



From the President

JEFFREY WRIGHT

SWEET DAYS of summer, the jasmine's in bloom, July is dressed up and playing her tune. For me, the vibe is in the air as expressed by these Seals and Crofts lyrics.

The beaming sunshine and meadows of Kennedy Grove Park welcomed me as I sought out the El Cerrito Rotary Club members for the event that they were hosting. As I meandered through the park looking for that group, I ran into Dick and Susan McCloskey sitting on a park bench with their pooch in tow, enjoying the serenity of the day. We had a pleasant conversation, with the three of us each acknowledging the joy in the simple pleasures of life.

Several groups were having events at the park that day and I was loath to "crash" various events in an effort to find the one that I was looking for, so I reached out to Ruthie Abelson Olivas who first informed me about the

■ See From the President, page 7



City of El Cerrito/worldOne July 4th Festival 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Cerrito Vista Park

The annual City of El Cerrito/worldOne July 4th Festival provides the chance to celebrate amongst high-flying banners, world-class music, food, friends, rides, bounce houses, community groups, vendors and more. After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this renowned event is returning to El Cerrito!

Music

Carnival Rides

Games

Family Fun

Classic Cars

Food, Drinks



'Best of El Cerrito' Campaign Builds Momentum

BY ROBERT ROGERS

THE "BEST" IS YET TO COME! The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce 2022 "Best of El Cerrito" campaign started strong, generating growing participation from area residents, patrons and businesses. The nomination phase saw nearly 200 nominations by late June.

Now is the time to vote, and to share these opportunities with your friends and neighbors. If you'd like a vote-now sign for your store or postcards that help customers find the voting page, email info@elcerritochamber.org.

The Chamber developed a diverse range of categories for recognition to ensure all of our City's 700+ registered businesses have an opportunity to be honored. Voting will open in the middle of this month.

Simply visit elcerritochamber.org/best-of-ec from your computer, tablet, or smart phone to support local business. Get out the vote for our City sharing this



via word of mouth, social media, text and email. Thanks to dedicated local sponsors like AC Transit, Shrem Law, The Joint Chiropractic, Elevation 66, *Contra Costa Marketplace Magazine*, and more, for sponsoring the outreach for this effort.

It takes just a moment to boost your favorite businesses and do your part in supporting our City. Shop local civic improvement campaigns have never been more important.

Each time we choose to spend a dollar locally we are improving the health of every facet of our community, from our businesses to our parks, schools and more.

An award ceremony for winning businesses is slated for September, after open voting ends in August.

Winning businesses will enjoy extensive Chamber benefits including both physical and digital logos, certificates, marketing packages, municipal recognition, privileges at a banquet award ceremony, features in the *Byline*, and more!

Vote now!



Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

CERRITO PRINTING has closed. "It's time to retire" said **Jayne Ramirez**, who worked at the family business that her father, Bud Uhlenbrock, founded in 1960.

Farewell to "chief." Just when you thought things couldn't get any crazier, the **San Francisco Unified School District** is removing the word "chief" from its job titles. Good priorities SFUSD. Hopefully, they'll tell Webster and keep this zany stuff on their side of the bay.



Speaking of that, Chief of Police **Paul Keith** is now the president of the always friendly **El Cerrito Rotary Club**, an associate member of this

Chamber of Commerce.

Some Banter. The building permit for the new **Banter Wine Bar** at Stockton and San Pablo has been issued and tenant improvements can now begin. However, nothing is easy. An automobile crashed through the wall of the building on June 9th and the structure was subsequently red tagged by the City. So the wine bar owners will have to work around the damaged wall.

The wall repair itself is a separate issue requiring the building owner to get a structural report to clear the red tag, then deal with permits, insurance, contractors, etc. I know Banter optimistically sees their glass as half full right now. Hopefully, the whole project goes smoothly as El Cerritans are very excited about this new business.

See food? It's coming. The **California Fish Grill** mentioned here in April will open at **El Cerrito Plaza**, but not until early next year. That's the latest intel.

