

San Jose to launch pilot program addressing oversized and lived-in vehicles
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Hanging up the phone
New limit on student smartphone use in California schools July 2026
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Evan Low concedes Silicon Valley congressional race to Sam Liccardo
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Times

NOV. 22 - DEC. 5, 2024 ■ VOL. 37, NO. 24



Valley Water and national weather service urge the community to prepare for winter storms

Valley Water, the County of Santa Clara, and the City of San José held a news conference featuring a winter outlook forecast discussion by the National Weather Service and an outline of the joint flood emergency preparedness efforts Nov. 13.

Last winter, Valley Water partnered with the County of Santa Clara and local cities to help residents stay safe by distributing 140,000 free filled sandbags. Valley Water stated that it's committed to working with local agencies and the community to help everyone be aware, be ready and be safe during extreme weather events.

Valley Water is urging residents to prepare for an uncertain winter by finding out if their home or business is at high risk of flooding, locating free sandbag distribution centers and signing up for Santa Clara County's emergency alert system.

George Casey is new San Jose D10 councilmember

By William Bellou
Publisher

George Casey is the new San Jose City District 10's councilmember, beating incumbent Arjun Batra.

San Jose Planning Commissioner Casey received 57.88% of the vote, or 23,268 votes, over Councilmember Batra with 42.12% of the vote, or 16,935 votes.

Casey's priorities include public safety, hiring more police officers, cleaning up encampments and addressing the housing and homelessness crisis.

On election night, Casey flashed huge smiles, while his supporters clapped and cheered. They flocked to him with hugs, handshakes and high fives.

They tell him how proud they are of him and how happy they are with the results.

"I'm overwhelmed," Casey told San José Spotlight. "I think they just had confidence in me and my background, and they believed in me."

District 10 covers the Santa Teresa and Almaden areas in South San Jose. Batra was appointed to the seat in January 2023, when it became vacant after voters elected then-District 10 Councilmember Matt Mahan as mayor in 2022.

"We ran a good campaign with integrity, and we will expect the results will get tighter. Whatever happens we will see in the final results," said Batra on election night.

With a background in urban planning and



Former San Jose Planning Commissioner **George Casey** talks with supporters on election night beating councilmember Arjun Batra in the race for San Jose City Council District 10. Photo by Joyce Chu, San José Spotlight.

experience on the planning commission, Casey said he has an inside view of how housing markets and development work.

"I want to revitalize downtown and support businesses by addressing blight and crime," Casey said. "The city's onerous regulatory environment is what hinders investors from coming in. The Planning Department is also understaffed, causing delays in the permitting process for housing developments."

Casey wants to create a pipeline by introducing students in middle and high schools

and colleges to law enforcement. Casey wants to create a down payment assistance program for officers to be able buy a home in the city as a way to keep them from jumping ship to work in other cities.

To address the housing crisis and lack of affordable homes in the city, Casey proposes increasing the supply of homes by building more naturally affordable starter homes, such as condominiums and townhouses.

Casey said there isn't enough urgency when
See CASEY, page 4



Mr. Carlos received hygiene kits from **Parth Gaba** at Comunidade Vida e Pa, Lisbon, Portugal for their homeless donation drive.

WeKare mission to assist homeless and low-income students

Provides kits filled with hygiene products

By William Bellou
Publisher

Parth Gaba, a dedicated high school student at Valley Christian Schools, is making waves with his non-profit initiative, WeKare.

Founded with the mission to assist homeless and low-income students, WeKare provides essential kits filled with hygiene prod-



WeKare founder **Parth Gaba**

ucts, first aid supplies, and school materials to those in need.

Recognizing the challenges faced by many of his peers, Parth was inspired to take action. "I saw students struggling not only with their studies but also with basic necessities," he said. "WeKare was born from the desire to make a tangible difference in their lives."

The WeKare kits have proven to be a lifeline for countless individuals. Each kit includes items such as soap, toothbrushes, band-aids, notebooks, and pens, ensuring that students have the resources necessary to thrive both academically and personally. So far, Parth has donated over 20,000 items, making a significant impact in the community.

Since its inception, Parth has been tireless in his efforts to expand
See GABA, page 6

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Almaden Times

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IN MEMORY

Shirley A. Olszewski

2/21/31 - 9/28/24

Almaden Valley

After living a very full life filled with family, friends and travel, Shirley Anne Olszewski died peacefully at the age of 93, on September 28, 2024. She was born in Denver, CO on February 21, 1931 and also lived in Oregon and Washington until settling in San Lorenzo and then San Jose, CA. She was married to her beloved husband John C. Olszewski for 58 years until his passing in 2009. She was the mother of 5 children, 4 sons: Douglas (Partner Sue) from Pleasanton, Bruce (Kami) from San Jose, Dale (Partner Wanda) from Florida, and Gary (Wendy) from San Jose, and daughter Sheree (Bill) from South Carolina.

