

'A true icon': San Jose developer Barry Swenson, philanthropist, dies at 85
SEE PAGE 7



San Jose public library fights to maintain funding amid budget woes
SEE PAGE 6



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Evergreen Times

MAY 2 - MAY 15, 2025 ■ VOL. 42, NO. 10

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Homeless camp in Evergreen Park reported to authorities

A concerned Evergreen Valley resident is reporting that a homeless camp has been set up at Evergreen Park located on San Felipe Rd. and Park Estates.

The resident is suggesting that letters be sent to the Councilmember for District 8, Domingo Candelas, district8@sanjoseca.gov; (408) 535-4908, expressing your concerns.

"I understand an abatement notice has been posted, but for me, we are not being informed how the homeless are arriving. Are they being relocated? Is an organization funding the move?" said the concerned resident.

He pointed out the materials in the camps were not just carried in, but rather they had to be transported. He also recommended that an entire sweep of the inside of the creek should be performed to locate anyone else hiding or trash that is being dumped inside.

USAAF 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCollum killed in action in 1944 to be laid to rest with full military honors May 3 at noon

Community turns out for procession from SJ Airport to Oak Hill Memorial Park

The community, many waving flags, paid their respects during a procession for United States Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCollum April 24 from Mineta San Jose Airport to Oak Hill Memorial Park.

The fallen soldier's remains will be laid to rest at Oak Hill Memorial Park to be near his parents and sister with full military honors among the community on May 3rd at noon which will include a 21-gun salute, bagpipers, a dove release, and possible fly-over.

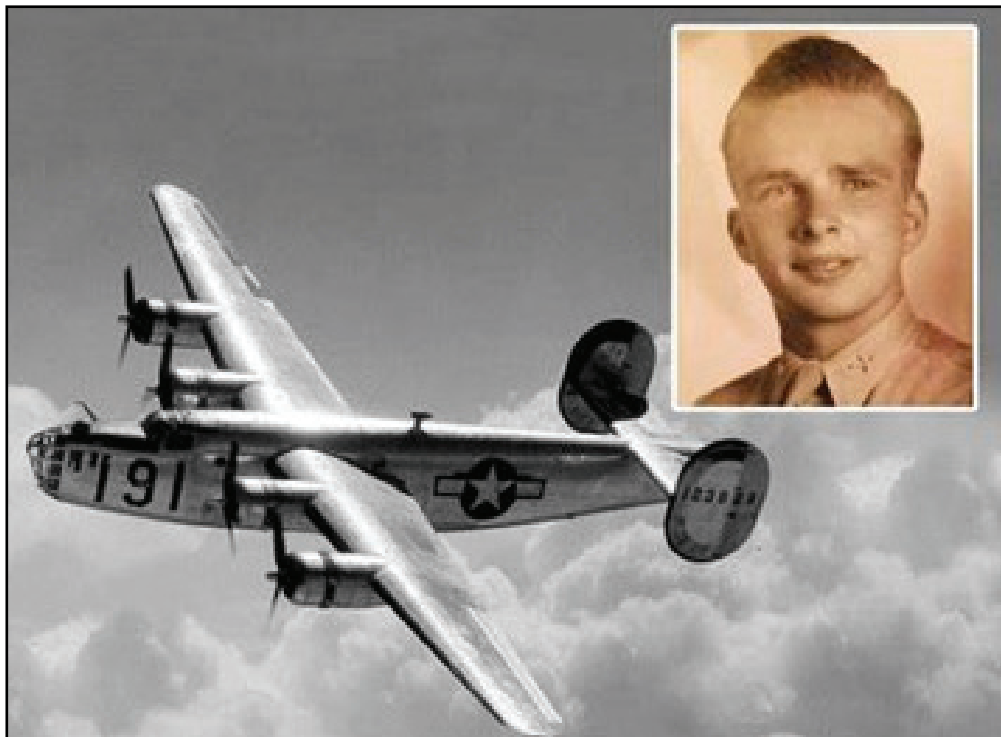
History

McCollum, who was killed in action on June 20, 1944, where he was serving in the U.S. Army Air Forces with the 565th Bombardment Squadron, 389th Bombardment Group.

