

Silicon Valley leaders ask for help solving the 'poverty pandemic'
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Happy New Year
from the staff of the
Willow Glen Times!

South Bay schools delay reopening, weigh requiring teachers to take vaccine
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Willow Glen *Times*

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Primrose School raises more than \$6,000 to provide PPE

Primrose School of Willow Glen hosted a successful Covid-19 Mask & PPE Drive that has raised more than \$6,000.

Through this drive, Primrose forwarded the donations to a variety of organizations that are helping to fight Covid-19 by providing PPE and the vaccine to the local community, such as Valley Medical Center Foundation, Get Us PPE, Family Supportive Housing, Home First Services, UNICEF, and Palo Alto Medical Foundation.

Every year during the holidays, Primrose students normally go on a field trip to a local grocery store and purchase canned food to donate with chore money that they earned at home. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this activity was not a viable option for Primrose, so it was decided that something should be done to help Covid-19 efforts instead.

Primrose set up a mock "store" in its conference room and stocked it with PPE supplies, such as masks, hand sanitizer, and gloves. The students got to help raise money first-hand by completing chores at home and using their earnings to purchase PPE from their mock store. Along with the store, the school also held a monetary drive so that families with children who were too young for the field trip could still donate.

"At Primrose School of Willow Glen, we want our children to learn about generosity and how to be kind to one another without expectation of reward so that it becomes a way of life," said Monica Thompson, Primrose School Director. "It's important that they begin learning about caring, giving, and sharing with others at an early age. We work hard to implement these principles into everyday life at school, and our Mask Drive is one example of how we do so."

Primrose School of Willow Glen is a small private school serving children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. The school is located at 1496 Hamilton Ave, San Jose. For more information, visit: www.primrosewillowglen.com.



San Jose Unified board members discuss sites for affordable housing for teachers during a September 2019 meeting. *File photo*

Grand jury accuses San Jose Unified of misleading public and its own board about lobbying efforts

By Lloyd Alaban

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

San Jose's biggest school district left the public and its own governing board in the dark about lobbying activities that were carried out on its behalf — and possibly violated government ethics laws in the process, according to a new grand jury report.

San Jose Unified School District hired a consulting firm to help it with a proposal to build affordable housing for district teachers and employees but didn't disclose to its board or the public that the consulting firm was also lobbying city officials, the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury said in a report issued last week.

Indeed, district staff members repeatedly denied to the board the consultancy was doing any lobbying for the district, according to the report.

Meanwhile, SJUSD obscured for the public and its board the lobbying activities another firm it hired was doing at the state level, according to the report.

"The vagueness, inaccuracies and lack of transparency surrounding

the consultant contracts cause the Grand Jury to further question whether the district was evaluating these contracts for compliance with government ethics laws," the grand jury said in its report.

"The Grand Jury is concerned about the district's lack of attention to this responsibility; the consultants' failure to disclose their financial interests; and the fact that the public is unaware that consultants may have disqualifying financial interests in the work they perform for the district."

The district declined to immediately comment, saying it would issue a formal response to the report "within the statutory timeframes."

SJUSD denial

SJUSD hired planning firm The Schoennauer Company, LLC, a registered lobbyist, in March 2019 at a rate of \$2,500 a month to help with its affordable housing proposal. At the time, the district was exploring a plan to relocate some of its schools and construct housing on the properties.

The proposal was opposed by many of the neighbors of the schools facing potential closures.

Schoennauer helped SJUSD narrow its list of 10 potential sites for the affordable housing development to four.

The grand jury report also criticized the district's relationship with a second housing consultant who worked with Schoennauer, Snider Consulting. The agreement with Snider was characterized by a trustee as "very vague about what was to be done."

From nearly the beginning, opponents criticized the district's move to hire Schoennauer and questioned the work it was doing for the district. Under questioning from the board, district staff members denied Schoennauer was lobbying for the district.

