



Happy Holidays
from the Staff of Times Media, Inc.

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San José Unified identifies ideal elementary characteristics, moves to implementation

Board to vote on next step in collaborative schools of tomorrow initiative

By William Bellou
Publisher

The San José Unified School District has completed the first step of the district's Schools of Tomorrow initiative.

The Schools of Tomorrow Advisory Committee, composed of parents/guardians, teachers, staff, and union representatives, has completed its work and delivered its final recommendation to the Board of Education regarding the characteristics of the ideal elementary school.

The Schools of Tomorrow Advisory Committee recommends that elementary schools, using negotiated student-to-staff ratios, have 3 classes per grade level, Special Day Classes placed in clusters of 3-4, and 4 classes per grade level at schools that offer both a standard structured English immersion program and a bilingual program. These characteristics are foundational, the Schools of Tomorrow Advisory Committee writes, because of their "impact on social and academic opportunities for students, teacher planning and collaboration, the likelihood of combination classes, and the availability of additional support offerings for students and staff."

The San José Unified Board of Education recently reviewed the Schools of Tomorrow Advisory Committee's recommendation and established a Schools of
See ELEMENTARY, page 9

Happy Hollow hosts Santa Clara County families for 'Friendsgiving'

By Lorraine Gabbert
San José Spotlight

Santa Clara County families and advocates in the court system had a recent opportunity to enjoy time together over a Thanksgiving meal at a local park and zoo.

Families in the Dependency Wellness Court and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) programs shared in a "Friendsgiving" Nov. 15 at Happy Hollow Park & Zoo in San Jose. The event — hosted by Happy Hollow Foundation through a Healthy Living grant from Kaiser Permanente — aimed to give positive experiences to people participating in the dependency wellness court and their families.

The Friendsgiving feast provided struggling children and families a supportive environ-



Santa Clara County families and advocates in the court system had the opportunity to enjoy time together at Happy Hollow on Nov. 15, 2025. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert.

ment ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. Happy Hollow Foundation Executive Director Rhonda Nourse said such uplifting childhood experiences are critical to recovering from trauma. Nearly 200 people attended the event this year, double the amount from 2024. Nourse said she was humbled by attendees sharing what they were thankful for, from clothing and food to sobriety and a roof

over their heads.

"It showed that the foundation has a very meaningful role in these people's lives — just providing this one simple meal ... and a positive experience around a holiday," Nourse told San José Spotlight. "These families have a choice between putting food on the table or a day spent at Happy Hollow. (Through the
See FRIENDSGIVING, page 9

Santa Clara County education board looks to reform amid probe

By Brandon Pho
San José Spotlight

Santa Clara County Office of Education leaders say a series of probes they ordered into their former superintendent found contract favoritism and improper use of funds — though the full reports have not been made public.

The Board of Education took a first swing on policy changes stemming from those findings, which focus on former superintendent Mary Ann Dewan, recently at their regular board meeting.

The board's majority voted to fire Dewan without cause in October 2024. When the decision



Santa Clara County Board of Education President Maimona Afzal Berta (center) among fellow trustees on Wednesday. Photo by Vicente Vera.

sparked backlash from residents and state lawmakers, the board accused Dewan of impropriety and mispending — hiring independent investigators to examine Dewan's leadership. Last December, Office of Education officials said they handed over information to local law enforcement.

County prosecutors don't see a case.

"We carefully reviewed the evidence and concluded that there was insufficient evidence to charge a crime," Sean Webby, a spokesperson for District Attorney Jeff Rosen's office, told San José Spotlight.

It's unclear when the Office of Education plans to release the independent investigators' full report. At Wednesday's meeting, a lawyer for the school district said there is no central report — and that redactions have to be made before their release.

See ED BOARD, page 9

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Times **Local News**

BookSmart — Bringing a beloved community bookstore to Evergreen's Eastridge Center

By Sean Eastwood
Times staff writer

The beloved independent bookstore BookSmart is bringing its signature warmth, curiosity, and community spirit to Eastridge Center in Evergreen Valley.

After 30 years of serving the South Valley community, beloved independent bookstore BookSmart is bringing its signature warmth, curiosity, and community spirit to Eastridge Center in Evergreen Valley.

The new location, BookSmart Eastridge, officially opens its doors this month, reintroducing something the area has been missing for far too long—a neighborhood bookstore.

