

# **OMVNA** Newsletter

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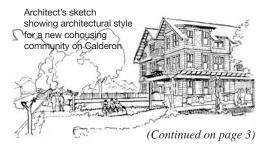
NEWS •••



#### Co-housing Community Planned for 445 Calderon

by Katherine Forrest

Local residents are in the process of planning for a new "old-fashioned neighborhood" on a piece of property on Calderon at Velarde. This is a "first" for Mountain View, and it represents part of a growing interest in cohousing nationwide.



## Check out omvna.org

Check out www.omvna.org. We have a special feature this month: a video accompaniment to the article on ridding the neighborhood of snails.

On the site, all newsletter articles are posted, and residents of Old Mountain View are encouraged to join in the conversation by leaving a comment on an article.

We have also set up a survey tool on the site, with the question this month asking which alternatives to the High Speed Rail Old Mountain View residents prefer. This survey tool does nothing more than gather opinions from a selfselected group who have an opinion and want to participate in the survey. In this way it is much like public comment at a Council meeting. It does *not* purport to be a random sample of neighborhood

## Council Deliberates:

# Grants Prometheus Request for Changes in Zoning

On April 27 City Council debated the controversial Prometheus Development of 455 Evelyn Avenue, site of the current Minton's building supply store. At issue was Prometheus's request for re-zoning the parcel from 15-25 units/acre to 58 units/acre as well as what to do about BMR (below market rate) units, which were in limbo because of recent court rulings. Council voted 5-2 to grant the developer's requests.

Mayor Ronit Bryant kicked off Council deliberation with a question about neighborhood preservation: "What does neighborhood preservation mean? Does it mean not changing the neighborhood? Does it mean keeping it exactly as it is today? I don't think so."

Siegel commented, "No one says don't do a project here, and even don't do high density. But if you do it, do it right." He cited a litany of issues raised by residents, including inadequate parking, the building not fitting in with the neighborhood, a lack of sufficient park space, and increased traffic.

Siegel noted that the majority of the neighborhood was against the project from the feedback he received. "I don't know why we aren't listening to the neighborhood and what they want," said Siegel.

In contrast, Margaret Abe-Koga said that she did not see a clear consensus for or against the project.

Mayor Bryant and Mike Kasperzak felt that the city needed more apartments in the downtown, with Kasperzak highlighting affordability by pointing out that "the last time I looked you didn't have to put \$300,000 down for the first month's rent."

Siegel noted that the city is already proportionately high in apartments at 55-58% compared to 33% in other cities on the Peninsula.

(Continued on page 2)

# Sunday Brunch at Zucca Ristorante

**Bottomless Mimosas for only \$3.50** 

Bring the whole family to the June OMVNA Mixer, a Sunday brunch at Zucca Ristorante, 186 Castro Street on Sunday, June 20, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For residents of Old Mountain View, the brunch will feature half-price bottomless Mimosas for \$3.50 (and kids' virgin Mimosas!) and a Mediterranean Table buffet for \$7.50.

The Mediterranean Table includes items such as sliced oranges with mint, melon with feta and honey, sliced Roma tomatoes with vinegar, and Greek-style eggplant with oregano. You can also purchase entrees such as a spicy salmon frittata (\$9.50) or a chicken wrap with brie, sliced tomatoes, bacon and cabbage slaw (\$9.50).

For the complete brunch menu, visit www. zuccaristorante.com.



# Zucca Ristorante A Friendly Neighborhood Bistro

by Max Hauser

Zucca Ristorante, 186 Castro, (650) 864 9940 www.zuccaristorante.com

Though Zucca opened in 2001, locals may still perceive it as one of the "newer" downtown restaurants. It was among a wave of openings that included what are now some of downtown's best known. When Mehmet Degerli and Praveen Singha opened Zucca, it was also something new, combining upscale ambience, pan-Mediterranean cooking (I've enjoyed Greek, Italian, and Turkish specialties), and a "happening" bar.

