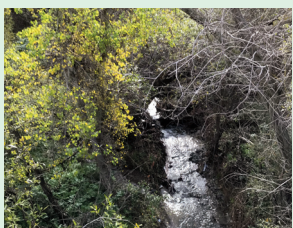


Evergreen's bright green colors are a result of the recent wet weather
SEE PAGE 4



Surprising move
Final congressional map splits San Jose into four districts
— **SEE PAGE 7**

California's new composting law: what you need to know
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DEC. 31, 2021 – JAN. 13, 2022 ■ VOL. 39, NO. 1

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District 5 San Jose City Council candidate **Andres Quintero** speaking at a rally for the Unity Map on Dec. 7.
Photo by Tran Nguyen

San Jose politician worked on map that would have benefited his candidacy

Quintero lives in District 8

By Eli Wolfe

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

Questions are swirling around an East San Jose politician who worked on a redistricting map that would have helped him in an upcoming election.

Andres Quintero, vice president of the board of trustees for Alum Rock Union School District, announced his candidacy for the District 5 San Jose City Council seat last week. According to an East San Jose community leader, Quintero was pondering a run as early

See QUINTERO, page 21

San Jose mayor wants all city workers to get COVID boosters

Under proposal all visitors entering city buildings would need vax shots

By Jana Kadah

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

San Jose city employees may have another vaccine requirement coming their way. Mayor Sam Liccardo introduced a proposal last week to require all city employees to get COVID-19 booster shots as a condition of employment. Visitors to city-owned facilities such as the SAP Center and San Jose McEnery Convention Center would also need a third shot.

Liccardo's proposal will be heard by the city's Rules and Open Government Committee on Jan. 5, which means it could make its way to the full City Council by Jan. 11. If passed, San Jose would be the first city in the state to impose such a mandate.

The proposed booster mandate comes as the Omicron variant spreads in Santa Clara County—it's now the dominant strain in the country.

"It's plainly evident that Omicron is much more transmissible, and we're seeing that all



Mayor **Sam Liccardo** said with rapid transmission rates across the county, he's eyeing the end of January as a deadline for city employees to get boosted.

throughout the East Coast, certainly through Europe and other parts of this country that makes the risk to our community quite eminent," Liccardo said.

"We are not interested by any stretch in causing panic. We just want to make sure everyone's prepared."

There are 10 confirmed Omicron infections in Santa Clara County, but Liccardo said health officials suspect the number is actually much higher. The seven-day rolling average of new COVID infections in the county is 187 as of Tuesday.

Liccardo said with rapid transmission rates across the county, he's eyeing the end of January as a deadline for city employees to get boosted. He said he'll have a better idea of a deadline after the holiday break.

"But as far as I can tell, there's no reason why you should not move forward aggressively knowing what we know, both about Omicron and about the importance of getting fully vaccinated, which I believe includes a booster shot," the mayor said.

Liccardo's booster mandate came as unwelcome news to some.

Tom Saggau, spokesperson for the San Jose Police Officers' Association, said he hadn't heard of the proposal until the mayor announced it.

"Our objection is really process-focused and we want to see the data," Saggau told San José Spotlight. "There has to be a negotiation or discussion. You cannot impose changes to

See BOOSTERS, page 21



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The SOS Auto Repair Toys for Tots drive turned out to be a great success.

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Times Local News

Taking pride in working together for families and children

By Sylvia Arenas
Special to the Times

As we reflect and prepare to close out 2021, I want to say how proud I am of the work we have done together to advocate for our children and families during the height of the pandemic.

The City of San José received more than \$200 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds this Spring – yet we only pledged around a tenth of 1% of that enormous fund to support COVID impacted families with after school, preschool and summer camp programs that many utilize as an affordable childcare option.

These critical programs and services provide working families the support to complete a full shift and/or return back to work knowing that their children are safe and in good care in afterschool and recreational programs offered by the City.



District 8 Report

By Sylvia Arenas
City Councilmember

That is why I am so grateful for the District 8 neighbors and community based organizations that supported my memorandum to the City Council on November 30th to call for an increase in ARPA funds from \$1 million to upwards of \$10.5 million to expand Child and Youth Services to meet the greatest need and investment our community can make – investing in our children. You may re-watch the November 30th City Council discussion here: <https://tinyurl.com/4nn648fh>.

Increasing these city services ensures that our communities most impacted by the pandemic have support from the City, as we recover from the devastation of the pandemic.

Thank you so much for all of your advocacy efforts to ensure that we are not leaving children and families behind. I hope everybody enjoys the winter holidays and safely enjoys quality time with their families and loved ones! Please do not hesitate to contact my office if there are any issues in your neighborhood or if we can be of assistance on any City related matters.

You can reach my office and connect with someone on my team at District8@sanjose-ca.gov or (408) 535-4908.



Heirloom nativity scene stolen by suspect captured on security cam

The Galindo family of Evergreen is heart-broken.

The family's San Jose house was all set up for Christmas to welcome everyone for the Holidays. Then, the festive mood changed as the family's cherished Nativity scene was stolen right off of their front porch just a few days before Christmas.

"I was very, very upset," said Alma Galindo. "The nativity scene was a family heirloom that we wanted to keep passing down to our kids from my mother," said Alma. "People have no respect. Our hearts are broken!"

A Ring videocam-captured image shows the suspect grabbing the entire Luna Family nativity scene at the front of their home and running away.

A man caught on camera in plain view filled up his bag with the figurines and took off on foot.

"That someone would just have the

courage to walk up and take a Nativity, I mean who takes that?" Galindo said.

Galindo said that about an hour later, the man came back to take the rest of it.

Hours later, a neighbor who saw the post and video on the Nextdoor app brought the Galindo family a new one.

"I was astonished and shocked, it was crazy that someone was actually reaching out to help us," Samuel Rodriguez, neighbor of the Galindos said.

***"That someone would just
have the courage to walk
up and take a Nativity, I
mean who takes that?"
Galindo said.***

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Chinyere Nwachukwu
of Evergreen named to
MSOE Honors List for
Fall Quarter 2021

Chinyere Nwachukwu, from San Jose, was named to the Milwaukee School of Engineering's Honors List for the 2021 Fall Quarter.

Nwachukwu is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Undergraduate students who have earned a GPA of 3.20 or higher (out of 4.0) for this quarter are on the Honors List.

Milwaukee School of Engineering (www.msoe.edu) is the university of choice for those seeking an inclusive community of experiential learners driven to solve the complex challenges of today and tomorrow. The independent, non-profit university has about 2,700 students and was founded in 1903.

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PUBLISHER / CEO
WILLIAM D. BELLOU
williamb@timesmediainc.com

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
WILLIAM D. BELLOU
williamb@timesmediainc.com

ADVERTISING SALES
WILLIAM D. BELLOU
408-494-7000

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: DIANE BLUM,
SUNAY SANGHANI, SEAN EASTWOOD,
KEVIN LARSEN, NIRBAN SINGH,
FRANK SHORTT, JUDY LY, EUGENE LUU,
APOORVA PANIDAPU

ART DIRECTOR
JEFF BAHAM
graphics@timesmediainc.com

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
SANDY BELLOU

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Valley Currents

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



Top: The greening of the Evergreen Foothills is apparent. Far right: Thompson Creek above and below (near right) the Yerba Buena Bridge; Below: mushrooms start appearing; and Live Oak is budding.



EVERGREEN GREENING

Bright colors are signs of a wet winter

By Frank Shortt
Times staff writer

The hills around Evergreen Valley are living up to their name as the greens and yellows indicative of a wet winter appear.

Thompson Creek, the watershed for Evergreen, is flowing again. This has been absent for the last couple of years as drought, the bane of California, has prevailed. Surprising rains have been present for several days and nights now causing the feeder streams to flow freely into Thompson.

Thompson Creek, a tributary of Coyote Creek, flows entirely in the district of Ever-

green in East San Jose. The Lake Cunningham flood retention basin now resides where Thompson Creek once flowed into the marshy area known as Laguna Socayre. The flowing creek is a welcome sight to humans and animals alike as birds and small animals scurry about showing their joy at new life.

Another good sign that the ground is getting soaked are the many diverse mushrooms along the pathways and sidewalks. Whether these mushrooms are the edible variety will take an Agaricus expert as is the genus of mushrooms. Anyway, the mushrooms are doing their job showing that there has been plenty of rain so far this year.

