

The 2024 entertainment lineup at the 2024 Italian Family Festa is off the charts!

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Reservoir plans to move forward after judge rejects lawsuit alleging project would hurt environment

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JUNE 21 - JULY 4, 2024 ■ VOL. 37, NO. 13

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Knickerbockers' Lee Knorek and Wataru Misaka (1923-2019). Photo Credit: George Torrie / NY Daily News via Getty Images file

## Almaden resident holding book launch to celebrate new book about basketball hero Wataru Misaka

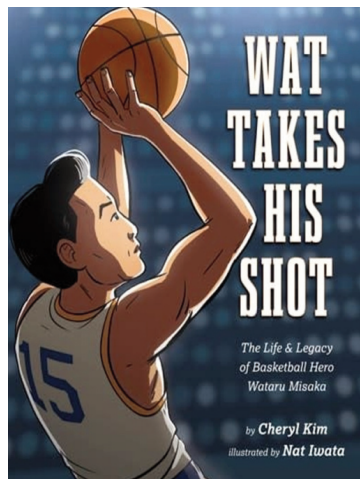
Cheryl Kim graduated from Leland High School in 1999

Almaden resident Cheryl Kim is holding a book launch June 22 at Linden Tree Books to celebrate her new book about basketball hero Wataru Misaka. Kim is an award-winning author who grew up in Almaden and graduated from Leland High School in 1999.

Kim's traditionally published picture book, *WAT TAKES HIS SHOT: The Life and Legacy of Basketball Hero Wataru Misaka* was recently named a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection, receiving a starred review from School Library Journal, and will be featured on a panel at the American Library Association's National Conference this month.

It is the inspirational story of a Japanese American basketball player who broke the color barrier in the NBA, the same year Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball.

"I taught at a local elementary school for nine years before split-



ting my time between Almaden and Thailand, where our family volunteers with an anti-child trafficking organization," Kim said.

Kim said her new book is an important contribution to Asian American history as the book releases into the world. She has also written several books for Sports Illustrated for Kids, National Geographic Learning, and other publications.

For more information, visit [www.cherylkimbooks.com](http://www.cherylkimbooks.com).

## EVERY HEART BEATS TRUE

### Fireworks display event options for July 3-4

If you're ready to make plans to watch local fireworks, you have three options to choose from this year, including pyrotechnic displays at Almaden Lake Park, Lake Cunningham Park, and Excite Ballpark.

Residents looking for a natural setting than a street or a baseball stadium on the Fourth can head to Almaden Lake Regional Park, which has its ninth annual festival starting at 3 p.m. July 4 with live music, food trucks and a fun zone for kids before the fireworks start about 9:15 p.m.

San Jose Councilmember Domingo Candelas is hosting his First Ever Fireworks show at Lake Cunningham Park in East San Jose for the first time. Those festivities start at 7 p.m. and also will feature food trucks and family-friendly activities.

The rockets will go off July 3 after the Giants' game against the Stockton Ports, and on July 4 the fireworks will follow a concert by country music artist Matt Stell,



presented by Bay Country with both events at Excite Ballpark.

For more information regarding the Almaden Lake Park fireworks show, visit <https://sjd10.com/4th-of-july>

For more information regarding the Lake Cunningham Lake Park fireworks show, visit <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/6855/4738?curm=7&cury=2024>

For more information regarding the fireworks show at Excite Ballpark, visit [sjgiants.com](http://sjgiants.com),



## Leland's Quixilver FRC 604 Robotics Team wins title of Milstein Division Champions at FIRST World Championships

*Quixilver team receives second title, the Milstein division's autonomous award, recognizing their consistent and high-performance robot operation*

Almaden Valley's Leland High School's renowned robotics team, Quixilver FRC 604, clinched the coveted title of Milstein Division Champions at the FIRST World Championship, held last month at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas.

The Milstein Division Championship, a pinnacle event in the realm of high school robotics, drew in teams from across the United States and worldwide. This was

the 33rd year of FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition that saw participation from 3,500 teams spanning 28 countries, comprising over 86,700 high school students, who competed in more than 170 regional and district events in 2024. Out of the 3500+ FRC teams only 600 secured spots at the championship.

