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Evergreen Times

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Teachers in the East Side Union High School District rally for better wages outside of Independence High School in San Jose on May 3, 2024. Photo courtesy of Jack Hamner.

East San Jose teachers demand raises to meet cost of living

By Annalise Freimarck
San José Spotlight

Teachers in the East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) are calling for higher wages to keep up with the increasing cost of living — as the district struggles with an anticipated multimillion-dollar budget deficit.

ESUHSD, which serves more than 24,000 students, is offering its

teachers a 1.1% raise for the 2024-25 school year, according to East Side Teachers Association (ESTA), the union representing teachers and other workers. Teachers said the increase is insufficient, causing salary negotiations to stall as hundreds of teachers refuse to work any extra time above contract requirements.

A school spokesperson referred San José Spotlight to a May 2 district message to the community that said it will continue to work with the union as it navigates its finances.

“The District is committed to providing competitive salaries to its teachers and staff. The District relies primarily on state funding to pay salaries and fund operations,” according to the statement. “As you may have seen in recent news coverage, the state has decreased funding to public schools since July’s budget projection by reducing cost of living increases to all school districts and public schools. The District shares teachers’ frustrations with the state budgeting process.”

The negotiations come at a time
See *TEACHERS*, page 4

Great accomplishments for EVHS Robotics Team

Team 2854: The Prototypes win Quality Award at EBR competition and Regional Engineering Inspiration Award at San Francisco Regional
By William Bellou
Publisher

Evergreen Valley High School’s First Robotics Club, Team 2854: The Prototypes, is making a name for themselves with several recent accomplishments.

Founded in 2009, Team 2854 welcomes members from all backgrounds and works with several mentors to build competitive FIRST robots. The club consists of four teams that compete in FIRST Robotics competitions. There are three FTC teams and one FRC team. FTC stands for First Tech Challenge; the robots are smaller, and this is available to middle schoolers. FRC stands for First Robotics Challenge: this level of FIRST is more technically advanced and is only for high school students.

This year Team 2854 qualified for the FIRST Championship which was held in Houston, Texas April 17th - 20th. Team 2854 competed



Team 2854: The Prototype welcomes members from all backgrounds and works with several mentors to build competitive FIRST robots. The club consists of four teams that compete in FIRST Robotics competitions.

with other teams from all around the world. In addition, Team 2854 was awarded the FIRST Quality Award, which celebrates machine robustness in concept and fabrication. This season, the club was also awarded the FIRST Quality Award at EBR (East Bay Regional) competition.

Team 2854 qualified for the FIRST Championship after winning the Engineering Inspiration Award at SFR (San Francisco Regional) in March. The Engineering Inspiration Award celebrates outstanding success in advancing respect and appreciation for
See *ROBOTICS*, page 5

High School sophomore Tanisha Samuel raises \$10K in donations to combat blood cancer

Tanish Samuel is 2024 Student Visionary of the Year Candidate

By William Bellou
Publisher

Tanisha Samuel of San Jose, raised ten thousand dollars with the help of her team, A Reason to Hope, as part of the fundraising program for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS).

The philanthropic competition engages thousands of high school students nationwide each driven by their unique determination to excel all
See *VISIONARY*, page 8



Tanisha Samuel (left) of San Jose participated in the 2024 Student Visionary of the Year campaign as a candidate. The Student Visionary of the Year is a philanthropic leadership development program that raises funds for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS). The philanthropic competition brings together thousands of high school students across the country with the goal to end blood cancer.

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Times Community News

Teachers

Continued from page 1
when the state anticipates upwards of a \$73 billion education budget deficit for next school year according to California Legislative Analyst's Office data, affecting the district budget.

As part of the public school system, East Side Union High School District receives most of its funding from the state through sources based on student attendance and one-time funds, school board President Pattie Cortese said. The district anticipates its reserves to dwindle from roughly \$92 million by the end of this school year and go into the red by 2025-26 with an estimated \$26 million deficit largely due to the state shortfall, according to district data.

