

Studies show San Jose unsafe for bicycles
SEE PAGE 4



Hikers rejoice
Supervisors approve new trails connecting parklands in South County
SEE PAGE 11

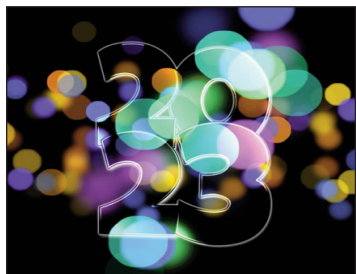
Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: The Exhibition
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DEC. 30, 2022 – JAN. 12, 2023 ■ VOL. 40, NO. 1

EvergreenTimes

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A new year, a new beginning

By Bryan Golden

The New Year is a time of resolutions. It's a time when people commit to making a change in their life. Losing weight, changing jobs, saving money, making money, a new relationship, getting in shape, going back to school, or giving up smoking, are just some of the goals people set for themselves on January 1st.

Although it's possible for anyone to make a change or a new start, it takes determination, commitment, and persistence. A new goal must be your own. You have to really want it. Without a burning desire, your motivation will fade quickly. It's virtually impossible to make a change due to external pressure.

You may agree to what someone else wants you to do, but it's very difficult to succeed without an internal drive. So, in order to successfully make a change or

See **NEW YEAR**, page 8

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Superheroes and teddy bears spread holiday joy

By Lorraine Gabbert
Senior Staff Writer

Superheroes brought holiday joy to school children, sharing high fives, hugs and teddy bears.

Batman, Superman, Captain America and friends surprised students at John J. Montgomery Elementary School, a Title I public elementary school in the Evergreen School District, bringing its Superhero Spirit Day to a new level.

Faces alight with surprise, students received a candy cane and book donated to the school before entering a room full of teddy bears and superheroes. Capes and masks decorated the back wall.

"I got to high-five Batman!" said one little girl. "It's the best day ever!" shouted another.

David Watkins, as Batman, Steve Lam as Superman and Dan Nitschke as Captain America have visited hospital pediatric ICUs and schools during the holidays for seven years.

"To see the kids light up makes it all worth it," Watkins said.

Lam agrees. He said bringing joy to children and seeing their wide-eyed wonder is priceless.

"This is maybe one of the few presents they're going to receive," he said. "Just to give this to them means everything."

The idea of distributing teddy bears started with Raley's Supermarkets/Nob Hill Foods, where Watkins is a cashier. To raise funds for Second Harvest Food Bank and Raley's Food for



Lani Bassett as Encanto Princess Mirabel Madrigal, told students love and kindness are magical.

Families programs, the supermarket offered Buster Cozy teddy bears in exchange for donations. As many customers contributed funds without taking bears, manager Nai Baker thought

it would be nice to gift them to a local hospital. Watkins was inspired to give back to Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara, where he previously had a cancerous tumor removed, and recruited some friends to join him.

This year, the three caped crusaders were joined by Lani Bassett as Encanto Princess Mirabel Madrigal, Sean Bassett as The Mandalorian, Ronan Beltracchi as Dr. Strange, Raquel Mandoza as Captain Marvel and Jordan Wong as Robin. They told students the best way to be a superhero is being kind.

"Everyone needs a sidekick and that one's yours," said Wong as Robin, while handing a child a bear. Wong loved the reaction of one of the boys receiving a teddy bear. When he told him he could keep it, the boy said, "For real?"

See **SUPERHEROES**, page 8

"I got to high-five Batman!" said one little girl. "It's the best day ever!" shouted another.



New Silver Creek 107,000 climate-controlled self-storage facility has ribbon cutting ceremony

The brand new climate-controlled self-storage facility officially opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Dec. 15 on Silver Creek Valley Road.

The new state-of-the-art self-storage facility, Silver Creek Self Storage, is located directly behind The Commonwealth Credit Union just off Hellyer Ave and Silver Creek Valley Road.

See **STORAGE**, page 8



HEAVENLY LIGHT – Evergreen resident Peter Ligeti took this beautiful photo of a double rainbow as he drove up the hill on Yerba Buena Rd. Dec. 9.

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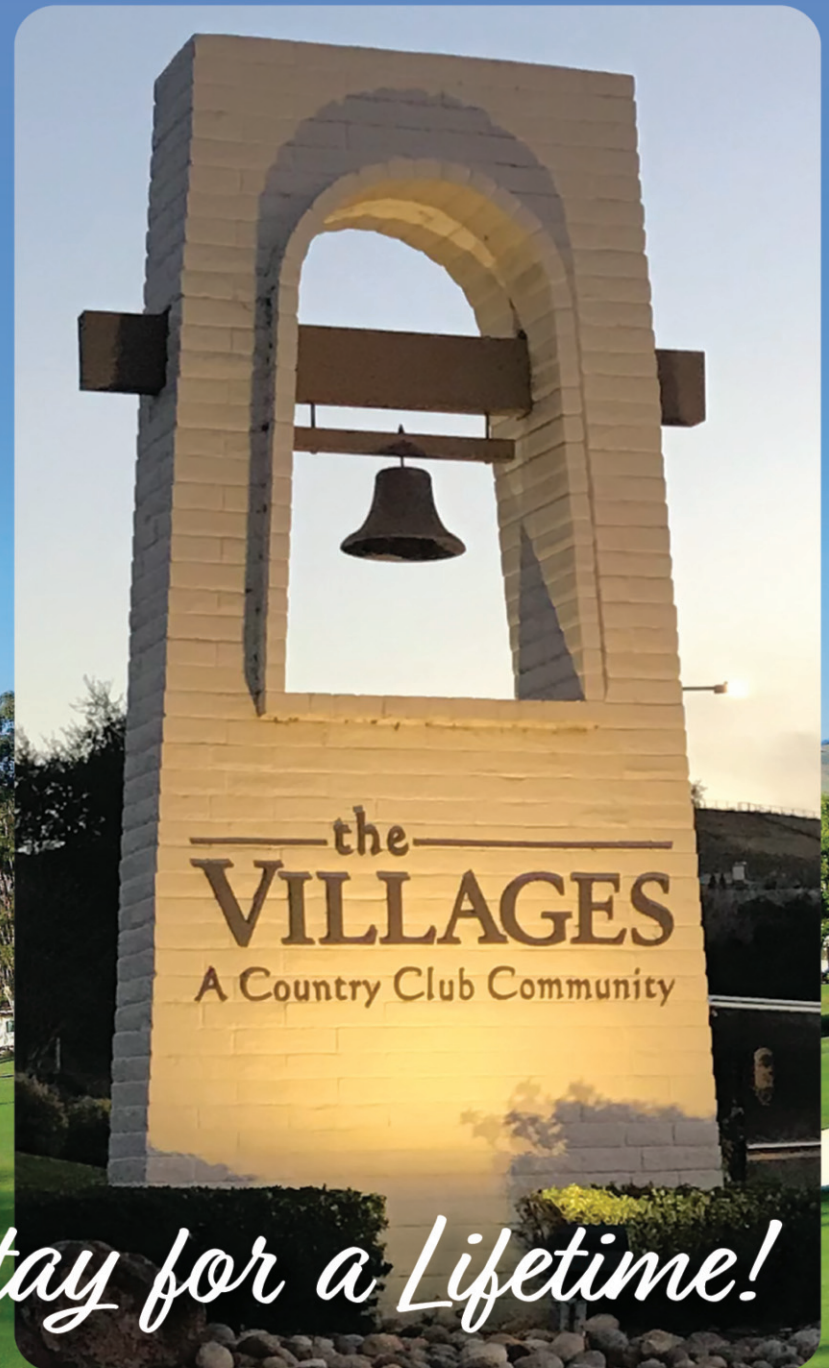
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NOTEBOOK



Four Valley Water board members begin terms following ceremonial swearing-in

Valley Water held a ceremonial swearing-in at the board meeting on Dec. 13 for newly-elected directors Jim Beall and Rebecca Eisenberg and re-elected directors John L. Varela and Tony Estremera. Directors Beall and Varela officially took the oath of office on Dec. 2, and Directors Eisenberg and Estremera were sworn in on Dec. 9. The board meeting on Dec. 13 will be the first meeting for the newly-elected directors.

Jim Beall will represent District 4, which encompasses the City of Campbell and parts of west and south San José. Communities and neighborhoods include San José's San Tomas, Cambrian Park, Parkview, Branham, Blossom Hill, and the northern portions of Almaden Valley and Santa Teresa.

Beall is embarking on his fifth decade of public service. He entered public office at age 28 and served as a San José councilmember (1980-1994), Santa Clara County supervisor (1994-2006), and as a Legislator in the state Assembly and Senate (2006-2020). He graduated from Belarmine College Preparatory and earned a degree in Political Science from San José State University with a focus on Urban Planning and Public Finance.

