



Comfort Food

THE CHICKEN POT PIE – FLAVOR AND NUTRITION
BENEATH THAT GOLDEN, FLAKY CRUST 4

WEEKEND WEATHER
SUNNY Sunny thru Sunday
 HIGHS: 65-68
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110
 LOWS: 42-44

FRIDAY **SATURDAY** **SUNDAY**

San Leandro Times

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

VOL. 35 • NO. 2

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025

SAN LEANDRO • CALIFORNIA



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAISER PERMANENTE

Mom Sophia Greenwell and dad James Greenwell IV hold the newly arrived daughter Raelynn James at the Kaiser Permanente San Leandro Medical Center on New Year's Day. They are now the parents of five daughters.

First Baby of Year Born in San Leandro

By Mike McGuire
San Leandro Times

The Bay Area's first baby of 2025 arrived in San Leandro at the Kaiser Medical Center right at the stroke of midnight on January 1.

Raelynn James Greenwell weighed 8 pounds even and was 18-and-a-half inches long, said proud mom Sophia Greenwell.

Dad James Greenwell IV had been watching the countdown to midnight on his phone and it was also visible on a TV in the delivery area as Raelynn made her entrance.

Raelynn joins four other daughters age 5 through 17 at the Greenwells' Union City home, and hadn't been expected until January 10, Sophia Greenwell said.

"We got to the hospital about 2:30 p.m., and she was born right at midnight," Sophia said. "I pushed about three times, somebody in the room suggested I cough, and when I did, Raelynn came right out!"

All the tests on Raelynn were normal, and her parents were able to take her home about 8 p.m., Sophia said.

see *BABY*, page 11

Former Chief Pridgen Sues City, Robustelli

Abdul Pridgen claims harassment, violation of rights, discrimination, wrongful termination, defamation

By Michael Singer
San Leandro Times

Former San Leandro Police Chief Abdul Pridgen is suing the city and its former city manager, claiming violations of the state's Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).

The lawsuit also includes 25 other unnamed people who will be named later.

Pridgen is claiming seven different issues, including discrimination, retaliation, harassment, intentional infliction of emotional distress, wrongful termination in vi-

olation of public policy, and defamation. The suit seeks unspecified back pay, punitive damages, and lawyers' fees.

Pridgen claims the city's systemic racist policies and harassing workplace environment violated his rights under FEHA. While Pridgen's lawyers filed the complaint on October 29, 2024, the City of San Leandro did not receive its summons until December 20, 2024. The city now has until January 19 to file a written

see *SUES*, page 11

Washington Manor Evacuated after Gas Leak

By Mike McGuire
San Leandro Times

It wasn't the rainy Sunday morning wake-up call Washington Manor residents expected, or wanted, on December 29.

Before dawn at about 6:35 a.m., police cars drove through the Greenhouse Marketplace and residential streets nearby, telling residents they

should evacuate due to a reported large gas leak. Officers followed up, going door to door to make sure everybody had moved to safety.

The Marina Community Center on Wicks Boulevard was just outside the evacuation zone, so Parks and

see *GAS*, page 12

New Laws in 2025 Address Retail Theft, Pedestrian Safety, Housing

By Mike McGuire
San Leandro Times

An increased minimum wage, a limit on apartment security deposits, tougher penalties on retail theft, and a parking ticket you may not expect are among the changes in state laws Californians will

see in 2025.

Effective January 1, the statewide minimum wage rose 50 cents to \$16 an hour, with some occupations seeing a higher minimum a few months into the year.

Security deposits for those renting an apartment will be

limited to one month's rent, making moving in a little cheaper for some.

A host of laws and a state initiative, Proposition 36, aim at greatly discouraging retail theft, which had become an organized crime operation in some cases.

And don't think you can park near a crosswalk without getting fined just because no sign or curb painting tells you otherwise. Fines, which will vary by locality, can now be charged to those parked within 20 feet of a crosswalk, marked

see *NEW*, page 10

INSIDE YOUR TIMES

COMMUNITY

Students, sign up for MLK oratory contest. **Page 2**

CALENDAR

Become a bicycle and pedestrian commissioner. **Page 3**

NEWS

A second GameStop store hit by burglars. **Page 12**

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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. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 835 E. 14th St., San Leandro. For more information, call Zaira Duncan at 667-3522.



Students: Sign Up for Martin Luther King Oratorical Festival and Poetry Slam

Deadline for student entries is Monday, January 13

The San Leandro Recreation and Parks Department is now accepting student entries for the 2025 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratorical Festival and Poetry Slam to be held on Saturday, Jan. 18, at 10:30 a.m. at the Marina Community Center, 15301 Wicks Blvd.

This annual event honors Dr. King's legacy of peace, equality, and social justice.

The Oratorical Festival and Poetry Slam will feature local students performing

original or well-known essays, speeches, and poems inspired by Martin Luther King's message.

San Leandro students in grades 3 through 12 are invited to enter. Gift card prizes will be awarded in the respective grade categories.

To enter, submit an entry form with a brief description of the piece you plan to perform. The entry deadline is Monday, Jan. 13, or until 25 entries are received – whichever comes first. So be sure to submit your form early.

To submit an entry form, visit sanleandro.org/mlk or contact youth@sanleandro.org.

While only students may perform, this event is free and open to the entire community to attend. Come support local talent and join in celebrating Dr. King's enduring message of hope and social change.

Correction

In the story, "2024: Looking Back on the Year" (Dec. 26, 2024), the name was misspelled of the San Leandro man who celebrated his 100th birthday and has traveled the world. His name is Benny Jason.



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY ELIZABETH GRUBBS

Leon Vonguyen interviews another sailor on the deck of the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Nimitz.

Vonguyen Stationed Aboard U.S.S. Nimitz in the Pacific

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Leon Vonguyen, a native of Oakland, California, interviews a sailor on the flight deck aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) while underway in the U.S. Navy's 3rd Fleet area of

operations.

As an integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific in addition to providing realistic and relevant training necessary to execute the Navy's timeless roles of sea control and power

projection.

The U.S. Navy 3rd Fleet works in close coordination with other numbered fleets to provide commanders with capable, ready forces to deploy forward and win in day-to-day competition, in crisis, and in conflict.

San Leandro Times

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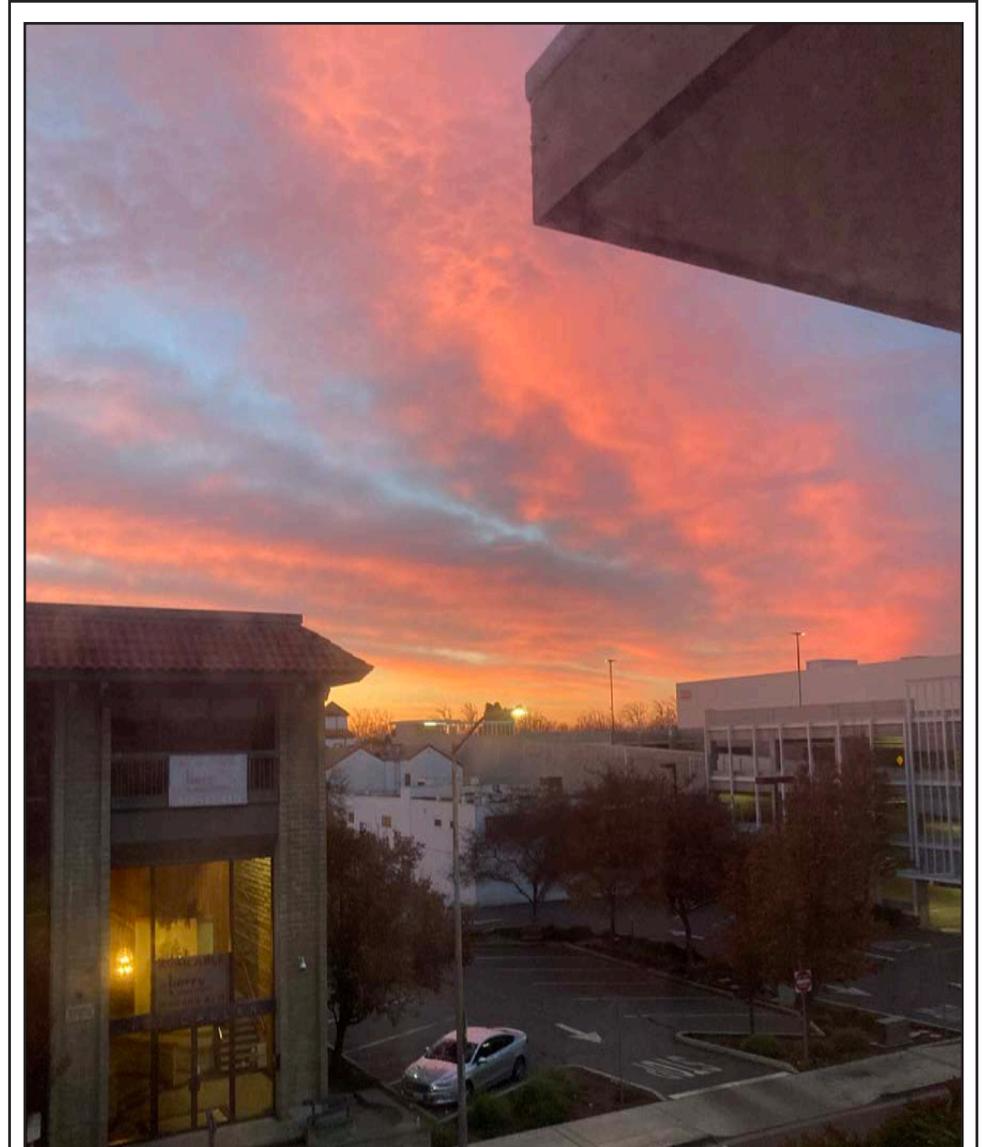


