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Colli in Concert on
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Fallacy behind state's rollback of
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efforts to start
complying with
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Times

APRIL 12 - APRIL 25, 2024 ■ VOL. 37, NO. 8

Easter Bunny makes joyful house calls on Easter weekend in Almaden Valley

By Sean Eastwood
Times staff writer

Almaden Valley had a special visitor making house calls this past Holiday weekend!

Aidan Schnittker, a Senior at Leland High School, transformed into the Easter Bunny himself and brought a little magic to some very surprised and delighted children.

"I love giving back to the community and offering various kinds of events," said Aidan's mother, Kelly Ray. "Last year I did an Easter Egg hunt and this year I wanted to try something a little different. Having my son play the role of the Easter Bunny and watching him engage so amazingly with the kids made the event extra special for me."

Editor's note: Parents and families who are interested in signing up for a Bunny visit next year should keep an eye out for community announcement or reach out to Kelly Ray (kellyray@therealexperts.com) to be one of the first on the calendar for next year's festivities.



The Easter Bunny laid out eggs for an Easter Egg hunt for each family visited in Almaden, knocked on the front door and posed for pictures.

Non-profit Heart & Homes contributes 200 hygiene care packages to Bay Area homeless

Organization supports local communities in need

In a significant act of charity and community support, Heart & Homes, a nonprofit organization, has made a meaningful contribution to the Bay Area's homeless communities by donating 200 hygiene care packages.

Founded by an industrious high school sophomore from Presentation High School, Harika Chodavarapu, the non-profit provides essential items such as soaps, lotions, dental kits, blankets, deodorants, and hand sanitizers to those in need.

"The need for basic items among the homeless is overwhelming. Many of us take these necessities for granted. We aim to help as many people as possible by providing these critical items," Harika said.

The organization's volunteers support homeless shelters with necessary supplies and aid old age homes with food provisions. Looking ahead, Heart & Homes has set an ambitious goal for 2024 to enlarge its impact and expand its operations.



Harika Chodavarapu, Founder and Bay Area Chapter Head of Heart and Homes

Drew, a representative from Food Not Bombs (FNB), a local community support organization, expressed his heartfelt gratitude towards Heart & Homes's generous donation.

"We have a wonderful young lady [Harika] here who's on the high school level who sees the importance of love, mercy, beauty, and compassion in the community and sees that nobody, no matter what times we're in, should have to fall to a level of ruin and destitution," Drew said. "They're essential things that all people need, and we have."

The homelessness crisis in the Bay Area continues to be a pressing issue, with McKinsey & Company reporting approximately 38,000 individuals experiencing homelessness on any given night, marking a 35 percent increase since 2019. While many organizations focus on providing essential food supplies, Heart & Homes aims to complement these efforts by addressing the dire need for basic hygiene items

Individuals interested in volunteering or contributing to Heart & Homes's mission are encouraged to contact at harika@heartandhomes.org.



Lion Dance Dragons: **Aiden Ren, Anthony Xie, Dalston Chan, Ethan Soda**
(Photo credit: Maggie Wang)

Op Ed

The dragon's dilemma for Leland Bridge Night 2024

By Denail Xu

As the sixth sign in the Chinese zodiac, the auspicious dragon symbolizes good luck, strength, and health.

Out of all the animals in the 12-year cycle, the dragon is the only mythical creature present in the original fable while it is often widely regarded as a representation of prosperity and authority.

The dragon carries an aura of mystery and uncertainty, befitting of the philosophy that all things are balanced in one aspect or another, of light and dark, of knowledge and obscurity. That is, in the context of the 2024 Leland Bridge Night.

Leland Bridge Night is an annual celebration of the Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, hosted by the Leland Bridge Parents' Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising funds to support schoolwide extracurricular activities like Speech and Debate and Robotics.

The event itself is extravagant; from the interior decoration of var-

ious ornaments and lanterns to many talented student performances, it never fails to amaze the audience. More than 200 people gathered in the school cafeteria, not just to be there for the fun, but also to appreciate and embrace Chinese culture.

I have attended the event three years in a row now. Little did I know then that in the coming years, participating in Leland Bridge Night would be one of my favorite activities in contributing to the community.

Last year, as a freshman, I was put in charge of going out on weekends to visit different businesses to request sponsorships for raffle prizes during the event. That certainly entailed some rejection, as not every store was willing to donate a sum of money, but luckily performing and other jobs balanced it out for me.

This year, I was unexpectedly given a line! "If you're the mascot, then what am I?" I had said, given the role of acting as a dragon

See DRAGON, page 8

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

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

YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley's Tribute to Women Awards announced, celebrating 40 years of leadership

By **Veronica Short**
Special to the Times

YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley's Annual Tribute to Women Awards is celebrating 40 years of women's leadership.

