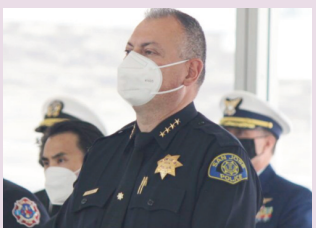


San Jose
expected to lose
hundreds of
police officers
— **SEE PAGE 14**



Monumental undertaking
Fundraising efforts for bronze 6-foot
statue tribute to Norman Y. Mineta
— **SEE PAGE 4**

San Jose's iconic
bookstore
Hicklebee's
going up for sale
— **SEE PAGE 10**



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Almaden Times

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AUGUST 19 – SEPT. 1, 2022 ■ VOL. 35, NO. 17

California's public-school enrollment drops below 6 million

*Enrollment continues to
drop at faster rates than
before the pandemic*

By Joe Hong
Cal Matters

For the first time since the start of the century, California has fewer than 6 million students attending public schools.

According to new data released by the California Department of Education, enrollment in public schools continues to drop more quickly than it did before the pandemic, stirring fears of more budget cuts and long-term financial instability for schools.

Among key takeaways from the newly released data:

- Statewide enrollment has dropped by more than 110,000 students to 5,892,240 during the current school year, a 1.8% dip from last year but less steep than the 2.6% decline during the first year of the pandemic.
- Charter school enrollment also is down for the first time since at least 2014.
- Kindergarten enrollment is up, though nowhere near pre-pandemic levels.
- And 9,000 more students are enrolled in private schools, a 1.7% increase, but that doesn't explain much of the exodus from public schools.

For the better part of a decade, public school enrollment was in steady decline in California mostly due to a lack of affordable housing, education officials across the state said. When the pandemic reached California, early job losses

See **ENROLLMENT**, page 11

San Jose Almaden Girls 12u Water Polo Club Team places 15th at Junior Olympics

*Finished as the 5th
best team in all of
northern California*

By Eric Rise
Special to the Times

The 12U San Jose Almaden girls Water Polo Club Team had an historic summer of competition.

The 12u team finished 15th at the USA Water Polo National Junior Olympics July 24, the youngest team ever to achieve the high placement. The Junior Olympics tournament is the national championship of all the top qualifying water polo clubs in the United States.

The Almaden team is comprised

of one 10-year old, Chloe Boem, five 11-year olds, Lily Caouette, Chloe Fridgen, Anna Li, Annalisse Rise, and Emma Schneider, and six 12-year olds, Sophia DeScioli, Diyana Gunasekera, Kylie Haughton, Shreya Moorthy, Dahlia Peralta, and Inaya Stojanovic.

The girls started the summer placing 2nd at a Santa Cruz tournament. They also placed 2nd in Clovis at the Hardcore Cup, 3rd at another tournament in Santa Cruz, before heading to Arroyo Grande where they placed 3rd in the U14 division. The team also traveled to L.A. to play in the elite US Club Championships where they placed 11th.

Along with playing great water



Almaden Girls Water Polo Team goalie **Kylie Haughton** blocks a shot resulting in a game winning 15th place finish at the Junior Olympics July 23.

polo, the girls had fun as a team. Whether it was playing their own game of water polo in the team hotel, taking pictures and hanging out with former Olympian Natalie Benson, eating pizza at Klondike's in Arroyo Grande, or hitting a piña-

ta at the hotel these girls also made sure to have fun together.

Team sets top 24 goal

The 12u Team set a goal at the start of the summer to make the top 24 in the nation at the National

See **WATER POLO**, page 14

Almaden students win the Innovation Project Award at the FLL – Northern California Recreation League

By William Bellou
Publisher

Almaden students from Williams and Graystone Elementary Schools are winners of the Innovation Project Award at the FLL (FIRST® LEGO® League) – Northern California Recreation League event.

Through the FIRST LEGO League Innovation Project, students ages 9-16 explore what it means to be an innovator by finding solutions to today's societal problems.

The Almaden Team, Technopath, comprised of five fourth grade students from Williams and Graystone Elementary Schools won the Global Innovation Award presented for 2021-22. Members of the team include Rishaan Samuel, Gregory Arutyunov, Harish Natarajan, Dia Iyer, and Alys Myers.

The annual Innovation Project Award cele-



Pictured (left to right) are winners of the FLL – Northern California 4th Grade Innovation Award: **Alys Myers, Gregory Arutyunov, Rishaan Samuel, Harish Natarajan, and Dia Iyer.**

brates the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, and changemakers who are developing solutions for today's societal problems. The award also honors the winning team for developing the mindsets, competencies, and inspiration to impact the world for generations to come.

As part of the 2021-2022 Season, CARGO CONNECTSM, participating teams from more than 110 countries identified a problem related to improving the transportation journey of products,

researched the problem, and designed a new piece of technology or improved an existing one.

Selected for their outstanding solutions, 20 finalist teams advanced to the 2022 FIRST LEGO League Innovation Project Award competition presented by Qualcomm.

The teams attended workshops with innovation experts and showcase their solutions in front of a global audience of peers, sponsors, and industry leaders.

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OP ED

The fight
for my life

My battle with omicron

By Kevin Larsen

Some capitalize the name of this virus variant but not me. I do not wish to give it any status. It happened a while back.

This is a true experience with the omicron.

I took my Pfizer vaccine and was told once I got it I could not get the covid.

Earlier, key people in the news who earned a paycheck from the government said masks were not necessary then admitted to lying because they did not want a run on masks across the nation.

I began to wonder if paid people believed that the end justifies the means.

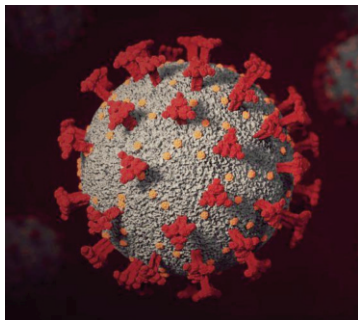
I was told the vax was good for children but then I was told it wears off and children really don't need a vaccine.

The booster I was told is the same as the first two shots I took. So the word "booster" was in my opinion double talk for the same shot I got earlier called a "vaccine."

I began to realize that someone in government was redefining the word "vaccine," in my opinion.

Also, it is announced that currently the vaccine is being tweaked to better fight new strains of covid. This made me wonder why the old vaccine was still being administered.

Due to, in my opinion, lots of misinformation on the so-called vaccine, I decided to get only one booster and wait.



Following my preventative rituals of avoidance of people to steer clear of any transmission, I did these things; I wore a mask when going out, kept social distance, did not go into stuffy rooms, shopped quickly, washed my hands and more.

Still, as time went by, that elusive foe snuck into my nostrils and I got sick. I got a runny nose, dry cough that felt like a rubber band was in my throat, had fatigue, a bit of a fever, aches and knew my body let the enemy in through the gates.

I took the little at home test but even with a college degree under my belt I did not mix the solution properly and the test came out negative. In my opinion the instructions are flawed in the package.

I realized I was supposed to put more of the liquid in the tube. After doing that, the test came out positive.

I felt I was facing death in the face and fighting a kind of virus that was not living. I also perceived that I was let down by government information so I went online and did my own research.

I learned in my opinion that this new omicron variant is less severe and is less likely to go into the lungs.

Would I meet the respirator?

I decided to fight the virus on my terms. This involved drinking lots of fluids and Gatorade because it has electrolytes in it and the cheaper brands don't.

I took vitamins and ate healthy including soups rich in nourishment.

I self-isolated and took constant oversight as to how I felt.

During day two things got worse because I perspired a lot. I noticed my dreams at night were almost like a horror film and I was not the victor nor the vanquished so I kept fighting.

I began to wonder if my heart would stop. I knew I needed to get a Will and or Trust set up for my assets. Would my ticker keep time?

I geared myself up with positive thinking to battle this unknown visitor from a laboratory. I began to reflect how this pandemic could have killed massive amounts of people like a meteor that crashed down long ago to extinguish the dinosaurs.

This virus could have been much worse. It could have killed off more people in our world. This new variant of the original virus was perhaps a kind of gift because it is milder in my opinion and also works to build up some kind of immunity resistance in my opinion to the original more deadly covid. I am not a doctor

See OMICRON, page 10

Valley Currents

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

Fundraising efforts for bronze 6-foot
statue tribute to Norman Y. Mineta

Group raising \$150K for
bronze tribute to late
SJ mayor, U.S.

transportation secretary

By Times Media news staff

Two years ago, a group of Norm Mineta's friends began to fundraise for a 6-foot life sized bronze statue to be installed at the entrance of the San Jose Mineta International Airport and are now inviting tax-deductible donations to complete the effort.

The non-profit Quest Valley Charities (QVC) Inc. was created to lead the campaign. Honorary Co-chairs include Japanese American community leader Yosh Uchida, Congressman Zoe Lofgren, State Senator Dave Cortese, Supervisor Cindy Chavez, and Mayor Sam Liccardo.

