



## Spring Forward

SET YOUR CLOCKS FORWARD ONE HOUR  
ON SUNDAY FOR DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ..... 4

WEEKEND WEATHER

SUNNY

Sunnr thru Sunday

HIGHS: 57-69

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

LOWS: 41-46

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

# San Leandro Times

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

VOL. 35 • NO. 10

THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025

SAN LEANDRO • CALIFORNIA



PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

Pirates pitcher Gary Ferguson battles the Encinal batters in the early innings.

## Pirates Edge Encinal at Home, 8-7

The San Leandro High baseball team beat Encinal, 8-7, last Friday afternoon on the Pirates home field.

The win followed an 11-5 victory over Skyline earlier in the week in the opening game of the season, giving San Leandro a record of 2-0.

The Pirates will host Mission High of San Francisco on Saturday at 11 a.m., and Berkeley next Tuesday, March 11, at 3:30 p.m.

In other games, Arroyo High got shut out at Ukiah on Saturday, 8-0, and San Lorenzo beat Mt. Diablo twice,

both home and away, by scores of 12-2 and 25-0.

San Lorenzo High will host Ygnacio Valley this Friday at 3:30. The Arroyo baseball team will travel to Dublin High on Saturday for a game at 11 a.m.

## Man Charged For Shooting At SL Police

District Attorney Ursula Jones Dickson charges man with attempted murder in shooting

The district attorney has charged a man with attempted murder for shooting at three San Leandro police officers after a traffic stop on Feb. 16.

District Attorney Ursula Jones Dickson announced last week that Reynaldo Melendez, 40, has been charged with three counts of attempted murder for shooting at the officers.

Melendez was stopped by San Leandro police as he was driving a pickup truck that

matched the description of a vehicle that was reportedly used as a weapon in a domestic violence incident in the parking lot of the Walmart on Hesperian Boulevard.

Three officers on the scene fired their weapons, but neither they nor the suspect were injured in the incident. The suspect was taken into custody.

In addition to attempted murder, Melendez was also

see SHOOTING, page 11

## Feds Charge Former Substitute Teacher For Threatening Letters

By Jim Knowles  
San Leandro Times

The U.S. Attorney's Office charged Lester Dale Lee, 69, of Oakland, with mailing threatening communications to Dayton Elementary School in San Leandro.

Lee allegedly mailed threatening letters to Dayton on three occasions in 2023,

according to the criminal complaint. The first letter was sent in May 2023 to the school and addressed to a Dayton teacher.

In the letter, Lee posed as a parent of a student in the teacher's classroom. He used racial slurs to describe some of

see TEACHER, page 11

## City Budget Faces Future Deficit

By Mike McGuire  
San Leandro Times

San Leandro residents got to pick their city budget priorities at two Budget Engagement public meetings held last week, but a looming deficit can't be overlooked.

The exercise is not just a fun choice between enjoyable alternatives, City Manager Janelle Cameron cautioned.

"We have a problem - San Leandro has a structural deficit," Cameron said. "We're set up for expenditures to be more than revenue. We need to course-correct."

Cameron said that we are not doomed to drastic and

immediate cuts, though.

"We're in a great position right now - we have some space to fix it," she said.

People gathered on Thursday, February 27 at the Marina Community Center and on Saturday, March 1 at the Surlene Grant Meeting Room to rank projects within the City Council's five top priority categories.

Those categories are public safety, infrastructure, quality of life, economic development, and housing and homelessness. Items within

see BUDGET, page 10



PHOTO BY MIKE MCGUIRE

City Manager Janelle Cameron explains San Leandro's budget situation at a Budget Engagement session at the Marina Community Center on February 27. Assistant City Manager T. Michael Yuen is at right.

### INSIDE YOUR TIMES

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#### EDUCATION

Big trip in store for student essay winners. **Page 3**

#### NEWS

Police review board reviews military gear. **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.



## San Leandro Times

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

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## VITA Offers Free Tax Preparation

The IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) will offer no-cost tax preparation to qualified taxpayers who earn \$67,000 or less annually (applies to both the individual and households), persons with disabilities, and limited English-speaking people.

The service will be available by appointment on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. through April 15 at the Marina Community Center, 15301 Wicks Boulevard in San Leandro.

In addition, services will

be available from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Senior Community Center, 13909 East 14th Street on the following dates: March 11, March 20 and April 1.

To make your appointment at either site or for more information contact VITA by email at [vita.eitc@acgov.org](mailto:vita.eitc@acgov.org) or by calling at (510) 271-9141.

This service is possible thanks to a partnership with the Alameda County Social Services Agency, VITA, and the City of San Leandro.



PHOTO COURTESY OF INNER WHEEL

Inner Wheel members Barbara Mehan BAWAR (Bay Area Women Against Rape) Chairperson, JoAnne Frazier Past vice president, and Linda Mahadevan past president attended the Founders Day Celebration in Saratoga.

### Clarification

The story about the volunteers supporting the woman who had racist graffiti painted on her fence ("San Leandra's Rally for Reed," Feb. 27, 2025), incorrectly said that City Councilman Dylan Boldt helped repaint the fence. He wasn't part of the painting crew but he did offer to help pay for it.

## Inner Wheel Meets in Saratoga

The Inner Wheel Club of San Leandro enjoyed a full

day in Saratoga recently in fellowship with Inner Wheel District 517.

The Inner Wheel Club of Saratoga hosted the Founders Day Celebration at the Saratoga Country Club. The guest speaker was Amber Caldwell, an IWUSA Foundation trustee.

Caldwell spoke about Camp No Limits, a program to educate and empower young people with limb loss/limb differences and their families to discover and develop a

healthy, happy and independent lifestyle.

Inner Wheel Club of SL continues to support the Myoelectric Limb Project through their yearly charitable fundraising events. IW strives to promote friendship, to encourage personal service, and to foster international understanding.

For more information on Inner Wheel of San Leandro, email: [iwclubofsanleandro@gmail.com](mailto:iwclubofsanleandro@gmail.com)

## Bay-O-Vista

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## Support Group for Tobacco Recovery Meets on Thursdays

The Support Group for Tobacco Recovery meets in San Leandro every Thursday from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. in the Sequoia Room Conference Center at Creekside Plaza, 1100 San Leandro Blvd., one block from the San Leandro BART Station.

Discussion topics include: your relationship with tobacco, self-care and stress

relief, your body and tobacco, medicines that can help, protecting your wellness and recovery – The New You: What's Next?

Receive a \$10 gift card, up to 5 per person, for participating. A collaboration between Lifelong's East Bay Community Recovery Project and the Alameda County Tobacco Control Program.

