



From the President

MATT KHADIVIAN

MY DEAR readers, in this edition, let us discuss how small businesses can increase their revenue in 2023 by adopting several effective strategies. With the pandemic's impact on the economy and ongoing changes in consumer behavior, businesses must be innovative and proactive to stay competitive and profitable. Here are some ideas that small businesses can implement to increase their revenue:

1 Embrace e-commerce: Small businesses should invest in building an online presence through an e-commerce platform. Online shopping has become a norm due to the pandemic, and small businesses can benefit from this trend by expanding their reach beyond the physical store. By providing customers with a convenient online shopping experience, small businesses can increase their revenue by attracting more customers, generating repeat business, and reducing overhead costs.

■ See *From the President*, page 7



**LET'S
DO IT
AGAIN**

BY CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

PAUL FADELLI

FOR MANY years, the El Cerrito July 4th celebration grew and grew — locally becoming known as one of the best venues to celebrate our nation's birthday. As the worldOne Festival, it has brought great music, food and community activities to Cerrito Vista Park every year.

Until last year, the July 4th Festival was always a city-budgeted event. Then, following two years of a COVID-19 shutdown and difficult financial issues for our city — our local businesses, associations, foundations, Arts & Culture

■ See *El Cerrito's Big Fourth of July*, page 5

El Cerrito: A Seafood Desert No More



On hand for the official opening of California Fish Grill at El Cerrito Plaza on April 5th were Council Member Paul Fadelli, Chamber President Matt Khadivian, Treasurer/*Byline* editor John C. Stashik, Mayor Lisa Motoyama, President/CEO Bob Holden, and Council Member Carolyn Wysinger.

BY CATALINA HU

THE HIGHLY anticipated grand opening of California Fish Grill in El Cerrito Plaza finally arrived. The restaurant generously invited the community to a three-day "Friends & Family Event" for complimentary meals while training their new crew.

On Wednesday, April 5th, California Fish Grill President and CEO, Bob Holden, representatives from the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce, along with Mayor Lisa Motoyama and Council Members Paul Fadelli and Carolyn Wysinger, gathered in front of the restaurant for a ribbon cutting ceremony. With the Chamber's Big Scissors on display, California Fish Grill's friendly staff officially welcomed the first paying customers with large smiles and enthusiasm.

El Cerrito is the 52nd store for the rapidly growing chain which is headquartered in Irvine, California. Established in 1998, the firm now operates in California, Nevada and Arizona. The stores are all company owned.

"Fast casual" is the restaurant theme with the main focus on flame-grilled sustainably caught seafood. They also offer salads, tacos, sandwiches, fried seafood, and plant-based options.

The El Cerrito Plaza location offers both indoor and patio dining with ample

■ See *California Fish Grill*, page 5

NEW MEMBERS



**ANTOJITOS
GUATEMALTECOS**

11252 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito 94530
510-224-8018

yuryaguilar4@gmail.com



5040 El Cerrito Plaza, El Cerrito
510-926-6102 cafishgrill.com



235 El Cerrito Plaza
El Cerrito
510-508-4634
animeislandca.com



Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

BANTER WINE BAR opened on April 20th at 10368 San Pablo Ave. The dream of Claire Sullivan and Devin Hohler received its first mention on this page in November 2021. That shows you that starting a business is not for the faint of heart. But the opening crowd was enthusiastic and the place has been packed. The menu offers a good selection of wine, some local beers, and light food. Banter is destined to be a very popular place in town.

□



Openings. At El Cerrito Plaza, Anime Island opened on April 15th at the site of what used to be The Junket. Open every day, noon 'til 8, and they have a selection of \$1.00 comics too. Amy and Kalen Yamashiro are the owners.



New at Lincoln and San Pablo, is **Emilianos Tacos**. Their truck is open for business every day, 10 'til 10, for more than tacos. Think burritos, nachos, ceviche, plus great frescas.

If you're hungry for variety, **Super Slice Pizza** is next to the taco truck for what you could make into *Mex-Ital* cuisine.

□

Chevron Federal Credit Union membership is benefit available to members of the **Contra Costa Historical Society**. To join: cocohistory.org.



Claire Sullivan and Devin Hohler, proud owners of Banter Wine Bar, now officially open for business. Candid pics show a busy place.

John C. Stashik

□

Organic vegan grocery. Shelving is in place inside the former dry cleaner at Moeser and San Pablo. More tenant improvements to do, for sure. However, this new store should become a reality eventually. The business is on the Richmond side of the avenue. One sure sign of progress: the parking lot was recently paved.

□



SOROPTIMIST®
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Soroptimist event. Heads up! On Sunday, June 18th (3-6 p.m.), the El Cerrito Soroptimists will hold an art-wine-chocolate event at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley (UUCB) in Kensington. \$35 gets you in the door for a glass of wine, chocolate samples, music, plus an opportunity to bid on art. That'll be Father's Day, so dad gets a complimentary second glass of wine!

