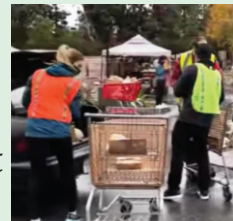


South Bay schools delay reopening, weigh requiring teachers to take vaccine
SEE PAGE 4



Happy New Year
from the staff of the
Evergreen Times!

Vietnamese Real Estate Professionals assn. hosts 'Fight Hunger at Home' event
SEE PAGE 4



JAN. 1 – JAN. 14, 2021 ■ VOL. 38, NO. 1

Evergreen Times

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Three Evergreen Valley High School Teens find a solution to inaccessible tutoring and loss of motivation

'Learn Beyond' provides free virtual sessions for children's enrichment in math and science

By William Bellou
Publisher

Three students from Evergreen Valley High School have always had a passion to aid their community and make it a better place.

As soon as the teens analyzed the ongoing problem of inaccessible education and how distance learning was affecting children's motivation to learn, Aleeza Hurrira, Hien Nguyen, and Amrita Raparti knew they had to find a solution. As a result of their findings, "Learn Beyond" became a reality in July 2020.

The three dedicated teens witnessed first-hand that private tutoring and enrichment was inaccessible to many students due to variables such as cost and location, causing children who are in need of education outside of school potentially not being able to receive it.

The group of teens observed
See LEARN BEYOND, page 3

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Old school bus gets a facelift and emerges as the 'Evergreen School District Ice Cream Bus'



A Child Nutrition Services bus distributes ice cream to the Evergreen School District's 10,000 students.

In October, when the Evergreen School District Special Events Team launched "Ice Cream Wednesdays," the district used a Child Nutrition Services bus to transport and distribute ice cream to the district's 10,000 students in its school communities.

"Ice Cream Wednesdays" are one of many ways that the district is providing fun and uplifting activities during distance learning and the pandemic. Following safety guidelines from the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health, the amazing Child Nutrition Services Team distributes ice cream to students and their families through a drive-through method.

Over the next four weeks, an idea began brewing. "Looking at the bus through the eyes of a child, I asked, 'What if we spruced it up and painted it with fun colors and put pictures of ice cream on it?'" said Dr. Emy Flores, Superintendent of the Evergreen School District. The district's Special Events Team went to design mode, to

paint a 20-year-old school bus pink with light blue trim, and adding ice cream and popsicle decals on its sides.

Evergreen Transportation Manager, David Reyes, and District Mechanic, Fidel Hernandez made sure that design details were a big part of the process in making sure details were accurate and the timeline was followed in completing this fun project.

The final touch of the facelift was painting over the black "Evergreen Elementary School District" letters on the side of the school bus and applying the new name, "Ice Cream Bus" in fun blue lettering. Coming down the street, students and their families will see a big smiley face on the front of the bus as it arrives in their community, and the same smiley face as it leaves.

"Our students have had to endure so many changes in their lives over the past nine months," Dr. Flores said. "But, they're still children, and they still love to have fun in their lives. The Ice Cream Bus is one way that we can bring

fun to them, and smiles to their faces," she continued.

When the Ice Cream Bus resumes its rounds after the state shut

down, smiles will be coming and going throughout the Evergreen neighborhoods, from the children, adults ... and bus, alike.

AND LO, THE STAR



CHRISTMAS STAR – A beautiful photo of the Christmas Star over Evergreen Valley was taken by Evergreen resident Linda Ballard. The year-ending treat known as the "Christmas Star" or "Star of Bethlehem" is actually an especially bright planetary conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn – which was visible in the evening and night sky on Dec. 21. Linda said she took the photo at Valle Vista about 5:45 p.m.

SEE OUR LISTINGS OF EVERGREEN AREA MEETINGS, PLACES OF WORSHIP AND CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS INSIDE THE BACK COVER

Times **Community News**



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Principal **Kristi Frankina** welcomes guests to Tom Matsumoto's Fantasy of Lights.

Matsumoto's Fantasy of Lights a great success

By **Frank Shortt**
Times staff writer

Under the direction of Kristi Frankina, Principal of Matsumoto Elementary School in the Evergreen School District, a drive-through Fantasy of Lights was a great success.

PTA President, Sujatha Ayyadevara, along with MyLinh Trinh and the entire PTA at Matsumoto, assisted Ms. Frankina in carrying out the Fantasy of Lights for the students and families in the community to enjoy. Some readers might remember MyLinh as being in the PTA at Laurelwood Elementary that was closed due to District financial woes.

Mrs. Frankina has spent many hours and worked very hard to help make the event come together. This meant staying late in the evenings and coming in on weekends. She brilliantly found a way for the classrooms and students to collaborate together

while adhering to the Covid-19 safety precautions. Every display was themed and accompanied by a grade level tree. Students of each grade decorated an ornament to be placed on their grade level tree. The trees are up for auction.

All proceeds from the event and the silent tree auction will go back to the school. Students were also able to submit a performance which was displayed in code at the gate. By 12/17, there were already over 350 tickets sold.

Donors for this event included: Freeman Orthodontics, Office of Sylvia Arenas, Silver Creek Academy, Chef P, Farmers Insurance Claudia Chata, Target store, Homes and Beyond Nidia Nuristani.

This special event shows the coordination and cooperation that can be accomplished in spite of the pandemic that is raging in our Country.







INSPIRE EXPLORE CHALLENGE

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<p>First Grade Division</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anthony G. 2. Vishank S. 3. Shanaya G. Hanh D. 	<p>Fifth Grade Division</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alessandra G. 2. Ojas P. 3. Reya S.
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<p>Third Grade Division</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theodore W. 2. Aadya P. 3. Lambros P. Ayaan S. 	<p>Seventh Grade Division</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abigail K. 2. Vibhi R. 3. Anjali M.
<p>Fourth Grade Division</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kavin M. 2. Navya K. 3. Anvitha M. Sahana P. 	<p>Eighth Grade Division</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nicole L. 2. Lavanya S. Ashwini A. 3. Celine T.

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Times **Community News**



Learn Beyond

Continued from page 1

how distance learning due to the pandemic was affecting children's motivation to learn and their mental health. With Covid-19, children were at a greater risk of emotions such as anxiety and stress, causing an impact on their education. Aleeza, Hien, and Amrita sought to find a solution to address these problems.

'Learn Beyond' provides live online tutoring

To address the education needs of students, the team of teens created "Learn Beyond," a free and virtual weekly session which enriches the lives of children in topics such as math and science, as well as providing tutoring and assistance in homework. The goal of the organization is not only to enhance the children's education, but to inspire the love of learning for every one of their students, because they soon realize that learning can be fun.

Every Wednesday, the teens pro-

vide an hour-long virtual session for students in grades 4-6 who participate throughout the community.

Beginning with a "homework session," Aleeza, Hien, and Amrita make sure that the students have no confusions about their work from school by assisting them in any subject matter.

Learn Beyond's next step is to conduct a "math session," where the students cover a multitude of topics such as operations with fractions, rounding, and working with decimals. The virtual session ends with a "science session," where they have covered a variety of interesting topics such as Newton's laws, photosynthesis, and the physics behind the blue sky.

'Learn Beyond' connects in fun ways

Learn Beyond is more than an average, weekly class. With engaging and amusing sessions, students are genuinely able to experience learning through a unique lens.

If you would like to learn more about the group and what they do, please visit Learn Beyond's website: learnbeyond6.wixsite.com/mysite or email: learnbeyond6@gmail.com.

Smooth round rocks found inside store fronts

Someone is throwing them through the glass

By **Kevin Larsen**
Times staff writer

If this mystery is figured out, someone goes to jail and pays for the damage, too.

We have one or more persons who think it is their right to throw round river polished rocks through the windows of store fronts.

Such rocks can be found in front of some homes used for landscaping purposes.

This rock throwing seems to be happening at night, in the dark at shopping centers in the Evergreen area.

More such rocks were thrown into windows recently and the workers let me take a photo of them.

Why this is happening is all unclear. Rather than jump to conclusions and blame others, the talk is that a camera system may now be in place.

Throw more rocks to vandalize store front windows, get caught, and go to jail.



The rock throwing seems to be happening at night, in the dark at shopping centers in the Evergreen area.



