

ARE ALL SENIORS
REQUIRED TO FILE
INCOME TAXES?

Tax Day Looms

4

WEEKEND WEATHER

MILD Mainly sunny with some afternoon clouds

HIGHS: 63-68

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

LOWS: 42-47

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

San Leandro Times

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

VOL. 31 • NO. 4

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2021

SAN LEANDRO • CALIFORNIA



PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

Pit Crew

A city road crew was out in the rain last week patching up cracks and potholes on Washington Avenue and other streets. Patching cracks in the pavement prevents potholes from forming.

Lewelling Neighbors Concerned with Disruptions, Calls for Police at House

By Michael Singer
San Leandro Times

Neighbors along the 800 block of Lewelling Boulevard say they're concerned about a home that has been the site of five police visits in the last 30 days, and that at one point included the use of helicopters and heavily armed officers.

In what is usually a quiet area in town west of Washington

Avenue, residents tell the San Leandro Times that they have launched numerous complaints with police about an uptick in crime surrounding the property. Neighbors say the reports include episodes of vehicle theft, vandalism, trespassing, graffiti, and petty theft.

The home sits on a half-acre parcel with a large backyard. According to San Leandro

City Manager's office staff, the owner filed paperwork so he could demolish the one-story single-family house built in 1915 and construct six townhome condominiums or two or three stories.

The City Council approved the planned development in November 2019. The applicant and property owner have yet to submit grading and building permits,

according to City of San Leandro spokesperson Paul Sanftner.

A representative for the owner, who asked to remain anonymous, said work on transforming the property into condos was halted once COVID-19 shut down city offices last year.

Lt. Ali Khan with the San Leandro Police Department Criminal Investigations unit

see *DISRUPTIONS*, page 10

City Council to Hold Planning Meeting

The San Leandro City Council will hold its annual planning session on Saturday, Feb. 6, starting at 9 a.m. on Zoom Video Conferencing Platform: <https://zoom.us/j/506831637>

The meeting will include opportunities for comments and questions from the public.

Agenda topics will also include a review of accomplishments from 2020, an update on the city's budget and financial forecast, along with a discussion on top priorities for the year ahead. A detailed meeting agenda will also be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting on the

Meeting Central section of the City of San Leandro website, sanleandro.org.

"This is one of the most important meetings of the year, and the public's input will allow us to set priorities for the upcoming year and beyond," said Mayor Pauline Cutter. "For this

year's planning session, I expect we will continue to discuss ways of assisting our residents and businesses in recovering from the pandemic as well as ways of advancing our race and equity objectives, along with numerous other important initiatives."

State Clears Pathway on School Opening

But local districts more cautious; county criteria needs to be met

By Michael Singer
San Leandro Times

Students and teachers may have been cleared to return to California classrooms, but local school district officials are taking few chances with continued Covid infections and the slow roll-out of vaccine.

The state opened the way for in-person instruction last Friday for K-12 schools, providing that they have an approved safety plan in place. But local school officials haven't yet set a schedule for schools to open.

Currently, state guidelines allow students in grades below middle school to return with restrictions. Middle and high school students will be allowed back on campus if infections remain low for five consecutive days and the county remains firmly in California's designated Red Tier. Alameda County is currently in the Purple Tier, the most restrictive stage.

"There are only a few boxes left to check," said San Leandro Unified School District spokesperson Keziah Moss. "To simultaneously be running one format of schooling (distance learning) while preparing for two future versions (hybrid learning and full in-person learning) has stretched resources and personnel in ways that would have been difficult to envision one year ago."

San Leandro launched its

COVID-19 testing for staff in a pilot phase last week, Moss said. The next phase is bringing back small groups of students for targeted, in-person support.

see *OPENING*, page 10

SL Woman's 'Ridiculous' Life Playing On YouTube

By Mike McGuire
San Leandro Times

"This is the story of the ridiculous 24th year of my life," says Hanna Rachel Gerry of San Leandro to begin *Being Me Is Ridiculous*, the one-woman show she recently performed at The Marsh in San Francisco and online.

Gerry goes on to caution the audience, "Barf bags are under your seat, and you may need them." (You won't, actually.)

When she was just out of college, the San Leandro High School graduate, actress and playwright was laid low by a

see *RIDICULOUS*, page 12

INSIDE YOUR TIMES

BOOKS

Journalist exposes slave labor in China. **Page 2**

NEWS

Mayor Cutter to head transit commission. **Page 3**

FOOD

The Super Bowl requires Super Snacks. **Page 5**

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MEETING SCHEDULES

CITY COUNCIL
Council meets on the first and third Monday of each month at 7 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 Michelle Mayfield at 667-3522.



PETS OF THE WEEK



Summer



Milo

The Pets of the Week at the Hayward Animal Shelter are Summer the bunny and Milo the guinea pig.

Summer is a curious female bunny who is friendly and easy to handle. She is particular about her room. She will arrange things just so and get upset if you move her things once she's put them in

the right place.

Milo is a male guinea pig who likes the company of his buddy, Bailey. He also likes snacking on fresh greens and hanging out in his guinea pig castle.

For more information on Summer or Milo, call the Hayward Animal Shelter at 510-293-7200.

American Companies Still Profit from Slave Labor

By Jim Knowles
San Leandro Times

It's not hard to see what we did wrong looking back hundreds of years ago.

But what might be interesting is to know what we're doing wrong today, what we overlook as "just the way it is." What will people a century from now think of us?

Journalist Amelia Pang gives us a hint in her book that explores how the products that we buy today, made and sold by American companies, exploits slave labor in China.

Made in China: A Prisoner, an SOS Letter, and the Hidden Cost of America's Cheap Goods is Pang's first book. She has previously been awarded for investigative journalism by the Los Angeles Press Club for uncovering the exploitation of smuggled immigrants recruited to work in Chinese restaurants.

The story begins with a note. It's a surprise note that falls out of a package of Halloween decorations bought by a woman named



Amelia Pang

Julie Keith in Oregon.

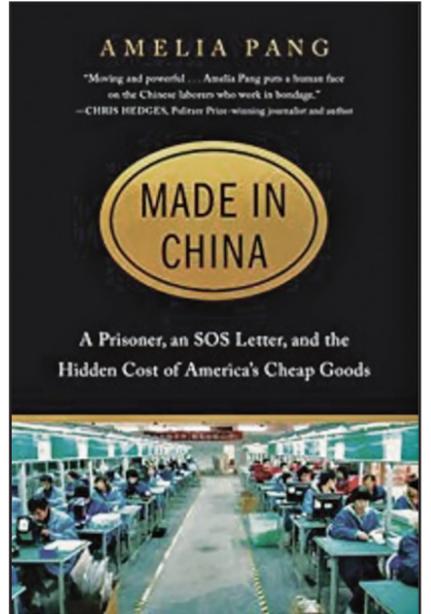
A worker in China had slipped the note into a cheap, plastic Halloween headstone, hoping that somebody in the free world might find it.

Keith started reading the note, written in broken English: "Sir: If you occasionally buy this product, please kindly

resend this letter to the World Human Right Organization. Thousands people here who are under the persicuton of the Chinese Communist Party Government will thank and remember you forever."

The note was written by a Chinese engineer who was forced into a labor camp because he had campaigned for the freedom to join a meditation movement.

