

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

TUESDAY, MARCH 17



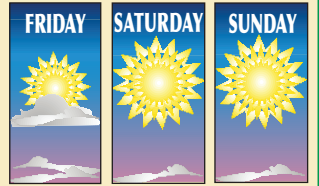
WEEKEND WEATHER

Cloudy Partly cloudy thru Sunday

HIGHS: 72-80

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110

LOWS: 52-57



San Leandro Times

AN INDEPENDENT HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER SERVING SAN LEANDRO, ASHLAND, SAN LORENZO AND SHEFFIELD VILLAGE

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THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026

SAN LEANDRO • CALIFORNIA

Council Praises Downtown Benefit District

By Ruben Banuelos
San Leandro Times

The head of the Downtown Community Benefit District (CBD) said that the district demonstrated success in 2025 but also is under funding pressures during an annual update to the City Council on March 2.

Morgan Mack Rose, executive director of the San Leandro Improvement Association (SLIA), which governs the Downtown San Leandro Community Benefit District, said 2025 exceeded expectations.

"I look to this every single year," Mack Rose said to the council. "We had a fantastic year for 2025."

The community benefit district (CBD) was founded in 2013 and is funded by an additional property tax on 199 downtown commercial lots. The CBD provides cleaning, safety, marketing and beautification in downtown San Leandro.

The district covers around 30 blocks, in an area within Alvarado Street, Santa Rosa Street, San Leandro Creek and Castro Street. Single-family homes and condominiums are not included in the extra tax assessment.

Morgan Mack-Rose told the council about the organization. *see DOWNTOWN, page 8*

Women's HerStory Fest & Diva Dance Party

Celebrate the special lady in your life at the Women's HerStory Fest & Diva Dance Party on Friday, March 13, from 4 to 9 p.m. in the Downtown Plaza, corner Washington and W. Juana avenues.

Moms, daughters, aunts, grandmas, and the men and boys who love them are invited to dance the night away to the beats of DJ Black Wom-

an. Enjoy music, delicious food, crafted drinks, artisan vendors, and explore exhibits featuring prominent women from history.

This festival is part of the Downtown San Leandro Second Fridays series and is hosted by the Downtown San Leandro Community Benefit District and West Coast Makers.

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SPORTS

Assumption basketball wins league championship. **Page 2**

AVIATION

Aviation museum to host open house. **Page 3**

CLASSIFIEDS

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PHOTO BY KELSEY CHEN

Madison School students performed at the Luna New Year celebration in front of a packed house.

Madison Rings in the Lunar New Year

The vibrant sounds of drums and student voices filled the air on February 27 as James Madison Elementary School hosted its annual Lunar New Year celebration.

The celebration drew a record crowd of over 300 people, transforming the

school into a hub of cultural pride.

The festivities began with opening remarks from Mayor Juan Gonzales and Principal Paulette Smith, who highlighted the power of the holiday in uniting San Leandro's diverse families.

The heart of the evening featured

James Madisons' Mandarin Dual Language Mandarin Immersion students. From Transitional Kindergarten through 2nd grade, young performers took to the stage to showcase their skills in traditional song, dance, and poetic

see MADISON, page 8

Valentine's Dinner Becomes a Can't Miss Date

By Carol Thornberry
San Leandro Times

Cupid made an early appearance this year as Jim Ervin of the San Francisco Cigar Company on MacArthur Boulevard in San Leandro hosted his annual Valentine's Dinner, an event that has become a can't-miss date on the social calendars of friends, clients, and cigar aficionados alike.

Guests arrived in festive

fashion at the ever-charming Casa Orinda Restaurant, where the evening began with warm greetings, polished service, and the hum of lively conversation. The historic setting proved the perfect backdrop for a night devoted to good company and Valentine's cheer.

Among those enjoying the festivities were locals, Cathy

and Bill Lemas, Deb and Mike Delaney of Lyal Nickals fame, Faye and Robert Caruso, Denice and Chuck Canepa, and Terry Kirby, who mingled comfortably as cocktails gave way to dinner and laughter echoed through the room.

Charlie and Anne Martorello said they would not miss this event for the world, disclosing that they drove up from Carmel in the middle of their mini vacation to join the

fun only to return there the next day.

The gathering reflected the easy camaraderie that has become the hallmark of Ervin's events — equal parts elegance and friendship.

