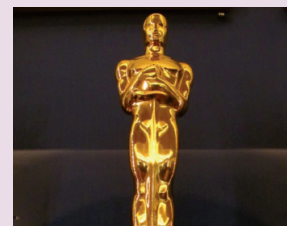


How the Almaden Lake Project will help the environment
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A legend remembered
Leadership lessons learned from Kobe Bryant
SEE PAGE 6

Oscars 2020: What to look for at the biggest night in Hollywood
SEE PAGE 23



FEB. 7 – FEB. 20, 2020 ■ VOL. 33, NO. 4

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Jenny Higgins Bradanini



Matt Mahan



Helen Wang

District 10 City Council Candidate Forum to be held Monday, Feb. 10

The Almaden Valley Community Association (AVAC) is hosting a District 10 City Council Candidate Forum.

The nonpartisan forum will be held Monday, Feb. 10 from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. at West-Gate Church – South Hills Campus, 6601 Camden Ave.

There are three District 10 City Council Candidates for the upcoming March 3, 2020 Primary election; Jenny Higgins Bradanini, Matt Mahan, and Helen Wang.

AVCA, a non-profit organization founded in 1961, is a grassroots community organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Almaden.

For more information about AVCA, visit avcasj.org.

All-inclusive playground is coming to Almaden Lake Park

By Lorraine Gabbert
Senior Staff Writer

Joyful shrieks and laughter ripple from the slide, swings, and spinning rides at San Jose's Rotary PlayGarden. But this is no ordinary playground: it's a place for both able-bodied and disabled children to play together with family and friends.

"I love this playground and this opportunity for my son," says Amanda Afshar. "He's able to play with any child and not see differences as something negative, but just to see them as differences. He can still play and interact with those children."

Parent Chris Dewile agrees. "All these kids are meeting each other," he says. "So, when they go to school, they don't have biases."

All-inclusive playgrounds are popping up throughout Santa Clara County, including a future site at Almaden Lake Park, thanks to \$20 million in County grants.

Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Deputy

Director Nicole Burnham says that these types of playgrounds provide places for children and adults of all abilities and ages to come together and share in the joy of play and connectivity.

"All-inclusive playgrounds provide experiences that are comfortable, fun, and challenging for community members of all skills and abilities," she says.

"It's gratifying, and frankly, it's just the right thing to do to provide all-inclusive places to play and socialize," says Santa Clara County Board President Joe Simitian. "I'm so pleased that our County stepped up to help create more of these innovative playgrounds for all."

Simitian, who with Supervisor Cindy Chavez, proposed the initial \$10 million matching grant program, provided \$2 million for each of the five supervisorial districts to ensure projects were funded in

See PLAYGROUND, page 18



All-inclusive playgrounds are about providing spaces where everyone in the community can come together and be able to play together.

Support for reallocation of Measure B funds nixed by San Jose City Council

By William Bellou
Publisher

San Jose lawmakers have voted to send a clear message to the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to not shift money from Measure B to expanding bus routes.

The San Jose City Council voted 7-2-2 to send a letter to the VTA Board of Directors calling on their regional partners to keep their "commitment" to voters in a letter by preserving the 2016 transportation sales tax Measure B revenue for pre-approved projects, which include repaving roads and widening highways.

Mayor Sam Liccardo and Councilmembers Magdalena Carrasco, Lan Diep, Chappie Jones and Raul Perez serve as directors on the VTA board.

Climate and transportation activists have been rallying support to divert the sales tax's funds — estimated to produce more than \$6.3 billion over the next 30 years. Dozens of advocates lobbied the VTA's board of directors last month to put more Measure B funding into expanding the county's bus routes and services. Out of the \$6.3 billion from measure B funds, \$3.25B will go to transit including \$500 million for buses

and 250 bike trails, \$1B for Caltrain and \$1.5B for BART PHASE 2.

The majority of the council members are worried that shifting the Measure B funding priorities would tarnish their reputation with voters, especially with Measure E which will appear on the March 2020 ballot. If passed, the real estate property transfer tax measure will raise tens of millions of dollars a year to fund affordable housing projects in San Jose.

Two Councilmembers, Raul Perez and Sergio Jimenez dissented, siding with proponents of the reallocation to combat climate change

and getting residents out of vehicles and onto buses and trains. Councilmembers Sylvia Arenas and Magdalena Carrasco were absent.

Councilmember Johnny Khamis spearheaded an effort to keep the funding as intended in a letter to VTA which he signed in Dec. along with Vice Mayor Chappie Jones and councilmembers Bev Davis and Pam Foley.

Khamis calls the shifting of funds "dishonest," stating that the move would undermine the will of the voters. "I think that it's dishonest, because it's not what we told the public that we would do," Khamis said.

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Median List Price:	\$1,525,000	\$1,593,000
Median Sale Price:	\$1,510,000	\$1,622,500
Difference:	-\$15,000	+\$29,500
Median Sq Ft:	2,238	2,470
Median Price Per Sq Ft:	\$672	\$734
Percent of Listings that Sold:	78%	100%

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OP ED

Two major reasons voters should defeat Measure E

By Pat Waite

Special to the Times

These days it's difficult to drive around San Jose without seeing evidence of our area's housing problems. Tents along the railroad tracks, people soliciting on street corners and parked cars full of personal belongings can be found all over our city. We feel sorry for our fellow residents who find themselves in such dire straits and want to do what we can to help.

