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MARCH 26 – APRIL 8, 2021 ■ VOL. 38, NO. 7

# Evergreen Times

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## Evergreen School District students to return to in-person learning April 19th

Students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6 will return to school on April 26

By William Bellou  
Publisher

The Evergreen Elementary School District (EESD) Board of Trustees unanimously approved a phased return to in-person learning of all students starting the week of April 19 at its board meeting on Wednesday, March 17.

Among the main reasons why the EESD Board of Trustees voted to offer in-person learning to its students, included declining COVID-19 cases, EESD's safety mitigation strategies, student social-emotional health, learning loss mitigation and the availability of COVID-19 vaccines to education workers, among other factors.

In encouraging the return to school, district staff also pointed to national findings that K-12 in-person schools are not a primary driver of COVID-19 transmission,



**The Board of Trustees also approved an agreement to launch a pilot hybrid in-person learning program that commenced this week with a small group of teachers who have agreed to be a part of this early return to in-person learning project.**

improvements being made to all district ventilation systems and increased access to COVID-19 testing for staff.

The phased return to in-person learning for EESD students is scheduled as follows, pending approval by the California Department of Public Health and Santa Clara County Department of Public Health.

The transition to in-person learning will be the week of April 19 with Special Day Class Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, 7, and 8. The following week, April 26, students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6 will return to school for in-person learning.

See EESD, page 21



## A PARK WORTH A BARK

Councilmember Sylvia Arenas cuts the ribbon for the new Welch Park Dog Park on March 19.

## Furry friends now have a park of their own

*Councilmember Arenas listens to community to make vision a reality*

By Kevin Larsen  
Times staff writer

In September 2018, Councilmember Arenas held Community Visioning Meetings to understand what activities and features were desired by the community surrounding Welch Park located near Tully Rd. and Huran Drive (behind the McDonalds on Tully Road).

Three years ago, then Welsh Neighborhood Community President Laura Retchika, along with a large group of neighbors, advocated for a dog park which would provide fun and be a productive project to enhance community. They needed help to make this neighborhood dream come true.

Councilmember Arenas and her team got together many agencies of the city to hold community vision meetings to listen and help the residents design and plan how it all could happen.

The community needed to have

a say in how it would look, where it would go and all of the final touches that would make it a very special place. To do that, vast county departments were invited by Arenas' District 8 Office to work hand in hand with the community.

### Welch Dog Park opens

After working on the project for two years, the new dog park is now completed and opened on Friday, March 19 with a virtual groundbreaking ceremony to cut the blue ribbon.

Welch Dog Park pet-friendly amenities include a double-gated

entry, separate large and small dog areas, pet drinking fountain, benches, and wood "fibar" surfacing to give canine friends a soft place to walk and run.

Arenas said that Katherine R. Smith Elementary School also helped in bringing the community together in holding discussions on how the project would proceed (the school is next to Welch Park).

"I want to thank the neighborhood association that is in place now and that is Leticia Ochoa, Eddie Juarez and Benita Rojas," Arenas said. "I want to also thank our public works department and our parks and neighborhood recreation services department that have worked diligently since 2018 to make sure that this important project happened for our community."

Community member Eddie Juarez stated, "I know this project was years in the making, it took a lot of effort from everyone to make it happen. I really hope you all enjoy it and I really hope your pets enjoy it as well."

See DOG PARK, page 2



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Times **Community News**

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## Dog Park

*Continued from page 1*

Jon Cicirelli Director of PRNS (Parks and Neighborhood Recreation Services) said, "We care for over 200 parks, more than 61 miles of trails, 50 community centers, and several premier destinations to serve our city's residents and visitors by connecting people to places and each other. With community partners, people, and residents and you, we are building leading systems of parks and programs that enhance quality of life here in San Jose. Our goal is to provide quality places of play exploration and connection where people make memories that last a lifetime! I am pleased to celebrate this achievement with you today. I hope you will continue to engage with us in this important work. As we look toward the future, we are inspired by all of you, our community and partners, and we look forward to accomplishing even more together. Thank you and congratulations to everyone who helped make this possible."

### Building quality places that inspire belonging

Nichole Burnham, Deputy Director of Capital Programs for Parks and Recreation said, "I want to thank my team and Public Works for helping make this project a reality. We're excited to reveal and celebrate this new community amenity here in San Jose where our teams take great pride in delivering quality places that inspire belonging. We hope that this amenity is serving the community for years to come and that you all enjoy the activities that you're able to do in your park."

Leticia Ochoa, Welsh Park Neighborhood Community Association President said, "I'm very excited to hear about the completion of the dog park. This is a very special place that will help improve the lives of our committee members and of our pets, because families will continue to have peaceful walks throughout Welsh Park and at the same time have their furry babies enjoy this special place for them. This was all made possible by several community members who advocated to have something like this. I want to say thank you to them. I want to say thank

you to Laura, I want to say thank you to Councilmember Sylvia Arenas who continues to support several new projects in our Welch Park neighborhood. I also want to thank Project Hope who continues to support our association, board members and our community members, thank you so much for all you do for us!"

"I want to personally thank Councilmember Arenas for all her hard work and helping bring this Welch Park community center back to the community," said Laura Arechiga, a resident. "City staff have helped us come together to have town hall meetings here, to see what our visions were for this community, and one of our visions was having a dog park here at Welsh Park. So, I want to thank all of you who came to those town hall meetings. I want to thank Project Hope for helping us organize those meetings, and most of all, all of you who gave your input on what your vision and everyone's vision was for the Welsh Park and this dog park."

Maria Cid of Project Hope said, "I would like to take this moment to congratulate the Welch Park community members on their beautiful dog park. Having this dog park will greatly enhance an already amazing park. We want to give our furry friends a safe place to exercise and socialize while giving their owners a chance to further connect with their dog. We want to thank Councilmember Sylvia Arenas who helped make this dog park a reality. We want to thank the Department of Parks and Recreation and Neighborhood Services in building a beautiful dog park. We also want to thank our great community leader Laura Retchika and others that advocated the importance of getting a dog park. Lastly, we want to thank the Welsh Park Neighborhood Association leaders and community members for their continued support, congratulations and once again, enjoy your dog park."

Lee Wilcox, Deputy City Manager of San Jose said he and his dog Tucker can hardly wait to, "join you at the Welsh Park dog park. Congratulations District 8."