Over dinner, guests shared stories, renewed acquaintances, and toasted the occasion, while Ervin offered brief remarks thanking everyone for their continued friendship and *see DINNER, page 8*

MEETING SCHEDULES

CITY COUNCIL

Council meets on the first and third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers, City Hall, 835 E. 14th St., San Leandro. For more information, call the City Clerk at 577-3367.

SAN LEANDRO SCHOOL BOARD

Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at 2600 Teagarden St., San Leandro. For more information, call Zaira Duncan at 667-3522.



Assumption Boys Basketball Wins League Championship

The Assumption 6th Grade Boys Basketball team has claimed the Southern Alameda County (SAC) League championship in the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) with a perfect 12-0 season — sealing the title with a commanding 41-16 victory over Our Lady of Grace of Castro Valley.

The championship game, played at St. Bede's in Hayward, marked a triumphant return to the top for Assumption after last year's heartbreaking finish. In 2025, the team went undefeated through the regular season, only to suffer its first and only loss in the championship game against St. Leander's.

This year, the story came full circle. Assumption not only defeated St. Leander's during league play but powered through the season to capture the SAC championship trophy outright — this time finishing what they started.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAUREN SUGAYAN

The Assumption School 6th grade basketball team celebrates after winning the league championship.

The team is made up of off the court. Many of the four fifth graders and nine boys have been classmates for six years, growing up together, victory even more meaningful learning together, and now is the bond these players share winning together.

At the Library

Festival of Colors: Holi Craft for Kids

Celebrate the joy of Holi at the Festival of Colors with a fun-filled children's program designed especially for kids ages 11 and under, on Saturday, March 14, from 3 to 4 p.m. at the Manor Branch Library, 1241 Manor Blvd. Little artists will enjoy colorful crafts and hands-on activities that share the vibrant traditions and spirit of this beloved holiday.

Movies at the Main

Celebrate Women's History Month with the a free showing of A League of Their Own, on Saturday, March 14 at 2 p.m. at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave. The movie stars Geena Davis, Madonna, Rosie O'Donnell, and Tom Hanks, a humorous true story of the trailblazing women who formed a professional baseball league during World War II. Rated PG. Runtime 128 minutes. Enjoy theater seating, surround sound, and free movie snacks.

Spring Celebration & Nowruz Festival

The library will host a Traditional Persian Dance Performance & Dance Workshop, Spring Celebration & Nowruz festival, on Saturday, March 14, at 2 p.m. at the San Leandro Main Library 300 Estudillo Ave. Learn about traditions, create crafts, and enjoy treats. A fun cultural experience for all ages.

Countdown to College: Mapping Your Path to College

Create a year-by-year plan to stay on target and keep college applications stress-free at this Countdown to College workshop on Tuesday, March 17, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the San Leandro Main Library 300 Estudillo Ave.

Family Fun Night at the Main Library: Reptile Show

Jungle James will present a reptile show at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave., on Wednesday, March 18, at 6:30 p.m. See reptiles from around the world up close. Doors open at 6:20 p.m. and the show begins at 6:30 p.m. All ages welcome. For more information, call 510-577-3960.

View the Women's History Month Tiny Art Show

View the Women's History Month Tiny Art Show at the Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave. Art work will be on display through April 1. Thank you to the San Leandro Art Association for donating the supplies for this year's kits.

Enjoy patron submitted art inspired by women artists to highlight and celebrate women creatives. Get in-

Lose Weight by Joining TOPS

Resolved to lose weight in 2026? Join TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) for the support you need to start your weight loss journey. TOPS is a non profit weight loss support group that meets on Fridays at 9:30 a.m. (doors open at 8:45 a.m.) at the United Methodist Church, 19806 Wisteria St. in Castro Valley. For more information, contact Linda Brooks at 510-461-3894. Join us for fellowship and support. What do you have to lose?

San Leandro Times

An independent hometown newspaper serving San Leandro, Ashland, San Lorenzo and Sheffield Village

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Community Calendar

Candidate for Judge to Speak at Big Tent Meeting

Big Tent will meet on Saturday, March 14, at 11 a.m. at Families United, 209 Joaquin Ave. in San Leandro. The agenda will include a redlining resolution, Operation Big Vote, and the Youth Advisory Committee. Spotlight awards will be presented to Anna Edwards and Susan Hughes for outstanding accomplishments. The speaker will be Patricia Miles, candidate for Superior Court judge.

