



From the President

JEFFREY WRIGHT

I AM HAPPY to say that on September 19th, my wife Tyra and I celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary. We have spent our entire married life living in the city of El Cerrito. Our children grew up in El Cerrito, played in the city parks and graduated from El Cerrito High School. They also both earned their first “outside” dollars in this city.

Our son Jeffrey secured his first job from our former neighbor Marian Blechman. I had her house for sale, and she hired Jeffrey to keep the yard watered, as she had already moved out of the house. At the time he was about 10 years old, and he took the job very seriously. He developed his own log sheet indicating the date and time that he performed his duties, and he was consistent in his performance. Our daughter became a highly sought-after neighborhood babysitter after a couple of our immediate neighbors engaged her services.

■ See From the President, page 7



‘Best of El Cerrito’ Winners Announced

EL CERRITO’s “Best of...” campaign sparked a sensation in the region, as thousands voted for their favorite El Cerrito businesses in categories as diverse as “Best Hair Salon” to “Best Real Estate Agent” and “Best Donut Shop.” The contest generated more than 22,000 votes. Amazing!

In addition to wide recognition through Chamber and other local platforms, we will honor each winner at a celebratory event on October 20th. El Cerrito Mayor Gabriel Quinto and Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia will be among the dignitaries on hand to meet and honor the local business superstars that help make El Cerrito a Bay Area jewel.

At the edge of your seat to know if you’re a winner? We’ll be reaching out with the news and invitation to the event. The listing is now posted on the Chamber website: elcerritochamber.org/best-of-ec.

To all the nominees, our community appreciates you.

To all winners: CONGRATULATIONS!

Chamber Election

TERMS FOR five of the nine directors will end in January, 2023. They are Aissia Ashoori, Mark Figone, Sonja Givens-Thomas, Scott Harris, and John C. Stashik. Directors serve two years.

The president will appoint a nominating committee the board meeting on October 5th. The report from that body will be announced a membership meeting in November. Ballots are then mailed to all regular members in good standing if there are multiple people running.

Participation is encouraged. Any member interested in serving on the board of directors should contact President Jeffrey Wright: j.wright@elcerritochamber.org.



AWARDS EVENT

Best of El Cerrito Celebration

Thursday, October 20, 2022
5:30-7:30 p.m.



7019 Stockton Avenue
El Cerrito

Winners and community leaders will be invited via Eventbrite

Welcome New Member GYMBOREE. See page 4.



Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

THERE'S IS A LOT happening now in our business community. Here's a short list for *Byline* readers. There appears to be no shortage of dining options in El Cerrito. *Bon appétit.*

□

Masa, located in Point Richmond, features hand-crafted tamales. Opened just in time for the pandemic, the taqueria not only survived, but thrived. As mentioned here a month ago, Masa #2 will be opening at a former Jack In The Box across Panama Avenue from the Natural Grocery Prepared Food Annex, possibly in December. Construction is underway now. With a much smaller building than the sit down restaurant at the Point, this second Masa will be a grab and go store. The drive up window will remain, and hopefully, some tables can be placed outside. Peek at a menu: masatamalesandtacos.com.

□

More food news. In July I mentioned that Ike's Love & Sandwiches needs an El Cerrito Plaza location. That *will happen* when the rapidly expanding chain opens a store in the former Rubio's space in the not too distant future.

□

Banter Wine. The small nondescript building next to the strip mall at Stockton and San Pablo is destined to become an El Cerrito wine bar. Claire Sullivan and Devin Hohler have been getting an education on how difficult opening a new business can be while building out the interior. Progress was being made until an automobile punched a hole through a wall. The building owner will make repairs but that delays the goal of opening a wine bar in the near future. In the meantime, sign up at banterwine.com for a mailing list to get updates and an opportunity to join their Wine Club.

□

Dolly's at 10172 San Pablo Ave. (Peppermint Tree Plaza), pushed back their initial opening date and hopes to welcome customers in early 2023 providing to-go/takeout pasta, salad, etc.

□



John C. Stashik

Mohamed Cherif is The Hummus Guy and now a vendor at the Farmers Market at El Cerrito Plaza on Saturdays. He has been making hummus since 2003, organic and delicious. Stop by and say hello.

Tigon, is the new Vietnamese restaurant now at Central and San Pablo. Open 7 days a week.