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#### Council Deliberates

(Continued from front page)

In addition, Siegel claimed that the developer told him that they expect an annual turnover rate of 50%. "To me this doesn't sound like the Old Mountain View I've been hearing about—being friendly, knowing your neighbors...It's more like a long-stay hotel" except the city does not benefit by collecting hotel taxes.

John Inks defended changes in zoning saying that Council frequently amends Precise Plans, citing as an example the Tech Farm on the north side of Evelyn Avenue adjacent to the train tracks, noting that several variances were granted and that the building height was 4 feet higher.

Both Kasperzak and Abe-Koga argued that higher density would make a grocery store viable. Abe-Koga said that the community was currently at 3400 residences and needed 4000 to 5000 to a support a grocery store.

## **11** No one says don't do a project here, and even don't do high density. But if you do it, do it right.

-Vice Mayor Jac Siegel

Regarding concerns with traffic and parking, Siegel felt that many of the assumptions of the traffic study were questionable. Tom Means and Inks defended the study, and Means felt that Council should show more respect for the data and the work of staff.

Council granted all of the developer requests, going against the Environmental Planning Commission's 4-1 vote not to grant the variances.

Siegel said, "This is not a compromise. This is not even close to a compromise. Instead there seems to be so much more concern for the developer to make money."

Laura Macias concurred and wondered "what the great advantage to the city is ...to change the rules for the developer and the current property owner....Is it the role and responsibility of the city to ensure that the developer and the owner earns the most revenue on a property?

Demolition is slated to begin in September, and construction in Summer 2011.

# Letter from the hair

by Laura Lewis

Most of you probably saw the MV Voice article on the improvements in Mountain View school test scores. What was not mentioned in that article is that our very own Landels Elementary School made huge strides in its test scores, bettering their 2008 result by 29 points with an average API score of 825 (out of a possible 1000). Landels also won the California Distinguished School award which honors those schools that have demonstrated educational excellence for all students and helped narrow the achievement gap that exists in certain student populations because of background, condition, or circumstances. When compared to schools with similarly diverse student population Landels was among the best in the state (GreatSchools.net ranked Landels as a 9 out of 10 for quality and test scores among such schools). I'd like to offer my congratulations to the students, teachers, parents, administrators and volunteers that contributed to this success.



On another note, two great events will return

for the summer in the coming weeks. Thursday Night Live offers music and fun in Pioneer Park on the following Thursdays between 6:30-8:00 PM: July 8, July 22, Aug 5, and Aug 19. Also, Children's Theater in the Park will run June 25 through August 13 Fridays at 6:30 pm. So bring a picnic and enjoy these outstanding free events. More information on both events can be found at http://mountainviewdowntown.com.

Lastly, I wanted to remind everyone that we are gearing up for election season, both for three City Council seats as well as the OMVNA Steering Committee. In the coming months we will be forming a Nominating Committee which will subsequently begin its search for those interested in serving the neighborhood. I encourage you all to consider serving either on the Nominating Committee or the Steering Committee. Those interested in receiving more information about these positions can contact me at Chair@OMVNA.org.

Cheers,

#### No More Taxes for OMVNA

**OMVNA** Treasurer Carter Coleman submitted paperwork to the IRS in order for OMVNA to be designated as a 501c4 non-profit organization. The impact is that the association will no longer need to pay federal income tax. Tax returns must still be filed, and were filed in compliance by May 15.

An additional impact of the change is that contributions to OMVNA are now tax deductible.

Keep up on the High Speed Rail!

**High Speed Rail Alternatives Analysis** Tuesday, June 22, 6:30 p.m. City Hall, Council Chambers, **500 Castro Street** 

June Mixer

Sunday, June 20, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. **Zucca Ristorante, 186 Castro Street** Enjoy bottomless Mimosas for only \$3.50.

#### 445 Calderon

(Continued from front page)

Cohousing communities, now numbering over 230 in 36 states, are designed to bring together the amenities of private homes with the benefits of more sustainable living. That means common facilities and good connections with neighbors.

