Hello October. The leaves are starting to turn, and I had to use my wipers to push the condensation off of my windshield a couple of mornings last week. Being a fan of cool weather, I’m looking forward to putting on a jacket once again. One of the best things about fall is the menu change. For me fall is the time for all those long slow cooked dishes like stews and short ribs and braised meats. It’s hard to beat a traditional homemade Bolognese sauce, homemade gnocchi or carrots roasted with olive oil, garlic, and rosemary. I’ve been making tomato sauces on the weekends from the fantastic crop of tomatoes my garden yielded this year, so I’m well stocked for the coming months. I guess my Italian bias is showing. But this weekend I also made my first pot of chili of the season.

And now for the graceful segue; speaking of food, October also plays host to El Cerrito’s annual Restaurant Week. Once again, your Chamber in partnership with El Cerrito’s Economic Development Committee is hosting this annual effort to encourage everyone to get out and support our local restaurants and to sample what has become quite an international variety of food available here in El Cerrito.

Last month in the Byline you may have read about the unfortunate end of

From the President
MARK FIGONE

By Jeffrey Wright

As a member of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce board of directors I can unequivocally state that this organization is focused on implementing programs and supporting policies that strengthen our business community, and conversely, the city as a whole. We believe that when our businesses are doing well and prospering the entire community reap the benefits. It’s wonderful living here in El Cerrito, a city that to its credit offers a wide array of service providers, including numerous stores, restaurants as well as a brand-new state of the art 24 Hour Fitness Center! Our residents can enjoy the many options that are available to them. Our city coffers benefit by collecting sales taxes, business license fees and development fees. El Cerrito is a very desirable community on a positive upward bound trajectory. Through great leadership on the part of our mayor, the current city council, their predecessors and the sound day-to-day management of our city staff, this city has been able to make great strides.

In El Cerrito we are currently meeting our goals as outlined in the Housing Element section of our General Plan which is a feat unto itself and an accomplishment that many cities are unable to achieve. The level of success with the Housing Element portion of the General Plan can be attributed to careful planning and cultivation which, in turn, has made El Cerrito attractive and fertile ground for developers of multi-family housing developments which include market rate as well as set asides for low/affordable housing units.

Recently the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce board of directors voted to oppose Proposition 10 which will be on the November 2018 ballot. This ballot measure is commonly known as repealing the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, legislation that has been on the books in California since 1995 and exempts certain classes of property from rent control like the new residential developments recently constructed.
Governor Brown signed into law a ban on full service (“sit down”) restaurants from dispensing plastic straws to customers except by request. This will take effect on January 1, 2019. Ironically, fast food drive-through stores along with cafés, delis, and the like, are exempt from the law even though the bulk of plastic straws probably come from those establishments. Fatapple’s, here in El Cerrito, has already made the switch to paper straws with plastic still available by request.

Congratulations! Assistant city manager Karen Pinkos is the new president of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). On top of that Ms. Pinkos will become El Cerrito city manager when Scott Hanin retires at the end of this year. I’d say she’ll be very busy.

Smile. When city manager Scott Hanin addressed last month’s meeting (see page 5) he mentioned that cameras are to be installed along the BART path next year. They will benefit residents and businesses alike as that thoroughfare is used as an escape route for the criminal element that rip off nearby retail stores.

New biz. Also mentioned by the city manager was the was a green light for the marijuana retailer at the now vacant Bishop Center strip mall located at Conlon and San Pablo Avenue across from The Home Depot. These pot shops were to be real cash cows for local government; wait and see how that works out. But with the high security needed at that type of business, the immediate area could actually become safer.

Smooth rides. Mr. Roadshow, Gary Richards, reports in the Mercury News that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s annual pothole report gives El Cerrito roads a score of 84 out of 100, considered excellent.

TEPCO. On display until the end of the year at the Contra Costa Historical Society is a collection of Chinaware manufactured by El Cerrito’s own Technical Porcelain and China Ware Company. Until 1968 TEPCO had a factory located at the present site of the DMV and was the city’s biggest employer with 200 workers. The firm was the largest supplier of restaurant dishes west of the Mississippi. It’s worth a look at history as TEPCO has a cult following now. Address: 724 Escobar Street in Martinez. Visit cocohistory.org for additional information.

Post-mortem. I mentioned this last month and our board of directors discussed the rapid demise of the Cigar Box Kitchen at length. No re-hash needed. But at some point I hope for a meeting between the various parties (owner, Chamber, government) to learn why a new business shut down so quickly with the purpose of learning how to improve systems and procedures to avoid it happening again. Stay tuned.