In fact, though, Schoennauer partner Erik Schoennauer repeatedly met or spoke with city officials, including Mayor Sam Liccardo and Kelly Kline, the city director of land use, about SJUSD's proposal, according to lobbyist reports filed with the city that were cited in the grand jury report.

"The district repeatedly denied in public meetings that the consultant was lobbying on its behalf despite

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Times **Community News**

Grand jury

Continued from page 1

clear documentation to the contrary,” the grand jury said in its report. “These actions adversely tainted the public contracting process by misleading the board charged with approving the use of public funds for the consultant’s hiring.”

Even if district officials didn’t direct Schoennauer’s lobbying effort, they had little excuse to not be aware of it, the grand jury said in its report. Invoices submitted by the consulting firm to the district explicitly stated that it was performing “political lobbying services” for the district, according to the report.

“I don’t see what the concern is about having a dialogue with the city of San Jose,” said Erik Schoennauer of the Schoennauer Company. “Ultimately, any teacher housing project has to be approved by the city. So certainly it makes sense to check in with the mayor and others in the city to ensure that the direction the district may head in is consistent with the policies and the visions the city has. We should be having more communication, not less.”

Schoennauer said all meetings between city officials and him were lobbying only in the city’s definition of the word.

The city defines lobbying as “influencing or attempting to influence a city official or city official-elect with regard to a legislative or administrative action of the city or redevelopment agency” according to its lobbying ordinance.

“Any communication with a city official is lobbying. Their definition is very simple and very clear,” Schoennauer said. “That’s why our firm included the communications about San Jose Unified in our lobbyist reports to the city. But everyone needs to decide what their definition is of lobbying.”

He added the meetings were to ensure the district and the city were working well together to construct new housing for teachers.

Despite that, when Schoennauer’s contract

Date (2019)	Meeting Type/Participants	Meeting Subject
September 4	Unscheduled meeting with City planning director	General Plan policies to allow teacher housing on Public/Quasi-Public land.
October 4	Unscheduled phone call with City mayor; email or letter with City land use director and City chief operating officer	General Plan policies and entitlements to allow teacher housing on Public/Quasi-Public lands.
October 9	Email or letter with City land use director and City chief operating officer	General Plan policies and entitlements to allow teacher housing on Public/Quasi-Public lands.
October 15	Unscheduled phone call with City chief operating officer	General Plan policies and entitlements to allow teacher housing on Public/Quasi-Public and other District lands.
October 17	Email or letter with City land use director and City chief operating officer	General Plan policies and entitlements to allow teacher housing on Public/Quasi-Public and other District lands.
October 25	Scheduled meeting with City mayor and City director of land use	General Plan policies and entitlements to allow teacher housing on Public/Quasi-Public and other District lands.

A table displaying Schoennauer’s lobbying activity for the district. Source: Santa Clara County Grand Jury.

came up for an extension, district staff declined to correct their previous statements and inform SJUSD’s board about Schoennauer’s lobbying effort, according to the report. Instead, district staff appeared to intentionally obfuscate the work Schoennauer was doing for SJUSD, the grand jury said.

“In response to public comment and a trustee’s request for an update on the consultant’s work, staff provided detail at great length on the consultant’s activities that sound like lobbying without actually using the word ‘lobbying,’” the grand jury said in the report.

With the affordable housing project, SJUSD is seeking to provide homes for its educators and staff in one of the most expensive housing markets in the nation. Some teachers within the district have told the board in meetings that they are having extreme difficulty paying rent in the area where they teach. But the project has garnered considerable pushback from some affluent residents concerned it would decrease property values, increase traffic and endanger pedestrians in the area.

No disclosure forms

While it’s legal for the district to lobby city officials, that activity by consultants such as

Schoennauer can trigger state financial disclosure requirements that seek to prevent conflicts of interest. Under state law, government bodies are supposed to file a document — Form 805 — with the Fair Political Practices Commission to identify outside consultants who are helping them make governmental decisions.

After an agency files a Form 805, the consultants mentioned in it are required to file their own, separate financial disclosure forms.