More than 30 executive and emerging leaders will be recognized at a networking celebration and awards dinner presented by Cisco, May 2, 2024, 5:00 - 9:00 PM, at the Santa Clara Marriott.

The Awards recognize the achievements of women who have excelled in their fields and have made significant contributions to the Bay Area through their dedication and leadership.

"Tribute to Women is an opportunity to celebrate diversity in the workplace, to amplify the ways in which women support each other, and to shine a light on the importance of women's voice," said Adriana Caldera Boroffice, CEO, YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley. "With this milestone year, we're excited to be joined by companies from across the Bay Area that are actively committed to centering women's leadership and diversity."

Tribute to Women Awards salutes those corporations whose policies and practices encourage women's leadership and promote equal advancement opportunities for women of diverse backgrounds. "At Cisco, we believe in powering an inclusive future for all, and we are proud to sponsor the YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley's Annual Tribute to Women Awards, said Brian Tippens, Senior Vice President and Chief Social Impact Officer.

"As we celebrate 40 years of exceptional women's leadership, it is our honor to sponsor an event that not only recognizes the remarkable achievements of trailblazing women but also underscores the importance of a diverse and equitable workplace.

This year's honorees are not only transformational leaders, but they are also laying the groundwork for the next



generation of women leaders to build upon, ensuring a brighter, more equitable future for all."

Your YWCA strives to promote gender equality for women and girls in the workplace, and the larger community. We advocate ensuring diverse representation at all levels, including the highest-ranking leadership positions.

A limited number of tickets and tables are available for purchase at bit.ly/T40th, along with a complete list of the 2024 Honorees.

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Report: 2024's Healthiest Cities in America

With more than 7 in 10 U.S. adults being overweight and health care costs rising, the personal-finance website WalletHub just released its report on 2024's Healthiest Cities in America, to show where people are saving and costing themselves the most money.

WalletHub compared more than 180 of the largest U.S. cities across 41 key metrics.

The data set ranges from the cost of a medical visit to fruit and vegetable consumption to the share of physically active adults.

Healthiest Cities

1. San Francisco, CA
2. Honolulu, HI
3. Seattle, WA
4. San Diego, CA
5. Washington, DC
6. Portland, OR
7. Denver, CO
8. Salt Lake City, UT
9. Scottsdale, AZ
10. Irvine, CA

Unhealthiest Cities

173. Huntington, WV
174. Detroit, MI
175. Corpus Christi, TX
176. Fayetteville, NC
177. Augusta, GA
178. Shreveport, LA
179. Columbus, GA
180. Laredo, TX
181. Gulfport, MS
182. Brownsville, TX

To view the full report and your city's rank, visit: <https://wallethub.com/edu/healthiest-cities/31072>

Times **Community Notebook**

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Op Ed

Fallacy behind state's rollback of water conservation regulations

By Ed Harrington

With California's reservoirs brimming, this is the moment to strengthen our long-term water future, before the next drought. Unfortunately, the State Water Board has just taken a major step back from the fastest and cheapest way of securing water supplies for cities and towns by rolling back its own proposed conservation rules.

The draft rules issued in 2023 were intended to implement 2018 legislation "Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life." The bill was already a compromise, and the regulations implementing it years later were conservative.

The new rollback sets the state even further behind, likely to the detriment of ratepayers statewide. The primary driver for the change seems to have been complaints that the water savings proposed won't make much difference and will cost too much. The evidence, however, indicates otherwise, and decision makers need a fuller picture.

Conservation will cost billions, but so will finding new sources of water — where that is even possible. The question is which set of

strategies will be most affordable and provide greater benefits. Because we can't continue the status quo.

The most easily developed water sources have been built, and new supplies such as seawater desalination, pure water recycling, or dam raises will be much more expensive. If the goal is climate resilience and affordability, conservation is the least-cost option, and the fastest way to meet human needs for the long term.

The state estimated that implementing its conservation regulations would generate about 440,000 acre-feet of annual water savings, or 8.5% of total urban water use. That's a massive amount of water, roughly equivalent to the annual deliveries of San Francisco's entire Hetch Hetchy Regional Water System which serves more than 2.7 million people.

Moreover, the state's assessment was likely a substantial under-estimate. The highly regarded Pacific Institute estimates the potential for urban water savings to be between 2 million to 3 million acre-feet per year.

Ratepayers shoulder the burden for 95% of all local water infrastructure, so the relative cost of new water sources is a critical affordability issue. Supply projects such as desalination generally cost \$3,000 per acre-foot or more, while water efficiency measures range from \$600 to \$1,800 per acre-foot.