First United Methodist Labyrinth Prayer Gathering

First United Methodist Church, 1600 Bancroft Ave., will hold Labyrinth Prayer Gatherings on Thursdays at 10 a.m. through April 2. All are welcome.

First United Methodist Church Senior Citizens Exercise and Meditation

First United Methodist Church, 1600 Bancroft Ave. in San Leandro, invites senior citizens to a free program of seated exercise and meditation, followed by conversation and table activities accompanied by tea and healthy snacks on Tuesday mornings through May 19 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Nurture your body, mind, and spirit while building community. Meet in Hale Hall which is entered from Bancroft Avenue. All are welcome, non-denominational, no charge. For more information, call the church office at 510-483-0606.

Pershing to Speak at the Alta Mira Club

The Alta Mira Club, 561 Lafayette Ave. in San Leandro will showcase San Leandro resident artist Suzanne Pershing's kick-off of her newly published book: Chlorophyll the Tooth Fairy (not a children's book) on Saturday, March 21, at 1 p.m. No charge for admission. This is Suzanne's mom's story written by Suzanne and beautifully illustrated by world famous abstract artist Roy DeForest. See the original art that was featured on PBS's Antiques Road Show and hear how this book came to reality. Refreshments served, RSVP to nancyfong@aol.com or leave a message at 510-483-1018. Signed copies of the book will be available for purchase to benefit scholarships.

San Leandro High United Parents Crab Feed

San Leandro High School United Parents will host Crab Feed & More on Saturday, March 21, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the San Leandro Boys & Girls Club, 2200 San Leandro Blvd. Includes Dungeness crab, pasta, meatballs, salad French bread, BYO butter, seasoning, etc. Pre-sold tickets only. No tickets at the door. Visit <https://forms.gle/fXkDzQuaieikPYGE7> for tickets. For questions or to pay by check, email slhsunitedparents@gmail.com.

Kids' Easter Craft Party at Creekside Community Church

All kids and their friends and families are invited to Creekside Community Church's annual Kids' Easter Craft Party on Saturday, March 21, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at 951 MacArthur Blvd. in San Leandro. Kids will make Easter crafts and enjoy treats. Free and open to the entire community. All children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, visit www.creeksidecommunity.org.

St. John's Church Easter Bake Sale

St. John's Catholic Church, 264 E. Lewelling Blvd. in San Lorenzo will hold an Easter Bake Sale on Saturday, March 21, from 3 to 7 p.m.; and on Sunday, March 22, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. On Sunday enjoy a continental breakfast. For more information, call the church office at 510-351-5050.

Hill and Valley Club Bunco Madness

The Hill and Valley Club will present Bunco Madness on Saturday, March 21, starting at 10:30 a.m. at the clubhouse, 1808 B Street in Hayward. Your \$25 ticket includes Bunco and lunch, as well as door prizes and Bunco prizes. Make reservations by March 14. For more information or to make your reservation, email email pkeathley@icloud.com or call Pat Keathley at 510-461-1321. Proceeds from this event benefit the club's Pennies for Kids project, which purchases new school clothes for children in need.

DA to Speak at Washington Home Owners Meeting

The Washington Home Owners Association will host its monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 18, at 6:30 p.m. at the Marina Community Center, 15301 Wicks Blvd.

This month's guest speaker will be Alameda County District Attorney Ursula Jones Dickson. This is an opportunity to speak to the district attorney about any concerns and hear her plans for justice in Alameda County.

Washington Manor and Bonaire residents along with the general public are encouraged to attend.

For more information, visit: www.whoasl.com or call Bob Glaze at 510-352-2058.



PHOTO COURTESY OAKLAND AVIATION MUSEUM

Historic aircraft will be on display on Sunday at the Oakland Aviation Museum.

Oakland Aviation Museum Open House

Oakland Aviation Museum, 8252, Earhardt Road in Oakland, will host an Open Cockpit Day on Sunday, March 15, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

View many famous aircraft, including the A-3 Skywarrior, A-4 Skyhawk, A-6 Intruder, MiG-15, Harrier Jump Jet, Cessna O-2, and the P-51 Mustang. Short Solent Flying Boat

walk-through tour for an additional fee. Flight simulators, music by Friends of Ken Band, barbecue, European Train Enthusiasts exhibit, Southern Alameda County RC aircraft display, ham radio exhibit. Admission prices are: adults \$18, seniors \$15, teens/military \$13, kids 5 to 12 \$10, no charge for kids under 4.