**Don't Forget... Daylight Savings**  
**Spring Forward ~ Sunday, March 9**  
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## Community Calendar

### Hearing Loss Association Meeting

The Hearing Loss Association of America, East Bay will host three speakers who are teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) at schools in the Bay Area on Saturday, March 8, at the Kaiser Permanente, Fabiola Building, 3801 Howe St, Basement G-26, in Oakland. Social and refreshments at 9:30 a.m., presentation at 10 a.m., free pizza at 11:30 a.m. Learn about what DHH teachers do and why they feel it's the best job in the world. The meeting is available both In-Person and virtual (Zoom). Register at: [www.HearingLossEB.org](http://www.HearingLossEB.org) by March 6.

### The San Leandro Art Association Presents a Free Art Demonstration

The San Leandro Art Association will host a free art presentation on Tuesday, March 11, at the Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave. Socializing and refreshments at 5:30 p.m., a short meeting at 6 p.m., and the demonstration begins at 6:30 p.m. Local artist Sean Shelly will be discussing his approach to color theory and the use of color in his art. SLAA members will also be displaying artwork for the Artist of the Month Contest. All ages are welcome to this free event. For more information go to: [sanleandroart.contact@gmail.com](mailto:sanleandroart.contact@gmail.com)

### First United Methodist Senior Exercise

First United Methodist Church, 1600 Bancroft Ave. in San Leandro, invites senior citizens to a free program of seated exercise and meditation, followed by conversation and table activities with tea and healthy snacks. Meet on Tuesday mornings from 10 to 11:30 a.m. from March 11 to May 13 in Hale Hall which is entered from Bancroft Ave. Nurture your body, mind, and spirit while building community. All are welcome, non-denominational, no charge. For more information, call the church office at 510-483-0606.

### Senior Lunch Program at First Presbyterian

First Presbyterian Church of San Leandro, 180 Estudillo Ave., will offer a senior "Young at Heart" lunch program the third Thursday of each month at 11:30 a.m., beginning on March 20. Each lunch will be followed by a program ranging from musical groups to information about local charities. On March 20, Peter Small will present an entertaining program about legendary inventor Thomas Edison. Space is limited. Call 510-483-2772 to reserve your spot. A \$5 donation is suggested to help cover the cost of lunch.

### 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](http://SanLeandro.org/Boards)

### San Leandro Toastmasters Meet Every Thursday

San Leandro Toastmasters meets every Thursday from 6:45 to 7:45 p.m. online through Zoom. Email [sanleandrotm@gmail.com](mailto:sanleandrotm@gmail.com) for more information. Also, the Toastmasters meet in person at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave., on the last Thursday of every month from 6:45 to 7:45 p.m.

### Umpires Needed For HARD Recreation Softball

Hayward Softball Umpires Assoc. is recruiting year round, to work paid HARD Recreation Softball games – men's and women's and co-ed slow pitch. We train all age groups in fast and slow pitch. Call Educational Director at 510-586-8592 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. or email [umpire500.61@gmail.com](mailto:umpire500.61@gmail.com) for more information.

### 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?

## Muir Alumni Invited to Reunite With Coaches

All John Muir Middle School alumni are invited to Muir on the morning of Friday, March 14, from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Former John Muir coaches Jack Nelson (1990-2008) and Rich Vaeth (1969-2003) will reprise their roles as physical education teachers for one morning, and lead the group in exercise, kickball and socializing.

All alumni are welcome who attended Muir from 1970 to 2008. Rain or shine. In case of rain, activities will be in the gym.

March 14 will be a staff development day, so the event won't interfere with any school activities.

Sign up with Nelson by calling 510-303-2305.



Yellowstone National Park is one of the places visited by students who had winning essays, art or poems.

## America's Field Trip Invites Students To Enter and Win an Unforgettable Trip

Winning students take a field trip to Kennedy Space Center, Yellowstone National Park, Independence Hall

America's Field Trip is a nationwide contest designed

to engage elementary, middle, and high school students around America's upcoming 250th anniversary in 2026.

Students are invited to submit an essay, artwork, or poem answering the question: "What does America mean to you?"

### Field Trips for First-Place Winners

First-place winners will be awarded one of several unforgettable field trips to places like Kennedy Space Center in Florida; the Rock 'n' Roll

Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio; the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and more. Second-place winners and teachers can also earn cash awards.

### Entries Due by April 16

Entries are due by April 16 at 5 p.m. Entry guidelines and submission instructions can be found on the website for America's Field Trip: <https://america250.org/fieldtrip>

Find teacher resources at: <https://america250.org/fieldtrip/teacher-resources/>

## Learn How to Bolt And Brace Your Home

The Home Strengthening Earthquake Workshop series, held quarterly for homeowners, covers common residential construction vulnerabilities and essential retrofit techniques to enhance a home's earthquake resilience.

The workshop is offered by the city's Building and Safety Services Division, and includes four 2-hour classroom sessions. By the final

session, you will have a complete plan to bolt and brace your home to its foundation.

The 4-class workshop meets from 6 to 8 p.m. at the following dates: Thursday, March 6, Tuesday, March 11, Thursday, March 13, and Tuesday, March 18 at the Surlene Grant Community Room, 999 East 14th St., next to the San Leandro police station.

## Events at the Library

### Friends of the Library CD Sale

The Friends of the San Leandro Library will host a CD sale on Saturday, March 8, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Trustees Room at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave. Check out a large selection of CDs at low prices. All CDs are \$1 per disc, or buy 3 discs and get 1 disc free. There will be a few LPs and vinyl for sale too. All proceeds benefit the San Leandro Library's programs and services. Credit cards now accepted.

### Learn Essential Outdoor Survival Skills

An interactive program teaches adults the fundamental skills to stay safe and self-sufficient outdoors on Saturday, March 8, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the San Leandro Main Library, 300 Estudillo Ave. Whether planning a wilderness adventure or just want to be prepared for emergencies, this workshop provides practical knowledge and hands-on activities. Adults (18+), beginner to intermediate skill levels. Register at <https://sanleandro.libcal.com/event/14113399> For more information, visit [sanleandrolibrary.org/communityread](http://sanleandrolibrary.org/communityread) or call 510-577-3971.

## Spiritual, but not religious?

Watch 12:12pm Live-stream at [unitysanleandro.org](http://unitysanleandro.org) or on Facebook Live

- We emphasize spirituality more than religion.
- We believe there are many paths to God.
- We show you how to transform your life through practical spiritual principles.
- Everyone is welcome.

SUNDAY 12:12 P.M.

### Unity Church of San Leandro

Meeting in person on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays at 12:12 PM  
San Leandro Senior Community Center  
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Cooking with Beer

Beer is wonderful to cook with and, besides being a lot cheaper than that other popular cooking beverage, it's subtler and homier. Because it is such a satisfying, cooling drink, many people forget that beer is also one of the world's greatest seasoning agents.

As a marinade for meat, fish or seafood, it tenderizes. In roasting, baking or broiling, beer is used to baste the foods or as an ingredient in the basting sauce to impart a rich, dark color and highlight the gravy. As a baking liquid, beer is unsurpassed, adding lightness and buoyancy to biscuits, pan-

cakes, cakes and a variety of homemade breads. So move over wine and make way for a little of the brewer's art in the kitchen.

