

**'GREASE' IS  
BURNING UP THE  
STAGE OVER AT  
PIONEER HIGH  
SCHOOL – P4**



**JDC DANCE  
GROUP FROM SAN  
JOSE COMPETING  
ON 'WORLD OF  
DANCE' – P12**



**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR FOR  
THE FESTIVAL OF  
STRENGTH AND  
COURAGE – P19**



# Almaden Times

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MARCH 8–MARCH 21, 2019 ■ VOL. 32, NO. 6

## Preserving Coyote Valley to be discussed at D10 Leadership Coalition Group Meeting on March 16

District 10 Leadership Coalition group will have a speaker on Preserving Coyote Valley provided by the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority followed by audience questions and answers.

The presentation will be on Saturday, March 16, 2019 in the Almaden Valley Community Center in the third-floor conference room #3 between 9:15 and 10:45 AM. Attendance is open to all interested residents.



## Almaden Parents Pre-School celebrates 50th year March 30

Almaden Parents Pre-School (APPS) is celebrating its 50th year serving children and families this month.

Alumni from all years, current members, families and friends of APPS are cordially invited to join us at our 50th Anniversary Reunion Celebration.

The event will take place  
See PRESCHOOL, page 6

# Pat Dando sculpture in the works

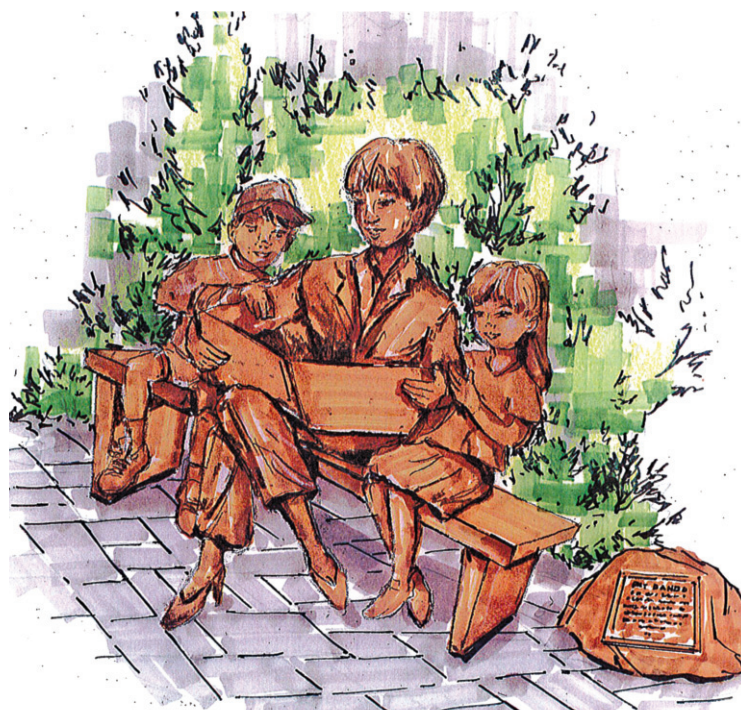
*Artwork would honor cherished lawmaker's memory*

By Carina Woudenberg  
Special to the Times

Pat Dando, a former San Jose City Councilmember representing Almaden Valley – District 10 and vice mayor, remembered for her advocacy and tireless work ethic, will be honored with a bronze sculpture at the Almaden Library and Community Center next year.

The idea for the sculpture took shape at Dando's memorial service held after the beloved politician and community advocate died from lung cancer in July 2017 at the age of 71. It's a tribute that seems appropriate on a number of levels, friends said.

"She loved art," said Bill Baron, a longtime friend of Dando's who is leading fundraising efforts for the project. Baron noted that Dando



A preliminary sketch of the Pat Dando monument. Artwork courtesy of Bill Baron

would often seek out bronze sculptures while on vacation with her husband, Bob. So the choice of material just made sense.

The location of the statue

also holds significance. It will be located in front of the library, a project she supported while on the council, Baron said.

The project is driven by a

committee of 20 community members who were either friends of Dando's or at least knew her over a span of decades. It is co-chaired by current San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo along with former mayors Chuck Reed and Tom McEnery.

Reed served on the council with Dando when she was vice mayor and continued to work with her after she became the president and chief executive officer of the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, which is now known as the Silicon Valley organization.

"She was a great, strong woman," Reed said. "It's good to have a statue made for her; it would be a good addition to the city."

The sculpture itself will feature Dando sitting on a bench with two children. Next to the sculpture, organizers envision a boulder-encased plaque that includes

See DANDO, page 6

## VTA to cut Almaden lines

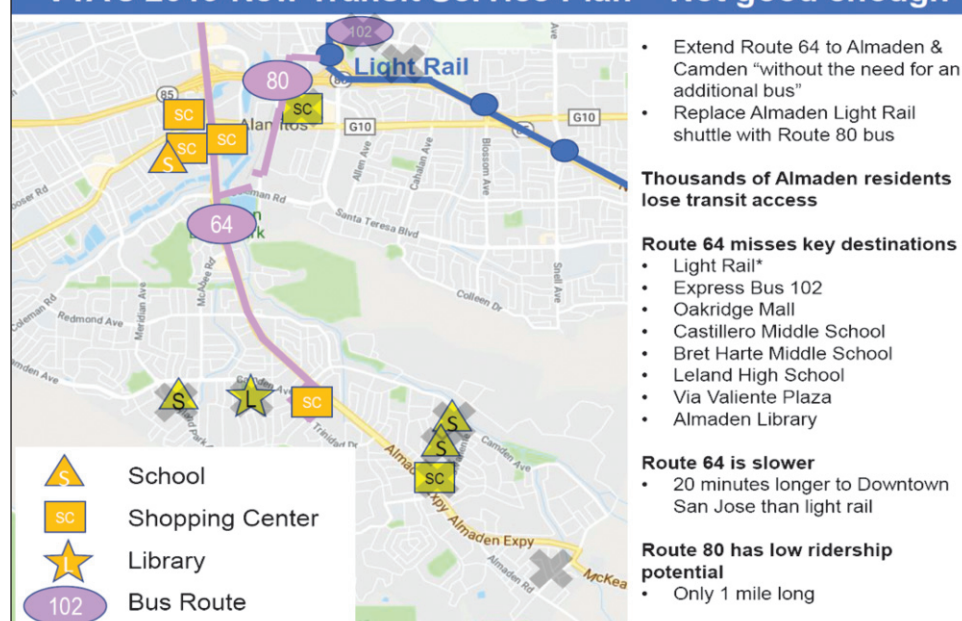
By Lorraine Gabbert  
Senior Staff Writer

"...I don't remember a time when the VTA came to us and said, 'We really need to increase bus service.' In my recollection, as far back as I can recall, the tendency has been to cut, especially at either end of the county and on the edges."

—Palo Alto City Councilwoman Liz Kniss  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is threatening to cut back its light rail and bus service to Almaden and other areas with low ridership.

