

SJ Youth Symphony's Philharmonic Orchestra announces its 24-25 season opener concert, Dec. 7 **SEE PAGE 6**



**Big ticket prize**  
Lottery ticket worth more than \$561K sold in Mt. Pleasant neighborhood  
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VTA bids farewell to longest-serving board member Cindy Chavez  
**SEE PAGE 9**



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# Evergreen Times

NOV. 15 - NOV. 28, 2024 ■ VOL. 41, NO. 24

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## No, Emma Prusch Farm Park isn't closing

*Dispute between city, foundation generates social media storm*

By William Bellou  
Publisher

This newspaper along with other media received an urgent notice stating that Emma Prusch Farm Park in San Jose, located at a site at King and Story roads was shutting down.

Despite anything the public has heard to the contrary in print or on social media sites, the park is thriving with families enjoying the Park's new playground while goats, pigs, roosters and peacocks strolled around to the amusement of onlookers.

The turmoil began after supporters of the Prusch Farm Park Foundation posted that the city had served the foundation with an eviction notice to have all its property removed by Nov. 18. The post suggested this was being

*See PARK, page 4*

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## District 8 San Jose Councilman Domingo Candelas wins reelection

By Times staff writers

San Jose Councilmember Domingo Candelas is headed for four more years on the city council after a tumultuous election fight with police Sgt. Tam Truong, representing Evergreen, Silver Creek and Lake Cunningham communities.

In a heated fight for reelection, San Jose Councilmember Domingo Candelas appears to be headed for another four years on the city council.

In the final vote count, incumbent Candelas won against San Jose police Sgt. Tam Truong, with 56.63% of the vote, with 19,737 votes. Truong received 43.37% of the vote, with 15,118 votes.

"After more than 30,000 door knocks, thousands of phone calls, I truly understand what issues our community neighbors are having, and I feel good for the kind of campaign we ran and the conversations we had," Candelas said. "I look forward to serving District 8 in the next four years."

Candelas said his priorities for a second term are making communities safer, empowering neighborhoods and keeping the streets clean.

"It's important that we respect the democratic process," Truong said. "I want to extend my respect and gratitude to our opponent. While Domingo and I may have different ideas, we share the same commitment to improving our city and making it thrive. To the incredible volunteers, staff, supporters — thank you. Thank you for your hard work and dedication. And to my family and friends, your support has meant the world to me."

Truong has been entrenched in controversy and faced criminal proceedings. The Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office charged Truong with grand theft related to mortgage fraud in September. The fraud charge was dismissed a month later. He was put on administrative leave from the police department amid the investigation and the state police board temporarily suspended his officer certification.

Since the start of his campaign, Candelas raised \$298,204 and spent \$264,913. Truong raised \$197,046 and spent \$192,164.



San Jose Councilmember **Domingo Candelas** appears to have won reelection Tuesday. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert, San Jose Spotlight.

### ELECTION 2024

#### School District Boards' election results Nov. 5, 2024

Evergreen SD Governing Board (Vote For 2)		
Patti Andrade	40.43%	14,449
Jeremy Barousse	31.87%	11,389
Linda Mora	27.70%	9,901

East Side Union High SD Governing Board (Vote For 2)		
Pattie Cortese	33.59%	53,644
Bryan Do	31.91%	50,958
Patricia Martinez-Roach	21.70%	34,655
Rudy J. Rodriguez	12.80%	20,444
159,701		

SJ - Evergreen CCD, TA #3 Governing Board (Vote For 1)		
Tony Alexander	64.17%	18,942
Mahbub R. Khan	35.83%	10,578
29,520		



### DRUM ROLL PLEASE

Performers from the **Manilatown Ancestral Ensemble** performed as part of Filipino American History Month at Evergreen Valley College.

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\*The Young Artist Competition is kindly sponsored by the San Jose Symphony Foundation. "San Jose Symphony" is a registered trademark of the San Jose Symphony Foundation, and its use in all its variations is by license.