BEER-BATTERED ONION RINGS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 eggs, separated
- 1 cup beer
- 4 tablespoons melted butter
- Salt to taste
- 3 large onions, sliced into rings
- 2 quarts oil for frying

Sift flour into a large bowl. In another large bowl, whisk egg yolks. Mix in beer, butter and salt. Set aside 1 cup of flour for dipping the onion rings. Slowly stir the egg yolk mixture into the remaining flour and mix well. Allow the mixture to stand 30 to 60 minutes. Heat deep fryer to 375°F.

In a small bowl, stiffly beat the egg whites. Gently combine the egg whites with the batter. Coat each onion ring with flour and dip into batter.

Deep fry the battered rings, several at a time, until golden

brown. Drain on paper towels and serve. Makes 5 servings.

BEER CHEESE SOUP

- 2 tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 chicken bouillon cubes
- 6 cups milk
- 1-1/4 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- Pinch dry mustard
- Salt, pepper and paprika
- 1-1/2 cups beer
- Chopped green bell pepper
- Crumbled crisp bacon

Cook onion in butter in top of double boiler directly over burner until golden brown. Stir in flour and bouillon cubes. Blend in milk. Place over bottom of double boiler with 1 inch hot water and cook until slightly thickened. Add cheese and mustard and cook until cheese melts, stirring occasionally. Season to taste with salt, pepper and paprika.

Add 1/4 cup beer to each serving and accompany with green pepper and bacon. Makes 6 servings.

TEXAS BEER CHILI

- 2 tablespoons lean ground beef

- 2 (8-ounce) cans tomato sauce
- 1 (16-ounce) can pinto beans
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon salt, to taste
- 1 teaspoon cayenne or less
- 1 (16-ounce) can tomatoes
- 1 (12-ounce) can beer
- 1 small onion, chopped

Cook ground beef in frying pan and drain liquid. Mix beef in large pot with tomato sauce, pinto beans and chopped up can of peeled tomatoes. Add chili powder, oregano and your favorite beer (or water, if preferred). Salt lightly to taste and add 1 small onion. Simmer for 10 minutes and then carefully add cayenne pepper. One teaspoon will be quite hot so you may want to try just a little. Stir it in slowly and cook another 5 minutes.

This chili tastes even better the next day and you can also try different kinds of beans.

SOUTHERN COOKED GREENS

- 1/2 pound chopped raw bacon
- 3 cups julienne

- onions
- Salt and ground black pepper
- Pinch cayenne
- 2 tablespoons minced shallots
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 (12-ounce) bottle beer
- 1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- 6 pounds greens, such as mustard greens, collard greens, kale, and spinach, cleaned and stemmed

In a large pot, render the bacon until crispy, about 5 minutes. Add the onions and cook for about 6 to 7 minutes or until the onions are wilted. Season the mixture with salt, pepper and pinch of cayenne. Add the shallots and garlic and cook for 2 minutes.

Stir in the beer, vinegar, and molasses. Stir in the greens, a third at a time, pressing the greens down as they start to wilt. Cook, uncovered for about 1-1/4 hours. Serves 8.

PASTA & EGGPLANT IN BEER

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 medium eggplant, about 1 pound, peeled and diced
- Salt and pepper
- 6 ounces smoked ham, cubed
- 1 cup lager (beer)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 cup fresh or frozen peas
- 1 pound large tubular pasta such as penne, cooked
- Grated Parmesan cheese

In a large skillet heat the olive oil over medium heat. Put in the eggplant, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, for about 10 minutes, until it becomes soft.

Stir in the ham, and fry 2 minutes. Add the lager and rosemary, and bring to a boil. Reduce the liquid by half. Put in the peas, reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook for 2 minutes.

Stir the cooked pasta into the sauce, and cook for 30 seconds to heat through. Transfer to a serving bowl, sprinkle with plenty of Parmesan cheese, and serve. Yields 4 to 6 servings.

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HOROSCOPE by Salomé

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ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's a good time to reassess important relationships, both personal and professional, to see where problems might exist and how they can be overcome. Keep the lines of communication open.

TAURUS (April 20 - May 20): It's not easy to bring order to a chaotic situation, whether it's in the workplace or at home. But if anyone can do it, you can! A pleasant surprise awaits you by week's end.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be careful that you don't make an upcoming decision solely on the word of those who might have their own reasons for wanting you to act as they suggest. Check things out for yourself.

CANCER (June 21 - July 22): A personal relationship that seems to be going nowhere could be restarted once you know why it stalled. An honest discussion could result in some surprising revelations.

LEO (July 23 - August 22): An unexpected attack of self-doubt could be a way of warning yourself to go slow before making a career-changing decision. Take more time to do a closer study of the facts.

VIRGO (August 23 - Sept. 22): A workplace problem needs your attention now before it deteriorates to a point beyond repair. A trusted third party could be helpful in closing the gaps that have opened.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - October 22): A recent family situation could give rise to a new problem. Keep an open mind and avoid making judgments about anyone's motives until all the facts are in.

SCORPIO (October 23 - November 21): Rely on your always-sharp intuition to alert you to potential problems regarding someone's attempt to explain away the circumstances behind a puzzling incident.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): Although you still need to do some snipping off of those lingering loose ends from a past project, you can begin moving on to something else.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): With your self-confidence levels rising, you should feel quite comfortable with taking on a possibly troublesome but potentially well-rewarded situation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): Travel is favored, both for business and for fun. The end of the week brings news about an upcoming project that could lead toward a promised career change.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20): You might feel suddenly overwhelmed by a flood of responsibilities. But if you deal with each one in its turn, you'll soon be able to hold your head above water and move on.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

V	A	C	R	E	A	M	M	A	M
I	L	E	E	L	B	A	I	R	A
C	E	R	A	M	I	C	S	N	E
E	P	A	S	O	C	I	A	L	S
A	M	B	E	R	S	N	O	V	
C	A	R	K	I	M	B	A	R	N
D	R	U	G	X	E	S	N	O	O
C	A	M	U	S	H	U	M	V	I
I	T	O	N	O	M	A	A	M	
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N	O	T	A	E	N	F	O	R	C
I	G	O	R	O	D	E	R	E	M
T	O	M	S	S	O	W	S	R	O



# Seniors: Does Your Estate Plan Cover Digital Assets?

By Gene L. Osofsky, Esq.  
Special to the Times

**Q:** I am a frequent user of Facebook and other social media accounts, and I sometimes wonder what would happen to my accounts upon my death. Would my family be able to access my posts or terminate my accounts?

**A:** Under a California law that went into effect January 1, 2017, the answer is “yes”, provided that you take proactive steps during your lifetime to authorize access after your death. The law is called the “Revised Uniform Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act” (“Act”) or AB 691. Previously, California law was silent on the right of family members to access such records after the owner’s death.

