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The program includes J.S. Bach (Tocatta & Fugue in D Minor); Camille Saint-Saëns (Danse Macabre); Modest Mussorgsky (Night on Bald Mountain); John Williams (Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban); Franz Schubert (Die Erlkönig); Bernard Herrmann (Psycho); and Edvard Grieg (In the Hall of the Mountain King).

For tickets, visit www.tickets.symphonysanjose.org/Online

Panetta reintroduces bipartisan legislation ensuring veterans transportation to medical appointments

United States Representative Jimmy Panetta (CA-19) reintroduced bipartisan legislation that would permanently provide safe and reliable transportation for veterans to and from VA facilities and other treatment centers.

The Veterans Earned Transportation (Vets ETA) Act would permanently reauthorize a VA program that provides these transportation services for veterans to better access vocational rehabilitation, counseling, and medical treatment, particularly for those who are visually impaired, elderly, immobile, or living in remote and rural areas.

"Many veterans who live in rural areas throughout our country have a difficult time accessing VA health care due to the distance they have to travel," said Rep. Panetta. "This bipartisan legislation would ensure permanent funding for vital VA transportation services, allowing veterans, regardless of their ability or where they live, access the mental, physical, and vocational care that they may need. Taking this action is a big step towards ensuring that the United States is serving all those who served our country."

More than 32,300 veterans currently live in California's 19th Congressional District. The Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) was established in 2010. Since then, the VA has focused on expanding access and estab-



"Our veterans have dedicated their lives to defending our nation and deserve access to high-quality care after their service," said Rep. Ted Lieu. "We owe it to them to make sure they have access to mental health care, medical treatment, job training services, and more offered by the VA."

lishing Mobility Managers at each VA facility to better meet the transportation needs of veterans across the country. Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01) and Ted Lieu (CA-36) co-lead the Vets ETA Act.

"The absence of dependable transportation for our veterans to their VA appointments greatly impacts their access to essential care," said Rep. Fitzpatrick. "I am proud to join my colleagues in the introduction of the bipartisan Veterans Earned Transportation Act, to permanently authorize a program that ensures safe and reliable transportation to VA treatment providers, thereby alleviating the unjust burden on our veterans, so they can receive the care they deserve."

"Our veterans have dedicated their lives to defending our nation and deserve access to high-quality care after their service," said Rep. Lieu. "We owe it to them to make sure they have access to mental health care, medical treatment, job training services, and more offered by the VA. No veteran should lose access to these critical supports due to a lack of reliable transportation. I am pleased to join Representative Panetta to reintroduce the Vets ETA Act, which would permanently fund a VA program that provides safe and reliable transportation for veterans to and from their VA care."

State to send San Jose millions to clear homeless camps

By William Bellou
Publisher

The state of California is getting ready to send San Jose money to help clear encampments and provide support to unhoused residents.

The funding is being allocated from the state's Encampment Resolution Funding grant program and follows Newsom's July order that local jurisdictions be more aggressive at clearing encampments throughout the state.

Although the amount the state

plans to send is nearly \$5 million, officials reveal that it's not nearly enough compared to what the city needs to tackle the homelessness crisis.

Gov. Gavin Newsom doled out \$130.7 million last week to assist in reducing the number of homeless people statewide. Local advocates say the money won't go far, and that the state needs to invest more in solutions.

San Jose wants to open eight safe sleeping sites throughout the city, with each tent having a max-



The city began sweeping a homeless encampment near Columbus Park in early September. The area was cleared two years ago to comply with the Federal Aviation Administration's demands, and since then has repopulated with dozens of people living in their cars and RVs. Photo by Joyce Chu.

imum price tag of \$40,000. For 500 tents, for a total expenditure of \$20 million. Additionally, the

city is working on a parking site projected to cost more than \$8 million.