The 44-acre Emma Prusch Farm Park in East San Jose. The garden is maintained by the Prusch Farm Park Foundation. Photo by Vicente Vera, San José Spotlight.

## Park

*Continued from page 1*

done in retaliation for the foundation's belief a few months ago that funds were improperly used for purposes other than the park.

Unfortunately, as neighborhood groups sent emails and reposted the original post, many came to the conclusion the city was closing the park. In actuality, the foundation had been a "guardian of the Farm" and partnered with the city since 1979. The Farm represents less than 1% of the Park's 44-acres, according to Parks Director Jon Cicirelli.

"The city hasn't had a formal agreement with the foundation in more than a decade, and only part of the park controlled by foundation members is Emma's Kitchen Garden. The foundation does not operate the Park."

In 2021 the city went through a process to find an operator for Emma Prusch Farm Park and selected Vegglielution, the nonprofit that already had been running programs at its six-acre urban community farm at the park.

The main dispute by the Foundation is the park's finances

related to a gas station lease on the property. In 1962, Emma Prusch gifted the land from her family's dairy farm to the city on the condition that it remain an agricultural park and that any revenue generated would go back into it mainly from a nearby gas station.

A Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services spokesperson told San José Spotlight their decision to end negotiations with the foundation had nothing to do with its request for information. They maintain that no money has been missing or mismanaged.

The city contracted an outside mediator to try and come to an agreement with the foundation, Cicirelli said, but the two sides were unable to resolve their differences. He said in a letter on Oct. 31 that the city decided to "end negotiations" with the organization.

Sal Pizarro stated in his Mercury News column: "It would be a shame to see Emma's Kitchen Garden fall into disrepair or even to have the Prusch Farm Park Foundation ushered out after many years of organizing volunteers and activities at the park. The foundation helped keep the park in the public eye as San Jose grew up dramatically around it."

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### ESD Superintendent accused of election violation

Dear Editor:

I wanted to bring your attention to a significant unfolding matter in the Evergreen School District involving the Superintendent, Dr. Antoine Hawkins, and allegations of a possible violation of California Education Code Section 7054.

According to witnesses, Dr. Hawkins may have allegedly encouraged management staff to support two incumbent board members in the current election, allegedly advising against endorsing another candidate (me) who is a former principal of the Evergreen School District. This alleged incident, if accurate, would potentially violate the provisions of Education Code 7054, which prohibits school officials from using district resources or authority to influence election outcomes.

Upon learning about this from witnesses, I reported the alleged violation to the Registrar of Voters who then escalated it with the District Attorney's office. I also reached out to the Board, an email from me was sent to them and I also attended a special board meeting to inform the Board in person. The Board has officially been informed multiple times of the alleged violation of the Superintendent. I requested an impartial investigation to clarify these actions and uphold transparency within the district.

This allegation suggests that Dr. Hawkins might have used his influence and position to potentially manipulate election results in favor of the two incumbents. Such actions, if confirmed, would represent a significant breach of the ethical standards expected of district leadership and could compromise the integrity of the election process. This issue is of particular concern given the expectation of impartiality and neutrality in school leadership, especially in matters of public elections. Many in our community would appreciate the Evergreen Times shedding light on this situation, especially the residents (more than 9,000) who voted for me, as it directly impacts on the integrity of our school district's leadership. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I believe the community would benefit from knowing more about what is happening in our school district, especially with such serious allegations in play.

**Linda Mora**

*Evergreen Valley*

*Editor's note: Authors of letters to the editor are solely responsible for the statements and opinions contained in their letters. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Times Media, Inc. staff or management. Times Media Inc. does not verify the accuracy of any statements.*

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**Times Media, Inc.**  
**(408) 494-7000**

EXECUTIVE EDITOR  
**WILLIAM D. BELLOU**  
williamb@timesmediainc.com

ADVERTISING SALES  
**WILLIAM D. BELLOU:** 408-494-7000

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:  
**DIANE BLUM, SUNAY SANGHANI,**  
**SEAN EASTWOOD,**  
**NIRBAN SINGH, FRANK SHORTT,**  
**JUDY LY, EUGENE LUU,**  
**APOORVA PANIDAPU, KELLY RAY**