PHOTO BY DON WEINGARTEN

Red Sky at Morning

Don Weingarten looked out of his window one morning last week and took this photo of the beautiful sky over downtown San Leandro.

This New Year
RESOLVE TO VOLUNTEER



NEW TUTOR TRAINING
JAN. 25, FEB. 1, & FEB. 8



Scan QR code or visit sanleandro.org/literacy for online orientation and to register

projectliteracy@sanleandro.org | 510-577-3944

Community Calendar

January Silver Screen

Seniors are invited to enjoy Jumanji (1995, PG) on Thursday, Jan. 9, at 1:30 p.m. in the Thunderbolt Room at the Marina Community Center, 15301 Wicks Blvd., San Leandro. Hosted by the City of San Leandro Human Services Department's Senior Services. Tickets are \$2, and no registration is needed. Popcorn is included.

Washington Home Owners to Meet

The Washington Home Owners Association will host its monthly meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at 6:30 p.m. at the Marina Community Center, 15301 Wicks Blvd., Room C. San Leandro City Manager Janelle Cameron will be the guest speaker. This will be your chance to meet the city manager and ask questions that concern you about the city and Washington Manor. For more information, visit the association's website at : www.whoasl.com or call Bob Glaze 510-352-2058.

Become a Bicycle and Pedestrian Commissioner

Help make San Leandro a community where walking and biking are safe, equitable, and enjoyable for all ages and abilities. Become a member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission. As a commissioner, you'll advise on biking and walking conditions and help create a more accessible San Leandro. Apply now: SanLeandro.org/Boards

Financial Wellness Workshops

Take steps toward your financial wellness and join us for a free 6-part series on Thursdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave., beginning with "Building Savings & Wealth on Jan. 16, "Increasing Cash Flow & Managing Debt" on Jan. 23. Learn planning and savings tools from Youngky Hermanto, CLTC, a registered financial advisor. Register for any or all sessions by calling 510-577-3971 or visiting the library's website at www.sanleandrolibrary.org

Applications for the 2025 Cherry Festival & Parade

Last year, over 20,000 people enjoyed the parade and festival. The festival is seeking vendors with high-quality products, unique experiences, professional attitudes, community non-profits, and performers to help make this the best Cherry Festival yet. If you're interested in applying, visit sanleandrocherryfest.com for more information. The 2025 Cherry Festival and Parade will be on Saturday, June 7.

Join the "Book It 2025 Reading Challenge"

Push the boundaries of your reading by joining the San Leandro Library's "Book It 2025 Reading Challenge," open to teens and adults, starting Jan. 10. Stop by any branch library to pick up a gameboard, or join online at sanleandrolibrary.beanstack.org

Free Yoga Class

Come to the Manor Branch Library, 1241 Manor Blvd., for a free yoga class on Saturday Jan. 18 at 11 a.m. Instructor Dallis Wright-Morash is passionate about yoga and has many years of experience in teaching it. She is a fitness instructor at Bay-O-Vista Club in San Leandro. Come join the fun and give your body a good stretch to get off on the right track for the New Year.

Family Fun Night: Professor Smart's Science Show

Professor Smart brings science to life with an interactive performance of science demonstrations, of storytelling, and juggling on Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 6:30 p.m. at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave. All ages welcome. For more information, call 510-577-3960

Homework Center

At the Manor Branch Library

Need help with your homework? Come to the Manor Branch Library, 1241 Manor Blvd., for after-school homework help on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5 p.m. This is for students in grades 1 through 5. Registration needed at bit.ly/4fD096R or call 510-577-7971.



PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

The musical chairs provide a little oasis to relax and read in downtown San Leandro.

Learn about Services For the Deaf at DCARA

Learn what our local Deaf Counseling Advocacy and Referral Agency (DCARA) provides to individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened.

Amy Gomme, the Executive Director of DCARA will present what services are offered on Saturday, Jan. 11. Socialize with refreshments at 9:30 a.m., the presentation will be at 10 a.m., and free pizza at 11:30 a.m. at Kaiser

Permanete Fabiola Building, 3801 Howe Street, Basement G-28, in Oakland. There is free parking across the street in the parking structure.

Come to the in-person meeting to meet the speaker, meet others who have hearing loss and enjoy complementary refreshments.

The meeting is available both In-Person and virtual (Zoom).

Please register at: www.HearingLossEB.org

Baby Story Time at The Manor Branch Library

Baby storytime is a great way for parents/caregivers to interact and develop a bond with their baby – held every Thursday at 9:30 a.m. at Manor Branch Library, 1241 Manor Blvd. in San Leandro.

Babies will be in a social setting with other babies where they will sing and develop pre-language skills as well as play with toys in an environment with others their age. Adults can use this time to meet with other parents in a supportive setting. This storytime is for pre-walking babies only. Experience lots of songs and movement. For parents who have a baby and a toddler, please attend the toddler storytime.

Play Winter Reading BINGO with the SL Library

The San Leandro Public Library invites all ages to play Winter Reading BINGO.

Pick up a game card at any San Leandro Library branch or participate online with Beanstack, the Library's online reading program application. Complete a row of squares in any direction to earn a drawing ticket for grand prizes.

For Kids and Youth Ages 0-17: Complete the whole game card (or badges on Beanstack) by January 7 to earn a free scoop of ice cream, generously provided by our friends at Loard's.

Grand prizes include Dual Membership for Oakland Museum of California (OCMA), four tickets to the MADE Video Game Museum, 4 tickets to a 2025 San Jose Earthquakes regular

season home match, a \$30 Nike gift card, one month of lessons (including a uniform) from Pallens Martial Arts or a 1-year family membership to the Exploratorium.

For Adults ages 18 and over, complete 5 squares in a row of the game card to get an exclusive 2025 calendar featuring our library mascot, RooRoo, and a chance to win a Kindle Paper.

"Shorter days and colder temperatures make December a great time to cozy up with a new book or an old favorite. We encourage readers of all ages to join the library's free and easy winter reading game," says Library Director Brian Simons.

All ages are encouraged to participate. Learn more at sanleandro.org/winterreading or call 510-577-3971 for details.

More Events

Become a Project Literacy Volunteer

Project Literacy, the library's free adult literacy and ESL program, is training new volunteer tutors. You can help adult students improve their basic reading, writing, and English language skills so they can meet their goals and live more fulfilling lives.

The four-part training consists of an online orientation and three workshops held on Saturdays from 1 to 2:30 p.m. on January 25, February 1, and February 8. To access the orientation or to register, visit www.sanleandro.org/literacy and click on "Be a Tutor," or call Project Literacy at 510-577-3944.

Germar the Magician to Perform at Manor Branch Library

Experience a magical afternoon with Germar the Magician at the Manor Branch Library, 1241 Manor Blvd., on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at 4:30 p.m. Germar will amaze audiences of all ages with his captivating tricks, illusions, and interactive fun. It's a family-friendly event that promises to spark wonder and excitement. Don't miss out on the magic.

Resolve to Lose Weight By Joining TOPS

Resolve to lose weight in 2025. 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. at the United Methodist Church, 19806 Wisteria Street in Castro Valley. For more information, call Sandy Montero at 510-299-7312. Join for fellowship and support. What do you have to lose?