Teachers struggling with San Jose's affordability such as Becky Hopkins said they need better wages, even with an expected deficit.

Hopkins, an art teacher at Oak Grove High School since 2011, makes about \$130,800 annually and lives paycheck to paycheck while supporting her son and 72-year-old mother. She said if her mother didn't work a part-time job, she doesn't know how she'd make it, with 47% of her income going to her below-market rate rent.

"Percentage-wise, it's insulting," Hopkins told San José Spotlight. "I'm tired of hearing (about the deficit) because it's never held any water. It's always panned out that they've had more than they bargained for, more than they thought."

Jose Solis, an English language development teacher who's worked in the district for seven years, is part of a growing group of teachers commuting long hours because he can't afford to live in San Jose. He drives to work from Gilroy and said as an East San Jose native he would love to live in the district, but can't afford a house for him and his 8-year-old daughter. Still, he's committed to the district.

"There is a point where it's not really about the money. It's just about the principle," he told San José Spotlight.



Teachers in the East Side Union High School District rallied for better wages outside of Silver Creek High School in San Jose on May 3, 2024. Photo courtesy of Jack Hamner.

The prior three-year contract gave the teachers a 4% raise for 2021-22 and 2022-23 and a slight bump to 4.25% for this school year. The base salary of a teacher in the district starts at roughly \$69,900, lower than the roughly \$75,800 Campbell Union High School District offers, which has high schools in San Jose.

The raises came when East Side Union High School District wasn't anticipating a roughly \$26 million deficit in the coming years. The situation has been further exacerbated by the loss of federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act that funneled down to the state during the pandemic. Those dollars are expected to dry up at the end of this year.

Cortese said she understands teachers' frustrations and wishes the district could pay them more.

"Do they deserve more money? Yes. Has inflation gone up? Yes. Are they having a hard time making ends meet? Yes, 100%," she told San José Spotlight. "I mean, it's so heartbreaking, but that doesn't mean we have the money to give."

The teachers union and district are meeting with a mediator, ESTA President Jack Hamner said. Teachers will also hold up signs demanding higher wages before walking into school today, he added.

"We're trying to do whatever we can to get it done as soon as possible. We just hope that the school district is doing the same," Hamner told San José Spotlight. "They say they are, but their actions are telling a different story."

2024 San Jose budget is tricky

By Matt Mahan

This year's budget is different. It's difficult. And it will require the sacrifices and tradeoffs we all make when looking at our own personal budgets.

Except instead of cutting down on eating out and sacrificing a family vacation, the City of San Jose must tighten its belt to the tune of \$52 million. My March Budget Message gave direction to the City Manager on how to do just that.

And she delivered. Our City Manager has put forward a proposed operating budget that accounts for our multi-million dollar shortfall without significantly impacting city services our residents rely on and while continuing to make progress on the issues that matter most.

Before I get too deep into the details, let's remind ourselves of the budgetary challenges we face this year.

First, we must comply with the Clean Water Act, which requires us to eliminate pollution flowing into our waterways and the Bay. In order for the City to renew its Stormwater Permit, our Regional Water Quality Control Board has mandated a 100% reduction in pollutants entering key stretches of our waterways by the middle of next year. We estimate that 88% of pollutants entering our rivers and creeks result from the 1,000+ people living in unmanaged, unsheltered encampments in these areas.

Our City Manager has budgeted \$27 million this year alone to begin to meet this environmental mandate. We will primarily do this by completing the nearly 800 modular units of interim housing we still have in our pipeline, standing up basic shelter, including managed sites for safe sleeping and safe parking, and beginning to clean up and enforce no re-encampment zones along our waterways. This will be neither easy nor inexpensive, but in the long run we will all be better off when we provide a basic, safe alternative to unmanaged encampments and, when available, require that people use them.

