Recently my wife Tyra and I were in Monterey, California, for a few days to celebrate our 34th wedding anniversary. We had a lovely room at the Intercontinental Hotel on Cannery Row. The area was bustling with activity and the sidewalks were filled with people, some wearing masks while others did not. It is evident to me that we are now in the stage of the “new normal.” The era of mass shutdowns and business closures is behind us, and in my opinion, unlikely to reoccur as we continue to work through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Various pandemic specific relief programs such as enhanced unemployment insurance payments and eviction moratoriums are not being extended. These are strong indicators that we are once again at the point of business as usual, albeit within the framework of the “new normal.”

The Contra Costa Association of Realtors held their 100th year anniversary celebration on September 24, 2021, at the Pleasant Hill Community Center, a great venue that offers nice indoor and outdoor options. Over 400 people registered to attend the event. In line with the new normal, the attendees who wanted to socialize and enjoy the Back Forty Barbecue catered meal in the comfort of the crisp air-conditioned indoor facility had to first present evidence of being fully vaccinated and then they were given a green wrist band.

NUG Makes It Official

NUG, El Cerrito’s first cannabis dispensary, opened August 12th at 11888 San Pablo Avenue (opposite The Home Depot). On September 25th the store held an official grand opening complete with the Big Scissors from the Chamber of Commerce. Pictured at the ribbon snip are Nico Enea, a founder, Assistant General Manager Rob Luna, city council members Lisa Motoyama, Gabe Quinto, Tessa Rudnick, General Manager Esther Montoya, Chamber President Jeffrey Wright, Mayor Paul Fadelli, founder/CEO Dr. John Oram, and Soledad Ramirez.

Show YOUR Holiday Season El Cerrito Pride

As we head into the Winter holiday season, it is as important—more important than ever—to show our support of businesses and embrace the shopping local movement.

Thank you community minded sponsors, the El Cerrito Chamber’s “We ♥ El Cerrito” shop local program (elcerritochamber.org/shop-local) is in place for the holidays. By shopping in our city and purchasing eGift cards* for others (or to use yourself), you can show neighborly pride and contribute towards strengthening our local economy.

Help us spread the word? Get your own “I ♥ El Cerrito” button, a free gift from the Chamber to you! Email: info@elcerritochamber.org to pick one up.


*eGift Cards powered by Yiftee

In Person Chamber Mixer

Tuesday, Oct. 19th • 5:30 p.m.
Los Moles Beer Garden (patio)
6120 Potrero Ave., El Cerrito
Good morning America, how are you? (Thank you to the late Steve Goodman for that lead.) Last month I was On The Road Again (as Willie Nelson sings) visiting Nashville and exploring—and eating—my way throughout the Southeast. Stops also included Savannah, Charleston, Asheville, Roanoke, Charlotte, and finally, Alexandria.

Upon departing Music City, I put 1800 miles on the rental car in five states. The Blue Ridge Parkway is 469 miles of scenic national park (“America’s favorite drive”) and I covered most of it. Skyline Drive through Shenandoah National Park is another winner.

Southern hospitality is real. Drivers are not as reckless and I saw little graffiti or trash on the roads.

Food in Savannah and Charleston is amazing. I’m still dreaming of the shrimp and grits served at Sorry Charlie’s Oyster Bar in Savannah. Forget chain stores and dine at local places. Good advice everywhere you travel.

So if you’re here looking for the usual tidbits of EC business news, I’ll do my best. Truth is: El Cerrito wasn’t even on my mind but still #ElCerritoProud. I’d be roaming now if not for the Byline which runs like clockwork. Thank you loyal readers for bringing me back home.

Back in EC. On the front page you can see the welcome NUG got at their official grand opening last month. To our “buds” at NUG, I personally invite you to the live Chamber mixer at Los Moles Beer Garden on October 19th at 5:30 p.m.

Welcome to Travis Campbell, a new and energized member of the City’s Economic Development Committee. On deck is Patrick Swen, and the City Council should approve his appointment early this month. I wish them well as the EDC’s mission is an important one. City boards, commissions, and committees consist of volunteers, so thank all of you for serving the residents and businesses of our city.

