



From the President

JEFFREY WRIGHT

RECENTLY I had a few household and automotive projects to address requiring me to make a few purchases. I can tell you most assuredly that choices and options are a beautiful thing! Furthermore, I can state emphatically that this little hamlet, town, official city of El Cerrito, affords an array of choices and options.

The hot water valve stem at the faucet in one of the bathrooms had failed resulting in an annoying drip that had to be corrected. I also needed a battery-operated tire inflator. My tire inflator that plugs into the cigarette lighter, probably was not going to work in any of the four cigarette lighters in my 1964 Cadillac.

After doing a little online research, our local Home Depot had a Ryobi battery operated inflator for less than \$20. That looked like a good deal to me, and besides that I could “kill two birds with one stone” and get the faucet valve stem at the same location.

Upon arriving at Home Depot, I was unable to locate a suitable replacement valve stem in the appropriate aisle. My valve stem was not a Delta, Price Pfister or even a good fit for the generic Danco product line that was stocked at that time. Off to Row 20 and Bin 9 to look at the tire inflator. Even though the in-store price was \$10 higher than I anticipated, that was still okay.

However, the revelation that it required me to separately purchase the

■ See From the President, page 7

New Member



Jason Russell

Edward Jones Investments

5330 College Ave., Oakland 94618

510-844-4772

edwardjones.com

Bring Back the Fourth!



El Cerrito Recreation

BY EL CERRITO COUNCILMEMBER PAUL FADELLI

EL CERRITO's July 4th Festival has grown over the years from a small simple event at the community center parking lot and Portola school black top to a full-blown world class festival — with live music, rides, booths, food trucks and very special vibes in the East Bay. For many in El Cerrito the annual City of El Cerrito/worldOne Festival has been a time to relax, rejoice and recreate — with banners flying high, friends nearby, and the sound of children laughing at every turn. It was a day every year not only to be proud of our country, but also to be proud of our city.

But the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic forced the festival to be put on hold — just when we needed it the most. With necessary and difficult budget decisions over the past two years, the City Council also decided that for the immediate

future, we must have a 4th of July event that is *cost-neutral* and supported by volunteer and sponsorship efforts.

It's time to take on these efforts. It's time to come together again!

Our goal is to raise \$50,000 in local funds, through corporate sponsorships and individual donations, to re-establish our July 4th Festival within the next two years — hopefully *this year*, if possible.

We are seeking proud sponsorship partners for the July 4th Festival and will provide corporate branding opportunities for those who contribute at specific contribution levels. If you're a local business or retailer who cares about this community, please consider reaching out to your customers in this pro-community way by sponsoring a *very* visible event that has defined El Cerrito over the past couple decades.

■ See Fourth of July Festival, page 3

Meet the New Pickle



John C. Stashik

Meet Varun Kalra, owner of the El Cerrito franchise of Mr. Pickle's Sandwich Shop on San Pablo Avenue at Schmidt Lane. Varun bought the store from the original owners, Yanja and Jung Kwon on February 7th. The popular sandwich shop originally opened here on April 23, 2018 and is a member of this Chamber.



Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

CCHEERS! Congratulations to our invaluable partner, Minuteman Press of Berkeley, celebrating their golden anniversary. The firm began as Captain Copy in that city 50 years ago. Minuteman has printed the *Byline* every month since June 2008.

□

Another milestone. PennDel's Bakehouse marks its first year in business on March 27th. So happy you're here!

□

The Joint Chiropractic opened for business on February 28th. The office offers a *free initial visit*. Located near Safeway at 11450 San Pablo, Suite 400.

□

Super Slice Pizza at 10180 San Pablo (Peppermint Tree Plaza) hopes to open in April after remodeling the former Armadillo pizza shop which closed at the onset of the pandemic. Yes, they're using the Armadillo oven. Soloman and Omar Esmatyar are the owners and this is their first restaurant. Nori Roll is next door so it'll be possible to get pizza with sushi on the side! I'll keep you posted.

□



Sophie and Ana Sanchez of Golden Poppy 2

Welcome to EC. Golden Poppy 2 is the new shop at 7509 Fairmount offering flowers, plants, and gifts. Open 9-5 weekdays, 10-5 Saturday.