Yet Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility (CFR) urges voters to vote no on San Jose's Measure E, the real property transfer tax, expected to raise around \$50 million per year. One issue that we have with the proposal is that there is no sunset clause. Even if we someday solve our housing problem, the tax will persist. But there are two major reasons we believe that voters should reject the measure.

First and most importantly, Measure E is a General Fund tax measure, which means the city council can spend the funds it generates on whatever they deem necessary. Today's council promises the proceeds will be used for subsidizing affordable housing and addressing homelessness. That's obviously well-intentioned and certainly money needs to be spent addressing those issues. The problem is that the use of the General Fund dollars by subsequent city councils cannot be restricted. When the next downturn hits, the tax receipts will most certainly be diverted to avoid layoffs and other cuts. Alternatively, a future council could determine that paying down the city's \$3.5 billion unfunded pension liability is a better use of the Measure E funds. The bottom line is that Measure E funds

See MEASURE E, page 8

Valley Currents

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

How the Almaden Lake Project will help the environment

By Director Linda J. LeZotte,
District 4

Santa Clara County Water

With the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Almaden Lake Improvement Project now closed, I wanted to take a moment to thank all the members of the community who have participated in our extensive outreach for this project.

As an initiative funded through our Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection program, the Almaden Lake project is locally financed, and it is very important that our community's voice is heard.

It was great to see more than 60 people attend our Jan. 8 public meeting at Valley Water's headquarters, just a couple of blocks away from Almaden Lake to express their views and opinions on the environmental impact of the proposed project. The gathering marked the 22nd public meeting Valley Water has hosted since outreach on the project began in 2012.

Almaden Lake is located about five miles away from the site of the old New Almaden Quicksilver Mine, a gold rush era mine that resulted in the release of thousands of tons of mercury into local creeks and the Guadalupe Watershed. Since the formation of Almaden Lake by the erosion of the old gravel quarry, mercury-laden sediment that flows down Alamitos Creek has accumulated at the bottom.

To address these issues, the project team proposes to build a levee to separate Alamitos Creek from Almaden Lake. Post-construction, the lake will feature the existing island and a new island. To improve water circulation, the lake bottom will be re-contoured and water from the lake will be discharged to the Alamitos Percolation Pond. The creek flows will be isolated to the restored creek section, providing a direct connection from Alamitos Creek to Guadalupe River, as it once did before the park



The Senator Mine at Almaden Quicksilver County Park opened in 1863 and was worked until 1926. The mine released tons of mercury into the local watershed.

was created in the 1980s.

The native Central California Coast steelhead, a species listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act, will be able to swim through improved conditions bypassing the waters of the lake, where they risk getting lost and being preyed upon by invasive species, such as bass.

The Final Environmental Impact Report will be brought to the Valley Water Board of Directors in the summer of 2020. The extensive community input we've gathered ensures me, along with my board colleagues, that our decision will be well informed. We will be responding in writing to all comments received during the review period of the draft in the final EIR.

Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection matter to all of us.

Thanks for working side-by-side with Valley Water, as we maintain our commitment to protect the environment, restore habitat and improve water quality.



Swearing in

San Jose Police Academy's thirty-sixth Graduating Class ceremony swears in 46 police officers on Jan. 24. The San Jose Police Department continues to strive to reflect diversity of the city of San Jose. It was reported that the last two police academy classes, more than 70 percent of recruits have gone on to finish their field training to become street-ready officers.

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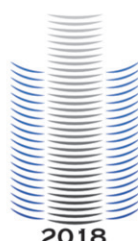
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Times **Op Ed**



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WF-57582

Leadership lessons learned from Kobe

By Gino Blefari
Special to the Times

On the subject of sports, the biggest news event last week as you know was the tragic passing of Lakers legend Kobe Bryant.

As the news outlets widely reported, Kobe died suddenly along with his daughter Gianna Bryant and seven other passengers aboard a helicopter that crashed Sunday morning into a hillside in Calabasas, California.

As the world mourns all those lives lost in the crash. And while we collectively grieve, there are patches of hope to be found in the important leadership lessons the basketball luminary left behind.

Kobe was an undeniable master of his sport. He was a five-time NBA Champion and the youngest player to ever start an NBA game at 18 years and 158 days old. At 18 years of age, Kobe was also the youngest Slam Dunk Contest winner when he took first place in the 1997 competition during All-Star Weekend. In his final NBA game, Kobe scored an incredible 60 points. He was also an 18-time NBA All-Star and a two-time Olympic gold medalist.

But even with his massive accomplishments, he made just as profound an impact off the court, especially through the development of his unique approach to sports, business and life. After watching Quentin Tarantino's Kill Bill, Kobe coined his own nickname, Black Mamba, which was code in the movie for the world's deadliest assassin. Inspired by the nickname, Kobe developed a mindset called "Mamba Mentality," applicable to any situation and every leader. Speaking with Amazon Book Review, Kobe defined the term: "Mamba Mentality is all about focusing on the process and trusting in the hard work when it matters most. It's the ultimate mantra for the competitive spirit."

Here are a few examples of Kobe's unrelenting Mamba Mindset:

1. He was a fierce competitor. Even during Kobe's high school years playing at Lower Merion in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, he would show up to practice at 5 a.m. and stay on the court for a solid two hours. He'd also play one-on-one games with his teammates ... to 100 points. (During his worst match-up, Business Insider says he still won 100-12.)