Rebecca Eisenberg will represent District 7, which encompasses the cities of Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, Monte Sereno, the towns of Los Altos Hills and Los Gatos, and parts of South San José. Communities and neighborhoods include the unincorporated community of Redwood Estates along Highway 17 in Los Gatos and the southern portions of Almaden Valley in San Jose.

Eisenberg has 30 years of experience as a Silicon Valley attorney, social activist and entrepreneur. Most of her career has been with Silicon Valley startups where she has served as an early employee and executive including PayPal, Trulia and Reddit. Director Eisenberg majored in Decision Science at Stanford University and attended Harvard Law School, which spurred a career in legal justice and social change.

In addition to the two new board members, John L. Varela and Tony Estremera were re-elected to represent Districts 1 and 6, respectively.

Varela, currently serving as Board Chair Pro Tem, was appointed to the Board of Directors in December 2015 to represent District 1. He was elected by the voters in November 2016 and re-elected in 2018 and 2022. District 1 encompasses the cities of Gilroy, Morgan Hill, the unincorporated community of San Martin and parts of East and South San Jose.

Varela is a former Morgan Hill city mayor and councilmember. He serves on the Board of Directors for Joint Venture Silicon Valley, Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce, and the Pajaro River Watershed Flood Protection Authority. He is also involved in the South County Regional Wastewater Authority and Safe Clean Water Independent Monitoring Committee. He began his tenure on the board in 1996, when he was

See WATER BOARD, page 8

Valley Currents

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



Members of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition gather for a community ride in 2022. Photo courtesy of Shiloh Ballard.

San Jose unsafe for bicyclists

'People are dying on our roads'

By Loan-Anh Pham
San José Spotlight

San Jose tops the list of Silicon Valley cities with the most bicycle crashes, injuries and deaths, which is nothing to brag about.

San Jose ranks the worst in bike safety, tallying 2,803 bike crashes over a decade, resulting in 38 deaths and 2,752 injuries. Palo Alto ranks second with 787 bike crashes, resulting in three deaths and 795 injuries. That's according to a study conducted by Walkup Law Firm, which collected data from 14,718 bicycle incidents from 2011 to 2021 in Silicon Valley. The study defines Silicon Valley as San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The study also reveals downtown San Jose and around San Jose State University as the second most dangerous area for cyclists, only topped by Palo Alto's Downtown North. Downtown San Jose had a total of 97 crashes from 2011 to 2021, resulting in 92 injuries and one death.

Shiloh Ballard, executive director of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, said bicycle safety is an urgent matter that requires streamlined processes to get infrastructure projects constructed. Currently, a bicycle lane can take years to finish.

"San Jose on average has 20 crashes a day... We can't wait 10 years," Ballard told San José Spotlight. "People are dying on our roads."

Unsafe streets have long been a part of San Jose: the city saw 60 traffic fatalities last year and has surpassed that record with 64 deaths this year. The city adopted the Vision Zero initiative in 2015 and announced a \$6 million effort in March to implement safety measures, including pedestrian barriers, bike lanes and better signage and lighting. Vision Zero aims to reduce traffic fatalities and injuries through infrastructure and data collection projects.

Colin Heyne, spokesperson for the city's transportation department, said San Jose has had eight cyclist deaths this year. That number is the same as last year, and cyclist deaths have been on the rise along with other types of traffic fatalities, he added.

"We look at bicyclists, along with pedestrians, as our most vulnerable road users and as a barometer for how safe our streets are," Heyne told San José Spotlight.

The high accident numbers in San Jose can be explained due to a variety of factors, including a large population, busy downtown and larger amounts of activity due to students and workers near San Jose State University, Heyne said.

The report reveals a high num-

ber of incidents on streets near downtown San Jose, including the intersection between South Sixth and Reed streets. Bicycle crashes are also high in other parts of the city, including Senter and Tully roads.

San Jose's Better Bike Plan 2025 aims to make bicycling more accessible by increasing bike parking, sharing services and bike lanes, Heyne said. Santa Clara County has been working to create a bicycle superhighway for cyclists to travel between cities. The goal is to ensure cyclists can access all parts of the city safely, he added.

"We acknowledge that even if it is great infrastructure, if it's an island, it's not going to help," Heyne told San José Spotlight. "We need to have that great infrastructure be connected."

Michael Kelly, a senior partner at Walkup Law Firm, said addressing bicycle safety requires a culture shift. Many drivers remain inattentive to cyclists on the road, he said, an attitude that puts cyclists in harm's way.

"We see conflicts both due to roadway design, roadway use, and the behavior and psychology of drivers... We see so often vehicle drivers who say, 'Well, I never saw the bicycle,'" Kelly told San José Spotlight. "There's no such thing as an invisible bicyclist."

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Times **Feature****CAREER COLUMN****Keep looking forward**

By Angela Copeland

When you're riding a horse, there's an important lesson about where you focus your energy. You need to keep your head up, and focused on where you want to go. If you look down, you may get stuck and ultimately, you may not make it to your intended destination. The same is true when looking for a job.

The modern job search comes with quite a few bumps in the road. It has happened to the best of us. You're interviewing with one company. It seems like it's going well. You receive positive feedback, so you stop looking for jobs. You wait for



the job offer to arrive. But, at the end, you aren't selected.

This happened to me when interviewing for a job at a financial services company. They put me through ten rounds of interviews over a six month period. After going in person for interviews, the hiring manager let me know that I was the one he'd selected. But, he wanted me to talk with a few more people, which elongated the process by a month or more. This was an unusual request given how far along we were, but I did the interviews. Since I knew I'd been selected, I began to pack my things. The job was in another city, and I needed to prepare to move.

Strangely, that job offer never arrived. Instead, I received a phone call from the hiring manager. He told me he had good news and bad news. I was the winning candidate. But, they had decided not to hire anyone in order to save money. I could tell by the lightness in the hiring manager's tone that he had no idea what an impact this decision had on me. He wasn't thinking about the months it would take me to find another job. He had no idea I'd already packed, or that I'd

stopped applying at other companies. In his mind, it was as if he'd changed his mind about ordering a dessert after dinner. But for me, it was devastating news.

What could I have done differently here? Well, for one, the lesson is to never stop applying for jobs until you have a written job offer in hand. Until that point, anything could happen. The company could choose to hire someone else, or to hire no one at all.

Second, you should try to go through job interviews without thinking about the outcome. When you focus on the outcome, you will be extremely disappointed by all the rejection. It will begin to feel as if something is wrong with you. But, that's not true. The modern hiring process is broken.

And, don't get too excited just because you're a perfect fit for a role. Someone else may be a perfect fit too.

So, stay focused. Keep your eyes on the end goal. When you reach it, you'll know. Until then, keep looking forward.

Angela Copeland, a leadership and career expert, can be reached at www.angelacopeland.com.

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Times **Feature**

Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: The Exhibition Jan. 14 – April 30

Up-close-and-personal with 34 reproductions of Michelangelo's famous ceiling frescoes at Westfield Oakridge Shopping Center in San Jose

Tickets are now on sale for the internationally acclaimed *Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: The Exhibition*, which opens Saturday, January 14th and runs through April 30th at Westfield Oakridge shopping center in San Jose.

Presented by SEE™ Global Entertainment and CBF Productions, the exhibition is a presentation of museum-quality, near-life-size reproductions of one of the world's greatest artistic achievements.

"From Rome to the Bay Area, this exhibition allows visitors to bask in one of Rome's most renowned pieces of art and history without having to make the long and expensive journey," said Vincenzo Giammanco, CEO and Founder of CBF Productions.

Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: The Exhibition is a collection of the artist's renowned ceiling frescoes from the Vatican's Sistine

Chapel, reproduced in a format that allows viewers to get face-to-face with the masterpieces. Through 34 artfully displayed reproductions, this innovative presentation includes world-renowned pieces like The Last Judgement, bringing them just a few feet away from the audience.

Guests will enhance their experience with the audio guide tour, which provides the "why" behind each fresco – all through their own mobile device. This narrative accompaniment is available in multiple languages and is free-of-charge.

"We have had sold-out openings in Austin, Cleveland, Portland, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and Green Bay in recent months and now we are proud to bring this experience to the San Jose area," Martin Biallas, CEO of Los Angeles-based SEE™ Global Entertainment, producer of the exhibit.

Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: The Exhibition is open Thursdays – Sundays 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. Tickets start at \$22.50 for adults, \$19.00 per child. Discounts are available for seniors, students, military, family bundles, and groups of 10 people. Tickets are on sale now at <https://chapelsistine.com/exhibits/san-jose>

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'Elf' brings joy to reader

Dear Editor,
Greetings!

Thank you for running the article "Elf Trouble-A Christmas Story" in your December 16 edition (Volume 39, Number 26). In mainstream media, we generally have to choose between one depressing jour-



nalistic offering or another. It's refreshing to see such a fun, lighthearted piece such as the one by Kevin Larsen, among plenty of other positive articles about uplifting events and champions in our community. That is the blessing of our local newspapers, especially the *Evergreen Times*.

