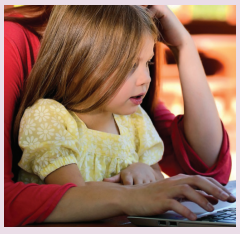


Green tech program raises \$130,000 for low income student and household laptops – **SEE PAGE 4**



Mahan's discourse
Homelessness remains a community concern for San Jose residents
SEE PAGE 17

Kids Against Hunger benefits from San Jose teacher's volunteerism – **SEE PAGE 14**



JUNE 10 – JUNE 23, 2022 ■ VOL. 35, NO. 12

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Almaden Times

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Hindus push for Diwali holiday in Santa Clara County schools

Diwali falls on October 24 this year

Hindus are urging closure of all—public, charter, private, parochial—schools in Santa Clara County (California) on their most popular festival Diwali.

Hindu statesman Rajan Zed, in a statement in Nevada today, said that it was simply not fair with Hindu pupils in schools in Santa Clara County, as they had to be at school on their most popular festival; while Santa Clara County schools were closed during festivities of other religions.

Zed, who is President of Universal Society of Hinduism, stated that since it was vital for Hindu families to celebrate Diwali day together at home with their children; closing schools on Diwali would ensure that and would also display how respectful and accommodating these schools were to their faith.

Rajan Zed indicated that holiday on Diwali in Santa Clara County schools would be a step in the positive direction in view of the reported presence of a substantial number of Hindu students; as it was important

See DIWALI, page 21

Celebrate Fourth of July at Almaden Lake Park: Legal and spectacular fireworks show

Presented by Council Member Matt Mahan

By William Bellou

This year marks the 7th Annual 4th of July Fireworks Festival at Almaden Lake Park on Monday, July 4th presented by Councilmember Matt Mahan.

The festival begins at 3 p.m. with the fireworks getting underway at approximately 9:15 p.m. as soon as it is dark.

This event is free and open to the public and provides a perfect venue for the community to come together and celebrate the birth of our nation while watching a spectacular safe professional fireworks show with family and friends.

Councilmember Matt Mahan recognizes the importance of bringing the community together to celebrate the July 4th holiday in a fun and safe surrounding.

Currently, fireworks shows are only allowed by a permitted and licensed professional per San Jose Municipal Code 10.17.100.

“Fireworks are illegal in San Jose because we are concerned about accidental fires in our neighborhoods or grasslands that threaten the homes and safety of our residents,” Mahan said. “We offer this fireworks show to celebrate our independence and to provide an alternative to using illegal fireworks.”

Residents are encouraged to report illegal fireworks. Information on illegal fireworks, including when to call 911, how to file a report,



“We offer this firework show to celebrate our independence and to provide an alternative to using illegal fireworks,” said Councilmember Matt Mahan.

and San Jose’s Host Ordinance, visit <https://bit.ly/SJ-Fireworks>.

Sponsors

Major sponsors for this year’s event include: Summerhill Housing Group, Casino M8trix, Devastating-

Pyrotechnics, City of San Jose and the Office of Cultural Affairs, Brandenburg Foundation and Cinnabar Hills Golf Club, County of Santa Clara, AT&T, Big 5 Sporting Goods, Home Group, See FIREWORKS, page 5

Valley Water settles with residents over 2017 flood



Submerged cars in San Jose following the February 2017 flood. File photo courtesy of KQED.

Worst flood in San Jose in 20 years caused 14,000 people to evacuate

Silicon Valley’s largest water agency has agreed to pay \$8.25 million to settle lawsuits from more than 200 people in San Jose who suffered losses following the worst flood in 20 years in 2017.

The agreement marked the conclusion of a four-year lawsuit and was announced in a joint statement with the plaintiffs on its website, noting all parties are pleased to have reached a resolution. The plaintiffs’ attorneys will receive about one-third of the settlement.

Santa Clara Valley Water District will pay 231 families and individuals by June 15, 2022 whose homes and belongings were submerged under a torrent of rising water when

Coyote Creek burst over its banks on Feb. 21, 2017.

“From the onset, both sides sought to resolve this case fairly. The \$8.25 million settlement was reached because Valley Water and those affected by the flood event engaged in good-faith settlement discussions,” the statement said. It also noted Valley Water is developing flood protection and management projects along nine miles of flood-prone areas near Coyote Creek.”

Residents filed numerous lawsuits against Valley Water following a storm on Feb. 18, 2017 that breached Anderson Dam in South San Jose. The 20-year-flood caused an estimated \$100 million in damages and displaced 14,000 residents from neighborhoods near Coyote Creek, including Rock Springs,

See FLOOD, page 5

SEE OUR LISTINGS OF LOCAL REALTORS, CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING AND HOME IMPROVEMENT ADVERTISEMENTS INSIDE THE BACK COVER

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Valley Currents

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

OP-ED

Reflections from 19th Annual Sacramento Bus Trip for Education

Ensuring equity, access, and opportunity for every child

By Senator Dave Cortese

The pandemic has reshaped seemingly every aspect of our lives. Creating a shock throughout our education system, the economic and social effects of the past two years have spilled over

into our school settings, forcing us to acknowledge the full impact of educational inequities and rethink how we truly ensure access and opportunity for every child.

As I have done every year for the past two decades, on May 18th, I led several bus loads of students, teachers, education leaders and

See BUS TRIP, page 18



NOTEBOOK



Dillyn Jaycruz Gogue is set to return to court June 29, but mainly to find out if the alternate defender's office does not have any conflicts of his own to take the case.

