As you might imagine, it is often difficult for me to come up with subject matter for this column on a regular basis. I purposely avoid politics because I don’t believe that this column should be used as my personal bully pulpit. Instead, besides trying to keep you informed about the goings on at the Chamber and here in our community, I like to share with you some of my perspectives and experiences that I find interesting. I hope I’ve succeeded at keeping you at least mildly amused and entertained.

So for fun this month I want to vent about a pet peeve of mine. That is the view, ridiculous in my opinion, that GMO is bad. I got the idea while shopping the other day for my families’ Thanksgiving dinner and was struck by the incredible amount of food products in my grocery store that are advertised as “Non-GMO.”

What is GMO? It is health speak for a genetically modified organism. I’d like to start by suggesting that there simply is no such thing. Every single plant in the produce aisle or listed as an ingredient in processed food has been genetically modified.

Take, for instance, just those vegetables that are descended from the common mustard plant. They include broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, and kohlrabi. Each came about by selective breeding of preceding generations chosen for their characteristics. What is this if not genetic modification? This genetic modification has led to a veritable bounty of delicious, nutritious and easier to grow food for the world. But it has taken time, millennia in fact.

A common technique developed over a century ago is subjecting seeds to radiation to scramble their DNA and create mutant strains, many with very

See From the President, page 6
Signs of the season. Delancey Street Christmas trees showed up on “Black Friday” at Waldo and San Pablo. Fatapple’s restaurant had their festive holiday decorations up before Thanksgiving. Pies, thousands of them, are baked right here in El Cerrito for Nation’s restaurants. The Sundar Shadi display on the Moeser Lane hill, will be set up mid-month and that brings people to our city from all over the Bay Area. Onward toward 2019.

Don’t forget Festivus, the holiday for the rest of us! December 23rd is the day to air grievances, celebrate feats of strength, get out the aluminum pole, and have a Festivus dinner. If you don’t get it, I’m certain a Seinfeld rerun will air that day on Channel 36.

New area code. To accommodate the ever increasing need for more phone numbers a new 341 area code will be added to the geographic area now served by good ol’ 510. Existing numbers will not change but calling procedures will. The new numbers will begin appearing in mid-2019 but callers are advised to start using the new procedure on Dec. 15th. That new procedure is to dial 11 digits: 1 + area code + telephone number. You’ll hear more about this.

Doherty’s Truck Rentals is opening a fleet sales lot on the northwest corner of Huntington and San Pablo avenues. Need a car or truck from the rental fleet? Call (510) 334-0777.

Progress. Hana Gardens, next to City Hall, is nearing completion and will be a nice enhancement to the avenue.

Baby steps. That new tapas bar called the 514 Lounge still isn’t open but has help wanted signs in the front window along with a health department temporary placard, all good signs you might say. Located on San Pablo Avenue just south of Potrero, it has been a work in progress for over a year. Hopefully, this new business opens soon.

Official Notice of Chamber Election

By John C. Stashik

It is election time again at the Chamber. We have a board of directors composed of nine voting members who serve two year terms. Five are elected one year and four the following year. In addition, the Chamber manager, who is an employee, sits on the board as non-voting member. The board of directors meets monthly (or as needed).

Our Bylaws require the president to appoint a nominating committee at the October membership meeting. That committee comes up with a list of candidates to appear on the ballot and their report is announced at the November membership meeting. Nominations can also be made from the floor at the November meeting.

Following that, ballots are printed and mailed to all regular members in good standing. Associate members don’t vote.

Votes are counted in December and the results announced. The winning candidates are then installed at the January membership meeting. Also in December, the board will choose the officers for the following year (president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary).

Last month on November 20th, a membership meeting was held at Los Moles Beer Garden. Nominating committee members Sil Addiego and Bill Kuhlman announced the slate of five candidates to appear on the ballot. An additional candidate was nominated from the floor, thus six candidates will appear on the ballot for the five open board seats.

Ballots will be mailed to all regular paid-up members on November 30, 2018. Members should return the ballots not later than noon on December 10, 2018, to the Chamber office. A self-addressed reply envelope will be included with the ballots.

That is some background on this annual ritual. Now, here are the names of the candidates.

Aissia Ashoori
City of El Cerrito

Russell H. Doi
Reverse Mortgage Specialist

Mark Figone
East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc.