The last, but not least, sign of a wet winter is the appearance of green budding on the giant Live oaks that are so plentiful in the Santa Clara valley, Evergreen being no exception. All the squirrels will be happy knowing that the acorn crop will be plentiful this growing season and that they can store up for at least a couple of years against drought or cold spells.

All in all, Evergreen is looking great as the harbinger of the ending of the drought and for better things to come. Those looking for wild mustard greens will not be disappointed as they forage the hillsides for these very tasty and wholesome plants!

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Times **Local News****OP-ED**

I saw them kissing

I always wondered why Paris is considered the city for lovers.

As I get older, I begin to realize that perhaps many in our world forget the wonder of kissing.

Holding hands in some ways fades as each decade passes and sometimes partners walk behind one another.

At the local shopping mall, looking up while going down an escalator I happened to view a chance encounter which made me smile.

It was a girl and guy both in their teens, going up the moving stairs and she turned around to hold her man. You see, their heights seem to match as she stood a stair above him. It was all unexpected for him and one could visibly see he was dazed in this somewhat out of place experience.

How I admire her courage to plant a kiss on him while pressing in and all the while facing backward while traveling up.

It was a sight to see and she and he both measured the time of the kiss as they rapidly reached the top peaking once to not fall down and have a kissing catastrophe, while all the while smiling at each other and going back to kissing each other for one more time on the way up. Maybe they knew that the best place to secretly kiss was in full view of all because no one seemed to notice or if they did, everyone seemed to not want to reveal it.

This experience is perhaps the most important in one's life and all unscripted with daring and gallantry. How many such moments have been thwarted by fear to never take place.

I did not want to spy as they walked to the right out of sight but my eyes took in how gleefully he took his arm and like a square-dance tethered it into hers. The girl started a chain reaction of happiness with an innocent boy who perhaps had never been kissed before and he certainly could not have found a better tutor.

My memories I am afraid have become numbed over time but I could reflect decades ago of my personal experiences to find my smile once again.

As I get older, my leg bones seem to need oil to move, I understand more clearly now why in Paris the act of public kissing is applauded. Maybe secret glances by passers by have the strength to reawaken fond remembrances of long-ago romantic interludes inside their sacred souls.

Such chance sights bring hope and joy in our world to know that people can find happiness in connecting with someone they might fall in love with and know that such things cost no money but only take simple courage to achieve.

Holding hands is most important followed by kissing. Perfume and after shave take command of all air particles. There is no better joy in being with the one you love and having the inner mechanisms of emotions not follow directions, teasing mercilessly the logic in one's mind while writing the simplest of love letters to come.

But of course, such mail written in ink, is perhaps a thing of the past.

I only know for sure, that it's good to witness girls and guys kiss in 2021 and hold hands without masks too.

You see, I saw them kissing and it made me smile.

Kevin Larsen
Evergreen Valley

Final congressional map splits San Jose into four districts

By **Eli Wolfe**
Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

In a surprising upset, the state commission charged with redrawing California's political boundaries drew San Jose into four districts after briefly considering an option that would have limited it to three.

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission voted last week to approve a map that places San Jose in four congressional districts: 16, 17, 18 and 19.

Mayor Sam Liccardo celebrated when the commission advanced a map that would have allowed San Jose to retain a city-majority congressional district. When it became clear the commission was considering a four-way split again, Liccardo made impassioned pleas on social media for residents to testify against the map.

He didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The commission adopted the four-way split for San Jose in part to avoid a district that sprawled from San Mateo to San Luis Obispo counties.

"I think that was the first point in which we started to evaluate what the impacts of a three-split within the city of San Jose would do to the general area,"

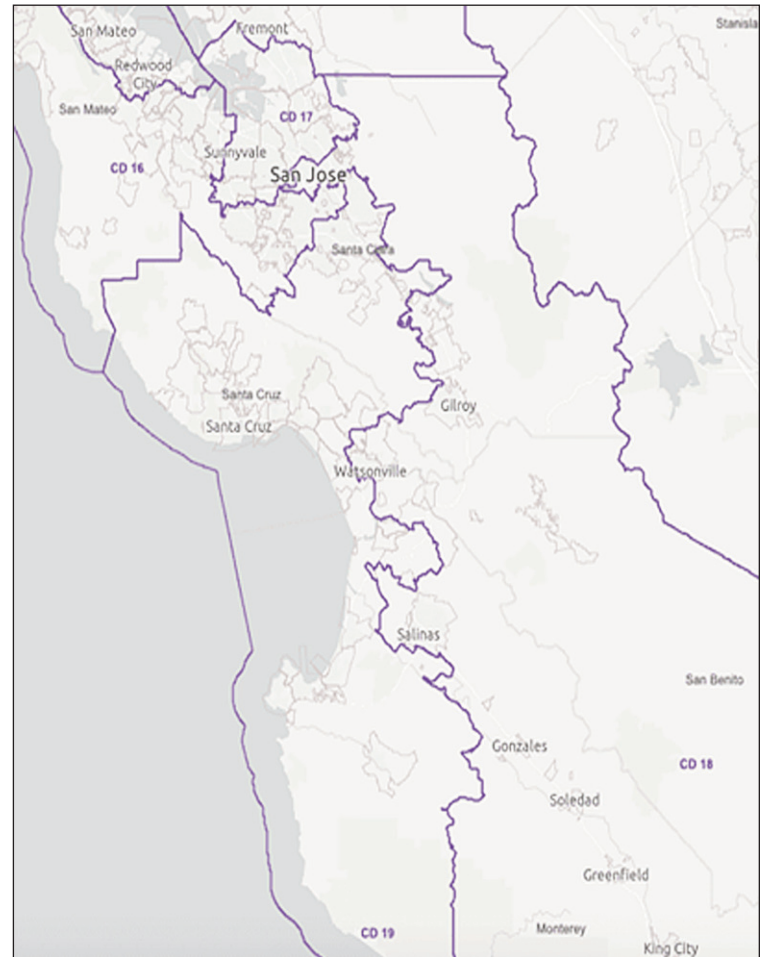
Commissioner Isra Ahmad said, "The commission fell back to the four-split in San Jose with the mind of trying to make as many communities of interest as whole as possible."

Proposed congressional boundaries could split San Jose

The new congressional lines make some other changes in Santa Clara County. Santa Clara, Cupertino, Sunnyvale and Milpitas are now in District 17. Mountain View, Palo Alto and Los Gatos are in District 16. Evergreen and Edenvale are in District 19, which stretches to Santa Cruz and all the way down the coast to Paso Robles. A chunk of Alum Rock is in District 18, which sweeps south to include Morgan Hill, Gilroy, Watsonville and King City.

Terry Christensen, a retired San Jose State University political science professor and host of Valley Politics, is somewhat optimistic about the new boundaries.

"Best spin we can put on this is that San Jose could have not one but (four) representatives if candidates get their act together," he said.



Final congressional boundary lines in Silicon Valley. *Image courtesy of California Citizens Redistricting Commission.*

The state commission must follow six criteria for redrawing congressional boundaries: maintain equal populations in districts; comply with the federal Voting Rights Act; ensure contiguous borders; minimize the division of cities, counties and neighborhood communities of interest; ensure districts are geographically compact; and ensure each Senate district has two complete and adjacent Assembly districts. The commission does not consider how maps will

affect incumbents or candidates.

Ahmad noted San Jose, like much of the South Bay, is densely populated, which makes it challenging to create districts that don't divide communities of interest.

She added the split was also necessary to preserve a Latino-majority district to comply with the Voting Rights Act. This district includes a portion of San Jose in the Alum Rock area that contains Latino essential workers.

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2022 Hiring Trends

By Angela Copeland
Special to the Times

The New Year is here! Just like last year, the world has changed.



Our personal lives and our work lives will continue to look much different than they did in 2019. We've found a new normal. So, what does this mean for hiring in 2022? There are a few trends you should be on the lookout for.

Find Your Style: One of the great things that has come out of the pandemic is remote work. But, remote work isn't for everyone. The good news is, not every company is remote. This means that you, the job seeker, have an opportunity to decide which working style works the best for you. I firmly believe this split in office, remote, and hybrid work environments will stick around long after the pandemic is over. This is the time to pick your perfect work environment.

Extend Your Search Area: In the past, if there were no jobs in your local area, you had two choices. You could stay with your current employer, or you could move. But, remote work breaks down the barrier of distance. If you're in a small market, you can now fish for jobs anywhere in the country. This opens up the possibilities. In some cases, it can also mean an increase in salary. If you're looking

for remote opportunities, look beyond your local market. And, just because a job posting has a city attached to it does not mean there's no chance of remote work.