City of San José's green technology program raises \$130,000 for low income student and household laptops

San José Mayor Sam Liccardo, in partnership with Revivn and the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF), announced a fundraising milestone of more than \$130,000 for purchasing new laptops for low-income residents in San José.

This innovative "green technology" program partners with technology companies to reduce e-waste by refurbishing old and retired devices before selling them, and then leveraging the profits to buy brand new devices for San José students in need.

"Closing the digital divide for our least-connected residents starts by getting them reliable devices for school and work," said San José Mayor Sam Liccardo. "This public-private partnership is a model for how our business community can help digitally connect all our neighbors."

Leveraging the device refurbishment capabilities of Revivn, Mayor Liccardo's Office of Technology and Innovation (MOTI) and CETF partnered with Silicon Valley technology companies to transform donated unused devices into funding for new computers for low-income residents through the Digital Inclusion Fund. Revivn matches a portion of proceeds for all San José donations. Through this unique philanthropic model, com-

"Closing the digital divide for our least-connected residents starts by getting them reliable devices for school and work," said San José Mayor Sam Liccardo.

panies are able to participate without a direct financial investment and are able to give within their existing business models.

panies are able to participate without a direct financial investment and are able to give within their existing business models.

"Repurposing technology is enabling the world to gain dedicated computer access," said Anthony Serina, Revivn Co-Founder, and Co-Chief Executive Officer. "We continue to invest in refurbishing machines at scale, which is an essential step to expanding our mission."

"We are bridging two gaps: the excess supply of unused hardware enterprises possess and the extraordinary demand for tech access in underserved communities" said John Fazzolari, Revivn Co-Founder who also serves as Co-Chief Executive Officer. "There's

plenty of room for us to launch many more of these enterprise partnerships that encourage companies to repurpose their tech for good."

"The innovative partnership established by the Mayor's Office, Adobe, Revivn, and ServiceNow is a shining success story for ecologically-responsible disposition of retired computing devices that provides a robust revenue stream to assist low-income families to get connected to the Internet. It is a model that can easily be replicated and expanded for even greater impact in the community," said Sunne Wright McPeak, President and CEO, California Emerging Technology Fund.

"From high schoolers applying to college to immigrant mothers looking for employment, the devices funded by this partnership are already having a transformative impact on San José residents," said Clay Garner, Chief Innovation Officer to Mayor Liccardo and Director of MOTI.

The new program provides residents with improved access to devices for school or work while also growing a faster and more reliable digital inclusion revenue stream. To date, the City has distributed more than 10,000 devices through the San José Digital Inclusion Fund.

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

Suspect in San Jose Home Depot Fire appears in court

The man accused of intentionally setting a fire that destroyed a Home Depot store on Blossom Hill Rd. in San Jose was back in court Wednesday.

Dillyn Jaycruz Gogue, 27, faces numerous charges including arson for the April 9 fire, but also faces possible court time for other alleged crimes including other theft that same day.

The appointed public defender told the court the office had a conflict in defending Gogue stemming from other alleged crimes he's going to have to fight in court.

Gogue is set to return to court June 29.

Times **Cover Story****Fireworks***Continued from page 1*

Depot, Star One Credit Union, Westfield Oakridge, Green Waste, 99 Ranch Market, WestGate Church, KeyPoint Credit Union, San Jose Earthquakes, and Midtown Family Services.

This year's Festival features local band, Snarky Cats led by George Nowicki, and local magician, Pete G. Magic. Food Trucks and booths include Falafel Fresh & Gyros; Grill Zillas; Los Jarochos Grill; Hula Truck; Mister Softee; Dippin Dots; and Junior's Roaster.

Numerous festival booths include Write a Letter to a Soldier sponsored by WestGate Church, Home Depot Kids Workshop, face painting, and many other activities.

Costume contest

This year's Costume Contest will be interactive. Guests can vote online for the Most Patriotic Family, Teen, and Child (under 12), so dress up and participate!

Carpooling and public transit is encouraged. No drop offs. No on-site parking. No alcohol, No pets or emotional support animals, No barbecues and No illegal fireworks are allowed at the park at any time on July 4th. Bikes may not be ridden inside the park. Rules will be enforced; absolutely no exceptions.

Grab a Frisbee, bring a blanket for comfort and a flashlight for safety and celebrate the 246 birthday of this great nation-United States of America.



Almaden Lake Park is located at the corner of Almaden Expressway and Coleman Road.

To volunteer and support the event, visit the District 10 website at sjd10.com/4th-of-july or contact the District 10 office at district10@sanjoseca.gov or 408-535-4910.

Flood*Continued from page 1*

Naglee Park and the South Bay Mobile Home Park.

The victims claimed that city officials did not do enough to properly warn the public of the danger until it was too late. And they said that the water district, a government agency which provides drinking water and flood control to much of Santa Clara County, also bore responsibility because it had failed to adequately maintain vegetation and sediment in the creek channel, and that it improperly operated Anderson Dam upstream.

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CHANNELOCITY REPORT**Wealthiest neighborhoods in San Jose listed by home price**

San Jose is a flourishing city in sunny California. This city is the third-most populated in California and the tenth-most populous in the United States.

ChanneLOCITY reports they found the wealthiest neighborhoods in San Jose.

Here is their list.

#1-Silver Creek Valley (95138)

Silver Creek rings in as the most expensive place to live in San Jose with an astounding median home price of \$1,958,835. This means this residential area in California is more expensive than 99.2% of the neighborhoods in the U.S.

