeaten Carmel and earn the school's first-ever CCS football title.

Both Carmel (12-0) and Menlo entered the playoffs without ever having won a CCS playoff game. Carmel, however, went on a three-game postseason steamroll, scoring 176 points during its run. Menlo, which lost to Carmel in nonleague play in the second game of the season, 49-14, gave the Padres their closest game and in the process became the first team to get a lead on Carmel at any time during the season. ■

STANFORD ROUNDUP

O'Hara caps stellar career with All-American honors

Cardinal football team is headed to the Sun Bowl and will face Oklahoma Sooners on New Year's Eve

by Rick Eyrer

Stanford senior forward Kelley O'Hara, the odds-on favorite to win the National Player of the Year award, was named a first-team All-American by the National Soccer Colleges Association of America (NSCAA) on Wednesday.

O'Hara was one of four Stanford players accorded All-American status, the most of any school. She was joined by junior forward Christen Press (second team), senior defender Ali Riley (third team) and freshman midfielder Mariah Nogueira (third team).

O'Hara, the national leader in goals (26) and points (65), was a second-team selection the past two years. This season, she led the Cardinal to a 25-1 record and a berth in the NCAA championship final, teaming with Press to form the highest-scoring tandem in the country.

Press, an NSCAA All-American for the first time, scored 21 goals, had a school-record 16 assists, and

58 points; the second-highest season total in Stanford history, behind O'Hara. Press scored five goals in six NCAA Tournament matches, including the dramatic Golden Goal in overtime that beat UCLA in the semifinals.

Riley, a left outside back, led the Stanford defense to 14 shutouts and a 0.57 goals-against average and aided in the attack with her speed and overlapping runs.

Nogueira, the Pac-10 Newcomer of the Year, scored five goals and had five assists to tie for fourth on the team scoring list despite playing a defensive midfielder role. She proved herself one of the best headers of the ball in the college game and a target on set pieces, as well as a strong presence on defense.

Including last year's first-team All-Americans, Palo Alto grad Teresa Noyola and Castilleja grad Lindsay Taylor, this year's Stanford

(continued on page 48)

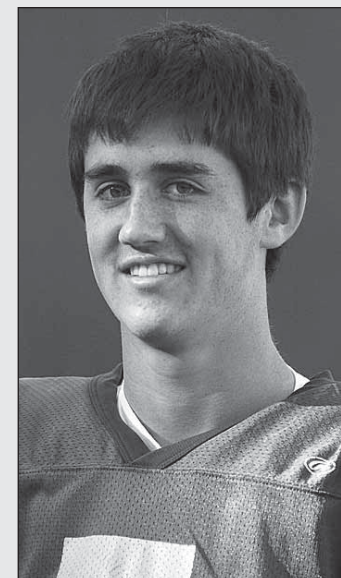
ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Eve Zelinger

Castilleja School

The senior helped the Gators start their basketball season 4-0 for the first time ever by scoring 87 points, including 62 that earned her MVP honors for three wins and a title at the Forest Lake Christian tourney.



Danny Diekroeger

Menlo School

The senior quarterback broke numerous school records plus an all-time Bay Area mark for 470 yards on 30-of-48 passing with four touchdowns during a wild 56-35 loss to unbeaten Carmel in the CCS Division IV championship game.

Honorable mention

Katie Baum

Menlo soccer

Massiel Castellanos

Woodside Priory soccer

Nicole Fasola

Menlo soccer

Ahjalee Harvey

Eastside Prep basketball

Natasha von Kaeppler

Castilleja basketball

Kelsey Morehead

Pinewood basketball

Davante Adams

Palo Alto basketball

Tim Benton

Menlo football

Dante Fraioli

Pinewood basketball

Beau Nichols

Menlo football

Kyle Riches

Pinewood basketball

Max Schmarzo

Palo Alto basketball

* previous winner

To see video interviews of the Athletes of the Week, go to www.PASportsOnline.com

Volleyball

(continued from page 42)

Stanford held its home matches at Burnham Pavilion while Maples was getting a facelift, and did not host a postseason match for the just the second time in the past 23 years.

As the No. 11 overall seed, Stanford was not expected to do well after winning 24 of 30 regular-season matches. That team eventually went on to win the national title as the lowest seed ever to do so, beating seeds No. 6, 7 and 4 along the way, and all on the road.

Only USC, at 27-10 in 1981, has lost more matches and won the NCAA championship. It was a 16-team field that year.

