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Pizarro: Stanford-Cal rivalry gives Shakespeare scene a clever twist

By Sal Pizarro

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MUSIC TO SWING BY: Saint Michael's Trio had a packed house last Friday night for its ninth annual gala concert at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts. St. Mike's is a chamber music group with a decidedly modern twist: Russell Hancock (piano), Daniel Cher (violin) and Michel Flexer (cello) play everything from classical Mendelssohn to jaunty arrangements of Beatles tunes.

For this special evening, they unveiled the world premiere of "Waltz Spectaculaire," a fun piece they commissioned from Canadian composer Cameron Wilson, and mingled afterward with the audience. It seems in Silicon Valley, disruption even extends to chamber music.

FOLLOW THE MONEY: It's been quite an election year already, and the primary season is just starting. The League of Women Voters has what's sure to be a lively discussion planned about the influence of "dark money" on the political process on Saturday. The "Money in Politics" study takes place at the Campus Center at West Valley College in Saratoga from 1 to 4 p.m. It's free, and you can get more details by emailing dpicraux@gmail.com.

GARDEN GATHERING: For the past five years, the 200 rose climbers and tree roses along Lean and Calero avenues in South San Jose have been under the care of the San Jose Garden Club, who took over their maintenance when it seemed the city would be abandoning them. Under the leadership of Kathy Pottol, a number of women gather on the third Tuesday of each month to trim, stake and fertilize the bushes while also cleaning up plant waste and litter in the area.

But January is a big month, as the group prunes back all the roses to get them ready for the new blooming season. And that's what they'll be doing next Tuesday, starting at 9 a.m. Volunteers are welcome to join them on this annual task or just stop by for a quick hello. Thanks to the club, you'll be able to stop and smell the roses later on.

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