Upon cutting the blue ribbon, Councilmember Arenas said, "Come by and bring your doggie and have some fun."

*Editor's Note: Don't have a doggie? Welsh Park also has some very nice benches for one to sit and rest.*

Times **Community News**

San Jose Police released video surveillance footage of the suspect vehicle, a BMW, 4-door, with possible damage to the left rear taillight, taken the morning of the fatal shooting of a Vietnamese American on March 5.

## Police ask for assistance in shooting death of Thu Nguyen in Evergreen

The San Jose Police Department is asking for the public's assistance in identifying the suspects responsible for the murder of Thu Nguyen in his driveway in Evergreen.

San Jose Police Officers responded to the area of Glen Keats Court and Glen Ferguson Circle in Evergreen Valley on a report of a person shot at 5:54 a.m. on March 5.

Officers arrived to find Mr. Nguyen in the arms of his wife and daughter, suffering from at least one gunshot wound. Mr. Nguyen was declared deceased at the scene.

The preliminary investigation revealed Mr. Nguyen saw the suspects tampering with his vehicle and went outside to confront and stop the suspects. One of the sus-

pects shot Mr. Nguyen in front of his son, who was coming to his father's aid.

Witnesses described the suspect vehicle as light blue and/or silver BMW, 4-door, with possible damage to the left rear taillight, both driver side windows, and windshield.

Police officials released new surveillance footage, relating to the fatal shooting. The footage shows a light blue or silver four-door BMW sedan the two suspects drove after shooting. There were at least two suspects, one of which was described only as an unknown race male.

Although the victim was Vietnamese, police officials said they have no information that this homicide was racially motivated.

Anyone with information about the March 5 shooting can contact the SJPd homicide unit at 408-277-5283 or leave a tip with Silicon Valley Crime Stoppers at 408-947-7867 or at [svcrimestoppers.org](http://svcrimestoppers.org). Tipsters may be eligible for a cash reward.



## Help make public transit more accessible for everyone!

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## We must unite to fight AAPI hate crimes and violence

By Supervisor Otto Lee  
*Special to the Times*  
How much louder must we scream, yell, plead and cry against the hate crimes and violence against our Asian community?

We gathered at San José City Hall on March 13 to call for an end to acts of anti-Asian violence, only to have our nation rocked four days later by yet another horrific act of hate.

We stand in solidarity and grief for the lives lost to senseless murders in Atlanta. We say their names and we will fight for them. Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez, Paul Andre Michels, Soon C. Park, Hyun J. Grant, Suncha Kim, and Yong A. Yue.

We must become extra vigilant to keep our communities safe, and not let hate and fear divide us. Enough IS enough!

We must unite and educate everyone to stand and fight violence and bigotry together. The violence against the AAPI community is drastically increasing, while these crimes are seriously

See UNITE, page 6

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# Valley Currents

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

## Local Scout builds face shields for medical facility, first responders

Rahil Kapadia, an Evergreen Valley resident and Boy Scout with Troop 251, has built more than 750 face shields for his recent Eagle Scout project and related volunteering activities.

As the COVID pandemic spread last year, Rahil was inspired to take action. He found that there was a severe shortage of face shields at various medical facilities.

According to the CDC, face shields provide an extra layer of protection over and above a face mask. This extra protection is extremely valuable for those in the medical profession.

Using simple materials from the Home Depot, Office Depot, and Joann Fabrics, Rahil began building his first face shields. Soon, more than 500 face shields were built through an organization he started called Shields Against Corona. Rahil, who serves as president of the organization, said that 100% of donated funds are used exclusively to build face shields.

After the successful project undertaken by his organization, Rahil decided to build additional ones as part of his Eagle Scout project.

One of the organizations Rahil was working with, Momentum for Mental Health in San Jose, told Rahil that their frontline workers visit at-risk members of the community, including seniors, at their homes to provide a range of mental health and other services. A lack of face shields put both the workers and the patients at risk. Convinced that he needed to help, Rahil decided to rally his Boy Scout troop to take action. Members of the Troop agreed that Rahil could undertake this activity as part of his Eagle Project. After raising nearly \$1,000 through friends and family and a Krispy Kreme doughnut sale, Rahil invited volunteer Scouts to a socially distanced face shield making event.

With the materials already purchased, Rahil kicked off the Boy Scouts volunteer event with training on how to make the face



Rahil Kapadia, an Evergreen Valley resident and Boy Scout with Troop 251, has built more than 750 face shields for his recent Eagle Scout project and related volunteering activities. He is currently a sophomore at Archbishop Mitty High School.

shields and a discussion about safety — both from the cutting equipment and also Covid. The event was a success. In just 2-3 hours, seven volunteers constructed more than 250 face shields. Rahil delivered the face shields to a grateful staff member at Momentum for Health.

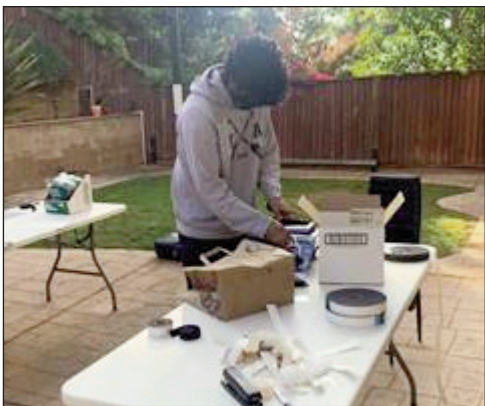
While many first responders and senior citizens are getting vaccinated, the need for a

continuous supply of face shields is vitally important, so Rahil has pledged to continue to devote his time to building more shields to protect people from getting infected during the pandemic.

Editor's note: If you would like to volunteer or donate to the Shields Against Corona, visit: [rahilkapadia007.wixsite.com/shieldsagainst-corona](https://rahilkapadia007.wixsite.com/shieldsagainst-corona)



In just 2-3 hours, seven volunteers constructed more than 250 face shields. Rahil delivered the face shields to a grateful staff member at Momentum for Health.



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Times **Community News****Are you ready for some fun?**

Join us for our first annual:

**Virtual Charity 5k Fun Run/Walk****May 20 to May 24**

This is a fun family event that will allow any community to participate. Follow a suggested route or go on your own over a 5-day duration. Runners, walkers, hikers can create their 5K anywhere, from an indoor treadmill to walking the dog, or choose to "Go for the Gold" and see where they rank on the leader board.