For decades, owners Brad Jones and Cinda Meister have made BookSmart a cornerstone of Morgan Hill's cultural and civic life—hosting author visits, promoting literacy, supporting teachers, and giving back through programs like the Gift of Reading. Now, they're thrilled to share that same commitment with another community.

"Eastridge has such a deep connection to local culture," says co-owner Cinda Meister, "and we're excited to be part of that story—bringing a place where people can



browse, discover, and connect."

BookSmart Eastridge offers a thoughtfully curated selection of books for all ages, from bestsellers to children's favorites and hidden gems. Customers can also special-order any title, ensuring every reader finds the perfect book. In addition to books, the store features gifts, puzzles, calendars, educational toys, greeting cards, and whimsical book-lover treasures—from bookmarks to book-themed socks and mugs.

True to BookSmart's roots, the new location also hires primarily from the local neighborhood, offers discounts for teachers, and plans to host community events, including visits from local authors, literacy drives, and creative workshops.

BookSmart can be found at Suite 256, on the upper level of the mall between JC Penney and Macy's. BookSmart invites East San Jose families, educators, and readers to stop by, browse, and experience the joy of an independent bookstore once again.

For more about BookSmart's history and mission, visit mybooksmart.indielite.org/about-us.

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Times Local News

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority receives state funding to bolster wildfire prevention work

California State Coastal Conservancy grant enables Authority to purchase new equipment, implement proven methods to reduce potential fire hazards

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority) has received a \$240,000 grant from the California State Coastal Conservancy for a fuel break implementation project in western Santa Clara County. The grant, approved today by the Coastal Conservancy's board, enables the Authority to purchase specialized equipment that will allow Authority staff to reduce and remove flammable vegetation along the ridgeline roads in western Santa Clara County. Fuel breaks like this have been scientifically shown to reduce the spread of wildfire and helped contain the Loma Fire above Morgan Hill in 2016.

"Proactive fuels management is a critical part of caring for open space to protect the communities we serve in Santa Clara County," said Andrea Mackenzie, general manager of the Authority. "We are grateful that the Coastal Conservancy acknowledges the importance of building wildfire resiliency for our lands and communities via this generous grant. We are now ready to increase our wildfire management work, in

accordance with the County-wide Wildfire Protection Plan, starting in January."

The Santa Clara County Community Wildfire Protection Plan identifies the western part of the county as the location of most flammable vegetation, or fuels. Removing or reducing these fuels and building fire breaks helps limit the spread of wildfire into residential and urbanized areas. In western Santa Clara County, nearly 58 miles of fuel breaks—areas where flammable vegetation or combustible materials have been removed, making it harder for wildfires to spread—run along ridge roads. They rise as high as the Loma Prieta and Mount Umunhum summits, descending into dense, fast-growing, low-lying chaparral and scrub before grading into oak woodland at lower elevations. The fuel breaks need proactive maintenance to remain effective.

"Healthy natural lands are vital in preventing and reducing catastrophic wildfires and the Authority has a proven track record of implementing projects like this in Santa Clara County," said Amy Hutzel, executive officer for the California State Coastal Conservancy. "As the threat of catastrophic wildfires increases, we are proud to support the acceleration of the

Authority's wildfire resilience work to protect communities, critical roadways and open space in some of our region's most vulnerable landscapes."

The source of funding comes from a block grant to the Coastal Conservancy from the California Department of Conservation under its Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP). The goal of the RFFCP is to increase regional capacity to prioritize, develop, and implement projects that improve forest health and fire resiliency.

Next Steps

The Authority's newly funded project focuses on a four-mile section of the fuel break in need

of heavy-equipment work (see map). Originally established in 1985 by CALFIRE, the miles-long western Santa Clara County fuel break protects the watershed at the Chesbro, Uvas and Lexington Reservoirs, while also protecting multiple residential neighborhoods.

The fuel break implementation project is scheduled to start in January 2026, and this equipment will enable the Authority to continue ongoing wildfire prevention work. This work will complement the Authority's ongoing conservation grazing efforts, further reducing flammable vegetation and enhancing landscape resilience.

