Ishita Verma is shattering the mental health stigma SEE PAGE 4



Cortese moves to Senate Leaving his role as Supervisor, Dave Cortese says 'keep in touch!' SEE PAGE 12

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How East Side Union High Schools are keeping students, staff safe SEE PAGE 2



NOV. 20 - DEC. 3, 2020 **VOL. 37, NO. 24**

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ESUHSD, City of
San Jose and Sandy
Hook promise rollout
to 'Say SomethingC
C
V
a

Anonymous Reporting System'

Students will learn how to spot the signs of concerning social and emotional behaviors

SUHSD is continuing its partnership with the City of San Jose and Sandy Hook Promise (SHP), the leading violence prevention organization, to roll out its "Say Something Anonymous Reporting System" (SS-ARS) to its students districtwide.

The district is launching a week-long awareness training and campaign for its students and staff.

SS-ARS allows students to submit secure and anonymous safety concerns to help identify and intervene when students are in crisis. The intent is to provide support to individuals before they hurt themselves or others. Concerned students simply submit a tip using the SS-ARS app, website, or by calling a dedicated 24/7 crisis center. SHP's crisis center *See SAY SOMETHING, page 3*

Community and volunteers rally around 'Gifts for Teens' mission

By Jan Giroux Special to the Times

andemic or no pandemic, the show must go on." That was the motto this year for the Gifts for Teens steering committee.

Even though the number of holiday gift bags decreased, there was no lack of enthusiasm, creative thinking and can-do spirit from the community and committee.

Generous donations were received from many businesses in the South Bay willing to help "Gifts for Teens," a non-profit that creates and distributes gift bags to community agencies that serve foster, low income and homeless teens that are often overlooked by local youth programs.

A heartfelt thank you goes to the following: Walmart Almaden store for their grant of \$1,000, Carl's Jr. for 400 gift meal cards and ongoing sponsor Emerald Hills Golfland for 400 admission passes. Funds were contributed by the Almaden Valley Singles, Delta Theta Tau Sorority, Dentist Susan Di Bene and tasty protein bars given by local Sprouts, Trader Joe's, and Whole Foods Markets. In addition, each of the 400 gift bags had a \$25.00 gift card from either Target or Walmart.



Welcome additions to our gift bags included a warm hooded sweatshirt, hygiene kits, fun teen items and hand sanitizers. To add a more personal touch, the Gifts for Teens Club, students at Pioneer High School, made 400 personalized, hand-written notes, one for each teen recipient.

The assembly and filling of bags were prepared in an outdoor setting complete with shade tents, distancing, masks and sanitizers per County COVID protocols. Thank you to the San Jose Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) for use of their space.

Committee members along with a limited number of community volunteers from the Almaden and Blossom Hill Chapter of National Charity League, Pioneer High School students, History Club of Los Gatos, and Xi Iota Zeta Sorority assembled and filled bags on September 19, October 17 and 20th. Agencies receiving gift bags this year include: Sacred Heart Community Service for teens of low-income families, Advent who serves teens suffering from substance abuse and the Bill Wilson Center for their foster teens and homeless drop-ins.

The generosity of AAUW members, community businesses and volunteers during this pandemic year has been overwhelming and greatly appreciated. Knowing that you contributed to making a merrier holiday for a deserving teen is a reward in itself.

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County moving into State's Purple Tier as COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations rise locally

Officials urge residents to exercise caution in interactions outside of their immediate household

Citing concerns regarding a sudden rise in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, the State of California announced Monday that Santa Clara County moved directly into the most restrictive Purple Tier of the *Blueprint for a Safer Economy* on Tuesday, November 17.

Under the State's Blueprint, the Purple Tier indicates that the risk of community transmission in the county is widespread.



The State's website includes information regarding the Purple Tier and its impact on businesses and activities. Impacts include the closure of indoor dining, which was already planned in Santa Clara, as well as the closure of all indoor activities associated with gyms, museums, zoos and aquariums, places of worship, and movie theaters. Shopping malls and all retail establishments must reduce to a maximum of 25 percent capacity.

"The announcement from the State reflects that we appear to be heading into the worst phase of the pandemic to date," said Santa Clara County Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody. "Rapidly rising cases and hospitalizations should serve as a wake-up call for our entire community. We ask every resident to do everything they can to slow the spread of transmission in our community, protect our most vulnerable residents, and save lives." Daily cases have doubled in the last ten days in the State of California, which is the fastest increase that California has seen since the beginning of the pandemic. Santa Clara County is among 41 California counties that are now in the Purple Tier of the State's Blueprint.

Given the alarming rise in cases and hospitalizations, the County of Santa Clara strongly urges residents to refrain from all travel, including over the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, to gather with persons outside of their household only outdoors, and to limit interactions with persons outside of their immediate household.

See our Listings of Evergreen Area Meetings, Places of Worship and Classified Advertisements Inside the Back Cover

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Times **Community News**

How East San Jose schools are keeping students, staff safe

ESUHSD

Report

By Chris Funk

Superintendent, East Side Union High School District

A s reported by Sonya Herrera in San José Spotlight Nov. 10, East San Jose ranks No. 1 in new cases per capita in the county. This is not new news to us who work for East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD).

According to county data, 1,988 people tested positive for the virus in the 95122 ZIP code. With a population of 57,780 people, the number of cases in the area amounts to a rate of 3,441 cases for every 100,000 people.

As superintendent of ESUHSD, I recommended to our Board of Trustees in late June that, in the best interest of our staff, students and families, we start the school year in distance learning because we had

several ZIP codes with the highest percentage of COVID-19 cases in Santa Clara County.

We created a four-phased approach to reopening our schools.

We are currently in Phase 2, supporting single-stable cohorts of 16 for our students most struggling with distance learning based on our sixweek and 12-week reporting periods. Since the first day of school, students have been on our campuses accessing our Wi-Fi if they lacked broadband at home or did not have a cafe and quiet place to study

a safe and quiet place to study.

When Santa Clara County shifted off the state watchlist and entered into the moderate status as per the criteria outlined in the Blueprint for a Safer Economy, our district was able to safely provide in-person, onsite intervention and support to students identified as requiring additional assistance.

Due to the size of our comprehensive high schools, the only way to maintain social distancing and proper spacing as defined by the Santa Clara County Public Health Department Reopening Schools framework, in-person, onsite support and intervention will be provided through single stable cohorts which will meet inside (up to 16) and outside (up to 32). We believe this is the most feasible way to approach in-person, onsite intervention and support. Each cohort will include at least one adult.

Each school will offer in-person, onsite intervention and support up to 10 single cohorts of students identified as needing additional assistance. Student and staff participation will be voluntary and the cohort can meet on a daily basis (site discretion).

A student/teacher can only participate in a single cohort at a time. Students and teachers may rotate cohorts every three to five weeks with seven days between co-



horts. There is a maximum of 310 students at any given time on campus.

Below are a few examples of the type of cohorts for Phase 2 we are offering.

Examples of a single cohort include groups identified in the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCP), as well as the following groups:

Students who have fallen behind in school who are identified as Students with Special Needs, English Language Learners, Foster Youth or McKinney-Vento;

Athletics, clubs and Goodwill Assets program cohorts;

Students who will be offered in-person, onsite inter-

vention and support will be identified by each site, and parents will be asked to opt in if they agree to having the student be part of a cohort;

Students who have been identified will be notified by school personnel and provided details of the cohort sessions, including safety protocols and expectations.

If parents agree to opt in their student for participation in the cohort, they will need to agree to conduct temperature checks and symptom screening for their student prior to arriving on campus for the cohort session.