\* All proceeds are donated back to the community as grants to non-profit organizations, local schools, and as merit-based scholarships for local students.

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**Unite***Continued from page 4*

under-reported. Whether it be the "model minority" stereotypes, or the vicious murders in Atlanta, or assaults on the streets in Oakland or the Caltrain in San José - it's all rooted in the same ignorance and hate which needs to end. Silence will embolden the perpetrators and we must stand up to let them know that this will never be tolerated, and justice will be upheld.

We also must not let "what-aboutism" distract the conversation that needs to be had on systemic racism. We can no longer hide behind excuses and dismiss these acts of domestic terrorism as mental health breakdowns or expressions of free speech. There are real influences and dangerous rhetoric that has targeted the AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) community to be harassed, denigrated, murdered, harmed, intimidated and maligned. No more.

Santa Clara County is one of America's most thriving communities because of our diversity. Our county is home to over 750,000 Asian Americans, with deep roots for many generations, yet we still struggle to be seen

and respected.

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors is taking concrete actions to address the spike in anti-Asian violence and will be considering a proposal I authored to develop an anti-hate community outreach and education campaign on March 23. The meeting will be streamed on the Board of Supervisors' YouTube channel: SCCgov chambers.

Outside of City Hall I said that we will not tolerate this hate and violence. We will never be silenced. I want to continue to extend my appreciation to our brothers and sisters from the Black, Latinx, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ+ and other communities for standing with the AAPI community. We are in this together.

Hate against one is crime against us all. There is no place for hate crimes in our community, our country, or ever. Standing together and speaking up is how we will prevail.

In solidarity.

**Supervisor Otto Lee**

If you or someone you know has been a target or victim of violence or a hate crime, report this to our law enforcement immediately. Please visit <https://stopaapihate.org/> for more information.

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Times **Feature****Krispy Kreme offering a free daily donut all year long – just show your vaccination card**

Here's an additional reason to get your COVID-19 vaccination.

Krispy Kreme is offering a sweet deal - it's giving free doughnuts to anyone with valid vaccination card, all year long. A vaccine sticker is not valid.

Any customer with a valid COVID-19 vaccination card will receive a free Original Glazed doughnut at participating locations nationwide. In San Jose, Krispy Kreme is located at: 121 Curtner Ave, Suite 40, San Jose, CA 95125.

The iconic doughnut shop specifies that any guests who have received at least one of the two shots of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, or one shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine qualify for the promotion.

Vaccinated individuals can go back every single day and continue getting free doughnuts throughout 2021.

Krispy Kreme says they are supporting health care workers and volunteers who are administering vaccines by delivering free doughnuts to vaccination centers across the country in the coming weeks.

"We all want to get COVID-19 behind us as fast as possible and we want to support everyone doing their part to make the country safe by getting vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available to them," Chief Marketing Officer Dave Skena said in a statement.

**Survey: 145 million Americans say they cannot afford another year like 2020**

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's finances, around 145 million Americans say they cannot afford another year like 2020, according to WalletHub's new Coronavirus Money Survey.

The survey illustrates some of the ways in which COVID-19 has impacted Americans' lives and spending habits.

Below are additional highlights of the report, along with a WalletHub Q&A.

- Money problems are a huge source of stress. Money problems have now surpassed COVID-19 as being the top stressor in America, a 15% change since last year.
- The pandemic causes more need for credit cards. 29 Million more Americans say they will apply for a new credit card this year due to coronavirus, compared to last year.
- Women's spending has increased more. Women are 16% more likely than men to say they spend more money due to coronavirus.
- Many Americans have decided to start saving. 61% of Americans are saving more money during the coronavirus pandemic, rather than spending more.
- Touching cash is less scary. About 30% fewer people than last year believe it is possible to contract COVID-19 from money.

The complete survey results can be found at <http://walletHub.com/credit-cards#survey>.

**Property Tax Relief: Assessor Larry Stone urges business owners to provide equipment valuation information**

Recognizing that many businesses have suffered as a result of Covid-19, Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone is proactively planning to provide temporary property tax relief.

"This Recession is very different than the 2008 Great Recession when we reduced the property assessments of 136,000 homes," said Stone. The 2008 Recession was caused by subprime mortgage credit fraud, and excessive risk-taking by major financial institutions. This time it is businesses, such as hotels, restaurants and retail that have been most severely impacted. Covid-19 restrictions imposed by the government have severely impacted many

businesses. The Assessor's Office intends to provide proactive reductions where warranted."

There are two very different types of relief the Assessor can provide to property owners; one for the owners of the buildings and land and another for the owners of business equipment and machinery.

To assist business operators, the Assessor is inviting the owners of businesses, such as restaurants, movie theaters, and gyms and fitness facilities, to submit valuable information about their business equipment. The Assessor's Office is legally required to assess business personal property, e.g. machinery equipment valued in excess of \$10,000, as of January 1. "Clearly, many businesses have suffered due to the Covid shelter-in-place order and other health restrictions. We intend to review potential value reductions if the

market value of equipment and machinery has declined," said Stone.

To provide relief, the Assessor's Office is legally required to have qualitative evidence to support a reduction. The Assessor's Office is requesting that businesses provide information, such as how long a business has been closed or experienced reduced hours of operation in 2020, how business income may have been effected, and the extent to which the utilization of business equipment has been impaired. Businesses are asked to complete the request for information through the Assessor's on-line filing system at system at Santa Clara County Assessor's Office - E-Filing ([sccassessor.org](http://sccassessor.org)). Businesses must file property statement filings, due April 1, and no later than May 7, without penalty.



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## 'Evergreen Tennis' founded by Evergreen High School sophomore to boost recycling

*25,000 Tennis balls recycled thus far equivalent to 150K plastic bottles!*

By William Bellou  
Publisher

Ritali Jain, a sophomore at Evergreen Valley High School, founded 'Evergreen Tennis' to increase community engagement on boosting the rate at which we recycle tennis balls.

'Evergreen Tennis', a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, collects and recycles an item whose recycling process is unbeknownst to a ma-

jority of citizens: tennis balls.

"When most people think about recycling, paper and plastics come to mind," said Jain. "However, many common items that traditionally end up in landfills are recyclable in unconventional ways."

Jain, who has been playing tennis for more than six years, said she's concerned about the countless number of balls that are thrown away.