Pang tells the story of this im-



AMELIA PANG
"Moving and powerful... Amelia Pang puts a human face on the Chinese laborers who work in bondage."
—CHRIS HEDGES, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author

MADE IN CHINA

A Prisoner, an SOS Letter, and the Hidden Cost of America's Cheap Goods



prisoned engineer and others like him. She also writes about the Uygur minority group and how they've been exploited for labor.

Pang conducted extensive interviews and first-hand reporting to uncover a network of forced labor camps that feed American consumerism. She uncovers the real cost of cheap goods. And she calls on Americans to ask more questions from the companies whose products we buy.

San Leandro Times

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SLAA to Host Art Demonstration

The San Leandro Art Association will host a Zoom art demonstration with Michele Hausman, an oil painter based in Soquel, California, on Tuesday, Feb. 9, at 11 a.m.

The public is invited to join.

The demo will last about an hour and a half and a supply list is available if you'd like to work along with her. Contact Kathleen Kelly at kat@mkathleenkelly.com for the supply list, Zoom access or with questions.

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SLZ Adult School Winter Virtual Health Resource Fair

San Lorenzo Adult School will host its Winter Virtual Health Resource Fair on Tuesday, Feb. 9, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Professionals from health-care, education, and a children's community organization will give

presentations on COVID-centered topics in the areas of fitness, trauma, meditation and the perspective of a school nurse. Register at http://bit.ly/hrf_invite.

For more information, email pjetson@slzusd.org.

Aviation Museum Open for Outdoor Viewing

The Oakland Aviation Museum, 8252 Earhart Road in Oakland, is open again for outdoor exhibit viewing only, Wednesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Indoor exhibits will remain

closed until the current restrictions are lifted. Please remember to keep social distancing and always wear a mask. For more information, visit www.oaklandaviationmuseum.org.

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Cutter Elected Chair of County Transit Commission

Mayor Pauline Cutter was re-elected as chair of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) at its first meeting of 2021.

Emeryville City Council member John Bauters was elected by the commission as vice-chair. The chair and vice-chair serve 1-year terms.

The county-wide transportation plan, updated in 2020, to guide Alameda CTC's decision-making over the next 30 years to prioritize projects and programs, includes:

- Advancement of multimodal corridor improvements, including San Pablo Avenue and the East 14th Street-Mission Boulevard corridor project.
- Ensuring safe mobility options for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Pushing forward rail strategy in partnership with other agencies.



Mayor Pauline Cutter

- Expansion of model educational and supportive programs like Safe Routes to Schools and the Student Transit Pass Program.
- Expansion of freeway express lanes.
- For 2021, Cutter's key initiatives include:
 - Safety for all ages and abilities.
 - Transit Oriented Development

ment that supports transportation, housing and jobs.

•Delivery of environmentally supportive and equity-focused investments and programs, including transit, bike and pedestrian improvements, and new technologies for clean air and safe communities.

About the Alameda County Transportation Commission

Alameda CTC coordinates countywide transportation planning and delivers essential, voter-supported transportation improvements in every jurisdiction throughout Alameda County. Funding sources for Alameda CTC's expenditure plans include Measure B, approved by 81.5 percent of county voters in 2000, and Measure BB, approved by more than 70 percent of voters in 2014. Please visit www.AlamedaCTC.org to learn more, and follow Alameda CTC on Facebook and Twitter.

Library to Host Zoom Program On African-American Genealogy

Researching your family tree can be a fascinating journey. For African-Americans researching ancestral roots, the paths to uncovering and documenting family stories may be hard to find.

In many cases, key documents and information may never have been recorded in the first place, or even actively suppressed over time. Nonetheless, the strength and beauty of Black family heritage shines down through the generations.

In honor of the 2021 Black History Month theme, The Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity, Alvis

Ward, Jr. and Felicia Addison, both of the African-American Genealogical Society of Northern California (AAGSNC) will offer guidance and expertise on how to help crack the code in researching Black family history and genealogy.

This Zoom 1-hour program will be presented on Saturday, Feb. 6 at 11 a.m. There will include time afterwards for a question-and-answer session with the speakers. To register, visit <http://bit.ly/AfAmGenealogy2021>. Suggested donation is \$10.

AAGSNC was founded in 1996 to preserve and promote the

study of records of a genealogical and historical nature relating to African American ancestry, and to explore and share about the ripples of impact created by the Atlantic Slave Trade throughout the world.

This program is presented by the Hayward Area Historical Society, in partnership with the Women's Ministry of Palma Ceia Baptist Church and the Eden Rose (CA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.

Chinese Feng Shui For Lunar New Year

Join the San Leandro Public Library for a traditional Chinese perspective of Feng Shui to celebrate the Lunar New Year on Thursday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m.

Learn how Feng Shui principles can support healthy living practices for working and schooling from home. Manu Butterworth, founding director

of Golden Gate Feng Shui School in Oakland, will make the presentation.

Please register for this free virtual event.

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/splFengShui> to attend this virtual event. Email Kirstin Mandalay at kmandalay@sanleandro.org for more information.

Community Calendar

Boys & Girls Club Drive-Through Crab Feed

The San Leandro Boys & Girls Club's annual crab feed will be on Saturday, Feb. 20, from 4 to 6 p.m. Due to the pandemic, the crab feed will be a drive-through pick-up in the club's parking lot at 2200 San Leandro Blvd. Each order comes with 4 pounds of crab and pasta, salad and bread. Tickets are \$55 and ticket sales end on Feb. 15. For tickets and the raffle, visit the club's website: www.bgcsl.org. The crab feed is sponsored by Fremont Bank and F.H. Dailey Chevrolet.

Black History Month Read-In

Join the San Leandro Public Library for its first annual virtual Black History Month Read-In, for teens and adults, to uplift and celebrate Black writers and thinkers.

Earn badges by reading books from our #ownvoices Black Writers Booklist, writing reviews of #ownvoices books by Black authors, and watching movies about Black history. Each badge gets you a raffle ticket for the Grand Prize. Earn three or more badges and you'll be eligible to pick up a completion prize from the library. The challenge will run through the month of February. For more information, visit the library's website, www.sanleandrolibrary.org.

Hayward Arts Council Exhibition

Thirty-two members of the Hayward Arts Council are featuring a variety of media including acrylics, watercolors, oils, textiles, mixed assemblage, poetry, photography, mixed media, digital print, paper cut art, and ink. To view this exhibition, visit haywardartscouncil.org

#ownvoices Virtual Book Club

Join the San Leandro Library for a friendly and casual adult book club focused on #ownvoices books on Thursday, Feb. 4, from 6 to 7 p.m. The club is for adults 18 and over. #ownvoices is a hashtag that started in 2015 to promote diverse authors and books. Come with your own book or find some reading inspiration. Learn more and register for this virtual book club by visiting the library's website, www.sanleandrolibrary.org.

Lunar New Year: Year of the Metal Ox 2021—Success in Challenging Times

Join the San Leandro Library for a virtual presentation by certified BaZi Astrology Reader Janet Louie on Saturday, Feb. 13, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Learn about the significance of the Lunar New Year animals, tap into the energies of the Metal Ox, and set yourself up for success this year. Learn more and register for this virtual event at the library's website, www.sanleandrolibrary.org.