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

Times **Community**



San Jose City Council District 8 candidate **Tam Truong** (center) had his officer certification temporarily suspended by the state police board amid allegations of mortgage fraud. *Photo by Annalise Freimarck.*

Evergreen District 8 City Council candidate is temporarily decertified as a police officer

By **Joyce Chu**
San José Spotlight

A San Jose police sergeant and City Council candidate has had his officer certification temporarily suspended by the state police board amid allegations of mortgage fraud.

The state's Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training temporarily decertified Tam Truong on Sept. 18 due to his pending criminal proceedings. The state board decertifies officers when they have committed serious misconduct, such as sexual assault, abuse of power or violation of the law.

"I am completely innocent," Truong told San José Spotlight. "When all the facts are presented, that will be clear to everyone."

The Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office charged Truong with grand theft related to mortgage fraud, in a one-count criminal complaint filed on Sept. 5. The complaint alleged Truong unlawfully took personal property and money — exceeding \$100,000 — from Orange Coast Title of Northern California, PHH Mortgage Services, Newrez LLC and American Home Mortgage.

In 2022, Orange Coast Title Company sued Truong for allegedly defrauding an escrow officer, which al-

lowed Truong to ditch his mortgage and collect nearly \$540,000 from the sale of a home.

The San Jose Police Department put Truong on administrative leave after he was charged with grand theft. SJPD representatives did not respond to a request for comment on Truong's decertification.

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan pulled his endorsement for Truong after he was charged by the DA's office.

"This single-count complaint filed by the district attorney's office represents nothing more than an allegation," Truong previously told San José Spotlight. "It is based on a misunderstanding of all the facts in this case. This matter has been settled through a civil proceeding, which is the appropriate venue. There is no evidence that I intended to mislead anyone."

Truong, who's worked in law enforcement for two decades, is running against incumbent Councilmember Domingo Candelas for the District 8 San Jose City Council seat in November.

San José Spotlight last year also reported that Truong at one point owed more than \$30,000 to a former employee of his private security company, Training and Protective Services. He started

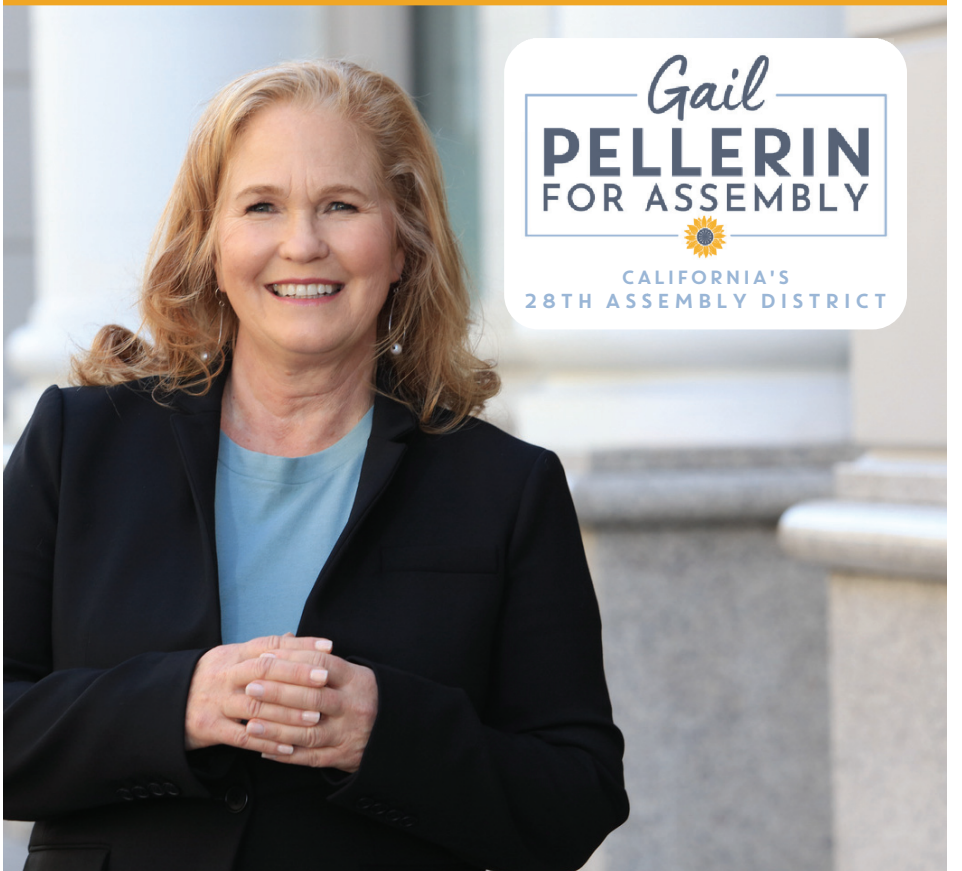
the company in 2012 to offer private patrols for neighborhoods just as the city's police force was hemorrhaging officers due to Measure B, a ballot measure that slashed retirement benefits for SJPD officers.