Under this Act, there are essentially four ways in which you may give a person you trust (your “fiduciary”) access to your social media accounts after your demise. The Act calls these “digital assets.”

1) Use On-Line Tool: You may give consent in the “Online Tool” set up by the account custodian, such as Facebook or Twitter (“X”), in response to the new law. The consent you provide in this tool overrides anything to the contrary in the custodian’s “terms of service,” or any contrary intention in your will or other legal document;

2) Grant Authority In A Legal Document: Under the new law, you may grant access in your Last Will, Power of Attorney, Trust, or other legal document. But this au-



Gene Osofsky

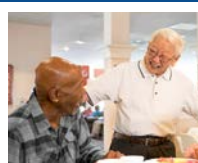
thorization must specifically grant the right to access your digital assets. A general grant of authority to deal with your estate may not be sufficient.

3) Terms of Service Agreement: If you have failed to grant access by using the account custodian’s “Online Tool,” nor given specific au-

thority in your Last Will or other legal document, then the custodian’s Terms of Service (“TOS”) would control, and the TOS may or may not grant authority to access records of your digital communications after your death.

4) Court Order: Finally, see SENIORS, page 12

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# REAL ESTATE GALLERY



## REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Carl Medford, CRS  
Special to the Times

GUEST COMMENTARY



# Family Gifts Can Ease Downpayment Woes

By Carl Medford, CRS  
Special to the Times

With Bay Area home prices soaring into the stratosphere, buyer wannabees are finding it increasingly difficult to come up with adequate downpayments. As a result, many seek help

from their families. This is nothing new: my wife and I asked her parents for help getting into our first home over 40 years ago. It worked back then and is a viable option today as well.

As is the case with any home purchase, every penny must be accounted

for: any funds that “suddenly appear” without proper documentation could derail your loan.

Money being provided by extended family members can qualify as part of a buyer’s downpayment but must follow strict guidelines. To begin, it must be a gift. If it is categorized as a loan, then it will be factored into the buyer’s debt ratio which could actually push the numbers over the acceptable limits and lower the qualifying purchase price.

All funds coming in as a gift must be fully documented in the form of a “gift letter.” The letter must specify the amount and the fact that repayment is not expected. Lenders can provide templates for buyers that can be filled out, signed by the applicable family members and then sent to the lender.

Differing loan programs also have different criteria that must be adhered to. As an example, FHA loans limit eligible sources



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The  
vernal  
equinox



ARTIST'S DEPICTION - NOT TO SCALE

- The **first day of spring** arrives Thursday, March 20, 2025.
- This day is known as the “vernal equinox.” In Latin, *ver* means “spring,” *aequus* means “equal” and *nox* means “night.”
- On this day, Earth’s position allows the northern and southern hemispheres to receive the sun’s rays equally; night and day are nearly equal in length. Spring comes to the northern hemisphere and autumn to the southern hemisphere. – Brenda Weaver

Sources: [earthsky.org](http://earthsky.org), [almanac.com](http://almanac.com), [vocabulary.com](http://vocabulary.com), @NWSNorman

of funding to relatives, close friends, charities, employers or labor unions. Conforming loans mandate that any gift funds provider be directly related, or by marriage, adoption or legal guardianship. VA loans are significantly less strict, allowing funds from almost anyone.

Surprisingly, many buyers do not know that gift funds are an option and so delay their purchases until they can manage to save up money on their own. This can be a Catch-22 scenario, as prices can often increase faster than a buyer’s ability to save adequate funds.

It is important to understand that, from the lender’s perspective, these funds must be categorized as a gift. In our case, once we had the gift funds in hand for our first purchase along with the accompanying gift letter, my father-in-law pulled me aside and stated, “You do understand we want this money back, right?” Bottom line, regardless of any arrangement you have with a gift provider, that stays between you and them.

Need help with your downpayment? A gift may be the ticket to success.

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.

## RECENT HOME SALES

### Castro Valley

20111 West Ridge Court #16 94546: \$720,000 [2 BD - 1,440 SF - 1977  
5373 San Simeon Place 94552: \$880,000 [3 BD - 1,546 SF - 1981  
20003 Summercrest Drive 94552: \$905,000  
4741 Sorani Way 94546: \$1,070,000 [3 BD - 1,730 SF - 1963

**TOTAL SALES: 5**  
**LOWEST AMOUNT: \$720,000** **MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$905,000**  
**HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,190,000** **AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$953,000**

### SAN LEANDRO

1188 Burkhart Avenue 94579: \$375,000 [2 BD - 821 SF - 1950  
14475 Kings Court 94578: \$520,000 [2 BD - 1,035 SF - 1974  
14172 Outrigger Drive 94577: \$550,000 [2 BD - 1,033 SF - 1988  
15162 Golden Gate Drive 94579: \$700,000 [2 BD - 1,256 SF - 1951  
1548 137th Avenue 94578: \$750,000 [2 BD - 1,014 SF - 1947  
1747 Oriole Avenue 94578: \$800,000 [3 BD - 1,448 SF - 1946  
520 Pershing Drive 94577: \$800,000 [2 BD - 1,101 SF - 1941  
1421 156th Avenue 94578: \$810,000 [3 BD - 1,026 SF - 1947  
1655 Boxwood Avenue 94579: \$818,000 [3 BD - 1,149 SF - 1954  
14292 Tiburon Road 94577: \$910,000 [4 BD - 1,804 SF - 1963  
1965 166th Avenue 94578: \$920,000 [1,588 SF - 1951  
356 Accolade Drive 94577: \$925,000 [4 BD - 1,627 SF - 2002  
1709 140th Avenue 94578: \$965,000 [3 BD - 1,732 SF - 1946  
1789 Skyview Drive 94577: \$1,365,000 [3 BD - 2,343 SF - 1963

**TOTAL SALES: 14**  
**LOWEST AMOUNT: \$375,000** **MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$805,000**  
**HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,365,000** **AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$800,571**

### SAN LORENZO

1231 Via Los Trancos 94580: \$865,000 [3 BD - 1,563 SF - 1950

**TOTAL SALES: 1**  
**LOWEST AMOUNT: \$865,000** **MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$865,000**  
**HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$865,000** **AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$865,000**

### HAYWARD

25938 Kay Avenue #223 94545: \$460,000 [1 BD - 840 SF - 1989  
267 Sunset Boulevard #2 94541: \$530,000 [2 BD - 1,070 SF - 1983  
24303 Dover Lane 94541: \$550,000 [2 BD - 1,208 SF - 1978  
810 Voyager Way #21 94544: \$565,000 [2 BD - 1,110 SF - 1988  
26115 Eastman Court 94544: \$610,000 [3 BD - 1,086 SF - 1952  
28315 Rochelle Avenue 94544: \$655,000 [5 BD - 1,755 SF - 1951  
20906 Locust Street 94541: \$687,000 [2 BD - 951 SF - 1948  
1257 Apple Avenue 94541: \$693,000 [3 BD - 1,585 SF - 1953  
27733 Dickens Avenue 94544: \$730,000 [3 BD - 1,162 SF - 1954  
31823 Carroll Avenue 94544: \$760,000 [3 BD - 1,221 SF - 1951  
25833 Bryn Mawr Avenue 94542: \$807,000 [2 BD - 888 SF - 1950  
21406 Ocean View Drive 94541: \$810,000 [2 BD - 1,020 SF - 1920  
26141 Hickory Avenue 94544: \$830,000 [3 BD - 1,359 SF - 1952  
31434 Brae Burn Avenue 94544: \$831,000 [3 BD - 1,233 SF - 1955



# Growing Spuds Is as Easy as Pie

By Buzz Bertolero  
The Dirt Gardener

**Q** I have a four-year-old lime that's planted in the ground. Two years ago, the limes were just about the right size. Today, they are a lot smaller, and the leaves are covered with black stuff. In addition, it hasn't grown as it is the same size as when I planted it. What am I doing wrong?