On June 20, 1944, he was the bombardier aboard a B-24J Liberator (serial number 42-100351) during a bombing mission targeting enemy facilities in Politz, Germany.

While flying over the Baltic Sea near Lange-land Island, Denmark, McCollum's aircraft collided with another B-24 in the formation and spiraled into the sea. Of the ten crew members on board, two survived, were captured, and later returned to U.S. custody. The remaining

See McCOLLUM, page 3



The community pay their respects with many waving flags during a procession for United States Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCollum April 24 from the Mineta San Jose Airport to Oakhill Memorial Cemetery.



Santa Clara County Office of Education appoints Toston new superintendent

By William Bellou
Publisher

Santa Clara County Office of Education's embattled elected board has found a new superintendent, David M. Toston.

Santa Clara County Board of Education Trustees have appointed David M. Toston as the new superintendent after five months of political upheaval. Toston will begin his new role May 1.



Toston previously served as senior advisor at the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence. The organization focuses on statewide education initiatives focused on school equity and community engagement. Toston also served as Associate Superintendent at the El Dorado County Office of Education and Assistant Superintendent at the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools.

Santa Clara County Office of Education has been plagued with instability and division following the controversial firing of former superintendent Mary Ann Dewan last October.

Dewan's firing came after a federal investigation in February found that \$135,370 in federal funds were misallocated. The funds were earmarked for preschool education program Head Start but ended up paying for non-Head Start staff and credit card purchases while Dewan was superintendent.

"I am deeply honored to serve as

Superintendent of the Santa Clara County Office of Education," Toston said in an Office of Education statement announcing his appointment. "This role is both a privilege and a responsibility, and I look forward to partnering with our trustees, SCCOE teammates, districts, students, educators, families and community partners. Together, we will demonstrate what is possible through the strength of our diversity—ensuring every educator is supported in preparing students to achieve the hopes and dreams of their families and communities."

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

Times **Community**



State Senator Cortese's bill gives homeless youth better chances for employment, college education

Bill passes by senate human services committee

State Senator Dave Cortese's SB 33, which would establish a statewide guaranteed income pilot program providing homeless students with direct cash assistance to support their transition out of high school, cleared the Senate Human Services Committee today on a 5-0 bipartisan vote and now heads to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"The goal of my bill is to give unhoused students access to employment and college," said Senator Dave Cortese. "The pilot program would provide \$1,000 in direct cash assistance to youth from May 1, 2026 through August 1, 2026."

"More than 270,000 students within California's K-12 school system are experiencing homelessness, a number that has increased by over 48 percent in the past decade. About 17,000 of these students are in the 12th grade, an increase of about 2,000 students since the committee saw this bill in the last legislative cycle."

DJ Anthony Gaffield, a former high school unhoused youth, now a youth advocate for Young Invincibles, testified that having a guaranteed income would have had a big impact on his life.

"Every day was a battle, not just for survival, but for any sort of hope. The weight of uncertainty and survival often overshadowed my ability to focus on my education, career goals and my mental health," he told the committee members. "I know how easy it is to become invisible when you're on the margins of society."

- In Santa Clara County, approximately 5,000 students in K-12 were homeless in 2023-2024, a 500 student increase from the previous year, according to the California Department of Education.
- The guaranteed income pilot program is titled the California SOAR (Success, Opportunity & Academic Resilience Guaranteed Income Program.)
- The bill also directs the Department to measure student employment and education attainment outcomes.



McCollum

Continued from page 1

eight, including Lt. McCollum, were declared missing in action.

In 2019, Danish divers discovered a WWII-era aircraft wreck in the area where Lt. McCollum's plane was lost. After the site was

cleared of unexploded ordnance, teams from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), the University of Delaware, and the Royal Danish Navy conducted an underwater survey. Human remains and other significant evidence were recovered, ultimately leading to the identification of Lt. McCollum through forensic and circumstantial evidence.

The Planets

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Times News

Ways to give back

By Domingo Candelas

Are you looking for ways to get involved and give back to your community? The City of San José offers plenty of opportunities to make a real impact!