"Players frequently purchase tennis balls in bulk because the ball quality deteriorates after only a few sessions of play," said Jain. "With the growing popularity of tennis in our local area, I knew I could not stand by as vast amounts of balls polluted our landfills, hurting our environment."

Throughout her research, Jain said she was astonished by the magnitude of the recycling issue. More than 125 million tennis balls are thrown away each year in the U.S. alone, and more than 350 million worldwide.

Each tennis ball takes more than 400 years to decompose, nearly the same as plastic water bottles. In terms of weight, the amount of tennis balls thrown away annually equates to approximately 750 million plastic water bottles.

"It's crazy how this problem is so massive, yet naturally



Ritali Jain

overlooked due to the obscurity and lack of emphasis," explained Jain.

### 25,000 tennis balls recycled

'Evergreen Tennis' was founded to raise awareness regarding recycling by implementing an accessible and effortless option for players to recycle their tennis balls. The nonprofit provides bins at various courts free of cost to the community. The tennis balls are collected and sent for shipping where they can be recycled into material for building tennis courts. So far, Evergreen Tennis has recycled more than 25,000 tennis balls, which is equivalent to recycling 150,000 plastic bottles!

### Challenges

'Evergreen Tennis' faced its first challenge right from the beginning. While the organization was founded in January 2020 and set to launch its operations, it was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic, as numerous Bay Area tennis facilities were closed. However, 'Evergreen Tennis' bounced back and is currently operating in several areas including Evergreen, Los Gatos, and Fremont. The Director of Club Partnering with Evergreen Tennis recently remarked, "This is a great initiative for the environment, and I'm so happy to support it."

### Filling a need

The City of San Jose and other cities across the Bay Area currently do not provide this type of ball recycling and that's where 'Evergreen Tennis' fills in the institutional gap needed to mitigate the climate crisis. The ongoing climate fires and other disasters have especially been a call to action. Jain said she is hopeful that the initiative inspires communities to look to make a difference no matter how small it seems.

"All these instances of social entrepreneurship come together and really can make change," said Jain. "It ripples throughout our communities."

Expansion is a very feasible and a primary goal for 'Evergreen Tennis,' as there are currently more than 350 courts in San Jose and thousands of courts across the Bay Area.

The nonprofit is looking for passionate youth volunteers who align with its mission of saving the environment. To help drive this environmental cause, those with the resources are encouraged to donate to 'Evergreen Tennis' at [www.evergreentennis.org](http://www.evergreentennis.org)



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## Times Feature

## Supervisor Lee details first 100 days of service for District 3

By Otto Lee

Special to the Times

March 17, 2021 was Supervisor Otto Lee's 100th day of service to District 3 and Santa Clara County. Since 1933 and FDR's "New Deal", the first one hundred days has become a measure for new leadership. As Santa Clara County continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic and address the housing crisis, we are working towards a brighter future.

We have a lot of work to do over these next 3.5 years, but it's important to take a moment and look back at the success of our first 100 days. We sit at the intersection of possibility, and I'm ready to take on future challenges.

Your D3 Team is committed to the work. We are humbled and honored to serve our community. Here's a brief look back on our first 100 Days, our reflection of where we are today and a roadmap of possibilities.

My colleagues on the Board of Supervisors and I are working together to make real, positive changes and support to the community. Here are some of the biggest highlights from our meetings in the first 100 days of my term:

**COVID-19 Relief Efforts**

Dec. 15: Temporary cap on commissions and fees charged by third-party food delivery services to local restaurants and/or their customers

Jan. 26: Hazard Pay in Santa Clara County for Grocery Workers

Jan. 26: Urgency ordinance temporarily banning evictions

Feb. 9: Prioritize extremely low-income households for federal emergency rental assistance

Feb. 9: Reducing or waiving fees charged to small business establishments for the calendar year 2021 due to COVID-19

**County Services, Reforms & Policies:**

Jan. 12: Review County (Environmental) Sustainability Master Plan

Feb. 9: Development moratorium in unincorporated Coyote Valley and Climate Change Overlay Zone reviews

Feb. 23: Consider recommendations relating to a Santa Clara County Correctional System Master Plan and commissioning a Department of Corrections Needs Assessment Study

Feb. 23: Allocation of \$100 million Measure A Funds for five new affordable housing projects in San José

**Equity and Inclusion:**

Dec. 15: Resolution establishing a hate crimes task force

Mar. 9: Resolution denouncing ongoing anti-Asian sentiment and violence against Asian American community members

**100 Days - Helping The Unhoused**

One of the biggest issues we have worked on so far, but has not directly been a Board vote, is addressing homelessness and supporting our unhoused neighbors. We shared a D3 Focus On newsletter with you about all of our efforts (<https://mailchi.mp/0ad51dde0145/d3-focus-on-housing-13386568>) but we would like to share an incredibly uplifting story. Thanks to a coalition of partners working together, our neighbors at Fair Oaks Parks were secured temporary housing, and are working on the next step in their transition to stable housing. Here is the link for the video about Fair Oaks Park: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcWe-jN4BtgQ>

**100 Days - Partners In Service Deliver PPE Donations and More**

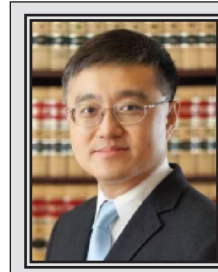
We hit the ground running on day one and kept moving forward. One initiative that we are looking forward to is our Partners In Service

Program. A value deeply instilled within me is my duty to serve my community. Silicon Valley is full of the energy, interest and availability necessary for us to tackle our challenges. This program enables us to help guide partners to the needs within our community and how they can best help give back. This is for the community, by the community. We will be focusing on three main fields - public health, education, and homelessness. We will be rolling out more information this spring, and we are excited by the work we have already achieved with our current partners in service, such as Broadcom, Bridge Foundation, Nanjing Chamber of Com-

merce and Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce of SF Bay Area.

**100 Days - Staying Connected**

Of course, our success is only possible with you. Please follow us on social media Twitter @SupOttoLee or Facebook.com/SupervisorOttoLee, or visit us online at SupervisorLee.org. So far, we have attended more than 20 neighborhood association meetings and hosted more than 150 online meetings with community leaders, organizations and residents. Our community net-

**County Report**By Otto Lee  
Supervisor District 3

work is growing and if we can connect and share with one another, we'll do great things together.