□

Antojitos Guatemaltecos is reoccupying the restaurant space at 11252 San Pablo Ave. (near Potrero) and is scheduled to open this fall. The owners are currently operating a food truck in Richmond with El Cerrito representing their first brick and mortar location.

□

California Fish Grill will bring a much needed seafood restaurant to El Cerrito and is slated to open in early next year at 5040 El Cerrito Plaza (former Mod Pizza location). Since 1998 they've been grilling and crafting healthy seafood favorites for loyal customers.

□

Food truck. On September 20th, the City's Zoning Administrator approved an administrative use permit application to allow a food truck that would sell Nepali, Indian, and Tibetan food in conjunction with the Annapurna Mart at 11299 San Pablo Avenue in the Del Norte Plaza shopping center (Potrero and San Pablo near Los Moles Beer Garden).

□

Elevation 66 Brewing Co. has added quesadillas to their delicious bar menu.

□



"We open Monday!" That's what I was told late last month at the rejuvenated Little Hill Lounge. I did not ask "*which Monday?*" So the bar *could* be open when you read this. There's now a DJ booth too. Address: 10753 San Pablo.

□

My "recs." Fatapple's bakery now offers Georgia Pecan Pie and their ever popular Pumpkin Pie.

Check out Mi Casa Grill at Macdonald and San Pablo for extraordinary Mexican cuisine. Try *chilaquiles* for breakfast, early when there is no waiting. You'll love their coffee too.

Sushi Matsu is one of my regular stops at 10561 San Pablo Ave. Owner Angi Yang will treat you well.

□

Finally! An email from Solaiman Esmatyar, who will operate Super Slice Pizza with his brother Omar, says November 4th will be their opening date. I've personally had samples and it will be worth the wait. Location: 10180 San Pablo Ave. (former Armadillo).

■ See Past Prez Palaver, page 3

PAST PREZ PALAVER

■ Continued from page 2



Solaiman Esmatyar demonstrates how Super Slice Pizza builds a pie.

□
Mayfair Station. A reminder, there are four new commercial spaces (total 8,300 sq. ft.) available at the new apartment complex at Cutting and San Pablo, adjacent to the del Norte BART. Lori Rosenthal of Gordon Real Estate is your contact for leasing information: lori@gordoncommercial.com.

Mayfair will also begin leasing 156 new residential units this month and the 69 affordable unit phase is to break ground late in 2023.

□



Grant Shoaf is the new manager at our Mechanics Bank at Fairmount and San Pablo. He's eager to set you up with a business line of credit (Prime+0%) or equipment financing. Contact him: grant_shoaf@mechanicsbank.com or phone 925-303-8550.

Also, the word is the bank is hiring tellers. Visit the branch to apply.

□

Fun stuff. An El Cerrito free folk festival, presented by the SF Folk Music Club and the City's Arts & Culture Commission, will be held Saturday, October 8th, from noon until 8 p.m., at the Community Center.

Hurry, as "Camelot" will close on Sunday, October 9th, at the Contra Costa Civic Theatre. ccct.org.

George Clooney and Julia Roberts reunite on screen in "Ticket to Paradise," starting Friday, October 21st, at the Rialto Cinemas Cerrito. More at: rialtocinemas.com.

□

Holiday Lights. Once again, the "theater block" will be lit up with festive lights thanks to the generosity of several donors. Look for them late this month. And, the annual beer and burger bash at Elevation 66 celebrating those lights will be announced in the next *Byline*.

□

Meet Sheena. Mayor Gabe Quinto's new Whippet pup. El Cerrito's newest resident, shown in this picture at nine weeks of age, and—like her human—very #ElCerritoProud!



□



Let's do this! Damien Carrion of the El Cerrito Fire Dept. again heads up the annual toy drive. Put a donation barrel in *every* business. Hook up by email: dcarrion@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.



Opening Oct. 17th



John C. Sashik

MEET DR. NILANTHI KULASEKARA ("Dr. K" for short) who will open the first urgent pet care in California on Monday, October 17th, in El Cerrito. The doctor has over 25 years of experience as a veterinarian, with 20 of those in emergency rooms.

Urgent Pet's vision is to help the many patients that cannot see their local veterinarian on short notice, but whose only other option is one of the region's busy emergency rooms.

There, the patients end up triaged, waiting for hours before even seeing a doctor while the life-threatening emergencies are prioritized.