2. He never let anything—even injury—sideline him in the execution of his goals. During his years as a Lakers player, Kobe was always the first player in the gym, even when he was hurt. He once played left-handed because he had an injury to his right



hand and was determined not to let it keep him off the court.

3. He combined physical practice with mental motivation. He was a proponent of the mental aspect of the game; former Lakers teammate Shaquille O'Neall wrote in his book that Kobe would often practice dribbling and shooting without a ball and exhibit the same physical intensity as if he had a ball in his hands.

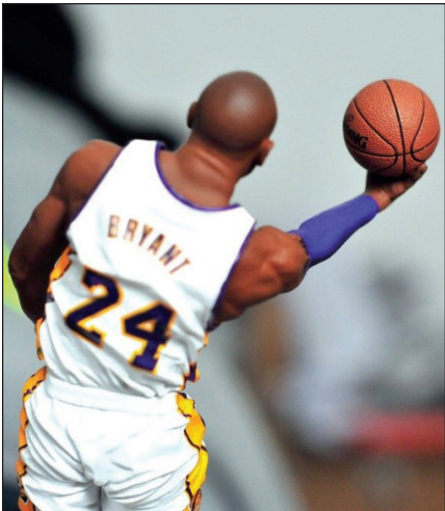
4. He was a student of continuous improvement. According to Sports Illustrated, in 2008 he requested Nike shave a few millimeters off the soles of his sneakers to get "a hundredth of a second better reaction time."

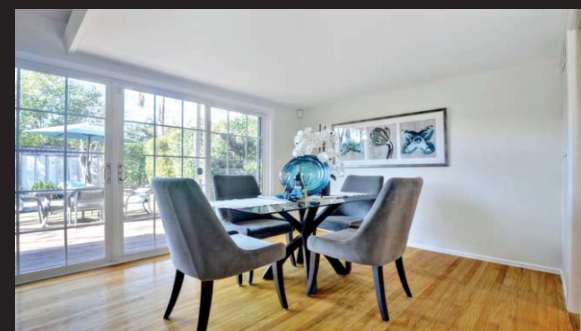
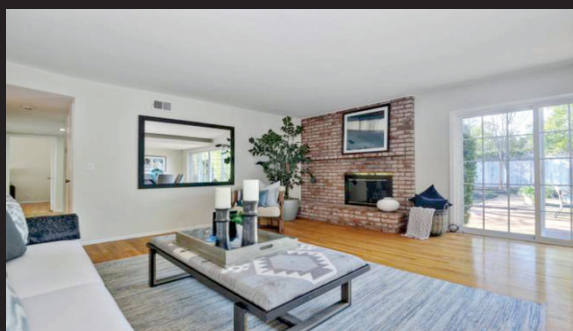
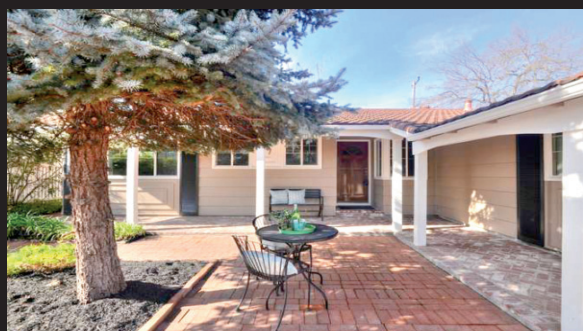
5. He believed in authenticity and the power of personal storytelling. "Be yourself," he once said to Bloomberg. "That's it. Be you. There's no gimmick. You don't have to contrive anything. Who are you? Where are you today? What is your story? And all you're doing is communicating that story to the public."

6. He was committed to accountability in leadership. Speaking with NBA TV, Kobe said in February of 2015: "There's a big misconception where people winning or success comes from everybody putting their arms around each other and singing 'Kumbaya' and patting them on the back when they mess up, and that's just not the reality. If you are going to be a leader, you are not going to please everybody. You have to hold people accountable, even if you have that moment of being uncomfortable."

7. He programmed the non-conscious portion of his brain to reject failure. To Showtime, Kobe explained: "When we are saying, 'This cannot be accomplished, this cannot be done,' then we are short-changing ourselves. My brain, it cannot process failure. It will not process failure. Because if I have to sit there and face myself and tell myself, 'You're a failure,' I think that is ... almost worse than death."

Gino Blefari is Chairman, HSG Affiliates LLC. ginoblefari@hsfranchise.com





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Times Community

Hammer Theatre presents National Geographic Live!

Hammer Theatre Center presents National Geographic Live!, an acclaimed speaker series bringing the world's best scientists, explorers, authors, photographers, and filmmakers to the stage in thought-provoking presentations by today's leading explorers.

The spring 2020 lineup for National Geographic Live! includes wildlife cinematographer Shannon Wild, bioengineer Kakani Katija, award-winning photographer David Guttenfelder, and Egyptologist Kara Cooney. Shows will be held at the Hammer Theatre Center, 101 Paseo De San Antonio, San Jose.

For more information and tickets (\$30-\$45), the public may visit www.hammertheatre.com or call (408) 924-8501.

Extras needed for new 'Matrix 4' movie

Almaden residents who have ever dreamed of appearing in a Hollywood blockbuster featuring simulated gunfire, pyrotechnics, helicopters flying under 500 feet, here's your opportunity!

A "major" film, Matrix 4 under the code name of "Project Ice Cream" has begun filming in the Bay Area and will conclude shooting on March 1.