Try New Roles: The job market is tight right now. Companies are having a tough time finding talent. This means that when a company tries to find a perfect candidate, they very likely will come up empty handed. For the job seeker, this is great. If you've thought of trying a new career field, this is the time to try. Hiring managers are much more likely to give an underdog applicant a shot when it's hard to find the perfect candidate.

Remote Learning: For years, companies have expected their employees to take charge of their education. When employees stay at an organization for fewer years, the company has less incentive to invest in training. They expect you to show up, ready to work. The problem is, in a remote world, it can be hard to increase your skills and knowledge. It's like you're on an island, focused only on your existing work. But, there are many free online courses available. Use them to keep yourself up to date while you're growing your career.

Whatever you do, don't sell yourself short in 2022. I know that the last two years have been scary. We've faced a lot of unknown together, and in quite an isolated fashion. But, companies are still hiring. And, you are still valuable. Accept that what is normal has changed. Make a new set of goals for the New Year, and let's move forward together.

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Does cherishing life require abolishing abortion?

Dear Editor,
Life begins at the point of conception. No one can deny that after a human being is conceived it will develop into the very same being as those debating this issue.

What astounds me is that those who favor abortion went through an identical development stage as the being they are condemning to death. Would these very same people agree that a similar choice should have been made about their own existence? How many human lives have been lost that could have added to our society in so many ways?

Abortion today is used primarily as a birth control of convenience because people are too self-centered to take precautions. They prefer their own pleasurable self-indulgence over the care and sanctity of the life they created. What ever happened to taking responsibility for one's actions in this country? Is it too much to ask a woman who has conceived to place the child into adoption? Nine

months of discomfort is nothing compared to life in prison for voluntary manslaughter! And what about consenting to sex with a male; is that part of the equation too? Or has abortion just become another extension of the women's liberation movement started in the late 60's which coincidentally boosted membership on or about the same date as Roe V. Wade?

Does the father of the child have a say in this? And what about the constitution of the United States? Are not all people conceived in this country deserving of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? I believe abortion is a crime against humanity and should be outlawed. We need to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision and get back to cherishing life in this country. For a country that murders its children cannot be far from self-destruction.

Back in 1973 a Supreme Court decision {Roe v. Wade} legalized abortion by a 7-2 vote.

Six of the seven justices in the majority were Republican appointees. The only Democrat appointee, Byron White, voted against Roe v. Wade. Back then the Republican motto was government is best that governs least. Hence the Republicans giveth and the Republicans taketh away.

Joe Bialek



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A look at the San Jose city council candidates running for office in 2022

By **Lloyd Alaban**

Courtesy of San José Spotlight

In less than six months, San Joseans will go to the ballot box to pick their next councilmembers and mayor.

Numerous candidates have already pulled papers, including Cindy Chavez, Dev Davis, Jonathan Royce Esteban, Matt Mahan and Raul Peralez who are vying to become San Jose's next mayor.

Here's a roundup of the candidates who have declared so far in the race by office. (Candidates have until March 11 to file to run for political office in San Jose.)

Half of the City Council's seats — all the odd districts — are up for election this cycle. Districts 1, 3 and 5 are open seats, with the current officeholders terming out, while Districts 7 and 9 have two incumbents running for reelection: Maya Esparza and Pam Foley, respectively. The primary is set for June 2022.

The biggest seat up for grabs this cycle is mayor. Sam Liccardo is terming out in December 2022 after eight years as the city's top elected official and a previous eight years representing District 3.

With nearly half the 11-member City Council potentially changing, June's results could shift council power back toward business interests or strengthen labor's narrow 6-5 majority. San Jose is generally divided between the two political powerhouses — the business lobby and labor unions — and the business-aligned leaders lost their majority last year when progressive Councilmember David Cohen unseated conservative incumbent Lan Diep in District 4.

The top two vote-getters in each race will head to a runoff in November unless one candidate wins by more than 50 percent in June.

Mayor

Next year's biggest prize already has four big-name candidates in the race: Councilmembers Dev Davis, Matt Mahan and Raul Peralez and Santa Clara County Supervisor Cindy Chavez. Also in the mix: former Nevada congressional candidate Jonathan Royce Esteban.

Davis, who won reelection to her council seat in November, has pushed hard in recent weeks against SB 9, a state bill that allows homeowners to build additional units in single-family neighborhoods. She's made preserving these suburban neighborhoods a cornerstone of her campaign.

Mahan, who was sworn into his first term of any political office in December 2020, launched his campaign for mayor in September in what he called a "revolution of common sense." Part of that revolution includes building up to 5,000 prefab units on 50 acres of public land, improving policing by holding rogue officers accountable for misconduct instead of defunding police and building housing around transit.

Chavez, who has served on the Board of Supervisors since 2013, has the longest political tenure of anyone in the field. One of labor's most seasoned insiders, she was a vocal leader in the fight to close Reid-Hillview Airport amid concerns that leaded fuel was poisoning the community.

Peralez, a former teacher and police officer, is terming out after eight years representing downtown San Jose. He helped launch a business recovery task force to help downtown businesses weather the pandemic. The son of an immigrant and the first in his family to graduate college, Peralez said homelessness has been his number one priority.

Here's the rest of the mayoral field

Also in the race is Tyrone Wade, a former marriage and family crisis counselor who used to run a homeless shelter. Wade wants to implement serious criminal justice reform, including community policing and review the San Jose Police Department's use of force policy. Wade's first priority would be to reform the children protective services system, he told San José Spotlight.

Another contender is Brian Smith, a political unknown who lives in East San Jose.

District 1

Planning Commissioner Justin Lardinois was the first candidate to declare for the West San Jose seat in April. He's joined by the president of the San Jose Downtown Foundation board, Ramona Snyder. The district's incumbent, Vice Mayor Chappie Jones, terms out next year.

Snyder's Facebook campaign page is light on details, but she's been a force in downtown for years. She is a former chair of the city's Arts Commission and was part of the team that helped build a playground at Sherman Oaks Elementary School.

Lardinois, who has served on the commission since July 2020, is also a former member of the city's Housing and Community Development Commission. His priorities include more affordable housing, more opportunities for first-time homebuyers, sanctioned encampments and safer streets for cyclists and pedestrians.

District 3

Peralez terms out next year and is running for mayor. The downtown seat has flip-flopped between labor and business interests over the years—before Peralez, Liccardo represented District 3 and before him Chavez held the seat. She headed the South Bay Labor Council.

Health care professional and former Congressional candidate Ivan Torres and attorney

Elizabeth Chien-Hale have already declared for the seat. They'll be joined by Gulf War veteran and 2006 City Council Candidate Dennis Kyne, Miles Christopher Linden and Irene Smith.

Kyne, a 15-year Army veteran and insurance worker, previously ran for the seat in 2006. Similar to his prior campaign, Kyne's top priority is ending the homelessness crisis in the city.

Linden declared his candidacy last month. San José Spotlight couldn't find a website or other campaign materials for him.

Smith has lived in the downtown area since 1989, according to her campaign website. She's looking for a different solution to homelessness with a lot more coordination between the county and state.

"No group knows what the other is spending or how the programs might work together. There has been no coordination, no master plan," she says on her website.

District 5

One of the most highly-anticipated council races is the fight for the East San Jose seat.

Three longtime politicians have already declared for the East San Jose crown: Santa Clara County Board of Education Trustee Peter Ortiz, Planning Commission Chair Rolando Bonilla, and former Assemblymember Nora Campos, who held the seat from 2001 to 2010.

Ortiz won election to the Board of Education in 2018, and has kept active in East San Jose's small business community. He wants to launch paid job training programs for the district's unemployed residents, sanctioned encampments and alternative policing, such as community patrols.

Bonilla, a former City Hall insider, created a grant program in February to help East San Jose small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Earlier this year, he asked the City Council to spend millions in East San Jose for economic recovery and pressured the council

to increase illegal dumping fees.

Campos is no newcomer to politics. Both she and her brother, Xavier, have represented District 5 on the City Council. Her latest comeback centers around supplying East San Jose businesses with resources to survive the pandemic.

Radio anchor H.G. Nguyen is the latest to join the race.

Nguyen doesn't have an official campaign website, but she has been active in the city's Vietnamese community. She hosts San Jose Co Gi La, a local Vietnamese language radio station.

Nguyen and husband Thuan Nguyen ran the Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce of Santa Clara Valley, according to a report by the Silicon Valley Business Journal.