Gift idea. Jenny K. at 6925 Stockton Avenue, home of the El Cerrito T-shirt, is also home to the EC tote bag. How useful! $11.99 with plenty in stock.
Why the Governor Should Veto SB 826

BY CHRIS MICHELI

S enate Bill 826, authored by Senators Hannah-Beth Jackson and Toni Atkins, is pending before Governor Jerry Brown after having passed both houses of the legislature. SB 826 would require a publicly-held corporation (domestic or foreign) whose principal executive offices are located in California to have a minimum of one female on its board of directors by the end of 2019. Thereafter, two female directors would need to be in place by the end of 2021 if the corporation has five directors, or three female directors would be needed if the corporation has six or more directors. The average publicly-traded corporation has nine board members.

For purposes of enforcing these new mandates, the California Secretary of State would be required to publicly report corporate compliance with this bill and the Secretary would be authorized to impose fines for any violation of the bill. Because SB 826 would establish a gender-based quota, it would likely violate federal and state laws and, as such, Governor Brown should veto the measure.

While California’s business community is committed to workplace diversity, including their boards of directors, the approach taken by this bill is not the right answer. SB 826 would place gender as the most important basis for membership on a corporation’s board of directors over all other criteria as well as other classifications protected under federal and state discrimination laws. Why is gender chosen in this bill over race or ethnicity, or sexual orientation or any other form of protected classification?

The practical impact of the bill would be to place these publicly-traded corporations in a legal conflict as they attempt to comply with diversity goals, state and federal constitutional constraints, and the provisions of SB 826. Businesses, especially those that are publicly-traded, want to comply with both state and federal laws and diversity goals in hiring of employees and corporate directors. This bill creates an untenable position for those companies.

How are boards of directors of publicly-held corporations chosen? Directors are chosen by a vote of the corporation’s shareholders, rather than the corporation itself. This raises the question whether government can mandate that those shareholders choose a specific individual?

Moreover, in Europe, where several countries have had board director quotas as proposed by SB 826, they have had mixed results, including in Norway with a 40% quota. In some of these countries, by the way, the penalty for failure to meet the specified quota includes corporate dissolution, so there is plenty of incentive to meet those gender quotas. As described in an article in The Economist magazine, however, “Studies from at least six countries on companies’ performance, decision-making and stock market returns fail to show that quotas make a consistent difference, good or bad.”

Finally, numerous legal commentators have not only questioned the policy rationale for a gender quota on corporate boards, but also the constitutionality of such a mandate. Both the United States and California Constitutions contain equal protection provisions that prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender. This may be why no other state has enacted a similar bill; it cannot withstand judicial scrutiny.

While the intent behind SB 826 is valid as corporations’ boards of directors should look more like the diverse citizenry of California, a governmental mandate is unwarranted and Governor Brown should veto this measure.

The views expressed here are mine and do not necessarily represent those of the Chamber Board. Email: lmartinengo@elcerritochamber.org; cell: (510) 778-5883.
One of the Chamber’s newest members, Move With Studio, is owned and operated by Kelsey Wiedenhoefer, a California native. She was born in San Diego and raised in the town of Hanford, in the central valley. Kelsey’s upbringing included a high level of athletics from an early age as her entire family was involved with physical movement such as dance, sports, etc. Along with being a high school counselor, Kelsey’s father coached football and wrestling and her mother was a swim coach. Volleyball was Kelsey’s favorite sport and she was recruited to play for UC San Diego. While also pursuing a political science degree, she played a lot of competitive volleyball. Sports was huge but not her only focus. Kelsey also got a Masters in peace and justice studies, and worked in a law firm for a few years.

Following a major knee injury and surgery, Kelsey began to explore various healing therapies to help with recovery. She got the most consistent benefit and relief from doing Pilates techniques, a specific practice of physical movements founded by Joseph Pilates over 100 years ago. Kelsey became an avid fan of the techniques that helped her in maintaining flexibility and strength. She decided to get certification in Pilates instruction in 2008 to be able to share with others that which helped her so effectively.

In early 2012, Kelsey was approached by friends of a friend to launch a brand new Pilates studio on Maiden Lane in San Francisco. Kelsey made the move to the city and nurtured the successful growth of the business for six years. In 2014, Kelsey moved to Oakland and began to take private clients as well as those in the city. Earlier this year, Kelsey was ready for a new challenge and began inquiring into possible East Bay opportunities. Very fortuitously, the owner of Fitwise Pilates in El Cerrito, was looking to exit her studio space and got in touch with Kelsey. The business transition happened very smoothly with some of the previous instructors and clients staying on.