She bragged of her 7 grandchildren Jennifer (Luke), Matt (Jordan), Kelly (Beau), Justin, Emily, Reed, and Max and even more so of her 5 great grandchildren, Caiden, Ainsley, Hadley, Harper



and Eliana.

She enjoyed many years as a stay-at-home mom, cooking, baking (her famous lemon pies), sewing, needlework, and crocheting and volunteering as PTA President and Girl Scout Cookie Chairman. She rejoined the work force when all of her children were in school and retired as a loan processor for Shapell Industries. In retirement she was an avid volunteer at the San Jose Airport working in the information booth and loved "telling people where to go!" She took up golf and enjoyed its chal-

lenges plus enjoyed many cruises and travels around the United States and Europe. She rarely missed watching her beloved San Francisco Giants and 49ers play their games, as well as her own grandchildren's sports.

She leaves behind a very special group of friends in her Love Circle Marriage group, her bridge playing partners, and her fellow seniors at Almaden Valley. She was predeceased by her husband John C. Olszewski, brother Gerald Williams, sister Diane Sternberg, and brother-in-law Bill Sternberg.

Casey

Continued from page 1
it comes to solving the homelessness crisis and that the county needs to play a greater role. He sees building more tiny homes as the quickest solution to ending homelessness. However, he wants these sites to require drug treatment, mental health services and job training.

During his 22 months in office, Batra said he's worked on addressing issues his residents view as most pressing. That includes public safety, homelessness, traffic safety — especially around schools — cleaner parks and lower costs of services. Batra, 78, has lived in Almaden since 1987. His background doesn't include the typical long-running list of political positions — instead, he is a retired Intel executive and software engineer who forayed into government a few years ago after working for former Mayor Sam Liccardo's office of technology and innovation.

Since the start of his campaign, Casey raised \$287,950, including \$32,000 from loans, and spent \$276,414. Batra raised \$242,524, including \$100,000 from loans, and spent \$180,762.



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Times Local News



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Gaba

Continued from page 1
WeKare's reach. He has made significant donations not only locally but also internationally, impacting lives in ten countries and 23 cities around the globe. "It's important to remember that the challenges of poverty and lack of resources are global issues," Parth remarked. "I

want to help as many people as possible, regardless of where they are."

To fund his mission, Parth has organized various fundraising activities, including lemonade stands and dog-sitting services. His entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to community service have allowed him to raise essential funds to support WeKare's initiatives.

In collaboration with District 8

Council Member, Domingo Candelas, Parth is planning to make monthly donations at Welch Park in San Jose, furthering his commitment to local outreach. "This partnership will help us reach more families in need and ensure that our donations have a lasting impact," he stated.

Parth has also partnered with Family Giving Tree and the Evergreen School District to provide school supplies for lower-income families, ensuring that students have the tools they need to succeed academically. Additionally, he has worked with CityTeam to donate hygiene kits directly to homeless encampments in the area. "Every little bit helps," he said. "We want to provide comfort and dignity to those facing hardship."

Collaborating with Joy of sharing Norcal for Philippines donation of school supplies, WeKare got noticed by the department of education at Doliman Elementary School "Parth embodies the spirit of service," said one faculty member. "His initiative is a shining example of how young people can lead positive change."

As WeKare continues to grow, Parth remains focused on inspiring others to get involved. "I want to show that anyone can make a difference, no matter their age or background," he said. "Together, we can create a brighter future for all students."

For more information on WeKare and how to support its mission, visit wekareforyou.org.



Parth delivered 1,200 School supply kits to Jennifer Cullenbine, President at Back-to-School drive at Family Giving Tree, Milpitas. These kits were included in backpacks prepared for elementary school kids.



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Times **Local News**

New limit on student smartphone use in California schools July 2026

Gov. Gavin Newsom recently signed controversial legislation requiring California school districts to limit student smartphone use during the school day by July 2026.

The Phone-Free School Act — AB 3216 — makes California the fifth state to require all public schools to restrict student phone use on school grounds.

“We know that excessive smartphone use increases anxiety, depression and other mental health issues — but we have the power to intervene,” Newsom said in a statement. “This new law will help students focus on academics, social development and the world in front of them — not their screens — when they’re in school.”

The governor’s office said the new law will involve “significant stakeholder participation” to ensure schools’ policies are responsive to communities’ “needs and desires.”

The law says students must be allowed to use their phones in emergencies or when permitted by a teacher, administrator or doctor. Students can also use their phones if their individualized edu-

cation program requires it.