San Leandro Garden Club to Meet

The San Leandro Garden Club will meet on Tuesday, March 17, at 10:30 a.m. at the Marina Community Center, 15301 Wicks Blvd. in San Leandro.

The speaker will be Thomas Colby who will talk about the history of Bonsai, plant selection, how to culture a small tree in a pot and what it should look like to be a bonsai.

I.D.E.S. St. John Spaghetti Lunch & Bingo

I.D.E.S. St. John, 1670 Orchard Ave. in San Leandro, will host a Spaghetti Lunch & Bingo on Saturday, March 21, at noon. Tickets are \$15 which includes lunch and four Bingo cards. Extra Bingo cards for 25 cents. For tickets call, Janet Re at 510-483-1132, or Willie Calvo at 510-207-6326.

Hearing Loss Association to Meet

The Hearing Loss Association - East Bay will meet on Saturday, March 14, at Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center, 3600 Broadway, Lower Level Conference Room LL-B. Refreshments at 9:30 a.m., presentation at 10 a.m., pizza at 11:30 a.m. The presentation will be on music and cochlear implants.

The speaker Lourdes Kaufman is a fourth-year medical student at the Uni-

versity of California, San Francisco, planning a career in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

She is interested in caring for populations affected by hearing loss and in improving access to sound and meaningful everyday experiences for deaf and hard-of-hearing patients.

Register at: www.HearingLossEB.org. RSVP by: Friday, March 13, at 5 p.m.

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REAL ESTATE GALLERY



Homeowners Staying in Their Homes Longer

By Carl Medford, CRS
Special to the Times

A recent Bloomberg post by Prashant Gopal proclaims, "Homeowners Stay Put 12 Years, Stifling the US Housing Market." The article highlights a trend reshaping the housing market which is making it more difficult

for buyers to find affordable homes.

According to Redfin as of 12/25, typical U.S. homeowners remain in their homes approximately 12 years, nearly double the median tenure recorded two decades ago. A combination of economic pressures, rising home prices and the record low mortgage rates of a few

years ago have combined, creating incentives for homeowners to stay put.

Homeowner tenure reached its peak in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when uncertainty locked many Americans in place. Prompted by the rock-bottom interest rates, however, buyers surged to the market and, coupled with remote work capabilities, the average tenure shortened significantly.

As mortgage rates climbed and home prices continued to rise, however, the trend of homeowners staying longer has resumed. A key driver behind this phenomenon is often called the "lock-in effect" (or golden handcuffs). Millions of homeowners secured mortgages with sub-4% rates during the low-rate years. Today's buyers, in contrast, face significantly higher rates. Selling a home and purchasing another often means giving up a favorable mortgage rate and taking on a more expensive one.

As a result, many homeowners are sitting tight.

With fewer homeowners listing their properties for sale, the supply of available

homes has dwindled, pushing prices higher. Soaring prices along with higher interest rates have made it increasingly difficult for first-time buyers to enter the market.

Demographics also play a role. Empty-nest baby boomers are holding onto larger homes longer, even after their children have moved out. A 2024 analysis by Redfin found that empty-nest boomers own about 28% of U.S. homes with three or more bedrooms—roughly twice the share owned by millennials with children. This trend is particularly pronounced in California's major metropolitan areas, where Prop 13 property tax rules allow homeowners to maintain relatively low tax bills as long as they stay in their homes. In cities like Los Angeles and San Jose, homeowners often remain in their properties for around two decades.

While mortgage rates have recently teased below 6 percent, most homeowners still benefit from significantly lower rates. Until borrowing costs fall further or housing supply increases meaningfully, many homeowners are likely to continue staying put—keeping the housing market tight and competitive for buyers.

Carl Medford is a licensed Realtor with Keller Williams Realty and a licensed general contractor. This article is sponsored by the Central County Marketing Group.