Bringing Nature Home – Reimagining The Places Where We Live

Watch Doug Tallamy's talk, "Nature's Best Hope," followed by a discussion about what we would like to do to make the places we live and work welcome for birds, butterflies and bees, and how we can move forward to carry out our ideas on Tuesday, Jan. 28, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Castro Valley Library's Chabot Canyon Room, 3600 Norbridge Ave. in Castro Valley.

Native wildflower seeds will be available, plus a native plant cutting and seed swap. Light snacks and drinks will be provided.

This free talk will be moderated by Kathy Kramer, founder of the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour.

Oakland Aviation Museum

Oakland Aviation Museum, 8252, Earhardt Road in Oakland, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 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. Admission prices are: adults \$18, seniors \$15, teens/military \$13, kids 5 to 12 \$10, no charge for kids under 4.

Meditation Mondays

Relax at a free drop-in relaxation practice on the first Monday of the month from 6 to 7 p.m. at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave. Calm your stress with meditation, gentle stretching, breath work, and poetry. For age 18 and older. Call 510-577-3971 to reserve a spot of just drop in. Future Meditation Mondays will be on Feb. 3 and March 3.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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The Ever-Popular Pot Pie

Few foods are as comforting as a traditional pot pie. Beneath a golden, flaky crust lies an explosion of flavor – piping hot chunks of meat and tasty vegetables wrapped in a savory sauce. Generations of hungry appetites have been satisfied with this delicious culinary staple.

- chicken breast halves, cubed
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1 cup frozen green peas
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon celery seed
- 1-3/4 cups chicken broth
- 2/3 cup milk

- 2 (9-inch) unbaked pie crusts

Preheat oven to 425°F. In a saucepan, combine chicken, carrots, peas, and celery. Add water to cover and boil for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, drain and set aside. In the saucepan over medium heat, cook onions in butter until soft and translucent. Stir in flour, salt, pepper, and celery seed. Slowly stir in chicken broth and milk. Simmer

over medium-low heat until thick. Remove from heat and set aside. Place the chicken mixture in bottom pie crust. Pour hot liquid mixture over. Cover with top crust, seal edges, and cut away excess dough. Make several small slits in the top to allow steam to escape. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 to 35 minutes, or until pastry is golden brown and filling is bubbly. Cool for 10 minutes before serving. Makes one 9-inch pie.

COUNTRY BEEF POT PIE

- 1 box Pillsbury refrigerated pie crusts, softened as directed on box
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 3/4 pound boneless beef sirloin steak, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 (12-ounce) jar beef gravy
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables
- 2 cups frozen southern-style hash-brown potatoes (from 32-ounce package)
- Sesame seed, if desired

Heat oven to 400°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on package for two-crust pie using 9-inch glass pie pan. Heat oil in large skillet over me-

dium-high heat until hot. Add beef and onion; cook and stir until beef is browned. Drain. In small bowl, combine gravy, cornstarch, sugar and pepper; mix well. Add to beef in skillet. Stir in vegetables and potatoes. Cook about 5 minutes or until vegetables are thawed, stirring occasionally. Spoon mixture into pie crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edges and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust; sprinkle with sesame seed. Bake at 400°F for 35 to 45 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Yields 6 servings.

VEGETARIAN POT PIE

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 small heads fennel, finely chopped (about 3 cups)
- 1/2 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2/3 cup peeled and finely chopped carrots
- 12 ounces white button mushrooms, sliced (5 cups)
- 1 small russet potato, peeled and diced small
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup frozen baby green peas
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh chives
- 1/4 cup parsley
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 1 large egg yolk

7 ounces store-bought puff pastry or pie dough (defrosted if frozen). Heat the oven to 400°F and arrange a rack in the middle. Melt butter over medium heat in a 3- to 4-quart Dutch oven or heavy bottomed saucepan. When it foams, add fennel, onions, and carrots, and cook until just soft and onions are translucent, about 2 minutes. Add mushrooms and potato, season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper, and stir to coat. Cook, stirring rarely, until mushrooms have let off water and are shrunken, about 6 minutes. Sprinkle flour over vegetables, stir to coat, and cook until raw flavor is gone, about 1 to 2 minutes. Carefully add broth and milk, stirring constantly until mixture is smooth. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and cook until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, add peas, herbs, and vinegar, and stir to coat. Season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Turn filling into an 8 by 8-inch baking dish. Whisk egg together with 2 teaspoons water and a pinch of salt until evenly mixed. Set aside. With kitchen shears, cut dough to fit over the baking dish. Place dough over filling and tuck into the edges of the dish. Brush dough with egg wash and cut slits in the top to vent. Place on a baking sheet and bake until crust is golden brown and mixture is bubbling, about 25 to 30 minutes. Let sit at least 5 minutes before serving. Serves 8.

HAM & CHEESE POT PIE

- 1 (6-oz) ham steak, chopped
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup frozen broccoli cuts, thawed, drained
- 1 cup frozen cauliflower florets, thawed, drained
- 2 green onions chopped
- 1/2 cup (half of 8-oz tub) cream cheese with chives and onions
- 1 ready-to-use refrigerated pie crust (1/2 of 14.1-oz. pkg.)
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon water

Heat oven to 400°F. Combine first 5 ingredients. Microwave cream cheese spread in microwaveable bowl on HIGH 1 minute or until completely melted, stirring every 15 seconds. Add to ham mixture; mix well. Spoon into 4 (8-oz) ramekins.

Unroll pie crust on lightly floured surface; roll to 12-inch circle. Cut into 4 rounds with 5-inch cookie cutter. Cut leaves from about 1/4 of the trimmings with small cookie cutter or sharp knife; discard remaining trimmings.

Beat egg and water with fork until blended; brush onto top edges of ramekins. Top with pastry rounds; press gently onto top edges of ramekins to seal. Top with leaf cut-outs; brush lightly with egg wash. Discard any remaining egg wash. Place ramekins on baking sheet. Cut slits in crusts to vent. Bake 30 to 32 min. or until golden brown. Serves 4.

EASTBAY PUBLISHING PRESENTS

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS

The Castro Valley Forum and San Leandro Times Present These Special Sections for 2025:

A Parent's Guide To:

Parents Guide to Schools Ad Copy Deadline Noon January 8	Jan. 15 CVF, Jan. 16 SLT
Parents Guide to Summer Activities Ad Copy Deadline Noon April 2	April 9 CVF, April 10 SLT
Parents Guide: Back to School Ad Copy Deadline Noon July 23	July 30 CVF, July 31 SLT



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HOROSCOPE by Salomé

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- ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** It's a good time to take a much-needed break from your recent hectic schedule and spend some time in quieter surroundings. Important news could arrive early next week.
- TAURUS (April 20 - May 20):** The Taurean traits of reliability and thoroughness could be well-tested when decision-makers consider your proposals and/or requests. Be prepared to answer some probing questions.
- GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** A sudden attack of boredom leaves you with some tasks undone. It's OK to take a short respite, but get back to work by week's end so that you have time for other projects.
- CANCER (June 21 - July 22):** Avoid prejudging a situation just because it looks bad. Facts could emerge that can make your position uncomfortable, to say the least. Meanwhile, a relative has interesting news to share with you.
- LEO (July 23 - August 22):** This is a good time to begin reassessing some of your recent decisions about your long-range goals to see if they still have merit. In addition, spend more time with loved ones this weekend.
- VIRGO (August 23 - Sept. 22):** An unsettled situation at home or on the job early in the week could drain your energy levels, making it difficult to get your work done on schedule. But things improve by midweek.
- LIBRA (Sept. 23 - October 22):** A temporary setback could give you time to go over your plans to find weaknesses that you might have overlooked before. Also, a romantic getaway with a special person is favored this weekend.
- SCORPIO (October 23 - November 21):** Professional and personal situations benefit you once you set a positive tone in getting things off to a good start. Honest dialogue smooths over any occasional display of balkiness.
- SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21):** A problem with workplace colleagues or family members seems to defy even your sage counsel. But be patient. Your words will eventually lead to a resolution.
- CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19):** Don't just wait out an unexpected and unexplained delay in your career move. You could gain added respect if you ask why it happened and what you can do to move things along.
- AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18):** Although your workplace strategies are usually accepted, you could be challenged by someone who isn't so favorably impressed. Be prepared to defend your positions.
- PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20):** Your friendship circle expands with new people coming into your life at this time. Welcome them warmly, but don't neglect cherished longtime personal relationships.

