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## OTHER FEATURES

From the May 20, 2005 print edition

### Lily of the Valley

## Like May flowers, valley's successful women in bloom

Ah, May. It's one of Lily's favorite times of the year.

Spring is giving way to summer and the valley looks marvelous.

But it's also the time of the year when the valley pays tribute to its many successful women in business. Many were honored at the NAWBO/Business Journal gala May 12 (see page 27).

Now four venture capital companies will share the stage on May 25 in Mountain View as the [Women's Technology Cluster](#) holds its first national awards for VC investment in women-run companies.

[Mobius Venture Capital Inc.](#) of Palo Alto, [New Enterprise Associates](#) of Baltimore, Md., [Vanguard Ventures](#) of Palo Alto and [Versant Ventures](#) of Menlo Park will each receive kudos at the event at the [Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts](#).

The winners come from a study released last year by [Growththink Research](#), a venture capital research company based in Venice, in SoCal, and [re:invention Consulting Inc.](#), of Chicago, Ill. The two companies used 2003 data to do an analysis of 1,860 venture-backed companies titled "Venture Funding for Women Entrepreneurs: A Gender-Based Analysis of VC Investments."

The Women's Technology Cluster is honoring those companies with the largest number of deals with women-led companies, the largest total dollar amount invested in women-led companies and the greatest number of women in executive management.

It just so happens that the four top VC firms fitting those criteria are all based in the Bay Area. There are also 30 women-led Bay Area companies that received venture capital in 2003, WTC reports.

"I am honored that the WTC is recognizing Mobius Venture Capital as one of the firms leading the charge in funding women entrepreneurs," said Mobius managing director Heidi Roizen in a press release. "But make no mistake about it, we don't fund women out of some sort of 'diversity cause'... we funded these women because they are great entrepreneurs."

Lily couldn't have said it better. Bravo to all involved.

WTC's mission is to help women entrepreneurs succeed and to increase investor awareness of opportunities to invest in women-led companies.

Co-sponsors of the event include [SDForum](#), [Springboard Enterprises](#) and VC Task Force Women's VC SIG.

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A respite for parents

If the kids are sitting on the couch moaning that there's nothing to do this summer, six local organizations have a solution: The San Jose Safari Summer Day Camp.

[Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens](#), a consortium that includes museums, visitor attractions and parks, is coordinating the nonprofit effort and offering its visitor center as the base camp. For \$225 per week, wiggly youngsters between the ages of 7 and 10 can spend five days in groups of 15 kids exploring local attractions.

They will start off at the Guadalupe River Park, a 2.6-mile park along the river due to be completed in September. Youngsters will learn about the natural environment. On Day Two, they'll get to take in mummies and artifacts and create art work at the [Rosicurian Egyptian Museum](#) and tour 110 rooms at the [Winchester Mystery House](#). Day Three involves culture at the [San Jose Museum of Art](#). On Day Four, they'll start out at Arena Green's carousel of wild animals and play structures and then move on to the [Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge](#). Winding up the festivities on Day Five, they will travel to History Park in Kelley Park and experience what it was like to travel on the Overland Trail and be part of an 1890s farm family.

Lily is exhausted just typing all these adventures. But it certainly sounds better than watching cartoons.

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#### Car lover's dream

Lily has a certain grudging admiration for a good marketing approach. And one Atherton Realtor has come up with a dandy.

Meet Bob 'BC' Cross of [RE/MAX Executive](#), the self-proclaimed 'car property Realtor.'

"I want people who are looking to buy these kinds of houses -- homes with a 4 car garage or more -- to know that I am there for them," his PR material boldly proclaims. "This is my passion in the real estate business, a love affair with this unique type of house."

Then he turns philosophic:

"It's not a good idea to underestimate the importance, both psychologically and physically, of a garage that is the biggest and baddest around."

But he also has a business side:

"Let's face it, if you can't easily search out a house with an 8-car garage somewhere between Los Gatos and Atherton, as a Realtor you're not going to know what to tell your clients."

Way too much testosterone for Lily, but gearheads can check out his Web site, [www.CarProperties.com](http://www.CarProperties.com)

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#### Return of the prodigal

There's good news for sandwich lovers in downtown San Jose.

Allie Elafifi has returned to Café NoNo's. Mr. Elafifi left the eclectic eatery on North First and Santa Clara about six months ago. It was one of those family moments, with Mr. Elafifi reprising the Michael Keaton's character in Mr. Mom.

But making PB&J's for four kids was enough to propel Allie back to the land of chicken pesto sandwiches, turkey subs and Middle eastern pizza and, of course, the cafe's classic falafel.

Café NoNo's regulars are reported to be ecstatic. No word from Mr. Elafifi's children.

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**Go long, Dad**

Just in time for Father's Day comes word that AERA Corp. is getting ready to sell tickets for the first civilian flight into space.

The Altairis rocket is designed to comfortably launch six passenger astronauts and one mission commander into space... and bring them safely back to earth, the firm's press release says. That seems the least they can do at \$250,000 a ticket.

Lift-off from Cape Canaveral in Florida is scheduled for December 2006, so frugal shoppers may be able to write it off as a multi-holiday gift.

"There are certain minimum physical requirements and we have to be sure that the people who have signed up meet the criteria to be an Altairis passenger astronaut," said Bill Sprague, the founder, president and chief scientist behind the [Altairis Rocket](#).

"We believe that the flights subsequent to 2007 and beyond will be less expensive than the first flights," said Mr. Sprague.

Lily loves a bargain but she'll pass on this one.

If you're interested, tickets for the first launch and reservations for the up to 30 launches planned for 2007 are available at the [AeraSpaceTours.com](#) website.

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*Want to be Lily's friend and a source, anonymous or otherwise? Drop a note to Lily at [lily@bizjournals.com](mailto:lily@bizjournals.com) and tell her what you've seen and heard around the valley.*

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