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Willow Glen Times

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Elizabeth Kooiman

Willow Glen resident Elizabeth Kooiman named to Baylor University Dean's Honor Roll

Willow Glen resident Elizabeth Kooiman, School of Engineering & Computer Science has been named to the Dean's Academic Honor Roll for the 2021 fall semester at Baylor University.

The Dean's List is comprised of Baylor undergraduates with a minimum grade-point average of 3.7, while enrolled in a minimum of twelve semester hours.

Baylor University is a private Christian university and a nationally ranked research institution. The University provides a vibrant campus community for more than 17,000 students by blending interdisciplinary research with an international reputation for educational excellence and a faculty commitment to teaching and scholarship.

BETTER BIKING



Good Karma Bikes CEO **James Gardner** found a way to do good through bicycles.
Photo by Lorraine Gabbert

Willow Glen's Good Karma Bikes keeps people moving

30% of bike shop's income is reinvested in free bikes, parts and labor

By Lorraine Gabbert

Willow Glen's Good Karma Bikes provides free bicycles to those in need of reliable transportation, which has been a lifeline for many, including refugees.

CEO James Gardner sees bicycles as tools for improving mental and physical health, environmental sustainability and transforming lives. In addition to recreation, bikes provide transit for those who can't afford the expense of a car to get to work.

"I have a burning desire to leave the world better off," he told San José Spotlight. "Giving is our secret sauce."

One bike given away for each one sold

The nonprofit gives away a bicycle for each one sold. It also partners with other nonprofits

to help children, foster youth, unhoused and disabled people and veterans. More than 30% of the bike shop's income is reinvested in free bikes, parts and labor.

Since its start in 2009, Good Karma Bikes has contributed more than \$2.1 million in community aid, repaired 350,000 bikes and donated 6,482 bicycles. Its volunteers are its lifeblood and have accrued 104,605 hours.

Members of the Abrahamic Alliance International (AAI), a charitable, nonprofit organization uniting Jews, Christians and Muslims, volunteer monthly to rebuild bikes for the International Rescue Committee, which helps people affected by crises.

One of AAI's volunteers, Aziz Baameur, likes the spirit of the people working there and appreciates Gardner took the time to teach them the ropes.

"Most of the volunteers didn't know much about bikes," he said, "but they got it done."



Noëlle Boesenberg launched her own cottage baking business out of her Willow Glen home when she was laid off at the start of the pandemic.

Willow Glen bakery's business is booming following a switch to plant-based spreads

Wedding and celebration cakes booked up through June

By Times Media staff writers

The skyrocketing cost of butter is causing a Willow Glen bakery to pivot to plant-based baking to keep the sweet treats coming.

Noëlle Boesenberg launched her own cottage baking business, Therapy Baking, out of her Willow Glen home when she was laid off at the start of the pandemic.

She came up with the name because it soothed her during uncertain times.

Late last year, the cost of ingredients—especially butter—skyrocketed to the point where it was eating away her profits, especially

See BAKERY, page 2



SEE OUR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE - PAGE 15

From 'Fixer Upper' to sought after winery Church Creek Cellars invites you to visit

We are excited to share Church Creek Cellars with you as our second feature to our Times Media winery column.

In our last issue we highlighted Kirigin Cellars, one of CA's oldest wineries, this time we feature Church Creek Cellars one of newest wineries along the Santa Clara Valley Wine Trail.

A family choice

In 2011, Church Creek Cellars owners Carl and Diana Borsody, in tow with their then 8-year-old daughter Chloe, bought the property that has now become their own boutique winery; they actually did not have plans to open or operate a winery. In fact, they purchased the property consisting of 10-acres with a fixer upper home to remodel the home, put the property in order and potentially sell it within five years and move elsewhere.

Carl was (and still is) working in high tech and Diana was a retired Southwest flight attendant – neither of them had any prior experience working with wine. And, Chloe, was onboard with any decision her parents made as long as it included horses and friends. Now, 11 years later, Church Creek Cellars is a staple amongst the Santa Clara Valley wine region. The Borsody's have no plans to leave; rather, they are adding to the ambiance of their family-owned winery. The creek that runs through the Borsody's property is called Church Creek; thus, the Borsody's named their winery after the creek.

Tractor fun

Diana shared what changed their trajectory was when her husband Carl got a tractor; and that was that. As the theme song for the former TV sitcom, Green Acres goes, "Green acres is the place to be.... farm livin is the life for me...land spreadin out so far and wide..." and just like that, Carl and his tractor led the family to relook at their own green acres and fixer upper home with a new vision. Within the first year of living on their property the Borsody's began to care for the existing grapes and then purchased an additional 10-acres adjacent to their property while leasing the other adjacent 10-acres on the other side of their property. Thus, Church Creek Cellars is comprised of more than 30-acres. You can view the beautiful landscape as you sip your wine out on their wine tasting terrace.