No go. Spirit Halloween, a holiday supply store mentioned here a month ago in the former Bed, Bath & Beyond space at the Plaza will not open. In fact, signage is gone. Without boring details, let’s say it just didn’t work out.

Taste the grape. It’s early in the process but a wine bar is proposed for 10368 San Pablo Avenue, opposite the Natural Grocery. With an enhanced San Pablo Avenue, more such enterprises are likely to come.

No. 2. El Cerrito’s second cannabis dispensary, Authentic El Cerrito, will open at Schmidt Lane and San Pablo Avenue by the end of the year according to the company. A store build-out comes first.

Crime. Tired of watching your inventory walk out the door with criminals protected against prosecution by Proposition 47? Mary Knox is running for district attorney in Contra Costa County. She has worked in the DA’s office for 37 years and believes she can make life a bit less pleasant for thieves, even though they’re protected by asinine California laws passed by voters. I’ll find out more about Ms. Knox and her vision and report back to you.

Mayfair. Community Development’s Aissia Ashoori sends this information. In 2020, Phase I of the Mayfair project broke ground and began construction on 156 market rate units including almost 9,000 sq. ft. ground floor commercial. Mayfair is heading into the final stretch of construction this Fall. Site work will continue around the building beginning with Kearney, continuing to Cutting, and finishing on San Pablo. All work, including the public art installation, is scheduled for December completion.

Phase II of the project will include 69 affordable housing units and is slated to break ground late 2022. Bridge Housing and the City are working together to secure funding from various sources. See el-cerrito.org/majorprojects for more information.

Health order. A Contra Costa County temporary health order applies to indoor eating and drinking establishments and exercise facilities. The risk of transmission is highest in these

See Past Prez Palaver, page 3
spaces because people remove face coverings to eat or drink, or breathe heavier because of physical exertion.

How do you show you’ve been vaccinated? There are three ways:

1. A CDC vaccination record card, or a copy or photo of the card.
2. A digital vaccine record issued by the State of California.
3. Documentation from a health care provider stating you’re vaccinated.

If you're not fully vaccinated, a negative COVID-19 test result received in the past three days will also work.

You can download the necessary docs to a smart phone. Easy.

What about testing? You can get a walk-up test at the Eagles Aerie parking lot on Carlson, just south of Central. Cost is covered by your insurance.

Encampments. A major cleanup along the BART path behind Safeway was done last month by Public Works after neighborhood complaints. Before anyone rants about City Hall not doing anything to clear out homeless camps, I will totally defend the City based on my personal experience.

Fact: City management and Public Works promptly respond to all email and calls. The problem is moving encampments takes time, and certain procedures need to be carefully followed.

The problem is regional. I hate contacting the City about this stuff; their small staff has plenty to do without picking up trash and garbage from these camps. Be advised, both Public Works and the police know of these encampments and do monitor conditions surrounding them. When public right of way is blocked, nuisance created, or safety of the public is compromised, City staff will move the camp.

Protocol is best described by Public Works. County CORE reaches out to offer services to the homeless individuals. Unfortunately, many of them refuse services. During the pandemic, the City is not actively clearing out homeless encampments until they are declared a threat to public safety and public health. Once City staff has made that determination, a 72 hour notice informs the individuals and the public that there will be a scheduled cleanup. Legally, the City is not allowed to remove personal belongings without posting said notice.

By all means, contact the City with your concerns. Staff does respond. Be advised, they’re between a rock and hard place, and cannot simply move campers out without following very specific protocol.

Charleston humor. How many people does it take to change a light bulb in Charleston?

Answer: 3. One to change the bulb. Another to mix the drinks. A third to recall how lovely the old light bulb was. (Everything is old there.)
THE GLENN: EL CERRITO’S PREMIER FRAMER

OCTOBER 1, 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of The Glenn Custom Framing, one of the hidden treasures of El Cerrito. El Cerritan Kathleen Glenn opened her frame shop on San Pablo Avenue when she was just 24 years old.