In addition to these expanded stormwater mandates, and just like every family in San Jose, the City is experiencing the same rising costs and slowing revenue growth associated with persistently high inflation. Despite these challenges, the City Manager has managed to put forward a balanced budget using the four

strategies I recommended in my March Message:

1. Finding cost savings and efficiencies within city departments — the City Manager worked with department heads to find \$12 million worth of proposed cost reductions that will have the least impact on services that touch our residents. Council offices, including my office, will also face small reductions to contribute to the overall target. With an overall General Fund budget of \$1.6 billion, the \$12 million figure represents a modest reduction.

2. Elimination of vacant roles — in a City with 7,000 employees, we always have vacancies. While we would love to be better staffed to deliver the best possible service to our residents, the City Manager has

identified 54 positions that have sat empty (some, for a long time) and can be removed from this year's budget to help close the gap. Please note: police staffing—which is a top community priority—should actually expand in 2024-2025 as we grow our Academy class sizes and begin filling roles that are currently vacant but still included in the base budget.

3. Finding new sources of revenue — The City Manager has identified \$29M in new and anticipated revenues from the state, county and other sources. Some of these funds, assuming they are secured, will be dedicated to future affordable housing development.

4. Reallocating existing revenues to higher priority uses — the City Manager proposes using flexible Measure E funds to meet our Stormwater Permit obligations (e.g. interim housing, safe sleeping/parking, encampment clean ups) while using the new state and county funds identified above to preserve between \$22 million and \$40 million for new affordable housing development.

I want to thank our City Manager, Jennifer Maguire, for proposing a balanced budget that addresses our most urgent needs—including stormwater permit compliance, continued police hiring, ongoing blight fighting, and funding for affordable housing—without requiring cuts to other city services our residents rely on.

I also want to thank my council colleagues for recognizing the challenges we face, the importance of focus and flexibility, and the willingness to find efficiencies across city departments. I'm looking forward to putting together a June Budget Message that continues to get creative with the limited dollars we have, while preserving investment in the core services our residents demand.



From the Mayor
Matt Mahan
Mayor, San Jose

SJPD investigating traffic fatality on East Capitol Expwy

By SJPD Officer Tanya Hernandez #4493

On May 7, 2024, at approximately 7:23 AM, San José Police Department Patrol Officers responded to a collision involving two vehicles and a bicyclist in the area of East Capitol Expressway and Senter Road.

A red Chevy Silverado truck, occupied by a lone adult male driver, was traveling westbound on East Capitol Expressway when it ran a red light at Senter Road. The red Chevy truck then struck a bicyclist, ridden by an adult male, and a white Ford F-150 pick-up truck, occupied by an adult male driver. The bicyclist and white Ford truck were both traveling northbound on Senter Road through the intersection with East Capitol Expressway on a green light when the collision occurred.

The suspect driver of the red Chevy truck attempted to flee the scene but was shortly apprehended by a good Samaritan until police arrived. The suspect driver was taken into custody and was found to be in possession of a privately manufactured firearm. The suspect was transported to a local hospital for minor injuries

before being booked into the Santa Clara County Main Jail for multiple charges.

The bicyclist sustained major injuries and was



pronounced deceased at the scene. The driver of the white Ford truck sustained minor injuries and was treated on scene.

This is the 17th fatal collision and 17th traffic death of 2024.

Anyone with information on this investigation is urged to contact Detective Bowen #4461 of the San José Police Department's Traffic Investigations Unit at 4461@sanjoseca.gov or 408-277-4654.



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Times **Community****Robotics***Continued from page 1*

engineering within a team's school or organization and community.

"Over the last couple of seasons, Team 2854 has concentrated its efforts on increasing the admiration for STEM in our team and community," said Krisha Shenoy, Team 2854: The Prototype Marketing Director. "We recently participated in events such as STEM night and Shark Tank to help recognize FIRST robotics at Evergreen Valley High School. We also organized bake sales to help us connect with our community and raise profits."

One of Team 2854's greatest accomplishments has been its Women in STEM outreach program. Team 2854 recently partnered with SWE (Society of Women Engineers) to hold a panel and speaker event that reached more than 200 Evergreen High School students. The effort resulted in increasing the number of women on Team 2854 from just two to fifteen women and the team expects that number to increase in the coming months.