If you're interested in shaping the future of our city, consider applying to serve on one of San José's many Boards and Commissions that cover vast interests.

Members help guide important decisions, and while each position has a set term, the time commitment varies, making it a flexible and rewarding way to serve.

Folks are welcome to apply at any time, and your application will remain active for one year! District 8 currently has two vacancies: Arts Commission and Measure T Oversight Committee!

You can also volunteer at any of our 23 San Jose Public Library branches, where help is always needed for a variety of programs — from tutoring students and leading

coding classes to supporting community events. There's truly something for everyone.

Our very own Evergreen Community Center is always welcoming passionate volunteers to help build a stronger, more connected neighborhood. Stop by to learn more and sign up!

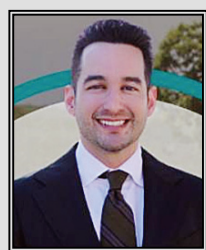
I'd like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to

everyone who joined us for yesterday's Great American Litter Pick-Up! Thanks to more than 60 dedicated volunteers, we were able to make a meaningful impact by beautifying Lake Cunningham Park and the Welch Park neighborhood in honor of Earth Day.

I'm especially grateful to the Tully Road Eastridge Business Association (TREBA) and the Welch Park Neighborhood Association for their ongoing commitment to keeping our community clean. Want to participate in our next clean-up? Sign up for our volunteer list by visiting our website: <https://shorturl.at/38Drd>

Every act of service helps create the community we all want to see.

It is my pleasure and privilege to serve as your City Councilmember.



Council Report
Domingo Candelas,
District 8 Councilmember



Cortese to serve on Senate Committee to assure 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics run smoothly

State Senator Dave Cortese has been appointed to a special committee on International Sporting Events including the 2028 Olympics and the 2026 World Cup by California Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire.

The bipartisan committee of 11 Senators is tasked with ensuring the state's preparedness to host both the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics. The FIFA World Cup is estimated to bring in more than half a billion dollars to both the Bay Area and Los Angeles. Meanwhile, the 2028 Olympics are projected to create nearly 80,000 new full-time jobs with an \$11 billion economic impact. Millions of spectators are expected to flock to the state for both events.

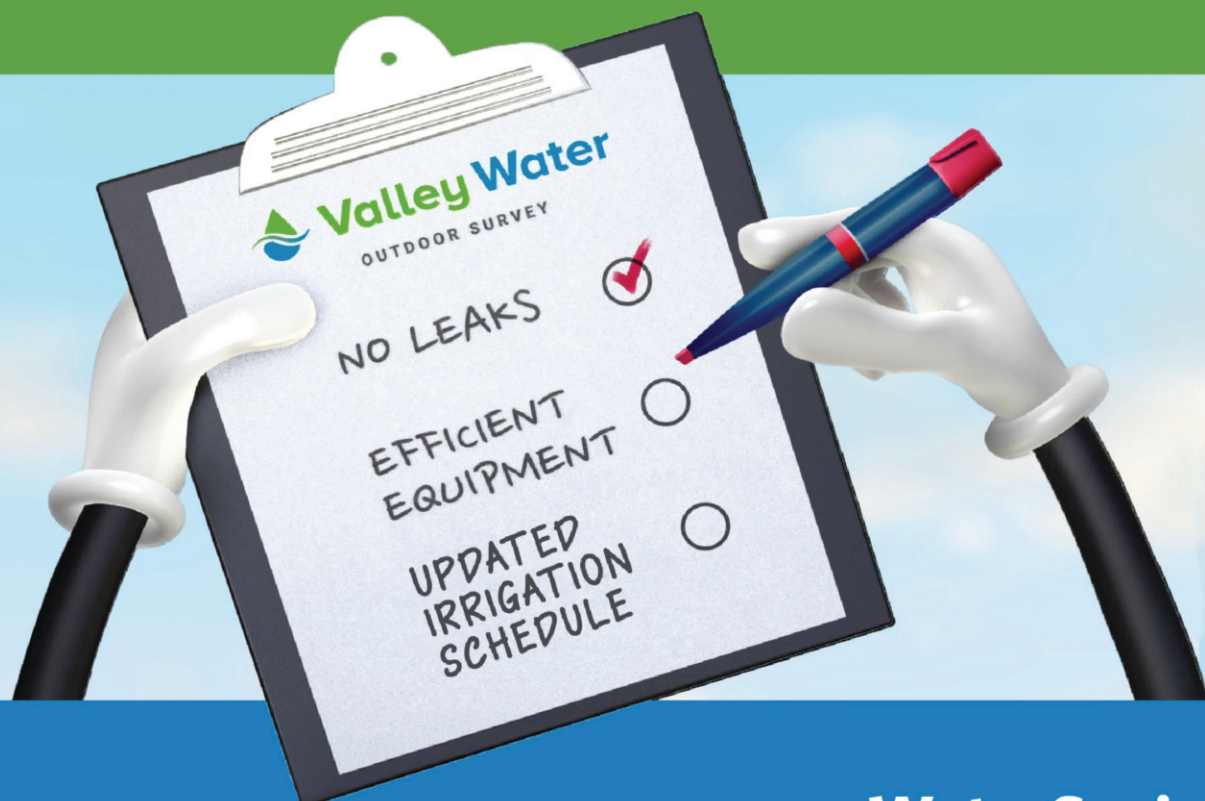
"California is going to be on the world stage for these two monumental sporting events and I will do everything in my capacity to ensure