During Kathleen’s senior year in high school, she got a part time job at Soule Artists Supplies Art Studio & Frame Shop in El Cerrito. The part time job turned into a full time career. She learned not only how to run the storefront but also how to cut frame molding and matting. She became so skilled at framing and eventually took over the shop’s framer position. She learned the ins and outs of the business and established a good rapport with the clients and vendors. She would often receive job offers but she had her own ideas. Six years later, with her parents’ help, she purchased a molding business in Oakland and moved it to El Cerrito.

When Kathleen went to register her business, she was told that she would have to publish her fictitious business name in the newspaper for several weeks. She simply did not have any extra money for the publication. She decided to use her own name as her business name in order to skip the fictitious name publication requirement. The Glenn Custom Framing was born.

The Glenn’s original location was on San Pablo Avenue. Over the last 50 years, its location moved six times from San Pablo Avenue to a second location on San Pablo Avenue to Fairmount Avenue to a second location on Fairmount and then Stockton Avenue. In 2012, it moved to its current location at 7002 Stockton Avenue from the previous location just across the street on Stockton. Rent and space were always a factor for moving; however, its home has always been El Cerrito.

Kathleen also became an El Cerrito homeowner 30 years ago. In the late 1980s, Kathleen taught picture-framing classes at West Contra Costa Adult Education. In the 1990s, while Kathleen’s daughter attended El Cerrito High School, Kathleen worked on the Little Theatre’s costumes and stage sets. From 2009 to 2013, she organized the weekly Stockton Avenue Art Stroll to bring local artists, musicians, merchants, and residents together. She also served as the chair of El Cerrito Art Association. While Kathleen was fully immersed in community activities, running a business, and raising a family, she was also fighting cancer. She is a cancer survivor and participated in Relay for Life numerous times to honor and remember those affected by cancer.

The windows and walls of The Glenn Custom Framing Shop are adorned with framed photographs, paintings, drawings, needlework, movie posters, ceramic bowls, greeting cards, mini frames, soda pop cap magnets, and frame molding samples. Kathleen is especially proud of
her mini picture frames because they are difficult to make due to the small sizes. Unlike other shops simply assemble pre-cut photo frames; Kathleen still cuts the moldings, mat- tings, and glass by hand specifically to each order.

When asked what the most interesting item she has ever framed, she immediately answered it was a pelican skull with a big smile. No doubt there was an interesting story with that project. She explained that Professional Picture Framers Association (also established in 1971) now offers certification programs and exams, and people can complete the courses and pass the exams to become Master Certified Picture Framers. However, she has over 50 years of experience creating frames, and no exam or any virtual class could substitute for her expertise.

You have likely seen Kathleen’s work without realizing it. The Glenn created every single frame on the El Cerrito Wall of Fame, located in the vestibule of the El Cerrito City Council Chambers at City Hall. The Glenn also framed all the displays in the El Cerrito High School Museum.

Kathleen would love to keep running the shop for as long as she can. She is hoping to teach at West Contra Costa Adult School again; so more people can learn the craft of picture framing. In addition to framing two dimensional images, other available services are museum and conservation treatment, needlework and fabric art, three-dimen- sional display, and heirloom keepsake treasures.

Due to the COVID-19 situation and Kathleen’s auto-immune condition, the best way to contact her for consultation is by emailing glennecca@sbcglobal.net with a photo and dimensions of the object you wish to frame along with anything specific you are looking for. She would then set an appointment to discuss details on your budget and options.

Next time you pass by her shop, don’t forget to check out her window display and Little Library. For sure, you will find fond memories and discover new inspirations.
Making Peace with Uncertainty

While seasons in the Bay Area are not as delineated as in some parts of the world, this time of the year as the days grow shorter, we notice foliage changing and the weather turning. Naturally, we begin spending less time outdoors and looking ahead to Fall holidays and traditions.

Where once we took things for granted, what we would do, who we would spend time with, in this span of time, we have come to expect the unexpected. Will we see trick-or-treaters this year or perhaps innovate something else that recognizes that we must still physically distance as we seek more connection? We are continuing to navigate the contours of COVID-19, simultaneously grown accustomed to the “thing” while we look forward to a day when we won’t have to worry about vaccination rates and rapid COVID-19 tests.