Teachers and students may only be part of one cohort at a time. For example, a teacher could identify 15 students based on grades and attendance to make a cohort. A single cohort can be split into two cohorts to meet gathering size for indoor support.

If a cohort meets outdoors, the cohort can be 31 students and one adult.

Cohorts can meet during tutorial, advisory periods, after school or on Saturday.

Unless the student is accessing the school's Wi-Fi on the school campus, all students participating in in-person intervention and support, must leave campus immediately upon completion of the cohort session.

Our Reopening Task Force has recommended that we follow similar guidelines See SAFETY, next page

Safety

Continued from previous page for Phase 3. Phase 3 will begin when the

county reaches the Minimal Level of active cases. Phase 3 will increase the number of cohorts to no more than 500 students on campus at single time (Reopening Plan).

In an effort to protect our staff, students and families, Phases 2 and 3 are voluntary. Staff members with underlying health conditions, over the age of 62 or are living with or taking care of someone with underlying health conditions, may continue to work from home. Families must opt in to have their child receive in-person support.

Any staff member who is working at the district office or at the school site is being tested weekly at the expense of the district.

We are taking a very thoughtful and measured approach to addressing the needs for all of stakeholders during this pandemic. We cannot allow this pandemic to destroy the advances we have made to East Side Union High School District.

It is more important than ever that we meet the demands of distance learning and provide the scaffolding and safety nets so that all of our students meet the rigorous demands of earning a high school diploma. We will not let our community down.

Contact Chris at funkc@esuhsd.org or follow @chrisfunksupt on Twitter.

Say Something

Continued from page 1

then triages the tip and dispositions it back into participating school districts and, as needed, to law enforcement.

"Building upon our Say Something program, we are happy to partner with ES-UHSD to help its students be "upstanders" by training them to Know the Signs of potential violence," said Nicole Hockley, managing director at Sandy Hook Promise and mother to Dylan, killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School. "With SS-ARS, students can now take action to submit a tip anonymously and be sure it is case managed by schools and local law enforcement. From bullying, to substance abuse, to suicide and school shooting threats, schools and communities can take tangible action to prevent harm before it occurs."

"The current pandemic has created an environment where students are experiencing higher levels of stress, trauma, and isolation. We are committed to providing as many avenues as possible for students to seek support with their social and emotional needs. We believe SS-ARS will empower our students to advocate for their needs and the needs of others," said Chaunise Powell, ESUHSD Director of Student Services.

The SS-ARS system is managed and maintained by a national digital leader in the school safety space and 24/7 Crisis Center national compliance leader, both have 20+ years of experience. SHP provides overall management and training of SS-ARS to school districts and students and pays for 100% of the costs to train and sustain the program in a school district.

Free flu test now included with Covid-19 testing at SC County Fairgrounds and city-based sites

ree COVID-19 testing facilities at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds and the rotating city-based sites now include a test for influenza, offering an added benefit with no additional cost, inconvenience, or additional procedure.

The combination tests are also available at Valley Medical Center clinics for those showing symptoms. COVID-19 tests at the County pop-up testing facilities, Emmanuel Baptist Church in San José, and the South County Annex in Gilroy, do not include the influenza screening because these sites are designed for people without symptoms. Dr. Jennifer Tong, Hospital Surge Branch Director for the County of Santa Clara, said that at this time people with symptoms common to both the flu and COVID-19 have about an equal likelihood of being infected with either virus.

"Potentially they could even be infected with both, and it's vital that they know what they have so that they can follow the correct isolation recommendations," Tong said. "It's also important for health officials to know the number of people in the community who are positive for either one, whether or not they are showing symptoms. Studies have found that asymptomatic people can also carry the flu."

To make an appointment, visit: www.sccfreetest.org and click on "Schedule an Appointment Today." Text message results are available at appointment-based County of Santa Clara testing facilities.

Santa Clara County Fairgrounds Parking Lot A (across from the blue arch) - Drive-through, bike, and walk-up appointments across the street from the Fairgrounds main entrance, 344 Tully Road, San José. Appointments Friday, Nov. 20, 11:30 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.; Saturday, Nov. 21, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



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Op Ed What's behind improvements in U.S. life expectancy?

By Sally C. Pipes Special to the Times harmaceuticals have added about a year to U.S. life expectancy since 1990, according to new research published in Health Affairs by scholars from Harvard and the University of Michigan.

Yet Americans don't live as long as their counterparts in Canada and the United Kingdom. British life expectancy is over 81 years; for Canadians, it's 82 years. U.S. life expectancy is just 78.6 years.

Fans of Medicare for All believe that's proof of the superiority of socialized medicine. Dig a little deeper, though, and it's clear that life expectancy is an imperfect measure of the quality of a nation's healthcare system.

In fact, by rationing cuttingedge pharmaceuticals -- or not providing them in the first place -socialized medicine could actually be depriving Canadians and Britons of extra years of life.

The Health Affairs study found that U.S. life expectancy increased 3.3 years between 1990 and 2015. Pharmaceuticals were responsible for 35 percent of that gain.

This is only the latest study to confirm that we have medical innovation to thank for our steadily increasing lifespans. According to research from Columbia University professor Frank Lichtenberg, average life expectancy across 52 countries increased by almost two years between 1986 and 2000. New pharmaceuticals were responsible for 40 percent of that increase.

See LIFE EXPECTANCY, page 18

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Valley Currents

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

Ishita Verma is shattering the mental health stigma

I shita Verma, a senior at Silver Creek High School, founded "Shattering The Stigma" last year, a mental health awareness project seeking to demystify media representations of psychological conditions.

Originally starting as a personal blog, the project has now expanded to a weekly student-written informational article series, a Podcast discussing media portrayals with experts, and a platform for students to share their stories. The project has a team of 60 international students and amassed over 500 readers.

Ishita, steering "Shattering The Stigma's" efforts, initially inspired to start a blog series after noticing the inaccuracy of mental health portrayals in media such as movies, television shows, and books. Connecting how these misrepresentations exacerbated misconceptions and stigma around mental

health, she set out to do something about it. In July 2019, she launched a website where she'd post monthly articles that scientifically explained the conditions being represented and gave viewers a more complete understanding and several resources they could pursue for further learning.

With time, Ishita's blog gained a following. Many students even expressed interest in joining Ishita's pursuit. As Ishita welcomed new contributors, the project took on a larger meaning, transgressing beyond her personal



Ishita Verma

blog and becoming the international, studentled project Shattering The Stigma.

"Shattering The Stigma" currently has three pillars. Its *Misconceptions in the Media* article series delves into media portrayals ranging from Bollywood to K-Dramas to Telenovelas to raise mental health awareness. Some of their most popular features have discussed mental health in *Joker, Lizzie McGuire,* and *Never Have I Ever*. Shattering The Stigma also has a blog for student mental health stories, where teens are empowered to share their experiences (and can do so anonymously) and be inspired by fellow teens. Recently, Ishita also led her team to launch a Podcast series: Demystifying Depictions. It discusses mental health in the media with experts such as psychiatrists, psychologists, advocates, and professors. They have collaborated with organizations (like the National Alliance On Mental Illness) and influencers (like Dr. Tina Ministry aka BrownPscyhologist), to dissect media like *The Hate U Give* and *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower*. They have several exciting episodes in the production process releasing soon.

Though Ishita hadn't ever thought that the project would grow so large, she's incredibly excited by their progress. She loves hearing from followers about how "Shattering The Stigma's" work has impacted them, whether it be helping students embrace their own mental illnesses or simply be more aware. Ishita aims to continue her progress with "Shatter-

ing The Stigma" and has several ideas for future pursuits. She's interested in collaborating with more organizations, translating their content into multiple languages, and even creating a documentary capturing the impact of irresponsible media portrayals on youth.