Aside from home prices, the median rental price is \$3,594. A 2,920 square foot home in San Jose with 4 bedrooms and 3.5 bathrooms is priced at a staggering \$3,495,000. You can view the listing on Redfin.com .

#2-Silver Creek Valley South (95138)

Kiddie corner to Silver Creek, Silver Creek South is the second wealthiest neighborhood in San Jose with a median home price of \$1,824,789.

This is a densely populated residential area with a home vacancy rate of only 2.5%. That's a lower vacancy rate than 85.2% of places in the U.S. There's no denying the real estate supply in this area is limited.

The Silver Creek South neighborhood is wealthier than 99.8% of the neighborhoods in the United States. Notably, 79.4% of professionals who live here are executives, managers, and professionals.

#3-Minnesota Ave/Camino Ramon (95125)

The median home price in the Minnesota Ave/Can Ramon area of San Jose has a median home price of \$1,723,491.

The real estate market is hot in this area—the vacancy rate is 0.5%, which is a lower rate of vacancies than 93.5% of all residential areas in the U.S. Only 3.7% of America's neighborhoods are wealthier than residents here.

Those who do work and live in the Minnesota Ave/Camino Ramon area commute to the office. In fact, 83.0% drive alone in a private automobile to get to work, and 33.2% of them spend around 15 to 30 minutes commuting.

#4-Murdoch Park (95129)

Coming at the fourth spot on our list is Murdoch Park in San Jose. This multi-block neighborhood has a median home price of \$1,711,216. A humble-looking home here of 1,607 square feet and a modest 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms is priced at a staggering \$1,795,000. You can view the entire property listing here on Redfin.

There are quite a few wealthy residents here. Only 0.6% of America's neighborhoods are wealthier than those who live in Murdoch Park.

Amazingly, 54.3% of Murdoch Park residents have earned an advanced degree. This includes Master's degrees, MBAs and PhDs.

#5-Rainbow Park (95129)

The median home price in Rainbow Park

is \$1,699,554. As if this statistic isn't high enough, Rainbow Park's average monthly price is currently \$5,386.

Residents here are equally male and female. The demographics are 51.3% male and 48.7% female and are more diverse than 43% of U.S. neighborhoods.

The top language spoken here is English and the average household income is \$209,129.



Silver Creek Valley is the wealthiest neighborhood in San Jose according to a new report by ChanneLOCITY. Photo courtesy of Redfin

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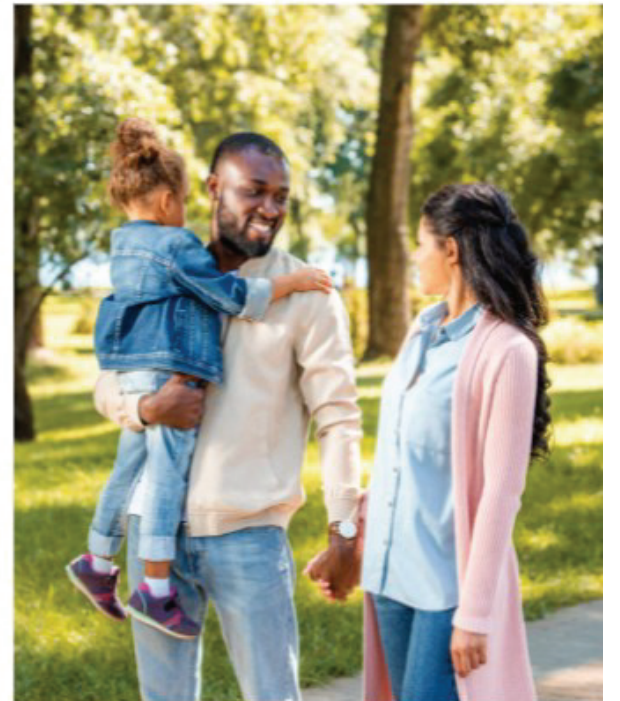
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For more information
www.AlmadenWomen.org



Join our community of involved women!

The Almaden Valley Women's Club is currently accepting new members. We are a committed group of women who enjoy having fun while giving back to our community. We come together to volunteer as a group, to socialize with walks and fun activities and to put on annual community events, raising funds for local area non-profit organizations.

If you live in the San Jose area and are interested in learning more about us, please visit our website: <https://www.almadenwomen.org>





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— SAN JOSE CITY COUNCIL —
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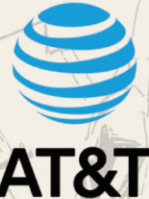
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Times **News**

Bill to reform felony murder rule/LWOP advances

Senate Bill (SB) 300 authored by State Senator Dave Cortese (D-Silicon Valley), a bill to reform California's "felony murder special circumstance" law as well as the life in prison without parole (LWOP) sentence, cleared a crucial hurdle last week when it advanced through the Assembly Public Safety Committee.

At a news conference held June 1, at the California State Capitol, Senator Cortese said this bill was meant to reform previous state statutes that are severely outdated and unjust.

"When this doctrine is largely done away with in other states and other parts of the world, it begs the question of who these laws are really impacting here in our state," says Senator Cortese. "Life in prison without the possibility of parole for a crime you did not commit or intend to commit is a sentence no one deserves, but it is one being disproportionately served to black and Latinx communities in California, particularly our young people."

This bill restores judicial discretion to impose a sentence other than death or LWOP when a judge rules that it serves the interest of justice in a case where a special circumstance is charged.