One of Truong's employees, Kevin Halverson, claimed he worked nearly 1,700 hours in the first half of 2013, but was paid for only a little more than 500 hours, in a wage theft case filed with the state labor commissioner in 2014.

Following a hearing and testimony from Halverson and some of his co-workers in early 2015, the labor commissioner ordered Truong to pay Halverson \$34,071 in wages, damages, interest and penalties. Truong's company dissolved a short time later.

"Running for elected office as a decertified police officer isn't a very good look for a candidate," Steve Slack, president of the San Jose Police Officers' Association, told San José Spotlight. "Voters deserve to know the truth and we encourage Tam Truong to publicly release, in its entirety, the settlement agreement that he says resolves the civil lawsuit that accused him of defrauding a mortgage company out of hundreds of thousands of dollars."

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Top Santa Clara County education leader sues

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools Mary Ann Dew-an has filed a lawsuit against the county Board of Education after trustees voted to fire her in closed session.

Trustees last week voted 4-2 behind closed doors to terminate Dew-an's contract "without cause upon 30 days written notice." But Dew-an has come back swinging as she seeks to claw her way back to the position in a lawsuit filed Tuesday, alleging the board had no authority to fire her because she was appointed. She claims she is not technically employed by the Santa Clara County Office of Education — but rather she is a constitutional officer.

Dewan, an education columnist for San José Spotlight, is represented by San Jose-based law firm Lathrop GPM, and is asking the Santa Clara County Superior Court to make a judicial declaration to determine how the case should proceed.

The lawsuit states that, "(Board of Education trustees) had no authority to terminate the Superintendent with or without cause under the law, the 2022 Agreement or the September 2018



Santa Clara County Office of Education Superintendent Mary Ann Dewan at the Feb. 21, 2024 board meeting. Photo by Brandon Pho.

Agreement and any such termination is null and void and of no legal effect."

But Area 4 Trustee Joseph Di Salvo said the contractual agreement allows for Dew-an to be terminated without cause. He was among the four who voted to fire Dew-an.

Dewan voluntarily entered into the employment agreement with the Santa Clara County Office of Education as superintendent of schools on Sept. 19, 2018, and Di Salvo said the agreement clearly states Dew-an can be let go upon 30 days notice.

Steven A. Ellenberg with Lathrop GPM said the employment agreement is not valid because Dew-an was not employed by the board of education.

"It's not an employment relationship. The superintendent is by law, a constitutional officer, separate and apart from the board of education, which is separately established and has its own limited roles," Ellenberg told San José Spotlight. "For example, the governor appoints judges all the time, but they're not his employees and he doesn't have the right to fire them." Board President Maimona Afzal Berta said

trustees followed proper procedure when deciding on Oct. 2 to terminate Dew-an's contract.

"The Santa Clara County Board of Education's process relating to Dr. Mary Ann Dewan's employment is consistent with past practice over many decades by the board relating to superintendent employment decisions at the Santa Clara County Board of Education," Berta told San José Spotlight.

Dewan has been on administrative leave since Oct. 3, but her attorneys argue the board has no right to place Dew-an on administrative leave since such an action is not within the terms of the 2018 contractual agreement.

