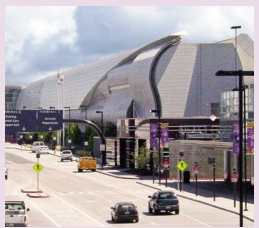


Baby chickens to take flight at San José Mineta International Airport
SEE PAGE 4



Program offers solution
San José Councilmembers offer breakthrough pilot program to reduce homeless encampments — **SEE PAGE 5**

City of San Jose, District 10 Council Member	
Precincts Reporting 100%	Votes
<div><div></div> George Casey</div>	8,242
<div><div></div> Arjun Batra</div>	7,775
<div><div></div> Lenka Wright</div>	5,262
	21,279

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Times

MARCH 15 - 28, 2024 ■ VOL. 37, NO. 6



Mahika Khosla

Leland High School sophomore impacts the community with her astronomy lessons for young children

By William Bellou
Publisher

A Leland High School sophomore providing astronomy lessons at local libraries to promote scientific thinking in youth and an experimental-focused curriculum. Her non-profit, Astro Revolution, is set to hold their first competition at West Valley Library for children and teens.

Growing up, Mahika Khosla saw that astronomy was not widely represented in schools and wanted to bring the fascinating wonders of space to young children. She saw the benefits of getting kids to think of questions about the universe as a way for them to explore scientific thinking and the vastness of possibilities. So, she started to contact libraries in local areas where she could give free lessons to the underprivileged and initiated her organization, Astro Revolution.

"My favorite subject was always science and astronomy. When these topics were not discussed in depth in school courses, I had to learn and develop my interest outside of school," Mahika said. "I wanted to spread my passion with others and make it more accessible for children

See KHOSLA, page 3

Don't miss the local stage production of West Side Story

By Jane Johnson
Special to the Times



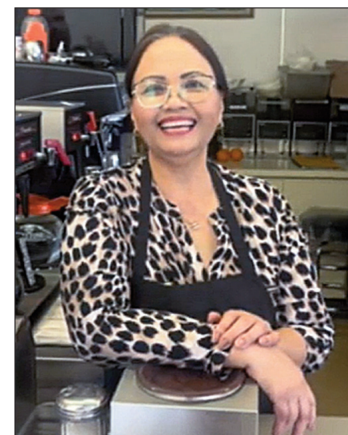
West Side Story is coming to one of the best Bay Area high school theater programs near you!

The popular iconic production, with its energetic dancing and great story telling both through traditional means and through dance alone, will be presented by the Pioneer High School's Drama Department March 22nd, 23rd, 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th. Expect the music to be driven by upbeat Latin beats and jazz undertones, as well as memorable ballads.

For those unfamiliar with the story, look to a retelling of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" with "a theme focused on two lovers thwarted by circumstances beyond their control," described Mrs. Ashley Coleman, Pioneer High School's theatre director.

Based in 1950s New York's Upper Manhattan, it tells the story of two rival gangs, one Puerto Rican (the Sharks) and the other

See WEST SIDE STORY, page 8



After 23 years, **Mary Lonh** is retiring and turning over the reigns of Maple Leaf Donuts in Almaden to a family member. Photo by Kelly Ray

Mary the 'Donut Lady' at Maple Leaf Donuts retires

By Kelly Ray
Special to the Times

Mary the 'Donut Lady' has announced her retirement after 23 years as the owner and manager of Maple Leaf Donuts located on Almaden Expressway in Almaden.

When Mary was asked how she felt about retiring last week on her last day of work she said, "I feel nervous, and happy, but it's so sad that I'm leaving you guys. I want to thank the Almaden community for their support. It is too hard to say goodbye.

She is like family to the families'

Hundreds of children have grown up on Mary's donuts. In fact, Mary's donut parties would bring in \$250 donations for classrooms at Almaden elementary schools. "She is like family to the families in Almaden," said a long-time customer. Mary knows and remembers all the local kids who grew up eating their donuts."

Maple Leaf Donuts of Almaden Valley has served thousands of donuts to loyal customers for 23 years. The reigns of the successful donut shop are being turned over to a family member.

See DONUT LADY, page 3

San Jose City Councilmember trails rival

By Lorraine Gabbert
San José Spotlight

A South San Jose councilmember who snagged a seat in a contentious appointment last year is fighting to stay in office — and now it appears he'll face challenger George Casey in November.

Casey leads with 38.7% of the vote. San Jose Councilmember Arjun Batra has secured 36.5% of the vote. Candidate Lenka Wright trailed behind with 24.7% of the vote.

The early results show a voter turnout of about 25.5%, according to the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters. The registrar's office is expecting turnout for this primary election to land at about 35% to 45%, officials said Tuesday.

