



Super Sunday
THE SUPER BOWL IS OVER THE TOP
AND THE BEST EXCUSE TO BREAK ANY DIET..... 4

WEEKEND WEATHER
Cloudy
HIGHS: 57-61
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110
LOWS: 38-49

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

San Leandro Times

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

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025

SAN LEANDRO • CALIFORNIA



PHOTO BY MIKE MCGUIRE

Carolina Ixta, author and fourth grade teacher, holds up the cover of her book *Shut Up, This Is Serious*, which won the 2025 Pura Belpre Award. On her desk are some of the cards and drawings her students gave her after they found out she'd won the award.

Teacher's Book Is a Winner

By Mike McGuire
San Leandro Times

San Leandro teacher and author Carolina Ixta has won the 2025 Pura Belpre Award for her first novel, *Shut Up, This Is Serious*.

The award has been given every year since 1996 for the young adult novel that

best portrays and celebrates the Latino cultural experience.

Ixta, who teaches fourth grade at Jefferson School, was also a finalist for the William C. Morris Award, given for the best first novel for young adult readers.

Both awards are presented by the American Library Association.

Shut Up, This Is Serious is about two best friends, children of Mexican immigrants, growing up in Oakland and having to overcome a number of challenges.

"It's great that I won the award, but it was also exciting to see how my

see BOOK, page 12

City Council Wish List Will Require Money

Council lists its annual priorities, but costs exceed current revenue

By Michael Singer
San Leandro Times

The San Leandro City Council and the heads of city departments reviewed city priorities during a 4-hour planning session open to the public this past Saturday at the Surlene G. Grant Community Meeting Room.

The meeting included an update on the city's longterm forecast, a review of accomplishments in 2024, and an evaluation of the city's top goals for 2025 and beyond.

San Leandro will continue to complete its unfinished public safety, housing, and

infrastructure projects in the next 12 months while adding "quality of life" and "economic development" priorities to its list.

But paying for everything on the City Council's wish list may be difficult.

Director of Public Works Sheila Marques outlined the top five city assets that need serious upgrades or maintenance, including the city's water pollution control plant (WPCP), San Leandro's stormwater infrastructure, the

see MONEY, page 11

Mok Heads to Sierra Leone For Teaching Position

By Mike McGuire
San Leandro Times

San Leandro resident Dr. Hoi-Fei Mok, the city's former sustainability manager, has won a Fulbright Specialist Award to travel to Sierra Leone to train people on a human rights approach in dealing with climate change.

Mok, who uses they/their pronouns, said that the poverty

in Sierra Leone makes it especially important that polices to combat climate change make poor people's lives better rather than worse.

The Fulbright program description says, "Climate change threatens their livelihoods, their mental health,

see MOK, page 12

Resource Center Named after Wilma Chan

By Scott Faust
San Leandro Times

The San Lorenzo Unified School District held a grand opening on Jan. 23 for a newly relocated resource center named for the late Wilma Chan, who served as a state assembly member and Alameda County supervisor.

About 60 people gathered to hear speakers, witness a ribbon-cutting and tour the Wilma Chan Family Resource Center (WCFRC), located on the campus of Royal Sunset

High School in the Hayward Acres neighborhood.

The center serves the entire school district, which includes San Lorenzo, southwest San Leandro, Ashland, and part of Cherryland.

"We are not merely celebrating the opening of this wonderful facility, we are celebrating a legacy," said Alameda County Supervisor Lena Tam, who was elected in 2022 to the District 3 seat that Chan held when she died

see CENTER, page 10



PHOTO COURTESY SAN LORENZO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Supervisor Lena Tam, Superintendent Daryl Camp and other dignitaries cut the ribbon at the opening.

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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.



San Leandro Times

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PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

Going Up

A painter went up high to paint an apartment building on Washington Avenue last week.

Gonzales Appointed as City's New Financial Director

San Leandro City Manager Janelle Cameron recently announced the appointment of Nicole Gonzales as the city's new finance director.

Gonzales has over a decade of experience in public sector finance, with a wealth of expertise in strategic financial planning, debt management, and investment strategies.

She officially joined the City of San Leandro on Saturday, Feb. 1, the day of the City Council Work Session.

Gonzales spent eight successful years with the City of Hayward where she managed a \$400 million operating budget, ensuring fiscal sustainability through innovative financial practices and long-term strategic planning.

"Nicole Gonzales is a highly skilled public finance professional with a proven track record in ensuring fiscal



Nicole Gonzales began her job on Saturday as the City of San Leandro's finance director.

responsibility and sustainability," said Cameron. "Her expertise, leadership, and deep commitment to public service make her an invaluable addition to our Executive Team. I am confident she will play a critical role in maintaining the financial health of our City while supporting our goals for transparency and community impact."

Gonzales is an active member of the Government Finance Officers Association

(GFOA), California Society of Municipal Finance Officers (CSMFO), and Municipal Management Association of Northern California (MMANC). She holds both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Public Administration from California State University at Hayward.

As finance director, Gonzales will oversee the City's general financial management, including budget, investment plans, financial reporting, and auditing, as well as provide leadership to ensure fiscal sustainability and accountability. Her skills and experience will be vital in guiding the City's financial planning efforts and supporting its strategic priorities.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the City of San Leandro as its new Finance Director," Gonzalez said. "I look forward to collaborating with the City's dedicated team to ensure financial stability and to support the community's vision for a vibrant and prosperous future."

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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?

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Community Calendar

San Leandro High Jazz & Wind Ensemble Concerts

Everyone is invited to the San Leandro High School Jazz Band Concert on Wednesday, Feb. 5, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., and the San Leandro High School Wind Ensemble Concert on Thursday, Feb. 6, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the San Leandro Performing Arts Center, 2250 Bancroft Ave. in San Leandro. Tickets are \$5 at the door. All proceeds support the San Leandro High School Instrumental Music Program.

Lunar New Year Celebration: Craft and Kung Fu

Celebrate the Year of the Snake at the Manor Branch Library, 1241 Manor Blvd., on Sunday, Feb. 9. Join a festive afternoon featuring a craft session from 2:30 to 3:15 p.m., followed by an exciting performance by U.S. Shaolin Kung Fu from 3:30 to 4 p.m. This event is for all ages and no registration is needed.

Alta Mira Club Mystery Tea Luncheon

The Alta Mira Club, 561 Lafayette Ave. in San Leandro, will host a Mystery Tea Luncheon on Monday, Feb. 17, at noon, featuring popular mystery writers Jennifer Morita, Karen Phillips and Simon Wood. Salad bar luncheon, followed by the program. Tickets \$25. All proceeds benefit scholarships. Limited seating. Email or call for reservations: Nancyfong@aol.com or 510-483-1018.