District 7

Incumbent Councilmember Maya Esparza, former director of Destination: Home's homeless veterans campaign, has filed for reelection.

Esparza will face two Vietnamese Americans for the East San Jose seat: San Jose Fire Captain Bien Doan and East Side Union High School District Board President Van Le. Esparza is expected to draw significant support from the city's labor camp.

Esparza defeated former Councilmember Tam Nguyen in 2018 leading to a loss in Vietnamese representation — compounded by Diep's loss in 2020. Vietnamese leaders are eager to win back a seat for their community.

District 9

After coasting to victory in 2018, incumbent Pam Foley officially announced her run for reelection on Thursday. She currently has no competition, according to the city's filings.

"It has been an honor to represent the neighbors of District 9 on the San Jose City Council," Foley said in a statement. "We have been able to accomplish so much—but we still have much more to do."

Superheroes spread good holiday cheer

By **Lorraine Gabbert**

Senior Staff Writer

Kindergarten students at Alex Anderson Elementary School in San Jose couldn't believe their eyes when a group of superheroes dropped in for a visit.

"This is the best day ever!" shouted the kids.

Batman, Superman, Captain America, Captain Marvel and Thor arrived ready to spread good cheer. They were accompanied by the Mandalorian, much to the excitement of the young Star Wars fans.

Interacting with the kindergarteners came naturally to Sean Bassett, who played the Mandalorian, as he has a five-year-old daughter. He remembers seeing costumed characters when he was young, including his father who dressed as Darth Vader to bring joy to children.

Bassett said being able to follow in his father's footsteps and do something for kids meant a lot to him.



The children's faces lit up even more when the superheroes gifted them with teddy bears. David Watkins, dressed as Batman, was delighted to hear the children's squeals and peals of laughter.

"It feels great seeing the kids' expressions," Watkins said. "This is why we're all here."

The superheroes were also able to distribute teddy bears, donated by Raley's Nob Hill, to students at Horace Cureton, Earl Frost, Hayes and Oak Ridge Elementary Schools.

Principal Sarah Kates-March said it was nice for the kids to see life can still be magical. She told the superheroes she was grateful to them for bringing joy to children who hadn't had a lot to look forward to lately.

"These days with COVID...happiness is the

greatest gift," she said. "I can't imagine a better gift around the holidays."

Instructional Assistant Gretchen Siri said it was exciting for the kids to see some of their heroes in person. Siri also appreciated their giving out gifts.

"Some of these kids might not be getting too much for Christmas," she said. "So, this is really nice for them."

Lam said when he hands a child a bear and sees their smile and the excitement in their eyes, there's nothing like it. Nitschke agrees.

"Seeing their joy, I want to spend the rest of my life doing this," he said.

Pictured above: **Captain America, Thor, Superman, Batman, the Mandalorian and Captain Marvel** brought joy to kinder students at elementary schools throughout San Jose.



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Times Local News

In annual speech, San Jose mayor says homelessness is city's 'biggest failure'

By Jana Kadah

Article courtesy of San José Spotlight

San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo painted a realistic picture of the city's failures while highlighting a hopeful future at his State of the City address on Thursday, Dec. 23.

In his seventh annual address, and second virtual speech, Liccardo discussed the city's biggest issues. He focused on homelessness, public safety, community resiliency and environmental improvements.

The city's biggest failure in Liccardo's eyes—homelessness.

"I take responsibility for that failure and for every unhoused neighbor who is in camps in our parks, our creeks and our sidewalks," Liccardo said. "It's the failure of decisions predicated on the belief that if we just keep doing the same things the same way, eventually progress would come, contrary to the palpable evidence in our streets."

The city's 2019 homeless count showed San Jose had more than 6,000 unhoused residents—a figure that rose 42% from 2017 to 2019. It's also a figure many housing advocates believe is much higher after two pandemic years and the end of the state eviction ban.

Liccardo said the city helped 4,900 homeless residents find permanent housing since the pandemic's start, but the proof of growing homelessness is in the streets as many roads, parks and creeks are still riddled with tents and makeshift homes.

San Jose mayor focuses on COVID-19 recovery in State of the City speech

Sandy Perry, a housing advocate and president of the Affordable Housing Network of Santa Clara County, said the homeless crisis is "without a doubt" the city's biggest failure.

"The lack of affordable housing is the city's problem, but I just don't agree with their approach because they're long on transitional housing or temporary housing and they're short on permanent solutions," Perry told San José Spotlight.

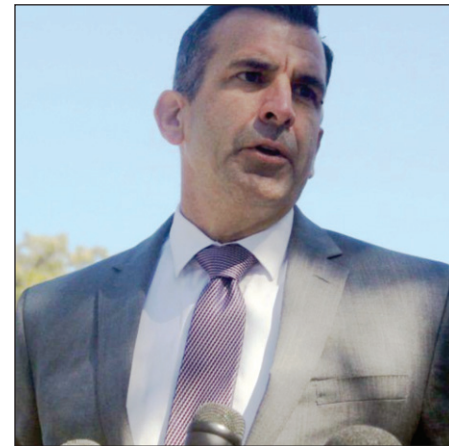
Liccardo touted new, innovative solutions like transforming motel rooms into interim housing sites and building additional prefabricated homes. His goal for next year is to construct 1,000 quick-build apartments and convert 300 motel rooms.

He advocated for quicker, temporary solutions to be more cost effective and get people off the street quicker—noting 2016's Measure A "gave too many false hope that it would solve homelessness."

"In reality, the first apartment complex funded with that 2016 measure didn't open its doors in San Jose until 2020," the mayor continued.

Public Safety

Liccardo spoke of solutions to improve public safety "without a gun or a badge," like halting police enforcement in high schools and expanding the community service officer program. He also pointed



to a program started this year that sends behavioral and mental health specialists on calls with police.

But advocates within the criminal justice system like Raj Jayadev from Silicon Valley De-Bug said the mayor has done the opposite by increasing funding to police through the purchase of different surveillance technologies without investing in alternatives.

"It's really, quite frankly, insulting knowing that people are dying on the street and they're buying new technologies that exacerbate the suffering," Jayadev said.

"We're seeing just an escalation of people that are having more and more real interactions and dangerous interactions with police."

The mayor said San Jose police are the most thinly-staffed department compared to other major cities in the U.S., which is why he said he didn't listen to protestor calls to defund the police.

"Our neighborhoods invariably tell us that they want to see more police patrols in their neighborhoods, not fewer," Liccardo said.

Environment and community

The mayor also discussed plans to create a more sustainable future—noting the recent vote to make San Jose carbon neutral by 2030—the first city in the U.S. to set such a goal.

He also pointed to the 400 miles of bike lanes recently completed and the installation of 2,000 publicly accessible car chargers for electric vehicles.

Liccardo celebrated the city's investments to curb the digital divide. The city helped connect more than 100,000 residents to free Wi-Fi and equipped more than 60,000 students with laptops, the mayor said.

"We continue to pull together to confront unprecedented challenges," Liccardo said. "For all our challenges, San Jose has never shone brighter."

He concluded by saying San Jose is the envy of all other cities because of its innovations and opportunities.

"I've provided you with a glimpse of some of our work so far and of our work together in the year ahead," Liccardo said. "I hold my service to you as my greatest professional honor I relish the privilege of continuing to serve you."

The Ragam: one of the advanced and difficult aspects of Carnatic music

By **Veena Krishnan**
Special to the Times

One of the advanced and difficult aspects of Carnatic music is the Ragam – Thanam – Pallavi, also referred to as an RTP or Pallavi.

A Pallavi (not the pallavi that was discussed in a previous article), is a beautiful aspect of manodharmam. It provides full scope for a performer and covers multiple aspects of manodharmam. RTPs are almost entirely manodharmam based. In a full-length concert of two and a half to three hours, RTPs are performed after the main piece. Otherwise, if the concert spans a shorter duration of one to two hours, the Pallavi will be the main piece.

An RTP begins with the Ragam, or raga alapana. This, as mentioned in previous articles, is the melodic improvisation of a specific ragam which will be followed throughout the rest of the piece. It does not follow any beat. Some performers choose to present their Pallavi in multiple ragams. Syllables such as “tha,” “dha,” “ri,” and “na” are used for raga alapana. Madurai Mani Iyer, a famous Carnatic singer of the 20th century, also used syllables such as “la,” “oo,” and “ee” in his raga alapanas. If the main performer has a melodic instrumental accompanist, they would also play a raga alapana of about the same duration.