The Mountain View Cohousing Community (MVCC), being developed and designed by its members, will have 19 condominium units, ranging in size from approximately 1370 to 2050 square feet. Members will share a 4500-s.f. common house with facilities for recreation, exercise, group dining, crafts, tool shop, bike storage, etc.

David and Susan Burwen, long-time Mountain View residents, were one of the couples who first conceived of the idea of a local cohousing project. Susan said, "Now that our sons are adults, we wanted to downsize. We love Mountain View and want to stay here, but are seeking to live in a stable neighborhood of people who care about each others' welfare like close friends." Of the nine member households already committed to the project, three are long-time Mountain View residents, and the others are from nearby cities: Los Altos, Palo Alto, and Portola Valley, with one from Half Moon Bay. Among them are physicians, teachers, engineers and other professionals, working and retired.

Award-winning architect Charles (Chuck) Durrett, who is the primary architect for the MVCC project, has designed some 50 cohousing projects across the country. He spoke about cohousing to a standing-room-only crowd last fall at Books, Inc., on Castro Street.

Durrett has led five design workshops with the MVCC members, during which the members have provided input on the site layout, exterior appearance, the common house, and design of the individual condominium units. Durrett said, "We're planning an upscale, sophisticated design, one that will reinforce the classic feeling of the Old Mountain View neighborhood." MVCC members have been consulting with the City of Mountain View and will be meeting with neighbors in the near future.

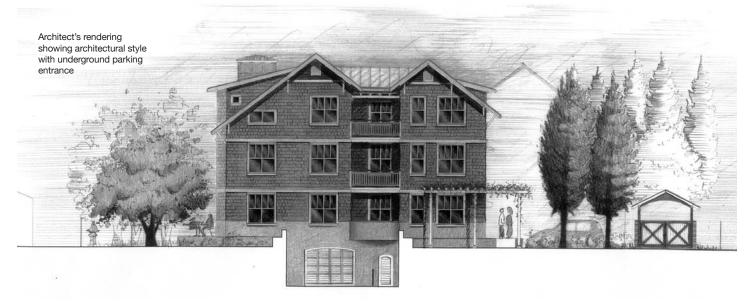
Cohousing communities tend to be very environmentally conscious and MVCC is no exception. The buildings will be energy efficient and landscaping will be designed to present a "green" face to the neighborhood. Plans include organic gardens, fruit trees and a small greenhouse, and preservation of a number of the healthiest existing large trees on the property.

Parking (two places per unit) will be underground, with stations for charging electric vehicles. As David Burwen explained, "Our location makes it attractive for us to use public transportation. We want to emphasize walking and bicycling as much as possible for local trips. It's good for our health and for the neighborhood."

In planning for the new community, MVCC is dealing with some unique issues related to the history of the property, which had been a black walnut orchard, apparently started more than 100 years ago. Barrie D. Coate & Associates, arborists and horticultural consultants, have advised MVCC that most of the old walnut trees are at the end of their lives and are not viable. MVCC offered to give the existing old farmhouse on the property to the Mountain View Historical Society earlier this year, for transfer to the Cuesta Annex historic park, but the MVHS rejected the offer. At MVCC's request, historic consultants Carey & Co. have just completed a historic resources evaluation report regarding the house. MVCC will be meeting with representatives of the city to determine the next steps. If anyone else is interested in taking the old house, MVCC is eager to hear from you.

MVCC is actively seeking additional members. See www.mountainviewco-housing.org for more information.

Kate Forrest is a member of the planned Cohousing Community and has been involved in the design process and community-building activities since October, 2009. She is currently a resident of Ladera (Portola Valley).



# Ingredients for Success

by Deb Keller

What if you could chow down on Cheetos but get the nutritional impact of munching on broccoli? And do something good for the environment to boot?

Those are the benefits of a new food line developed by Old Mountain View resident, Dr. Deepa Shenoy. Deepa's company, Pul Foods, launched a breakfast cereal line called Crunchfuls, and have a snack food is in the works.