HOME
of the
WEEK

Elevated & Sophisticated

Welcome to 409 Pershing! This move-in ready, beautifully updated, 3-bed, 2-bath home just over 1,500 square feet* of living space. Thoughtfully improved over the years, this house blends classic character with modern efficiency, comfort, and exceptional indoor-outdoor living. Mature, well-established landscaping creates a warm and inviting sense of arrival. Inside, stunning hardwood floors, fresh interior paint, and natural light streaming through dual-pane windows create a bright and welcoming environment. The spacious updated kitchen connects easily to the main living areas, making everyday living and entertaining virtually effortless. Both bathrooms have been tastefully updated, and a multi-zone mini split HVAC system provides efficient heating and cooling throughout the home. Major system upgrades include owned solar with new Tesla Powerwall, updated electrical service, on-demand water heater, replaced sewer lateral, updated fresh-water service line, earthquake retrofitting, and a seismic gas shut-off valve. The very private backyard retreat is designed for gathering, with thoughtfully designed landscaping, and a built-in stainless steel pizza oven and outdoor kitchen. A detached versatile bonus space offers flexibility for the homeowner. Home office? Gym? Creative retreat? With extensive upgrades, clean reports, close to BART, and a setting designed for comfort and entertaining, 409 Pershing is a rare opportunity in one of San Leandro's most established neighborhoods. Welcome home.
*(per public record).

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RECENT HOME SALES

Castro Valley

2190 Somerset Avenue 94578: \$700,000 [2 BD - 887 SF - 1951
21928 Baywood Avenue 94546: \$765,000 [3 BD - 1,440 SF - 1947
2325 Bramble Court 94546: \$835,000 [3 BD - 1,262 SF - 1960

TOTAL SALES: 3
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$700,000 MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$765,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$835,000 AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$766,666

SAN LEANDRO

1400 Carpentier Street #325 94577: \$385,000 [2 BD - 1,406 SF - 1983
1222 Wainwright Avenue 94577: \$400,000 [2 BD - 840 SF - 1943
394 Caliente Drive 94578: \$499,000 [2 BD - 1,060 SF - 1980
2476 Wimbledon Lane 94577: \$620,000 [1,371 SF - 1978
705 Williams Street 94577: \$732,000 [2 BD - 920 SF - 1900
709 Dolores Avenue 94577: \$750,000 [3 BD - 1,685 SF - 1949
15373 Inverness Street 94579: \$790,000 [4 BD - 1,337 SF - 1955
15535 Sedgeman Street 94579: \$933,000 [3 BD - 1,545 SF - 1959
1876 Benedict Drive 94577: \$1,000,000 [3 BD - 1,731 SF - 1955
1945 Bradhoff Avenue 94577: \$1,000,000 [3 BD - 1,490 SF - 1946
418 Sybil Avenue 94577: \$1,200,000 [4 BD - 3,021 SF - 1961

TOTAL SALES: 12
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$615,000 MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$787,500
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,300,000 AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$877,583

SAN LORENZO

19736 Royal Avenue 94541: \$600,000 [3 BD - 1,260 SF - 1950
1086 Via Coralla 94580: \$670,000 [3 BD - 1,260 SF - 1949
15822 Devonwood Way 94580: \$828,000 [4 BD - 1,741 SF - 1990

TOTAL SALES: 3
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$600,000 MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$670,500
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$828,000 AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$814,333

HAYWARD

260 Industrial Parkway #5 94544: \$279,000 [1 BD - 686 SF - 1973
27418 Susan Place #3 94544: \$398,000 [2 BD - 869 SF - 1980
27828 Mandarin Avenue 94544: \$559,000 [3 BD - 1,264 SF - 1954
1088 Azalea Court 94541: \$695,000 [3 BD - 1,332 SF - 1973
23136 Amador Street 94541: \$725,000 [2 BD - 841 SF - 1950
22369 Main Street 94541: \$730,000 [3 BD - 2,016 SF - 1935
24660 Joanne Street 94544: \$755,000 [3 BD - 1,352 SF - 1950
26132 Jane Avenue 94544: \$879,000 [3 BD - 1,328 SF - 1952
27159 Underwood Avenue 94544: \$889,000 [3 BD - 1,473 SF - 1955
30847 Prestwick Avenue 94544: \$955,000 [1,559 SF - 1955
27896 Adobe Court 94542: \$1,585,000 [5 BD - 2,650 SF - 1971

TOTAL SALES: 11
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$279,000 MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$730,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,585,000 AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$768,090

Alameda County Women's Hall Of Fame Announces 2026 Inductees

The Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame recently announced its 2026 class of inductees.

The Hall of Fame was Established in 1993 and honors exceptional women who have made a lasting impact in Alameda County's diverse communities, preserving their legacies in the county archives.

This year, nine remarkable women join the more than 300 past inductees, recognized for their contributions across a range of fields:

- **Business & Professions:** Joan Seppala, Owner/Publisher of The Independent

- **Community Service:** Monica Lau, Chief Operating Officer of Family Bridges, Inc.