Some schools in California have already limited the use of cell phones. San Mateo High School became a phone-free campus in 2019, and Los Angeles Unified School District voted earlier this summer to ban students’ use of phones beginning in 2025.



Opera on stage

Musetta (**Melissa Sonhi**) takes center stage in the town square in Opera San José’s production of “La Bohème” now through Dec. 1 at the California Theatre in downtown San Jose. *Photo credit: David Allen*

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Times **Local News**

End of election season means its time to work

By Dave Cortese

The long and winding election season is finally over!

I cannot thank you enough for re-electing me to another four-year term as your California State Senator representing the new District 15.

This is the first time I have run for re-election since the district boundaries were changed in 2022. My district now includes San Martin, Gilroy and Morgan Hill and I'm looking forward to working with my new constituents.

I will continue working on homelessness, housing affordability, the cost of living, bringing inflation down, and of course, working on the new technology like self-driving cars that we embrace here but we have to regulate as a state Legislature.

At the national level, I am more than prepared as a California State Senator to stand up for the people of California who will be vulnerable to the sweeping policy changes on deportation and other life changing issues



Senate Report

By Dave Cortese
State Senator

expected under another Trump Administration in 2025.

I was prepared in 2016 as a Santa Clara County Supervisor when I was the lead on filing the first lawsuit against the first Trump Administration that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. In the end, our County saved more than two billion dollars per year in federal healthcare dollars to protect our residents. I protected our "Dreamers."

I appeared on Tucker Carlson's conservative show saying we can't hold people without due process, probable cause, without a warrant in a criminal jail for a civil violation. We knew the President of the United States can't usurp the spending powers of the United States Congress and can't interfere with local control by trying to coerce people in counties by threatening to take away billions of dollars in federal funding that's completely unrelated to his policies. The Constitution of the United States is the law of the land. It's paramount.

As a Democratic Party we are well aware that we just lost a national election, and we need to hit the reset button and adjust our platform.

However we will never stop defending the most vulnerable among us.

Let's keep moving forward.

Reflecting on election results need not divide local populace

By Matt Mahan

I know many of us are reflecting upon and worried about the level of division in our nation after this election. Whether you were happy with the results, terrified by them or sitting somewhere in between, I want to remind you of one important thing:

Here at the local level, we have more that unites us than divides us. We all want the same thing for our city and our families – we want a safe, clean San Jose. We want to see an end to homelessness and an increase in economic vibrancy. We want to live in a city with opportunities for our kids and accountability for results from our government.

That's what I'll be focused on these next four years – delivering results that will positively impact your everyday lives. I think



From the Mayor

Matt Mahan
Mayor, San Jose

we all know there will be argument, distraction and half-baked ideas floated at higher levels of government. I want to make a promise to you now – I will not get distracted by what's going on in D.C. I will stand up for the needs of our city, when necessary, but I will not play partisan games with your lives. I will not abandon our revolution of common sense or our mission to create the city we all want to live in.

We have a lot to celebrate here at the local level. We have a new Congressman who knows our city well and will fight for our interests in D.C. We have new council members who are ready to dedicate themselves to getting our city back to basics. And with the overwhelming passage of Prop 36, we have new tools that our judges can use to hold people accountable for accessing the addiction treatment they need to turn their lives around.

No matter your views, the most powerful thing we can do is come together with the understanding that we will never agree on everything, but we can agree on enough to move forward a shared vision for the future.

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Times **Local News**

Evan Low concedes Silicon Valley congressional race to Sam Liccardo

By Brandon Pho
San José Spotlight

State Assemblymember Evan Low has conceded the race for Silicon Valley's hottest congressional seat — sending former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo to Washington D.C.

Election night results launched Liccardo into a comfortable 20% lead over Low for Congressional District 16, a trend that hasn't changed much since subsequent ballot tallying updates. Low — whose campaign was backed by police, nurse and teacher unions — congratulated Liccardo and expressed gratitude for his supporters.

"Although the outcome of the election is not one we hoped for, I am proud of the people-first campaign that we ran, focusing on the very real issues that affect the daily lives



Assemblymember **Evan Low** and his district director **Patrick Ahrens** spoke to supporters together at a joint viewing party at the Democratic Volunteer Center on Nov. 5, 2024. Photo by B. Sakura Cannestra.

of CD-16 voters," Low, the Chinese American state lawmaker who spent a decade building power in Sacramento, wrote in a statement posted to X, formerly known as Twitter.

Low said he spoke to Liccardo — whose campaign saw support from climate and gun control advocacy groups — on Wednesday evening and thanked him for a hard fought campaign.

"His success will be our success here in Silicon Valley," Low said.