The products are made from pulse, which is a category of grain that includes lentils, split peas, dal, and chickpeas. Pulse has more protein, complex carbohydrates, and fiber (both dietary and soluble) than whole grains, is packed with vitamins and minerals, and is allergen free. (And they are delicious. I am munching on the chocolate flavoured ones now.)

Besides being good for you, the product is also good for the environment since pulse are legumes, which are nitrogen-fixing, taking nitrogen from the air and putting it back into the soil, a natural way to fortify the soil instead of using chemical additives.

Eugene Cordero, an OMV resident and professor of the Department of Meteorology and Climate Science at San Jose State pointed out an additional environmental benefit: "From a global warming perspective, eating legumes as a protein source is orders of magnitude better than eating animal products. For example, the emissions associated with growing 100 calories of beef produce about 3 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>, an emission level that is similar to driving a car nearly 3 miles. By contrast, growing 100 calories of legumes produces less then 0.02 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub>, an emission level that is similar to driving a car 30 yards."

Typically when a company like General Mills brings a new product to market, it is a \$50-100 million investment backed by an organization with market research, product development, brand managers, advertising, and distribution behind them.

Even with that investment, it's tough, because you're fighting to displace another



product on the shelf. Only 1 out of 10 product introductions are successful, and

only 1 out of 1000 recoup the investment within the first year.

In contrast, Deepa started the venture with a \$5000 investment from her husband and set up shop in their Old Mountain View apartment.

Being a David in a Goliath setting is not easy. "When I approached vendors for grain, for example, they didn't even want to talk to me unless I was buying a truckload. I just wanted a 50-pound bag."

Deepa and her husband, Sandeep, a strong supporter of her venture, worked on an extensive business plan, and armed with this and a year of work behind them to show progress, they were able to raise \$250,000 from family and friends.

Deepa, who has a PhD in molecular biology at the University of Maryland, worked for years on the development of the cereal and snack food, testing some 150 base formulations and 50 flavor combinations (12-15 tons of cereal and snacks in all!), before hitting on the cereal products they launched last month.

The cereal line is now carried by Draeger's, the Milk Pail, and DeMartini's, to name a few, as well as in stores in Oregon and Washington. The day I met to talk with Deepa, she had signed up Sigona's.

A good start, but the challenge now is to scale distribution. "I went to four or five venture capitalists that focused on food, and the answer that I consistently got was that we had to prove the potential of our product with a minimum of \$2 million in sales before they would consider investing in our company," said Deepa. That's a lot of boxes of cereal.

One of the most important ingredients to any business is enthusiasm, and Deepa is brimming with that. Just talking to her over a cup of coffee at Dana Street Roasting made me want to run out into the streets of Old Mountain View and sing the praises of lentils. *Learn more at www.pulfoods.com*.

#### Zucca

(Continued from front page)

I remember ad-hoc parties around that bar, which might include the mayor, a local musician or two, Castro merchants, a NASA scientist who stopped in for his habitual Martini before dinner, and various hangers-around, all convivial. Singha would bustle around, rearranging things, remarking on the "high energy" he saw on Castro Street. Over the years Zucca has hosted countless business meals over mezze appetizer platters, steamed mussels, or hanger steaks.



Sidewalk tables are very popular in fine weather. I used Zucca frequently in its first few years for business and pleasure dining. By the time Degerli left the partnership to open Bodrum Café up the street in 2008, Zucca had more competition than in 2001.

Newer restaurants like Café Baklava and the big venues off California (Cantankerous Fish and Cascal) serve similar markets, while competitive Mediterranean cooking is available up and down Castro

However, the population dining in downtown Mountain View has also grown enough to support many more restaurants than in 2001.

Zucca's popularity remains, and Singha recently told me of midweek value offerings and Sunday brunches. The downtown "high energy" that he observed in Zucca's early days has only increased.