Here are a few quotes from club members:

Jiya Sahlot - "When I joined FIRST, I didn't realize I would be making a difference in people's lives!"

Mihir Garg - "Joining robotics taught me the power of a team and combining individual strengths for a bigger goal."

Raeva Desai - "I joined for the robots and stayed for the team."

Samya Arora - "Robotics has allowed me to be part of an incredible community and I hope everyone gets this opportunity!"

Sanjay Manamala - "Robotics has not only taught me technical skills, but several intrapersonal ones as well."

Harsha Manamala - "When I first joined robotics it was just another extracurricular, I didn't even realize when it became a lifestyle."

Soham Palaiya - "Everyday I wake up and wait until robotics starts, cause that's where I am truly at home!"

Krisha said that Team 2854's accomplishments wouldn't be possible without the support of its many sponsors which include Luna's Sheetmetal Inc., Boeing, Roy Dum-lao, The Do Family, Dream Maker Fund, PG&E, Google, Olander, Hack Club, JP Metal Fabrication, SolidWorks, Evergreen Valley High School, Daniel Bray, NASA, Nvidia, STV Inc., and Port Plastics.

For more information about EVHS Robotics, email: robotics.evhs@gmail.com

If you would like to make a donation, use this link: <https://hcb.hackclub.com/donations/start/prototypes>



Team 2854: The Prototypes at FRC World Championships event. Row 1 (bottom): Suhaani Desai, Krisha Shenoy, Raeva Desai, Priyanka Karunakaran, Antony Ton, Akarsh Shetty, Soham Palaiya, Harsha Manamala, Sreekarthikeya Kankanala, Karun Pai, and Mihir Garg. Row 2: Bhavya Modugula, Ammaar Ishtiaq, Aniket Patil, Max Do, Preetam Hegde, Sourish Gorthi, Sanjay Manamala, Nyel Umair, and Abhay Jani. Row 3 (top): Musa Ghaffar, Navyaa Lalachandani, Aaron Joji, Sanjam Bahl, Aaroosh Sinha, Aayan Jafri, Aryan Naik, Sashwanth Divakar, Anirudh Srikrishnan, Soham Ramtekkar, Nishant Jonnalagadda, Krish Iyengar, Kshitij Teotia, Aaron Pereira, Siddhanth Srikanth, Gaurav Thammimeri, Michaela Brant, Rukmangathan Balakrishnan, Anne Tran, and Roy Dumlao. Photo by Karun Pai.



The Philharmonic Orchestra performs in a concert featuring Latin music

2023-24 Season Finale concert; Ticket purchases now available online

The San Jose Youth Symphony's Philharmonic Orchestra, under the artistic leadership of Music Director and Conductor Yair Samet, presents its 2023-24 Season Finale Concert to be held on Saturday, June 1, 2024, 2 pm, at the California Theatre, 345 S. 1st Street, San Jose, CA 95113.

This premier orchestra, made up of the most advanced students in the San Jose Youth Symphony, will open the concert with Gershwin's Cuban Overture, which features

rumba, Caribbean rhythms and Cuban native percussion.

The orchestra will also perform Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras, No. 5*, featuring its cellists along with local soprano, Jasmine Marie Diaz; Juan Pablo Contreras's *Mariachitlàn*, Ginastera's *Pampeana No. 3*; and Piazzolla's *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*. The concert will close with Juan Pablo Moncayo's lively *Huapango*.

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.

Scammers are impersonating businesses with fake subscription renewal notices

By Sean Eastwood
Times staff writer

Email continues to be a popular avenue for scammers who want to steal consumers' personal and financial information.

To trick consumers into clicking links and providing personal information, scammers are posing as legitimate businesses and emailing consumers.

The Better Business Bureau warns consumers to be extra vigilant when receiving urgent emails from supposed businesses asking for payment information.