Thank you. Gracias. Cảm ơn bạn. 謝謝你. Salamat. Getting to be your Supervisor means a lot to me, and I am honored to serve you and our community. We are working to embrace a future of inclusion and diversity, where each of our neighbors are thriving--not merely surviving. We are caring for our planet and for each other, and doing so safely. We'll do it together. Thank you for giving me these past 100 days to serve you, I look forward to the hundreds more ahead.

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## Times Feature



A cyclist enjoys riding in the sun. Stock photo.

## Bay Area's first bicycle superhighway to connect San Jose, Santa Clara

By Sonya Herrera

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight  
Continuous. Connected. Safe.  
And joyful.

This is what the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority aims to achieve with its Central Bikeway project, a roughly 10-mile bicycle superhighway through San Jose and Santa Clara that would be the first of its kind in the Bay Area.

"It will set a lot of precedents for hopeful future corridors," said VTA land use planner Brent Pearce during a presentation of the project. "We will be using joy as an evaluation metric."

The Central Bikeway was recently proposed as part of the Santa Clara County-wide Bike Plan in 2018, a comprehensive look at helping cyclists travel more easily and safely between cities by VTA staff.

Santa Clara County already has 800 miles of bikeways, including dedicated bike lanes on roads such as San Fernando Street in downtown San Jose. There are 200 miles of dedicated bike trails, but many popular routes—such as the Guadalupe River Trail and Coyote Creek Trail—are not connected through a continuous, uninterrupted path.

The transportation agency is studying three alternatives for the proposed bicycle superhighway, nicknamed the Walsh Wizard, the Trail Trackway and the Shortliner. All routes extend east of Highway 680 in San Jose.

Members of VTA's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee discussed the three alternatives last week during their monthly meeting. Only one San Jose resident, Brandon Alvarado, serves on the 16-member committee.

Pearce said the Walsh Wizard—which would run just north of Lawrence Caltrain Station in Santa Clara along Berryessa Road in San Jose—is projected to be the slowest of the routes between cities because of its length, with 22% of the bikeway along the Guadalupe River Trail. This path would also require the least roadway changes and would likely be the cheapest.

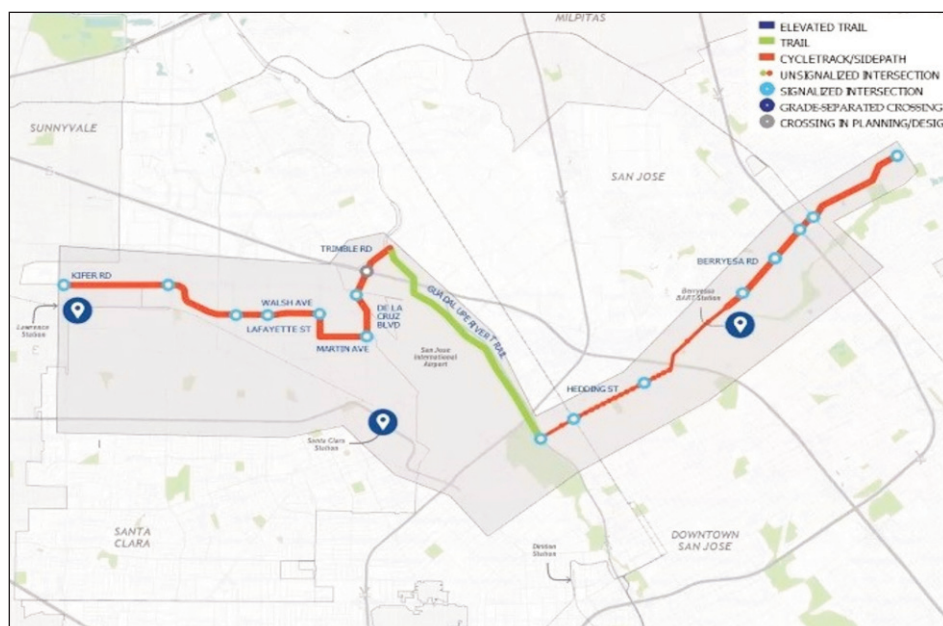
Committee member Tim Oey said this route leaves cyclists vulnerable to the river's seasonal rise, which floods over the bike path.

The Trail Trackway—the most "trail-like" of the options—follows the Penitencia Creek Trail, Coyote Creek Trail, Caltrans Corridor and Caltrain Corridor to San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail finally ending on Central Expressway. Grade separations, or elevated paths, would need to be built on at least two points, making it a more arduous ride for casual cyclists.

Committee member Betsy Megs said the proposed trails bikeway could present a safety issue, particularly for female cyclists.

"That is a personal safety thing to my mind," Megs said. "That sounds like it has

See CYCLING, page 15



The Walsh Wizard, which follows a portion of the Guadalupe River Trail, would likely be the cheapest of the three alternatives proposed by VTA. Image courtesy of VTA

# ESUHSD prepares for in-person instruction in April

The East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) Board of Trustees voted unanimously on Thurs., March 18 to reopen schools on April 19, 2021.

Santa Clara County remains in the red tier on California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy and continues to show a downward trend in the number of COVID-19 cases.

The district's Reopening Plan for schools outlines strict safety protocols, including, but not limited to:

- Maximum of 1,000 students at any given time on campus
- Requires masks and six feet of physical distancing by students and staff
- Students will be regularly tested
- Full tracking and tracing are in place at the District level
- Any student/staff participating in in-person instruction must go through a symptom screening check each day
- No person once tested positive for COVID-19, may return until negative test is provided or 10 days of quarantine is completed

As of February 28, 2021, Santa Clara County expanded COVID-19 vaccine appointment opportunities for employees in education, of which many ESUHSD employees secured their appointments.

"The benefits of opening our schools for all students that would like to come back for in-person instruction on campus far outweigh the costs of keeping them closed," said ESUHSD Board President, Van Le. "For those students and families that are not ready for in-person instruction, they will continue with distance learning. We are committed to keeping our staff, students and families safe and healthy."