See VTA, page 16

### VTA's 2019 New Transit Service Plan – Not good enough



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## This Week:

### ARTS

JDC dance group from San Jose competing on 'World of Dance': **PAGE 12**

### OP ED

Fundraising for the Pat Dando Legacy Project has topped its \$350,000 goal: **PAGE 18**

### COMMUNITY

Mark your calendar for the Festival of Strength and Courage March 17: **PAGE 19**



### CALENDAR

Foothill Community Concert Series to present Flauti Dolci and Amici: **PAGE 16**

### ALSO

Realtor Guide: **PAGE 22**  
Worship Guide: **PAGE 21**  
Classifieds: **PAGE 23**

# Almaden Times

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# Valley Currents

cur | rent (adj.) Present, topical, timely, newsworthy. (n.) Movement in a definite direction, a flow.

## 'Grease' burnin' up a stage near you!

By Jane Johnson

Special to the Times

"Grease" Is the word that you heard

"Grease" may not only be the "word that you heard," but it may just be the musical that blows those bobby socks right off your feet!

For many of us "Grease" was a favorite movie soundtrack if not outright movie. The story, with its nostalgic return to the 50's for some, the relating to high school teen dramas and challenges for others, the music that has time, place and motion undercurrent in every lyric and even the somewhat controversial ending engages all of us on some level.

For those who haven't yet seen "Grease" all the way through those who know it by heart, you're in for a treat! First, though, you should know this is the musical, not the movie. In actuality the musical debuted first (1971), followed by the well-known John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John 1978 movie rendition. "I think the musical is better," said Ashley Coleman, Drama Director for Pioneer High School. "It was a musical first...there's a magic about stage shows that are different from film. Although similar in most ways, there are striking differences in the two, especially worthy of seeing this rendition so you can compare and contrast yourself."

Coleman says of her 90 person cast and crew, "this musical suits the cast and students we have. Every year I look a year ahead and try to figure out what musical will fit the talent we have. I always have to play with the team that shows up, so I had to ask for this show 'do I have 10 people who can hold their own with a solo?' and fortunately I do." Coleman is always impressed with the sheer number and



The Grease casts hopes to leave the audience joyful and spellbound. Photo by Emily Nguyen

level of talent in the Pioneer program, which makes casting challenging.

"The characters have nothing to do with what they look like," said Coleman. "We would never cast based on what someone looks like - we cast on whether someone can sing, how well they dance, how well they can act, and how well they fit a character. So the casting of this show may surprise some who are expecting (characters who look like those in the movie)." Senior Connor Sechrist, who plays Danny, agrees, "Grease' is a show that has a lot of roles, and I think Pioneer has a lot of really talented people that can fit those roles. Even if we recast the show right now, we'd have a full set of new people who could fill

in the roles and do just as well."

Known for harnessing and channeling students' multiple talents, Pioneer High School is also renowned for their high level productions of any script they've purchased the rights to produce. "Grease" is no exception, leaving audience members wanting to return again and again to join the fun. If you've seen a production by Pioneer, you know the musicals are always directed towards the positive. This makes for a thoroughly enjoyable night out. Megan Hunt shares "we have the right director. Mrs. Coleman is so good at doing this; she really has a vision for this show. And, we're the best at being translators

See GREASE, page 8

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Teacher occupation and compensation needs reform

Dear Editor,

San Jose Unified School District is proposing to replace district schools with teacher "affordable housing" as a way to attract and retain teachers.

In evaluating this salary issue there certain factors to consider:

1. Teachers work fewer days.

SJUSD teachers have two months summer vacation with pay; four weeks vacation during the school term (Fall, New Year, Winter and Spring breaks) plus holidays during the year, like Thanksgiving, break. Summer breaks are a relic of a time when children needed to help parents for summer farming duties. Why not have schools all year around?

2. Teachers have generous post-retirement benefits including defined benefit pension plans; many private sector employees have only social security benefits; and hopefully, a 401K retirement savings plan.

3. Increasing amounts of

school revenue are diverted to address the \$100B CALSTRS unfunded pension liability.

4. Increasing revenues are being diverted from the classroom to fund an increasing bureaucracy to initiate, implement and evaluate multiple programs to improve academic achievement.

5. Teacher compensation is based on seniority and number of college degrees obtained; not performance. Charter schools arose in popularity because of the failure of unionized public schools to educate our kids to meet the 21st Century educational challenges we face in a

global economy.

In short, we need to radically change the teaching employment model that inherited from the 19th and 20th centuries.

We need to change the education business model from a bureaucracy dedicated to self-preservation and expansion to one that focuses on satisfying the customers' needs or else loses customers.

As Reagan once observed, "A government bureau is the closest thing to eternal life we'll ever see on this earth."

**Jerry Mungai**  
Almaden Valley

## LET THE ALMADEN TIMES HEAR FROM YOU!

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Times **Community**

# Almaden Senior Association St. Patrick's Day Lunch

Saturday, March 16, 2019

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm



Enjoy a delicious menu of corned beef,  
cabbage, carrots, potatoes,  
dessert and Shillelagh punch.

Live entertainment by Peter Daldry

Beginning on February 25th, tickets will be sold from  
8:40 am to 10:00 am M,W,F in the lobby of the  
Almaden Community Center  
\$14.00 members, \$17.00 non-members  
Cash or check only. Please bring your membership card.



For more information call: 268-1133

## Preschool

*Continued from page 1*

at The Children's Discovery Museum in San Jose on Saturday, March 30 from 6-9 p.m. Tickets must be purchased by March 15th – there will be no ticket sales at the door.

APPS is a parent participation (or co-op) preschool, located in South San Jose. They have a 50-year history of providing exceptional education in a supportive, creative and safe environment. Through play-based learning, the disciplines of literature, science, art, math, culinary arts, music and creativity are unlocked. APPS is proud to be recognized as a Positive Discipline Lab School and are committed to implementing Positive Discipline practices in our classrooms and through our parent education program.

The school was founded in 1969 by a group of parents in south San Jose who wanted to participate in their children's early childhood education. They formulated a philosophy that was based on sequential intellectual (or cognitive) development. The parents wanted to be present with their children and witness their growth and new discoveries and created a co-op preschool model.

Together, parents and teachers create an environment that is happy, safe, and secure so that the children can grow physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. Since its opening in 1969, APPS continues to develop the whole child through the dedication of its teachers and the active participation of parents.

For ticket sales and information visit: [www.tinyurl.com/APPS50](http://www.tinyurl.com/APPS50)

APPS Website: [www.appsonline.org](http://www.appsonline.org)

## Dando

*Continued from page 1*

a short summary of Dando's life. A QR code will be included to direct readers to a website containing more information about her life, personality and accomplishments.

"The website will be full of inspiring information encouraging those visiting about the importance of ethics, importance of education, to be friendly and polite, to care about your fellow citizen and to become engaged in the community and to serve in leadership roles," Baron told San José Spotlight on Friday.

The group set a fundraising goal of at least \$350,000 for the project, with \$250,000 going toward the sculpture and the remainder pegged for an endowment to the San Jose Public Library for children's educational programming.

Baron says the group hopes to continue funding the endowment on an annual basis. The committee had raised \$360,000 as of Friday. Additional donations will now benefit the endowment fund for future years.

Dando served on the San Jose City Council for 10 years beginning in 1995. She became vice mayor for two years during former Mayor Ron Gonzales's term. Before that, Dando worked for McEnery during his second mayoral term which began in the late 1980s.