Sonja Givens-Thomas
El Cerrito Royale

Bill Kuhlman
CW3 Bio

John C. Stashik
Premier Graphics

Now you know how it all works. Look for your ballot and vote.

January 1st: Minimum Wage $15 Per Hour

Effective January 1, 2019, the minimum wage for all workers within the city of El Cerrito will be $15 per hour. This is an increase from the current $13.60 hourly rate.

Employers are required to post the official El Cerrito Wage Bulletin at work sites. Said document is available from the City of El Cerrito or the Chamber. For more information contact the City of El Cerrito at (510) 215-4318 or email wages@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Over 15,000 Chamber of Commerce mailers dropped into the postal service just before Thanksgiving promoting member businesses. That number reflects an expanded circulation area that includes all of El Cerrito, part of Richmond Annex, and now East Richmond Heights. Feedback on this marketing program for members has been positive. The next card will be mailed at the beginning of February, 2019. For more information about the El Cerrito Marketing Program, send an email to ads@elcerritochamber.org

Ho ho ho. I’ll see you at the Chamber holiday luncheon on December 18th at the Berkeley Country Club. Get your tickets soon (see page 1). Best wishes for great holidays from your Byline scribe and Chamber treasurer.
End of Year Notes for El Cerritans

S T A Y I N G  I N D O O R S due to the smoky air, I’ve been doing a lot of reading of online essays and articles from sites as diverse as The Atlantic, Fast Company, Vice, Politico, and the San Francisco Chronicle. The standout essays were filled with poignant memories of the past or seriously questionable actions in the present. I looked for links and lessons that I could personally learn from as well as somehow help me (in my Chamber work) to make El Cerrito a better, more cohesive, responsive and vibrant community.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the twin tragedies of November 1978, the horrendous Jonestown massacre and days later, the cold-blooded murder of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. In the late ’70s I lived and worked in the city; media images from those sad shocking days are seared into my mind.

One of the salient thoughts expressed by a few people in the aftermath of those events was how shockingly easy it was for a charismatic person such as Jim Jones, to be accepted into the city’s inner political circles yet turn out to be a mentally unstable despot and charlatan. The assassin of Moscone and Milk, Supervisor Dan White, a former firefighter and policeman, appeared to be a wholesome all American family man, yet planned and carried out a hate-filled rampage.

Considering Americans elected the current White House occupant, can we truly say we are not still too gullible when faced with a bold promise-maker and huckster? How is the learning curve on this changing now?

I read a few articles about Amazon’s decision to establish two new headquarters sites instead of one. Queens, New York, and Arlington, Virginia (next to Washington, D.C.), were the winners after a 14 month long “beauty contest” with over 235 cities bending over backwards to woo billionaire Jeff Bezos. Why enrich the already rich east coast, when they could have helped to boost any number of economically deserving mid-American cities? Everything this company does is infuriating and greedy and here’s why. In the midst of a national housing crisis, the site chosen in New York City had been earmarked for almost 5,000 housing units, including 1,500 for low and very low income residents. Two development companies had already begun formulating plans, that are now being tossed out. Plus, the cities offered Amazon a reported $2 billion-plus in local and state subsidies.

Not everyone is thrilled with the deal. “Our subways are crumbling, our children lack school seats, and too many of our neighbors lack adequate health care,” read a joint statement from New York Senator Michael Gianaris and New York City council member Jimmy Van Bramer. “It is unfathomable that we would sign a $3 billion check to Amazon in the face of these challenges.” To add insult to injury, there are plans to build a helipad for Bezos so he doesn’t have to join the commute crush.

My local angle take-away from this tale is not so different from what I’ve written here before; city government and residents must not kowtow to property developers that come into El Cerrito with grand projects and fee payments but with less than desirable overall results. Let’s make sure the maximum benefit of any upcoming deals come to El Cerrito’s current citizens and not the out-of-town developers’ pockets.

I’m hoping 2019 brings forth a fresh perspective to the management and character of the growth of our city, especially one that does more than talk about having a thriving business (locally owned is best) community.

Also, you must come to our annual social and fundraising luncheon on December 18th! See page 1 for more information, or on our website. It’s quite a fun and friendly time to chat, network, eat together, and raise funds so our small but mighty Chamber can continue its support of local business.

If you’ll soon be looking for gifts, before going online, be sure to visit the local merchants in El Cerrito first. Please look at our website directory and support the member shops, restaurants, cafes, professional services, and have a great holiday season!