public safety, transportation and infrastructure are in the best shape possible to make these events go smoothly," said Cortese, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.

The Senate Special Committee will be holding a series of hearings in the coming months.

The Special Committee will be chaired by Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), vice-chaired by Senator Maria Elena Durazo (D-Los Angeles), and will include the following Senators: Senator Bob Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera), Senator Dave Cortese (D-San Jose), Senator Lena Gonzalez (D-Long Beach), Senator Laura Richardson (D-South Bay), Senator Susan Rubio (D-Baldwin Park), Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles), Senator Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana), Senator Suzette Martinez Valladares (R-Santa Clarita), and Senator Aisha Wahab (D-Silicon Valley).

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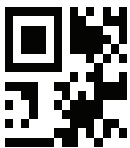


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Times Feature

San Jose public library fights to maintain funding amid budget woes

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

Library advocates say they expect to ride out the upcoming San Jose budget cycle without any major cuts. But trouble could be on the horizon, with the city projecting an ongoing shortfall over the next few years.

San Jose’s Library and Education Commission learned April 16 of three anticipated public library budget cuts, which include cutting \$90,000 from library security, suspending the college and career pathways job position and dropping \$500,000 in the city’s agreement with San Jose State University for Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Administrative Officer Fiahna Cabana said.

Anticipated cuts for the library appear to be substantially lower than the \$4.59 million suggested by the City Manager’s Office in a Dec. 13, 2024 memo.

A city spokesperson said public library officials don’t have any additional information to share about the

2025-26 budget beyond Mayor Matt Mahan’s March budget message.

“The proposed operating budget is scheduled for release on May 1 that will include the details of all budget proposals,” spokesperson Demetria Machado told San José Spotlight. “However, we remain committed to bringing strategies forward that responsibly balance the budget while also doing everything we can to minimize impacts to vital programs and services our community depends on, at the library and throughout the city, and to our employees.”

Commissioner Jose Abastida said he’s pleased to hear the upcoming year’s cuts are expected to have a minimal service impact.

“We know we still have to go through the June budget discussions and things are not done — but the library and education commission’s main point is that we maintain library safety and infrastructure,” he told San José Spotlight. “That’s where we’ll keep advocating and fighting.”

With a 20% increase in foot traffic and more than 3.6 million annual visitors to all San Jose libraries since the pandemic, Abastida said he wants to continue seeing minimal impacts to the public library’s budget in upcoming years.

“Given the increase in library users, I think it would make for a pretty persuasive argument that our San Jose residents need more library services,” he told San José Spotlight.