□

Harbor Freight Tools is still building out the former Big 5 site and no opening date has been announced. But they are hiring workers now.

□

New UPS Store Opens



John C. Stashik

THE UPS STORE® network, the nation's largest franchise system of retail shipping, postal, print and business centers, has opened its first Blue Horizon store last month in El Cerrito. The new design has a contemporary look intended to be fast, efficient and customer friendly.



John C. Stashik

Mayor Gabe Quinto welcomes the new business to El Cerrito. Above, Richa, Rajan, "VK" Chopra (owner), and the mayor.

The UPS Store will provide a wide array of services including shipping and freight, mail and package receiving, printing, scanning, faxing and notary service.

Senior citizens and AAA members receive a five percent discount on all their shipping or freight services.

The franchisee, V. K. Chopra, currently operates The UPS Store on Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. While there are hundreds of The UPS Store's in the area, VK's store stands out, as it is a rare *five star rated* UPS store.

The store is located at 11461 San Pablo Ave. in El Cerrito (across from Safeway) with abundant street parking. Call them at 510-340-3100 or visit them to enjoy a great service experience.

Daiso closed temporarily after a small electrical fire on February 8th. The smoke was quite thick so the store is in a deep cleanup mode for now. Expect Daiso to reopen after a scrubbing and restocking.

□

Richmond note: Mi Casa Grill has opened at the corner of Macdonald and San Pablo (by Grocery Outlet) so a new Mexican restaurant in business just steps from our city limit.

□

"I'll fix this mess." And she did. I reference a conversation with City Manager Karen Pinkos in the City Hall parking lot two years ago. We were shut down by the pandemic and the State Auditor had El Cerrito on the "naughty list." General fund reserves were zilch.

Now I'm looking at the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report which will be on the City Council agenda

March 1st, and things are looking very good for the City. Not to bore you with numbers, I'll just mention the general fund balance: *negative* \$110,021 on July 1, 2020; a *positive* figure of \$7,143,262 on June 30, 2021. Wow!

There is no need for another TRAN loan as there's cash in the bank. Tons of these financial facts are at el-cerrito.org.

I give total credit to Karen Pinkos for this huge achievement. She worked day and night, hired experts, put together a plan, and actually got the City Council to pay close attention to spending. It wasn't easy. Federal ARPA funds helped that general fund balance, too.

Everyone on the City staff agreed to a pay cut. Some positions were eliminated. Now it's time to end any furloughs, restore competitive wages, and thank a bunch of dedicated employees for their help during a difficult time.

■ See Past Prez Palaver, page 5

FOURTH OF JULY FESTIVAL

■ Continued from page 1

Your investment will be felt and cherished by thousands of grateful local residents and neighbors who look forward to this event each summer.

Can you help? Or can you recommend someone who will?

For local residents who also want to contribute, an active fundraising webpage is located at el-cerrito.org/july4donations. Funds collected can only be used for a July 4th event, and if we are unable to have a celebration this year, the funds will only be used for future July 4th events.

Isn't it time to feel good again? And isn't it time to help our City get back on track by supporting the City of El Cerrito/worldOne 4th of July Festival we have all loved for so long?



Please let myself, Mayor Quinto, or any Councilmember know via our city email addresses (mine is pfadelli@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us) if you would like to be a sponsor and we will get back to you with how to make that happen.

For more information on the City of El Cerrito & worldOne 4th of July Festival, please visit our website at el-cerrito.org/july4.

Thanks for your help. Let's do this — and let's celebrate again!

