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AUGUST 2019 ■ VOL. 15, NO. 6

# Willow Glen

# Times

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### Census workers to begin canvassing neighborhoods

Census Bureau workers will be canvassing neighborhoods in San Jose to confirm and record addresses in preparation for the 2020 Census.

This operation is important in ensuring that the U.S. Census Bureau has a complete and accurate master address file that will be used to mail Census 2020 information to all households.

As part of this operation, Census workers may contact residents to confirm address information. No personal information will be requested.

Census workers will have official government badges with their photographs, and carry black canvas bags and laptops with the Census logo. If a resident is in doubt about a visitor, they can call the U.S. Census Bureau Regional Office at 213-314-6500 to verify their identity.

If it is determined that the visitor is not an official Census worker, residents should call the San Jose Police Department non-emergency line at 408-277-8900 to report the incident. This field operation will be ongoing through mid-October 2019.

## Local quilt artist accepted into World Quilt Competition

The renowned World Quilt New England has officially accepted quilt artist Cindy Adams from Willow Glen in the 2019 World Quilt Competition. The event will take place at the Mass-Mutual Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, August 15-17, 2019.

Adams's quilt, Adonis, will be displayed at the show along with over 220 other entries from around the world. Winners will be selected at the show and publicized on the World Quilt New England website beginning Thursday, August 15, 2019. Quilt and textile art enthusiasts will have the opportunity to view Adams's quilt along with all the other magnificent quilts at World Quilt New England, August 15-17, 2019.

Now in its twenty-third year, this international quilt competition attracts entries from across the globe, featuring quilts from Australia, Canada, Germany, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Mancuso Show Management President, David Mancuso said, "Quilts are sometimes folk art, sometimes very classic, and at other times modern – but all are truly works of art. The World Quilt Competition incorporates pieces from some of the best quilters in the world to be judged, and enjoyed by spectators and quilt artists."

Besides the entries to the quilt competition, World Quilt New England will feature work-



Cindy Adams' quilt is based on a photo she took of Adonis, an eagle at the Alaskan Wildlife Conservation Center. It measures 36.5" x 48.

shops and lectures taught by a world-class faculty, a comprehensive Merchants Mall and a beautiful collection of special exhibits. These include quilts from Massachusetts based groups Northampton Modern Quilt Guild and Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild, Creative Conun-

drums with Fabric Fiddling by international instructor Jennie Rayment, Fly Me to The Moon, The ARTrageous Sea, and Cloth in Common, an international quilt group, plus many more!

### OPINION

## Significant improvement to San Jose's financial situation

By Pat Waite  
*Special to the Times*

San Jose's financial situation has improved significantly since the double whammy of the pension crisis and the Great Recession.

A historically long economic expansion has increased tax receipts. Between 2014 and 2018 four tax measures passed, increasing tax revenue by about \$100 million annually. On the surface, things look pretty good: police academy classes are full, libraries are open six days a week, our roads are being repaved and our City is judiciously building reserves for the next downturn.

However, the future is not all that rosy. As Mayor Liccardo warned in March, "this Budg-

et Message triggers the foghorn to prepare for the dangers in the misty months ahead." His not so subtle warning: San Jose could see a return to the dark days of 2009-2012, with debilitating cuts to core services required for maintaining a balanced budget.

Indeed, San Jose is not only poorly prepared for the next economic downturn, it is in a worse position than it was prior to the 2008 downturn. During the Great Recession, San Jose diverted money from libraries and street paving, among other services, to protect public safety spending. Today those options are off the table, as special funds dedicated to specific spending were set up as part of the tax initiatives. Combined with the near certainty of the need for significant

increases to pension contributions yet again, this portends a very bleak future for our City. Lacking immediate action, we may face crushing reductions to our core services such as public safety and parks.