"We are moving in the right direction," said ESUHSD Superintendent, Chris D. Funk. "As we approached the one-year anniversary of distance learning, we were

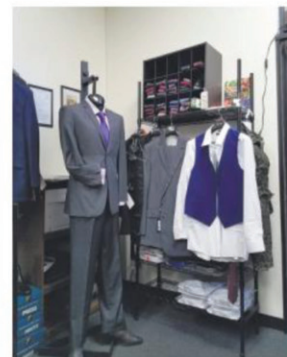
*"The benefits of opening our schools for all students that would like to come back for in-person instruction on campus far outweigh the costs of keeping them closed," said ESUHSD Board President, Van Le.*

well aware of the significant strain that distance learning is having on some students, not only on the learning process, but also the impacts on the mental and physical well-being of students. My top priority is getting students who want to be back on campus safely back this spring."

"It's important to provide in-person support and interventions for our students and families," said Teresa Marquez, Associate Superintendent of Educational Services. "Our campuses have been open to students needing a quiet space and/or

access to stable internet, including our foster youth, homeless students, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and those that are disengaged. Our outreach to parents has shown that there's a need for more students to return to our campuses for academic support and social connections."

Governor Newsom has also designated funds under the AB/SB 86 Incentive to support schools in reopening efforts and ESUHSD stands to potentially receive approximately \$7.9 million.



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## Newsom Recall Campaign submits 2 million signatures

The two campaign committees working to recall Governor Gavin Newsom submitted more than 2 million voter signatures on March 17.

The 2 million signatures represent the most ever gathered on an official recall petition in the history of the United States.

In 2003, California voters recalled Governor Gray Davis in a campaign led by Rescue California.

### Nextar poll

The Nexstar Media Group's six California television stations along with Emerson College published a poll last week who they wanted to represent California in the 2022 election.

The poll found that 58.3% of Californians want someone other than Governor Gavin Newsom in the 2022 election.

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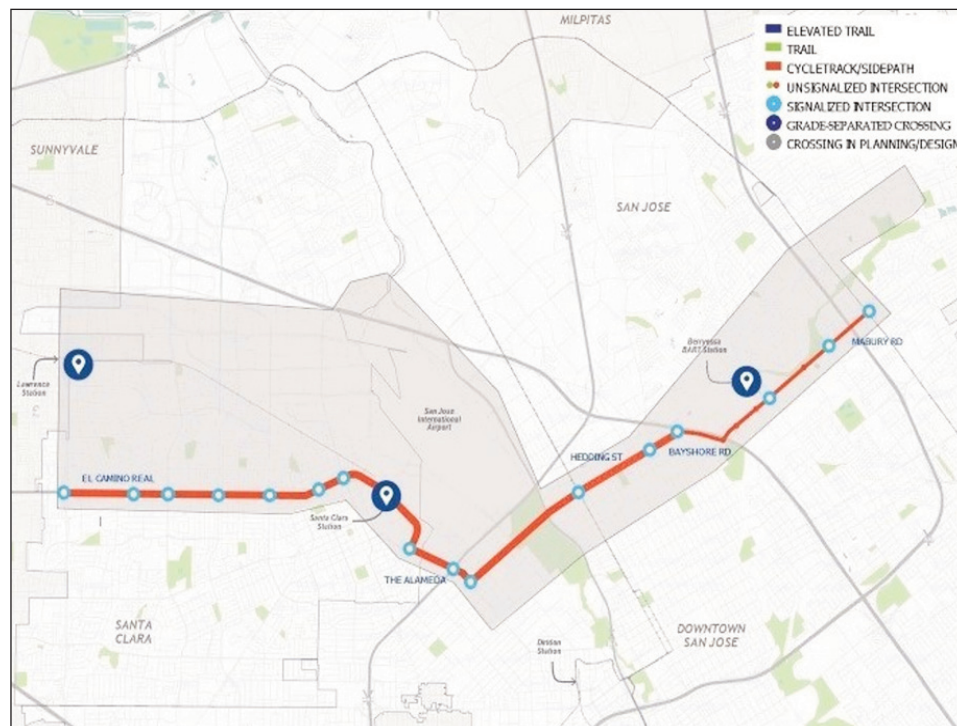
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**Times Feature**Above: Map of the Trail Trackway option. Below: Map of the Shortliner option. *Images courtesy of VTA.***Cycling***Continued from page 12*

the strong potential to be both isolated and have relatively little access.”

Oey agreed, adding that while trails are fun, they don’t serve commuters well.

“When I think of a bike superhighway, I want to get to where I want to get to quicker,” Oey said.

The shortest-length option is the Shortliner, which would extend from East El Camino Real to Mabury Road and Capitol Avenue in San Jose. Pearse said this route would benefit commuters who want relatively quick access to restaurants and retail along the storied El Camino.

Committee member John Cordes said that while the Shortliner may be shortest in length, it likely would not be the shortest in terms of time, given the heavy traffic along El Camino. Pearse said VTA could coordinate traffic signals to ensure cyclists would not need to stop at every intersection along the busy street.

The VTA planner said residents are more likely to use the route to commute to and



from work; however, the agency’s initial public outreach showed that residents also hope to use the bikeway for leisure and exercise.

“The hard thing about planning facilities like this, over long distances, is those trade-offs present themselves really quickly,” Pearse said.

Readers can learn more about the project and how to access meetings at [vta.org/centralbikeway](http://vta.org/centralbikeway).

Contact Sonya Herrera at [sonya.m.herrera@gmail.com](mailto:sonya.m.herrera@gmail.com) or follow @SMHsoftware on Twitter.

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## California Dept. of Public Health issues updated K-12 guidance: 3-foot physical distancing between students in classrooms

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) updated K-12 Schools Guidance to align with the latest science, as reflected by yesterday’s update from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

CDPH’s quick response serves to mitigate potential confusion as schools throughout the state actively resume in-person instruction and plan for the summer and fall.

The state’s updated guidance strongly recommends distancing of at least three feet for students in classrooms. The updated guidance also renders all schools eligible to open if case rates are below 25 per 100,000 population.

In all tiers, schools that have not yet opened must post their COVID Safety

Plan online five days before reopening. In the purple tier, all schools must also submit their COVID Safety Plan to their local health officer and the State Safe Schools team concurrent with the online posting.

## Bank of America Villages Branch location scheduled to close

Notices are being mailed out notifying customers that the Bank of America Evergreen Villages Branch is closing, the only branch closing in the South Bay located at 2933 The Villages Pkwy, San Jose, CA 95135

“This is really upsetting. While many of us already do online banking, we still use the ATM,” said a Bank of America customer. “I am aware that there are other branches nearby but some people don’t drive and are able to walk to the bank; I would like for the ATM to remain.”