Next, is the Thanam. This is also melodic improvisation but includes rhythm (though there is no talam (beat grouping) involved and percussionists usually do not play). Thanam starts off slow/medium paced and becomes fast towards the end. Thanam started off as a technique for the veenai, a Carnatic instrument, but is now performed by various instruments and vocalists. Syllables such as, “aa,” “nam,” and “tha” are used to form words such as “Aananda” “Anantha” and “Thanam.” The main performer first sings a short section and their melodic accompanist plays after that. Each section has a distinctive ending. As a side note, some artists, especially veenai players, play thanam for krithi, too.

Now, to the Pallavi. The Pallavi is a single line of sahityam (lyrics), usually set to a longer talam. The sahityam is either composed by the performer (or by the performer’s guru) or taken from a krithi. It includes two parts, the purvangam, and the uttharangam and between these two parts, there is usually a pause. Talams with longer cycles are usually chosen as it gives the opportunity to have a longer Pallavi. It is also common for a performer to choose a complex talam to render their Pallavi.

Neraval and swaraprastharam are performed next (please refer to the previous article for more detail). For the Pallavi, most performers include a ragamlika. This is when they perform long swarams in contrasting ragams. After ending each swaram, they sing the Pallavi line in that ragam. Accompanists also play for this part. Although all artists come back to the main ragam after the ragamlika, some sing/play the ragams from the ragamlika in reverse order before coming back.

Trikalam is either sung before the neraval or after all the swarams. The Pallavi is presented in 3 speeds. After all these, the percussionist(s) plays his/her tani avarthanam. Check a previous article, “Carnatic Percussion Instruments,” for more detail. To conclude, the performer sings/plays the Pallavi line once again and ends the presentation. Many of the older RTP recordings have the tani earlier in the Pallavi.

RTPs are a popular scene at concerts, and many Carnatic musicians are well-known for their contribution to this field. Pallavi Seshu Iyer, who got his title for his mastery in the presentation of Pallavis, was a famous musician and composer born in the 19th century. The Alathur Brothers

(not brothers by birth) were famous for their complex RTPs. D. K. Pattammal was the first woman to sing a Ragam – Thanam – Pallavi in a concert. Both the Alathur Brothers and D. K. Pattammal were born in the early 20th century. Check out this link to hear the Alathur Brothers performing an RTP: <https://youtu.be/zwyhGi-p9M>

The Ragam – Thanam – Pallavi is a very complex part of Carnatic music; stay tuned for Part 3 of the manodharmam articles!



Thanam was originally created for the veenai, a Carnatic fretted string instrument.



About Carnatic Music
By Veena Krishnan

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Report: Most popular US national parks on TikTok

Research can today reveal the most popular US national parks on TikTok, and Yosemite National Park is the 3rd most popular on the app.

The team at ParkSleepFly analysed the view counts on TikTok of national park hashtags in the US (& around the world) to reveal the most popular national parks on the app.

You can view the full research here: parksleepfly.com/blog/the-tiktok-national-park-index

It is no secret that Yellowstone National Park draws in tourists from all over the world thanks to its incredibly photogenic landscapes and its unique variety of sceneries: from mountainous landscapes to waterfalls and forests! This may explain why the national park is the most popular on TikTok, with 630.3 million views, 339 million views ahead of second place.

Second place winner **Denali National Park** (pictured above) is instead known precisely for Denali, the highest peak in North America! The national park received 291.5 million views on TikTok overall.

The national park in the US (& the world) with the lowest number of views on TikTok is Kobuk Valley National Park in Alaska, with only 124 views.

The research also looked at the most popular national parks around the world on TikTok, with 7 US national parks making the top 10 globally.

Top 10 US national parks on TikTok:

Rank	Name	State	Hashtag	Views
1	Yellowstone National Park	Wyoming Montana Idaho	#yellowstone	630,300,000
2	Denali National Park	Alaska	#denali	291,500,000
3	Yosemite National Park	California	#yosemite	279,800,000
4	Grand Canyon National Park	Arizona	#grandcanyon	249,200,000
5	Joshua Tree National Park	California	#joshuatree	120,800,000
6	Glacier National Park	Montana	#glaciernationalpark	115,000,000
7	Redwood National Park	California	#redwoodnationalpark	95,200,000
8	Zion National Park	Utah	#zionnationalpark	90,100,000
9	Virgin Islands National Park	US Virgin Islands	#virginislands	85,700,000
10	Death Valley National Park	California Nevada	#deathvalley	43,100,000

Top 10 US national parks in the world on TikTok:

Rank	Name	Location	Hashtag	Views
1	Yellowstone National Park	USA	#yellowstone	630,300,000
2	Denali National Park	USA	#denali	291,500,000
3	Yosemite National Park	USA	#yosemite	279,800,000
4	Grand Canyon National Park	USA	#grandcanyon	249,200,000
5	Göreme National Park	Turkey	#göreme	122,900,000
6	Joshua Tree National Park	USA	#joshuatree	120,800,000
7	Glacier National Park	USA	#glaciernationalpark	115,000,000
8	Lake District National Park	UK	#lakedistrict	105,900,000
9	Kruger National Park	South Africa	#krugernationalpark	98,700,000
10	Redwood National Park	USA	#redwoodnationalpark	95,200,000



We believe that everyone deserves to live in a safe and healthy home.

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Together, we've completed 50,000 repairs for our most vulnerable community members in the last 30 years

We have three programs to help our neighbors in need

Critical Repairs

Income-eligible owner-occupied properties (single family or mobile homes) are eligible for critical home repairs that, if not corrected, would make the home uninhabitable.

Rebuilding Days

Our Rebuilding Day program provides major and minor repairs and renovations resulting in life-changing improvements for the homeowners and organizations served.

Safe At Home

Safe at Home program addresses home repair and maintenance issues that may otherwise present a safety risk or that limit access to or within the home.

Ways to get involved

Volunteers Join us, safely, for Rebuilding Day, April 17 & 24, 2021, as an individual volunteer or with your corporate or community group.

Contractors We work with contractors that possess CA contractor specialty (Class C) in painting, plumbing, HVAC, roofing or electrical.

Donate Sign up to sponsor an upcoming neighbor in need build or donate at www.rtsv.org today.



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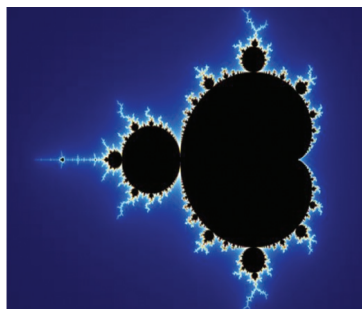
Times **Feature**

(Not only frozen) fractals all around

By **Apoorva Panidapu**
Special to the Times

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

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



The Mandelbrot set

On March 1st, 1980, in the IBM research center of Yorktown Heights, NY, mathematician Benoit (B.) Mandelbrot caught the first glimpse of what would later be known as the Mandelbrot set, a celebrity in the gorgeous world of fractals. If I had seen it, I might've thought it was a computer virus (albeit, a beautiful one), and it kind of is in a way! It has been called the 'ultimate computer virus' because of the sheer computational power it requires.

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

The Mandelbrot set also

demonstrates another core property of fractals: self-similarity. This means that, if you zoom in, you can't definitively say how much you have zoomed in by because you'll just see more and more Mandelbrot sets.

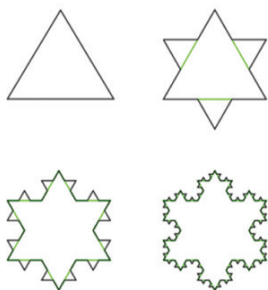
History of Fractals

However, per usual, though Mandelbrot is regarded as the "father of fractals," this wasn't the absolute first instance of the notion. French mathematician Henri Poincaré and British mathematician Arthur Cayley had hints of such ideas and

fractals, but they didn't have computational technology to look into it further like Mandelbrot did. As modern fractals rose to fame (well, mathematical fame), the work from French mathematicians Pierre Fatou and Gaston Julia from around 1919 came to light, as it concerned fractals in the complex plane. Their works weren't called fractals at that point (as Mandelbrot coined the term in 1975), and they also didn't have the technology to precisely see their shapes, but this shows how long these types of ideas have been considered.

