



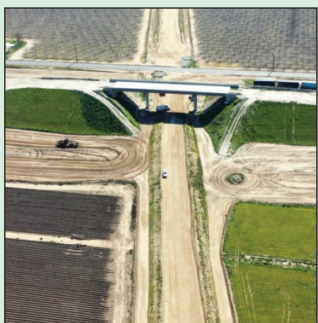
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Willow Glen *Times*

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Grade separation for the California high-speed rail project at Excelsior Avenue near State Route 43 in Kings County. Photo courtesy of the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

Bay Area poll shows support for high-speed rail route

Finishing the complete route from Los Angeles to San Francisco could take \$105 billion

By Eli Wolfe

Article courtesy of
San José Spotlight

A new poll suggests strong public support for California's ambitious high-speed rail project, but the challenges of stretching it to San Jose are daunting.

UC Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies reported voters in California favor continuing the high-speed rail project by a five-to-three margin.

The poll, which examined a range of issues voters want the state to address, was administered online to 8,676 California residents in English and Spanish. The findings are likely subject to a sampling error of approximately plus or minus 2 percent

Mark DiCamillo, director of UC Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies poll, told San José Spotlight it can't easily be compared to past surveys
See RAIL, page 2

TASTY TALENTS

ChefCentury: New culinary niche provides talented chefs support with kitchen, marketing and home delivery service

By William Bellou
Publisher

A new San Jose venture called ChefCentury is promoting the talents of an array of multi-talented, multicultural chefs into a local commissary kitchen to create sumptuous home delivered meals.

The idea was spawned when an entrepreneur looking to make a difference during a pandemic met a chef who decided to come out of retirement to cook home-delivered meals for his many longtime clients.

The new enterprise was founded and funded by Richard Tam with Brad Kunkel. Together they manage the kitchen operations

that bring both budding and experienced culinarians in the kitchen:

"Focus on cooking. We handle the rest," is the duos moto. By "the rest," Tam means chefs have the use of a fully equipped and licensed kitchen including marketing, delivery and customer service support. This new culinary niche allows chefs to do what they do best, "showcase their culinary skills and build a future in the emerging delivery food industry."

"A lot of chefs were devastated by COVID, and I thought I should do something to help the small guys," said Tam. "So we started the enterprise off as a social mission. with a profit-sharing model which provides 70 percent of the profits



The enterprise was founded and funded by **Richard Tam** (above) with **Brad Kunkel** (below left).

to the chefs; with zero financial risk."

Kunkel explained that Tam's background is not in restaurants — he was the founder/CEO of a self-publishing business — but his heart is deep into the culinary field now.

"Richard's heart is for the chefs. He wants to help in every way humanly possible so local chefs can pursue their culinary passion," Kunkel said.

During that last 18 months more than a dozen chefs have joined with Tam and Kunkel to fine-tuning their skills by preparing lunches and dinners for deliveries, experimenting with pop-ups and donating meals to charitable organizations.

Holiday creations

Creating holiday meals for pickup or home delivery is very popular with clients. On Valentine's Day, "Date in a Box" was creative idea that that included dinner — a cranberry ribeye with garlic smashed potatoes, bacon-wrapped asparagus, chocolate-covered strawberries — along with a long-stemmed rose, tea light candles and red linen napkins. For St. Patrick's Day, Kunkel will be making Guinness-braised short ribs with roasted rosemary carrots and green beans, smashed

See CHEFCENTURY, page 2



Chef Brad Kunkel's kitchen has a focus on the cooking. Pictured above is a London Broil from the kitchen.

SEE OUR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE - PAGE 15

Times **Community News**

High Speed Rail construction continues to expand in Kern County.

High Speed Rail

Continued from page 1

about the popularity of the rail project. But he said the results show majority support for the truncated version of the project.

“We’re now in 2022, it’s a long way away, and it’s been 14 years, but voters wanted to go forward even in its kind of abbreviated form,” DiCamillo said.

In 2008, California voters approved bonds to design and build a high-speed rail system that would run from San Diego to Sacramento by 2030. Cost overruns and delays have extended the timeline: the state’s current plan calls for a rail line linking Bakersfield to Merced by 2030, and then the Bay Area by 2033. According to the latest state estimate, finishing the complete route from Los Angeles to San Francisco could take \$105 billion.

San Jose Diridon Station set to become major transit hub

The high-speed rail line would feed into San Jose through Diridon Station, which is already set to become a major transit hub thanks to the expansion of BART from the north. At a recent VTA board meeting, officials from the California High-Speed Rail Authority said the project will require tunneling through the Pacheco Pass to connect the Central Valley to Gilroy, and then San Jose. A final environmental impact report is going to be received by the authority’s board later this month.

Projected \$50 billion in economic output

According to a high-speed rail spokes-person, the connection between Silicon Valley and the Central Valley is projected to generate nearly \$50 billion in economic output.