Epiphany Lutheran's Closing Worship Service

Epiphany Lutheran Church, 16248 Carolyn St. in San Leandro, invites everyone to celebrate the life and ministry of the church on Sunday, Feb. 23, at 3 p.m. Gather at this closing worship service in gratitude and faith as we give thanks for Epiphany Lutheran's impact and legacy.

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

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

Women's History Month Tiny Art Show at the San Leandro Public Library

The San Leandro Public Library is celebrating Women's History Month with its 4th Annual Tiny Art Show. Pick up a mini art kit (3"x3" canvas, paint, brushes) starting 02/03 at the Main Library to create a masterpiece inspired by women artists. Return by February 27 to be featured in the March Tiny Art Show display. Kits available while supplies last.

SLHS United Parents Crab Feed

The San Leandro High School United Parents are having a crab feed on Saturday, March 1, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the San Leandro Boys & Girls Club, 2200 San Leandro Blvd. Fresh Dungeness crab, pasta, meatballs, salad, French bread. No host bar and dessert bar. Raffle, auction items. Pre-sold tickets only: <https://forms.gle/AS5EKaobyMxiZt1w7> Order by Feb. 22. Tickets are \$85 and \$15 of each ticket donated to a sports team or student organization of your choice.



PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

This Saturday: Take Your Child to the Library Day

The San Leandro Public Library will participate in Take Your Child to the Library Day on Saturday, Feb. 8.

The event was developed to encourage families everywhere to take their children to their local libraries and take advantage of this free community resource that enriches, educates and entertains.

The library is an ideal place for children to play, discover, make friends, and have fun, and Take Your Child to the Library Day is the perfect time to discover some library magic. Visit the Main Library or Manor Branch during open hours on Feb. 8 to receive a special surprise (while supplies last) and enjoy crafts and a scavenger hunt in the library.

You can also get a library card (they're free), meet library staff, and explore all the wonders that your local library has to offer.

At 2 p.m., the Main Library will host 123 Andrés for

a bilingual family concert with Grammy-winners Andrés & Christina. Seating for the concert is first come, first served and doors will close if the room reaches capacity.

"Taking children to the library helps them develop a love of reading and learning, but more than that, the library has something to offer everyone in your family," says Library Director Brian Simons. "Not only do we have books for all ages, but board games, technology resources, online college and career support, a Library of Things that lends items like stand mixers, birdwatching kits, telescopes and more, and educational & enrichment programs. If you can't make it on the 8th, visit us another day – because every day is a great day to take your child to the library."

For more information, contact Kelly Keefer at 510-577-3954 or KKeefe@sanleandro.org

Financial Wellness Workshops at the Library

Take steps toward your financial wellness with a free workshop series on Thursdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave.

Learn planning and savings tools from Youngky Hermanto, CLTC, a registered financial advisor.

The next session is "Your Health & Wealth" on Feb. 6; "Understanding Asset Accumulation Strategies" on Feb. 20; and "Fulfilling Long-Term Goals" on Feb. 27. Register for any or all sessions by calling 510-577-3971 or visiting the library's website at www.sanleandrolibrary.org

Events at the Library

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.

Castro Valley Orchestra Free Concert

The Castro Valley Orchestra will open its 2025 season with a free concert on Sunday, Feb. 9, at 2 p.m. at the Castro Valley Center for the Arts, 19501 Redwood Road in Castro Valley. The program will include works by Bizet, Humperdinck, and Mozart. Ross Gershenson, retired Fremont music teacher and member of the Oakland Symphony, will perform the Horn Concerto by Lee Actor. A reception to meet the soloist and members of the orchestra will follow the concert.

SLAA Free Art Demonstration

The San Leandro Art Association will host a free art demonstration on Tuesday, Feb. 11, at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave. Socializing with refreshments begins at 5:30 p.m., a short general meeting starts at 6 p.m., and the demonstration begins at 6:30 p.m. Local artist Bushra Gill, whose work is inspired by Islamic patterns, will present a slide show detailing how she works on multiple projects concurrently. Stop by and be inspired. Members will also display artwork for the Artist of the Month Contest. All ages are welcome. Email sanleandroart.contact@gmail.com for more information.

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.

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SUNDAY 12:12 P.M.

Unity Church of San Leandro

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San Leandro Senior Community Center
13909 E. 14th St., San Leandro

Castro Valley Orchestra Concert

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2025
2:00 P.M.

Featuring
Overture to "Hansel & Gretel"

by Engelbert Humperdinck
Suite #2 from "Carmen"

By Georges Bizet

Overture to "The Marriage of Figaro"

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Concerto for Horn & Orchestra

by Lee Actor

Ross Gershenson, Horn Soloist

Admission is free and a reception will immediately follow the concert.

Castro Valley Center for the Arts
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Tackling Sunday's Snackfest

According to the Super Bowl party tips published by the NFL, the only rule for game-day food is that there should be plenty of it.

Junk food is required at a gathering like this. Keep in mind that watching a big football game is an acceptable excuse to break any diet.

Dips and one-hand-only foods are absolute necessities. There should be no fumbling distractions – no juggling of knives, forks and spoons.

EASY CHICKEN WINGS

2 cups brown sugar
1 cup yellow mustard
1/4 cup soy sauce

5 pounds chicken wings, cut into thirds, tips discarded

Mix brown sugar, mustard, and soy sauce together in a bowl. Measure 1/4 cup marinade for basting and transfer to a small bowl; cover and refrigerate.

Place wings in a large resealable bag. Pour remaining marinade over wings, coating well. Seal and marinate wings in refrigerator at least 2 hours and up to overnight.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Remove chicken wings from resealable bag and transfer to a baking sheet. Discard marinade.

Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. Baste wings with reserved 1/4 cup marinade; cook, basting every 10 minutes, until chicken is no longer pink in the

center, about 30 more minutes. Yields 10 servings.

RANCH DRESSING DIP

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried dill weed
1 tablespoon dried chives
1 tablespoon dried parsley
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1 dash hot pepper sauce
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon white pepper

Combine the mayonnaise, sour

cream, buttermilk, garlic powder, oregano, dill weed, chives, parsley, Parmesan cheese, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, pepper and refrigerate for at least 1/2 an hour. If the dressing is too thick, add a little extra buttermilk to thin.

NACHOS

2 cloves garlic, crushed
6 green onions, sliced, white parts and tops separated
3 tablespoons canola oil
1 shredded, cooked, whole chicken breast
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup salsa
1/2 (12-ounce) package tortilla chips
1 (8-ounce) package shredded Cheddar/Monterey Jack cheese blend
1/2 large tomato, diced

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, cook and stir the garlic and white parts of the green onions in canola oil until tender. Mix in shredded chicken, salt and pepper. Toss until well coated with oil. Stir in the salsa.