Keep Waterways Clean, Starting on Your Street

The Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service is an annual event hosted by the Alameda County Clean Water Program that helps keep our waterways free of harmful trash. You don't even have to go to a creek to keep it clean. Creek cleanups start at your door. Trash travels through storm drains into creeks, and rivers to become harmful pollution. You can participate on any day throughout January, self-guided and close to home. Local streets, sidewalks, parks, and other natural areas are good choices. Trash within our neighborhoods becomes the trash polluting the coast once the rains come. We need your help to clean your neighborhoods. To register, please visit <https://accleanwater.eventbrite.com>.

City of San Leandro 'Warmline'

The City of San Leandro launched a new service that enables members of the public to contact professionals via telephone who are trained to provide emotional support, coronavirus testing site information, and many other social services or referrals. In partnership with the City, La Clinica de la Raza will provide services for Spanish-language residents, and Asian Health Services will provide services to Chinese-language speaking residents in both Cantonese and Mandarin. For Spanish: call 510-535-8480, Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (except public holidays).

For Cantonese and Mandarin: call 510-735-3940, Monday 1 to 3 p.m., Tuesday 1 to 5 p.m., Thursday 9 a.m. to noon, Friday 1 to 3 p.m.

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SENIORS

Should You File Federal Income Tax?

By Jim Miller
Special to the Times

Whether or not you are required to file a federal income tax return this year actually depends on several factors: How much you earned last year (in 2020), the source of that income, your age and your filing status.

Here's a rundown of this tax season's IRS tax filing requirement thresholds. For most people, this is pretty straightforward.

If your 2020 gross income – which includes all taxable income, not counting your Social Security benefits (unless you are married and filing separately) – was below the threshold for your filing status and age, you may not have to file. But if it's over, you will.

• Single: \$12,400 (\$14,050 if you're 65 or older by Jan. 1, 2021).

• Married filing jointly: \$24,800 (\$26,100 if you or your spouse is 65 or older; or \$27,400 if you're both over 65).

• Married filing separately: \$5 at any age.

• Head of household: \$18,650 (\$20,300 if age 65 or older).

• Qualifying widow(er) with dependent child: \$24,800 (\$26,100 if age 65 or older).

To get a detailed breakdown on federal filing requirements, along with information on taxable and nontaxable income, call the IRS at 800-829-3676 and ask them to mail you a free copy of the "1040 and 1040-SR Instructions for Tax Year 2020," or you can get it online at IRS.gov.

Check Here Too

There are, however, some other financial situations that can require you to file a tax return, even if your gross income falls below the IRS filing requirements.

For example, if you earned more than \$400 from self-employment in 2020, owe any special taxes like an alternative minimum tax, or get premium tax credits because you, your spouse or a dependent is enrolled in a Health Insurance Marketplace (aka Obamacare) plan, you'll need to file.

You'll also need to file if you're receiving Social Security benefits, and one-half of your benefits

plus your other gross income and any tax-exempt interest exceeds \$25,000, or \$32,000 if you're married and filing jointly.

To figure all this out, the IRS offers an interactive tax assistant tool on their website that asks a series of questions that will help you determine if you're required to file, or if you should file because you're due a refund. It takes less than 15 minutes to complete.

You can access this tool at IRS.gov/Help/ITA – click on "Do I Need to File a Tax Return?" Or,

you can get assistance over the phone by calling the IRS helpline at 800-829-1040.

Check Your State

Even if you're not required to file a federal tax return this year, don't assume that you're also excused from filing state income taxes. The rules for your state might be very different. Check with your state tax agency before concluding that you're entirely in the clear. For links to state tax agencies see Taxadmin.org/state-tax-agencies.

Tax Prep Assistance

If you find that you do need to file a tax return this year, you can file through the IRS at IRS.gov/FreeFile if your 2020 adjusted gross income was below \$72,000.

Or, if you need some help, contact the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (or TCE) program. Sponsored by the IRS, TCE provides free tax preparation and counseling to middle and low-income taxpayers, age 60 and older. Call 800-906-9887 or visit IRS.treasury.gov/freetaxprep to find out about services near you.

You can also get help through the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide service, a participant in the TCE program that provides free tax preparation in-person, online and by phone.

To find out about service options in your area, call 888-227-7669 or visit AARP.org/findtax-help. You don't have to be an AARP member to use this service.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org.

Key Elder Law Numbers Updated for 2021



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

Below are updated numbers for 2021 that are frequently used in our Elder Law practice and which may be of interest to clients:

Medi-Cal Spousal Impoverishment Numbers for 2021: The new Community Spouse Resource Allowance ("CSRA") is \$130,380. The Minimum Monthly Maintenance Needs Allowance ("MMMNA") for the "At-Home" Spouse is \$3,259.50.

The "CSRA" is the amount of savings or other countable resources, and the "MMMNA" is the amount of monthly income, which the At-Home spouse can retain when the Ill Spouse needs a Medi-Cal subsidy to help with the cost of nursing home care. The goal of Congress in setting these "safe harbors" was to avoid the spousal impoverishment of the At-Home spouse when the other needed care.

Aged & Disabled Federal Poverty Level Program: These are the monthly income thresholds;

persons whose income is below these thresholds may qualify for No Share of Cost Medi-Cal when receiving Medi-Cal benefits at home:

Single Individual: \$1,468 (up from \$1,294); Couple: \$1,983 (up from \$1,747).

Gift and estate tax figures: Federal estate tax exemption: \$11.7 million for individuals, \$23.4 million for married couples;

Lifetime tax exclusion for gifts: \$11.7 million;

Generation-skipping transfer tax exemption: \$11.7 million;

Annual gift tax exclusion: \$15,000 (unchanged).

Long-Term Care Premium Deductibility Limits for 2021: The Internal Revenue Service has announced the 2021 limitations on the deductibility of long-term care insurance premiums from income.

Any premium amounts above these limits are not considered to be a medical expense and hence are not deductible. The deductibility increases with age: Attained age before the close of the

taxable year: Maximum deduction 40 or less = \$450; More than 40 but not more than 50 = \$850; More than 50 but not more than 60 = \$1,690; More than 60 but not more than 70 = \$4,520; More than 70 = \$5,640

Veterans Benefits To Qualify for Pension: Asset limit: \$130,773 (effective 12/1/2020)

Penalty Period Rate for Prior Gift Transfers: \$2,295. This number is divided into the value of any disqualifying gifts made within 3 years of application and the result is the number of months of disqualification from eligibility to receive a pension.

Maximum Monthly Pension Rates for Veterans or their surviving spouses who need the highest level of care in their care setting, i.e. Aid and Attendance: Single veteran \$1,936; Married veteran \$2,295; Surviving spouse of Veteran \$1,244; Vet married to Vet (both with A&A) \$3,071.75

Medicare Premiums, Deductibles and Copayments for 2021: Part B premium: \$148.50/month (was \$144.60); Part B deductible: \$203 (was \$198); Part A deductible: \$1,484 (was \$1,408); Co-payment for hospital

stay days 61-90: \$371/day (was \$352); Co-payment for hospital stay days 91 and beyond: \$742/day (was \$704); Skilled nursing facility co-payment, days 21-100: \$185.50/day (was \$176); Part B premiums for higher-income beneficiaries: Individuals with annual incomes above \$88,000 and married couples with annual incomes above \$176,000 will pay more, beginning at a monthly premium of \$207.80, and increasing to as much as \$504.90 per month for those with annual incomes above \$500K for singles and above \$750K for married couples.

Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") Benefits for 2021: The new monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payment benefit in California is: For a single person: \$954.72; For a married couple: \$1,598.14; For beneficiaries who are blind: a single person's monthly benefit is \$1,011.23 and a married couple's (where both are blind) is \$1,751. Where one is blind and one spouse is aged or disabled, the benefit is \$1,691.65.

Gene L. Osofsky is an Elder Law and Estate Planning attorney in the East Bay. Visit his website at www.LawyerForSeniors.com.

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LIFESTYLE



Sunday's Super Snacks

Brace yourself for seeing a lot of rushing, scrambling and snapping on this Super Bowl Sunday.

And that's just around the snack table in front of the TV.

While the Super Bowl isn't a national holiday, that doesn't stop more than 130 million Americans from treating it like one. It is the second-biggest food consumption event after Thanksgiving each year.

According to the Haas Avocado Board, big game fans are expected to eat more than 278 million avocados – more than 139 million pounds – mostly in the form of guacamole.

Here's how to make that and a few other Super Bowl favorites.

GUACAMOLE

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

Wash, peel, pit and mash avocados. Finely mince the garlic.

In a small cup, add salt, minced garlic and lemon juice. Set aside to soak for 15-30 minutes. This takes the "edge" off the garlic. Add remaining ingredients.

This can be made in a food processor or using a blender.

Serve with crackers and tortilla chips. Makes about 1-1/2 cups.

ITALIAN MEATBALLS

Vegetable oil cooking spray

- 2 large shallots, peeled and chopped
- 1/4 cup sun-dried tomatoes in oil, drained (5 or 6)
- 1/3 cup packed fresh basil leaves
- 1/3 cup shredded Mozzarella
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes
- 1-1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1-1/2 pounds 20% fat ground beef
- 1 pound ground pork
- 6 ounces smoked Mozzarella, cut into 36 (1/2-inch) cubes
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 3 cups warm marinara sauce

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a baking sheet with vegetable oil cooking spray. Set aside.

In a food processor, pulse together the shallots, sun-dried tomatoes, basil, shredded Mozzarella, Parmesan, tomato paste, red pepper flakes, and salt. Process until blended.

Transfer the mixture to a large bowl. Add the beef and pork and, using a wooden spoon or clean hands, stir until well combined. Form the mixture into 36 equal-size meatballs (about 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 inches in diameter).

Insert 1 cube smoked mozzarella cheese into the center of each meatball and form the meat

around it, completely enclosing the cheese.

In a large nonstick skillet, heat half the oil over medium heat. Add half of the meatballs and cook, turning occasionally, until well browned on all sides, about 5 minutes. Drain on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining oil and meatballs.

Place the browned meatballs onto the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes for medium doneness. Set aside to cool slightly, and serve with warm marinara sauce. Yields 36 meatballs.

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 garlic-flavor bite-size 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 of snack mix.

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

Use large eggs that are at least a week old (fresh eggs are difficult to peel). To cook, place eggs in a single layer in a large pan, and cover by an inch with cold water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for up to 15 minutes.

Plunge eggs into iced water and cool until just warm, then peel.

Carefully cut eggs in half lengthwise; remove yolks and mash them with a 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. Serves 6.

BUFFALO HOT WINGS

- 10 chicken wings (cut into sections)
- Oil (for frying)
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup hot sauce
- 1 dash black pepper
- 1 dash garlic powder
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

In a bowl mix together flour, paprika, cayenne pepper, and salt.

Place chicken wings in a large bowl and toss with the flour mixture until evenly coated. Cover the dish and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Heat deep fryer to 375°F and fry chicken wings in batches for 10-15 minutes until golden brown.

Drain on paper towels.

While wings are frying, in a sauce pan combine hot sauce, butter, black pepper and garlic powder over medium heat. Stir until butter is melted and the sauce is well blended. Remove from heat.

Place wings in a serving bowl, add the sauce and toss to coat evenly. Serve with ranch or blue cheese dressing and celery. Makes enough for 3 or 4.

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.

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Published in the February 10th issue of the *Castro Valley Forum* and the February 11th issue of the *San Leandro Times!*

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<p>♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥</p> <p>Ronnie, Andrew & Ashleigh Happy Valentine's Day! To the world's most terrific kids. All our love, Mama and Denny</p> <p>STYLE #1 Line of hearts • First line bold Up to 20 words</p>	<p>♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥</p> <p>JOAN</p> <p>Happy Valentine's Day To My Love We'll Be Together Always — RJ</p> <p>STYLE #2 Large heart • Short name on heart Up to 10 words</p>	<p>♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥</p> <p>TO MY VALENTINE</p> <p>♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥</p> <p>JOAN SMITH</p> <p>ALL MY LOVE ROBERT JONES</p> <p>STYLE #3 All-cap message over large heart Up to 10 words</p>	<p>♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥</p> <p>JOAN SMITH</p> <p>Thank You For Being My True Love For All These Years! Your Sweetheart, Robert Jones</p> <p>STYLE #4 All-cap name with hearts Up to 20 words</p>
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REAL ESTATE GALLERY



REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Carl Medford, CRS
Special to the Times

GUEST COMMENTARY



HomeLight Survey Identifies 2021 Top Housing Market Trends

During the recession, For Sale signs dotted neighborhoods like dandelions on a spring lawn. Driving through neighborhoods currently reveals a different situation: there are virtually no homes for sale.

Not just a local issue: a HomeLight survey of more than 1,000 real estate professionals nationwide identified limited inventory as 2021's No. 1 housing market problem (*magazine.realtor/daily-news/2021/01/20/real-estate-pros-pick-2021s-7-biggest-housing-issues*).

Here are the survey's top 7 projected issues for 2021:

Record low inventory: whether a result of COVID-19 or other issues, the fact remains that market inventory is down across the country. The lack of homes is spurring multiple offers and boosting prices.

Consumer confidence will grow: as the vaccine becomes more widely available, it is believed more sellers will begin

putting their homes on the market. Additionally, as businesses reopen, job security could propel more buyers into the market.

Foreclosures will increase: as the stimulus plans end later this year and loan forbearance programs cease, some may end up losing their homes. It will, however, be nothing like the previous recession.

Mortgage rates will stay low: as long as rates remain at rock-bottom levels, buyers will continue to flood the market. Additionally, refinances are happening in such large numbers they are effectively clogging the lending pipeline, adding to transaction delays.

Work from home is opening doors: many analysts believe the virus has changed the workforce landscape forever.

Inspired by the fact they can permanently operate from their dining room tables, many stay-at-home workers are looking to relocate to less expensive areas and homes more suited to the new realities.

COVID surges will not affect the housing market: one of the huge surprises during the pandemic is that the real estate market has acted the exact opposite of what was predicted. Whereas a natural disaster might have destroyed physical buildings and slowed the market, the virus has left the housing stock intact, allowing for continued sales. Now that the virus is no longer a surprise and we have learned to navigate in this new world, further outbreaks should not hinder the market.

Affordability has become

a significant issue: as prices spike due to inventory shortages, many are getting priced out. To offset this problem, the new administration is suggesting a \$15,000 first-time buyer tax credit may be in the offing.

With 2021 off and running, while facing uphill challenges, the Central County Realtors also encourage you to stay safe.

(*magazine.realtor/daily-news/2021/01/20/real-estate-pros-pick-2021s-7-biggest-housing-issues*)

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.