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Santa Clara County schools are preparing for students to return to campus but not until COVID-19 case counts decrease. *File photo courtesy of Barbara O'Loughlin.*

South Bay schools delay reopening, weigh requiring teachers to take vaccine

By Lorraine Gabbert

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

San Jose's biggest school district has put its reopening plans on pause over the resurgent coronavirus pandemic.

San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD), which intended to return thousands of students to campus on Jan. 5, informed parents last week via email it will delay that effort indefinitely.

"The pandemic continues to rage around us, dimming the hope of a return to normal life anytime soon," said San Jose Unified School District Superintendent Nancy Albarrán.

The district's move came in response to Santa Clara County returning to the purple — or highest — tier for COVID-19 infection rates. As of Dec. 14, there have been 49,216 reported COVID-19 cases and 529 related deaths in the county.

SJUSD plans to resume its reopening effort when the county returns to the lower orange or yellow coronavirus tiers, Albarrán said in the letter.

See *VACCINE*, page 6

Valley Currents

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

'Fight Hunger at Home' 2020 event held by Vietnamese National Association of Real Estate Professionals

Vietnamese National Association of Real Estate Professionals (VNARP) hosted a "Fight Hunger at Home" 2020 event held at the Kenny Foreman Reaching Out Center on Saturday, Dec. 12.

The goal of the VNARP is to give back to the community this holiday season, especially those who are impacted by the COVID19 pandemic by giving out full boxes of groceries for each family. Groceries were distributed by drive-thru and walk-thru as well.



During the recent coronavirus pandemic, many families are struggling to purchase groceries. The VNARP partnered with the Reaching Out Center this year to raise money and give out groceries to more than 1,200 families in the community, said a VNARP spokesperson. "We want to give special thanks to our sponsors, partners, and people like you, who

generously and thoughtfully give their time and resources to ensure that no family goes hungry in the South Bay.

Extra measures were enacted to ensure the safety of the VNARP staff, volunteers, and the handling of groceries. Some of those measures include wearing masks, gloves, and social distancing.

First Tech Challenge Team Terrabats journey through STEM

Evergreen neighborhood students from different schools and grades won the most prestigious Inspire award in the FTC program, part of FIRST's robotics competitions, remote qualifier hosted by Google. More information about FIRST programs can be found at www.firstinspires.org.

Team Terrabats was formed to bring together kids of all ages who are eager to seek out knowledge and thrive in a stem environment. Team Terrabats, which was founded in 2017, actively promotes STEM in their local community irrespective of socio-economic status as a self-motivated, self-funded group of students. The team is proud to be able to provide out of box solutions for team management during the current pandemic while still keeping the passion for the latest robotic technology alive by inspiring others to join hands in their journey. One parent shared with the team coach "This team is an oasis in the current times and it has allowed my son to feel he is part of something valuable. I am so proud of him."

Although the team was second in their Robot score, reaching the highest possible score for regionals remains as their primary goal. The team has won various awards in past – Design, Control, Motivate, Connect, finalist, and second Inspire, but this year due to team resilience and passion, they won their first Inspire Award. Inspire Award is awarded to the



Team Terrabats was formed to bring together kids of all ages who are eager to seek out knowledge and thrive in a stem environment.

team who embrace all aspects of FTC challenge and inspiration to other teams, acting with Gracious Professionalism™ both on and off the playing field. In April 2021, Terrabats is working hard to score as high as possible in the robot game and excel in all aspects of FTC in the NorCal Regionals and win a spot to the

world event.

The team's adult coaches Vishakha Mujoo and Rajani Sankarappan have been instrumental in guiding the team through the years and have been a support system the team's youth require.

See *TERRABATS*, next page

EvergreenTimes

Times Media, Inc. / (408) 494-7000

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Times **Community News**

Terrabats

Continued from previous page

Terrabats has grown and evolved and the team's growth and dedication has been able to overcome many hurdles with resilience. The team works with local libraries, Stem for Kids, YMCA, and other local organizations to run ongoing stem based classes. The team prides itself in their motto "3T's, Inspire, Influence, and Impact."

The team captains Pratik Lokesh and Shuhul Mujoo, 4-year veterans, are strong pillars who have the years of experience and have a never-ending thirst to spread knowledge and motivate others to learn. They are the engine that keeps the team running and motivated in the current pandemic.

The captains together with the team have learned many things over the course of four years.

Computer Aided Design is inspiring

"Through hard work, anything is possible and all of us believe Terrabats will succeed," Lokesh said. "My FTC journey has taught me many things, engineering, teamwork, and most importantly patience. Early on I would create a design only for it to be rendered completely useless by a simple flaw and I would give up. This inspired me to self-learn CAD and now I design and prototype for hours on end with nothing in sight but our goal. FTC isn't just a side hobby; it's a passion that drives me to learn valuable life skills."

"Programming was always an interest, nothing more. Just something I wanted to pursue but never had the motivation or reason to," Mujoo said. "Ever since I joined FTC the possibilities of programming skyrocketed for me. Every year's new challenge has given the opportunity to create smarter and efficient robots with new methods implemented."

Aahan P, Akhil A, Ananya R, Ananya M, Gayatri J, and Nithin L, are members who have joined and each team member actively contributes in various aspects of FTC which includes Design, Programming, Outreach, Fundraising, and Documentation. Every year TerraBats begins recruiting in April and training starts for interested team members before the year's challenge is released. New recruits included; Anjali R, Arnav P, Dhruva C, Harnoor S, Snehil V, and Vasudha K, who actively participated in the team's events and training in all aspects of FTC.

To spread, motivation, and inspire the team, they continuously participate and organize events and classes. Groups including the Bay Area Science festival, Maker's fair, local schools, and Terrabats organized prominent events for the team to participate in each year; but this year due to Covid-19, organizing the events has been a challenge. Hence, the team organized many online events to keep spirits high and the light of knowledge burning, such as Spookathon and Stem Lab.

Events such as our STEM Lab have allowed students to show their creativity and learn something new. Event's lead Ananya said, "This year organizing events was harder than ever, to engage kids virtually is a known difficulty many people face. But through activities and more, I know for sure we can inspire and influence as we did before!"

Mentoring other First teams is another way the team influences young minds. Over the course they have mentored and helped form various FLL Jr, FLL, and FTC teams. EN Lead Gayatri says, "Working with young kids has been an enlightening experience."

The team will thrive to spread knowledge in their community and will continue to mentor many more Jr FLL, FLL, and FTC teams.

If you are interested in learning more about Terrabats and how you can get mentored, send an email to: terrabats14525@gmail.com.

Free Little Library established by family living at 1750 Yerba Buena Rd.

A Free Little Library has been established in the front yard located at 1750 Yerba Buena Rd. This library is a place for the community to grab a book they may want to read, donate a book they have already read, or even just pick up a book to share with a friend.



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Times **Community News**

EVC partners with student-led nonprofit to deliver needed food and hygiene kits to students

Evergreen Valley College (EVC) hosted its final drive-thru food distribution of 2020 on Dec. 18.

Basic needs and food insecurity has been a critical need for EVC students. Prior to the pandemic, EVC, in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank, New Seasons Market, and Fresh & Natural, had distributed nearly 20,000 pounds of food to EVC students from September 2019-March 2020 through its permanent food pantry on campus.

When COVID-19 hit and the shelter in place began, EVC had to be creative and pivot while still supporting the students in need, especially as the need increased. So, EVC began delivering bi-monthly drive-thru food distributions where students stay in their cars and volunteers place the food into their trunk. Since June of 2020, EVC has served over 10,000 individuals and distributed over 125,000 pounds of food.

What made the final distribution of 2020



EVC student and Hope Hearted Co-founder, **Quynh Nguyen** with EVC President **Tammeil Gilkerson**

unique is that EVC partnered with a nonprofit, co-created by an EVC student, to deliver hygiene kits in addition to food.

Bay Area has third largest population of homeless in U.S.A

Quynh Nguyen was born and raised in San José and is in her 2nd year at EVC. Quynh and three friends, who she met volunteering at O'Connor Hospital, established a 501c3 nonprofit called Hope Hearted to address the issue of those who are unhoused in San José/Bay Area, which has the third largest population of homelessness in

the United States.

They decided to establish a 501c3 nonprofit called Hope Hearted and formed partnerships with local shelters, built a team of 150 volunteers, started reaching out for donations of money and supplies, and began putting together care packages filled with soaps, deodorants, masks, hand sanitizers, shampoos, and more. Hope Hearted has now distributed over 2,500 care packages, including about 400 that were distributed to EVC students, along with the food and groceries...