Arrange tortilla chips on a large baking sheet. Spoon the chicken mixture over tortilla chips. Top with cheese blend and tomato. Bake in the preheated oven 10 minutes, or until cheese has melted. Remove from heat and sprinkle with green onion tops before serving. Serves 6.

REUBEN PIGS-IN-A-BLANKET

6 beef hot dogs
1 tube refrigerated crescent roll dough
2 ounces deli sliced pastrami
1 ounce diced swiss cheese
1/4 cup sauerkraut
1/2 cup bottled Russian dressing, for dipping

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Cut each hot dog into 4 pieces, and then cut a small slit into the top of each hot dog piece. Stuff a small bit of cheese into each hot dog. Slice the crescent roll dough into 24 strips (they won't be even but it doesn't matter). Cut the pastrami into strips.

To assemble the Reuben piggies, lay a piece of pastrami on a strip of dough. Top with a small bit of sauerkraut, and then a piece of cheese-stuffed hot dog. Roll up the dough and press together. Place the assembled piggie on a baking sheet and repeat with the remaining hot dogs. Bake for 10-12 minutes, until the dough is golden. Serve hot with the dressing for dipping. Yields 24.

CROCKPOT BEER-CHEESE DIP

1 pound processed cheese loaf, cut into 1-inch pieces
1/2 cup beer
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce

Mix all ingredients in a 1 or 2 quart slow-cooker. Cover and cook on high for 40 minutes until cheese melts. Stir until mixture is smooth. Scrape down cooker sides. Turn heat to low. Dip will hold for 4 hours if you stir it occasionally. Serve with pretzels, bread cubes or crackers.

DEVILED EGGS

12 hard-cooked eggs
4 tablespoons Italian dressing
1 teaspoon yellow mustard
2 (2-ounce) jars chopped pimientos, drained
2 tablespoons chopped green pepper

Carefully cut eggs in half lengthwise; remove yolks and set whites aside. Mash yolks with fork. Stir dressing and mustard into yolks. Stir in pimientos and green pepper.

Refill whites using 1 heaping tablespoon yolk mixture for each egg half. Chill to blend flavors. Makes 6 servings.

SMOKED SALMON DIP

8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 tablespoon minced fresh dill
1 teaspoon prepared horseradish, drained
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 pound smoked salmon, minced

Cream the cheese in an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment until just smooth. Add the sour cream, lemon juice, dill, horseradish, salt and pepper, and mix. Add the smoked salmon and mix well. Chill and serve. Yields 1-1/2 pints.

CHEX PARTY MIX

6 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1-1/2 teaspoons seasoned salt
3/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
3 cups Corn Chex cereal
3 cups Rice Chex cereal
3 cups Wheat Chex cereal
1 cup mixed nuts
1 cup pretzels
1 cup bagel chips

Heat oven to 250°F. Melt butter (or margarine) in large roasting pan in oven. Stir in seasonings. Gradually stir in remaining ingredients until evenly coated. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Spread on paper towels to cool. Store in airtight container. Yields 12 cups.

GUACAMOLE

2 ripe avocados
1 teaspoon salt
1-1/2 teaspoons lime juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/2 tablespoon grated onion
2 dashes hot pepper sauce

Peel, pit and mash avocados. In a small cup, add salt, minced garlic and lemon juice. Set aside for 15-30 minutes. Add remaining ingredients. Makes 1-1/2 cups.

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ARIES (March 21 to April 19): A long-forgotten promise is recalled. It's not too late to follow up on it. You might find a pleasant surprise waiting. Meanwhile, see a doctor about a pesky health problem.



TAURUS (April 20 - May 20): The best way to get over a personal disappointment is to get out, meet old friends, and make new ones! One of those new friends could very well become a special person in your life.



GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A chance to invest comes with some strings attached that could cause economic problems later on. Be careful. Cupid favors romantic possibilities with a loving Libra or a passionate Pisces.



CANCER (June 21 - July 22): A simple problem threatens to turn into a legal showdown unless it's cleared up soon. Wishing it away won't help. In addition, a telephone call could lead to a change in travel plans.



LEO (July 23 - August 22): A close friend who suddenly becomes remote is in need of your warm reassurance. Give it generously. Meanwhile, a misunderstanding on the job creates the potential for future problems. Settle it quickly.



VIRGO (August 23 - Sept. 22): Career advancement involves the need for added training. The investment of your time and effort will pay off. In other news, some stormy personal situations begin to calm down.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 - October 22): Scale back on your grandiose schemes for a while. Neither the time nor the circumstances are right to make the huge financial investment needed to see the matter through. A Gemini has romance on the mind.



SCORPIO (October 23 - November 21): You could soon face a fascinating dilemma: Do you continue seeing a very special person who is currently in your life or renew a relationship with another person who will suddenly return from your past?



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): Financial problems need your attention. It's a good idea to cut back on unnecessary expenses until these money matters are under control. Then go out and have a great time!



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): What you may now see as a good reason to end a relationship could turn out to be based more on supposition than substance. Don't make any rash decisions.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): Change is the watchword for this week. Some Aquarians will be moving to new places while others will be taking new career paths. Steer clear of a family dispute.



PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20): Be prepared for a romantic disappointment to become a fading memory with the arrival of a new love – possibly a Gemini. Meanwhile, talk to someone you trust about developing your idea into a marketable product.

SENIORS

Properly Monitor Your Blood Pressure

By Jim Miller
Special to the Times

Everyone with high blood pressure (130/80 or higher) should have a home blood pressure monitor. Home monitoring can help you keep tabs on your blood pressure in a comfortable setting. Plus, if you're taking medication it will make certain it's working, and alert you to a health problem if it arises. Here are some top-rated blood pressure monitors to consider along with some tips to help ensure you take an accurate reading.

Best Monitors

The most accurate and easiest to use home blood pressure monitors today are electric/battery powered automatic arm monitors, which are more reliable than wrist or fingertip monitors. With an automatic arm monitor, you simply wrap the cuff around your bicep and with the push of a button the cuff inflates and deflates automatically giving you your results on the display window in a matter of seconds.

Many automatic monitors also come with additional features such as irregular heartbeat detection; a risk category indicator that tells you whether your blood pressure is in the high range; a data-averaging function that allows you to take multiple readings and get an overall average; multiple user memory that allows two or more users to save their readings; and downloadable memory that lets you transmit your data to your smartphone or computer.

The top five automatic arm monitors as recommended by Consumer Reports for 2025 are the Omron Platinum BP5450 (\$90), Omron 10 Series BP7450 (\$70), Omron Evolv BP7000 (\$70), A&D Medical UA767F (\$55), and Omron 3 Series BP7100 (\$55). And the top wrist monitors are the Omron 7 Series BP6350 (\$55) and the Equate (Walmart) 4500 Series (\$40).