Dr. K's office will specialize in urgent care cases, and can focus on giving your pets the medical attention they need, as quickly as possible. Designed from the ground up to create an efficient flow for pets and owners, less time is spent in the waiting room.

Committed to communication, Dr. K makes diagnosis and treatment options as simple and easy-to-understand as possible.

10612 San Pablo Ave. at Moeser Lane & Kearney St. (near 24 Hour Fitness)
El Cerrito • Phone 510-838-4669

www.urgentpetcare.com

A 'Hidden Gym' in El Cerrito for Kids, Families

BY ROBERT ROGERS

WHEN SHE SEES a need, Dr. Toia Mengesha looks to build solutions. That's just how the mother of four is wired. When her mom suffered a brain aneurysm in 2016, Mengesha responded in part by launching The Worst Headache 501c3, a nonprofit organization to support awareness and prevention.

Similarly, when she noticed a lack of pay-to-play indoor spaces and programming for the area's babies and toddlers, she sprang into action.

"It's just what I do, start an organization to meet a need," said Mengesha, who also has an academic background in early childhood development.



Toia Mengesha

Mengesha discovered a Gymboree Play & Music in a charming but somewhat hidden location in El Cerrito. Convinced that it could serve more local families with high-quality children's play and programming, Mengesha bought the business from the former owner and got to work building her clientele.

That was in June of 2018.

By January of 2020, Mengesha's Gymboree was nearing 200 regular customers and climbing, with word-of-mouth and marketing efforts generating buzz all over town. She had six part-time employees and was scrambling to ramp up capacity.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Everything changed.

"We had to shut down for basically 18 months," Mengesha said. "When your clientele is ages 0 to 5, most of your kids age out of the programming pretty quickly, so when we reopened, we basically had to start from scratch—or less than scratch because the pandemic makes for a tougher environment" in which to operate.

But Mengesha and her staff and clients are clawing their way back, thanks to her committed vision, a supportive atmosphere, and a model that draws raves from parents and kids who try it.

Mengesha also served for five years as publisher of an online resource called "The Macaroni Kid," which helps parents discover resources and opportunities in their neighborhoods.

"We are a literal hidden GYM, a gym for little people to play," Mengesha said. "But we know that this community deserves this."

GYMBOREE®



Mengesha describes her Gymboree as not only a place for diverse programming for little ones, but also a meeting spot where moms, dads, grandparents, nannies, and others can come and spend quality time with their children and meet other families. The inside is a beautiful, functional play area teeming with songs, dance, bubbles, parachutes and more.

"Babies and children learn through play," Mengesha said.

Among the features at Gymboree are:

- ✓ For children ages 0-5.
- ✓ Preschool alternative and preschool readiness programs.
- ✓ Preschool steps classes.
- ✓ Skills-based classes for babies, crawlers, walkers, runners and explorers (most advanced).
- ✓ Flexible pricing for memberships and class passes to fit any budget.
- ✓ All the best safety and vaccination requirements following county and state guidelines.
- ✓ Play and song-based curriculum and routines.
- ✓ Offers special events like Gymboween, Winter Wonderland, Sweetheart Party, and more.

Best of all, Mengesha continues to invite any and all parents to bring in their children for a free first class, a tryout of sorts.

"There's no risk because your first class is free," Mengesha said. "You have to experience it to understand what a great place this is for you and your child ... almost everyone who comes in for free winds up becoming longer-term customers."

Gymboree El Cerrito has flexible hours and is generally open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. It's located at 704 El Cerrito Plaza, on the Mezzanine Level.

Mengesha and her team have survived a pandemic that no one could have foreseen, and she is fierce in her determination to build something lasting in El Cerrito.

"I would just ask people to do all you can to support your local businesses, whatever they are," she said. "If we don't support them, they won't be here, and then we won't have something as nice as great services right here in our community."