Ishita's passion and dedication is truly inspiring. Her efforts to eliminate the stigma around mental health are key to sparking conversations and raising awareness.

You can check out her project's website: shatteringthestigma.wixsite.com/project.

The *Demystifying Depictions Podcast* is available on most Podcast streaming services.





SOARING

This majestic Bald Eagle made an appearance at the Villages Golf and Country Club golf course at holes number 6 and 7 on Nov. 8 perched on a giant eucalyptus tree, beautifully photographed by Villager resident Frank Langben. The Bald Eagle was just seen this week perched on the same tree.

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How informed are students about the Electoral College and the presidential candidates' policies?

ith the election results still looming, the presidential race is top of mind for everybody in the US right now... and kids under 18 who couldn't vote in this election are no exception.

Homework help platform and online learning community Brainly surveyed 2,684 US students (ages 13-17) to find out how informed they are about the electoral college and each of the presidential candidates' policies, which issues are most important to them, and more.

The most important political issue to students in regard to the upcoming election was racial/ethnic equality (22.8%). Racial/ethnic equality was chosen by nearly twice as many students as the next most popular political issue: health care (12.7%).

The other top-ranked most important political issues to students were as follows:

- Economy (11.7%)
- Gun control/rights (11.7%)Education (11.5%)

Climate change (8.7%)Immigration (7.2%)

• Foreign policy (3.3%)

When it comes to each of the presidential

candidates' political views, policies, and qualifications, roughly 42% of students said they were somewhat informed. Another 39% said they were highly informed, while 19% said they were completely uninformed.

When it comes to the Electoral College process, a whopping 25% of students said they were completely uninformed. By contrast, 46% of students said they were somewhat informed while 29% said they were highly informed.

About an equal number of students said they

received most of their information about the presidential election through social media (24.1%) and broadcast TV news (24%). Online news sites were a not-so-distant third with 19.6% and parents/guardians rounded out the top four information sources with 12.5%.

"Voting is one of the primary ways we participate in our democracy, but it can be hard to know how to talk to kids about voting, especially during this contentious election season. Election season is a great opportunity to help your kids understand how our country works—and to talk about the values you believe in (no matter who you're casting your ballot for)," says Patrick Quinn, parenting expert at Brainly.



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Times Feature

Op Ed What gives us humans our dignity?

By Srujal Shah Special to the Times hat gives us humans our dignity? Is it our income? Our education? The company we work for? Our job titles? Our status in society?

The 100th birthday of Revered **Pandurang Shastri Athavale** (pictured) was celebrated on Oct. 19 around the world by millions as Human Dignity Day. But why would someone's birthday be celebrated as Human Dignity Day?

Rev. Pandurang Shastri Athavale taught a simple but powerful notion that we all have dignity because we are human and the Universal Power is within us irrespective of our religious beliefs: "The supreme power within me is my dignity. The supreme power within you is your dignity. The supreme power within all of us is human dignity."

We are the only creation on the planet capable of expressing gratitude to this Universal Power and of becoming anything we envision. Human beings have the power if they choose, to become evil or good. This is one of the marvels of our existence. Could not the realization of this universal human divinity help to bring about the equality our society needs today?

In a time when groups are being galvanized and polarized because of race, nationalism, religion, and socio-economic status, Pandurang Shastri Athavale (known as Dadaji meaning "elder brother" in Marathi) inspired millions of people to acknowledge their divinity, the part of their identity that unifies them.

This compelling idea brought tens of millions of people together under the umbrella of a global family founded by Rev. Athavale, known as the Swadhyaya family. One of this group's most remarkable feats is its vast presence in six continents without soliciting a single donation. The work is based on absolute faith in divinity and the principles of gratefulness and selfless work (bhakti) described in an ancient Indian text, the Bhagavad Gita.

Rev. Athavale revived from ancient texts of the Vedas, the true meaning of bhakti as "devotion based on indwelling God." By explaining that God lives in all of us, he inspired and provided the framework for millions of people, both rich and poor, to consistently devote a portion of their time and skills to put this outlook into practice by building selfless relationships with complete strangers and engaging in other constructive projects. Over time a very transformed society became visible in communities around the world—one characterized by love, self-respect, and a positive attitude toward life.

Rev. Pandurang Shastri Athavale lived to uplift others and did not desire even his



own birthday to carry his name. He was the recipient of many prestigious awards and recognitions, including The Templeton Prize, The Magsaysay Award and invitations to the Vatican by the Holy Pope. Rev. Athavale explained that you can only achieve peace within a society by finding peace within the individual first.

To celebrate the selfless life of this great soul who has changed the lives of tens of millions of people around the world, can we take some time today to remember what really gives us our own dignity and to consider how our actions guide us to this end? This will make Human Dignity Day meaningful to each one of us and lead to a greater understanding of humankind.

Revered Pandurang Shastri Athavale (19 October 1920 – 25 October 2003), also known as Dadaji, which literally translates as "elder brother" in Marathi, was an Indian activist, philosopher, spiritual leader, social revolutionary, and religion reformist.

REPORT Most Charitable States for 2021

With the U.S. ranked as the most generous country over the past 10 years by the World Giving Index, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on Most Charitable States for 2021 in addition to its picks for Best Charities for 2021 and a Charity Calculator to help donors decide where and how to give.

To determine where the most generous Americans are inspiring others to be more selfless, WalletHub compared the 50 states based on 19 key indicators of charitable behavior.

The data set ranges from the volunteer rate to the share of income donated to the share of sheltered homeless. California did not make the top 20 list. The State listed as number 43.

| | Most Charitable States | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------|--|
| | 1. Utah | 11. Alaska | |
| | 2. Minnesota | 12. Georgia | |
| | 3. Maryland | 13. Wyoming | |
| | 4. Oregon | 14. Washington | |
| | 5. Ohio | 15. New Hampshire | |
| | 6. Pennsylvania | 16. Arkansas | |
| | 7. Virginia | 17. North Carolina | |
| | 8. North Dakota | 18. Wisconsin | |
| | 9. Maine | 19. New York | |
| | 10. Colorado | 20. Illinois | |
| | | | |



World-renowned mezzo-soprano **Susan Graham** stars in this riveting drama, a dazzling American opera with a touch of musical theatre razzle-dazzle. This witty work follows a famous stage actress and her two adult children, trying to find connection over the holidays.

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San Jose Dance Theatre begins fundraiser goal of \$40K for its production of The Nutcracker

Virtual link available with \$25 gift

This year San Jose Dance Theatre (SJDT) would have celebrated its 55th Annual Nutcracker, one of the oldest Nutcracker productions in the state.

Due to the COVID crisis this annual event, loved by so many, will not be able to bring live holiday cheer to the San Jose community.

While the organization has expressed its disappointment in not being able to offer its annu-

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3519 San Felipe Rd. San Jose, CA 95135 www.sosautorepair.com al Christmas tradition in 2020, SJDT intends to return in 2021 stronger than ever. SJDT's production of Nutcracker, like many other dance companies in the US,

supports the company's operations for the entire year which normally contributes 40% of the organization's annual income; 2020 will see SJDT's revenue drop by more than \$450,000.

The current goal is to raise a small portion of the lost SJDT revenues through the community's support allowing the dance company to bridge the gap and continue their legacy many years into the future. The average cost of a ticket for our production is \$60 and just 670 generous donations will generate \$40,000 in needed revenue.

As a tribute to our 55 years of continuous production SJDT will be filming excerpts of The Nutcracker on location around San Jose for a virtual performance to be available on a new streaming platform SJDT Digital available at Friends of the Ballet.