Home monitoring can help you keep tabs on your blood pressure in a comfortable setting. Plus, if you're taking medication it will make certain it's working, and alert you if a health problem arises.

You can purchase these blood pressure monitors at pharmacies, medical supply stores or online and you don't need a prescription to buy one. Prices, however, will vary slightly depending on where you buy.

How to Measure

After you buy your monitor, it's a good idea to take it to your doctor's office so they can check its accuracy and make sure you're using it properly.

Empty your bladder and ensure at least 5 minutes of quiet rest before measurements.

Sit correctly: Sit with your back straight and supported (on a dining chair, rather than a sofa). Your feet should be flat on the floor and your legs should not be crossed. Your arm should be supported on a flat surface (such as a table) with the upper arm at heart level. Make sure the middle of the cuff is placed directly above the bend of the elbow. Check your monitor's instructions for an illustration.

Don't measure over cloths: Put the cuff directly on your bare skin. Putting it over clothes can raise your systolic (upper) number by up to 40 mmHg.

Measure at the same time: It's important to take the readings at the same time each day, such as in the morning before taking medications, or evening before dinner.

Take multiple readings: Each time you measure, take at least two readings one minute apart and record the results.

For more information on high blood pressure numbers and how to accurately measure it at home, visit Heart.org/HBP.

Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book. visit SavvySenior.org.



Senior Driver Safety Seminar

Stay safe and save money. Registration has begun for the Castro Valley Library's popular senior driving program, conducted by the California Highway Patrol. This free seminar will be on Tuesday, Feb. 11, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the Castro Valley Library, 3600 Norbridge Ave. The seminar will include: Compensating for Age-Related Changes, Tune-Up Your Driving Skills, Rules of the Road, Safe Driving Tips, and more. Receive a certificate for completing this free course which may lead to an insurance discount. You must be 65 or older to qualify. Registration is required. To register, call the Library Information Desk at 510-667-7900 or see Events at: aclibrary.org/branches/csv The Castro Valley Library is wheel chair accessible.

Help With Your HealthCare Costs

Numerous programs may help reduce your health care and prescription drug costs if you meet the eligibility requirements. At the Castro Valley Library's free presentation on Wednesday, Feb. 26, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. you will learn about: The Medicare program and its costs; Medi-Cal and the Medicare Savings Programs; The Low-Income Subsidy (Extra Help) for prescription drugs; and eligibility requirements, the application processes, and the benefits. The Library is at 3600 Norbridge Ave. For more information, call 510-667-7900.

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REAL ESTATE GALLERY



REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Carl Medford, CRS
Special to the Times

GUEST COMMENTARY



Maximizing Your Yard

By Carl Medford, CRS
Special to the Forum

Looking for a home with enough space for our large family, we settled on the only 6-bedroom home available. It had a lot of deferred maintenance, but as a contractor, I knew getting it back into shape and even improving it would not be a problem. The real issue, however, was a massive pool, complete with a diving board and slide which dominated the back yard. We had never had a pool and quite frankly, the idea of effectively maintaining one was daunting.

As it happened, the kids and their friends spent countless hours frolicking in the water and we ended up grateful for the resource. After a few trials we decided to leave the maintenance to professionals and from then on, the water remained clear. Once the last child left home, however, the pool presented us with some problems. By this time, it was 50 years old and both it and the surrounding mass of concrete were in need of serious upgrading. With no one left at home to enjoy the pool, we began looking at other options.

As we were planning on selling our home, we considered what might appeal to younger buyers. Instead of paying an immense sum to redo the pool, we had it removed at a fraction of the cost of upgrading. This opened up a blank slate for us to develop a yard that was more practical. I spent time drawing out a few options and we settled on a number of interlocking concrete patios, a large gazebo, a firepit, BBQ gas and water hookups, a small basketball court all surrounded by a ribbon of drought-resistant flowerbeds, complete with accent lighting.

The overall effect was stunning and was all accomplished at significantly less than we would have paid to redo the pool. Prior to selling, we had a few parties and quickly discovered that the backyard was the place everyone wanted to be. It also turned out to be a hit with the family that bought the home: they love entertaining and, after we had moved, one of our neighbors sent us a picture of our previous backyard taken over their fence that showed the entire backyard full of people having an awesome time.

Bottom line: if you take the time to effectively plan, your yard can become a functional and attractive space that enhances your living experience and also increases your home's value.

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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of the
WEEK

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A Time to Plant

By Samantha Mazzotta
Special to the Times

It might be hard to believe, with winter still pounding at our doors, that it's time to start preparing the lawn and garden. But February is an ideal time to get ready for the upcoming growing season.

In some areas, it's not too early to start seedlings. In just a few weeks' time they will be ready for planting, right about the time that the soil and weather are both warm enough to nourish those plants.

To get ready for spring, start planning how you'll begin your seasonal lawn care regime, pick out new plants you'll want for your garden, inventory stored bulbs and seeds, and prep the lawn and garden tools. Lay out all of your hand tools and check for damage

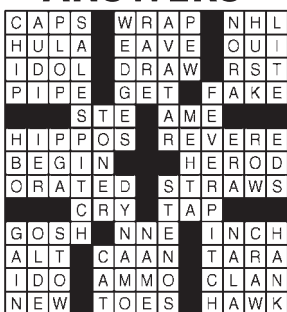
or rust. Clean off rust with a little steel wool, and thinly coat the metal parts with an all-purpose lubricant like 3-in-1 oil or WD-40. Wooden handles should get a fresh, thin coating of a wood-friendly treatment like linseed oil or butcher block oil.

Unfold the lawnmower and other gas- or electric-powered lawn tools and prepare them for use. Make sure blades and chains are in place, check to make sure spark-plug connections are clean -- maybe even give the starting cord a good tug (in a well-ventilated area) to make sure starting is possible -- and electric cords are not frayed. Don't fill gas-powered tools with gas just yet, but do fill a spare gas can with the correct mixture and store away from the house, well away from flames and in a well-ventilated area.

Finally, make sure you have all the lawn and garden supplies you need to handle springtime tasks. This includes fertilizer, extra grass seed for bare spots, mulch and any other items that will make outdoor work go faster and easier.

HOME TIP: Didn't have time to start a compost pile last fall? Don't fret -- start composting now with a smaller amount and lots of fresh dirt, then add organic materials and turn as usual.

