

# Mountain View VOICE

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Castro Point well taken

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## Local skater's Olympic dreams

KATIE DANO HOPES TO COMPETE IN VANCOUVER

By Kelsey Mesher

While sports fans gear up for this summer's Olympic Games in Beijing, Mountain View resident Katie Dano already has her heart set on 2010.

Dano, a rising junior at Mountain View High School, recently took first place at the Philippine National Championship in figure skating — a win she hopes will open the door to an Olympic bid.

Dano's career began when she was just 5 years old.

"My mom wanted to put me in something that would take my energy up," she said. She remembers watching the older skaters in awe as they whirled around the rink. "I was falling all over the place but I loved it."

Nowadays, at her home rink in Redwood City, all eyes are on Dano. She has come a long way since her first attempts at skating — a two-time regional cham-



DARLENE BOUCHARD

Katie Dano of Mountain View skates in Redwood City.

pion, she has competed twice at Junior Nationals in addition to her recent win abroad.

On the ice, she looks much older than her 16 years. She

lifts her arms gracefully while gliding across the rink, extending a leg into the air and elon-

► See **SKATER**, page 8

## Unwritten law for violent immigrants

FEDS NOTIFIED OF SOME CRIMINALS' IMMIGRATION STATUS, BUT CITY, COUNTY HAVE NO OFFICIAL POLICY

By Daniel DeBolt

The recent tragedy in San Francisco, when a father and his two sons were gunned down in cold blood, allegedly by an undocumented immigrant, was every city's worst nightmare. The question remains, however, whether it might have been avoided had they been in Santa Clara County.

The suspect in that case, 21-year-old Salvadoran immigrant Edwin Ramos, reportedly was protected by San

Francisco's recently rescinded "sanctuary city" policy. Under the policy, San Francisco did not share information about undocumented criminals with immigration officials, who could have deported Ramos due to prior offenses.

Mountain View and Santa Clara County do not have a sanctuary policy, making it harder for someone like Ramos — who had juvenile court convictions for violent crimes, including a gang-related assault — to avoid

the notice of immigration officials. Still, although it's less likely, violent criminals can skirt deportation here. Interviews with local police and county prosecutors indicate that there is no formal policy on when to report a suspect's immigration status, and police say they don't ask the

question upon arrest. As a result, federal immigration officials often end up screening local jail populations, but it's an overwhelming job, and not a top priority due to the war on terror, according to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE.

The county district attorney's office has an unwritten policy of reporting the immigration status of violent criminals, including juveniles, but "Unless they [the criminals] tell us there is no way to know," said Javier Alcalá, supervising deputy district attorney for North County.

"Our office can report to ICE either when someone has been charged with a crime, or after conviction," said Amy Cornell, spokesperson for the district

### ■ MAKE THE CALL

Under Santa Clara County's unwritten policy, certain crimes prompt law enforcement officials to report the immigration status of juveniles and adults to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Those crimes are:

- Murder
- Robbery
- Sexual assault
- Assault with serious bodily injury
- Multiple burglaries
- Major fraud

Source: Santa Clara County district attorney's public information office

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► See **IMMIGRANTS**, page 9

## New tax increase proposed to fund BART extension

By Daniel DeBolt

Once again, efforts are underway to bring Bay Area Rapid Transit to San Jose with the help of a sales tax increase.

This time, however, the proposed increase — which is expected to be put on the November ballot by the Valley

Transportation Authority during its Aug. 7 meeting — would be just an eighth of a cent, with all funds dedicated to the BART extension. And it comes with a catch that proponents hope voters will like.

Members of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group have been meeting with top transit officials to hammer out details on

the measure, which is expected to raise at least \$42 million a year for the project. The BART extension would require an estimated \$50 million a year in operating expenses and would cost billions to construct that the VTA doesn't have, but proponents say the \$42 million is enough, and would help match funds that have been all

but promised by the state and federal government.

That's where the catch comes in: Under the proposal, if the VTA puts the measure on the ballot and voters approve it, but state and federal officials fail to come through with the hundreds of millions needed to

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**Katie Dano** practices her routine in Redwood City.

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## SKATER

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gating her tiny five-foot frame. Suddenly she is spinning rapidly, grabbing a foot and pulling it up and over her head — a Bielman spin, her favorite trick.

Dano is just getting warmed up after returning from the Philippines.

"I had no expectations," she said of her first trip to the national competition there. After her short program she was .6 points behind the leader. She secured the win with her long program, finishing 12 points ahead of the competition.

Her giddiness is still palpable: "I guess it was good, because I won!"

For the next two years, Dano will compete as a member of the Philippine national team — she has the opportunity to compete for the Philippines because her father is Filipino, and she has dual citizenship. She believes her chances of making it to Vancouver in 2010 are better if she competes outside the U.S.

"In America there are a lot of skaters," she explained. "I thought, maybe I can compete for the Philippines."

The road to the Olympics will be long and include grand prix events and national competitions. If she, and the Philippine team in general, does well, Dano could possibly receive an invitation to the Olympics.

"She's got some work to do," said Julie Lowndes, her coach of eight years. "She needs to get a couple triple jumps. She needs to bring her skating up to more of a championship level."

But Lowndes, who has been

coaching skaters for 26 years, said that Katie may be her first to try for an Olympic run.

"She's definitely one of my better skaters," she said. "I've had [skaters achieve] national placement, but I've never had an Olympic competitor. It would be really fun to share that with her."

Lowndes said one of the factors will be getting enough training time in. During the summer months Dano practices three to four hours per day in Redwood City. When school starts, she will wake up at 4:30 a.m. to hit the ice before class. And then there's off-ice training: Pilates, cardio, weights.

Dano struggles to keep a balance between skating and school, but says her teachers are mostly supportive. Her coaches, on the other hand, are still having trouble letting her out of practice on time.

"I got so many tardies this year I almost had to go to Saturday school," she said.

For Dano, the balancing act is well worth the effort. Through skating she has become a seasoned traveler, competing in Europe three times. She recently made a fourth trip to celebrate her 16th birthday with her best friend, Eva, a skater from Belgium who competes for the Netherlands.

"I have the best experiences friends-wise," she said. "I have friends all over the world. We all have the same love for skating."

Friendly competition with skaters she's met both home and abroad keeps Dano keen on fine tuning her skating — that, and the possibility of a trip to Vancouver. ▀

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