Teams undertook the challenge of designing, building, and programming 125 lb. robots within a tight timeframe of 6-8 weeks for this year's Crescendo challenge.

Quixilver's journey commenced with winning the *See QUIXILVER FRC 604, page 4*

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



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Times **Community Notebook**

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**Quixilver FRC 604**

*Continued from page 1*

Monterey Bay Regional and the Sacramento Regional tournaments, solidifying their place among the elite competitors at the world championship. Quixilver were also finalists at the Silicon Valley Regional.

The team was awarded the Quality Award, the Industrial Design Award sponsored by General Motors, and the Innovation in Control Award this year at these regionals.

In addition, Eugene Fang, 604 alumni and technical mentor for Quixilver was presented with the Woodie Flowers Finalist Award at the Monterey Bay Regional.

The Woodie Flowers Award recognizes individuals who inspire students through excellent communication, innovative teaching methods, and a passion for empowering the next generation of leaders in STEM fields.

The world championship consisted of 8 divisions of 75 teams each. At the end of the qualification matches in the Milstein Division, Quixilver ranked #1 with a record of 9-1-0. As the #1 seed alliance captain, Quixilver chose Team 9483 ("Istanbul Wildcats" from Türkiye), Team 1058 ("PVC Pirates" from NH) and Team 78 ("Air Strikes from RI) as their alliance partners.

With double-elimination playoffs, Quixilver's alliance won an additional five playoff matches to clinch the Milstein Division title, with a pinnacle high score of 151. This was Quixilver's third season winning their division at a FIRST championship.

The Quixilver team also received the Milstein



Quixilver FRC 604 enters the arena to compete.

division's autonomous award, recognizing their consistent, reliable, and high-performance robot operation during autonomously managed actions, underlining their technical prowess and innovation.

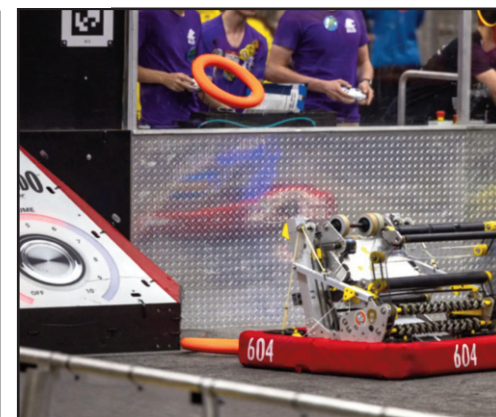
Advancing to the Einstein field, Quixilver's alliance competed again with the other seven divisions' winning alliances. Facing formidable competition, Quixilver's alliance secured a 5-6th place position after the double elimination rounds.

Looking back at their outstanding achievements, Quixilver proudly holds a remarkable record of 58 wins, 10 losses, and 1 tie in 2024.

The robotics program at Leland High School stands as a testament to dedication and excellence, offering a year-round after-school activity

open to all students. Founded in 2000 by head mentor Helen Arrington, a math teacher and instructional coach for San Jose Unified, the team is nurtured by a cadre of dedicated volunteer mentors and alumni, imparting invaluable skills in CAD, design, programming, electrical engineering, and low-cost manufacturing techniques. Notably, the team has clinched 11 Regional Chairman's Awards (now known as Impact Awards) for their outstanding STEM outreach efforts.

Furthermore, Quixilver's head mentor Helen Arrington was among the 15 educators globally recognized by the 2024 Inspire the Future initiative by FIRST, lauding her unwavering commitment to engaging students in STEM education and expanding access to FIRST programs, thereby leaving an indelible mark on the future of STEM education.



604 shooting a ring into the "speaker."



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Saturday, July 13th, 2024, 12pm-3pm

Lunch is a buffet of spiral wrap sandwiches, mini corn dogs, hot wings, salad, fruit and cheese plates. Enjoy your picnic lunch while visiting with friends. Dessert and Island punch will be included.