Ike's Love & Sandwiches just opened in Pinole. This rapidly expanding chain needs an **El Cerrito Plaza** location; just

saying. Memo to the **Economic Development Committee**... A perfect complement to our outstanding Mr. Pickle's.

Fix it shop. To open at some point is **ubreakifix** at 210 El Cerrito Plaza by **Trader Joe's**. Repairing smart phones and other devices will be their specialty. No opening date yet known.



No commute! Do you know that live-work lofts are available at **Credence**, the brand new condominium building at Eureka and San Pablo? Only eight out of 32 units on the site are still available for purchase and two of those are reserved for live-work use. Contact **Branagh** at 925-385-8874 or sales@branagh.com.

Cops. They have a dangerous, and often thankless job. But police are a necessity in a civilized society. El Cerrito police have our backs 24 hours every day and on this platform I will say thank you for always being just a 911 call away.

We had a few residents demand our city council make a 20% cut to the police

department budget; fortunately, that did not happen. The business operators who comprise our membership would most certainly not approve of fewer police resources.

Local retailers are crime victims daily and the cost is staggering. Keep apprised with what's happening in city government and speak up to protect your interests along with those of the City as a whole.

City budget. The 2022-23 El Cerrito budget was adopted 4-1 on June 21st by the city council, not without some last minute drama. It's a good budget, with city management continuing to be very cautious about spending or projecting future revenue. The City has turned the financial corner, rebuilding, with the help of dedicated staff, solid management, and an engaged city council.



Outstanding! City Manager **Karen Pinkos** received the 2022 *Career Excellence Award* given by **California Women Leading Government**, presented on May 26th at a Municipal Management Association summit. Excellence in El Cerrito city management is just one more reason residents are so **#ElCerritoProud**.

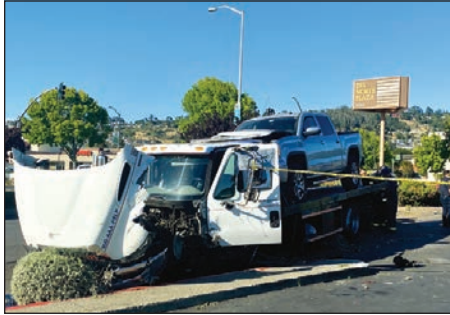
■ See Past Prez Palaver, page 3



In the City Council chambers on June 21st, Ruby Adachi Hiramoto, second from left, proudly holds her Mayoral Certificate of Recognition signed by Mayor Gabe Quinto on the occasion of her 101st birthday as family and city council members look on. Adachi is a familiar name to many older El Cerritans.

PAST PREZ PALAVER

■ Continued from page 2



John C. Stashik

Runaway. A flatbed tow truck lost its brakes and flew down Potrero Ave. on Saturday, June 11th, ending up in the Del Norte Plaza parking lot at San Pablo Ave. Along the way the truck shoved a Lexus into a light pole but amazingly there were only minor injuries. It

stopped short of taking out Los Moles Beer Garden.

All hands on deck were summoned including two ECFD engine companies, ECPD, and even Public Works. The police investigation continues.

□

Where's the pizza? It's now July, long past the goal of a May 1st opening date. But an on-site inspection by this writer at Super Slice Pizza revealed the former Armadillo oven ready to fire up, a new prep table, cooler for sodas, and a new POS system in place, all ready for action. Therefore, I am placing my bet on this new essential business opening this month at 10180 San Pablo Ave. in Peppermint Tree Plaza.

□

Rialto Cinemas Cerrito has great pizza too! Coming to our own El Cerrito big screen on Tuesday, August 2nd at 7 p.m., will be the musical "Kinky Boots" from London's West End, "filmed" live, on stage. Tickets: rialtocinemas.com.

□

Looking ahead: at the Contra Costa Civic Theatre, will be Lerner & Loewe's "Camelot" opening on September 9th. Tickets: ccct.org. Incredible entertainment, practically next door.

□

Cannabis #2. The City of El Cerrito approved an operating permit in March 2021 for a second cannabis dispensary which is going to be located at Schmidt Lane and San Pablo Ave. (in the former Batteries+Bulbs building).