This year, the Cardinal won 20 of its 27 regular-season matches. Its fourth seed was more a result of parity in the Pac-10 than anything. Stanford won the conference with four losses, the most ever by a conference champion.

Stanford seniors are hoping for their fourth consecutive trip to the Final Four. In order to do, the Cardinal will have to beat No. 16 Michigan (26-9) on Friday night at 7 p.m. and either No. 3 Hawaii (30-2) or No. 8 Illinois (26-5) on Saturday at 8:30 p.m. (televised by ESPNU)

All three teams have been ranked ahead of Stanford at one point or another during the course of the season and the Rainbow Wahine own a three-set victory over the Cardinal.

In the most recent RPI ratings, the fighting Illini are fourth, the Wolverines are ninth, Stanford is sixth and Hawaii is 22nd.

Hawaii is the victim of playing in the WAC in terms of strength of schedule, and in playing a lop-sided

20 home matches.

Stanford, Michigan and Illinois benefit from playing in tough conferences. There are three teams each from the Pac-10 and Big 10 among the top 10, while Hawaii is the only WAC team among the top 75.

The Rainbow Wahine has played as difficult a schedule as they can, bringing in UCLA, Texas, California, St. Louis, and Stanford, going 3-2 against the group.

Illinois and Hawaii meet at 5 p.m. Friday in the other semifinal of easily the toughest regional in the nation, with an average RPI rating of 11.

The Rainbow Wahine won the Western Athletic Conference for the 14th straight year and beat New Mexico and USC to reach the Sweet Sixteen.

Illinois, the tournament's No. 5 overall seed, finished second in the Big Ten, behind undefeated and two-time defending national champion Penn State. The Illini defeated IPFW (3-0) and Dayton (3-1) in Champaign, Ill., last weekend.

Michigan, the No. 13 overall seed, advanced to a regional semifinal for the third consecutive season after beating Niagara and Ohio in Ann Arbor in the first two rounds

The regional winner advances to the Final Four, Dec. 17 and 19, at the St. Pete Times Forum in Tampa, Fla.

Michigan beat Notre Dame and lost to Oregon State this season. Stanford did the reverse, winning twice against the Beavers and losing to the Irish.

It's the first meeting between the two schools in 15 years.

Stanford has won more NCAA championships (six), made more Final Four appearances (18), competed in more national championship

matches (14) and won more NCAA Tournament matches (94) than any program in the nation.

Four Stanford players were named all-Pacific Region earlier in the week. Junior Alix Klineman was named to the 14-player team for the third straight season. She was joined on the team by junior Cassidy Lichtman and Janet Okogbaa. Junior Gabi Ailes received honorable mention.

Karissa Cook and Jessica Walker on named to the Pac-10 All-Freshman team, while Hannah Benjamin received honorable mention.

The three seniors — Okogbaa, Alex Fisher and Joanna Evans — have helped lead Stanford to 116 victories, four consecutive Pac-10 titles and three straight appearances in the national championship match. Combined, they have nearly 700 kills, over 700 assists, 300 blocks and 250 digs. They have appeared in 20 postseason matches in their college careers.

The junior class is not far behind, competing in 14 postseason matches so far.

Stanford had a 12-1 record at Maples Pavilion this year and is 54-4 at home over the last four seasons.

Stanford was the only team in the Pac-10 to finish in the top five of all seven statistical categories: hitting percentage, 3rd, .258; opponent hitting percentage, 4th, .213; assists, 3rd, 13.59; kills, 4th, 14.36; blocks, 4th, 2.67; service aces, 3rd, 1.16; digs, 3rd, 16.56.

Stanford coach John Dunning is one victory from 700. He has a record of 699-146 (.827) in the 25 years since he left Fremont High in Sunnyvale to take on the University of Pacific job.

His winning percentage ranks among the top five all-time for Division I coaches. Dunning is 262-44



Hector Garica-Molina/Stanford Athletics

Stephanie Browne (12) and her Stanford volleyball teammates will take on Michigan in the NCAA Sweet Sixteen on Friday at Stanford.

at Stanford, and the all-time winningest coach in Pac-10 history by percentage (.855).

NCAA Stanford Regional tickets are priced as follows: Reserved two-day tickets are \$25. General admis-

sion two-day tickets are available for \$15 for adults and \$10 for youth, students and senior citizens. Single session tickets are \$15 for reserved seats and \$10 for adult general admission. ■

Gerhart

(continued from page 42)

the most humble. When the Stanford players voted for a team MVP, Gerhart voted for freshman quarterback Andrew Luck. Everyone else voted for Gerhart.

