



Manager's Minute

MARK SCOTT

I RECENTLY returned to the Chamber Office after a month long bout with pneumonia and complications from the recovery and treatment. I would like to thank all of those who sent prayers, well wishes, and encouragement. It does help.

While we hope for a full recovery the doctors say it is too early to tell. Two years ago I had an intense encounter with our Medicare system which also required a long period of recovery. From my encounters with health care system I have learned first hand why they call it the “practice” of medicine.

Some things I learned should be passed along for there are things you don't want to hear your health professional say:

1. “Let's try this!”
2. “This will be a partnership between you and me.” This means they have no clue what's going on and need your feed bags back to design further treatment.

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An Economist's View

BY MARK SCOTT

AT THE MEMBERSHIP meeting on June 16th attendees were treated to an insightful message on the economy presented by Brian Pretti, Senior Vice President of Mechanics Bank and the Chief Investment Strategist for the bank. Caution was the word of the day. Given the fact that Mechanics Bank avoided the need for bailout and still expanded during the economic crisis, the audience absorbed the disclaimers and admonitions that preceded the message.

The United States along with other world governments embarked in late 2008 on an unprecedented reflation campaign in order to offset a historic implosion in private sector debt. Refla-

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Featuring the Berkeley Opera

Saturday,
Sept. 25
5-9 p.m.

Plans Underway for New, Improved 'Taste'

BY SEWALL GLINTERNICK

THIS IS THE YEAR members of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce, their family, and friends will get the change to enjoy *la dolce vita* (the good life)—and won't even have to go to Italy to do it!

After a one year layoff, the popular *A Taste of El Cerrito* fundraiser returns Saturday, September 25, in a new format that promises an evening of delicious food and drink, a new and improved silent auction and raffle, and live performers headlined by the Berkeley Opera Company, which now makes its home in El Cerrito.

This event is being co-sponsored by the Chamber and the City of El Cerrito at the Community Center and, according to general chairperson Judy Pope, “will be more up-scale and community-minded than ever before, and will be designed to provide those attending with a gala evening.”

“Dress for this event will be informal,” she added, “but those wishing to don tuxes, dinner jackets, and evening gowns will be welcome to supply a dress-up touch to the festivities.” Tickets for the event will cost \$45 per person, and will be limited to 224 participants. As in past years, proceeds from the 2010 *Taste of El Cerrito* will be used to finance the Chamber's business promotion programs throughout the year and college scholarships for El Cerrito High School business students.

The new and improved *Taste* is scheduled to get underway with no-host cocktails and complimentary hors d'oeuvres, followed by a catered three-course Italian sit-down dinner against a background of live music. The raffle and silent auction will round out the evening's activities.

Pope requests that those who wish to contribute items for the raffle and silent auction arrange to have them picked up by telephoning her at (510) 525-7232 as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Chamber President John Stashik announced that notices giving further details of this year's *Taste* will soon be mailed to members along with a form soliciting volunteers to become Platinum, Gold or Silver sponsors of this year's event.

“These sponsorships,” he explained, “are vital for the *Taste* to provide the income necessary to cover the Chamber's expenses and supply funds to pay for the ECHS scholarships.”

Ticket sales will begin in the next few weeks and sales locations will be announced. The Web site for the event will soon be updated with the 2010 information and tickets will also be available for purchase on-line.



The
**President's
Palaver**
JOHN C. STASHIK

THIS MONTH the City Council will meet to consider placing a proposal on the November ballot to increase the sales tax rate in El Cerrito by one-half percent for seven years. At my request, Suzanne Iarla of the City of El Cerrito, has provided information on why the city feels this tax hike is necessary. Her summary appears on this page; please read it and become more informed. I have no personal opinion at this time.

A look at the Board of Equalization tax rate schedule on the Internet shows El Cerrito in step with most of our neighbors with a current sales tax rate of 9.75%. Some communities have a lower rate; none that I found were higher (although I did not check every locale). Would a rate of 10.25% make us the highest in the area?

The sales tax rate in Kensington is a bit less than El Cerrito's at 9.25%; likewise for San Pablo and Hercules. Over the hill, Concord and Walnut Creek also have a sales tax rate of 9.25%. Moving north, Vallejo has a tax rate of 8.375% as does the outlet store mecca of Vacaville. Many Marin County cities are at 9%; San Rafael is at 9.5%.