ART DIRECTOR  
**JEFF BAHAM:**  
graphics@timesmediainc.com

PUBLISHER / CEO  
**WILLIAM D. BELLOU:**  
williamb@timesmediainc.com

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
**SANDY BELLOU**

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Times **Community News**

# The San Jose Nutcracker

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## San Jose Youth Symphony's Philharmonic Orchestra announces its 24-25 season opener concert, Dec. 7

*The Philharmonic Orchestra Performs Rossini, Bériot, Massenet and Smetana*

The San Jose Youth Symphony's Philharmonic Orchestra, under the artistic leadership of Music Director and Conductor Yair Samet, presents its 2024-25 Season Opener Concert to be held on Saturday, December 7, 2024, 7:30 pm, at the Mexican Heritage Plaza Theater, 1700 Alum Rock Avenue, San Jose, CA 95116.

The orchestra will open with Rossini's sprightly and percussive *La Gazza Ladra* Overture (The Thieving Magpie), along with Massenet's most highly regarded work for orchestra, the *Ballet Suite* from *Le Cid*, and close with Smetana's exciting *Three Dances* from *The Bartered Bride*.

This concert will also feature a winner from the 2024 Young Artists' Competition, proudly sponsored by the San Jose Symphony Foundation\*. Outstanding young soloist, Angela Liu, violinist, will perform Bériot's *Scène de Ballet* for Violin and Orchestra.

Angela Liu is a high school senior at Pacific Grove High School and has been playing violin with the San Jose Youth Symphony since 2018 and is currently in her third year with the Philharmonic Orchestra.

The San Jose Youth Symphony (SJYS) is



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

The musicians of SJYS, all school-age youth, are chosen from more than 650 applicants through our annual auditions. The SJYS comprises 13 distinct performing ensembles: two full orchestras, a chamber orchestra, two flute choirs, two string ensembles, as well as winds, brass, harp, saxophone, percussion, and jazz ensembles.

To purchase tickets, visit: <https://www.sjys.org/product-category/tickets>

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## Lottery ticket worth more than \$561K sold in Mt. Pleasant neighborhood on S. White Rd.

*Only winning ticket in the country to pick all five numbers*

No one won the Powerball lottery jackpot of \$39 million last week, but some lucky winner who bought a game ticket at the 7-Eleven store, 1434 S. White Rd. in the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood is \$561,233 richer, officials said.

The unidentified player picked the five regular numbers, which were 13, 22, 29, 43 and 58, but did not select the power number, which was 22. The player was the only one statewide to pick all five regular numbers.

The player has 180 days from the day of the draw to collect the winnings to collect the more than half million dollars.

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Times **Local News**

# San Jose Public Library System invites the public to join the Fine Free across entire library system

Historic implementation by City Librarian Jill Bourne who leads the way

By Kevin Larsen

Special to the Times

A flyer from the San Jose Public Library system states, “Your library is now your playground to explore, read, return and repeat. Bring back your overdue items and pass on the joy of borrowing.”

Bookworms rejoice! The San Jose Public Library, located in the heart of the Silicon Valley with 25 locations, officially announced the elimination of late fees as of July 2024 (three months ago).

This means if you started checking out books on July 2024 and you're late in returning them, you do not have to worry about late fees any more on them.

Those who have late items before that date still have the opportunity to volunteer your fines away on those older items by doing volunteer work, book replacement

program and the read away your fines program to clear away all fees.

To honor this Wave Away Your Fees new program a September Ceremonial Item got the San Jose City Council special vote. A celebrity was there!

**Krazy George Henderson**

**Krazy George Henderson** (below) kicked off this new program at the San Jose City Council meeting. He is a local legend and inventor of the *Wave* for ice hockey and



many other athletic events such as the football games at San Jose State University and other countries too, so he is known worldwide. Some say that the *Wave* began with Krazy George in 1979. He used to have one half of the audience stand up, scream his cheer while he was holding a drum, then sit, while the other side copied them but there was a natural delay when some of the crowd got up late, so that's how it all began.

In the years to come Krazy George added to his routine by starting cheers in the cor-

ner of a stadium athletic event and as the fans yelled it back, they would stand and yell then sit down causing a verbal *Wave* with standing.

The public owes this *Wave* gift to Krazy George, and the City Council was blessed to hear him perform it when the new library gift of no fines was instituted. The no fine breakthrough is in place, but it could also stop in the future or keep going, just like the *Wave*. The key is for everyone to bring back late items and show all that the *Wave* is working and the library and city leaders were intelligent to implement it.

**Your library is your playground**

The librarians at Evergreen Library and Village Square are believed by many to be the best in the world! It's a place of refuge and one can be free to explore, learn and borrow books and even DVD items too.

**Jill Bourne uplifts**



Winner of Librarian of the Year from the Library Journal publication tells us that this leader, **Jill Bourne** (above), is special and

we can learn from her too.

She recently stated regarding the elimination of library fees for items checked out after July 2024, “This is a significant milestone in the library's history as we announce the elimination of fines on all materials returned late. We are confident that going fines free will help us achieve our goal of removing barriers to access and encourage people to visit the library, check out materials and join over 760,000 library members to sign-up for a San Jose Public Library card, especially during this National Library Card Sign-up Month.”

**San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan voices thanks**

“Our libraries provide residents with books, technology, and enriching programs, all of which will now be even more accessible with the elimination of late fines. We're thrilled to have partnered with Krazy George, a proud San Jose State alumni and the inventor of ‘The Wave’ to launch the Library's Fine Free Wave Campaign. By raising awareness, we can encourage more people to join their local public library.”

Many believe the library is special because if you're feeling down or confused, there is perhaps nothing better than to listen to audio tapes, or reading to the authors who enthrall. Also, if you ever want to speak to a grand thinker past or present and become enchanted, try some biographies and be amazed.

To learn more about the myriads of good things Jill Bourne has brought to our library system in San Jose, web search: Librarian Journal Jill Bourne.

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Times **Community News****TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK****Differential Privacy**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:

**Differential Privacy**

Imagine the U.S. government collecting census data or a hospital sharing information for medical research. In these cases, people’s personal information is at risk. Although each piece of data might seem harmless on its own, combining small bits from different sources could reveal private details about someone. This is the issue differential privacy aims to solve.

**What is Differential Privacy?**

Differential privacy is a method that protects personal information in large datasets, like census records or medical information. It ensures that no one can identify an individual by comparing data from different sources. Whether it’s a curious neighbor or a company seeking private details,

differential privacy uses advanced techniques to keep personal data secure.

**How Does Differential Privacy Work?**

Differential privacy works by adding “noise” or slight changes to the data. This extra layer of “fuzziness” makes it hard for anyone to pinpoint exact details about individuals in the data, while still allowing researchers to gather useful insights.

Here are some methods used to add this noise:

1. **Laplace Mechanism:** This method adds a certain amount of random noise based on the size of the dataset, ensuring individual privacy. The more data there is, the more noise is added to balance out privacy and accuracy.

2. **Gaussian Mechanism:** Similar to the Laplace method, this technique also adds noise but is based on a different probability calculation (the Gaussian distribution). It adjusts the noise according to privacy and sensitivity needs.

3. **Exponential Mechanism:** Rather than adding noise, this method selects data at random from a dataset based on probabilities, allowing answers to questions without revealing specifics.

**Why is Differential Privacy Important?**

Differential privacy is especially valuable when working with sensitive information, such as healthcare records or large-scale surveys. It protects user data without compromising the quality of insights, making it a powerful tool in data analysis.

By applying differential privacy, organizations can safely analyze data without

risking individual privacy. This approach supports responsible data use in a world where privacy matters more than ever.

**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.

**VTA bids farewell to longest-serving board member Cindy Chavez**By **William Bellou***Publisher*

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Board of Directors bid farewell to **Cindy Chavez**, its longest-serving board member, at her final VTA board meeting Thursday, November 7.