I'm grateful to you for providing news and articles we can celebrate.

Keep up the great work! May everyone have a happy and healthy New Year!

Gratefully,
Pattie Cortese



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Times **From the Cover**

Left: **David Watkins** gave out high-fives, hugs and teddy bears to students. Right: Students enjoyed receiving teddy bears from the superheroes.

Superheroes

Continued from page 1
and he was so happy.

Dr. Antoine Hawkins, superintendent of Evergreen Elementary School District, said events like this are critically important to help people understand the importance of community.

"Nob Hill has provided to our students a wonderful opportunity to share Christmas love and holiday cheer," he said, "and I'm just so grateful to them for their kindness."

Transitional kindergarten teacher Tremayne Wilkins said it was an amazing community event.

"The kids were super excited," she said. "...It meant a lot. It's hard for families these days to provide all that they need. It's nice to know at school they feel connected and know that we care about them."

Principal Jaime Hammond said it was like Christmas morning for the children.

"It's making my day. It's bringing me a lot of joy," she said. "We're really excited to have Dave and his team come to Montgomery. This is

a real blessing to our community."

Hammond said as a Title I school, the families of some students struggle economically, so receiving a teddy bear is greatly appreciated.

"To have somebody just show them that extra bit of kindness during the holidays is really appreciated by our community and our

students," she said.

PTA member Kim Vuong said it's wonderful what the superheroes do for the children.

"I hope they feel special," she said.

"I'm glad they have a special gift they can keep with them that will give them a little bit of joy."



Jordan Wong as Robin enjoyed interacting with the children.

Storage

Continued from page 1

The facility offers 107,000 square feet of net rentable space comprised of 1,086 climate-controlled units, 32 drive-up units, and three elevators. The building contains polished concrete floors with individually alarmed spaces.

Security

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The management team has more than 30-years of experience in the self-storage business.

"Our philosophy is to provide exceptional customer service which is delivered by our experienced professional staff," said Melissa Volau, Area Manager. "Our commitment to customer satisfaction and community involvement is unparalleled as we place high regard for community involvement and charitable contributions."



Water Board

Continued from page 4
appointed to fill out a term after the District 2 representative resigned. The following year, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors appointed him to serve as an at-large member. He was elected by voters in 2010 to represent District 6, and re-elected in 2014, 2018 and 2022 and served as the Board's chairperson in 2001, 2007, 2014 and 2021. District 6 encompasses parts of Central and East San Jose.

Director Estremera has extensive government experience in both appointed and elected positions serving on the Santa Clara County Grand Jury, Santa Clara County Housing Task Force, Valley Medical Center Advisory Board, Santa Clara County Personnel Board, San Jose Municipal Stadi-

um Task Force, (San Jose) Mayor's Committee on Minority Affairs and the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District Board of Trustees.

Valley Water manages an integrated water resources system that includes the supply of clean, safe water, flood protection and stewardship of streams on behalf of Santa Clara County's nearly 2 million residents. Valley Water effectively manages 10 dams and surface water reservoirs, three water treatment plants, an advanced recycled water purification center, a state-of-the-art water quality laboratory, 277 acres of groundwater recharge ponds and 294 miles of streams. We provide wholesale water and groundwater management services to local municipalities and private water retailers who deliver drinking water directly to homes and businesses in Santa Clara County.



New Year

Continued from page 1
reach a goal, you have to make sure it's what you really want.

Don't start off on the wrong foot by making excuses as to why you will probably fail. If you don't truly believe you can do it, you won't. People who do this will say something like, "I'll try to do it, but ..." Or you may hear, "I tried before and it didn't work but I'll give it another go." Before you begin, make sure the only things you are telling yourself are, "I can," "I will," and "I will do whatever it takes."

A new beginning is a three-step process. You have to first know what you want, formulate a plan to achieve it, and then take the necessary action to get it. Setting a specific goal is essential. The more detailed the better. If you want to lose weight, how much and by when? If you want a new job, what will it be and how much will it pay? If you want to save money, how much and how often?

Next, you need a plan. Just like your goal, your plan must be as detailed as possible. If you are going to lose weight, what will be your menu each week? Are you going to go on a specific diet, cut out certain foods, or just eat less? For finding a new job, what will

be your strategy? Do you need a new resume? Will you look on line, in the classifieds, use an employment agency, network, cold call, or all of these? If you want to save more money, in what areas will you cut back? Do you know where your money is going? Have you created a budget?

You want your plan to be doable. The smaller the steps are, the more likely you will be to succeed. Any time you feel a step is too big, break it down further. It doesn't matter how small each step is so long as you keep going and never give up.

Losing 20 pounds may feel overwhelming, but dropping two pounds a month doesn't seem too bad. If you keep at it for 10 months, you will reach your goal. Saving \$3000 might appear beyond reach, but cutting back \$9 a day on family spending is manageable.

Finally, you must take action. The best goals and greatest plans will go nowhere without action. The reason you divided your plan into small sections is so it would be easy to take action, one day at a time. All you have to do is keep going, until you achieve your goal.

Bryan is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact Bryan at Bryan@columnist.com or visit www.DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com Copyright 2022 Bryan Golden

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5 health tips to help you succeed in the New Year

Photos courtesy of iStock
(Family Features) The new year brings a time to reassess health habits. New Year's goals and resolutions are often focused on weight loss or exercise. Although these are important indicators of health and happiness for many people, maintaining overall health is important, too.

Registered dietitian, author and nutrition consultant Manuel Villacorta offers these tips to start the new year with a healthy routine:

Create a Meal Plan you'll want to eat
For well-balanced meals, think ahead and plan a weekly menu that matches your taste preferences to stay interested. When you feel like you're on a diet or being forced to eat something, you're more likely to stop following the plan. It's helpful to make some-



thing to enjoy together with family or friends and make sticking to a meal plan easier. Manuel suggests:

1. Making shopping lists to stay organized
2. Checking your cupboards to avoid over-buying and waste
3. Scheduling a day of the week to shop

This Ground Chicken and Sweet Potato Skillet is an easy meal plan starter.

Think ahead for balanced meals
For well-balanced meals, think ahead and plan a weekly menu that matches your taste preferences to stay interested. When you feel like you're on a diet or being forced to eat something, you're more likely to stop following the plan. It's helpful to make something to enjoy together with family or friends and make sticking to a meal plan easier. Manuel suggests:

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3. Scheduling a day of the week to shop

This Ground Chicken and Sweet Potato Skillet <https://tinyurl.com/yc434ff9> is an easy meal plan starter.

Fill in dietary gaps with flavanol supplements
A balanced diet is key to overall health, including your heart and brain health. In fact, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics released a first-of-its-kind recommendation to eat 400-600 milligrams of flavanols daily to support cardiometabolic health. Flavanols are bioactive compounds found in plant-based foods like cocoa, tea, apples and berries; however, levels can vary across foods, and it can be difficult to get everything you need from food alone.

A flavanol supplement like CocoaVia™ can help fill dietary gaps when you can't meet

the recommendations with food alone. The flavanols in CocoaVia are clinically proven to promote cardiovascular and brain health for the long-term, supporting a strong heart and better memory.* Each Cardio Health product serving provides 500 milligrams of cocoa flavanols in two capsules or one powder scoop. Additionally, Memory+ – containing 750 milligrams of cocoa flavanols per three-capsule serving – is ConsumerLab.com's Overall Top Pick for cocoa products with the highest concentration of flavanols. Only CocoaVia is made with Cocoapro™ cocoa extract, the most concentrated and clinically proven flavanol extract ingredient on the market.

Try adding CocoaVia capsules to your routine or a scoop of Cardio Health powder to smoothies, coffee or this Cocoa Blueberry Smoothie Bowl. Learn more at CocoaVia.com.

Fuel for energy
Not having enough energy can impact performance at work and the gym. What you eat can impact your energy levels. Manuel suggests eating every 3-4 hours and including all three macronutrients – carbohydrates, protein and fat – at mealtimes.

For example, many people eat salads with greens and protein, but you can bulk them up with broccoli and carrots for a heartier mix. Aim for meals packed with vitamins, minerals and nutrient-dense foods like grains and starchy vegetables that provide energy.

Make Fiber a focus
Fiber is a nutrient often overlooked. Soluble fiber helps maintain glucose levels, which are important for your brain to function at its best. Oats, beans and avocados are all good sources of soluble fiber. Including fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and whole grains can increase your fiber intake and benefit your gut health.

Be strategic about stocking your kitchen
Making several weekly grocery trips is time consuming and better spent on things like physical activity. Try strategies to get most of what you need in the fewest trips possible like buying bulk beans, grains and pasta. Remember, not everything has to be fresh. Frozen and canned produce are often stored at their peak freshness to offer many of the same nutrients. Choose low-sodium, canned options when possible and rinse before eating.