Before immersing herself into politics later in life, Dando worked as a school teacher in Schenectady, New York. After her family's move to San Jose, Dando focused on raising her children and became a strong advocate for improving the local schools and surrounding community, according to her obituary.

The mother of three co-founded the Almaden Valley Youth Counseling Center and served as president of the Almaden Women's Club. She



Pat Dando

also was involved with the first Almaden Art and Wine Festival, serving as publicity chair.

Dando also has been credited for her role in financing the construction of the city's SAP Center, which is home to the San Jose Sharks. The project passed by just a few votes during Dando's time on the council.

Baron described Dando as a unique person in her ability to touch others and embrace the "it takes a village" mentality. She never took sole credit for projects she had a hand in, Baron said.

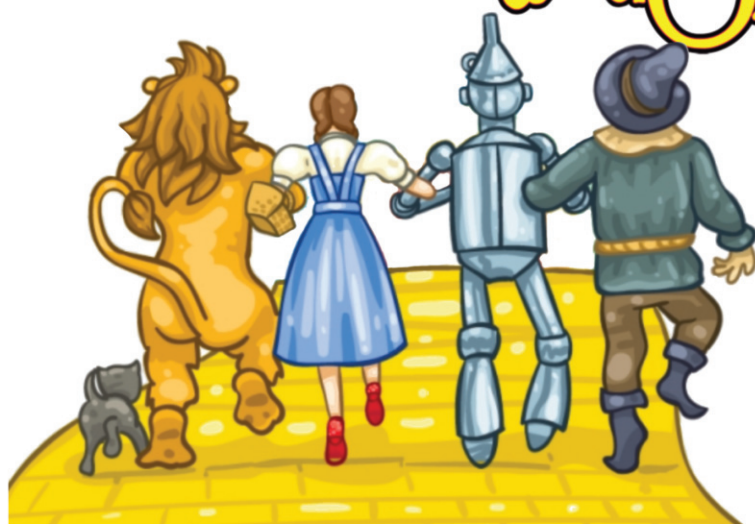
"She sort of instilled a certain set of values that we now carry forward," Baron added. "Pat continues to give back through the hundreds of people that she touched."

Those interested in contributing to the endowment can write a check to the Almaden Valley Women's Club, a nonprofit which is operating as the fiscal agent for the project, and mail it to Bill Baron, Partner, Bradenburg Properties at 1122 Willow Street, Suite 200 in San Jose.

The sculpture is expected to be established by March 2020.

Contact Carina Woudenberg at [carinaw86@gmail.com](mailto:carinaw86@gmail.com) or follow @carinaew on Twitter. Article courtesy of San Jose Spotlight

# The Wizard of Oz



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Times **Community**

# Grease

Continued from page 4  
from script to stage.”

Coleman hopes you'll come away feeling “joy and spellbound by all the energy” you've just seen, as well as being “very impressed with what these students can do” so much so that you're bound to forget they're just students and instead feel you've watched semi-professional theatre at its finest. “Pioneer High is the right school to produce “Grease” because first-off we have high schoolers playing high schoolers (so they're) playing someone their age going through similar life situations,” Coleman explained. “We also have the talent to support it. It's a very well-known show. A lot of people who aren't theater people know “Grease” so that comes with a responsibility to do it well because people come in with high expectations. We're also the right school because of the group of students we have - how good and dedicated they are. They are able to meet the expectations head on. If I went to see ‘Grease’ I'd have certain expectations, too. Pioneer High School is the right one to showcase “Grease” because the students will be able to produce what an audience expects, if not more.”

## We start believing now that we can be who we are

For those who may not know, “Grease” is set in and around 1950s fictional “Rydell High,” with teens facing many of the same issues they have all along, even

today: Defining friendships, handling rumors and speculation, confronting stereotypes, learning to overcome obstacles, and finding the balance of change while still holding onto yourself are just some of the themes found in “Grease.”

Sandy, played by senior Kaylan Tate, and Danny help shape the give and take underlying the plot. Kaylan “loves drama - it's one of my happy places!” but wasn't drawn to acting until the end of her sophomore year. Prior to that, she performed in an elementary school play with a feeling then of “pure stage fright.” Fortunately that stage fright is long behind her. She's now found herself in a starring role - one she worked hard to achieve. “Sandy brings a pure wholesomeness to the plot. She goes through a lot of individual growth and comes to a deeper understanding of who she is and who she wants to be.” Kaylan's “super excited, over the moon and I hope everyone who sees it enjoys it!” It's the first (main) role that she's had - ever. A 4-year Varsity Tennis player, she also co-anchors PHS News, is active in Girl Scouts, and previously played in the band for many years. “My understanding of music helped me grasp not only the words of the songs but the meaning of the songs...so it's a good way for me to express what Sandy's feeling throughout the play.”

Like Kaylan, Connor Sechrist was drawn to PHS musicals after seeing their “Les Miserables” his freshman year. His experience spans chorus and supporting roles, including solo vignettes in last

year's “Guys and Dolls.” He hoped for Danny, working hard preparing his audition, and now that he has it “those who know me will be surprised by how I'm acting” in this role. Doing this show has been eye-opening for some of the students involved, captured by Connor as “it's surprising to see how people acted back in those days, like what was acceptable. The language they used is kind of funny to hear but they actually talked like that. (It's) surprising how grown up they all are. I feel like we're becoming younger - I don't feel like I'm as old as Danny would be. It feels like teens now are younger.” It's in some ways funny for Connor to be playing this role. For one he's very athletic. “I really appreciate going out and doing exercise. I've played soccer and swim - I still swim....actually it's hard to be a character who is not athletic. (Although Danny) tries his best to be athletic in the show, that is not a role that fits Danny Zuko. I feel that's a little fun to act because I see myself as kind of the opposite from him.” Besides running marathons on his own, Connor “really enjoys rock climbing. It's a hobby I just started recently. But I'm not doing it as much right now as I don't want to hurt myself before the show.” Mrs. Coleman breathed an audible sigh of relief to that!

Rizzo, played by the familiar sight of Isabella Osborne, now finishing her senior year, is the play's antagonist. “Rizzo's the bad girl and is very promiscuous - very different from who I am. Rizzo provides a more serious tone, she is a mean

character but deep down she's very angry and very sad. Danny and Sandy are lighter characters, so she gives depth and makes it more relatable in that way” explains Osborne. As she has done with past characters, Osborne's portrayal makes you fully believe Rizzo. “Experience with acting really helps. I'm very aware of my emotions, so it's easy for me to tap into how Rizzo is feeling and I can use that to grow her character.”

Senior Megan Hunt plays Frenchy. It's a perfect role for her as she has proved her comic relief in past productions by nailing the timing. Her talent for this show is no different. “I'm really happy I'm playing Frenchy. She's important as she's a link between the other characters, and she's always there for Sandy.” Megan mused the audience would be most surprised by “probably how well our cast goes together. We all get along, and it's going to be really good I think, because of how well we all go together.” Perhaps through all the music rehearsals those lyrics have rubbed off?