"Norman Y. Mineta was a tireless champion for our city—embodying our nation's greatest ideals to secure bipartisan support to serve his community. It is only fitting that he is memorialized for his remarkable life and landmark achievements, in his hometown of San Jose," expresses Mayor Liccardo.

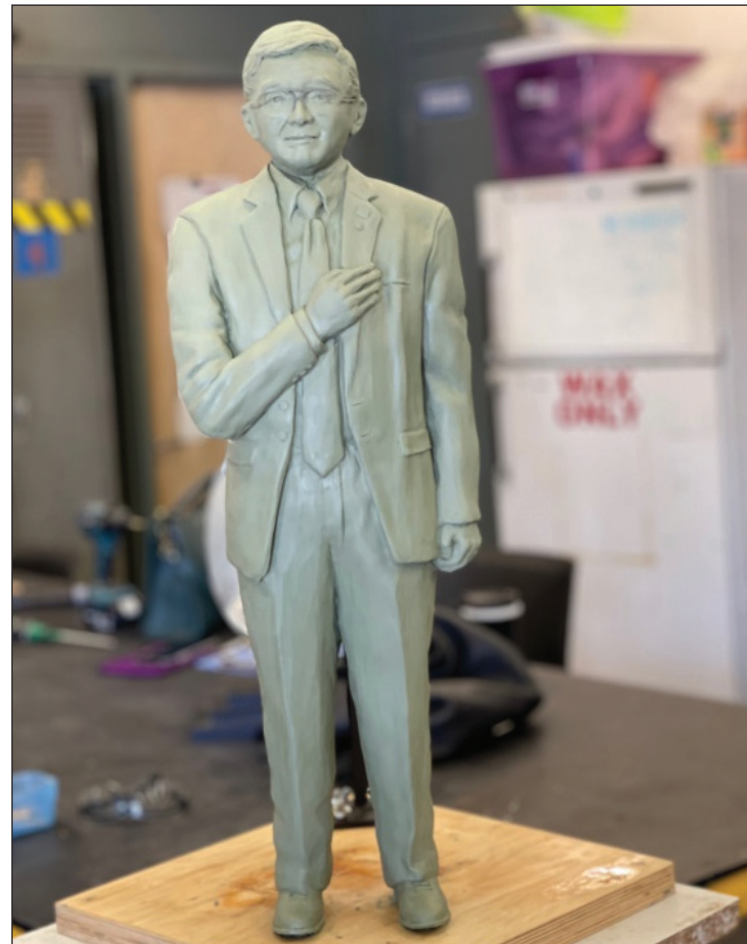
With Mineta's passing on May 3rd, 2022, the movement has gathered purpose with a desire to see him standing tall once again at his namesake airport. The first 15 donors of 10k or more will have their names engraved on the pedestal base. Every donor will be recognized at the statue's dedication.

Rod Diridon Sr., President of QVC, Inc. worked closely with Mineta on the Valley's transportation system. Mineta and Diridon also collaborated on legislation for Congress to authorize the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University.

"Norm Mineta is the most impactful person ever to come out of Santa Clara County," Diridon said. "His great work will be remembered forever."

Born a Japanese-American citizen on November 12, 1931, in San Jose, CA, Norman Yoshio Mineta never had what was considered a "conventional" life. Mineta's Japanese immigrant parents were prohibited from becoming American citizens due to the Asian Exclusion Act. During World War II, Mineta's family, alongside thousands of other Japanese immigrants, were forced from their homes and detained in internment camps.

Carl Guardino, Executive Vice President of Global Government Affairs and Policy for Bloom Energy and Vice



Chair of the California Transportation Commission, explains further,

"Early in his illustrious life, as a little boy sent to an internment camp during World War II, Norman Mineta made a conscious choice to 'grow better, not bitter.' Due to that decision, all of our lives have been improved by his service to our City, State, and Nation – As Mayor, Congressman, Cabinet Secretary to two Presidents, as well as mentor and friend to so many. This statue is a small tribute to a larger-than-life leader who has touched us all in such positive and profound ways."

In 1953, Mineta graduated from the University of California, Berkeley School of Business Administration. After graduating, Mineta joined the U.S. Army and served as an intelligence officer in Japan and Korea.

Following his service in the U.S. Army, Mineta worked with his father at the Mineta Insurance Agency, and later became the first Asian-Pacific-American mayor of a major U.S. city and served over twenty years in Congress.

He later served as the first Asian-American Cabinet member as U.S. Secretary of Commerce under President Bill Clinton and the only Democrat in George W. Bush's cabinet as Transportation Secretary. Mineta

was not only responsible for safely grounding all the airplanes after September 11, 2001, but also helped create the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and organized the Department of Homeland Security.

Joyce Iwasaki, Japanese Community Ambassador said, "I've had the privilege of working with Norm and learned ways that helped him have an impact on his friends and family, in his community, his country, and the world. He did so by understanding that humanity is constantly changing, by being an attentive listener, by knowing how to work in alliances, and how important it is to respect all points of view. He was humble and likable. This statue project will remind people of Norm's contribution at all levels."

Mineta's life-long work in demanding justice, freedom, and equality for all people has set the standard for moving forward in politics, personal affairs, and more.

Norm's son, David Mineta, President and CEO of Momentum, shares, "It means so much to our family that a statue would be erected at the airport that bears his name. It is a permanent reminder about what he stood for and the values he learned growing up in this valley."

AlmadenTimes

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Bellarmino College Prep to honor 3 alumni as Hall of Fame inductees

Bellarmino College Preparatory will recognize three distinguished alumni at its Hall of Fame ceremony the evening of Saturday, August 27, 2022.

The three inductees embody Bellarmine's motto of being men for and with others through their extraordinary personal achievements, remarkable professional accomplishments, and significant contributions to the community.

The individuals to be honored, and their respective categories, are Vic Giacalone, Class of 1964 (Business); Rev. Gerald T. Wade, Class of 1955 (Public Service); and Rusty Zimmerman, Class of 1998 (Humanities & Fine Arts).

Vic Giacalone

Vic Giacalone '64, president and CEO of The Best Electrical Company, Inc., has managed his family business for the past 54 years after graduating from Santa Clara University. He has established a reputation in the San Jose area for building and maintaining longstanding client relationships and a tremendous depth of knowledge in his field. Vic has been involved in numerous professional organizations and committees in his career, including as president of the National Electrical Contractors' Association from 1981-83. He has also been committed to civic involvement as a member of the Rotary Club of San Jose, Civic Center Kiwanis Club, and Committee to Improve the Economic Climate of San Jose, as well as a board member at the San Jose Historical Museum and San Jose Repertory Theatre.

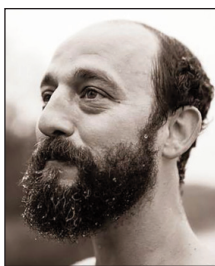
Rev. Gerald T. Wade

Throughout the school's long history, it is likely that no individual has given more of himself to Bellarmine, and the people of Bellarmine, than Rev. Gerald T. Wade, S.J. '55. As a student, he rarely missed an event or activity, embracing the sense of brotherhood the school provided. And more than 70 years later, he continues to embody that spirit of community through his constant warmth and kindness. Inspired by the enthusiasm and camaraderie of the Jesuit Scholastics who taught him, he entered the Society of Jesus upon graduating from Bellarmine in 1955. He completed undergraduate studies and earned a master's degree in Philosophy from Gonzaga University before returning to Bellarmine in 1962 to teach Latin, run the senior dorm, and moderate the Cardinal newspaper. Fr. Wade was ordained to the Priesthood on June 1, 1968. He went on to complete a master's degree in Theology at Santa Clara University and a Master's in Latin at the University of Southern California, then became vice principal of Loyola High School in Los Angeles.

Rusty Zimmerman

The artistic talent of Rusty Zimmerman '98 blossomed at California College of the

Arts and led him to Brooklyn, New York to pursue a career as a professional painter. Rusty has served as a portrait artist for former New York City Mayor Andrew Cuomo, and his work has been featured in publications such as the New York Times, Bloomberg Citylab, and Saatchi Gallery Magazine in London. He has also lectured at Wellesley College and Long



Island University. In 2015, uncomfortable with the fact that the art of portraiture was inaccessible to many due to financial constraints, Rusty founded The Free Portrait Project. Over the next two years, he completed 200 free portraits of his neighbors – painting everyone from schoolteachers to street performers, software engineers to unhoused individuals, Haitian immigrants to Hassidic Jews, college students to retirees – attempting to capture the tremendous diversity of his neighborhood of Crown Heights and use his art to break down reli-

gious, ethnic, and socioeconomic barriers in his community.

The Hall of Fame inductions will occur on the Bellarmine campus in San Jose, with the awards ceremony taking place at 5 p.m. in the Main Stage Theatre of the Sobrato Center for Humanities and the Arts, followed by a dinner on the Leo J. and Mary G. Lucas Quad.