**These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.*



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LOCAL NOTEBOOK

Supervisors approve new trails connecting parklands in South County

Thousands of acres of parklands soon will be linked

Santa Clara County supervisors voted Tuesday to buy two tracts of land located near the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The lands — which combined will cost the county \$1.6 million and are located near the southernmost edge of Santa Clara County — will end up connecting 5,622 acres between Mount Madonna and Uvas Reservoir County Parks. In addition, the county will nab a slice of land that will link Santa Teresa County Park to a nearby boulevard, allowing for easier accessibility.

The completion date for the trails is currently unknown, according to the county. They are set to be multiuse, allowing for hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders. When completed, trail goers will be able to trek from Mount Madonna's 1,897-foot peak all the way north to the Uvas Reservoir, where trout and largemouth bass reside.

Mount Madonna has been under the county's control since 1927 and since has expanded, while Uvas Reservoir was first purchased in 1960. Though the two chunks of lands initially will be owned by the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency, it eventually will be turned over to the county, according to the agency's executive director. The total cost of the lands is \$8.2 million, with the county, Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency, Peninsula Open Space Trust, the California Wildlife Conservation Board, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the local Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation all pitching in.

"I think this is a great move," said Supervisor Otto Lee — who represents District 3 — during Tuesday's meeting about the project, pointing out the county Parks Department's larger goal of connecting all of its public lands through trails. In March, the county spent \$8.5 million for a 47-acre sliver of land to link Santa Teresa and Calero County Parks.

Recent storms drop 1.5 inches of rain in Santa Clara Valley

Experts say California needs at least one well-above-average water year to end drought

Valley Water reported that there were no major impacts from the recent storms that dropped more than 1.5

inches across Santa Clara County.

This storms came on the heels of much-needed rain over the past few weeks. The agency's employees worked to ensure our waterways remain clear of debris and blockages.

Valley Water owns and manages 294 miles of the more than 800 miles of creeks in the county. The agency regularly inspects streams and bank conditions, and the crews have been cleaning out areas of creeks that are known hot spots for vegetation and debris buildup. These areas were checked and cleaned following the storm last week, according to John Varela, Chair Pro Tem

and Director Dist. 1 Valley Water Board of Directors.

"Our employees will continue to clean out waterways throughout the winter. To report issues in creeks, call 1-408-630-2378 or visit our website at valleywater.org. Residents and businesses can also take steps to be flood ready," said Varela. "For flood safety tips, visit www.valleywater.org/floodready. The website includes sandbag locations and other resources."

Experts say that California needs at least one well-above-average water year, and maybe more, to end the drought and

replenish reservoirs.

"We all must continue our water-savings efforts," said Varela. "Earlier this year, our board adopted watering rules which prohibit property owners in Santa Clara County from watering within 48 hours of rainfall measuring a quarter inch or more. So please turn off your sprinklers this weekend and leave them off during the cooler winter months."

To learn how Valley Water can help you save water and money through our robust rebate and conservation programs, visit WaterSavings.org.

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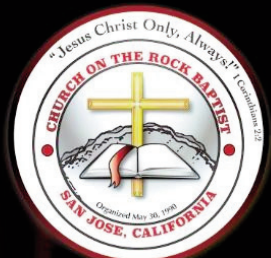
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Times News Briefs

Website identifies which school districts are well run

By Dan Walters

One conspicuous absence on his list of California’s virtues is its public education system, for good reason.

In statewide and nationwide tests of K-12 academic achievement, California lags badly behind. Learning is especially deficient among children from poor families, but even kids from affluent California families tend to lag behind those in other states.

To the extent that this educational crisis receives any attention in the state Capitol, the discussion is almost always confined to money, on the fanciful notion that spending more will automatically increase academic attainment.

One reason money doesn’t solve the problem is that the state provides very little oversight on how the money is spent, including the extra funds that local school systems receive specifically to close the achievement gap. State education officials intervene only when local systems are flirting with insolvency.

Some school districts spend their money wisely and effectively and some don’t and outcomes largely hinge on the quality of their governance. Those with engaged and committed boards and administrators tend to have better outcomes than those with inconsistent, politics-driven and often chaotic governance.

That’s why a massive effort to judge how well California’s local school systems are structured and managed is

welcome.

Arun Ramanathan, CEO of Pivot Learning, an Oakland-based nonprofit organization that advises school systems on improving instruction, created a series of benchmarks to gauge how well school districts are prepared to embrace reforms. He also created a website that allows the public to view the results for every school district with at least 2,500 students.

“Despite billions in investment and decades of effort, new reform efforts rarely have intended impacts at the district, school and classroom level, and sustained improvement is rare,” Ramanathan told EdSource, a website of education journalism. “There are rarely insights into why. The District Readiness Index (districtreadiness.org) resulted from that questioning.”

The ratings cover five “domains” — community relations, finance, leadership, personnel policies and workplace conditions. Users can see how the districts score in each, with overall ratings designated by colors. Blue is the best, yellow is in the middle and orange is the worst. The grading process resulted in about half of the 420 districts getting yellow grades and about 40% blue marks with roughly two dozen placed in the orange category, meaning they have “few foundations” for achieving needed reforms.

Some of the state’s largest districts are colored orange, including Los Angeles Unified, whose enrollment approaches 10% of the state’s 6 million public school students.

It’s not surprising that L.A. Unified, Oakland Unified, San Francisco Unified and Sacramento Unified received low

marks because all have been in constant political turmoil and financial distress of their own making.

Three of the large districts — San Diego Unified, Elk Grove Unified and San Juan Unified — escaped the orange designation and are marked as yellow. A few large districts achieved blue status for being well prepared, including Fresno Unified, Long Beach Unified and San Bernardino Unified. But most of the blue districts tend to be either in affluent suburbs — no surprise there — or in rural areas.

Most interestingly, the blue list includes a number of districts with large numbers of poor students, such as Brawley and Calexico in poverty-stricken Imperial County.

The District Readiness Index provides new ammunition for the school reform movement in California, which seeks to elevate students’ welfare over the petty politics, particularly in Los Angeles Unified and other large districts, that sabotage their educations.

Dan Walters is a CalMatters columnist.

the biggest problem – WalletHub compared 23 major MSAs (Metropolitan Statistical Areas) across two key metrics involving the Consumer Price Index, which measures inflation.

The Consumer Price Index was compared for the latest month for which BLS data is available to two months prior and one year prior to get a snapshot of how inflation has changed in the short and long term.

Rising the Most

1. Phoenix, AZ	19. Los Angeles, CA
2. Miami, FL	20. Chicago, IL
3. Tampa, FL	21. San Diego, CA
4. Atlanta, GA	22. Honolulu, HI
5. Seattle, WA	23. Minneapolis, MN

Rising the Least

1. New York, NY	11. Miami, FL
2. Orlando, FL	12. Austin, TX
3. Las Vegas, NV	13. San Antonio, TX
4. San Francisco, CA	14. San Diego, CA
5. Atlanta, GA	15. Nashville, TN
6. Denver, CO	16. Louisville, KY
7. Washington, DC	17. Boston, MA
8. Chicago, IL	18. Philadelphia, PA
9. Los Angeles, CA	19. El Paso, TX
10. Seattle, WA	20. New Orleans, LA

To view the full report and your city’s rank, please visit: <https://wallethub.com/edu/cities-inflation/107537>

Report

2022’s best cities for New Year’s celebrations

With New Year’s around the corner and 70% of Americans spending at least \$50 on food and drinks for the occasion, the personal-finance website WalletHub just released its report on 2022’s Best Cities for New Year’s.

To determine which cities are the

best for safely ringing in the new year without breaking the bank, WalletHub compared the 100 biggest cities across 29 key metrics. The data set ranges from safety and vaccination rates to quality food options and costs.

Best Cities for New Year’s

1. New York, NY	11. Miami, FL
2. Orlando, FL	12. Austin, TX
3. Las Vegas, NV	13. San Antonio, TX
4. San Francisco, CA	14. San Diego, CA
5. Atlanta, GA	15. Nashville, TN
6. Denver, CO	16. Louisville, KY
7. Washington, DC	17. Boston, MA
8. Chicago, IL	18. Philadelphia, PA
9. Los Angeles, CA	19. El Paso, TX
10. Seattle, WA	20. New Orleans, LA

Key Stats

- 80+ Million – Number of Americans who will travel for the New Year’s holiday this year, with nearly half of them driving to their destination.
- 59% – Share of Americans who plan to celebrate New Year’s Eve with family or friends. Only 37% will attend public events or eat out.
- \$865 – Average cost for a couple to enjoy dinner and a show on New Year’s Eve in the three largest cities (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago).
- 360+ Million – Number of glasses of sparkling wine that are drunk each New Year’s Eve.