There are two reasons for this. The most obvious is that any economic downturn will reduce tax payments. While the City is establishing reserves to mitigate the effects of a decline in revenues, even a minor downturn will strain the ability to maintain these services at a level that we desire. I suspect that employees and the Council will find a way to ride out a downturn with minimal cuts, and virtually none to public safety programs... except for one additional and very substan-

*See FINANCES, page 5*



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*The Almaden Valley Art & Wine Festival is supported, in part, by a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San Jose*

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## Free Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Workshop and Resource Fair, Aug. 17

ADUs, also called granny units, are a great way to provide housing, create income, and build equity. Want to learn more? Then this FREE workshop and resource fair on Saturday, Aug. 17 are for you.

Housing Trust Silicon Valley and City of Sunnyvale are co-hosting the event, sponsored by AARP. Homeowners from all Bay Area cities are welcome to attend. The ADU Workshop is from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm.

Experts will cover these five key areas of building an ADU:

1. Can I build an ADU on my site?
2. How do I get a permit to build an ADU?
3. How do I hire a builder and manage construction?
4. How do I pay for an ADU?
5. I'm a landlord, now what?

1:30-3:30pm - ADU Resource Fair - Discuss your ADU project with builders, design professionals, consultants, lenders, insurance agents, and city staff. Get the contacts and information you need to get started.

Event Location - Attendees must be registered: Orchard Pavilion, Sunnyvale Senior Center 550 East Remington Dr., Sunnyvale Use these Eventbrite links to register: ADU WORKSHOP (register for workshop or both events): [vivit smallhomesbigimpactadu\\_workshop.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/adu-workshop-and-resource-fair-tickets-54444444444). ADU RESOURCE FAIR (register for fair only): [smallhomesbigimpactadu\\_resourcefair.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/adu-resource-fair-tickets-54444444444).

## Willow Glen Times

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# Valley Currents

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



## Italian Flag Throwers coming to the Italian Family FESTA

The Italian American Heritage Foundation (IAHF) will feature the internationally renowned and award winning Sbandieratori E Musici Fornovo Taro, flag throwers and musicians from Fornovo di Taro Italy at the 39th Annual Italian Family FESTA August 24 and 25.

During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the flag was flown for the purpose of reporting, even at long distances, military maneuvers. This communication to the troops was entrusted to the flag thrower; the drums that accompanied the battles had a similar effect, in addition to coordinating movements of troops and to provoke their opponents.

The group keeps alive this ancient tradition with passion and professionalism, performing throughout Italy and abroad. They have participated in over 700 shows in 16 years, taking part in the most significant medieval and renaissance events in Austria, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland. They have also performed in China, India and Hong Kong.

"We are honored to host Sbandieratori E Musici Fornovo Taro and watch the group parade through the 'streets' of the Italian Family FESTA. They will end with an astonishing flag throwing performance, accompanied by the sound of drums and trumpets," said Nancy Morreale, FESTA Director. Adding the flags and costumes are red, blue and white, as the coat of

arms of the city of Fornovo, inspired by the late middle ages and early renaissance period. The Group links the present with the past, giving revival to old cultural traditions that cannot be lost.

If you are interested in sponsoring the Sbandieratori E Musici Fornovo Taro group or would like to assist with the group while they are visiting please contact Nancy Morreale, FESTA Director at [sponsors@italianfamilyfestasj.org](mailto:sponsors@italianfamilyfestasj.org).

### About Italian Family FESTA

The Italian Family FESTA is presented by the Italian American Heritage Foundation (IAHF). The FESTA brings to the Santa Clara Valley all things Italian. Through our food, music, crafts, bocce, grape stomp, cultural offerings and wine tasting garden we share our Italian culture and heritage. We welcome everyone to share a bit of Italy with us. All proceeds support the preservation of Italian culture and the Italian American Heritage Foundation Scholarship Program. Admission is free.