Fractional Dimension

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



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

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

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

Applications

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

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



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

So back to our original question: what is a fractal? Well, a lot of mathematicians have differing views on the exact definition of fractals (because they can often be too limiting), but all definitions typically include varying conditions on self-similarity and fractal dimension. But, because of this struggle of encapsulating fractals with a single definition, most mathematicians feel that fractals

shouldn't be confined to a rigid definition—that its beauty transcends such a thing, allowing only for a general characterization.

My favorite description of fractals comes from the father of fractals himself:

"Beautiful, damn hard, increasingly useful. That's fractals." - Benoit B. Mandelbrot

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

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

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

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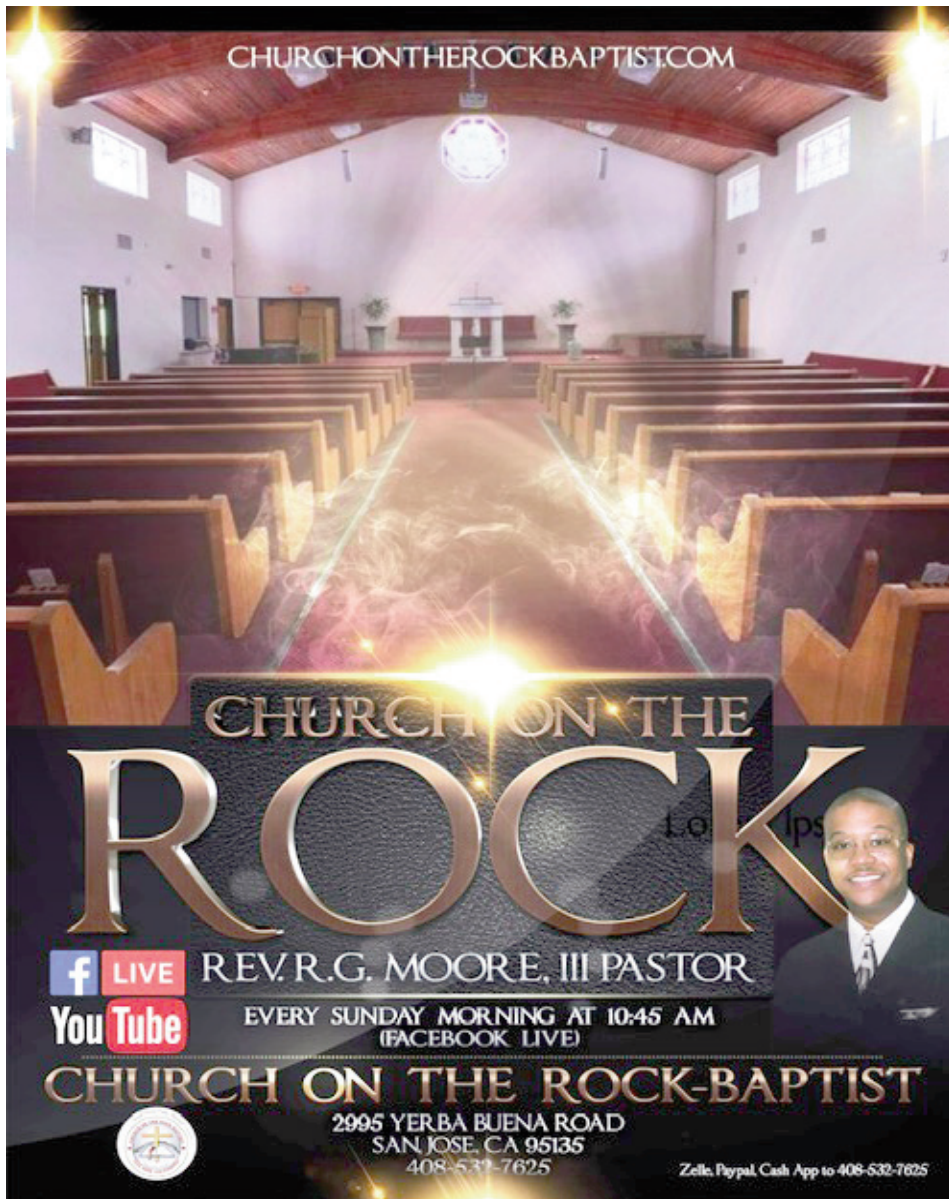
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Times **Opinion****GUEST COLUMNIST****Hopes for an open, competitive telecommunications firm selection process have been extinguished at the Villages Golf and Country Club**

By Michael Clurman

I had hoped when I became President of the Technology Club two years ago that our club could play a leading role in provoking public discussion in the Villages Golf and Country Club about the technologies emerging for high-speed internet over the coming decade and beyond.

The Villages Golf and Country Club's current 15-year contract with Comcast ends in July 2022, so the timing for such a discussion was ideal.

Although no one disputed that final responsibility to determine the vendor selection process and the final selection of a new telecommunications vendor rests with the Club Board of Directors (CBOD), in an open, democratic community it should be the role of volunteer organizations to engage members in the discussion.

A Club Board which lives up to the promise made by its members during the recently concluded election to promote open communication with Villagers ought to welcome such engagement and provide as much information as possible to stimulate discussion and debate.

Last year the majority of the members of the board of the Technology Club ruled out any focus on the negotiations for a new telecommunications contract, and as a result, I resigned as President.

All my worst fears about how the selection process would proceed absent any role for clubs and other community organizations have come to pass. The process has been conducted by the CBOD largely in secret with minimal information being released publicly and with all important decisions being conducted behind closed doors by a tiny group of Villagers on the CBOD and its advisory committee in consultation with the General Manager.

Here are some key milestones in this secretive process:

The CBOD tasked a few Villagers to form the Network Services Project (NSP) to offer technical guidance and research.

The NSP prepared three reports intended as background information in the telecommunications vendor selection process. All three reports remain secret to this day.

A formal request to release the reports was refused by the General Manager.

One of those papers reported on the experience of comparable communities in selecting a telecommunications contractor. At least one neighboring 55+ community was reported to have undergone an open, highly competitive selection process.

One can only speculate that an important reason for the CBOD's reluctance to release that report is fear that it would encourage Villagers to contrast how an open process has worked in other communities with our own closed and secretive selec-

tion process.

- I wrote a Pulse letter to the Villager reminding all concerned that "For any procurement of goods or services costing over \$25,000 the Club's 'Procurement Policy' (CPo308) requires that management is required to solicit at least three competitive bids from vendors or suppliers capable of meeting the requirements in the bid solicitation."

- Several weeks later, apparently in response to that reminder, the CBOD announced in the August 19th Villager that there would be a two-stage procedure established that appeared at first blush to meet the requirement for an open, competitive solicitation.

Stage 1: I would have an RFP going out to the required minimum of three consulting firms. The selected consulting firm would then identify technology alternatives and establish performance standards for the telecommunications firm we select. The consultant will recommend a solution consistent with the preferences expressed in the survey which Villagers answered several months ago.

Stage 2: The consultant will then drive the competitive process that solicits bids from at least three telecommunications firms.

Unfortunately, the apparent openness proved to be an illusion.

The solicitation process for the consultant was completely secret. No RFP was ever released and one can only wonder if an RFP exists. A formal request to release the RFP and identify the solicited firms was flatly refused. We have no way of knowing why the same person involved in the process last time was ultimately selected as the consultant to drive the selection. We do not even know if any other consultant was ever considered. We do know that he is exactly the same consultant who steered us into the current 15 year Comcast contract in 2007.

Over the course of the 15-year Comcast contract, Villagers have raised many objections to both the service and pricing policies of Comcast. If anyone had wanted a fresh pair of eyes to take a new look at alternatives and technologies after 15 years of not altogether happy experience with Comcast and after revolutionary changes have taken place in the telecommunications field, this choice is not a happy choice.

The announcement in the December 16 Villager represents the final death of any hope for an open competitive selection process. Not only did the CBOD announce that the same individual will once again drive the selection process, Comcast is the only telecommunications vendor identified with whom the CBOD will be conducting negotiations. We have no reason to

See OP ED, next page

Times **Feature**

Paving of Evergreen Valley streets earns high marks

MCK company and Criss painting did remarkable work

By **Kevin Larsen**
Times staff writer

The City of San Jose Department of Transportation stated on Nextdoor.com: "We've covered lots of ground in 2020, nearly 200 miles of pavement were repaired (2020) and we're not stopping there."

During several weeks in late November and December, the MCK company came out and expertly paved the streets in Evergreen Valley.

A mailer explained what they were doing and A-Frame signs were placed along the street to ask for cars to not park from 7a.m.

to 5 p.m. for several days during the process.