HEALTH & FITNESS

This Year, Commit to be Fit

Embarking on a fitness journey is a fantastic step towards a healthier and happier you! However, the world of exercise can sometimes feel like navigating a complex maze filled with jargon and conflicting advice. Two terms that often surface when discussing strength training are “reps” and “weight,” while “cardio” represents a whole different realm of activity. Understanding these fundamental concepts is crucial for designing an effective and safe exercise routine, whether you’re aiming to build muscle, increase endurance, or simply improve your overall well-being. This article aims to demystify these concepts, providing you with a clear understanding of reps, weight, and cardio, and how to effectively incorporate them into your beginner fitness plan.

Let’s first dive into the world of strength training and unpack the concepts of reps and weight. “Reps,” short for repetitions, simply refer to the number of times you perform a specific exercise movement in a row. For instance, if you lift a dumbbell up and down 10 times, you have completed 10 reps. Reps are the building blocks of sets. A “set” is a group of consecutive reps, separated by a short rest period. So, if you perform 10 bicep curls, rest for a minute, and then do another 10 bicep curls, you’ve completed two sets of 10 reps. Understanding this basic structure is the foundation for planning your strength training workouts.

Now, let’s talk about “weight.” In the context of strength training, weight refers to the resistance you are working against. This could be the weight of dumbbells, barbells, kettlebells, resistance bands, or even your own body weight. Choosing the right weight is essential for achieving your fitness goals and preventing injuries. The weight you select directly

influences the number of reps you can comfortably perform. If the weight is too light, you might be able to do many repetitions without feeling much challenge. Conversely, if the weight is too heavy, you might struggle to complete even a few reps with proper form. The sweet spot is finding a weight that allows you to complete the desired number of reps with good form while feeling a noticeable level of exertion.

So, how do you know what weight is right for you as a beginner? A good starting point is to choose a weight that allows you to perform 8-12 repetitions with good form. This rep range is generally considered effective for building muscle strength and size. You should feel challenged towards the end of the set, meaning the last few repetitions should require effort, but you should still be able to maintain proper technique. It’s always better to start lighter and gradually increase the weight as you get stronger. Don’t be afraid to experiment and adjust the weight based on how your body feels. It’s also beneficial to learn the proper form for each exercise before adding significant weight. Practicing with lighter weights or even just bodyweight allows you to master the movement patterns and reduce the risk of injury.

The number of reps you perform can also influence the specific benefits you gain from your strength training. Different rep ranges tend to target different physiological adaptations. For example, performing fewer reps (typically 1-5) with heavier weight is often associated with building maximal strength. This is because you’re overloading your muscles with a significant amount of resistance, forcing them to adapt and become stronger.

On the other hand, performing a moderate number of reps (around 6-12) is generally consid-

ered optimal for muscle hypertrophy, which is the increase in the size of your muscle fibers. This range provides a good balance of tension and metabolic stress, stimulating muscle growth.

Finally, higher rep ranges (15 or more) with lighter weight tend to focus more on muscular endurance, improving the ability of your muscles to sustain repeated contractions over a longer period. As a beginner, focusing on the 8-12 rep range is a solid foundation for building overall strength and muscle.

Now, let’s shift our focus to “cardio,” short for cardiovascular exercise. Cardio refers to any activity that elevates your heart rate and breathing for a sustained period. Think of activities like running, swimming, cycling, brisk walking, dancing, and jumping jacks. Cardio plays a vital role in overall health and fitness, offering numerous benefits that complement strength training.

The primary purpose of cardio is to improve the health of your cardiovascular system, which includes your heart, lungs, and blood vessels. Regular cardio exercise strengthens your heart muscle, allowing it to pump blood more efficiently. This, in turn, can lower your resting heart rate and blood pressure, reducing your risk of heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular conditions.

Beyond cardiovascular health, cardio offers a plethora of other benefits. It’s an excellent way to burn calories and manage your weight. Engaging in regular cardio can help you create a calorie deficit, which is necessary for weight loss. Cardio also boosts your mood and energy levels. Physical activity releases endorphins, which have mood-boosting effects and can help alleviate stress and anxiety. Furthermore, cardio can improve sleep quality, increase bone density, and even lower your risk of certain types of

cancer and type 2 diabetes.

When it comes to cardio, there isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach. The type, intensity, and duration of cardio you choose will depend on your individual fitness goals and preferences. There are two main types of cardio: low-intensity steady-state (LISS) and high-intensity interval training (HIIT). LISS involves performing an activity at a moderate intensity for a sustained period, such as a brisk walk or a leisurely bike ride. HIIT, on the other hand, involves alternating between short bursts of high-intensity exercise and brief periods of rest or low-intensity activity. Both types of cardio offer benefits, and incorporating both into your routine can provide a well-rounded approach.

As a beginner, it’s wise to start with lower-intensity cardio and gradually increase the duration and intensity as your fitness level improves. Aiming for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity cardio or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity cardio per week, as recommended by many health organizations, is a good starting point. You can break this down into smaller, manageable sessions throughout the week. Find activities you enjoy and that fit into your lifestyle to make cardio a sustainable part of your routine. Don’t be afraid to experiment with different types of cardio to find what you like best.

Now, how do you combine strength training and cardio effectively? Both are essential components of a well-rounded fitness program, and incorporating both will yield the greatest overall benefits. Many people wonder whether they should do cardio before or after strength training. The answer depends on your primary goals. If your main focus is strength and muscle growth, it’s generally recommended to do your strength training first. This allows you to exert



A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER YOU: Cardio plays a vital role in overall health and fitness, offering numerous benefits that complement strength training.

maximum effort and energy on your weightlifting exercises when your muscles are fresh. Doing cardio beforehand might fatigue your muscles, potentially compromising your strength training performance.

However, if your primary goal is cardiovascular fitness or endurance, you might choose to do cardio first. Alternatively, you can separate your strength training and cardio sessions on different days. This allows you to dedicate your full attention to each type of exercise. Another option is to do them on the same day but at different times, perhaps cardio in the morning and strength training in the evening, or vice versa. Listen to your body and find a schedule that works best for you.

In conclusion, understanding the basics of exercise reps, weight, and cardio is fundamental for

embarking on a successful fitness journey. Reps and weight are the cornerstones of strength training, with different rep ranges targeting different adaptations. Cardio plays a crucial role in improving cardiovascular health, boosting energy levels, and aiding in weight management. By understanding how these elements work and how to effectively combine them, you can create a well-rounded exercise routine that helps you achieve your fitness goals, whether it’s building strength, increasing endurance, or simply improving your overall health and well-being. Remember to start slowly, listen to your body, and gradually increase the intensity and duration of your workouts as you get fitter. Consistency is key, and making exercise a regular part of your life will lead to lasting positive changes.

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Three (3)	2 Bedroom	2 to 5	\$3,503	1 Person \$109,000 2 People \$124,550 3 People \$140,150 4 People \$155,700 5 People \$168,150

REAL ESTATE GALLERY



REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Carl Medford, CRS
Special to the Times

GUEST COMMENTARY



Understanding Open House Signs

By Carl Medford, CRS
Special to the Times

A seller scheduled an Open House (OH) and on the day of the event, as their agent was out setting OH signs, the sellers drove around to see where the signs were. Moments later, as the agent was opening the home, the seller called and irately demanded to know why signs were not in specific locations – in some cases, over a mile from the home.

This interaction happens a fair bit and usually results from a lack of understanding about the purpose of OH signs. While OHs can definitely help sell a home, in most

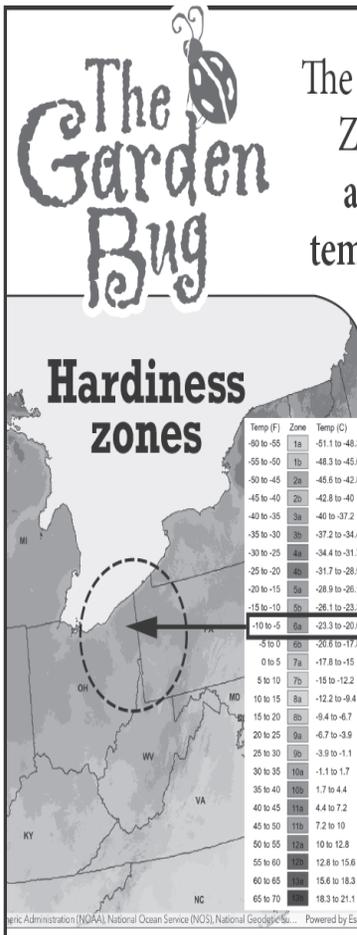
cases, contrary to popular opinion, OH signs have little or no effect on the actual sale.