Throughout a season in which he shattered his own school season rushing record with 1,736 yards, and scored 26 touchdowns — both national-leading marks — Gerhart has deflected credit for his role in turning around a Stanford program that hadn't had a winning season or bowl appearance since 2001.

But others were more forthcoming.

"The best I've ever been around," Stanford coach Jim Harbaugh said after Gerhart's spectacular 205-yard, three-touchdown performance on national television against Notre Dame Nov. 28.

In the boisterous Stanford Stadium locker room after the last-minute 45-38 regular season finale victory, Harbaugh handed Gerhart the game ball, as his teammates chanted "Heis-man! Heis-man!"

And then Gerhart did it. The Heisman pose. The place went nuts.

When he arrived at class the following Monday, the room erupted in applause. When he walks across campus, he people were nudging each other and pointing. Every time he checks his Facebook account, he



David Gonzales/Stanford Photo

Stanford senior Toby Gerhart has been getting a lot of attention this football season, and rightfully so for the Heisman Trophy finalist.

has 50 new friend requests — he estimates he has 1,500 "friends" and another 1,800 unconfirmed.

"I can't keep up with it anymore," he said.

Yet, he's still the guy who always keeps a fishing pole in the trunk of his car. The guy who owned only one suit, until prompted this week to

upgrade for the Heisman ceremony. The guy who can see himself following the footsteps of his father, Todd Gerhart, as a career high school football coach.

"I'm extremely flattered to be invited," he said. "I'm going to be with a roomful of guys that are legends of college football. To be associated

with them is going to be an honor. To meet them and hang out with them is going to be a lot of fun."

The timing may be right for Gerhart. None of the nation's big names seized the Heisman opportunity with big seasons.

Florida quarterback Tim Tebow and Texas quarterback Colt McCoy failed to make positive lasting impressions in their most recent games. Nebraska's Ndamukong Suh is a defensive tackle, a position that has never produced a Heisman winner. And Alabama's Mark Ingram has that 16-carry, 34-yard performance against Auburn to consider.

When asked what edge he may have in the race, Gerhart said: "Consistency."

He's had 10 100-yard performances in 12 games and his low yardage total was 82, against Wake Forest. But that was with only 17 carries, Gerhart's lowest total of the season. He still had a healthy 4.8-yard average in that game.

"One thing about all this is I've let the production and play speak for itself," Gerhart said. "There wasn't a lot of preseason hype — or any preseason hype. Being recognized for what you do on the field, and not being a 'media baby,' makes it a lot more special."

Voters may disregard Gerhart because of his team's 8-4 record, without realizing that it was Gerhart, who in the words of teammates "carried the team on his back," to

reach that mark — a seven-victory improvement over Gerhart's freshman year.

Voters in some parts of the country may view Stanford's Pacific-10 Conference schedule as weaker than, say, Alabama's in the Southeastern Conference.

But Gerhart averaged 14.84 yards in the Pac-10, a conference that has more teams (five) ranked in the BCS, AP, and USA Today top 25s than any other conference. The Anderson & Hester BCS computer rankings have rated the Pac-10 as the strongest conference in the nation.

Throw in the fact that Stanford has played eight teams that have been ranked among the Top 25 at some point in the season, and that he is averaging a national-best 200.3 yards per game against ranked opponents, and Gerhart has a pretty solid case.

And if he does hear his name called Saturday?

"I'll be speechless," he said. "It'll be the greatest moment of my life."

And, someday perhaps, another 12-year-old boy with big dreams will walk through the Downtown Athletic Club, and stare, wide-eyed, at a portrait of Toby Gerhart. ■

(David Kiefer works in the Sports Information Department at Stanford University. The former local sportswriter has been involved in the local community for three decades.)



Courtesy PASA

The Palo Alto Stanford Aquatics' foursome of (L-R) Jasmine Tosky, Maddy Schaefer, Alicia Grima and Julia Ama set age-group records in the 400 free and 800 free relay teams at the Short Course Nationals.

Swimming

(continued from page 42)

185.5 to the 184 accumulated by King Aquatics of Washington — a team that featured Olympian Megan Jendrick. The title came down to the final 400 free relay, where King Aquatics held a 6 1/2-point over PASA, which needed to beat King Aquatics by four places to claim the crown.