But the district hasn’t filed a single Form 805 in the past three years, according to the report. And despite doing extensive work on behalf of SJUSD, including lobbying, neither Schoennauer nor Snider filed the financial disclosure forms, the grand jury reported.

“Without this information, the board and public may not be able to identify areas in which the consultants are potentially prohibited from participating due to their financial interests,” the grand jury said in the report.

Indeed, the grand jury identified one such potentially disqualifying conflict of interest. One of the four sites now being considered for affordable housing is yards away from a house owned by Kelly Snider of Snider Consulting. Snider is also a district parent. Although the district knew about the conflict, it didn’t disclose it to the public or its board, determining that it didn’t need to.

“The school district’s attorney reviewed my contract and all the payments (related to the project) were sent to my house,” Snider told San José Spotlight. “My address is public. I have a business license with the city of San Jose at this address. So this is not a conflict in any way. All of the business I do is out of my own home.”

Snider did not believe her property constituted a conflict of interest, and denied doing any lobbying.

“I did no lobbying, and no one I worked with did any lobbying,” she said. “I am not aware of

any lobbying, including the collaboration I did with the other consultants who were working on the project.”

Essentially, the district chose to avoid the issue rather than being transparent about it, the grand jury said. And by doing so, it could have violated state ethics laws.

“While the ultimate resolution of alleged state ethics law violations rests with other public bodies, the Grand Jury’s investigation found deficiencies in the district’s process for identifying consultants who are required to file public statements of economic interests,” the grand jury said.

Lack of transparency

The grand jury also found problems with SJUSD’s lobbying at the state level. Last year, the district hired Ball/Frost Group, LLC to represent it in Sacramento, according to the report. But the contract it signed with Ball/Frost isn’t readily available to the public, and the district didn’t clearly and fully disclose the work Ball/Frost was doing on its behalf, the report found.

Ball/Frost was not immediately available for comment.

“Nothing is remotely transparent about the state lobbying contracts,” the grand jury said in the report.

The grand jury issued four recommendations. It asked the district to be more transparent and accurate in communicating with the public, to revise its contracting procedures to make sure lobbyists are more clearly identified when they work with the district, to clearly place any lobbying business on its agenda and to have a better method to inform contractors of their obligations to disclose information, including information that should be sent to the FPPC.

Civil grand juries are responsible for examining the administration of county services, hearing citizen complaints from county officials and serving as a financial watchdog for public funds, among other duties. They generally release reports on their findings several times a year.

SJUSD educates approximately 30,000 students from kindergarten through 12th grade and employs more than 3,000 teachers and staff. Its boundaries stretch from north of downtown San Jose to Almaden Valley.

Contact Lloyd Alaban at lloyd.b.alaban@gmail.com or follow @lloydalaban on Twitter.



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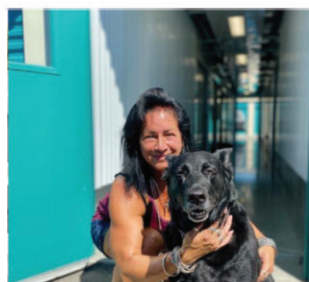
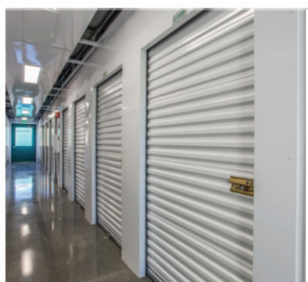
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Santa Clara County schools are preparing for students to return to campus but not until COVID-19 case counts decrease. *File photo courtesy of Barbara O'Loughlin.*

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 10

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Valley Currents

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



Homeless residents line up during a food and clothing drive at St. James Park in downtown San Jose. *File photo.*

Silicon Valley leaders ask for help solving the 'poverty pandemic'

By Lorraine Gabbert
Article courtesy of San José
Spotlight

Santa Clara County elected officials, business and faith leaders are asking the community to help low-income people hit hardest by the pandemic.