UUCB is located at 1 Lawson Road and the view from that Kensington hill is spectacular. The entry fee helps fund women's scholarships. Contact **Candy Capogrossi** at 408-823-4575 or email artwinechocolate23@gmail.com. This is fun stuff, like the Rotary Sip and Savor of a few years ago.

□

ELEVATION 66

Spring Beer Pairing. Tickets are now on sale for a special dinner at 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 28th, at Elevation 66. This is a four course meal prepared by chef Bruce Lengacher paired with house brewed craft beers. \$98 includes tax and tip. Stop by the pub at 10082 San Pablo Ave. for tickets—and a pint. To see the menu and purchase tickets online visit: elevation66.com.

□

Monthly Masa update. Let's lay the delay blame on PG&E as the new restaurant is waiting for electricity. Now, my prediction: **Masa will open on May 5th.** (If it doesn't, write to the *Byline* editor.) As the new grab and go business gets more established, expect to see a patio area with outdoor seating. In case you missed the regular updates, the location is at Panama and San Pablo, opposite the Natural Grocery Prepared Food Annex.

□

Art. Join the **El Cerrito Art Association** on Monday, May 8th, 6:30-8:30 p.m. for a demonstration by architect and watercolor artist **David Savellano**, who enjoys the spontaneity of painting outdoor scenes. He'll demonstrate his

■ See Past Prez Palaver, page 3

PAST PREZ PALAVER

■ Continued from page 2

approach and skills in capturing random and unpredictable compositions following brief business announcements in the Garden Room of the El Cerrito Community Center.

□

STIIIZY. Building continues on the city's second cannabis dispensary at Schmidt Lane and San Pablo Ave. Our reliable *Byline* source thinks June or July is when a grand opening can be held. There are many moving parts to the project. You'll be kept posted on these pages for that major event.

□

Movie time. Cary Grant and Grace Kelly star in Alfred Hitchcock's "To Catch a Thief" (1955) at our fabulous home town movie house, the **Rialto Cinemas Cerrito**. This is a free matinee on Thursday, May 11th, at one o'clock.

The following month the free matinee showing is "Victor/Victoria" (1982); on Thursday, June 8th. The food is great at the Cerrito, so call it *lunch*. Get out of the house. It's always more enjoyable watching movies on the big screen.

□



Maria Mikhayenko as Julia Child and Michael Sally as Paul Child.

CCCT. Playing through May 21st at the Contra Costa Civic Theatre is "To Master the Art." Fridays, Saturdays, and Sunday matinees; purchase tickets at ccct.org. Live theatre in El Cerrito!

□

Flutter flags. I love them. My company sells them. (There's full disclosure.) But, the byzantine sign regulations in El Cerrito prohibit them. Still, they're sprouting up on the Avenue as businesses seek more visibility and sales. So far, City personnel seem to ignore them and that's just fine. City Council: get rid of this stupid rule along with the many other weird sign regs. Let 'em fly.



Your Input Sought

As the City of El Cerrito develops the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget, they want to hear from community members about the priorities that are most important to residents, businesses, and interested parties, with the goal of creating a budget that ensures the City is financially sustainable and healthy, while also being able to continue to fund and provide the services that residents and businesses care about most. Use the below link for a survey or contact a City Council member.

Provide your input using this survey:
<https://polco.us/sw4ws5>

Best of El Cerrito 2023 Begins this Summer

BY ROBERT ROGERS

AFTER A smashing debut in 2022, the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce will bring back the acclaimed "Best of El Cerrito" contest in 2023. This campaign honors exemplary members of El Cerrito's world-class and diverse business community, as determined by your votes!

Last year's campaign garnered more than 22,000 votes and honored 125 local businesses. The campaign culminated in a gala award ceremony at Juku meeting and events space, where a huge crowd of owners, operators, and elected city and county officials dined, networked, and celebrated the achievements of local businesses.

Voting is set to commence this Summer, with the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce again leading a comprehensive outreach campaign. A can't-miss award ceremony at a location yet to be determined will be scheduled in the Fall.

The Best of El Cerrito campaign aims to highlight the most beloved businesses in El Cerrito. Occasionally, voters also honor businesses in cities near El Cerrito that are heavily patronized by El Cerrito residents. The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce continues to ramp up crucial support for local businesses, and is drawing new members. Sponsor levels are shown in the table below. Join today!