Tammy Cooper, a formerly incarcerated

ed woman who was sentenced to life without parole after being charged as an unwilling accomplice says, "I was sentenced to life without parole for a crime my abuser committed, and this backwards law took 28 years of my life. We need SB 300 to make sure that people are not sentenced to die for other people's actions. Please help prevent other survivors like me from facing death by incarceration or execution."

"There is no justice without mercy, which is why I strongly support the passage of SB 300," said Lynn Williams, crime victim and advocate. "Life without parole is just a prolonged death sentence — and it robs a person of hope and robs society of the potential this person might become. Our state must make a commitment to rehabilitate, to restore, and to assimilate a person back into society."

"We have to allow a pathway for people to earn their way back to freedom. We are all impacted by life without parole. The communities who are left behind, the victims and crime survivors, the people who cause harm and the families," said Yolanda, of Silicon Valley De-Bug. "This bill is essential because, though it is modest in scope, for those doing LWOP and their loved ones, it is the most meaningful legislation thus far."

For more information, contact Tara Sreekrishnan, Office of Senator Dave Cortese, at 408 480 7833 or tara.sreekrishnan@sen.ca.gov.

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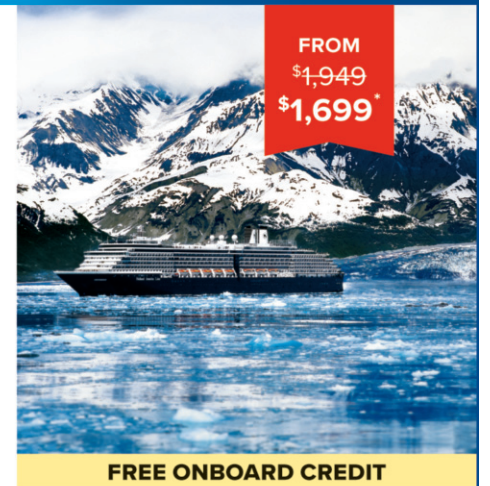


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Times **Feature**

Keeping a close eye out for your pet as warmer weather approaches

As the weather gets warmer and we're all spending more time outside, it's important to make sure we're looking out for our pets.

Ticks and other parasites, like roundworm, hookworm and heartworm, are rampant this time of year, so it's crucial

that we protect our pets from parasites and tick-borne illnesses.

Even in areas where ticks are less common, like San Jose, it's still necessary to keep a close eye on your pets and take measures to prevent illness. Some ticks and parasites transmit diseases that are very difficult, or even impossible, to treat by the time they're caught. Pet owners can't be too careful when it comes to the care of their furry friends.

Local veterinary clinics recommend that pet owners prioritize preventative care as the best strategy to manage parasite and tick-borne illnesses.



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Times Feature

Opera San José unveils new line-up for 2022–23 Season

Opera San José new General Director Shawna Lucey is excited about the company's 2022–23 season, a joyful lineup that offers audiences a renewed chance to gather and celebrate live performances.

The company's 39th season, presented September 10, 2022, to April 30, 2023, will feature four mainstage productions at the majestic California Theatre in downtown San José.

"Our season will feature new productions and treasured classics, with thrilling artist debuts that give our audiences a first look at the stars of tomorrow in four productions we know will charm, move, and delight," Lucey said. "We are also maintaining Opera San José's international digital presence, utilizing its state-of-the-art Heiman Digital Media studio to produce works offered to audiences around the world, in addition to the company's live mainstage offerings."

Lucey also noted Opera San José's history of female empowerment. "The storied legacy of founder Irene Dalis, who displayed unwavering dedication to the development of new talent, will continue to remain at the core of the company's vision," she says. "I'm happy to say that under the stewardship of my predecessor Khori Dastoor, Opera San José successfully navigated hardship throughout the pandemic, and has emerged stronger and more vibrant than ever before. I am honored to be part of this legacy and committed to furthering the company's mission to make opera more accessible to all. A large part of these efforts will be driven by partnering with communities here in the South Bay." In this vein, Lucey announced the international debut of a female conductor.

The season launches with an all-new vibrant and celebratory production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, transported to India during Victorian Imperial rule (Sept. 10 – 25, 2022) — originally announced as the company's 2020–21 season opener and postponed due to COVID — followed by a dazzling production of Alma Deutscher's *Cinderella* (Nov. 12 – 27, 2022) that will feature the conducting debut of the internationally-acclaimed young composer/musician. The season concludes with handsome revivals of two classic works that will feature major role debuts for rising young artists: Verdi's comic masterpiece, *Falstaff* (Feb. 11 – 26, 2023), and Puccini's political thriller, *Tosca* (April 15 – 30, 2023).

For more information or to purchase subscriptions (\$100–\$550) the public can visit operasj.org or call (408) 437-4450 (open Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm). Subscriptions are on sale now; single tickets will go on sale July 5, 2022.

2022–23 season lineup

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

Music by Mozart, libretto by Beaumarchais

September 10 – 25, 2022

Launching the season will be an all-new production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, transported to colonial India during Victorian Imperial rule. Sexual politics and class resentments play out through the prism of shifting power and revolution, culminating in a celebratory Indian wedding that will bring the exuberance and festivity of Bollywood to the California Theatre stage. Opera San José will join forces with Mosaic America to bring Kathak dance to this multi-cultural celebration. Director Brad Dalton, who was last seen with the company for its 2020 production of *Il Trovatore*,



Cinderella (Vanessa Becerra, Center) with her evil stepsisters Griselda (Stacey Tappan, L) and Zibaldona (Karin Mushegain, R) in OSJ's 2017 production of Deutscher's "*Cinderella*." Photo by John Draginoff

returns for this vibrant production, while internationally acclaimed conductor Viswa Subbaraman makes his company debut.