Despite his struggle to finish first, Batra said he feels optimistic. He beat out five others in a



San Jose Planning Commissioner **George Casey** celebrates with supporters after leading the District 10 council race in San Jose. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert.

closely-watched appointment process in January 2023, including Casey.

"We're neck and neck with George Casey," Batra told San José Spotlight. "Hopefully, we'll pull ahead of him. Hopefully these percentages will hold. I'm happy with what's there."

Batra, a retired tech worker turned politician, and his two challengers are competing to represent District 10. The district includes the Almaden, Blossom Valley, and Santa Teresa areas in South San Jose.

Casey gathered with his supporters at a pizzeria in the Almaden neighborhood Tuesday night.

The group huddled together, munching on pizza and desserts as they watched early returns

See CASEY, page 10

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Please note: I have not and will not be verifying or investigating any information supplied by others.

Times **Community News****Khosla**

Continued from page 1
to learn about astronomy."

Mahika created slides for six lessons: Big Bang and Distance, Black Holes and the Information Paradox, Dark Energy and Dark Matter, Motion, Aerospace Engineering, and Stars and Constellations. Each lesson included icebreakers, a lecture, one or two experiments, and an online trivia game to wrap up the lesson. Mahika also provided all necessary supplies so that those at the library could receive the program free of charge.

The first lesson was held last year at West Valley Branch Library. Six students attended, showing their learnings through their playdough projects and asking many intriguing questions from the content. Mahika described her first time teaching, "It was nerve-racking at first. But once I got the hang of it and the kids began to get more involved with the lesson, time flew by, and seeing the kids learn was one of the best feelings ever."

As libraries gained interest in holding the program, Mahika's friends from school helped create material for later lessons and teaching at several locations. They also helped run social media accounts and create posters for upcoming events.

Today, Astro Revolution is present in six different libraries and has taught more than 250 students, ranging from ages thirteen to as young as four. The team has completed



six lessons at two locations and is planning a competition to challenge kids in groups to use their creativity to solve problems that may appear when humans colonize Mars. The kids will learn how to apply experimental design, and their work will be judged by parents and high school teachers. The next step for Astro Revolution is to go national.

"My friends and I have already begun working towards spreading our lessons to young kids outside of the state and preparing online material," Mahika said. "I hope to encourage more children to learn about the ever-expanding universe and see astronomy as a possibility to pursue in the future."

Editor's note: The next scheduled teaching event is Lesson 6: Constellations & Stars, which will be held March 17, 2024; 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm; Seven Trees Library and also on March 19, 2024; 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm at the Berryessa Library. For more information, visit: www.astrorrevolution.site.



2023-24 Spring San Jose Youth Concert Philharmonic Orchestra to perform Chaminade, Reinecke, Chausson and Poulenc Saturday, March 23

The San Jose Youth Symphony's Philharmonic Orchestra, under the artistic leadership of Music Director and Conductor Yair Samet, presents its 2024 Spring Concert to be held on Saturday, March 23, 2024, 2 pm, at the California Theatre, 345 S. 1st Street, San Jose, CA 95113.

The concert opens with female composer Cécile Chaminade's lovely and romantic work, Callirhoe Ballet Symphonique, and will conclude with Poulenc's Les Biches Suite. This concert will also feature winners from the 2023 Young Artists' Competition, proudly sponsored by the San Jose Symphony Foundation*. Outstanding young soloists, **Lyria Zhu** (inset, top), flute, will perform Reinecke's Flute Concerto in D Major; and **Saarthak Shankavaram** (inset, bottom), violin, will perform Chausson's Poème for Violin and Orchestra.

Lyria Zhu is a senior at Lynbrook High School and has been playing flute with Dr. Ming Li for over six years. She has been with the San Jose Youth Symphony for four years total, three of those as part of the Philharmonic Orchestra.

Saarthak Shankavaram, 16, is a sophomore at Prospect High School. In Singapore, where he was born, he learned singing in the Indian Hindustani classical tradition.

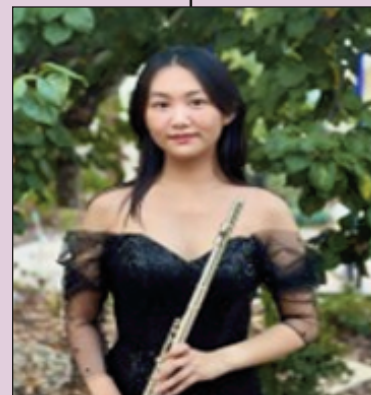
After moving to the US in 3rd grade, he began violin lessons with Gretchen Mieschke, and has been with the San Jose Youth Symphony for several years, the last two of those as part of the Philharmonic Orchestra.

