



# OMVNA Newsletter

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## Leadership Mountain View Seeks Future Leaders

Leadership Mountain View (LMV) is a ten-month training program for emerging community leaders. It is now accepting applications for the class of 2010 – its twentieth anniversary year. The program consists of nine full-day and one half-day sessions. Classes take place one Friday a month, starting in September and running through June.

Class members explore leadership and community issues through discussions, expert speakers, workshops and field trips. Topics will include how city government works and issues facing the regional economic, environmental, human services and educational systems.

Many local residents are LMV graduates, including Council members **Bryant & Abe-Koga**.

To apply online, visit <https://chambermv.wufoo.com/forms/lmv-application/> Tuition is \$1,750. Payment schedules are available, as well as some partial scholarships. The class size is limited to 32 and LMV is committed to seeking participants who reflect the rich diversity of the area.

For more information, contact Program Director **Alicia Crank** at [alicia@chambermv.org](mailto:alicia@chambermv.org) ■



## It's Big! It's Fun! It's Made out of Chocolate!

OMVNA's annual Ice Cream Social will be held at Mercy-Bush Park on **Sunday, Aug. 30 1-3 p.m.** Save the date! **Free ice cream** for everyone!

Come meet your neighbors for an afternoon of fun! Activities for children will include an MV Fire Truck, Soap Box Derby race cars, and lots of inflatable kids' games.

## Letter from the Chair

*By Noam Livnat*

More than 20 neighbors joined OMVNA's Steering Committee's July meeting to share their perspectives regarding Prometheus' proposed development at the Minton site. An important related discussion also took place regarding what role, if any, OMVNA should play in representing the neighborhood in this regard.

Prometheus has proposed building more than 200 one- and two-bedroom flats in a format similar to Park Place Apartments, which stretch west from Castro between Church and High School Way. The proposal asks for a number of changes from the current zoning plan, including higher density, buildings with 3 and 4 stories, and narrower sidewalks.

To some, this is an example of smart growth: residences catering to professionals, next to a local transportation hub and in the midst of a walkable community. The neighbors who attended the meeting see it differently. Among the concerns they expressed were worries about deviating from the current zoning plan, increasing the already high percentage of renters in Mountain View, the possibility that the development will become student housing for a  
*Continued on Page 2*

**Letter from the Chair** (continued) future Moffett University, concerns about the impact of inadequate parking, traffic congestion, loss of City tax revenue due to the structure of the deal with Minton, and that public transportation usage wouldn't be enough to justify the development. Many were upset by what they had heard about OMVNA's position on the project.

The Steering Committee has sent two letters regarding the proposed project to City Council. The first one, printed in the March, 2009 *Newsletter*, supported Prometheus' request for staff resources to evaluate the project. The second is printed on this page. Unfortunately, our position might have been misrepresented by others.

To be clear: the Steering Committee supports *evaluating* this project, and does believe that the Minton site is a good place for a high-density project. This doesn't mean that the project is "ready to go." Input from residents, evaluation by the city's professional staff, traffic studies, and much other work are needed before anybody could pass truly informed judgment.

But there's a more fundamental issue here. Any development project like this brings costs as well as benefits to the community. The problem is that the whole community enjoys the benefits, such as a more vibrant downtown, while many of the costs may be concentrated in a small area and primarily affect the development's nearest neighbors.

OMVNA represents all downtown residents and thus the Steering Committee seeks to determine its positions on any topic in terms

of overall costs and benefits to the entire neighborhood. This may contrast with opinions of groups of neighbors and that's OK – OMVNA will help other voices be heard, because discussion and debate can only improve the outcome. But as each of us weighs in on this and other issues, we need to remember that there can be a fine line between majority rule and the tyranny of the majority, and to be respectful and sensitive to the needs and rights of groups within our larger community. ■

### **OMVNA Chair's Letter to the Mayor about Minton Lumber Redevelopment**

The Steering Committee authorized Chair **Noam Livnat** to send this letter to the Mayor and Council prior to its June 16 meeting in which the proposal by Prometheus Development was reviewed.