There will be fun games, popcorn and a photo booth to take photos to remember the day. Panextasy, a 2 piece steel drum band will entertain you with island sounds and familiar beach tunes. Wear beach attire: bright shirts, shorts, sandals, sun hats (no bikinis or speedos please).

Tickets go on sale June 21<sup>st</sup>, 8 to 10am in the ACC lobby then MWF from 8am-10am. \$22 members \$25 non-members. Call Jeanne @408-425-5723 for more information.

Social Media: For up to date information go to...

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The ever-popular Italice! These talented musicians will serve up the most original and authentic Italian music at this year's Italian Family Festa.

**The 2024 Italian Family Festa will rock!**

By **William Bellou**  
Publisher

The 2024 entertainment lineup at 2024 Italian Family Festa is off the charts!

The 42nd Annual Festa will feature many more talented musicians this year.

The event takes place Saturday, August 3 from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Sunday, August 4 from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. at History Park, 1650 Senter Rd. in San Jose.

The ever-popular Italice! These talented musicians serve up the most original and authentic Italian music. The group has more than 40 years of musical experience and has performed all over the west. Italice will likely turn the Festa into a dance party!

The Festa is also excited to have the award-winning San Francisco Brass Band! The group won the North American Brass Band Association (NABBA) 2nd Section in 2023. And, this year, it clinched the title for 1st Section. The band is among the top ten brass bands in the United States.

Also performing at this year's Festa is The Houserockers... a 10-piece rock & soul band that plays the greatest songs ever recorded. The Houserockers have won several Bay Area Best Band Awards, including "Best Cover Band in the Bay Area."

Also performing at the Festa this year

are Opera San Jose, Gold Money Band, and Fratello Marionettes.

The Festa is also offering special entertainment for the kids this year in the Zona di Ragazze e Ragazzi... aka, Kids' Activity Zone!

Back by popular demand, Satvik the Magician! He brings magic, mystery, and excitement! Youngsters and parents will be astonished! Kids can also try their hand at swordsmanship with the Italian Renaissance Swordsmanship Academy! Other hands-on activities for kids include a professional face painter.

Please visit our website for the full schedule of entertainment: [italianfamilyfesta.org](http://italianfamilyfesta.org) Admission is FREE!

Entertainment schedule:

Saturday, August 3

12:30 - 1:00 Opera San Jose  
1:30 - 3:30 San Francisco Brass Band  
4:15 - 6:45 The Houserockers - Saturday Night Street Dance

Sunday, August 4

11:30 - 12:00 Opera San Jose  
12:30 - 2:15 San Francisco Brass Band  
2:45 - 4:45 Italice

The Italian Family Festa is presented by the Italian American Heritage Foundation (IAHF). All proceeds support the preservation of Italian culture and the Italian American Heritage Foundation Scholarship Program.



**SAN FRANCISCO BRASS**

Among the performers this year at the Italian Family Festival will be San Francisco Brass Band.

Times Local News

**Reservoir plans to move forward after judge rejects lawsuit alleging project would hurt environment**

By William Bellou  
Publisher

The \$4.5 billion project, known as Sites Reservoir in California, is moving forward after a judge's decision to reject a lawsuit by environmental groups opposed to it.

The new reservoir is planned for the rolling ranchlands west of the town of Maxwell, about 70 miles northwest of Sacramento.

Sites would be California's eighth largest reservoir and bring about water to 24 million people, including residents of Santa Clara County, parts of the East Bay and Los Angeles.

The project is supported by President Biden, Gov. Gavin Newsom, farm organizations, labor unions and about 20 water agencies, including the Santa Clara Valley Water District, Zone 7 Water Agency in Livermore, and the Metropolitan Water District in Los Angeles, all of which are partners and would receive water from the Sites Reservoir.

"California needs more water storage, and we have no time to waste," Newsom said Tuesday. "Projects like the Sites Reservoir will capture rain and snow runoff to supply millions of homes with clean drinking water."

The reservoir would store water diverted from the Sacramento River in wet years, for use by cities and farms around the state in dry years.