“It’s encouraging to know the people of California are excited by the promise of the nation’s

Vice Mayor Chappie Jones, who chairs VTA’s board, said he believes high-speed rail will transform Diridon into the equivalent of New York’s Grand Central Station on the West Coast.

first high-speed rail system,” Anthony Lopez, a spokesperson for the High-Speed Rail Authority, told San José Spotlight. “We look forward to moving this project forward and putting high-speed rail into service by the end of the decade.”

Speeding through San Jose

Local officials and transit advocates are optimistic about the project’s potential impact on San Jose. Vice Mayor Chappie Jones, who chairs VTA’s board, told San José Spotlight he believes high-speed rail will transform Diridon into the equivalent of New York’s Grand Central Station on the West Coast.

“You’re going to have BART, light rail, buses and trains coming into that station, and having high-speed rail also come in will bring tens of thousands of riders into downtown San Jose,” Jones said. “The economic benefit of that alone is tremendous.”

Derrick Seaver, president and CEO of the San Jose Chamber of Commerce, said he’s not surprised people are supportive of the project, especially given the return of crushing traffic as the pandemic recedes. The Berkeley poll noted four out of 10 respondents are experiencing serious

problems due to rising gas prices.

Seaver said there are many upsides to the project for the local economy, although he is concerned about construction.

“The struggle the business community has is all about the mitigation costs—where is the construction going to take place? What is the mitigation going to look like?” Seaver told San José Spotlight. “Downtown San Jose has a lot of activity already, with the BART project coming downtown, so this would be another element they would have to work through.”

Project could create more affordable homes for commuters

Jones noted the project will also allow more people to commute to San Jose from the Central Valley, where there are more opportunities for people to find affordable homes. Aside from the challenges of tunneling under the mountains that separate Silicon Valley from the Central Valley, Jones said he’s concerned about how the trains will travel through San Jose.

“That’s a big discussion in terms of grade separation. Do you want a train just going 110 or 125 miles per hour at grade level and crossing major intersections?” Jones said. “Imagine the safety concerns for vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians.”

Amtrak is considered slow

Monica Mallon, a transit advocate and San José Spotlight columnist, believes high-speed rail will be a major improvement over Amtrak, which she said is too slow. She said the greatest obstacle will come down to money.

“The funding has not been what (high speed rail staff) expected it to be,” Mallon told San José Spotlight. “I think they expected the private sector to step up a little more and contribute.”



Blackened salmon with mango avocado chutney and green salad.

Left: **Nadia Shami**, marketing. Right: **Natasha Nguyen**, Founder/Operations.

Quinoa tabouleh with souvlaki shrimp.

ChefCentury

Continued from page 1

gold potatoes with caramelized onions and a dessert of Irish creme brulee — and tucking some fun holiday facts into the decorated box.

Wellness meals

ChefCentury has been preparing home-delivered wellness meals that build on Kunkel’s experience cooking for clients under his brand, the Nutrition Kitchen.

Tam emphasizes that these are balanced farm-to-table meals, not a diet plan. “There are no false promises that this is a quick fix. Eat well and you will get healthier over time,” said Tam.

Kunkel, who has had long-term success with clients, said, “If the idea is a lifelong commitment to eating well, you have to make it interesting and not boring. You can’t drink smoothies all day. The idea is to have a variety of proteins and cuisines each week. We’ll change it out based on the seasons.”

ChefCentury has reasonable price points. For example \$10-\$12 for lunches and \$15-\$18 for dinners, with no delivery fee. Tam says the 25 to 30 percent fees being charged by delivery services “unconscionable.”

To learn more about the offerings of ChefCentury, visit their website at: www.chefcentury.com.

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Protecting Our Democracy Act takes aim at presidential abuses

Dear Editor:

It's no secret that Congress is polarized. Rarely does an issue receive strong bipartisan support. That's why it's so striking that 4 out of 5 voters agree that we must do more to safeguard our democracy from presidential corruption.

No president, regardless of party, should be able to exploit weaknesses in our political system for their personal gain. That's where the Protecting Our Democracy Act comes in. If passed, it would prevent future abuse of presidential power and corruption, increase transparency,



and ensure presidents of either party can be held accountable.

If the average person used their office for personal gain, they'd go to jail. If the average person could pardon themselves, there would be no rule of law. Therefore, no president should be above the law. It's just common sense.

I'm urging Congress to pass the Protecting Our Democracy Act. It's time we put safeguards in place to prevent a corrupt president of any party from abusing the power of their office.

Evelyn Phelan
San Jose



Elizabeth Kamya, a representative with IFPTE Local 21, said the wage increase proposal for some city workers comes as high job vacancies continue to plague City Hall. Photo courtesy of IFPTE Local 21.

San Jose workers fleeing city, others rally for higher wages

By Tran Nguyen
Article courtesy of
San José Spotlight

Hundreds of job vacancies, low wages and unmanageable workloads have city workers frustrated and demanding changes.

More than 80 city employees gathered in front of San Jose City Hall early Tuesday as union leaders called for a pay increase for more than 3,000 workers. The city has a workforce of roughly 6,200 employees.