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RECENT HOME SALES

Castro Valley

21314 Gary Drive #216 94546: \$560,000 [2 BD - 1,025 SF - 1991
21095 Gary Drive #306 94546: \$575,000 [2 BD - 1,101 SF - 1980
21103 Gary Drive #316e 94546: \$591,000 [3 BD - 1,354 SF - 1993
3632 Somerset Avenue 94546: \$905,000 [3 BD - 1,658 SF - 1945
17447 Parker Road 94546: \$1,485,000 [4 BD - 2,682 SF - 1958
5791 Cold Water Drive 94552: \$1,575,000 [3 BD - 1,710 SF - 1968
5495 Greenridge Road 94552: \$1,688,000 [4 BD - 2,038 SF - 1960

TOTAL SALES: 7
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$560,000 MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$905,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,688,000 AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$1,054,142

SAN LEANDRO

373 Caliente Circle 94578: \$300,000 [2 BD - 1,060 SF - 1980
433 Harlan Street #206 94577: \$415,000 [2 BD - 803 SF - 1964
15765 Maubert Avenue 94578: \$485,000 [3 BD - 1,131 SF - 1974
958 Manor Boulevard 94579: \$520,000 [3 BD - 1,020 SF - 1950
14677 Hanover Street 94579: \$700,000 [3 BD - 1,081 SF - 1951
469 Cascade Road 94577: \$795,000 [3 BD - 1,116 SF - 1948
965 Arguello Drive 94578: \$838,000 [3 BD - 1,114 SF - 1954
2127 167th Avenue 94578: \$850,000 [4 BD - 2,060 SF - 1980
13844 Velarde Drive 94578: \$850,000 [3 BD - 1,376 SF - 1956
2329 Marina Boulevard 94577: \$920,000 [3 BD - 1,885 SF - 1949
14479 Locust Street 94579: \$960,000 [5 BD - 2,204 SF - 1952
1681 Purdue Street 94579: \$985,000 [3 BD - 1,076 SF - 1953
1211 San Jose Street 94577: \$1,025,000 [2 BD - 1,259 SF - 1937
14519 Tiburon Road 94577: \$1,100,000 [5 BD - 1,584 SF - 1963

TOTAL SALES: 14
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$300,000 MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$844,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,100,000 AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$767,357

SAN LORENZO

51535 Via Lobos 94580: \$925,000 [3 BD - 1,125 SF - 1955
1477 Via Barrett 94580: \$985,000 [3 BD - 1,325 SF - 1955
TOTAL SALES: 2
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$925,000 MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$955,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$985,000 AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$955,000

HAYWARD

29612 Mountain Oak Court #67 94544: \$370,000 [1 BD - 489 SF - 1985
27665 Eucalyptus Court 94544: \$585,000 [3 BD - 1,457 SF - 1979
22394 Princeton Street 94541: \$617,500 [3 BD - 1,554 SF - 1939
25080 Vista Greens Court 94541: \$695,000 [2 BD - 1,250 SF - 1973
3085 D Street 94541: \$745,000 [2 BD - 891 SF - 1924
23756 Nevada Road 94541: \$747,000 [3 BD - 1,150 SF - 1956
24540 Margaret Drive 94542: \$810,000 [3 BD - 1,194 SF - 1954
25852 Underwood Avenue 94544: \$830,000 [3 BD - 1,042 SF - 1952
25823 Cascade Street 94544: \$860,000 [3 BD - 1,081 SF - 1954
261 Rome Place 94544: \$890,000 [3 BD - 1,287 SF - 1951

Rust, Mildew a Concern for Roses in the Spring

By Buzz Bertolero
The Dirt Gardener

Q I'm looking to replace several older roses this year. Which roses are more resistant to rust, mildew and other problems?

A Rust, Mildew, and Black Spots are the primary fungus diseases that plague Bay Area roses. Hybrid Tea, Grandiflora, and Floribunda varieties are the most susceptible. Rose varieties introduced this century are more resistant than earlier ones, but none are disease-free. The very popular Floral Carpet Roses, David Austin Roses, Knock-out family, and landscape roses are disease-free. Here are the factors that contribute to Rust, Mildew, and Black Spot on roses. Mild nighttime temperatures

and moisture on the foliage after the sun goes down are the keys to all of these diseases. In addition, removing all the debris around the bushes after pruning is recommended to eliminate the over-wintering fungal spores. With the new foliage emerging and the spring rains, Rust, Mildew, and Black Spot are a concern. You need to apply your fungicides prior to the problem occurring. Applying a fungicide when the disease(s) are present doesn't solve the problem. The fungal spores infect the bushes twelve to eighteen days before the problem shows up on the foliage. While there are plenty of rose disease controls available, these products will not eradicate the problem. They return when the right conditions occur. Fortunately, today we have several systemic fungicides that solve

these diseases. Bonide System Drench and Bayer Advance All In One for Roses are two such products. They are best applied when the new growth is at least an inch long and rain is in the long-range forecast. They'll protect roses for six weeks. Bonide System Drench and Bayer Advance All In One for Roses are liquids you apply to your roses' base. Bayer Advance All In One for Roses granular is also available. If you're an organic gardener, these products are not for you. Again, the organic control success depends on how wet of a spring we have. After the rainy season concludes, watering the foliage in the late afternoons or those areas with an afternoon marine influence prolong the problems into the summer and fall months. You have a very good probability of having dis-

ease-free roses with systemic roses products.

Q My Plum tree has stopped producing. The trees have been quite productive but were a big disappointment last year. How do I correct things this year?

A Plums produce fruit on the second-year wood. If the trees are

pruned too severely, the fruiting spurs are removed. This is probably the number one reason deciduous fruit trees fail to set fruit. There are other reasons but they don't apply to your trees. Generally, you should remove fifteen to twenty-five percent of the annual growth. The fruiting spurs are easy to detect. Those branches with buds clustered in a grouping of three or more are the

fruiting buds. These stems are darker color than the one-year-old growth, which is a lighter color and has single buds. The good news is the tree's productivity will return once the pruning technique changes.

Buzz Bertolero is an Advanced California Certified Nursery Professional. The Dirt Gardener's website is www.dirtgardener.com, and questions can be sent by email to buzz@dirtgardener.com.