**A** Your lime is suffering from several problems that are not related to each other. First, the black stuff on the leaves is called Black Sooty Mold. Insects such as Aphids, especially in the spring or Scale, are the primary culprit, along with other sucking insects. They feed on

the new growth, passing the plant juices through their bodies. This clear, sticky substance then drops onto the foliage below, where the black mold grows. You prevent the Black Mold by controlling the bugs with Horticultural Oil during the year. In March, start feeding the lime monthly through October with Citrus food. The flush of new growth will mask or hide the discolored leaves. The Black Mold will not disappear on its own. Your second problem is your plant is planted too deep in the ground; hence, it hasn't grown. The top of the first root should be at or just above the soil surface. When planted too deep, plants struggle and eventually die from root rot. In late March, I would dig the plant and replant it. You

protect the exposed roots by mulching the area when the temperatures warm up. Lastly, the small, dry fruit is caused by irregular watering and fertilizer. After replanting, place a six-inch high watering basin around the plant. It should extend from the trunk to the drip line. You would fill this basin to the brim several times when you water. Once the rainy season concludes, water weekly. When the temperatures are over ninety degrees water twice a week, you'll see a vast improvement in your lime by the fall. I'd also take a few digital pictures so you can track the changes throughout the year.

**Q** Will it harm my roses to trim off the thorn after pruning?

**A** I'm not sure what you would gain by removing the thorns. There is no horticultural advantage in removing them. You are risking the plants by creating entry points for stem diseases and

invading insects. These bushes will not remain thornless for long as the thorns return with the new growth. I think it's just a waste of time with little to gain from it. However, I would do the following: remove all the remaining foliage on the bush(es) and the debris at the bush's bushes. Next, spray the dormant canes and ground immediately under them with a Copper Fungicide.

The fungicide helps control the overwintering fungal spores. Finally, loosen the metal tag so it doesn't girdle the stem where it's attached.

Buzz Bertolero is an Advanced California Certified Nursery Professional. The Dirt Gardener's website is [www.dirtgardener.com](http://www.dirtgardener.com), and questions can be sent by email to [buzz@dirtgardener.com](mailto:buzz@dirtgardener.com).

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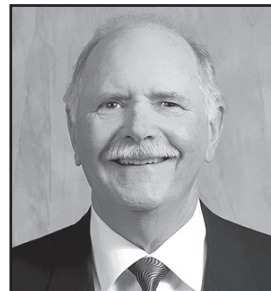
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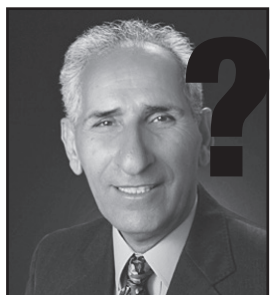
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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF

Gary Stefan Wemmer.  
Case Number:  
25PR110120

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of: **Gary Stefan Wemmer.**

A Petition for Probate has been filed by **James Christopher Lujan (Wemmer)** in the Superior Court of California, County of Alameda. The Petition for Probate requests that **James Christopher Lujan (Wemmer)** be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

THE PETITION requests the decedent's WILL and codicils, any, be admitted to probate. The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court.

The PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on **March 14, 2025, 9:45 a.m., Dept. 202, at 2120 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704.**

IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the **later of either (1) four months** from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code or (2) **60 days** from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. **Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.**

YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Petitioner: **James Christopher Lujan (Wemmer)**  
4573 Glacier Street Springfield, OR. 97478 541-870-6692

LEGAL 1950 SLT - 25PR110120 02/20/25, 02/27/25, 03/06/25

THE TIMES CROSSWORD

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- 13 "Prometheus" actor Idris
- 14 Tehran's country
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- 18 Ecol. watchdog
- 19 Church matchups
- 21 Mellow yellows
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- 25 Train unit
- 26 Actress Catrall
- 28 Rural buildings
- 32 Pharmaceutical
- 34 Crosses (out)
- 36 Cranny
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- 39 Drone
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- 51 Part of N.B.
- 52 Mob bully
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- 4 Comment
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- 6 Grade-school basics
- 7 Brick worker
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- 9 Location
- 10 Crumbly earth
- 11 Common conjunctions
- 16 Mimic
- 20 Male swan
- 21 Outlet letters
- 22 Actress Kate
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- 27 "Whatever"
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- 30 PBS science show
- 31 Nonfat
- 33 Fender instruments
- 35 Heat source
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- 53 Hardly any
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ANSWERS ON PAGE 4

LEGAL NOTICES

FILED February 10, 2025  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 612396  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS  
NAME STATEMENT  
Pursuant to Business and  
Professions Code  
Sections 17900-17930  
The name of the business(es):  
Mudroom Clay Studios located at 1311 Park Street #1281 Alameda, CA 94501 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Orange Blossom Arts LLC, located at 1311 Park Street #1281 Alameda, CA 94501. This business is conducted by a Limited Partnership. This business commenced N/A  
/s/Melissa O'Kane  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.  
Expires February 09, 20230  
FEB 13, 20, 27, MAR 06, 2025  
1935 - SLT

FILED January 21, 2025  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 612394  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS  
NAME STATEMENT  
Pursuant to Business and  
Professions Code  
Sections 17900-17930  
The name of the business(es):  
GoTo Landscaping located at 1934 Via Barrett, San Lorenzo, CA 94580 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Michio Goto, located at 1934 Via Barrett, San Lorenzo, CA 94580. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced N/A  
/s/Michio Goto  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.  
Expires January 20, 2030  
FEB 20, 27, MAR 06, 13, 2025  
1940 - SLT

FILED February 14, 2025  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 612487  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS  
NAME STATEMENT  
Pursuant to Business and  
Professions Code  
Sections 17900-17930  
The name of the business(es):  
Floor Covering Contractors located at 4421 Fair Ave Oakland, CA 94619 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Michael J. McBride JR, located at 4421 Fair Ave Oakland, CA 94619. This business is conducted by a Individual. This business commenced 01/00/1984  
/s/Michael J. McBride  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.  
Expires February 13, 2030  
FEB 27, MAR 06, 13, 20, 2025  
1945 - SLT