- **Culture & Art:** Fredrika Newton, Co-Founder & President of the Dr. Huey P Newton Foundation

- **Education:** Tammeil Gilkerson, Chancellor of Peralta Community College District

- **Health:** Dr. Harsha Ram-

chandani, MD, Chief Medical Officer of Bay Area Community Health

- **Non-Traditional Careers:** April Luckett-Fahimi, Under-sheriff of Alameda County

- **Philanthropy:** Tamara Chao, President & Executive Director of the Asian Pacific Fund

- **Science, Technology & Engineering:** Noreen King, Founder & CEO of Evolve Manufacturing

- **Sports & Athletics:** Ohe-maa Nyanin, General Manager of the Golden State Valkyries

These outstanding women will be honored at the 31st Annual Luncheon & Inductee Ceremony on Saturday, March 28, at The Club at Castlewood in Pleasanton.

The event will also celebrate seven student scholarship recipients through the Mary V. King/Wilma Chan Youth Scholarship Fund.

For more information or to support the Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame, visit <https://www.acgov.org/whof/>.



PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

A fife and drum band marched in last year's St. Patrick's Day Parade in San Francisco.

St. Patrick's Day Parade to Mark Its 175th Year on Saturday

This Saturday marks the 175th Anniversary of San Francisco's St. Patrick's Day Parade, starting at 11:30 a.m. at 2nd and Market streets and marching to City Hall.

Music, dancing and cultural performances will run after

the parade until 5 p.m. in the City Hall area.

This year is the 250th anniversary of the United States, so the theme is "Happy 250th America — You Are Great."

The parade celebrates the enduring friendship between Ire-

land and the United States and the shared spirit of freedom, opportunity, and civic pride that has shaped both nations.

The parade will feature floats, marching bands, pipe bands, traditional Irish dancers, cultural organizations,

youth groups, and community leaders.

For 175 years, this parade has reflected the strength, resilience, and joy of San Francisco's Irish community and its deep roots in the life of the city.

OPINION

The Last Thing We Need Is More Taxes

Editor,

The March 5 San Leandro Times reports that the City Council has authorized polling on possible new taxes, including a parcel tax or higher business taxes that could appear on a future ballot. Yet San Leandro's sales tax already stands at 10.75%, and if the proposed regional BART funding measure appears on the ballot and passes, that rate could climb to 11.25%.

Costs of daily life keeps rising. Bridge tolls have increased repeatedly in recent years. BART fares have gone up again. Gasoline prices remain among the highest in the nation. Food, housing, utilities, and insurance continue to rise, while inflation has steadily reduced household purchasing power.

California is already known as one of the most expensive states in which to live, and many residents looking for affordability are leaving. For those who remain, every additional tax or fee places greater pressure on already strained household budgets.

This is especially true for seniors on fixed incomes, young families

trying to get established, workers commuting long distances, and many residents holding two jobs simply to stay afloat. For many households, these rising costs are not abstract statistics—they are the difference between stability and constant financial stress.

Equally troubling is the idea of spending additional taxpayer money on commissioned polling to test support for new taxes, if this is the intention. When residents are already struggling with rising costs, using public funds to explore ways to take even more from them seems difficult to justify.

Before asking us for additional taxes, our City Council should demonstrate the same discipline families and business owners must practice every day: review spending carefully, prioritize essential services and infrastructure, eliminate unnecessary costs, and pursue outside funding wherever possible.

Residents of San Leandro deserve transparency, fiscal restraint, and a genuine voice before any new tax burden is placed on this community.

Peggy A. Heubel
San Leandro

Where Are the Police?

Editor,

Thank you San Leandro police for license plate cameras, the portable blue light camera systems, for more intersection cameras, instead of your much needed presence.

Thank you San Leandro police for relying on businesses for footage of a potential crime, for not pulling over people who run stop signs and red lights in your presence.

Thank you for not addressing pan-handling, and loitering, for not doing anything about the masked off road dirt bike riders who run red lights and pass our police station, and for doing a great job by sub-contracting out all your work to technology.

Thank you for hosting a one time annual "neighborhood night out" so you can say, "we are here for you" and then go back into your hiding spots.

Has anyone seen a San Leandro police officer patrolling in recent memory? Answer: Seldom. And finally a standing ovation to our women and men in uniform, sworn to serve, protect and then hide.

