



Thoughts D'Jour

JUDY POPE · President

LOVE IS IN the air! Yes, Valentine's Day is almost here but this is not what I am referring to. El Cerrito is a city loved by many people and is a unique city that has a special quality to the families and businesses that make this their home.

El Cerrito is a diverse community with many members of our population being able to trace many generations of family living here.

Why do you care for (love) El Cerrito? Let us know. E-mail me at judy@elcerritochamber.org. Your thoughts are important as it will help highlight the positive aspects of our community in planning new programs to promote El Cerrito and our business community.

Do you have your "EL CERRITO—There's no place like home" poster? Is it displayed in your business? This simple tool is available free to all El Cerrito business to help promote support for our businesses and encourage people to shop locally. The posters are available at all Chamber functions, the new Chamber office located at 10296 San Pablo Avenue, ▶ See Thoughts D'Jour, page 3

Member Reminders

MEMBERSHIP renewals have been sent out. Your 2012 Membership dues were payable by January 31, 2012. In order to make things easier for you this year, we are offering a new service. Your membership dues can be paid by any major credit card.

Call Judy from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday at (510) 501-2460 to make this transaction. Your printed credit card receipt will be sent to you along with your membership card and 2012 tab. Be sure we do receive your information card as it is an important part of our Chamber information base and new Web site.

Back on the Avenue



Many attended the grand opening and gave enthusiastic response to our new home. (Now a full house is more than two people in the office!)

Grand Opening/Mixer: Great 'House Warming'!

BY JUDY POPE

THE FIRST MIXER of 2012 was held Thursday, January 26th at 5:00 p.m. at the new El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce home, 10296 San Pablo Avenue. This move has brought more space that the Chamber greatly needed and much better visibility as we are on San Pablo Avenue with large windows and good signage possibilities. This was demonstrated by the large number of people that attended this cheerful event.

Guests included El Cerrito Chamber members, city officials, long-time El Cerrito residents, members of the El Cerrito Rotary, as well as visitors from the Albany Chamber of Commerce. Jin Jin

Acupressure Therapy sent a beautiful plant as a gift to celebrate this event. Velocity Lock and Key brought key caps as gifts available for everyone. (Take one of these key caps to her shop and get a key made for free.)

Guests were served a deli tray (from The Junket), stuffed mushrooms, tri-tip roast, salad, rolls, carrot cake and assorted beverages were provided by Mark Scott and his good friend Chef Tom.

This event was planned for a two hour duration people arrived early and stayed late. This was a "grand beginning" to a new chapter of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce, with a special thank you to all that attended or sent gifts or food donations to enhance the celebration and to those that remained after to clean up and reset the office.



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Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

WHY DO I LOVE EL CERRITO? That's the question President Pope asks in her column this month. I've an easy answer: it's close to San Francisco! Let's face it, people come from all over the world to visit The City and we're just minutes from it. It is sometimes an easy drive; or there's BART from two stations in our town. Shopping, entertainment, sightseeing and fine dining. Plus, the greatest location in the world for sailing!

My home away from home (when not at Fatapple's) used to be Original Joe's. A fire put the well known restaurant out of business four years ago. But now it's back, this time in North Beach. As soon as this *Byline* goes to bed, I'm heading across the bay for a Joe's Special and a classic Manhattan. Welcome back Original Joe's. *Cheers!*

□

EC "bidness." After two years the former Coldwell Banker office is again occupied at 11155 San Pablo Avenue. The tenant is **Restaurant Design Advance**. As the name implies this is a full service restaurant design firm.

The **Glenn Custom Framing and Gallery of Art** should be open at its new 7002 Stockton Avenue home by February 3rd. Look for a grand opening celebration in March.

Dr. Lee Prutton is remodeling the **Abbey Pet Hospital** at 11070 San Pablo Avenue. In response to my query, the hospital is expanding into part of the area now occupied by the Feline B&B.

□

Mixers to resume. Per articles in this *Byline*, they're returning. That's good news as the chief mission of the Chamber is business promotion. They should be monthly events. Host one.

□

Stuffed with crab. El Cerrito Police Employees held their annual fundraiser on January 20 at the Community Center and the hall was packed. Profits from this popular event go toward police dog King's advanced training. The array of raffle prizes included a Glock pistol courtesy of the **Old West Gun Room**.

City Deals With Redevelopment Shutdown

BY DALE F. MEAD

LIKE MOST CITIES up and down the state, El Cerrito is scrambling to make sense of California's shutdown of redevelopment agencies, a 65-year-old blight-fighting tool that Gov. Jerry Brown and the legislature dismantled with passage of two laws in July.