In a tightly contested battle going into the final 50, PASA was in third followed by King Aquatics in fourth, but the King anchor faded to seventh giving PASA the team title.

PASA piled up most of its points in the relays, but had two outstanding swims from Maddy Schaefer and Jasmine Tosky. Schaefer, 16, who attends St. Francis High, finished fifth overall in the women's 50 free final — losing only to four Olympians. Schaefer, however, won the 18-under national title with a 22.52 clocking that broke her own 15-16 Pacific record.

Schaefer won last spring's 50 free title at the Central Coast Section finals in 22.55.

Tosky, 15, a sophomore at Palo Alto High, was sixth overall in the 200 fly finals in 1:56.22, breaking the Pacific record set by Olympian Natalie Coughlin in 1998.

Schaefer and Tosky also swam on the 200 free relay team with Paly's Sarah Liang, 16, and Gunn's Julia Ama, 15, that clocked 1:32.21 to set a Pacific and national 15-16 and 15-18 records.

Schaefer, Tosky and Ama were joined by 15-year old Alicia Grima on the 400 free relay team that set a Pacific record of 3:21.12. Both the 400 free and 200 free relay teams finished third overall to collegiate squads.

Tosky, Schaefer, Ama and Grima set a Pacific and national record for 15-16s in the 800 free relay (7:21.64). That team was sixth overall. In the 400 medley relay, Grima, Liang, Tosky and Schaefer went 3:43.09 for seventh overall while setting Pacific records for 15-16s and 15-18s.

In the 200 medley relay, Grima, Liang, Tosky and Schaefer finished ninth overall in 1:42.46 to set yet another Pacific record for 15-16s

and 15-18s in 1:42.46. Along with the aforementioned five swimmers, Katie Howard from Sacred Heart Prep rounded out the PASA squad.

In other individual events, Tosky was ninth in the 200 IM (1:58.36), finished 11th in the 400 IM (4:13.22), and took 12th in the 100 fly (54.12). Schaefer also took 10th in the 100 free (49.53) where the top four finishers were U.S. Olympians.

Tosky also clocked a 1:47.88 leg to lead off the 800 free relay. That time was faster than the winning time at the CCS finals. Her 100 fly time also

was faster than the CCS champ.

Elsewhere during the weekend, PASA sent more than 50 swimmers to the Junior Olympics last weekend in Pleasanton, and came home with second place in the overall meet.

Alex Liang, a fifth grader at Duveneck School, won all nine of his events and combined with Kenny Joseph, Andrew Jozefov, Max Ferenczy and Enoch Min to win both of the 10 and under Boys relays. Liang broke the Pacific Swimming record in the 50 back with a 30.13. He also took home the high-point award. ■

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Christmas Day Friday, December 25
10:00 am Carols & Lessons

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CHRISTMAS EVE – THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

4:00 pm Family Mass – Our Lady of the Rosary
(Children's Christmas Pageant during Mass)

6:00 pm Family Mass – St. Albert the Great
(Children's Christmas Pageant during Mass)

6:00 pm – St. Thomas Aquinas

7:00 pm – Our Lady of the Rosary *(Spanish)*

Midnight Mass 12:00 am – St. Thomas Aquinas *(Gregorian)*

CHRISTMAS DAY – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

7:30am – St. Thomas Aquinas; 9:00am – St. Albert the Great; 10:30am – Our Lady of the Rosary;
 10:30am – St. Thomas Aquinas; 12:00 Noon – St. Thomas Aquinas *(Gregorian)*



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Sunday, December 20, 10:00 AM: Worship, "The Wonder of Love"
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11:30 AM: Christmas Brunch



**Thursday, December 24, 5:30 PM:
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December 25, 10:30 a.m. - Worship - Holy Communion

Congregational Carol Singing; Keith Wanamaker, Organist



Stanford Memorial Church Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services



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 Christmas Eve Ecumenical Family Service**

Sermon by the Rev. Joanne Sanders
Please bring new, unwrapped gifts for children in need.
 Doors open at 4:15 pm.