For example, water saved through conservation enabled Los Angeles to avoid additional supply, treatment, and pumping costs totaling more than \$11 billion between 1990 and 2016. Absent this conservation, customer bills would have been more than 26% higher.

Ratepayer affordability depends not only on how much something costs, but also how you pay for it. Few of us can pay cash for a house, but it becomes affordable when the cost is spread over time. The same is true when paying for water conservation. Water utilities routinely borrow to pay for large construction projects. Doing the same for water efficiency programs would enable utilities to substantially scale up these efforts but keep rates affordable by spreading the costs over time to match the long-term benefits.

Right now, utilities can also tap federal dollars to cover half the cost of conservation projects, making them more affordable than ever for ratepayers. Since 2021, dozens of California communities have received federal grants for smart meters, turf replacement programs, appliance rebates, and other water efficiency efforts.

Six years ago, the state committed to "Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life." To deliver on this promise and ensure reliable and affordable water for Californians, the state should move ahead with the conservation rules proposed last year, not the watered-down version released this week. The urgency to invest in water efficiency is greater today than ever before, and California's communities and ratepayers deserve no less.

Ed Harrington is former general manager of the San Francisco PUC and the former president of the Governmental Finance Officers Association. Cynthia Koehler is executive director of nonprofit WaterNow Alliance.

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Times **Community Notebook**

IN MEMORY

Junetta McKewan
July 12, 1931 - Mar 24, 2024

Member of Almaden Hills
 United Methodist Church

Resident of San Jose Junetta M. McKewan, passed away on March 24, 2024, surrounded by her family.

She and her husband Richard S McKewan were happy together for 74 years.

After raising three children Junetta went back to college. She earned a Master's in Education and taught elementary school and English as Second Languaged (ESL) for over 50 years.

She was an active member of the Almaden Hills United Methodist Church and gave of her time and talents generously.

Junetta and Dick traveled the world and particularly loved the Grand Canyon. Junetta loved to cook and bake, she was an avid gardener, and she made beautiful quilts.

Junetta is survived by her husband Richard



S McKewan, sons William McKewan and Tom McKewan, daughter Jeanie McKewan, 4 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren.

Donations can be sent to Second Harvest of Silicon Valley. <https://www.shfb.org>.

**Steinway Society -
 The Bay Area
 presents Italian
 pianist Federico
 Colli in Concert on
 Saturday, May 4**

Steinway Society - The Bay Area presents the multi-award-winning classical pianist Federico Colli in concert on Saturday, May 4, 2024, at 7:30 pm PST at Cubberley Community Center Theatre in Palo Alto, CA.

To meet the needs of a diverse community of patrons, Steinway Society also offers a streaming option to watch the concert live and provide "unlimited listens" for 48 hours afterward. Program notes and a complimentary recorded pre-concert lecture by classical music expert Dr. Gary Lemco are available for ticketholders at www.steinwaysociety.com.

The concert is presented Live and Live-Streamed by Steinway Society—The Bay Area. Program includes Ligeti, Domenico Scarlatti, François Couperin, and Maurice Ravel.

Tickets: \$45 to \$70

General Admission: \$70/\$60/\$50

Senior & student: \$65/\$55/\$45

Livestream online: \$25 per household / live + unlimited listens for 48 hours

Purchase Tickets: <https://steinwaysociety.com/>; Box Office: 408.300.5635; Email: office@steinwaysociety.com

FULL PROGRAM

Ligeti, Musica ricercata

1. Sostenuto - Misurato - Prestissimo
2. Mesto, rigido e cerimoniale
3. Allegro con spirito
4. Tempo di valse
5. Rubato, Lamentoso
6. Allegro molto capriccioso
7. Cantabile, molto legato



8. Vivace, Energico
 9. Adagio, Mesto
 10. Vivace, Capriccioso
 11. Andante misurato e tranquillo
- Domenico Scarlatti, Sonatas
 Sonata in F Minor, K. 19
 Sonata in D Major, K. 430
 Sonata in D Minor, K. 32
 Sonata in C Minor, K. 40
 Sonata in C Major, K. 95
 Sonata in D Minor, K. 1
 INTERMISSION

François Couperin, Le Carillon de Cythère
 François Couperin, Les Barricades Mystérieuses

