



From the President

JEFFREY WRIGHT

“NOW THAT was great!” Yes, those are words that I spoke aloud when reflecting upon the exciting Best of El Cerrito program that culminated in a wonderful capacity crowd awards ceremony and recognition event held on October 20th and hosted at JUKU, 7019 Stockton Avenue, El Cerrito. We thank the owners, Chamber members Greg and Shoko, for making the space available and for being such gracious hosts. Congratulations to all award winners!

On Sunday, October 23rd, I had the opportunity to attend the launch party of New Horizon Real Estate located in the Bank of The West Plaza, located on San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito. It was indeed a grand affair! Chamber member and owner, Alice Chan, utilized the entire parking lot to create a memorable event with an array of food selections, a live DJ, lion dancers, activities for children, professional photography

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John C. Stashik

Nation's Giant Hamburgers proudly calls El Cerrito home. The company is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. Mayor Gabe Quinto presents President & CEO Grant Power with a mayoral proclamation honoring the firm. Retired CEO Dale Power is at right. Read the story of Nation's in the June 2022 *Byline* which is available online at elcerritchamber.org/byline.

Live November 3rd: Pinkos & Quinto

BY JOHN C. STASHIK

WE WELCOME City Manager Karen Pinkos and Mayor Gabriel Quinto. Get the latest and most accurate information about every happening from both City management and City Council from the people who know.

This will be the City Manager's first appearance in front of the membership in three years. A lot has happened since then. That's an understatement.



Karen Pinkos



Gabriel Quinto

The location of the meeting is at Tigon, the new restaurant at Central and San Pablo, El Cerrito. The meeting begins at 11:30 and concludes at 1 o'clock.

Cost for lunch is \$25 (\$27 for non-members) and there will be a choice of three entrées. Reservations can be made via eventbrite.com. Call 510-705-1202 for information.

**New Minimum Wage
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\$17.35 per hour**



Have a Beer and Food on Us!

Visit Elevation 66 on Friday, November 4th.

Enjoy complimentary beer and food courtesy of these sponsors from 6-8 p.m.

Admire the Theater Block holiday lights!
Bring a donation for the Toys for Tots barrel.

10082 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito





Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

SERVICE ABOVE SELF. That's the motto of 1.4 million member Rotary International (rotary.org). The local club here in El Cerrito has been a valued member



of this Chamber for ages. Many Rotarians are Chamber members and vice versa. While the Chamber of Commerce has its focus on helping business, Rotarians

use their energy helping people. If you need a rundown of everything the Rotary Club has done for El Cerrito, call me; there's not enough space here for a list.

Not a member, I often get invitations to the local Rotary Club lunches and it's always a pleasure to attend. September 29th was one such occasion and State Controller Betty Yee was the keynote speaker.

However, the real highlight of the meeting came as a complete surprise. City Manager Karen Pinkos was inducted into membership in the El Cerrito Rotary Club. For a person who has given her heart and soul to this City for 21 years, and is by her very nature honest, thoughtful, and kind, becoming a Rotarian is a perfect fit. It was truly an honor to attend and witness Karen's induction in person.

□



New Mom! Assistant City Manager Alexandra Orologas and husband Jason are the very proud parents of baby Theo, who arrived into the world on September 28th at 12:46 p.m., 7 lbs., 6 oz. Congrats from the *Byline*!

□

K-town. Leasing a portion of our vacant Midtown Activity Center modules at 10940 San Pablo Ave. is the Kensington Police Dept. October 12th was their first day there. As for the Fire Department, the station housing Engine 65 on Craft Ave. is complete and in use. Both are



Holding their new member kits, the two inductees into the El Cerrito Rotary Club were Irene Takahashi, retired judge and professional mediator, and City Manager Karen Pinkos. Also in the photo are "Mr. Rotary" Jack Freethy, this year's club president Chief of Police Paul Keith, and Marty Kaliski.



John C. Stashik

temporary quarters while a public safety building is re-constructed.