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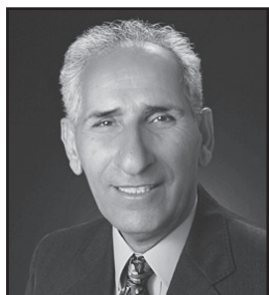
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LEGAL NOTICES

FILED
MELISSA WILK
January 6, 2025
County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 611614

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

The name of the business(es):
EM Stone located at 2140 Dunn Rd Hayward, CA 94545 / 22226 Moselle Ct Hayward, CA 94541 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Enrique Mata, located at 22226 Moselle Ct Hayward, CA 94541. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced 1/28/2020
/s/Enrique Mata
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.
Expires January 5, 2030
JAN 16, 23, 30, FEB 6, 2025
1910 - SLT

LEGAL NOTICES

FILED
MELISSA WILK
January 8, 2024
County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 611670

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

The name of the business(es):
Pilar / R Assets Management Network located at 10510 Pearmain Street Oakland, CA 94603 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Pilar Rosales, located at 10510 Pearmain Street Oakland, CA 94603. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced 11/15/24
/s/Pilar Rosales
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.
Expires January 7, 2030
JAN 16, 23, 30, FEB 6, 2025
1907 - SLT

LEGAL NOTICES

FILED
MELISSA WILK
January 21, 2025
County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 611885

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

The name of the business(es):
Chrys & Bib Innovations located at 724 Lewelling Blvd. #328 San Leandro, CA 94579 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Anne Happy, located at 724 Lewelling Blvd. #328 San Leandro, CA 94579. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced N/A
/s/Anne Happy
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.
Expires January 20, 2030
JAN 23, 30, FEB 06, 13, 2025
1916 - SLT

LEGAL NOTICES

FILED
MELISSA WILK
January 8, 2024
County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 611674

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

The name of the business(es):
Ohlone Lawn Care located at 1353 Via Vista San Lorenzo, CA 94580 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Gabriel Medina, located at 21353 Via Vista San Lorenzo, CA 94580. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced N/A
/s/Gabriel Medina
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Expires January 7, 2030
JAN 16, 23, 30, FEB 6, 2025
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ANSWERS ON PAGE 6

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Mayor Gonzalez Appointed to Post at National League of Cities

Mayor appointed to National League of Cities' Small Cities Council

Mayor Juan González has been appointed to the National League of Cities (NLC) 2025 Small Cities Council.

González was elected to a one-year term to develop and guide programs among local elected officials from similar communities.

"I am honored to join the National League of Cities' Small Cities Council and



Mayor Juan Gonzalez

represent San Leandro on a national stage," said Mayor Juan González. "This is a great opportunity to collaborate with fellow local leaders, share innovative solutions, and advocate for the unique needs of small cities like ours. By working together, we can develop policies and programs that strengthen our communities and enhance the quality of life for all residents."

González will play a key role among a diverse group of local leaders to encourage

collaboration, networking and the development of resources and programs beneficial to communities that share demographics, size or location that can be replicated across the country.

"It is crucial that we bring together local leaders that are representative of all communities to share solutions, and challenges from their hometowns, which are used to develop NLC policies and programs," said National League of Cities President

Steve Patterson, Mayor of Athens, Ohio. "Bringing the experience and leadership of Mayor González to serve as a member on NLC's Small Cities Council this year goes a long way to ensuring every city, town, and village has the resources they need to lift up their communities and improve the lives of their residents."

This year's Small Cities Council leadership will consist of:

• Chair: Mary Sarver, may-

or pro tem, City of Grandview, Texas

• Vice Chair: Rashad Roberts, councilmember, Town of Chadbourne, North Carolina

• Vice Chair: Gloria Solario, councilmember, City of Avondale, Arizona

• Board Liaison: Bianca Motley Broom, mayor, City of College Park, Georgia.

For more information on NLC's Member Councils, visit: <https://www.nlc.org/current-initiatives/member-councils-2/>.

Center: New location gives resource center more space

continued from front page
after being hit by a car. "The center honors the life and work of a visionary leader ... whose lifelong dedication to the well-being of children, families and underserved communities continues to inspire us all."

Over the past year, center staff have outfitted its new quarters in a wing of a building it shares with its lead agency partner, La Familia, which assists with public benefits enrollment and offers a variety of classes.

Facilities include a spacious classroom, a food distribution area, a family reading room, a storage room and places for private and group meetings.

The center opened in 2020

to serve families disrupted by COVID, occupying a single room at the Lewelling Place school site on Fargo Avenue. Funds to prepare the new location were made available by former Supervisor Dave Brown, who was appointed to complete the final year of Chan's term.

Those funds were earmarked to serve the Hayward Acres neighborhood, east of Hesperian and between Bartlett and A streets.

In addition to maintaining a twice-monthly food distribution for hundreds of district families, the WCFRC provides diapers, toiletries, clothing and school supplies to families and individuals in need, with a special focus on families experiencing

or at risk of homelessness. Center staff, including La Familia, also offer guidance and referral for housing, health care and educational programs.

SLZUSD Superintendent Daryl Camp expressed gratitude to supervisors Tam and Brown and their staffs for partnering with the district and La Familia, and to the Chan family for endorsing the naming honor.

"I want to express my profound thanks on behalf of our school district and the entire Eden area to everyone who had a better idea, and a willingness to make that idea a reality," Camp said. "All of it has occurred in the caring, collaborative and cherished spirit of Wilma Chan."



The San Lorenzo school district's resource center is named after the late Wilma Chan.

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.

Bancroft Avenue Plan Should Consider Students Most

Editor,

On Jan 23, 2025, the *San Leandro Times* published a letter to the editor, "Speak Up on Bancroft Bike Lanes," about San Leandro's plan to make Bancroft Avenue safer for kids. The writer suggests we should solicit input from those "most impacted," but their focus is solely on personal

parking concerns.

They claim, "We need parking in front of our homes," yet overlook the fact that homeowners already have driveways. In reality, what they are asking for is a public subsidy of personal parking spaces on public land—at the expense of child safety.

If we are truly asking for input from those most impacted, why not consult the thousands of children who walk, roll, take the bus, or ride

in cars to school? These children are the ones who will feel the effects of these changes most directly.

The letter also falsely suggests that slow-rolling bike lanes contribute to traffic congestion. However, Bancroft Avenue, even without protected cycle lanes, already experiences congestion during school pickup and drop-off times. What's more, every bike or scooter on the road means one less motor vehicle, helping to alleviate congestion and free up space.

While I agree that all residents should provide input on the designs and express their concerns, we must also keep in mind that the thousands of children—hundreds of whom already walk or roll to school—are the most impacted. They are the priority, not the homeowner who loses a curbside parking spot that was never meant for their exclusive use.

Erick Gutierrez
San Leandro

Leave Out Letters About National Issues

Editor,

Please keep the editorials local. I can't be the only person tired of reading the back and forth between Joffe and West in the letters to the editor. I suggest the editor of the *San Leandro Times* stick to editorials and stories that are local to San Leandro. Leave the national news to the national periodicals and spare us the same old rhetoric that should be directed elsewhere.

Chris Morreale
San Leandro

Pay City Workers More

Editor,

I would like to share a message for the mayor and the City Council: Pay our city workers. Whatever they are asking for, give it to them, then give them a little more as a token of acknowledgment that you have acted poorly in the recent negotiations.