New state of the art equipment was seen and the crews moved like clockwork to scrape the road, prep it, lay down of asphalt, roll it smooth, and expertly clean up everything.

It has been over 20 years since the streets have been paved in the 95148 area code and nearby. This is considered by many as a good use of taxpayer dollars and too, the work quality by these companies is wonderful!

Some reflect, this kind of work pays well as an alternative to a college path. The workers were seen to really take pride in what they do and had an upbeat attitude in expertly following schedules to complete the process as planned and explained to homeowners. Perhaps too, ladies are welcome to apply to such work to provide equity in the job hiring.

Editor's Note: Read more about paving season updates and accomplishments at bit.ly/3phZy08.

Op Ed

Continued from previous page

believe any other telecommunications firm is being seriously considered. The negotiations with Comcast, like everything else about the process, will allegedly be secret.

When we were discussing telecommunications in the technology club, one highly active member who is now on the CBOD and is identified as one of the Board members designated to provide support in the negotiations with Comcast, expressed such fear of Comcast's legal department that he urged us to forego any public or even private criticism of Comcast. When I wrote a Pulse letter containing some criticisms of Comcast, the Villages current General Manager, took the highly unusual step of vetoing the letter with an explanation to the effect that criticism of a powerful private company was inadvisable.

Entering into another long-term contract with a vendor whose litigious legal department intimidates both our General Manager and the Board member playing a key role in the negotiations is more than a little nuts; this is not how the Villages ought to engage a private firm in a lucrative contract that will consume a substantial portion of Villager's HOA and will enable the firm to potentially sell us millions of dollars' worth of optional services.

The selection of a new telecommunications vendor is arguably the most consequential decision this Board will make. The capabilities of our high speed internet are

already central to entertainment, communications and management of club facilities. In coming years they will play the key role in fields as diverse as telemedicine, transportation, and building and grounds maintenance.

In addition Villagers already spend more of our HOA assessment every month on its contractually fixed obligation to Comcast, than on all other recreational items COMBINED in the Villages budget. And this is only the amount paid to Comcast monthly from our HOA assessment. Villagers typically spend several times the amount extracted from their HOA on optional Comcast services.

Regardless of whether Comcast's charges are excessive, the great financial and quality of life impact on Villagers of the telecommunications vendor selection dictates that the selection ought to be undertaken with the widest possible discussion and participation of Villagers.

If the 15-year contract the Board and the consultant steered us into in 2007 is any indication we will be stuck with the consequences of this new contract well past the life expectancy of the majority of current members of this community.

For most of us Comcast will be with us 'til death do us part.

True love may not be forever, but it's likely that for most Villagers, Comcast certainly is.

The opinions and viewpoints expressed by guest authors and columnists in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions and viewpoints of the staff and management of the Evergreen Times and Times Media, Inc.

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Times **Local News**

VTA recovers nearly half of pre-pandemic weekday ridership

Shortage of bus drivers keeping VTA from offering full services

VTA's weekday transit ridership has reached 47% of pre-COVID levels as of November 2021 – a marked increase over the 30% recovery rate this time last year.

The improvement in ridership comes after the agency fully restored daytime weekday operations in its October 11 schedule update.

The bulk of recent ridership growth is concentrated on VTA's Frequent Bus lines,

which are seeing nearly two-thirds of normal rider counts back onboard. Weekday bus ridership overall has risen to 52% of pre-pandemic levels. The rates of weekday ridership recovery broken down by service category are as follows:

- Frequent: 59% of pre-COVID weekday ridership recovered
- Local: 50% of pre-COVID weekday ridership recovered
- Rapid: 49% of pre-COVID weekday ridership recovered
- Light rail: 31% of pre-COVID weekday ridership recovered

• Express: 25% of pre-COVID weekday ridership recovered

"The need for reliable, safe public transit has continued to ring true throughout the pandemic," said VTA Chief Planning and Programming Officer Deborah Dagang. "And the trajectory for VTA's service restoration aims to improve service for everyone, especially those who rely on it most."

The rate of VTA's weekday ridership recovery is accelerating. While most years see a dip in riders between October and November, this year saw an increase in that timeframe as bus ridership remained steady and light rail increased by nearly 1,000 passengers.

The accelerated recovery speaks to the effectiveness of investing in the system's core service, which was a cornerstone of the New Transit Service Plan that launched in December 2019.

This ridership return is both local and regional. Routes like the Rapid 500 between Berryessa BART and Downtown San Jose/Diridon saw weekday ridership nearly double in September 2021, compared to June 2020 when BART service launched in North San Jose.

To date, the amount of transit service VTA is offering is at 90% of pre-pandemic levels. A shortage of bus operators is keeping VTA from running full service.

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Times **Local News**

California's new composting law: what you need to know

By William Bellou
Publisher

On Jan. 1, a new law requiring Californians to separate organic waste from the rest of their trash will start being phased in.

The groundbreaking new law will forever change the way we dispose of our organic waste, in particular, kitchen scraps.

Senate Bill 1383 requires all residents and businesses to separate such “green” waste from other trash, but the program will be rolled out gradually for homes and businesses in the coming months.

Fines can be levied for failing to separate organic refuse from other trash. But those charges aren’t scheduled to begin until 2024. CalRecycle, the state agency overseeing the change, has lots of information about the new requirements on its website: www.calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/slcp/education

Beginning in 2024, state law will allow fines for those who contaminate their organic waste. A first offense could cost you \$50 to \$100, with third and subsequent offenses costing up to \$500.

Here are some frequently asked questions about the new requirements.

Isn’t garbage just garbage? Why are California lawmakers requiring us to separate organic waste from the rest of our trash?

Scientists have found that organic waste dumped into traditional landfills decomposes and creates methane, a super-pollutant with as much as 80 times the Earth-warming potency of carbon dioxide.

When do I need to begin separating my kitchen waste from other trash?

The opening date for organics diversion varies, depending on where you live.

Are there alternatives to having the kitchen and yard waste trucked away?

Yes. Food scraps can be composted at home or taken to friends or family who compost or to a community compost location.

What about food that’s still edible? Where should it go?

SB 1383 proposes increasing by 25% the amount of edible food that supermarkets and other large outlets preserve. (It does not require residents or small businesses to recycle edible food.) The surplus goes to food banks. Businesses can learn more about donations by visiting FoodDropLA.com.

Who’s going to pay for all this?

You are. A survey by the League of California Cities found that most local governments expect refuse collection rates to increase less than 20%, with 1 in 5 cities saying they expect charges to go up more.



Beginning in 2024, state law will allow fines for those who contaminate their organic waste. A first offense could cost you \$50 to \$100, with third and subsequent offenses costing up to \$500.

Shawn Ansari – Record Sale



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Times Feature

Survey: More than 1 in 3 Californians avoid posting about politics for fear of being ostracized

More than 1 in 3 Californians avoid posting about politics on social media for fear of being ostracized, survey finds.

- Almost 2/3 want all their social media posts automatically erased when they die.
- 38% say they used their spare time during the course of the pandemic to clear their accounts of any embarrassing post.

If it seems like social media platforms are a hotbed for hatred and hostility, it's because (at least one) appears to have been designed in this way. Indeed, a leaked memo from Facebook a couple of years ago stated: "Our algorithms exploit the human brain's attraction to divisiveness." This was further followed in October, when a whistleblower explained how the company seeks to sow division between users, which is why those who utilize social media platforms would do well to steer clear of posting contentious topics.

Religion and politics are notoriously divisive topics. And nowadays, when people post controversial viewpoints on social media, they're more likely to blow up on the internet given that the algorithms are designed to do precisely that.

Moreover, given how divided our nation is politically, a simple post can bait thousands of other users to comment. Redact.dev, a unique software that allows you to scan your social media history and automatically remove any contentious posts, conducted a survey of 5,444 social media users across the U.S. This discovered that more than a third (35%) of Californians avoid posting about politics on their social media accounts for fear of being ostracized by the online community. It appears women are slightly more concerned about these fears than men.

The survey also discovered that many want their online legacies removed entirely once they're no longer around to manage their social media profiles. Sixty percent of social media users in California think their entire post history should be completely erased in the event of their death. Perhaps this is because more than 1 in 10 (13%) users are concerned about existing social media content posted in the past, that might now be considered contentious... Some platforms, like Facebook, allow users to appoint a legacy contact, who will have certain rights to the account when the original users die. Google also allows users to plan their post-mortem account management by sharing certain data with a trusted contact via the Inactive Account Manager.