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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

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Times Local News



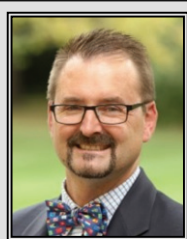
Gearing up for the holiday season

By Bill Schroh, Jr.
President & CEO
History San José

Happy November everyone! As we gear up for this Holiday season, I am on an emotional roller coaster! October began with the high of History San José hosting our Annual Valley of Heart's Delight Fundraiser which not only raises funds for the museum but is also a celebration of the history and culture of San Jose.

More than 200 people joined us under the Light Tower of History Park as we celebrated three San Jose luminaries, San José Jazz Executive Director Brendan Rawson and Community Engagement Leaders Marianne and Carl Salas for their incredible work both onstage and behind the scenes helping to create the fellowship and community in San Jose we all strive for and love! During the event I shared some exciting news about the Sakauye Farmhouse, and I am happy to finally be able to share it with all of you!

In partnership with San Jose City Councilmember Rosemary Kamei, the Japanese American Museum of San Jose, and the Preservation Action Council San Jose, I am thrilled to announce that we have reached our first fundraising milestone to be able to move the Sakauye Farmhouse to History Park! The house is no longer in danger of being demolished, yet there still is much work to be done once the Sakauye Farmhouse has arrived at History Park! Now the second phase of fundraising begins for the restoration of the Farmhouse. Please support our restoration efforts so that we can prepare the home for



History San José
Bill Schroh, Jr.
President & CEO

use as a gallery, event space, and classroom. I will keep you informed on the progress of the move!

San José Roots took place on November 1st at San Pedro Square Market with thanks to our sponsors, the San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs, Betty Duong, and StarOne Credit Union. Once again History San José, along with our community partners at Mosaic America and many more, hosted tours of our historic

downtown buildings, cultural performances, poetry readings, and community booths that highlighted the vibrant cultural heritage of our city. During this festival we incorporate as many different traditions as possible to show how diverse our shared community really is. This blending of cultures has made us the amazing region we are today.

In contrast to the highs of our many fall events, the month is ending with seeing the senseless injury of one of the most important symbols of the United States: the White House. Seeing the East Wing of the White House destroyed without the historic preservation community's involvement makes me stop and think, what might be next? This will only make me work harder to make sure something like this does not happen in San Jose without the historic preservation community's input!

Our history and heritage needs to be preserved, protected, and celebrated, not erased, distorted, or destroyed! The History San José Team will continue the fight to save and preserve important historic buildings in San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley. One of the key pillars of History San José is the preservation of historic buildings, and as many of you know, it's one of the reasons History Park was created! I hope you will join us to support this worthy cause.

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Revolutionizing Irrigation: How drones are transforming agriculture in San Jose

By Matthew Frazier

In the heart of agricultural innovation, particularly in areas like San Jose, CA, drones have become pivotal in irrigation management.

As farmers and farming professionals strive to maximize crop yields while efficiently managing resources, drones equipped with cutting-edge technology have emerged as game changers.

The ideal drones for this task are not just flying devices; they are sophisticated tools packed with features that can revolutionize how irrigation is approached.

In irrigation management, one of the standout capabilities of modern drones is their use of multispectral and thermal cameras. Multispectral cameras capture a spectrum of light beyond the visible range, which helps identify plant health and stress levels. By analyzing this data, farmers can pinpoint areas that require attention, ensuring that every drop of water is used efficiently.

Thermal cameras are equally impressive, capable of measuring temperature variations across the field. This technology creates moisture maps that highlight which areas need water, ultimately leading to a more efficient irrigation strategy that conserves resources and maximizes yield. Integrating these sensor types is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the farm's health.

In addition to sensor technology, drones equipped with LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) offer a revolutionary approach to field mapping. By understanding the slope and elevation of the land, farmers can opti-

mize their irrigation systems to ensure that water is distributed evenly and efficiently, preventing runoff and wastage.

But not all drones are created equal, especially when it comes to size and capability. For larger areas with varied terrain, a hybrid drone that combines the efficiency of fixed-wing designs with the agility of vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) is often the best choice. These drones can cover expansive fields quickly while still operating in confined spaces. On the other hand, multi-rotor drones are excellent for smaller plots, providing detailed analyses for specific areas without the need for extensive travel.