And whomever is representing you in the negotiations? Get rid of them, they are not helping you.

I went to the City Council meeting on Monday evening, Feb. 3, to stand with my community on a separate issue, and was amazed as city worker after city worker went to the microphone to ask for your help in reaching a new contract for their services.

As I realized from their remarks how poorly they have been treated, I started to feel embarrassed to live in a city that would treat their most important capital, human capital, so poorly.

I was bordering on feeling ashamed, but then realized that I can't be taking on the feelings that you should be feeling. Please do right by our city workers and treat them fairly, and then treat them a little better than that. Thank you.

Sid Elmer
San Leandro

Money: Wish list sounds good until it meets financial reality

continued from front page

city's 15 public parks, and three school district parks – and more than 30 aging buildings, including City Hall, libraries, police and fire stations, and finally the city's 382 lane miles of streets.

"Our city is 150 years old, and the infrastructure today is the product of the politics of

“If we don't have these difficult conversations we will have far fewer options than we have now for our facilities.

— Director of Public Works
Sheila Marquises

the past, Marquises said. "If we don't have these difficult conversations about what to prioritize, we will have far fewer options than we have now for our facilities."

San Leandro Assistant Finance Director Heather Rowden discussed the city's updated biannual budgets. San Leandro is expected to end its fiscal year this June, completing spending of its \$149.9 million general fund budget and a forecasted \$147 million general fund budget starting in July 2025.

Rowden warned that future funding challenges for the

years ahead include a \$183.95 million backlog of capital improvement projects, such as \$19 million needed to fund the city's aging facilities and \$79.6 million in capital and operating and maintenance costs for stormwater infrastructure. Some \$219 million will be needed in future years to fund the city's retiree health and pension funds, she said.

The city has proposed some financial solutions over the last year, including an unsuccessful stormwater fee increase on the ballot to maintain stormwater pipes and systems.

"This is the third year in a row we have faced a budget crisis. We need to have a tough conversation about our priorities," Mayor González said. "We don't want to be in the same cash-strapped situation they see in Oakland. We need to make a statement as a council and say to the people of San Leandro these are the most important things that we need our staff to work on and focus on to help us be a great city over the next 5, 10, 20, 30 years."

While there were more than 200 items on its wish list, the council decided to focus on bolstering renters' protections through the city's Rent Review Board and limiting rent increases, implementing the city's parks master plan, and funding repair, maintenance, or replacement of city assets such as roads, storm drains, and city buildings.

Additional priorities included locking up dumpsters at strip malls and shopping centers, adopting Alameda County's multifamily unit smoking ban, and achieving

100 percent staffing for all allocated police positions.

The council also received public comments about the city's current state, including increased calls to protect renters' rights, the need to repair and fully reopen Lake Chabot Road, and the improvement of the city's arts programs.

City Manager Janelle

“We don't want to be in the same cash-strapped situation they see in Oakland

— Mayor Juan Gonzalez

Cameron noted that in the public safety category, San Leandro increased the number of police staff from 71 percent to 80 percent and updated its emergency plans with evacuation drills and training.

Police also now have ordinances helping to crack down on sidschows and catalytic converter theft, she said.

In the infrastructure category, the city completed its Tree Master Plan, initiated several community cleanup efforts, launched its Age-Friendly Action Plan, and released its MySanLeandro.com mobile phone app for people to communicate with the city.

The city has also completed the construction of its new navigation center on Lewelling Boulevard and launched its pilot program, the Mental



PHOTO BY MICHAEL SINGER

The City Council spent Saturday going over the priorities for the upcoming year.

Health Crisis Unit Program Launch (ARU - Alternative Response Unit).

The public has three chances to comment about the city's budget: in-person meetings on February 27 at 6 p.m. at the Marina Community Center, March 1 at 9:30 a.m. at the Surlene Grant Community Room, and a virtual meeting on April 29.

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Mary Lee Young

September 25, 1950 ~ December 19, 2024

Of San Leandro, entered peacefully into the Lord's arms on December 19, 2024, with her family by her side. Mary was born on September 25, 1950, in Salida, Colorado, and moved to San Leandro, California, when she was just three years old. Later, she relocated to Alameda, where she met and soon married the love of her life, Jack Ralph Young. They would have celebrated 56 wonderful years together on February 1, 2025.



Mary was a devoted mother to her daughter, Theresa Young of Pleasanton, a beloved sister, and friend to Dayle Achilles of Castro Valley, and a loving grandmother to her three grandchildren: Cody Shields of San Francisco, Mackenzie Humphrey of Livermore, and Riley Shields of Pleasanton. She was also a proud great-grandmother to Grayson Humphrey of Livermore. Mary was preceded in death by her father, William Usnick; her mother, Adelaide Steinbeck; her stepmother, Ruth Usnick; and her sister, Francis Usnick.

Mary dedicated her life to her family and her work. After leaving Ewing Irrigation, where she had worked for many years, she joined the family business, AAA Drapery Co., helping to build a company that provided for her family for over 50 years. In addition to her work, Mary cherished spending time at the family houseboat on the delta, especially enjoying clamming. She loved to volunteer for Theresa's various sports teams, as well as at St. Felicitas and St. John's IDES Hall. Much of her time was spent taking care of the household which included Jack, Theresa, and an extended family member who resided with them at the time. Above all, Mary found her greatest joy in her grandchildren, often taking them to Fairyland and relishing her role as a grandmother. She adored all of them, even though she occasionally claimed she had a favorite. In her later years, Mary enjoyed visits to Cache Creek to play slots and video poker, dining out, and participating in the festivities at St. John IDES Hall. At home, she spent many hours watching her favorite DVDs, particularly those featuring her favorite actor, Richard Gere.

Although she will be deeply missed as a wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, and friend, the memories of Mary will last forever, remaining in our thoughts and prayers.

San Leandro School Community Mourns Loss of Ernesto Ortega

San Leandro teachers, staff and families were proud to know Ernesto Ortega.

He attended Madison elementary, John Muir Middle school and was set to walk for graduation in our new high school gym in just a few months from now.

Last Thursday our world was shattered by the tragic news of Ernesto's passing. Ernesto was a radiant soul. His love and kindness, sweet spirit and big smile touched everyone who knew him, and his absence leaves a void that can never be filled.

Ernesto leaves behind Sisters Monserrat, Devani, Mother Araceli, Father Felipe,



Ernesto Ortega

All of which were devoted to Ernesto.

Araceli and Felipe are the heart of the family- loving nurturing parents, joyful and dedicated to the needs of each of their children. They prided themselves in creating a life of a loving home filled with faith, laughter and care.