"It's been an eye-opening experience packaging and distributing the kits to the unhoused and low income experience. Being able to help my community college, however, probably means the most to me," Quynh said. "It's the community closest to me that I truly want to make an impact on

Guel of Evergreen Valley name to Fall 2020 Dean's List at Iowa Wesleyan University

Philip Guel of Evergreen Valley has been named to the Fall 2020 Dean's List at Iowa Wesleyan University.

Students exemplifying academic excellence represent the United States and countries abroad. Criteria to be a part of IW's Dean's List include degree-seeking students taking 12 or more hours per semester with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

Guel is majoring in Exercise Science and Wellness. He is a graduate of Evergreen Valley High School.

As Southeast Iowa's regional comprehensive university, Iowa Wesleyan University is a transformational learning community whose passion is to educate, empower and inspire students to lead meaningful lives and careers.



and give back to. We are all students at Evergreen Valley College despite our racial, social, and economic background, and I want to be able to provide and help my peers any way possible amidst these chaotic times."

For more info on food distributions at EVC, visit: <http://bit.ly/evcfoodinfo>

For more info on Hope Hearted, visit <https://www.hopeheartedvolunteers.org>

Vaccine

Continued from page 1

The district polled parents in November about whether they wanted their children to attend in-person learning when it was expected to resume in January. The district plans to give parents who chose to send their children back to school four weeks notice before such instruction resumes, Albarrán said.

The state Legislature is requiring schools to offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, SJUSD spokeswoman Jennifer Maddox said. Despite the delay, the district is preparing classrooms for students to return, collecting personal protective equipment for teachers and other personnel, separating students' desks to allow for social distancing and ordering acrylic barriers that will allow teachers to move about their classrooms.

"We are still planning and preparing for a Jan. 5 start date even though we know that's not going to happen, solely because we want to be ready," Maddox said.

SJUSD's delay of in-person learning is one of several among local school districts.

East Side Union High School District (ES-UHSD) put its own reopening plans on pause last month. ESUHS previously brought some students back to campus and had planned to have 500 students at each of its campuses starting Jan. 15.

But the district announced Nov. 16 it would put that plan on hold until the county gets back into at least the red tier for coronavirus infections.

Campbell Union School District similarly has delayed its reopening plans.

Across the district's 10 elementary and two middle schools, only about 300 students total are attending classes in-person, Marla Sanchez, a district spokeswoman, said. The district had been hoping to move to the next stage of reopening — a hybrid schedule with students on campus for part of the day and learning remotely for the other part — but put that on pause when the county went into the purple tier.

It won't resume its reopening effort until the county has dropped to the red tier and stayed there for two weeks, Sanchez said. At this point, the district won't resume its reopening effort until Jan. 19 at the earliest, she said.

"Everything is in place to go into the next phase," she said. "But things with this virus keep changing."

To speed the return of in-person learning, school district representatives as well as other education officials and advocates are urging health officials to make it a priority to administer coronavirus vaccines to teachers and school staff.

Santa Clara County will initially receive
See VACCINE, page 13



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Times Feature

Op Ed: Sixplexes coming to your neighborhood block

By Pierluigi Oliverio
Special to the Times

The San Jose General Plan 2040 (GP2040) is the blueprint of how San Jose will grow in the future.

One of the ambitious goals of GP2040 is to achieve financial solvency for the city by balancing job growth with housing growth.

For decades, San Jose has done the heavy lifting by building the majority of housing for the entire region, while neighboring cities enjoyed the benefits of this imbalance, and offered little in return. This created a significant inequity between San Jose and other cities in terms of tax dollars per resident, and produced a reality where San Jose struggles to provide basic city services while neighboring cities are able to provide superior services for their residents.

The current general plan has a smart growth strategy of locating new infill housing adjacent to transit and along major boulevards. San Jose consistently approves thousands of housing units, both market rate and low income, designated for these strategic parcels. The other goal of the balanced equation, job creation, necessitates we reserve commercial and industrial parcels for future development, so San Jose has a sufficient tax base without having to constantly raise taxes every two years (or in the case of 2020, twice in the same year).

While GP2040 allows for higher density development in strategic locations, it also pledges to protect single-family home neighborhoods. When I served on the GP2040 task force for five years, I advocated for protecting established neighborhoods so higher density housing would be created where it most made sense, namely, along densely populated transit corridors. This policy was supported by the former planning director Joe Horwedel.

The current GP2040 taskforce has decided to renege on this pledge, however, and voted on August 20 to start the process of converting single-family houses into fourplexes “by right,” meaning, no community meetings or hearings would be required, and a house could simply be demolished and a fourplex could be constructed in its place. This proposal would be citywide and encompass all San Jose neighborhoods. Taken a step further, allowing a four unit complex to replace a single-family home could have an even broader impact on neighborhoods, as the same property may also have two ADU’s on site, creating six units instead of one.

Access to these units will be car dependent, since the bus system will never reach far-flung cul-de-sacs. State law does not allow cities to limit the number of cars per dwelling, thus automobiles associated with these six units would be competing for available street parking. Density where it was not planned creates chaos and conflict. Once implemented, how would we fix it? Answer: the impact would be irreversible.

When a family saved up to buy a single-family home, there was a promise made by the city in the zoning that their block

would remain intact, even if San Jose continued to grow around them. These buyers did their due diligence, prior to purchase, and should not be forced to swallow such a drastic change to their neighborhood. This policy would result in a family being outbid on a house by a profit-motivated buyer who would stand to make significantly more money with 4 or 6 units than with a single-family house.

Instead of flipping the bird to approximately 180,000 San Jose homeowners, we

should stick with the existing GP2040 which will produce housing units at a lower per unit cost and not denigrate the unique character of single-family home neighborhoods. If proponents are confident that this is truly beneficial for a majority of city residents, then the issue should appear on a future ballot for a city-wide vote.

Pierluigi Oliverio is member of the San Jose Planning Commission and a former councilman in District 6.

“For decades, San Jose has done the heavy lifting by building the majority of housing for the entire region, while neighboring cities enjoyed the benefits of this imbalance, and offered little in return.”



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COMPASS

Op Ed: Small businesses need better support during COVID-19 crisis

An insightful look at a small business owner's experience

By Shannon Adams

Special to the Times

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted to explore a \$100 million financial assistance package to help small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The County Administration is debating eligibility criteria and parameters of the financial assistance package. At this time, I would like to offer some insight into why this process is so important for our local businesses and why it is of the utmost importance that the County be thoughtful

in how it determines eligibility. Here is the story of my own small business:

1. Urban Body San Jose received assistance from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which made us ineligible for many other grants. We received it early on when requirements included the funding be spent in 8 weeks, a line item which was later changed to 24 weeks. In the end, this was major part of the reason the PPP

“Due to federal restrictions, the PPP money only covered payroll for 8 weeks, an action that did nothing to contribute to keeping our business afloat.”

made to the PPP, it was too late for those of us who applied early and now we are left with no assistance. Receiving PPP should not disqualify businesses.

did not help our business at all. Due to federal restrictions, the money only covered payroll for 8 weeks, an action that did nothing to contribute to keeping our business afloat. By the time mistakes were realized and significant changes were

2. We were also not eligible for specific San Jose grants because of our personal household income. While myself and my business partner have been working overtime to stay afloat, due to PPP restrictions, we were only able to pay our employees and as owners, were not able to pay ourselves. In fact, neither of us have received any compensation since March. Because the income of our spouses (NOT us) was more than \$75K annually, our small business is not eligible for financial help locally, simply because we cannot prove what monthly expenses are personal. Especially in Silicon Valley, where cost of living is obscene, this doesn't even consider that most households need a dual income to survive. We are basically asking small business owners to use personal money to prop up their businesses. But how can we do that when we aren't making any money? As a small business with many employees, in the middle of the Bay Area, having a personal income over \$75K doesn't mean we can support an entire business. It's ridiculous and discouraging and puts us at risk of closing permanently. Personal income should not determine eligibility.