To contribute by check please make payable to "City of El Cerrito" and mail to:

El Cerrito Recreation Department
4th of July Donation
7007 Moeser Lane
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Donate by credit card at:
el-cerrito.org/july4donations



Sponsor the 2022 4th of July Festival



Sponsorship Benefit	Presenting \$10,000	Fireworks \$5,000	Stars & Stripes \$2,500	Blue \$1,000	Red \$500	White \$300
Certificate of Appreciation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Listed as Sponsor on City Website & at Event	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logo on Website with Link to your Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Social Media Acknowledgement	✓ x 6	✓ x 4	✓ x 3	✓ x 2	✓ x 1	
Logo with Link to Your Website in Rec Dept E-News	✓ x 6	✓ x 4	✓ x 3	✓ x 2	✓ x 1	
Recognition on 88.1KeCg97.7 Radio	✓ x 6	✓ x 4	✓ x 3	✓ x 2	✓ x 1	
Your Stand Alone Banner at Event	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Included on Press Release Announcing Sponsors	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Logo on Event Program	✓	✓	✓			
Vendor Booth at Event	✓	✓	✓			
Recognition and Award at City Council Meeting	✓	✓	✓			
worldOne Stage Announcement at Festival	✓ x 3	✓ x 2	✓ x 1			
1/4 Page Ad in rECguide	✓ x 3	✓ x 2	✓ x 1			
Logo on all Marketing & Promotion	✓	✓				
Logo on Event Signage	✓	✓				
Main Stage Sponsorship Banner	✓					
Event Area Naming Rights	✓					



Ask us about festival naming rights. Thank you for your consideration!

Your Pets are in Good Hands at Abbey

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CATALINA HU

THE ROOTS of Abbey Pet Hospital go back 64 years. Started in 1958 by Dr. Linton and named Linton Pet Hospital, it was renamed Alberrito Pet Hospital in the 1970s.

In 1989, Dr. Lee Prutton took over the practice and it became Abbey Pet Hospital. Over the decades, the pet



Dr. Matthew Judd

hospital expanded and remodeled numerous times. Dr. Matthew Judd joined Abbey in 2011, which was about the same time I started

taking my newly rescued shepherd mix to see Dr. Judd. Although I have never met Dr. Prutton, I heard great things about him. When he retired in 2016, Dr. Judd became the new owner of Abbey Pet Hospital, which is possibly the oldest pet hospital in El Cerrito.

Over the years I rescued several more dogs. As the caretaker of four rescued dogs, I have visited Abbey and seen Dr. Judd more often than my own primary care physician. Dr. Judd has provided dental care for my dogs and treated them for ear infection, eye infection, eye injury, skin allergy, hip dysplasia, etc.

He has always been courteous and taken the time to listen and explain treatment options and provided cost estimates without pushing unnecessary procedures. The staff has always been professional and friendly, and the hospital has always been sparkling clean and odorless.

One of my rescues has behavior issues and is not fond of seeing a doctor. The little Havanese would turn from a cutie to a little untouchable angry beast in the exam room. Dr. Judd and the staff have always treated the little monster with humor, patience, and compassion.

The pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to Abbey. To protect both staff and clients' health, curbside service and other appointment procedures were implemented. For the past two years, the hospital's clients have been waiting in their cars while their pets were brought into the hospital.

With a huge increase of pet adoptions and new pet owners during the pandemic, the staff at Abbey has been extremely busy taking care of our pet population. I had to visit Abbey twice during the pandemic, even though the dogs were not thrilled to be there, I was just grateful that they could still receive prompt treatments from my trusty doctor and his team.

As the county lifted the indoor mask mandate on February 16th, I asked Dr. Judd when the clients would be able to enter the hospital with their pets again. His plan is to make the switch this month.

Dr. Judd's wife, Dr. Anne Hitchcock, who is a graduate of U.C. Davis Veterinary School, joined Abbey during the pandemic. I had the pleasure of meeting her in the parking lot after she provided curbside consultation to a client.

In January 2022, Feline Bed and Breakfast was closed in order to expand Abbey's treatment room and offer more services in the future. More great news is that after two years of disruption, new clients are now accepted at the hospital.

Two more wonderful veterinarians at Abbey are Dr. Gretel Schlegel and Dr. Jennie Kim. Dr. Schlegel joined Abbey in 2017 after moving from Wisconsin where she worked at a mixed animal practice. Dr. Kim joined the staff in 2018 after several years of practicing emergency medicine in Brooklyn,



Doctors Hitchcock and Judd

Pet Hospital

New York. With a total staff of 24, Abbey has four top-notch doctors of various experience and backgrounds, yet it still provides the personal touch of a small clinic.