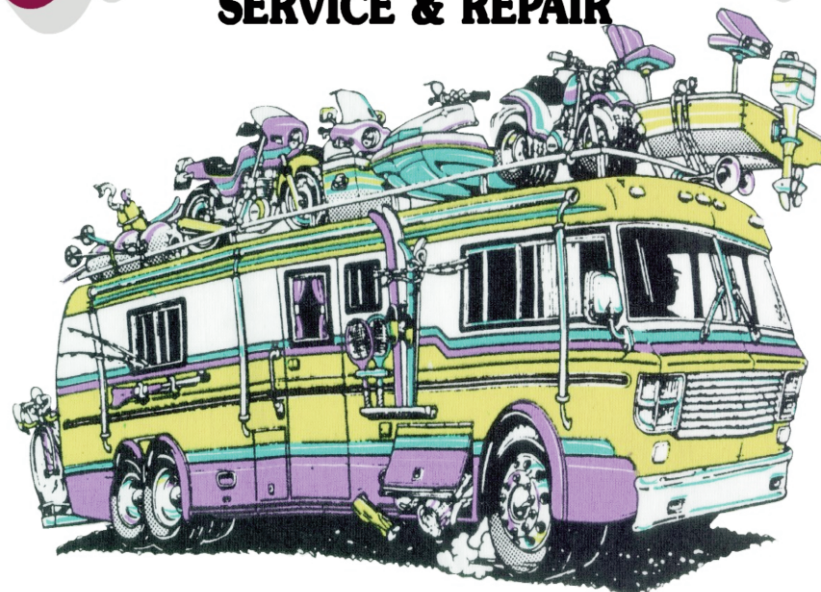
François Couperin, Les Folies françaises
 ou Les Dominos

Maurice Ravel, Le Tombeau de Couperin
 Born in Brescia, Italy in 1988, Colli studied at the Milan Conservatory, Imola International Piano Academy and Salzburg Mozarteum. The Music Section of the UK Critics' Circle included him among the recipients of its 2018 Awards.

Praised by Gramophone as "one of the more original thinkers of his generation," Federico Colli has been rapidly gaining worldwide recognition for his compelling, unconventional interpretations and clarity of sound. After winning First Prize at the Salzburg Mozart Competition in 2011, and the Gold Medal at the 2012 Leeds International Piano Competition, International Piano Magazine selected him "as one of the 30 pianists under 30 who are likely to dominate the world stage in years to come."

For more information on season subscriptions, individual tickets, the artists, and Steinway Society, go to www.SteinwaySociety.com or contact (408) 300-5635.

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Times **Local News**

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Sunnyvale Community Players presents Jesus Christ Superstar April 13th - May 5th

Sunnyvale Community Players (SCP) presents the rockin' classic musical "Jesus Christ Superstar" beginning Saturday April 13th and running through Sunday, May 5th. Performances are at Sunnyvale Theatre, inside the Sunnyvale Community Center, 550 East Remington Drive.

Prepare to immerse yourself in this timeless work, Jesus Christ Superstar is a raw and powerful rock opera written by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice that tells one of the most universally-known and oft-told stories in the world: the story of Jesus' crucifixion. Superstar tells the story of Jesus from the perspective of Judas Iscariot and explores the relationships between Judas and Jesus, Jesus and the people of Israel and the leadership of

Rome, as well as Jesus' relationship with Mary Magdalene and his other devoted followers.

With original music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Tim Rice, this rock opera features songs that will captivate you such as "Heaven's on Their Minds", "What's the Buzz", "Everything is Alright" and of course they titular, "Superstar" This show will have you grooving along with this color cast of characters as well as pull you in as we witness the love, betrayal and tragedy of Jesus Christ through the eyes of Judas,

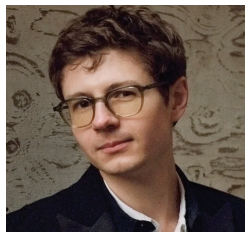
Sunnyvale Community Players (SCP) presents the rockin' classic musical "Jesus Christ Superstar" beginning Saturday April 13th

Performances are 8 p.m. for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday showings; 2:30 p.m. for Sunday matinees. Running time is approximately 90 minutes with (1) 15 minute intermission.

Tickets are \$44 for adults; \$38 for students and seniors (age 55 and older). \$25 for Children 10 & Under. They can be purchased online at www.sunnyvaleplayers.org or through the box office at (408) 475-1198.

Steinway Society
THE BAY AREA

LIVE & LIVESTREAM



PAVEL KOLESNIKOV

April 7, 2:30 p.m.

Cubberley Community Center Theatre, Palo Alto

PROGRAM

Chopin, Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 45

Chopin, Four Waltzes

Chopin, Three Nocturnes

Chopin, Five Mazurkas

INTERMISSION

Schubert, Piano Sonata in B-Flat Major, D. 960



TRIO WANDERER

April 20, 7:30 p.m.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, San Jose

PROGRAM

Fauré, Piano Trio in D Minor, Op. 120

L. Boulanger, D'un soir triste—D'un matin de printemps, for Piano Trio

INTERMISSION

Bonis, Soir. Matin, Op. 76, for Piano Trio

Ravel, Piano Trio in A Minor



FEDERICO COLLI

May 4, 7:30 p.m.