Chavez (inset) terms out of her County Supervisor seat this year and has taken a position as the Bernalillo County Manager in Albuquerque, New Mexico, starting November 13.

Chavez has served on the board for more than 20 years, serving as Chair of the VTA Board a record four times—2006, 2016, 2020, and 2024—and as Vice Chair prior

to those years.

Chavez first joined the VTA Board in 1999 as a San José City Councilmember, where she represented Downtown San José. After being elected to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in 2013, she continued her service on the VTA Board until



2024. Throughout her time at VTA, Chavez has been a passionate advocate for the agency, its employees, and passengers throughout Santa Clara County.

“Cindy has been VTA’s biggest cheerleader, but also a tough critic, all to ensure that the people of Santa Clara County received the services and attention they deserve,” said Carolyn Gonot, VTA’s General Manager and CEO. “I could not have asked for a more deeply engaged and committed leader.”

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All shook up for very important ways you can prepare for earthquakes in 2024. See PAGE 6

Community walks voted among top 150 nature walks to start 2024. See PAGE 9

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**Evergreen Times**

NEWS

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### Man arrested for retail theft over past 8 months

*Suspect allegedly stole thousands of dollars of goods*

Police have arrested a man on suspicion of stealing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of goods from businesses including Home Depot, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Target in San Jose over the past eight months, according to authorities.

The arrest came after the San Jose Police Department's Organized Retail Theft Detail investigated 113 retail theft incidents, according to police spokesperson Stacie Shih. The investigation was funded by an \$8.4 million grant from the California Board of State and Community Corrections.

In a statement, San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan thanked the retail theft detail for "leaning in and using the resources

we have available to hold bad actors accountable."

"Retail theft harms our economy, levies a theft tax on working families and makes us all feel less safe," Mahan said. "We need to give our law enforcement agencies across the state of California more tools to address this crisis head on."

Anyone with information related to the cases can contact David Moody at 408-277-4166 or david.moody@sanjoseca.gov.

### Mobile camera pilot program launched to quell crime

By Sean Eastwood

Times Media staff writer

Small businesses struggling with rampant crime in East San Jose are in need of help which is coming from a recently launched mobile

camera pilot program.

The city of San Jose just announced it has launched a mobile camera pilot program at Lions Plaza on Tully Road — part of the city's ongoing emphasis on using technology solutions to provide a presence or help solve cases as its police department grapples with staffing shortfalls.

The Tully Road-Eastridge area is in the process of creating a business improvement district, which will collect assessments from businesses in the vicinity to address public safety. These activities, including keeping streets clean are evolving separately from the camera pilot program.

"I believe there's nothing more basic than keeping our community safe," San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan said. "It is the fundamental responsibility of our government, and since taking office, I've tried to make sure that city hall is focusing on the basics like public safety. That being said, this community here, this corridor, (Tully Road-Eastridge Business Association), has not entirely yet felt the impact of that shift to a focus on the basics. They have still been experiencing repeated break-ins and property damage while simply trying to run a small business and make ends meet."

Mahan, District 8 Councilmember Domingo Candelas and San Jose Police Chief Paul Joseph on Tuesday unveiled two portable camera arrays with a speakerphone and license plate reader.

The police department says they will not monitor the cameras 24/7, but it will have access to the data collected along with business owners in the area.

Candelas requested the camera purchase be included in the budget at a cost of \$50,000.

"They feel unsafe," Candelas said. "They feel their business is at risk because of the constant shattered windows and robberies. Han Kee, for example, down the street, has been in business for 39 years and it would be a shame to see them close their doors for fear of the issues that they have felt. A nail shop owner on the other side of the road had to reduce their business hours because once the sun went down, people did not feel safe."



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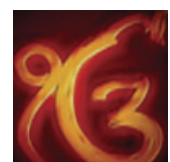
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Sunday 9:00 AM, Sunday 11:00AM, Igbo Mass - Second Sunday of the month 12:30 PM  
Mt. Hamilton Grange - 2840 Aborn Road  
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8:15 AM  
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