It is great to have the opportunity to start fresh with a new year. Some might consider 2021 to have been a year of stumbling blocks and challenges whereas others, such as myself, saw it as a year of stepping stones and character-building experiences.

Now that we are toned up, have strengthened our character, and hope-fully have become more resilient and wiser, we can boldly embrace all that 2022 has to offer.

Serving as the 2021 President of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce has certainly been my pleasure. A gracious thank you is certainly in order for our 2021 board members: Sil Addiego, Aissia Ashoori, Mark Figone, Scott Harris, Matt Khadivian, John Stashik, Nic Tang, and Sonja Givens-Thomas. Also, a hearty thanks to Chamber Manager, Georgina Edwards.

An extra special acknowledgement to Sil Addiego for his 40 plus years of service as a member of the board of directors. A well earned and deserved retirement from board service.

I also want to thank Kevin O’Neal and Robert Rogers for “throwing their hats in the ring” and getting elected to the Chamber board with two-year terms starting January 18, 2022. A big thanks to my wife, Tyra Wright for the support and encouragement that she provides.

The Chamber appreciates and is thankful for each of our Chamber members. We are also truly fortunate to have a wonderful and collaborative working relationship with our city council and city staff. The same can be said about the Farmer’s Market. We appreciate all the energy and effort that goes into making it a success. To all of you who were able to attend our virtual gatherings as well as our live events, thank you for attending.

2022 offers a new year and a new beginning. Let’s all make 2022 a stellar year.

El Cerrito Mayor Quinto Tells His Goals

By Gabriel Quinto, Mayor of El Cerrito

Over the past two years, the City has dealt with many challenges. We have had to tackle financial issues, and deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been a challenging time full of difficult decisions. But our City has taken action to fix past mistakes, and we’ve made a great deal of progress. We are now in a position where we can envision a healthy and sustainable future.

This year as Mayor, my focus will be sustainability. Sustainability has been defined by the United Nations to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet the needs of the future. For El Cerrito, we have many projects that will fulfill the City’s short-term goals as well as our long-term vision, and I believe that we should concentrate on finishing what we’ve started. We must be realistic about what the City can and can’t do, and we must be mindful of our staff’s capacity and respectful of the work that they do.

The vision of sustainability for El Cerrito includes the following:

• Financial Sustainability. We will implement the City’s Fiscal Sustainability Plan and continue our progress on the State Auditor’s recommendations.

The officers for 2022 will be elected by the Board of Directors at the January 5th meeting.

Election Results

Ballots for seats on the Board of Directors were counted and results are shown below. These four director positions are effective January 18, 2022, and the term is two years.

The complete tally is as follows:

Matt Khadivian, El Mono ...................... 20*  
Kevin O’Neal, Well Grounded ............... 19*  
Robert Rogers, Supvr. John Gioia office .... 18*  
Nic Tang, Winkler Real Estate Group ....... 9  
Jeffrey Wright, Wright Realtors ............. 20*  
*Indicates elected

The officers for 2022 will be elected by the Board of Directors at the January 5th meeting.

El Cerrito Mayor Quinto Tells His Goals

Effective Immediately: El Cerrito Minimum Wage $16.37 per Hour
HAPPY NEW YEAR. Don’t look back. Hopefully, everyone will get their vaccine and life can return to the real normal, not that stupid “new normal,” sometime… Does that look familiar? It’s from my column one year ago. We didn’t get as far as hoped in 2021. A déjà vu year. You may note the mask has been removed from the Byline nameplate on the front page. I’m optimistic about getting this COVID-19 mess under control. Just because this newsletter removed its mask doesn’t mean readers should do the same. Wear it, get your vaccine and booster, then play it safe and smart.

Christmas miracle. At the December 21st City Council meeting, that body approved funding for emergency work to repair the leaking the Public Safety Building roof. Now let’s quickly finish the repairs.

40 years. On December 10, 2021, the Natural Grocery Company celebrated the firm’s 40th anniversary with a celebratory event held in the El Cerrito store’s Prepared Food Annex.

This month a certificate signed by El Cerrito Mayor Gabriel Quinto will be presented to founder Bob Gerner, and CEO Jennifer Sandkuhler (photo above) recognizing the firm.

But wait, there’s more! In the February Byline, the Natural Grocery will be our profiled business.