HOME of the WEEK
2812 Chloe Ct., Castro Valley
\$949,000
3 bed, 2.5 baths

Amazing Views! Just move in this updated throughout 1,386 sq ft, 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bath home, w/an additional 140 sq ft bonus room, perfect for a work from home space! Features of the property include hardwood flooring throughout, formal living room w/picture window & fireplace. Open concept updated kitchen & family room w/granite counters, designer backsplash, breakfast bar, skylight & slider to expansive deck & patio, great for entertaining! Master bedroom w/2 closets, one a walk-in, master bath w/tile flooring, stall shower & modern touches. Remodeled hall bath w/shower over tub & tile flooring. 2 additional bedrooms complete the main living area. Down the stairs consists of the laundry area, lots of storage including under the house, garage & office area w/its own 1/2 bath. This home boasts top of the line, 2.5-year-old solar panels, great for your electric bills, new interior paint, recessed lighting, terraced backyard w/sweeping views, spa & gated side yard. Central location!



Picture Perfect



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Weed Control; When Can I Plant Seeds?

By Buzz Bertolero
Special to the Times

Q What tips can you give me for controlling the weeds in my two-year-old sheet-mulched front garden? I've heard that vinegar and liquid soap works.

A It happens every year. As soon as the rainy season begins, the unwanted vegetation pops up everywhere. The dormant weed seeds that have laid dormant for months start germinating.

The best advice for this annual task is to begin controlling seedlings early while they're tiny and don't procrastinate. They're growing slowly now, but just wait. Longer days and warmer temperatures will trigger the growth.

Once Daylight Savings Time starts (March 14 this year), the weeds accelerate quickly.

The two primary methods of controlling weeds are (1) manually with a hoe or (2) with a herbicide. The significant advantage of starting early is that

you can hoe a big area quickly with no sweat. Herbicides cover a much large space when the weeds are tiny.

For seasonal weeds and grasses, vinegar and soap will work. However, many of today's organic herbicides use a combination of citric acid and essential oils of rosemary, cinnamon, wintergreen, clove, and other plants.

These are non-selective, so you would not apply them to your lawn or ground cover.

Their mode of action is to burn the tissue causing the plants to die. All of these products have to be reapplied as necessary throughout the growing season.

I'm going to assume that a drip system is being used to water the plants. This would eliminate applying a pre-emergent herbicide that would kill the weed seeds before they germinate. After two years, the sheet mulch has deteriorated significantly.

You might want to think of updating it if you have a significant number of reoccurring weeds.



Note: Sheet mulching, also known as composting in place, mimics nature by breaking down organic material from the topmost layers down.

The simplest form of sheet mulching consists of applying a bottom layer of decomposable material, such as cardboard or newspapers, to the ground to kill existing vegetation and suppress weeds (from Wikipedia). You'll also find it referred to as "lasagna gardening."

Q Can you tell me when it is safe to plant seeds? I don't want to be too early.

A The timing depends on what you're planting. Carrots, beets, turnips, lettuce are planted year-round in the ground or containers. Tomatoes and peppers are best started in flats along with the other summer vegetables.

The same is true with seasonal color. You should figure on eight weeks from the time you sow the seed until you plant in the open ground. Seeds started today in flats should be ready in late April.

The benefit of starting seedlings in flats is that you are only transplanting the most vigorous plants. I'd avoid stating Pansies, Violas, and Iceland Poppies, as they will fade when the temperatures get warm. Instead, I would start Marigolds, Petunias, Impatiens, Vinca, and others. They will grow and flower in the summer and fall.

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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Mortgage Rates Move Down

Long-term fixed mortgage rate edged down last week, according to Freddie Mac's weekly nationwide survey.

Thirty-year fixed-rate mortgages averaged 2.73 percent for the week ending Jan. 28, down from 2.77 percent the week before. A year ago at this time, the 30-year rate averaged 3.51 percent.

Fifteen-year fixed-rate mortgages averaged 2.20 percent, down from 2.21 percent.

Five-year hybrid adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) averaged 2.80 percent, unchanged from a week earlier.

"As the market reacts to a new administration in Washington and COVID-19 driven economic malaise, mortgage rates continued to decrease this week, just slightly," said Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's Chief Economist.

"Even as house prices increase at the fastest rate we've seen in years, competition to buy is strong given the low inventory that exists across the country. The fact that there are not enough homes to meet demand is going to be an ongoing issue for the foreseeable future."

Bay East Realtors Announce Award Winners

Several local real estate professionals were recognized as this year's award winners during the 2021 Bay East virtual Inaugural event on Jan. 28.

June Burckhardt with Legacy Real Estate in Fremont received the Realtor of the Year award for demonstrating the highest level of integrity and commitment to the real estate profession.

Louise Lovewell with RE/Max Accord in Castro Valley received the Good Neighbor Award. This award recognizes a member making a positive contribution to their communities. Lovewell has been a Bay East member for more than 40 years and, in 1986, helped found Building Futures for Women and Children, a shelter program

for homeless women and children.

Leah Nishi with Farmers Insurance in Alameda, received the Bay East 2020 Affiliate of the Year Award.

Jennifer Branchini with Compass Real Estate in Pleasanton received the Outstanding Leader Award.

For the first time, three Bay East members, Nancie Allen, Sheila Cunha, and Steve Medeiros, received the John A. Deadrich Distinguished Service Award for their extraordinary contributions during 2020.

The Bay East Association of Realtors is a trade association serving more than 5,800 residential and commercial real estate professionals throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

RECENT HOME SALES

Castro Valley

17324 Ehle Street	94546: \$615,000 3 BD - 1,437 SF - 1952
20144 Forest Avenue	94546: \$635,000 2 BD - 1,339 SF - 1985
2210 Lobert Street	94546: \$785,000 3 BD - 1,298 SF - 1948
4742 James Avenue	94546: \$860,000 2 BD - 944 SF - 1948
4836 Larimer Way	94546: \$873,000 3 BD - 1,176 SF - 1959
5180 Chesney Glen Dr	94552: \$920,000 3 BD - 1,374 SF - 1998
3270 Lenard Drive	94546: \$970,000 3 BD - 1,593 SF - 1958
6280 Crow Canyon Rd	94552: \$1,025,000 2 BD - 1,174 SF - 1959
19607 Adair Drive	94546: \$1,030,000 4 BD - 1,762 SF - 1955
3471 Lenard Drive	94546: \$1,030,000 3 BD - 2,000 SF - 1957
4593 James Avenue	94546: \$1,170,000 4 BD - 1,937 SF - 1950
3517 Northwood Drive	94546: \$1,200,000 4 BD - 2,378 SF - 1953
22559 Canyon Terrace Dr	94552: \$1,560,000 5 BD - 2,507 SF - 2002
TOTAL SALES:	13
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$615,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,560,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT:	\$970,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT:	\$974,846

San Leandro

1450 Thrush Avenue	94578: \$398,000 2 BD - 820 SF - 1994
1024 Martin Boulevard	94577: \$580,000 2 BD - 886 SF - 1943
14886 Saturn Drive	94578: \$630,000 2 BD - 941 SF - 1953
2056 Manchester Road	94578: \$640,000 2 BD - 983 SF - 1948
1238 Ottawa Avenue	94579: \$700,000 3 BD - 1,081 SF - 1951
1611 143rd Avenue	94578: \$720,000 2 BD - 984 SF - 1948
1342 Belding Street	94579: \$760,000 3 BD - 1,230 SF - 1957
1647 Lanier Avenue	94579: \$770,000 3 BD - 1,420 SF - 1957
15311 Dewey Street	94579: \$780,000 2 BD - 1,331 SF - 1950
15 Dorchester Avenue	94577: \$820,000 4 BD - 1,582 SF - 1944
14372 Hemlock Street	94579: \$889,000 4 BD - 1,700 SF - 1952
1171 Oakes Boulevard	94577: \$1,125,000 3 BD - 2,626 SF - 1940
TOTAL SALES:	12
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$398,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,125,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT:	\$740,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT:	\$734,333

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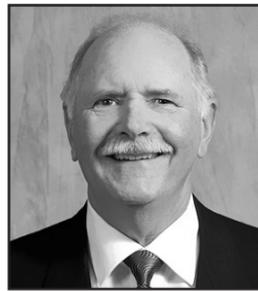
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Let Hearts, Not Metallic Balloons, Soar on Valentine's Day

With Valentine's Day approaching, PG&E reminds customers that sparks – and not just the romantic kind – can fly on February 14 if improperly secured helium-filled metallic balloons come in contact with power lines.