The San Jose Youth Symphony (SJYS) is one of the oldest and finest youth orchestras on the West Coast of the U.S. Founded over seven decades ago as part of the former San Jose Symphony, SJYS has a rich tradition of musical performance and education.

The musicians of SJYS, all school-age youth, are chosen from more than 650 applicants through our annual auditions. The SJYS comprises 12 distinct performing ensembles: two full orchestras, a Chamber orchestra, two flute choirs, two string ensembles, as well as winds, harp, saxophone, percussion, and jazz ensembles.

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Online ticket purchases are available through the San Jose Youth Symphony website: <https://www.sjys.org/product-category/tickets>



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Donut Lady

Continued
from page 1

The new owner, Monorom "Jing" Bun, is using all of Mary's family's recipes for a seamless transition. "I look forward to serving the community with the same product quality and customer service," he said.



Times **Community Notebook****AlmadenTimes**

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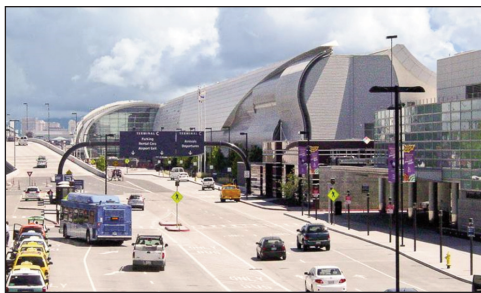
Baby chickens to take flight at San José Mineta International Airport celebrating its 75th year

San José Mineta International Airport (SJC) is kicking off some egg-citing festivities to celebrate 75 years of service for the Bay Area community starting March 6.

In tribute to its very first arriving passengers – a group of 2,550 baby chickens – anniversary events at SJC will feature creative acknowledgments of those feathered pioneers in various forms and sizes.

"For 75 years, SJC staff has put in the work to create an unparalleled travel experience that is both reliable and convenient for our residents and visitors from across the globe," said San José Mayor Matt Mahan. "Thanks to their dedication, our airport was recently recognized as one of the best in the country, and I'm confident the next 75 years will prove just as bright for SJC and all those coming to visit our beautiful city."

This landmark anniversary celebrates a journey that began in 1929, when the first Citizen Airport Committee (CAC) was formed. In 1939, the CAC, driven by the vision of a dedicated aviation enthusiast from San José, Ernest H. Renzel Jr., selected the site for the future airport. The location (a former onion field) was chosen based on its proximity to the town and superior weather conditions



in the area.

A Stanford graduate, grocer and City Councilmember, Renzel led a transformative campaign to elevate San José's status in the aviation world. His decade-long efforts paid off on Feb. 1, 1949, with the official dedication of San José Municipal Airport, introducing modern-day passenger service to the local community. Notably, the Airport's first commercial flight, a DC-3 operated by Southwest Airways (forerunner of today's Delta Air Lines), carried a unique mix of passengers: seven humans and 2,550 baby chickens, with only the latter deplaning in San José. (The humans continued on to Los Angeles).

San José Municipal Airport underwent its first significant transformation in 1968 when it became San José International Airport – signaling its readiness to connect the Bay Area with the world. Another important moment in SJC's history came in 2001, when it was renamed in honor of the influential former Mayor and Congressman Norman Y. Mineta for his contributions to the Airport's development and to the U.S. transportation sector.

Passengers traveling through SJC in 2024 will be treated to an array of airport festivities and decor, a dedicated anniversary webpage and surprise encounters with "chickens" roaming throughout the terminals with giveaways. In addition, fun photo opportunities will be present including the unique chance to pose with a 10' inflatable baby chicken

that will be located in Terminal B Baggage Claim. Social media enthusiasts will have access to engaging and educational content, including animated videos, contests and first-class seats to the "Baby Chickens Take Flight at SJC" campaign.

A commemorative logo was created to mark the events dedicated to this important anniversary in SJC's journey through history.

"I'm pleased to celebrate the 75 wonderful years of the San José Mineta International Airport providing service to passengers in the greater Bay Area and beyond. I want to thank all our airline carriers, food and beverage concessionaires, and SJC staff past, current and present for making SJC a simple and timely travel experience," said Jennifer Maguire, San José City Manager. "We look forward to providing passengers with many more years of exemplary service they have come to expect and love about flying through San José."

Over the years, SJC has facilitated extensive development and expansion to accommodate Silicon Valley's dynamic growth. Between 2015 and 2019, the Airport was declared the fastest growing airport in the U.S. And in 2022, passengers traveling through SJC voted it as the Best Mid-size Airport in North America for Customer Experience. Most recently in 2023, SJC earned the title of Best Midsize Airport in the U.S. from The Wall Street Journal.