The coalition of unions, made up of Municipal Employee's Federation (MEF) 101 and International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE) Local 21, wants to see a 5.5% wage hike for next fiscal year, citing concerns over inflation, high job vacancy rates and a \$27.7 million surplus in the city's budget.

"What we're asking is an extra \$200 for groceries per month," Elizabeth Kamya, a representative with IFPTE Local 21, told San José Spotlight. "We want the city to invest in its workers. We're not asking for more than what we need."

San Jose, the 10th largest city in the U.S., has roughly 800 job vacancies across City Hall. The high vacancy rate has forced workers in some key services to work longer hours or pick up extra shifts, costing San Jose \$78 million in overtime last year. Union members said this is the direct result

See WORKERS, page 7

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Valley Currents

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



California ranks fourth most bicycle friendly state in League of American Bicyclists 2022 Report

California took 4th Place in the annual ranking of Bicycle Friendly States by the League of American Bicyclists which was announced in Washington, D.C. last week.

The state Report Card found in today's report praises California for...

"...significant advances in bicycle policy in recent years, but those advances must be institutionalized more thoroughly in local Caltrans offices and in funding decisions made by Caltrans and the state legislature."

The report also stated, "While California's Active Transportation Program has expanded in recent years, it still fails to meet the demand for biking and walking investments with a nearly \$2 billion gap in funding in the last application round."

CalBike's \$2 Billion for Bikes campaign aims to fill the funding gap identified by the League. Many excellent projects in the Active Transportation Program didn't get funded in the last cycle due to lack of budget. Governor Newsom and the legislature

have, so far, tentatively committed up to \$1.1 billion in additional funding for biking and walking infrastructure in the next fiscal year, which is an encouraging first step, but California needs more.

Dave Snyder, executive director of Cal Bike, said of the League's report:

"California being named the fourth most bike-friendly state is wonderful news. But California can and should be the MOST bike-friendly state in the nation. The pandemic showed us that Californians love to bike recreationally. But more Californians would love to use bikes for commuting and shopping too, if they felt the streets were safe enough."

Snyder continued, "While funding for bicycles in California has increased recently, we are still ranked at 39th in per capita spending and 23rd in safety nationwide. To catch up, let's invest \$2 billion in safe bikeways that reach destinations where people want to go. By vastly expanding our bike infrastructure, California can become the climate and equity leader we claim to be."



The League of American Bicyclist was founded as the League of American Wheelmen in 1880. Bicyclists, known then as "wheelmen," were challenged by rutted roads of gravel and dirt and faced antagonism from horsemen, wagon drivers, and pedestrians.

Times In Memory

Denise Lynn Bondelie

July 19, 1963 - April 3, 2022

Resident of Willow Glen;

Willow Glen High School grad

Denise Bondelie passed away peacefully on April 3 in Los Gatos. She was born the youngest of 3 in San Jose, California.

After living in Santa Clara for many years, her family moved to Willow Glen 1972.

Known to her family and friends as "Nene," Denise enjoyed staying active. She loved riding bikes, driving go-carts through the neighborhood, and playing organized basketball and softball. Denise attended Willow Glen area elementary and middle schools. She graduated from Del Mar High School in 1981.

Denise spent her first two college years at the University of Hawaii. It was then she established her "ohana" roots and love for the Polynesian setting. She graduated with a bachelor's degree from California State University, Chico in 1985. Denise attended McGeorge School of Law and Lincoln Law School, earned her law degree, and was admitted to the California State Bar in 1995.

Denise began practicing law at a private San Jose firm. She represented clients in worker's compensation and disability matters. In 2000 she became partner at the Carlo and Bondelie law firm. By 2006 Denise moved to Indiana for her family and work. In that time her son Chase was born. She eventually returned to San Jose to live with and assist her father.

She never gave up her passions for traveling, driving her sports cars and cheering on the San Francisco Giants, 49ers and Golden State Warriors. Denise attended the World Series at Candlestick Park during the 1989 Earth-quake. She even served as a SF Giants Ballgirl, and that meant the world to her. She will always be remembered for her wit, humor and popular backyard pig parties.

Denise was a loving parent, daughter, sister and aunt. To her delight, Denise shared her vacations in Kauai with her family. She made lasting friendships with neighbors, colleagues and clients. She will be forever missed.

The Bondelie Family is grateful for the attention and compassion offered by the emergency room and intensive care unit staff at El Camino Hospital.

Denise is preceded in death by her parents Bruce and Barbara (Berry) Bondelie.

She is survived by her son Chase Gardnour, brother Scott, sister Dana (Matt) and nieces Shelby (Chris) and Darby. Denise's love for her dogs Lucy and Barbie was unending.

A celebration of her life will be announced. Donations may be made to the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (www.autisticadvocacy.org.)



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Times **Notebook**

Workers

Continued from page 4

of the noncompetitive, low paying jobs in the city.