CINDERELLA

Music and libretto by Alma Deutscher

November 12 – 27, 2022

The season continues with the international conducting debut of prodigy composer/musician Alma Deutscher, who will take the podium for a lavish production of her landmark opera, *Cinderella*. In 2017, California Theatre audiences watched the sold-out American premiere of *Cinderella* by the then 13-year-old composer, in a production driven and supported by the Packard Humanities Institute (PHI). OSJ and PHI are thrilled to be joining forces once more to welcome Deutscher back, with the now 17-year-old taking the baton in this pivotal moment in her career. Based on the classic fairytale, this family-friendly work is reset at an opera company run by a scheming stepmother, in which the title character is a brilliant composer, laboring as a copyist. In this production, *Cinderella* is united with the prince not due to the fit of a glass slipper, but with the beginning of a melody only she knows how to continue.

FALSTAFF

Music by Verdi, libretto by Boito

February 11 – 26, 2023

Women take charge in Verdi's hilarious and beloved comedic masterpiece, *Falstaff*. Adapted from Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and scenes from *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*, this rollicking production offers a joyful look at one of the Bard's most popular characters, the boisterous knight Sir John Falstaff, and his misadventures at the hands of four witty women. The classic production will feature notable role debuts by some of America's leading new voices. Stage direction is by Jose Maria Condemi, Director of Opera and Musical Theatre at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and OSJ Music Director Joseph Marcheso conducts.

TOSCA

Music by Puccini, libretto by Illica and Giacosa

April 15 – 30, 2023

The company's season concludes with a vivid production of Puccini's thriller *Tosca*. With breathtaking music and some of opera's most celebrated arias, the work follows the tragic story of a tempestuous opera singer and her artist lover, whose passionate involvement with a political prisoner has made them targets of the chief of the secret police. OSJ Music Director Joseph Marcheso leads this production alongside Tara Branham, OSJ's first Resident Director, who will make her exciting California Theatre debut.

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Cadwallader students volunteer their time at Kids Against Hunger in Pleasanton.

Kids Against Hunger benefits from ESD teacher's volunteerism

Lucy Hsu, the saga continues

By Frank Shortt
Times staff writer

Lucy Hsu is a very young, energetic teacher in San Jose.

Hsu has taken several trips to quite a few countries that are not as economically stable as we are in the USA. She has also aided in establishing schools for the needy, helped with the training of teachers, and even bought clothing for children when she saw the need!

Hsu's latest chapter is that she has been volunteering at a nonprofit organization in Pleasanton called Kids Against Hunger.

"I was looking for a local organization that sends relief to Haiti," Hsu said. "Haiti had a catastrophic 7.0 earthquake back in January 12, 2010, which was my 29th birthday. This inspired me to go to Haiti on relief trips several times in the last few years. During Covid, I could not go to Haiti, and started to look for a local organization that sent supplies there, especially since Haiti had another recent 7.0+ earthquake in 2021.

The Kids Against Hunger organization just seemed to fit the bill for this endeavor. They not only feed the hungry locally but have sent over a million meals a year to places such as Haiti and Africa. The food packets took three years to develop by scientists and nutritionists to be extremely high in nutritional value. They contain 21 vitamins/minerals and as much protein as a steak dinner. It has been proven to reverse malnourishment."

After Lucy volunteered for a few months at Kids Against Hunger, she joined as a regular staff member to train new volunteers and run monthly packing events. She volunteered several times a month when Russia attacked Ukraine earlier this year and they began sending food packets to Ukraine and Poland to refugee camps that have cropped up there. So far they have packed and sent close to 1.5 million meals.

Hsu decided to take her students to the Kids Against Hunger location this month so they could experience a food packing event while making a difference by serving the

Continued, next page

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Times **Local News**



Above: a field trip from Cadwallader; below: Kids Against Hunger volunteers from Cadwallader.



needy. She stated, "They were extremely excited, especially after seeing videos of children in Ukraine and various countries eating the food, and what a big difference a simple act can make."

At Cadwallader School (in the Evergreen School District), Hsu took three classes of second graders (roughly 56 students and 6 parent chaperones) to the warehouse on May 16, 2022.

"In a 90 minute packing session, we packed 3672 meals!" Hsu said. "At the end of the day, many students proclaimed it was the best field trip ever, and even one kid saying it was "more fun than Disneyland!" Lucy seems to generate enthusiasm wherever she volunteers!

Hsu says with gusto "I've always had an interest in volunteering overseas, but especially for refugee relief, since my parents and extended family were refugees from Vietnam and survived a tragic journey to make a better life in the USA for my sister and me. We grew up with very little, often benefitting from the generosity of giving individuals and organizations. It became a dream for me to someday have the means to give back both locally and globally. Some of my most memorable overseas projects include: volunteering in Kenya for six months as a community developer in a "slum-burbia"; six months in Myanmar developing educational programs in orphanages and rural villages; Teaching in Pakistan in an impoverished tent community, bringing relief to Haiti after their earthquake, building homes in Malawi, and teaching at an orphanage in Guatemala."