Mylar balloons have a silvery foil coating, which is a conductor for electricity. If the balloons float away and make contact with power lines, they can short transformers, melt electric wires and cause power outages, all of which pose public safety risks.

In 2019, metallic balloons striking electric lines caused 376 power outages in PG&E's service

area alone, disrupting electric service to more than 179,000 homes and businesses.

"We encourage our customers to celebrate Valentine's Day responsibly by securing metallic balloons with a weight that's heavy enough to prevent them from floating away," said Walt Posey, PG&E's Electric Operations Safety director.

Follow these important safety tips for metallic balloons:

- Use caution and avoid celebrating with metallic balloons near overhead electric lines.

- When possible, keep metallic balloons indoors. Never permit metallic balloons to be released

outside, for everyone's safety.

- Don't bundle metallic balloons together.

- Never attempt to retrieve any type of balloon, kite or toy that becomes caught in a power line. Leave it alone, and immediately call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000 to report the problem.

- Never go near a power line that has fallen to the ground or is dangling in the air. Always assume downed electric lines are energized and extremely dangerous. Stay far away, keep others away and immediately call 911 to alert the police and fire departments. Other tips can be found at pge.com/beprepared.



Mylar balloons that have a metallic coating are an increasing cause of power outages in Northern California.

Students Invited To Submit Art About Transportation

Alameda County is inviting high school students to make and submit creative art pieces this month for a new event, "Creation for Transportation: Art for Walking, Bicycling, Carpooling and Taking Transit."

Creation for Transportation encourages students to create and submit artistic pieces that address the impacts of different transportation choices and that inspire action around walking, bicycling, skateboarding, and

taking transit.

The program is designed to encourage students to explore different transportation choices that reduce their carbon footprint, while complying with state-wide health orders.

Art can be created in any medium, such as video (featuring a dance, skit, music or documentary personal testimonial); written poem, or visual art. Students are encouraged to take photos or videos of their participation and post them

on their school's websites and on social media using the hashtag #creationfortransportation.

Students who submit an eligible entry will be entered to win incentives that will be awarded for a select number of exceptional art projects.

For contest purposes, artwork may include air quality, safety, health, climate change, community, and well-being. Students will have until Friday, Feb. 26, to submit their art at: tinyurl.com/Creation4Transportation.

Disruptions: Neighbors complain about house on Lewelling Blvd.

continued from front page

confirmed the multiple visits to the home, including an incident on Dec. 30 where officers conducted a search warrant looking for a felony suspect. The suspect was found at a separate address in San Lorenzo.

In January, the home was the scene of three other calls including one on Jan. 2 to investigate a shouting argument, a Jan. 10

noise complaint from someone playing loud music, and two visits on Jan. 15 about an argument between roommates. While police acknowledge residents' concerns about the disruption to the neighborhood, Lt. Khan says the frequency of calls to the home have not gone unnoticed.

"Our field personnel are aware of this address and are actively providing mediation

service to the residence when the police are summoned," said Khan.

Neighbors who are frustrated by the site are encouraged to speak with an on-duty patrol sergeant to, "ensure that their concerns are addressed expeditiously," Khan said, adding that the callers may remain anonymous. The patrol supervisor can be reached at 510-577-3258.

County Program Offers Grants Up To \$2,500 to Arts Organizations

Applications from nonprofit arts organizations are now being accepted for Alameda County's 2021 ArtsFund program for awards up to \$2,500.

The fund is available for many types of arts programs including dance, music, theater, visual arts, literature and media arts. The application deadline is Wednesday, March 31.

The Alameda County Arts Commission awarded grants of

\$1,000 to \$2,500 to 45 nonprofit groups throughout the county last year.

The Commission staff will present two webinars to assist organizations in preparing their grant application. The online workshops will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 11 and at 10 a.m. on Friday, March 5.

The free workshops are open to the public and reservations are not required.

For details about how to join the webinars and to learn more about the ArtsFund Grant Program, visit www.acgov.org/arts and click on "Programs." The Arts Commission staff can also be reached by email at artscommission@acgov.org or by calling 510-208-9646.

Funding for the ArtsFund Grant Program is provided by Alameda County and by donations and individual contributions.

Opening: Sports are benched

continued from front page

After-school programs are open at all San Leandro elementary schools, which are currently limited to specifically qualified students to meet social distancing and safety requirements.

Sports programs were benched by the pandemic for the past 12 months, but Castro Valley and San Leandro have made athlete conditioning available in small groups since the fall.

Some physically-distanced programs like cross country, golf, tennis, swimming, and track and field are likely to return later this year if the numbers improve, according to a statement by the North Coast Section, the governing body of high school sports.

While the school districts

inch closer to getting kids back into the classroom, Alameda County has yet to begin vaccinating teachers.

"We are still in Phase 1-A with about 145,000 individuals in that category," said Public Health Department spokesperson Neetu Balram.

The first phase includes first responders and health care workers. Phase 1-B would include those who work in education, childcare, emergency services, and food and agriculture.

"We anticipate moving to Phase 1-B, Tier 1 soon pending vaccine supply, which continues to be the biggest challenge," Balram said. "We likely won't complete Phase 1-A in Alameda County before we move into

Phase 1-B Tier 1, so health care workers will continue to have access to the vaccine appointments."

The good news is that Alameda County saw a drop in infections in January as the winter surge recedes. Public Health Department stats show only seven thousand new cases in over a week and fewer patients ending up in hospital beds.

Last week's update for the county supervisors revealed 404 people were hospitalized countywide with COVID-19 and that even though there were 109 patients needing ICU care, the county's capacity of available beds for the extremely sick was more than 32 percent; in contrast to about 23 percent availability within the rest of the Bay Area.

LEGAL NOTICES

FILED JANUARY 8, 2021
MELISSA WILK County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 575662

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): Roxanne's In-Home Care Services located at 4006 Milton Avenue, Castro Valley, CA 94546, in Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Roxanne K. Rufino, 4006 Milton Avenue, Castro Valley, CA 94546. This business is conducted by an individual. This business commenced 02-24-2016.

/s/ Roxanne K. Rufino
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.

Expires JANUARY 8, 2026

JAN 28, FEB 4, 11, 18, 2021
322-SLT

FILED JANUARY 5, 2021
MELISSA WILK County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 575606

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): WOOFWALKS located at 15935 Gramercy Drive, San Leandro, CA 94578, in Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): WOOFWALKS, LLC, 15935 Gramercy Drive, San Leandro, CA 94578. This business is conducted by a limited liability company. This business commenced 01/01/2000.