704 El Cerrito Plaza (Mezzanine Level)
Call 510-528-3002

gymboreeclasses.com/en/locations/CA/El-Cerrito/

Proud member of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce

THE OFFICIAL LIST OF THE 2022 BEST OF EL CERRITO WINNERS

Animal Services

Best Animal Shelter or Rescue Groups
The Milo Foundation Winner
Berkeley Humane Runner Up

Best Pet Stores

Pet Food Express Winner
Best Places to Board Pets
Metro Dog Winner

Best Veterinary Clinics
Abbey Pet Hospital Winner

Food & Drink

Best Bagel Shops
Well Grounded Tea & Coffee Bar Winner
Best Bakeries
Fatapple's El Cerrito Restaurant and Bakery Winner

PennDel's Bakehouse Runner Up

Best Barbecue Joints

Black Star Pirate BBQ Winner
Gangnam Tofu Korean Cuisine Runner Up

Best Bars

The Factory Bar Winner
Hotsy Totsy Club Runner Up
Best Breakfast/Brunch Spots
Sam's Log Cabin Winner

Best Burger Places

AI's Big Burger Winner
Red Onion Runner Up

Best Butcher Shops

El Cerrito Natural Grocery Company Winner

Best Caterers

Mr. Pickle's Sandwich Shop Winner
Anaviv Runner Up

Best Cheese Shops

Cheese Board Collective Winner
Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese Runner Up

Best Chinese Restaurants

Noodles Fresh Winner
New Dumpling Runner Up

Best Cocktails

Hotsy Totsy Club Winner

Best Coffeehouses

Well Grounded Tea & Coffee Bar Winner

Best Doughnuts

Donut Time (Johnny's Donuts) Winner
All Star Donuts Runner Up

Best Ice Cream Shops

iScream Winner
Baskin-Robbins Runner Up

Best Italian Restaurants

Benchmark Pizzeria Winner

Best Japanese Restaurants

Katana-Ya Winner

Best Liquor Stores

BevMo! Winner
Arlington Wine & Spirits Runner Up

Best Local Wineries

Donkey & Goat Winner

Best Mexican Restaurants

Los Moles Beer Garden Winner

Best Outdoor Dining Spots

Westbrae Biergarten Winner
Los Moles Beer Garden Runner Up

Best Pizzas

Little Star Pizza Winner
Benchmark Pizzeria Co-Runner Up
Zachary's Chicago Pizza Co-Runner Up

Best Places to Drink Beer

Elevation 66 Brewing Company Winner
Westbrae Biergarten Runner Up

Best Restaurants

Juanita & Maude Winner

Best Thai/Burmese Restaurants

Larb Thai Food & Tapas Winner

Best Vietnamese/Cambodian/Laotian Restaurants

Huong Tra Restaurant Winner

Best Wine Stores & Wine Bars

Arlington Wine & Spirits Winner

Health and Beauty Services

Best Acupuncture Practices

Marie Bowser Acupuncture Winner

Best Alternative Medicine Practices

The Vestibule Center For Sound Living Winner

Best Barbershops

Grand Barber Shop Winner
Phil's Barber Shop Runner Up

Best Chiropractic Services

Dr. Joshua Pollack @ Joshua Tree Chiropractic (El Cerrito Plaza) Winner

Best Dental Practices

Linh Cao-Chan, D.D.S. Winner
Children's Dentistry - Nicholas Ching, D.D.S., Inc. Runner Up

Best Hair Salons/Stylists

Chop Salon Winner
Reflections Hair Design Runner Up

Best Home Care Services for Seniors

Eskaton Hazel Shirley Manor Winner
El Cerrito Royale Runner Up

Best Places for Physical Therapy

Albany Physical Therapy Winner
Physical Therapy Innovations Runner Up

Best Places to Get a Facial

Face Magic Winner
Hibiscus Boutique Spa Runner Up

Best Places to Get a Manicure or Pedicure

Nails by Vivian Winner

Best Places to Get a Massage

Joanne Cosgrove CMT Winner
Hibiscus Boutique Spa Runner Up

Best Spas

Bay Beauty Spa Winner
Bay Area Brain Spa Runner Up

Best Waxing Salons

European Wax Center Winner

Household & General Services

Best Auto Repair Shops

Steve's Auto Care Winner

Best Cleaners

Great American Dry Cleaners Winner

Best Funeral Services

Sunset View Cemetery & Mortuary Winner

Best General Contractors

Blue Dog Construction and Renovation Winner
Jimmy Stuart Construction Runner Up

Best Heating Contractors

Hassler Heating & Air Conditioning Winner

Best Interior Design Firms

Influent Home Winner

Best Landscape Services Design and Contractors

Sue Oda Landscape Architect Winner

Best Locksmiths

Velocity Lock & Key Winner

Best Painting Companies

Gate View Painting Winner

Best Roofing Contractors

Nicholas Roofing Inc. Winner

Kids

Best Educational Resources

The Practice Space Winner

Best Preschools

El Cerrito Preschool Co-op Winner

Best Summer Camps

El Cerrito Recreation Department Winner
Contra Costa Civic Theatre (CCCT) Drama Camp Runner Up