Area 2 Trustee Tara Sreekrishnan, who voted against ousting Dewan, said the decision to fire her behind closed doors has eroded trust in the community.

"There was a lack of transparency and public input in this decision, and this lawsuit only underscores that the board has still not held a public hearing to address these concerns. Ignoring the voices of those we serve completely undermines the accountability we are entrusted to uphold," Sreekrishnan told San José Spotlight.



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Times **Community News**

When we invest in women's health, we all benefit

By County Supervisor Joe Simitian

Women's health is so much more than "just" a women's issue; it's a complex set of issues with widespread impact on families and communities. Despite significant advancements in health care, however, women continue to face unique challenges and barriers that require attention and action.

Reproductive Health and Rights

At the heart of women's health is the issue of reproductive health care. Access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including family planning services, is essential for women's overall well-being. Yet, these services are frequently under threat and underfunded.

Whether it's choosing a provider, ensuring access to contraception and preventative care, or ensuring the affordability of services, our County recognizes that the ability to access and provide family planning and reproductive health care is essential for the health and well-being of our residents.

Following the Supreme Court's reversal of Roe v. Wade, I took action to protect access to reproductive health care by authoring a resolution that reconfirmed our County's continued support for reproductive rights and called on Congress to enact national legislation protecting those rights.

Ensuring that women in our County have access to comprehensive health care has long been a priority for me. Most recently, I worked with my colleague Supervisor Cindy Chavez to

make our County's the OB/GYN Urgent Care program, an innovative pilot program we launched for pregnant women during COVID-19, a permanent offering of the Santa Clara Valley Healthcare system.

Back in 2017, when I learned that Planned Parenthood's San Antonio Road site lease was coming to an end, I urged our Board to partner with Planned Parenthood to find a way to continue health care services for our North County patients.

As a result, in 2022, we opened the County's first specialty care clinic and pharmacy in the North County. Located in the Planned Parenthood facility on California Street in Mountain View, the clinic and pharmacy complement the primary care services offered in the area by Planned Parenthood and other local nonprofit partners.

In 2018, when we learned that the MayView Community Health Center, which provides health care to low-income families and individuals throughout northern Santa Clara County, had been operating on reduced hours, I persuaded the Board of Supervisors to take action to provide MayView with emergency stabilization funding. The County's support enabled MayView to hire a full-time ob-gyn and a part-time nurse practitioner, allowing the health center to keep all of its clinics open and preserve accessible and affordable health care for women in the North County.

The following year, our Board allocated almost \$500,000 to replace Title X funding lost as a result of new federal rules that penalized organizations that made referrals to access abortion services.

Removing Barriers

As policymakers, it is our duty to break down barriers to health care, especially those affect-

ing marginalized communities. I'm glad to have had so many opportunities over the years to advocate for women's health.

To address a gap in critical services for survivors of violence, in 2019, I successfully pushed for the expansion of sexual assault exams to the North County (Stanford Hospital), enabling survivors to undergo the procedures closer to home in their own community.

In 2020, I pushed for funding to support Pink Ribbon Good (PRG) and Cancer CAREPoint in their work with patients receiving cancer treatment at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. Our County's support enabled these two organizations to provide a slew of critical services to patients during the height of the COVID pandemic and, in the case of PRG, expand services to patients at other hospitals throughout our County.

Breast Health Services

Considering the profound importance of preventive care, particularly breast cancer screenings, I recently proposed County officials expand opportunities for breast cancer screening for County residents to ensure early detection of breast cancer, particularly those with dense breast tissue.

A new law went into effect this fall requiring mammography facilities nationwide to notify patients of their breast density in their mammogram reports. This is important because an overwhelming majority of women are unaware of their breast density, yet nearly half of women have dense breast tissue and the risk of breast cancer for women with extremely dense tissue is about five times greater than for those with low breast density.