"As we hit the 75-year milestone, our focus remains on convenience and excellent service. This anniversary celebrates our beginnings and commitment to connecting people and places," said SJC Director of Aviation John Aitken. "I am grateful to everyone who has played a role in our history. Here's to many more years of SJC serving our community."

Editor's note: Community members and passengers are encouraged to join in the celebration and events throughout the year at flysjc.com/75years.

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Reinecke - Flute Concerto in D Major

Chausson - Poème for Violin & Orchestra

Poulenc - Les Biches Suite



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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.

Times Local News

IN MEMORY

Victoria "Vicki" L. Mirassou

Oct. 26, 1946 - March 4, 2024

Resident of San Jose Vicki L. Mirassou - Sister, Wife, Mother, Grandmother Vicki "Nana" was born on October 26, 1946 in San Jose, Ca. to LaVerne and Allen Franklin. She had one younger sister, Toni. She grew up in San Jose and attended elementary and middle schools in the Campbell Union

School District; she graduated from Del Mar High School where she made life-long friends. She attended San Jose City College and received an associates degree in Dental Assisting. She worked as a dental assistant for several years. She met Clovis, her husband of 47 years, at 4th Street Bowl. They were married in 1976 and had twin daughters in 1978 who joined their big sisters, Kristi and Debbie. Vicki loved to sew and made amazing quilts for her family and friends. Her passion for sewing was fueled by weekly sewing sessions with friends and trips to local quilt shows. She was notorious for making shopping bags, baby bath tow-



els, bibs, and pillow covers and generously gifting them to her family and friends. Vicki and Clovis loved going to baseball games together. She was an avid Giants fan. One of their favorite trips was to Spring

Training where Vicki met her favorite player, Will Clark. Vicki loved baseball and softball. During the spring, there was always a game on the tv. Most of her life was spent cheering on her kids and grandkids at any event she was able to attend. Vicki was known as a loving, generous, welcoming, kind hearted, and strong woman who loved her family very much. She loved helping her friends and family. She picked up her grandkids after school from the oldest grandson to the youngest until her final day. Vicki will be greatly missed by her family and friends. After 77 wonderful years, she passed away on March 4, 2024. She

leaves behind a sister, Toni (Bob), her four daughters, Kristi (Bill), Debbie (Scott), Kelli, Karin (Michele), four step-sons, and 14 grandchildren. A Celebration of Life will be held at Almaden Country Club on March 30 from 11 AM - 2 PM. Memorial donations may be made to the FRAXA Research Foundation or the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.



KUDOS

Almaden Valley resident Sandee Carlson named to Biola University's Dean's List

Almaden Valley resident Sandee Carlson was recently named to the Biola University Dean's List in Fall 2023. Biola students are placed on the dean's list to honor those with a GPA of 3.6 or higher while enrolled in 12 or more credits and whose cumulative GPA is at least 3.2. Carlson is working towards a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a double minor in Biblical Studies and Spanish. "My passion is to walk alongside others and cultivate meaningful relationships, so I chose Psychology to better understand people and how they operate," said Carlson. "For my spring project this year as a Peer Internship Ambassador, I created an event for psychology and sociology students to come to Biola to learn more about the skills they learned from their psychology degree and how those skills directly apply to careers outside of the typical clinical psychology route, which include business, community services, and education." "Inclusion in Biola University's Dean's List is reserved for students who demonstrate exceptional performance in their academic studies. This honor signifies hard work, engagement, and investment in scholarship," said Dr. Tamara Anderson, Tamara Anderson, Senior Associate Provost.

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Times **Local News**

San José Councilmembers offer breakthrough pilot program to reduce homeless encampments

Councilmembers Doan and Batra propose three-district pilot program offering up to 1,000 pre-engineered beds for unsheltered persons in the pilot area

Two San José councilmembers have had it with the city's chronic inability to address the inhumane living conditions of unsheltered neighbors in San José.

Councilmembers Bien Doan and Arjun Batra are launching for consideration a new program that will use cutting edge, pre-engineered lodging solutions to create a congregant shelter community with the capacity to meet the needs of every single homeless person in the pilot districts of 2, 7, and 10.

Over the last five years, San José's homeless population has increased by 44% according to the annual Point in Time counts, and only 30% of the City's homeless population is sheltered.

SJ LUV

Called SJ LUV (Lifting Up LiVes), the pilot program aims to use pre-engineered structure technology at one of four already-identified sites in District 7 to create dignified shelter opportunities that will not only provide beds for the unhoused, but also useful wrap-around services to help those residents address issues like mental health, substance abuse, and job training.