#### OPINION

# Some Thoughts on Transit Center Parking

by Julie Lovins

From my vantage point a couple blocks southwest of Bush and Villa, here are my two lists for this week: one of problems, another of useful proposals I've heard (none of them a complete solution in itself, nor should we expect such). After agreement on these and/or other items, the next steps require hard work by organized volunteers, and someone should step up to lead this effort.

#### **Problems:**

- 1. Too many cars (at \$1.50 to \$3/day!) for parking lot to handle.
- 2. Comments of residents south of Evelyn about inconveniences to them caused by on-street parked cars identified as belonging to commuters.
- 3. The local VTA buses that are supposed to be "feeders" to and from the station don't run on schedules or routes that enable them to fulfill this function.
- 4. Allowing parking "up to 24 hours" apparently doesn't fit with the needs of the "overnight" parkers (who commute home by train and work in this area). Where should they be parking?

- 5. The Farmers' Market additional challenge on Sundays.
- 6. The ancillary parking lot behind Tied House, owned by the City and used largely by Caltrain commuters, is slated for development.

#### **Toward solutions?**

- 1. Starting asap, could we do our own very precise parked-car-counts, on a limited number of blocks, with frequent intervals, all hours, identifying them as belonging to residents or to visitors? (Strong opinion: If this is not done, it will be impossible to show the effect of any future changes in the neighborhood that might affect parking habits. Also, needed as a baseline in case we are successful in improving the situation before the City-sponsored parking study occurs.)
- 2. Any unrealized potential for additional carpooling to/from the Transit Center by commuters with predictable commute schedules? Resources abound, starting with '511'.
- 3. Could there be incentives (like free parking spaces?) for vanpools to/ from the station?

- 4. Is biking there maxed out?
- 5. Can we find out why more people are not taking advantage of the FREE parking available (with a 72-hour limit posted) at the large Park-and-Ride lot at Pioneer and Evelyn? It's about 10 minutes to the train from there, via walking or light rail. LRT is free with a two-zone Caltrain ticket. Aren't some commuters parking nearly that far from the station now?
- 6. Any nearby off-street parking spaces, public or private, that could be used by or time-shared with commuters, finances TBD?
- 7. What space might be available specifically for overnight parkers (other than the VTA lot, above, which already seems to be)?
- 8. Forget about a "parking deck" over the current lot? Unfunded, no more permanent a solution than any others--quite aside from HSR planning considerations.
- 9. Put informational flyers about parking alternatives on cars that meet group-determined criteria for nuisance value to residents?



(Continued from front page)

### Check out www.omvna.org

opinion that can be extrapolated to the Old Mountain View population as a whole.

Recognizing that not all Old Mountain View residents have access to a computer, residents may participate in the survey by mailing in this form.





## Which alternative for High Speed Rail would you prefer?

Αt	grac	le

☐ At grade, with Castro closed at Central

■ Tunnel

☐ Trench

□ Elevated tracks

Name:

Street Address:

Vote online at **OMVNA.org** or mail this form to: OMVNA, 650 Castro Street, 120-500, Mountain View, CA 94041.

# Stakeholders

by Robert Cox

The city of Mountain View is in the process of rewriting its general plan, a document that informs zoning decisions and guides development in the city for the next twenty years. City leaders had the foresight to reach out to the neighborhoods across the city, and solicit their input. The visioning process was very successful, with some 250 residents participating.

It came as a surprise to many, then, when at special joint sessions of the City Council and the commissioners of Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) on January 26 and February 10, a majority of these city leaders showed support for alternatives that did not factor in resident input from the visioning sessions.

In a meeting on March 20, residents raised this issue. Although the City has agreed to open up the process to more resident input, staff cautioned that there were many stakeholders who contributed input to the process.