How this scam works

You receive an urgent email from a business you have a membership or an account with that states your subscription or membership has expired. The email asks you to click a link to provide your payment information. The email may even offer a special deal or discount for updating your payment

information now.

The email may look legitimate and include the business's logo, and you may have even received the email around the time your subscription has expired or will be expiring. So, you click the link and provide your credit card information, only to find out that the email and the website were fake. Your card may be charged, and a scammer now has your personal and financial information.

Scammers may also email you stating that your subscription to a certain business has or will be auto-renewing for a certain dollar amount, causing confusion and worry. They may provide a customer service phone number to call, which is actually fake.

BBB Scam Tracker has received several recent reports about scammers impersonating different businesses through email.

One consumer shared, "Received an email on 1/3/2024 that 'my Sirius XM account has expired!' This email came one day after my normal Sirius XM renewal date. The email wanted me to go to a website and 'insert' my credit card info... Before proceeding, I logged into my actual Sirius XM account and verified it had automatically renewed as normal. What threw me off at first was that the scammer somehow knew my renewal date. I did not lose any money."

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Times **Local News**

Visionary

Continued from page 1
 in support of LLS's mission to combat blood cancer. Every 180 seconds someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with this disease, which currently lacks preventative measures.

Achieving record donations
 "We were able to collect \$10K in donations in just seven weeks of fundraising with support from Leland High School and Bret Harte Middle School's ASB teacher," said Samuel. "Generous donations came from Ajit Koti, Therese Swan (Real Estate Agent) and Nicole Rottjakob (Dentist)."

Tanisha Samuel's family and friends played a big role in helping raise local funds for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

A number of local Almaden busi-

nesses as well as Samuel's family and friends played a big role in helping to raise funds. The 2024 Student Visionary Candidate class raised a total of \$258,100.

Linda who was the campaign manager helped her all along and helped Tanisha in professional development and how to raise funds by corporate sponsorship.

Student Visionaries of the Year is a groundbreaking leadership development program for high school students that has helped LLS invest more than \$1.7 billion in cutting-edge research worldwide, fueling nearly every critical advancement in blood cancer treatment that spans the most promising cancer research. And, as the leading source of free blood cancer information, education, and support, LLS helps blood cancer patients and their families through a wide

range of free services. Each candidate team chose an LLS Mission Pillar to represent and bring awareness to throughout their seven-week campaign. These three pillars, research, patient support, and advocacy, make up the very core of what LLS does.

About The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is the global leader in the fight against blood cancer. The LLS mission: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world, provides free information and support services, and is the voice for all blood cancer patients seeking access to quality, affordable, coordinated care.

Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi inducts Huang and Peneff of Evergreen Valley

Christopher Huang and Yury Peneff of Evergreen Valley have been inducted into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.

Christopher Huang attends the University of California-Davis, and Yury Peneff is a member of the United States Air Force Academy.

Phi Kappa Phi membership is by invitation only and

requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 325 campuses in the United States, its territories and the Philippines.

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Times OpEd

Are cap and gown charges legal?

Evergreen Valley High School selling caps and gowns at school, but now the district is offering to pay for rental fee and now saying wearing a cap and gown is optional; Is charging \$25 a seat for additional guests at graduation legal?

People may not like what I'm saying, but I'm putting my name on the line because I truly care about our Evergreen Valley High School students and the principals of equity.

Last month I filed a complaint with Glen Vander Zee superintendent of East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD); the principal of Evergreen Valley High School, Mary Ann Dewan; superintendent of Santa Clara County Office of Education, Tony Thurmond; superintendent of California Department of Education and all the board members.

I have received NO response from the school district and the Santa Clara County Office of education hopped into the concern and made its ruling giving 15 days for a response, which in my view was handled incorrectly.

This is a bad situation in my opinion at Evergreen Valley High School.