City workers last year successfully bargained for a 3.25% wage increase after months of negotiation. The contract guarantees a 3% increase for this year's contract, but the city also agreed to meet with union leaders again this year to discuss a higher percentage.

IFPTE Local 21 conducted a survey where more than 550 city workers—about two thirds of its members—said the current pay levels have forced many to move out of the city, go to food banks to feed their families and apply for various governmental assistance programs to stay afloat.

"We have had enough of (the city's) games and broken promises, we deserve better working conditions and to earn a livable wage," city worker Jill Mariani said at the rally. "There's always enough money for their lucrative salaries and for their pet projects, but for our staff that carry out the work—not so much."

Nick Rovetto, vice president of MEF, said San Jose has also become a "training ground" for other cities, where workers spend several months learning the job, then quickly depart for better offers at cities such as Santa Clara and Sunnyvale.

Since February, Rovetto said his group in the planning, building and code enforcement department has lost roughly 10 people who took other jobs around the South Bay.

"The workload has become insane with our vacancies," Rovetto told San José Spotlight. "What we're paid here is not efficient to retain people."

The lack of employees also affects turn-around time for residents in need of city services. Rovetto said he recently learned some residents had to wait seven to eight months before his team could respond to them.

City officials declined to comment on the proposal and Tuesday's rally.

San Jose, represented by law firm Sloan Sakai Yeung & Wong LLP, shot down the unions' proposal at a meeting last week, claiming the city has never agreed to adjust pay based on inflation and that wages are not the only factor in retaining workers, a letter from the law firm reads. IFPTE Local 21 shared the letter with San José Spotlight.

The unions and the city are heading to a second meeting this week, as workers expect a counter offer from the city.

Several San Jose council candidates spoke

in support of the unions' efforts at Tuesday's rally.

"I wouldn't be standing here today if it wasn't for the city librarians and city rec workers who guided folks like myself in a troubled neighborhood into better paths and better opportunities," said Omar Torres, who's running for City Council in District 3. "We're going to pay you right and we're also gonna make you love your job better."

Peter Ortiz, a candidate for the District 5 council seat, also vowed to be an ally to workers if he's elected.

"It's time that the city work for its working people," Ortiz said. "We cannot prioritize the best interest of our residents here in San Jose, while not prioritizing the interest of our workers to deliver vital services."



City worker **Jill Mariani** said many of her colleagues have left their jobs because of the low pay and unmanageable workload. Photo by Tran Nguyen.

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City employees gathered in front of San Jose City Hall the morning of April 19 as union leaders called for a pay increase for more than 3,000 workers. Photo courtesy of IFPTE Local 21.

'Hands of the poor'

Lady in the rain

In late March, it was raining in San Jose and I was told by others that the elderly lady was sitting in the rain with an umbrella.

The location is in the quaint area called Evergreen.

'They are the same person as we are'

Passer byes said to me, "I pray for someone to help not only her but other homeless in the area too." Then a resident said something I thought profound. She said, "They are the same person as we are."

Still another woman stated, "We are not saved by our religions, we are saved by the grace of God."

I could not sleep that night, so I went to her and gave her a blanket. Walking to her I noticed that the sprinklers hit where she was sitting. She had to stand. I handed her the nice blanket and noticed she did not use it but instead kept it to her side. The next day and most days after, including this week, I brought her hot coffee and a hash brown from McDonalds.

This is a strong woman, perhaps 80 years old. Others told me it is not normal for such a lady to be house-less. There was a deep mystery here and I decided to explore more in the days to come by taking the time to interview her, who was she, where she came from.

She told me she has no name and refers to herself as "Hanoi." Some days as I looked at her in the rain and cold her face bundled up and all, she reminded me of a snapshot of the painting by Edvard Munch called "The Scream." Other days she looked like a cozy furry lion wrapped in white wool.

This woman whom I first dared to not make eye contact a week earlier, began to speak. She said some English but it was a distant second language for her. Her mother language I learned is French but she spoke Vietnamese too.

She put cream in her hot coffee and added many sugars as I began to ask about her life to try to gain some perspective on her.

Parents killed at age 5

She explained that at age 5 she was kidnapped and taken away and her parents were killed. It took place in Vietnam and she said she still owns land there.

When I asked why she left the OWL warming center she explained that they treated people like communists and she didn't like it.

Quite strong and fearless, she sat and watched cars pass. She did this all day and night except to get food or use the restroom. She did not lie down and I wondered how she could be so strong.

I explained that someone will ask her to move all of her things and brought her clear plastic bags to consolidate it all but she refused and said, "No."

She said everything was fine and spoke not so clear English but I could hear that she felt the arrangement of the

plastic flowers bought at the dollar store were beautiful. I believe she created art and it was indeed pretty to look at. I smiled.

When I asked about the banana and the two large pineapples in buckets of water, she responded that she planned to grow them, of course.

As I dropped off a nice new blanket, another woman gave her a white warm comfy jacket. She used it as a hat and it looked good on her.