His family needs our help to partner with them in giving Ernesto a beautiful and meaningful funeral. To contribute, go to: <https://giveahand.com/fundraiser/in-ernestos-memory-support-the-ortega-palacios-family>

Thank you kindly, San Leandro.

Sisters Monserrat, Devani, and a large extended family.

Book: Teacher-author inspires students, and vice versa

continued from front page
students reacted when they heard I'd won," Ixta said.

"I'm reaching one of my goals just when they're at the age where they begin to decide on theirs," she added.

Ixta teaches in Jefferson's dual-language immersion program, half the day in English, half in Spanish. She loves being able to do that, but admits it's a lot of a work for one's brain. She's been with the San Leandro Unified School District for six years.

The students showered her with cards and flowers, and asked lots of questions about being a writer.

Ixta suggested they read a lot, and read widely, if they want to write. She told them one of her favorite books since she was in fourth grade herself was Pam Muñoz Ryan's "Esperanza Rising." That book had won the Pura Belpré Award in 2002, and helped inspire at least one young student then to win the same award 23 years later.

But Ixta had assigned the book to her own fourth grade class first, and students were

excited to make that connection.

"Why I got my book published," she said, "was help from a mentor, Raquel Vasquez Gilliland, a Latina woman monitoring other Latina women who want to write."

"Please, read, write – and don't let A.I. take our jobs."

— Carolina Ixta

Her mentor, who had won the Pura Belpré Award in 2022 for "How Moon Fuentes Fell in Love with the Universe," guided Ixta through the process

of getting a book into print.

Ixta had given an author talk which filled the San Leandro Performing Arts Center, on the San Leandro High School campus, when her book was first published a year ago. A session that followed in the smaller confines of the high school's library was also packed, and students asked Ixta specific questions about becoming a writer and getting published.

"I see a lot of potential here in San Leandro," she said. "My own students keep me on my toes, but there's lots of potential."

Ixta said she wanted her own students to write, and to read, not only to help them find out who they are, but to keep writing and print alive. She had her students write out the personal narratives of their lives so far, and NBC Bay Area television featured that project on a newscast.

She's been traveling the country, school calendar permitting, to appear at book conventions and other literary events. Her next appearance will be this Saturday, Feb. 8,

at the Young Adult Novelist Convention at the downtown Redwood City Library, 1044 Middlefield Road. It runs from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Coincidentally, the paperback edition of "Shut Up, This Is Serious" will be released that same day.

Ixta's at work on her second novel, expected early in 2026. It's set in a place resembling California's Inland Empire, a land of warehouses, bad air, and poverty east of Los Angeles that is inhabited by many immigrants.

Ixta thinks books, reading and writing are important, especially given the job artificial intelligence is doing garbling the world's knowledge. Her students were curious about it, so she had them use A.I. to gather information about "Shut Up, This Is Serious," which has



PHOTO BY MIKE MCGUIRE

Carolina Ixta with some of the drawings and cards her students gave her after her book won the award.

been the subject of numerous articles found on the internet.

The information A.I. turned up was frequently wrong and some of it seemed to stem from racist assumptions programmed into its algorithms, she said. It told her students, for example, that the two main characters

fled to the United States to escape drug cartels. Though both characters in the novel were born in the U.S., and the words "cartel" or "cartels" do not appear anywhere in the book, Ixta said.

"Please, read, write, and don't let A.I. take all of our jobs," Ixta said.

Mok: Sharing ideas on climate change

continued from front page

food security, and the country's infrastructure, water, energy, and coast."

Many Sierra Leoneans farm, and face threats to their livelihood from climate change. The problems they face include not only water availability, but even being able to keep their land when written ownership records are often incomplete.

Other major industries are fishing, as Sierra Leone is on the west coast of Africa, and tourism around the capital, Freetown.

Mok will be working with the Campaign for Human Rights and Development International, based in Freetown, and will stay about a month, starting in March.

"Empowering local bodies is essential to increase effectiveness and stimulate the active participation of poor women and men in environmental resources and management decision-making," the project description says.

Mok sees challenges in both the country's poverty and an infrastructure much less developed than in richer countries.

"People may be day-to-day focused on survival, and not have a lot of time to think about climate change," Mok said. "They may say, 'It's very hot out,' but part of our job is to show them that the same hot sun can help make their lives better as a power source."

Mok plans to apply some of the same skills and knowledge used as San Leandro's sustainability manager from



Hoi-Fei Mok won a Fulbright award to travel to Sierra Leone to train people on a human rights approach in dealing with climate change.

2019 to last year, and as one of the leaders of the California Strategic Growth Council.

"In fact, we may even adapt some of the same materials I used with the city and state," Mom said.

One thing Mom will be doing there is writing a handbook for human rights defenders and environmental activists. Another is developing a human rights advocacy tool for environmental groups that will give citizens a platform to speak out about climate change in public meetings and with officials.

The Fulbright program was set up just after World War II to promote friendships between Americans and residents of other countries, with a college scholarship program being perhaps its best-known part. However, the Specialist Awards are just one of several

other aspects of the program. Fulbright recipients address issues in all academic disciplines, while building relationships, knowledge, and leadership in other countries. It's primarily funded by Congress through the U.S. State Department, which considers such outreach efforts valuable to the long-term interests of the country.

Some 39 heads of state were Fulbright recipients, along with 60 Nobel Prize winners and 88 Pulitzer Prize winners.

Mok grew up in San Leandro, attended Roosevelt School, Bancroft Middle School and San Leandro High School before getting a master's degree from Wellesley College and a doctorate in environmental science from the University of Melbourne in Australia.

City of San Leandro's Home Earthquake Strengthening Course

The City of San Leandro is again offering its nationally recognized and award-winning Home Earthquake Strengthening Course to homeowners. This is a "do-it-yourself" course geared towards owners of older, raised-floor homes. Homeowners will be shown how to identify and strengthen structural weaknesses in their homes. Upon completion of this four-day course, each homeowner will have a customized blueprint for their seismic project.

If you own a hillside home, please contact the Division of Building & Safety at (510) 577-3405.

When: March 6, 11, 13 and 18

This is a four-day course.

Where: Surlene Grant Community Room @
999 E. 14th Street, San Leandro

Time: 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Cost for City of San Leandro Residents:

\$30.00 for single / \$35.00 for couples

Cost for Non-Residents / Unincorporated

San Leandro: \$50.00 for single / \$60.00 for couples

Class size is limited.

REGISTRATION BY MAIL

PHONE, OR

EMAIL: Permitsbyemail@sanleandro.org

ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE BASIS

For more information, please call Division of Building & Safety Services at (510) 577-3405.

TO REGISTER: Please mail your payment and information or call:



**City of San Leandro
Building Division
835 E. 14th Street
San Leandro, CA 94577
(510) 577-3405**