Stopping at the Arlington Exxon station I saw a KPD traffic officer and said "welcome to El Cerrito." He replied they're happy to be in our trailers. I then said "we appreciate the extra eyes along Moeser and Fairmount too." All good.

□

Speaking of cops, the word is ECPD will soon have four more officers. The hiring campaign must be paying off. Our city is a great place to be a cop, however, nobody wants constant overtime after long regular shifts. Relief is coming. Our business members want more, not fewer, police. Crime is very costly to merchants.

□

On the Avenue. The plan by developer Kevin Wang for a nice restaurant on the ground floor of the new Cerrito Vista apartments at 10963 San Pablo was a good one. Alas, it is not to be. Restaurants haven't fully recovered from the pandemic and staffing is tough to find. So the ground floor is now being converted into a live-work area.

□

STIIIZY is the brand of El Cerrito's second cannabis outlet at Schmidt Lane and San Pablo Ave. "Construction supply delays and issues with many vendors" have delayed the opening according to a spokesperson, who adds that there is not a set date for completion, but "they want the store to open ASAP."

□

New business. El-Cerrito Gift & Smoke (the hyphen is theirs) is open at 10287 San Pablo Avenue next door to the New India Supermarket at the corner of Columbia Ave. A real plethora of paraphernalia! Nearby is Tobacco Outlet in Peppermint Tree Plaza (10170 San Pablo Ave.). Smokers, we've got you covered.

□

Alice Chan rocks! A month ago the *Byline* printed an announcement for the official launch party for New Horizon Real Estate at 11100 San Pablo Ave. on Sunday, October 23rd. On that date, the entire Bank of the West Plaza parking lot was filled with the biggest open house party I've seen. Music, food, a raffle, exhibits, photos; even our own *Big Scissors* made a cameo. Alice is obviously a Realtor who understands marketing. A shout out to Wenyan from Noodles Fresh too. Thanks for the potstickers!

□

Delancey Street Christmas trees are for sale at Waldo & San Pablo.

■ See Past Prez Palaver, page 3

PAST PREZ PALAVER

■ Continued from page 2



John C. Stashik

Mary is back! The 514 Lounge on San Pablo just south of Potrero has been closed for way too long. Owner Mary Dugbartey reopened on October 27th to a large crowd. Regular business hours are Thursdays through Sundays, 4-9 p.m. Location is at 11236 San Pablo next to Tashi Delek. Me thinks that this is a perfect venue for the next Chamber mixer. Let's do it. Cheers to Mary!

□

Tashi Delek serves Tibetan Indian and Nepali cuisine. Guatemalan tacos will be available at the other side of 514 Lounge after a new tenant buildout. You can't go hungry on that part of the Avenue.

□



John C. Stashik

Mayfair Station, El Cerrito's giant apartment building at Cutting & San Pablo, is open and the 156 market rate residential units are ready to lease. Tours can be scheduled: 510-231-0644, or online at mayfairstation.com. Two views of the courtyard are shown above.

□



John C. Stashik

It's a family business. Taassin, Solaiman, and Taaha, of Super Slice Pizza.

Super Slice Pizza opens on Friday, November 4th with hours from 11 to 8, except Tuesdays. Location: 10180 San Pablo Ave. (near Nori Roll and Larb). Brothers Omar and Solaiman eagerly await your visit for fabulous pizza.

□

Masa to go. Buildout of the new tamale house at the site of a former Jack In the Box next the the El Cerrito Natural Grocery Prepared Food Annex is progressing well. Maybe this month?

□



John C. Stashik

When they're not saving lives, Engineer Thatcher, Captain-Paramedic Carrion, and Firefighter Archiga, from Engine 71, solicit toy donations.

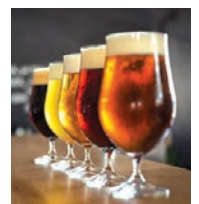
Into Infinity Beer Pairing Dinner

Sunday, November 13th • 6 p.m.

ELEVATION 66
Brewing Company

The theme is going to be "Into Infinity." The dinner includes a four course meal pairing with house brew craft beers. Seating is limited. *Please come in and get your tickets now.* Join and support us enjoying a tasteful dinner pairing with our amazing house made craft beers.