Casting is looking for a lot of extras of no particular look or type, and that extras with cars they're willing to bring to the shoot are welcome as well. If you're interested in becoming an extra on "Project Ice Cream" or other films and TV shows, you can create a profile and apply online at mycastingfile.com.

Extras must be available to work up to 12 hours or longer per day at the rate of \$124.72 per eight hours and must be over the age of 18 who have authorization to work in the U.S. You will be required to bring a photo ID, social security card, or passport to the movie set.

Bulb flowers are good gifts for your Valentine

Valentine's Day means flowers - and lots of them!

After all, nothing comes close to flowers as a declaration of love. Go ahead: be extravagant with your choice of dazzling tulips, hyacinths, daffodils and many more enchanting spring flowers. Celebrate love!

The colors of love

Red isn't the only color associated with love anymore. Today's flower trends are much more inclusive so there's no reason to limit your choice. Pick what you like. Or even better: listen to your heart! Choose from the season's most luscious flowers: from tulips to hyacinths, from daffodils to grape hyacinths. It's the perfect way to create the most personal gift of flowers you could imagine. And including one or more red tulips could never be wrong!



Pure love

Anything's possible - even when you keep it simple. What about a great big bunch of tulips in your sweetheart's favorite color? That's what we'd call pure love! A large vase filled with one or more kinds of daffodils would also make the perfect gift. Or choose beautiful bulb flowers all in a single color: blue irises, hyacinths and grape hyacinths. Stylish to say the least.

Make your love last

These spring flowers are also available as ready-potted bulbs. This makes it easy to fill up a big container. It's like giving a garden full of flowers. Fun to give and fun to receive. And your Valentine will enjoy them even longer. If you'd like to make something yourself, fill some little jars or mugs with a single ready-potted tulip and give them to your favorite friends and relatives. A small gesture, but one that says a lot! More flower gift ideas are available at: www.ilsysays.com.


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Measure E

Continued from page 4

flow into the city's General Fund, and therefore can be used for whatever spending the city council chooses.

Second, the government bodies specifically tasked with addressing our homelessness and affordable housing issues are deploying major funds to do so. Voters passed 2018's Measure A, the Santa Clara County measure allocating \$950 million to solving our housing crisis. Thus far \$234 million has been committed for construction of about 1,600 units scheduled for completion by 2022. Voters also passed the \$4 billion California Proposition 1 and Governor Newsom has released \$1 billion of it. Additionally, the governor's 2020-21 budget includes \$1.4 billion to fight homelessness. To top it off, local companies recognize their role in helping solve the chronic problem and are stepping up big time. Apple, Facebook, Google and others have committed \$4.5 billion for area housing solutions and are already deploying funds through local non-profits.

Our city certainly should be part of the

solution, but within the context of our city charter. San Jose should start by streamlining and reducing the cost of its construction processes, which are major impediments to driving up our supply of housing. Our city government leaders need to reduce planning, development and construction fees, which can add upwards of \$60,000 to the cost of building a home. They need to address the bureaucratic quagmire that creates an unreasonably long concept to completion of the construction cycle. The zoning philosophy must evolve from one favoring existing homeowners to one that facilitates increased density where appropriate to reduce the cost of land per residential unit. These actions will facilitate the construction of the affordable homes so badly needed in our city.

CFR encourages you to tell our city council how you believe they should address the area's housing problems by voting no on Measure E. We also urge you to consider supporting the non-profit organizations working to help solve the problems, a list of which can be found at our web site, www.cfr-sj.org.

Pat Waite is the President of Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility.

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Times **Community News**



The Almaden Valley Community Association presents:

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM

Council District 10

The Almaden Valley Community Association is hosting this nonpartisan forum to introduce the candidates for the District 10 City Council seat in the upcoming March 3, 2020 Primary election.

Monday, February 10, 2020

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

**WestGate Church – South Hills Campus
6601 Camden Ave., San Jose, CA 95120**



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BRADANINI**



**MATT
MAHAN**



**HELEN
WANG**

Sponsored by the Almaden Valley Community Association

The AVCA is a grassroots community organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Almaden.

The AVCA is a non-profit organization established in 1961.

For more information about AVCA, please visit www.avcasi.org

Beaulieu of Almaden wins swimming and diving awards

Liberty League swimming and diving awards were presented recently to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) student-athlete Megan Beaulieu of Almaden Valley.

Beaulieu recently won six events and finished second in a seventh to help Rensselaer to a dual meet win and a runner-up in an invitational in two meets held Jan. 18-19. Beaulieu was also named swimmer of the week.

In a 200-98 win over Union College at Robison Pool on Friday, she helped the 200 medley relay team to a win in a time of 1:53.83, won the 200 freestyle in 2:03.02, captured the 200 backstroke in 2:13.42 and swam the anchor on the winning 200 free relay team (1:42.95).

In the RPI Kumpf Invitational, Beaulieu won the 200 backstroke, defeating 13 others with a time of 2:14.40, and finished second of 14 in the 200 individual medley, losing by less than a second (2:16.47 - 2:16.84).

She also swam on the victorious 400 medley relay team that won by more than three seconds (4:09.53 - 4:12.85). Rensselaer was second of five schools in the invitational with 557 points. Ithaca College won with 602 points.

An aeronautical engineering major, Beaulieu was previously honored in mid-October when she had two wins and two second place finishes in a dual meet at RIT. She captured the 200 backstroke in 2:12.84, which was nearly three seconds ahead of the runner-up (2:15.29), and won the 200 individual medley in 2:15.29. Beaulieu was



second in the 200 free by .01 (2:00.79 - 2:00.80) and swam on the second place 200 medley relay team (1:56.52).