In the span of a half hour, I learned the following from the elderly lady who calls herself "Hanoi."

"My life isn't working, she said. "It is important to feed the animals and the trees."

When asked about her parents she said they were killed when she was five in Vietnam during the war, long ago. She said she was kidnapped as a young child and moved around the world and through Singapore, Europe and then arrived to the United States in her 30's. She said she owned land in Vietnam and America.

When I said I was sorry for her parents dying she responded firmly that her parents were not dead, they lived inside her heart as she motioned with her hands and arms drawing into her.

Some might consider her mentally ill but her words were in my view very keen. She said, "God is in the sky." And, when speaking about her current living situation she stated, "I don't accept too much trouble."



"She reminded me of a snapshot of the painting by Edvard Munch called 'The Scream.'"

She mentioned "Buddha" and I knew religion was important to her.

She was bitter about those she called "robbers," who she felt lost their lives because of how they comported themselves in living in this one.

When asked again about her name she responded, "The people dropped my name and I learned to live by myself."

Then she struggled to find a plastic card that was on a lanyard and it was a bus Clipper Card to which she felt had much power.

She then stated, "I can't handle too much communism," and explained she once had a \$1,200 monthly payment on a townhouse in San Jose. I deciphered her words to mean that bad people had moved in who were not part of her family.

I'm always happy

Then she said something truly powerful. "I am always happy and I love myself and I don't want to bother people."

When I asked her what she wanted, she responded, "I want to buy a house."

As far as I could tell, she considers herself a scientist and designer. She pointed to the Pineapple in water bucket with plastic flowers bought from the dollar store and said, "If I wasn't a scientist or designer how could I have created this." Then she said, "It's beautiful," to which I agreed and nodded my head.

She made great sense when she said, "I didn't go to any university because it was too expensive so I learned myself."

When I asked her what food, she would like so that others could buy it for her, she said "chicken roll." When I asked again and again, I finally figured out she meant, "Chicken roast," which is sold in supermarkets in plastic domes.

I do not wish to live like a fish in a can

I tried to convince her to go back at night to the OWL warming center but she said to me, "I do not wish to live like a fish in the can, and they treat everyone like communists." In asking others I was told she was asked to leave the warming center because she was not treating people properly.

She had suspicions that people in her life stole from her and stated, "They never change, they rob and are professional robbers."

When I asked what else she would like to have she said she wanted to buy a cover to help her during rain and sun. I got the impression she wanted a canopy one can set up over their head.

In the next day, others helped her by buying pants and socks and it was nice to see her head wrapped with the nice jacket so she could keep warm.

I and others tried to get her help. We contacted many agencies and the city and county.

Then something glorious happened the next morning. Someone commandeered a Starbucks um-

brella and incorporated it to lean over her so that she would not be rained upon by sprinklers nor mother nature. Others gave her blankets in clear plastic zip holders. This was humanity reaching out to her. I just knew that previous C.E.O. Howard D. Schultz would be proud!

It made me feel good that the community was rallying around her as I brought the next day's cup of coffee. As I looked at her, I thought, no one more noble than her. No one stronger. She was iconic, but I was scared.

I was scared that some part of the bureaucracy of the city or county would be by to inhumanly remove all traces of all things and her too. Some time soon I knew this to happen. It was just a matter of this thing called time.

Maybe, it is a small possibility but perhaps, this nice elderly lady has social security coming to her because she came to the U.S.A. more than 40 years ago. Maybe she has monies in a bank somewhere too. Maybe she has the land she speaks of owning in one or two countries, who knows.

The key factor in deciphering it all will be to connect her to a social worker who speaks French and can in some way find out her social security number.

Church groups, Councilwoman Sylvia Arenas and TEAM, Mayor Sam Liccardo and TEAM, HOMEFIRST, others pitch in best they can.

We found out some very important information. There is a countywide system that manages information on the homeless. This system is called the HMIS System (Homeless Management Information System). This was big news for the elderly lady and others too, can work with agencies to find out more about their past and too maybe monies due to her to create a new pathway of living.

NEXTDOOR to the rescue

NEXTDOOR (you can join for free) is a social media site that has neighborhood involvement. Through NEXTDOOR 100's of



Someone commandeered a Starbucks umbrella for her. This became her home.

Times **Op Ed**

people connected and reached out to make phone calls in an effort to help this elderly lady. There were many who kindly visited her. Many Vietnamese speaking residents came and some bought her soup and had a long chat with her. This was nice because it brought socialization into play. More than one NEXTDOOR lady has visited kindly the elderly lady and they communicate to her. One said, "I told her mama people are trying to help you and you need to accept their help." They also said, "Ahhh, I hope soon she has a new safe home and she is happy." I reflect that this is the power of NEXTDOOR, for such comments energize me and others to not give up hope and NEXTDOOR connects so that "Hanoi," can get visits and get the beauty of social interaction in her native language.