Winemaking team grows

Carl and Diana met Rick and Tina Pronge at a dinner in late 2011. Rick shared that he was a home winemaker and the Borsody's shared that they had just purchased land that had existing vines which they now intended to develop into wine. Like a good wine paired with a good cheese, the Borsody's and Pronges' begin working together. Rick became Church Creek Cellars winemaker. Rick's wife, Tina works in the winetasting room and their daughter, Allison Burrman is her dad's protégé as she is following her dad's footsteps learning how to make wine while working alongside him.

Church Creek Cellar's first vintage was created in 2012. The winery and tasting room officially opened to the public during Santa Clara



Church Creek Cellar owners - Carl, Diana and Chloe Borsody.

Valley Passport (SCVP) weekend in 2018. One can purchase a "Passport Ticket" which allows you to visit participating wineries where you receive free wine tastings with a small snack while tasting. Opening during the 2018 Passport Weekend proved beneficial for Church Creek Cellars.

Award winning red wines

Church Creek Cellars are known for their bold reds and have received many recognitions and awards. The Borsody's were initially going to make wine on the side, thus they did not do large productions. Because of this, their wine has stayed in barrels longer than most which accounts for its full-bodied flavor. Church Creek Cellars has their 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate Reserve for sale but has sold out of their 2015 Zinfandel. They recently begun a Rose' line including Rose' of Merlot, Rose' of Zinfandel and Rose' of Sangiovese which have proved to be very popular. Their wines are available onsite and at Rocca's Market in San Martin and Relish Kitchen in Gilroy. Wine Club memberships are available.

Every Church Creek Cellars wine bottle has a beautiful oak tree on the label. The oak tree pictured is located on the right side of the driveway as you enter Church Creek Cellars. Carl has named many of the wines including the 2016 Convergence and the Encore Dessert Wine which won a bronze medal at the 2019



Pee Wee the Cat aka "the gopher friend maker."



Sunset Magazine International Wine Competition.

"Closing down during the pandemic was weird," shared Diana, "During the shutdown, our wine club customers would drive up and I would put their wine in their trunk and off they would go. It was vastly different than what I was used to -- having people stay here on the premises and enjoy the overall ambiance," shared Diana.

Visitors are flocking to Church Creek Cellars

Upon reopening, hundreds of people have flocked back to Church Creek Cellars to enjoy the wines, wine tasting room and beautiful outside deck overlooking the 21-acre vineyard. "It was good to have people back," shared Diana.

Church Creek Cellars is open every 1st and 3rd weekend from Noon to 5:00 pm. They are also remodeling the grounds by adding additional picnic areas, bocce ball courts and other amenities that can be rented for weddings and other venues.

The Borsody's home that was originally supposed to be remodeled by 2016 took a back seat to the winery and is about 80% done. Carl and Diana are using their garage as a living room while the finishing touches of their remodel are completed. Chloe is in Boston studying music but is still an integral part of the family winery. Peewee, the Borsody's cat is a staple at the winery too. Peewee is known to have made friends with many of the gophers and is just as much a staple as the wine.

Pet friendly

Church Creek Cellars is a family environment where bringing your children and well-behaved dogs are allowed. Just be sure to keep your children and animals close by.

"We love what we do; we love our customers, neighbors, and the overall community; we hope to see you here at Church Creek Cellars," shared Diana.

Editor's Note; Church Creek Cellars is located at 11495 Center Avenue Gilroy, CA 95020. The tasting room is open the first and third weekend of each month from noon to 5pm. You can learn more by visiting their website: ChurchCreek-Cellars.com; or call (669) 500-0295.



TherapyBaking is committed to supporting the underserved, unhoused, and marginalized communities in the Bay Area.

Bakery

Continued from page 1

butter, which has increased more than 40 percent.

Boesenberg said she still wanted to bake tantalizing treats such as sparkling rose cupcakes topped with vanilla buttercream, but she also knew she had to expand her baking skills.

"I originally focused on traditional ingredients but I rose to the challenge to come up with vegan pastries and celebration cakes," said Boesenberg in an interview with KPIX 5. "That's great because I don't have to use butter for vegan items."

Now Boesenberg substitutes plant-based spreads in recipes that call for butter and even shortening. In an effort to be inclusive to all dietary needs, TherapyBaking is focused on developing vegan, grain-, gluten-, and sugar-free delights in addition to desserts made from traditional ingredients.