Gifts of \$25 and above will receive a link to the 2020 Virtual Nutcracker to enjoy during the holidays, and a sneak peek at the building of SJDT's new Giant Christmas Tree. Those donating \$120 or more receive a free one-year Membership to the new Friends of The Ballet Program.

San Jose named 'Most Innovative City in the U.S.'

The Center for Digital Government has recognized the City of San José as the nation's most innovative local government in their annual Digital Cities Survey.

Celebrating its 20th year, the annual survey recognizes cities using technology to tackle social challenges, enhance services, strengthen cybersecurity, and more.

This award hits a major milestone in Mayor Liccardo's Smart City Vision aiming to make San José the most innovative city in the country by 2020. The Smart City Vision is defined by a series of core values and goals that influence the transformative, user-centric technology being developed for the benefit of our communities. 2020 is the fourth consecutive year San José has placed in the survey's top ten and its first top finish.

"When we launched the Smart City Vision in 2016 with the goal of becoming the nation's most innovative city in 2020, I don't think I foresaw how critically important that innovation would become with the onset of COVID, and how we would need technology, data, and agile processes to nimbly launch a host of new emergency services – from distributing 2.4 million meals per week to expanding free broadband connectivity to more than 100,000 residents – that have sustained our community in recent months," said Mayor Sam Liccardo. "We have the most thinly staffed *See INNOVATION, page 12*



Steinway Society Home Concert Hall Series features Gryaznov

Innovative series brings outstanding artists to classical music lovers

our outstanding international classical piano artists will be performing for Steinway Society – The Bay Area this Fall through an innovative Home Concert Hall virtual series.

Steinway Society's 26th season features Vyacheslav Gryaznov who will perform in December and American pianist Andrew Li is slated to appear January 2021.

"We were so disappointed to have to cancel concerts this spring because of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Kathy Yu Wilson, Steinway Society president. "When we realized we would still not be able to host live performances in the Fall, we decided if we couldn't bring patrons to a concert hall, we'd bring the concert hall to them instead."

Unique Video Performances Watched at Your Leisure

The series will consist of recordings produced specifically for Steinway Society – The Bay Area that will not be available elsewhere on the Internet.

Each month's concert will be released on a given date and subscribers will be able to view the recording as many times as they would like during the four-day performance window. Each artist has been invited to give a short talk before the performance about their choice of pieces, their musical lives, and how the pandemic has impacted them. A recorded pre-concert lecture by Bay Area classical music expert Dr. Gary Lemco will be available for download as well.

Prices Set Low to Allow Greater Participation

While tickets to in-person concerts of Steinway Society artists typically cost between \$40 to \$60. Home Concert Hall virtual tickets are priced at \$20 per household per concert. Or, the entire four-concert series is available at the special promotional price of \$60.

"With our virtual Home Concert Hall series, every seat is a front-row seat, and there's only one charge per household," said Kathy Yu Wilson. "We hope this will encourage classical music lovers in the Bay Area and around the world to join us for these exceptional performances, while we provide much needed support to outstanding artists whose livelihoods have been severely impacted by the pandemic."

Artists

• Vyacheslav Gryaznov - December 19-21, 2020

• Andrew Li - January 22-25, 2021

Vyacheslav Gryaznov - Dec. 18-21,

Vyacheslav (called Slava by his friends) thrilled the audience in his West Coast debut with the Steinway Society in 2016, receiving three encores. He has performed to great acclaim throughout the U.S., Russia and Europe, including Carnegie Hall and the Berlin Philharmonie. Gryaznov studied at the Moscow State Conservatory for his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and he earned the Yale School of Music's Artist Diploma in 2018. He is on the teaching faculty of the Moscow Conservatory's piano department. In 2014, Gryaznov signed with Schott Music, where his work is the publisher's top ten best-selling piano editions.

Andrew Li - January 22-25, 2021

Andrew Li has shown his gift for and love of music since early childhood. He won first prize in the Bay State Piano Competition for five consecutive years from the ages of 7-12 year, and first prize for two consecutive years at the Steinway Competition in Boston. In October 2014, Andrew joined his older brother, George, in a performance at the recital series of Hamilton College. Since giving his first solo recital at the First Presbyterian Church in Utica, NY when he was ten, Andrew has won prizes in multiple piano competitions, including first prize at the Boston Symphony Orchestra youth concerto competition, second prize at the Hilton Head International Piano Competition, and third prize at the Minnesota Piano-e-Competition. In April 2018, he won first prize at the Harvard Music Association Achievement Awards.

Tickets Available Now

Tickets for the performances may be purchased in advance by going To: www.steinwaysociety.com/tickets or by contacting the Steinway Society box office at 408-300-5635. Tickets: \$20 per concert. For more information, visit: www.steinwaysociety.com



Vyacheslav Gryaznov will perform December 19-21, 2020. Photo courtesy of Steinway Society



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Times Community News

Together, we made the County a better place: thank you!

County

Report

By Dave Cortese

By Dave Cortese

Special to the Times or 12 years, I have had the privilege of representing District 3 on the Santa

Clara County Board of Supervisors. Next month, I will be moving to my new job as representative on the California State Senate, replacing Senator Jim Beall in District 15.

I am not saying goodbye because I will still be serving Santa Clara County and will still need your support and feedback just as I have since I took office as Supervisor in 2008. Over the years, we have accomplished much together and have faced difficult times and enormous challenges. I promise I will

take the dedication and hard work that I devoted to my job as your Supervisor to my

But first, let me thank the residents of Santa Clara County for their engagement,

commissions, helped to ease the suffering of the unhoused, and lobbied on behalf of those with mental illnesses and physical

Innovation

Continued from page 10

City Hall of any major city in the nation, but our team's passion for this important work, guarantees their ability to nimbly pivot from standard city services to critical response needs like ensuring every resident had food and school children could learn remotely."

Among the City of San Jose's initiatives is the expansion of digital equity through public-private partnerships, seeking to bridge the digital divide in San José through a Digital Inclusion Fund to connect 50,000 households with universal device access and universal connectivity. The city has also created a "green" device donation program and is on pace to connect over 300,000 San Joseans to broadband by 2022 — more people than the entire city of St. Louis.

The city's overall innovation strategy is a

disabilities. You cleaned up trash along trails, creeks and rivers, chose to ride public transit instead of driving every day in your cars and generously donated to food-

banks. You invited me to march with you to celebrate women's suffrage, and included me in your conversations about the rights of LBGTQ residents.

Most recently, you made great sacrifices to face the most serious health crisis of our lifetimes by wearing masks, keeping physical distances from others and avoiding crowds and indoor gatherings. As business owners, you went the extra mile to comply with safety measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.

As frontline health care workers, you put your lives on the line to care for the victims of coronavirus. And as firefighters, you worked tirelessly to save lives, homes and businesses during the worst wildfire season in the state's history. As teachers and parents of students, you worked together to provide remote education until schools can reopen. You've learned to work from home and adopted teleconferencing as a new way to do business. As faith leaders, you brought people together to worship safely.

The County and my office couldn't effectively serve residents without the strong partnerships with the nonprofit organizations and community groups that work to house the homeless, feed hungry families, provide counseling to children, care for older adults and share resources with parolees who want second chances to better their lives. Those organizations are supported by financial contributions from residents as well as thousands of volunteer hours.

I loved my job as your County Supervisor, but I look forward to continuing to serve you in the State Capitol. My message is not goodbye; it's keep in touch!

collaborative effort between The Mayor's Office of Technology and Innovation (MOTI), the Civic Innovation team and the city's IT department led by Rob Lloyd. MOTI was founded by Shireen Santosham and recently taken over by Jordan Sun. The City's Civic Innovation team is helmed by Dolan Beckel. Other external partnerships, with companies like AT&T, were made possible through the hard work of Deputy City Manager, Kip Harkness. Alumni of both teams have gone on to create cutting edge technology and community changing advances.