To understand, it is important to know how buyers find OHs. Years ago, they relied on newspaper ads to find OHs and then followed the signs. In contrast, today's buyers mostly search for homes on their mobile devices. When a listing agent posts OH dates and times on the multiple listing service (MLS), then they automatically syndicate to all major web portals. Consequently, if a buyer sees a home on their mobile device, they also see OH information. If interested, they simply click on the GPS link to get directions. The days of buyers out

driving around looking for OH signs are long gone.

Bottom line, in today's real estate market, the only homes that actually need OH signs are off-market properties that are not advertised online (very rare) and those where the listing agent has not posted the OH on the MLS.

What, then, is the purpose of OH signs? First, they advertise the agent hosting the OH. The more signs they put out, the more visibility they get. Second, and more importantly, they notify neighbors of homes on the market in their neighborhood. While buyers are looking for OHs, most sellers are not, and so OH signs alert neighbors to



The U.S. government's online Plant Hardiness Zone interactive map can help you find the average annual extreme minimum winter temperature in any area of the U.S. by typing in a zip code. The areas are displayed as 10-degree F zones and 5-degree F half-zones designated as "a" and "b", and are keyed by color and number/letter combinations. Plants sold in catalogs and storefronts are often marked with which "zone" they tolerate, along with their needs such as required daily sun exposure, soil type, wind tolerance and best watering practices. - Brenda Weaver

Source: <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>

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local market activity, provide an opportunity to talk to the agent at the Open House and allow comparisons to their own home to get a sense of current values. This means there is no real need for signs to be set too far away.

All municipalities have strict regulations dictating where signs can or cannot be set. Unfortunately, in some cases the regulations are too strict and actually limit market activity. Agents must understand the rules and comply or face having their signs impounded and fines levied.

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

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Mortgage Rates Reach Highest Point Since July

Inching up to just shy of seven percent, mortgage rates reached their highest point in nearly six months. Compared to this time last year, rates are elevated and the market's affordability headwinds persist. However, buyers appear to be more inclined to get off the sidelines as pending home sales rise.

RECENT HOME SALES

Castro Valley

21659 Dolores Street 94546: \$799,000 [2 BD - 1,018 SF - 1948
2684 Watson Street 94546: \$840,000 [3 BD - 1,061 SF - 1948
18334 Pepper Street 94546: \$900,000 [2 BD - 1,026 SF - 1936
20459 Stanton Avenue 94546: \$945,000 [4 BD - 1,758 SF - 1957
3545 Teeling Court 94546: \$1,035,000 [3 BD - 1,650 SF - 2019
19503 Helen Place 94546: \$1,149,000 [3 BD - 2,087 SF - 1946
21686 Gail Drive 94546: \$1,178,000 [3 BD - 2,030 SF - 1964
3179 Terry Court 94546: \$1,200,000 [4 BD - 1,512 SF - 1962
19500 Buren Place 94552: \$1,400,000 [3 BD - 2,251 SF - 2002
5801 Cold Water Drive 94552: \$1,520,000 [3 BD - 1,944 SF - 1968

TOTAL SALES: 10
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$799,000 **MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$1,092,000**
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,520,000 **AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$1,096,600**

SAN LEANDRO

1333 Leonard Drive 94577: \$675,000 [3 BD - 1,044 SF - 1953
1357 Brookside Drive 94577: \$740,000 [3 BD - 950 SF - 1942
1918 Evergreen Avenue 94577: \$790,000 [3 BD - 1,579 SF - 1961
15363 Ruggles Street 94579: \$854,000 [3 BD - 1,115 SF - 1955
1708 Thornton Place 94577: \$920,000 [3 BD - 1,332 SF - 1999
1023 Victoria Avenue 94577: \$940,000 [3 BD - 1,356 SF - 1939
844 Bridge Road 94577: \$1,062,000 [2 BD - 1,690 SF - 1936
1843 Pacific Avenue 94577: \$1,100,000 [3 BD - 2,073 SF - 1952
719 Oakes Boulevard 94577: \$1,390,000 [4 BD - 2,506 SF - 1942
1688 Regent Drive 94577: \$1,650,000 [3 BD - 3,195 SF - 1969

TOTAL SALES: 10
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$675,000 **MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$930,000**
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,650,000 **AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$1,012,100**

SAN LORENZO

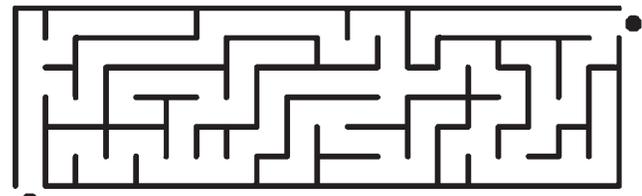
16099 Channel Street 94580: \$780,000 [3 BD - 1,100 SF - 1954
813 Linnea Avenue 94580: \$800,000 [3 BD - 1,063 SF - 1951
1028 Via Honda 94580: \$832,000 [2 BD - 1,365 SF - 1948
1807 Via Carreta 94580: \$975,000 [1,991 SF - 1953
15600 Lorenzo Avenue 94580: \$1,090,000 [2 BD - 1,937 SF - 1944

TOTAL SALES: 5
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$780,000 **MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$832,000**
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,090,000 **AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$895,400**

HAYWARD

27951 Thornton Court #1a 94544: \$422,000 [2 BD - 990 SF - 1986
27505 Tampa Avenue #57 94544: \$460,000 [2 BD - 910 SF - 1981
565 Lagunitas Lane 94544: \$700,000 [3 BD - 1,404 SF - 1955
17462 Langton Way 94541: \$735,000 [2 BD - 1,334 SF - 1942
27788 La Porte Avenue 94545: \$740,000 [3 BD - 1,000 SF - 1955
449 Valle Vista Avenue 94544: \$805,000 [2 BD - 1,558 SF - 2019
27647 Pompano Avenue 94544: \$825,000 [4 BD - 1,556 SF - 1954
680 Sunset Boulevard 94541: \$861,000 [5 BD - 1,892 SF - 1939

Kids' Maze



How to Avoid Cutting Off the Valuable Portion of the Rose when Pruning

By Buzz Bertolero
The Dirt Gardener

The bottom branches of my tree roses have extended out into the walkway. I want to minimize the interference by pruning them back.

Tree roses are pruned just like bush roses, with one exception: there is a fair amount of bending over with bush roses while you remain upright with a tree rose. The first thing you need to do is locate the bud union. The bud union is where the named rose variety is attached or budded onto a rootstock. With tree roses, you'll have several bud unions. The first is near the ground, while the second forms a straight stem and resembles a broomstick. The desired variety is budded three to four feet off the ground at the top. They look like large knots, and there may be several. You must identify these points before pruning to avoid cutting off the valuable and irreplaceable portion of the rose. The shoots that develop below the bud unions should be removed periodically



By Spring's Flowers - Own work, CC0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=148674225>

throughout the year, as it is a sucker or rogue growth. This growth is typical with all budded roses. With the intruding lower branches, it's a judgment call on your part regarding how far back to prune them. It can be twelve inches to several feet, depending on the situation. Usually, roses are pruned to an outside bud, so the new canes or growth form a circle that grows

away from the bush's center. In this case, you deviate from that and select buds growing laterally to either the left or right. You'll find the growth buds where a leaf is or has been attached to a stem, usually red. You continue to repeat this throughout the year when you remove the spent flowers. I suggest taking a few digital pictures before and after. These images allow you to review what you did so you can repeat or modify things in the future. Tree roses can be pruned anytime in the next twelve weeks.

How would I go about dividing my Artichoke plant? I planted one several years ago, and it's massive now.

Dividing an Artichoke plant is relatively easy. You'll need a shovel to dig up the clump, and an ax or pruning saw to segment it. A mature Artichoke plant is divided into three or more parts depending on the size and replanted. If you can't accommodate all the plants, save the biggest and give the others away. Next, you amend the new planting hole(s) with generous amounts of homemade compost or soil conditioner. Artichokes are planted in warm inland areas in the full sun or afternoon shade. The clumps are divided every three to four years to keep the production high. Besides planting them in the ground, Artichokes make an excellent contain-

er plant. The silver-gray foliage can also add Pansies, Violas, Alyssum, or Marigolds for a colorful backdrop on a deck, patio, or balcony. You can also add additional color.