When assessing the best drones for irrigation management, a few models stand out for their superb performance and user-friendly features. The DJI Agras T40 and T50 are among the top contenders, explicitly designed for agricultural use. With impressive flight times of 20 to 60 minutes, these drones are built for maximum efficiency, enabling them to cover large areas without frequent recharging. Their advanced radar systems enhance terrain-following and collision avoidance, enabling precise navigation in complex environments.

The Parrot Bluegrass Fields drone is another remarkable option that features a multispectral camera capable of capturing extensive data in a single flight. This model is particularly appealing to those seeking to maximize the area covered per charge, making it a reliable partner in the quest for sustainable farming.



Water Wise
Matthew Frazier,
Certified Water
Manager

Duarte Poinsettias



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During your visit, you'll have the opportunity to tour their greenhouse, learn about their growing process, and find the perfect poinsettia for your home or as a thoughtful holiday gift. Whether you're a long-time customer or stopping by for the first time, their friendly staff will be happy to answer your questions and help you pick out just what you need.

Your self-guided tour promises a delightful and immersive experience for plant enthusiasts and holiday shoppers alike. As you explore the greenhouse, you'll discover an array of poinsettia varieties in full bloom like you have never seen before, each cultivated with care to ensure vibrant color and lasting freshness.

Look around the large warehouse of Poinsettia plants and decide if you would like to buy. They will label your purchase with your name & place them in the storage area of the bus to be transported home.

After we leave the nursery, we will travel a short distance to the Grizzly Rock Café where you will have a buffet lunch of tri-tip steak, chicken, vegetables, potatoes, salad, rolls and iced tea. Coffee, soda, beer, wine and dessert will be available to purchase, cash preferred.

We will return to Almaden Community Center around 4:30pm.

Tickets are on sale, 8am to 10am M/W/F in the Almaden Community Center lobby.
Cost of the trip will be \$80.00. Cash or check (sorry no refunds).
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For more information contact Rich Sanders at 408 219-8641



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Times Local News

San Jose Dance Theatre announces community guest artists for 60th anniversary 'Chimney Sweep' cameo roles in The Original San José Nutcracker

In celebration of the 60th Anniversary of The Original San José Nutcracker, San Jose Dance Theatre is delighted to introduce a special new tradition: Guest Community Chimney Sweeps, featuring notable local leaders and beloved public figures in cameo appearances throughout Nutcracker weekend.

Traditionally, chimney sweeps have long been considered symbols of good fortune — folklore says that shaking a chimney sweep's hand brings luck for the year ahead. In this milestone production, each guest will bring their own magic, personality, and San José spirit to this whimsical role, honoring both the past and future of this beloved holiday production.

"This is such a joyful way to honor our community while celebrating 60 years of Nutcracker magic in San José," says Elizabeth Sweeney, Executive Director of San Jose Dance Theatre. "Each guest sweep embodies the collaborative, community-centered heart of SJD."

San Jose Dance Theatre is proud to welcome the following guest chimney sweeps:

Guest Chimney Sweep Appearances

- December 13, 2:00 PM: Viscount Michael North – San Jose Restaurateur
- December 13, 7:30 PM: Elizabeth Sweeney – SJD Alumna & Executive Director
- December 14, 2:00 PM: Ron Murietta – Arts Industry Support Director, San Jose Office of Economic Development & Cultural Affairs
- December 20, 2:00 PM: Shan Berries – Radio Host at Mix 106.5, Founder of Shades By Shan Cosmetics & The MamaBerries Foundation
- December 20, 7:30 PM: Holly Barr – Realtor & Founder of Willow Glen Charm
- December 21, 2:00 PM: Matt Mahan – Mayor of San José

Each guest artist will appear live on stage in their scheduled performance, contributing to the joy, humor, and theatrical sparkle of this long-standing holiday tradition.



The Original San José Nutcracker, San Jose Dance Theatre is introducing a special new tradition: Guest Community Chimney Sweeps, featuring notable local leaders and beloved public figures in cameo appearances at Nutcracker weekend performances. Among those appearing this year are (left to right) **Elizabeth Sweeney**, Executive Director of San Jose Dance Theatre; **Nicole Haskins**, Artistic Director of San Jose Dance Theatre, San Jose Mayor **Matt Mahan**, and **John Torrey**, Board President of San Jose Dance Theatre.