Honoring Chris

An official proclamation honoring Chris Treadway was approved by the El Cerrito City Council on November 2, 2021. (It was printed in the December Byline.) A memorial service for Chris was held on December 12th. At that time a resolution by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors was presented to Diana Treadway by District 1 Supervisor John Gioia.

The Junket, which opened for business on November 3, 1979, closed at the end of last month. The delicatessens, owned by Bruno and Cindy Frisch, was a fixture at El Cerrito Plaza for 42 years. The following is courtesy of Renegade Deli Heiress, Schatzie Frisch.

The Day the Headcheese* Died
(Sung to the tune of “American Pie” by Don McLean 1971)

A long, long time ago
I can still remember how that Headcheese
Used to make me smile
And I knew if I had my chance
That I could make The Junket last
And maybe we’d be happy for a while

But December made me bitter
The rent the bills, was I a quitter?
Covid on the doorstep
I couldn’t take one more step

I can’t remember if I cried
When I learned about the Deli’s demise
But something touched me deep inside
The day the Headcheese died

So, bye-bye, to the Headcheese on Rye
Drove my belly to the Deli, but the Deli retired
And good ole boys were eating
Headcheese on Rye
Singin’, “This’ll be the day that I die, and
If I can’t have my Headcheese I’ll cry”

*Headcheese [hed-cheez]: Headcheese is a cold cut that originated in Europe. Headcheese is not a dairy cheese. There is no cheese involved.

86. The Little Hill Lounge has closed. Located at 10753 San Pablo Avenue across from Marshalls, the popular watering hole has a new owner and future plans are not yet known. The Lounge had a strong social media presence on the ‘gram so keep your eyes open.

33rd annual MLK Day Parade is an El Cerrito tradition. Gather on Monday, January 17th, at 9 a.m. in the Del Norte BART station parking area; depart at 10 o’clock by car (like last year). End up at the El Cerrito Plaza BART station for festivities at 11. See ‘ya there.

Making appearances in the early part of this year will be some new businesses. (Caveat: this is a timeline this writer sees, definitely nothing official.) Harbor Freight is the new firm at the former Big 5 Sporting Goods site. No reason they should not be able open their doors relatively soon.

Construction has been underway at the former Batteries+Lamps building for the city’s second cannabis dispensary, branded Authentic El Cerrito. Corpora has stated “first quarter.” Across the avenue from Safeway is a new UPS Store and that should be wrapping up construction. Two UPS Stores really puts 94530 on the map!

On Moeser near San Pablo the Urgent Care Animal Hospital will be opening. It’s not only nice to welcome a new business to El Cerrito but it’s great for pet owners seeking immediate care, but not a full blown ER visit. Several months ought to make it a done deal and open to patients.

Banter, a wine bar and bottle shop, plans to open this Spring at 10368 San Pablo Ave. near Stockton. Owner Claire Sullivan says there will be a light food menu too.

Mayfair Station is how the new apartment complex at Cutting & San Pablo is named.

Byline Online
eccerritochamber.org/byline

See Past Prez Palaver, page 3
THE MAYOR’S GOALS

Continued from page 1

We will work on funding our pension liability and maintain an appropriate level of General Fund reserves. We must be strategic and thoughtful about our budget and resources, while responding to the needs of our community.

• Environmental Sustainability. We will continue to be leaders in Contra Costa in this area, including implementing environmental activities, the recent foodware and solid waste ordinances, and our Climate Action Plan. We will continue to promote sustainable development and construction, champion clean energy, and foster sustainable transportation.

• Economic Sustainability. The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan update will continue to provide the platform for sustainable development. We continue to be a leader in housing for all. We are working closely with BART on the El Cerrito Plaza project, which promises to be the biggest economic development project in our City in many years, including the potential for a new library that will serve the entire community. Of course, we will partner with the Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development and market El Cerrito as a great place to live, work, play, and do business.

• Sustainable Health and Safety. Public health remains the highest priority, promoting COVID-19 safety so we can overcome the pandemic. Disaster preparedness and wildfire safety will always be key priorities, and we will continue to seek ways to prevent wildfires and improve our readiness. We will continue our focus on crime prevention, being leaders in community law enforcement while protecting our most vulnerable residents.

We intend to use an equity lens in all that we do, so that our City is safe, inclusive, and accessible for all. When we have a vision for sustainability, then we can ensure that we are indeed meeting present needs and planning for the future. El Cerrito is ready to build on our progress and move our City forward.

PAST PREZ PALAVER

Continued from page 2

Pablo is branded and the original timetable had those units available for leasing last Fall. A delay attributed to the shipping logjam, so I heard, threw the project off schedule. Kind of ironic, as placing those modular apartment units on the site is similar to locking down containers on a ship. But Community Development says they should receive a certificate of occupancy in February. There is considerable ground floor footage for commercial use. Contact Community Development for leasing contacts for this high traffic corner.

Definitely not soon, but eventually, there will be a Hampton Inn & Suites hotel opposite Mayfair. No building permit yet, but preliminary steps are well underway. A game changer for that corner and the city, not to mention a nice looking building replacing blight.

Bottom line: things are happening in our little city even during a pandemic. There is much to look forward to.

OSH. The City’s Design Review Board will hold a public hearing regarding 1755 Eastshore Blvd., aka OSH, on Wednesday, January 5th, at 7:30 p.m. by Zoom. A public storage business is planned and the hearing is about parts of that plan. To learn more, contact the DRB. That information plus the Zoom login can be found at el-cerrito.org.


Introducing New Chamber Directors

Robert Rogers serves as District Coordinator and Communications Specialist for Contra Costa County District 1 Supervisor John Gioia, based in El Cerrito. He is a former newspaper reporter and holds B.A. degrees from California State University, Fullerton and an M.A. in journalism from UC Berkeley, where he served as a lecturer at the Graduate School of Journalism. Rogers also holds a certificate from Georgetown University’s TFAS program and a mini-MBA from the University at Buffalo School of Management. He also is a Credentialed County Executive at the California State Association of Counties Institute. Rogers is passionate about community service and helping local merchants and entrepreneurs thrive in a rapidly evolving commercial context.

Email: r.rogers@elcerritochamber.org

Kevin O’Neal

I have cooperated Well Grounded Tea and Coffee Bar with my wife for the past 17 years. It’s been our passion project together, a fulfillment of a dream to demonstrate that entrepreneurship can have a positive impact on the community within which we reside. It has been an honor and a blessing to operate here in El Cerrito. Receiving such amazing support from everyone around us has allowed us to provide support to various local organizations: local schools and PTAs, CCCT, ECYB, ECFC, ECHS and Korematsu Clubs, the Wildcat 4-H Club, just to name a few.

Looking ahead, I hope to share my enthusiasm with other El Cerrito business owners and advocate for small businesses like yours.

Email: k.oneal@elcerritochamber.org
Everyone’s Favorite Pastime...

By Dave Weinstein
El Cerrito Historical Society

Hardworking they were, the Pryde Boys, Dick and Buster. Dick, a plumber, and Buster, an electrician, found well paying jobs while still teenagers during the dark days of the Depression working for Pullman Co., which manufactured railway sleeping cars in Richmond.

But it wasn’t enough. Within a few years, for a time with partner Lloyd Christiansen, the brothers were running a business named Pastime.

Nearing a century later, Pastime is still prospering as a family-owned firm. It is, after Sunset View Cemetery, probably El Cerrito’s oldest business. Pastime has undergone remarkable changes, but it has remained true to its original goal: to support the family both financially and as a family.

Why did Donald H. Pryde (known as “Dick,” 1907-2003) and Norman G. Pryde (known as “Buster,” 1906-1994) start Pastime?

“Well, they wanted to be their own boss, for one thing,” says David Pryde, 83, Buster’s son, “and they wanted to get ahead. And when you work for somebody else, it’s hard, you know?”

David, who sat with the El Cerrito Historical Society for an interview, has been Pastime’s CEO since the late 1980s.

Pastime did not begin as a place that sold saws, lawn mowers, garden furniture, and dish drainers. Instead, the original Pastime opened as a café and then a bar, much in the spirit of El Cerrito in the 1930s, a wide open town drenched in neon, with gambling joints, bordellos, jazz halls, and prize fights.

The site was historic even then. It is on or very close to the site where Wilhelm Rust opened a hardware business and forge before the turn of the 20th century, one of the original businesses in the area.
Began as an El Cerrito Tavern

Pastime acquired nearby buildings and other sites for expansion, combining them into a conglomerate of a building.

“There’s probably about four or five pieces of property (in the current structure), because Villa’s market used to be here,” he says.

In 1970 the Prydes brought in Berkeley architect Leon Rimov & Associates to remodel the store. The result is the Pastime we see today.

David attributes Pastime’s growth over the years and its success to hard work (he’s a big one on hard work), and to being “more progressive. We joined a cooperative for buying.”

This was Ace hardware, a Midwest cooperative that had yet to move to the West Coast. “So my cousin (Robert Pryde) and I flew back to Chicago,” David says. “…saying that we wanted to have them come out this way.”

What was the benefit of allying with Ace?

*See Pastime Ace Hardware, page 6*
“Well, you get to buy much cheaper. We eliminated the middleman. We used to buy from wholesalers, maybe 10 or 15 wholesalers, where they’ve had 10 or 15 percent of their margin. Well, now, we get that margin. So that made it profitable for us, and if we didn’t have that, we wouldn’t make it,” David says.

And bear in mind, Ace does not own Pastime. “No, we own it,” David says. Ace is owned by its member stores.

Shoppers at Pastime, wondering where to find a particular item, or with questions on how to use it, grab a number and wait for assistance. It’s a feature most people seem to like, and “the numbers system,” as David calls it, was devised in the 1960s by his cousin Richard Pryde.

“The youngest one, he came up with the best idea,” David says.

Today David Pryde remains CEO of Pastime, serving alongside several third generation Prydes. David’s son Jeffrey is manager, as are Dan Pryde, the son of Donald Pryde, and Susan Estrada, the daughter of Richard Pryde.

Carrell closed out our chat with this.

She’s been hunting and fishing since childhood, fishing at Point Isabel (before it was reshaped by grading and expanded with bay fill), and learned to make arrows from his uncle George, who “had a hunting club up in the mountains. We used to go there every summer and hunt.”

David’s never been much of a gambler. His dad had advised against it.

When asked what makes him proud, both answers revolve around family and the family business. “That we did it, that we held on here,” he answers. “How many businesses can last as long? It’s been in business almost 100 years.”

“I’m proud of our parents. They started this. I’m getting teary eyed,” he says, near the end of our interview.
As 2021 closed, we were still deeper into our COVID-19 experience than we might have imagined. Yet, slowly, unselfconsciously or deliberately, we are living each day with more confidence and managing with more options (got a “rapid test” on hand yet?). It seems as if it’s been one long year, the last 24 months.

Here, in El Cerrito, we continue on, accustomed to smaller (and fresh air) gatherings, with outdoor heaters keeping us warm enough to spend time catching up with friends and family and appreciating our community. We are experts at anticipating COVID-19 protocols, with vaccine cards (or test results) neatly packed next to our IDs and allotting for extra time for check in at theaters and restaurants.

“Virtual” gatherings for work and personal reasons are now part of our daily life and here to stay. Some of what felt like strained adaptations are now welcome options. Who wants to go back to driving somewhere for just an hour long meeting? Even telehealth has become a useful and helpful option, at first mostly a logistical workaround to decrease exposure and efficient access, but now a legitimate and useful way to connect with our health care providers.

With a new year upon us, we can be sure that we’ll have more opportunities to keep adapting and changing, with more appreciation for our resiliency and human adaptability. 2022 here we come!

New Year New Us

COVID TESTING
EL CERRITO
By CityHealth

Daily 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
3223 Carlson Blvd., El Cerrito
in the Bayview Eagles Parking Lot
All Insurance Accepted
Walkups OK

Picture This at Potrero & San Pablo

An application was submitted in February 2021 for a proposed five-story building to wrap around the existing Chevron station at 6111 & 6115 Potrero Avenue and 11335 San Pablo Avenue. This building would include 63 residential units; 5,554 square feet of ground floor commercial space; 23 vehicle parking spaces; 97 long term bicycle parking spaces; and 12 short term bicycle parking spaces. **The ground floor commercial space includes a 2,900 square foot brewery and a 2,400 square foot restaurant.** The project will be considered by the El Cerrito Planning Commission and Design Review Board this year.

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Farmers Market
AT EL CERRITO PLAZA
Open Tuesday & Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sponsored By
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Living Business and Community Since 1998

Frog Hollow Farm
now at the Tuesday market

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Frog Hollow Farm
now at the Tuesday market
ANNUAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS INSTALLATION MEETING (BY ZOOM)

Tuesday, January 18th • Noon

Contact info@elcerritochamber.org for login link

The California Home of DETROIT PIZZA!

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