To view the full report and your city’s rank, please visit: <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-places-for-new-years-eve/17263>

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A Full, Festive Menu for Holiday Celebrations

FAMILY FEATURES

From the hors d'oeuvres to the main course and all the way through dessert, creating a full holiday menu doesn't have to be hard.

The key to a successful feast is focusing on dishes that can please loved ones of all ages and palates, such as a festive salad before the turkey or ham main dish, which can be accompanied by complementary sides like au gratin potatoes. Finally, top off the celebration with a divine dessert featuring classic cranberry flavor.

To find more holiday recipe inspiration, visit Culinary.net.



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

Start Holiday Celebrations with a Salad

With a bed of tender, leafy green spinach and pops of red cranberries, a salad lends itself perfectly to the colors and flavors of the holiday season. Plus, as a lighter bite ahead of the big meal, it makes for a delicious introduction to festive dinner parties, family gatherings and get-togethers.

This Spinach Christmas Tree Salad offers a fresh, festive option that adds a seasonal presentation to the table while inviting guests to take a bite. Harvested at the peak of flavor, tender Fresh Express Baby Spinach has a mild and delicate taste that makes it an ideal addition to recipes throughout the holidays.

Find more ways to freshen up your holiday menu at FreshExpress.com.

Spinach Christmas Tree Salad

Servings: 6

- 2 packages (5 ounces each) Fresh Express Baby Spinach
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries, divided
- 1/3 cup pistachios, divided
- 1/2 cup feta cheese, divided
- 1 red pepper, cored, cut into thin strips
- 1 large apple, thinly sliced, cut into star shapes

Dressing:

- 1 cup whole berry cranberry sauce
- 3 tablespoons cranberry juice
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt



In large bowl, toss baby spinach with 1/4 cup dried cranberries, 1/6 cup pistachios and 1/4 cup feta cheese. Transfer to Christmas tree cake mold. Neatly arrange spinach leaves to create smooth surface.

Arrange red pepper strips, trimming as needed, to create garland. Arrange remaining dried cranberries, remaining pistachios and remaining feta cheese as "ornaments" on top of spinach. Create tree topper with one apple star; place remaining apple stars around "tree."

To make dressing: In blender, process cranberry sauce, cranberry juice, balsamic vinegar, honey, olive oil, brown sugar and salt until smooth.

Dish Up a Divine Holiday Dessert

Give your holiday gatherings a new twist this year with a creamy cranberry delight that's a cause for celebration all on its own. Smooth, divine taste at the dessert table can be the memorable moment your family craves year after year.

This rich, festive Cranberry Cheesecake combines classic flavor with a homemade cranberry compote-infused layer above a crust sweetly made using C&H Light Brown Sugar and graham crackers. Top it all off with fresh and sugared cranberries, rosemary sprigs and whipped cream for a tempting treat that tastes as good as it looks.

To find more sweet eats to celebrate the holidays, visit chsugar.com.

Cranberry Cheesecake

Prep time: 45 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Cranberry Compote:

- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- 1 cup C&H Light Brown Sugar
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest



Crust:

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons C&H Light Brown Sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Cheesecake:

- 3 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, at room temperature
- 2 cups C&H Organic Raw Cane Sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup sour cream, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup cranberry compote

fresh cranberries
sugared cranberries
rosemary sprigs
whipped cream

To make cranberry compote: In medium saucepan, bring cranberries, brown sugar, orange juice and orange zest to boil. Lower heat and simmer 10-15 minutes, or until most cranberries burst. Remove from heat. Cool completely at room temperature then transfer to bowl; refrigerate.

To make crust: Preheat oven to 350 F. Butter 8-inch springform pan and line bottom with parchment paper. Set aside.

In medium bowl, mix cracker crumbs, butter, brown sugar and salt. Press crumb mixture into bottom of prepared pan. Bake 15 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside. Reduce oven temperature to 325 F.

To make cheesecake: In bowl of electric mixer fitted with paddle attachment, beat cream cheese at medium speed until smooth. Add cane sugar and beat 2-3 minutes. Scrape sides of bowl as needed. Add flour, vanilla and salt. Beat 1 minute until incorporated.

Add one egg at a time, mixing until incorporated. Add sour cream and mix 1 minute. Scrape sides of bowl as needed. In medium bowl, mix half of cheesecake batter with 1/2 cup cranberry compote.

Wrap springform pan with aluminum foil and place in large roasting pan. Pour cream cheese and cranberry mixture into prepared pan. Top with remaining cream cheese batter. Place roasting pan in oven and add hot water to 1-inch of springform pan. Bake 1 hour, 15 minutes, or until cake looks set in center. Remove from oven and rest 1 hour. Refrigerate in pan overnight.

Decorate cake with fresh and sugared cranberries, rosemary sprigs and whipped cream.

A Hearty Holiday Side Dish

From appetizers and snacks to the main course, sides and sweets, almost everyone has a favorite holiday dish. However, it's the pairings and complementary dishes that make festive get-togethers special.

This Creamy Au Gratin Potatoes with Kale and Gruyere is an ideal example of a savory side that goes well with a variety of holiday meals, making it a perfect option for families seeking a versatile recipe to serve with dinner. Rosy-skinned and white-fleshed, Wisconsin Round Red potatoes have a firm, smooth and moist texture, making them well-suited for roasting in this hearty dish.

Visit eatwisconsinpotatoes.com to discover more recipes fit for serving your loved ones.

Creamy Au Gratin Potatoes with Kale and Gruyere

Recipe courtesy of Wisconsin Potatoes

- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 cloves shallots, diced
- 4 large kale leaves, finely chopped (discard stems)
- 2 pounds red potatoes, sliced 1/8 inch
- 2 ounces gruyere cheese, grated
- 1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated

Heat oven to 325 F.

In small saucepan over medium heat, combine cream, salt, black pepper, garlic and thyme; stir constantly, until cream starts to bubble, 4-6 minutes. When bubbling, remove from heat and stir until slightly cooled. Let cream sit.

Heat large (12-inch) oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat. Add butter. When butter melts, add shallots and kale leaves. Sauté until kale is tender and bright green, about 4 minutes. Turn off burner.

Add sliced potatoes to skillet, fanning over top of kale.

Use slotted spoon to remove garlic and thyme from heavy cream. Pour heavy cream over potatoes.

Cover skillet tightly with foil and bake until potatoes are tender, 75-85 minutes.

Remove skillet from oven and turn on broiler. Discard foil.

Sprinkle gruyere and Parmesan cheeses over potatoes, tucking some cheese between potato slices.

Return skillet to oven and broil until top is golden brown, 5-6 minutes.



Times Feature

TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK
Compliance as a Service (CaaS)

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:

Compliance as a Service (CaaS)

Businesses today handle large amounts of electronic customer data, from email addresses to payment information. Much of this sensitive data can



harm your business and your customers should it fall into the wrong hands. Compliance plays a vital role in serving customers and protecting your business from legal and financial trouble.

Compliance as a Service is a type of solution that uses cloud computing to help businesses store data and manage regulatory compliance. Though services vary depending on the industry, Compliance as a Service providers typically store sensitive data in accordance with regulations and provide tools for managing and reporting compliance in your organization. Compliance support services in the cloud are often used by large organizations that operate in highly regulated industries such as healthcare, banking, and finance. The goal of Compliance as a Service is to reduce an organization’s compliance burden by outsourcing compliance management tasks to a

third-party that has the resources required to meet regulatory requirements in a more cost-effective manner.

The Pros and Cons of Compliance as a Service

If you’re involved in highly regulated industries like healthcare or financial services, you may want to think about using compliance services from cloud-based companies as they can enhance your compliance initiatives and help ensure you stay abreast of continued updates.

Getting help with compliance can increase efficiency in small businesses by decreasing the amount of documentation required by regulatory bodies that you or your employees must personally administer and oversee. It can also cut down on the cost of managing HIPAA regulations or other industry-specific compliance issues. This can include offerings such as vulnerability scan-

ning, data encryption log monitoring, access management, and several other tools that can be difficult for smaller organizations to manage themselves.

On the other hand, carving out portions of compliance requirements may make you feel too comfortable. If you assume that another company has taken care of your risks and legal responsibilities when it hasn’t, your business will be the one that pays for any slipups — and those fines can be financially devastating to small businesses. Relying on someone else to ensure your compliance may muddy the waters and leave certain responsibilities to chance.