Owned by Shryne Group, Inc., Authentic El Cerrito, was to be the store name of the El Cerrito outlet. However, the name will now be **STIIZY** to eliminate potential confusion and better align with company branding.

Construction work is progressing on the building improvements. At this time it is too early to tell when the store will be open for business. One thing is certain, when that day arrives, the Chamber will be ready for a ribbon cutting and big celebration.

□

SUMMER MEGA MIXER!

Thursday, July 28th, 5:30-7:30pm

Chambers & Communities
Working Together!

All members of the business community are welcome.
Bring plenty of business cards
& a raffle prize to promote your business!



John C. Stashik

Meet José Castrejon, Interim Chief of the El Cerrito Fire Department. A month ago we bid farewell to Chief Michael Pignoni. It happens that José has been a firefighter here for a quarter century, almost as long as Mike. Say "hi" if you see him around the town.

**FREE TO CHAMBER MEMBERS
NON-MEMBERS \$10**
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Crockett Library)
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JUKU™

>>> A NEW SPACE FOR YOU

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CATALINA HU

ARE YOU READY to throw that post pandemic party (again)? Are you ready to resume in person tutoring in a friendly casual setting? Are you tired of your dogs barking non-stop every time you are on a Zoom call? Are you looking for a nice affordable and comfortable space to host your meetup group? JUKU, El Cerrito's newest co-work space, is exactly what you need and much more!

On one afternoon in July 2020, as I was driving down Ashbury Avenue, JUKU's grand opening open house invitation popped up on my Instagram notification. I had great respect and curiosity for anyone starting a new business in 2020, so I made a turn and pulled over to check out the new co-work space at 7019 Stockton Avenue. Jordan Mayer greeted me and introduced himself as the manager of the establishment. Shoko, who is Jordan's mother, also introduced herself and thanked me for stopping by. I was impressed by their enthusiasm and excited for having a new co-work space in El Cerrito.

Now nearly two years later, I met Jordan and Shoko at JUKU again on a sunny afternoon. The homelike space was filled with an abundance of natural light through the large skylight. A couple of students were working on their laptops in the work area. The kitchen area was fully stocked with handmade Japanese ceramic mugs and a selection of drinks and snack items. A large screen TV and a curved sofa were next to the kitchen area ready for relaxation and entertainment, and the reading area had a selection of newspapers and magazines. Three smaller rooms with colorful barn-style sliding doors were available for more private conversations and special projects. One wall featured a series of framed glass mosaic images created by an award winning local artist, Sylvia Mori. Live plants, cute colorful decorations and bite-size treats were strategically placed throughout the entire space. It was completed with a sweet, quiet family dog named Sweet Pea.

I was excited to learn how the community has utilized JUKU's since its grand opening. Many El Cerrito

High School students found JUKU to be a great place to study and work on school projects. Numerous community members who have been working remotely since the pandemic now enjoy walking to JUKU to work. It has also

hosted employee holiday parties, JUKU Bento pop-up, and Brooke Birch Tea pop-up. However, due to the surge of Omicron infections over the holidays, JUKU was closed for several weeks early this year.

Just as I was wondering why JUKU hasn't installed more permanent signage above its storefront, another member of the Mayer family joined in and introduced himself as Gregg, who is Jordan's father. He shared how the family collaboratively planned the opening of JUKU since 2016. As long time El Cerrito residents, they envisioned a co-work space, where community members could gather to collaborate, to share ideas and create. They knew the perfect location for such a space since Gregg had enjoyed working at the same location for decades. Jordan also spent his Gaucho days doing homework at the same location.

It's a short walk from El Cerrito High School, nestled in a residential area and conveniently located among a few local family businesses. The family researched extensively and compared numerous co-working business models in France and Japan. The former office space of Gregg L. Mayer & Co. was redesigned and renovated. When everything was finally in place and ready to open JUKU, it was March 2020. The pandemic put the opening on hold for several more months until July.