Through the new United Against the Poverty Pandemic coalition, formed during the pandemic by Brett Bymaster, executive director of Healing Grove Health Center, the group is working to find solutions for low-income families struggling with job loss and paying rent.

The coalition, which includes the city of San Jose, Health Grove Health Center, Cathedral of Faith, work2future, Westgate Church, Cicuro and CityTeam, announced a goal of raising \$1 million in private funds before Jan. 31 for rent relief and to fund a work program.

Mayor Sam Liccardo said Dec. 7 there is a growing divide between those who are able to survive living in Silicon Valley and those who are struggling to keep their heads above water.

"This pandemic has widened that chasm and government can't do it alone," he said.

According to Liccardo, the city's food distribution operations have handed out more than 2.5 million meals a week to families in need and committed more than \$22 million in federal funding for struggling families through the Silicon Valley Strong Initiative. However, the mayor said this is just a drop in the bucket of what is needed.

Santa Clara County Supervisor Susan Ellenberg said local governments should extend loans to small businesses and provide financial support to low-income communities asked to stay home from work, especially those who test positive for COVID-19.

Ellenberg said she and Supervisor Cindy Chavez will propose extending and improving the isolation quarantine support program, which offers motel rooms for people who test positive for COVID-19 and cannot safely isolate at home, in addition to providing groceries, cleaning supplies, rent and other financial support.

She also recommends expanding partnerships with community-based organizations to support struggling residents and businesses.

Bymaster said a recent phone survey showed more than 14,600 county families, including 30,000 children, are at risk of becoming homeless when the state's eviction moratorium expires Jan. 31.

"We expect a wave of homelessness when the eviction moratorium expires," he said. "But we have the resources in Santa Clara County to do something about this. Let's unite together to make a difference."

The United Against the Poverty Pandemic coalition has provided more than 450,000 pounds of food to those who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 and \$900,000 in financial aid through private donations and partnering with nonprofits. Now it's working to provide \$1.7 million in financial aid, employment and food aid by Dec. 31.

COVID-19 has especially affected low-income communities. At the Healing Grove clinic, Bymaster said the positivity rate among low-income Latinos was 28%, compared with the county average of 4.7%. The clinic has provided about 2,500 COVID-19 tests for low income-patients and treated 900 clients for COVID-19.

Councilmember Maya Esparza,

who represents the hardest hit ZIP codes in the county, said COVID-19's resulting economic hardships hit low-income minority communities the hardest, in addition to disproportionately infecting and killing more Latinos.

"People are getting sick and dying at much higher rates than the rest of the city and county," Esparza said.

COVID-19 also stripped low-income jobs in hospitality, construction, services, trade and transportation. Bymaster said people working in these sectors saw their average annual income drop from \$27,566 a year to \$11,402 after the pandemic.

According to the coalition, about 36,200 Santa Clara County households have unpaid rent debt totaling \$117 million. This debt could be erased, he said, if the 160,000 families in Santa Clara County who earn more than \$200,000 a year donated \$730 each.

"Each of us has a role to play. I hope you will be with us pushing together against this poverty pandemic," Liccardo said.

To help the coalition, visit: <https://povertypandemic.org>

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Times **Community News**

Driver killed in single vehicle collision on Lincoln Ave.

The driver of a truck that careened into a San Jose business has succumbed to his injuries.

Officers responded to the area of Lincoln Avenue and Savaker Street to investigate a single vehicle collision on Dec. 18 at approximately 6 p.m.

The preliminary investigation revealed the following:

A 1973 green Datsun pickup truck was traveling at a high rate of speed when the adult male driver lost control of the vehicle and struck, head-on, the front wall of a business on Lincoln Avenue.

The driver, who was ejected from the vehicle, was subsequently transported to a local hospital suffering from major injuries. SJPd was notified that the driver succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased on Dec. 19.

Anyone with information on this investigation is urged to contact Detective Templeman #3556 of the San Jose Police Department's Traffic Investigations Unit at 408-277-4654.