August 24 and 25, 2019: Saturday, August 24: 11:00 AM - 8:00 PM; Sunday, August 25: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM

History Park San Jose, 1650 Senter Road, San Jose, CA 95112 Free Admission. [www.ItalianFamilyFestaSJ.org](http://www.ItalianFamilyFestaSJ.org)

### About the foundation

The Italian American Heritage Foundation (IAHF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Italian heritage and culture in the Santa Clara Valley.

## International competition launches to create a Silicon Valley icon

By Adam F. Hutton

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

Silicon Valley has no icon. For more than 50 years the area has had an international reputation as the world's leading region for technology, business innovation and venture capital. In all that time, no monument has been built to symbolize its prestige.

But this week, a group of local philanthropists launched Urban Confluence Silicon Valley, a worldwide ideas competition to create a recognizable landmark just northwest of downtown San Jose — on Arena Green in Guadalupe River Park — one they hope will rival the Eiffel Tower in Paris or the Gateway Arch in St. Louis.

"We thought it was odd that an area as important as ours didn't have a monument," said Steve Borkenhagen, executive director of the San Jose Light Tower Corporation, a nonprofit group founded by Borkenhagen, Jon Ball and Thomas Wohlmuth to manifest the missing icon.

He says the group has raised more than \$1 million from hundreds of donors to finance the contest and the construction of the monument.

The nonprofit takes its name from San Jose's first, and last, international symbol — a 237-foot light tower that could be seen from San Francisco — a 19th century technological wonder making it the first city west of the Rocky Mountains to light itself using electricity in 1881.

But the tower did not endure. It survived the 1906 earthquake that destroyed many of the surrounding structures. But strong winds toppled it in 1915, and more than a century later, nothing has emerged to replace it.

The original concept the nonprofit came up with was to create a 21st century version of the tower near its original location at the corner of Market and Santa Clara streets.

Although the light tower continues to be an inspiration for the project, Borkenhagen said the group opened up to a wider set of possibilities after that idea received a lukewarm reception from the public. Part of the excitement around the project will be examining new ideas the founders of the group never envisioned, he added.

"We've come a long way from our original notion of a light tower," Borkenhagen said, noting that the competition takes its name from the confluence of the Guadalupe and Coyote Rivers.

It's a good thing too, says Bob Staedler, a land use consultant who worked in San Jose's redevelopment agency for 12 years.

"The starting premise was off putting," Staedler said. "Trying to replicate the past to make it seem iconic is futile."

Former newspaper publisher David Cohen, who also serves on the Urban Confluence Silicon Valley community task force, says he wasn't excited about the original concept either.

"Back in the day, the light tower was monumental, but today if it were replicated it would only be a relic," Cohen said.

Even with the change in direction, Staedler says he's not confident the project will achieve its goal.

"I'm extremely skeptical on this," he said. "But I don't make it a habit to tell other people how to spend their time and money, so as long as it's not draining the general fund, God bless them."

Staedler said the city should focus on expanding its trails and maintaining its parks for the people who live here, rather than building a monument for tourists.

But Borkenhagen says the monument will be a source of civic pride, something that is sorely lacking, conspicuous by its absence in a place with an oversized ego in many other ways.

"Silicon Valley has great self-esteem in certain areas," Borkenhagen said. "Intellectually and technologically, but we don't have a place that causes people to have that feeling of awe that these great

See ICON, next page

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## Finances

*Continued from page 1*  
tial problem.

That problem, and the second reason for pessimism, is the strain the City's pension program places on the budget. In 2008 an unfunded pension liability of \$1 billion in the City's two largest plans, covering over 11,000 current and former employees, triggered then-Mayor Reed's call for reform. In response, the City quintupled its annual payments into the pension funds and voters overwhelmingly passed several pension reform ballot measures. City employment plunged as unhappy employees retired, were laid off, or left for "greener pastures." Across the board cuts affecting every aspect of City services were made to maintain a balanced budget.