Robert Johansen
San Leandro

Uphold the Constitution

Editor,

President Trump likes to tout the fact that the U.S. military is the best in the world and that he is using it to rid the world of an evil government. Well, both of those things are true, but he isn't following the rules.

The rule (Constitution) is for him to go to Congress, get permission to attack a country that has not attacked us and is clearly not an imminent threat to the United States, and then use the military to attack that country.

The Seattle Seahawks have developed what is probably the best football team in history, but does that give their offense the right to hold defensive players the next year?

No, of course not. They have to follow the rules.

The House of Representatives needs to stand up for itself, draw up an Article of Impeachment for the high crime of declaring war which is the Congress's exclusive prerogative, and then have the Senate convict President Trump of that high crime.

Don Siefkes
San Leandro

The Musk Library?

Editor,

Every year the San Leandro City Council (with the highest 10.75% sales tax in the state), seeks methods to extract more taxes from impoverished citizens. Every year it decides to pay a private consulting firm big bucks to do polling on a new tax (San Leandro Times, March 5). If the poll's results show that residents are fed up, the results are hidden from public view.

This year, the council favors two tax weapons, which can cause great harm, an increased business license tax and a new parcel/property tax, which has never been levied in San Leandro.

How about finding new taxes which won't hurt citizens? I urge City Council to look into "naming rights."

Billionaires in Northern California, who haven't moved out of state yet, may be interested in putting their names on San Leandro's Main Library, or City Hall, or police station, for a price. Three or four million dollars a year for each structure will go a long way toward solving this city's money problems.

George Z. Banks
San Leandro

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How to Fill the Lower Gaps in a Hedge

By Buzz Bertolero
The Dirt Gardener

Despite trimming it every year, our privet hedge remains over 8 feet tall, with most new growth at the top. What steps can we take to reduce the height and promote more growth to fill in the lower gaps?

A tall hedge to develop gaps or be sparse in certain areas. The goal of a hedge is to create a barrier as quickly as possible. Once it reaches the desired height, it's assumed that the lower part will fill in on its own. Unfortunately, the taller the hedge, the less likely this is to happen with just annual pruning. Typically, pruning three to four times a year, starting with the first flush of growth in spring, is standard practice.

Lateral growth is es-

sential for maintaining a dense hedge. While the hedge is growing, it's recommended to fertilize after each shearing with an all-purpose fertilizer to encourage more growth. Once the hedge is established, a spring feeding is usually sufficient.

Ideally, you should first develop the lower part of the hedge by keeping it at a fixed height. After it has filled in, you can raise the height until reaching your desired level. This rarely happens because we're often too impatient for the barrier to form.

Another reason for gaps at the bottom is that the plants are spaced too far apart. Planting closer together is beneficial in this case.

Here's what I would do now: determine your desired height and prune back to that point. Spring is a good time to do this since growth is starting.

To fill in larger gaps at the bottom, plant a few more new plants. This is the fastest way to fill these areas, followed by fertilizing the

entire row. The final step is to trim the hedge once a quarter.

Usually, hedges are pruned with straight sides, but over time, the bottom can become shaded. Increasing light involves tapering the hedge into a trapezoid, with the narrowest section at the top. The lack of light is another reason the lower parts of hedges tend to thin out.

Another option is to add new plants at the base in the gap area.

Is it okay to add the contents of a paper shredder to our compost pile?

Using shredded paper from a paper shredder in a compost pile is completely fine. Along with straw and cardboard, I recommend it as a substitute for brown leaves, especially during summer. Plain black-and-white newsprint (non-glossy) is generally safe

Besides conserving moisture, mulching also prevents weed seeds from germinating.

Buzz Bertolero is an Advanced California Certified Nursery Professional. The Dirt Gardener's website can be found at www.dirtgardener.com, and any questions can be directed to buzz@dirtgardener.com. Additionally, please modify your spam filter to ensure my reply is received.

for compost piles. Color non-glossy ink contains a small amount of toxins, but it can still be used. Glossy inserts should be avoided. Shredded paper can also serve as mulch.

I suggest spreading the paper over an area, watering it to eliminate air pockets, and then covering it with traditional mulches.