As a freshman, Beaulieu set school records in the 200 backstroke (2:02.53) and 400 medley relay (3:51.23). She was an NCAA All-America Honorable Mention in both the 100 backstroke (13th) and 200 backstroke (16th).



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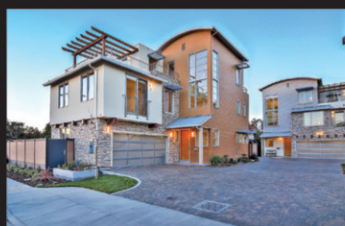
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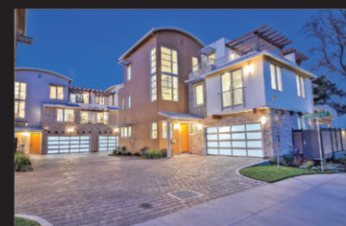
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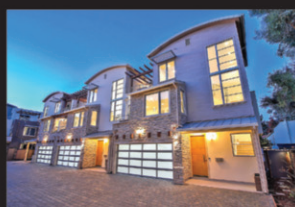
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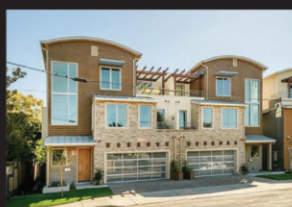
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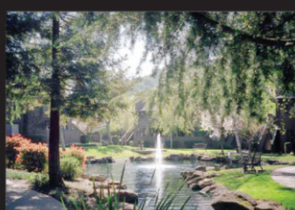
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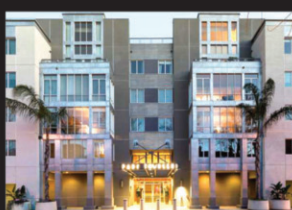
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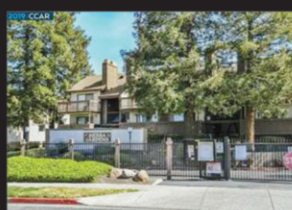
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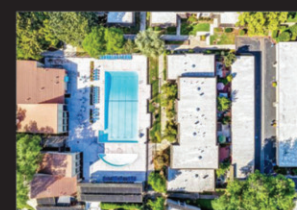
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for SAN JOSE CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 10

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- **Continue rebuilding our police department** so law enforcement can be visible and engaged in our communities
- **Link new housing to transit and road improvements** so we can make our city more affordable without making traffic worse
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Times **Local News****Dakota Alspach of Almaden named to University of Delaware's Dean List**

Dakota Alspach of Almaden Valley has been named to the University of Delaware's Dean's List.

Dakota is studying Special Education and Early Childhood.

To meet eligibility requirements for the Dean's List, a student must be enrolled full-time and earn a GPA of 3.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale) for the semester.

The University of Delaware has a great tradition of excellence, from its founding as a small private academy in 1743, to the research-intensive, technologically advanced institution of today.



who earned a scholastic average of 3.6 or better while carrying at least 12 hours of regularly graded courses.

Kim attended Bret Harte Middle School and graduated from Leland High School in 2018. She was a member of Leland's Girls Varsity Basketball Team. She was one of the Central Coast Section's top hurdlers in both the 100-meter hurdles and 300-meter hurdles as a junior. In her high school career, she has 18 victories in the 300 hurdles and 14 in the 100 hurdles, as well as multiple wins on relay teams.

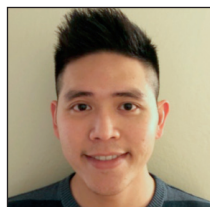
For more than 150 years, Lehigh University (lehigh.edu) has combined academic and learning opportunities with leadership in fostering innovative research. The institution is among the nation's most selective, highly ranked private research universities.

Almaden Georgia Tech graduates announced

Georgia Tech has announced that three Almaden residents have graduated from Georgia Institute of Technology the Institute's 258th Commencement ceremony.

Receiving degrees are Nguyen Le, Master of Science in Computer Science; Rohan Ramakrishnan, Bachelor of Science in Computer Science; and Courtney Wong, Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering.

One of the nation's leading research universities, the Georgia Institute of Technology is in the business of Creating the Next--the next idea, the next technology, and the next legion of agile minds well equipped to



L-R: **Nguyen Le, Courtney Wong**

imagine and engineer our future. Georgia Tech is ranked number 5 among the nation's public universities by U.S. News & World Report.

Mackenzie Meyer of Almaden named to McDaniel Dean's List

Mackenzie Meyer of Almaden Valley has been recognized for outstanding academic achievement by being named to the McDaniel College Dean's List with Highest Honors.

Meyer, who graduated from Pioneer High School, is majoring in Biology. She is currently on the McDaniel College Women's Cross Country Team.

McDaniel College, founded in 1867, is a four-year, independent college of the liberal arts and sciences offering more than 70 undergraduate programs of study, including pre-professional specializations and student-designed majors, and more than 20 graduate programs.

**13th Annual Winter Walk and Senior Resource Fair at Westfield Oakridge Mall: Feb. 21**

You're invited to attend a Hawaiian Themed 13th Annual Senior Winter Walk & Resource Fair on Friday, Feb. 21 from 8 am to 10 am at Westfield Oakridge in the Macy's Court.