The new FDA mandate will help women make better decisions about additional medical screenings or care they may need. It's essentially what we did here in California more than

a decade ago with Senate Bill 1538, legislation I authored (as a member of the California State Senate) to improve breast cancer detection in women with dense breast tissue.

In 2023, at my behest, our Board declared our County's support for the Find It Early Act, federal legislation (currently pending in Congress) that would require insurance plans to cover diagnostic tests without additional cost to the patient due to insurance co-pays or deductibles.

Let's continue to advocate for policies that support women's health, educate our communities, and ensure that all women have access to the care they require at every stage of life. Let's work together to eliminate health disparities, protect reproductive rights, and ensure that every woman has access to the care she needs.

To all the women reading this: I urge you to take charge of your health today. We often hear of women taking care of themselves last, missing a sign or symptom because they were busy taking care of others. Schedule your mammogram — and encourage others in your life to do the same. Listen to your heart, and call 911 if you are experiencing a stroke or heart attack. It could be the action that saves yours — or a loved one's — life.

Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian represents the Fifth District which includes Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Saratoga, Stanford, portions of San Jose and unincorporated communities in the Santa Cruz Mountains. He was elected to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in 2012 and re-elected in 2016 and 2020. Stay up to date on news and events happening in District Five by signing up for Supervisor Simitian's monthly newsletter: district5.sccgov.org/newsletter.



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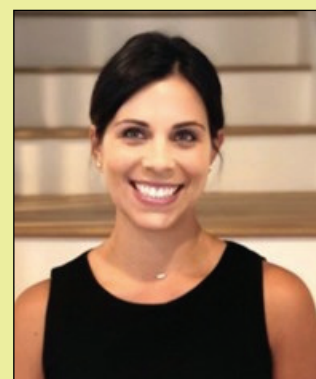


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Times **Local News**

Union distrusts San Jose cop's fundraising for fallen officer

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

Union representatives are calling out San Jose police Sgt. Tam Truong for running a fundraiser for the family of a fallen officer while being sued for alleged financial fraud. But family members don't see a problem. Truong set up a GoFundMe page for Community Service Officer Long Pham, who was struck and killed by an alleged drunk driver on Aug. 3 while directing traffic



San Jose Community Service officer Long Pham was struck and killed by an alleged drunk driver on Aug. 3. A GoFund Me page was set up for the family by Tam Truong, who is facing criminal fraud allegations. Photo by Vicente Vera.



San Jose Community Service Officer Long Pham was killed in the line of duty in early August. Photo courtesy of the San Jose Police Department.

on Monterey Road. To date, the GoFundMe page has raised more than \$23,000. But Municipal Employees' Federation - AFSCME Local 101 officials said Truong shouldn't be managing any of the funds given his alleged history.

"Sergeant Truong is currently facing criminal fraud allegations and is a defendant in a pending lawsuit. He has also faced wage theft claims related to a private security company he once managed," Local 101 union repre-

sentative John Tucker told San José Spotlight. "These unresolved legal matters cast doubt on his suitability to manage such a significant sum of money meant for the Pham family."

The GoFundMe launched by

Truong lists Son Pham as the beneficiary. According to GoFundMe policy, adding a beneficiary to the fundraising campaign ensures the funds will be received directly by the beneficiary's bank account.

Truong did not reply to a request for a comment.

Son Pham, who said he is the brother of Long Pham, described being deeply disappointed to see union officials demand the GoFundMe page meant to support his family be taken down. After Long Pham was killed there was an outpour of support from the

law enforcement community toward the Pham family.

"All the funds raised in this account go to us and we are the only people with access to it," Son Pham told San José Spotlight. "The contribution money our family has received has been from the GoFundMe that was created by Sgt. Tam Truong."

He said the family has yet to receive any money from the San Jose Police Foundation fundraising campaigns.

A San Jose Police Foundation spokesperson said a check has been cut for the donations they raised on behalf of the family and they will receive the funds in the coming days. The foundation spokesperson said he was not comfortable disclosing the amount, because he does not want to bring unwanted attention to the family.