This special addition is part of San Jose Dance Theatre's ongoing celebration of its Diamond Jubilee year, honoring the generations of dancers, families, and local supporters who have made The Original San José Nutcracker a cherished cultural landmark for six decades.

About San Jose Dance Theatre

Founded in 1964, San Jose Dance Theatre is a premier nonprofit arts organization dedicated to excellence in dance training, performance, and community enrichment. For 60 years, SJD has brought the magic of The Nutcracker to Silicon Valley and provided world-class ballet education to young dancers across the region.

VTA Awards \$750,000 to advance transit access, community resilience, and engagement across Santa Clara County

By Sean Eastwood
Times staff writer

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) announced more than \$750,000 in grant funding to support projects that improve access to public transit, strengthen community resilience, expand inclusive engagement, and celebrate community identity across Santa Clara County.

These investments, going to 14 recipients in four different categories, help cities and nonprofits advance equitable, transit-oriented communities (TOCs) that connect residents to opportunity while promoting cultural vibrancy and sustainability.

This is the second year VTA has awarded these grants to various organizations and cities in Santa Clara County. The award presentation was held at the San Jose Museum of Art on Nov. 12.

Program Area A: Transit Access and Circulation Planning (\$350,000)

Program Area B: Community Resilience – Total Funding: \$200,000

Program Area C: Education and Engagement – Total Funding: \$100,000

Program Area D: Placemaking and Cultural Activation – Total Funding: \$100,000

Together, these projects share a regional commitment to building equitable, connected, and culturally vibrant transit-oriented communities across Santa Clara County according to VTA officials.

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Times **Feature**

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan invites community to historic plaque unveiling at City Hall on December 4

San Jose to Celebrate 60th Anniversary of the Grateful Dead

By Sean Eastwood
Times staff writer

Mayor Matt Mahan and San Jose Rocks announced a momentous celebration marking the 60th anniversary of the Grateful Dead's first performance under that iconic name.

The city will unveil a commemorative bronze plaque at San Jose City Hall on Dec. 4 above the footprint of a house which once stood on South Fifth Street. In that building, Jerry Garcia, Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, and Bill Kreutzmann made history on December 4, 1965, by playing their very first notes as the Grateful Dead.

"San Jose has an incredible musical heritage that deserves to be celebrated," said Mayor Matt Mahan. "The Grateful Dead didn't just start here—they launched a cultural revolution that spread throughout the Bay Area and the world. This plaque will serve as a permanent reminder to current and future generations that San Jose is where this legendary band first performed under the Grateful Dead name. I'm thrilled to invite our entire community to this free celebration on December 4th."

December 4th Event Schedule

All events are free and open to the public at San Jose City Hall, 200 E. Santa Clara Street:

4:00 PM – Event area opens at City Hall's South Plaza

4:30 PM – San Jose State Musical Jam Band Students Perform Greeting Songs

4:45 PM – • Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Land Acknowledgment

• Welcome from city leaders and San Jose Rocks Founder Dan Orloff

• The Story Behind the Story with Mark Purdy, San Jose Rocks historian and journalist

• Ira Meltzer shares his firsthand account

of organizing the December 4, 1965 Acid Test

• Special remarks from Trixie Garcia, daughter of Jerry Garcia

• Unveiling of the commemorative bronze plaque featuring the iconic Steal Your Face logo

5:15 PM – Drum procession leads to Sonic Runway

5:25 PM – Sonic Runway illuminates with light and sound

5:26 PM – Psychedelic light show projected onto City Hall rotunda and West Wing featuring historic Grateful Dead and Acid Test imagery

5:30–7:30 PM – Reception featuring rare Grateful Dead & Acid Test exhibit at Janet Gray Hayes Rotunda

Federal funds on the way to help upgrade VTA low-emission bus fleet

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) will receive \$20 million in federal funding for hybrid diesel-electric low-emission buses as it builds its fleet to help counter harmful environmental impacts.

VTA is one of 24 agencies across California to receive funding made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in 2023.

"Replacing outdated buses with low-emission hybrids isn't optional—it's essential," said Carolyn Gonot, General Manager/CEO of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. "Government funding is critical to reducing harmful emissions, safeguarding public health, and ensuring our transit systems remain resilient for the future."