Meantime, in our community, El Cerrito and the greater Bay Area, we forge ahead one day at a time, continuing to wear masks and abiding by health orders to participate in activities as fully as possible, which starting September 22 in Contra Costa County, include showing proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test. West Contra Costa Unified may become Bay Area’s first school district to mandate COVID-19 vaccine mandate for everyone 12 and older students, faculty and staff.

For businesses and organizations, the landscape remains challenging and uncertain, with private and non-profit sectors continuing to adapt and develop practices to resume services and programs in person, including at El Cerrito’s Contra Costa Civic Theatre (ccct.org) as they re-open for a season of live theatre (proof of vaccination required). As Executive Artistic Director, Marilyn Langbehn, shares, “The past couple of years has taught us all about finding humor and joy in unlikely places, making peace with uncertainty, and building strength through human connection.”

As we find our way during this holiday season, let’s do everything possible to support our artists, restaurateurs, retailers, all those that work each day to create beauty, provide services and goods and make our El Cerrito the hometown we love.

Broadway’s back in NY! And so is live theatre here in El Cerrito.

Our Town runs through October 31 at Contra Costa Civic Theatre.

Tickets: ccct.org

Written by Thornton Wilder

Byline

Feedback? Send it here:
byline@elcerritochamber.org

Proof of Vaccine

Rialto Cinemas Cerrito requires Proof of Vaccination for COVID-19 from patrons, staff, and vendors for movie theaters in El Cerrito and Contra Costa County.

Ease your stress and go see a movie. El Cerrito’s own movie house has great food too. To see what’s showing, visit: rialtocinemas.com.
which allowed them to move freely between indoor and outdoor activities.

Those who could not provide evidence of vaccination were still welcome, but they were limited to the outdoor spaces which had several well-spaced tables along with various food and beverage stations, as well as a live band. I contrast this with the annual Inaugural Ball event for the 2021 officers and directors which was held virtually, whereas in past years it was a large in person event at the Blackhawk Museum.

The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce is also navigating in the new normal environment. As an organization we are accustomed to having live, in person events. Be that our monthly luncheon, mixers, and grand opening celebrations. Our leadership team is developing parameters for our organization to function effectively in the new normal environment whereby we can be sensitive to the needs of all parties while at the same time being the best asset that we can be to those whom we serve.

Recognizing that there is “nothing new under the sun” my curiosity caused me to do a little research. I Googled information on pandemics as well as recessions. Livescience.com had an interesting article on 20 of the worst epidemics in history and stacker.com had an interesting article that chronicled every recession in U.S. history and how the country responded. Pandemics, severe illness, death and financial challenges are events that will always be with us. Studying history helps to add perspective to present day challenges.

Exercising good judgment along with a reasonable measure of caution is always in order and is a sensible approach to day-to-day living under any circumstances. It is important that we remind ourselves that we are resilient people. We have overcome pandemics and economic challenges in the past and we will continue to do so in the future. There is so much to see, do, and experience. Embrace this life and enjoy it!

## Bib Gourmand in EC

**By John C. Stashik**

Michelin announced a number of new Bib Gourmands in California, one of which is here in El Cerrito. These are restaurants offering good quality and value as deemed by Michelin inspectors.

New Dumpling made the list. This popular eatery offers dine-in and take out service and is located at 10064 San Pablo Avenue, next to the Rialto Cinemas Cerrito.

### Join the Board

**Terms for four of the nine directors will end in January, 2022. They are Sil Addiego, Matt Khadivian, Nic Tang, and Jeffrey Wright. Directors serve two years.**

The president will appoint a nominating committee at this month’s board meeting on October 6th. The report from that body will be announced in November. Ballots are then mailed to all regular members in good standing if there are multiple people running.

Participation is welcomed. Any member interested in serving on the board of directors is encouraged to contact President Jeffrey Wright: j.wright@elcerritochamber.org.
El Cerritans love their view of the Golden Gate and the natural air conditioning that flows through it. Sometimes, nature erases it, as this view from Sea View and Moeser demonstrates. No boats visible, but it’s a good sailing day; every day is a good sailing day.