In this musical and different than the movie, the character Patty Simcox is a key part of the unfolding story. Played by senior Brylie Carlson, “I'm the one everyone makes fun of, the happy-go-lucky goody-two-shoes. I move the story along in a way. For example, Sandy and Danny have a cute moment, but I come in and break apart the moment. I'm also a comic relief part, too.” Brylie has observed of past audiences “overall people who haven't seen our shows when

See GREASE, page 10

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### Tips and Trends

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## Times Community



A grant from the AVWC enabled Castillero Middle School's drama department to fund new risers.

## Women's Club teams up with Castillero Drama to fund new risers for shows

By Beth Swartz  
Special to the Times

Castillero Middle School and the Almaden Valley Women's Club are teaming up to raise funds for new risers for the drama department.

Castillero's drama department puts on two productions each school year in the theater classroom which becomes a transformative, flexible space. The theater room includes a stage in the front and a technical space in the back of the room.

In order for the audience to see any production, risers are rented for the back part of the room. The drama department puts on two main stage productions each school year which attracts not only parents but also members of the larger Almaden community. The next drama production is *The Wizard of Oz*; March 21-23.

The Booster Club parents knew that the risers were crucial for the audience which can number up to 300 people per show. The risers are a necessary but expensive aspect of each performance. Any profits made at the show are spent renting risers which mean other areas of the drama department go wanting.

"We would like to take any profits from the shows and put that money toward new costumes or technical equipment for the enhancement of our theater program," says Rachael Parakh, Vice President of the Castillero Drama Booster Club. "But the cost of the risers takes up almost all of the profit we earn from our plays and musicals."

This year the newly formed Castillero Drama Booster Club decided to submit a grant to the Almaden Valley Women's Club to help raise some funds for the risers.

Each year the Almaden Valley Women's Club produces the Art & Wine Festival held in September at Almaden Lake Park. All proceeds from that event are donated to local organizations or set aside for scholarships. Rachael Parakh and Mary Ann Frank, President and Treasurer applied for and received a grant from the AVWC.

"This grant enabled us to kick off our fundraising campaign for the risers," says Parakh. In addition to the grant, funds were also raised by the Castillero  
*See RISERS, page 21*



Castillero students work on the "Yellow Brick Road" sets for the upcoming production of *"The Wizard of Oz."*

## Grease

*Continued from page 8*

they come to see our productions, they're really overwhelmed with 'Wow this is a lot of talent!' Or, those who come to see show after show, we keep surprising them with how good our cast is. And, overall the way (shows are) produced (when comparing to other schools she's seen on YouTube). Our school puts a lot of work into it, we try very hard, and it shows in our performance. Also the communication onstage is all our relationships on stage because we're all friends outside so it shows on stage."

Every interviewee remarked about the sheer force of passion the PHS drama students possess and the family they've created both onstage and off. Take a look at the Facebook page @PioneerDrama to see junior Emily Nguyen's visionary photo shoot done outside of school with costumes these young adults put together on their own, all to promote this musical. Joy, fun, family and character shine through. And that's just a fun photo shoot. Wait 'til you see them all bring what they've got to the stage.

Besides notoriety as a high quality production house, Pioneer also has the distinction of drawing in talent from all walks of high school life. Cheerleaders, robotics team members, track and field stars, artists, football players, dance team members, math whizzes, linguists, swimmers, scientists, golfers, journalists, varsity tennis players - those and many more all make up the multi-talented cast and crew. In addition many work including Megan, who works an average of 24 hours every week beyond attending school and rehearsals, and others volunteer like Brylie who is very involved with Foster The Bay, a local organization supporting families fostering children. These well-rounded students bring their multi-faceted outside experiences combined with shared acting experiences to the stage nightly creating characters and a story you will thoroughly enjoy. "One thing that (sets us apart) from other school shows is that we have great chemistry together - all the characters - and that will really show and make the musical so much better" observed junior Josh Radzinski who plays Kenickie. "Not only do we have a bunch of great female (actors) but we also have a bunch of boys as well and there are a lot of high schools where the Drama department is full of a lot of girls but not a lot of guys. In ours, there are a lot of guys and they're all like best friends. All the girls are so close to each other and all the guys are so close to each other and it's really gonna show."

Each of the leads has hopes for you, the audience, to gain from this show. Connor is "hoping the audience learns sometimes you do have to change a little to appeal to who you want to appeal to, and that it's not all about one side, it's that both sides have to change to accommodate the other side." Kaylan hopes "we can inspire future actors and actresses to take the stage and pursue their passions early, because when I was little I would go to plays like this and the people on the stage were stars. (Also) to young and old alike it can help show them even though there are dark times in our lives we have to go out and find the things that make us happy, that we're passionate about, and that we can serve the world best." Josh said "knowing they saw a great show, hoping they had fun, too, because there are parts where people go into the audience and interact with them...so hopefully they'll walk away with a big smile on

their face knowing they saw a great production of 'Grease.' Isabella shared you will be "surprised by the size of the cast (and) the amount of talent. Often when you go to a high school play your expectations may be kind of low, but there's something about Pioneer - the directors, the talent and that all coming together to create an amazing piece of work." Megan shared "I'm hoping they walk away with 'Wow! This was a really well done show not necessarily put on by high schoolers (and that they're) proud of their community knowing we can do things like this. It doesn't cost a lot but it's really, really good because of the people who are onstage." Brylie adds "I hope the audience walks away thinking this was a great production with great kids who can really act. Also, that the show is not as sexist feeling as maybe one would think. They are keeping the reality of the show but with a modern twist. It's pretty well known so it will be fun for people, too, because the songs are really well known."

Probably the best part of producing a play is the creative license given to the director to interpret it through their own vision. With "Grease" often the ending has been a bit controversial as, although it's not written that way, many have left with the feeling that the right way for a woman to "get a man" is to change into a promiscuous-looking character. "As a woman that hasn't sat well with me; however, we've talked how Sandy hasn't chosen to sell herself out but instead has become empowered," said Coleman. "Same with Danny Zuko, that he has also changed. It's instead through both making changes, both becoming vulnerable, which to me is more indicative of what would happen in a real relationship. I hope the audience really enjoys the ride the characters take them on and that the end is considered a happy ending. I hope they come away very impressed with what these students can do, their energy, their creativity, and that they continue to uphold the standard that Pioneer is known for. Most leave saying 'that's another one for the books and the next time Pioneer puts on a show I'll be back.' Our students are the show's best marketers - what they put out on stage is what will keep people wanting to come back year after year. I also hope that we gain more new audience members, more fans of PHS Drama. Also for the kids that come to see the show - this is a very fun show for children, a lot of whom know the music - I hope it inspires them. I hope they get excited about theatre and hopefully come to Pioneer one day and want to be on stage here. I hope to maintain those ties and grow them."

It's suggested to get tickets to "Grease" early, as word of mouth has already garnered fast-moving ticket sales. If they appear sold out online, go to the door upon opening any night to gain a seat until sold to capacity. The sound from multiple chorus numbers, the enthusiasm, the talent will surely surprise and move you to toe-tapping, groove-in-your-seat delight. And as Kaylan Tate reveals "(it might surprise you) how the leads interact and the kind of subtleties you might not see in the first show, but if you go a second or third night you'll be able to pick up on them."

Performances are scheduled for Friday-Saturday March 22-23 and Wednesday-Saturday March 28-30 at 7 p.m. Tickets (\$15 Adults; \$7 for students and children, and \$10 for seniors 62 years and older) are available now at [phsdrama.ludus.com](http://phsdrama.ludus.com).



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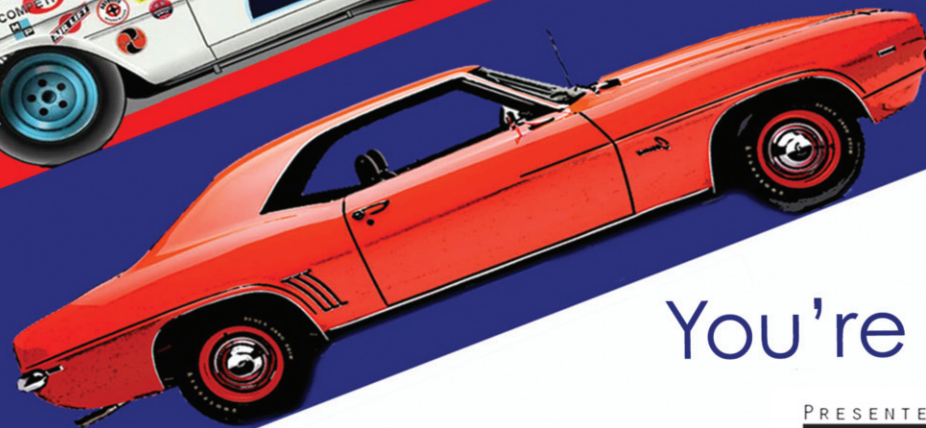
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## JDC dance group from San Jose competing on 'World of Dance'

NBC's "World of Dance," Sunday March 3, featured the contemporary dance group JDC from San Jose, CA in the Junior Team competition. JDC impressed judges Jennifer Lopez, NE-YO and Derek Hough, and qualified to continue dancing on the "World of Dance" stage. JDC, comprised of eight dancers ages 12-14, has been dancing together since 2012, JDC has been on a winning streak since the Radix Nationals in 2016, remaining undefeated in every competition throughout 2017 and 2018. Combining their unique style, exceptional technique, and award-winning choreography, JDC is ready to take on the World of Dance stage.

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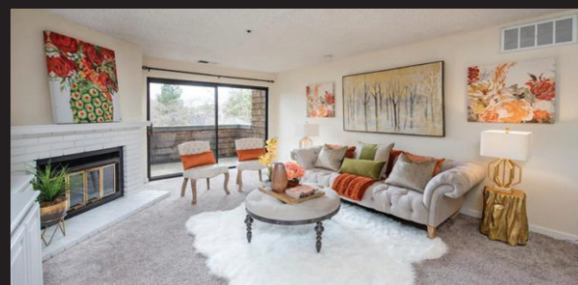
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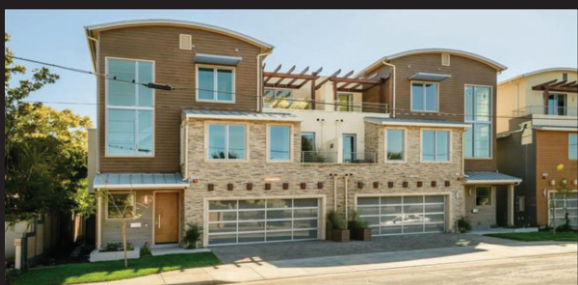
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## Times Cover Story

### New Route 83 corrects many current Route 13 deficiencies



- Retains connections to **Light Rail** mainline and **Express 102**
  - Retains service to **Oakridge Mall**
  - Replaces time-consuming diversion into Almaden Light Rail Station with **new service** to **Almaden Fashion Plaza** and other shopping centers at Almaden & Blossom Hill
  - Closer to **Pioneer High**
  - **New service** to **Castillero** and **Almaden Library**
  - Retains service to **Bret Harte** and **Leland High**
  - Retains service to **Harry Rd.** that has no other transit options
- Route 83 serves many more key destinations than Route 13*  
*In its 2017 Next Network plan, VTA committed to operating this service every 60 minutes*

## VTA cuts

*Continued from page 1*

Under VTA's current plan, the Ohlone/Chynoweth-Almaden light rail line will be eliminated. It will be replaced with bus Route 80, which is scheduled to run every 30 minutes. Bus Route 83, slated to replace Almaden Valley's Route 13, will also be terminated.

For those who don't drive, like students who take buses to and from school, and the elderly who use them to go food shopping, to medical appointments and the community center, this is especially problematic.

"I am concerned about the service cuts and especially how it will affect the senior population of Almaden Valley," says Councilmember Johnny Khamis. "I will advocate for alternative methods like an on-demand service that VTA can provide like Uber or Lyft."

Almaden Valley Community Association Treasurer Michael Lee has proposed a revised Route 83 to replace Route 13. Almaden Valley Community Association Director Matt Mahan is working on a blog post and petition requesting VTA to investigate Lee's "Winning VTA Solution for Almaden."

VTA has cut more than 90 percent of service into Almaden Valley since the 1980s, including Route 63 along Meridian Ave. and Route 65 along Redmond Ave. "Why is VTA now targeting the one remaining viable lifeline bus through this Valley?" asks Lee.

VTA cites low ridership for justifying further cuts. However, Lee says that past service cuts and longer wait times led to the ridership losses. After public opposition in 2017 to VTA's plan to cut Almaden Valley service, VTA approved a new Route 83 to serve more destinations. But faced with a budget deficit, VTA now proposes the elimination of Route 83 before it was even implemented.

Lee notes that the elimination of Almaden's buses might not be obvious as people currently ride Routes 13 and 63. "Route 83 is the improved version of 13," he says. "Unless you knew it was to replace 13, you would not necessarily realize that your bus is going to disappear. The 63 was eliminated in 2017, but that change has not yet come to pass because it's to coincide with the

arrival of BART. Route 64 going south on Almaden Expressway would stop at Camden, rather than at the Almaden Light Rail Station. Here we are saving our lifeline buses without asking for any expenditure other than those already committed to Almaden Valley. It's an absolute win-win."

"Some of the proposed cuts on our side of town seem reasonable," says Mahan. "But I believe that the high level of community feedback and the vulnerability of the residents who will bear the burden of these cuts create a compelling case for preserving route 63 and giving route 83 a try. The 83 will give VTA the opportunity to increase quality and ridership on a key bus route in Almaden Valley."

The Next Network Plan, developed in 2016 and 2017, was the first major redesign of VTA's transit network since 2008, and intended to improve ridership, cost-effectiveness and connections to regional transit. It sought to balance the contradictory objectives of maximizing ridership (serving more people per dollar spent) with providing geographic coverage.

But according to VTA, the Next Network Plan proved financially unsustainable. The Transportation Authority is up against a \$20 million structural deficit in fiscal year 2018 and a \$26 million deficit in fiscal year 2019.

"VTA must find an appropriate and difficult balance between spending its fixed budget on ridership and coverage goals," says VTA Public Information Officer Holly Perez. "Staff has been tasked to create a transit plan that balances putting a greater emphasis on ridership within a fixed budget."