Following lawsuits to rescind the law, the state Supreme Court cleared it in December. The Court also nullified another law the legislature had devised to allow municipalities to retain their agencies—for a price: sharing redevelopment tax revenues with adjoining cities, school districts and special districts. Most have been hit hard fiscally by declining property taxes and reduced state budget funding.

El Cerrito had paid the initial \$1.85 million required, with a commitment to pay upwards of \$500,000 annually to keep its agency going. The status of the initial payment is one of many issues still to be clarified.

The staff will update the council on its assessment of the dissolution at its mid-year budget review Feb. 21.

The redevelopment agency was officially dissolved February 1, with the city taking on its fiduciary obligations. On January 17, the city council voted 5-0 to take over the agency's housing assets

and functions this month, including plans for a 64-unit senior housing project on the former Tradeway Furniture parcel next to City Hall.

The action also included adoption of a Recognized Obligation Payment Schedule spelling out the outstanding agency contractual obligations that can be met with tax revenues generated by past redevelopment.

However, the ROPS will be subject to review and/or approval of a yet-to-be-formed Oversight Board comprising representatives of neighboring agencies that will split up future tax revenues, as well as the Contra Costa County Auditor and the state. Hypothetically, some items could be rejected during the approval process.

Among the obligations are the salaries of Lori Treviño, Redevelopment Manager; Hilde Myall, Senior Housing Program Manager; and Dwayne Dalman, Senior Economic Development Program Manager. If their payrolls are not approved, those positions could be lost.

In a separate action, the council approved a letter to the state supporting SB 659, a bill to postpone dissolution of the agencies past Feb. 1. However, the state assembly reportedly decided not to hear the bill, effectively killing it.

Just one week later the **Albany-El Cerrito Exchange Club** held their crab feed to benefit the El Cerrito High soccer teams. Yet another local feed happens February 4th at St. John's.

□

Suzanne Iarla, Community Outreach Specialist, reminds us that City Council meetings will switch from Monday to Tuesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. This change will be effective February 21st.

□

Earthquake strengthening at the El Cerrito Plaza BART station will continue until September. Passenger access inside and around the station will be changed during the project. Wear your hard hats and safety vest (just kidding) and allow some extra time to navigate to and from the platforms. Eventually the dust will settle and the station will be safer.



Photos: John C. Stashik

(Above) Mayor Bill Jones and wife at the EC Police Employees Association crab feed.

(Left) Sgt. Scott Cliatt and son raffle off a crab trap for people who like to catch their own.

Mixers and Small Business Showcase in Planning Stage

BY JUDY POPE

HOSTS ARE needed for our 2012 Chamber mixers. They are held the third Thursday of the month generally, but we can be flexible. You provide the location and appetizers for the guests. We will provide the wine, soda and water.

Chamber members will be happy to learn about your business as well as network with other Chamber members. We currently have a host for our June and September mixers. This is a great opportunity, especially if you are a new member, to introduce our business community to the goods and services you offer.

For those of you who do not have the space to host a mixer, the June mixer is designed for you. Our members and guests can learn about your business. There is no cost to participate in the event as this is sponsored by the El Cerrito Chamber. We will provide the location and you provide just a few munchies at your table and information about your business.

If you are interested in participating in this event, please call the Chamber office, e-mail judy@elcerritochamber.org or manager@elcerritochamber.org. There is no cost to participate in the event. The venue will be announced in March.

We have noticed in the last year, our mixer attendance has been declining. Even if you do not host a mixer, or participate in our June mixer please consider attending the mixers that are scheduled to support other business owners. In these tight economic times, it is important to network and support all of our local business owners.

We also appreciate businesses that support our raffle by bringing a gift to be raffled off. This is a way the Chamber makes money during the event and is great advertisement for your business. If you are interested in hosting a mixer, please contact the Chamber office or e-mail judy@elcerritochamber.org.

Sponsor a mixer and get an ad within the *Byline* for free!

2012 Board of Directors Take Their Places

BY JUDY POPE

THE 76TH ANNUAL Installation of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors was held in the Ballroom of the Mira Vista Golf & Country Club on Wednesday, January 18th. Your Board of Directors for 2012 is as follows: Judy Pope, President; Sonja Givens-Thomas, First Vice President; Mark Figone, Second Vice President; Charles E. Weaver, Secretary-Treasurer; Sil Addiego, Director; Dwayne Dalman, Director; Michael Roberts, Director; Nancy McCarthy, Director, and John Stashik, Director. Mark Scott is the Manager of the Chamber and continues to assist the Board of Directors with the day to day operation.