10082 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito www.elevation66.com



'Best of El Cerrito' Awards Celebration a Smashing Success

BY ROBERT ROGERS

AS NIGHT fell and many of El Cerrito's brightest entrepreneurial stars descended on its newest local co-working and events space, a fun and memorable celebration was assured.

"Thanks so much to the Chamber of Commerce and the City of El Cerrito!" said a beaming Esther Goodstal of the award-winning Elevation 66 Brewing Co., prompting hearty applause from the crowd.

The inaugural "Best of El Cerrito" award ceremony was hosted by the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce at JUKU meeting and events space. It drew a standing room only crowd of winners, elected officials, Board of Directors, small business owners, and many more.

The October 20th gathering honored the 125 local businesses newly-minted as the "Best of El Cerrito" by a Chamber-led campaign that tallied about 23,000 votes.

Along with ample time for networking, attendees were treated to a speaking program that included winners in several business categories, El Cerrito Councilmember Paul Fadelli, Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, El Cerrito Chamber President Jeff Wright, Chamber Director Scott Harris, and more.

"We are here to advocate for those who are doing business in the City of El Cerrito," Wright thundered. "If you're not already a member, become a member, because we can bestow benefits on you to help advance your business."

Before the speaking program, attendees delighted in hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and mingling.

JUKU event and co-work space proved the perfect host. Owners Shoko Kiyono and Gregg Mayer provided a fun and festive atmosphere, and impeccably-designed décor and layout. JUKU is located at 7019 Stockton Ave. and was voted El Cerrito's best co-work space.

County Supervisor Gioia said El Cerrito is thriving because of diverse businesses, the willingness of City leaders to promote housing development, and the pro-business support of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce. Gioia urged everyone to shop local this holiday season.

"I want to thank all of you, small businesses, for contributing to the civic life of our community in so many ways," Gioia said.

The "Best of El Cerrito 2022" campaign sparked a sensation in the region, with 23,000 votes representing an astonishingly high rate of participation in a city El Cerrito's size. There was no shortage of choices, as El Cerrito boasts a local economy brimming with hundreds of diverse businesses. "Best of" winners enjoy a range of benefits, including certificates in their stores and online marketing work that reaches tens of thousands of potential customers.

Join the Chamber today to benefit from professional marketing, consultation, networking, and policy advocacy services.



El Cerrito Bouncing Back Financially

DURING the September 20th City Council meeting, El Cerrito's Finance Director Sandra Dalida shared the FY 2021-22 Fourth Quarter General Fund Financial Update and Income Statement, reflecting the City's projected General Fund revenues to be \$4.6 million above budget (111%).

The increase can be attributed to a variety of factors. Expenditures are \$2.9 million below budget (93%). The City also received the second installment of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds this Summer, totalling an additional \$3 million allocated to the General Fund Budget. The unaudited year-end fund balance is estimated to be \$8.09 million, far exceeding the City's General Fund minimum reserve target of 10% of expenditures.

El Cerrito's independent auditor removed the "going concern" designation from the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for FY 2020-21, with

City Manager Karen Pinkos remarking the "amazing turnaround in the General Fund," particularly noting the recovery from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

"We are proud to report that the City of El Cerrito's financial health is thriving, with City revenues far exceeding anticipated projections," said Financial Director Sandra Dalida. "The City remains committed to proactive fiscal management, ensuring that El Cerrito will continue to provide essential services while the General Fund grows stronger."

The State Auditor recently pulled El Cerrito off the high risk list and moved the City to the moderate category. Get more information about City finances by visiting el-cerrito.org/budget.

Get the 411

Subscribe to Community Development e-newsletter: el-cerrito.org/CommDev

CHAMBER ELECTIONS

The Nominating Committee for delivers its report on Wednesday, November 2, at 10:00 a.m. by Zoom. To get the Zoom link, email info@elcerritochamber.org.

At that point nominations from the floor are permitted per bylaws.