Event registration is available online at: <https://www.bcp.org/bhof>



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ANNUAL REPORT NOTICE

2016 Measure B Citizens' Oversight Committee Annual Report on Fiscal Year 2021

In November 2016, Santa Clara County voters approved Measure B, a 30-year, half-cent county-wide sales tax devoted to enhancing transit, highways, expressways, and active transportation (bicycles, pedestrian, and complete streets) within Santa Clara County. In 2019, VTA's 2016 Measure B Program began the process to deliver the projects and programs contained in the ballot, having been delayed by an unsuccessful court challenge to the measure.

The ballot entrusted the 2016 Measure B Citizens' Oversight Committee (MBCOC), comprised of fellow community members, with oversight to ensure that 2016 Measure B funds are being spent consistent with the ballot and for informing voters on Program compliance.

The MBCOC has conducted its annual hearing to gather input from the public, evaluated the results of the independent audit for the subject period, and completed review of the revenues and expenditures for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 (7/1/20 – 6/30/21). After thorough and careful consideration:

FINDING

It is the conclusion of the 2016 Measure B Citizens' Oversight Committee, that for the period of FY 2021, 2016 Measure B tax dollars were spent in accordance with the intent of the measure.

This finding and additional information on the 2016 Measure B Program are contained in the MBCOC Annual Report on FY 2021 at: www.vta.org/2016-measure-b-citizens-oversight-committee. Further information on the MBCOC is available at that same site. Additional information on the 2016 Measure B Program and projects is available at: www.vta.org/projects/funding/2016-measure-b

Printed copies of select 2016 Measure B documents are available at libraries and other public buildings throughout the county, and at the VTA offices at 3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA, in the Building B lobby.



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Times News



City of San José celebrates \$10 million in state funding for Vision Zero Project

Assemblymember **Ash Kalra**, Mayor **Sam Liccardo**, and city councilmembers recently celebrated \$10 million in state funds for San José's East San José Corridor Safety Improvement Project.

The project is part of the Vision Zero strategy a traffic safety initiative to eliminate deaths and severe injuries on roadways. San José's Vision Zero is a plan to eliminate deaths and severe injuries on City roadways. The funding will

improve the Senter Road corridor, one of the City's most dangerous corridors.

Improvements to the Senter Road Corridor include:

- Median islands and Enhanced Crosswalks
- Streetlights – Upgrade existing fixtures and add new pedestrian-scale lighting
- Pedestrian and Bike Sensors to provide signal timing extension
- Speed Calming (signs and outreach)
- Bikeway separated from traffic by concrete islands (similar to 10th/11th)
- Traffic Signal at Senter and Balfour
- Central transit signal priority
- Data collection and analysis

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Times News

IN MEMORY

San Jose 'Community Champion' Joe Noonan dies at 48

San Jose lost one of its passionate advocates with the passing of Joe Noonan Aug 2. He was 48.

A tireless advocate for community organizations and projects, Joe most recently served in a leadership capacity with the Bay Area Furniture Bank, a non-profit that transports and donates surplus furniture to families in need.

Noonan's family moved to California from Elmhurst, Illinois in 1987. After working with technology companies, including Navteq, Cisco and JDS Uniphase in the 1990s and aughts, he came downtown to work for Broadway San Jose in 2010 and in 2012 joined the San Jose Downtown Association as its sponsorship manager for four years, contributing to the development of Downtown Ice and Music in the Park.

After that, Noonan held development positions with Christmas in the Park and the City of San Jose, where he promoted the Viva CalleSJ, Viva Parks and San Jose Al Fresco programs. He also managed the historic Twohy Building's apartments for many years.

On April 26, 2022, after being diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer, Noonan was honored by San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo with a city



proclamation. Liccardo called him "an incredible champion and cheerleader for our community."

As news of his death spread this week, accolades were posted to social media. "He spent his time cultivating relationships, connecting people, and caring about his community," longtime friend Steve Enders wrote. "He was always such a positive, helpful, friendly person," recalled promoter Bruce Labadie.

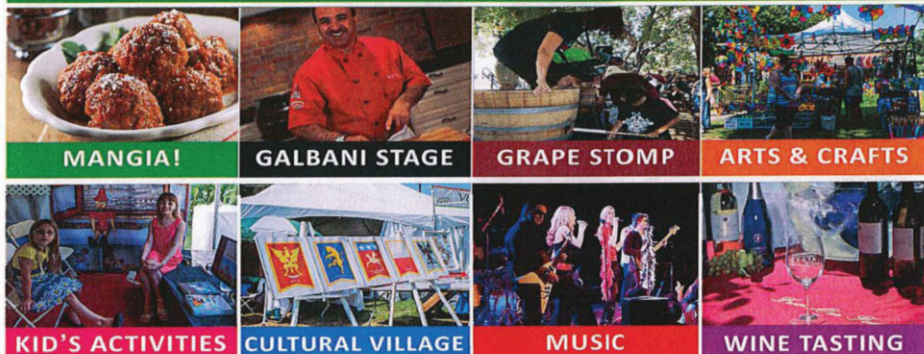
Noonan is survived by his sister, Jennifer Noonan Smoker of Washington, DC, and father Joseph F. Noonan of San Jose. His mother, Jacqueline Claire Noonan, predeceased him in 2020.

Friends and family are also welcomed to make donations of any amount to one of two charities Joe passionately endorsed - Hunger at Home and the Bay Area Furniture Bank.

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San Jose's iconic bookstore Hickleebee's going up for sale

Owners say it's time to retire after 43 years in Willow Glen

By William Bellou
Publisher

Willow Glen's iconic Hickleebee's Bookstore co-owner Monica Holmes has announced the bookstore she opened with her sister Valarie Lewis in 1979 is going up for sale.

Both Homes and Lewis say that they're ready to retire and hope to sell their popular Willow Glen shop.

"I could probably stick with Hickleebee's past 100 years old, but I

believe in exiting with grace," Lewis said in an email this week. "And it's time. We have every intention of finding the right owners to carry on the Hickleebee's tradition."

The bookstore located on Lincoln Avenue features a cozy children's reading area. The shop's bookshelves are packed with books of laughter, romance, friendship, and adventure.

"The key ingredients that will contribute to the success of a new owner are all in place: a loyal customer base; a dedicated, hard-working staff; the technology tools to remain current and relevant; and

a beautiful environment that appeals to customers of all ages," the newsletter said, noting that the ideal new owner would be passionate about books and possess sound judgement, some creativity and a good sense of what it takes to operate a retail business. "We would be delighted to find a new owner who would enjoy steering San Jose's family center for literature and learning."

While it is primarily known — and proudly so — as a children's bookstore, Hickleebee's has long catered to readers of all ages and has hosted events featuring celebri-



Joy Steuerwald and her son, Harrison Prioste, enjoy Hickleebee's picture books. Hickleebee's, which opened 43 years ago, is going up for sale. Photos by Lorraine Gabbert.

ties, literary and otherwise, including "Captain Underpants" creator Dav Pilkey, Chelsea Clinton, humorist Dave Barry, Supreme

Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, J.K. Rowling's promoting her first book, and late U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta.



Hickleebee's owners Valerie Lewis and Monica Holmes enjoyed working together at the Willow Glen bookstore for 43 years. They now want to sell the bookstore to travel and spend more time with their families.

Notice of Public Meeting & Hearing San José Municipal Water System Public Health Goals Report on Water Quality

The City of San José Municipal Water System has prepared a Public Health Goals Report on Water Quality pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 116470 (b). The report includes water quality information for the **Evergreen, Edenvale, and Coyote Valley** areas of San José. If you are interested in sharing your comments on the report, please join us:

Public Meeting
Tuesday, August 23, 2022
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.
San José Municipal Water System
3025 Tuers Road
San José, CA 95121

Public Hearing/Report Adoption
Tuesday, August 30, 2022
1:30 P.M.
City of San José - City Hall Council Chambers
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113

This report is on file and available for public review at the office of San José Municipal Water System, and available online at www.sjmunwater.com. If you have any questions, please call us at (408) 277-3671.

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Omicron

Continued from page 4

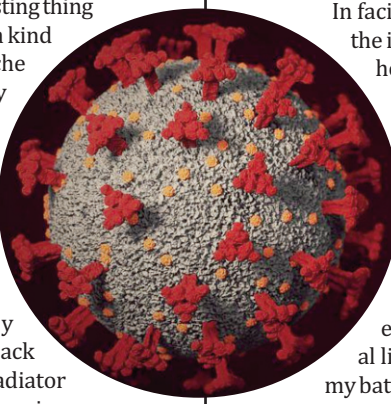
so I give no advice here; I only take you on my personal journey.

On day three, I tested positive again but felt that I was beating back the virus. The interesting thing I experienced is a kind of extension of ache in all the body which told me in my mind that this virus is trying to take over my body.