**Thursday, December 24, 9 pm
 Christmas Eve Festival Eucharist**

Sermon by Dean Scotty McLennan

Thursday, December 24, Midnight
 Catholic Christmas Eve Mass

Friday, December 25, 10:30 am
 Catholic Christmas Day Mass

<http://religiousofstanford.edu>



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945 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA
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www.valleypreschurch.org

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 10:00 pm Candlelight Service

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 11:15 pm Candlelight Holy Communion Service
Friday, December 25: 11:00 am
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 10:00 p.m. Festal Choral Eucharist

Friday, December 25th

Christmas Day

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Carols, Rite I

Ladera Community Church

3300 Alpine Rd., Portola Valley
 www.ladera.org

We hope you will join us for one or more of these events:

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10
Advent Prayer Service, 7:30 pm
 A service of "Healing and Hope"

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13
Madrigal Concert, 10:30 am
 Performed by Mountain View High School's Singers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20
Christmas Music Service, 9:30 am
 Rejoice and Sing!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24
Family Christmas Pageant, 4 pm
 Candle Lighting Service, 8 pm

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3
Celebration of Three Kings, 9:30 am

For more details, visit www.ladera.org
 or call the church office at (650) 854-5481.



Christmas Eve: 5-6:30pm
New Year's Eve: 7-9:00pm
 (visit our website for details)

Come celebrate the season with us.



Peninsula Bible Church
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 www.pbc.org



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CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH US!

Wherever you are in your journey, whether church is familiar or not, we welcome you to join us for one of our Christmas services. Whether you prefer a simpler children's service or a more traditional service with the Church Choir infused with the sense of the sacred that fills Christmas Eve night, we invite you to join us.

Christmas Eve
(All services will be about an hour)

4:00 pm Children's Communion Service with Pageant
 6:00 pm Christmas Communion Service with the Festival Choir
 9:30 pm Carol Sing
 10:00 pm Christmas Communion Service with the Festival Choir

Christmas Day

10:00 am Christmas Day Communion with hymns

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Stanford roundup

(continued from page 43)

team featured six All-Americans. All but five seniors will from a 25-1 team that dropped a 1-0 decision to North Carolina in the NCAA finals last Sunday in College Station, Texas.

Stanford reached its first ever national championship match of what has been a remarkable, record-setting, season.

The Cardinal reasserted itself on the national scene, and with plenty of offensive firepower returning, the program can look forward to continued success.

Stanford loses seniors O'Hara,

Riley, Hillary Heath, Alicia Jenkins and Kristin Stannard, all prominent figures in the Cardinal return to the Final Four the past two years.

"The same mentality has been here the entire time, with the goal of winning a national championship," Jenkins said. "But this year, everything kind of came together. Obviously, today was really disappointing, but I'm really proud of every single person on the team and the effort that they've given every day, all season long."

And yet, in many ways, it was still a young team. Junior goalie Kira Maker, who made four saves in the game, returns along with starters Press, Noyola, Taylor, Allison McCann, Alina Garciamendez and

Rachel Quon.

Nogueira, Courtney Verloo, Camille Levin, Morgan Redman and Marhani Hing-Glover will also return after making significant contributions this year.

Football

Stanford will meet Oklahoma in the Brut Sun Bowl on New Year's Eve at 11 a.m. (PT) on CBS. The 19th-ranked Cardinal (8-4) qualified for its first bowl game in eight years with its first winning season in eight years. Oklahoma (7-5) tied for third place in the South Division of the Big 12.

Stanford is 1-3 all-time against Oklahoma, with the then 16th-ranked Sooners beating the Cardi-

nal in their last meeting, 19-7, on Sept. 8, 1984.

Stanford upset then 4th-ranked Oklahoma, 31-14, in Norman on Sept. 27, 1980.

It will be the third appearance at the El Paso bowl game for both schools, though they will be meeting for the first time ever in the postseason.

Stanford won in 1977 under Bill Walsh, beating LSU, 24-14. The Cardinal also won in 1996 under Tyrone Willingham, beating Michigan State, 38-0.

"Our players, coaches and staff are truly honored to accept the Sun Bowl Committee's invitation," said Stanford coach Jim Harbaugh. "Stanford football is privileged to

join the proud tradition of the Sun Bowl and the wonderful people of El Paso. We move forward with humble hearts, unwavering focus and relentless preparation."

The Sooners, who average over 31 points and 419 yards of total offense, won the 1981 Sun Bowl, beating Houston, 40-14, and again in 1993 with a 41-10 win over Texas Tech.

Stanford is led by senior running back Toby Gerhart, who leads the nation in total rushing yards with 1,736 yards and scoring with 26 rushing touchdowns.

Stanford will be making its 22nd bowl appearance. The Cardinal is 9-10-1 (.452) in bowl games. This is Oklahoma's 43rd overall bowl appearance. ■

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