The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library in downtown San Jose. City libraries are expected to see minimal cuts during the upcoming budget cycle. File photo

“In the future, we would likely be advocating for an increase in funding so we can maintain staff and also library hours.”

City officials projected a \$60 million 2025-26 budget deficit in December, but after reshuffling funds, the shortfall was reduced to about \$46 million, with a \$53 million budget shortfall anticipated for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

Cabana said the public library’s future investments will receive limited consideration, but is still able to take advantage of prior funding.

“One actual addition we have is a one-time investment of about

\$500,000 in our general fund to increase funding for materials acquisitions, which is coming from prior years,” she said.

The city library system has already implemented cost-control measures, including a hiring freeze and limitations on employee promotions. These measures have recently come under fire from labor organizations. Library workers rallied earlier this month to call for an increase in funding for essential city services.

Library and Education Commission Vice Chair Angelica Ramos said libraries are one of the few public spaces where families can gather,

learn and grow together. They provide a space for children to learn and prepare before entering school, she added.

“The modern world demands digital literacy, yet in the self-proclaimed tech capital of Silicon Valley, tens of thousands of families lack reliable internet access and/or devices at home. Libraries have stepped in to close this gap,” Ramos told San José Spotlight. “At a time when information access is under attack, we must take a standby protecting our libraries — not gutting them.”



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Times **Local News**



Barry Swenson, former chairman of Barry Swenson Builders and a local construction pioneer, died Saturday at age 85. Photo courtesy of the Swenson family.

'A true icon': San Jose developer, philanthropist dies at 85

By **B. Sakura Cannestra**
San José Spotlight

Barry Swenson, the groundbreaking developer who reshaped the city's skyline and became a household name, has died at age 85.

Swenson was the third generation leader of Swenson Builders, one of Silicon Valley's most prominent construction and development firms, known for developing iconic buildings throughout San Jose. Those who knew him remember him for his optimism and encouraging demeanor, as well as his business prowess. His cause of death has not been released.

"That's just first and foremost his real gift to everybody else, is that he was always upbeat and always encouraging people," Ron Swenson, CEO of Solar Skyways and Barry Swenson's younger brother, told San José Spotlight.

Ron Swenson said his brother's encouraging nature set him apart in a cutthroat development industry. He recalled a time when the pair ran into a friend at breakfast, who was performing in a live band at the restaurant. His brother invited the band to San Jose to play for one of their family's events.

The Swenson brothers often donned wide brimmed hats, standing out from the crowd. Barry enjoyed gardening and ranching, and raised pheasants and ducks in the family's backyard while in high school. He gave the birds away as Christmas presents to the family's business partners.

Swenson Builders was founded by Barry Swenson in 1961, but Ron and Barry Swenson's grandfather Carl Swenson began the family's first construction company in 1926. The family has a century-long history of constructing some of San Jose's most iconic buildings, including the De Anza Hotel and San Pedro Square Market.

Urban Catalyst Founder Erik Hayden said Barry's white cowboy hat and boots gave him a laid back first impression — until they started talking about business and he became a sharp and formidable force. Hayden said he supported San Jose's culture,

including Christmas in the Park and the San Jose Jazz Festival, among others.

Hayden worked with Barry about 15 years ago when he was with Republic Urban Properties. His company had partnered with Swenson Builders for the Ohlone projects, an 8.32 acre multi-family apartment project at the intersection of West San Carlos and Sunol streets. Hayden said he is fortunate for the opportunity to learn from Barry early in his career.

Land use consultant Erik Schoennauer recalled working with Barry when he was chief of staff to former San Jose Councilmember Patricia Dando, then in his current role as a consultant working with developers on San Jose projects.

He said the Swenson family has impacted Silicon Valley through revolutionary construction projects and their philanthropy.

"He was incredibly generous and engaged in the San Jose community, as a person," Schoennauer told San José Spotlight. "That legacy is of equal importance to any physical building."



Those who knew **Barry Swenson** said he was generous and affable. He often stood out in his signature white hat. Photo courtesy of the Swenson family.



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Times **Local News**

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American charity donations up 1.9%

Charitable giving not keeping pace with inflationary pressure

Americans increased their total giving by an estimated 1.9% last year, but donations are not keeping pace with inflationary pressure.