In response to VTA's Board of Directors request, the staff developed the Draft 2019 New Transit Plan, which costs about 4 percent less to operate and places a greater emphasis on increasing ridership. Under both plans, the routes proposed for reduction or elimination demonstrated low ridership and high costs per rider.

Investing in high-frequency routes and connections with BART is projected to save VTA about \$15 million annually. Although financially more secure, this shifts the balance of ridership versus coverage.

VTA's current service employs a  
*Continued on next page*

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## Times Cover Story

70/30 balance. The Draft Next Network Plan proposed an 85/15 balance that was adjusted to 83/17 for the Final Next Network Plan. The Draft 2019 New Transit Service Plan proposes a 90/10 balance.

In the New Transit Plan, light rail routes will operate every 15 minutes on weekdays and 20 minutes on weekends, except for early mornings and late evenings, when ridership declines.

VTA is proposing discontinuing some express and school routes as they are less cost-effective. These include: Express Routes 101, 122, 182 and 185. Additionally, the number of trips operated on Express Routes 102, 103, 121 and 168 would be decreased. Currently, VTA provides additional buses around bell times on school routes. Three of these extra services are proposed to be discontinued: Route 81 serving St. Francis High School in Mountain View, Route 66 to Santa Teresa High School and the

Route 55X line that provides a direct route from Fremont High School in Sunnyvale to North Sunnyvale.

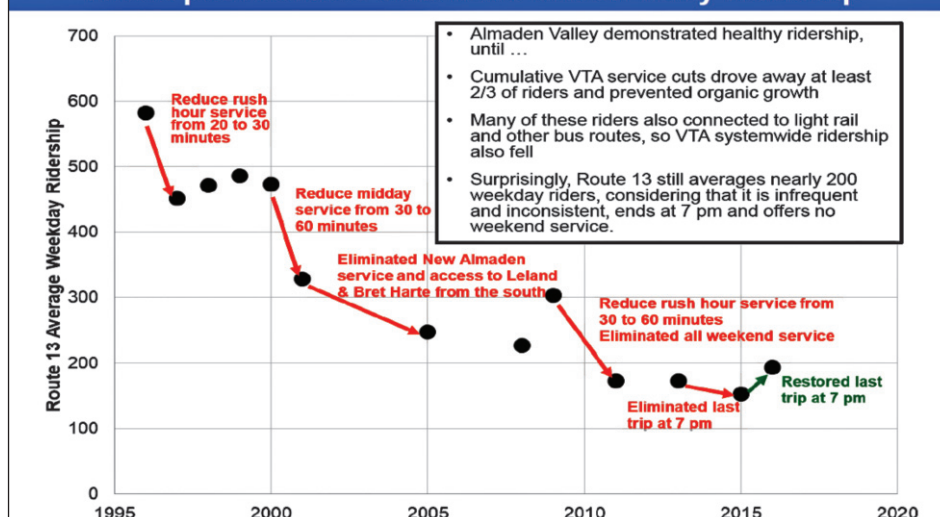
Increased bus frequency is proposed for routes from Gilroy to San Jose (Route 68), Westgate and Curtner light rail (Route 26), on Stevens Creek Boulevard (23) and El Camino (522).

The 2019 New Transit Plan was presented to community groups in January and February. In March, VTA will analyze the community input and incorporate it into the new plan. In May, it will seek VTA Board adoption of the Final 2019 New Transit Service Plan. Implementation is scheduled for October through December, coinciding with the projected start of BART service to Santa Clara County.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires VTA to provide services within ¼ of a mile of a fixed transit route. Passengers with disabilities who can't use fixed route bus and light rail may qualify for paratransit service, a door-to-door shared ride service for a premium fee, with rides outside the service network costing considerably more. In 2017, it was projected to cost \$16 per ride for those outside the service network as opposed to \$4 per ride inside the service network.

With the intention of increasing ridership, the Next Network Plan increased the number of frequent routes in VTA's network. After analyzing

## These past service cuts have driven away ridership



ing its ridership, it also decided to decrease service levels during weekday commute periods, reallocating it to weekday middays and weekends.

VTA says that it intends to incorporate community input received during the development of the Next Network Plan, minimize impacts to current riders and provide equitable service while adhering to VTA Board direction to reduce cost.

"The new proposal makes the frequent network proposed in the Next Network Plan stronger," says VTA, "and brings even more people into a short walk of frequent transit."

However, while seeking to be financially solvent by increasing service to high ridership routes, VTA is cutting back or eliminating essential services to areas with few or no other transit options.

Please see VTA information on their 2019 New Transit Service Plan at: <http://www.vta.org/News-and-Media/Connect-with-VTA/Public-Feedback-on-Draft-2019-New-Transit-Service-Plan-Heres-What-We-Heard#.XHxG8bh7LPY>.

Please see Matt Mahan's Petition at: <http://chnng.it/ZTtdNDNVNd> and blog post at: <https://medium.com/@matthewmahan/vta-dont-strand-almaden-s-seniors-students-bcb495701d3e>.

Please see Michael Lee's "Winning VTA Solution for Almaden" at: <https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/almaden-valley/VTA+Almaden+Valley+Presentation.pdf>.

Why should I care about VTA cutting Almaden Valley's remaining transit service?	
	Without transit service, many senior citizens, people with disabilities and non-drivers will become essentially imprisoned in their own homes.
	Leland, Bret Harte and Castillero will lose all transit service. If parents are not available to drive them, many students may have difficulty reaching school, after-school activities, the public library, jobs and internships to prepare them for adulthood.
	Parents with busy schedules may have to shorten work hours just to get their kids to and from school. Added congestion around schools inconveniences every nearby driver, not just parents.
	Transit riders, including retail industry workers and shoppers, will lose access to Oakridge Mall and other shopping centers.
	Almaden Valley taxpayers contribute about \$17 million to VTA's transit budget annually*, but VTA is not setting aside less than 5% of this amount to provide some of Almaden Valley's most vulnerable residents with basic mobility.

\*0.5% 1976 Sales Tax, 0.25% State Transportation Development Act, 0.5% 2000 Measure A, 0.125% 2008 Measure B, 0.5% 2016 Measure B. Assumes taxpayer contributions to VTA are proportional to population.



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Amy L. Horowitz Attorney at Law

## Almaden Law Group provides estate planning and probate services.

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## Almaden Law Group

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Email: [amy@almadenlawgroup.com](mailto:amy@almadenlawgroup.com)[www.almadenlawgroup.com](http://www.almadenlawgroup.com)

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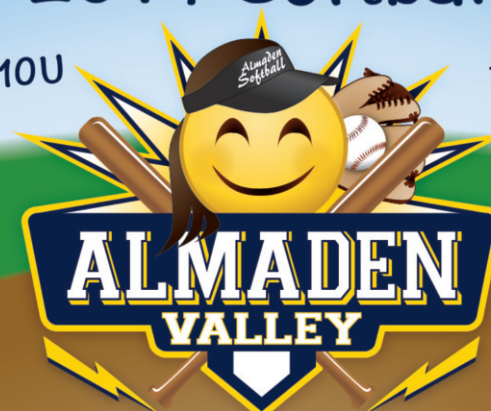
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## 2019 Softball

6U, 8U, 10U

12U &amp; 14U



## ALMADEN VALLEY GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE

- Families will receive a \$20 discount per registered sibling for all age groups
- \$50 credit for each "New Player" referral

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Apply Online at [www.sjys.org](http://www.sjys.org)  
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SJYS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has limited scholarships and financial aid offerings available based on a showing of need. For Additional Information, contact: [sjys@sjys.org](mailto:sjys@sjys.org)

Times **OpEd**

## Fundraising for the Pat Dando Legacy Project has topped its \$350,000 goal

Oh, you haven't even heard about the project or any fundraising efforts?