Over the years I have recommended many pet owners to go to Abbey for their fur babies' health care. If you are looking for a new local pet hospital, look no further; you can fill out the registration form at abbeypethospital.com under "new clients."

As one of the oldest pet hospitals in El Cerrito, Abbey has always been a part of the community. The hospital has sponsored El Cerrito Youth Baseball teams, participated in the Centennial Parade, and promoted dog adoption at the annual Barks and Bells Expo. It is also a long time member of this Chamber of Commerce. As we are getting to the end of pandemic (hopefully), I look forward to seeing Abbey Pet Hospital's participation in community events again.



**Abbey Pet
Hospital**

11070 San Pablo Ave. • El Cerrito 94530

510-233-1003

abbeypethospital.com



The County Clerk-Recorder is Your Business Partner

BY VICKI GORDON

NO MATTER what size business you have, the work of the County Clerk-Recorder's office matters to you! Aside from the important role of managing elections throughout the County, the Clerk-Recorder provides crucial services such as fictitious business name filings and search functions, and the Clerk-Recorder's office handles mechanics lien filings for any supplier of goods and services to property.



Do you have concerns or questions about a business you are contracting with and want to make sure they are legitimate? The Clerk's office provides an online and in-office search capability that allows you to search by fictitious business and/or owner names and ensure that the entity you are dealing with has followed the rules and properly registered to do business in the County.

Want to get started and form your own business or a new business under a fictitious name? The Clerk-Recorder handles this key function for the business community. All of this can be found at the County Clerk-Recorder website: <https://www.ccclerkrec.us>

If you run a business supplying goods and services benefiting a property, then protecting your rights by filing timely preliminary notices and mechanics liens is a must. The Clerk-Recorder's office manages the lien recording process to ensure it is handled smoothly so that craftsmen, suppliers and service providers can foreclose on a lien if needed to be paid. Whether you are an experienced user of the Clerk-Recorder's office services or only an occasional user, your feedback shapes how the office performs in the future.

As a candidate for the open Clerk-Recorder position in this June's election, I'm interested in looking for ways to improve these critical services. The County Clerk-Recorder's work matters to businesses small and large, and I

believe there is always room for new ideas and improvement. If you have suggestions on how the Clerk-Recorder's Office can be even more responsive to the business community and the public, please contact me at 925-289-9553 or at vcgordon@live.com.

*Vicki Gordon Candidate for
County Clerk-Recorder*

PAST PREZ PALAVER

■ Continued from page 2

□

Contra Costa Civic Theatre. March 4 to March 20, Anton in Show Business. Tickets: ccct.org.

□

Cerrito Classics. Suspicion (1941) March 17 at 7 p.m. at the Rialto Cinemas Cerrito. rialtocinemas.com. Cat Ballou in April.

□

RIP. Cynthia May "Cindy" Frisch, who operated The Junket for 42 years with husband Bruno, passed away on February 16th.

Strengthening Our Chamber in 2022

EVERY NEW YEAR gives us a chance to renew our optimism. After another year deeply shaped by how we adapt and react to the significant impacts of COVID-19, we can rest assured that treatments, vaccines, and well tested measures will allow for a wider range of activities as a community and for our businesses.

At our Chamber, we are evaluating how to serve our community differently (and better), continuing with programs businesses value and working to incorporate new efforts. With our 2022 board, we are reshaping

our strategy and tactics and reaching out for perspective and feedback from members. Initial results from our member survey reveal several themes to guide our work, including: building supportive connections with other non-profit organizations in El Cerrito, continuing to provide information through our print and email communications, and increasing ways for businesses to network and learn. Got feedback? Contact info@elcerritochamber.org to participate in the survey.



Community Matters

GEORGINA EDWARDS

February Burgerim Mixer



Last month's mixer had a large turnout at Burgerim, 174 El Cerrito Plaza. Owner Peter Nguyen was kept very busy in the kitchen it was dinner time and attendees were hungry. Great burgers there!