With charitable giving actually down year over year after adjusting for inflation, the non-profit organization SmileHub just released its report on the Best Charities for 2025.

To highlight the best charities, SmileHub compared nearly 300,000 charities based on our proprietary SmileHub Rating, which evaluates organizations across five categories: financial health, management overhead, fundraising efficiency, program efficiency and transparency.

Top 20 National Charities

1. Optica
2. Aga Khan Foundation
3. Morgan Stanley Global Impact Funding Trust
4. Nationwide Children's Hospital
5. American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)
6. The US Olympic and Paralympic Endowment
7. Research to Prevent Blindness
8. Volunteers of America National Services
9. Veterans United Foundation
10. MAP International
11. ASTM International



12. MedShare
13. EY Foundation
14. WaterStone
15. Mather Foundation
16. Foundation Housing
17. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
18. Rockefeller Family Fund
19. American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO)
20. Friends of the Children

Best Charities by Category

- Animals: Friends of the Zoo of Kansas City
- Arts: Maxwell C King Center for the Performing Arts
- Children: Misericordia Foundation
- Community Support: Housing Catalyst
- Disaster Relief: Wesley Chapel Volunteer Fire Dept.
- Economic Development: Guidestream Charitable Gift Fund
- Education: Cincinnati Museums Foundation
- Environmental Protection: Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail
- Faith & Religious Support: First Presbyterian Church of Dallas Foundation
- Health & Wellness: Abington Memorial Hospital Foundation
- Homeless Support: Sacramento Steps Forward
- International Support: Interweave Solutions
- Reducing Poverty: Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP)
- Research: Kacyra Family Foundation
- Rights & Activism: Follow Your Dream Foundation
- Sports & Recreation: TaxSlayer Gator Bowl
- Veterans: Louisiana National Guard Foundation

To view the full report, visit: <https://smilehub.org/blog/best-charities/97>

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Times **Local News**

Gabby Chavez-Lopez, executive director of the Latina Coalition of Silicon Valley, at her election night party on April 8, 2025. *Photo by Vicente Vera.*

San Jose special election likely headed to June runoff

By William Bellou
Publisher

Chavez-Lopez, executive director of the Latina Coalition of Silicon Valley, is hold-

ing on to her lead for the San Jose City Council District 3 special election, but it's not enough of the vote to secure an election win.

Chavez-Lopez holds 29% of the vote. Matthew Quevedo, the mayor's deputy chief of staff, is in second place by one vote or 22.18% and Planning Commission Chair Anthony Tordillos is trailing in third at 22.17%.

The top two vote-getters will head to the June 24 runoff election.

If the trend holds, it will trigger an automatic recount under county election rules.

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Let's Talk Measure A.

The audit is done — now we need your feedback.

The Citizens Watchdog Committee (CWC) invites you to provide your input on 2000 Measure A expenditures, including the results of the annual compliance audit for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.

Join us at the annual public hearing:

Wednesday, May 8, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. (time certain)

In Person: VTA Headquarters, 3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134 – Conference Room B-106

Via Zoom: us02web.zoom.us/j/86677185373
Webinar ID: 866 7718 5373

Contact the Office of the Board Secretary for questions. Sign language and interpreter services will be provided upon request at least five days prior to the meeting. Written comments are accepted until 10:00 a.m. on May 6, 2025 by email to board.secretary@vta.org.


The Audit Results are In!


The Committee commissioned an audit of the Measure A Program financial records and schedule for FY 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). Crowe LLP, an independent certified public accounting firm, conducted the compliance audit and issued an unqualified ("clean") opinion on Measure A Program compliance with the ballot, making this the 17th consecutive audit receiving a clean opinion.

The Audit results are available on VTA's website at vta.org/cwc-fy24audit and at the VTA Administrative Office at 3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134 in the Building B Main Lobby.

Here's the Back Story!

In November 2000, Santa Clara County voters approved Measure A, a half-cent sales tax for specific public transit capital improvement projects and operations. Revenue collection began in April 2006. Highlights for FY 2024 include key activities for VTA's BART Silicon Valley Extension project, Eastridge to BART Regional Connector project, and Caltrain Electrification efforts.