By Lisa Martinengo

BYLINE

December 2018

Prizes Needed

Raffle and auction prizes are needed for the Chamber holiday luncheon and fundraiser. The event will be on December 18th.

Donations of merchandise or services are greatly appreciated. In addition, consider it added publicity for your business.

Contact the Chamber manager, Lisa Martinengo, to participate. Telephone: (510) 705-1202 or email to info@elcerritochamber.org.
If you agree that, for a human, being whole is the equivalent of being totally healthy, it’s easy to understand the goal of the Elkayam Center for Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine, which is to help you to become a whole and healthy person. I attended the Center’s recent open house to witness the launch of the newly enhanced array of services that integrate the best elements of Asian and Western healing approaches. I sat down with owner Ron Elkayam, MS, L.Ac., to learn more about his virtual one-stop shop featuring his acupuncture practice plus an expanded team of new physical and mental wellness practitioners.

Growing up in Baltimore, Ron’s family was always interested in physical well being. His parents exercised regularly and he grew up with keen interest in martial arts. Eventually, Ron migrated to the Bay Area, and in the late ’90s during a leave of absence from his office job, he went to a health fair, where he met a Chinese healing practitioner who introduced him to the wonders of acupuncture. The proverbial light bulb went on and Ron had found his calling. He went back to school for four years of acupuncture and pre-med training. In 2005, he made the big leap to live in Taiwan to enhance his knowledge. Fortunately, Ron made good connections and ended up staying for two years, teaching English, learning Mandarin, and getting hands on training with expert practitioners. More doors eventually opened and he moved to mainland China, living in Shanghai and Beijing for three more years, working in clinics, gaining invaluable skills and experience in the healing arts.

In 2010, Ron returned to the U.S. and set up his own practice in the Washington, D.C., area. It was during these years that Ron realized that the most encouraging messaging to appeal to Americans about Eastern healing was to talk about it in terms of science. He also mentioned that all Chinese doctors in China are trained in Western medicine in addition to their traditional methods.

The call of nicer weather and old friendships brought Ron back west in 2014 and he opened a practice here to offer complete body and mind health services for everyone in need. The Center (on the mezzanine of El Cerrito Plaza) has a spacious suite of rooms soothingly appointed and equipped for acupuncture and all the services offered by the team. In Ron’s cadre is a nutritional coach, a massage therapist, a bodyworker, and several psychotherapists. Some of the conditions that Ron and colleagues have successfully treated are chronic pain, respiratory, digestive, emotional, neurological, cardiovascular, hormonal and skin issues, just to name a few areas.

Please see the website for more complete information. With such a wide range of health and wellness services offered, the Center for Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine, is a veritable oasis for calming, rejuvenating and healing almost whatever ails you. The team of practitioners are very committed to helping you feel whole and healthy again. Many insurance programs are also accepted, so there shouldn’t be any obstacle to getting the help you need.

Please stop in for a free 30 minute consultation!

By Lisa Martinengo

Search No More!
Your Oasis of Wellness is at El Cerrito Plaza.

[ in-te-gra-tive: combining one or more things with another so they become a new and whole total. ]

Elkayam Center for Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine

731 El Cerrito Plaza (mezzanine level)
Enter at stairwell near Joann Fabrics
(510) 528-1836
www.elkayamacupuncture.com
That mixed paper you throw in the recycling bin and expect to have a new life has turned into garbage.

Because of policy changes by China that mandate virtually pure material (no more than .5 percent contamination) for processing, “the recycling market has collapsed,” said Mark Figone, president of East Bay Sanitary Co., the city’s family-owned refuse firm. “It is a crisis.”

Mixed paper contaminated by uncleaned jars or cans is now worthless on the overseas market, and bales are stacking up at collection storage sites around California.

“It is probably the most dramatic change in the recycling market in the last 20 to 30 years,” said Maria Sanders, manager of El Cerrito’s Operations & Environmental Services Division.

Mixed paper once generated revenue of $50 to $150 a ton, used to help cover operating costs. Now, “Bales are stacking up,” said Figone, who represents his company with the California Refuse and Recycling Council. “Processors have nowhere to put them. Stacks are a fire hazard and a vector hazard. It becomes a health and safety issue. Volumes are potentially going to take a huge hit.”

Most of the public isn’t yet aware that the days of just putting everything in the recycling bin are over and the days of rinsing and drying cans and jars have returned. Most are unaware that the majority of plastic thrown in the bin is not recyclable.