Specific Plan SEIR

From Community Development

IN 2019, the City kicked off the update to the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. There were several community meetings and workshops held to gather public feedback around urban design, housing (market-rate and affordable) parking and economic development along San Pablo Avenue.

During the pandemic, City staff continued to work on the Plan and held a Virtual Open House last November.

A draft of the Specific Plan Update and the corresponding Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) will be available in this month, and once released, there will be a 45-day public review/comment period.

The City will send notifications to the public in the upcoming weeks with additional details about the Specific Plan update and SEIR and how to provide comments. For more information go to el-cerrito.org/SPASPCurrent.

Welcome Note

BY JOHN C. STASHIK

SANDRA DALIDA is the new Finance Director-Treasurer for the City of El Cerrito effective immediately.



That position has been vacant since October. The interim finance director has been the city manager.

Ms. Dalida has years of public and private sector experience in high finance and her extensive professional knowledge will support our city now and well into the future. Read her bio on the City's website.

Current El Cerrito Sales Tax Breakdown

3.94%	State General Fund
.50%	Contra Costa County Transportation Authority
.50%	BART in Contra Costa County
1.81%	County health, social services, public safety, transportation
.50%	Public Safety (Prop. 172)
1.00%	El Cerrito General Fund (Bradley Burns)
.50%	El Cerrito Measure A (Smooth Streets)
1.00%	El Cerrito Measure R (2015 Transactions & Use Tax)
.50%	Contra Costa County Measure X
10.25%	Total El Cerrito rate

Source: El Cerrito FY 2021-22 Budget Book, page 43

FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

Ryobi battery and charger unit for an additional \$119 quickly closed out any further consideration for that unit. This decision was my choice and I made it!

A quick ride down San Pablo Avenue to our local O'Reilly Auto Parts store yielded what I was looking for and at a reasonable price, certainly for the intended purpose.

The following day, I was scheduled to meet with new Chamber board member and owner of Well Grounded Tea & Coffee Bar, Kevin O'Neal, to make an in-person visit to one of our local businesses. The location was near Pastime Hardware, so once again I figured that I would "kill two birds with one stone." These days it might not be politically correct to use that phrase and I have already done it twice in this column. If I get "cancelled" there will be no hard feelings. I will understand and take it in stride. In any event, I headed to the appropriate plumbing supply aisle at Pastime and after a little searching, I was able to find exactly what I needed.

It is wonderful to have choices and options between big chain stores, mid-sized family-owned enterprises and small establishments. There's something for everyone. In El Cerrito we have a great mix of all business types in a wide range of categories. This city has a great soul comprised of the old and the new, the big and the small.

Speaking of El Cerrito and soul, the lyrics to "It's Alright" as penned by Curtis Mayfield of the Impressions, I can freely say about our city, "you got soul, and everybody knows that it's all right, whoa, it's all right!"



John C. Stashik

Lieutenant Colonel Simpson and Gunnery Sergeant Runsewe came by Station 71 to thank the El Cerrito Fire Department for assisting with the Marines' Toys for Tots program. Captain/Paramedic Damien Carrión (who heads this effort for the department) and Chief Pigoni were presented a plaque with the Marines' gratitude. The program reached 32,000 children in 2021. The Chamber assisted with collection barrel placement.

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Contact the *Byline* with news or feedback: byline@elcerritochamber.org

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Get CommDev News

Community Development e-Newsletter
el-cerrito.org/CommDev



Acting Captain Dawson, Engineer Hood, and Firefighter Stroud, of the El Cerrito Fire Department, were practicing aerial ladder placement at the new Mayfair apartment building on San Pablo and Knott. Called Mayfair Station, the complex may open next month. Photo courtesy of ECFD.

Then and Now



File photo from November 2010 shows Representative John Garamendi at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon with Michelle Blackwell, vice president, and John C. Stashik, then president. Fast forward to February 12, 2022, and the Congressman is again visiting El Cerrito, seen here at the Plaza, where he received a special copy of that 2010 *Byline*. With new district boundaries Garamendi could once again be El Cerrito's Congressional Representative.



Byline

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Proud members of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce