Happy New Year! I’d like to thank everyone who attended our holiday lunch last month. For those of you who couldn’t make it, it was held at El Cerrito’s new Mexican restaurant, Los Moles. The more than 40 attendees were treated to a great lunch with a choice of five different entrées. I’d like to thank Lito Saldaña and his staff for a great party. The food was fantastic, and a good time was had by all who attended. I also want to thank our manager, Lisa, for all her hard work that contributed to the success of this annual event. To those of you who brought toys for the Toys for Tots program and who generously donated items for our raffle, thanks to all of you as well.

We will be installing our new directors at this month’s lunch on January 16th. I’d like to ask everyone to attend and lend your support and encouragement to your new directors. As an additional incentive, our guest speaker will be Fiona Ma, current member of the Board of Equalization and a candidate for state treasurer. With the passage of the new federal income tax changes as well as the legalization of cannabis and all of its related sales tax issues, I have no doubt her presentation will be extremely interesting.

As I write this, with Christmas just past and New Year’s just around the corner, part of me thinks: thank goodness its almost over. But as the holiday season begins to wind down, I’m happy that I can also say to myself how good it has been. With the exception of standing in line for 30 minutes on Christmas eve morning from 6:50 to 7:30 a.m. to get fresh crabs for what has become a family tradition of crab and Caesar salad for dinner on Christmas day, I managed to avoid lines and traffic pretty successfully this year. Christmas eve was spent with family members who I don’t get to see during the year.

Installation, Tax Talk, at Jan. 16th Lunch

By John C. Stashik

Members are encouraged to RSVP now for the annual installation luncheon meeting set for Tuesday, January 16th at noon. It will be held in the third floor meeting room of El Cerrito Royale, 6510 Gladys Avenue, in El Cerrito.

Joining veteran Sil Addiego (Coldwell Banker Bartels Realty) on the 2018-19 board are: Fred Fassett (Minuteman Press of Berkeley), Nic Tang (Marvin Gardens Real Estate), and Jeffrey Wright (Wright Realtors). There are nine voting members on the board of directors; these four were recently elected and five will run for election in a year serving two year terms.

Catering the luncheon will be new member Cafe N!ne doing business at the Bank of the West Plaza, 11100 San Pablo Avenue. Gannon Abbey is the proprietor. Special pricing is in effect for this lunch only. $20 to eat; $10 for those who don’t want lunch, and no credit card or PayPal fees will be assessed.

The speaker at this event will be Fiona Ma, CPA, representing the second district of the state Board of Equalization. As of last July the Board of Equalization was renamed as the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration. Despite the new name they still collect your sales taxes.

Note to Employers

Starting January 1, 2018, the minimum wage for workers within El Cerrito city limits is $13.60 per hour. Employers are required to post the official city-issued wage bulletin at work sites. Contact the Chamber of Commerce manager for any additional information about the El Cerrito minimum wage ordinance.
Happy New Year! We now begin another trip around the sun. Look for continued growth of our membership in 2018 and more worthwhile speakers, workshops, mixers, advertising opportunities, and other ways to increase your business. My prediction: it will be a fantastic year.

Council switch. On December 19th, the El Cerrito City Council did their annual shuffle and Gabriel Quinto became the mayor with Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto the mayor pro-tem. Best wishes to both.

Crab feed schedule. It’s that time again. Salesian College Preparatory School will hold their 53rd annual crab feed on Friday, January 12th (8 p.m. dinner), and Saturday, January 13th (7 p.m. dinner). $50 for all you can eat crab and pasta. Buy tickets at the school (2851 Salesian Ave., Richmond) or go online at www.salesian.com.

The El Cerrito Recreation and Park Dept. will have their crab feed on Saturday, January 27th, at the Community Center. Crab, salad, garlic bread, pasta, and a dessert for $50. Plus a no host bar and lots of great raffle prizes. Get tickets at the Community Center; advance purchase only. This benefits the David Hunter Memorial Scholarship. I got mine and will see you there!

St. John the Baptist School’s crab feed and auction is on Saturday, February 10th, at 6 p.m. in the gym. $50 per ticket. Information at (510) 234-2244 or www.stjohnec.org. Location: 11156 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito.

Finally, I mentioned last month that the El Cerrito Police Employees Association was planning a crab feed and raffle on Saturday, February 17th. No further details yet, but check back here next issue.

Open Saturdays. Cafe N!ne at Bank of the West Plaza will begin Saturday hours this month. Until now it has been a Monday-Friday operation.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from page 1

very often. It was a wonderful evening and a perfect reminder for me of the gift of and the importance of family.

As I begin a fourth and final term as the El Cerrito Chamber president, I want to say how grateful I am for the dedicated hard work of our other board members. Thanks too to our newest board members. Your willingness to lend a hand is very much appreciated.

I have no doubt that we will continue with the gains we’ve made over the past few years in increasing our membership and in continuing to expand the value we bring to our local business community, a challenging task indeed in the digital age. Please don’t hesitate to offer your interest, your ideas, and even your criticisms. The board needs your input if it is to be responsive to your needs as a business.

To borrow a line from the late, great Jackie Gleason’s theme song, “and away we go!”—again.

From the Historical Society. The annual meeting will be Sunday, January 14th, at 3 p.m. in the Garden Room of the Community Center. Following a brief business meeting, which will include election of officers, there will be a program delving into El Cerrito’s deepest layers of history: its geological layers. Gary Prost, a geologist with the Northern California Geological Society, will show images and discuss the geological setting of El Cerrito and the rocks in our city—metamorphic rocks, the Franciscan formation, and faults and landslides. Gary will also display samples from his collection. Gary led a geological walking tour earlier this year for the society and Trail Trekkers. These programs are always quite interesting.