Sites would be the largest new reservoir in California since 1979, when the federal government opened New Melones Lake in the Sierra Foothills between Sonora and Angels Camp.

The plan is opposed by the Sierra Club, Friends of the River and other environmental groups who say that filling Sites would divert too much water from the Sacramento River, hurting endangered salmon, steelhead and Delta smelt, and depriving the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta of fresh water.

"We're disappointed by the court ruling," said John Buse, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity in Oakland. "There is considerable momentum for this project. But people need to weigh that against the fact that it is expensive and has limited benefits and significant environ-

mental costs."

Last July, Newsom signed a law designed to speed construction of water, solar, wind and transportation projects.

Under the new law, lawsuits that are filed under the California Environmental Quality Act, known as CEQA, must be decided within 270 days on such projects. The Sites Reservoir lawsuit was decided in 148 days.

CEQA is one of the state's landmark environmental laws. Signed by former Gov. Ronald Reagan in 1970, it requires developers to evaluate their projects' impacts on air pollution, water pollution, wildlife, traffic, noise, and other factors. Newsom and former Gov. Jerry Brown have acknowledged the law has had unintended consequences, stalling for years projects that are important to the state and its economy.

The environmental groups who sued the Sites Project Authority, a collection of local government officials in the Sacramento Valley who are proposing the new reservoir, have until Friday to decide whether to appeal.

The project has nearly all of its funding lined up.

Last week, the Biden administration granted another \$67 million to the project, raising the total funding from Congress and the administration to \$519 million. It also has received a \$2.2 billion loan from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a \$450 million loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and \$875 million in state funds from Proposition 1, a water bond approved by California voters in 2014. Much of the rest of the money, and the loan repayments, would come from water agencies around the state who buy its water.

If the environmentalists' lawsuit is not rekindled by a higher court, the final hurdle for the project is to receive water rights from the State Water Resources Control Board, which is appointed by Newsom. Hearings are set to begin in July and run until next April, said Jerry Brown, executive director of the Sites Project Authority.

Brown, who is not related to the former governor, said Wednesday that the project is on track to break ground in 2026 and finish by 2032.

"We need to get it built so that we are prepared for our future," said Brown, the former general manager of the Contra Costa Water District. "This court ruling shows that California can still build big water projects and do it in an environmentally sensitive way, which we have to do because

climate change is affecting our water system, which isn't set up for what is coming at us."

Had the reservoir already been built, it would have filled to the top in the past two winters, Brown said. It would hold 1.5-million-acre feet — enough for 7.5 million people in a year. In response to environmentalists' concerns, Brown added that the project would have diverted an average of only 6% of the water that flowed through the Delta during January to April.

During big winter storms, up to 90% of the

water flowing through the Delta flows to the ocean because state and federal pumps at Tracy do not have the capacity to capture more.

Buse, with the Center for Biological Diversity, said pumping in drier times is what worries him.

"Those biggest flow periods are the least controversial," he said. "The greater concern is when the flows are not as great, and they would still be taking water. That's when it would have more impact on salmon and other fish. Those are critical periods."

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Times **Local News**

## Cars in the Park largest annual antique and classic auto show in the west September 14

Formally *Antique Autos in History Park* continues along with 'A Living History Day'

The 24th annual Cars in the Park presented by the Santa Clara Valley Model T Ford Club and History San José will take place on Saturday, September 14, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The popular car show fills History Park (Kelley Park, 693 Phelan Ave, San José, CA) with more than 200 period-correct through 1949 vehicles, fire equipment, bicycles, and motorcycles of all makes.

The featured vehicles this year are 1914 to 1938 Dodge Brothers automobiles.

### Requirements for entering an antique or classic vehicle

There is no registration nor fee required to enter a vehicle. Just bring your antique vehicle to the gate at History Park.



All vehicles permitted on the grounds of History Park during the show are manufactured between the late 1800s through 1949 and are period correct. (No vehicle will be allowed on the grounds of History Park during the show that is newer than 1949.)