Best Winter Camps

Contra Costa Civic Theatre (CCCT) Co-Winner
El Cerrito Recreation Department Co-Winner

Lifestyle & Leisure

Best Continuing Education Options

Vasco Career College Winner
Alvarado Adult School Runner Up

Best Co-Work Space

JUKU Winner

Best Dance Lessons & Studio

Katie's Dance Studio & Company Winner
Move With Studio Runner Up

Best EC City Park

Arlington Park & Clubhouse Winner
Cerrito Vista Park Runner Up

Best Event Spaces

WePerform Center Winner

Best Fitness Classes

El Cerrito Recreation Department Winner
Fuse Fitness Kensington Winner

Best Gyms/Health Clubs

Fuse Fitness Kensington Winner

Best Hotel

Terrace Inn & Suites Winner

Best Live Theater

Contra Costa Civic Theatre (CCCT) Winner

Best Martial Arts School

Wen Wu School-Internal Martial Winner

Best Movie Theater

Rialto Cinemas Cerrito Winner

Best Music Lessons

WePerform Center Winner

Best Nonprofit/Civic Good Groups

El Cerrito Library Winner
Contra Costa Civic Theatre (CCCT) Runner Up

Best Place to Have a Picnic

Arlington Park & Clubhouse Co-Winner
Blake Garden UC Berkeley Co-Winner

Best Place to Walk Your Dog

Point Isabel Dog Park Winner

Best Tennis Court

Arlington Park & Clubhouse Winner

Best Yoga Studios & Teachers

Susan Weiner Yoga Winner

Professional Services

Best Accounting or Tax Practices

Lynda Kwong Winner
B&T Bookkeeping, Inc. Runner Up

Best Attorneys

Kathleen Hunt, Unique Law Co-Winner
Shrem Law Co-Winner

Best Banks, S&Ls or Credit Unions

Mechanics Bank - El Cerrito Branch Winner

Best Digital Marketing

ClientClicks Internet Marketing Winner

Best Financial Planners

Robin Patin Enso Wealth Winner

Best Insurance Agents

Chris Clark Winner

Best IT Services

Nerd Crossing Winner

Best Mortgage Brokers

Evelyn Freitas at Guaranteed Rate Winner
Faramarz Moen-Ziai at CrossCountry Mortgage Runner Up

Best Promotional Products & Signage

Premier Graphics Winner

Best Real Estate Agents

Maya Arechiga (Red Oak Realty) Co-Winner
Negar Souza (Red Oak Realty) Co-Winner

MAJ Realtors (@ District Homes/Side Real Estate) Runner Up

Best Real Estate Companies

Red Oak Realty Winner

Best Residential Architects

Coast Architecture & Design Winner

Retail Stores

Best Art Galleries

Richmond Art Center Winner

Best Arts and Crafts Stores

Black Art Materials Winner
JOANN Fabric and Crafts Runner Up

Best Arts and Home Decor

Talavera Ceramics & Tile Winner

Best Bookstores

Pegasus Books Winner

Best Cannabis Dispensaries

NUG El Cerrito Winner

Best Car Dealer

Honda of El Cerrito Winner

Best Cell Phone Store

Verizon Winner

Best Children's Stores

Jenny K. Winner

Best Chocolate Shops

See's Candies Winner

Best Clothing and Shoe Stores

Marshall's Winner

Best Dealers & Pawn Shops

El Cerrito Coin Exchange Winner

Best Flower Shops

El Cerrito Natural Grocery - Prepared Food Annex Co-Winner

Trader Joe's Co-Winner

Best Gas Station

Costco Wholesale Winner

Best Gift Shops

Jenny K. Winner

Best Greeting Card Store

Jenny K. Winner

Best Grocery Stores

El Cerrito Natural Grocery Company Winner

Best Hobby Shop

JOANN Fabric and Crafts Winner

Best Jewelry Stores

Jenny K. Winner

Best Music Store

Down Home Music Winner

Best Post Office

USPS, Fairmount Branch Winner

Best Printing & Copy Shop

Copy Central Winner

Best Specialized Grocery Stores

Yaoya-San Winner

Best Sporting Goods

Mike's Bikes of Berkeley Winner

Best Thrift Shop

Turnabout Shop Winner

Best in Class (One of a Kind)