FILED February 14, 2025  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 612476  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS  
NAME STATEMENT  
Pursuant to Business and  
Professions Code  
Sections 17900-17930  
The name of the business(es):  
Samaritan In Action, located at 2470 W. Avenue 136th, San Leandro, CA 94577 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Nellie R. Casanas, located at 2470 W. Avenue 136th, San Leandro, CA 94577. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced 02/14/2025  
/s/Nellie R. Casanas  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.  
Expires February 13, 2030  
MAR 06, 13, 20, 27, 2025  
1950 - SLT

LEGAL NOTICES

FILED February 10, 2025  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 612394  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS  
NAME STATEMENT  
Pursuant to Business and  
Professions Code  
Sections 17900-17930  
The name of the business(es):  
Blackmen "Safe Space" Podcast located at 29212 Harpoon Way, #401 Hayward, CA 94544 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Martin L. Sharp, located at 29212 Harpoon Way, #401 Hayward, CA 94544. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced N/A  
/s/Martin L. Sharp  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.  
Expires February 09, 2030  
FEB 13, 20, 27, MAR 06, 2025  
1930 - SLT

FILED February 13, 2025  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 612452  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS  
NAME STATEMENT  
Pursuant to Business and  
Professions Code  
Sections 17900-17930  
The name of the business(es):  
Fonte's Custom Countertops located at 31374 Santa Elena Way, Union City, CA 94587 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Michael Fonte, located at 31374 Santa Elena Way, Union City, CA 94587. This business is conducted by An Individual. This business commenced N/A  
/s/Michael Fonte  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.  
Expires February 12, 2030  
FEB 20, 27, MAR 06, 13, 2025  
1940 - SLT

FILED February 19, 2025  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 612539  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS  
NAME STATEMENT  
Pursuant to Business and  
Professions Code  
Sections 17900-17930  
The name of the business(es):  
Cazabat Consulting located at 2195 East Avenue Fairview, CA 94541 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Cazabat Consulting LLC, located at 2195 East Avenue Fairview, CA 94541. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. This business commenced N/A  
/s/Rick Burtholomew  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.  
Expires February 18, 2030  
FEB 27, MAR 06, 13, 20, 2025  
1940 - SLT

FILED February 14, 2025  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY  
By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 612498  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS  
NAME STATEMENT  
Pursuant to Business and  
Professions Code  
Sections 17900-17930  
The name of the business(es):  
Crossroads Culture and Community Center, located at 296 A Mac Arthur, San Leandro, CA 94577 / 1235 Orchard Avenue Unit 2-UP, San Leandro, CA 94577 Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Akimasa Moore, located at 1235 Orchard Avenue Unit 2-UP, San Leandro, CA 94577. This business is conducted by Co-partners. This business commenced N/A  
/s/Akimasa Jawara Moore  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.  
Expires February 13, 2030  
FEB 27, MAR 06, 13, 20, 2025  
1945 - CVF



# Budget: Expenses in upcoming years need to be addressed

continued from front page

those categories were written on sheets posted on walls in the meeting rooms, and people were invited to put a limited number of stick-on dots by the items they would most want to see.

Those suggestions will be passed on to the City Council, which will hold an additional public meeting before passing a new two-year budget for fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 by May 30.

Some of the projects people could prioritize are already underway, having been funded in the present budget or previous ones.

Cameron led the sessions, joined by Assistant City Manager T. Michael Yuen and city Finance Director Nicole Gonzales.

Cameron said that a city's budget is always an estimate of what revenues and expenditures will be in a given year, and that either could run higher or lower in practice. Sometimes the news is good, such as an unexpected savings (often through an unfilled position). And sometimes it's the destruction caused by the storms that hit starting on New Year's Eve two years ago.

The Finance Department's figures show a budget surplus of \$9.8 million in 2024, a projected deficit of \$13.4 million in 2025, a surplus of 0.2 million in 2026, and a deficit of \$3.6 million in 2027.

The figures for last year and this year are 2024 revenues of \$144.7 million and expenditures of \$135 million, and 2025 revenues of \$143.4 million against expenditures of \$156.9 million.

Some of those fluctuations did not result from deliberately spending more than what came in or less than what came in, said Yuen. Numerous city operations span more than a single budget year, and sometimes a given project doesn't use all of its funding one year, but then draws on that to spend more than was budgeted in the subsequent year.

That can be true even if the project costs what it was expected to and budgeted for, Yuen said.

Cameron said short-term revenue and expenditure can be affected by such things as interest rates, geopolitics, natural disasters, changes in federal budgeting (such as aid to cities) and unemployment levels.

It's important not to lose track of longer-term needs of the city, such as facilities, vehicles and equipment, Cameron said. These wear out and have to be replaced, hopefully well before they fail suddenly. But if they're not failing at the moment, it's easy to spend money instead on more obvious needs.

## Necessary Upcoming Expenditures

There are some 34 city facilities that face a \$19 million maintenance and replacement backlog by fiscal year 2030, Cameron said. Our 71 miles of storm sewers need \$79.6 million worth of work. Our sewers need \$58.5 million of replacement and maintenance in the next five years, and \$91 million over the next 10 years.

The Parks Master Plan, now being finalized, is expected to show estimated capital costs of about \$14 million over the next 10 years.

City buildings and the city's IT systems need major attention as well, Cameron said.

Then there are the roads, Cameron said. To keep our 182 miles of roads in the same condition as they are now,



PHOTO BY MIKE MCGUIRE

The budget meetings were well publicized by City Hall but few people attended.

some \$12.5 million would be needed for the first five years, then \$8 million a year after that to maintain them in the same condition.

The city's current pavement condition index (PCI), on a 0-100 scale, stands at 61, Cameron said. That compares to an average of 67 for roads throughout Alameda County, and somewhere in the 80s for a well-maintained road. It would cost even more to

raise roads' PCI from where it stands now, she said.

"We don't have to pay for all of those things next year, but we do need to fix them soon," Cameron said.

An audience member questioned whether the city's structural deficit could be addressed through savings by reorganizing departments and checking staffing levels.

"We've been reducing staffing for years, and we

have quite lean staffing by now," Cameron replied. She said that by keeping a given task within a single merged department, quality of service can be improved from having it split between two or more departments.

"We're not going to reduce expenditures so much by reorganization, but we can keep more things from falling through the cracks," the city manager said.

## 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](mailto:letters@ebpublishing.com) or send by mail to: The Editor, San Leandro Times, 2060 Washington Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577.

#### USAID a Cornerstone

The United States Agency for International Development, USAID, has been a cornerstone for US diplomacy, economic growth, and global leadership since President John F. Kennedy established it in 1961 during the Cold War.