In the ten years since tackling pension obligations, we have seen positive economic growth and a strong stock market in addition to changes to city employees' pension plans. You would expect San Jose to be making progress on the unfunded pension liability. Sadly, that is not the case. As of the end of fiscal 2018, the unfunded liability for the City's two largest pension funds totaled about \$3 billion, triple the previous danger level. There are more than a few reasons for this; returns not meeting assumptions and significant adviser fees being two of the major ones.

According to Mayor Liccardo we must wait another eight years before pension payments, and hopefully the unfunded liability, begin declining, assuming the financial projections hold true.

But the financial projections will not hold true. "Retirement board experts have – with good reason – continued to advise the boards to reduce their discount rates," the Mayor states. Reducing the discount rate, which is also the target rate of return on the pension fund assets, will increase actual annual costs "by several tens of millions of dollars, cutting spending on everything from police to parks and potholes." When adopted, that lower, realistic rate of return will increase the unfunded liability by another \$2 billion, requiring roughly \$140 million per year more in annual funding through either tax increases or budget cuts.

Mayor Liccardo calls for convening stakeholders, including taxpayers, to examine how to safeguard the benefits already earned by employees while also protecting the City's ability to deliver core services. He must go further.

For starters, delivering these services at reasonable cost must take priority during budgeting. All departments and every activity should be focused on providing these necessary services first. We need to ensure that the "3 Ps" (public safety, parks and pavement) are adequately funded before diverting money to non-essential spending.

Second, I believe that the next City Manager should come from outside our City's employee base. The last time San Jose hired a city manager with no San Jose experience was nearly 20 years ago. I greatly respect the employees who dedicate themselves to serving our residents, but we would benefit from a fresh set of eyes to drive new, more efficient methods for delivering city services.

Finally, our City Council needs to engage in the tough task of holding itself accountable for driving efficiencies, not politics. San Jose's internal auditor team routinely finds savings opportunities; as of December, 2018, there were \$10 million of budget savings recommendations awaiting implementation. Past recommendations for saving \$100+ million each year have been largely ignored. The Council must focus on the mundane business of creating an organization that more efficiently serves our residents' basic requirements rather than reacting to each issue of the day.

If you made it this far, congratulations. You are truly concerned about the future of our City. I urge you to share your concern with your city council representative and Mayor Liccardo. Get involved with your neighborhood association. Residents must drive the change necessary to create a sustainable financial model for San Jose.

We thought that we had put an end to the problems created by our past pension promises. We are sadly mistaken. As Yogi Berra quipped, "it's déjà vu all over again."

*Pat Waite is a long-time Evergreen resident and the President of Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility (CFR). A more detailed analysis of the subject of this article can be found at the CFR web site, [www.cfr-sj.org](http://www.cfr-sj.org).*

## Icon

*Continued from previous page*  
icons and landmarks do. That was our original motivation."

That said, the nonprofit is not looking for an artist's interpretation of the tech industry.

"We are in Silicon Valley, but we don't want this to be an homage to the microchip or bro-culture or coding or any of that stuff," the executive director said.

The group started soliciting entries [urbanconfluencesiliconvalley.submittable.com/submit](http://urbanconfluencesiliconvalley.submittable.com/submit) for the contest on Tuesday and Borkenhagen says he expects hundreds, if not thousands, of applications. The deadline to submit is October 15. Next, up to 50 submissions will be selected by a community panel for a public exhibition in November. Those entries will go before a distinguished panel of artists, designers and place-makers,

which will select three finalists.

The finalists will each be given \$150,000 to develop their ideas and make their final presentations to the panel in May 2020. Borkenhagen says construction on the winning entry will begin later that year and continue into 2021.

It can't come soon enough for Cohen, who arrived in Silicon Valley 35 years ago when "in terms of architecture, San Jose was the most boring place in the universe." In other words, he's been waiting for this for a long time.

"There's no iconic structure that speaks to the innovation that has come out of this area and I think it is going to be fascinating to watch it happen with this project," Cohen said.