The Pilates system of movement has enormous benefits for virtually everyone, and for many health and fitness conditions. For example, anyone dealing with post injury aches and pains, anyone wanting to strengthen the abdominal core or help spinal alignment, and posture, will be helped by this process. With regular practice, Pilates will bring about better balance, comprehensive strength, an elongated frame, and the ability to move better through daily activities. There are group classes and private sessions that run from 50 to 55 minutes. Class value packages are available, too. Kelsey also offers a body work called Fascial Stretch Therapy, which is a specific form of massage that eases aches and promotes ease and wellness by creating space between the joints and muscles. She is a Level 3 Fascial Stretch specialist and has worked with professional athletes to help them maintain flexibility and optimal upper body performance.

The Move With Studio is located at 11100 San Pablo Avenue, Suite 109, near Cafe N’Nue, across the Avenue from the main post office. The Studio is open seven days a week, day and evening. For anyone wishing to increase their overall health with strength, balance and endurance and enhance your daily life, check out Move With Studio Pilates.

By Lisa Martinengo

Move With Ease Through Life? Move With Studio Can Help With That!

Kelsey Wiedenhoefer (right) receives her member plaque from Chamber manager Lisa Martinengo.
BY LISA MARTINENGO

After two years repeating the same format, it was becoming a Chamber tradition that the city manager, Scott Hanin, would be the September guest, giving an informal “state of the city” address to attendees. This year’s event was planned to be the same only an unexpected twist turned it into a very different affair this time. In mid-July, Hanin announced publicly his decision to retire after managing El Cerrito for 17 years.

In reaction to the news, the guest list climbed to over 40 people, evidently excited to attend the September 18th lunch at the Berkeley Country Club. Maybe it would turn out to be the last public address from our city manager.

After 15 minutes of networking, Chamber president, Mark Figone, called for order, guests took their seats, servers brought out lunch and the meeting started with event announcements. The member spotlight followed; a lunch feature that offers a designated Chamber member five minutes to address the audience to highlight their business. Attorney, and El Cerrito resident, Kathleen Hunt, of Unique Law, spoke about her legal specialties. The microphone was then turned over to Ryan Lau, External Affairs Representative from AC Transit, to discuss transit measures that impact El Cerrito on the November ballot.

About 12:30 p.m., Scott Hanin was called to the podium and the room settled in to listen. Rather than offer a static speech, he asked the audience for input and he used this as basis to touch on several important topics. It was no surprise that Proposition V, the charter city and real estate transfer tax measure, was described by Hanin, as a very necessary tool for the city to increase its revenue. He admitted the difficulty in asking residents to support another tax, yet it’s crucial that everyone know how years of reduced property taxes and sluggish economic conditions have left the city with dwindling financial resources. Hanin is proud of the police department, which has equipped all patrol officers with body cameras and other useful tech equipment. He commended the park and recreation department for its extensive activities and programs drawing a high level of community participation. The potential debacle over the senior center was solved by setting up portable buildings that are now called the Midtown Activity Center, to better reflect the active local senior population. The “small but mighty” public works department got a shout out with kudos for their great work on street repair and storm drains.

In response to a question about how the city is helping local business, Hanin just said the planning department is currently dealing with a huge number of permit applications in a timely fashion and neither planning nor the design review board have been a “bottleneck” to new projects.

All in all, Hanin seemed pleased with the trajectory in which the city is headed, especially if the parcel tax revenue becomes a reality. As for himself in the new year, he plans to walk his dogs and take it easy for a while. Sounds like a good plan. Happy retirement, Scott!
NO ON PROP. 10

Continued from page 1

in El Cerrito as well as those that are approved and “in the pipeline.”

Other exemptions also include condominiums as well as single family residences which comprise a great part of the housing stock in El Cerrito. The Costa-Hawkins legislation was the outgrowth of onerous rent control ordinances which basically caused severe stagnation in the development of new multi-family residential development which, in turn, impacted supply. Something had to be done to help encourage development, and that was the passage of Costa-Hawkins. Proponents of rent control now want to get rid of the protections afforded under Costa-Hawkins as a means to potentially expand rent control.

The board of directors of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce believes that repealing Costa-Hawkins will exacerbate the housing situation by discouraging developers from building, resulting in less housing stock being available. Furthermore, in El Cerrito, we have some great projects that could be jeopardized causing the city to lose several hundred units of sorely needed housing including low/affordable housing units if developers become uneasy with the repeal of the protections afforded under Costa-Hawkins by way of Proposition 10 passing. We believe that smart development in El Cerrito along our major transportation corridors will serve our entire community in a manner that is beneficial to the long-term health and well-being of the great city of El Cerrito.