The federal Low-No Program helps transit agencies buy or lease U.S.-made low- or zero-emission buses and make critical facility, station, and charging upgrades to facilitate this transition. Transit agencies throughout California are tasked with converting to zero-emission/low emission fleets by the year 2040.

The funding is part of a nationwide federal investment of \$2 billion that will go to 165 transit projects in 45 states and Washington, D.C.

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The Almaden Senior Association is a diverse group of enthusiastic active adults 50+ who enjoy new learning opportunities, new experiences, and new adventures. Join us today. Meet new people and get involved with classes and programs that will enhance your life and open new doors.

Poinsettias Nursery and Lunch, Tuesday, December 2, 2025:

Tickets are on sale now for a fun bus trip to the Duarte Poinsettia Nursery in Hughson, CA (near Modesto). Come see 60,000 colorful poinsettias where they are grown. You can purchase them and take them with you. After visiting the nursery, we will go to the Grizzly Rock Café for a buffet lunch that is included in your trip. Depart ACC at 7:45am. Return around 4:30pm. Buy your tickets in the Almaden Community Center lobby, M/W/F 8 to 10am, \$80 Cash or Check. Contact Rich at 408-219-8641 for more information.

Save the Date, Soup Party, Saturday January 24, 2026, Noon:

Join us for all you can eat soup until they are gone. 4 homemade soups served with fresh bread and dessert. Tickets go on sale Monday, January 5th from 8am-10am and every M/W/F in the Almaden Community Center lobby \$14, Cash or check. For more info call Jeanne at 408-425-5723

All events and trips are for those 50 years and over. Payments are cash or check only, sorry no refunds.

Almaden Senior Association
at the Almaden Community Center
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"Anything that could happen to a girl



Yew said there's a correlation between

"We can intervene in a court setting and help families heal," she said. "We had one mom who had ... her rights terminated to the children. She came into family wellness court and was healed. She got her kids back. Then she started to have relationships with her relatives who had

"I was scared out of my mind, but I did it because I wanted my babies," she said. "Now I have a daughter in college. My daddy just passed away from cancer, but I got to take care of him. That's the beauty of recovery. We learn from it and we become stronger."

Elementary

"The collaborative effort of the Schools of Tomorrow Advisory Committee has given us a clear, student-centered vision for the future of elementary education in San José Unified," said Superintendent Nancy Albarrán. "As we move into the implementation phase, our commitment remains to execute this initiative transparently, inclusively, and with respect for our students, staff, and community. Together, uniting as one community, we can and will elevate opportunities for all."

Ed Board

Kathleen King, a former Board of

"In my 30-plus years of public service, I have never seen a public agency that was as focused on serving interests other than the public

"I look forward to the Board's consideration and adoption of these reforms so we can move forward with clear, student-centered, and publicly responsible oversight of administrative practices," Berta said.

San Jose legendary community leader Frank Fiacchini dies
Sta. Pica 4

Air Force Cadet Adriana Chang of San Jose is selected as the Student of the Year
Sta. Pica 4

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER: JEFFREY WILLY, JR. (2011)

WillowGlenTimes

CORRESPONDENT: JEFFREY WILLY, JR. WWW.WILLOWGLENTIMES.COM

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER: JEFFREY WILLY, JR. (2011)

Here's what's running for San Jose City Council mayor

San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo announced today that he will not seek re-election in 2017. Liccardo, who has served as mayor since 2011, said he wants to spend more time with his family and focus on his business. He will be leaving office in 2017 after a four-year term.

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THANK YOU

for being a longtime reader of this paper

We appreciate your continued support of our local journalism.

WillowGlenTimes

IN MEMORY

Galina (Faynshtein) Lyte

1939 - 2025; Willow Glen

Galina Lyte of San Jose, passed away on October 29, 2025 at her home in Willow Glen, joining her beloved husband, Aaron (Levine) Lyte, the love of her life, who passed away in January 2024 at 96.

Their love was one for the ages. Galina was predeceased by her beloved daughter, Karina Gibbs, who died of cancer in 2014. Galina left behind her two adored grandchildren, Joshua Gibbs, age 20, and Savannah Gibbs, age 18, and their father/Galina's son-in-law, Edward Gibbs, of North Carolina, as well as many friends.

Galina was born in Russia to parents Saul and Rukhoma Kazhdan, living under a difficult political regime with breadlines and little heat in winter. As a wife with a young daughter, Galina escaped to Italy in 1978 and immigrated to the United States in 1979.

