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# Times

NOV. 24 – DEC. 7, 2023 ■ VOL. 36, NO. 24



**NCL CLASS OF 2024** - Eight high schools (Leland, Los Gatos, Mitty, Notre Dame, Pioneer, Presentation, Saint Francis, and Valley Christian) are represented in the class of 2024. These 23 young women have spent the last six years working together performing hundreds of hours of philanthropy throughout the community alongside their mothers. Top L-R: **Ava Theaker, Alexis Barker, Alexandra Amooi, Isabella Hertzig, Maya Srinivasan, Abbie Mackintosh, Samantha Hoyt, Nia Calais, and Josie Caouette.** Bottom L-R: **Meghan Bowler, Victoria Power, Kelsey Elo, Lydia Cumming, Katelyn Schweighardt, Taylor Farnum, and Kyla Ould.** Missing are: **Olivia Arellano, Mia Ceulemans, Claire Florio, Katelyn Hughes, Maya Lewis, Ella Ralston, and Kaci Yoshioka-Wong.** Photo Credit: *Tracy Cavano Photography*

## Almaden Blossom Valley National Charity League Class of 2024 selects Martin Fontana Parks Association for senior project

By **William Bellou**  
*Publisher*

The Almaden Blossom Valley Chapter of National Charity League (NCL) Class of 2024 has chosen Martin Fontana Parks Association as their focus for this

year's senior project.

Every year the graduating class of National Charity League completes their NCL journey with a Senior Project. As a class, many of the members have volunteered at both TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana parks

to help clean out weeds, clear and repair paths, and water young oak trees.

Over the past five years, NCL has noticed a decline in local neighborhood parks with fewer funds  
*See CHARITY LEAGUE, page 5*

## Santa Clara County Parks celebrates 25 enchanting years of Fantasy of Lights

By **William Bellou**  
*Publisher*

Santa Clara County Parks is thrilled to announce the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Fantasy of Lights, an awe-inspiring holiday extravaganza. Anticipation is high with an estimated influx of more than 25,000 vehicles expected to drive-thru Vasona Lake County Park in Los Gatos.

From Tuesday, December 5 through Saturday, December 30, families are invited to experience the magic of a 1.5-mile drive-thru adorned with sparkling holiday lights and over 50 themed holiday displays. Favorite attractions, including a thrilling dinosaur den with an erupting volcano, an engaging display of playful penguins, Santa shooting hoops and a  
*See LIGHTS, page 7*



## COMMUNITY NOTEBOOK



**Jake Cordingly, left. Leyla Bikul, center. Ezra McCelleis, right.**

## Pioneer High School's well-versed advanced drama actors to appear in key roles for the comedy 'Harvey'

By **Jane Johnson**  
*Special to the Times*

Each autumn Pioneer High School's (PHS) Advanced Drama auditions some of the best and brightest talent into select roles in their dramatic or comedic play slated for Thurs-Sat, Nov 30, Dec 1 & 2 at The Steve Dini Stage at Pioneer High School, located at 1220 Blossom Hill Road.

This year is no exception with some well-versed actors appearing in key roles for the comedy "Harvey." You'll recognize versatile actors Donovan Collins, Sofia Chichizola and Ezra McCelleis from last year's "Arsenic and Old Lace."

"Harvey" is here to entertain and uplift you nightly. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for a 7 p.m. show which starts Thurs-Sat Nov 30, Dec 1, 2 at The Steve Dini Stage at Pioneer High School, 1220 Blossom Hill Road.

### Amazing actors

What sets these actors apart is every single one of them are humble, kind and rooting for each

other, and the entire cast, for the overall success of the play.

When asked why she chose this play at this time, Director Ashely Coleman shared "I have loved this play since I saw it brought to the stage in 2009. It went on my long list of Someday shows and was just waiting for the right cast to perform it. 'Harvey' showcases the unique gifts and talents of the students we have currently."