Berkeley Country Club
The Glenn Custom Framing

Old West Gun Room

JunkCat

Doherty's Truck & Auto Rental

Best School Spirit

Albany High School

Albany Middle School

Crestmont School

De La Salle High School

El Cerrito High School

Fairmont Elementary School

Fred T. Korematsu Middle School

Harding Elementary School

Madera Elementary School

Neighborhood School

Outside School

Park Day School

Prospect Sierra

Richmond High School

Saint Mary's College High School

The Berkeley School

Thousand Oaks Primary School

West County Mandarin School



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All in a Day's Work for ECPD Officer Michael Olivieri

BY BJ THORSNES

RECENTLY, I found myself following an El Cerrito police car, which stopped at my rental property. After parking, a young police officer got out and spoke briefly with my 94-year-old tenant Kate, who seemed to be waiting

for him, then went around the corner of my building.

After parking, I asked Kate what was going on. She had called the police because a homeless man had established himself by her back gate which made her uncomfortable.

I went around the corner where the police officer had gone and found him speaking softly with someone sitting in the bushes. As I listened, I heard the kind, gentle words the officer was saying to the man in the bushes.

Gradually the man got up and gathered his belongings, even cleaning



Reminder: Trees Need a Drink, Too

EL CERRITO needs trees, and trees need water! Even during a drought, responsible water use includes watering trees. While most business district trees are watered automatically by the City irrigation systems, trees in yards and on residential streets may require supplemental water to remain alive during the current exceptional drought.

Trees make our communities healthy, beautiful, and livable. Unlike grass and other plants, trees need deep, slow watering to develop strong root systems for their health and longevity.

Drought-damaged trees may not show ill effects for many months when it could be too late to save them. While city trees in the business district are generally watered by an irrigation system, trees throughout our neighborhoods may need your help.

Trees need to be watered deeply and infrequently.

Watering Tips

• Established trees (3+ years old)

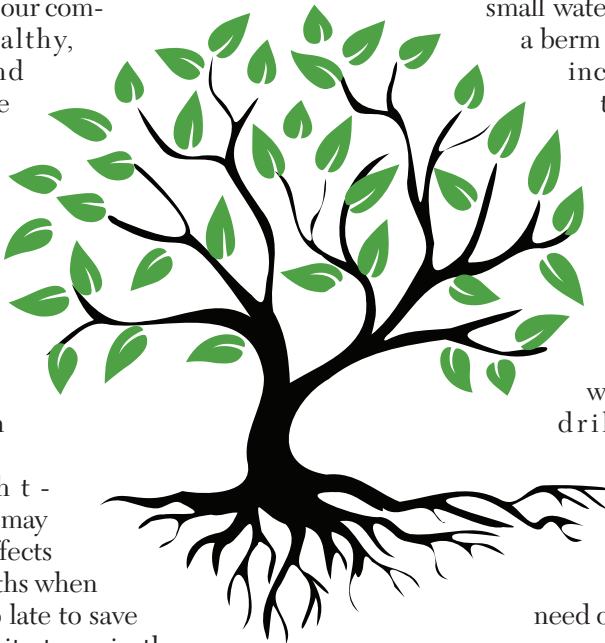
Slowly soak the root zone out toward the drip line—the area under the farthest reaches of the branches—until water soaks 12 to 18 inches below the

surface. Soaker hoses are perfect for this. Do not water close to the trunk.

• Young trees

The roots are still located closer to the trunk. They should receive at least 20 gallons of water every 14 to 21 days in summer.

To retain water, create a small watering basin with a berm of dirt 18 to 24 inches from the trunk. Then slowly fill the basin by using a watering bag or other slow soaking method such as a five-gallon bucket with small holes drilled in the bottom. Let the soil dry between waterings. Tree roots need oxygen, too!



Mulching is very beneficial to trees. Three to six inches of arbor mulch or leaf litter placed at least four inches from the trunk will insulate roots, improve available nutrition, help to retain moisture, and reduce the need for supplemental irrigation.

Fertilizer: Do not fertilize trees during the dry season; this can easily damage or kill the tree. Fertilizing trees is rarely necessary, given good soil health, so it should be done with great caution.

up around the site at the policeman's suggestion, then shuffled on his way.

The police officer came back to talk with Kate, and I got an inside look at neighborhood goings-on. He said the man had been trying to get out of the sun to rest, and that he had explained to him that his presence frightened Kate and that perhaps he could find another place to light.