You can also do this with sheets of newspaper, cardboard, or a combination of both. Ultimately, aim for a 2- to 3-inch layer. This should be applied to the canopy, but not to the trunk.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

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FILED February 11, 2026
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By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 620792

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930
The name of the business(es):
MC Roofing, located at 18928 Thornbury Ave., Castro Valley, CA 94546. Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Moi Cisneros, located at 18928 Thornbury Ave., Castro Valley, CA 94546. This business is conducted by a Corporation. This business commenced 9/18/18
/s/Eduardo Reynaga Gonzalez
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.
Expires February 10, 2031
MAR 4, 11, 18, 25, 2026
21250-CVF

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FILED February 27, 2026
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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
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/s/Justin M. Lewis
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MAR 12, 19, 26, APR 2, 2026
21350-SLT

FILED January 29, 2026
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FILE NO. 620504

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The name of the business(es):
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| 36 "I dropped the fruitcake!" | 28 Ledge |
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| 38 Politico Nancy | 31 Courts |
| 41 Parcel of land | 34 Mollify |
| 42 Latin 101 word | 35 Lengthy list |
| 43 Archbishops, e.g. | 37 -- Perignon |
| 48 Get overemotional | 38 Leaf |
| 49 Slithery fish | 39 Flightless birds |
| 50 Prime-time hour | 40 Endure |
| 51 Villa d'-- | 41 Easter bloom |
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ANSWERS ON PAGE 7

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"Local Newspapers Remain a Dominant Source of News in Small Towns..."
according to the Reynolds Journalism Institute & the University of Missouri's School of Journalism.

Madison: Singing and demonstrations

continued from front page recitation.

The cultural display continued with high-energy demonstrations from Shaolin Kung Fu and East West Kung Fu, whose traditional lion dance and martial arts mastery captivated the audience.

Adding to the visual spectacle, students from Ms. Wei's dance class and A Fun Learning Center performed in intricate traditional attire, bridging the gap between ancient customs and the next generation.

As the final echoes of the drums faded, the sense of community remained. The evening was more than just a series of performances; it was a vibrant testament to James Madison Elementary's dedication to cultural diversity.

Families left the campus



PHOTO BY KELSEY CHEN

Mayor Juan Gonzalez joined the celebration at Madison School.

not only with memories of the traditions that continue a spectacular show but with to weave the James Madison a renewed appreciation for community closer together.

Downtown: Cleaning and ambassadors

continued from front page nization's efforts on behalf of downtown businesses and community efforts. Rising costs have also made it more difficult to maintain services, she said.

"We're a small but mighty office," Mack-Rose said.

SLIA has the cleaning ambassadors on staff who clean downtown, removing graffiti, pressure washing the sidewalks, and emptying the trash cans. Safety ambassadors patrol the area to identify obstacles and help the community.

Volunteers also pass out sack lunches to unhoused residents within the area. Ambassadors conducted thousands of service activities in 2025 — such as litter disposal, welfare checks, graffiti re-

moval, and meal distributions, Mack-Rose said.

SLIA's events include markets and seasonal celebrations designed to bring visitors downtown and promote businesses. Festivals and community gatherings (holiday celebrations, cultural events, etc.) are held during the year.

SLIA also coordinates with the San Leandro Public Library and the city's recreation department to partner on activities and share resources, Mack-Rose said.

SLIA has backed a number of downtown public art projects including murals and mosaics supported by grants. During the meeting one of the projects received praise from City Councilmember Dylan Bolt. "It is beautiful," he said.

Mack-Rose told the coun-

cil that SLIA is struggling financially.

The district's annual budget is \$1.1 million — \$490,000 from assessments, and \$603,000 from non-assessments.

Expenditures of \$704,000 goes to Sidewalk, Beautification and Order, \$264,000 to District Identity and Street Improvements, and \$180,000 to administration.

The Downtown San Leandro Community Benefit District has been in operation since 2013 with a 15 year term. To continue, the district will require downtown property owners to approve it again in 2028.

Councilmembers thanked the organization for working to support downtown San Leandro.



PHOTO BY CAROL THORNBERRY

Bill and Cathy Lemas enjoyed the evening at the Valentine's dinner.

Dinner: Tradition and friendship

continued from front page support.

As the evening drew to a close, it was clear the night celebrated more than Valentine's Day. It honored tradition, friendship, and the pleasure of gathering together

— all delivered with the signature warmth and style guests have come to expect from their gracious host.

Now in its 36th year, the San Francisco Cigar Company continues to serve not only as a destination for premium

cigar enthusiasts but also as a hub for community and connection.

If you are a premium cigar smoker or not, stop by the store at 1085 MacArthur Blvd. Jim is always happy to meet and greet new friends.

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