Join the Conversation
Scan to Learn More





Korbin 'Van Cliburn of today' to perform live in concert May 31

Russian-American concert pianist Alexander Yevgenyevich Kobrin is often referred to as the "Van Cliburn of today."

Kobrin will perform live in concert for Steinway Society - The Bay Area on Saturday, May 31, 2025, 7:30 p.m. at the Visual and Performing Arts Center in Cupertino.

To meet the needs of a diverse community of patrons, Steinway Society also offers a recorded option to enjoy the concert on-demand for 48 hours.

THE PROGRAM

Beethoven, Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 7
Brahms, Drei Intermezzi, Op. 117
Chopin, Four Mazurkas, Op. 24
Chopin, Fantaisie in F Minor, Op. 49
Chopin, Berceuse in D-flat Major, Op. 57
Chopin, Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60
Chopin, Polonaise-Fantaisie in A-flat Major, Op. 61

TICKETS

Prices listed include all fees; Single Tickets: \$53 to \$78 (General Admission: \$78/\$68/\$58; Senior & student: \$73/\$63/\$53; Student Rush at the door: \$20). Recorded Tickets: \$26.75 per household (unlimited viewing for 48 hours after release)

Tickets: <https://steinwaysociety.com>. Box Office: 408.300.5635. Email: office@steinwaysociety.com



Anna Fedorova
10/5/24



Vyacheslav Gryaznov
11/16/24



Alexander Malofeev
1/26/25

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Zlata Chochieva
3/29/25



Florian Noack
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Alexander Kobrin
5/31/25



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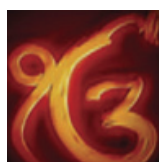


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God is One
ੴ ਸਿਕ ਹੈ
Rab Ik Hai

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GURDWARA**
3636 Gurdwara Ave.
San Jose, CA 95148

The word Sikh (see-kh) means "disciple" or "student." A Sikh is a practitioner of the faith founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak in Punjab of old British India. A Guru who is a "teacher" or "enlightener" completes the relationship of teaching and learning. Sikhism is monotheistic and stresses the equality of all men and women. Sikhs believe in three basic principles; meditating on the name of God (praying), earning a living by honest means and sharing the fruits of one's labor with others. Currently there are close to one million Sikhs living in the USA and Canada and 25 million Sikhs living around the world. Sikhism is the 5th largest religion in the world. At the Gurdwara (House of God) in San Jose we welcome all. We pray daily for peace and prosperity for everybody in the world. Come to visit and enjoy Langer (food) in our kitchen which is open 365 days of the year and serves complementary vegetarian meals. We also encourage you to enter our history room

on site and walk the beautiful grounds. Learn more about us and community events we sponsor by visiting our website; <http://www.SanJose-Gurdwara.org>

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We invite you to join our community of faith located in the Evergreen area of San Jose. We are an inclusive diverse community striving to serve as Disciples of Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis, offering prayerful and joyful liturgies, evangelization, fellowship, and service opportunities to the community. We offer spiritual opportunities for all ages, including children's liturgy, dynamic E.C.H.O Jr. High, I.G.N.I.T.E. High School, & North Star Young Adult Ministries, along with small faith communities and opportunities to help the poor and marginalized of San Jose. Our Chapel, Gathering

Hall, Parish Office, Mission Center, Parish Gift Shop, and Memorial Garden are all located at 5111 San Felipe Rd. Please come join us in worship at any of the following times in our Chapel: Weekdays (M-Sa) at 8:30 AM; Saturdays at 4:00 PM (English) and 5:30 PM (Vietnamese); Sundays at 8:00 AM (English), 10:00 AM (English), 12:00 PM (English), 4:00 PM (Vietnamese), and 6:00 PM Youth Mass (English). The Villages Gated Community also features a Mass on Sundays at 8:15 AM at the Cribari Auditorium. For more information, please call or visit us at the Parish Office open M-F 9:00 AM -12:00 PM; 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Come join us and

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