In addition to the oath of office, which was administered by Sil Addiego, honors and awards were conferred on some of our

members for their many years of service and dedication to the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce.

Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to Leona Seidell

and to Larry Seidell for their selfless donations and supporting the Chamber over many years. Sil Addiego received a Certificate of Appreciation, as did Charlie Weaver. Sil and Charlie, like Larry, have been part of the backbone of our Chamber for many years, serving on the Board of Directors, donating countless hours to Chamber business, helping with fundraisers and being a liaison for the Chamber with other organizations within our community.

The Chamber bestowed on Pat Berndt a Lifetime Membership for her many outstanding years of support and service to the Chamber.



The installation and awards were celebrated with a cake provided by Sammie and Micah Sager and Kris Jarvis.

Byline Flyer Ads

BY JUDY POPE

THE COST IS \$25 per flyer and if you put a flyer in the newsletter for three consecutive months (\$75), the fourth month is free. Payment is due at one time; however, you do not need to use the same flyer each month.

Change the flyer each month to showcase different things about your business. We do require 200 copies of the flyer to be provided. Any extra flyers will be available for distribution at the Chamber office.

THOUGHTS D'JOUR

► Continued from page 1

and at D'Jour Floral, 7512 Fairmount Avenue. We need to have a higher rate of visibility of these posters in the community for them to be more effective. If you stop by for a poster, pick up an extra poster or two for other businesses in your neighborhood. Help get the word out: *There is no place like home!*

Our food drive continues: *we can make a difference, one can at a time!* A special thank you to Leona and Larry Seidell and their Nickle Age Touring Club for collecting a large amount of food items in support the Chamber food drive. If we all pitch in a little bit each month, we can help members within our own community that are facing difficult times.

NEW AT HONDA OF EL CERRITO

Larry Maxon, General Manager

How would you like an easy, free and effective way to improve your business' Internet presence?

Part One

By Judy Pope

Well, it's available today to licensed businesses in the City of El Cerrito and it is easy to do. The City of El Cerrito has a new Web design and along with the updated city information Shop El Cerrito is being updated as well. Currently there are more than 800 businesses listed on the Web but very few have claimed their listing.

An example of a claimed listing is as follows:

<p>B&T Bookkeeping, Inc. 3020 El Cerrito Plaza, #507 El Cerrito, CA 94530 View Map Phone: 510-528-8411 Fax: 526 3969 Email: info@btbookkeeping.com Link: http://www.btbookkeeping.com</p>	<p>Our unique approach to bookkeeping offers much more than monthly bank reconciliation. We provide you with the data analysis and the tools to tap into your most valuable resource: your data. Because your data does not lie, it can tell you a story of how your business is performing. B&T Bookkeeping will assist you in reading your story and ultimately telling it to your investors, bankers and clients. We offer: Quickbooks Setup & Training, Bill Pay, Invoicing, Statement Reconciliation, Quarterly Account Review</p>
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To receive the full benefit of this listing for your business you must make an effort by claiming your listing. In order to claim your business listing contact the city. You can showcase your business with important information, such as business description, hours and accepted payment types, you can create a link to your own web site and more. All of this

is accomplished with a phone call to (510) 215-4330 and they will put you on the right path. (Be sure to have your city business license number handy when you call.)

Google Maps offers a similar service and next month, the Byline will have the how to get your listings out there on Google for free!

County Launches New Stroke Response System

BY JOHN GIOIA

*Contra Costa County Supervisor
District One*

AS MANY OF YOU know, I'm a long-time advocate for enhancing emergency preparedness and care, including leading a successful county effort at placing defibrillators at key public locations. It's estimated that nearly 1,000 people experience a stroke each year in Contra Costa County. From 2005 to 2007, stroke was the county's third killer.

That's why I'm particularly pleased to share that last week, the county launched a new coordinated stroke system, which links patients to medical providers trained to identify and treat strokes. Our county is the 11th jurisdiction in the state to establish this life-saving approach.

The system, administered by Contra Costa Emergency Medical Services, essentially creates a stroke care team that starts with a 911 emergency call, rapidly linking callers to emergency care

providers who are trained to identify stroke victims and transport them to a stroke-certified hospital. There are seven such hospitals in the county, including Doctors Medical Center and Kaiser Hospital in West County.

As with a heart attack, time is of the essence when treating strokes. Medical experts often talk about a four-hour window when treatment can save lives and reduce brain damage. The new system is designed to greatly increase the number of stroke patients treated within this window.