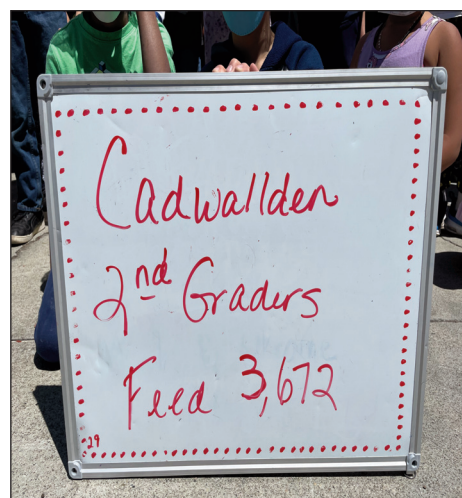
This summer Lucy plans to be in Medyka, Poland, a town bordering Ukraine that has become a receiving center for refugees. Along with other international volunteers, their mission will be to cook/serve 1000 meals daily to Ukrainians.

"I've set up a fundraiser for those who want to contribute to food and supplies," explained Hsu. "All the volunteers pay for their own flight and living arrangements (which for now will be tents and sleeping bags). My supervisor at Kids Against Hunger will also be donating food pouches for me to bring on this trip."

It appears that Lucy will have a very busy summer and the Evergreen community wishes her all the best in her endeavors!

Anyone wishing to donate to Lucy's worthy cause may do so at: gofund.me/47edce13

To support Kids Against Hunger in the Bay Area, visit: <https://www.kahbayarea.org>.



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Times **Feature**

Top 5 Most Popular Pizza Places in San Jose

List based on prior customer reviews

NewsBreak.com has just listed the top five pizza restaurants in San Jose based on reader responses and comments. There are a lot of spots, but here are the top five according to the news organization.

5. The Pizza Press

There's nothing quite like a fresh, hot pizza straight from the oven. And at Pizza Press in San Jose, California, they know how

to make a mean pie. The dough is crispy, the sauce is zesty and flavorful, and the toppings are always fresh. Whether you're in the mood for a classic pepperoni or something more unique like sun-dried tomatoes and goat cheese, you can always find the perfect pizza at Pizza Press.

4. The Got2go Pizza

The Got2go Pizza in San Jose is a great place to eat pizza. The restaurant is small and family-oriented. The menu is simple, but the food is delicious. The pizzas are cooked in a wood-fired oven, and the crusts are thin and crispy. The toppings are fresh

and flavorful. The prices are reasonable. The Got2go Pizza in San Jose is a great place to eat pizza.

3. Slice of Homage Pizza

Slice of Homage is a popular pizza spot in San Jose, California. The restaurant is known for its fresh, made-to-order pizzas and friendly staff. The menu features a wide variety of pizza toppings, including traditional options like pepperoni and cheese and more unusual choices like chicken Alfredo and barbecue sauce. Slice of Homage is a great option to eat pizza.

2. Slice of New York Pizza



Slice of New York Pizza prides itself on using only the freshest ingredients, and it shows in the taste of the pizza. The dough is made fresh daily, and the sauce is a secret family recipe passed down for generations. The result is a pie that is truly unique and delicious.

1. Bibo's NY Pizza

Saving the best for last, Bibo's Pizza is so delicious and popular for its specialty pizzas, a build-your-pizza format. Customers can pick their ingredients, and pizzas are made to their taste. However, during peak hours, their wait time is as much as 60 minutes, and that's because of the influx of customers.

San José to receive \$8 million in federal grants for rail crossing safety improvements

The City of San José was awarded two grants, totaling \$8.72 million, from the highly competitive Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program this month.

CRISI is managed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), which is one of the agencies within the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT). San José was the only city in the applicant pool to receive two awards this cycle.

The funding will allow the City to move ahead with two critical transit improvement projects: design of traffic-separated railroad crossings of key streets intersecting Monterey Road and construction of a "queue cutter" traffic signal to improve safety by keeping vehicles and bicyclists away from oncoming trains on the Bascom Avenue corridor.

"Federal investments in San José's rail infrastructure are a welcome benefit for the safety of our drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians," said San José Mayor Sam Liccardo. "I'm thankful to our partners at the Federal Railroad Administration for investing in San José as we work to improve transit safety and make progress in preparation for future high-speed rail."

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Times Feature



Homelessness remains a community concern

By Lorraine Gabbert
Senior Staff Writer

Bad police behavior and the homeless are major issues for San Jose residents.

At a Chat with Matt public discourse on May 12, Councilmember Matt Mahan offered his views and possible solutions on these topics.

A string of allegations has recently plagued the San Jose Police Department, from trading a meth pipe for information and drinking alcohol on the job to sexual misconduct. One officer died from a fentanyl overdose.

Resident Brad (last name withheld) said new officers shouldn't be hired before this is dealt with.

"The department is out of control," he said, "and yet we want to hire more police officers?"

But resident Sherry Weldon said more police officers are needed. She is in favor of disciplining problem officers but hiring as many officers as the city budget allows.

"It's critical that we hold our employees accountable," Mahan said, "Officers who engage in criminal behavior or serious violations of their code of conduct should be disciplined...If you're intoxicated on the job, especially in a public safety role, you should lose your job."

Mahan said the majority of police officers care about the community and want to protect and serve. He doesn't think a hiring freeze is the answer but is supportive of expanding the oversight of the independent police auditor.

Many residents expressed their concerns regarding the homeless. The city is leasing the Santa Teresa VTA station for five years for RV parking. Mahan said the goal is to transition people from living in RVs to permanent housing, helping the working poor. He said he'd like the site to be small with onsite services and well managed.

Some residents said south San Jose is being overwhelmed by homeless encampments, keeping people from being able to use trails. Others complained about blight, including cars on the streets with broken windows and graffiti.

Mahan said transitional housing and drug treatment centers need to be equitably distributed across the city. He is a proponent of City Hall focusing on core services affecting quality of life and public safety.