The Center for Digital Government is a national research and advisory institute on information technology policies and best practices in state and local government. The Center is a division of e.Republic, the nation's only media and research company focused exclusively on state and local government and education.

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Thanksgiving



It is different this year. A time to give thanks as we face the special challenges that Covid-19 has brought us.

000

Thoughts, meditation and prayers for each other keep us closer when distance separates.

Let us be thankful that we have this day to share with another. "Zoom", "Skype", "Call" or "Write". Somehow. Some way.

"As we celebrate Thanksgiving Day in the presence of Covid-19 help us find ways to be thankful. Protect the most vulnerable among us, especially all who are currently sick or in isolation. Grant wisdom, patience, and clarity to first responders and health care workers. Guide us as we seek the best way to respond in our families and communities. Give us courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern, and acts of service, trusting that you abide with us always." Teach us to rejoice in God's abiding presence. Teach us to be thankful, hope filled people." Amen.

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new role as State Senator.

compassion and thoughtfulness in working with me and the other Supervisors to help find solutions and address the lack of affordable housing, access to healthcare, the impacts of climate change and the digital divide. You supported the plan to preserve farmland and open space in the County, promoted our magnificent history and heritage, and much more.

You voiced your concerns at Board meetings, gave up a day to attend my office's Summit on Firearms Safety and then another to participate in our Summit on Homelessness. You boarded buses to travel to Sacramento to call on legislators to fund education and showed up by the thousands to Alviso Marina County Park to celebrate the County's diversity at Day on the Bay multicultural festival.

You volunteered to serve on boards and

Reunited

Evidence of horses have been found in archeological digs that verify the four legged creatures were corralled long ago and ridden in times of war.

More than 5,000 years ago a girl put a clan back in the fight for utter survival of family. The wise leader of her group was an older woman who told her that decisions play out in time for the present rhymes with what happened in the past.

With her family group down to ten, with a scout running overland with key information, they understood dispassionately that soon they would be hunted by the four foot beast tribe. They knew of the large heavy creatures which carried metal warfare items and riders. The animals were honored and it was understood they were not the killers but instead tools of those who rode upon them with sword and skill. Their hunted clan decided to take refuge in an ancient stone structure.

The small tribe was on a defensive move. The leader instructed three men and two women go above the cliff and divert the stream. They fell three trees upon the bank and put the water above it. The slope allowed the icy blue liquid to flow toward the cliff but to give it direction they scored the ground to lead the puddled liquid to the edges. The leader told them to make holes, deep holes, three feet apart curving with cliff edge so that all water would flow into the cavities secretly dug so as to weaken the sand edge.

As one looked from the top edge of the cliff it was seen that there was an old house like structure of stone below. The cliff was not too high and it overlooked the ancient dwelling which had been abandoned long ago. This place, known as "Dark Home" was empty because people could not bear to stay there for unexplained mysterious unrestful things were said to occur.

Her tribe lit a large fire outside. Dark clouds informed them of rains soon to arrive. Several branches leaned over the fire so that they would become lasting fuel for nighttime flames. They also knew smoke would lead the killer tribe towards them in a day. As all began to take refuge inside the stone structure they said their prayer and swept the wood planked floor including chairs and table. It became dark outside and the fire rose strong outside. They moved into the structure to get rest from the elements of wind and cold outside as the sun slowly walked under the land.

Suddenly inside the structure their cat weaved back and forth in front of them as they walked. It criss crossed near the table. Then in the next few minutes a member of the family screamed as the chairs began to move by themselves and drag a few inches to and fro. All ran out that night except the young girl. Their lady leader explained that the spirits in the house wished to be set free and best for this evening to sleep outside so they could explore in the early morning light.

As the sun crept up they returned to the ancient home and knew that in a day the storm would visit along with those who were determined to stop their breathing. The leader called forth the young girl and whispered in her ear. The girl relayed the messages to all by motioning with her hands and stated. "move the table and pull up the floor." Slowly one by one each plank lifted to reveal two skeletons of a man and woman who were never buried but instead lay there for unknown reasons after being murdered long ago. A metal sword was shoved through the chest of the man and another lay imbedded with the lady as she was seen to cradle his head. As lovers, following a battle, they had been killed and thrown on the ground. The old woman once again whispered into the ear of the little girl and it was explained that a proper burial was needed outside near the fire. With great care and honor a curved place was dug in the ground so their feet faced the overhang of the cliff. Those that were helping with the grave said the sticks used to scrape the earth were unnaturally opposed to falling down and stood erect as they worked the soil. New forces of nature combined with the supernatural were working together. Special embroidered cloths were used to wrap each skeleton for all knew in some unexplained way that these were descendants of their tribe.

Without warning, the girl sang with special melody that emitted a harmonic resonance that shook the ground. It was midday and as the rain came lightning struck the ground in front of her. All knew it was a sign of protection and forewarned something to come.

As the ancient bodies were carefully lowered to grave, each was unfurled with three of the carriers pulling up on the cloth at the same time. As the bones spun in the air gravity and some other mystic force took hold of each bone and aligned all legs, arms, ribs and fingers. As their bodies fell together on the wet earthen grave the man's skeletal hand fell gently around her body and he turned to lay his palm so that hers clasped onto it for eternity. Witnesses said his arm slid lovingly around her spine with grace and comfort as the unthinkable happened in which the two skeletons fell together in an everlasting hug.

Someone whispered the word "Inseparable" and felt he was protecting her and she of course had given him the will to live forever. The girl decided on her own to drag the tips of the ancient swords which created two parallel lines behind her as she walked slowly to the grave. When she got close she tossed each sword and they flew into the grave so that they landed with handles at the ready between their white boned bodies. Several crowd onlookers wanted to keep the swords but could not find the strength to utter a word of protest Some whispered that the girl was called upon to do this by some unknown power so that one day in centuries to come another girl her age would find the swords and pick it up once more. Scoops of dirt were quickly tossed by hand another scream was heard. Someone had noticed the man's hand finger bones began to slowly close like a door in the wind while holding lady skeleton's hand. They were now together in their forever dance of embrace. All pushed dirt onto the grave, ten hands pressed down to pat the dirt to match the contour of the flat ground. This action of the many was a way for all to bid fond goodbye to the ancient honored couple who loved each other forever. The grave became washed and being unmarked lost as it melted into the ground with each individual crying raindrop.

The shimmering colorful glow of the lover's joined souls spun slowly as they became entwined and lifted in a white light to the heavens. Their spirits spoke a new language while dancing once again creating enchanting colors as they kissed in the sky. All knew some force had come upon them and what took place was done with some kind of secret power. Several bold thunder claps sounded along the hills with gleaming light and jagged electricity. Turning back, several workers pointed to the cliff for they saw their foes on horses at the edge formulating their plan of attack. All ran to take cover in the house and to wait silently. The old woman whispered once again in the ear of the little girl. She told all that the stream above had been diverted to allow for an ongoing run of water to the edge of the cliff. Also, five amongst them had dug deep holes all along the top of the cliff so that the water would collect there and saturate the soil. This particular earth was composed of sand and would crumble with moisture yet the riders of the four legged creatures would not know for the puddle on the cliff

hid the deeply dug holes and the strata of the overhang was a mere six feet.