Many may remember "Harvey" as the film with Jimmy Stewart from the 1950s. Still to this day it brings a laugh in old timey reruns. Harvey himself is an unmistakable, rather tall, white, yet invisible, rabbit. Best friend to the lead character, Elwood, Harvey is ever present in Elwood's life, accompanying him from one social situation to the next. Albeit invisibly. The story is about "an insane man who sees a 6-foot-tall rabbit. It's about his family, and workers at a sanitarium, and all that's going on all around (Elwood). It's at the same time really funny and really  
*See HARVEY, page 6*

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\*The Young Artist Competition is kindly sponsored by the San Jose Symphony Foundation. "San Jose Symphony" is a registered trademark of the San Jose Symphony Foundation, and its use in all its variations is by license.

# Valley Currents

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



Nick Adams, Matt Mahan and Steve Wymer pictured in the Willow Glen Times March 2023 issue.

## San Jose Chamber's CEO pick could be controversial

By Jana Kadah  
San José Spotlight

Once-political powerhouse for business interests in San Jose is looking to return to its former glory—and soon it will pick a new CEO to help it get there.

The San Jose Chamber of Commerce is close to selecting its next permanent CEO after former president and CEO Derrick Seaver resigned in August. Toni Miranda, former senior executive at Blach Construction, has served as interim CEO but his gig is set to be up in the next few weeks.

Several influential business leaders familiar with the hiring process told San José Spotlight there are two

finalists for the CEO role: Nick Adams, president and CEO of NINICO Communications, and Leah Toeniskoetter, founding director of SPUR San Jose, a senior manager at Deloitte and daughter of prolific developer Chuck Toeniskoetter.

Adams and Toeniskoetter beat out several well-known business politicians including former San Jose Councilmember Johnny Khamis, former Vice Mayor Chappie Jones and Silicon Valley Business PAC Director Victor Gomez.

Gomez, a lobbyist and former chief of staff at San Jose City Hall, previously helmed the chamber's political action committee (PAC) in 2015-17

before he left to launch Silicon Valley Business PAC in 2018. This group aimed to fill a void in the city's political landscape after the chamber of commerce dissolved its PAC amid backlash for racist ads in 2020.

"Ever since that happened, I don't think anybody has really pushed the organization in a way where it's advocating for the needs of the business community in San Jose," Gomez told San José Spotlight. "There's been this huge void, so I hope and expect that whoever ends up in this position does grab the bull by the horns and elevate the work that they're doing in advocacy for the business community."

It's a concern others have shared. While the business community agrees about the importance of revitalizing the chamber by reestablishing its PAC and rallying around local businesses, there are disagreements over who should lead.

Two local lobbyists criticized Adams and questioned his integrity, calling him "slimy" because of his ties to infamous former eBay executive Steve Wymer, who was accused in a heinous stalking and harassment campaign while at the tech giant. Despite his past, Wymer wielded troubling influence at city hall with former Mayor Sam Liccardo and even

secured a spot on Mayor Matt Mahan's transition team. Adams did not respond to requests for comment.

Adams, who is not a registered lobbyist, is being accused of lobbying elected officials on the 18th floor—including the mayor's office.

This is problematic because backdoor lobbying to influence city officials or policies are not disclosed as is required for registered lobbyists—meaning the public is left in the dark.

"Nick is the kind of guy that a lot of business leaders don't really feel like he's trustworthy," one lobbyist told San José Spotlight on condition of anonymity, due to not being authorized to speak on the matter officially. "I just don't know a lot of people locally that like him."

But apart from these ethical concerns, the lobbyist says the chamber needs to refocus on its goal of  
*See CHAMBER CEO, page 10*

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Times **Local News**

**Charity League**

*Continued from page 1*

being allocated to maintain them. Martin Fontana Parks Association was created to help fill this gap and to preserve the parks as places for neighbors to meet and appreciate the outdoors.

**Preserving California native plants and natural habitats**

MFPA also focuses on preserving California native plants and natural habitats for wildlife. At the beginning of 2023, MFPA revamped an area of Fontana Park known as “Five Islands.” This area has been transformed into a beautiful location with five sections of California native plants, pathways and a bench and neighbors who frequent the park for walks, jogs and playground visits are able to enjoy it. With “Five Islands” in mind, the Class of 2024 approached MFPA to see if they had other areas they could beautify, and they were more than eager to have NCL’s help.

After meeting with the MFPA president, Kelly Shepherd, the class decided to tackle a 30 ft. by 20 ft. area that is overrun with weeds and borders an open grass field with a par course. The new project involves clearing out the area, breaking up and amending the soil, and planting a pollinator garden with California native plants to attract bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies to the park.

The Class of 2024 has organized themselves into committees with a research group tasked with selecting native plants to attract pollinators and thrive in the climate, while the materials team is involved with pricing and shopping for plants and soil and keeping to a strict budget. The design group works alongside the research team, creating and drawing a layout for the area. Some of the young ladies chose to be liaisons scheduling workdays and coordinating with the entire

class and MFPA and a documentation team who have been busy photographing and documenting the chronology of the project.

The Class of 2024 is working together efficiently on the project and hopes that this will help the local community, beautify the park, and provide shelter for the local wildlife, while having a great time doing so.

**Words of encouragement**

The entire chapter of NCL is also becoming involved with painting large river rocks with designs of pollinators and words of encouragement to scatter over this beautiful garden.

Eight high schools (Leland, Los Gatos, Mitty, Notre Dame, Pioneer, Presentation, Saint Francis, and Valley Christian) are represented in the class of 2024. These 23 young women have spent the last six years together developing leadership skills, taking part in cultural experiences and performing hundreds of hours of philanthropy throughout the community alongside their mothers.

Since 2018, these mother daughter teams have volunteered in multiple focus areas, such as supporting animals and the environment in 7th grade, helping families in need in 8th grade, assisting children in 9th grade, senior care in 10th grade, and helping the hungry and homeless in 11th grade.

The mothers and daughters of the NCL class of 2024 are working hard to put together a senior recognition event to celebrate the culmination of their six years together. This will take place on Sunday, April 28, 2024 at the Almaden Golf and Country Club.

Editors note: One can visit Martin Fontana Parks to see native California plants and consider incorporating them into their yards at home. For more information about Martin Fontana Parks Association, visit [www.saveourparktrees.wordpress.com/membership-3](http://www.saveourparktrees.wordpress.com/membership-3)

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# Harvey

BY MARY CHASE

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Times **Local News**

## Harvey

*Continued from page 1*

sweet,” explained Ezra, who plays Dr. Sanderson, one of the asylum physicians.

Elwood lives in his mansion along with his sister, Veta, and Veta’s daughter, Myrtle Mae. Veta, played by PHA senior Sofia Chichizola, is convinced of her brother’s insanity when he continues to blame mishaps on Harvey. Trying to figure out a way to help her brother, but also insure she and her daughter are left well off, is Veta’s aim. “(Veta)’s a bit of the villain character, which I’m having a lot of fun playing. She’s a little wacko herself, it’s like she can’t tell what she’s doing or why,” said Sofia.

Coming off the villain himself in last year’s play, PHS senior Donovan Collins has done a 180-degree turn with this role. “Elwood P. Dowd is a very funny man. He’s very happy, very cheery, which are traits I like to think encapsulate me. I try to be the sweetest to everyone and especially to those I care about. Elwood is like that.” When asked who he played, Donovan’s humble nature shone through: “I play one of the main people.”

Every one of the students described the play as funny, but in a highbrow “smart” sort of way. “It will provide the audience a good laugh, it is a very funny show with a lot of funny moments. However, there is a level of attention the audience must commit to in order to not miss any of the humor.” shared Donovan. Ezra agreed. “There are humorous lines in the dialogue, very funny lines, and the humor is very precise, so if you’re not paying attention, you will miss it. Because of this, we’re working quite a bit on our enunciation and pacing to ensure our audience gets the most out of their experience.”

Sofia stressed “make sure you



Davis Jones, left. Maya Lewis, right.



Jake Cordingly, left. Sophia Chichizola, right.

come quite literally expecting nothing. You will find you don’t know what you’ve gotten yourself into - the storyline changes from what you think you know” and you’re in for a fun night.

To bring a play like this to life requires many behind-the-scenes volunteers. Just a few to highlight, from Mrs. Coleman: “Many may not know that Marissa Bacon (tech), Kyla Blili (costumes), and Lorie Biviano (sets/props) have been pulling double duty between the upcoming production of “Harvey” and “Oklahoma” which closed at the end of Oct. They give each show, and each performer, such careful attention and detail... it’s tremendously generous on their part, and tremendously humbling on mine. Imagine a show with no set, no props, no lights or sound, no costumes... no magic. These volunteers are responsible for much of the magic you see in bringing a performance to life.”

“Harvey” showcases our local talent in a funny yet heartwarming story. Unique to this cast, all three of these young adults plan to pursue acting at some level in the future. All point to the Advanced Drama program at Pioneer as being pivotal and an “experience not to be missed if you can get it.” “It’s amazing! So much fun, such a great atmosphere with people who are excited about the projects,” said Ezra.

“It’s all just amazing. Great productions, so many great people, Mrs. Coleman has built a program where people really care about each other, and most of my friends have come from the program, each



Donovan Collins, left. Ezra McCelleis, right.

of whom I love dearly,” said Donovan.

As Mrs. Coleman said, “This 70-year-old play delivers many laughs, but also a gentle reminder and deeper meaning. ‘Harvey’ is a lesson about the importance of friendship and how loyalty must withstand every single challenge. Harvey’s plot revolves around the Dowd family and how they interact with each other. Over the



Emily Goguen, left. Donovan Collins, right.

course of the play, they learn to make sacrifices for each other, and they redefine how they view one another. It is my hope that our audiences do the same.”

“Harvey” is here to entertain and uplift you nightly. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for a 7 p.m. show starts Thurs-Sat Nov 30, Dec 1, 2 at The Steve Dini Stage located at Pioneer High School. 1220 Blossom Hill Road.

For more info and tickets, visit [phsdrama.ludus.com](http://phsdrama.ludus.com).

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Times Local News

## Best places to shop on Black Friday 2023

Black Friday, Nov 24, 2023, one of the year's biggest shopping holidays, is almost here. Knowing the best places to shop can save consumers hundreds or even thousands of dollars this year on everything from jewelry and clothes to appliances, furniture and electronics.

JCPenney, Macy's and Belk are the top three retailers for Black Friday shoppers, according to a new report by the personal-finance website WalletHub. The report surveyed over 3,500 deals from 13 of the biggest U.S. retailers' 2023 Black Friday ads.

"JCPenney offers an average discount of 59.1%, and you'll save the most money when shopping for jewelry, apparel, accessories, and appliances," said Cassandra Happe, WalletHub analyst. "Macy's is the second-best Black Friday retailer, offering an average discount of 58.2%, with especially good deals on jewelry, clothing and furniture. Belk takes third place, saving consumers an average of 54.8%, with great offers on appliances, apparel and con-

sumer packaged goods like makeup and shampoo."

While Belk has a lot fewer locations than JCPenney or Macy's, consumers nationwide can take advantage of Black Friday deals at all three retailers by shopping online.

### Top 10 Black Friday Retailers

(Avg. % Discount)

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. JCPenney (59.12%) | 6. BJ's (30.11%)     |
| 2. Macy's (58.19%)   | 7. Best Buy (29.78%) |
| 3. Belk (54.76%)     | 8. Amazon (28.48%)   |
| 4. Kohl's (48.81%)   | 9. Walmart (26.88%)  |
| 5. Target (32.70%)   | 10. Dell (25.79%)    |

Some retailers are offering much smaller Black Friday deals this year. For example, Costco only gives an average of 17% off, and shoppers at The Home Depot will save an average of around 21%.

"The best Black Friday deals can save you up to 85%, which could translate into hundreds or even thousands of dollars in savings, depending on the extent of your shopping spree," Happe stated. "Knowing exactly where to find the best deals can also help you save a lot of time and avoid a lot of aggravation. You don't even need to leave your house and fight the mob in an

actual store."

### Tips for Black Friday Shopping

• **Research the Stores with the Best Deals:** Knowing ahead of time which stores provide the best savings will help you get the most bang for your buck. Checking out Black Friday ad scans is a good way to set your sights on the best deals in advance.

• **Use a Rewards Credit Card:** Putting your Black Friday purchases on a rewards credit card can save you an additional 1% to 5%, and even more if you use them to earn an initial bonus. Just make sure to stick to a budget and only charge what you can afford to pay in full by the due date.

• **Start Shopping Early:** Black Friday shopping isn't just for Black Friday anymore. Some stores start their sales weeks in advance and keep the deals going all the way through Cyber Monday.

• **Shop Online:** The days of risking getting trampled just to find the best deals are over. Tons of retailers offer their Black Friday deals online, allowing you to save big from the comfort of your home.

• **To view the full report, visit:**

<https://wallethub.com/edu/best-worst-retailers-for-black-friday/8385>

## Gun Buyback event slated Dec. 2 at Reid-Hillview County Airport

The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office is sponsoring an upcoming Gun Buyback Event, set to take place on December 2 at Reid-Hillview County Airport in San José.

The event will run from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and is open to all residents of Santa Clara County. Participants are encouraged to bring any unwanted firearms, including handguns, rifles, shotguns, and assault weapons. To ensure a safer community, individuals can surrender their firearms with no questions asked and without fear of legal repercussions.

"Reducing the number of unsecured firearms in our community is paramount to ensuring the safety and well-being of our residents. The Gun Buyback program provides a crucial opportunity for individuals to responsibly dispose of unwanted firearms, preventing accidents, gun thefts, and potentially harmful situations. By working together through initiatives like this, we can make a significant impact in creating a safer environment for everyone," said Sheriff Jonsen.

Participants will receive a cash incentive in exchange for turning in their firearms.

## Lights

Continued from page 1

dazzling tunnel of moving lights, are set to captivate attendees of all ages.

To secure admission, tickets must be purchased in advance as no tickets will be sold at the gate. Tickets can be purchased by the desired day and time of entrance (30-minute periods between 6:00pm and 9:30pm).

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Vasona Lake County Park is located at 333 Blossom Hill Rd, Los Gatos, CA95032. For directions, ticketing and more information visit [www.parkhere.org](http://www.parkhere.org) or call (408) 355-2201. Fantasy of Lights is proudly presented by Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation.

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Times Arts

## Audubon Society creates online art photo gallery of birds

By Sean Eastwood  
Staff writer

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society recently had its inaugural Bird Celebration with an introduction of its online gallery.

The gallery features photos and artwork of birds submitted by community members. Submissions are featured in SCVAS materials, including Instagram, Facebook and newsletters.

“We had nearly 50 people submit their artwork, including several youth,” Teresa Cheng, the volunteer leading the Bird Celebration, said in her issued statement. “While this was the first year for this event, we’re very pleased with how it went and look forward to sponsoring similar initiatives in the future.”

Artists and photographers represented in the gallery at [bit.ly/SCVASgallery](http://bit.ly/SCVASgallery) include Cheng and Floy and Dave Zittin of Cupertino and Jeremy Frank, Ed Reed and Camden Bac of Sunnyvale. San Jose residents with works in the online gallery are Sushanta Bhandarkar, Chris Johnson, Kristin Lynn, Rajesh Pasupathy, Orizema Cruz Pina, Howard Friedman, Sapana Kapadia, Karen Maor, Chris Henry, Christopher Klein and



While submissions for an online gallery created by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society for its recent inaugural Bird Celebration included many photographs of birds, the gallery also features several sketches and paintings, including “Two Chickadees on Coffee Berries” by Cupertino artist Floy Zittin.

Tiphaknee Tamboury.

SCVAS Executive Director Matthew Dodder noted that while the entries included many photographs of birds, the gallery also features several sketches and paintings, and even a felt sculpture.

Editor’s note: The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is headquartered at McClellan Ranch Preserve in Cupertino. For more information, go to [scvas.org](http://scvas.org).

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## 'Ardent Echoes' concert slated for Dec. 2 by Mission Chamber Orchestra of San José

Featuring romantic and passionate works by Beethoven, Schumann, Ireland and more! Pay what you can afford to attend!

Mission Chamber Orchestra of San José (MCOSJ) announces “Ardent Echoes,” a concert programmed and guest conducted by James Beauton.

Taking place on Saturday, Dec. 2nd at 7:30 p.m. at San José’s Hammer Theatre Center, the concert features romantic and passionate works by Beethoven, Schumann, and John Ireland, and the California premiere of the Double Percussion Concerto by Nick DiBerardino.

### Percussion instruments fill the stage

Guest conductor James Beauton says he is elated to be presenting “Ardent Echoes” with MCOSJ. “This program combines some of my favorite things: making music with friends (old and new), filling a stage with percussion instruments, and of course, Beethoven! The concert culminates with Robert Schumann’s Symphony no. 4, and we’ll kick the whole thing off with the Egmont Overture to show exactly how the music of Beethoven ardently echoes through time.”

Percussion soloists arx duo (Garret Arney and Sijia Huang) are longtime collaborative friends of Beauton. “When

someone sees a concerto for percussion,” says the duo’s founder Garret Arney, “they expect to hear something loud, with virtuosic and exposed percussion parts, but the Double Percussion Concerto] is actually very delicate, detailed, and in harmony with the ensemble. It’s not just a cool percussion piece, it’s a cool piece with a feature of percussion.”

MCOSJ’s concerts this season provide the opportunity to enjoy thrilling live music in intimate venues with programs chosen and conducted by the four Music Director candidates. It’s a unique chance to be part of this important transition for the group. Ticket prices are affordable - General: \$25, Senior: \$20, Student: \$15, Child: \$10 — and the “pay what you can afford” option ensures the concerts are accessible for everyone to enjoy.

### Program

Ludwig van Beethoven Egmont Overture

John Ireland Downland Suite for String Orchestra

Nick DiBerardino Double Percussion Concerto

Robert Schumann Symphony no. 4

Tickets: General: \$25, Senior: \$20, Student: \$15, Child: \$10, or pay what you can afford. For more info, visit [www.missionchamber.org/events-tickets](http://www.missionchamber.org/events-tickets)

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**IN MEMORY**

**Basil 'Huff'  
E. Huffman  
1934 – 2023**

Began career at Pioneer High School

Resident of San Jose Basil "Huff" E. Huffman passed away peacefully at home on October 9, 2023, with his wife, Cecilia, by his side. He was born on February 2, 1934 to Basil and Vivian Huffman and was raised in Avenal, California. He was the eldest to two brothers, Perry and Jess.

Avenal was a small community where everyone knew each other well and Huff maintained friendships from his youth until his passing. He put himself through college at San Jose State to become an educator. After college, he joined the Army and was stationed at Fort Ord, CA. He married Nancy Achziger in 1957 and welcomed three sons to complete their family in San Jose, CA.

Basil touched people's lives in different ways. He lived his life with purpose and passion. He was most happy when working with people in making connections, mentoring and problem solving in the education field.

Huff started his career as a teacher at Pioneer High School in San Jose, CA. He continued to improve his knowledge and training to ultimately become a dedicated, effective and well-respected principal of several high schools. He really enjoyed mentoring troubled teens and took a firm stance on the direction and commitment required to make a difference in their lives. Everyone knew they would get an honest and straightforward response from Huff. He received many acknowledgments, awards and distinctions over his career as an educator and administrator.

Huff loved sports and when he was not cheering on his boys or his high schools, he would be doing the same for his beloved Giants, 49ers and Warriors! He enjoyed telling stories and reminiscing about the good old days, Willie Nelson and building things. He built the much-loved Huffman fam-



ily cabin in Sierra City, CA. This cabin provided wonderful family time and great stories for several generations of Huffmans. Huff and his wife, Cecilia, spent much of their retired years enjoying the view and gardens of the cabin. They also loved to travel and spent time in Europe and took many trips to Mexico.

Huff is survived by his wife of 38 years, Cecilia, son Ross and wife Colleen, son Randy, daughter in law, Donna, grandchildren, Matthew, Andrea, Brian, Daniel, Carissa, David, Cera, Cristen, and 4 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Basil and Vivian Huffman and his son, Craig. He will be remembered not only for his work ethic and honesty, but also for his commitment to his family, his love of adventure and holding court at family gatherings.

**EVC recognized as leader in supporting transfer students**

Evergreen Valley College recognized success in enrolling and graduating Associate-Degree-for-Transfer-earners and closing racial/ethnic equity gaps

EVC has been named both a 2023 Champion of Higher Education and 2023 Equity Champion of Higher Education by the Campaign for College Opportunity last week, which recognized EVC as a top performer in three specific areas:

- Associate Degrees for Transfer Awarded as a Percentage of all Associate Degrees Awarded
- Equity Champion for Black Students
- Equity Champion for Latinx Students

The Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) is an instrumental pathway that has streamlined the transfer process and made it easier for students to earn a bachelor's degree after completing an associate degree program.

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The Associate Degree for Transfer is designed to ensure that students are able to seamlessly transfer without accumulating excess units and spending more time and money on their education than necessary. Touted as "A Degree with a Guarantee," students graduating with an ADT are guaranteed admission and junior standing into the California State University system.

**Equity measures instituted**

Racial equity gaps persist in transfer rates between Latinx and Black students and their peers. Because of this, the Campaign for College Opportunity developed an equity measure that assesses how Latinx and Black students are accessing and earning an ADT relative to the campus average.

**Strong performance of Latinx and Black Students on EVC campus**

Due to the strong performance of Latinx and Black students on its campus, Evergreen Valley College was honored as a 2023 Equity Champion for both Black and Latinx Students. In order to earn this recognition, two criteria had to be met: at least 65 percent of Black and Latinx associate-degree earners had to earn an ADT and these students had to perform as well or better in this metric compared to the full student body.

**'Equity Champion' recognition**

Evergreen Valley College was one of just three colleges in California to be recognized as an Equity Champion for both Black and Latinx students.

"While there is still much work to be done to ensure that all students who want to transfer to a four-year university have the opportunity to do so, this recognition shows that the hard work of our dedicated faculty and classified staff is having a positive impact on the lives of our students, particularly when it comes to closing the equity gap and achieving positive educational outcomes," said Evergreen Valley College President Tammeil Gilkerson.

The award ceremony for the Champions of Higher Education for Excellence in Transfer took place on Nov. 14, 2023. To learn more about how the honorees are selected, visit the Campaign for College Opportunity website.

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**Chamber CEO**

*Continued from page 4*

advocating for businesses before it attempts to relaunch a PAC. Membership was at an all-time low following the 2020 scandal, with hundreds of local leaders leaving the group. There were no more than 300 members when Seaver was CEO, he previously said, but under his guidance that number grew close to 800. Before the scandal the chamber had 1,500 businesses.

"I have clients waiting on the sidelines that will not join the chamber until they know that it's a business advocacy organization," the lobbyist told San José Spotlight. "And you have essentially picked the top two people that don't know anything about advocacy."

Contact Jana at jana@sanjosespotlight.com or follow @Jana\_Kadah on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Editor's Note: Victor Gomez sits on San José Spotlight's board of directors.

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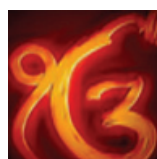


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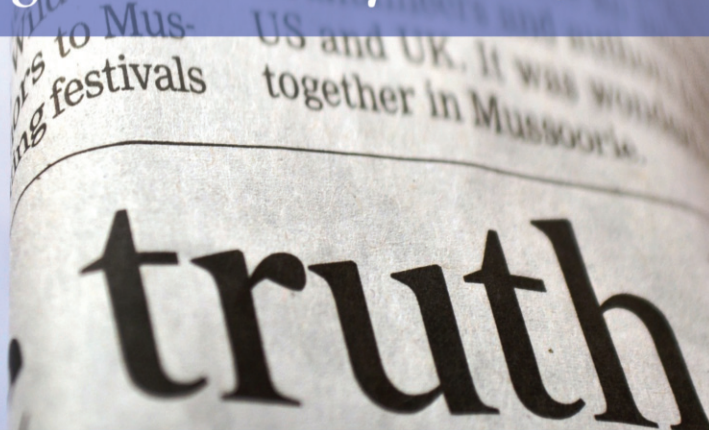
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