Contact Adam F. Hutton at [afhutton.sjspotlight@gmail.com](mailto:afhutton.sjspotlight@gmail.com) or follow @adamfhutton on Twitter.

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Times **Feature**

**Awkwafina** has a sad leading role in Lulu Wang's *The Farewell*.

## MOVIE REVIEW

# The Farewell

**By Joshua Kim**  
*Special to the Times*

One of last year's surprise critical and commercial hits was *Crazy Rich Asians*, which was praised for its minority cast and exploring themes and stories that are rarely explored in mainstream Hollywood movies.

Following in its footsteps is this year's *The Farewell* which also has a minority cast and explores similar themes, albeit in a more nuanced and less-flashy manner than *Crazy Rich Asians*.

The film centers around Billi (played by Awkwafina), who is a struggling Chinese immigrant millennial who lives in New York City. Despite having a not so ideal relationship with her parents, Billi maintains a strong relationship with her Nai Nai (Chinese for grandmother) who lives in China and talks to her regularly on the phone. Billi is then dismayed to learn that her Nai Nai is diagnosed with terminal cancer but is even more surprised to learn that her family has decided to keep this fact from her Nai Nai, a practice that would be considered unusual in the United States. It is also revealed that Billi's extended family has planned a fake wedding in China for Billi's cousin; an excuse for them to all return to China and spend the last fading moments of Nai Nai's life with her. Billi is told explicitly not to attend this family gathering in China, due to fears that she might show too much

emotion and give away the family's secret to Nai Nai, but she decides to take a plane to be with her Nai Nai anyway. While spending time with her Nai Nai and extended family in China, Billi grapples with important themes such as familial responsibility, the differences between East and West, and her identity as a Chinese American.

The Farewell is one of the best films I have seen this year. The script is smart, and the performances are excellent, especially that of Awkwafina. The film also explores its poignant themes and questions in a nuanced way that doesn't push the audience into any particular viewpoint, but rather lets the audience come to their own conclusion. There is also quite a lot of humor in the film, mostly which derived from recognizable family situations and interactions that you could genuinely see occurring with your own family. The most shining aspect of film to me, however, was its authenticity. Never during its run time did I feel that there was a scene or storyline that was mandated by a Hollywood studio. Every interaction and emotion expressed by the characters felt genuine, as if you were watching the occurrences of a real family.

While some might have misgivings about watching this film because of its heavily immigrant and Asian themes, I feel that the universality of the themes discussed makes this film relatable to everyone on some level. I highly recommend everyone seek this movie out. It is currently in limited release, but there are new screens being added weekly.

Score: 9/10



2019 - 20 SYMPHONY SEASON

# SYMPHONY SILICON VALLEY



**SET #1:**  
**Peacock Variations & Tchaikovsky**  
October 5-6, 2019  
Conductor: **Carlos Vieu**  
◆ KODÁLY: Variations on a Hungarian Theme - Peacock Variations  
◆ TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 6 - Pathétique

**SET #2:**  
**Partners & Dances**  
October 26-27, 2019  
Conductor: **JoAnn Falletta**  
Soloists: **Robin Mayforth & Evan Kahn**  
◆ LIU BOULANGER: D'un soir triste  
◆ LIU BOULANGER: D'un matin de printemps  
◆ DAVID ARAMIAN: Partners: Violin & Cello Double Concerto (SSV co-commission)  
◆ RACHMANINOV: Symphonic Dances

**SET #3:**  
**Khachaturian & Brahms**  
December 7-8, 2019  
Conductor: **Pietro Rizzo**  
Soloist: **Nareh Arghamanyan**, piano  
◆ GUNKA: Russian and Ludmilla Overture  
◆ KHACHATURIAN: Piano Concerto  
◆ BRAHMS: Symphony No. 2

**SET #4:**  
**Film with Full Score The Red Violin**  
January 24-26, 2020  
Conductor: **Shih-Hung Young**  
Soloist: **Lara St. John**, violin  
◆ CORIGLIANO: The Red Violin