Well for the last year and a half we have been building community consensus, working with the city staff, and gaining approvals from the appropriate city committee (Public Art) and commissions (Parks & Rec. and Library) to Remember and Honor Pat and Inspire others to follow her example of Community Service.

Once we received approval of these groups we launched a fundraising effort headed

by Bill Baron (former Chairman of the Board of the SJ/SV Chamber of Commerce) and co-chaired by Mayor Sam Liccardo and former Mayors Chuck Reed and Tom McEnery.

The goal was to privately fund (without city/taxpayer dollars) the creation of a life size bronze statue of Pat sitting on a bench reading to a boy and girl located just outside the main entrance of the Almaden Library/Community Center. In addition to the bronze statue, there would be a \$100,000 endowment for enhancing children's pro-

grams at the Almaden branch library. Total dollar goal was \$350,000, for both.

Well, through the hard work of the fundraising group and the generosity of many in Business, Political, and development communities along with the Dando family & friends they have topped their goal. As of March 1st they had commitments for \$391,925 (112 % of goal).

So, what happens to the extra dollars? They will go directly into the library endowment for enhancing children's programs at the Almaden Library.

Want to help? You can help build the endowment to permanently support children's programming enhancements by mailing a check, for any amount, made payable to the Almaden Valley Women's Club addressed to: Bill Baron, Partner, Brandenburg Properties, 1122 Willow Street, Suite 200, San Jose, CA. 95125. He will see that you get a receipt from the Women's Club (our 501(c)3 fiscal partner) for your donation.

The installation of the bronze statue just to the right side of the main entrance should happen sometime in March 2020.

Thanks, to all who have helped get us this far. We can see the goal line, so it's time to finish well!

**Rich Crowley**  
Steering Committee Chair  
Almaden Valley

### Want to submit a news item for the Almaden Times?

Press day:  
March 20, 2019  
Deadline:  
March 17, 2019

Write to  
[editorial@timesmediainc.com](mailto:editorial@timesmediainc.com)

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**AUTOMATIC**

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Sale Price .....\$23,138  
Hyundai Retail Bonus Cash .....-\$1,250

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Times **Feature**

Basketball is just one of many events that will be offered at the annual Hola Mohalla event at the Sikh Gurdwara on March 17.

## Mark your calendar for the Festival of Strength and Courage March 17

*Free annual event for the whole family in the San Jose Evergreen area*

Sunday, March 17 marks the return of the 8th annual Hola Mohalla Festival which takes place at the Sikh Gurdwara, located in East San Jose in the Evergreen foothills.

This is an easy drive from Almaden. You can take highway 101 and exit on either the Capital Expressway Exit or the Tully Road Exit and head for the hills up Quimby Road. Everyone in the Almaden Community and beyond are arriving to this special annual event! Why not make it a day for an exciting excursion for you and the family.

Free Admission, delicious food, good conversations, and fascinating events are held for every one of all ages to observe or participate in. Hola Mohalla is celebrated worldwide and marks the beginning of the Sikh New Year. It is very nice to come and walk

the grounds and learn about this wonderful Indian cultural heritage day that truly embraces the spirit of friendship and love. It is a cultural day of friendship!

This is a place that all religions and people of different backgrounds are always welcome to visit. Did you know that the Gurdwara serves the Evergreen Community in many ways and is open 365 days of the year and offers complementary food to all on a daily basis and other important services.

### A message from the president of the Sikh Gurdwara

Mr. Bob Dhillon, President states, "With great dedication and devotion we are hosting one of the largest family festivals in all of California. It is a safe and fun place to take your family. We gladly invite you to our festival. Also, we have a new playground that the young ones will be sure to enjoy. We hope you will come and enjoy the complementary tasty foods and refreshments we take pride in making for you. Everyone is welcome. There will also

See *FESTIVAL*, page 21



Free Admission, delicious food, good conversation, and fascinating events are held for every one of all ages to observe or participate in at the festival.

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Joy-filled worship every  
Sunday at 10:00 AM, with  
communion open to all.  
Join Pastor Naomi for  
tea/coffee at Orchard  
Valley cafe in Campbell  
during community drop-in  
office hours from 11 AM  
to 1 PM on most  
Tuesdays.

Our ministries/activities  
include:

- Bible study on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month, at 6PM.
  - A Food Pantry serving anyone in need—open Tu/Th/Sa 10:00 AM to Noon.
  - Lighted Window Productions featuring uplifting concerts, thought-provoking theater productions, informative lectures, and even an occasional karaoke night—all in a wholesome environment.
  - Our facilities also provide rental space for community based groups that promote understanding, wholeness, growth, and education. Some of these include the Old Orchard School, Orchard City Indivisible, AA, etc.
- Our activities flow from our core values:
- Extravagant Joy
  - Passionate Faith
  - Loving Respect
  - Deep Connectedness
  - Intentional Growth
  - Shared Laughter
- Visit us at our web site at: [church@campbellucc.org](http://church@campbellucc.org) or better yet, visit us at our

worship services on  
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Coffee, refreshments, and  
conversation always, right  
after service.

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6581 Camden Ave., San  
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We are a welcoming  
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Worship Sunday, 9:00 AM  
followed by fellowship and  
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in Worship: Holy  
Communion  
2nd Sunday in Worship:  
Folks Choir and Potluck  
Sunday.  
Tuesdays, AA Meetings,  
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Wednesdays, 9:30 AM,  
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Lord's supper. Simple—  
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Bible class at 9:30 AM

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Come make new Christian  
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details and meeting times  
[www.eastvalleychurch.com](http://www.eastvalleychurch.com)  
Senior Pastor – Pastor  
Ron Johnson,  
Community-Life Pastor -  
Pastor Patrick Boyd,  
Children's Ministry Co-  
Directors – Alyssa Friend  
and Kristen Pearson  
We are located at 2827  
Flint Ave (Between Tully &  
Norwood) San Jose, CA  
95148, Phone 408-238-  
0231, e-mail [info@east-valleychurch.com](mailto:info@east-valleychurch.com)  
We are associated with  
Converge Worldwide  
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wide.org](http://www.convergeworld-<br/>wide.org)

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God's family. All junior  
high and senior high stu-  
dents are welcome to par-  
ticipate in our Youth  
Groups. During the school  
year we have joint  
Sunday School with our  
sister church, the  
Congregational Church of  
Almaden Valley, UCC. The  
Episcopal Church in  
Almaden offers the fol-  
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Make a Difference and feel  
the difference God can  
make in your life!