Cubberley Community Center Theatre, Palo Alto

PROGRAM

Ligeti, Musica ricercata

Scarlatti, Selected Sonatas

INTERMISSION

Couperin, Le Carillon de Cythère

Couperin, Les Barricades mystérieuses

Couperin, Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos

Couperin, Selections from Le Tombeau de Couperin

Ravel, from Le Tombeau de Couperin

Op Ed: Let's keep the San Jose tax collectors out of our bedrooms

By Pierluigi Oliverio
A city only exists with tax revenues — and the collection of those taxes should be simple, streamlined and fair.



Candidates for San Jose City Council are calling for a complicated, dubious and unwieldy new tax. It's called The Empty Homes Tax, and it would create an invasive new bureaucracy with little promise of revenue.

It's a double tax on top of existing property taxes and is based on the misbegotten hope of finding the needle in a haystack. The EHT would apply to any housing unit that is unoccupied for a portion of the year, with proceeds funding low-income housing.

This new tax is contrary to private property rights and good tax policy. In the U.S., individuals have the right to live in any state they can afford, with the opportunity to purchase or rent and inhabit a dwelling as they wish.

EHT is double taxation of a dwelling and could be applied regardless of: hospital stay, surgery rehabilitation, senior assisted living, job transfer, caregiving out of town, construction remodel, death in the family or retirees traveling by RV across the U.S. If an exception is allowed, then it would require residents to share sensitive data and documentation with

a government official.

The administration of such a tax is arduous and onerous because it requires households to fill out forms annually and legally self-attest their occupancy. In order to ensure compliance, there would be late fees, and if a household refused to share their personal and/or potentially sensitive medical information, they could be subject to an infraction. Auditing a percentage of households would be required, consuming limited city resources and creating a time burden for those subject to audit.

This creates a situation where neighbors are tattling on their neighbor's home and the city would investigate. I don't think we want a city where this type of neighbor-on-neighbor conflict could arise.

It is important to understand that city employees, with limited resources, would need to be reallocated from other departments to oversee the paperwork from hundreds of thousands of dwellings to locate the small percentage of dwellings that may be vacant. Ultimately this exercise may not even produce enough revenue to cover the administrative costs and thus potentially no additional tax revenue.

We often hear pleas to "keep government out of the bedroom." But with this new occupancy tax scheme, the government would not
See TAX COLLECTORS, page 8



Box Office: (408) 300-5635 | steinwaysociety.com

Free Hola Mohalla Festival of Courage and Strength April 21 at Sikh Gurdwara in Evergreen Valley

By Kirpal Atwal

Special to the Times

The Evergreen Community is excited in anticipation of this year's Hola Mohalla Festival of Courage and Strength on Sunday, April 21 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) at one of San Jose's most beautiful landmarks, San Jose Gurdwara.

This special event encourages everyone to be healthy, engage in physical sports, and tackle challenges to help everyone achieve well-rounded physical and mental health.

The annual free event not only provides a unique opportunity for the community to come together, but also fosters understanding and love for one another.

Located all the way up Quimby Road in the Evergreen Valley foothills, this is a day where all people of all cultures and religions are invited as guests of the American Sikhs in the Bay Area.

The Festival of Courage and Strength (Hola Mohala) is truly a unique experience and a gift to the community. Thousands of volunteers of many faiths organize the event which offers complementary tasty specialty recipes of delicious handmade food and beverages, including several flavors of ice cream!

Building strength and courage

Hola Mohalla focuses on building up your



Above: San Jose Gurdwara Sikhs prepare food for an event in November 2023.

"It's a Festival of love from the Sikhs to all people!" — Bob Dhillon

own personal strength and courage in all you do. You and your family of all ages are encouraged to join in or observe many athletic competitions such as Tug of War, Running Races for adults and children, Martial Arts, competitive games and performances, Volleyball and Basketball competitions, Horseback Riding Competitions, and Pony Rides for youngsters where they navigate the saddle and ride the circular track that is sure to bring a smile to their face!

"This is a festival where you can come and enjoy events with your family and walk around and enjoy our various activities. We welcome you as our guest and hope you have a wonderful time," said Bob Dhillon, President of the San Jose Gurdwara. "We want everyone to know that this festival belongs to everyone in the community. It's an event where everyone is welcome to enjoy and build new friendships and understanding."

This Festival is a representation of love from the Sikhs to all people!"