**SET #5:**  
**Nakamatsu Plays Beethoven**  
March 21-22, 2020  
Conductor: **John Nelson**  
Soloist: **Jon Nakamatsu**, piano  
◆ BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 2  
◆ BEETHOVEN: Choral Fantasy  
◆ SCHUMANN: Symphony No. 4

**SET #6:**  
**Mozart, Lutoslawski & Brahms**  
May 9-10, 2020  
Conductor: **Tito Muñoz**  
Soloist: **Giora Schmidt**, violin  
◆ MOZART: Symphony No. 35 - Haffner  
◆ LUTOSLAWSKI: Concerto for Orchestra  
◆ BRAHMS: Violin Concerto

**SET #7:**  
**Schubert & A Sea Symphony**  
June 6-7, 2020  
Conductor: **Tatsuya Shimono**  
Soloists:  
◆ Symphony Silicon Valley Chorale  
◆ SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 8 - Unfinished  
◆ VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: A Sea Symphony

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# Valley Water's capital improvement and conservation work under way

**By Santa Clara Valley  
Water District  
Director Linda J. LeZotte**  
*Special to the Times*

In January, when I became chair of the Valley Water Board of Directors, I said my priorities for the year were to continue the board's work to ensure a safe, secure supply of water for our community while protecting homes and businesses from flooding, as well as protecting our natural environment.

We have been working toward that end all year, and in May, we adopted the 5-year Capital Improvement Program, which we revisit every year. That plan describes the capital projects Valley Water has under way or plans to begin in the next five years.

The Fiscal Year 2020-2024 rolling Capital Improvement Program contains 67 capital projects, for an estimated cost of \$4.4 billion. Over the next five years, the total estimate for construction contracts to be awarded is approximately \$1 billion, which will generate or sustain between 10,000 and 20,000 jobs.

These projects run the gamut from the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project aimed at providing emergency water storage for Santa Clara County and benefiting fisheries in Pacheco Creek to flood protection projects along Coyote Creek. All the identified projects are investments that will maintain and improve our flood protection infrastructure and support Valley Water's mission of environmental stewardship.

They also provide a reliable water supply that Silicon Valley depends on for a healthy life, environment and economy. In addition to the Capital Improvement Program's identification of projects that help us achieve this mission, we also are cognizant of the importance of conservation.

We never know when the next drought is coming or how long it will last. That's why it's important to make conservation a way of life. During our most recent drought, the Valley Water Board of Directors asked the community to cut back on their water usage by 30 percent, and the community stepped up, saving as much as 28 percent over 2013 water use levels.

With community conservation efforts, Valley Water's management of our groundwater reserves and the help of a couple of wet winters, we have been able to bring our groundwater levels back up to the normal range, where we expect them to remain

throughout the year. These efforts also helped us stave off subsidence, or the sinking of the land surface, which would be detrimental to infrastructure and our groundwater storage capacity. Our groundwater storage is important to help us weather dry times.

To help the community with conservation, we have a number of rebates we offer to residents and businesses, including rebates for converting lawns to drought-tolerant landscapes, for using water from your washing machine in your landscape, and irrigation system upgrades.

To learn more about how Valley Water can help you conserve, visit [valleywater.org](http://valleywater.org).

Submitted on behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Water District. As always, I am available for questions or comments as your District 4 representative for the City of Campbell, portions of Willow

Glen and the Cambrian, North Almaden and Blossom Hill neighborhoods of San José. Feel free to contact me at (408) 265-2600.

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## Singles

**Almaden Valley (Senior) Singles**

The organization that brings single residents of Almaden Valley (95120) over 65 to enjoy a social life close to home and take part in community service.

Come and join us for our monthly breakfast which are held at 9 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at Cup and Saucer, Princeton Plaza Mall, 1375 Blossom Hill Road.

## Employment

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