If this sales tax hike plan does go on the ballot and a 10.25% tax rate is approved by voters in November, how will it impact El Cerrito businesses? I'd like to know what our members think. E-mail me a message and give me your thoughts: stash@elcerritochamber.org.

West County Business Expo

Coming on Friday, August 20th, is the West County Business Expo put on by the Pinole Chamber of Commerce. Last year's Expo was a success with 1000 attendees and I feel the event will attract an even larger turnout this year.

Our Chamber will have a booth. This is a great marketing opportunity for business people and I encourage participation. The cost is \$150 for a booth and the event runs 4-7 p.m. in Pinole.

We have more information and registration forms. Contact our Chamber office soon to take advantage of this.

Council to Consider Sales Tax Hike

BY SUZANNE IARLA, CITY OF EL CERRITO

THE RECESSION, CONTINUED state takeaways, falling home prices, and strained revenues could erode the high quality of service in the City of El Cerrito and the accomplishments that have taken years to develop. The state has already taken more than \$2 million from El Cerrito to deal with its own budget deficit. In order to maintain the high quality of services and facilities expected by the citizens of El Cerrito, additional revenues will be needed.

The City of El Cerrito will consider a November ballot initiative for a one-half cent sales tax increase to maintain vital city services during these difficult economic times. If approved by the residents of El Cerrito, this measure would last seven years to give the city local control over local funds for local needs.

The city has already made significant cuts and reductions to balance the budget and operate as efficiently as possible. This year, in order to balance the budget, the city used a comprehensive strategy that includes funding cuts, re-organization to maximize efficiencies, employee compensation deferrals, the one-time use of some reserves, and includes the passage of a one-half cent sales tax in November. Without additional revenue, the city will need to make significant cuts and reduce services.

A recent survey of community members indicated that El Cerrito residents would support a local finance measure to maintain vital city services. The funding from the proposed sales tax measure would help the city maintain some priorities identified by the community as essential, including:

- Fire protection and emergency medical services.
- Current levels of police and firefighters.
- After-school programs for children and teens.
- Maintenance of city parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and courts.

The City Council will consider placing the initiative on the November ballot at their regular meeting on Monday, July 19, 2010. Please call (510) 215-4318 or visit the City of El Cerrito Web site at www.el-cerrito.org for more information.

Rep. Garamendi Visits Shields Again



Shields Nursing Homes

Congressman John Garamendi with William and Monique Shields during his visit to Shields Nursing Center in El Cerrito in honor of National Nursing Home Week. The Shields were delighted to host his second trip to the facility and look forward to further visits. They also operate Shields Richmond Nursing Center.

BY KATHERINE BARNES, SHIELDS NURSING HOMES

NATIONAL NURSING HOME WEEK was May 9-15 and spotlighted both nursing home residents and staff and encouraged all to celebrate those that make a positive difference in their lives every day. The theme was *Enriching Every Day*. A supportive and caring environment, such as a nursing home, provides enrichment for residents and families to continue growing, learning and teaching through various ways. Shields is a member of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce.

Abbey Carpet of El Cerrito

BY SEWALL GLINTERNICK

LOCAL PEOPLE WHO NEED new floor covering for their home, and want the finest in quality and service, need to look no further than Abbey Carpet of El Cerrito at 10351 San Pablo Avenue. The company, well known for its large selection of carpet, hardwood flooring, area rugs, vinyl tiles, and carpet remnants, is no stranger to high praise.



Ron Codron

In February of this year the San Francisco *Chronicle* carried a story on the front page of its Sunday business section which reported that a non-profit consumers' group had rated Abbey Carpet the best in quality service and installation of all the floor covering stores in the Bay Area. Before that the local firm was selected to install some 80,000 square feet of special carpeting

in the restored Fox Oakland Theater.

Ron Codron, who has headed the El Cerrito firm since 1974 when he took over a company-owned facility here, made floor covering his life's career when—after serving in the U.S. Air Force—he went to work in his father's store in Sacramento.

Over his years of doing business here Codron has never felt the need to make his customers cheat themselves by choosing colors and textures of floor coverings from pictures on the Internet. Abbey's beautiful, large, well-lit San Pablo Avenue showroom always features a large selection of floor coverings to pick from.

Among the leading products available there are Abbey Hardwood, Anso Caress Platinum, Tile by Daltile, Kardean Luxury Vinyl, Area Rugs By Nourison, Stainmaster Carpet, Alexander Smith, and American Showcase.