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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Just keep swimming...in deadly conditions (Part 3)

How Machine Learning with Remote Sensing can save coastal dead zones

By Apoorva Panidapu

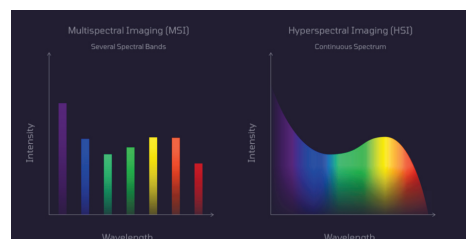
In the last two articles, we talked about how human activity is increasing eutrophication (aka an excess of nutrients), thereby causing the alarming expansion of dead zones (low-oxygen areas of water). This is killing our aquatic life and worsening climate change. But don't lose hope yet! Here comes the good part: we can do something about it.

Last column, we discussed how a machine learning approach with remote sensing can improve predictions about how natural systems behave, improve data analysis automation, and use these insights to better manage our resources to stop dead zones. With agricultural activity steadily increasing, it's time to go all in on what's called precision agriculture to find exactly where we need fertilizers the most and to achieve this ideal fertilization point using machine learning.

How do we do this? Simply put, remote sensing can detect the energy reflected from ground surfaces. The chemical composition of leaves, including their nitrogen levels, changes how much energy is reflected, but we need high sensitivity to monitor this minute change.

Airborne Hyperspectral Sensors to Measure Crop Traits

Introducing: hyperspectral sensors! Operating on the nanoscale, hyperspectral sensors can detect differences as small as 3-5 nanometers across their entire range and offer hundreds of wavelengths across the full range of visible, near-infrared, and shortwave infrared with high spatial resolution (<1 m). For comparison, other airborne remote sensing technologies can only pick up the visible spectrum and potentially near-infrared, i.e., some small number of spectral bands.



Earlier this year, a research team from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign put powerful hyperspectral sensors on a plane and flew it over an Illinois corn field three times. These sensors let them scan fields incredibly quickly, taking only a few seconds per acre. Since the sensors obtain much higher spectral and spatial resolution compared to satellites, the team was able to detect the crops' nitro-



Gems in STEM
By Apoorva Panidapu



gen status efficiency with up to 85% accuracy, close to "ground-truth quality." So these airborne sensors are not only a powerfully precise tool for remote sensing, they also allow us to monitor larger areas quickly and at low cost, without sacrificing too much accuracy.

This study by UIUC was the first attempt ever to use full-range (400–2400 nanometers) optical airborne hyperspectral sensors to measure a bunch of important crop traits, like photosynthetic capacity and nitrogen content/concentration, at both leaf and canopy scales. This is science, baby!

For their research, the UIUC team ALSO developed the current best algorithm for detecting nitrogen reflectance data from the hyperspectral sensors, which they expect will be used in upcoming detection technologies.

Sheng Wang, assistant professor in the Agroecosystem Sustainability Center of UIUC, says,

"Our approach fills a gap between field measurements and satellites and provides a cost-effective and highly accurate approach to crop nitrogen management in sustainable precision agriculture."

Their end goal is to equip satellites with this technology of hyperspectral sensors, thereby allowing farmers to monitor their fields' nutrient status early on in the growing season to make better-informed decisions about how to use fertilizers sustainably and efficiently.

Okay, so we've talked a lot about crops, crops, and more crops. But we started out this article talking about dead zones, i.e., areas in water. Turns out we can tag team this problem by monitoring nutrients in both crops and coastal waters.



Deep Learning for Spatiotemporal Assessments of Nutrients in Coastal Waters

Two important limiting nutrients in coastal waters are dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) and dissolved inorganic phosphorus (DIP). High DIP and DIN can trigger eutrophication and all its gruesome effects that we talked about before, leading to water quality deterioration. To make sure this doesn't happen, we need to monitor DIN and DIP in coastal waters, just like we monitored the nitrogen levels in crops.

Unfortunately, most field survey techniques for monitoring these nutrients in water are expensive and time-consuming. Not only that, current site-based monitoring techniques only really give us the regional water quality status. Considering how much water we would need to monitor constantly, both of these are probably not the Goldilocks monitoring method we want. :(The search continues!

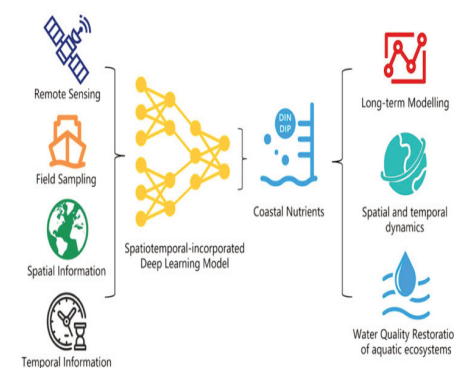
What we do want is a big picture understanding of water quality in the context of both time and space, or what we call its spatiotemporal patterns, at a large scale, but we want to obtain this understanding at a low cost. If we

can do this, we can understand our coastal waters and how to effectively treat them.

Wait, why do we want spatiotemporal patterns? Seems like more trouble than it's worth, no? Well, we can intuitively see that water (especially off coasts) is a pretty complex environment. Say we're trying to model a wave and how each of its water droplets behave. We can imagine that this behavior changes depending on the specific location and coast, not to mention the changing seasons. If we only took into account one of these factors, we probably wouldn't get an accurate picture! Indeed, coastal waters usually have highly seasonal changes in short time intervals, and even more complex factors depending on its coast. So, it makes sense that the relationship between nutrients in water and remote sensing varies with space and time. That's why we care about spatiotemporal patterns—they enable us to make better predictions.

To find this big picture understanding, researchers Wu et al. (2022) from Zhejiang University and UIUC developed a spatiotemporal deep-learning model (ST-DBN) to estimate large-scale nutrients. Using remote sensing, they achieved very strong predictions, established relationships between measured environmental factors and satellite maps, and reduced estimation errors by over 40% compared to non-spatiotemporal models!

How?

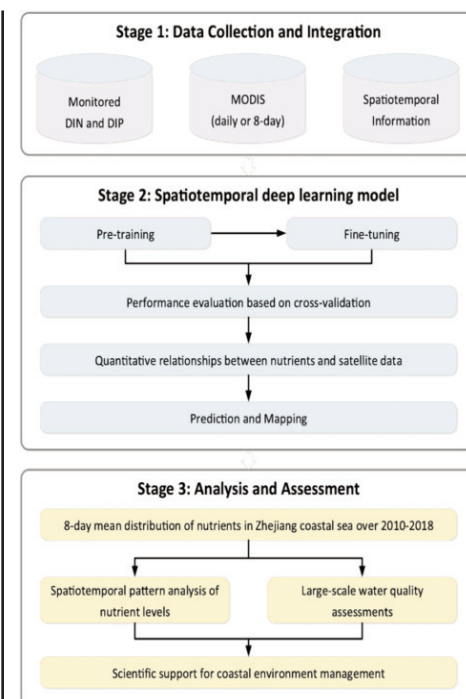


For their study, these researchers used satellite data to explore the spatiotemporal distributions of DIN and DIP over the region of Zhejiang Coastal Sea (ZCS) from 2010-2018. Using the spatiotemporal patterns of nutrients based on the annual, seasonal, monthly, and 8-day average distributions, they wanted to answer three main questions:

1. Can the long-term and large-scale DIN and DIP distribution be accurately estimated by a nonlinear ST-DBN?
2. How did the spatiotemporal distributions of DIN, DIP, and water quality in ZCS change in the period 2010-2018?
3. How can the government control nutrients and improve water quality in the future?

In their study, they found that

- It's a yes to Question #1! We can accurately estimate the long-term and large-scale DIN and DIP distribution with a spatiotemporal model.
- The water quality was better in spring and summer and poorer in fall and winter.
- The concentration of DIN and DIP decreased by 24% and 19% in the period 2010-2018, respectively. But, the water quality didn't significantly improve. Even though the DIN concentration was lower, it still greatly exceeded the worst quality level's critical value.
- DIN contributed 93.9% to the worst quality, while DIP only accounted for 37.8%. This goes to show that the eutrophication of DIP in the ZCS has gotten much better compared to



that of DIN.

The researchers concluded that the Zhejiang Province government should monitor the runoff, velocity, and DIN concentration more frequently in their waters. They should especially try to control DIN more effectively, particularly in fall and winter when the water quality is worse.

This study proves that using spatiotemporal-incorporated deep learning models with remote sensing technology works to monitor nutrients and water quality in coastal areas! But, there's a reason we haven't hit the ground running yet—there's a few challenges left to conquer.

Challenges in the Long-Term and Large-Scale

In order to scale and implement these machine learning models to all our coastal waters, we need data. Unfortunately, we can't do much if we don't have accessible and current data sets to train our model. In particular, we would need Analysis Ready Data (ARD) to be readily available, which requires a lot of time and computational power (not to mention smart people) to prepare. We also have technical mountains to climb in preprocessing, extracting, synthesizing, analyzing, storing, transferring, and basically just wrangling these large data sets more efficiently to end up with an accurate and well-developed training data set, which can get hard when we're talking about complex environments like coastal waters and multi-scale, multi-sensor and multi-platform, and multi-temporal earth observation. Phew, that's a lot of multi's.

As our climate changes, accurate projections are increasingly important. With machine learning and close to real-time data from satellites and ocean exploration from remote sensing, we can dive head-first into monitoring dead zones and fertilizer pollutant levels to predict and respond to eutrophication quickly. We can stop the expansion of dead zones, and protect our aquatic life and ecosystems from the doomsday fishbowl.

Before you go, I have one last question for you: Do you like spatiotemporal patterns? Because I love & appreciate you across space and time. <3

Until next time! If you have any questions or comments, please email me at apoorvap-writes@gmail.com.

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



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Times Feature

State Senator Cortese achieves historic record by passing crucial CA Senate bills to help others

By Kevin Larsen

Times Staff Writer

On December 9, Senate District 15 held a quaint outside event to honor his team with regard to the many accomplishments of laws passed this year by the Office of State Senator Dave Cortese.

Cortese has become a juggernaut in how he focuses on doing his important work to help the good of the people. He achieves more than most anyone in how he does his work.

Here's his answer to how he does it.

He was asked how it is that he has accomplished so very much in so short a period of time in his role as a State Senator. Of course, his team helps him but he's like the quarterback of setting the pace and plays.

The soft-spoken Dave Cortese said, "To use a football analogy I think I use a hurry up offence in getting things done in the State Senate." He went on to say, he works hard and fast because he wants to help others and that is his quest and what motivates him. It is seen in his face and eyes that he cares deeply about assisting people in California and beyond and he doesn't want people to suffer. It is a calling for him.

Growing up he attended Evergreen elementary school in East San Jose. In middle school he played safety position in football and his first love of sports is and always will be baseball. When asked to give any advice for the youngsters he said, "Well, the best baseball player I ever saw was Willie Mays and he struck out once in a while, so, if you swing and you miss at one of your goals, don't give up!"

His winning attitude and fantastic management techniques with his team has translated to creating year after year record accomplishments that surpass the norm.

Endless accomplishments

2021 – Juvenile Justice Diversion & Supportive Programs for Youth – Helping Retirees Continue Post-Retirement Opportunities – Consumer Protection Law – Santa Clara County Hospital Seismic Safety – Local Economic Development; Funding for Affordable Housing – Wildlife Connectivity Barriers to Protect Wildlife – California Surplus Land (*Corresponding Bill to SB 530*) – Ending Spousal Rape

2022 – Family Finding Protocols for Children – Tenant Preferences to Prevent Displacement – Special Education Inclusion & Equity – Protections for Continuing Care Residents – Equity & Stability for Retired Educators – Parity for Classified School Employees – Accessible, Safe & Democratic Public Meetings – Retirement Savings Program Expansion & Postretirement Equity – Student Mental Health Support through School-Linked Services – Worker Wellness in Response to the VTA Shooting – Preventing Online Sexual Exploitation Other areas of support were obtained for: Martial Cottle Park improvements, Integrated Data for Student Mental Health Support, Eastside Education Initiative, Santa Clara County Youth Climate Initiative, Silicon Valley's LBGTQ + History, Transportation Infrastructure and Worker Wellness Protection.

His secured requests in 2021-2022 State Budget

Student Mental Health to create school and county mental health partnerships across Cal-



ifornia. VTA to provide post-tragedy relief to traumatized employees and help get essential transit services running again as soon as possible. Universal Basic Income - California Guaranteed Income Pilot Program" to serve California youth exiting the state's extended foster care program as well as pregnant women.

Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings Project - To create connectivity and a safe crossing for trail users to enjoy the natural beauty of our Santa Cruz Mountains. Litter Abatement - To assist local jurisdictions with the removal of trash and debris from local streets and along state highways in Santa Clara County. San José - Evergreen Community College District - a planning and community engagement grant to plan the development of vacant college property to serve students. Wildfire Preparedness Technologies - To provide state-of-the-art technology to communicate securely and effectively during a wildfire or natural disaster including emergency mobile cell phone coverage.

Oh so humble

At the event that celebrated this year's accomplishments, something unbelievable happened. State Senator Cortese, after graciously meeting many people, walked to the podium to speak. He thanked everyone and there was individual applause for individuals, but in an oh so humble way, he did not refer to any of his accomplishments done this year. This is one of the hidden qualities of State Senator Dave Cortese, no bragging!

His lengthy biography helps us to know him better and allows us to understand why he is so humble. There is no one like this highly successful leader for he is one-of-a-kind. Let's take just a moment to brag a little about him.

His upbringing forged his ability to communicate in ways that get things done. You might say that he does not wrestle with the thing called procrastination. His website goes into depth. It is important to note, while growing up, his vivacious mother and strong father with two very intelligent and enchanting sisters, along with the entire extended family, helped shape the many qualities of State Senator Cortese.

This historic family with roots in farming and traditional family values has always reached out to help the community and beyond. They have done many good things and walk with all. This unpretentiousness and miraculous support for the common person, helped the entire community and they con-

tinue to do so to this day. No one sets limits on a Cortese! Yes indeed, family helped the boy to grow up into who he is today.

Biography

Senator Dave Cortese was elected in November of 2020 to represent State Senate District 15 which encompasses much of Santa Clara County in the heart of Silicon Valley. Along with his accomplished career as an attorney and business owner, the Senator previously served on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for over a decade, with four years as Board President, on the San Jose City Council for eight years, including two years as Vice Mayor, and as a trustee for the East Side Union High School District for eight years.

He grew up in San Jose as part of a family that has been active in civic, cultural, and business activities for generations. Dave graduated from Bellarmine College Preparatory then University of California, Davis where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science. He earned his Juris Doctorate at Lincoln University Law School in San Jose. He has four children and is married to his wife Pattie Cortese who is currently a Trustee on the Eastside Union High School Board.

During his nearly three decades in public service, Dave has brought the community together to address and reduce homelessness, combat climate change, expand public transit options, reform the Santa Clara County's jail custody operations, and fight for the rights of immigrants.

To increase affordable housing and find solutions to homelessness, Dave initiated the creation of a countywide housing task force with representatives from business, labor, city and county offices, the local homeless population, and many experts on housing and homelessness. That group's recommendations led to such initiatives as the groundbreaking \$950 million "Measure A" affordable housing bond that Dave co-chaired as well as the All the Way Home campaign that has housed 1,940 of the County's veterans.

As a member and former Chair of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Dave fought hard to bring federal stimulus funds to the South Bay to rehabilitate our aging roads and ease congestion. On the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), he pushed to secure funding for the BART expansion into San Jose and for VTA's eventual light rail service to Eastridge. Dave secured improvements to expressways, Highway 101, Highway 85, and the Tully Road/Capitol Expressway/Yerba Buena interchanges. He spearheaded officially merging the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and

MTC's efforts to advance smarter land-use policies for the entire Bay Area and to tackle the important connection between housing, jobs, transportation and climate protection in a coordinated, regional fashion.

Dave has long been a champion of protecting our environment, leading Santa Clara County to transition to 100% renewable electric power, creating the County Climate Coalition in partnership with Al Gore's Climate Reality Project, and helping to form Silicon Valley Clean Energy, the community-owned provider of carbon-free electricity for Silicon Valley.

Dave has prioritized women's policy issues. He initiated the County's Gender and Ethnicity Pay Equity Ordinance, their landmark Anti-Human Trafficking Team, and their first-of-its kind review of Title IX policies for K-12 and higher education institutions.

Dave pushed Santa Clara County to become the first in the nation to file a lawsuit in federal court against the Trump Administration to overturn its unlawful rescission of the DACA Program. This attempt was successful, with the Supreme Court eventually overturning the Trump Administration's repeal of DACA. Dave again pushed the County to sue the Trump Administration for denying federal funding to "sanctuary" cities and counties that didn't participate in the President's aggressive immigration enforcement agenda. He helped lead the establishment of the Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations, the New American Fellowship program that employs DACA youth, and the allocation of millions in funding for legal services for DACA/DAPA recipients.

Dave provided oversight and direction for the County in areas of Finance, Budget, Technology and Capital Projects. He created the County's Open Government Ordinance and Office of Labor Standard's Enforcement to monitor the County's Wage Theft and Living Wage Ordinances, that he championed, as well as workplace sexual harassment.

Dave has initiated several local community-based gun buy-back and firearm relinquishment programs including "Unity Day" that became the County's largest gun buy-back event. After hosting the Community Summit on Firearms Safety with over 300 diverse participants, Dave spearheaded the County's safe-storage ordinance to prevent accidental shootings and suicides in homes.

With a strong track record rooted in restorative justice and fighting systematic inequities, Cortese has taken major steps to re-envision our justice system, including establishing the Santa Clara County Blue Ribbon Commission, which led to hundreds of recommendations to improve the treatment of inmates in custody, and creating the first policy in the United States to halt the incarceration of offenders under 13 years of age at Juvenile Hall.