/s/ WOOFWALKS LLC
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.

Expires JANUARY 5, 2026

JAN 28, FEB 4, 11, 18, 2021
323-SLT

FILED JANUARY 5, 2021
MELISSA WILK County Clerk
ALAMEDA COUNTY
By-----, Deputy
FILE NO. 575614

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): New Found Freedom located at 1650 152nd Street, San Leandro, CA 94578, in Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Harold B. Brooks, 1650 152nd Street, San Leandro, CA 94578. This business is conducted by an individual. This business commenced N/A.

/s/ Harold B. Brooks
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.

Expires JANUARY 5, 2026

FEB 4, 11, 18, 25, 2021
326-SLT

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OPINION

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Letters must include the writer's name, address and phone number, and **must be under 300 words**. We reserve the right to edit as necessary. E-mail letters to: letters@ebpublishing.com or fax to: 510-483-4209, or send by mail to: The Editor, San Leandro Times, 2060 Washington Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577.

Police Oversight

Editor:

There is a common misconception – if not an intentionally perpetrated falsehood – that independent civilian oversight of police is just another radical measure (as the recent “defund” movement has unfortunately been branded) that somehow poses a threat to public safety.

It is neither new nor radical. It has been around in the Bay Area for at least 45 years, including Berkeley, Richmond, Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose and Novato. And far from threatening public safety, effective civilian oversight can enhance it by helping the police improve their operations while strengthening community relations.

At its core, civilian oversight of police is a measured reform to balance power and restore public trust. [Contact Oversight4SL@gmail.com for more info.]

First, civilian oversight can provide independent law enforcement expertise to the Chief and City Manager to monitor – and intervene where appropriate – the handling of internal police disciplinary matters and responses to citizen complaints, to assure thorough investigations and fair outcomes.

This can enhance accountability while still respecting the appropriate role (and duty) of the police union to protect individual officers' rights.

Second, the City Council can get the benefit of ongoing community input in the systematic review of police practices and development of informed recommendations on police policies and procedures that is currently unavailable to it and in a manner that is transparent and engages the community.

The time for police reform is now. Through greater accountability and policy review, community engagement and trust building, transparency, deterrence and risk management, civilian police oversight (adequately resourced) can be a powerful agent for positive change.

—Bob Bailey
San Leandro

What 'Defunding' Means

Editor:

There are a lot of variations in the understanding of what “defunding the Police” means.

I believe it means ensuring that the money for policing is spent responsibly, and in a way which specifically benefits our community. We have had many years, even decades, of our police departments being unaccountable for their budget and its outcomes.

Do any of us truly understand specifically how and to what extent the current San Leandro Police Department's \$21 million a year budget is benefiting our community? Not just in simple terms, such as the number of officers on the street, but in terms of actual value gained?

The truth is that few, if any, can coherently describe the operation, its funding, and measurable value.

For many of you who manage or have managed budgets in the private sector, there are frequently times when you must defend your budget.

The only way to do this is to manage budgets effectively and responsibly and then be able to describe what value each expense provides – in numbers.

Our police department, and many others across the country, have failed to do this. In fact, police departments have not had to collect, examine and report meaningful data so we can understand policing benefits. In the rare cases that they do collect usable numbers, they are not required to disclose them.

I am advocating for responsible management and reporting. If we don't know what possible beneficial or detrimental impacts any budget changes will have, we cannot possibly formulate a responsible budget. If we require our police to operate in a way which enables the public to understand the impacts of the budget and make decisions based on them, then great.

If we cannot do this, we should change who we fund, focusing on those areas which are visible and measurable, such as the number of people helped through mental health or homeless services and many other important areas of need.

—Patty Breslin
San Leandro

What's in a Name?

Editor:

I think it is a great idea to rename schools, buildings and public spaces to better reflect the era in which we live.

The school board could rename Wilson Elementary to either *Woke Elementary* or *Built on Stolen Land Elementary*. Lake Chabot was built by Chinese slave labor (maybe call it *Lake SorryBro*).

And while we are rediscovering our collective consciousness, I'm sure there was no pedophilia in the Catholic church in the fifth century, right Saint Leander?

Do yourselves a favor, San Leandro, and do not name things after people, because people will let you down if you dig deep enough or wait long enough.

Maybe take after Stanford (Leland was a well-known robber baron in his own right), which changed their mascot name from Indians to Cardinal (a tree).

There are plenty of plants, aquatic, and avian creatures deserving the high honor of having something named after them (most of which have not offended anyone, except for those annoying seagulls down at the Marina).

—Fred Honsal
San Leandro

Patriots?

Editor:

There are so many problem we are facing right now, but how can we solve them?

The people who call themselves “patriots” break into the Capitol and trash the constitution they pretend to revere. The people who want to stop the steal are trying to steal the election.

The people of law and order attack the Capitol, vandalize it, and steal property.

The blue lives matter people attack police officers and injure 140, traumatize even more, and kill one.

I could go on like this, but in this world where up is down and down is up, a large numbers of citizens are hypnotized by demagogues and out of reach of reason. Half of the political establishment is so set on staying in power that they dare not correct even the most insane beliefs and instead simply allow the lunatics to run the asylum.

Democracy cannot function in this environment.

—Gerlinde Noori
Oakland

The Sore Winners

Editor:

The sore winners still cannot get over their acknowledgment that they “won” a fraudulent election. Now they try to ride on the assault of the Bastille:

“Six people died” is the battle cry of Democrats, in trying to conceal that five were unarmed patriots. “One police officer lost his life,” they cry hypocritically.

One of these individuals tries to counter my view with the argument that *one* of the people at the Capitol waved a Confederate flag. That's what “freedom of expression” should mean, not the censorship of ideas by Twitter, Facebook, the media in general, from books and all of those physical attacks on Trump supporters, over five years.

The Capitol is the place where the beasts of the SWAMP reside. It turns out now that the progressives are the fiercest defenders of the “sacred institutions” and the status quo, the Deep State or the bipartisan system of the corporations; pick the definition you like best.

Now, let's make some comparison of the candidates: Donald J. Trump went out campaigning, bare faced, in front of thousands of people; Joe Biden hid in the basement because the Fake News and many Republicans (the “Deep State”) did the campaigning for him. Donald J. Trump ruled only with the regular protection for the White House, Joe Biden needs 26,000 troops to protect his fraudulent win. I rest my case.

—Leo T. West
San Leandro



Send a Letter to the Editor
Letters@ebpublishing.com



"MR. PRESIDENT, THE POLITICAL CARTOONISTS OF AMERICA ARE WAITING."

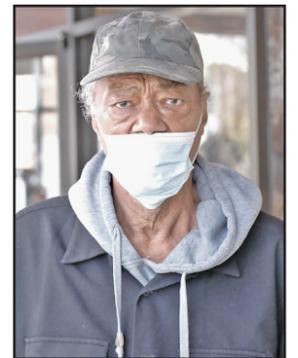
INQUIRING REPORTER

Should schools named after some presidents change their names?

— Asked downtown

No, it's all right the way it is. The name of a school should stay the same.

Frankie Dean Dillard
San Leandro



Maybe on certain ones, but not Lincoln. He fought for a lot of rights. You can find something everybody's done that's wrong. I don't know much about Wilson.