WEEKEND GARDENER

Rainy-Day Chores

Though it hasn't been very rainy so far this January, more wet weather is likely this next week. Take this time to reassess your garden's "grand plan." Take a look at your yard in the winter grayness. If it looks too bleak, visit your local garden center to get ideas for what plants and shrubs look good during the winter season. And, if you enjoy growing plants from seed, this is the perfect time to get out those seed catalogs and start ordering. Spring will be here before you know it. Catalogs generally offer a greater variety of flowers and vegetables that you'll find on store racks.

Lawns

On dry days, rake up leaves and debris from the lawn so a buildup won't flatten the grass. Be careful about walking on the grass too much during downpours.

January Planting

This is the time to plant artichokes. Fill a hole with one part humus and two parts soil. Plant with the buds the surface of the soil and add mulch after growth starts. All other bare-root flowers, shrubs and berries can be planted now.

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Tail is moved. 2. Window is different. 3. Fingers are not showing. 4. Ear is larger. 5. Blinds are added. 6. Laces are added to shoe.

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LEGAL NOTICES

FILED December 31, 2024
MELISSA WILK County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 611550

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): ZZL Construction located at 1220 Georgetown Ave. San Leandro, CA 94579 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Zhuozi Lin, located at 1220 Georgetown Ave. San Leandro, CA 94579. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced 12/31/2024 /s/Zhuozi Lin

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above. Expires December 30, 2029
JAN 09, 16, 23, 30, 2025
1900 - SLT

LEGAL NOTICES

FILED November 26, 2024
MELISSA WILK County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 610868

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): Goldline Tattoo & Body Piercing located at 17255 Hesperian Blvd., San Lorenzo, CA 94580 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Goldline Tattoo & Body Piercing LLC located at 17255 Hesperian Blvd., San Lorenzo, CA 94580. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. This business commenced 10/15/2024 /s/Gloria Perez

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MELISSA WILK County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 611525

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): Home Concept located at 2954 Alvarado Street San Leandro, CA 94577 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Expert Staging Corp., located at 2954 Alvarado Street San Leandro, CA 94577. This business is conducted by a Corporation. This business commenced 12/20/2024 /s/Kiet Huynh

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above. Expires December 29, 2029
JAN 09, 16, 23, 30, 2025
1902 - SLT

LEGAL NOTICES

FILED December 24, 2024
MELISSA WILK County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 611446

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): M Silva Hauling Services located at 22855 Watkins St. Hayward, CA 94541 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Manuel Sli-va Curriel, located at 22855 Watkins St. Hayward, CA 94541. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced N/A /s/Manuel Silva Curriel

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ACROSS

- Screen star Lamarr
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- Squealer
- Chemical suffix
- Montana city
- Scare badly
- Buckeyes' sch.
- Tibetan bovine
- "Ulalume" writer
- Dress store section
- Broadway duds
- Cat doc
- Life story
- Madonna role
- "Cutie," e.g.
- Peevish
- Actor Jannings
- "No --!" ("Sure thing!")
- Quibble
- Sandwich option
- "Auld Lang --"
- Away from SSW
- Ladies of Spain (Abbr.)

DOWN

- URL opener
- Toledo's lake
- Force
- Dairy case buy
- "Hush!"
- On the Aegean, say
- Inherited
- Tub user
- China setting
- Not barefoot
- Coop group
- It Romantic?"
- Scot's refusal
- "A spider!"
- Jazzy style
- Exploit
- Boy king
- Mas' mates
- Wall St. debut
- Dandy guy
- "You bet!"
- However
- ICU hookup
- Pond duck
- In shape
- Hermits
- Davis of "Jezebel"
- Actor Omar
- Quite
- Lay -- the line
- Nabokov novel
- Love god
- 18" (Uris novel)
- Right angles
- Raggedy doll

ANSWERS ON PAGE 6

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PLEASE RECYCLE



New: Laws go into effect on theft, housing, police use of force

continued from front page
or unmarked.

That “daylighting” law, meant to help vehicles and pedestrians see each other better, had actually been in effect for a year, but only warnings had been issued up until now.

Castro Valley once banned cars cruising slowly down Castro Valley Boulevard, but now promotes an annual cruise night so people can show off cars they’re proud of. AB 436 now bars cities and counties from imposing bans on cruising.

Crime was a big political issue in 2024, and legislators responded, with at least 11 major bills to toughen penalties and enforcement of some crimes.

Governor Gavin Newsom decried “loopholes” that had prevented tougher penalties against those accused of crimes at multiple businesses or in multiple jurisdictions. This often made each offense, considered by itself, a misde-

meanor, which rarely resulted in prison or jail time.

Newsom praised several new laws that let district attorneys and prosecutors combine multiple offenses, even in different jurisdictions, so someone can be tried in a single jurisdiction as felonies. Prison terms could be imposed for those convicted.

Other new laws dropped or modified provisions that had required car burglary victims to prove they had locked their cars, and for police officers to witness a theft personally before they could arrest a suspect.

While laws removed some restrictions on police officers and prosecutors, at least one new law, AB 360, set limits on officers using force against suspects. That law removed “excited delirium” as a medical cause of death or defense for a police officer accused of killing a suspect.

Medical experts had debated its existence, but it was the

original official cause of death for George Floyd just after his arrest in Minneapolis in 2020. Eyewitness accounts and further investigation resulted instead in a police officer being convicted of murder for choking Floyd to death.

Numerous laws also addressed California’s housing shortage, with at least one stiffening penalties on local governments that do not allow sufficient new housing. Another allows up to eight accessory dwelling units (ADUs, or in-law units) on a property, up from the two allowed until now.

SB 4, or the “Yes in God’s Backyard” law, allows housing to be developed on property owned by churches or some colleges, without local governments having a veto.

After many calls for building more facilities to treat the mentally ill or drug users desiring help,

AB 531 would issue bonds to fund 11,150 new behavior-

al health beds and housing as well as 26,700 outpatient treatment slots throughout the state.

And in the holiday spirit, any parents or grandparents concerned they may be stereotyping children with their gifts

might want to know that from now on, AB 1084 requires California retailers to all have a gender-neutral toy section.

Rain for Season Above Average Despite Current Dry Spell

By Mike Pechnew
Special to the Times

Snow pack and water supplies for Northern California are in pretty good shape for early January, buy in a weak La Niña pattern its not unusual to have long periods of dry weather during the winter

months.

We went through such a dry spell from November 26 through December 11. We are in another dry period that could extend to mid-January or longer.

Most of the Bay Area has received above normal pre-

cipitation so far the winter but there is a huge deficit as you travel south along U.S. 101.

Downtown Los Angeles has received a grand total of .09 inches of rain since October 1. The average annual rainfall for downtown

see RAIN, page 12

Special Education Zoom Meeting

The Special Education Community Advisory Committee Zoom meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 16, at 5 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the Zoom meeting. The committee represents San

Leandro, Castro Valley, Hayward, and San Lorenzo public schools. Call the Castro Valley Special Education Dept. at 510-537-3000 ext. 1220 for the Zoom invitation if you wish to attend the meeting.

OPINION

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Letters must include the writer’s name, address and phone number, and must be under 300 words. Letters can be edited for clarity or length. Letters are the views of the author and not necessarily the views of the newspaper or its advertisers. E-mail letters to: letters@ebpublishing.com or send by mail to: The Editor, San Leandro Times, 2060 Washington Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577.

Emergency Alerts Helpful

Editor,
When the recent Nixle alert to evacuate due to a gas leak hit my phone I immediately woke my adult children. The first thing out of both of their mouths was “why didn’t I receive an alert?”

They brought up a really good point. When an Amber alert is sent out everyone gets it whether or not they are registered with the county or Nixle. It seems to me that a mandatory evacuation also warrants alerts to everyone in the area whether or not they are registered.

As we were driving away, we saw police vehicles on several streets. I assume they were letting residents know about the evacuation order. We weren’t told the nature of the gas leak, but my immediate concern was that there could be an explosion at any time. I was concerned for officers and residents who were still in the area. I felt that with a danger that imminent the evacuation should happen a lot more quickly.

Door-to-door evacuation is labor intensive. Couldn’t our volunteers trained in emergency response have helped with that? Do we have a registry of vulnerable residents needing assistance in case of an emergency or evacuation?

I would like to thank the San Leandro Police Department for their dedication and professionalism during the evacuation. I’m thankful we have the technology that alerted us to the danger and let us know when it was safe to return home. I encourage everyone to sign up for emergency alerts.