Helped establish Evergreen Valley High School

As a School Board Trustee, Dave jump-started dormant plans to build a new high school in Evergreen and co-chaired the \$80 million bond campaign that led to Silicon Valley's first new high school in 25 years. He was a major architect of School Linked Services, a program

See CORTESE, page 21





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Times **Feature**

Cortese

Continued from page 19

that connects students and families to County social services and counseling. School Linked Services has grown to serve about 200 schools in the County.

Dave has had the opportunity to work with his father, former Assemblyman Dominic L. Cortese over a political career that commenced in 1968. His deep, local roots and love for his community continue to fuel his passion for public service.

As a California State Senator, Dave intends to continue and expand on the successful work he has done in Santa Clara County and apply as many solutions as possible statewide. That includes addressing climate change through building decarbonization, increasing California's housing stock, shifting the focus of our justice system from incarceration to rehabilitation, and fighting sexual assault and gender-based violence.

Shares viewpoints on his work

Q1: What makes you a successful State Senator?

"There are so many thought leaders, advocates, and experts right here in Senate District 15 that are moving the needle on our most pressing issues, often through new, innovative ways of thinking. I am grateful to tap into their expertise and work in partnership with our community to tackle issues that cut across diverse populations and places, whether it is education, poverty alleviation, or restoring our environment. I have always led with the understanding that we will not make progress in these critical areas unless we work collaboratively with people that hold different beliefs and ideologies."

Q2: What is one thing you are most proud of accomplishing in the past 2 years as State Senator?

"During an historic budget surplus, the State Legislature had an incredible opportunity to double down on our efforts to provide stability to children, families, older adults, small businesses and all of those recovering from the pandemic; I believe we met this moment together to truly improve the lives of millions of Californians. Over the course of two years, I secured over \$41,000,000 in district-specific investments for our Santa Clara County residents, including funding to expand school-based student mental health services, wildfire preparedness, safe wildlife and trail crossings, college and career preparedness for students that need it the most, and more."

Q3: Let's talk about your TEAM, what makes them so very special?

"When I think about my team, those that I lean on for advice, support, and even at times, positivity, there are so many people, colleagues, and collaborators I have to be grateful for. I look to my family, my office

staff that keeps things moving, my colleagues and my community. I am constantly overwhelmed and motivated by the generosity of those in our area that reach out to my office to provide their ideas and input, and I could not do this work without each and every one of them. It is this team that has greatly shaped my legislative and community work to serve the residents of Senate District 15. I am thankful for their partnership."

Q4: What are you planning to do in your job in the future years?

"As I look to the future, I want to expand on my core priorities that have defined my legislative work during my three decades of service as a School Board Member, a City Councilmember, and as a member of the County Board of Supervisors - ensuring wellness, support, and adequate protections for our most vulnerable community members. This includes those experiencing homelessness or extreme poverty, youth and our young adult population that lack the support systems they need to thrive, workers that put themselves on the frontlines every day, Californians that are at risk of the disastrous effects of wildfires, flooding and other climate emergencies. This legislative session, I was proud to author 19 bills covering these areas and more that were signed into law. There is much work ahead of us as we begin to enter the 2023-24 Legislative Session, but I am confident we can continue to champion successful efforts that will make our state healthier and stronger."

Small social event comes to a close

At the special event, Dave's wife Pattie Cortese also took time to kindly speak to others too. People just love to talk with them because they are humble, unassuming and hold the special secret to little by little help our world. Perhaps some believe, if they can rub elbows with them, then maybe some wisdom might be bestowed. Of course, it is known that every wonderful leader has help with regard to strength and intelligence and Godliness from their partner.

When told Patti was a Godly person, she responded, "Everyone is Godly." Then she added, "But some do not know they are Godly." When asked how we can help them be aware, she said, "We love them."

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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
pray daily for peace and
prosperity for everybody
in the world. Come to
visit and enjoy Langer
(food) in our kitchen
which is open 365 days of
the year and serves com-
plementary vegetarian
meals. We also encour-

age you to enter our histo-
ry room on site and walk
the beautiful grounds.
Learn more about us and
community events we
sponsor by visiting our
website; <http://www.San-JoseGurdwara.org>

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH

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San Jose, CA 95135
408-223-1562.
www.stfrancisofassisi.com
or www.stfrancisofassisi.org
We invite you to join our
community of faith located
in the Evergreen area of
San Jose. We are an
inclusive diverse commu-
nity striving to serve as
Disciples of Jesus Christ
in the footsteps of St.
Francis, offering prayerful
and joyful liturgies; evan-
gelization, fellowship, and
service opportunities to
the community. We offer
spiritual opportunities for
all ages, including chil-
dren's liturgy, dynamic
E.C.H.O - Jr. High, IGNIITE
- High School and North
Star-Young Adult Min-
istries, along with small
faith communities and
opportunities to help the
poor and marginalized of
San Jose. Our Preschool
is the only Catholic Pre-
school offering quality
family oriented service in
the Evergreen and Silver
Creek areas. Our Chapel,
Gathering Hall, Parish
Office, Mission Center,
Parish Gift Shop, Memori-
al Garden and Preschool
are all located at 5111
San Felipe Rd. Please
come join us to worship at
one of the following times
and locations:
St. Francis of Assisi
Chapel: Saturday 5:00PM,
Sunday 8:30 AM, 10:30
AM, 12:30 PM, 4:00 PM
(Mass in Vietnamese),
6:00 PM Youth Mass
St. Francis of Assisi Gath-
ering Hall
Sunday 9:00 AM, Sun-
day 11:00AM, Igbo Mass -
Second Sunday of the
month 12:30 PM
Mt. Hamilton Grange -
2840 Aborn Road
Sunday 9:30 AM
The Villages Gated Com-
munity (Cribari Auditori-
um) 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!

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Advantage Driving School is the premier driving school in northern California. Advantage Driving School has trained more than 300,000 students to drive safely since 1994. We offer complete programs for both traditional classroom and online courses. Driver Training is the behind the wheel training which prepares your child to pass the driving test at the DMV. We also offer complete programs for adults and senior citizens. If you have never driven or just need some supplemental instruction to improve your driving skills, we are just the school for you! We believe Advantage Driving School offers a great combination of experienced driving instructors and affordable prices!

Location: 5440 Thornwood Drive, Suite F;
Hours: 9 am-5 pm M-F 9 am-12 noon S-S; Phone: 408.363.4182; Email: info@advantagedriversed.com | Website: advantagedriversed.com

Publishing



CATALYTIC CONVERTER ETCH AND PROTECT PROGRAM

**In memory of The Nguyen
and the Nguyen Family**

**Please join the San Jose Police Department and the
San Jose Police Foundation for the Catalytic
Converter Etching Program.**

**Etching a converter with your license plate or
VIN number will assist police to help track the
converter in the event it is stolen and recovered.**

**EASY AS 1-2-3!
AND IT'S FREE!**



1



**Make an appointment with
one of our partners by
calling your choice below.**

2



**Register your vehicle
for the program.**

3



Get Etched!

**THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES ARE CURRENT SAN JOSE POLICE DEPARTMENT ETCH AND PROTECT PARTNERS. IF
YOU ARE AN AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESS OWNER WHO WISHES TO PARTNER WITH THE SAN JOSE POLICE
DEPARTMENT ETCH AND PROTECT PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT CAPTAIN TRAYER: 3301@SANJOSECA.GOV**

CAPITOL HONDA 745 CAPITOL EXPY, SAN JOSE 408-445-4422	STEVENS CREEK TOYOTA 4202 STEVENS CREEK BLVD. SAN JOSE 408-984-1234	SPEEDEE/MIDAS 1825 E. CAPITOL EXPY, SAN JOSE 408-531-0701
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Disclaimer: Etching the catalytic converter does not guarantee it will not be stolen, nor is it guarantee of recovery...but it could help!

Cost Estimator

Prepare cost estimates for construction projects.
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The COVID crisis has cost us all something. Many have lost jobs and financial security. Have \$10K In Debt? Credit Cards. Medical Bills. Car Loans. Call **NATIONAL DEBT RELIEF!** We can help! Get a **FREE** debt relief quote: Call 1-650-383-1785



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The Swan has been the #1 Agent in Almaden Valley each year for the last 13 years as measured by Dollars per Agent Per Year. She is the only Almaden Valley specialist to have been nationally ranked and recognized twice by The Wall Street Journal/ RealTrends for being in the Top 250 Agents in the US. Additionally, Swan is consistently among the Top 100 Agents in the SF Bay Area.

If you are thinking of selling your home, now is the time to start planning. Call me as soon as possible.

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4 Full Bath
3 Half-Bath
7158 Sq Ft
2.62 Acre Lot



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