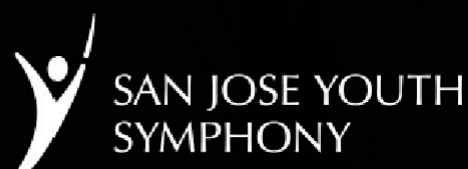
Wedding and celebration cakes booked up through June

The vegan community began supporting Boesenberg's business when they found out the bakery was using plant-based baking goods like her traditional cinnamon and Ube rolls. Boesenberg says she still uses butter for clients that ask for it, but about 80 percent of her business is now vegan.

"It still has that wonderful mouth feel. It's all about the fat right? You still have that, it's just that it comes from plants and not an animal," said Elisa Camahort Page, a regular customer.

Therapy Baking is booming with wedding and celebration cakes booked up through June. Boesenberg now plans to expand to a commercial kitchen and hire staff.

Therapy Baking is committed to supporting the underserved, unhoused, and marginalized communities in the Bay Area. If you would like to learn more and support the bakery, visit the company's website: www.therapybaking.com



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SJYS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (EIN 91-2166427) that has scholarships and financial aid offerings available based on a showing of need.

Valley Currents

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

OpEd

Hands of the poor

By Kevin Larsen
Evergreen Valley

The Owl Warming Center is a place where individuals can be kept safe at night as an alternative to living on the street.

The OWL is a place set up in a private location that temporarily takes in the poor on cold nights. It serves food and offers a safe haven for the less fortunate.

I had noticed a woman living on the street last month sitting on the ground with all of her worldly possessions. The things she covets are things you and I might not think to hold on to. All things kept in bags gotten from stores. Each item placed carefully in and checked upon often like a robin delicately overseeing a nest of eggs.

I notice she takes out a large egg shaped decoration. It was covered with glittery things and the color light blue. Shimmering, it had the value of perhaps less than one dollar. I must admit, for me, just looking at it from afar made me smile. I understood why one would want to keep it.

She tucked it gently into the mouth of a small store plastic bag which was mostly full. I see her take the empty paper towel roll and carefully push it in the same bag. Each thing had its place. She seems to be focused on her world



If you look closely, you will see the quiet elderly woman tending to her worldly possessions.

and not willing to make contact with others nor look at them.

I began to wonder why she kept so much. Over the weeks I saw her in the same area and her positions seemed to grow. How does she move it all from place to place, I wondered.

Today I see three piles of plastic bags and understand she transports it all to the bus stop bench. I say to myself, no wonder why Valley Transit Authority (V.T.A.) is removing so many benches. But I am against that and believe benches need to stay.

Some days, I held out two dollars and she prayed for me by putting together her hands and tilting her head down. I never made eye contact because I thought that too intrusive for her. Upon looking at her hands I thought them to be noble in nature. They were brown skinned and I could see by their use what they had done over perhaps 80 years. I had a feeling she had helped many in making meals and taking care of children. That was just a hunch. I imagined what recipes she had remembered and the special joy she gave her family with them.

Her face was always partially hidden with a hat and clothing draped around her neck. She dressed for warmth even in the sunshine.

Today at the bus stop I noticed her tending her bags. Each was fiddled with and kept in check. All

day she would sit on the ground or the bus bench and people would not speak to her. Human beings just walked around where she existed. Sometimes she put bags on the bus bench, but she removed them if people were waiting to take the bus. How considerate of her, I whispered to myself.

Her small body tended to not stand straight. Hunched over and sitting a certain way, the more I saw her or thought about her I was reminded of ancient Inca people who were preserved in graves and after thousands of years one could still see the person's kind face. She seemed to be ancient because her hair was white as snow.

I felt bad about the way some religions long ago sacrificed young women and they went to their deaths in an empty way as one of mankind's ritual creations. This made me reflect on how our area treats the homeless and perhaps that is our ritual.

As we turn our clocks back, at 6 pm it's still hot outside. I went back to give her a couple of dollars and nice white plastic bags in the thinking she could consolidate and take the mini bags and put them in the big clear bags for transport.

Just as I arrived, she was leaving and walking the other direction towards the store. Like a little girl, she abandoned her belongings for

a period of time and off she went to buy food. Usually, she dawdled over her bags but in this case, she was on a mission to leave it all behind and go to the store.

As she went over the crosswalk away from me, I noticed she picked up each foot daintily as if she was marching in a band. Her ankles, legs and knees were picked a bit straight up in unison with dedication and focus of moving forward.

The piles of mixed bags were so carefully tended to that they took on the status of someone's guardianship and were not to be touched. These possessions were simple artifacts collected from what looked to be things that people no longer wanted.

She never spoke and moved in slow motion. Somehow, I got the impression that she seemed to know this world and how to be patient with it. I took the time to wait for her to return and give her the small money and big bags. This was a second trip for me to give her these things for it gnawed on me that she had so many bags so I thought the nice big white, clear bags would be of great help to her. I would find out the next day while driving by that she chose not to use the new big clear bags.