Here is the ed code:

III. Fees Not Allowed

A. Cap and gown for high school graduation ceremony: A school district cannot require students to purchase or pay for a cap and gown if wearing a cap and gown is a condition of participation in a graduation ceremony. In *Sands v. Morongo*, 53 Cal. 3d 863, 873-874

(1991), cert. denied, 505 U.S. 1218 (1992), the California Supreme Court found that the high school graduation ceremony is "an integral part of the educational process" because it recognizes cumulative academic achievement. Therefore, the graduation ceremony is an "educational activity," pursuant to EC 49010(a), as to which a pupil fee cannot be charged. EC section 38119 only authorizes districts to rent caps and gowns from a supplier and provide them free of charge to students. Therefore, a cap and gown fee is not "otherwise allowed by law." EC section 49011(e). The CDE recommends that a district that requires students to wear a cap and gown at the ceremony inform students that: (1) the district will provide caps and gowns for graduating seniors for use during the ceremony, and (2) students also have the option to purchase an appropriate cap and gown from a vendor. No student should be required to self-identify as indigent in order to receive a cap and gown.

In my opinion ESUHSD superintendent Glenn Vander Zee and the school board have not been following the law by not offering free caps and gowns for all students graduating. I emailed them, but never received a response. What if the poor kids lack the monies to buy a cap and gown, I asked myself.

Evergreen Valley High School is charging students \$25 per seat (beyond the two free tickets available for parents) and an extra ticket if a student is on free and reduced lunch program, for anyone in their family and relatives to go to the graduation night. We see this email today that says: "Seniors Gradu-

ation Tickets are temporarily removed from the website. Due to overwhelming response to sales we are taking them off the website to ensure that we do not oversell. Thank you for your patience as we triple count our inventory."

Some say the school charges \$25 because there are a lot of students graduating. However, Silver Creek High School also has a large graduating class and the school has always offered FREE attendance at their graduation night along with many other high schools in San Jose.

The \$25 charge puts a burden on less fortunate students in their ability to invite their family members to graduation. It may be legal, or most likely illegal, but either way, the policy should be changed. What if kids can't afford to pay for parking downtown and extra tickets, but wealthy kids and parents rule the roost so to speak.

Opinion

My concern is that high school students should not have to pay for caps and gowns according to law, but the school district of East Side Union High School District says it's just fine.

After I expressed I was contemplating in filing a police report, immediately I got back this response from the Santa Clara County Office of Education who said my facts were wrong... I received the following by letter.

Santa Clara County Office of Education response

"Through this process we learned that EVHS provides rented caps and gowns for students to wear to graduation, free of charge. We also learned that vendors that rent caps and gowns do not permit the caps and gowns to be decorated and personalized; therefore, as an option for students who want to decorate their caps and gowns, EVHS has provided a link on its website where students can purchase their cap and gown from a vendor, if they so choose. Thus, you are correct in your statement that Education Code section 49011(e) does not permit a school to require students to purchase or pay for a cap and gown if wearing a cap and gown is a condition of participation in a graduation ceremony. However, ESUHSD is not requiring students to purchase their cap and gown to participate in their graduation ceremony. The District has rented caps and gowns from a supplier and provided them free of charge to students in accordance with Education Code section 38119, and also offered students the option of purchasing a cap and gown if they want to personalize the items with individual decoration and expression. Based upon the foregoing, the SCCOE has determined that the Complaint does not accurately reflect the facts of EVHS's options for students to receive a free rented cap and gown or purchase a cap and gown that can be personalized. Given the facts explained above, the Complaint is without merit because students are not being charged to participate in their graduation ceremony..."

Educational paid leaders should care more deeply about how schools operate. For example, if all the high school seniors have friends who bought their cap and gown, but they ask the school district to rent it, is that not a lack of equity? And what if only wealthy families buy \$25 tickets to get lots of family members.