With prayer, I fought back. I cheered on my body to attack back like a Roman gladiator and take no virus prisoners.

I knew that broth soups were going to be my weapons in the fight of the dead virus and help my fighter cells go into combat readiness.

I began to wonder if boosters were good to take and that maybe a more natural fight for health would build



immunity in traditional mother nature ways.

I knew about the other options of taking pills to fight the virus but wanted to give the soups a fighting chance. I think the healthiest of the soups is the Pho soups sold at many restaurants.

In facing death, I learned the important lesson of how to embrace life.

In day 5 with rest, I tested negative.

I'm not a doctor, nope. I am not recommending any strategies if one gets covid, I just wanted to express my personal life experience with my battle and victory over omicron.

I know omicron is a mysterious foe because it is not living. I think it is a ghost foe and it could arrive on the shores of my nose again to try another day to destroy my body.

For now, I am the victor!

Times **Notebook****Enrollment***Continued from page 1*

collided with that trend, making the decline worse.

Richard Barrera, a board trustee at San Diego Unified, the state's second largest district, said families were moving out of the district, especially those in gentrifying areas, resulting in disproportionate losses for schools in those neighborhoods. Then workers started to lose jobs in 2020, and more families had to relocate.

"When we opened up the schools last year, those schools had lower in-person attendance," Barrera said. "It's just more expensive for people with kids to live in California."

In the years before the pandemic, enrollment in traditional, non-charter public schools fell by about 1% a year. The first year of the pandemic, however, enrollment dropped by more than 3%, or about 175,000 students.

Even charter school enrollment slid, losing 12,600 students this year, a major reversal of historical trends. Since 2015, charter schools have seen only increases each year of at least 10,000 students.

Officials at the California Department of Education did not have a clear explanation for this sudden drop.

The California Charter Schools Association President Myrna Castrejón said this decline illustrates how charter schools "are facing the same statewide challenges as non-charter public schools." She called for equitable funding for charters.

For non-charter schools, much of the enrollment drop during the first year of the pandemic was due to tens of thousands of parents opting not to enroll their children in kindergarten. Most school campuses were closed at the time and children were learning online.

This year, with school buildings open, kindergarten enrollment went up by more than 7,000 students, recovering slightly from last year's 60,000-student plunge.

Enrollment numbers for first graders, however, dropped by 18,000 students this year — one of the steepest drops for a single grade level — suggesting that many students who were of kindergarten age in 2020 did not return to public schools for first grade.

California Department of Education officials would not comment on where those students went. Some school district officials said they also are looking for answers.

"It's a problem across all grade levels," said Barrett Snider of Capitol Advisors, a lobbying firm for school districts. "We just aren't sure where they've gone."

Because most of California's public schools are funded based on a combination of enrollment and attendance, small school districts are especially feeling the pain. Just a few students leaving can mean large chunks of money gone from their budgets.

"We've had declining enrollment since the turn of the century," said Linda Irving, superintendent of Sebastopol Union School District. "As a school gets smaller, it gets more difficult to provide quality programming, like music classes."

The 788-student district has been using one-time state grants to cover its costs, Irving said, but she needs a more permanent

solution.

"Declining enrollment cannot be fixed. I think we have to recognize that declining enrollment is part of broader demographic trends that are happening in our state." -- Brett McFadden, Superintendent Of The Nevada Joint Union High School District

It can be depressing working at a school where the student population is shrinking, she said. Administrators have a marketing budget to attract more families, yet they are being forced to cut staff.

"I was driving home from the gym yesterday, and I heard another superintendent on the radio," Irving said. "We're competing against each other."

Brett McFadden, superintendent of the Nevada Joint Union High School District, said



a large portion of the residents in his rural community work in the service industry and had to seek other jobs when businesses closed during the pandemic. Others left more recently, as the state began enforcing masking rules and issuing vaccine mandates.

"It's tough to do exit interviews, but our takeaway is that people left because of jobs," McFadden said. "Or they left because private schools weren't enforcing mask mandates."

According to state data, Nevada Joint Union High's enrollment was stable before the pandemic at around 2,800 students. As of Friday, McFadden said, enrollment is at 2,605. He said he lost 197 students since the school year started, which translates to more than \$2 million in lost funding.

See *ENROLLMENT*, page 15

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Times Feature

TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK
Federated learning

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:

Federated learning

Amongst the latest advances in Artificial Intelligence and Machine learning, I find the federated learning to be very fascinating. Federated learning is a form of machine learning technique where the devices which collect data partici-

pates in training the central machine learning model. This technique is most popular with mobile devices, or any other types of systems deployed at scale. Federated learning is useful for cases where the participating devices don’t want to share the data with the central server or uploading the collected data back to central server is prohibitive (high cost, unreliable connection, etc.).

A simple example would be personalized keyboards on smartphones. Predictive features on those personalized keyboards learn from your typing patterns, slangs, usage of words, etc. to give you better suggestions in the future. Since you are also using your keyboard to type confidential information such as passwords on websites, it is not a very good idea to send that kind

of data back to central server. Even if it is not the case with keyboard, assume you take pictures on your smartphone and tag them as “Family”, “Hobby”, and “Friends” in a smart photo app which can automatically tag your future pictures. That smart photo app may have some sort of machine learning model trained at its central server. For machine learning model to learn your tags, it must be trained on your images with your tags. Sending those images back to the central server along with their tags can be quite expensive on your mobile data connection. Moreover, you might not want to share your precious personal pictures with this smart photo app server. This is where federated learning comes in play. Machine learning models are trained on your smartphones and then the models are the

only ones sent to the central server. Now the central server averages the models using federated learning algorithm which it receives from several smartphones and then uses them to train its global machine learning model. After it has been trained for a while, the global model is distributed back to the smartphones to be used for predictive purposes or for further training.

While federated learning is still in its early stages and faces numerous challenges with its design and deployment, it will be interesting to see how tech giants like Google will leverage this technology.

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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Times **Feature**

Retired Lt. Col. Shawna
Rochelle Kimbrell

Five black service members shaping contemporary military history

Black Americans have served in the U.S. Armed Forces since the Revolutionary War, paving the way for Black service members today.

"It is also important we foster an inclusive environment across the USO (United Service Organizations). One consistent finding of our service member surveys is the diverse population we serve feels welcome, supported, and included when visiting the USO," said J.D. Crouch II, USO CEO and president. "We should feel very proud of this but always stay attuned to improving the experience for them."

The USO is sharing five stories of modern-day service members who are shaping contemporary military history.

1. Retired **Lt. General Nadja West** is no stranger to being a "first." In 2013, West became the first Black female major general of the Army's active component, as well as the Army Medicine's first Black female two-star general. In 2015, she became the first Black surgeon general of the Army. Finally, in 2016, she became the first Black female lieutenant general and highest-ranking woman to graduate from West Point. With more than 20 years of experience, she's proved herself a decisive leader, helping lead the Department of Defense (DOD) through crafting the response to the Ebola crisis, and managing an \$11 billion budget and 130,000 healthcare workers when she was commanding general of Medical Command.

2. Retired **Lt. Col. Shawna Rochelle Kimbrell** (pictured above) made headlines when she became the first Black female fighter pilot for the Air Force. Throughout her school years, she set her sights on the sky. As a kindergartner, she wanted to be an astronaut, but soon shifted her focus from spaceships to jets. Determined, she joined the Civil Air Patrol, worked at air shows, earned a private pilot's license and earned a spot in the Air Force Academy. Although naysayers told her to have a back-up plan because they believed her goals were unrealistic, to Kimbrell, that wasn't an option. In 1988, Kim-

brell graduated from the Air Force Academy and earned her pilot wings the following year. She's now a decorated Air Force veteran, having earned an Air Medal, an Aerial Achievement Medal and an Army Commendation Medal, just to name a few. With a full, successful military career behind her, Kimbrell shows no signs of slowing down. Today, she dedicates her days to help future officers at the Air Force Academy, where she teaches physical education and is the academy's Director of Culture, Climate and Diversity.

3. The first-ever Black female plebe to attend and graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy, **Lt. Janie L. Mines** first stepped onto campus in 1976. "The academy wasn't ready for [women]," Mines said in an interview with the DOD. "It just happened quickly, and it needed to be done. The academy considered itself to be a combat school, and [women] were not allowed to serve in combat. So, we were seen as taking up spots for good combat officers that were needed, because we 'couldn't do the job.' Additionally, there was a general belief that as Black women ... I would not be able to lead in what was at that time a white-male Navy." Despite being accepted to other prestigious universities, Mines was determined to attend the Academy and answer the call to serve. "When the Academy contacted me and said I was going to be the only Black woman who would be admitted, I felt like it was something I had to do." After graduation, Mines went on to become a lieutenant in the Navy Supply Corps and one of the first women to ever serve on a Navy ship. Today, she mentors young midshipmen, is the author of "No Coincidences: Reflections of the First Black Female Graduate of the United States Naval Academy" and is a member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service.

4. On January 21, 2021, retired **Gen. Lloyd Austin** was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in a near-unanimous vote to become the first Black defense secretary of the United States. A retired Army four-star general, he previously attended West Point and was soon commissioned as a second lieutenant. Austin served more than 40 years in the Army. He was the 33rd vice chief of staff of the branch and was the last commanding general of the U.S. Forces – Iraq Operation New Dawn. In 2013, President Barack Obama appointed him commander of United States Central Command, making Austin the first Black person

See *SERVICE MEMBERS*, page 15



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OSC has opened a new program for women based upon equine interaction and equine-assisted-learning, designed to develop self-awareness and self-acceptance, confidence and resilience, and safe boundaries.

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San Jose expected to lose hundreds of police officers

By Tran Nguyen
San José Spotlight

The San Jose Police Department should expect a mass exodus of officers in the next three years, union leaders said.

A survey conducted by The San Jose Police Officers' Association shows more than 200 officers are planning to resign—with more than 150 wishing to do so in the next 36 months.

Among those planning to leave, four out of five officers cited the lack of support from the city as the reason. Officers said issues such as salary and benefits also contribute to their departure plans.

Union leaders said the issue is years in the making and the result of city leaders failing to address chronic staffing issues. The police union is in contract negotiations with the city. According to city officials, the police union's latest proposal is a 14% pay increase over two years—8% in 2022-23 and 6% in 2023-24—and a \$5,000 bonus.

"These numbers are jaw dropping," union President Sean Pritchard told San José Spotlight, adding 77 other officers, eligible for retirement, plan to do so in the next three years. "We're drowning. SJPD is calling 911, and there's no lifeline."

The survey includes answers from 680 officers—less than half of all union members, spokesperson Tom Saggau told San José Spotlight. The union believes the real number of officers planning to resign would be much higher if all members responded, Saggau added.

Among more than 200 SJPD officers planning to resign in the near future, roughly 150 of them wish to do it in the next three years, a survey by the union shows. Chart courtesy of SJPOA.

The San Jose Police Department, the most thinly-staffed law enforcement department of any major U.S. metropolis, is already struggling with a surge in retirements and challenges in recruiting officers, San José Spotlight previously reported. The department has seen 206 officers retire or leave the department since January 2021, according to the police union. Plus, sworn officer applications dropped last year.

While the police union claims there have been 206 separations since January 2021, city officials said there were only 165 separations, 86 of which were retirements. Of the remaining 79, three were deaths, 11 were terminations, two transferred to civilian positions and three resigned in lieu of termination. Twenty-one resigned during the Field Officer Training program, leaving approximately 39 officer resignations outside the training program.

Union leaders said SJPD is doing the work of a department at least double its size. San Jose is serving more than a million people with approximately 1,153 sworn officers, while San Francisco employs a police force of more than 2,100 sworn officers, with a population of about 875,000.

"We should have up to 2,400 police officers based on the national average," Pritchard said. "But on its best day, we're pushing maybe 950 officers who are ready to hit the street and answer a 911 call."

The chronic staffing shortages in the police department have intensified over the past decade. Hundreds of officers left following former Mayor Chuck Reed's push for a ballot measure to reduce pension benefits. The sit-



San Jose Police Chief Anthony Mata wants to increase the number of sworn officers in the SJPD, which is one of the smallest in the nation for a city of its size. *Photo by Jana Kadah.*

uation became further exacerbated as the city's population increased and calls for service rose. The department is now mandating officers work overtime as its ranks continue to shrink over the years, Pritchard said.

City officials said San Jose is already paying competitive rates to officers. The average salary of an SJPD officer is \$189,000—the third highest among the Bay Area's 17 largest police departments, Mayor Sam Liccardo said.

"The police union is doing its job advocating for its members amid contract negotiations, but it's the city's job to stand up for our residents, and to attract and retain officers, with good wages without capitulating to union demands that our taxpayers cannot afford—as we have seen happen before," he said in a statement.

Filling the ranks

San Jose Police Chief Anthony Mata said the city is working to address the ongoing issues in the department.

"These are challenging times for law enforcement, not just in San Jose but across our nation. Despite the challenges, the San Jose Police Department is one of the finest police departments in the nation," Mata told San José Spotlight.

"We will continue to provide our workforce, both sworn and professional staff, with the tools and resources they need to be successful, feel empowered and grow professionally. I am proud of the great work our officers perform on a daily basis and their dedication to our community. I will do whatever is in my authority to support our workforce."

San Jose has tried to address the staffing issue through new investment into public safety in this year's budget. The city is adding a foot patrolling program of 16 new officers and starting a bonus program for new hires.

The San Jose Police Officers' Association wants the city to address low staffing with more aggressive hiring tactics, higher salaries and more officer support. The survey shows nearly 70% of officers looking to resign have plans to move to another police department. San José Spotlight previously reported SJPD lost officers to smaller departments such as Sunnyvale or Santa Clara where they can land better salaries or benefits.

"We need to attract the best, (and) we need to retain the best," Pritchard said. "In order to do that, we have to be competitive and provide a fair wage for the officers who risk their lives every single day."



Almaden Girls Water Polo Team takes 15th place at Junior Olympics.

Water polo

Continued from page 1

Junior Olympics. This was an impressive goal, as nearly half of the team had less than a year of experience in water polo. They were determined, though, and were willing to put in the work. The team practiced Monday thru Thursday for about two hours a day. Their dedication to practice was amazing. They became a top level team and ended surpassing their goal significantly.

When the schedule came out, the team was seeded 28th and would have an uphill battle, as they faced off against the eventual 7th place team Patriot. They lost their opening game and would need to win their next two in a row to have a chance to reach their goal of the platinum division (top 24 in the nation). Their next game was against the 21 seed Corona del Mar, coached by former Olympian, Melissa Seidemann. The Almaden team won 11-4. Next, they had to travel to Stanford for their 3rd game of the first day to play the 27 seed 805 B. The girls beat them 12-5 and were now in the platinum division; but the girls now wanted more. They reset their new goal for the top 16.

The team opened up day two by falling behind 1-3 to the 14 seed Arroyo Grande, who they had just lost to in a shootout the weekend before. The girls, though, stormed back over the next 3 quarters and won 11-6 by playing amazing defense and executing a fast break and drive offense. That win sent the team head to head with Diablo A that had beaten the Almaden team 3-18 just 31 days prior. This exciting game came down to tie 6-6 with under a minute to go. Then the team scored on a time out play to Sophia DeScioli to take the lead 7-6. Diablo, though, also scored on their timeout play tying the game back at 7-7 with less than 40 seconds to go. The Almaden team called timeout again, with the play breaking down, but Diyana Gunaskera hit an amazing shot from about 7 meters out to take the lead 8-7 with under 20 seconds to go. The girls played great defense, but Diablo hit a shot with 3 seconds left to send the game to a shootout. You would have thought the girls would have been disheartened, but they showed great composure. They had practiced shootouts all week in preparation for this possible moment. They won the shootout 3-2 after goalie, Kylie Haughton, made 3 amazing saves including the final shot to seal the win. The Almaden team had now won 4 consecutive

games in the tournament. They lost their 2nd game of the tournament that night to the eventual 11th place Shore Aquatic.

Shootout goes to sudden victory

Day 3 saw the 12u team matching up with Lamorinda B for a chance to make the top 16. The girls fell behind early and actually never had the lead until less than a minute to play. They executed their time out play perfectly, as they took a 7-6 lead. Lamorinda, though, tied it up at 7-7. The girls were now in their second shootout of the Junior Olympics. The team's goalie, Kylie Haughton, again came up huge, as she stopped 4 of the 5 shots. Neither team was able to score more than one during the first round. The shootout now went to sudden victory. Both teams had their first two shooters score. Then Inaya Stojanovic hit a perfect top corner for the eventual game winner. Kylie again made a huge save to seal the win. Everyone agrees, these girls were amazing in close games, as they were 5-1 during the summer in one or two goal games.

One of the top teams in the nation

On the last day, the girls lined up against 680 for 15th place in the entire nation. They saved their best for last. The team played their best game ever defeating 680 9-2. They jumped out early as Lily Caouette and the rest of the girls put pressure on their team with our fast break speed. This forced their goalie to help out leaving the goal slightly open for some perfectly placed shots. The defense was amazing as the girls flew everywhere, and shutting down 680's top player in set. The SJA U12 girls exceeded their goal, as they were now top 15 in the entire nation. They also finished as the 5th best team in all of northern California. This was an amazing group of girls who worked hard to reach this level. They earned it!

About the author

Eric Rise (erise@sbcglobal.net) has been the head coach of the SJA Water Polo Club and Leland High School girls varsity team for the past 20 years. During his tenure, his SJA teams have placed in the top 20 nationally. Eric led his Leland High School Girls Varsity Water Polo Team to four CCS section championships. He graduated from Westmont College with a BSW in mathematics and science and finished his master's degree in education from San Jose State University.

Editor's note: If you are interested in joining the team for the fall, please email sjawa-terpolo@gmail.com. Water polo is a fun sport, and SJA U12 girls are a great group. The fall season starts up at the end of August 2022.

Times **Feature**

Service members

Continued from page 13
to ever hold the position. In 2016, he retired from the military as a decorated and distinguished Army veteran with many honors, including a Silver Star and Humanitarian Service Medal. In the private sector, he served on several boards until President Joe Biden nominated him to be secretary of defense in 2021 -- where he serves today.

5. Retired **Col. Merryl Tengesdal** is the first, and currently the only, Black woman to fly a U-2 spy plane, which is utilized for the Air Force's high-altitude missions. After graduating from the University of New Haven, Tengesdal first served in the Navy flying helicopters. She went on to become an instructor pilot, training Navy and Air Force students at Joint Student Undergraduate Pilot Training. She transferred to the Air Force when her Naval obligation was complete. Though she describes being the first Black woman to fly a U-2 plane as "surreal," she

also says it's a "blind spot." "I try not to get caught up in being the only Black female. I just want to keep being inspirational and motivational for other people," Tengesdal said. During training, Tengesdal's instructors told her there would always be people who would say she was there because of her race and gender, and others who would say she shouldn't be there because of those things. One instructor reminded her that she was incredibly talented and would keep proving to others that she belongs at the top -- and soon enough, the critics wouldn't have those excuses anymore. Today, she reflects on that conversation in instances of self-doubt. Tengesdal retired in 2017 and has had many adventures since, including being a contestant on "Tough as Nails," a CBS reality show. (Statepoint)

Diversity and inclusion are central to the USO's values and mission. To learn more about the USO's commitment to diversity and inclusion visit <https://www.uso.org/diversity>.

Enrollment

Continued from page 11
"Declining enrollment cannot be fixed," he said. "I think we have to recognize that declining enrollment is part of broader demographic trends that are happening in our state."

Softening the blow
State leaders are floating measures to lessen the pain of declining enrollment.

In his proposed budget, Gov. Gavin Newsom said he would allow school districts to use a three-year average attendance rate to calculate next year's funding. This could be a substantial help, especially because attendance at most schools plummeted during this year's omicron surge.

State Sen. Anthony Portantino, a Democrat from Glendale, authored Senate Bill 830, which would pay districts based on enrollment rather than attendance.

While the policy debate over enrollment versus attendance-based funding has been ongoing for years, Portantino said this is the right time to make the change because of the state's surplus and the acute crisis of plummeting attendance and enrollment.

"School districts have to budget based on enrollment," Portantino said. "It makes no sense to penalize them if you have absences throughout the year."

Under his proposal, districts would still be



funded based on attendance but could apply for additional money based on enrollment. The bill would require that districts use 30% of the additional funding to address chronic absenteeism.

While these proposals might ease the fiscal effects of ebbing enrollments, district leaders still don't have a clear picture of why so many students are leaving, and they feel powerless to reverse the trend.

"Schools have been reacting to a public health crisis and trying to keep their lights on, so when kids disappear there's not a lot of capacity to chase them down and see what happened," said Snider, the lobbyist. "But I think that's going to be a big focus as we climb out of this."



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

Safe At Home

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Ways to get involved

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

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Times Community News

VTA Board Approves MOU to Change Caltrain Governance

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Board of Directors voted at its regular Board meeting Thursday, August 4, 2022, to approve a memorandum of understanding (MOU) of new governance for Caltrain.

The new governance will give San Francisco and Santa Clara counties more power and governance oversight of the peninsula commuter train service.

It establishes a separate, permanent Cal-

train Executive Director who reports exclusively to, and takes direction from, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB), which exercises authority over the selection, hiring, annual goal setting, performance review, compensation, and termination of the Caltrain Executive Director.

As a negotiated settlement for the governance transition, the MOU also includes a commitment for VTA to pay \$9,120,000 within twelve (12) months of execution of the MOU (August 2022) to compensate San Mateo County Transportation District.

The San Mateo County Transit District will no longer have sole final discretionary appointing power of an executive director, general counsel, and auditor for Caltrain.

A majority of the Caltrain board will now decide on the Executive Director, and Caltrain will maintain its own General Counsel and Auditor separate from SamTrans.

The Auspices of Auxins

By Matthew Frazier

In late spring of 2010, I was working in the garden center at The Home Depot in the Cambrian area of San Jose. It was during this time that a manager called me aside and told me I was to be certified, based on what they had observed thus far of my conversations and interactions with their customers.

The curriculum was forty hours of web-based training to become a certified nursery consultant. This was eight multi-hour lectures which resulted in being given an iron-on patch with the title.

One of the lectures in the course dealt with something I had not yet heard, though I had worked in a true independent retail nursery prior to being hired at this Home Depot garden center: Auxins. From what I recall in one of these lectures ... When we prune or shear a shrub or a tree, we cause a hormonal change which affects the growth habits and patterns.

I learned that when we prune or shear with bypass pruners in a specific fashion, we inhibit lateral growth within which results in a more desired form and shape for our shrub or tree.

When we prune roses, for example, I was told to locate a leaf junction of three to five then locate the bud on the cane where we want the cut. Using bypass loppers, pruners, or shears ... Go up ¼ inch and cut parallel to the direction the bud is pointing. This causing a release of auxins which will inhibit lateral growth for the roses and give us a more balanced and bilateral form.

This principle was shared with me too by an arborist who was a guest in another nursery during a pruning seminar/workshop. When water droplets form on branches and canes, they can slide off when we make cuts parallel to the buds. Making cuts perpendicular to the buds allows water droplets to rest there and cause dieback and other damage. This practice, along with removing crossing and dead/dying branches or canes, will help promote balanced and healthy plants.

I have invested some time in watching videos

on how auxins work within plants. I have studies, in some basic manner, anatomy and physiology of plants independently as well as part of my on-site training in the nurseries where I began and later in the garden centers attached to the home improvement centers.

Giving balanced form to plants will help draw sunlight and oxygen to their core – resulting in a lower probability of aphid infestation and other destructive nuisance insects. In a future article, I will mention insectary plants which complement our garden and landscape specimens.

There are comprehensive videos which go into great detail about geotropism and phototropism and how auxins cause the foliage and the roots of plants to grow in a specific way with respect to sunlight. I highly recommend watching some of these videos. The level of detail is not really feasible to synopsise in this short article.

One of the pieces of knowledge which has stayed with me

for the years during and since I worked in garden centers and nurseries is that plants are highly adaptable and can alter their habits with respect to cosmetic and structural pruning and shearing. In the context of water conservation and xeriscaping... using bypass loppers, pruners, and shears in this fashion will allow your shrubs and trees to grow in a more balanced manner.

For enthusiasts of all levels, I always recommend learning the concepts and the details of care for our plants. Though I no longer work in garden centers or nurseries as a consultant or specialist, I do very much enjoy working in the gardens here at the house and employing what I learned in my years in service to customers and the public.

My focus has since shifted from garden centers and nurseries to landscape irrigation/water management and now Stormwater Management and Wastewater Management as they relate to Water Conservation.

So, the next time you find yourself in your garden or your yard and working with your plants, please do take the opportunity to put this knowledge to use for your care and maintenance of your beloved plants.

Matthew Frazier is a Certified Water Manager, Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper, and Qualified Stormwater Manager. You may contact him at (408) 656-5622 – Mobile/Text; or by email: kitchenfrazier@hotmail.com



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Santa Clara County 'navigators' tackle mental health crisis

By **Lorraine Gabbert**
Times Senior Staff Writer

For someone in crisis, being able to access assistance is critical.

To help, Santa Clara County is striving to connect people with the right services for treatment.

The Behavioral Health Navigator Program, which launched July 27, offers personalized support by referring people to county and community resources that best fit their needs.

The goal of the program is to address challenges people face in navigating the county's complicated mental health care system.

When a call comes in to the behavioral health call center, mental health peer support workers—known as navigators—are there to assist. These navigators are individuals with lived experience such as peers, family members or caregivers of someone who has experienced the behavioral health system. They understand the anxious voice on the other end of the line because they have lived it.

If people are given the wrong information and resources or turned away because their insurance is ineligible, it can prevent them from seeking help, said Alicia Anderson, program manager of access and unplanned serv-

ices for the county's behavioral health services department.

"If the only answer you get is, 'We only work with Medi-Cal beneficiaries,' instead of where you can go for help, that's a big difference," she told San José Spotlight, adding the beauty of the program is anyone can call regardless of their insurance provider.

Santa Clara County sees demand for mental health treatment

The navigator program is the brainchild of Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian, who often heard from families that they needed help in finding the right path to treatment. In November 2021, the board of supervisors unanimously supported his proposal.

"People who need mental health help, for themselves, a friend or a family member, are already in a world of hurt," Simitian said in a statement. "Then they have to confront a system that's complicated, confusing and bureaucratic."

Three full time peer navigators knowledgeable about community resources refer clients to services. Three more may be added early next year, Anderson said.

The navigator team works closely with the behavioral health call center, the 988 suicide and mental health crisis hotline and mobile crisis teams. Two drop-in centers are also available for in-person consultation.

The pandemic exacerbated the need for support. In 2021, more than 40,000 residents accessed the county's behavioral health system and about 4,500 accessed its addic-



tion and substance use services, a 13% increase over the previous year, according to the county health system.

In January, county officials declared a public health crisis in the region related to mental illness and substance abuse. Compounded by the pandemic, there's been a dramatic increase in students suffering from severe depression and anxiety. An inadequate number of beds in treatment facilities has led to incarceration rather than mental health support services. The county has since added an outpatient treatment program known as Laura's Law, which seeks to help those with severe mental illness.

Making a difference

Bruce Copley, director of access and unplanned services for the behavioral health department, told San José Spotlight part of

the difficulty people face in seeking mental health support is the stigma and shame attached to these needs.

He said because the navigators have lived experience, they can share their own stories with callers to bring them out of their shells and help open doors to appropriate services.

Anderson said getting people the right care is crucial. In the past, residents weren't connected to the right referral due to a complicated phone tree or not being asked deeper questions. If a caller said they needed help with housing, they'd be given a number to call, but a further conversation might have revealed a domestic violence issue, she said. Now navigators spend more time with each caller to better understand the situation.

Although the program focuses on mental health, substance abuse and suicide prevention, navigators receive and refer calls regarding domestic violence, medical services and housing to other county services through detailed hand-offs.

"I think there's a lot of anxiety going to a new service for the first time," Anderson said. "It's very different knowing what to expect when you go somewhere versus just having the information about what they provide."

To contact the Navigator Program, call the Behavioral Health Call Center at (800) 704-0900, option 4. Drop-in centers are located in San Jose at Zephyr Self Help Center, 1075 E. Santa Clara St., or Behavioral Health Urgent Care at 871 Enborg Ct.

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SJ Library hosts summer coding showcase with support from Apple

This summer, San José Public Library (SJPL) received support for its Coding 5K Summer Camps from Apple's Community Education Initiative, which provides coding, creativity, and workforce opportunities for underrepresented communities.

Through the Camps, nearly 200 students (ages 8-12) had the opportunity to attend a series of free week-long coding classes at the library.

SJPL's Coding 5K Summer Camps are taught by experienced and certified instructors who are trained by library staff using

coding curriculum and apps provided by Apple. Apple has also provided professional learning and support for program leaders and facilitators, employee volunteers, and Apple technology, including iPad devices for campers to ensure that all participating students have access to an up-to-date device that allows them to successfully complete their projects. iPads can also be checked out with a library card.

Coding 5K Summer Camp offered a total of eight week-long camps at eight SJPL locations. The camps were offered in conjunction with the Coding 5K Challenge, a program designed to further enhance access to free quality STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math) learning programs for underserved elementary and middle school students.

More information can be found at: bit.ly/CodingCamp2022

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Times **Feature**

Report: 2022's states with the best & worst early education systems

With pre-K enrollment dropping by nearly 300,000 students last year, which hurt educational progress and increased inequality, the personal-finance website WalletHub today released its report on 2022's States with the Best & Worst Early Education Systems.

In order to determine the best early education systems in America, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across 12 key metrics. The data set ranges

from share of school districts that offer a state pre-K program to number of pre-K quality benchmarks met and total reported spending per child enrolled in pre-K.

Quality of Early Education in California (1=Best; 25=Avg.):

- 23rd – Share of 3- and 4-year-olds Enrolled in pre-K, pre-K Special Education and Head Start
- 18th – Income Requirement for State Pre-K Eligibility
- 18th – Total Reported Spending per Child Enrolled in Preschool
- 12th – Total State Head Start Program Spending per Child Enrolled in Preschool
- 1st – Monthly Child Care Co-Payment Fees as a Percent of Family Income

States with the Best & Worst Early Education Systems					
Rank &	State	Total Score	Access	Quality	Resources Economic Support
1	Arkansas	74.66	4	1	16
2	Nebraska	70.59	5	2	24
3	Maryland	69.85	14	2	6
4	District of Columbia	68.00	1	19	26
5	Rhode Island	63.45	27	6	2
6	Alabama	63.11	12	6	11
7	Oregon	61.32	13	20	1
8	Vermont	61.07	2	44	21
9	West Virginia	60.88	8	8	35
10	New Mexico	58.45	7	37	4
11	New Jersey	55.81	15	25	3
12	Oklahoma	55.76	9	37	10
13	Delaware	53.78	22	16	14
14	Tennessee	53.37	19	11	39
15	South Carolina	53.34	16	14	32
16	Louisiana	53.33	20	12	36
17	Illinois	52.54	6	42	23
18	Washington	51.22	24	21	13
19	Kentucky	51.12	17	13	46
20	Connecticut	50.62	23	15	29
21	Iowa	50.38	11	40	31
22	Virginia	49.98	48	4	28
23	Maine	48.69	18	37	20
24	Wisconsin	48.14	10	46	30
25	Texas	48.12	43	5	40
26	Hawaii	47.34	28	43	7
27	Utah	47.18	35	35	9
28	Kansas	46.41	3	49	33
29	Alaska	46.21	33	26	15
30	Ohio	45.23	29	17	43
31	Georgia	44.36	45	9	34
32	California	43.75	42	22	12
33	Mississippi	43.72	31	26	27
34	Arizona	42.76	25	24	50
35	North Carolina	42.52	47	9	37
36	Michigan	41.52	21	48	25
37	Nevada	41.34	50	17	5
38	Massachusetts	41.23	26	47	19
39	Pennsylvania	41.03	46	36	8
40	Colorado	40.95	44	23	22
41	Florida	40.05	40	26	38
42	Wyoming	39.06	32	26	41
43	South Dakota	38.79	34	26	41
44	New York	37.88	41	44	17
45	Idaho	37.11	39	26	44
46	Montana	36.97	36	26	47
47	New Hampshire	35.49	37	26	51
48	Minnesota	33.89	49	41	18
49	Missouri	29.29	38	50	45
50	North Dakota	29.23	30	51	48
51	Indiana	20.90	51	26	49

• Note: With the exception of "Total Score," all of the columns in the table above depict the relative rank of that state, where a rank of 1 represents the best conditions for that metric category.

For the full report, visit: <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-with-the-best-and-worst-early-education-systems/62668>



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Times News Briefs

'Inflation-busting' stimulus payments to Californians worth up to \$1,050 to be received in October

Stimulus checks and relief payments are being sent by several states across the country, including California, as inflation wreaks havoc on personal expenditures.

Several states have announced new initiatives to deliver payments to certain groups. States providing relief include California, Florida, and Virginia, among others.

In California, state officials are planning on giving stimulus checks of up to \$1,050 to an estimated 23 million people in October.

The payment amount will depend on whether the person is a single or joint filer for taxes, what the person's income is, and how many dependents he or she has.

Single filers will receive at least \$200 if they earn up to \$250,000 a year, and joint filers will receive \$400 if they earn up to \$500,000 a year.

The checks are part of a \$17 billion relief package that will also suspend the state's sales tax on diesel fuel and provide additional aid to help people with rent and utility bills, Governor Newsom said in a statement.

The inflation-relief checks are tax refunds that will send a total of \$9.5 billion back to state residents.

MONEY TIP FOR STUDENTS

Save money by earning college credit in high school

By Tim Ballard

One way for students to save money on the cost of higher education is to earn college credits while they are still in high school, according to KHEAA.

High school students can take advantage of several programs that let them earn college credits. These programs include:

* **Dual credit courses.** These courses let students earn both college and high school credit. They are offered in both academic and technical areas. In some cases, students will pay less than the college tuition rate.

* **Advanced Placement (AP) courses.** AP classes count as high school credits, but many colleges will give students college credit if they earn a certain grade on AP exams. Offered by the College Board, AP classes are widely available.

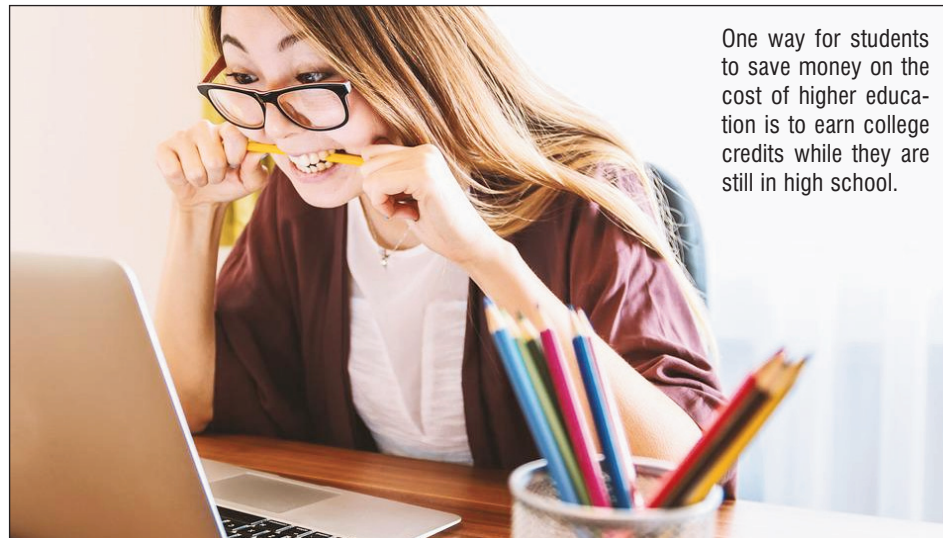
* **International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and Cambridge Advanced International (CAI) programs.** IB and CAI are for students 16 to 19 years old and are similar to AP courses. High school students may be able to receive college credit for the IB and CAI classes they take.

KHEAA is a public, non-profit agency established in 1966 to improve students' access to college. It provides information about financial aid and financial literacy at no cost to students and parents.

KHEAA also helps colleges manage their student loan default rates and verify information submitted on the FAFSA. For more information about those services, visit kheaa.com.

In addition, KHEAA disburses private Advantage Education Loans on behalf of its sister agency, KHESLC.

For more information, visit www.advantageeducationloan.com.



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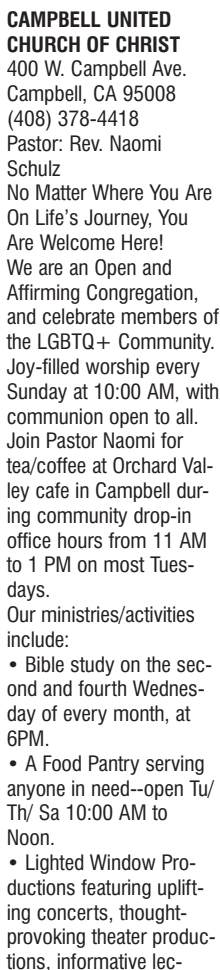
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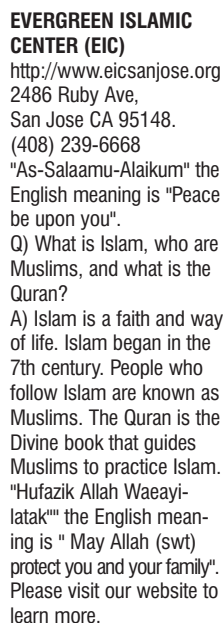
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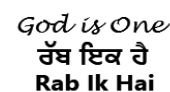
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shipping, and learning
together. Worship serv-
ices are at 10:00 AM at the
Horace Mann Community
Center (7th and Santa
Clara Streets). Worship
includes both contempo-
rary and traditional music,
a message that is relevant
to real life, based in the
Bible, and meaningful to
people of all ages and



THE POINT CHURCH
3695 Rose Terrasse Cir
San Jose, CA 95148
(408) 270-7646
English Service:
Sundays at 9:30 &
11:00 AM
Spanish Service:
11:00 AM
Cambodian Service:
11:00 AM
Cantonese Service:
11:00 AM
Mandarin Service:
11:00AM
Youth Extreme Point
(7th-12th grade):
Every Saturday at 6:30
PM - 8:30 PM

**SAINT ANTHONY
CATHOLIC CHURCH**
We invite you to become
a part of our hospitable,
intimate Catholic parish.
We are a caring commu-

nity, promoting spiritual growth, reaching out to people in need and where you get to know people by name. We offer children's religious education (CREATE); Youth Ministry (BLAST & X-STATIC); Scripture Study (day & evening); Senior's Group and many other adult ministries as well. Saint Anthony parish is located in Almaden Valley at 20101 McKean Road, San Jose, 95120. Our weekend Masses are at 4 p.m. on Saturday at our historic church at 21800 Bertram Road in New Almaden, CA 95042 and on Sunday at 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 5:30 p.m. at the McKean Road location. Our Parish Office is open Monday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. and Tuesday thru Thursday, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1 - 4 p.m. For more information, stop by the Parish Office or call (408) 997-4800, or visit our website at www.churchstanthony.com. Fr. Larry Hendel, Pastor



SAN JOSE GURDWARA
3636 Gurdwara Ave.
San Jose, CA 95148 The word Sikh (see-kh) means "disciple" or "student." A Sikh is a practitioner of the faith founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak in Punjab of old British India. A Guru who is a "teacher" or "enlightener" completes the relationship of teach-

ing and learning. Sikhism is monotheistic and stresses the equality of all men and women. Sikhs believe in three basic principles; meditating on the name of God (praying), earning a living by honest means and sharing the fruits of one's labor with others. Currently there are close to one million Sikhs living in the USA and Canada and 25 million Sikhs living around the world. Sikhism is the 5th largest religion in the world. At the Gurdwara (House of God) in San Jose we welcome all. We

Sunday 9:00 AM, Sunday 11:00 AM, Igbo Mass - Second Sunday of the month 12:30 PM Mt. Hamilton Grange - 2840 Aborn Road Sunday 9:30 AM The Villages Gated Community (Cribari Auditorium) Sunday 8:15 AM For more information, please call or visit us at the Parish Mission Center open M-F 9:00 AM -12:00 PM; 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Come join us and share your presence with us so that together we may grow and share our gifts to help build God's Kingdom!

the beautiful grounds. Learn more about us and community events we sponsor by visiting our website; [http://www. San-JoseGurdwara.org](http://www.San-JoseGurdwara.org)

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH
5111 San Felipe Rd.,
San Jose, CA 95135
408-223-1562.
www.stfranciscofassisi.com
or www.stfranciscofassisipreschool.org
We invite you to join our community of faith located in the Evergreen area of San Jose. We are an inclusive diverse community striving to serve as Disciples of Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis, offering prayerful and joyful liturgies; evangelization, fellowship, and service opportunities to the community. We offer spiritual opportunities for all ages, including children's liturgy, dynamic E.C.H.O - Jr. High, IGNITE - High School and North Star -Young Adult Ministries, along with small faith communities and opportunities to help the poor and marginalized of San Jose. Our Preschool is the only Catholic Preschool offering quality family oriented service in the Evergreen and Silver Creek areas. Our Chapel, Gathering Hall, Parish Office, Mission Center, Parish Gift Shop, Memorial Garden and Preschool are all located at 5111

The Almaden Senior Association members are a diverse group of enthusiastic, active, 50+ adults who enjoy new learning opportunities, new experiences, and new adventures.

Membership in the Almaden Senior Association offers discounts and opportunities to enjoy . . .

- exercise classes for all levels of ability;
- lunches and other social programs

organized and run by members of the Association;

- book clubs, cooking, computer and photography classes;
- trips to local and not so local places of interest such as the Steinbeck Museum in Salinas, Whale Watching in Monterey, casino trips and more.

As a member you're encouraged to help plan these activities and suggest new ones to enjoy. The Senior Association Philanthropy Program set up a process to donate funds to other non-profit organizations that reflect our mission.

Connected

We enjoy meeting new people, making new connections and getting involved. All volunteer opportunities are based on your time and energy commitment. Fees for classes, trips and social events are kept low because of senior volunteer participation and membership strength.

Stop by the main desk at the Almaden Community Center and ask for an application today. Yearly dues of \$10 are returned to you by discounts to most of the programs you participate in.

Join us today, meet new people and get involved with classes and programs that will enhance your life and open new doors.

For more information, go to www.almadenseniors.org
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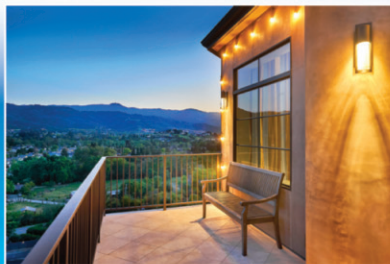
20601 Via Santa Teresa



\$4,990,000 | 5 Bed | 4 Full Bath | 3 Half-Baths | 7158 Sq Ft | 2.62 Acre Lot

Enter the private driveway up to this stunning Almaden Valley executive-style home and you are immediately awestruck by panoramic views in Santa Clara County. This architectural masterpiece incorporates the sweeping views into almost every room in the home. Gourmet kitchen, office/library, media room, game room, bonus room that could be an "in-law" suite. Tesla charging station. Solar. 4-car garage with workshop. Numerous balconies as well as the side yard with outdoor kitchen, two sitting areas, fire pit, pergola, hot tub, lawn, and pavers. Top schools: Graystone, Bret Harte, Leland.

AlmadenValleyRealEstate.com



Therese Swan
408.656.8240
tswan@tswan.com
DRE 01355719



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