Proposition 10 does not create any housing, nor does it have any provisions for affordable housing. These are just a few of the reasons why the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce board of directors adopted a no on Proposition 10 position.

Let us all embrace programs and policies that will create a healthy environment for our businesses and residents alike and continue to move El Cerrito on a positive, upward bound trajectory.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from page 1

what was to become Cigar Box Kitchen, El Cerrito’s newest restaurant. Opening a restaurant is a daunting task and there are a whole host of issues that can derail the effort. Everything from state and local health and safety regulations and building codes, to capital requirements and the architectural realities of a particular location can be an obstacle. But this is in no way unique to El Cerrito. In fact, there have been over 20 new restaurants opened here in El Cerrito since 2015. I’d say that’s a pretty darn good record for a city of our size.

On the international front we now have Brasil Bistro, Banana Leaf Thai, Gangnam Tofu Korean, Taste of Ethiopia, the Peruvian offerings at El Mono and Los Moles Mexican food. In addition, there is Mountain Mike’s Pizza, MOD Pizza, Hawaiian barbeque at Frannie Express, sushi at Nori Roll and sandwiches at Café N!ne and Mr. Pickles. That is just a small sample of our new dining options, not to mention all of the other dining possibilities that we are already familiar with.

So my message to you this month is to get out and eat. Specifically, Restaurant Week runs from October 11th through the 17th. Some of the restaurants are offering Restaurant Week promotions and the committee is working hard to encourage more to do the same. I’d also suggest that whatever restaurants you do visit, mention Restaurant Week and ask them if they are offering anything. If we can demonstrate the benefit of this annual promotional effort, we can encourage more restaurants to sign up in the future.

Remember, one of our most important jobs as Chamber members is to patronize and support our local businesses and members. There is a lot of great food to be had here in El Cerrito. So please, look to all of our local restaurants when you chose to eat out, not just during Restaurant Week but every week.

Tutti a tavola a mangiare!
2018
WEST CONTRA COSTA ECONOMIC SUMMIT

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Ilia Papas
Founder and Chief Technology Officer of Blue Apron

Attend for a chance to win travel for two to any Southwest published destination in the continental U.S. and Puerto Rico. Must be present to win.

October 24, 2018
10:30am - 2:30pm
The Craneway Pavilion
1414 Harbour Way
Richmond, CA 94804

We invite you to attend the West Contra Costa Economic Summit, a convening to learn about the West Contra Costa business climate and resources for local businesses.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
• Business expo and networking
• Address from Supervisor John Gioia
• Congressman Mark DeSaulnier invited
• Panel discussion with Mayors from El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, and San Pablo
Lunch will be provided

To attend, purchase a ticket online via Eventbrite: https://rcoc2018wccsummit.eventbrite.com
$20 for Chamber members | $30 for Non-Chamber members

PARTICIPANTS

We invite you to attend the West Contra Costa Economic Summit, a convening to learn about the West Contra Costa business climate and resources for local businesses.

CITIES

PARTICIPANTS

CHAMBERS & SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

MONTHLY LUNCHEON
Meet Traci Young
Business Engagement Manager, Rubicon Programs
“El Cerrito’s Economic Health Needs a 3 Point Approach”

ALSO: The Chamber has extended an invitation to the eleven people running for one of the three open seats on the board of the West Contra Costa Unified School District. Each candidate will have three minutes for an introduction and explain what he/she will do to improve the schools if elected.

Lunch prepared by: El Mono Fresh Flavors of Peru

Tuesday, October 16th at Noon
El Cerrito Royale (3rd floor)
6510 Gladys Ave., El Cerrito

RSVP: info@elcerritochamber.org or (510) 705-1202
$20 includes lunch ($22 credit or PayPal)

The Calendar
Oct. 4 Mixer at Mountain Mike’s Pizza. 5:30 p.m.
5-7 Annual ECAA Art Show; Community Center.
7 Sip & Savor at the Berkeley Country Club. 2:30 p.m.
11 Cerrito Classics. “Wait Until Dark” at 7 p.m.
Rialto Cinemas Cerrito.
11-17 El Cerrito Restaurant Week.
16 Chamber lunch meeting, noon. See lunch box above.
16 City Council meets, 7 p.m., City Hall.
thru 21 “Allegiance” at the Contra Costa Civic Theatre.
ccct.org

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

Chamber Officers & Staff
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