Truong is running for the San Jose City Council seat in District 8. He was recently placed on administrative leave from his position at the San Jose Police Department after he was sued last year for allegedly defrauding an Orange Coast Title Company escrow officer — allowing him to ditch his mortgage and collect nearly \$540,000 from the home's sale. Truong has since lost major endorsements over the alleged fraud controversy.

Local 101 officials have issued an open letter saying Truong is in no position to manage a fundraiser on behalf of the family of Long Pham.

Tucker is calling on Truong to take one of two actions — transfer all \$23,000 to the Pham family immediately or hand over control to a mutual party like the San Jose Police Foundation. He said he hopes Truong complies without the threat of legal action.

"This step is crucial to ensure transparency and avoid any risk of mismanagement," Tucker said.



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Times **Local News**



VTA board approves financing and purchase terms for new headquarters

After a thorough process and economic analysis, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is moving forward with a plan to relocate its headquarters and other satellite offices to one consolidated space in Downtown San Jose at 488 South Almaden Blvd.

Funding approved for the move, through the sale of bonds, will also be applied to facility improvements at all VTA Divisions throughout Santa Clara County focused on our workers and the workplace environment.

The VTA Board of Directors voted to approve the purchase terms for the new building, in a deal that leverages the distressed nature of the current real estate market.

“In an effort to be good stewards of taxpayer funds, we are fortunate to be able to take advantage of the current buyer’s market and at the same time help fill in vacant space in Downtown San Jose to shore up the vibrancy of our County’s largest city,” said Jessie O’Malley Solis, Director of VTA Real Estate and Transit Oriented Development. “Being able to secure more funding for workplace improvements at other VTA locations is paramount in this deal,” Solis said.

The current VTA headquarters located at 3331 North First Street was designated by the Board previously to be leased for Transit Oriented Development.

Revenues to the agency from leasing that land could be up to \$1.5 billion over time.

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Times **Local News**

TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK

LLM Training

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:

LLM Training

LLM (Large Language Model) training is a crucial process that defines how a model behaves. It involves creating or fine-tuning a model by training it on a large dataset, adjusting the model's weights to improve its performance.

The first phase of LLM training usually involves unsupervised learning, where the model is trained on unstructured, unlabeled data. This allows the model to form relationships between words and concepts. The next phase may use self-supervised learning, where labeled data helps the model better understand specific concepts. As the model progresses, it leverages transformer neural networks, which use self-attention

mechanisms to assign importance (weights) to different tokens.

Training LLMs is highly resource intensive. For instance, GPT-3, with 175 billion parameters, would take 288 years to train on a single GPU (Graphics Processing Unit). Due to the massive infrastructure requirements, many organizations rely on cloud platforms like Microsoft Azure for training.

Training challenges include:

1. Infrastructure: Requires multiple GPUs to handle enormous datasets and model parameters.

2. Cost: The resources needed for training are expensive, often requiring external infrastructure.

3. Model Parallelism: Distributing models across GPUs for efficient training, particularly with large models.

4. Architecture Choices: The complexity of training depends on model architecture, such as Transformer models with self-attention mechanisms.

Efficient LLM training requires balancing infrastructure, cost, and architecture to meet the model's functional needs.

About the Author

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.