The young girl began to sing loud just outside the house, her voice enchanting. The song held a secret frequency which jostled the sand on the cliff. The vibrations of her voice began the shake the ground with resonance. Suddenly as if to help her in her quest, there were two unbelievably loud thunderclaps and scattered strikes of electricity from clouds to the water holes on the cliff. The horses leaned back on their two legs and caused the cliff to give way where the riders positioned themselves on the edge peering down to better formulate their battle plans. The lip gave way along the holes like a cookie dipped in milk. Seven horses fell in slow motion so that their legs went upward. Their backs landed upon each warrior leader causing instant death but miraculously all the horses survived as they hit the piles of sand below and slowly got up being a bit dazed while walking towards the stone house.

Epilogue

The next day as the sun earnestly arose; those in the stone house walked without fear outside to face the killing clan. Drawing the icy clean air into their lungs they all whispered, "Where are they?" "Why are the horses here? Hours later the killing clan arrived but this time an older lady was elected to lead and had not the quest to kill. She walked with head held high with furs ornate beads and cap. She did not speak but instead bowed to the other leader while all yielded a nod back, including the young girl. This was considered a new statement of peace. As the small tribe began to give back the seven horses, the older lady in the killer tribe brought three back.

Just then the young girl spotted a young boy in the other group and smiled firmly. The boy was taken by her beauty and winked at her for he felt in his heart surely she could not be forgotten by him. He was drawn to her kindness and strength which spoke loudly in her smile. The two lady leaders looked at each other silently and nodded knowing that someday the two clans would join. Somehow they grasped that the girl and the boy with their pretty radiant faces were drawn to each other and could communicate more with a nod or a smile than any words could. They knew too that one day the boy and the girl would confess and someday call one another thieves for silently stealing each other's hearts without saying hello. The woman from the killer tribe motioned for the girl to come to her. She slowly walked forward and the lady leader took her favorite strand of beads and placed them slowly over her head. Both tribes went to one knee.

A day later a secret anomaly was seen in the side of the cliff. It was an ancient stone storage shelf where rough pieces of yellow metal and rare gems spilled out. The lady leader had the treasure split equally in two parts and sent scouts to the killer clan by horse to give them this gift of love and friendship so each clan could live well in the years to come. Upon arrival they handed the jewels and yellow metal to the lady leader wrapped in the same embroidered cloth which was used for the burial ceremony of the ancient ones. They also presented all clothing from the warriors dead with their swords, knifes and belongings. Those from the killer clan nodded in appreciation and bowed their heads ever so slightly without making eye contact.

This sharing and new quest for kindness made it possible for the tribes to begin to work together and build a village for a better way to protect their ways of life.

With love, the young boy and girl were to see each other n time and softly kiss.

(This story was written by local writer Kevin Larsen and published with grant from San José Coronavirus Relief Fund: Artists Grant/Center for Cultural Innovation) Times Feature

Career Corner Commuting to a Zoom meeting By Angela Copeland

Special to the Times

Has your work changed as a result of the pandemic?

If you have a corporate desk job, the answer may very well be no. While where you do your work has changed, the nature of your work has not. You are still focused on the same projects. You're meeting with the same people. Work is moving ahead.

But, doesn't that seem strange? Isn't it odd that work is moving forward, despite the current situation? Many people haven't seen their coworkers in person since mid-March.

With that in mind, what would change if we all went back to the office tomorrow? We'd pack a bag with our laptop. We would put on more formal clothing. We would spend a lot of time in traffic. Then, we would sit in our tiny offices on Zoom calls with our same colleagues.

What have we all been doing? In some cases, people have in person meetings. But it is increasingly common to communicate via video meetings, phone, and email.

Think back to your pre-pandemic work life. If you were to group your day into categories, how much was truly spent in person with your coworkers? For many people, it was very little.

Are we driving to work to sit by ourselves and to send email to each other? Are we sitting in a cubicle so that we can video chat with our colleagues from across the building?

Don't get me wrong. There are advantages to in person work. For example, you may have

a tiny apartment. Or, you might have children at home. In cases like these, an office can be very helpful.

But, office buildings are very expensive. They're expensive to build, and to maintain. Does your office building have one of those ping pong rooms? They're created to get us talking to each other. I've seen many of those rooms, but I've never seen anyone actually play ping pong at work.

This pandemic is truly the worst. It's painful on many levels every day. But, it is making us question why we've been doing things the way we are.

Why commute thirty minutes or an hour each way just to sit at a desk to email the person in the next office? We can all do that from anywhere.

Getting back to work would offer many perks on the mental health front. But, would those perks be as important if everyday activities were open? For example, if you could do your normal personal social activities, would it matter whether or not you went to an office?

If we let go of the office, what else would happen? Would our quality of life change? Would we spend less time commuting? What if we could move out of the crowded city to a home that was more suited for us? What if we had a little more time each day for our loved ones?

Should we commute for Zoom meetings?

Angela Copeland, a career expert and founder of Copeland Coaching, can be reached at copelandcoaching.com.



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This is our third year with **Toys for Tots**, every year we get and more donations. This year more than ever our help is needed, our goal is to overload the box we have and turn that into a TRUCK LOAD of toys to not just make a few kids holiday special but to make many kids holiday special this year. So *PLEASE* pass on the word to your friends, family, and neighbors. *We all win as a community, when we all help each other.*

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Gems in STEM Let's (Hydrothermal) Vent

By Anoohya Panidapu Special to the Times

Vents could lead to discovery of biologically relevant products and knowledge i everyone! I'm Anoohya, Apoorva's sister, and I'm a guest writer this week! For a little background on me: I'm currently a junior undergraduate at UC Berkeley, majoring in chemistry. In this article, we'll learn about the basics of hydrothermal vents, the interesting ecological relationships present, the threats that face this marine biome, and some of the chemistry that is involved. Hydrothermal vents are especially interesting considering their role in perhaps being the origin of life on Earth!

Hydrothermal vents were discovered somewhat recently, in 1977, by a team of geologists using the world's first deepsea submersible,



Alvin. These vents are usually found at depths of over two kilometers at the ocean floor. Now, you might be wondering how these are formed!

Well, Earth has tectonic plates that move and interact with one another. Hydrothermal vents form in volcanically active areas where Earth's tectonic plates spread apart and magma wells up to the surface. Cold seawater that seeps through cracks and crevices in the crust is then heated by the hot magma. It reemerges in the form of hydrothermal fluid to form the vents. The structures that look like chimneys are formed when the minerals from the vent are cooled and solidified into deposits. The released plumes (that look like smoke) consist of toxic minerals.



The conditions in these areas are quite extreme, with very high pressures, high temperatures, and strong acidity. The hydrothermal fluid contains dissolved metals and hydrogen sulfide. Importantly, there is a complete absence of light!

Now, because there is no sunlight, no photosynthesis occurs. One might naturally

wonder how, then, could life possibly exist in such conditions? Instead of there being plant life, there are chemosynthetic microorganisms. These chemosynthetic bacteria and Archaea convert the toxic vent minerals into forms of energy through chemosynthesis.

If you remember from earlier, one of the components of hydrothermal fluid is hydrogen sulfide. The overall chemical reaction for this chemosynthesis is: 6H2S (hydrogen sulfide) + 6H2O (water) + 6CO2 (carbon dioxide) + 6O2 (oxygen) \rightarrow C6H12O6 (sugar) + 6H2SO4 (sulfuric acid).

Oldest form of life on earth Chemosynthetic bacteria may be the old-

est life form on Earth. The carbohydrates they produce through chemosynthesis become the energy source for the organisms in a hydrothermal vent community. An example of this ecological relationship can be seen in Riftia pachyptila, or giant tube worms. They can be as long as eight feet tall! Giant tube worms are able to survive near hy-

drothermal vents through chemosynthesis. The top of the tube worm is a bright red plume that captures the molecules from the surrounding environment. It contains complex hemoglobins that bind with hydrogen sulfide and transport it to the chemosynthetic bacteria living in the tube worm trophosome (cavity). There are actually al-



most 300 million bacteria per ounce of tissue in the trophosome! The bacteria have a mutualistic relationship with tube worms, manufacturing sugars through chemosynthesis, which the tube worm absorbs to use as food. Deep-sea vents have very diverse communities with uniquely adapted species that coexist.

Should vents be mined for gold and zinc? Now, why should we care about them? Hydrothermal vents are very interesting because of the unique chemistry and ecological relationships the species in these diverse communities have. However, there is a large threat that faces this biome -- deepsea mining. The motivation behind deepsea mining is that hydrothermal vents are some of the last untapped deposits of precious metals on Earth. These metals include zinc and gold, which in 2017, Japan successfully mined from hydrothermal vents in Ok-

inawa. It is still unknown how large an ef-

fect mining could have on hydrothermal vents. Mining puts these vent communities,

See VENTS, page 17

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Times Local News

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hen you use your vehicle's blinker, does one side blink quicker than the other? If it does...then one of your bulbs has blown or may soon be going out. Now, before you rush to get a new bulb, you'll want to check your car manual as it will show you how to get at the indicator bulb and what type of bulb you'll need. Armed with this information, any auto parts store should be able to help you find the part you need.

One of the most important things you should know is "don't touch the glass" when you change headlight bulbs. Most of them are filled with halogen and have special coatings on the outside of the glass. If you touch the glass, you'll leave trace amounts of oil and grease on the glass which will cause that part of the glass to get hotter than the rest. It will eventually cause the bulb to crack and break.

When changing the headlight bulbs, hold the metal base part of the bulb or wear rub-

ber surgical/mechanic gloves so no residue is left behind. Changing bulbs can be tricky. OR you can stop by and leave it to us to take care of for you.

Don't "Fall Back" on your car's Maintenance!

Wet and cold weather are fast approaching. As always we want to make sure you and your vehicle are safe. Call us to schedule an appointment so we can get you in here and take care of any necessary repairs. Believe me, it's not fun breaking down when it's cold and wet outside.

We need some laughs!

Q: Why did the can crusher quit his job?

A: Because it was soda pressing. Here's another one...

Emergency contact:

When an employment application asks who is to be notified in case of emergency, I always write, "A very good doctor."

One more...

TGIF:

Nothing ruins a Friday more than suddenly realizing it's actually Tuesday.

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Opera San José announces new virtual performance of Jake Heggie's 'Three Decembers' starting Dec. 3

What an enchanting way to support the arts!

pera San José has announced it will present a new fully staged production of Jake Heggie's chamber opera, "Three Decembers."

Met with critical acclaim, "Three Decembers" has been hailed by Opera Today as "a modern masterpiece" with "a score filled with pleasures" that "provokes feeling and demands emotional reaction." Declared "an engaging crowd pleaser" by the Chicago Tribune, this lustrous one act, 90-minute foray into one riveting family is composed for three singers (soprano, mezzo-soprano, and baritone), is sung in English, and offers a thrilling experience for theatergoers and opera lovers alike.

The new production features world-renowned mezzosoprano Susan Graham in the central role, alongside celebrated Opera San José Resident Artists soprano Maya Kherani and baritone Efraín Solís, in a world-class digital production offered via on-demand streaming beginning December 3, 2020.

Based on the unpublished play "Some Christmas Letters" by Tony Award winning playwright Terrance Mc-Nally, "Three Decembers" follows the captivating story of a famous actress, Madeline Mitchell, and her two adult children, Beatrice and Charlie over three decades (1986, 1996, and 2006), bringing to mesmerizing life a family struggling to connect, as long-held secrets come to light.

With a brilliant, witty libretto by Gene Scheer and a soaring musical score by Jake Heggie, "Three Decembers" is a 90-minute fullhearted American opera about family – the ones we are born into and those we create.

An intimate, dual-piano arrangement was created and conducted by Opera San José Resident Artist conductor Christopher James Ray specifically for this vibrant production, which was captured in Opera San José's new Fred Heiman Digital Media Studio and directed by Tara Branham.

"Three Decembers" will launch its digital performances with a celebratory gala featuring a post-show conversation with Susan Graham, Jake Heggie, and the full artistic team on December 3, 2020, and then will be available to stream on demand for a limited time.

Tickets are \$40 per household (includes on-demand streaming access only) or \$50 per household (includes on-demand streaming access plus admission to the post-show gala Dec. 3). For more information or to purchase tickets, the public can visit operasj.org or call (408) 437-4450 (open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.).

Vents

Continued from page 15

consisting of rare and diverse organisms, at risk. There is also potential for spills of toxic materials, such as lead and arsenic, if the mining operation goes wrong. This would have catastrophic effects not only on marine life, but also on us. However, continuing to learn about and understand hydrothermal vents could lead to the discovery of helpful, biologically relevant products and knowledge.

I hope you enjoyed learning about hydrothermal vents! I believe it's especially important for younger generations to be aware of and thinking about the impacts we have on our natural world, even for a biome as mysterious and distant as hydrothermal vents.

Feel free to reach out to me at anoohya@berkeley.edu with any questions or comments!



World-renowned mezzo-soprano **Susan Graham** appears as famed actress "Madeline Mitchell" in Opera San José's new fully staged production of Jake Heggie's chamber opera ""Three Decembers." Offered via on-demand streaming beginning December 3, 2020, this world-class digital production will be available at operasj.org. Photo Credit: Mark Leialoha



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Times **Community News**



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Arbor Day Foundation gifts for the holiday season

Celebrate this year's holiday season with friends and loved ones while supporting conservation and tree planting with the help of the Arbor Day Foundation.

"The holidays are a time for thinking about others, and as you do, take a moment to think about what you can do to protect the beauty and splendor of the Earth," said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "We encourage everyone to give gifts that will have a lasting impact for generations to come."

• Give-A-Tree® cards from the Arbor Day Foundation offer a unique holiday giving opportunity with conservation benefits that will endure for generations. And again, this year, Give-A-Tree cards can be purchased individually and with customized text. Cards can be purchased for \$6.95.

• Purchasing the Arbor Day Foundation's coffee helps preserve rain forests in Central

Life expectancy

Continued from page 4

In the United States, cancer mortality has declined 29 percent since 1991. Lichtenberg attributes most of that decrease to new drugs.

Britain and Canada have not fared as well against cancer. In the United Kingdom, cancer mortality has gone down only 17 percent since the 1970s. The United States posts better five-year survival rates for breast, colon, prostate, and lung cancers than either Great Britain or Canada.

It's no coincidence that American cancer patients have access to more cutting-edge drugs than their peers elsewhere. Seventyfour new oncology drugs were launched worldwide between 2011 and 2018. Americans had access to 70 of them. Britons could get 55 of them; Canadians, just 43.

The story is much the same for drugs that treat other diseases. American patients had access to 88 percent of the 243 new medicines launched between 2011 and 2018. Residents of the U.K. had access to less than two-thirds, and Canadians, less than half.

If cutting-edge pharmaceuticals extend life, and Americans have access to more of and South America. The Foundation's coffee, a part of the Rain Forest Rescue® program, is shade-grown under the canopy of Latin American rain forests. Unlike sungrown coffee farms, this traditional shadegrown method gives the coffee a rich and delicious flavor. Cost per bag is \$18.94, including shipping.

• The Foundation's Trees in Celebration program allows the giver to honor loved ones while supporting crucial conservation efforts. For every two dollars donated, one tree is planted in a high-need forest, and recipients are given a certificate showing them where the trees were planted.