Bills call for steps toward universal preschool across state of California

Advocates say such a system would help working-class families and their children

Universal preschool is a step closer to becoming reality.

Assemblyman Kevin McCarty, D- Sacramento and other legislators last week proposed a sweeping suite of bills to help reform the state's early childhood system.

The bills seek to expand kindergarten to all 4-year-olds, make child care more affordable by creating a sliding scale for family fees, increase reimbursement rates for preschool teachers and bar expulsions and suspensions in preschool.

"This education package aims to lift up working families and our kids throughout California. We all know that early education matters for kindergarten readiness, to make sure our kids are ready to thrive when they enter a public school system, and for moms trying to go to work or go to school themselves," said McCarty, during a news conference on the legislation. "We see it crystal clear during COVID-19 how much early education and child care impacts our economy."

"It makes no sense that only one quarter of 4-year-olds are provided access to an additional year of kindergarten," said Kerry Woods, chair of the political action group for the California School Employees Association. "Expanding transitional kindergarten to all California's 4-year-olds is the right thing to do, and we should do it now, as study after study shows that providing quality early education for our children prepares them for future educational and personal success."

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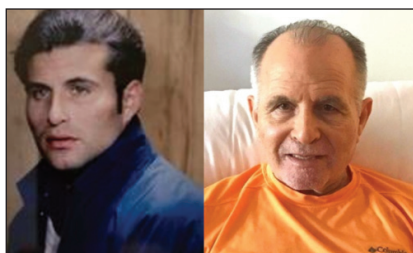


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Times **Community News****IN MEMORY****Michael Arthur Goodman****February 6, 1947 - December 14, 2020****San Jose native, resident of Willow Glen**

Michael Arthur Goodman was born in San Jose, California. His parents were Sally and Sam Goodman. Sam was in the Navy so there was a lot of traveling. Michael grew up around his cousins and the Guido Family in and around the Bay Area. Growing up, Michael loved to ride his bike and find adventure with his younger brother Tom

and cousins outside.

Michael started his education at St. Christopher's in Willow Glen, California but when his parents moved, he finished elementary school at Cory, then went on to middle school at Hoover, and graduated high school from Lincoln. Michael's little sister, Bonnie, arrived and rounded out the Goodman Family. They were

overjoyed.

Michael was a great athlete and loved playing football and basketball at Hoover Middle School and Lincoln High School, winning several athletic awards at both schools. After high school, he went on to San Francisco State, and received his teaching credential from Chico State. He was a substitute teacher for about a year before he landed a full time teaching job at Andrew Hill High School in San Jose, California. He not only taught Physical Education, Social Studies and Geography, he was the football and track coach for many years. Michael loved teaching and he

loved football. His 30 years at Andrew High was a dream come true. Michael influenced and inspired so many young minds at Andrew Hill High School.

Michael met Mary in 1978 and the love story began. In 1985, they tied the knot next to the Truckee River in Nevada surrounded by family. They were the perfect match. They settled in Willow Glen, California and they enjoyed their life with family and friends. Mike had a 1964 red, Volkswagen, bug and on weekends and during school breaks, he loved taking his Golden Retriever, Bo, to the beach. They were a great team Michael and Bo! Michael and Mary spent many years traveling throughout the USA, Canada, and throughout Italy. Michael loved to travel and he always wanted to go "somewhere."

Diagnosed with Parkinson's more than two decades ago, Michael was brave and strong. Michael passed away peacefully in the early morning of December 14, 2020. He is survived by his wife Mary Goodman, brother Thomas Goodman, sister Bonnie Dawes, children; Michael Raia and his wife Clarinda Raia, Julie Raia and her husband Eric Wilson, Christian Raia and his wife Adrienne Raia, grandchildren; Lucinda Leon, Anthony Raia, Joseph Raia, Mary Alice Raia, Scout Wilson, Alexis Raia, and Sadie Raia, great grandchildren; Eugene, Giovanni and Sophia, cousins and friends.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the Michael J. Fox Foundation, Lincoln High School, or Andrew Hill High School. And, finally as a dutiful patriot, Michael Arthur Goodman served in the National Guard. There will be a Celebration of Life in 2021 and we will keep family and friends posted on the date.