Questions? Comments? Submissions?
Contact the Byline
byline@elcerritochamber.org

Free Tax Seminar

THE CALIFORNIA Department of Tax and Fee Administration (formerly the Board of Equalization) will hold a free small business tax seminar in Oakland on January 23rd. Topics will include:

- Avoiding common sales tax problems.
- Employee or independent contractor?
- Better business through better records.
- Forms of ownership.

The seminar will be held at the Elihu Harris Building auditorium at 1515 Clay Street in downtown Oakland.

Check-in will begin at 8:30 a.m. with the seminar running from 9 a.m. until noon. RSVP is requested. Online, find more information at: www.cdtfa.ca.gov/seminar

514 Lounge. First mentioned here last September, the new tapa and cocktail establishment at 11236 San Pablo Avenue (near Potrero), is still in permit limbo according to the owner. Opening a business can take time and deep pockets. Hopefully, we’ll see a grand opening in the near future.

Let’s hear it for Mountain Mike’s Pizza! This store at 10750 San Pablo is open every day of the week, holidays too. They were even open Christmas when virtually every other restaurant in town were shut down. You won’t go hungry when Mt. Mike’s Pizza is handy! On top of that, they give a nice discount when you show your Chamber of Commerce advertising postcard mailed to every address in El Cerrito plus Richmond Annex.

Still looking. This Chamber of Commerce has received word from the building owner that we’re okay in our present office through March. After that, I presume we will be out in the cold unless a small office space is located somewhere in town. 300 sq. ft. would do it. Finding a new home is proving quite difficult. Any ideas? Tell us. Email info@elcerritochamber.org or phone (510) 705-1202.
On the local front, I’m glad our newly inaugurated mayor, Gabe Quinto, made it clear in his acceptance speech, that economic development has high priority with him. He plans to work closely with the Chamber to actively acknowledge current business owners as well as develop ways to make it easier for new entrepreneurs to start something here. El Cerrito still has several empty storefronts on the avenue and other commercial zones that are prime spots for a new enterprising business owner. I find Mayor Quinto’s attitude very encouraging and look forward to working together on these efforts. Being Chamber manager and visiting our member businesses to check-in is the best part of the job and knowing the mayor is super interested in local business vitality makes the job easier.

For this mayor and the next, it will be an important ongoing challenge to put policy and incentives in place that serve to encourage new businesses to see El Cerrito as a community that values its local merchants. If city leadership succeeds in this, then 2018 and beyond will bring about a vibrant, beneficial and enjoyable business environment and those who work, shop, play, or dine in El Cerrito will be the winners!

The views expressed here are mine and do not necessarily represent those of the Chamber Board. Email: l.martinengo@elcerritochamber.org; cell: (510) 778-5883.

Manager's Musings
LISA MARTINENGO

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Our Annual Newsletter Calendar containing up-to-date information on the current state of Digital Printing, a Full Year Calendar on One Page, and Valuable Offers has been mailed.

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January 2018

BYLINE
The Chamber held its traditional year-end fundraising luncheon on December 12th, and it was a delightful success on all fronts. Not all things were traditional, however, as the event was held at El Cerrito’s newest restaurant, Los Moles, rather than the Berkeley Country Club. There were over 35 attendees. Many guests had not visited the restaurant before. Along with attending in support of the Chamber, they had another good reason to attend. The afternoon started off with socializing and sipping sparkling wine, sponsored by East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc. Chamber president, Mark Figone, then welcomed guests and the program began. After a round of introductions, representatives from the El Cerrito Fire Department spoke about the Toys for Tots program and the southern California wildfire situation. Owner and chef Lito Saldañá was introduced and applauded for his choice in opening his restaurant in El Cerrito.

Lunch was served and the room was quieter except for murmurs of wonder about the good food. Then the raffle drawing began and excitement level rose as numbers were called out. The board of directors and staff are very grateful to the generous members who donated enticing goods and services for the raffle. Please see the accompanying list of donors and contributors (on the following page) and support them with your purchasing power whenever you can.

The highlight of the fundraising was, no doubt, the auctioning of two tickets to a Golden State Warriors basketball game, kindly donated by board member, Sil Addiego. Bill Kuhlman, also a board member and incoming vice president, did a bang up job of building excitement into a fever pitch with bidders battling it out and with the winning bid climbing to $450 for two great seats at a Warriors game.

Overall, it was a great day and brought in needed funds to keep the Chamber on good financial footing. Once again, please patronize our member businesses for your business or personal needs. Read the Byline online or in print and plan on coming to our next event; thank you!
**Calendar of Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 4</td>
<td>Board of Directors meets; 9 a.m., Chamber office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cerrito Classics: “Funny Face” at 7 p.m. Rialto Cinemas Cerrito.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Annual meeting of El Cerrito Historical Society, 3 p.m. Community Center. Includes talk on El Cerrito’s geology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Chamber luncheon and annual installation at noon. Fiona Ma, CPA, from Calif. Department of Tax &amp; Fee Administration is the speaker. El Cerrito Royale, 6510 Gladys Ave., El Cerrito. RSVP please. Story on page 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>City Council meets, 7 p.m., City Hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Rec-Park Dept. Crab Feed &amp; Raffle; 6 p.m. at Community Center. See page 2 for information.</td>
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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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A complete directory of Chamber members can be printed from the website:

[www.elcerritochamber.org](http://www.elcerritochamber.org)

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**Chamber Officers & Manager**

- **President**: Mark Figone, East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc.
- **Vice President**: Bill Kuhlman, CW3 Bio, LLC
- **Secretary**: Melanie Mintz, City of El Cerrito
- **Treasurer, Byline Editor**: John C. Stashik, Premier Graphics
- **Manager**: Lisa Martinengo