3. Our landlord refuses to work with us. Is there any way to create incentives or financial assistance to motivate landlords to help tenants? The only offer from our landlord was rent deferment, which would put us thousands and thousands of dollars in debt. How is that helping? How can a small business pay that back and make up for what they have lost and figure out rent? Small businesses cannot afford to take on debt right now. Period. And for many of us, our personal assets, our homes, are on the line if we can't pay. It is completely unacceptable in the middle of a pandemic. Right now, small business owners already worry about just being able to put food on their table. So, it has come to this. Since we cannot afford to hire an attorney and our landlord is not responding to us after multiple attempts, we are at a standstill. We have tried to negotiate out of the lease. We have asked to make the lease available for sublet. I have done everything I can to figure out a way for us to stay in business and it feels impossible. We have a \$1200 rent increase starting January 1. Yes, \$1200. And I have no idea how we are going to come up with those dollars. Landlords should not be allowed to take advantage of small businesses during the pandemic.

Something needs to change. Our situation is not unique. Small businesses need help. More information needs to be considered when discussing eligibility for these grants. We all know winter will be tough on small businesses and that COVID-19 isn't going away. I'm not sure who decided on eligibility previously, but they did the city and small businesses a true disservice and that is one of the reasons why so many of us are going out of business. We hear all the talk about supporting small businesses, but now it's time for the County to do more than talk the talk.

Shannon Adams is founder and co-owner of Urban Body San Jose.

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Times Feature

Op Ed: Misinformation and fake news: Will it ever end?

By Aroshi Ghosh
Special to the Times

On November 7th, the results for the 2020 Presidential election were announced by most major news outlets, including AP, Fox, CNN, and most people seemed to breathe a sigh of relief because the uncertainty seemed to be over.

Factitious lawn signs were tucked back into the garages and our community seemed to have returned to its usual peaceful state. However, a surge of fake news began appearing on social communication channels like WhatsApp, Facebook, Reddit, YouTube, which projected that the elections had been stolen, without providing any proof or evidence. This misinformation took a more sinister overtone when some alternative media outlets politicalized mask-wearing and denied its efficacy against COVID-19 by equating the pandemic to the flu. Even a neighborhood community app is inadvertently helping to spread misinformation about the pandemic and other conspiracy theories.

People who were disappointed with the election results because their candidate had been unsuccessful jumped on the bandwagon and began forwarding character assassinations to friends and family in a bid to

discredit the democratic process and justify the American response to the pandemic deaths.

Fake news and free speech

While free speech is the founding principle of a thriving civic life and democracy, we must recognize that misinformation or fake news, especially when instigated through technology, does not fall into the same category. In fact, the notion of free speech, which is protected by the First Amendment, is often misused to justify the spread of these alternate realities by vague unconfirmed media clips or partisan outlets.

Unfortunately, the mediums used to disseminate fake information to gullible people and the craftiness of its presentation obliterates the saner voices and pits neighbors against each other. The burden of sifting the grain from the chaff of misinformation falls to the general public. In most cases, people do not have the technical knowledge to identify how these fake news outlets operate and how they leverage the emotions of ordinary citizens to promote their agenda.

As citizens, it is our duty to educate ourselves on the nuances of ideology and issues and not let misinformation agitate us

or muddy the waters. While one may argue that traditional media should not be the gatekeeper of news, alternative media outlets that do not have a standard to uphold are more often guilty of sensationalizing news headlines in their quest for eyeballs on questionable content.

How does fake news operate?

When fake news is repeated often, it appears to be the truth. We lose all common sense, but we may be just the victims of propaganda and technology. Fake text generators like “synthetic text” or read fakes that use Artificial Intelligence algorithms are used to create emotionally charged messages voicing seemingly logical concerns and are unleashed on an unsuspecting audience. Such software targets people of specific beliefs based on their online presence and social media profiles. Additionally, media platforms now have the ability to quickly scale and reach a large audience with the click of a button.

During a recent testimony provided at a House Intelligence Committee hearing, Jake Clark, policy director of OpenAI, said that fake media generated using artificial intelligence like GPT-3 language modeling “has the potential to impersonate people who have created a lot of text online and may easily create troll-grade propaganda for social networks.” Unlike Google auto-complete that uses predictive text for messag-



ing and offers one-word suggestions to complete sentences, GPT-3 technology can generate entire paragraphs in a certain style.

While the intended purpose of the technology is to enable better interaction between computers and human beings, it may be easily leveraged for more nefarious purposes and generate artifacts that may include fake Reddit threads, short stories, poems, restaurant reviews, and so on. Deep fake images and videos that are generated using machine learning have also been used for propaganda, making people appear to say and do things that they never did in reality.

These technologies usually trigger people by generating content on controversial topics like election fraud or immigration. So, while technology may be responsible for creating and spreading misinformation, it is not only a technological problem because human beings are equally active in

See FAKE NEWS, page 13

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Times **Feature**

TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK

Data Privacy

By **Shubhi Asthana**
Special to the Times

Have you ever stumbled into a conversation where everyone is speaking around this “techie” word – and even after you’ve broken in, it is difficult to understand the unfamiliar jargon and acronyms? Well, there’s no need to sweat it. Let us teach you the meaning of some commonly used tech words:

Data Privacy

Facebook has been in the news for the past few years for sharing their user’s personal data and analytics with a third-party app. Previously, the social media platform was fined by Spain for using user’s personal

data for advertising purposes. There have been huge outcries on data privacy causing new privacy standards to be created for protection of data.

Data privacy, also called information privacy, is the aspect of IT that deals with the ability an organization or individual has to determine what data in a computer system can be shared with third parties. Everywhere we go, whether it’s our office, doctor’s clinic, or online shopping, we leave a trail of personal data on computer systems all over. This data, if it gets into the wrong hands, can be potentially devastating for us.

Financial data privacy is of utmost importance today. Data of an individual’s financial transaction, including the amount of assets, position held in stocks or funds, outstanding debts, and purchases are very sensitive. If any hacker or criminal gains access to this information including a person’s accounts

or credit card details, the person could become the victim of fraud or identity theft. Also, data on where a person visits often, whom he/she is contacted with, his/her daily activities and habits can be used to target individuals for customized marketing of products by corporations. Location data is also one of the most sensitive data collected by numerous apps on our phone. This gives rise to problems related to user privacy as mobility can be tracked by persons unknown to the user.

User data can be used in politics by swaying the political views of a voter, by presenting information which may be biased. In the medical field, people may not wish to reveal their medical records to others. This may be because they have concern that it might affect their insurance coverages or employment. Or, it may be because they would not wish for others to

know any medical or psychological conditions or treatments that would bring embarrassment upon themselves.

At the end of the day, I get it. You’re not a techie. You are not a data security professional. You just want to connect to the internet, search for information on Google, shop on Amazon, bank electronically, and post some pictures on Instagram. That would have been fair. Unfortunately, in today’s world, it will require a consistent effort from you all year to keep privacy and data protection on your radar and stay vigilant.

About the Author

Do you enjoy reading this column? Send in your comments or feedback to the author at shub.saxen@gmail.com. Shubhi Asthana works as a Research Senior Software Engineer at the IBM Almaden Research Center, San Jose.



Stopping time

GREAT WHITE EGRET IN FLIGHT – Here is a six image sequence showing a great white egret taking off and flying across the golf course recently at the Villages Golf and Country Club in Evergreen Valley. Note how the wings and body are deployed in different ways. *Photos by Lou Alexander*



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Times **Feature****Fake news***Continued from page 11*

circulating misinformation within their social groups.

How does fake news harm us?

While fake news may not be successful in changing the minds, hearts, and fundamental beliefs of people they do have the potential of causing disharmony and violence. Misinformation and fake news is not only the “next global political threat”, but it also expands to other areas like health, finance, culture, history, and lifestyle issues.

Consider these examples, say if people already fatigued by the limitations imposed by the pandemic disregard the need for consistent precautions, or if an individual decides to invest his life savings based on fake financial forecasts and trends, or if frustration fuels the belief that certain ethnic communities are responsible for the spread of the virus and start to target them for hate crimes. In all these cases, fake news is causing indirect harm and it is up to us to discourage the spread of misinformation by not only educating ourselves but possibly use technology to counter fake news and misinformation.

Fake news not only impacts people who are elderly, but also young people who are perhaps more aware of how digital technology operates. While older people may be more prone to share and circulate fake news unknowingly, ultimately all people are vulnerable to fake news irrespective of age because fake news is geared to target the individual's emotions.

How do we counter fake news?

We can leverage technology to spot fake news. Many social media companies like Facebook and Twitter are combating misinformation through artificial intelligence. Facebook has used Snopes and Google's technology Jigsaw are examples of technology-driven solutions that can detect toxic language. However, though machine learning-driven fact-checkers can be used to identify fake stories and combat chatbots, corporations are only motivated to keep their specific platforms clear of fake information to avoid legal liability. Ultimately, it requires numerous people across the world to effectively verify the multiple sources and the contexts from which information is generated. No single entity can take the responsibility to clean up the plethora of misinformation that is available online.

Vaccine*Continued from page 6*

some 17,550 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and about 39,300 doses of the Moderna vaccine, all of which are reserved for health care workers.

The Pfizer doses started arriving Dec. 15 while the Moderna ones are slated to arrive by Dec. 25, public health officials said. But given that both vaccines require two doses, those allotments won't be nearly enough to cover the approximately 100,000 health care workers in the county, much less teachers or anyone else.

School workers shouldn't get the vaccines before health care workers but they should be considered a priority, Maddox said.

“If we want the schools to be open as a community, we have to look at making sure the people who work in school facilities have access to the vaccine,” she said.

Teachers and staff should be included within the first three waves of COVID-19 vaccinations, ESUHSU Superintendent Chris Funk said.

“That's the only way to have confidence in reopening our schools,” he said. “And without reopening our schools fully, our economy won't come back.”

Funk hopes the district will be able to offer additional in-person instruction for the last six weeks of school as well as summer and fall.

“That's all contingent on educators ... from teachers to counselors to custodians getting the vaccine,” Funk said.

Such calls are being echoed around the state and nation.

With many students struggling with distance learning at risk of falling behind, the California Teachers Association is urging Gov. Gavin Newsom to prioritize educators for the vaccine.

Likewise, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten asked federal review panels to include teachers and staff in a top tier of those due to receive vaccinations.

Maddox said it's in the best interest of SJUSD students to return to in-person learning as soon as it's safe to do so.

“We really hope that everyone in the community continues to do everything they can: wear face coverings, keep socially distanced, avoid gatherings,” Maddox said. “We would certainly like to bring the kids back. We know a lot of families are really wanting to have the kids back. The sooner we can slow the spread again ... the sooner we'll be able to do that.”

Drug Takeback Program expanded

Disposing of old medicine properly has benefits for public health and the environment.

Both accidental and recreational illegal uses are proven to increase when old or unwanted medicines are kept around the house.

When throwing medicine away in the garbage, it can land in the wrong hands and flushing it risks polluting our water systems.

Traces of pharmaceuticals have been found in streams

Advanced treatment technology used at wastewater treatment plants still cannot remove these medicines from the water, so they can pass through the treatment plant and into our waterways. Traces of pharmaceuticals have been found in streams and tap water across the county.

So what is the best way to get rid of unwanted medications? That's easy: properly dispose of it at any of more than 300 designated disposal locations across California.

There are many new safe take-back locations for California residents. Here in Santa Clara County, the Med-Project has expanded for the disposal of unused or unwanted medication to more than 100 sites across the county!

Here's how it works:

- Remove pills from bottle or other container.
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South Bay Vietnamese Americans wrestle with COVID-19, lack of information

By Sonya Herrera

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

On a clear December day, the glowing sun hit a scant array of faces walking toward the Grand Century Mall in San Jose.

In a plaza once teeming with visitors, particularly Vietnamese Americans, there were mostly shop owners and workers tending to business: distributing supplies, cleaning facilities and fulfilling to-go orders for loyal customers.

San Jose alone is home to more than 100,000 Vietnamese American residents as of 2010 and has the largest population of Vietnamese Americans of any city outside of Vietnam. Santa Clara County as a whole has roughly 140,000 residents of Vietnamese ancestry. Yet, little is known about how COVID-19 has affected the Vietnamese American community in Santa Clara County.

The county has not published specific information about the community. Its data portal, which provides information on coronavirus case and death rates for different racial groups, does not include a breakdown of different Asian American subgroups, a category that includes Chinese Americans, Indian Americans and Filipino Americans.

Following public pressure at the Board of

Supervisors Dec. 8 meeting, county officials are expected to provide that breakdown to supervisors.

Huy Tran, a board member at the San Jose-based community group Vietnamese American Roundtable, said the lack of publicly available data makes it difficult for his community to understand the virus' impact.

"We're talking about a very diverse county," Tran said. "The experience of Southeast Asian refugees is very different from the experience of very recent South Asian immigrants."

Tran said the lack of official information has allowed misinformation to thrive. He recalled a story featured on local TV news of an elderly Vietnamese couple in San Jose who survived the virus. The reporters asked what health precautions they took, and the couple said they simply gargled salt water — a practice that has been debunked as a protective measure against COVID-19.

"I have family in Omaha that heard about what happened in San Jose, and they think 'Oh, it's easy,'" Tran said. "This information spreads and it sticks."

The local Vietnamese American community has some unique characteristics that may make it particularly susceptible to the virus. According to a county report from



Linh Nguyen, owner of Paloma Cafe in the Grand Century Mall in San Jose, stands inside his empty restaurant. Photo by Sonya Herrera

last year, "more Vietnamese American adults have been diagnosed with diabetes than all Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Caucasians in the county as a whole."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified both type I and type II diabetes as conditions that increase the risk of severe symptoms from coronavirus.

Linda Do, owner of the Blossom Nail Spa in San Jose, said Vietnamese women have been hit particularly hard by the county shutdown order. Many of them were employed in businesses that are heavily restricted by the order, such as nail and hair salons. On top of this, they now have to oversee their children's education while grappling with an unfamiliar language and new technology.

"We have no financial help; no one's helping us," Do said. "They won't allow us to go

to work to provide for our families... I have 50 employees that I feel responsible for."

Linh Nguyen, owner of Paloma Cafe, agrees that the change in protocol has been frustrating. Inside the popular restaurant is a cluster of unused space heaters and folding chairs laying in a darkened corner of the empty space.

Hoang Truong, who was born and raised in San Jose, said he feels fortunate to have retained his full-time job, which allows him to work from home while supporting his wife and one-year-old baby. Many people in his community, once employed as cashiers or waiters in restaurants, have lost their jobs.

"There's a lot of financial hardship," Truong said. "Life is more expensive now."

Truong said seniors have been hit particularly hard. Elderly people used to be able

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Times Feature



From left: High school students **Nathan Le**, **Andrew Le** and **Jonathan Nguyen** stand outside Grand Century Mall in San Jose. Nathan Le said he works a part-time job to help support his family while both his parents are unemployed. *Photo by Sonya Herrera*

to go to community centers for social activities, but now those centers are closed.

“It’s really impacted their mental health,” Truong said. “They feel bored, they feel lonely, they can’t talk to anyone else.”

He said the Vietnamese American community appears to be evenly split between people who think businesses should reopen and those who think they should remain closed for now.

“For the young people, of course, they really want to open — they need to go to

work, they need to provide for their families,” Truong said. “When I talk with seniors in a lot of my community, most of them say they still are scared of COVID-19.”

Dr. Daljeet Rai, a family physician at O’Connor Hospital in San Jose, said based on his observations and public data, Latinos have been the most affected by the virus. However, Vietnamese Americans and Filipino Americans appear to have been the hardest-hit among Asian Americans although hard data is not available.

“It seems like Vietnamese and Indian people are taking more precautions,” Rai said. “It’s been a struggle for us and health care providers. I’m sure it’s a bigger struggle for epidemiologists trying to get these data to us.”

Rai said members of ethnic groups, particularly Mexican Americans and Vietnamese Americans, have to reconcile the reality of the virus with the traditions in their respective cultures.

“Not a lot of Western people deal with extended families,” Rai said. “It’s really hard for family members to tell each other ‘Don’t come.’ You have to be hospitable.”

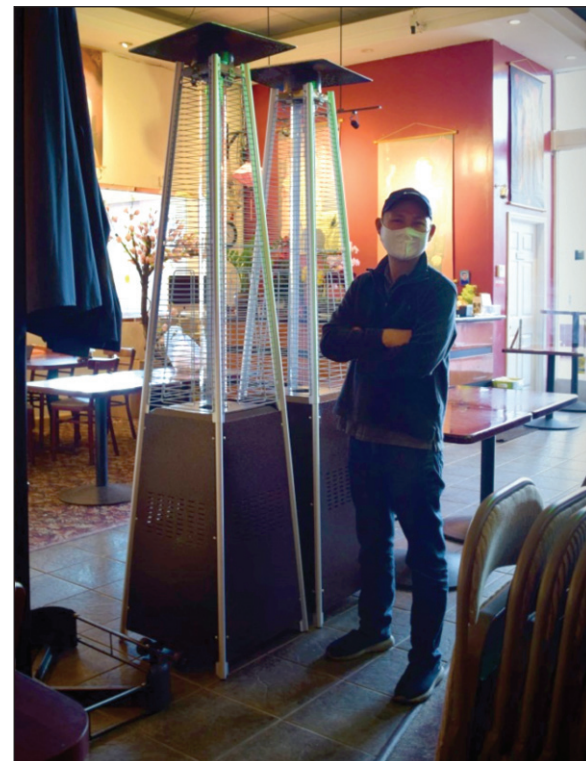
The physician added many people in these ethnic groups need to work essential jobs to provide for their families, which increases their exposure to the virus.

“They’re forced to go to work when other people are not forced to work,” Rai said. “They have to pay their bills, and a lot of times they don’t understand the system well enough to see what services are available.”

Nguyen of Paloma Cafe said the county’s health restrictions require him to run at 80% of his labor capacity, due to the restaurant’s drastically reduced income.

Nguyen makes up for the missing labor by asking his wife and two adult daughters to help him when they can. However, Nguyen said he supports the county health order.

“I myself put my health above everything,” Nguyen said. “It was the right decision to shut down.”



Linh Nguyen stands beside his restaurant’s space heaters, which he is unable to use following the county’s latest health order. *Photo by Sonya Herrera*

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Supervisor Lee presents medals to county departments, agencies and partners for outstanding service

Agencies continue to play critical role during pandemic

Raising the hard work and sacrifices of County employees and their partners in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors Otto Lee presented them with Service Medal Awards at a virtual ceremony on Monday, December 14.

County implemented containment strategies that combated the spread

Facing unprecedented challenge during rapidly evolving circumstances, the County acted quickly to develop and implement containment strategies to combat the

spread of the deadly virus.

“This year has challenged us in so many ways, but it has also strengthened our resilience, resourcefulness, and faith in one another. And that is reflected by the hard work of members of our County family and partners in the community who have worked tirelessly during the pandemic,” said Supervisor Lee. “Our resolve and commitment to represent and serve County residents, including our most vulnerable, has never wavered. No matter what 2021 may bring, I know we will be able to weather it together.”

Supervisor Lee’s awards were part of a Board of Supervisors Ceremony called by

Board President Cindy Chavez to present the President’s Medals for Exemplary Service and Supervisors’ Medal for Outstanding Service during the pandemic.

Supervisor Lee commended and presented Service Medal Awards to:

• **The Emergency Operations Center Team:** Administratively organized by the County’s Office of Emergency Management, and led by Director Dana Reed and Deputy Director David Flamm, the EOC Team has played a critical role in communicating and coordinating accurate information and resources to local cities, school districts, fellow hospital districts and systems, and the community at-large while also correspon-

ding with Federal and State Officials and Agencies.

• **The COVID-19 Testing and Public Health Department Operations Center Teams:** Led by cur Public Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody and former County Public Health Officer Dr. Marty Fensterseib, Dr. Jennifer Tong, and Chrissy Cheung, the COVID-19 Testing Team and Public Health Department Operations Center Staff have administered over 400,000 tests since January 2020 averaging 4,000 tests daily. More than 48,000 residents have tested positive for the virus while more than 500 have lost their lives due to related health complications. The testing efforts have helped identify and contain the spread of the virus.

• **Health Order Guidance and Interpretation Team:** Led by Chief Assistant County Counsel Greta Hansen and Assistant County Counsel Tony LoPresti, the Health Order Guidance and Interpretation Team has been instrumental in providing timely and accurate information to the County and members of the public as new health orders are issued by the State or needs emerge in the local community

• **County Counsel Health Order Enforcement and Litigation Team:** Also led by Chief Assistant County Counsel Greta Hansen and Assistant County Counsel Tony LoPresti, the County Counsel Health Order Enforcement and Litigation Team has played a key role in ensuring members of the public, businesses and other entities are in compliance with all relevant public health orders.

• **Community Partners:** Critical to the County’s efforts and impact in the community has been the partnerships and collaborations established with community-based organizations who have gained the trust and confidence of residents they serve. Many of these nonprofits have been on the frontlines providing financial relief, food, medical and mental health assistance and services to those affected by the pandemic. Community partners recognized included:

- Friends of Hue Foundation
- Nhat Tam Charities
- Asian American Center of Santa Clara County
- VOVINAM Viet Vo Dao San Jose
- Asian American Nonprofit Services
- Viet Tu Te Charities
- Santa Clara Community Coalition
- Council on American-Islamic Relations of the San Francisco Bay Area
- Bloom Catering
- Asian Americans for Community Involvement
- The COVID-19 Coalition
- Association of Indo-Americans
- Asian Americans for Better Community
- Voice for Vietnamese Americans Association
- The Milpitas Food Pantry
- Sunnyvale Community Services

Santa Clara County Supervisor Otto Lee represents District 3 including Milpitas, parts of Sunnyvale and San Jose. To contact Supervisor Lee please send an email to Otto.Lee@bos.sccgov.org or call 408-299-5030.

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Times Feature

Santa Clara County superintendents demonstrate amazing leadership with a steady hand

By Chris Funk

Special to the Times

How do you define leadership?

Plug the word into Google and a plethora of leadership quotes pop up.

One that resonates with me is by Julian Weissglass: "Leadership means taking responsibility for what matters to you." The "you" is really an "us," representing the students, staff, families and communities that make up East Side.

For the past eight months, the 32 superintendents in Santa Clara County have demonstrated amazing leadership with a steady hand during these unprecedented times as we face a pandemic. Leading when all eyes are on each of your decisions, such as during COVID-19, is not only stressful, but downright unimaginable. This is due to the lack of State and National leadership and support. Without clear and specific recommendations, protocols and financial support from the State level the challenge to keep students and staff safe is ominous.

The national average for time in a Superintendent position is five to six years. In California it is only three to four years. Fortunately, in Santa Clara County more than half of the Superintendents have been in their position for five or more years. Kudos to those who inherited this pandemic in their first or second year on the job. I believe that the length in leadership and the collegial nature of our group has led to a collaborative approach in facing this pandemic.

The decision to temporarily close our schools (due to pandemic) on March 16, 2020, was a collaborative decision. We hoped it was going to be a short time. None of us thought we would lose the last two and a half months of the 2019-2020 school year. We all planned to open school in the fall in some sort of fashion. Then COVID-19 became a moving target and the conditions for opening schools seemed to be even a faster moving target. This situation was unprecedented in our collective years of leadership in education.

We all understand the importance of having our schools open. There is no question that the teaching and learning that takes place in person and all of the supports that are built into the school day cannot be duplicated with an online version of school. The structure of schools is just too complex.

We also understand the importance of having a secure place for students to go and get nutritious meals, mental health support, and participate in extra-curricular activities. Opening schools is directly tied to the ability of many families to return to work. The reality is that the economy will not fully reopen until schools are back open for full-time, in-person instruction.

A major challenge for superintendents is the ease of public critics being a "Monday Morning Quarterback" or a "backseat driver" in their assessment of our decisions of how best to protect students and staff. I



**ESUHSD
Report**

Chris Funk
Superintendent

could never give an opinion to a doctor performing surgery because I have never been trained in surgery nor awake during a surgery. I have no idea what it must be like for a platoon of soldiers to come under heavy fire while out on patrol. I've never walked in the shoes of those professions.

But, if you have attended a public school and/or you graduated from high school, then you have an opinion of how schools should be run and how

teachers should teach. Our experience of going to school makes it easy to form and express an opinion about whether schools should be open or not and whether schools are high-performing or underperforming.

I have certainly made my fair share of mistakes and put my foot in my mouth on a number of occasions. I'm sure that I have many critics when it comes to how we have responded to COVID-19. What I will say is that my approach has been one of protecting our staff, students, families and community.

We cannot reopen our schools and keep them open if our staff are not protected and

if we do not have enough staff to work. The science behind addressing the pandemic has been straightforward: wear a mask, social distance, stay away from large group gatherings, and wash your hands often. If possible, stay home. These recommendations do not lend themselves to having high schools with 3,000 students open as usual.

I will continue to take a measured and thoughtful approach to reopening schools where the conditions allow for our staff, students, families and community to be safe. At this point, the light at the end of the tunnel is that we have vaccines on the way.