After that, ballots are mailed to all members in good standing, assuming there are multiple candidates for offices.

Elected Board members serve a two year term.

Street Trees

NEVER, EVER cut down a City tree. Such a move requires approval from the City. Also, if you witness any company removing a tree along the public right of way, be advised there is only *one* official City contractor and that firm is A Plus Tree.



John C. Stashnik



Robert Rogers

New Urgent Pet Animal Hospital Delivers Fast, Affordable Care



Meet the staff: Tina Witman, BS, RVT, VT, VCC; Dr. Kulasekara; Muong Saechao, VA; Daniela Doynne, VA; and Mako.

BY ROBERT ROGERS

EL CERRITO'S newest veterinarian knows each second is precious in providing pet care. She learned this as the doctor for the dogs that protected Sri Lanka's first woman President.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who survived a suicide bombing in 1999, relied on a retinue of 26 guard dogs. She also had her beloved cocker spaniel, Snowy. The President entrusted the health of all to Dr. Nilanthi Kulasekara, then Sri Lanka's most prominent woman veterinarian.

"The dogs were chronically sick, and I developed a regimen that kept them well so they could protect the President," she said.

Dr. Kulasekara, known affectionately as "Dr. K," brings her expertise and love of animals to El Cerrito via her new business, Urgent Pet Animal Hospital.

The hospital opened October 17th, and boasts a team comprising Dr. K and five trained and caring staff.

Located at 10612 San Pablo Avenue (at the corner of Moeser Lane), the hospital is outfitted with state-of-the-art technology for blood tests, X-rays, ultrasounds, ear examinations, microscopic analysis, a flush-to-the-floor "fear free" scale, and more.

What makes Urgent Pet Animal Hospital innovative and unique throughout the East Bay is its urgent pet care model.

The model is this: Provide expert and urgent medical care for pets whose owners can't see their regular vet on short notice and don't want to visit an overcrowded

emergency room. The model is a third way for pet owners who need urgent medical assistance for their furry friends. It's a place where they can count on rapid intake, immediate attention, and reasonable pricing.

"Efficiency is my motto," Dr. K says, flashing a smile that warms the examination room. "I can't guarantee rapid discharge, but I can guarantee rapid service. We don't waste time here, including your time."

"We love animals and we have the training and tools to give them the best care," Dr. K added. As she spoke, Mako, a tail-wagging, dark-brown Vizsla breed, ambled down the secure corridor while waiting for his guardian.

Even if your pet ultimately needs to visit an area emergency room, Urgent Pet Animal Hospital may be the best first stop because Dr. K and her team can quickly diagnose and refer you to the best available facility.

"An average wait time at an ER is more than four hours," Dr. K said. "We can provide care and expert consultation almost immediately."



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

and videography, allied professionals from the mortgage, home inspection and estate planning businesses were on hand and available to answer questions. The weather was lovely, and it was a great outdoor event enjoyed by the many people who were in attendance. Thank you, Alice, for inviting me to participate at your wonderful event.

The old saying is “all good things must come to an end” and I’d characterize my time as president of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce as being a “good thing.” I have served in the capacity of president for multiple consecutive years and now it is certainly time for someone else to “take the wheel.”

A “wartime president” is how I like to think about my extended tour of duty since we had to battle through COVID-19 and all that it brought. I am delighted that we have fresh faces on our board of directors and that they are actively engaged in making our organization stronger and more beneficial to our business community.

Moving into next year I will still be serving on the board of directors, however, you should see a new face at the masthead of the *Byline* president’s column. Change is good, especially in organizations that have qualified individuals who are willing to serve in various capacities.

Looking forward to my December 2022 Column. Have a wonderful day!

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, 514 Lounge, Elevation 66 Brewing Company.

Farmers Market

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Plus Merchant Awards and Direct Contributions

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Terry Kotsatos, Edward Jones
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Rialto Cinemas
The Glenn Custom Framing
The Natural Grocery Store
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...and others who made direct contributions to support the show, including anonymous donations...

Helen Brouwer
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John Stashik
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Many Thanks and Much Appreciation!

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