Police help out the best they possibly can

The police often do not get thanked for what they do. They are often chasing the bad guys and gals and stolen cars, retrieving of hand guns and more. Such is the case and at a meeting a Police Captain stated they are working on things and are trying to help the lady on the bus bench.

HOMEFIRST is a company in San Jose that helps the homeless. They provide and run shelters and also temporary places called OWL centers. Their people too are visiting regularly with the elderly lady and offering help. There is only so much they can do with the laws set by our political leaders as approved by the citizenry.

Proposed Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment Court

At this point in time in San Jose and beyond, if a homeless person wants to set up camp in a particular place, it

can often result in them staying there a while. Last month Governor Newsome proposed a new policy framework that will allow less rights to those that sleep in the open, meaning individuals struggling with homelessness, mental health issues, substance abuse and more, can be put in a court ordered program and provided access to services such as treatment plans. It is just in the proposal stage and has a long way to go to be cobbled out into some kind of law. The governor calls it the 'Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment Court.'

Lady in the rain is impeded if she doesn't choose help

The cold reality is if a person is not a harm to themselves, they can stay on the street. Thus, Laura's Law does not work and is not implemented in the majority of situations.

The word "Freedom," in our constitution gives each person their rights. So, for now, the choices of the homeless can provide them lots of rights in their choices to make camp into open spaces of where they live overnight and during the day. To site a person living in the open takes time and it all has to be done very tactfully and without disturbing the legal rights of those who make choices to live in ways that do not allow a roof over their head. Some set up camp along highways or creeks for the land

is overseen by different agencies which often can lag in siting their living quarters.

With regard to "The Lady in the rain," many in the community and on NEXTDOOR help her and make phone calls to try to get paid county, city and organizations to help. They cannot help her if she does not wish to make new choices. It is all about American freedom. The level of mental challenge is tough to move the needle on taking one's rights away.

One of my concerns is how these conditions may affect the viewpoint of children as they grow and witness house-less people. Will they become desensitized to others who are poor?

Bus bench to be pulled

I happen to see VTA (Valley Transit Company) pulling bus stop benches in the area. They explain they are pulling the benches to update them. I begin to understand it may be a matter of time before all of the elderly lady's things are forcibly removed and set gently down on the lawn behind her. Many brought umbrellas and things to her. I kindly explain to her that VTA may be removing



VTA is clearing the area by replacing benches, but they are not sure if they will succeed with her bench.

the bench to replace it in weeks to come. This news makes her visibly angry. She says, "Stop trying to help me, help yourself."

As the days pass, I see the elderly lady look worse. I wonder if she has not had a shower for a while. Many give her clothes which she uses. She has water and other things. Her personality changes when she gets angry and she states, "I don't like communism, I am a United States citizen and the U.S. is a liar." She continues, "the social workers are robbers, banks are robbers, they killed my life."

Though things are tough, I just know that prayer can make a difference so I ask all who believe in a higher power to take a moment and pray for this "Lady in the rain," who has not taken a shower for a while. Next week I and others will ask her to walk near to get a shower with Dignity on Wheels and we hope she does not say, "NO." Unfortunately when I post religious things on NEXTDOOR they are removed. So let's pray for NEXTDOOR too and allow more freedom to post religious beliefs such as quotes from Mother Teresa or other religious figures. Prayer is the answer and the lady is Buddhist, so perhaps a Buddhist monk can visit her.

Kevin Larsen
San Jose resident

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San José Mayor, state leaders, volunteers plant city's first 'Pocket Forest' in Celebration of Earth Day

Goal set to plant 1,000 trees in lowest tree canopy area of San Jose

On Earth Day, Mayor Sam Liccardo, California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday, Assemblymember Alex Lee, Councilmember David Cohen, and fifty volunteers planted thirty native trees at Baypointe Park.

The tree planting was the city's first "pocket forest." Councilmember David Cohen also announced his goal to plant 1,000 trees in District 4 which has the lowest tree canopy in San Jose.

"The consequences of our changing climate hurt us all, but disproportionately impacts many of our most vulnerable residents," said San José Mayor Sam Liccardo. "Growing our urban forest will continue to cut down on urban heating, helping to save lives and our planet in the process. Through our collective efforts we can create a healthier, more resilient city."

In February, 2022, San José City Council unanimously adopted the Community Forest Management Plan, which emphasized the urgency for an immediate increase in the city's tree canopy and established the need for innovative solutions to accomplish this goal as the city works to address other needs during its recovery from the pandemic. The trees for the City's first pocket forest were donated by Bloom Energy, and serve as a unique example of a private-public partnership between a company and a Council District with a direct allocation of money, time and resources to expand and actively maintain the city's tree canopy.

"We know that an important tool to address climate change and improve quality of life is planting more trees. Unfortunately, over the past decade, the tree canopy in San José's District 4 has dropped significantly and become lowest in the city," said Councilmember David Cohen,

District 4. "To address this, we are going to build a unique

public-private partnership to enlist volunteers and raise money in order to add trees to our parks and build pocket forests throughout the district. I'm thankful to our neighborhood associations and North San José business community for joining us in this effort."