She was a mechanical engineer, educated in Russia at Polytechnical Institute Leningrad earning an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering, and worked in nuclear power at a time when few women were in

that field.

In escaping Russia she taught herself Italian, and learned how to drive a truck and do manicures, knowing she would need basic job skills to survive and care for her young daughter. After immigrating to the US, she held jobs with Pedco Co. in Cincinnati, OH, followed by Schneider Consulting Engineers in Pittsburgh, PA, and eventually took a job with General Electric located in San Jose in their nuclear division, where she met her beloved Aaron., her co-worker, also a nuclear engineer. As a new United States citizen, she was called upon to help defuse the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor melt down in 1979 with her expertise and knowledge.

Her love affair with Aaron grew for many years as co-workers, before their eventual marriage in 2005. Together they traveled the world after retirement, celebrating their anniversaries every month, until Aaron's passing.

A diminutive but feisty young woman, Galina learned to navigate for herself at a young age, determined to succeed. Active and fit, she

loved hiking, walking, skiing, and swimming, and could often be seen walking the neighborhoods of Willow Glen in her shorts and sailor cap.

Galina's favorite quote by author Robert Anson Heinlein: "Love is that condition where someone else's happiness is necessary to your own."



San José Public Library reveals top checkouts of 2025

San José Public Library members' reading trends feature a children's favorite as overall leader for a second year in a row.

As another year comes to a close, San José Public Library (SJPL) is excited to share the most checked out titles by its library members in 2025.

From humorous graphic novels to transforming historical fiction, this year's top picks celebrate the diverse interests of our community and highlight the library's pivotal role in fostering a love for reading and learning.

The following titles are the top checked-out books of 2025 at SJPL:

Taking the crown as the most checked-out title in the "Adult" age group, Kristin Hannah's *The Women*, sweeps readers into a compelling coming of age story.

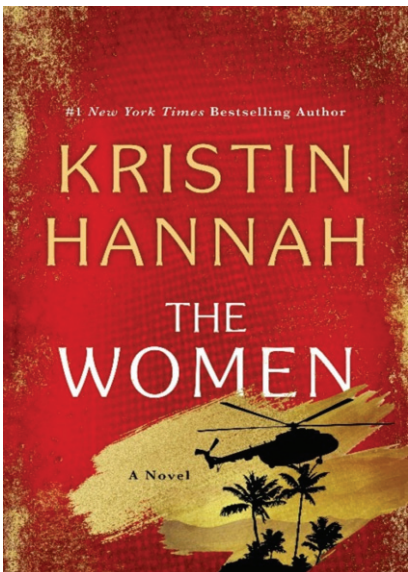
The prequel to *The Hunger Games*, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* by Suzanne Collins, remains the top pick for "Teen" readers for two consecutive years.

Once again, a Dav Pilkey title shines on top in the "Children" age group, *Dog Man: The Scarlet Shedder*, was the most checked-out title for that age group.

Dog Man: The Scarlet Shredder by Dav Pilkey also claims the

number one spot as SJPL's top checked out book across all age groups, genre, and formats, exemplifying the unquestionable popularity of the Dog Man series. For a second year, author Dav Pilkey is one of only two authors listed in SJPL's top ten Children's booklist.

View the complete list of the San José Public Library's top ten borrowed books in the adult,



teen, and children's age group at: sjpl.org/BestOf2025. There, you can also view the top five checked out books in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese, regardless of age, genre and format.

SJPL serves over 760,000 library cardholders and recorded an impressive 8.1 million items checked out over the past year. To borrow items from SJPL, all you need is a library card, which is free, easy, and rewarding to have.

For more information, visit: sjpl.org/membership



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In appreciation of the generosity of sponsors, donors and friends who supported the 2025 Hooray for Happy Hollow event benefiting Happy Hollow Park & Zoo.



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Happy Hollow Foundation is dedicated to preserving and enhancing Happy Hollow Park & Zoo so that it remains a community asset that is highly valued and accessible to all. Scan the QR code to learn more!

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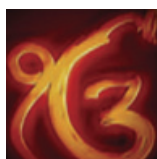
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SAN JOSE GURDWARA



God is One
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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 on site and walk the beautiful grounds. Learn

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