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9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.  
and 6 p.m. Rite of  
Reconciliation is every  
Saturday at 4 p.m. or by  
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408-997-5115. Get in the  
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[thepoint.church](http://thepoint.church)

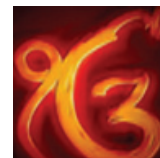
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Cambodian Service:  
11:00 AM  
Cantonese Service:  
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Mandarin Service:  
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Every Saturday at 6:30  
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Anthony parish is located  
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20101 McKean Road,  
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p.m. on Saturday at our  
historic church at 21800  
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Almaden, CA 95042 and  
on Sunday at 8:30 a.m.,  
10:30 a.m., and 5:30  
p.m. at the McKean Road  
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a.m. - 12 p.m. and  
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Office or call 1+ (408)  
997-4800, or visit our  
website at [www.church-  
stanthony.com](http://www.church-<br/>stanthony.com). Fr. Larry  
Hendel, Pastor.



God is One  
ੴ ਸਿਕ ਹੈ  
Rab Ik Hai

### SAN JOSE GURDWARA

3636 Gurdwara Ave.  
San Jose, CA 95148 The  
word Sikh (see-kh) means  
"disciple" or "student." A  
Sikh is a practitioner of the  
faith founded in the 15th  
century by Guru Nanak in  
Punjab of old British India.  
A Guru who is a "teacher"  
or "enlightener" completes  
the relationship of teaching  
and learning. Sikhism is  
monotheistic and stresses  
the equality of all men and  
women. Sikhs believe in  
three basic principles;  
meditating on the name of  
God (praying), earning a  
living by honest means  
and sharing the fruits of  
one's labor with others.  
Currently there are close  
to one million Sikhs living  
in the USA and Canada  
and 25 million Sikhs living  
around the world. Sikhism  
is the 5th largest religion in  
the world. At the  
Gurdwara (House of God)  
in San Jose we welcome  
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body in the world. Come  
to visit and enjoy Langer  
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KinnerCare offers unique, expertly designed early education programs for infants as young as 6 weeks to children up to age 5, which includes preschool and pre-kindergarten programs.



## Times Feature

## Festival

Continued from page 19

be many exciting unique booths you can visit that offer lots of specialty items you may wish to purchase that promote the delightful culture of India. All you have to do is go all the way up Quimby Road and you will find us. Some families make it an annual tradition to walk up and enjoy the festival then leisurely walk down the hill afterwards. Enjoy the day and rejoice in the importance of promoting strength and courage in our lives! Let's all celebrate together!"

## Sikhs care about all cultures

The Sikhs care about humanity and honor all religions without trying to proselytize anyone who visits their important center called The Gurdwara. You will be sure to feel inside your heart a joy of happiness when you witness competitions and sports composed of children and adults. It is invigorating and you will feel welcome!

## Your group can create a basketball team and volleyball team to challenge all

As an act of inclusivity, the Hola Mohalla Festival of Strength and Courage is accepting competitive team challenges from anyone in the community for basketball and volleyball competitions; individually or as a team you can also join in on the other challenges. Prizes are awarded so why not give yourself and your

team the stimulating challenge of competition which signifies the Hola Mohalla Festival!

There are free pony rides for the kids. Sports competition includes Basketball, Volleyball, Races and more! Delicious complimentary handmade foods are served, along with uplifting music.

The Hola Mohalla is a great family gathering which brings many cultures together and celebrates the nurturing of the importance of honoring one's competitive strength in life. It is all about finding your stronger self!

It teaches everyone by observation of athletic events to never give up when you face a challenge and also that it is good to strive to be fit in how you face challenges and live your life.

Editor's Note: Perhaps the best way to enjoy the festival is to park at Evergreen High School (staff parking lot) or Carolyn Clark elementary school and take the shuttle which runs all day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event is free and food is complementary. All age groups are encouraged to view the sporting events and also to sign up and participate too. It is a special day in our Evergreen Valley where everyone is a guest of the Sikhs.

Editor's Note; Look for the full page informational ad in this issue of the Almaden Times. For additional information visit: san-josegurdwara.org or contact Kirpal Atwal (408) 835-7712.

## Risers

Continued from page 10

drama department last fall with their 1st Annual Haunted House and Pumpkin Patch. Drama teacher Kelen Jones directed her students who created and worked at the family-friendly event which took attendees through the drama space which was transformed into a haunted attraction.

"The Almaden Valley Women's Club is happy to help with this endeavor," says Jenny Teixeira, President of the AVWC. "The Art & Wine Festival benefits local area students with scholarships, and we are pleased to also help area schools with special projects such as this that benefit the community."

The grant from the women's club will only get the Castillero community started on their road to owning their own risers. Parents have set up a Go Fund Me page to raise the rest of the money. More information about that and the page can be found by visiting: [www.gofundme.com/risers-for-castillero-drama](http://www.gofundme.com/risers-for-castillero-drama)

Castillero Drama students and parents are currently preparing for a production of The Wizard of Oz. Show dates are March 21-23. Tickets and more information can be found at: [www.castillero-cobradrama.ludus.com](http://www.castillero-cobradrama.ludus.com)

The Almaden Art & Wine Festival will take place on Sunday, Sept. 15 at Almaden Lake Park. For more information about the Almaden Valley Women's Club, please visit [www.almadenwomen.org](http://www.almadenwomen.org).



A resident of the Emerald City gets fitted for the upcoming production of "The Wizard of Oz."

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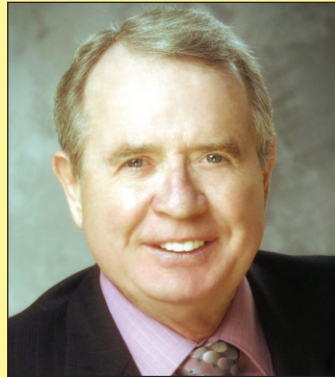
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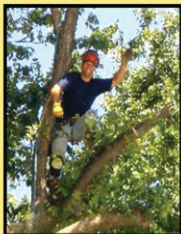
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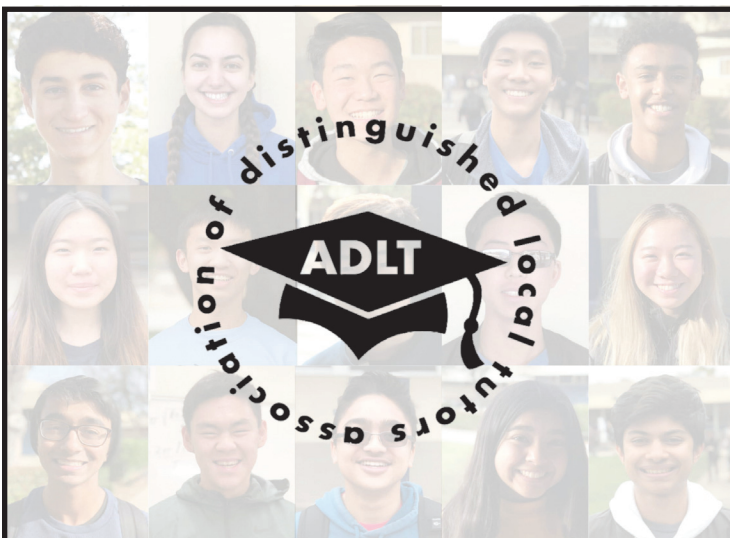
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