See ESUHSD REPORT, page 21

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Times **Community News**

CAREER COLUMN

Expected 2021 workplace trends

By **Angela Copeland**
Special to the Times

Have you had enough of 2020?

Let's look to what you can expect in your 2021 workplace. The 2020 pandemic has been a historic year. We've experienced unexpected change. And, interestingly, some

of that change may be here to stay.

Recently, Glassdoor's Chief Economist, Dr. Andrew Chamberlain, shared his five predictions on what the future holds at work. First, office life will return, but will never be the same. Second, employees expect progress, not pledges, on corporate diversity, equality, and inclusion. Salary expectations will get a permanent work from home overhaul. Company cultures must adapt to post-COVID-19 realities. And, although the COVID-19 recession is likely over, those jobs may never return.

I'm sure you would agree; there's a lot to

unpack here. Let's start with a few of the highlights.

More than 40% of US workers have been working from home full-time since June 2020. This dramatic shift has caused significant changes in the way we work. Chamberlain believes that although companies have been forced to rethink work from home policies, employees will ultimately return to work once it's safe. Although remote work allows companies to hire from anywhere, it has downsides. Chamberlain cites poor employee communication, lack of motivation and perform-

ance, lower creativity, and lack of spontaneity as the drawbacks to remote work. Casual bonds created through in person interactions are critical for building a culture of innovation and creativity. According to an internal survey of Glassdoor's own workforce, most workers prefer a hybrid work arrangement, splitting time between home and office.

The Black Lives Matter movement also cast a needed light on racial inequality that will impact our workplace going forward. Companies are being pushed to make real

See TRENDS, next page

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Times **Community News**

Fire departments recruiting for new candidates

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Fire Departments are currently seeking men and women who can represent the City's very diverse population. This effort includes people of all backgrounds, religions, and sexual orientations. The fire service and emergency response careers offer great benefits and retirement programs.

The 100% Free Online Internship Program helps build a strong foundation for interviewing, testing, and presentation skills. This program is ideal for 9th–12th grade students, college and post college students, active service members, and those wanting to start a new and exciting career.

Firefighter's ABCs is grateful for its partnerships with Toyota who provided the funding and Silicon Valley Ambulance who will provide a \$500 discount toward their EMT school.

Firefighter's ABCs will provide an additional grant in the amount of \$1000 for two diverse youth in Santa Clara County to attend EMT school in July of 2021, and will provide the same for 2022 and 2023. They will select one male and one female for this program.

Trends

Continued from previous page
progress on diversity and inclusion efforts. The public also expects more transparency on these efforts going forward. Conversations around economic inequality and police violence sparked a national conversation. In the workplace, this conversation has the potential to be a win-win. In other words, diversity attracts talent. Glassdoor found in a recent survey that more than three in four employees and job seekers say they would no longer apply at a company without workplace diversity.

Chamberlain also predicts a shift in salary expectations. He believes tech workers moving from expensive metros such as San Francisco or New York should

expect pay reductions from five to thirty percent, depending on where they move. This is one point where my perspective veers away from Chamberlain. If a worker has a unique skillset, a company will be forced to pay the fair market rate for that skillset, regardless of where they live. On the flip side, if location is no issue, job seekers will likely face more competition as they apply for jobs. I believe the increase in competition will change salaries more than a cost of living adjustment.

Ultimately, the unexpected nature of 2020 has forever changed our workplace, for good and for bad.

Here's to a better 2021!
Angela Copeland, a career expert and founder of Copeland Coaching, can be reached at copelandcoaching.com.

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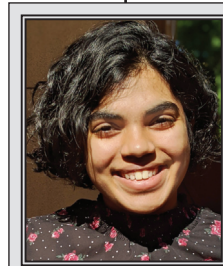
Times **Feature**

(Not only 'Frozen') fractals all around

By **Apoorva Panidapu**
Special to the Times

As a recap: this column is a place to learn about various STEM topics that I find exciting, and that I hope will excite you too. It is always written to be fairly accessible, so you don't have to worry about not having background knowledge. However, it does occasionally get more advanced towards the end.

And now it's time for our souls to spiral in frozen fractals all around, as Idina Menzel iconically sings in Frozen's "Let it Go." In particular, let's take a look at fractals! It's only fitting that we go back in time to look at the first visualization of a famous fractal.

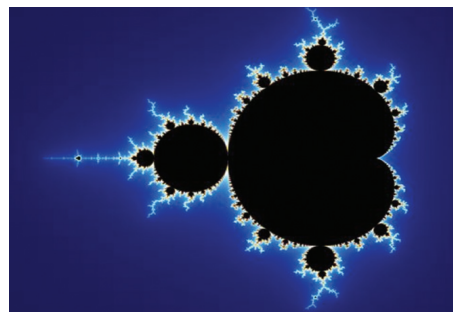


Gems in STEM
By Apoorva Panidapu

center of Yorktown Heights, NY, mathematician Benoit (B.) Mandelbrot caught the first glimpse of what would later be known as the Mandelbrot set, a celebrity in the gorgeous world of fractals. If I had seen it, I might've thought it was a computer virus (albeit, a beautiful one), and it kind of is in a way! It has been called the 'ultimate computer virus' because of the sheer computational power it requires.

Mandelbrot actually introduced the term 'fractal' in 1975, coming from the Latin word 'fractus'— meaning broken or fragmented. But what really is a fractal? Is there a rigid, formal definition? Let's see! The notion of a fractal is grounded in iteration, which is applying a formula again and again, to the results of previous application, infinitely many times. In the case of the Mandelbrot Set, the formula is $x^2 + c$, which seems rather simple for such a complex picture! The one-dimensional Mandelbrot set is made up of these values of c for which this sequence starting at $x=0$ does not go to infinity.

The Mandelbrot set also demonstrates another core property of fractals: self-similarity. This means that, if you zoom in, you can't definitively say how much you have



The Mandelbrot set
On March 1st, 1980, in the IBM research

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Times **Feature**

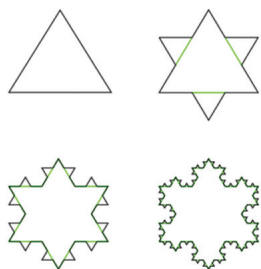
zoomed in by because you'll just see more and more Mandelbrot sets.

History of Fractals

However, per usual, though Mandelbrot is regarded as the "father of fractals," this wasn't the absolute first instance of the notion. French mathematician Henri Poincaré and British mathematician Arthur Cayley had hints of such ideas and fractals, but they didn't have computational technology to look into it further like Mandelbrot did. As modern fractals rose to fame (well, mathematical fame), the work from French mathematicians Pierre Fatou and Gaston Julia from around 1919 came to light, as it concerned fractals in the complex plane. Their works weren't called fractals at that point (as Mandelbrot coined the term in 1975), and they also didn't have the technology to precisely see their shapes, but this shows how long these types of ideas have been considered.

Fractional Dimension

Another very popular fractal is the **Koch curve**, also called the Koch snowflake, named after the Swedish mathematician Niels Fabian Helge von Koch, created in 1904. It is generated by the side of a triangle, adding a triangular bump to the central third of each segment in such a way that makes the fractal symmetric. It is best shown in the picture of the curve:



Now, I'm going to talk about the slightly more advanced concept of fractional dimension. You probably already have a concept of dimension: a single point has dimension zero, a line segment is one-dimensional, i.e. have dimension 1, a square has dimension 2, a cube has dimension 3. This is actually known as the Hausdorff dimension (also referred to as the Hausdorff-Besicovitch dimension), named after German mathematician Felix Hausdorff.

But what about the numbers in between? Is there such a thing as dimension 1.6?

Well, when we look at dimension in terms of scaling, we can describe peculiar objects, like fractals, with non-integer Hausdorff dimensions, using its properties of self-similarity and scaling. Hence, we have the idea of fractional dimension, introduced in 1918. For example, the Hausdorff dimension of the Koch curve is approximately 1.262. In general, the Hausdorff dimension for fractals is usually greater than the ordinary dimension, which is 1 in this case.

Applications

Well, what are the applications of fractals? There are lots and lots, fractals are not just infinitely many pretty faces. They model the natural world everywhere: in leaves, trees, coastlines, clouds, seashells, etc. Fractals can be applied to the growth of plants and marine organisms, like coral. Fractals have the unique ability to describe "roughness" in the real world, found anywhere from sound to the human body to the ocean to economics (and Frozen).