Also located on the grounds will be the Early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association. There will be antique crafts demonstrated and antique collectibles displayed.

Among the performers and displays include: A Dixieland Jazz Band, toy trains operating, trolley rides, and blacksmith demonstrations. Activities are also provided for kids. Food will be available from food trucks. Ice cream is available at O'Brien's

## Ninth annual July 4 festival promises explosive excitement

By Arjun Batra

I'm excited to invite you to the 9th Annual 4th of July Fireworks Festival. Celebrate Independence Day with us at Almaden Lake Park!

It is an honor to carry on this District 10 tradition, which began under the leadership of Former Councilmember Johnny Khamis and continues year after year.

Join me on July 4th starting at 3 p.m. for a jam-packed festival including a Family Fun Zone, food trucks, and booths showcasing local organizations and businesses. Enjoy live music and a new "Half-Time Show" featuring Comedy Sportz, the National Anthem, and more. Attend the half-time show in your most patriotic outfit for a chance to win prizes!

The celebration culminates with an explosive fireworks show at 9:15 PM (approximately). Former District 10 resident Craig Cutright with Blackstar Fireworks Incor-

porated, along with longtime District 10 resident and volunteer extraordinaire Bob Vonderwerth, are once again producing a fantastic fireworks display. This festival couldn't have come together without the efforts of our neighbors as well as generous donations from the community and our sponsors.

To ensure this event goes off with a bang, the Almaden Valley Women's Club needs your help! First, there are great volunteer opportunities for all ages. Students can have their community service forms signed. Visit [bit.ly/J4FF2024volunteer](http://bit.ly/J4FF2024volunteer) to sign up. In addition, support the Almaden Valley Women's Club and Rotary Club of Almaden/Willow Glen as they raise funds to keep this annual event going. Their fundraiser provides a win-win-win opportunity - you support the festival, you get huge savings on the things you do every day, AND you support local businesses. That's a win-win-win! Visit [goraisy.entertainment.com/avwc](http://goraisy.entertainment.com/avwc) to learn more.

We are grateful to the organizations and sponsors who help make this great event possible. Reach out to [district10@sanjose-ca.gov](mailto:district10@sanjose-ca.gov) if you have any questions or would like to learn more.

See you at the 4th of July Fireworks Festival at Almaden Lake Park as we gather to celebrate the United States of America!



**District 10 Report**  
Arjun Batra  
Councilmember,  
District 10

Ice Cream Parlor.

Spend the day and take a photo with an antique auto at the Associated Oil Company Service Station.

Please note there is NO alcohol, NO pets (except service dogs), and NO BBQs allowed inside the park. These are Park rules and must be followed.

Plan your day around the following:

- 12:00 Music by the Rhythmaires Band
- 1:00 Video: Dodge Brothers Factory in 1918
- 2:00 Model T Put-Together
- 3:30 Drawing for Door Prizes

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Times **Local News**

## Juliana Meeks of Almaden named to University of Rhode Island Spring 2024 Dean's List

The University of Rhode Island (pictured right) announced that **Juliana Meeks** of Almaden Valley has been named to the Spring 2024 Dean's List.

Students named to the Dean's List represent nearly all of Rhode Island's cities and towns, all six New England states, New York and New Jersey, and many other states and countries.

To be included on the Dean's List, full-time students must have completed 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable during a semester and achieved at least a 3.30 quality point average.

Founded in 1892, URI now enrolls more than 18,000 students and offers more than 200 degree programs across nine schools and colleges. As a land- and sea-grant institution, URI is a key driver of economic development in Rhode Island and contributes significantly to the health and vitality of the state, the New England region, and the nation.




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### TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK:

## Large Language Models (LLM)

By Shubhi Asthana



Have you ever stumbled into a conversation where everyone is speaking around this “techie” word – and even after you’ve broken in, it is difficult to understand the unfamiliar jargon and acronyms? Well, there’s no need to sweat it. Let me teach you the meaning of some commonly used tech words:

### Large Language Models (LLM)

Have you been reading about ChatGPT, GPT-4, Lambda, Falcon? Do you wonder where they do fit in the world of Artificial Intelligence and Machine learning?

They are all LLMs. Let’s understand what an LLM is.

A Large Language Model (LLM) is a neural network that is trained to understand language and can be used for various tasks, like summarizing, translating, predicting, and generating text. An LLM is trained on massive text datasets such as Common Crawl, Web-Text2, Books1, Books2, and Wikipedia.

Over millennia, humans developed spoken languages to communicate. Language is at the core of all forms of human and technological communications; it provides the words, semantics and grammar needed to convey ideas and concepts. In the AI world, a language model serves a similar purpose, providing a basis to communicate and generate new concepts.

An LLM is the evolution of the language model concept in AI that dramatically expands the data used for training and inference. In turn, it provides a massive increase in the capabilities of the AI model. While there isn’t a universally accepted figure for how large the data set for training needs to be, an LLM typically has at least one billion or more parameters. Parameters are a machine learning term for the variables present in the model on which it was trained that can be used to infer new content.

What are large language models used for? LLMs have become increasingly popular because they have broad applicability for a range of NLP tasks, including the following:

- Text generation: The ability to generate text on any topic that the LLM has been trained on is a primary use case.
- Translation: For LLMs trained on multiple languages, the ability to translate from one language to another is a common feature.
- Content summary: Summarizing blocks or multiple pages of text is a useful function of LLMs.
- Classification and categorization: An LLM can classify and categorize content.
- Conversational AI and chatbots: LLMs can enable a conversation with a user in a way that is typically more natural than older generations of AI technologies.

Do you enjoy reading this column? Send in your comments or feedback to the author at shub.saxen@gmail.com. Shubhi Asthana works as a Research Senior Software Engineer at the IBM Almaden Research Center, San Jose.

## Partnership launches free taxi rides for veterans in Santa Clara County

A partnership with the County of Santa Clara, Silicon Valley Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, (MOAA-SVC), and Yellow Cab of Silicon Valley is now providing free transportation assistance for veterans in Santa Clara County.

Veterans will be able to schedule a free taxi ride to medical appointments, job interviews, employment services, school or education activities, and other essential appointments. Scheduling a ride is easy, just call the County’s Office of Veterans Services at 408-918-4980 to schedule pick-up.

“Since taking office we have focused grant funding into our URJGENT program and supporting local organizations caring for our community. MOAA-SV came to us with an outstanding proposal for our veterans, and we’re so excited to see the program get underway,” said Supervisor Otto Lee.

The free ride program is thanks to a microgrant from the Office of County Supervisor Otto Lee to the MOAA-SVC, who coordinates the rides with the County’s Veterans Services Office, (VSO). The first grant allocated \$5,000 and a second grant awaiting approval

will provide another \$5,000. Rides are currently available for scheduling.

“This taxi service is a game changer for veterans,” proclaimed MOAA-SVC President Ret. Col. Ray Watts. “Providing reliable and accessible taxi services for veterans can significantly improve their quality of life and motility. Veterans, especially those with disabilities or limited mobility, often face challenges in transportation, making it difficult for them to attend medical appointments, run errands, or participate in social activities, this really helps reduce stress and anxiety too,” he added.

The VSO is a County and State funded agency established in 1944 to assist Veter-



ans, Military Personnel, and their families in obtaining federal, state, and local benefits earned through active-duty military service. Their office is located at 68 N. Winchester Boulevard, Santa Clara, CA 95050 and may be reached by phone at 408-918-4980, by email at vets@vets.sccgov.org, or online at veterans.sccgov.org/home.

The VSO is available online at veterans.sccgov.org/home or contact them directly by email at vets@vets.sccgov.org or phone at 408-918-4980.

### Almaden Senior Association

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Menu will be a buffet of spiral wrap sandwiches, mini corn dogs, hot wings, salad, fruit and cheese plates.

Dessert and Island punch.

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Wear beach attire. Bright shirts, shorts, sandals, caftans, sun hats, (no bikinis and speedos please).

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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

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