

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Miranda realizes how lucky she is to be here

MIRANDA walked around Palo Alto, to visit places old and new. She was impressed with the newly constructed Mitchell Park Library. It had cool areas for kids, including a kids' reading room, and a kids' meeting room.

There were computers, and places for adults to read, study and work.

She noticed some parents brought their children in after school, and on weekends, and sat with them for hours while the children studied or read.

She could see this parenting placed a high value on academic success. She wondered how the children were handling that pressure.

Mostly the children at the library seemed happy. It was a place of fun for them, and she was glad to see this.

Palo Alto was lucky to have peo-

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ple who supported the building of libraries, and made personal donations, when public money was stretched.

At the farmers market on Sunday on California Avenue, Miranda was amazed at the quality and variety of the food. She quickly learned a few tricks.

If you shop late at the market, the prices drop. And ugly fruits and vegetables were cheaper, reminding her of the conversation with Eddie about giant strawberries.

There were musicians at the market, old guys playing guitar and selling their CDs.

She chatted with Ted, an former Paly high school classmate who spent decades as a manager at HP, and then retired to sing Seals and Crofts songs on California Avenue; and to record, burn and sell his own CDs. I guess that's a good life, thought Miranda.

She found the Arbuckle Cafe at the Stanford Business School a good place to have lunch. The electronic sculptures and artwork surrounding the quad said something to her about the value the campus placed on fine art as part of the living and thinking environment.



MIRANDA

MBA students sat in the cafe with mentors, or with each other, practicing their pitches for start-ups. It was fascinating. Giant strawberries in the making.

University Avenue on Friday night, with its fairy lights wrapped around the trees, was a carnival. Miranda remembered the sleepy town of her childhood that closed down at 7 p.m. Now it was a boulevard, like the old town in Nice, with people from all over the world visiting, working, eating, hanging out.

She like the multi-cultural element, always a part of Palo Alto, but now more pronounced than ever.

Her friend Valerie, who taught middle school at Jordan, told Miranda that children in Santa Clara County now came from homes in which 146 different languages were spoken.

What an amazing place this is, thought Miranda. I am lucky to be here. I love Palo Alto.

More tomorrow.