Anderson Dam water levels drop to 3% capacity

New outlet tunnel construction to begin in 2021

Valley Water has gradually released water from Anderson Reservoir through the existing outlet which began Oct. 1, 2020.

Water levels in Anderson Reservoir have now dropped to 3% of capacity, the lowest level that can be reached through the existing outlet tunnel.

Because of the lack of early-season rain, Anderson reached the 3% level in less than three months. Valley Water may continue to release water from Anderson Reservoir once it begins capturing storm runoff from winter rains.

Valley Water will strive to maintain this 3% level moving forward as we work on projects designed to strengthen Anderson Dam.

Valley Water lowered the water levels in Anderson Reservoir in response to an order by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to reduce the risk to the public should Anderson Dam fail during a major earthquake.

Valley Water released water at a rate of about 200-acre feet per day, or 65 million gallons a day.

The next step in our work at Anderson Dam is to build a 1,700-foot-long tunnel, up to 24-feet in diameter, on the left side of the dam looking towards the reservoir. The new tunnel will increase the amount of water that can be released from Anderson by five times when used in conjunction with the existing outlet, allowing Valley Water to better maintain water levels in the reservoir.

Work on the outlet tunnel is expected to begin in early 2021, and we estimate it will take two to three years to complete.

Valley Water will begin work on retrofitting the dam embankment and spillway once the tunnel is complete. That effort, known as the Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit Project, is estimated to start in 2024 and will last about seven years.

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Times **OpEd**

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 citywide vote.

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

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Times Community News

IN MEMORY

Joseph Francis Ruiz

May 31, 1949 -

December 7, 2020

Resident of Willow Glen

Joseph Francis Ruiz, 71, lifelong resident of San Jose, peacefully passed away at his Willow Glen home on December 7, 2020 surrounded by family and his caretakers.

An outdoor and indoor visitation was held at Willow Glen Funeral Home on Monday, Dec. 21 followed by a private family burial.

Joe was born in San Jose, CA to Salvador and Wilma Ruiz on May 31, 1949. He attended Catholic schools his entire life, and was proud of his alma maters: St. Mary's, Bellarmine College Prep ('67), Santa Clara University ('71) and Santa Clara University School of Law ('74). Not one to venture far from home, he surprised his family by studying abroad in Rome, Italy for his junior year at Santa Clara and shared many stories (he loved to share stories) of his shenanigans during that time.

He married Carole Price shortly after college and started his legal career. They lived on Shasta Ave and then Janis Way, and shared many happy memories with their three daughters. Although they divorced, Joe and Carole remained friends and delighted in their children and grandchildren.

Joe entered the family business, Del Mutulo & Ruiz, in 1981 and helped his father and brother in the legal matters of

their residential real estate company. "The Office" on W. San Carlos Ave was one of his happy places. The most loyal son and brother, Joe worked for his family up until his death.

Joe is preceded in death by his parents, whom he cared for and was deeply devoted to, Salvador and Wilma Ruiz, and his uncle and namesake, Joseph Francis Ruiz.

He is survived by his three daughters, who were his pride and joy, Melissa Ruiz Burke (Damien), Julia Ruiz Hoffman (Christy) and Marya Ruiz; and son-in-law Casey Selfridge (Erin). His brother, favorite person, and business partner Sal Ruiz, whom he affectionately called "Kid." His adoring grandchildren, who lit up his life: Lucia, Margaret, Liam, Cameron, Josie, and Dylan, who loved to visit Papa because of



his undivided attention for them. He was a proud uncle to Sean and Tony (Sarah) Ruiz and Great-Uncle to adorable Wyatt. His devoted caretaker, Jessie, was by his side for twelve years, providing comfort and friendship while they watched the Golden State Warriors together. We are all better for knowing Joe.

