A few months ago, I purchased a suede jacket that was shipped to me from London. It was a size 40 Regular which is my usual “off the rack” size. Fortunately for me, I can usually buy a 40R and have a good fit. When the jacket arrived, I eagerly opened the packaging, admired the rich tobacco/cognac color and proceeded to slip into the jacket. As I stood in front of a full-length mirror in model mode, I quickly became somewhat dismayed. The sleeves were too long, falling beyond my wrist and into the upper portion of my hand. This was unacceptable! Off to the tailor I headed in order to get the sleeves shortened and a resulting fit that met my standards.

Now I have to inform you that this column will not be solely about my sartorial experiences and exploits. I am sorry if that disappoints you and leaves you pining for more. I referred to the suede jacket experience to drive the point that one size does not fit all.

Lately there has been a lot of conversation and action in nearby communities centered around the idea of reallocating funds from police departments for other community-based services including homelessness, youth activities, mental health services etc. It

See From the President, page 7

Sugar City MEGA MIXER
• Live & In Person
• Tuesday, July 13th 5:30-7:30 p.m.
• The Old Homestead
995 Loring Ave., Crockett
• All West County Chambers Invited

By Chris Treadway
A residential development at the former Guitar Center site is setting its official opening for July 28th with an invitation only event. At press time seven of the 32 units at the four-story Credence building at San Pablo and Eureka avenues had already been sold with four more reserved by potential buyers.

The building features units of two to three bedrooms, with 1.5 to 2 baths, many in a two-story configuration, with sizes ranging from 882 to 1,377 square feet. Each unit has an outdoor balcony/living space.

Unit prices range from $695,000 to $995,000 and include a package of Kitchen Aid appliances, an independent HVAC system, washer/dryer hookups and sound-proofing installations. Units are also wired for high speed internet service.

Two of the units, flanking the lobby entrance on the first floor, are designated as live-work spaces.

Behind the building are outdoor spaces for 16 cars and 17 enclosed garage spaces with separate entrances to the lobby, along with a bicycle storage room.

Lafayette-based Branagh Development, the builder, said the name of the development was chosen as a tribute to Creedence Clearwater Revival, the rock Hall of Fame band that had its roots in El Cerrito. The lobby includes a large guitar mural and a framed photo of CCR taken during the shoot of the band’s 1969 album Willy and the Poor Boys.

The location is also across San Pablo Avenue from Down Home Music, a pioneer in roots music and a famed retail location for albums, and upper units have views that take in Albany Hill and Mt. Tamalpais.

The location was previously home to a Safeway store (1950-70) that later was converted to a fabric store and then Guitar Center. Additional details and floor plans can be found at liveatcredence.com. Credence is one of four major residential El Cerrito developments enabled by the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan.
Congratulations to Olivero Plumbing in their 70th anniversary year, the best plumbers on the planet! Time flies when you’re having fun, right? Another trip around the sun.

Hurry! Shop soon as the final day for Batteries+Bulbs in El Cerrito will be July 4th. Everything is discounted as all stock must go. They’re at Schmidt Lane and San Pablo Avenue.

Nation’s news. In May SFGate.com published a story about Nation’s Giant Hamburgers, the 70 year old firm headquartered here in El Cerrito. The headline read: “…burger chain spent $1 million in advertising during the pandemic. And it worked.” The family run chain has 30 locations, including our favorite at Central and San Pablo, and all their delicious pies are baked here in El Cerrito. For the story, use this link: https://tinyurl.com/7ry39zpc

New name. It was in June, 2019, when Doctors Carol and Joe Ball retired and Dr. Christopher Nizer took over Ball Chiropractic Center’s practice. Now the old business name has been officially retired. Sound Precision Chiropractic is the new name. Top quality care and everything else remain the same.

The Friendly Club. When I received an invitation to the El Cerrito Rotary Club luncheon on June 10th, I had no idea it was the first live event since the pandemic shut down normal business. So grateful to Mayor Pro Tem Gabe Quinto for the invite and it was fun meeting Rotarians. Rotary has been a Chamber member since forever. The club exists to do great things. To become a part of the group, email Jack Freethy: jackfreethy@gmail.com.

Open again! The 514 Lounge, shut down since health orders took effect in March 2019, should be again serving your favorite drinks July 1st or soon after.

Foot Locker

Coming to El Cerrito Plaza is a new Foot Locker store. With an opening planned for August, the sneaker giant will have both adult and kid’s sizes. More information here next month.

Is it over? The Guv stated on June 15th that California is back in business. Our own City Hall will finally reopen, partially, on July 6th. (For specific details see el-cerrito.org.)

Post pandemic procedures differ among various businesses. Some still require masks; many do not. The smart thing to do is carry one in your pocket.

After 15 months of this you-know-what, I can’t wait to make up for lost time. When Jimmy Buffett and the Coral Reefer Band are back on tour with live concerts, we will know COVID-19 is past history. Fins up!

Movies. New mask guidelines are in effect at the Rialto Cinemas Cerrito theater. Vaccinated individuals are not required to wear a mask. Unvaccinated individuals are required to wear a mask unless eating or drinking while seated.

With reopening, Rialto says: “Your safety is our focus. We’re committed to adhering to all CDC, state and local regulations, as well as expert-backed suggestions.” Auditoriums are cleaned and disinfected including concession and rest room areas. Air is filtered and payment is contactless. So get out of the house and enjoy a movie!

On the Ave. The former All Creatures Veterinary Clinic property at 10305 San Pablo Avenue is now the new home of Sunshine Gutters. Installation, cleaning, repair: 510-525-0880.

But wait, there’s more. Quad Republic Skate Co. should complete their move to 10036 San Pablo this month. Rockin’ Robbie’s got a rockin’ facade makeover. PennDel’s Bakehouse at 6491 Portola extended their hours and they’re now open until 3 p.m. (Thurs.-Sun.). Sasa Kitchen looks like a goner. Popular Tashi Delek will punch through the wall of an adjacent parcel to expand.

See Past Prez Palaver, page 3
Connect, Engage and Thrive

O VER THESE last months, perhaps you have started noticing beauty emerge in our city. It is popping up all over the place, in the natural areas with flowers and on our sidewalks. If you are just re-acquainting yourself with El Cerrito as you emerge from months of isolation, make it a point to look around.

Thanks to our Arts & Culture Commission, we have vibrant utility boxes, colorful and engaging, each work inspired by the life and values of area artists. In prior years, the Commission also brought about the whimsical and elegant wind chimes on San Pablo Avenue. (For more information, visit the City’s website at el-cerrito.org and look for the Boards and Commissions listing.)

By shopping local, we participate and create the place we call home. Consider buying eGift cards as gifts to inspire others to do so, too.

PAST PREZ PALAVER

Continued from page 2

Mayfair Station, the new modular apartments at Cutting and San Pablo, should begin leasing in August or September; advertising has begun. I think they’ll fill up quickly. It’s no coincidence that the buildings across Knott Avenue at Del Norte Place have been getting a makeover as they compete for renters.

Cannabis. At Bishop Center (Conlon and San Pablo), the NUG cannabis store should be ready to open for business very soon. This will be one of two dispensaries approved by the City. Authentic El Cerrito [Byline, April 2021] is the other dispensary and that will open sometime in the Fall. Both businesses should bring significant tax revenue to the City. Authentic El Cerrito is a member of this Chamber.

Meet da Mayor. Beginning July 15th, Mayor Paul Fadelli will be hanging out at the El Cerrito Natural Grocery Annex on the first and third Thursdays every month between 9-11 a.m. Join him for a coffee and give him a piece of your mind. Compliments are welcome too.

Not to be outdone by Hizzoner, Council member Tessa Rudnick holds court at the Little Hill Lounge on Thursday, August 5th, from 6-8 p.m. Chat her up over an adult beverage. Or ask Tessa who makes the best pizza. Who says politicians are no fun?

Explore EC. Trail Trekker hiking maps are available at Jenny K., 6921 Stockton. Find every path and trail on these great maps. (The shortest is a mere 20 feet.)

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Mural magic. A once bare wall on the south side of the Moeser Square Center (next to the infamous 921 Kearny “campground” has come to life. It is worth a look. The colorful artwork encompasses parts of every business in the small shopping center at Moeser and San Pablo. See for yourself in the snippet below. Berkeley’s Nigel Sussman is the artist who created the mural.

Between covering boring walls with murals and decorating utility boxes with Box Art the city creates a sense of place and becomes more attractive as well. This mural was privately funded by Vine Street Investments which owns the Moeser Square Center.
If you run a small business, you probably already know that reviews are important. Whether you are a dentist, a financial planner, an attorney or a retail store owner, customers are checking you out online in places like Google, Yelp, and Facebook. According to marketing company, Brightlocal, 93% of customers read reviews of local businesses to determine quality. And according to the Harvard Business Review, “For every one star increase that a business gets on Yelp, they see a 5-9% increase in revenue.”

While reviews are important, they are not always easy to accumulate. To compound the problem, Yelp is notorious for filtering reviews so that they don’t appear in your business’ profile. After all of your hard work, you finally get that review you earned and then Yelp decides to not show it and moves it to the “not recommended” section. Often reviews are filtered because the reviewer is not an active “Yelper” with a history of Yelp reviews.

So what can you do to help ensure that your review will stick and show off the good work you do? Yelp has a handy feature called Friend Finder. Unfortunately, friend finder isn’t going to help you make new friends. But if you know your customer’s email address, it will help you as a business owner find out whether your customer is active on Yelp. If they are, you can use that knowledge to your advantage and ask that customer to leave you some feedback. Since they are active, their review is likely to stick in your Yelp profile.

To access the Friend Finder tool, log in to Yelp with your personal account and not with your business account. Then click on your profile photo at the upper-right corner and choose Find Friends.

If you are not a fan of Yelp, there are plenty of other review options. Google and Facebook are less likely to filter reviews. Whichever review platform you select, make sure that your business has a coherent review strategy. We recommend using a reputation management platform like Grade Us, Birdeye, Gather Up or Podium to make it easier to solicit reviews and show them off.

Scott Harris is a board member of the El Cerrito Chamber and is the marketing manager for ClientClicks Internet Marketing. scott@clientclicks.com
BY GEORGINA EDWARDS

With Summer upon us and the Bay Area leading vaccination rates, with our own El Cerrito quickly expected to exceed 80%, we are finally ready to enjoy all that our city has going on!

Our local shops, retailers, and other providers have been struggling to hang on and continue providing goods and services to us. It’s time for us to show our support of businesses and embrace the shopping local movement.

Thanks to community minded sponsors, the El Cerrito Chamber is actively promoting our new We ♥ El Cerrito shop local program (elcerritochamber.org/shop-local).

By shopping in our town and purchasing eGift cards* for others (or to use yourself), you can show neighborly pride and contribute towards strengthening our local economy.

Come by the Farmers Market at El Cerrito Plaza to pick up your very own I ♥ El Cerrito button; a free gift from the Chamber to you! And, if you can show us four receipts dated within the last month, you can claim a reward: a sweet branded shopping bag (featherweight, collapsible into a small pouch).

Upcoming We ♥ El Cerrito Chamber Giveaway Dates

• Saturdays 9-11 a.m. on July 3 & July 17 (with more dates to follow) at the Farmers Market at El Cerrito Plaza.

• I ♥ El Cerrito free buttons. Come and get one!

• Nifty re-usable shopping bags (with 4 receipts from local shopping).


*eGift Cards powered by Yiftee
Los Moles catered the May 26th luncheon in the public safety building parking area. The event was compliments of El Cerrito Royale and their department heads, along with the Residents Council.
FROM THE PRESIDENT

has become a major movement and it is
an emotionally charged one. Granted, there have been negative police actions that have occurred nationwide that have added fuel to the defund/real-
locate movement. However, what may apply to one city or community does not apply to all. It is not wise to try to put a 40 Regular on every community even if to some, it seems like it might be a good fit. Each police department should be examined on its own merits in conjunction with the values that are important to the community that is being served by that department.

In El Cerrito it is clear and evident that most residents and businesses con-
sider public safety a high priority. I have confidence that our elected city council, our city manager and our chief of police will make sure that the police department resources are being managed in the most efficient and effective means possible, in a manner that is “woke” and sensitive to all members of our society.

In El Cerrito, we want to be a com-
unity that is driven by sound data and facts, not ideologies, movements and raw emotion. I am reminded that it was not so long ago that there was a big push to implement rent control in this city, not based on sound data and facts, but because of ideology, organized tenant movements, and emotion. In their infinite wisdom, the city council decided to put a mechanism in place to gather factual data in order to have a sound basis to make intelligent decisions surrounding that issue. After amassing a substantial amount of data, it was determined that there was absolutely no need to impose rent control. Just as business entities gather data and perform PESTLE and SWOT analysis, which entails analyzing Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Envi-
ronmental issues, along with assessing

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) we must operate our city in the same manner and not allow ourselves to be swayed by move-
ments and emotions.

On another note, the Wrights held a graduation party for our daughter Gina, on Sunday, June 13, 2021. She decided that she wanted a small affair with her uncles, aunts and some of her cousins along with her boyfriend and a childhood friend who graduated with her from Cal on the same day. Unlike our usual modus operandi, which is to host a big barbecue with yours truly preparing a case of ribs, chicken, and

links along with Mrs. Wright putting together the side dishes we decided to take it easy.

This time, we had the event catered by El Cerrito’s very own Los Moles and they get FIVE STARS across the board. Our event was scheduled for 2:00 p.m. with the food set for arrival at 1:30 p.m. The Los Moles van arrived at 1:30 p.m., and the buffet style food was promptly setup in warming trays. Our experience with Los Moles was as follows:

1. Easy to do business with.
2. On time delivery and setup.
3. Great variety and all very tasty.
4. Excellent quantity.
5. Very reasonable pricing.

It is always great to be able to support a “home team!”

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New at the Farmers Market

The word Adda (pronounced ah+da) refers to a gathering spot in many colloquial Indian languages. Sri Lakha (above) chose the name because her food business is a gathering spot of many cultures. Stop by to say hello at the Saturday Farmers Market at El Cerrito Plaza. On the Web: addafoods.com

City Matters

Annual Business License Renewals
All businesses operating in El Cerrito are required to apply for and obtain a Business License. Annual business licenses expire on June 30th each year and all business license fees are due on July 1st. Payments received after July 31st will be subject to penalties. Businesses are encouraged to renew online or by mail. See: el-cerrito.org/businesslicenses
for information, or email businesslicense@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Rent Registry
All owners of rental properties in El Cerrito are required to register or renew their registration by July 31, 2021. No paper forms! For information see: el-cerrito.org/rentregistryguide

Tobacco Retailer Licenses
These are due by July 31, 2021. After that date, penalties accrue. For more information, go to: el-cerrito.org/tobacco-sales