Booths of food & wares

There will be food booths offering complementary mouthwatering delicious handmade culturally authentic foods, and don't forget the ice cream. There will also be booths that will feature authentic traditional Indian wares (clothing items, kid's toys, jewelry and more) for purchase. It is like walking through an authentic bazaar in India. Community information booths will feature San Jose agencies that offer complementary services.

Touring the Gurdwara

While attending the Festival, you may take a tour and learn about the culture of the San Jose Gurdwara, the largest in the United States. The Gurdwara is open to the public year-round and is considered among the most beautiful and tranquil places in the world. Ask about their history museum and you will be amazed. The Gurdwara welcomes all people of all cultures and all religions.

Take the shuttle or just walk in

For the past 10 years the Festival has grown in attendance. There is free parking in the Gurdwara and that fills up by morning and so many park along Gurdwara Avenue or at the schools where a free shuttle runs which will bring you to the site and back to your car later in the day. There are also shuttles from nearby schools. Everything is done like clockwork because the volunteers and oversight leaders professionally ensure the family friendly festival

See *FESTIVAL*, next page

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Times Local News

Dragon

Continued from page 1

during the introduction of the event, kicking out the rabbit from the previous year. Many of the audience members roared in delight at the surprise dragon dance that my partner and I gave during the latter half of the Lion Dance performance.

Looking back to our display, I asked myself, was the dragon meant to be just another visual effect to put more bang in the performance? Was it just another prop used to swing around on stage? What exactly is the meaning of the dragon, and why should we hold it in high regard? I ultimately concluded that although the dragon may just be a symbol from the Chinese zodiac, we all can learn a lot about ourselves and the community from even a simple little story.

Despite the show being an extremely well-planned event, with the MCs speaking their lines precisely and the volunteers serving the attendees nearly perfectly, the mysterious nature of the dragon is a constant reminder that behind the scenes, hard work and effort are being exerted by everyone to make these ideals into reality.

From the get-go, three to four months before the actual event, volunteers had started working diligently in preparation for the occasion. Dozens of students flocked and filled the volunteers' list, taking up opportunities from food and decoration to backstage work to even dressing up as a Money God character. Parents stayed nearly five to six hours every single day; starting right after school ended until the school closed at night just to supervise sufficient practice for per-



MC: Eric Yue, Lori Yang, Suvia Li, William Li, Daniel Lin, Karl Xing, Claire Tsai, Justin Lai. (Photo credit: Yongchun Gong)

formers. Our president, Monica Ho, bore the large responsibility of managing the entire event to ensure it ran smoothly.

Performances were both a pleasure and a pain to arrange, ultimately showcasing the wondrous talents of Leland students and their lack of stage fright in front of more than 200 people. But more importantly, everyone contributed their time willingly. From parents sacrificing their schedules regularly to their children taking as much time as possible out of their action-packed lives, planning each performance with spectacularity and precision wouldn't have been possible if not for this crucial aspect.

Then came the decoration team's turn to shine. The Friday before the event, three groups worked meticulously to prepare for the embellishment of the cafeteria, transforming it into someplace equivalent to a traditional Chinese paradise, matching the mood of the upcoming event. As the event began, a plethora of emotions flew around. Everyone was nervous, excited, and giddy. And I think that sentiment finally reached the audience as well. The audience members

were always on their toes about what was about to happen next — those bored becoming thrilled, those tired suddenly gaining newfound enthusiasm.

After the Volunteer Dance and the closing of the event, all spectators, volunteers, parents, and children, regardless of age, size, or gender, helped to clean up and put away the chairs. I think that out of the three Bridge Nights that I have attended, this year's has been the most efficient overall.

Talking with my friends after the event, we reflected on how this year's Leland Bridge Night seemed to be slightly more rushed than all the previous years. For example, the Kungfu performance that I was a part of barely had any practice. We only had three meetings, one to meet up, the second to design the performance, and the third one for the final rehearsal. We were underprepared, and before the event, we were anxious and scared that someone would make an error during the performance. But after the event, we looked back, and realized that our performance was great; everyone excelled surprising and captivating the audience.

So, I realize that while the future is often volatile and unforeseeable, the dragon always reminds us to look into the future and hope for the better.

As Chinese New Year passes, we say goodbye to Leland Bridge Night, yet look forward to it again as next year's springtime arrives.

Editor's note: This article was edited by Leland High School Student Claire Chen.

Tax Collectors

Continued from page 6

only be in the bedroom, but it would also be recording and tracking household information for a new city database. This database would be public information, making it viewable to well-intended and nefarious individuals alike, and essentially revealing when residents may or may not be occupying their home at any given time. I believe most San Jose residents would consider this a violation of their privacy.