I signed up through the Alameda County ACAAlert website www.acalert.org. They also have a phone app called Everbridge (which does the Nixle alerts). There, you can set up your home and locations you frequently visit, such as out-of-town family or second home locations, which I have also found helpful.

Sheryl Smith
San Leandro

Commends Park Department

Editor,
I bike ride down the San Leandro shoreline most Thursdays, no matter the weather. I found myself the only person on the shore during the horrendous wind storm, rain, and king tide a few weeks ago. In 30 years, I have never seen such an event.

Most of the shore became impassable. The bay water level was only a couple feet below the trail. There were tall powerful waves crashing onto and over the trail. All the logs from the rocks were pushed onto shore, lined up with the wind. There were 100-pound boulders thrown up on the path.

I want to praise San Leandro Parks for their immediate response. Exiting the trail at Lewelling Boulevard, I saw a San Leandro Parks Department truck with a worker already beginning to clean up, in the storm. It seems the shore was only closed a few days to foot traffic before the huge amount of debris (and plastic bottles) were removed. On recent rides, I see the trail is neat and clean. Some new boulders have been brought in to repair the rip-rap, and work on mitigating the erosion seems to have begun.

Shore park users should be happy that San Leandro Parks Department has made the repairs a priority after the destructive storm (which will be less rare in the future).

Gary Baker
San Leandro

Taxes and Death

Editor,

So the new year is upon us and we are looking to file taxes. Any idea what we pay in taxes? Well, we start with income tax, federal tax, then state tax, county tax, city tax. Then there is sales tax (10.75% in San Leandro - and they want it raised), which then is taxed again when the vendor buys something.

Then gas tax and car registration tax, the newer the car, the more you pay. How about taxes on your dinners out? Tax on any money you made from savings accounts or stocks, bonds, mutual funds?

Then there is property tax, bond taxes for schools and projects, taxes for mosquito abatement. Then multiple taxes on your cell phone for various fees, then 911 tax. Then when you die there is estate tax, sometimes called the death tax. Many other taxes to name here.

Governor Newsom wants to lower the percentage of people needed to approve new taxes so they can tax you some more. Sound fair? You got enough money for more taxes? I didn’t think so.

Write your legislators and say we are taxed enough already. Write your city leaders with the same message. Vote for legislators who will save us money rather than tax us to death, and then beyond. I say enough is enough.

Corey Anderson
San Leandro

Thank You, Pete Ballew
Editor,

To Pete Ballew: Thank you for all your years of dedicated service to the city and citizens of San Leandro. Well done! To the three City Councilmen: Fred Simon, Victor Aguilar and Bryan Azevedo, I leave you with this quote: “Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.”

Isobel Polvorosa
San Leandro

New Year, New Laws

Editor,

Happy New Year! I want to alert citizens of San Leandro about an important California law that has gone into effect on January 1, 2025 as a result of our legislators in Sacramento. San Leandrans, who plan to start an octopus farm or sell farmed octopuses from the privacy of their swimming pools, please forget about it.

Although currently there are no large-scale farming operations in California, this legislation aims to prevent octopus businesses from opening in the future. I assume most octopuses will be grateful. They are highly intelligent curious problem-solving animals that can feel pain. In contrast, legislators are often highly intelligent creatures, who sometimes never solve problems but are smart enough to receive a \$211 per diem in the Senate and \$214 per diem in the Assembly. I will feel much safer if they met for only 6 months a year instead of 12.

George Z. Banks
San Leandro

Baby: Baby had a good night, only waking up when she was hungry

continued from front page
 everyone had recovered enough to give a brief TV interview to KRON 4 News before leaving the hospital.

Sophia says Raelynn, named after a country singer with a similar name, is a good

“She’s a total wriggler. She’s very active.”

— Mom Sophia Greenwell

baby who did fine her first night, only waking when she got hungry.

“She has chubby cheeks, blue eyes and blonde hair,”

Sophia Greenwell earlier told a Kaiser spokesperson. “We’re beyond blessed. She’s perfect and looks like our youngest daughter. In fact, she reminds us of the little baby from Whoville.” (In the movie “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas.”)

“She’s a total wriggler, though. She’s very active,” Sophia added.

Raelynn’s sisters were eagerly awaiting her arrival, especially the two younger girls, Sophia said. They were all preparing the house for Raelynn, but as a new family member hadn’t been expected, she and James had recently gotten rid of all their baby gear and clothes.

Sophia said everybody at the hospital had been very nice, and that she hadn’t really expected having the first baby of the new year to generate so much media interest.

“We didn’t realize it would be such a big deal,” she said.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAISER PERMANENTE

The Bay Area’s first baby of the new year Raelynn James, and mom Sophia Greenwell holding Raelynn, who was born just after midnight on Jan. 1 at Kaiser Permanente San Leandro Medical Center.

Sues: Gonzalez: ‘Our response will reflect extensive work already conducted’

continued from front page
 response.

The City Council discussed the litigation for the first time during a closed-session meeting before Monday night’s regular council meeting. While no action was reported, City Attorney Richard Pio Roda mentioned that staff received instructions from the council.

“The City has retained outside legal counsel to represent the City in this matter,” San Leandro Mayor Juan González told the Times. “Our response to the lawsuit will reflect, among other things, the extensive work already conducted by the City in regards to former Chief Pridgen and his claims.”

Pridgen—San Leandro’s first Black police chief—was hired by Robustelli in 2021 in the aftermath of the San Leandro police shooting of Steven Taylor and the departure of then-Police Chief Jeff Tudor. At the time, city leaders said Pridgen would bring “transparency, investment into personnel, and implement police oversight for the department.”

Robustelli said Pridgen would be an “advocate for diversity, inclusion, and a community builder.”

According to Pridgen, the trouble started when he worked to hire two Black women to the police depart-



Former San Leandro Police Chief is suing former City Manager Fran Robustelli and the City of San Leandro for harassment, intimidation and wrongful termination, among other claims.

ment’s command staff, Bart Police Sergeant Antwinette Turner and Sacramento Public Safety Communications Manager LaTonya McDaniel.

In a confidential managers’ meeting on August 17, 2023, Pridgen announced his intent to hire the women. He hoped their addition would help the city with its goal of increasing the percentage of women serving with the San Leandro Police Department (SLPD) from 8 percent to 30 percent by 2030.

The complaint states that

Pridgen’s decision to hire the two women was met with an immediate backlash and resistance from the SLPD legacy officers—mainly the promotion of Turner to the rank of Lieutenant, which would have made her the first woman in SLPD history to be promoted to a rank above sergeant.

Pridgen said his command staff then began making false statements about what he said at the confidential meeting, prompting Police Management Association attorney Michael Rains to request that Robustelli investigate Pridgen, according to the complaint.

San Leandro hired Kramer Workplace Investigations to conduct the investigation. The results of the investigation has yet to be released to the public.

Robustelli placed Pridgen on administrative leave on September 11, 2023, for “allegations regarding department policy violations.”

In his complaint, Pridgen



Former San Leandro City Manager Fran Robustelli hired Pridgen and later removed him from the job. Robustelli also filed a complaint that she was subject to harassment and interference by City Council members.

said that he learned more about his employment status from City-issued press releases and newspaper reports than

from Robustelli.

Pridgen says the city’s information was intentionally vague to leave the impression that he had engaged in serious misconduct. He says this severely damaged his reputation in the community and ruined his chances of getting hired as the next Chief of Police in Oakland, which he was pursuing.

Pridgen’s complaint says that Kramer Workplace Investigations was not impartial. He says Kramer omitted critically relevant and “important evidence,” including text and email exchanges between himself and a male candidate for the police lieutenant position that Turner eventually won.

In January 2023, Pridgen applied for the vacated Oakland Police Chief position and was one of three final candidates. But Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao eventually rejected all three.

In the complaint, Pridgen laid out two years of accomplishments, including crime reduction, helping launch the Community Police Review Board, launching a police officer recruitment campaign, and working with various city, police, union, and public groups to improve relations and trust with the department.

When Pridgen announced he was considering the Oakland police chief position, he said Robustelli pleaded with him not to leave and worked to get him a contract extension with a 17 percent salary increase, according to the complaint.

Immediately following Pridgen’s leave, Acting Chief Luis Torres led the department for three weeks in September 2023, interim Chief Kevin Hart was hired from October 2023 until San Leandro hired Chief Angela Averiett in June 2024.

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Gas: Manor residents say they weren't kept informed during the evacuation emergency

continued from front page

Recreation staff opened it up as an emergency shelter. Residents of some 450 dwellings gathered there to await further word, as staff brought in food and beverages, set up a pet care area and even provided entertainment.