As I waited, I began to reflect on her life. Was she a mom? Was she once married? Where are her children? Drugs, no, she did not seem to need those so I felt that drugs were never part of her life quest. Where was her family? Was she a sweet grandmother I thought, who was disconnected from her family lifeline? But why? Maybe she had some monies due to her from social security. I knew she needed to see a social worker to figure it out. I would ask OWL to do this.

You see, the OWL Warming Center closes in a week or two or three. So where do the poor go? What happens to such people?

Perhaps somehow in our quest for freedom and total independence, we ignore and leave people behind in conversation of who they are and if their living conditions are proper. Perhaps we learn to disregard people.

As I laid down on the grass by the busy three lane street on the narrow grass strip, the overhanging branches fought the sun and gave me welcomed shade. I got the feeling everyone took me for a homeless person. I rested and after an hour was happy inside to see she returned.

Walking up to her I showed her the two-dollar bills and I handed her the big plastic bags. Careful to give her privacy I avoided eye contact. She created her isolation with hat and clothes gently and softly hiding her face. I noticed her pants were a bit dirty and wondered if she had the ability or means to do laundry.

After handing her the two things I came to give, she surprised me by tilting up her head to look at me. This was her way of saying thank you for her mouth did not move. For the first time, seeing a glimpse of her face, I noticed that she was not Hispanic as I had always thought. You see, her hands were brown color but my assumption was in error.

I believe she was either Japanese, Vietnamese or Chinese. Maybe she was part Hispanic, I did not know. To know a race is perhaps to gain some kind of barometer of information. But today it did not matter and had no relevance.

This realization made me reflect on how we are all part of the same human race and live together in what we do and perhaps think. I never knew her name and we never spoke. The thought did occur to me that perhaps people collect things because they believe the objects accumulated have more value than themselves.



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Times In Memory

Marie Rose Bianco

Feb. 3, 1940 - Feb. 11, 2022

Resident of Willow Glen

Marie Rose Bianco (née Piacente) passed on to her heavenly home Feb. 11, 2022. She was surrounded by family, her favorite photographs, books and awards, her beautiful knitting and intricate needlework—all that she truly loved.

Marie was predeceased by her devoted husband of 55 years William A. Bianco, Jr. (1939-2015) and is survived by her four children William III, Carol Ann, Richard, and Elizabeth, her two grandsons Christopher and Justin, her brother Bartolomeo, her dear sister-in-law Judith, 5 nieces, 2 nephews, several cousins and steadfast, loyal friends.

Marie was born in Mt. Vernon, New York and met Bill, the love of her life, in high school. They were married April 24, 1960 and in 1966 made the trek west to the land of opportunity, first to Simi Valley and then to Silicon Valley, eventually settling in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose.

Marie lived 56 of her 82 years in California and although she missed her family and the 4 seasons in New York, she enjoyed the bounty of California (before the droughts) and could tell you the name and how to take care of most flowers, plants, fruit trees and vegetables, embracing them all in her phenomenal cooking and baking.

Marie was passionate about her 100% Italian heritage, perfecting her maternal Grandmother's traditional recipes as well as the latest and greatest, all while listening to and singing her favorite songs and operas. She accomplished a great deal during her life but tracing her heritage to Opi, one of the "most beautiful medieval villages" in Italy surrounded by the mountains of the National Park of Abruzzo, and meeting family still living there, was one of her favorites.

Marie was an accomplished stenographer, legal secretary and administrator. She was also active in Bible Study, catechism, and marriage encounter all while supporting her 4 children's many activities. Marie did crossword puzzles daily, loved reading, sewing, knitting and stitching. She also loved travelling just about anywhere with Bill, for pleasure and for Kinetics, especially with the MCAA where they made lifelong, treasured friends. As an administrator at Kinetics, she touched many lives professionally and personally. Marie lives on not just in the hearts and minds of her family and friends, but in other beneficiaries from the Stanford University Mechanical Engineering endowment, the Cathy Kiley Wing at Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York City, and in her needlepoint art which adorns homes, baby nurseries, sick beds, couches and foot-

stools all over the world.

Marie was very proud of her time as a member of the Board of the San Jose Symphony where she took on the difficult task in 2002 as Chair as the Symphony was dissolving around her. It was a love of the art and the musicians that drove Marie to give the seed money to co-found

Symphony San Jose that reemployed the musicians and provided a concrete bridge that made classical music survive its institutional failing, but still be a resource of hope and beauty for the community. Symphony San Jose continues to flourish celebrating its 20th season.



Marie was deeply spiritual and religious throughout her life, raised in the Roman Catholic Church. In their later years, Marie and Bill felt "truly at home" in the loving arms of St. Stephen's in the Field Episcopal Church where they found the true message and love of God in their everyday lives.