This Earth Day event aims to inspire similar native plantings and greenery expansion across neighborhoods that have low levels of open space and trees in the city, especially those with the lowest levels of tree cover in the city. The risk to these neighborhoods, in addition to the lack of developed recreational open space, includes less protection from the warming climate offered by trees, which also help to sequester carbon in the atmosphere and contribute to lower street temperatures.

"This new Pocket Forest campaign in San José is an example of how the city and our state continues to provide opportunities for every Californian to take climate action," said California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday. "It's crucial for California to continue to be a climate-resilient state by offering programs such as the California Climate Action Corps to help reach our sustainability goals, whether it's through volunteering to plant a tree or educating your community. Let's continue to set a national example and lead the way forward."

"Urban trees and forests play a critical role in climate change mitigation and adaptation," said Assemblymember Alex Lee. "They help filter air and water, control stormwater, conserve energy, and provide animals shelter and shade."



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Times **Feature**



Eight arrested including assault with a deadly weapon and hit and run during one of five simultaneous sideshows on April 17.

Five simultaneous sideshows dispersed in San Jose April 17

Eight arrested including assault with a deadly weapon, hit and run

Five sideshow incidents were reported throughout the city of San Jose on April 17 at approximately 4 p.m.

San Jose Police Officers dispersed participants and onlookers at the following locations: Old Bayshore Highway and Gish Road; Santa Teresa Boulevard and the Highway 87 interchange; Meridian Avenue and Fruitdale Avenue; Capitol Expressway and Capitol Avenue; and Lundy Avenue and Concourse Drive.

Using all available resources, the sideshows were dispersed. At one location, Capitol Expressway and Capitol Avenue, some of the fleeing vehicles drove to the area of Story Road and Jackson Avenue where units met them and conducted enforcement action.

Felony hit and run

One of the involved side show vehicles that fled to Story Road rammed and struck a supervisor's patrol car. After the collision the driver fled and struck an officer who was on foot in the immediate area conducting enforcement.

The suspect vehicle was later located and stopped in the area of White Road and McKee Road. The driver, 19 year-old Isaac Guzman of Los Banos, was taken into custody and arrested for two counts of assault with a deadly weapon on an Officer, felony hit and run, and for possession of a privately made firearm.

The Officer that was struck was transported to a local hospital with minor to moderate injuries. He was treated and released.

In total eight arrests were made, two for firearms violations. Three vehicles were impounded for 30 days and approximately 40 citations were issued for spectator and mechanical violations.

You may submit crime tips and remain anonymous by using the P3TIPS mobile app, calling the tip line at (408) 947-STOP, or on www.svcrimestoppers.org.

If the information you submit leads to an arrest, you are eligible for a cash reward from the Silicon Valley Crime Stoppers Program.

SJ City Council opposes term limit measure

Water district spends \$3.2M in bid to allow board members to serve longer; Critics say that ballot measure 'A' is misleading

By William Bellou
Publisher

The San Jose City Council has voted to formally oppose a measure on the June ballot in Santa Clara County that would extend term limits for board members of the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

By a 7-3 vote late Tuesday, the council passed a resolution urging a no vote and calling on other cities in the area to also oppose it.

Critics, especially Councilmember Matt Mahan who led the opposition, complain that the proposal, Measure A, uses misleading wording in a deliberate attempt to trick voters into believing they are limiting the water district board members' terms, when it in fact would allow them to serve longer than currently allowed now.

Several councilmembers blasted the water district for spending \$3.2 million to place it on the ballot at a time when the agency has been raising water rates and buying water at high prices to reduce shortages in the drought.

"You know what's even worse than wasting taxpayer money? Intentionally misleading them," said San Jose Councilman Matt Mahan. "And that's exactly what this measure does."

Councilmember Raul Perez said, "When I read through the language, I was appalled."

Since 2010, water board members have been limited to three successive four-year terms. But in February, as several of them faced being termed out of office this year, the district's board voted 4-3 to put a measure on the June 7 countywide ballot to extend their service to four successive four-year terms. The measure's language does not say that if approved by voters, water district members, some of whom already have served more than 20 years on the board, could serve longer.

Voting in favor of the resolution to oppose the ballot measure were Mahan, Perez, Magdalena Carrasco, Dev Davis, Maya Esparza, Sylvia Arenas and Pam Foley. Voting no were Jimenez, David Cohen and Vice Mayor Chappie Jones.

The Santa Clara Valley Water District, based in San Jose, is a government agency that provides water and flood protection to 2 million residents countywide.



TENNIS TIPS

Play matches like you practice

By Ken DeHart

We all feel like we practice at one level then compete at a lower level. Here are some tips to transfer your practice level into your match play performance.

Relax

When you are practicing, notice how relaxed you are. Record your tension level. On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being totally relaxed and 5 being totally tense, record your tension level as you practice. Ideally you will play at a tension level of 2 or 3.