Both Gregg and Jordan are El Cerrito High School alumni who grew up in El Cerrito. Gregg is a successful biotech management consultant and enjoys sharing business ideas. Shoko, a long time El Cerrito resident who grew up in Yokohama, Japan, brings Japanese aesthetic into the décor of JUKU. Shoko is looking forward to host more art and language events. Jordan, who also shares a deep appreciation for arts, would love to have more food events and explore his new passion in growing plants.

While the kanji character of JUKU means private cram school, where Japanese students attend after regular school



Sweet Pea



Above, local artist Sylvia Mori gives tips and tricks on mosaic making. Some of Sylvia's work is on display at JUKU. Right, hors d'oeuvres for a gathering. Snacks are always available. Lower right, Shoko and Jordan Mayer. Below, students appreciate the ample table space and fast Wi-Fi.



to prepare for college entrance examinations; El Cerrito JUKU is a place for self-learning, creativity, gathering, and collaboration. JUKU recently hosted a free event featuring the renowned local artist, Sylvia Mori, who generously shared her life story, some of her creations, tips and tricks on making mosaic, and a live demonstration on creating a mosaic tile.

I envision more art receptions, movie watch parties, seminars and workshops of endless topics being hosted at JUKU. It offers high speed Wi-Fi, printer, scanner, shredder, a variety of seating options, a quiet room, complimentary snacks and refreshments such as coffee, tea, espresso, and pastries. The rate is \$8 per hour or \$24 per day. Students receive 50% discount. What a deal!

The space is much more comfortable than the public library, and, did I mention the complimentary drinks and fresh pastries from local bakeries? A monthly pass is now offered at \$99. JUKU's regular hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Follow JUKU on Instagram to learn of upcoming special events!



塾 | JUKUTM

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Tell YOUR Story

THIS HAS BEEN a year of renewal and revisiting our work as a Chamber within our community. We've had new board members bringing in fresh perspectives and established members coming together with inspiration and energy. Our workgroup for launching "Best of El Cerrito" with both "new" and "old" members bring forth creativity and new capacity.

Recently, we shared plans with Chamber members, reconnecting with the power of story telling in human experience, how it's always relevant and, perhaps, increasingly meaningful in an era of "noise" when being able to communicate in genuine and heartfelt is imperative. Whether we choose social media, or virtual meetings, or in-person gath-

erings, or any other way of communicating, like always, we humans must connect.

Our intent with the "Best of El Cerrito" program is to foster more awareness of local businesses and professional services, the richness in our community. In the effort, we hope to also make a contribution towards weaving a sense of belonging and supporting each other in our special part of the Bay Area.

As Robert Rogers, Chamber board member and professional communicator explains, "This is the era of narrative. Let us help you write, tell, act, emote, broadcast, and otherwise communicate your story. You are the Best of El Cerrito. Now let's tell your story."



Community Matters

GEORGINA EDWARDS

Demand Strong for Commercial Space at Mayfair Station

BY ROBERT ROGERS

LORI ROSENTHAL looks at bare walls, cold concrete and tangles of exposed pipe — and she sees endless potential.

Pacing the vacant space on the ground floor of Mayfair Station, a gleaming new 6-story apartment complex that sits adjacent to El Cerrito Del Norte BART, Rosenthal rattles off the enterprises that could take root.

"This spot will be a beacon, a destination," Rosenthal says. "The density, the transit, the housing...El Cerrito is undergoing a Renaissance."



Rosenthal, an agent with Gordon Commercial Real Estate Brokerage, is charged with securing tenants for the more than 8,000 square feet of commercial space at Mayfair Station, located at 11600 San Pablo Ave. at the intersection of Cutting Blvd. 156 new residential units are stacked above the ground floor commercial, with 67 more set to be built next door. There's a beautiful courtyard with sublime acoustics nestled in the site, promising another magnet for people and dollars.

Rosenthal began taking appointments with prospective tenants during



Mayfair Station is located at Cutting & San Pablo, one of the busiest traffic intersections in El Cerrito. Thousands of BART passengers pass by daily to and from the adjacent Del Norte station.

the week of June 20th. Within the day, she had more than 20 inquiries.