"We were really scared," said Washington Manor resident Melanie Antioquia. "We were right on the border of the evacuation area, and didn't know if we'd be told to evacuate or not. We didn't know how quickly we'd be able to evacuate my elderly father if we had to leave. There wasn't a lot of information. We had to read (the social media site) Nextdoor to find out what was happening."

Crews from the Alameda County Fire Department (ACFD) and Pacific Gas & Electric worked to repair the leak, and the evacuation order was lifted at 9:30 a.m., according to a PG&E spokesperson.

The large-scale evacuation was because the leak was originally reported as very large, a six-foot rupture in a six-inch diameter gas pipe, said AFDC spokesperson Cheryl Hurd. That pipe crossed under San Lorenzo Creek near Washington Avenue and the Greenhouse Marketplace, she said.

The fire department sent units, and PG&E sent a repair crew, but it turned out to be a less serious two-foot rupture, Hurd said. They continued with the larger evacuation rather than try to halt it once in progress, she said.

Bob Glaze, president of

the Washington Homeowners Association (WHOA), said the "rank-and-file" responders did a fine job of fixing the leak, but the "upper echelons" of both the fire department and PG&E should have done a better job of keeping the evacuated residents informed.

"We were over at the community center for hours, and none of the leaders from either the fire department or PG&E visited to update us or tell us when people could return to their homes," he said.

"The result was that that people ended up waiting 45 minutes after the repairs were completed without anyone telling them it was safe to go home," Glaze said.

WHOA put their concerns into a letter to City Manager Janelle Cameron, which praised the police department for how thoroughly they carried out the evacuation, and also praised the city Parks & Recreation Department staff for how well they had cared for residents in an emergency that began early on a Sunday morning.

The outreach by the fire department, a county agency, and by PG&E left much to be desired, Glaze said.

"We did know we had a problem early that Sunday," Glaze said. "People at the Greenhouse, some of them inside the McDonald's, had noticed a strong smell of gas. As the day went on and the wind blew, not only people in the evacuation area but even at the Community Center noticed a faint smell of gas."

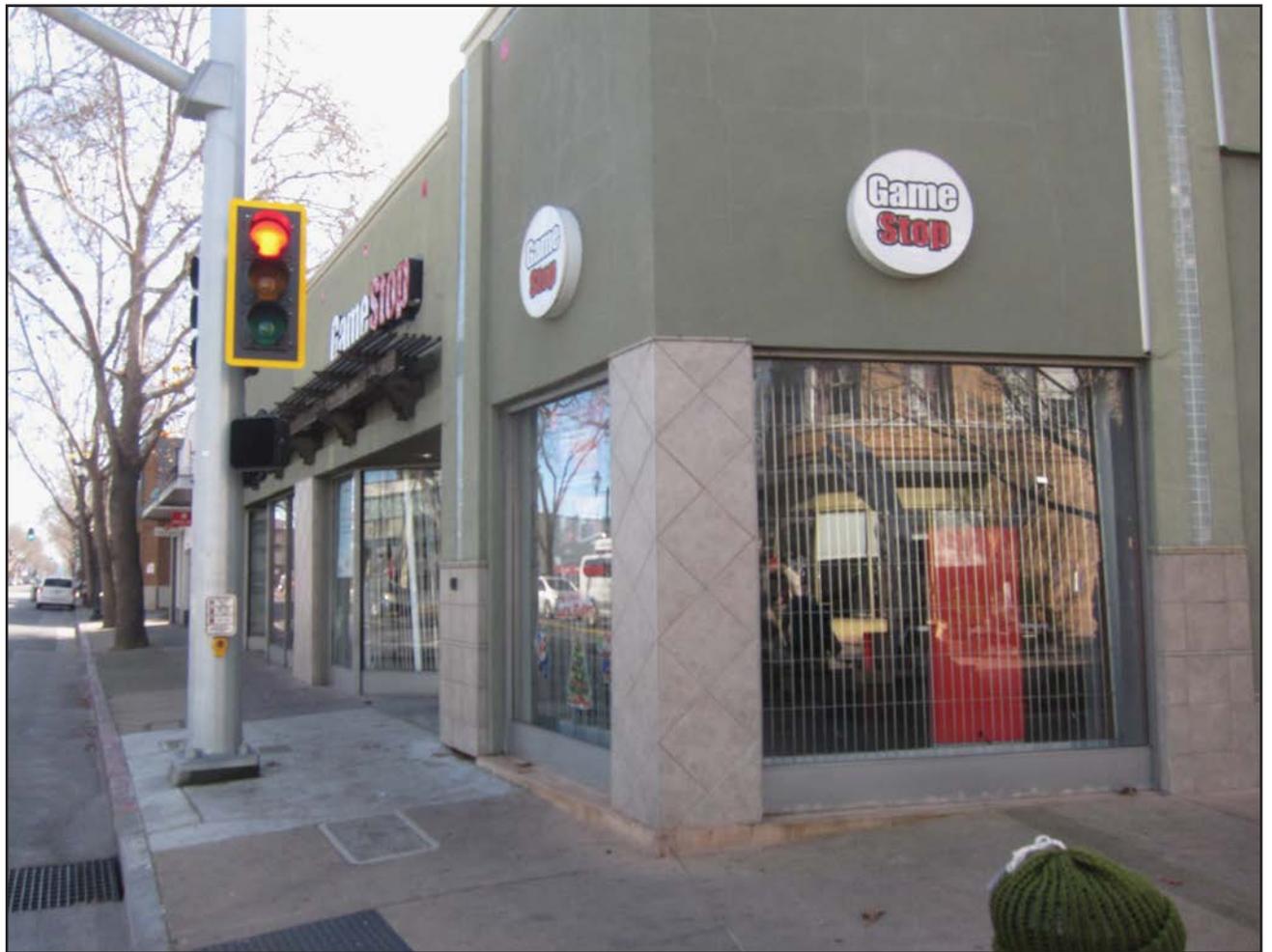


PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

Burglars smashed through the front of the GameStop store in downtown San Leandro just three days after they did the same kind of burglary at the GameStop store in Fashion Faire, near Bayfair. Below, the sign on the downtown GameStop's front door announces it is "permanently closed."

Break-In Closes Downtown GameStop Store

Two GameStop stores smashed and robbed in three days

By Jim Knowles
San Leandro Times

Burglars hit a second GameStop store in San Leandro three days after the Dec. 24 break-in of the GameStop at the Fashion Faire shopping center, near Bayfair.

The second smash-and-grab burglary happened at the GameStop downtown on Dec. 27, just after 6 a.m., according to Lt. Abe Teng of the San Leandro Police Department.

Just as in the first burglary, the suspects used a car to smash through the front of the store.

The company closed the downtown store after the bur-

glary. The GameStop store at Fashion Faire on Hesperian Boulevard remains open.

Teng said officers responded to a burglary in progress at the GameStop at 1415 East 14th Street, but the suspects fled the scene before police arrived.

Police found a white Infiniti sedan, later confirmed to be stolen, left at the scene. The suspects used the Infiniti to ram through the front of the business. The car was partially inside the store when police arrived, Teng said.

Surveillance footage shows that at least four suspects were involved in the



burglary, Teng said. The loss taken was over \$3,000 in video games and other merchandise. The investigation is ongoing, Teng said.

In the Dec. 24 burglary

of the GameStop at Fashion Faire, police chased two suspects in a car that crashed. The suspects fled on foot and police caught one of the suspects.

Rain: For the time being enjoy cold nights, mild days with plenty of sunshine

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Los Angeles is 14.65 inches. Southern California is experiencing strong offshore Santa Ana winds which exacerbates the extreme winter drought conditions.

The dividing line between above average and below average is the South Bay where the San Jose Airport rainfall is 65 percent of normal. The Evergreen neighborhood, east

of downtown San Jose has received only 47 percent of its average rainfall since October 1.

Further down the coast, Santa Maria has received only 37 percent of average for this time of year.

There is an interesting anomaly here in the East Bay with Hayward airport rainfall at 125 percent of average but Oakland Airport to the

“ Downtown San Jose has received only 47 percent of its average rainfall.

north only 76 percent, which is the same as the Livermore Airport.

All the averages will fall during this dry period. How much depends on how long it will last. In the meantime, enjoy cold nights, mild days and plenty of sunshine.

Meteorologist Mike Pechner, SF CBS News Bureau, is a Climate and Weather Specialist.

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