He said regionally, as homelessness has skyrocketed during the past decade, six jobs were

added for every home built. He said the "out of whack" housing to jobs ratio is why two to three families share homes on the Eastside and increasing rents and housing costs have pushed low-income families into living in their cars and RVs.

Mahan said building brand new apartments for the homeless costing \$850,000, which take five years to build, are too expensive and too slow. He sees private, prefabricated units placed on government-owned land as a faster way to end street homelessness. Mahan sees providing the unhoused with a safe place to live and requiring them to be housed as a solution.

Resident Randy Breunling said you can't just tell the homeless to go away as they need somewhere to live. Resident GailAnne Osmer said there just isn't enough housing.

Mahan said investments should be made in job training and placement, as well as expanded addiction and mental health treatment.

"For every population of 100,000 people, our county should have 50 beds for inpatient addiction and mental health treatment," Mahan said. "Despite being one of the wealthiest counties in the country, we have just 13...that is a huge problem."

Residents asked why more homeless people suffering from mental health crises don't receive a 72-hour hold. In California, law enforcement officers and mental health professionals can place a patient on an emergency 72-hour hold against their will for psychiatric hospitalization if they pose a danger to themselves or others.

Mahan said Santa Clara County only enacts the state's 5150 law when a person verbally expresses a danger to themselves or others.

Resident Charles Nolan said a 72-hour hold would allow enough time to determine whether a person posed a danger to the public and should be restrained, but resident Sandra Delvin said her daughter works with 5150 and the holds are sometimes only two hours.

Mahan said there has been resistance to compelling people to receive mental health counseling, but some individuals suffering from mental health issues may not make the right decisions about their care and could endanger themselves or others.

"We are underserving those in our community suffering from mental illness and addiction," he said.



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Times Feature

Bus trip

Continued from page 4

advocates on a trip to our state's Capitol, to discuss the greatest challenges facing our public education system today, because I believe that if we work collaboratively to rebuild our schools together through equity-driven initiatives, we can emerge post-pandemic stronger than ever before.

This year – after two years – my Sacramento Bus Trip for Education returned as an in-person gathering.

Over 180 Bus Trip participants from across Santa Clara County spoke to key decision makers that are responsible for crafting the state's education budget and policies: California's State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, State Assemblymembers Alex Lee, Ash Kalra, and Marc Berman, State Senators Connie Leyva, John Laird, Rosilic Ochoa Bogh, and Steve Glazer, the State's Department of Finance, the California Governor's Office, the California School Employees Association, and the California Teachers Association.

And there was much to discuss around the state's education priorities this year – with an historical-

ly high state budget surplus projected to be as much as \$97.5 billion, we are investing more than ever in our students. Proposition 98, the state's minimum guarantee to fund K-12 and community college education, is at an all-time high. Merely since our Bus Trip hosted ten years ago, Prop 98 levels have more than doubled from \$47.3 billion to now over \$110 billion – I have to give some credit to our Bus Trip cohorts for helping to make that happen!

In reality, no one person or group is responsible for this, but what is true is what we've been hearing over the past several years; through the passage of Prop 98 by voters to guarantee money for education along with the voices of those who kept pushing their legislators each year to invest in our future generations – these efforts are paying off.

The Governor's recently released budget proposal, or "May Revise", was promising in many aspects, with learning recovery at its forefront. As Chris Ferguson from our Department of Finance Education Systems Unit explained, per-pupil spending is historically high at \$22,850, with base funding for schools increasing more than \$2 billion through the Local Control Funding Formula.

Providing stability to school budgets was a common theme throughout this year's trip. Enrollment in our K-12 system declined by 110,000 students from the 20-21 to 21-22 school year, and districts are experiencing growing staff turnover as well as vacancies. Because schools are funded in large part from their student attendance numbers, declining enrollment has led to tremendous fiscal uncertainties.

The Classified School Employees Associ-

ation, the California Teachers Association, the Governor's Office, and Superintendent Thurmond, discussed various proposals they're spearheading to provide protections for declining enrollment as well as strategies to ensure adequate school staffing, including SB 830, a bill that would allow districts to receive additional funding around their student enrollment numbers, rather than attendance, as well as bills I have authored, SB 868 and SB 874, to recruit and retain qualified teachers and staff across our K-14 systems.

Senator Leyva, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, discussed her bill SB 976 to fully fund our state's transition to Universal Pre-K for an equitable rollout that doesn't leave behind childcare providers, while Senator Laird, Chair of the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Education, discussed his efforts to broaden student financial aid.

Investing in tomorrow and righting the wrongs of the past is Assemblymember Lee's prime concern in his role on the Assembly Education Committee and Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education. And like so many of us, he is pushing for more investments in Career Technical Education, like Silicon Valley's

MetroEd, for pathways and programs to prepare our students for skill-based careers. Assemblymember Kalra has been focusing his attention on removing barriers to higher education, including textbook cost transparency through his bill AB 2624.

We could not have pulled off this year's trip without the generous support of our Bus Trip sponsors: The Nuñez Community Foundation, the Silicon Valley Education Foundation, Ahmad Thomas, Bloom Energy and our very own San José State University.

It's hard to believe that this Bus Trip tradition began years ago when I was a San Jose City Councilmember, after a small group of us from the Evergreen area came together to deliver a petition to the Governor, urging him to adequately fund public education. Following each year's trip, we expanded our outreach little by little, and now the Bus Trip sees participants from across Santa Clara County.

For many of our students, it was their school that offered them a safe environment to heal from the instability of these past years and improve their well-being. The unexpected challenges education faced has made us all examine the role schools play in the lives of our children.