In 2022, voters in tax-friendly Santa Cruz rejected a \$6,000 per year EHT due to these concerns. EHT went into effect in January 2024 for both Berkeley and San Francisco. San Jose considered EHT in 2019 but dismissed it due

to complexity and costs.

If the real concern is blighted property, then the solution is simple: adequate and responsive code enforcement targeting problematic properties effectively. This laser-focused approach is far better than chronicling all residents' bedroom occupancy.

Before creating new tax burdens, policymakers should ensure that future tax proposals are thoughtfully designed, efficient and ultimately effective. We can debate whether a tax increase is warranted and what it should be allocated toward. However, a tax that puts the general fund at risk by creating a new bureaucracy should be a non-starter.

Pierluigi Oliverio is a member of the San Jose Planning Commission and a former San Jose city councilmember.

Festival

Continued from previous page

runs smoothly which allows everyone to have a meaningful experience.

History

More than 300 years ago in the country of India, the revered 10th Guru of the Sikh religion, Guru Gobind Singh Ji decided to create a new festival which would promote strength and courage. Also, beautiful words of poetry combined with traditional music were included with the court poet Bhai Nand Lal.

The festival continued year after year worldwide and was welcomed to Evergreen Valley over a decade ago at our community center open to everyone. Gurdwara on the Hill is the largest Sikh Gurdwara (Religious Temple and Community Center) in the United States.

The Sikhs do not proselytize or try to get people to join their religion; instead they believe the entire human race is connected and each religion can work in its own way to achieve the virtuousness of God.

They believe everyone is special and all of us are equal to each other. The Sikhs work with all churches through communities worldwide.

A gift to you

With outstretched generous hands they welcome you, your family and your friends. This Festival of Courage and Strength (Holla Mohalla) is truly a unique kind gift to Ever-

green Valley residents. Thousands of Sikhs and volunteers of other faiths organize the event.

Spread the word...

You are encouraged to bring your friends and neighbors to introduce them to the joyous nature of how the Evergreen Valley celebrates diversity and promotes respect for all cultures and people!

There is so much to do and see. Some like to get there early arriving at 10 a.m. when the parking is light and easy. Also, as the day moves forward in the morning time, one can sample the food first with shorter lines on the large field. If you would like to purchase items, there will be various vendor booths that offer authentic items from all over the world.

For more information visit: sanjosegurdwara.org or contact Kirpal Atwal at (408) 835-7712. The address of the Gurdwara is 3636 Gurdwara Ave, San Jose, CA 95148. Stay connected and download the San Jose Gurdwara App.

Editor's Note: The best way to enjoy the festival is to park at Evergreen Valley High School or Carolyn Clark Elementary School which will have shuttles coming and going all day starting at 10 a.m. The event is free and the food is complementary. All age groups are encouraged to watch the sporting events and participate. Also, if one wishes to donate or volunteer to help with all the things the Sikhs do in the community during the year, the information is available on their website.

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Times **Local News**



Complying with Clean Water Act

By Matt Mahan

Across America, cities are required to comply with the Clean Water Act.

But San Jose's plan to come into compliance has been rejected by our Regional Water Quality Control Board – not just once, but three times.

And for good reason. We've let our waterways degrade until they have become what you see today.

We've allowed over 1,000 people to live in unmanaged conditions along these waterways, creating waste that flows directly from our creeks to our oceans. No longer.

We have a mandate from the Water Board that requires us to do what is right – and that's to move people out of our waterways. And we must do this in a way that doesn't simply send people directly into our neighborhoods.

We don't have time to waste. If we don't have a serious plan to address the issue by June 2025, the Water Board can fine the City up to \$60,000 per day per pollutant found in our waters.

To address this, we'll need millions of dollars amidst a fiscal moment in which we are already predicting deficits. I am going to be honest with you — this is going to be hard. This is an unprecedented moment in our city's history. But we will get through it together and be a better city for it.

I hope that this is what our city, county and state need to get serious about addressing homelessness on a scale. We are not the only city affected by this mandate, but we will be the first to say thank you. Thank you for making clear that we can no longer afford to allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. During this year's budget process, we will prioritize strategies that address this crisis in

a way that scales and doesn't simply move people out of our creeks and onto our streets.

We need to explore the creation of safe sleeping sites and an expansion of congregate shelters. We will have to look at establishing no encampment zones along about 25 miles of discharge areas mandated by the Water Board.

And along the way, we will need to begin the massive project of cleaning up formerly unmanaged encampments that have been polluting our waterways.