When you are in a match, be aware of adjusting your tension level down from 4 or 5 to your practice tension level. As the importance of the match rises, so does your tension level. Between shots, games or sets, reset your tension level to your practice level.

Footwork and movement

Your ability to execute a shot depends upon the position your feet put you into. Out of balance or poor posture will usually produce a poor shot (posture = position and position = possession P+P+P). In practice, notice what height or point of contact allows you to produce your best shots. In the match, see the ball well to know how to get into your ideal hitting position. The pros average between 6-10 steps between each ball they hit. Those are called adjusting steps to put you into the best position to make your best shot.

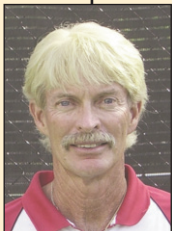
Warm up your key shots

In a tennis match, about 70% of the balls you will hit are either a serve or return of serve, only 30% are ground strokes, volleys or overheads. How often do you practice your serve and the return of serve in your practice sessions? In fact very few players take enough practice serves in the match warmup to be confident and seldom do you practice returns in the warm up. Spend more time serving and receiving in your match warm up then on your ground strokes, volleys and overheads to improve your match play performance.

See the ball

Perhaps the most underrated skill is the ability to "see" the ball (focus on) versus "watching" the ball (scanning). Because of less pressure in practice, players often focus on seeing the ball better than in the match where they begin to watch the ball, the opponent and targets.

Your ability to see the ball as the oppo-



nent makes contact with the ball (versus looking at the opponent then trying to find the ball) is critical to the amount of time you have to react to a shot coming at you.

While nearly impossible to do, try to see the ball spin in the warm up when the ball speed is slower and you are closer to the net (you are legally blind to the ball when it is about 3-4 feet as it approaches you).

The trick is to keep the eyes and the head still at contact to provide your best chance to produce a quality shot. When the eyes move or the head shifts, even the slightest it will change the path of your arm and hand, thus the path of your racquet on any shot, serve, ground stroke, volley or serve. This is best represented by the pros who keep their head still almost until they have finished their follow through on any shot (see video of Fed or Nadal at contact and after)

Other tips

- Breathing at contact is important to relaxing at contact and timing your shot (count as you contact the ball and see if you are timing your breathing with contact).

- Warm up all your game in the match warm up to see how your shots feel that day. It is like taking a test in school. Study all the information so you will be prepared for anything on the test that day. You may or may not have to use it, but you were prepared if it shows up.

- Physically warm up before you go on the court. You are counting on your body to be able to perform as best it can, at least get it warmed up to give it the best chance and perhaps avoid injuries (jumping jacks are a great all body warm up activity in emergencies)

- Document how you felt in practice in your journal. Now document how you felt in your match and compare. Writing things down allows you to visually and mentally compare. You also revisit the experience as you write it down and usually discover more details than just your passing thoughts.

Discover what works for you. Each of us are different and value different bits of information. As we were told, "doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results is the definition of insanity". While you do want to "play out of your mind" there are more effective ways to experience being in the zone.

Ken DeHart, USA High Performance Coach, serves as Director of Racquets, Alpine Hills Tennis & Swimming Club. He is a PTR Hall of Fame, PTR International Master Professional, and USPTA Master Professional. You may contact Ken at 408.892.3806; or email: kende hart@aol.com; ken@alpinehills.us.



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TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK

DeepMind

By Shubhi Asthana

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:

DeepMind

DeepMind is a division of Alphabet, Inc. which is the parent company for Google. It is

responsible for developing general-purpose artificial intelligence (AGI) technology. It was bought from a University College London spinout, DeepMind for a reported 400M euros in January 2014.

DeepMind uses raw pixel data as input and learns from experience. The researchers try to provide a large set of raw information to the algorithms as possible so that the systems themselves can learn the very best representations to use those for action or classification or predictions.

DeepMind technology has been challenged in many avenues; for example, it has been challenged to learn games on its own. For example, when it was tasked to beat the library of Atari games, it learned to under-

stand the games without changing the code. After a time, the AI could play the games better and with more efficiency than humans.

In pushing the boundaries of AI, DeepMind tasked itself with defeating the board game Go. Go is a computational challenge for AI, largely because of the complexity of choosing among the immense number of possible moves in the game. DeepMind developed a special project called AlphaGo, a computer program designed to play the board game. After numerous versions of supervised learning AI models, AlphaGo bested the No. 1 player worldwide in 2017.

Outside of playing games, DeepMind was used to improve power efficiency in the already optimized data centers at Google.

DeepMind was able to improve on the efforts of previous specialists by 15%, making a 40% reduction in cooling costs. It’s also been used in developing Google Assistant and helps create personalized app recommendations in Google Play.

As you can see, Google didn’t buy DeepMind for nothing. Indeed, it’s using certain DeepMind algorithms to make many of its best-known products and services smarter than they were previously.

About the Author

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

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