As I work with my colleagues to finalize this year's state budget, I am grateful for the opportunity to keep our Bus Trip tradition alive because, as each trip has taught us, when our students succeed, we all succeed.

Senator Dave Cortese represents State Senate District 15 in the California Legislature which encompasses much of Santa Clara County. He serves on the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee.

"With an historically high state budget surplus projected to be as much as \$97.5 billion, we are investing more than ever in our students."
-State Senator Dave Cortese

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Times **Feature**



REPORT
2022's Best & Worst States for Teachers

As the country faces a major teacher shortage, educators are overworked and burnt out.

Teachers today are having a hard time in their classrooms, so it's more important than ever to have them rewarded while they're working, and when they retire.

As part of its more extensive study 2022's Best (& Worst) States for Teachers, data analysts at Scholaroo set out to find the states that offer the best work benefits for their teachers.

Based on the analysis of 9 categories - the rankings showed that California is #30 in the nation.

California scores #3 in one work benefits category with its lowest rank in a category coming in at #45.

2022 Teacher Benefits Index - California

(In order of ranking, numerical ranking based on all-states position)

#3: Teachers Pension Qualification - percent of teachers that can qualify for a pension

#6: Average Pension Payment - average teachers' pension adjusted per cost of



living

#42: Social Security Participation - if teachers have access to health care and income security

#15: Portable Retirement Plan - if teachers can retain work benefits when switching employers

#45: Teacher Retirement Contribution - percent of teacher's salary added annually to the pension fund

#13: Employer Retirement Contribution - percent of teacher's salary that the state or school district pays annually to the pension fund

#5: Teacher Tenure - period of time until teachers receive a permanent contract

#6: Vesting Period - period of time until a teacher earns retirement benefits

#44: Retirement Ratings - a rating of alternative retirement options, amortization cost, and the amortization period

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Times **Feature**

TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK

Drones in the new world

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:

Drones in the new world

Whether they are disrupting flights at London’s Gatwick airport or racing around stadiums in one of the world’s newest sports, drones are being used in an ever-wider variety of ways.

A few years back, the first-ever organ delivered by drone was transplanted into a patient with kidney failure at the University of Maryland Medical Center, capping more than three years of work to show unmanned aircraft can

safely transport life-saving organs and tissue. Transportation has long posed challenges for the organ donation system. Experts say that drones could avoid airline delays and mishaps, traffic, and even bad weather, cutting travel time for the farthest deliveries by 70 percent.

At present there are approximately 290,000 drones registered for commercial uses such as wildfire mapping, agricultural and weather monitoring, disaster management, law enforcement, utility inspection, telecommunications, and real estate photography.

Vaccine delivery via drone is also saving lives in many parts of the world. For eg, children in the remote South Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu recently received the first vaccines delivered commercially by drone. The drone delivery covered almost 25 miles of rainforests and rugged mountainous terrain. The deliv-

ery brought potentially life-saving vaccines to 13 children and five pregnant women in Cook’s Bay, a small, scattered community on the island that does not have a health center or electricity and is only accessible by foot or small local boats.

Long-term, governments are interested in integrating drone delivery of vaccines into their national immunization program and using drones more widely to distribute health supplies. Data from this test program will also be used to inform other countries how drones can be used commercially in similar settings around the world.

Sometime back, drones were very helpful in the efforts to restore power in Puerto Rico. Repairing fallen power lines is not easy for humans to do, especially in Puerto Rico. First workers must locate downed lines, which can

be tough among debris, fallen trees, and undergrowth. The workers used quadcopters to locate fallen power lines across Puerto Rico, and to help repair those lines once they’re found. These Zoe drones—which can carry 26 lbs, fly for 40 minutes, and cost around \$15,000 each—can spot fallen lines and thread those lines through the poles, saving volunteers lots of time and money.

As we are observing, the drone technology is growing and a wide range of industries like agriculture, medical, surveying, insurance and disaster relief are seeing major innovation in this field.

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.

Diwali

Continued from page 1

to meet the religious and spiritual needs of Hindu pupils.

If schools had declared holidays around other religious days, why not Diwali, Zed asked. Holidays of all major religions should be honored and no one should be penalized for practicing their religion, Zed added.

Rajan Zed suggested all Santa Clara County schools to seriously look into declaring Diwali as an official holiday, thus recognizing the intersection of spirituality and education. Zed noted that awareness about ‘other’ religions thus created by such holidays like Diwali would make their students well-nurtured, well-balanced, and enlightened citizens of tomorrow.

Zed urged superintendent and board presidents of all the 31 school districts in Santa Clara County to work towards adding Diwali as an official holiday in their schools. Zed also sought the support of California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors President Mike Wasserman, Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary Ann Dewan, Santa Clara County Board of Education President Peter Ortiz in persuading public, charter, private, and parochial schools of Santa Clara County to declare Diwali as a holiday.

Rajan Zed further says that Hinduism is rich in festivals and religious festivals are very dear and sacred to Hindus. Diwali, the festival of lights, aims at dispelling the darkness and lighting up the lives and symbolizes the victory of good over evil. Diwali falls on October 24 this year.

Larger public-school districts in Santa Clara County include San José Unified School District, East Side Union High School District, Cupertino Union School District, Santa Clara Unified School District, Palo Alto Unified School District, Fremont Union High School District, etc.

Hinduism is the oldest and third largest religion of the world with about 1.2 billion adherents and moksh (liberation) is its ultimate goal. There are about three million Hindus in the USA.

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