A Celebration of Life will be held on April 29, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. at St. Stephen's, 7269 Santa Teresa Blvd., San Jose, CA 95139, with lunch to follow. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to St. Stephen's in Marie's name.



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Times In Memory

Jeffrey Lane Yoshioka

June 25, 1958 - Feb. 20, 2022

Graduate of Willow Glen High School

Jeff Yoshioka passed away peacefully at the age of 63. He touched so many lives in his own business, in his work with civil liberties, and his involvement in the community.

Jeff was born in San Jose, CA, and graduated from Willow Glen High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from San Jose State University and then went on to obtain his CPA license.

Directly out of college, Jeff worked for Rodney Kobara's accounting firm which became George Neyama's accounting firm. Jeff eventually opened up his own accounting business.

Whenever he could, Jeff enjoyed hosting parties and get-togethers for just about any occasion and always felt, "The more, the merrier!" He loved to play golf



and was a longtime member of the Garden City Golf Club.

Jeff was an active member of the San Jose Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and the Silicon Valley JACL (SVJACL). He was one of the four founding members of the SVJACL and served as either the Chapter President or Treasurer. Jeff's passion for civil and human rights

extended into his involvement with district and national organizations such as the JACL Health Trust, National Japanese American Memorial Committee, and the API Justice Coalition.

Because of all the work Jeff did for the SVJACL and the community, he was honored as a NCWNP JACL district Unsung Hero.

Being active in the San Jose Japanese community was of utmost importance to Jeff. He tirelessly volunteered every year at the San Jose Nikkei Matsuri and at the San Jose, Mountain View, and Palo Alto Buddhist Church Obon festivals.

Jeff was a cherished son to the late Eddie and Akiko Yoshioka, brother to Ron (Karen) Yoshioka, Mike Yoshioka, Nancy Kerbel, and Lynda (Art De Guzman) Yoshioka, and uncle to several nieces and nephews. A private funeral service has been held.



Photos: Conductor **Anthony Quartuccio**. Cellist **Jiaxun Yao**. Photos courtesy of the artists and San José Chamber Orchestra.

San José Chamber Orchestra's 30th Anniversary Season presents 'Eine Klein(e) Evening of Music'

Season concludes with three new works

San José Chamber Orchestra presents "Eine Klein(e) Evening of Music" Saturday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m. at Francis Episcopal Church, 1205 Pine Avenue, San José.

This program features cellist Jiaxun Yao, an up and coming artist and winner from the 2020 Irving M. Klein International String Competition. Founded in 1985, it is recognized as one of the world's leading competitions for young string musicians. Open to string players ages fifteen to twenty-three, the competition takes place every June in San Francisco, California.

The program

"Eine Klein(e) Evening of Music" features the beloved Concerto for Cello by Robert Schumann, with soloist Jiaxun Yao.

Premiere of three short new works by local composers, written as part of SJCO's Responseworks Commissioning Project: Cycles by Kendrick Tri Huynh, Refuge by Kerry Lewis and Doom, Gloom and Zoom by Mona Lyn Reese, featuring Philip Brezina on fiddle.

Conductor: Anthony Quartuccio; Cello soloist: Jiaxun Yao.

The San José Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1991 out of the desire of local musicians (at the time playing with Opera San José) for an opportunity to play chamber orchestra repertoire and explore music written by living composers. More Info: <https://sjco.org/about/>

Tickets: sjco.org or 408 295-4416 (Tickets also available at the door)

Single Ticket Prices: Adult: \$50, Senior (62 and above): \$45, Student: \$15.

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Now more than ever, we have come to appreciate the importance of a safe place to call home. At RTSV, as a nonprofit we are proud to provide critical and safety repairs at no cost to our local neighbors in need across Santa Clara County. But we can't do it without you.

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.



Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley

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Times Community News



Lake Oroville State Recreation Area. Image via California Department of Parks and Recreation

Finally, progress on vital Sites Reservoir project

By Dan Walters

Calmatters

The likelihood of a \$2.2 billion federal loan increases the possibility that the Sites Reservoir, a vital step in protecting California's water supply, will be constructed.

Simple logic tells us that as climate change alters precipitation patterns, California must expand its capacity to capture and store water.

Even if the overall amount of precipitation remains unchanged, we will receive more of it in the form of rain and less as snow, which means the natural reservoir of the Sierra snow pack will decline as a water source.

We can prepare for that decline by creating more storage, either in new reservoirs or by replenishing underground aquifers. However, despite the urgency of the situation — one underscored by the current drought — California politicians have been lackadaisical about doing what needs to be done.

Local and regional water authorities have been more diligent. Southern California's recent construction of more storage capacity is one reason it is less affected by the current drought than Northern California.