Karen Dominic
San Lorenzo,
works in San Leandro

If people feel the need to do so, then they might as well change it. Times change and it's a different view today. For example, the Washington Redskins. Now it's just Washington.

Darryl Wicker
San Leandro



Some schools, yes; most, no. Wilson School, I think, should remain the same. Most of the presidents long ago all favored segregation. Now it's a new age, but not all the names need to change.

Phyllis Johnson
San Leandro



In a way, it's a good thing. There's a lot of racism going on in the world. So some names should be changed.

Carin Ortiz
Hayward



Ridiculous: Story also says something about health care in America

continued from front page

collection of symptoms. It was finally diagnosed as acromegaly, due to a tumor in the pituitary gland, lodged at the base of the brain. It affects three people in a million every year.

Surgery is possible, if dangerous, and recovery to a normal life is not assured. It's been a few years, and Gerry is fine, but it wasn't obvious even after her surgery was successful that she would be. She spent more than a year recovering, with numerous setbacks along the way.

Gerry's account of that year is part stand-up and part impressions of the various figures she encountered, literally or figuratively, during that time. There's the Bad News Fairy, who tends to arrive as she thinks things are getting better. There's Madame Professor, there to deliver just the facts. And there's even Dr. Anthony Fauci, sporting enormous, upside-down glasses.

She discovers that positive thinking, often promoted to help people heal, can easily shade into magical thinking. She fully expected to meet a boyfriend

as soon as she got better, for instance.

"You get a brain tumor, and the universe gives you a man," she remembers thinking, recalling numerous TV shows and movies. She didn't get a boyfriend back then, but has since, she tells the audience.

Gerry said she had plenty of time along the way to ponder how health care works in America, especially when all the health care you can possibly get is barely enough to survive. She had the right combination of condition

and insurance so that her out-of-pocket costs were about \$300, but the same condition without that insurance could easily cost someone a half-million dollars, more than some people earn in a lifetime, she realized.

During Covid, which drove the latest version of the play away from live performance onto YouTube, she realized what American health care's big underlying condition is at the moment.

"Health care can't be tied to employment if the whole world gets laid off," she said.



Hannah Rachel Gerry performs "Being Me Is Ridiculous," filmed after-hours at the Zocalo Coffeehouse and available on YouTube.

Gerry premiered the play at The Marsh in San Francisco in 2018, and her revised version was ready to be presented by Theatre Bay Area when Covid shut down live theater last spring. She and director Stacey Ardelean, who had worked together in musicals at San Leandro High School in the early 2000s, jumped online and presented the play on YouTube.

The set probably looks familiar to San Leandro viewers, as it's Zocalo Coffeehouse on Bancroft Avenue, with tables pushed back and a daybed and desk added. Gerry's day job is there, although the café is limited to takeout orders at the moment due to Covid.

Stacey Ardelean had worked with a parents group putting on musicals at San Leandro High School and had met Hanna Gerry in the last one she put on. She worked with elementary school children on the Peninsula, and went on to found Fuse Theater in Redwood City in 2015.

Fuse presents plays about social issues and uses them as starting points for community dialogues about those issues. Even during the current Covid lockdown of live theater, Fuse is putting on workshops around immigration issues.

Ardelean has been a board member of the American Alliance for Theater and Education, and is just finishing a term as its national director.

After high school, Gerry went on to study drama at UC Irvine, and then got a graduate degree in dramatic writing at California State University, Los Angeles. She has performed Off-Broadway, throughout the Bay Area, in Los Angeles and in Orange County.

Ardelean and Gerry hadn't seen each other in a decade when they ran into each other a few

Hannah Rachel Gerry turned the most challenging year of her life into an entertaining and funny story and filmed it at a local coffeehouse.



years ago in a Berkeley coffeehouse. They started catching up, and soon Gerry was telling Ardelean about her play and her illness that had suggested it. Ardelean jumped at the chance to direct it.

Gerry's illness inspired her to pursue a second Master's degree in Drama Therapy, and she might be reworking "Being Me Is Ridiculous" further. One possibility is that it would go from its current one act to a full-length, multi-act play. Or she could write another play entirely, she said.

Gerry encouraged young people to tell their story and look for opportunities they may not know exist.

"Your story matters," she said. "If it isn't being told, tell it yourself."

She suggests submitting one's work everywhere, as there are lots of opportunities to get your work published that people don't always know about. For instance, with the Monday Night Marsh series, currently online but in-per-

son in normal times, anyone can submit a play 17-45 minutes long to that San Francisco theater.

For her part, Ardelean remembered Gerry well from her high school days, saying that back in high school she'd been bubbly with lots of personality.

"She has a lot of heart that goes behind her work, and she's able to poke fun at herself," Ardelean said.

One can search for "Being Me Is Ridiculous" on www.youtube.com.

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DF-CD-NP-Q121

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-  **ARIES (March 21 - April 19):** St. Valentine's Day magic rules the entire week for romantic Rams and Ewes. Music, which is the food of love, is also strong. The weekend offers news both unexpected and anticipated.
-  **TAURUS (April 20 - May 20):** Your aspects favor the arts -- which the Divine Bovine loves, loves, loves. Also, for those looking for romantic love, Cupid is available for requests. After all, his mother, Venus, rules your sign.
-  **GEMINI (May 21 - June 20):** Loving commitments continue to grow stronger. Ditto budding relationships. A recent move to help start-up a new career-linked direction soon could begin to show signs of progress.
-  **CANCER (June 21 - July 22):** Single Moon Children might be eager to take that proverbial chance on love. But your more serious side will feel better if you take things slowly and give your moonstruck self more time.
-  **LEO (July 23 - August 22):** It's a love fest for Leos and Leonas this week. Paired Cats might expect to be purr-fectly in sync. And with matchmaking friends, single Simbas searching for romance shouldn't have too far to look.
-  **VIRGO (August 23 - Sept. 22):** More understanding on both sides can work miracles in restoring ailing relationships to health. Make the first move, and you'll be closer to your much-wanted reunion.
-  **LIBRA (Sept. 23 - October 22):** Accept the fact that you are worthy of being loved, and you'll find proof in what is revealed to you over the course of the week. Also accept a compliment offered with great sincerity.
-  **SCORPIO (October 23 - November 21):** Planning to take a new direction in life is exciting. And so is a new awareness of someone's special affection. Expect a slow and mostly steady development of the situation.
-  **SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21):** Although you might still feel you weren't treated quite right in a recent matter, all that will work out in time. Meanwhile, enjoy the week's special qualities and potentials.
-  **CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19):** Deciding not to give up on a troubling romantic situation helps start the healing process. Expect to find some valuable insight into yourself as things move along.
-  **AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18):** The week is filled with positive potentials, but it's up to you to make the right choices. The advice of someone who truly cares for you and your well-being can be priceless.
-  **PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20):** It's a good time to make yourself available to possibilities of the romantic kind. Already paired? Good. In that case, be sure to reassure that special person of your feelings.



MISSING DOG

Missing since 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 17, this 32-pound black lab mix got spooked on the West Shore Trail in Lake Chabot Park. She was dragging a blue leash with red, yellow, and purple collar as well as prong collar. She is microchipped/spayed. She will not respond to her name as she is a new rescue and extremely skittish. If seen, allow her space and please call her owner at 925-594-1764 day or night.

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