The free Winter Walk and Senior Resource Fair will feature entertainment, a free continental breakfast, free on-site registration, and many drawing prizes. The event is hosted by San Jose City Councilmembers, Johnny Khamis, Pam Foley and Sergio Jimenez.

Bring your used eye glasses and hearing aids to the Lion's Club table to receive an extra drawing ticket.

Sponsors for this year's event are: Almaden Times, Alameda Family Funeral Services, El Camino Health, Kaiser Permanente, Star One Credit Union, and Westfield Oakridge.

Westfield Oakridge is located at 925 Blossom Hill Rd., San Jose, CA.

For more information, please call Michele Dexter at: (408) 535.4978 or email Michele.Dexter@sanjoseca.gov



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Times **Photo Op**

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Soup on a cold day -- Almaden Community Center held its annual soup party on January 18th. More than 150 seniors enjoyed several delicious soups, including Chicken Matza Ball, Gumbo Time, Minestrone Italian Vegetarian and Chicken Tortilla prepared by the Almaden Senior Chefs.

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■ **Address Housing Costs** California's housing prices are pushing the American Dream further out of reach. I will work to address the causes of these inflated housing costs and work with members of both parties to pass legislation to make the dream of affordable, attainable housing for Californians a reality.

■ **Protect Public Safety** As your State Senator, I will support public safety protections and close the loopholes that release violent criminals that voters never intended for early parole.

■ **Fight climate change** Climate change is real and our generation's solemn responsibility to address. California should lead the way.



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Times **Community News**

San Jose public safety update

By Johnny Khamis
Special to the Times

This past week, I had the great honor of speaking to the 46 cadets of the San José Police Department (SJPd) as they became full-fledged SJPd Officers sworn to protect and serve the residents of San José.

These new officers will now move on to field training alongside seasoned officers, after which they will be fully trained and ready to take on their own assignments. Some of the new officers will join the Traffic Enforcement Unit (TEU) and will bring that unit up to a total of 20 officers, which is important given the large number of complaints my office receives related to people speeding, ignoring traffic control devices, and driving recklessly. Be sure to continue to report traffic enforcement issues via the SJPd Traffic Enforcement Request form which is available online: www.jpdc.org/_forms/teu_request_form.asp

In my most recent meeting with our Southern Division Captain, Gina Tibaldi, she informed me that in November – the latest period for which statistics were available – the TEU issued 266 citations in Southern Division for violations that included speeding, running red lights, and distracted driving.

Using funds budgeted for burglary prevention, the SJPd launched a foot patrol. In December, this foot patrol was focused on deterring burglaries around the busy Oakridge Mall shopping center. They are also being utilized to address hot spots when they arise, such as the recent string of car break-ins along Winfield Boulevard. The visibility of the foot patrols helps to

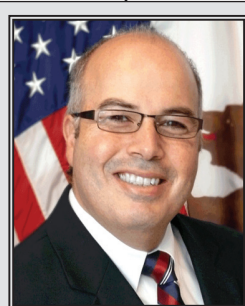
deter further incidents while allowing them to get an up-close look at any nefarious activity.

Something else the SJPd is doing to help keep us safe is conducting warrant checks on individuals living in homeless encampments. Many of those with outstanding warrants are in possession of methamphetamine, illegal weapons, stolen property, or are trespassing, and we – and people living in encampments – are made safer when these wanted individuals are back behind bars.

Finally, Chief Eddie Garcia and his team have been doing a fantastic job of taking illegal guns off of our streets with recent busts highlighted on the Chief's Twitter feed – @sjpdchief. California cannot be serious about gun crime

until we get guns out of the hands of those criminals who have given up their right to have a gun. We must also reform our laws so that possessing a gun while committing a crime is punished like the terrible crime that it is – so I'll be getting you more information in future newsletters on a fix to Proposition 47 – the Reducing Crime and Keeping California Safe Act of 2020 – that will be on the November ballot for voters to approve.

Remember to call 9-1-1 if you feel a situation is dangerous or you require immediate attention and report non-emergencies via 3-1-1 or the SJPd's online report system. If your street hasn't had a Neighborhood Watch recently, be sure to reach out to my Chief of Staff, Shane Patrick Connolly, at district10@sanjoseca.gov. He can connect you with Crime Prevention to get one scheduled.



District 10 Report

Johnny Khamis,
City Councilmember



Bay Area home prices on upswing again

Real Estate agents and economists expect a market rebound

After a slump in Bay Area home prices, the market appears poised to drive higher as buyers face low inventory and act on low interest rates, which the Federal Reserve Board left unchanged last week.

Low interest rates and a steady economy once again have stoked buying and selling across the region. December's median home price rose to \$871,500.

The median sale price for a single-family home in the Bay Area edged up 1.5% in December over the previous year; the first upswing since April 2019.

Real Estate agents and economists expect a market rebound after the December price upswing.



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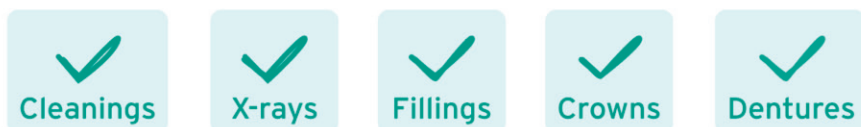
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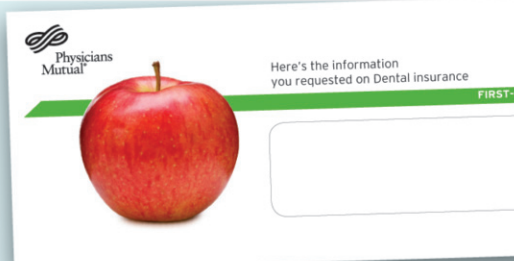
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Playground

Continued from page 1
each area.