Commercial tenants will need to make investments to configure the spaces to best suit their businesses. Plans show four separate commercial spaces, ranging from 1,453 to 2,632 square feet. But there's flexibility, with sizes and number of tenants both up open for alteration.

What makes the most sense? The market will ultimately decide, but Rosenthal has ideas.

"A food-related space would be a great anchor for three other tenants," she says. Fitness and health services, professional services, and coffee are all good possibilities.

The upcoming Del Norte Complete Streets project will include the addition of on-street parking and bike lanes along

the Mayfair frontage plus new crosswalks and other improvements. A new Hampton Inn & Suites hotel is slated for across the street.

Businesses could open as soon as Spring 2023. "El Cerrito is somewhere that people want to be."

To inquire about leasing opportunities, call Rosenthal at 510-524-2344 or lori@gordoncommercial.com.



Architect's rendering of the completed building highlighting the northwest corner of Mayfair Station as viewed from San Pablo Avenue.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

Rotary event, with my “where are you all S.O.S.?” I was soon in the company of the El Cerrito Rotarians. The fact that Andy Brown’s term as president was ending was a driving force for me attending the event. Andy and I both have office space in the Freethy building in El Cerrito. The day that I was moving in, Andy, who had not met me before, graciously aided my son and I with some very heavy items. He literally did some heavy lifting, then bestowed upon me a jar of honey from his personal hives. His gesture reminded me of the words of Maya Angelou, “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” Andy made me feel very welcome.

The Chamber was happy to welcome all who attended our in-person lunch meeting on June 22nd. Prior to the pandemic we had a monthly lunch meeting held at El Cerrito Royale. The pandemic and COVID-19 protocols required that we discontinue the meetings. On behalf of the Chamber, I want to thank Sonja Givens-Thomas for providing us with meeting space at El Cerrito Royale for our lunch events for many years. She and her staff run a top-notch operation at the highly regarded senior assisted living facility.

A big thank you to Chamber board member and Vice President, Matt Khadivian for offering his restaurant, El Mono, as the venue for our June 22nd relaunch of our lunch meetings. The food and service were great and have established a “new bar” in terms of what we will expect moving forward in terms of the dining experience. Kevin O’Neal, Chamber board member and owner of Well-Grounded, a popular El Cerrito coffee, tea and sandwich shop, was the featured speaker of the day,

and he came prepared with handouts and an enlightening presentation on the visioning process and cited how the process has helped him to grow his own business enterprise. Thank you, Kevin, for stepping-up!

At the conclusion of the well-attended lunch event, I asked Mayor Gabe Quinto and Chamber Treasurer, and number one ambassador, John Stashik, to give a pitch for the July 4th event that is now back after a pandemic induced hiatus. They were pleased to announce that the event is back in full-stride and that it is the result of the generous contributions of several local businesses, individuals, and organizations. Former mayor, and current councilmember Paul Fadelli had a strong desire to bring the event

back and he mobilized the forces to make it happen.

Come on out to the July 4th event at Cerrito Vista Park and enjoy the “sweet days of summer” and be sure to stop by the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce booth. Thanks again to all who make our Chamber and community-at-large a great place to spend time!

Housing Element Workshop

Tuesday, August 2nd

Share your input, ideas, issues, and solutions for El Cerrito housing

el-cerrito.org/housingelement2023

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

Renew Business Licenses

All businesses operating in El Cerrito are required to apply for and obtain a Business License. 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

Rental Registry

Effective July 1, 2022, all rental property owners are required to register or renew their registration through the City's online portal by July 31, 2022. *Paper forms are not acceptable.* Follow the step-by-step instructions at elcerrito.org/rentalregistry.

Detailed information, including online account access, will be mailed with Business License renewal notices. For more information about rental housing in El Cerrito, visit el-cerrito.org/rentalhousing.

Tobacco Retailer Licenses

These are due by July 31, 2022. Renew online. After that date, penalties accrue. Follow instructions at: el-cerrito.org/tobacco-sales

Become a Member of the Chamber

The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce supports local business and membership in the organization is open to all who have a business to support, large or small.

Contact: info@elcerritochamber.org
510-705-1202



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