• Give the gift of membership with the Arbor Day Foundation, and recipients will be sent 10 free trees, which will be shipped at the right time of year for planting. Memberships begin with a \$10 contribution.

To purchase holiday gifts that give back to the planet, visit: arborday.org/november.

them than their British and Canadian peers, then why do Americans die sooner?

Factors that have nothing to do with health care explain a lot. For example, the United States unfortunately has a much higher murder rate -- more than quadruple Great Britain's and more than triple Canada's, according to data from the World Health Organization.

Drug overdoses are also more common in the United States. Then there are traffic accidents, which are sadly more common in the United States.

America's comparatively high murder, drug overdose, and car-crash rates are serious problems. But they don't tell us much about the quality of the American health care system.

Thanks to the widespread availability of innovative pharmaceuticals, there's likely no better place to get sick than the United States. If America were to follow the example of Canada and Great Britain, and embrace government-run care that would no longer be the case.

Sally Pipes is President, CEO, and Thomas W. Smith Fellow in Health Care Policy at the Pacific Research Institute. This piece originally ran in The Forum.

Sharks warn San Jose downtown development may force them out

By Carly Wipf

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight The Sharks fear the impacts of a massive redevelopment of Diridon Station — which includes Google's megacampus — could force them out of San Jose. The NHL team says its concerns have fallen on deaf ears for more than a year.

Now, they're pleading with the public to help save the SAP Center, home to the Sharks' games, which neighbors Diridon Station.

"We don't want to go — San Jose is our home. We were born here, we were raised here," Jonathan Becher, president of Sharks Sports & Entertainment, told San José Spotlight. "But if people can't get in and out, we might get forced out."

In an open letter asking for public support, the Sharks said the ongoing construction, lack of parking and street closures from redevelopment within the Diridon Station neighborhood could jeopardize access to the SAP Center and turn the area near Diridon Station into a ghost town.

"For more than a year, we have been sharing our concerns with you regarding the proposed, massive development projects within the Diridon area of downtown San Jose, which surrounds SAP Center," team officials wrote in a letter that was widely distributed.

"For the past several years, we have been sharing those same concerns with city of San Jose officials and Google," the letter continued. "Unfortunately, those discussions have yielded limited results and the planners of these projects appear intent on moving forward in a manner that could force the Sharks out of San Jose."

The team's fears escalated when San Jose last month released its revised Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP), which



The Sharks said the Diridon Station development could jeopardize fans' ability to access SAP Center and turn the nearby area into a ghost town. Photo courtesy of the San Jose Sharks.

outlines the redevelopment of approximately 250 acres. It also released an environmental report for the sprawling Google campus, called the Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan.

The two proposals could add an additional 60,000 workers to the Diridon Station area. Google's campus will add 65 new buildings over 84 acres, the largest development project in the history of downtown San Jose.

The Sharks say there's not nearly enough parking to accommodate the army of new tech workers in the area. Google's project plans call for just 2,850 parking spots for their 30,000 employees.

"Without an adequate supply of parking for the tens of thousands of additional cars coming to the area, the streets surrounding SAP Center are likely to be hopelessly gridlocked," the team's letter says.

These shortfalls will be exacerbated by the extension of



An outline of the Diridon Station area is pictured.

BART to Diridon Station, Caltrain and high-speed rail, the team said. None of those projects plan for additional parking in the area to support their ridership.

See SHARKS, page 20

<text>

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Times Community News

Sharks

Continued from page 19

San Jose cut a deal in the 1990s with the hockey team to ensure parking near SAP Center would be readily available for fans. That deal was renewed in 2018. Now that Google is seeking to buy three parking lots traditionally occupied during Sharks games for its tech campus, the team is being squeezed out of the city.

Becher said he's hoping the city will hold up its end of the bargain.

Nanci Klein, director of economic development, said the city fully intends to provide the Sharks with the resources they need to thrive.

"The city of San Jose has always deeply valued the Sharks and we will continue to," Klein said, adding as the projects progress, the city will work out a "very thoughtful and detailed construction plan." Such plans typically don't happen until later in the development stage, according to Klein.

Klein said the city will honor its parking agreement with the Sharks but that transitioning and coordinating with new public transit will take time to sort out.

"It's not a lack of willingness or a lack of understanding," Klein said. "I assure you there will be a tremendous amount of coordination on construction mitigation. We totally get the Sharks need to do that. It's strictly wanting to know more about the specifics of the project." This is not the first time a massive project threatened the future of parking near the arena. In 2018, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority teased a 1,300space parking garage as it drafted plans for upgraded BART facilities at Diridon Station. VTA never followed through, leading the unhappy Sharks to sue in both Superior and Federal Courts.

SAP Center is not just home to hockey games. It also hosts dozens of concerts and live events every year. The Sharks are eligible to play at SAP Center through 2025 but can potentially extend their contract until 2040.

In addition to parking concerns, Sharks officials say they also worry about street network access.

The 2040 San Jose General Plan predicts that in 20 years, 60% of all trips will still be made by car, according to the team's letter. Google's development plan alone is projected to increase automobile trips to 136,600 a day from 19,200.

But San Jose is planning to reduce future street access in and out of Diridon Station. Traffic on Santa Clara Street in front of SAP Center is proposed to be reduced from four lanes to two lanes and the main routes connecting SAP Center to Highway 280 and Bird Avenue are also expected to be reduced from four lanes to two lanes —

one in each direction. Becher said projects such as BART, Caltrain and high speed rail will add thousands of automobile trips to the Diridon Station area. *(Continued, next page)*



Times Feature

"It all comes down to the city honoring their commitment they made to the Sharks years ago," said Bob Staedler, a principal with Silicon Valley Synergy, a San Jose land-use development firm. "It's time that the city steps up to the table and figures it out."

Staedler said the current traffic management plan for the arena is "one of the most effective arena traffic plans in the country." He said the Sharks' concern over ease of access amid development is a valid one.

"When the Shark Tank lets out, it clears in like 20 minutes," he said. "The city has not been able to find the will to just maintain what's been working for 20 years."

The team said it is also deeply concerned that simultaneous construction from all these projects — which could last 10 to 15 years — will hinder fans' ability to access the arena.

"There does not appear to be a plan that ensures SAP Center patrons can continue to safely and conveniently access the arena, and that our neighbors can maintain their quality of life during this transformational period," the letter said.

Becher cited lack of coordination between Google and DSAP projects as a major roadblock. He said the Sharks are asking the city to refrain from narrowing roads and ensure Google and VTA construction does not happen simultaneously.

In past public meetings, Google has indicated efforts to accommodate some of the Sharks' needs.

Woody Hanson, with San Franciscobased design firm, SITELAB urban studio, which is working on the Google plans, said the campus could include an event plaza capable of hosting Sharks pre-game activities.

Becher said the team has had productive conversations with Google and the tech giant has listened to the team's needs, but ultimately, the power lies in the city's hands.

"The parking obligation is actually the city's obligation, not Google's," Becher said. "Google may help them out. But that would be a Google deal with the city — not with us."

In the letter, the Sharks urged residents to help save SAP Center by providing feedback on the city's Diridon Planning page or speaking out at a community meeting on Dec. 3. The San Jose City Council is holding a study session Nov. 16 to go over the plans.

"We hope that you will share your concerns with your local elected officials and ask them to ensure that city planners address the street capacity issues, parking shortfalls and construction impacts in a manner that does not jeopardize SAP Center," the letter concluded. "Without this support, the arena simply cannot survive."

Contact Carly Wipf at carly@sanjosespotlight.com or follow @CarlyChristine W on Twitter.



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HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

We look forward to seeing you for our first Shred and E-waste event on **June 5th, 2021!**



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