Elon Musk and President Trump assert that USAID is corrupt and are defunding it. They are using a sledgehammer rather than a scalpel to reduce fraud. With the abrupt closure of USAID, \$140 million worth of U.S. farmers' crops rot in warehouses. USAID accounts for less than 1% of our federal budget.

Soon, China and Russia will take the place of USAID and force our national security to crumble. Funding for USAID must be restored.

Gerald and Winifred Thompson  
Castro Valley

#### Nix Letters from Outsiders

Editor,

I would like to commend both Steve Parker and Allan K. Lindsay-O'Neal (Letters to the Editor, Feb. 27, 2025) on their responses to the letter written by Bruce Joffe and his assertions about President Trump and the price of eggs.

My question is why does the editor print opinions by people who do not live in our community as Mr. Joffe lives in Piedmont and seems to have his opinion voiced monthly in our local paper. Are there not enough letters from people in our own community voicing different opinions that you need to go to outsiders?

John Shaddle  
San Leandro

Amnesty for Immigrants  
Working in the U.S.

Editor,

My campaign stands with immigrant workers fighting deportation.

One way the capitalist billionaires maintain their rule is by pitting native-born against foreign-born workers to divide and weaken the working class. They profit from having a layer of workers they hope will accept worse conditions because they fear deportation. This is used to drive down wages of all.

Our unions need to unite and strengthen our class by fighting for amnesty for undocumented workers. Immigrants already play a big role in leading labor struggles as seen in the recent hotel worker strikes. Taking the burden of fear off those who are undocumented will strengthen the fight for better wages and working conditions for all.

A campaign for amnesty will counter what both Republican and Democratic politicians do on behalf of the bosses — managing the flow of immigrants to fit employers' needs and condemning many to a second-class status. Biden left office with deportation orders against over a million. Trump claims he will deport many more. Neither party aims to expel the mass of undocumented workers, but to frighten them and intensify their exploitation. In times

of economic crisis anti-immigrant voices get a hearing from some workers fearing competition for jobs. Every worker needs a job.

Unions need to fight for a government-funded public works program to hire and train millions to rebuild infrastructure and areas damaged by fires, build childcare centers, hospitals, and housing.

Our unions need to break from support to the capitalist parties and build a party of labor to organize all working people to support union organization and the fight for amnesty.

The working class can and must take political power away from the capitalists. We are the only class with the social weight, experience in common struggle, and capacity to fight capitalist rule and win. Which class rules is the decisive question facing workers here and worldwide.

Eric Simpson  
Oakland

Eric Simpson is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Oakland mayor

#### Our Democracy Is in Peril

Editor,

Friday morning, I listened to the White House meeting between Ukraine President Zelensky and

President Trump and Vice President Vance. I am beyond disappointed and disgusted on how President Zelensky was treated. Number 47 spoke as if Ukraine invaded Russia instead of the fact that Putin invaded Ukraine to take their natural resources and expand the Russian territory.

It has been less than 2 months since the new administration was sworn in and the damage that they have done to the relationship with our European and North American alliances may be irreparable.

Our former reputation as defenders and protectors of democracy is gone as Trump and his cabal of handpicked loyal cabinet members openly disparage our NATO allies and voted against a NATO resolution last week demanding that Russia withdraw from Ukraine.

Our democracy is in peril, and your voice matters now more than ever. Contact your elected officials daily at the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to tell them not to pass the March 14 budget to fund the government until Republicans and Democrats make a bi-partisan effort to halt this takeover of our democracy by the self-serving administration in Putin's pocket.

Ellen Muir  
San Leandro



## Teacher: Address labels made at print shop

*continued from front page*

the Black students in the class and threatened to shoot them, according to the complaint.

Lee had been a substitute teacher at Dayton Elementary and was fired in April 2023, following reports of conflicts with students.

Lee was not a school district employee but worked through a staffing agency that has a contract with the school district to provide substitute teachers. He had worked at numerous schools in the district, including Dayton, during the 2022-2023 school year.

In a second letter in May of 2023, the envelop was addressed to the principal and contained an unidentified white powder, which was intended to scare the principal, according to the complaint.

A third letter in May was addressed to the teacher, again using a racial slur and threatening to shoot the Black students and the teachers if they were not removed from the school, according to the complaint. Lee is described in the complaint as a 69-year-old Black man.

The FBI conducted an investigation along with the San Leandro Police Department. Investigators tracked the letters mailed by Lee to an Oakland post office and the main post office in Alameda, according to the complaint. They also found that he used a FedEx Office store and an Office Max to print the letters and address labels used on the letters.



The complaint included photos of Lester Dale Lee at a print center where he allegedly printed the letters he sent to Dayton School.

The FBI held a consensual interview with Lee and then conducted a search of his home in Oakland with a warrant.

In the interview, Lee described his views on public schools, which he said are "more structured" in higher income areas. He said that in lower-income areas, with more students of color, "some

places ... the students pretty much run the place."

Lee also said in the interview that some Black students were disrespectful toward him and "they would accuse me of being white," which he said was "a little strange," according to the complaint. He said that in their eyes, "I don't act Black ... I don't talk Black."

The U.S. Attorney's Office

added in a press release, "A complaint merely alleges that crimes have been committed, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt."

If Lee is found guilty he could face a maximum sentence of five years in prison for each violation.

## Mayor Gonzalez State of City Speech Set for March 18

The City of San Leandro invites the public to join Mayor Juan Gonzalez for the 2025 State of the City on Tuesday, March 18, at 6:30 p.m. at the Senior Community Center, 13909 East 14th St.

The mayor will share

key updates on programs and services that drive San Leandro forward, and highlight City Council priorities, including: Public Safety, Infrastructure, Housing & Homelessness, Quality of Life, and Economic Development.

## Join the Library's 2025 Community Read Program

Join the San Leandro Public Library's Community Read 2025

This year's book is Waubgeshig Rice's *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, a post-apocalyptic thriller with an indigenous perspective. Then engage in a number of community events such as a Survive and Thrive Workshop, various book discussions, and more.

Visit the Main Library at 300 Estudillo Ave. or the Manor Branch Library at 1241 Manor Blvd. to get a free copy of the novel while supplies last.

Another way to participate is to borrow an e-book or audiobook version through the library using the Libby App and your library card.

For more details, call 510-577-3971.

## Save Costs on Charging Electric Vehicles

PG&E is offering a program to help customers save on electric vehicle charging costs. EV Charge Manager ensures EVs are charged when electric rates and grid demand are low. Simply plug in the EV, set the target battery level and ready-by time and it will be ready to go when needed.

The program is available

to PG&E customers in Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties who own or lease an eligible Tesla or use a Wallbox, ChargePoint or Emporia charger. Customers must live in a single-family or detached residence to be eligible. Visit: [www.pge.com/en/clean-energy/electric-vehicles/ev-charge-program.html](http://www.pge.com/en/clean-energy/electric-vehicles/ev-charge-program.html)

## Shooting: Gun-use enhancement

*continued from front page*

charged with three counts of assault on a peace officer with a semiautomatic firearm, one count of possession of a firearm by a felon with priors, unlawful firearm activity, two counts of assault with a deadly weapon and three counts of child abuse.