Educating consumers in recycling correctly and cleanly is one step in dealing with the issue, but it inevitably means more items will end up in the landfill. That runs counter to the 50 percent diversion mandate of the state’s AB939 recycling law.

“Residential is a higher percentage of recycling,” Figone said. “We try to encourage businesses to increase participation, but the bigger a business is, the harder it is to educate the employees.”

El Cerrito’s program includes a staff member whose duties include outreach and employee education for interested businesses.

Unlike most cities, El Cerrito operates its own collection program, as well as the recycling center, where material can be dropped off and is much less likely to be contaminated and lose its value.

“A good portion of revenue we get is from the recycling center. Curbside does not do as well,” although the city has not yet had to pay to have its bales taken, Sanders said.

Figone estimated that 20 to 30 percent of the material put in curbside bins is not recyclable and ends up in the landfill.

“One solution at the local level is to emphasize a cleaner waste stream. Material that used to be recycled now isn’t,” he said. “We have to get back to reusable and go away from plastics.”

A longer term solution is likely to be costly. “Things need to change in the garbage industry,” Figone said. “We don’t know if China is going to change its policy. We need to find new overseas markets. We also need to develop processing here, but nobody wants to take it on. It’s 10 years out at best.”

Recycling volume “is going to take a big hit” in the meantime, he said.

“We can do it. Companies are ready to leverage funding and get it done, but we’ve got to pass the message to the public,” Figone said. “The industry stands ready to get creative in partnership with jurisdictions, but with the understanding that the cost of garbage will be going up.”

Sanders said Recycling Center personnel “are here to answer questions seven days a week” at (510) 215-4350.
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from page 1

desirable traits. Thousands of varieties of plants that we consume today like grapefruits, lettuces, and oats, were developed that way.

Starting in the 1970s new techniques were created to add to this genetically modified bounty that are much faster. So-called “pre-molecular” or “gene editing” techniques basically created new hybrids without having to wait for two plants to grow and pollinate to create the next generation of seeds which then have to be grown to maturity. But some find these new techniques spooky believing that unlike the old fashioned “natural” methods, “foreign” genes are being added to the resulting plants. Not true and/or so what?

Since the 1930s plant breeders have been performing “wide cross” hybridizations, moving huge volumes of foreign genes across boundaries previously assumed to prevent viability thus creating plants that can’t and don’t exist in nature. But other techniques were developed to rescue and develop the unviable embryos of these crosses. So-called “pre-molecular” or “gene editing” techniques basically created new hybrids without having to wait for two plants to grow and pollinate to create the next generation of seeds which then have to be grown to maturity. But some find these new techniques spooky believing that unlike the old fashioned “natural” methods, “foreign” genes are being added to the resulting plants. Not true and/or so what?

So what difference does it make how the DNA from different plants gets mixed? Why assume that any of these techniques are inherently dangerous? Some have argued that gene editing will inevitably lead to new toxins or allergens or somehow negatively affect production. Where? When? I, for one, am not holding my breath. The boogeyman cometh and he has monetized the meaningless term “GMO” by charging higher prices to pay for the Non-GMO certification. Ignore the noise I say.

Happy holidays everyone. I hope you enjoy your GMO laden holiday meals without care or worry. Please join us at our annual holiday lunch. If you disagree with my GMO perspective, it would be a perfect opportunity to let me know. Also, don’t forget to vote for next year’s Chamber directors. Your ballot will be arriving soon.

Byline Comments?
Email: byline@elcerritochamber.org

El Cerrito Recreation Department presents

Crab Feed
Saturday, January 26, 2019
Doors Open at 5pm, Dinner Served at 6pm
Enjoy Generous Servings of Fresh Crab along with Salad, Bread, Pasta & Dessert + No Host Bar (Beer & Wine) and Raffle Prizes

$50 per Ticket
Tickets can be purchased at the Community Center. Proceeds Benefit the David Hunter Memorial Scholarship. Advance Ticket Purchase Only. No Outside Beverages.

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(510) 559-7000

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The Carbon Footprint of Email Can Be Very Large

By Phil Riebel

How much carbon dioxide (CO₂) could possibly be emitted from sending an email? A tiny puff perhaps! But when multiplied by the number of emails worldwide the carbon footprint of email becomes a significant size. A recent article in “The Switch” of The Washington Post draws attention to how our tech habits affect how much power is used and the environmental consequences of email.