#### Just who are the stakeholders?

There's quite a few (the complete list is on OMVNA.org). They fall into the following groups:

- 1. City departments, boards, commissions, and committees
- 2. Businesses
- Community service organizations, such as Kiwanis and League of Women Voters
- 4. Environmental groups
- 5. Housing advocacy groups
- 6. Media
- 7. Multi-lingual community organizations
- 8. Neighborhood associations
- 9. Churches
- 10. Neighboring jurisdictions
- 11. Developers, real estate community

It would be interesting to know how much was spent on the visioning process, and how much relative weight the different groups have.

Robert Cox is Secretary of OMVNA, but his opinions are his personal views and may not reflect the opinions of Old Mountain View residents.

# Old Mountain View Unite!

# in the battle against snails

by Carter Coleman





I awoke with a start in a cold sweat. Terrified. But I couldn't remember what I had been dreaming about.

It bothered me as I took my morning coffee out on the patio. As I tried to remember my dream, I noticed a silver trail meander like a drunken sailor across the patio tiles. And then all at once it hit me.

"I watched a snail slither across the edge of a straight razor. That's my dream. That's my nightmare." Marlon Brando, *Apocolypse Now*. It was my nightmare too. Although I'm not sure what Marlon Brando meant, for me, the nightmare was that the snail survived.

It was war. War with a slimy, wily opponent who attacks under cloak of darkness.

After the abundant spring rains, my property is awash with snails. In the night I can actually hear them munching on the Agapanthus and Acanthus. Or maybe that's just my imagination.

I recalled that in Australia, they had constructed a Rabbit Proof Fence across Australia. Might we do the same thing for snails? I decided to confer with a neighbor on Bush Street.

Carolyn warmed instantly to the idea of a snail-proof fence, most likely from her Aussie background. "And then you can get federal funding," she pointed out. I had never thought of it, but it was a most excellent idea.

My neighbor Brad also supported me in the Snail-Proof Fence concept, although I noticed that he was edging away from me as we talked.

Perhaps a copper barrier might be the way to go for the fence, but neighbor Jim Hollingsworth thought that perhaps the snails would jump over the copper fence. Jim obviously has not spent much time watching snails.

I also conferred with avid gardener Anne on Bush Street. How did she handle snails? "I tried beer," she told me, "but the only time it worked was when someone threw a beer bottle in the front yard...but all the bowls of beer I set out didn't really catch them."

"Why waste good beer," Carolyn opined.

In the end, rather than going the beer route, we opted for picking up the snails and putting them in a yard on the other side of El Camino. (Just kidding!)

If you want to support our effort to make Old Mountain View snail free, join us! Leave a comment on this article and see the snail video at http://www.OMVNA.org

Carter is Treasurer of OMVNA, but his opinions on snails are his personal views and do not reflect the opinions of Old Mountain View residents.

# Doggy Etiquette

by Jack Perkins

It was a cold, crisp morning, gloves would have been nice. Cold except for the warm squishiness of the plastic bag as you coddle fresh poo in your cold hand.

Part of you wants to cup both hands around it and warm the fingers.

Every dog has potential to be a lot of trouble. I have to keep reminding myself my dog is not universally loved.

Poo is one of the biggest detractors of the canine pet and even the hawkeyed prowess of the best bag carriers around miss a poo or two. One stray poo is like an advertisement against dogs. Nobody likes it; everybody knows where it came from.

There are other detractors and a new urban dog-owning discipline has arisen to counter negative dogativity.

#### **Dog-Personship Credo:**

I always carry a plethora of plastic bags when out with my dog.

I always clean up after my dog and occasionally your dog.

I always let other dog owners know when their dog is doing its dainty if they aren't paying attention, and I always offer a bag.

When out with my dog I may clean up a misplaced dog poo if I see it, even if it is not from my dog.

I always help other dog owners find their dog's droppings if they are having a tough time hunting them down.

Jack Perkins is OMVNA At Large #1 (whatever that is), but his opinions on dog poo are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the neighborhood.

# Grown of the state of the state

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The OMVNA Newsletter is distributed by volunteers to 2500 residences and 200 downtown businesses. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the OMVNA Steering Committee.

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