The man was reasonable and agreed to relocate. Then the policeman and Kate got into a discussion about the homeless in the neighborhood. Kate, who gets Meals On Wheels, shares that food with a certain homeless man on San Pablo Avenue near her apartment. (He never says "thank you," she noted.)

The officer knew exactly who she meant and even knew his full name! Then they talked about another homeless man on the avenue who has apparently been there for years. The policeman knew his name, too, and said that he and another policemen keep an eye out for him to be sure he is okay.

I was not surprised by my tenant Kate's compassion, but I was surprised by the police officer's clearly intimate knowledge of and concern for local street people.

He is Michael Olivieri, a thoughtful man who believes that everybody deserves to be treated with respect until they show him otherwise.

He was taking care of the community in many subtle ways that had nothing to do with crime, and I saw how safe my dear Kate felt, knowing that she can count on the local police to help her when she needs it.

Watching Michael at work threw new light on the business of defunding the police.

If you need more information regarding City trees, contact the El Cerrito City Arborist, Stephen Prée, spree@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

As most of the regular readers know, I am a real estate broker who started out in the business in 1979 working with my father who had his first El Cerrito office location on San Pablo Avenue in 1970, renting office space from R.E. Meadows in the location that is now Del Norte Place. Mr. Meadows built quality homes throughout El Cerrito, and I can still picture seeing that older gentlemen arriving at his office.

Myself and my family have had a long association with the city of El Cerrito. We are now approaching election time for local, state, and federal offices. Within the city of El Cerrito I appreciate nice parks, recreation, clean streets, responsive public safety, responsible development, housing policies and other matters handled in a measured and reasonable manner.

We want to maintain a city council that can work together with cohesion and effectiveness. One that is focused on providing good service levels for our community, sound municipal governance with a heavy emphasis on fiscal sustainability. That is the role of a city council. No doubt, there is a plethora of world-view issues, however, we need a council focused on local municipal governance issues.

HALLOWEEN HELP

Find a new costume at the
Contra Costa Civic Theatre one-day sale on
Saturday, October 8th, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

951 Pomona Ave., El Cerrito

Byline Pick Up Locations

This newsletter is mailed monthly to Chamber of Commerce members and others. A PDF edition is posted and available on the Chamber website: elcerritochamber.org/byline.

Other distribution points are:

El Cerrito City Hall, The Glenn Custom Framing, Mr. Pickle's Sandwich Shop, Doherty's Truck Rental, El Cerrito Public Library, The Farmers Market at El Cerrito Plaza, Elevation 66 Brewing Co.

Farmers Market

AT EL CERRITO PLAZA

Open Tuesday & Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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Take time to carefully evaluate all candidates running for office at the local, state, and federal levels. There are many avenues available both in person as well as online that offer the opportunity to hear from the various candidates. The West County Forum has been doing a great job bringing forth candidates at their monthly lunch meetings. Congressman John Garamendi spoke at the August meeting and at the September meeting West Contra Costa Unified School District candidates, Patricio Dujan and Demetrio Gonzalez-Hoy spoke.

I started this column by mentioning that my wife and I celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary. I want to publicly thank her for her support and encour-

agement over the years and for hanging in there with me.

Speaking of hanging in there, I will end the column on this note. Eleven people were hanging on a rope, under a helicopter. 10 men and 1 woman. The rope was not strong enough to carry them all, so they decided that one had to leave, because otherwise they were all going to fall. They weren't able to choose that person, until the woman gave a very touching speech. She said that she would voluntarily let go of the rope, because, as a woman, she was used to giving up everything for her husband and kids or for men in general and was used to always making sacrifices with little in return. As soon as she finished her speech, all the men started clapping...

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Library Parking Lot, 6500 Stockton Ave

October 8 is also the day of the citywide rummage sale.

New Minimum Wage \$17.35 Per Hour

Effective January 1, 2023, the minimum wage
will be \$17.35 per hour for all
El Cerrito workers.

Minimum Wage History

2019	\$15.00
2020	\$15.37
2021	\$15.61
2022	\$16.37

Employers must post the official El Cerrito Wage Bulletin which informs employees of the current rate and explains their rights. You can get a copy from the City or the Chamber. See el-cerrito.org/wages for more information on employer responsibilities.

The email contact for the City's Minimum Wage Compliance Program is wages@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

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