Because the program will provide capacity for every homeless person in the pilot districts, it will meet the parameters of the 9th Circuit Court's *Martin v Boise*, thereby allowing the city to require that homeless residents, including those in lived-in vehicles, in those districts leave creeks, parks, sidewalks, and public spaces in favor of the safe shelter communities.

"Enough is enough, we have a crisis and

must act in crisis mode" said former Fire Captain and current Councilmember Bien Doan, District 7. "For far too long we have enabled unsafe, inhumane, and dangerous living conditions for the unsheltered by relying on woefully slow and brutally expensive projects. Job #1 is to help get our homeless neighbors off the streets immediately--not a decade from now. It's time lead on this issue and save lives now."

"We have the tools, we have the technology, we have proven, market-tested alternatives," said former Intel and IBM executive and current Councilmember Arjun Batra, District 10. "I'm enthusiastic that we can leverage the insights we've acquired and maintain our creativity to assist as many individuals as swiftly as we can. We need to do everything in our power to deliver as quickly as possible, dignified shelter for the unsheltered."

The Councilmembers' proposal can build the shelter community in less than five months after the green light to begin construction is received, for a cost of roughly \$16,000 per bed, or a cost savings of 98.9% over the current Permanent Supportive Housing approach which can take up to a decade to build beds that can cost around \$1.4 Million each.

Pre-engineered congregate housing is widely acknowledged as a successful and viable option; structures can be made and assembled in as little as two weeks and have been used as gymnasiums, homeless shelters, hospitals, schools, dormitories, convention centers and more. In fact, the south hall of the San José Convention center is a prefabricated building that has been used for business, entertainment, and emergency needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our south hall was used as a shelter to house our homeless neighbors.

WATER-WISE®

Almaden: Home of orchards and vineyards

By Matthew Frazier

QWEL, CalWEP (2020-2024)

Almaden Valley is the home of orchards and vineyards, especially home-grown vineyards.

The Aristocracy of Almaden Valley enjoys its many varieties of wines, with their many marriages of flavor and tone.

As the Almaden sun sets behind the glowing emerald winter hills, there is much to celebrate in the daily and weekly affairs of the citizenry, not the least of which is the aspect and luxury of privacy.

Vitis californica

Almaden Valley Nursery (June 2006 to July 2008) was alive with wealthy clients and their contractors, searching in earnest and haste for table grapes and wine grapes. Privacy was paramount. Often, rodents devoured the grapes before they could be harvested. Not Vitis californica. This fruiting vine looks like



Vitis californica: This fruiting vine looks like table grapes and wine grapes.



Water Wise
Matthew Frazier,
Certified Water
Manager

table grapes and wine grapes. Yet the convenience of a screening effect is what sets this apart from many other varieties.

Often, customers sought complete seclusion from the view of their neighbors and those renting from them in adjacent units. Enter Vitis californica. With a vibrant glow of foliage and fruit and an aggressive growth habit, the landscape trees were not needed. Retailing at \$250 to \$500

in upscale private nurseries, 15-gallon and 24-inch box trees would eventually block such views and protect against voyeurs.

Vitis californica grows wild in California
See WATER WISE, page 9



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Trips and Events: Tickets on sale M,W,F 8am to 10am in the Almaden Community Center Lobby.

Graton Casino: Tues., March 19, Price: \$50. \$20 back in Free Play. Come with us to **Graton Casino** by bus for a day of gaming. Depart at 8AM from the Almaden Community Center and return around 6:30pm. For more information call Rich at 408-219-8641

Event:

St Patrick's Day: Saturday, March 16th, 2024 12pm-3pm. Come celebrate St. Patrick's Day at noon with lunch including corned beef, cabbage, carrots, chicken, potatoes, green salad, coleslaw, rolls, dessert and punch. Entertainment will be Bagpipes and drums by members of local pipe bands. Prices \$22.00 members \$25.00 non-members, Check or cash. For more information call Jeanne at 408-425-5723.

For more information, go to <https://almadenseniors.org>

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Times Local News

West Side Story

Continued from page 1

Caucasian (the Jets). Despite their rivalry, Tony, a just-past member of the Jets, falls in love with Maria, the Sharks leader, Bernardo's sister. As in "Romeo and Juliet", this, set against the tumultuous background of the two gangs and their shared misunderstanding and hatred, provides a similar outcome to the Shakespearean classic.

The difference? This story is set as a musical. Whereas normally Broadway productions allowed for four weeks' dance preparation and rehearsals, this demanded eight. In order to be successful in telling the story via this genre, participants literally have to be "triple threats": able at a high level to not only act, but also sing and dance at that same level of expectation.