But, past its mathematical profoundness,

one cannot forget the innate aesthetic beauty of fractals. Early African and Navajo artists recognized this, and implemented such patterns in their art and architecture.

Furthermore, fractal analysis has found



fractal patterns in the works of iconic American painter Jackson Pollock, and cognitive neuroscientists have found that his fractals incite the same reaction as fractals in nature and computer-generated fractals. Yet, there is still so much to be discovered about the nature and applications of fractals, and this is just the start!

So back to our original question: what is a fractal? Well, a lot of mathematicians have differing views on the exact definition of fractals (because they can often be too limiting), but all definitions typically include varying conditions on self-similarity and fractal dimension. But, because of this struggle of encapsulating fractals with a single definition, most mathematicians feel that fractals shouldn't be confined to a rigid definition—that its beauty transcends such a thing, allowing only for a general characterization.

My favorite description of fractals comes from the father of fractals himself: "Beautiful, damn hard, increasingly useful. That's fractals." - Benoit B. Mandelbrot

Now, you might be (or might not be, if you're normal) what the B in Benoit B. Mandelbrot's name stands for. (For any Knives Outs fans, it's not Blanc unfortunately.) Well, of course it stands for Benoit B. Mandelbrot! That's fractals. (Kind of.)

(Note: Mandelbrot actually added the B himself in a written record, and it was determined to not actually officially stand for anything, but feel free to think of it like this!)

Until next time! If you found this interesting, make sure to check out the next column! If you have any questions or comments, please email me at apoorvapwrites@gmail.com.

ESUHSD report

Continued from page 17

The key will be how accessible and when the vaccine will be made available to front-line workers (educators). If we want schools to reopen, educators need to receive the vaccine within the first three waves of distribution.

As we continue to face these challenging times, it is together that will get through them. Our future leaders must continue to have the tools they need to be successful. For that reason, I fully expect ESUHSD to run a full, in person summer school program this summer and open up school to all students in the fall of 2021. We need to vaccinate all of our workers in the education system and we all need to follow the health guidelines over the coming holidays to help flatten the curve. Our schools are counting on us all to do the right thing.

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Telephone: (408) 294-7254 x310. We are a community serving the Christ from the heart of the City, working to know Jesus and make Jesus known by serving, worshipping, and learning together. Worship services are at 10:00 AM at the Horace Mann Community Center (7th and Santa Clara Streets). Worship includes both contemporary and traditional music, a message that is relevant to real life, based in the Bible, and meaningful to people of all ages and backgrounds. We work in our community to provide real assistance and long-term, life-saving solutions: food, housing, counseling, and spiritual direction. Our children's & families' ministries include Sunday classes, outdoor family activities such as bike rides and fishing trips. Come, Make a Difference and feel the difference God can make in your life!

thepoint.church

Together let us build lives toward excellence! Music Institute (408) 791-7772 After School lessons on Piano, Violin, Viola, Flute PreSchool, Age 2-6 years. Caring for your child with God's love and affection.

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH

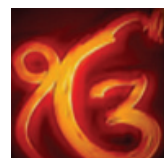
Faith.Knowledge. Community - this is our promise to our members. If you are looking for an active Christian faith community, we invite you to experience Holy Spirit Parish Community. All are welcome! We are located at 1200 Redmond Avenue, San Jose, CA 95120. Mass is celebrated at 8:30 a.m. Monday - Friday. Our weekend Mass schedule is Saturday 5 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Rite of Reconciliation is every Saturday at 4 p.m. or by appointment. Our Parish Office is open Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Call 408-997-5100 for recorded information or 408-997-5101 to speak with someone in our parish office. Information on Faith Formation for children and adults can be obtained by calling our Catechetical Office at 408-997-5115. Get in the loop with our 3sixty High School Youth Ministry by calling 408-997-5106. Holy Spirit School serves grades Pre-K through 8th, and is located at 1198 Redmond Avenue. You can reach the school office at 408-268-0794.

THE POINT CHURCH
3695 Rose Terrasse Cir San Jose, CA 95148 (408) 270-7646
English Service: Sundays at 9:30 & 11:00 AM
Spanish Service: 11:00 AM
Cambodian Service: 11:00 AM
Cantonese Service: 11:00 AM
Mandarin Service: 11:00AM
Youth Extreme Point (7th-12th grade): Every Saturday at 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

SAINT ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH
We invite you to become a part of our hospitable, intimate Catholic parish. We are a caring community, promoting spiritual

NOTE: Due to the coronavirus, many religious institutions have services online.

growth, reaching out to people in need and wherever you get to know people by name. We offer children's religious education (CREATE); Youth Ministry (BLAST & X-STATIC); Scripture Study (day & evening); Senior's Group and many other adult ministries as well. Saint Anthony parish is located in Almaden Valley at 20101 McKean Road, San Jose, 95120. Our weekend Masses are at 4 p.m. on Saturday at our historic church at 21800 Bertram Road in New Almaden, CA 95042 and on Sunday at 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 5:30 p.m. at the McKean Road location. Our Parish Office is open Monday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. and Tuesday thru Thursday, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1 - 4 p.m. For more information, stop by the Parish Office or call (408) 997-4800, or visit our website at www.churchstanthony.com. Fr. Larry Hendel, Pastor.



God is One
ੴ ਸਿਕ ਹੈ
Rab Ik Hai

SAN JOSE GURDWARA
3636 Gurdwara Ave. San Jose, CA 95148 The word Sikh (see-kh) means "disciple" or "student." A Sikh is a practitioner of the faith founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak in Punjab of old British India. A Guru who is a "teacher" or "enlightener" completes the relationship of teaching and learning. Sikhism is monotheistic and stresses the equality of all men and women. Sikhs believe in three basic principles; meditating on the name of God (praying), earning a living by honest means and sharing the fruits of one's labor with others. Currently there are close to one million Sikhs living in the USA and Canada and 25 million Sikhs living around the world. Sikhism is the 5th largest religion in the world. At the Gurdwara (House of God) in San Jose we welcome all. We pray daily for peace and prosperity for everybody in the world. Come to visit and enjoy Langer (food) in our kitchen which is open 365 days of the year and serves complementary vegetarian meals. We also encourage you to enter our history room on site and

walk the beautiful grounds. Learn more about us and community events we sponsor by visiting our website; <http://www.SanJoseGurdwara.org>

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH

5111 San Felipe Rd., San Jose, CA 95135 408-223-1562.

www.stfrancisofassisi.com or www.stfrancisofassisipreschool.org
We invite you to join our community of faith located in the Evergreen area of San Jose. We are an inclusive diverse community striving to serve as Disciples of Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis, offering prayerful and joyful liturgies; evangelization, fellowship, and service opportunities to the community. We offer spiritual opportunities for all ages, including children's liturgy, dynamic E.C.H.O - Jr. High, IGNITE - High School and North Star - Young Adult Ministries, along with small faith communities and opportunities to help the poor and marginalized of San Jose. Our Preschool is the only Catholic Preschool offering quality family oriented service in the Evergreen and Silver Creek areas. Our Chapel, Gathering Hall, Parish Office, Mission Center, Parish Gift Shop, Memorial Garden and Preschool are all located at 5111 San Felipe Rd. Please come join us to worship at one of the following times and locations:
St. Francis of Assisi Chapel: Saturday 5:00PM, Sunday 8:30 AM, 10:30 AM, 12:30 PM, 4:00 PM (Mass in Vietnamese), 6:00 PM Youth Mass
St. Francis of Assisi Gathering Hall
Sunday 9:00 AM, Sunday 11:00AM, Igbo Mass - Second Sunday of the month 12:30 PM
Mt. Hamilton Grange - 2840 Aborn Road
Sunday 9:30 AM
The Villages Gated Community (Cribari Auditorium) Sunday 8:15 AM
For more information, please call or visit us at the Parish Mission Center open M-F 9:00 AM -12:00 PM; 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Come join us and share your presence with us so that together we may grow and share our gifts to help build God's Kingdom!



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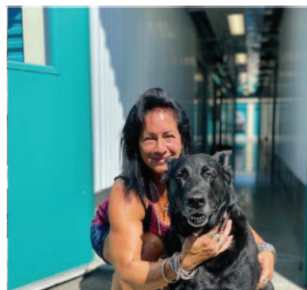
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