Rather than force his customers to make their selection from pictures, Codron, encourages them to visit Abbey Carpet's showroom. "That way," he points out, "we'll be able to do what we do best—enrich the look of their home. We'll be happy to send them home with samples of the floor covering they fancy so they can see them in their own lighting and environment.

Along with thousands of flooring products, Abbey Carpet of El Cerrito offers a constantly changing assortment of carpet remnants and roll ends from high-end retailers, department stores, manufacturers, and distributors—all at savings of 50% or more. [www.elcerrito.abbeycarpet.com]

AN ECONOMIST'S VIEW

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tion entailed the borrowing of and extending trillions in positive Gross Domestic Product, which was not surprising given the extent of the stimulus.

The strength of the GDP is driven by government spending and business rebuilding inventories. Currently, many economic indicators are trending up. Caution is still the watchword of the day. There are limits to the positive effects of stimulus. It would seem that the numbers will trend up for now. Traditionally small business growth has led the way out of recessions. This has not yet hap-

pened meaning little stimulus has made its way to Main Street as of yet.

The GDP may slow but will likely continue their rise. Small business recovery will take time and healing independent of government actions. Caution and prudence are important as we look for the recovery to shift the Main Street.

As economic recovery continues, don't look for rapid recovery of the

housing market or the return of loose credit markets as those were "bubble" phenomena. Instead, remain cautious and prepare for and take positions that will allow you to gain advantage from slow growth while protecting your assets from the possible, even likely, return of inflationary conditions. As usual, we have a limited number of Brian Pretti's handouts available at the office. Request a copy for yourself or pass it along.

MANAGER'S MINUTE

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3. "You are on a special diet" means that you won't get fed for a long time and that the nurses have an opportunity to clean out the refrigerator.
4. "I will check with the doctor to see if you can have... water... ice... food..." This is the classic delaying tactic. You'll get what you asked for—when hell freezes over!
5. "The lab didn't take enough blood." The lab screwed up.
6. "I'll get that after I finish with 32(a)." Shift change. Good luck!
7. "He's a good doctor... nurse... tech," etc..." Usually said with a

rising pitch and arched eye brow. Get a second opinion or run for the hills. Variant: "He's the best doctor on duty."

8. Another thing you don't want to hear your doctor say, especially if he is chief of cardiology is, "Humph, I've never seen anything like this before."

Finally, don't let this be the last thing you hear as you are wheeled directly from the ER to the operating room: "Why don't you paramedics stay with the patient because we don't get much practice with emergencies!"

I hope you are able to avoid encounters with the health care system. If you can't, well then *good luck!*



Brian Pretti

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El Cerrito

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Linking Business and Community Since 1936

P.O. Box 538 • El Cerrito, CA 94530

Calendar of Events

- July 4 Annual Independence Day fair; Cerrito Vista Park.
- 7 Chamber Board meets; El Cerrito Royale, 8:30 a.m.
- 8 Cerrito Classics: "Jaws." Cerrito Theater, 7:15 p.m., \$7.
- 9 Stockton Ave. Art Stroll; San Pablo to Ashbury, evening.
- 15 Meet to discuss preserving El Cerrito's pathways; City Hall, 7 p.m.
- 18 Historical tour of Sunset View Cemetery with Tom Panas. Meet at the chapel, Colusa & Fairmount Aves., 2 p.m.
- 19 City Council meets; City Hall, 7:30 p.m.
- 31 Contra Costa Civic Theatre cast reunion party; 2-5 p.m. www.ccct.org.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Playland-Not-at-the-Beach

Contact Kendra (510) 232-4264 ext. 30
www.playland-not-at-the-beach.org

LEGEND OF THE RING

Saturday, July 31 • 8 p.m.
Wednesday, August 4 • 7:30 p.m.
Friday, August 6 • 8 p.m.
Sunday, August 8 • 2 p.m.

BERKELEY OPERA

AT THE

El Cerrito Performing Arts Theater

540 Ashbury Ave., El Cerrito

(800) 838-3006 • www.berkeleyopera.org

Art on Stockton Avenue



Fruit Pairings

Paintings by Phil Martien & Sandi Potter

July 1–August 28 at
The Glenn Custom Framing & Gallery of Art
7027 Stockton Ave., El Cerrito • (510) 558-1078

Artists' Reception: Friday, July 9, 7-9 p.m.

Chamber Officers

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