*Dear Members of the City of Mountain View City Council:*

*We have met recently with Prometheus' representatives who updated OMVNA's Steering Committee regarding their proposed project. We specifically discussed their interim plan for the proposed new street connecting Evelyn and Villa, and were satisfied with the current proposal's interim solution. There were a number of additional points we would like to raise with regard to this project:*

- *We appreciate the fact that this is a relatively high density project, but would have been interested in exploring even higher density options given the location*

*of the site – close to public transportation and the downtown area.*

- *There is some concern regarding the garbage collection solution and its impact on residents in the area.*

- *We suggest reserving parking places for moving trucks. Absence of such spots at Park Place inconveniences the area's residents and often introduces safety hazards.*

- *The traffic impact of the project is not yet clear to us, and we would like to minimize traffic flow impact on Evelyn St. We intend to continue discussions with downtown residents and Prometheus and to follow the City's approval process.*

*Sincerely,*

*Noam Livnat, OMVNA Chair*

### **OMVNA Steering Committee**

The next Steering Committee meeting will be Monday, Aug. 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Board Room at 580 Castro. Everyone is welcome to attend! Agendas are sent to the OMVNAtalk e-mail list prior to each meeting. To suggest a topic, send e-mail to: [chair@omvna.org](mailto:chair@omvna.org)

Future meetings are held in the same location on the second Monday of each month. ■

### **Art & Wine Festival Seeks Volunteers, Sept. 12-13**

*By Julie Lovins*

Old Mountain View residents experience the annual Art & Wine Festival in at least two ways: as tourists in our own neighborhood, browsing a transformed Castro  
*Continued on Page 3*

## Lawn Gone, Garden Grown

By Paul Staley

With the increased popularity of home gardens, more and more homeowners are converting their lawns into productive gardens. Local residents **Libby Dresel** and **John Brazil** have done just that in their front yard at 307 Loreto. If you have seen their house, no doubt you've noticed the transformation and wondered what's going on there.

John is a native of Mountain View. His family has been here for five generations, originally farming and tending orchards. Libby has been a gardener since childhood. They grew tired of the work, chemicals, and especially the water consumption involved in maintaining a lawn, so they decided to convert it into a garden where they could grow the fresh veggies they love.

They needed to use the front lawn because their backyard is already full of trees. Their front yard receives full sun all day long and is the right size for their growing needs. According to Libby, "The best part has been the many nice people who have stopped to ask us what we are doing and to share their own gardening stories. If the veggies were not out front we would be missing all of that."

She took the extra step of creating two smaller beds that are adjacent to the large beds but at a lower level. This makes the large beds feel less boxy and gives a more professional look to their creation.

They are serious recyclers, and used their recycling skills in very clever ways. They first covered

the lawn with cardboard to kill the grass, but not with just any cardboard. They realized they had a lot of space to cover and needed cardboard that could stand up to the rigors of gardening. They hit on the idea of using old bicycle boxes from local bike shops. These boxes have proven to be a good idea because they are quite large to begin with and are made of thicker cardboard.

Their next recycling coup was to pick up straw bales that had been used as barriers at a bike race in San Jose. The process of assembling the beds was as simple as lining the bales up next to one another.

Finding quality soil with good drainage was a high priority. They wanted to use recycled soil but in the end purchased a high quality soil mix to fill the beds. This purchase was the most expensive part of the project by far.

While considering how to construct their raised beds, John and Libby took a class on raised bed gardening at Love Apple Farm in Ben Lomond. They used the bed-building techniques they learned in the class and also followed the Love Apple Farm method for growing top quality tomatoes. This involves a very deep planting hole and the use of fish heads, some crushed aspirin, a few eggshells and worm castings. Personally, I am eager to see how the tomatoes respond to this plant growing magic. Read details at [www.growbetterveggies.com](http://www.growbetterveggies.com) (Select "Re-post: How I Plant a Tomato" under the Recent Posts heading on the right-side menu.)

So far Libby has put in basil, tomatoes, peppers, squash and a cucumber. She has also planted

flowers specifically chosen to attract the birds and the bees. Still to come are ornamental flowers, as well as beans planted on a unique recycled trellis.

Libby and John have found a way to create a practical, visually appealing and inviting garden space that we can all enjoy. If you see them out enjoying their creation be sure to say hello. Since they now have ten tomato plants thriving, it's likely they will have an extra tomato or two that they will be happy to share with you. ■

**Festival Volunteers** (continued) Street, and as hosts to tens of thousands of visitors from the Bay Area and beyond.

There's a third way to experience it: as a volunteer. Some folks volunteer as a family, some bring a friend, and others come on their own to pitch in while meeting interesting new people.

**Green Mountain View** seeks volunteers to make sure that every can, bottle, and cardboard box is recycled. The main task, moving materials in wheeled totes, is familiar to most of us! E-mail [gmv.volunteering@gmail.com](mailto:gmv.volunteering@gmail.com) for more information on how to sign up for a three-hour shift.

The **Chamber of Commerce**, sponsor of the event, is looking for lots of local volunteers to welcome guests at wine and beer booths and handle other event functions. Click on the event logo at [www.chambermv.org](http://www.chambermv.org) to volunteer.

**Leadership Mountain View** seeks volunteers to staff its water booths. There's lots of interaction with thirsty customers and you can sign up for three-hour shifts at [tinyurl.com/LMVArt-Wine](http://tinyurl.com/LMVArt-Wine). ■

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