The story of this masterpiece is modernized at least into a century which begins with "twenty". Yet one of the main underlying themes is disturbingly repeated - true as it was in Shakespearean 1500s, it has reverberated throughout history all the way to and through the 1950s to today.

Tony, portrayed by PHS senior Luke Jennings, is the Romeo figure.

Although the story does not provide reasons for why Tony is no longer a part of the Jets (be

it older than high school age, a previous decision to no longer participate in the gang, too busy with work, whatever it may be), Tony has to be convinced by now Jets leader, Riff, to rejoin the gang and its cause at hand: beating the Sharks.

Although Tony is convinced, he's side-tracked by Maria. This role is challenging Luke in new and different ways than his usual type of character. For one, Tony is close to Luke's age.

Luke shared this is his favorite musical of all of the genre, and he is committed to providing the best possible performance.

"It's a dramatic role, where normally I'm cast in more comedic or paternal roles - probably because I'm tall so that archetype fits me," Luke said.

"Playing someone my own age; it's allowing me to put a bit of myself into the character. And it's stretching me as I haven't yet played the intense romantic or the character filled with grief. My character represents the optimism of youth, and how love warps the view of reality by seeing everything through rose-colored glasses."

Newcomer to the forefront of the stage, Rachel Kim, took a siesta from acting in the school's spring musical last year. Now in her senior year at Pioneer, she decided to join again for her last year, realizing she could blend her passion

for dance and acting with this show. Rachel is grateful she chose this year to return to one of her passions in musical theater.

"I never felt I was a talented singer, but after portraying Meg in "Hercules", (the autumn touring show with stops at multiple local elementary schools), I was told I could sing," Rachel said. "So when I was cast as Maria, Tony's love interest, I felt much more confident having played Meg. This role (as Maria) will be the largest role I've ever had."

There are multiple themes running through this story. Relevant to today there are two groups of people, each misunderstanding the other to such a degree hatred has festered among all the members of each gang towards members of the other gang. Racism runs an obvious intertwined theme. Themes of friendship, replacement brotherhood, love, violence, tragedy, loss, grief - to name just a few. As Donovan Collins, who portrays Bernardo, shared "the importance of how racism causes so many things" should not be lost on an audience member, or even a cast member.

"I'm hopeful audience members leave this production with a new perspective regarding the problems with racism," Donovan said. "Racism as you will see is but one of the subplots in this layered story."

West Side Story also has much for audience members and cast members alike to enjoy.

"Doing the fight scene is my favorite part of the musical; the intensity and the increased movement especially in the second act," said Donovan.

For Rachel, it is "definitely reminding me of why I returned to performing. It reawakened my love of theatre. The opening prologue is my absolute favorite. It tells the story through dance and movement; I literally love that part."

"It's my favorite when themes can be shared without a word being spoken. The spatial dynamics, who's on stage at any given moment during this scene is overall my favorite," shared Luke.

"West Side Story" stands out compared to other shows because of its consistent intricacies throughout all its aspects. Obviously, the show is going to contain dance --it's a musical - but the way that dance is used to represent all of the important acts on the stage is major-

ly important. The fact that the dancing of 'West Side Story' has been parodied in such media as 'Family Guy' is only a testament to its success,' said Mrs. Coleman.

"My hope is people see that what's most important is the content of one's soul. It's not the differences. It's not the cliques. For many of us here in California, that's not as obvious because we're exposed to more diversity. But in the 1950s the differences were prevalent and racial divisions more obvious. In the end, though, love has no boundaries," Rachel said.

"If the audience member takes away the message that connection is even more important than love, and that if people would only strive for connection versus division, I'd feel the audience left with one of the most important messages," Luke reflected. "The story is supposed to be sad. The message won't get across unless we achieve that level of sadness. It's why we work so hard as actors. If it's not done genuinely, what's the point? In the end, I hope our audience leaves with a new perspective on how to engage with others in a less hostile, more loving way."

"I hope our audiences leave impacted - not just by the artistic mastery of "West Side Story" - but also its universal message. It's the tale of the simmering forces of poverty, societal apathy & abandonment, prejudice, and resentment can, when pressurized to the right level, bring even the most innocent and peaceful people to violence," said Mrs. Coleman. "I would not say this a feel-good musical, but I would say it has the potential to convict and inspire every single audience member."

As Mrs. Coleman shared, "The tragedy of 'West Side Story' is as poignant today as it was back in the '50's and '60s because pleas for tolerance continue to resonate and the show has relevance for ever-new generations of audiences."