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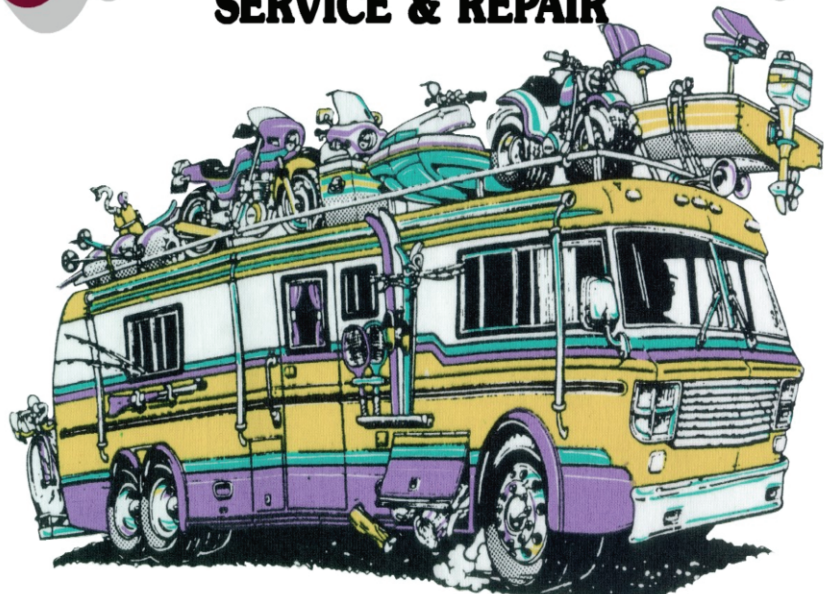
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30th anniversary of holidays at the Ainsley House

From Nov. 14 - Dec. 22, the Ainsley House and Holiday Boutique will be open Thursdays through Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Ainsley House is thrilled to welcome visitors this holiday season with a variety of festive events for the whole family.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of celebrating the holidays at the Ainsley House, and the theme, "Holiday Heritage," will highlight the ancestral and cultural traditions of the decorators. Each room will be adorned to reflect these unique heritages, making the Ainsley House a magical and unforgettable experience.

There's something for everyone to enjoy! Join us for a range of holiday celebrations, including Holiday Teas & Tours, the Holiday Boutique, Evening Open Houses, and Photos with Santa, as the Ainsley House spreads holiday cheer.

The Ainsley House invites the community to enjoy a festive holiday season with a variety of events and activities. From November 14 through December 22, the Ainsley House and Holiday Boutique will be open to the public Thursdays through Sundays from 11 AM to 3 PM. Please note that the Ainsley House will be closed on Thanksgiving Day.

Visitors can explore the beautifully decorated house at their own pace with self-guided tours. Admission is \$12 for adults (ages 18-64), \$10 for seniors (65+), and \$8 for youth (ages 7-17). Museum members receive free admission.

The Holiday Boutique, located in the Carriage House and the kitchen on the first floor of the Ainsley House, will be open during regular visiting hours. It features a selection of unique seasonal gifts, ornaments, jewelry, scarves, and more, perfect for holiday shopping.

The Campbell Museum Foundation's annual Holiday Teas and Tours fundraiser will take place on December 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, and 15. Guests will enjoy finger sandwiches, champagne, a special Ainsley blend tea, and delicious treats in the Carriage House, followed by a self-guided tour of the Ainsley



The Ainsley House was built in the style of an English Tudor Cotswold cottage in 1925 and serves as an arts and crafts house in Campbell, California.

House. Seating begins at 12 p.m., and admission is \$65 for the general public and \$60 for museum members. Proceeds support exhibits, education programs, and preservation efforts at the Campbell Historical Museum and Ainsley House. Reservations are required and can be made at www.campbellmuseums.com. Reservations Open October 16.

Santa Claus will make a special appearance at the Ainsley House on Saturday, November 23, from 9 AM to 12 PM. Families can meet Santa in the festive Sunporch room, with reservations available in one-hour time slots: 9-10 AM, 10-11 AM, and 11 AM-12 PM. While waiting for their turn, guests can enjoy hot chocolate and participate in holiday crafts. Admission is \$20 per family, and reservations can be made at www.campbellmuseums.com.

The Ainsley House will host two special evening Open House events on Thursday, December 19, and Sunday, December 22, from 5:30 to 8:00 PM. These events provide a wonderful opportunity to experience the house's holiday decorations at night, accompanied by live music in the living room and light refreshments in the Carriage House. Admission is \$15 for the general public, \$10 for museum members, and free for children 17 and under. Tickets will be available at the Carriage House on the evening of each event.

For more information and to reserve your spot for the Holiday Teas, Santa Photos, and Open House events, please visit www.campbellmuseums.com.

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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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