The bank branch will close permanently on July 20, 2021.

Customers with safe deposit boxes must close them out by May 21, 2021.

## GEMS IN STEM

## Fighting COVID-19 like a superhero

By Apoorva Panidapu

Special to the Times

Hi everyone! As a recap: this column, Gems in STEM, is a place to learn about various STEM topics that I find exciting, and that I hope will excite you too. This column will always be written to be accessible, so you don't have to worry about not having background knowledge.

While most of the past articles of this column have been math-oriented, today we're going to be tackling the T in STEM: technology!

Do you ever wish you were Bat man (or Bat + any other gender)? No, not the superhero Batman (who doesn't really have any superpowers), but someone who is sort of like the Bat; equivalent of Spiderman, i.e. someone with bat-like abilities. Chances are this is probably not one of your top three

wishes – but let me convince you why it should be. Then, I'll be the Genie to your Aladdin and grant you this wish with just a few

clicks on your phone. (Rest assured, this is not a pyramid scheme – Bat Scout's honor.)

Bats are famously known for their echolocation, which allows them to gauge the distance to various objects. It seems like a superpower until you learn how it actually works: bats call out a high-frequency sound and derive the distance based on how long it takes for the sound wave to bounce back—hence the term echo-location. These high-frequency sounds are called ultrasounds, because they're too high for humans to discernibly hear. Bats use this tool for a variety of reasons: to capture prey, avoid obstacles, and, most importantly,

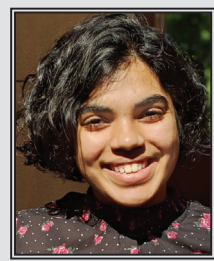
detect danger.

Okay, but what does this have to do with us, or with COVID-19? Well, just imagine if we had this ability! Imagine if you could detect when your super chat-ty younger sibling is coming around the corner, and could preemptively hide from the danger of being talked to death. Imagine if people were able

to leverage ultrasound to detect the undetectable...

Turns out we can (sort of)! Most of us already carry around our own personal bat: our smartphones. Modern mobile phones can emit ultrasonic waves and record them. Using this, the new contact-tracing app NOVID combines ultrasonic technology with Bluetooth and Wi-Fi to anonymously track an individual's exposure to COVID-19 with high accuracy rates, an active response to the global pandemic.

The most critical innovation is that which is born in the face of current, real-life crises, just as NOVID was. It values privacy as a form of safety, a value that is becoming increasingly scarce nowa-



## Gems in STEM

By Apoorva Panidapu



With NOVID, you can be a modern day superhero, using your trusty sidekick (your phone), to detect danger.

days. Safety and progress should always be prioritized equally—they are not mutually exclusive. While keeping privacy and anonymity in mind, NOVID overcomes the inefficient distance-tracking of Bluetooth technology by applying this echolocation concept, and thus became the first major app to be transparent with their users about these distances.

So how does it work? Essentially, if you can measure the time it takes to give out and receive an ultrasonic signal, you can determine the distance with a solid accuracy. NOVID leverages the smartphone's ability to do this and uses chains of contact to alert users if they encountered anyone who self-reported a positive COVID-19 case, or even users who came into contact with said people—all while remaining anonymous. By employing the everyday person's smartphone as the Robin to their Batman, NOVID surpasses similar apps with its increased accuracy, efficiency, and security.

But NOVID's relevancy isn't its only highlight! NOVID was founded by Carnegie Mellon University math professor Po-Shen Loh, who used his experience in network theory and graph theory to develop it. As an avid pure math enthusiast who is constantly asked the question, "Yeah, but what's the point?", it can be frustrating to have to justify pure math to my more science-oriented peers (who are all about applications). Though I believe many things don't need to have a practical application to have value, pure math does have the potential to substantially increase the efficiency of current technology! The issue is that not that many people actually know about this, or aren't very interested in delving into its abyss of abstractness to pull out obscure applications. However, at NOVID, the developers think about and utilize this sort of math constantly. For example, NOVID creates a graph of your social circles: each

person is a node (or vertex), and as you meet/pass other people, you create an invisible edge between you and them. Using degrees of separation, you are informed of any alarming circumstances and can reach out for help accordingly. Moreover, Dr. Loh has spoken about implementing finite field theory to improve a quadratic-time part of the code into linear-time, which results in better battery-saving on users' phones. Finite field properties are rarely seen outside of a math major's course requirements, and it's incredible to realize that it can be used to improve modern daily technology!

What is a superhero, really? I argue that a superhero is someone who uses their ability to help the world and protect the public. During the pandemic, most of us have felt powerless, unable to do anything except wait for vaccines. However, with NOVID, you can be a modern day superhero, Bat man, using your trusty sidekick (your phone), to detect danger. Except, unlike most superheroes, we fight the pandemic by avoiding the danger! Furthermore, NOVID opens the door to self-defense against future diseases by being a sort of radar, and has the potential to completely change the way we respond to pandemics. By letting us reclaim control from diseases with just one download, NOVID lets us be superheroes to our community. So, what do you wish for? Well, now you can be the Genie, and if you so wish, you can be Bat man with just a couple taps on your phone. Echoing the original Batman, I say, "Yes, [NOVID]. I shall become a bat."

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 apoorvap-writes@gmail.com.

*Disclaimer: I am just a user of the app, and I have no affiliation with the company. -- Apoorva*

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Times **Feature**

## Opera San José kicks off spring with 'Love and Secrets: a Domestic Trilogy'

Three exquisite operas, three evocative stories; 75 minutes of music launches April 15, 2021

Romance so often conjures images of affectionate gestures grand and small: flowers, chocolates, initials carved in bark.

Opera San José's latest digital offering, *Love & Secrets: A Domestic Trilogy*, explores what happens below the surface, with three tales of passion and yearning, as couples contend with the tumult, joys, and heartache of love.

"For couples around the globe, this extended period of quarantine has forced romantic relationships into uncharted territories," explains General Director Khorl Dastoor, who conceived of and curated this original collection of three chamber operas. "The rhythm of domestic life has been disrupted and challenged as never before. How do we cope when we cannot escape one another, or when losses feel new again? And what do we fight to keep just for ourselves? *Love & Secrets: A Domestic Trilogy* offers a timely window, both comedic and poignant, into the lives of three couples confronting such challenges, who must navigate a path forward together."