Editor's note: Due to some themes and scenes in this play, please consider it a PG-13 production. Doors open 6:30 p.m. nightly. Fri-Sat, March 22nd & 23rd, as well as Wed-Sat March 27th through 30th. General, student and senior tickets at <https://phsdrama.ludus.com> with some reserved for walk-up sales nightly. Pioneer High School is located at 1290 Blossom Hill Road, San Jose, CA.

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Times **Local News**

State recruiting 10K paid California Service Corps members to help communities; provide economic opportunities

By William Bellou
Publisher

Governor Gavin Newsom and California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday recently announced that California is seeking 10,000 people to join the California Service Corps. Members will gain meaningful work experience while helping their communities and earning money.

Over the coming year, California Service Corps programs is expected to employ more than 10,000 members, serving nearly five million hours.

Service members help communities by taking climate action, tutoring and mentoring students to help them succeed, supporting communities impacted by disasters, working to end hunger and connecting vulnerable people to vital resources and services.

"As Californians, the spirit of service and giving back is in our DNA – it's why we have the largest service corps in the nation, bigger than the Peace Corps and a model for other states," said Governor Gavin Newsom. "In the coming year, 10,000 service corps mem-

bers will devote more than five million hours to our communities as we work to build a California for all."

California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday, center, announces the California Service Corps recruitment drive alongside service members, from left, Wendy Parmelee, Chris Ashley, Chiena Ty, and Wendy Lizola. Together, they ignite a collective commitment to making a California For All.

The California Service Corps is the largest service force in the nation, consisting of four paid service programs: #CaliforniansForAll College Corps, California Climate Action Corps, #CaliforniansForAll Youth Jobs Corps and AmeriCorps California. Combined, it is a force larger than the Peace Corps and will be mobilized at a time when California is addressing the climate crisis, post-pandemic academic recovery and how to shape the future of our workforce.

"These are California's future leaders, and we need their passion, energy and enthusiasm to address our greatest challenges," said California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday. "These programs pave pathways for prosperity, propel progress on our most pressing issues, and promote unity to help unravel the crisis of social isolation and division."

California Service Corps members gain skills and experience while connecting with others and making a positive difference. Additionally, service experiences foster a positive sense of connection and belonging, an answer to the loneliness crisis – as declared by the U.S. Surgeon General.

To learn more about California Service Corps visit CAServiceCorps.com.

Water Wise

Continued from page 7

and is a specimen as much as a staple. With ornamental berries that attract both migratory and native birds, this botanical serves a dual function. Vital to privacy, this piece is the perfect condiment to the whole. Many were skeptical at first but when they saw images and photos of a mature specimen, they were sold, much as the plant. These were special orders then as they are today.

With the very finest plants in Almaden Valley and the neighboring valleys, the stock is certain to satisfy. This vine is an ideal and optimal choice for those with little to no time for gardening and landscaping. The aggressive growth habit of this vine will rise to the occasion, figuratively and literally.

Attaching ladder trellis to the top of fences with cedar-colored deck screws is effective from what I have seen over the years. The foliage of this vine will



hold everything firmly in place while shooting out a plethora of green shades of both mature and new growth. The berries are edible though not a draw for their flavor to humans; but birds really like them. The luminous glow in sunrise hours and sunset hours makes this a focal point of any garden or landscape.

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Editor's note: Matthew Frazier is a Certified Water Manager, Qualified Stormwater Manager, and Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper. You may reach Matthew at (408) 656-5622 – Mobile; or by email: kitchenfrazier@hotmail.com



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Times Local News

Casey

Continued from page 1
trickle in. Casey said he decided to run for the seat because the district deserves better than its current leadership.

"I got involved because I was frustrated with issues that were just not being addressed in San Jose," he told San José Spotlight. "You come across such generous people, generous with their time and their money. They inspired me and frustrated me even more because people deserve so much more. This has been phenomenal for me. I'm just so proud to be a part of this community."

Batra filled the seat last year after Mayor Matt Mahan was elected mayor in Nov. 2022. Batra, who worked as a software engineer and Intel executive, served on city committees overseeing tax measure spending and smart city initiatives.

Batra has positioned himself as a reliable moderate vote on a city council dominated by progressives. In his year in office, he's worked on measures to address homelessness and to speed up the city's permitting and housing development processes. To improve street safety, he added 15 speed bumps across his district, narrowed streets and implemented speed radars. He also hired 10 additional school crossing guards and put more lights in the Hoffman Via Monte neighborhood.

Casey, a San Jose planning commissioner and attorney, said his experience as a corporate lawyer with a background in real estate makes him the most viable to replace Batra. Casey is endorsed by the police officers' association and Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility. On the campaign trail, Casey prioritized

affordable housing measures such as down payment assistance and rent-to-own policies for police officers and city employees to bolster retention.