For more information on the new stroke system check the Emergency Medical Services Web site at www.cccems.org, or call (915) 646-4690.

I'm excited by this new state-of-the-art medical care approach, and will keep you posted on stroke education efforts in West County.

Supervisor Gioia's El Cerrito office is at 11780 San Pablo Avenue, Suite D. Telephone (510) 374-3231. On the Internet: www.cocobos.org/gioia.

Host a Mixer, Get Free Advertising

If you are a small business and would like to showcase your business, host a mixer, and receive this ad space for the month of your mixer.

Please contact the Chamber office as soon as possible.

(510) 705-1202

BY SEWALL GLINTERNICK

A long-time loyal member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Plaza Auto Service is a full-service business that has dedicated itself to making the car repair experience as hassle-free as possible.

For many years partners John DeVincenzi and Angelo Benassini with their team of highly trained technicians have been providing local drivers with constant friendly service specifically designed to get customers back on the road as soon and as painlessly as possible.

A modern repair facility, Plaza Auto Service uses the latest computer hardware and software to diagnose vehicle problems. As an ASE certified repair facility the shop is updated on a constant basis to provide customers with the highest quality service.

“At Plaza Service,” the pair explain, “we know how busy our customers are, and we want to help keep their vehicles in top condition. To that end we make our service experience as

trouble-free as possible by offering early-bird and night-owl drop-box service along with local shuttle service to home or office. We also offer free reminders when it’s time for maintenance.”

As an AC Delco repair center and an ASE Certified Shop the partners have pledged themselves to doing everything possible to doing everything possible to

“making customers feel welcome, comfortable, and satisfied with their service experience.”

Plaza Auto Service works on cars of all makes and models, and is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and closed Saturday and Sunday.

Plaza Auto Service

6801 Fairmount Avenue
(at Richmond Street)
El Cerrito

Phone (510) 527-9383

OLDE EL CERRITO BUSINESS



Part of El Cerrito’s history, **Sally Rand** was a burlesque dancer most noted for her ostrich feather fan dance and balloon bubble dance and actress in the 1920s.

She starred in the “Sally Rand’s Nude Ranch” at the 1939-40 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island.

Ms. Rand had a club in El Cerrito on San Pablo Avenue at the county line.

Now you can purchase a bit of El Cerrito’s colorful past.

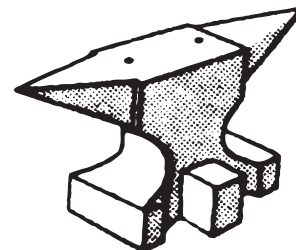
Postcards: 10 for \$10

Greeting cards with envelopes: \$10 for \$15

Posters (as shown) appropriate for framing starting at \$20

To order, e-mail jsbayat1@comcast.net.

All proceeds benefit the El Cerrito Historical Society.





El Cerrito

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Linking Business and Community Since 1936

P.O. Box 538 • El Cerrito, CA 94530

February Luncheon Meeting

Wed., Feb. 15 • Noon-1:30 p.m.

Mira Vista Golf & Country Club
7901 Cutting Blvd., El Cerrito

Mayor Bill Jones
The State of the City

Reservations required!

E-mail: info@elcerritochamber.org or call (510) 705-1202

\$20 members • \$25 non-member guests
All major credit cards accepted

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 1** Chamber Board of Directors meets; 8:30 a.m., 10296 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito.
- 4** "The New Metropolis: Building a Sustainable and Healthy Bay Area in the Age of Global Warming." February 4, 10 a.m.; Rialto Cinemas Cerrito.
- 6** City Council meets; 7:30 p.m., City Hall.
- 10** Neil Simon's "Barefoot in the Park" opens at the Contra Costa Civic Theatre, 8 p.m., through March 4. Tickets: www.ccct.org
- 16** Shadi Historical Room at City Hall open to public 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- 21** City Council meets; 7:30 p.m., City Hall.
- 25** Soroptimist International of El Cerrito presents Angela Mason, noted humanitarian, at 7 p.m. Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley. \$20. Food and Refreshments served. Call Lu Tipping at (510) 812-5411 for information and reservations.



Chamber Officers

President	Judy Pope, D'Jour Floral & Gifts
First Vice President	Sonja Givens-Thomas, El Cerrito Royale
Second Vice President	Mark Figone, East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc.
Secretary-Treasurer	Charlie Weaver, Certified Public Accountant
Manager	Mark L. Scott

Byline

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