Belatedly, increasing storage is moving upward on the political agenda. Recently, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency invited sponsors of the Sites Reservoir project, which has been on the back burner for decades, to apply for a \$2.2 billion loan that would cover roughly 40% of the project's estimated cost.

Along with some state water bond money and commitments from prospective users of the project — Southern California water agencies, mostly — Sites is now in position to put together

a financing package to make it a reality.

"We've definitely turned the corner and we have a nice tailwind at our back," said Jerry Brown, executive director of the Sites Project Authority. Brown is not related to former Gov. Jerry Brown, whose Colusa County retirement home, incidentally, is not far from Sites.

It's not going to happen immediately, despite the urgency of the situation. Just assembling the loan package and getting approval could take several years and there are other hurdles to clear. Nevertheless, the strong possibility of a federal loan is a huge step forward.

If it becomes reality, the reservoir would be constructed on the west side of the Sacramento Valley, west of Maxwell. It would have a capacity of up to 1.8 million acre-feet of water, about half the size of the state's Lake Oroville, but unlike Oroville, would not dam a major river.

Sites would be an off-stream reservoir, similar to — and slightly smaller than — the San Luis Reservoir in the Pacheco Pass west of Los Banos. During periods of high precipitation and runoff, Sacramento River water would be pumped into Sites, then released back into the river as needed for agriculture, residential use or to maintain flows for fish.

As an off-stream reservoir, Sites escapes at least some of the traditional opposition to big water projects from environmental groups, but there is some criticism that it could be used to divert water during low precipitation periods.

"It's just a, kind of, different way of thinking about it," project boss Brown told the Associated Press. "There's a lot of fear and distrust and we have to operate in a way that we, you know, secure trust and address the fears."

The good news about Sites should be kept in perspective. It's just one of many steps that California must take to protect its vital water supply from the potential ravages of climate change.

It's entirely possible that climate change will not only change the mix of precipitation — more rain and less snow — but reduce the overall volume of water that falls on California, thus making more storage even more crucial while forcing us to rethink the entire pattern of water use.

Nothing is more critical to California's future.

Editor's note: Dan Walters has been a journalist for more than 60 years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. He began his professional career in 1960, at age 16, at the Humboldt Times. You may reach Dan by email: dan@calmatters.org

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Tenants and housing rights activists protest for a halting of rent payments and mortgage debt caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in LA. Photo by Lucy Nicholson, Reuters

How long are Californians waiting for rent relief? Protection from evictions disappears April 1

Study says only 16% of applicants have been paid

By **Manuela Tobias**
CalMatters

A new study says that California has sent rent relief to only 16% of applicants, who are waiting months. The state disputes the analysis, but according to its figures, only 41% of applicants have been paid.

Only 16% of nearly half a million renters who applied for rent relief from the state of California have been paid, according to a new analysis released today. And the clock is ticking: Under state law, landlords will be able to evict tenants who failed to pay rent by April 1.

Of more than 488,000 households who applied for assistance since the program launched in March 2021, about 180,000 were approved. Four percent were denied, and more than half of the applicants are still awaiting a response, according to the study, produced by the National Equity Atlas, Housing Now and the Western Center on Law & Poverty using state data.

But even most renters whose applications were approved are still waiting for a check, according to the analysis. Of the 180,000 households whose applications were approved, just more than 75,000 households were paid. And they still need more help: 90% of those households have reapplied for more money.

The number of people paid, according to the study, is significantly lower than what is shown on the state's public dashboard — 191,000 households “served” and \$2.2 billion paid.

Monica Hernández, a spokesperson with the California Department of Housing and Community Development, disputed the report's findings and said that the state's dashboard has “the most current and accurate numbers.”

Of 467,000 complete applications to date, 191,000 payments, or 41%, have been made, she said, and each week more than \$80 million is going out to more than 8,000 households.

The study's authors said they stood behind their analysis, which shows that \$900 million has been paid (“application complete, paid” in the state's data), while another \$1.15 billion has

only been approved (“application complete, payment pending”).

“It doesn't matter if you have a piece of paper that says you're approved, you need the money,” said Madeline Howard, a senior staff attorney at the Western Center and co-author of the report. “It doesn't reflect the experience of the tenants who are living this day to day.”

The study also found that applicants waited a median of more than three months to get an approval, and another month to get paid — 135 days total. The wait times have been getting shorter, however: Households who applied for aid last March waited about six months to get paid, while those who applied in October faced a wait time of just less than four months.

In her emailed response, Hernández said that the wait time measure “does not account for the different rules that different applications applied under at different times” or “for incomplete, duplicate, or potentially fraudulent applications that we are just now clearing out of the data.”

California received about \$5.2 billion from the federal government to help renters stay housed and keep landlords paid. The state is in charge of administering about half of that, while 25 cities and counties are administering the rest. The new study focuses on the state program, which covers nearly two-thirds of Californians.