The Superintendent of the East Side Union High School District (who is said to have received a recent raise) needs

to go into ACTION and eliminate any wrongful moves with the schools, which in my opinion, don't seem to care about their students. Why were the parents not informed that FREE CAPS AND GOWNS (RENTAL OPTON) ARE SUPPLIED BY THE EVERGREEN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL AND TOO, IF A STUDENT DOESN'T WANT TO WEAR A CAP AND GOWN then they can go to the ceremony without it. My view is this is a poor way to run a school. Just think, the kids who are poor have rented caps and gowns (maybe) and what happens if they get it dirty or put a design on it that is not allowed. The wealthy buy their caps and gowns while the poor are hindered from having equity. Maybe some

poor families will skip going to the graduation ceremony. Maybe some kids or families do not want a "thrift store like" cap and gown. Was this explored? Were the parents informed what was going on?

I suggest a letter should be sent to all Evergreen Valley High School graduating students and their parents that CAPS AND GOWNS CAN BE RENTED FOR FREE, and the school board needs to refund any seat purchased for \$25 (again to provide equity for the poor students).

Mary Ann Dewan, Superintendent of the Santa Clara County Office of Education. (408) 453-6511; mdewan@sccoe.org, or Glenn Vander Zee, Superintendent of East Side Union High School District email; vanderzeeg@esuhsd.org

Update from Santa Clara County Office of Education leader

On Monday, May 13th, the following was emailed to me;

"Mr. Larsen, I am writing to let you know that my team and I are looking into your concern and are taking it seriously. We are working to expedite a response once we have completed our review of the concern raised, respectfully."

In my view, not a good response for the kids, and too, if any person wishes to respond, send an OpEd to the *Evergreen Times* by emailing the newspaper via email: times@timesmediainc.com.

Kevin Larsen

Parent and community leader
Evergreen Valley



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Ronald Niel Bruschetta

Jan. 14, 1940 - April 8, 2024

Bruschetta grew up on his family's large working ranch in the Evergreen foothills

With great sadness we share that our dear Ronald Niel Bruschetta passed away on April 8, 2024. Beloved by many, Ron's kindness, warmth and generosity made him an inspiration for his wife, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, extended family and friends. Ron was born on January 14, 1940, in San Jose, California.



Ronald attended James Lick High School and spent his youth on his family's large working ranch in the Evergreen foothills of San Jose. He attended San Jose State College as a pre-med major before amending his vocational destiny to a career in cosmetology. Ronald married his wife, Grace Margherita, in 1963 and they had many wonderful adventures. They traveled the world, loved their home, and hosted huge holiday celebrations.

Ronald held fond memories of the more than forty years he spent with his clients in Willow Glen at the iconic Ronald's Coiffures on Lincoln Avenue. He was a lifelong fan of the Niners, Giants, Warriors, Sharks and A's. Ron is survived by his beautiful wife, Grace Margherita Bruschetta, his best friend and son, Paul Bruschetta and his eternally devoted daughter, Jennifer Bell. As his family grew, so did his generosity. Ron opened his heart to his daughter-in-law, Donna Kirby Bruschetta and his son-in-law-and-fellow sports-fanatic, John Bell. He will be cherished in the memories of his grandchildren Ashley Bruschetta (and her husband, Marcos), Alyssa Sutton (and her husband Levi), Lauren Bell and Anthony Bell. We will keep his memory alive for his great grandchildren Nico and

Max Estrada and Walker Sutton. He is missed by his very large doodle dog named Bubbles.

While our family grieves, we share that Ronald spent his last days at home, with his family, in the warm sunshine, watching March Madness, and listening to Frankie Valli and the music from his lifetime. He was at peace. We will aspire to be like the man who was our everything.

Toshiko Betty Masaki

Sept. 14, 1924 - April 2, 2024

Resident of Atria Evergreen Valley

Resident of San Jose Toshiko Betty Masaki, 99, entered into rest on April 2, 2024. Born in Loomis, CA to the late Gosaichi and Shizuno Hamamoto. The only girl out of nine brothers.



She was a longtime resident of Sunnyvale. She worked at Siliconix in Santa Clara, retiring after 19 years of service. For the last 8 years she lived at Atria Evergreen Valley Assisted Living where she enjoyed daily exercise, arts and crafts, and socializing with friends. Toshiko will be remembered for her genuine care for others and her positive spirit.