A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases produced to directly and indirectly support human activities, usually expressed in equivalent tons of CO₂.

Establishing the exact amount of the CO₂ produced by sending an email includes many variables: the energy it takes to move the email across the Internet, process it, view it, store it, reread it and, after some time, delete it. This in turn requires computers, servers and routers spread around the world that operate with differing levels of energy efficiency. It also involves in some small way, the manufacture of all that equipment.

In his 2010 book “How Bad are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything,” Mike Berners-Lee estimated that an ordinary email that you click on, open, forward or reply to emits four grams of CO₂. If that email has an attachment of, for example 1 MB, the CO₂ goes up to 19g and if that attachment is then forwarded or filed, the footprint for that one email could be as high as 50g! If the email is spam and blocked by a filter, then the number is only 0.3g. Every email has a unique footprint that reflects its size and the number of times it is moved around.

The footprint also reflects the kind of energy used by the infrastructure which allows that email to be sent. Data centers, for example, store our emails along with all their attachments, photos and other aspects of the digital economy during peak demands for electricity. As our dependence on email and other digital media grows more extensive so does the footprint. Numerous emails with attachments included a suggestion to avoid sending numerous emails with attachments during peak demands for electricity.

But should we be worried about the carbon footprint of a few emails? Well, it is not just a few! According to the 2015 report on email statistics by The Radicati Group, a technology market research firm, the number of emails sent and received worldwide per day is estimated at 205 billion. This figure is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 3% and reach about 246 billion by the end of 2019. This means almost 2.4 million emails are sent every second, and some 74 trillion emails are sent per year.

Assuming all emails emit the lowest estimate (0.3g CO₂ per email), the total worldwide CO₂ generated by emails would be 22 million metric tons of CO₂ per year. This is equivalent to the amount of greenhouse gases produced by almost five million cars. If all emails emit the highest estimate (50g of CO₂ per email), roughly four billion metric tons of CO₂ would be generated each year by emails sent around the world. This is equivalent to the CO₂ emitted annually by 890 million cars. The answer no doubt, lies somewhere in between.

What is not in doubt however, is that one email may indeed produce an insignificant amount of CO₂ but when all those tiny footprints are measured at a global scale, the footprint becomes astonishing in size. The government of France has already noticed this and has recently released a list of écogestes included a suggestion to avoid sending numerous emails with attachments during peak demands for electricity.

As our dependence on email and other aspects of the digital economy grows more extensive — and it will — we need to be aware of the energy demands that will follow.

Courtesy of Printing Impressions

Dues for 2019

By John C. Stashik

Your Chamber is on good financial footing due to increased membership. The board has approved a very minor increase in annual dues rates as shown below, effective January 1, 2019. Note the bank and utility categories have been eliminated.

- 1 to 5 employees .......... $179
- 6 to 10 employees .......... $242
- 11 to 15 employees .......... $305
- 16 to 25 employees .......... $368
- 26 to 50 employees .......... $415
- 51 to 100 employees .......... $462
- Over 100 employees .......... $510
- Associate members .......... $110

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510-526-4407
The Calendar

Dec.
4 City Council meets, 7 p.m., City Hall.
5 Chamber Board meets, 9 a.m., Location TBA.
6 Cerrito Classics: “Love Actually.” 7 p.m. at Rialto Cinemas Cerrito.
7 Final performances of “Ripcord,” closing Dec. 9. Fri. & Sat. evenings, Sunday matinee. ccct.org
14 “All Is Calm,” at the Contra Costa Civic Theatre. Through Dec. 22. ccct.org
15 Sundar Shadi holiday display, 5-10 p.m. daily through Dec. 26. Moeser Lane hill (near Seaview).
18 Annual Chamber holiday lunch and silent auction.
18 City Council meets, 7 p.m., City Hall.
Jan.
15 Annual Chamber installation meeting, noon, location TBA.
26 Crab Feed for Rec-Park, 6 p.m., Community Center.

Farmers Market Holiday Hours
OPEN Saturday, Dec. 22, 2018
CLOSED Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2018 (Christmas)
Saturday, Dec. 29, 2018
Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019 (New Year’s Day)
OPEN Saturday, Jan. 5, 2019

A complete directory of Chamber members can be printed from the website: www.elcerritochamber.org

Chamber Officers & Staff
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
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