We won't be able to do this alone. We need our County to add in-patient treatment beds for mental health and addiction. We need the state and federal government to increase their investment in solutions on that scale. And we will need our community to say yes to the solutions to homelessness because it is far better to get people indoors and into treatment than to leave them in our streets and creeks.

Amid crisis comes opportunity. It creates community. I am excited to continue working toward a solution with you, neighbors across San Jose, and my colleagues on the council.



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Times **Local News**

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**No-Budget Horror Cinema
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Age Of The Ageless: Why San Jose?

A 10-year career as an underground horror cinema actor was born

By **Matthew Frazier**

I began my story writing venture nearly 40 years ago.

It was Halloween Eve 1984 when I was just five years old, just weeks before my 6th birthday when I knew I wanted to become a horror legend in cinema and theatre in San Jose, CA.

Why San Jose?

San Jose is not the top place horror film fans think of as an environ and locale that



fosters creativity.

Being a new column entry series on No-Budget Horror Cinema, Cine-Wise asks the question, Why San Jose?

Hollywood has long been the go-to for all things Cinema, as far back as we remember. The mega franchises have made and broken the careers of countless individuals.

To celebrate and capture the essence of horror and terror, an exhaustive search arose, to see the titles of no-budget horror genre feature films and short films that originated in this valley. Although I have yet to see a comprehensive list, San Jose is wealthy with lore and myth imbued with the spirit of such themes and tones.

With a formal education and training as a theatre actor and playwright, with ambitions of forging a legacy as a black box theatre icon in Bay Area productions, life took an unexpected turn when chronic absenteeism of both cast and crew plagued a local ultra-low-budget film friend worked on.

The no-calls, and no-shows of guild-affiliated artists and artisans created an opening; the opportunity to get a grip on a short horror film.

On the morning of the second day of shooting, a SAG-AFTRA actor no-called-n-showed. Wasting not a moment, I told the key grip to tell the unit production manager to tell the assistant director to tell the director I would

fill in in exchange for a VHS tape of raw footage of the dailies for the scenes. Hence, a 10-year career as an underground horror genre horror cinema actor was born.

Back to the central and glaring question: Why San Jose? More to come on this one. San Jose was often referred to as the Valley of The Hearts' Delight, which evolved into Silicon Valley and, in the process, became a graveyard for farmers and ranchers, as well as underground artists.

Some have carved out an existence here amidst this post-apocalyptic megapolis of trending technology. It's true; San Jose has its haunted locales that beckon for their stories to be told.

There are both famous and infamous artists and non-artists who got their start right here. Silicon Valley has a globally renowned film festival. Yet this is not specific to horror or terror. Leaning towards dream logic and the supernatural, my sto-

ries yearn for The Sins of Celluloid.

The colleges and universities of California are a bounty of knowledge and wisdom in The Arts, especially Cinema and Theatre. San Jose is no exception. San Jose City College and San Jose State University have instructors who sing the praises of their arts and crafts in these disciplines.

Why San Jose? is a larger conversation. To begin, I retort: "San Jose has a rich history of Crime and Mystique, not to be outdone nor undermined by High-Tech Gad-getry."

Bring your prophets and sages. San Jose: We are now in the throes of The Age of The Ageless. Antiquity's Progeny. Brimming with Allegory!

Editor's note: Actor, director, producer, writer Matthew Fraizer is a columnist for Times Media, Inc. (No-Budget Cinema/Theatre®; Skullicon Valley®, California and WaterWise®).

Leland Drama Presents

Mean Girls

Show dates:
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SAN JOSE GURDWARA
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The word Sikh (see-kh) means "disciple" or "student." A Sikh is a practitioner of the faith founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak in Punjab of old British India. A Guru who is a "teacher" or "enlightener" completes the relationship of teaching and learning. Sikhism is monotheistic and stresses the equality of all men and women. Sikhs believe in three basic principles; meditating on the name of God (praying), earning a living by honest means and sharing the fruits of one's labor with others. Currently there are close to one million Sikhs living in the USA and Canada and 25 million Sikhs living around the world. Sikhism is the 5th largest religion in the world. At the Gurdwara (House of God) in San Jose we welcome all. We 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 complementary vegetarian meals. We also encourage you to enter our history room

on site and walk the beautiful grounds. Learn more about us and community events we sponsor by visiting our website; <http://www.SanJoseGurdwara.org>

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Cinco de Mayo: Saturday, May 4th, 12-3pm

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Meeting with Mayor Mahan: The Almaden Valley Community Association, Almaden Senior Association and Los Paseos Neighborhood Association are co-sponsoring an evening with Mayor Matt Mahan at Westgate Church at 6601 Camden Ave, Monday April 15th at 7pm. Attend In-Person or via Zoom. Register for Zoom at <https://avcasj.org>.

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