Joe loved: La Villa in Willow Glen, where he and his brother would ride their bikes to as kids for a pint of their famous "ravs," The Beatles, which he knew every trivia question imaginable, all things garlic, every episode of Seinfeld, John's Xlent Foods in Willow Glen, where he took his daughters for dinner on Wednesday nights, his father's corny jokes, his mother's Italian cooking, his brother's "burn the bone!" bbqing, "Tour de Willow Glen" drives, and being around his grandchildren. Joe's heart was big, his mind was brilliant, his perseverance was contagious and his positivity was constant. And, most important to him, his legacy of "family is #1" is lasting.

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Times **Community News**

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 (ESUHSD) put its own reopening plans on pause last month. ESUHSD 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 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.


See **VACCINE**, next page


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Times Community News

Vaccine

Continued from previous page

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 dis-



tance 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."

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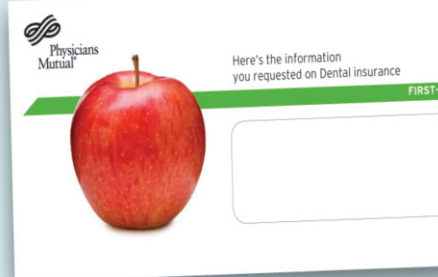
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Firefighter's ABCs is grateful for its partnerships with Toyota who provided the funding and Silicon Valley Ambulance who will provide a \$500 discount toward their EMT school.

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.



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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**

How does the 2021 housing market look?

By Neil Collins

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

Nine months ago when our world was turned upside down with a countywide stay-at-home order, none of us could have predicted the robust housing market we have been experiencing.



Many of us were assuming similar outcomes as we experienced during the last great recession, but plummeting prices and mass foreclosures never materialized. In fact, sale prices for homes increased and so did sales. So what do the experts think the 2021 housing market will look like?

Jordan Levine, the deputy chief economist for the California Association of Realtors (C.A.R.), gave his 2021 forecast earlier this month and expects the housing market to grow at 3.3% for next year with prices increasing by 4.4%.

Most expect interest rates to remain virtually unchanged next year and that the 30-year fixed mortgage rate will hover around 3%. Levine based his forecast on several assumptions including a successful vaccine distribution, improved GDP and foreclosure rates being single digits.

Locally, despite unprecedented pressure on the economy, housing is still likely to be one of the bright spots of the recovery. Realtor.com's housing forecast predicts the San Jose metro market will grow by 10.8% in both sales and price year over year. Lack of inventory continues to be the main factor driving up housing prices.

Dave Walsh, 2021 C.A.R. president and San Jose Compass manager, is predicting a banner year for housing in Santa Clara County, which could see sales rising at 5.4% or more if the inventory is there to support it.

However, Walsh continues to see weakness in the condo market with the latest inventory numbers showing a 50%+ increase over last year.

If the vaccine renews optimism that we are getting closer to moving beyond COVID-19, the increased supply of condos and low interest rates could offer a unique opportunity for first-time buyers in Santa Clara County.

According to Levine's market forecast, "the share of first-time buyers reached the highest level in 10 years this past summer, with nearly two of five homes being sold to buyers who purchased for the first time."

Despite the rosy outlook to the housing market there are still major headwinds.

This pandemic has contributed greatly to the ongoing wealth gap in our community. The "K" shape nature of the economic recovery that we are experiencing is likely to continue into 2021.

The top wage earners in our community have been relatively unaffected as compared to the lower third of wage earners, many of whom have been devastated by reduced work hours and layoffs.

It is those top wage earners who are continuing to drive the housing market while the rest of the community falls further behind. And for that reason, we need to continue looking for equitable solutions that lift up our entire community.

Neil Collins is CEO of the Santa Clara County Association of Realtors, a trade association representing more than



Realtor.com's housing forecast predicts the San Jose metro market will grow by 10.8% in both sales and price year over year. Lack of inventory continues to be the main factor driving up housing prices. *File photo by Carly Wipf.*

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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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**Happy Holidays
and Cheers to a
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-Jackie



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