Conducted by Music Director Joseph Marcheso and Resident Conductor Christopher James Ray, who will be leading members of the Opera San José Orchestra, and directed by Opera San José Resident Director Tara Branham, this trilogy of fully-staged works will launch its digital performances 6:00 p.m., Thursday, April 15 with a post-performance virtual "cast party," and will then be available to stream on demand for a limited time.

Tickets (which include 30 days of on-demand viewing access) are available on a pay-what-you-can basis at \$15, \$25, or \$40 per household. A special opening night ticket (\$50 per household) includes admission to the post-show cast party on April 15. For more information or to purchase tickets, the public can visit [operasj.org](http://operasj.org) or call (408) 437-4450 (open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)



Resident Artists soprano **Vanessa Becerra** and baritone **Efraín Solís** appear in Wolf-Ferrari's "Il segreto di Susanna" in Opera San José's latest digital offering, "Love & Secrets: A Domestic Trilogy," launching on April 15. *Photo Credit: Chris Ayers.*



## Rain total for Evergreen Valley: 8.82 inches

Evergreen Valley received 0.30" of rain from the Thursday-Friday storm March 18-19, 2021 bringing our YTD (year-to-date) total to 8.82 inches, according to Silver Creek Valley resident Jacqueline Bogard who monitors our rain totals with her rain gauge. The rain year begins October 1.

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DF-CD-NP-Q121

Times **Community News**

## Adopt-A-Bench Public Art Project unveiled by Youth Commission

Valley Water has announced the completion of the pilot Adopt-A-Bench project.

Two decades ago, Valley Water installed nearly 200 interpretive benches throughout Santa Clara County. Recently, the Valley Water Youth Commission worked alongside Paul J. Gonzalez, a San Jose artist and muralist, to repurpose and revitalize seven of these benches as part of a pilot program.

The revitalized benches have artwork that depict scenes of environmental stewardship, highlighting the importance of protecting plants and wildlife. These seven revitalized public art benches are along Uvas Creek in Gilroy, Saratoga Creek in



Santa Clara, Berryessa Creek in Milpitas, Los Alamitos Creek and Penitencia Creek in San Jose, Stevens Creek in Cupertino, and Permanente Creek in Los Altos.

"It is important for Valley Water to fulfill our role as a good neighbor to take responsible care of our creeks and waterways and create a better, more sustainable community," said Board of Directors Chair Tony Estremera.

Youth Commissioner Elise Mullen added, "I think this project did a fantastic job of combining art and interesting information about the local flora and fauna surrounding each of these benches."

A live-stream virtual event will be held to celebrate the completion of the seven public art benches in Santa Clara County.

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## Times Feature

### TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK

## Digital Twin

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 me teach you the meaning of some commonly used tech words:

#### Digital Twin

The concept of Digital Twin was introduced in 2003 at the University of Michigan in a published paper. Thanks to the evolution of Internet of Things (IoT), this concept is now becoming cost-effective to implement. Today, it is so imperative to the business that it was named one of Gartner’s Top 10 Strategic Technology Trends for 2017.

So what is a Digital Twin?

A digital twin is a virtual model of a process, product or service. Let’s take an example – Suppose you have a document or information you want to save for future use. Once the document is scanned and saved in a digital format on a computer, we can do two things with the original document – get rid of it or keep it, for instance for regulatory reasons. If we trash it, the paper-free dream, it’s gone and all we have is that digital information, no copy. With a digital twin, we have two versions of a ‘thing’: the physical one and the digital twin one.

The digital twin concept is built on three pillars:

- A physical product in real space
- A virtual product in virtual space
- The connection of data and information

that ties the virtual and real products together.

First, smart components that use sensors to gather data about real-time status are integrated with the physical product. The components are connected to a virtual product that receives and processes all the data the sensors monitor. Using this setup, an engineer can understand how the product is performing, and how will they perform in the future. Analysis from the data collected through the sensors allow us to make better predictions.

Digital twins help manufacturers and engineers visualize products in use, in real-time. It helps to refine assumptions made on the product using predictive analytics and helps in troubleshooting. It also allows manufacturers to edit a virtual prototype throughout the production process.

Many industries are adopting the digital twin approach for product design, including construction and asset management of buildings and infrastructure. The 15-billion Crossrail project, for example has a digital twin model of the whole network. General Electric GE is using digital twinning to build and maintain its wind farms. Virtual models allow engineers to monitor and control the turbines, identifying problems before they occur.

Digital Twin is an excellent way to digitize the physical world for an industrial company. This will help make the full cycle of a product more efficient as well as cost-effective.

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



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Times **Community News**

**Bank Robbery** – On Friday afternoon, March 12, at the southwest shopping center at Aborn and White Roads, San Jose Police responded to a robbery in progress. According to Information officer Steve Aponte, officers responded to the 3300 Block of San Felipe Rd for a robbery incident. A report was taken, and detectives are currently working the case. No suspects are in custody. *Photo by CL*

**EESD**

*Continued from page 1*

Families still have the option to continue distance learning for their child. The hybrid and distance learning models will be in place through the end of the 2020-21 school year.

The Board of Trustees also approved an agreement to launch a pilot hybrid in-person learning program that commenced this week with a small group of teachers who have agreed to be a part of this early return to in-person learning project.

EESD administrators believe the pilot program will help inform best practices with approaches to instruction and scheduling as the district prepares for more students to return to in-person learning on April 19.

"Our school district stands to learn valuable lessons about what works and what does not work from the early returners," said Dr. Emy

Flores, Superintendent of EESD. "As we thoughtfully approach returning students to our school campuses to in-person learning, we recognize our teachers and staff and thank them for their care, professionalism, flexibility and commitment throughout this historic and challenging time in our district. As always, we are committed to providing all students with high quality and engaging instruction, while also supporting their social and emotional needs, especially through this transition."

In order to allow for social distancing, students learning in-person will be in the hybrid learning schedule, students will be assigned to one of two cohorts that attend school in-person on campus two days per week. The hybrid learning model is a blend of distance education and in-person, on-campus, classroom instruction, to achieve having fewer students on campus in order to implement the recommended six feet of social distancing in the classroom and on campus.

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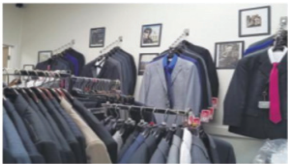
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