In January, the state received \$62 million in additional federal aid, or only 3% of the nearly \$2 billion it requested in November. On March 15, the department announced it had received an additional \$136 million. Still, California received one third of the funds reallocated by the U.S. Treasury, which Hernandez said spoke to federal officials’ “confidence in our ability to distribute funds to households in need in a timely fashion.”

According to Hernández, a budget bill the Legislature passed in February that allocates General Fund dollars to state and local rent relief programs “means that every eligible applicant seeking assistance for eligible costs submitted and incurred on or before March 31, 2022, will be assisted.” The state law allows the state

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Times **Feature**

Tech Jargon of the week

Cold Wallets

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:

Cold Wallets
A wallet is simply a method to store virtual money. Like you can keep non-virtual money in a bank account or under your mattress, you can keep virtual currencies in hot and cold wallets.

There are different kinds of wallets – hot wallet, cold wallet, etc.

Cold wallet is an offline wallet provided for storing bitcoins. With cold wallet, the digital currency is stored on a platform that is not connected to the internet, thereby, protecting the wallet from unauthorized access, cyber hacks, and other vulnerabilities that a system connected to the internet is susceptible to. Unlike a physical wallet, which can hold any currency if it’s paper, a cold wallet cannot store all cryptocurrencies. Each cold wallet has its own unique range of cryptocurrencies it is compatible with. This means that if a cryptocurrency is sent to the wrong wallet, the amount sent is lost forever.

Cold wallets offer the best method of safeguarding cryptocurrencies because they store crypto assets offline and literally put it in the hands of the owners. Other wallet types are susceptible to hacking, phishing, and damage which can easily lead to loss of funds. While people might choose other wallet types for

cryptocurrencies they move or trade frequently, cold wallets are ideal for long-term storage.

Cold wallets are devices built to store users’ private keys securely. Most look like a USB drive and can be accessed via desktop apps. The private key given to any bitcoin user is a unique string of alphanumeric characters required to access the user’s address. The address is the user’s unique ID that is required to make transactions and receive bitcoins from a sender. Two people making a transaction with bitcoin, where one is a seller and the other a buyer, will have to share their addresses with each other to complete the transaction. The buyer of the commodity or service sends the required number of bitcoins to the seller’s divulged address as payment, and the blockchain verifies the validity of the transaction and confirms that the buyer or sender really has those funds to send. Once the payment has been delivered to the address, the seller or receiver can only access the funds through his or her private key. It is, therefore, imperative, for private keys to be kept secure because if stolen, the user’s bitcoins or altcoins could be unlocked and accessed from the address without authorization.

Cold wallets cost money. Prices for common hardware wallets range from \$50 to \$200. Not a big price to pay if you own many cryptocurrencies, but ridiculous to safeguard a few Satoshi. Additionally, if you lose your cold wallet or break it beyond repair, it is all gone.

Remember, if you want to hold onto your cryptocurrencies, keep them safe!
Do you enjoy reading this column? Send in your comments or feedback to the author at shub.saxen@gmail.com. Shubhi Asthana works as a Research Senior Software Engineer at the IBM Almaden Research Center, San Jose.


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Evictions

Continued from page 10
to pay people quicker as they wait on the Treasury, but it also means that if the federal government doesn’t foot the bill, California will.

That also means March 31 is the new deadline to apply for rent relief, according to an email from HCD spokesperson Alex Traverso on March 9.

The new study is the most complete look yet at how rent relief is going in California.

The full data set was not released to the Western Center through the state Public Records Act until after the center announced its intent to sue the Department of Housing and Community Development, which administers the program with the help of a private contractor. Repeated Public Records Act requests for the full data set had previously been denied. These groups have been tracking California’s eviction and rent relief efforts from the beginning.

CalMatters has requested similar data from the state through several Public Records Act requests and had been repeatedly told the data did not exist.

“We don’t track data and create a report on dates that folks applied and then they received a response. What we do is we’re able to look at the age of applications within the system and make sure that all applications are assigned by a certain date,” Geoffrey Ross, deputy director for the Division of Federal Financial Assistance at the housing department, told CalMatters.

Hernández said that statement was accurate at the time.

A state ban on evictions for non-payment of

rent went into effect at the start of the pandemic and was extended several times. That protection ended last October — with one condition. Through March 31, landlords would be blocked from evicting tenants over non-payment of rent through Sept. 30, 2021, if they had applied for rent relief from the state. That additional layer of protection disappears on April 1.