The charges include a gun use enhancement and an additional enhancement for 2 strikes (one prior) at the time of the shooting.

The criminal complaint alleges that Melendez attempted to murder San Leandro Police Officers Blake Staniford, Quinton May, and Austin Lovel by allegedly firing at them with a semiautomatic weapon while the officers were engaged in the performance of their duties. The complaint also alleges that the defendant used his 2021 Toyota Tacoma as a deadly weapon.

"The crimes that are alleged here are very serious," said District Attorney Jones Dickson. "My office has zero tolerance for gun violence. The whole community is at risk when a gun is used in any crime. Public safety is a priority for this office as well as our community."

"We recognize the seriousness of this incident and want to reassure the community that it is being thoroughly

and objectively investigated," said San Leandro Police Chief Angela Averiett. "Our department remains dedicated to upholding the highest standards and adhering to ethical practices."

At the San Leandro City Council meeting on February 18, Mayor Juan González said that the city would work with the police department to release video footage of the incident to the public.

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FD1505 fdr651

## Now is your chance to participate in Eastbay Publishing's semi-annual "Women In Business" special section!

The Castro Valley Forum and San Leandro Times Present...

## WOMEN IN BUSINESS

March 19 (CVF) & March 20 (SLT), 2025  
Oct. 15 (CVF) & Oct. 16 (SLT), 2025

Here is your chance to tell your career success story in the Castro Valley Forum and the San Leandro Times. These special pages pay tribute to the women movers and shakers in our community. Whether you have started your own business, manage a local retail store, sold over a million dollars in real estate or have been a community leader, this section salutes top women employees and entrepreneurs through photo profiles.

Deadline for space reservations: Wednesday, Mar. 12 (CVF) & Thursday, Mar. 13 (SLT),  
Wednesday, Oct. 8 (CVF) & Thursday, Oct. 9 (SLT).

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Revised 2/23/25



# Police Review Board Looks at P.D.'s Military Gear

The San Leandro Police Department presented its annual military equipment report during the Community Police Review Board (CPRB) meeting on Feb. 19.

Assistant Police Chief Luis Torres outlined the police department's use of military-grade equipment over the past year, and explained what the police have done in response to last year's CPRB recommendations.

"This report increases transparency, accountability, and oversight for funding, acquisition and use of specified

equipment," Torres told the CPRB.

The presentation is required under AB 481, a 2021 California law requiring law enforcement to report annually to the public what military equipment it has and obtain approval before purchasing any more.

Torres reviewed the equipment that officers can currently use, including a surveillance robot, four drones, two armored vehicles, battering rams, hundreds of flash-bang grenades, tear gas canisters, and specialized shotguns and

rifles.

The large-scale vehicles were on display during community events like the Cherry Festival and car shows. San Leandro Police sent its command center to the gas leak on December 29, 2024, near Lewelling Boulevard and Washington Avenue, and to a suicide situation last year.

The police used some of their military weapons on March 7 last year to apprehend a murder suspect. Officers used one can of tear gas and fired 40 mm less-lethal rounds 11 times at a vehicle with a

Pleasanton murder suspect who crashed on I-580 westbound near Miramonte Avenue. The man had barricaded himself in the car and then took his own life.

In the last year, the police department purchased more rifles. Last March, the City Council approved the purchase of 40 shotguns under the AB 481 rules. The department purchased 20 in 2024 for \$51,999.90 (approximately \$2,600 each). The remaining 20 are on track for purchase this year for \$3,000 each.

The Police Department

also converted 16 SWAT rifles for patrol officer use for \$10,794.38 and removed four personally owned rifles from its inventory. Assistant Chief Torres said that officers can no longer use personally owned rifles as part of their job.

Last March, San Leandro's City Council prohibited the use of weapons on the police department's robots or drones, and limited the use of chemical agents or bean bag projectiles for crowd control. The CPRB was also against the purchase of wide-range TASER devices, microwave weapons, water cannons, or long-range acoustic devices.

This year, the San Leandro police would like to add two Aardvark Kinetic Breaching

Tools to their inventory. The weapons are hand-held impact rams that allow officers to crash through locks, hinges, and doorframes.

"These are beneficial to officers because they can use it behind a shield," Assistant Chief Torres said. "They are more efficient than typical battering rams. They cost \$14,000 apiece, and each has a 10-year lifespan."

Assistant Chief Torres said that the department had not received any community complaints and there were no violations of the SLPD's military equipment policies over the past year.

Now that the CPRB has reviewed the report, the City Council is expected to review the AB 481 report.

## Seniors: The complications of 'digital assets'

*continued from page 5*

unless you have specifically objected to the release in the Online Tool or in your Will or other legal document, your executor might apply for a court order, provided that he or she can show that disclosure is reasonably necessary for estate administration.

So, if you would like others to have access to your digital assets after your death, the two best ways to do this are as follows: (a) go to the custodian's website, locate the "online tool" established pursuant to this legislation and specifically consent to disclosure to your executor, successor trustee, or other designated loved ones after your death; and/or (b) specifically authorize disclosure in your Last Will, Power Of Attorney, Trust or other legal document.

If you have already prepared your estate planning documents, you might consider the creation of a stand-alone Power Of Attorney for Digital Assets. Note: normally, a power of attorney expires upon the death of the maker. But under this legislation, a consent in a power of attorney to access digital assets would apparently still be valid, for that limited purpose, after the death of the maker.

Further, this Act was recently amended, effective this year (2025), to address a previous shortcoming: previously, your fiduciary could only access these accounts upon your death. Now, under recently enacted AB 1458, your designated fiduciary can also do

so upon your incapacity. This now allows your Agent under a Durable Power of Attorney, or your court-appointed Conservator, to act during your lifetime where you are not able to do so yourself.

Lastly, the term "digital assets" is a bit confusing regarding bank accounts. It appears that the online access to these accounts (which permits you to pay bills electronically and view your banking transactions) is considered a covered "digital asset," but the actual money in those accounts is not. Thus, you may still need to go into your loved one's bank in order to handle certain transactions with respect to those accounts.

Still, where the need is to pay bills and determine account balances, the Digital Asset law is a welcome addition to the power now given to your Executor, Trustee, and – most recently – your Conservator and Agent under a POA.

In summary, if you desire to provide access to your social, medical, and on-line accounts upon your incapacity or your demise, you may now do so, provided that you take proactive steps as outlined above.

Gene L. Osofsky is an elder law and estate planning attorney who has been helping East Bay families for over 25 years with Trusts, Wills, Powers of Attorney, Probate, Medi-Cal Planning, and related matters. To contact his office, send an email to [Gene@Lawyer-ForSeniors.com](mailto:Gene@Lawyer-ForSeniors.com) or call (510) 247-2555.

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