"I thought it was important that these playgrounds become a regional asset," he said. "Kids and families from all across the County should have access to playgrounds that are truly all-inclusive."

In the first round, the City of San Jose was awarded \$2 million for improvements at Emma Prusch Farm Park and \$1 million for Lincoln Glen Park. In the second round, the City was awarded \$1 million for Rotary PlayGarden and \$671,250 for Almaden Lake Park. Other grants went to the City of Cupertino, Mountain View School District, Palo Alto Unified School District, Santa Clara Unified School District, and the City of Santa Clara.

"The success of the Rotary PlayGarden at Guadalupe River Gardens demonstrated an overwhelming need for all-inclusive playgrounds," says Burnham. "The generous grant program funded by Santa Clara County provided much needed seed money for PRNS to accelerate the addition of all-inclusive playgrounds throughout the City."

Julie Riera Matsushima the visionary and force behind the all-inclusive Rotary PlayGarden, was motivated by her love for her twin granddaughters, and especially by Aimee, who is physically disabled.

"When they were small, we couldn't take them to the park," says Matsushima, "because one could play and one could not, as she's in a wheelchair. That was the start of my quest to have the city do more."

As president of the Rotary Club of San Jose, she shared her frustration regarding inaccessible parks and asked for their support. So, when the Rotary was deciding upon their 100th anniversary gift to the city, the PlayGarden became their project. They raised about \$6 million dollars to build it.

"People didn't get why we'd want a park for able-bodied kids to play with disabled kids," says Matsushima. "The thought is they have nothing in common, but the reality is that all children like to play together, and nothing could be better than for able-bodied kids to see that children in a wheelchair love to swing and go down the slide as much as they do."

The PlayGarden has something for all ages and abilities and it's not just about kids: it also works for

grandparents with walkers and wheelchairs. All-inclusive playgrounds also provide a place for families with disabled children to meet and establish a support network.

One of the favorite park elements is the huge concrete slides with ramps to the top rather than ladders to climb. Concrete was chosen as the building material as plastic and metal interfere with cochlear implants. There's also a wheelchair-accessible merry-go-round, interactive kinetic art, adaptive swings, musical chimes, a sand-and-water play area, and sculptures of native plants and animals. Adding to sensory input, pilot and air traffic control chatter from Mineta San Jose International Airport is piped in. Plans are in the works to add a zipline and labyrinth.

"Typically, a family with a disabled child doesn't go to the park as a family because there's nowhere for those children to play. This allows them to do that. They can have birthday parties, or picnics, and enjoy the experience as a family," says Matsushima. "It's just awesome."

"There are no new regulations requiring all-inclusive playgrounds," says Burnham. "This is something we are doing proactively to serve our residents. Playgrounds are already required to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which helps ensure that they're accessible to wheelchair users, but the ADA requirements don't do anything to address the 90 percent of people with disabilities who aren't in a wheelchair."

All-inclusive playgrounds also provide safety rubber surfacing, ramps, and earthen mounds to ensure that all parts of the playground are usable and enjoyable for people with mobility or physical disabilities. Space is devoted to imaginative, musical, and nature/sensory play for children with autism/sensory disorders or who may have cognitive or developmental disabilities. Burnham says they've put an emphasis on planting, trees, and natural play materials as exposure to nature at a young age improves cognitive development and soothes children with autism and sensory processing disorders.

"We design the playgrounds so...regardless of ability, each child can find something to challenge or excite them," she says.

Almaden Lake Park's all-inclusive playground

In late March, PRNS will unveil their preliminary design for the park at a community outreach meeting.

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Times **Cover Story**

After gaining a better sense of what the community envisions, they will tailor their design accordingly. They aim to have the design defined by the end of the summer, begin construction in mid-2021, and have the park opened in 2022.

PRNS is also collecting feedback from the community through an online survey at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/AlmadenAll-Inclusive1.

"So far, we've heard that people want more active play elements and more shade," says Burnham. "For specific play features like slides, climbers, and nature play areas with textured plants top the list."

Due to the higher accessibility and programmatic requirements, all-inclusive playgrounds are more expensive than a typical playground. The budget for the Almaden all-inclusive playground is \$1.3 million. The grant program requires the City to match the County's grant, and as it's a reimbursement grant, the City has to provide \$2 million for a \$1 million grant.

"It's a challenge for us," says Burnham. "The Rotary PlayGarden was built by the Rotary and they fundraised for most of the \$6 million it took to build that. If we had additional funding, then the project could be more robust. If there are members of the Almaden commu-

nity interested in doing some fundraising to expand this project, we would welcome that."

"More money is needed to make a better park," says Michele Dexter, Council Liaison for Councilmember Johnny Khamis. "The parks department would be thrilled if they had \$2 million, but they don't. It will be a nice regional playground, but it could be so much more. Finding another source of funding would be tremendous for the community."

Dexter says that at a recent faith leader luncheon hosted by Councilmember Khamis, both Pastor Jordan Wong of Almaden Neighborhood Church and Pastor support person Melissa Hung of Westgate Church, South Hills Campus, said they have started special needs programs in Almaden.