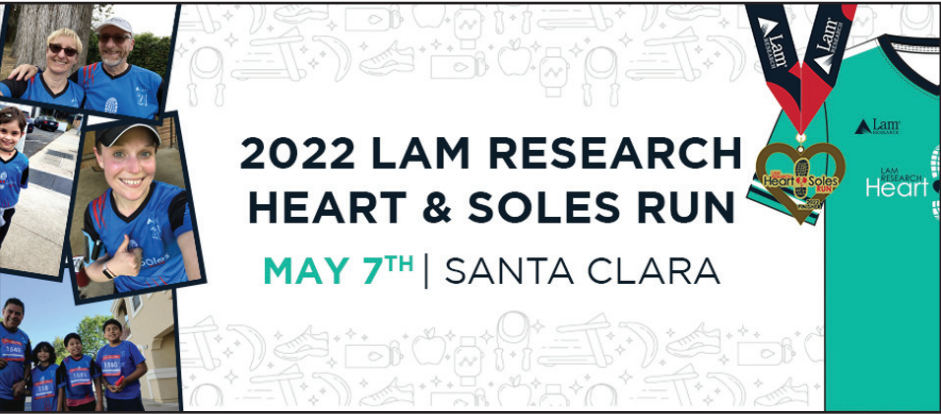
“I’m really confused as to why we haven’t heard anything to extend the eviction protections,” Howard said. “People are waiting. They don’t have their money.”

The state rent relief program continues to face other challenges that have persisted from its inception, according to another recent survey of 58 tenant organizations across the state by Tenants Together, an advocacy group. Ninety percent of survey respondents reported difficulties accessing the application and 82% reported difficulty getting information about their applications.

The survey found that California’s most vulnerable tenants — including non-English speakers, seniors, and people with informal leases — continue to face the greatest hurdles to getting rent relief.

“There’s I think a lack of understanding in the Legislature that people become homeless after they’re evicted from their homes,” said Shanti Singh, legislative and communications director for the group that conducted the survey.

Editor’s note: Manuela Tobias is the housing reporter for CalMatters. Her stories focus on the political dynamics and economic and racial inequities that have contributed to the housing crisis in California and its potential. You can reach Manuela by email: manuela@calmatters.org.



9th Annual Lam Research Heart & Soles Run May 7

By **Mary Ann Dewan, Ph.D.**
County Superintendent of Schools

Spring has arrived. It is a perfect time to "spring into" family lifestyle changes that support healthy food and activity. Now is a beautiful time to get the entire family outside for cycling, soccer, or having fun on the playground. The 9th Annual Lam Research Heart & Soles Run is on Saturday, May 7. You are encouraged to join in with the Fitness & Fun Spring into Fitness Challenge leading up to the event's 5K/10K.



From the Superintendent
Mary Ann Dewan, Ph. D.

During your practice runs, be sure everyone drinks water when physically active. Replace sugary beverages such as sodas, juices, or sports drinks with fresh fruits and vegetables. Visiting your local farmers' market, grocery store, or produce stand adds a fun and educational opportunity to learn about eating seasonal produce while identifying colors, shapes, and what they like to eat. Choosing healthy foods and participating in physical activities are a few healthy habits that a family can build together. Practicing the proven safety and risk mitigation strategies such as testing, staying home when sick, and vaccinations keep communities safe and healthy.

To learn more about the 9th Annual Lam Research Heart & Soles Run, visit:
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Times Feature

Low-income seniors may apply for special property tax exemption

By Sean Eastwood
Staff writer

Santa Clara County seniors, 65 and older, could qualify to be exempt from paying the Safe, Clean Water property tax if they own their home and live in it as a primary residence. Valley Water offers an exemption for qualifying low-income seniors from the Safe, Clean Water special property tax. The tax was re-

newed and approved by the voters in November of 2020. The application period for the 2022 Safe, Clean Water low-income senior property tax exemption is open from April 15, 2022 - June 30, 2022. **Program Criteria for 2022** Santa Clara County seniors could be exempt from the tax if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Born before June 30, 1958.
- Have a total household income for 2021 was below \$62,292. Total household income is the total gross income for every person over



18 years old who lives in the home. It excludes capital gains.

- Live in and own the home the tax is assessed on.

Please note that mobile homes in parks and homes that are in an irrevocable trust are not eligible. Seniors who meet the requirements, should complete the application, and return with proof of age, such as a copy of a driver's license, copy of birth certificate, copy of passport, or copy of a medical card that shows date of birth. We request that no original documents be sent.

Applications can be submitted via regular mail or as a legible scanned copy via email. For more information about the Safe, Clean Water low-income senior property tax exemption, or to apply, please visit our website at valleywater.org/senior-parcel-tax-exemption. To apply for the tax exemption application is available online at valleywater.org/senior-parcel-tax-exemption. *Editor's note: The Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program was renewed and approved by voters in November 2020 and is based on six key community priorities to ensure a safe, reliable water supply while supporting the public health and public safety of our community. More information can be found online at: valleywater.org/safecleanwater*

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