She is survived by daughter Gayle (Gil) Alcones; grandchildren Annette (Fred) Fucanan and Aaron (Eileen) Alcones; 5 great grandchildren, her brother Harry (Sally) Hamamoto; and many loving nephews and nieces. She is preceded in death by her husband, Muneo, daughter Lynn Masaki, brothers Takeshi, Sakaye, Kazuo, Goichi, Yutaka, Max, George and Tom Hamamoto.

Funeral service was held Saturday, May 11 at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple, 575 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mtn. View.

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Q) What is Islam, who are Muslims, and what is the Quran?
A) Islam is a faith and way of life. Islam began in the 7th century. People who follow Islam are known as Muslims. The Quran is the Divine book that guides Muslims to

practice Islam. "Hufazik Allah Waeayilatak" the English meaning is "May Allah (swt) protect you and your family". Please visit our website to learn more.



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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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St. Francis of Assisi Chapel: Saturday 5:00PM, Sunday 8:30 AM, 10:30 AM, 12:30 PM, 4:00 PM (Mass in Vietnamese), 6:00 PM Youth Mass
St. Francis of Assisi Gathering Hall
Sunday 9:00 AM, Sunday 11:00AM, Igbo Mass - Second Sunday of the month 12:30 PM
Mt. Hamilton Grange - 2840 Aborn Road
Sunday 9:30 AM
The Villages Gated Community (Cribari Auditorium) Sunday

8:15 AM
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We Want to Hear from You!

You are invited to provide input on 2016 Measure B Program expenditures and the results of the annual performance audit at the 2016 Measure B Citizens' Oversight Committee's (MBCOC) public hearing:

Wednesday, May 22, 2024
12:00 p.m.

• **In-person: Conference Room B-106,
VTA Administrative Offices,
3331 N. First Street, San Jose California.**

(This location is served by VTA Light Rail and Bus Line 20.)

• **Zoom videoconference: us02web.zoom.us/j/86178471598**



Input can be provided during the meeting, or written comments for the hearing will be accepted until 10:00 a.m. on 5/22/24 at board.secretary@vta.org.

Further information on the public hearing is available at vta.org/2016-measure-b-citizens-oversight-committee. Contact the Office of the Board Secretary at (408) 321-5680 or board.secretary@vta.org for questions. Sign language and interpreter services will be provided upon request by contacting VTA Customer Service at (408) 321-2300 or customer.service@vta.org at least five days prior to the meeting.



Background

In November 2016, Santa Clara County voters approved Measure B, a 30-year, half-cent countywide sales tax devoted to enhancing transit, highways, expressways, and active transportation (bicycles, pedestrians, and complete streets) within Santa Clara County.

Voters entrusted the MBCOC, comprised of fellow community members, with performing oversight to ensure that 2016 Measure B funds are being spent consistently with the intent of the ballot and to inform voters on Program compliance.

The Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) continues its delivery of the projects and programs contained in the 2016 Measure B Program. Examples of the projects/programs underway include local streets/road repairs and improvements, highway interchanges, Caltrain corridor capacity improvements, local transit improvements, and bicycle/pedestrian projects. More information on 2016 Measure B projects/programs is available on VTA's website: (1) vta.org/2016measureb; and (2) 2016measureb.vta.org.

Audit Results

The MBCOC commissioned the annual independent audit of 2016 Measure B Program revenue and expenditures for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023). Moss Adams, LLP, completed this audit and presented its findings at the 3/27/24 MBCOC meeting, indicating its conclusion that **VTA complied, in all material respects, with the requirements for the 2016 Measure B Program as defined in the ballot.** Every annual audit of the 2016 Measure B Program since inception has received this same conclusion.

Audit reports and other information on 2016 Measure B are available on VTA's website at vta.org/2016measureb and the VTA Headquarters at 3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134, in the Building B Main Lobby weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.