Liccardo is working to put a team of congressional staff in place to serve his district in Silicon Valley and in Washington D.C.

"I thank Evan Low for his well-

wishes and congratulations earlier this evening, and I was also pleased to receive a message of congratulations and support from Congresswoman Anna Eshoo," Liccardo said in a statement announcing Low's concession. "I join our community in expressing our profound gratitude for her three decades of leadership and service to our community."

It was a bitter and unusual fight for the seat. A historic tie in the primaries sparked a contentious recount that left Liccardo and Low bumping heads with negative campaigning, endorsement jockeying, heated debates and dueling FEC complaints.

Both candidates are tight with established Silicon Valley political circles. But they differ on key issues such as Proposition 36, a statewide ballot measure which would ramp

up criminal punishment for petty theft if approved in the election. Liccardo has come out in support of the measure, while Low said he's against it.



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San Jose Youth Symphony's Philharmonic Orchestra announces its 24-25 season opener concert

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 sen-

ior 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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OSC has opened a new program for women based upon equine interaction and equine-assisted-learning, designed to develop self-awareness and self-acceptance, confidence and resilience, and safe boundaries.

G.R.I.T. is for adult women led by OSC founder Landa Keirstead. The small group meets in 2 hour sessions, once per week for six-weeks

Contact One Step Closer for more information and to enroll
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San Jose to launch pilot program addressing monitoring of oversized and lived-in vehicles

"Keeping our streets clean, safe and accessible is one of government's most fundamental responsibilities."

-- San José Mayor Matt Mahan

By Sean Eastwood

Times Media staff writer

In response to environmental and safety issues caused by oversized and lived-in vehicles, the City of San José's Department of Transportation (DOT) is developing a pilot program to better monitor and enforce parking rules.

Over two months, DOT staff manually took stock of every oversized or likely lived-in vehicle parked citywide. This inventory will help identify areas of highest concern and guide the establishment of 30 temporary and 10 permanent tow-away zones in the most impacted neighborhoods.

"Keeping our streets clean, safe and accessible is one of government's most fundamental responsibilities," said San José Mayor Matt Mahan. "This inventory will allow us to monitor the worst RV hotspots in the city and track our progress toward dismantling them."

City staff found just over 900 oversized and likely lived-in vehicles on city streets. The map will be updated as the new enforcement program is launched, giving residents a real-time look at the progress being made.

The Oversized and Lived-In Vehicle Enforcement (OLIVE) program was requested in Mayor Mahan's March Budget Message and funded by a \$1.5 million budget addendum in the FY 2024-2025 budget that directs the department to identify areas impacted by oversized and likely lived-in vehicles on city streets, set up temporary tow-away zones for cleanup and street sweeping, and assess the feasibility of implementing permanent parking restrictions in certain areas.

As part of this initiative, up to 30 sites will be selected for temporary tow-away restrictions to facilitate cleaning and encourage vehicle relocation. Vehicles remaining in these restricted zones will be subject to towing and impound if not moved voluntarily.

"This solution is a long time coming. It will provide critical relief to neighbors living in RVs and allow us to give them clearer pathways off of our streets," said Councilmember David Cohen (D4). "It will also ensure that our communities are less blighted, which will ease the tension between neighborhoods and residents in lived-in vehicles. I'm excited at the prospect of providing a broad set of solutions, and this site is a key step towards achieving our goals."

Parking-restricted sites will be prioritized based on the severity of parking concerns and associated issues such as but not limited to:

- Proximity of parked vehicles to sensitive areas including schools, parks waterways, storm drains, and emergency interim housing sites.
- The number of vehicles concentrated in an area.
- Site conditions including levels of observed trash, biowaste, and potential obstructions.
- Proximity of parked vehicles to Priority Safety Corridors and bike lanes.

While most sites will be considered solely using the above criteria, Council district offices will be able to advise on one specific location in their respective districts. Residents are encouraged to reach out to their Councilmember and provide feedback on areas that are significantly impacted by the presence of presumed lived-in and oversized vehicles. Once 30 sites have been selected, DOT staff will begin outreach to neighborhoods with proposed parking-restricted sites and to people living in vehicles parked in the sites. Based on the success of the temporary restrictions, up to 10 sites will be considered for permanent parking restrictions.

The city is working to expand its offerings for those living in vehicles. It opened the Santa Teresa Safe Parking Site in July of last year which can serve up to 42 people and their vehicles. Early next year, the city plans to open its second and largest — the Berryessa Safe Parking Site — on a 6.3-acre lot in District 4, which has the ability to take up to 85 vehicles off city streets.

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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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Sunday 9:00 AM, Sunday 11:00AM, Igbo Mass - Second Sunday of the month 12:30 PM
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