Batra and Casey secured a dual endorsement from the Silicon Valley Biz PAC.

Wright, a former broadcast journalist who works as a communications director for the city of Mountain View, is endorsed by four of Batra's council colleagues, including San Jose Councilmembers Dev Davis, Sergio Jimenez and Omar Torres, as well as Santa Clara County Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, Santa Clara Valley Water District Board Director Jim Beall and Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone.

At her election night party at Mr. Mojito Bar & Grill in Almaden Valley, Wright was upbeat as she watched the early returns. Lively music filled the air as she and her supporters gathered around a fire pit and dined on appetizers.

"I'm feeling great and overwhelmed by the enthusiasm shown by my supporters," Wright told San José Spotlight. "I met great people knocking on thousands of doors in District 10. We have such a great community here and the enthusiasm to see our community thrive moves me not only to see what I can do for District 10 but the community at large."

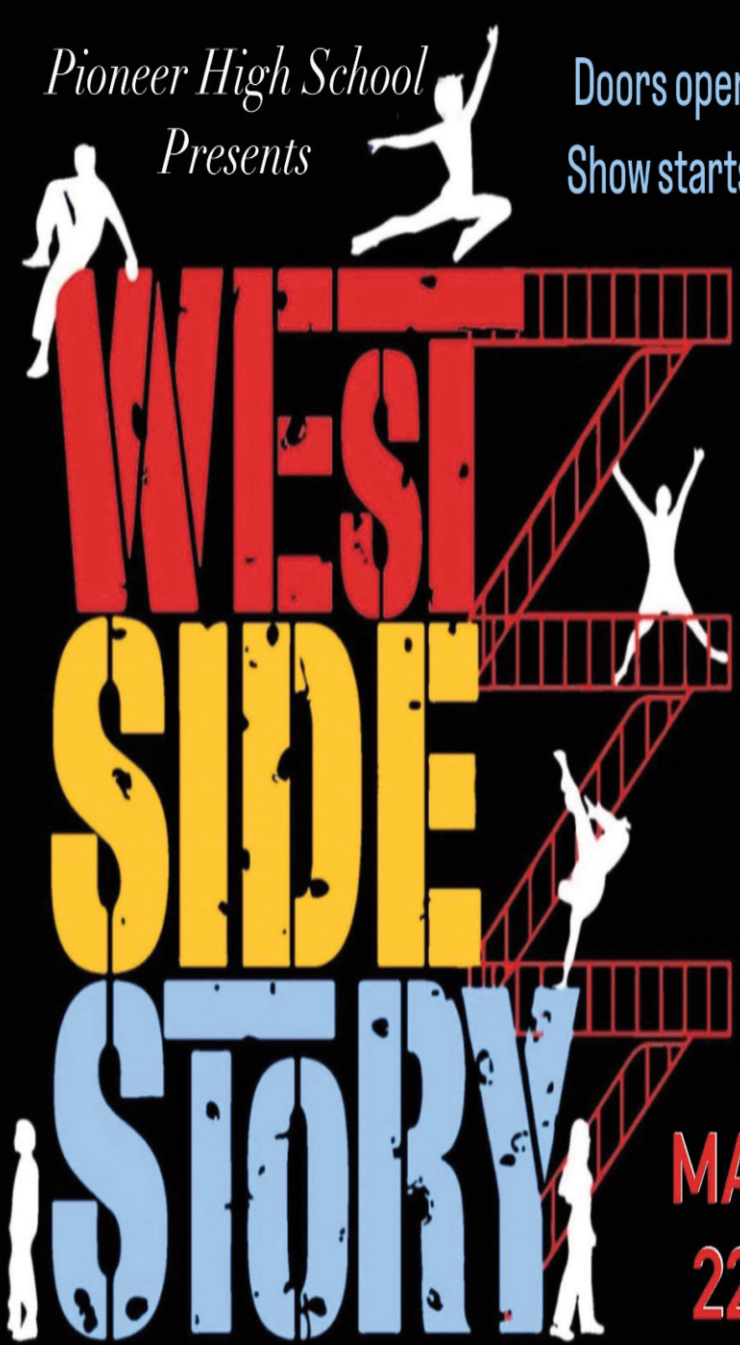
She ran a campaign focused on public safety staffing, investing in emergency services and addressing homelessness with safe parking and housing solutions.

During the race, Batra raised the most money with \$67,314, followed by Casey with \$59,590 and Wright with \$32,794, as of Dec. 31.

Batra did not have an election night party and told San Jose Spotlight he voted by mail earlier in the week.

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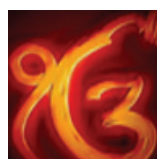


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