"I told them we were putting in an inclusive playground in Almaden," says Dexter, "and they said we need that so much. There's definitely a need."

To aid with project funding, contact Nicolle Burnham at: 408-793-5514.

"All-inclusive playgrounds are about providing spaces where everyone in the community can come together and be able to play together," says Burnham. "It's important for us as a society."



All-inclusive playgrounds also provide safety rubber surfacing, ramps, and earthen mounds to ensure that all parts of the playground are usable and enjoyable for people with mobility or physical disabilities.



Press day: February 18, 2020

Deadline: February 15, 2020

Write to editorial@timesmediainc.com

Almaden Times

The Almaden Senior Association members are a diverse group of enthusiastic, active, 50+ adults who enjoy new learning opportunities, new experiences, and new adventures.

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or "enlightener" completes
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is monotheistic and
stresses the equality of all
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believe in three basic prin-
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earning a living by honest
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Times Features

Oscars 2020: What to look for at the biggest night in Hollywood

By Joshua Kim

Special to the Times

The Academy Awards, the biggest night in Hollywood, is fast approaching, and the list of nominated films represents a great sampling of what cinema had to offer in the past year.

Facing falling viewership due to a narrow focus on so called "Oscar bait" dramas with little or no popular appeal, the Academy seems to be committed to its recent turn in acknowledging films from a wide spectrum of appeal.

This year's nominees include not only films from veteran directors such as Quentin Tarantino's *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* and Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman*, but also includes the widely popular one billion dollar hit comic book film *Joker*, which scored eleven nominations, the most of any other film.

Oscar's staples such as the period drama, represented by female driven *Little Women* and the war drama represented by *1917* were nominated, but so was the humorous and satirical *Jojo Rabbit* and the fast paced and energetic *Ford v Ferrari*. *Parasite* is only the twelfth foreign language film in the Oscar's ninety two year history to be nominated for the Best Picture award.

This year's nominations also explored a wide range of powerful and pertinent social themes such as mental health and social isolation, hate and anti-semitism, and class dynamics.

A major storyline to look out for at this year's ceremony is how well streaming service Netflix's films, *The Irishman*, *Marriage Story*, and *The Two Popes* perform. While Netflix was able to win big with its film *Roma*, last year, it was not able to nab the top prize of Best Picture, and this year Netflix is hoping for another shot at the prize. A win for Netflix would cement its position as a top industry film maker and would symbolize the already shifting ways in which films are viewed and distributed.

Despite the wide range of films nominated, many movie goers are disappointed at the jarringly apparent lack of racial and gender diversity of this year's nominees. While the Academy has progressed in this area in recent years, nominating movies such as *Moonlight* (2017), *Get Out* (2018), and *BlackKlansman* (2019), this year's nominees contain no movies by or about people of color. In addition, for the second year in a row, no women have been nominated for best director, despite many great contenders such as Greta Gerwig for her work on *Little Women*, Lulu Wang for her work on *The Farewell*, and Marielle Heller for her work on *It's A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*.

This year's Academy Awards will be telecast on February 9 at 5 p.m. PST on ABC. Make sure to tune in to celebrate another great year in film. In the meantime, check out these amazing nominated films from last year.

Editor's note: Questions and comments can be sent to Joshua Kim at jk5505@nyu.edu.

Opera San José unveils new season; supporters welcome new General Director Khorl Dastoor

Opera San José supporters gathered at the historic California Theatre Jan. 21 to welcome its new General Director Khorl Dastoor and hear her unveil the company's new strategic vision and ground-breaking line-up for the 2020-21 Season.

Dastoor presented the company's new productions, company premieres, artist debuts, and cultural collaborations in four mainstage productions – including one with Broadway roots, a San José Opera first.

Dastoor succeeds retiring general director Larry Hancock. She becomes one of only six women, and the only woman of color, leading a major opera company in the US (budget over \$3 million). Dastoor has been affiliated with Opera San José since joining its resident ensemble of principal artists in 2007.

Since then she has been overseeing all aspects of artistic planning and business operations, and now announces her first season to be staged September 2020 through May 2021 at the beautifully restored California Theatre in downtown San Jose.

Dastoor went on to enthusiastically describe her vision for the future, noting, "In its next chapter, Opera San José is committed to expanding access to the art form for more residents of our region, expanding and developing our programmatic offerings to better

serve the diverse community of the valley, and incubating the next generation of singers, musicians, designers, composers, directors and craftspeople that will engine the future of operatic expression in America."

Also announced were new curtain times: in the 2020-21 season evening performances will begin at 7:30 pm, and matinees move to 2:00 pm Dastoor said. "We heard from many patrons that they would prefer to get home earlier, and were happy to respond with earlier show times."

For more information or to purchase subscriptions (\$140-\$550 for four operas), the public can visit operasj.org or call (408) 437-4450 (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm). Subscriptions are on sale now; single tickets will go on sale in June 2020.

The Opera San Jose 2020-21 Season will include four new productions: THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO - A British Raj reimagining of this brilliant opera buffa - September 12 - 27, 2020; CARMEN - Fiery flamenco joins brilliant singing to reignite this classic - November 14 - 29, 2020; SALOME, Daring, rarely performed opera in a dynamic new production -- February 13 - 28, 2021; WEST SIDE STORY - Thrilling music and vivid dancing explode on our stage - April 17 - May 2, 2021.



Opera San José's new General Director **Khorl Dastoor**. Photo Credit: Chris Hardy

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