As our knowledge and worldview expands, oftentimes our thoughts and opinions evolve alongside. This may explain why almost half (46%) of users say they've gone back through their social media history and found their old posts, which are totally different to the opinions they currently hold today. This might also



explain why 25% say they've set their social media accounts to 'private' when job hunting...

Lockdown presented many with an opportunity to complete tasks that may have been of lower priority before the pandemic, but still needed to be done sometime. More than a third (38%) of social media users say they used their spare time during the course of the pandemic to clear their accounts of any embarrassing posts.

'If you're concerned about your social media history bearing a negative effect on your future, such as job prospects or your post-mortem legacy, it could be worthwhile for your own peace of mind to go through your accounts and start afresh,' says a spokesperson from Redact.dev. 'This will allow you to alleviate stress about any content you may have posted in the past, which differs from your current thoughts and opinions.'

Survey results illustrated in the following infographic: www.redact.dev/blog/digital-death-cancel-culture

Political fund-raising gates open

Evergreen Valley's supervisorial district changed

Yes, candidates for San Jose mayor and City Council can officially begin raising money now that the redistricting process has been resolved with a compromise.

Now you can legally send money to your favorite candidate!

The new county supervisorial districts was a surprise to many, as District 1 no longer hosts Los Gatos, Monte Sereno and Almaden Valley. These communities are now in District 5 which includes Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and Palo Alto.

Evergreen Valley has now changed from supervisorial District 3 to District 1, which includes South County.

The new county map passed on a 3-2 vote, with District 5 Supervisor Joe Simitian and Los Gatos resident and District 1 Supervisor Mike Wasserman voting no.

Zoe Lofgren's district has picked up the farmland communities all the way to Salinas, while Rep. Jimmy Panetta' lost much of his rural area resulting in his picking up more of San Jose.

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Evergreen Times

Times Feature

Boosters

Continued from page 1
working conditions without meeting and conferring with your workers.”

And before a decision is imposed on city employees, Saggau said bargaining chairs should be able to see data and other information to help inform the mandate.

“We’re focused on making sure that the process is followed and making sure the law is followed to make sure our rights are protected,” he said. “So that’s why this kind of announcement with no consultation is disappointing.”

San Jose previously enacted a vaccine mandate for city employees earlier this year — a move that was met with some pushback from SJPd and the San Jose Fire Department. As a compromise, all 7,037 city workers received a one-week grace period to provide proof of vaccination after the Sept. 30 deadline.

Eventually, more than 95% of the city’s employees met the requirement, Liccardo said.

Of San Jose’s roughly 1,150 police officers, 1,052 are fully vaccinated. For firefighters, 611 of 676 are fully vaccinated, according to data from the city.

As of Dec. 7, only 353 employees are not fully vaccinated, according to data from Jennifer Schembri, director of the city manager’s office of employee relations.

Of those, about 288 actively working employees have approved exemptions, or have exemptions currently under review.

Six workers have received notices of intended discipline for failing to show proof of vaccination, two are in the disciplinary process and three have been suspended without pay. The remaining employees are new hires, whose data has not been verified yet.

Liccardo said the city will soon track booster shots among city employees. The mayor is also proposing the purchase of software or equipment that would facilitate more rapid and less labor-intensive verification of vaccinations, according to his office.



Liccardo

Quintero

Continued from page 1

as January or February. But he did not disclose this fact while promoting the adoption of the Unity Map—a proposal for redrawing San Jose’s political boundaries.

Quintero currently lives in District 8. The original draft of the Unity Map, no longer being considered by San Jose lawmakers, would have placed his home within District 5.

Some East San Jose community leaders say this omission is deeply unethical given Quintero’s advocacy of the Unity Map through the nonprofit organization Latino Leadership Alliance, where he has served as chair of its redistricting committee. As recently as last week, Quintero appeared at a rally outside City Hall to support the Unity Map.

“The problem is Andres was literally the face of the map—he presented it to the (redistricting) commissions,” said Serena Alvarez, executive director of the Salvador E. Alvarez Institute for Non-Violence. Alvarez said Quintero told her earlier this year he intended to run for District 5, and she hadn’t realized at the time he lived in District 8. “At no point did he inform the public or the com-

missions that he had a self-interest in the Unity Map,” she said.

San Jose irons out details for new political boundaries

Quintero told San José Spotlight he couldn’t recall making formal statements about running for City Council prior to his announcement over the weekend. He said any discussions he may have had earlier this year about a possible run were just casual conversations.

“It’s unfortunate people are spending a significant amount of time asking where I live and where I’m at,” he said, adding that people raising the issue probably support another candidate in the District 5 election. Alvarez said she donated \$100 to Peter Ortiz, who is running, but doesn’t plan to endorse anyone in the election.

The Unity Map was introduced at the city and county levels by a coalition of labor and civil rights groups. A version of the map for Santa Clara County was recently approved by the Board of Supervisors. Leaders from various South Bay organizations, including the Latino Leadership Alliance, promoted the Unity Map as a way to create more equitable representation for historically marginalized communities in San Jose.

The alliance did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Quintero said he never worked on drafting the political boundaries on the Unity Map. He claims his role was simply to advocate for the map as proper representation for the Latino community.

San Jose is still in the process of sorting its political boundaries as part of the once-in-a-decade redistricting process. The City Council recently decided to winnow its field of potential maps to one introduced by Councilmember David Cohen, which is a mix of elements from the three frontrunners: the Unity Map, the Community Map and the Commission Map.

Quintero is waiting for the city’s redistricting process to resolve, but he intends to run for the District 5 council seat regardless of which district his home ends up in.

“I’m waiting to see where the lines fall,” he said. “If I’m in the district, that’s fine. If I’m out of the district, I intend to be in a position to run for D5 regardless of where the lines may be.”

Editor’s Note: Perla Rodriguez, spouse of District 5 candidate Rolando Bonilla, serves as chair of San José Spotlight’s board of directors.

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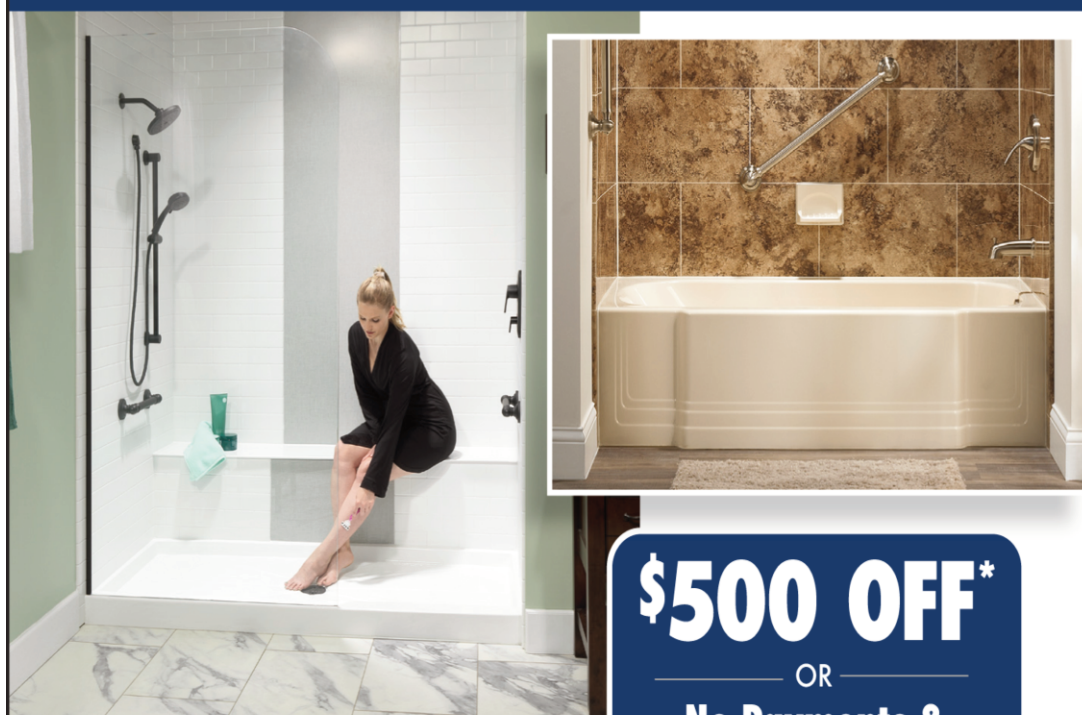
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