BEST OF EL CERRITO 2023 Sponsorship Opportunities & Recognition

elcerritchamber.org/best-of-ec
Contact: info@elcerritchamber.org



Sponsorship Benefits	Premier \$2,500	Partner \$1,000	Associate \$500	Supporter \$250
Listing in Best of El Cerrito marketing materials and communications.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mention in Best of El Cerrito communications.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Name and logo placement ECCC website.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Included in Press Releases	✓	✓	✓	✓
Featured in a Mixer/Meet-up	✓	✓	✓	
Prominent logo placement in all Best of El Cerrito marketing materials and communications, including outdoor banners throughout town.	✓	✓	✓	
Advertising in Chamber eMail and Social Channels	✓ x3	✓ x2	✓ x2	
Advertising in Chamber Print Vehicle (Byline, Marketing Mailer)	✓ x2	✓ x1		
Feature story in Chamber Communications	✓	✓		
Create Your Own Community Recognition Award	✓	✓		
Award Party (Location Host) Exclusive, includes additional benefits.	✓			

Los Moles Beer Garden

Exquisite Mexican Cuisine

BY ANDREW MELENDEZ

AT THE CORNER of Del Norte Plaza in El Cerrito, you will find a vibrantly colored restaurant with the sounds of Spanish music playing from within. Los Moles Beer Garden is a beloved Mexican restaurant that's generating buzz around the Bay Area.



The interior is decorated with intricately painted art, soft yellow lights, and detailed clay pottery, all of which paint a beautiful illustration of a cozy and inviting traditional Mexican home. As I sat down, I was greeted warmly by staff, all of whom exuded a lively energy that made me feel welcome. While the vibe is intimate and authentic, the restaurant is spacious, with multiple rooms and outdoor spaces perfect for large parties, both professional or personal.

Their signature dish is the Mole Poblano, a chicken and rice meal bathed in their famous mole sauce. This family recipe sauce includes the sweet and savory taste of chile peppers, the subtle hint of cinnamon, and the delectable suggestion of chocolate over a blend of 50 other spices and ingredients.

The chicken was cooked well and evenly tender, which melted perfectly together with the mole sauce to provide a bold and juicy palate. Served with a large spoonful of green rice, the meal engulfed my taste buds with a stream of intense flavors.

If you're in El Cerrito, the Mole Poblano at Los Moles Beer Garden is a must-try dish. This restaurant will excite anyone looking for an authentic Mexican experience in the Bay Area.



Photos: Andrew Melendez



6120 Potrero Avenue at San Pablo, El Cerrito

Open Monday-Friday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Call 510-230-4855 • losmoles.com

Tuesdays are Taco Tuesdays!

The Turnabout Thrift Shop: Treasures with Heart

BY ROBERT ROGERS

THE AWARD-WINNING and beloved Turnabout Thrift Shop hosted El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce's jovial April 11 mixer.

The event drew many of the volunteers who make The Turnabout Thrift Shop such an enduring success, along with Chamber members and other residents.

The mixer was a great opportunity to introduce people to this gem, which by virtue of its locally donated inventory, local volunteer workforce, and philanthropic mission, may be the greenest business in a city full of green and efficient businesses.

"Proceeds that we bring in from the store go to pay for free pediatric den-



Marcella Paolucci, BCA president

tistry and free orthodontia for young people in West Contra Costa County in need," said Jon Bashor, a longtime local resident and volunteer.

Every week features new special deals at The Turnabout, where vintage and high quality merchandise sells for

unbelievably low prices. There's a wide variety of merchandise, including small furniture, clothing for men, women and children, books, housewares, antiques, art, electronics, knick-knacks, and so much more.

The community voted The Turnabout Thrift Shop the Best Thrift Store in El Cerrito during the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce's acclaimed "Best of" contest in 2022.

With volunteer workers, donated inventory, and low prices, the store has been able to fund the dental health of thousands of children over the years. The store has been on San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito since 1986. But the Berkeley Clinic Auxiliary dates to

■ See Turnabout Shop, page 7

CALIFORNIA FISH GRILL

■ Continued from page 1

free parking. It has two self-ordering kiosks in addition to ordering at the counter.



John C. Stashik

“Responsibly Sourced,” “Seafood Watch Official Partner” statements and a *sustainable seafood list* are displayed as large wall decors. Within days of its grand opening, the Plaza feels so much more alive! NextDoor and Instagram

have been flooded with rave reviews from not only El Cerritos but also from Albany, Richmond, Pinole, and Hercules residents.

As a *Byline* correspondent, this writer had the good fortune to attend a special VIP dinner ahead of the official opening. It was a joyous occasion with delicious grilled seafood made to order.

The arrival of California Fish Grill is certainly one of the most exciting post pandemic events in the Plaza. I will be dining there in upcoming weeks to try other menu items.

Visit the new restaurant at 5040 El Cerrito Plaza. Phone 510-926-6102. For menus, see cafishgrill.com. Say “hello” to general manager Martin Perez and tell him you’re delighted to have CFG here in El Cerrito.



The El Cerrito Marketing Program mailer, delivered to every El Cerrito address (plus East Richmond Heights and partial Annex), contains a valuable coupon. Watch for it around May 1st.

Hillside Festival

THERE’S something for everyone at the 9th annual El Cerrito Hillside Festival, Saturday and Sunday, May 6-7. The festival features walks and informative hikes around the 100-acre Hillside Natural Area.



Hikes range from easy to strenuous and activities include a nature scavenger hunt for young people, a senior stroll, poetry by the winners of the Hillside haiku contest, art projects for kids, how-to use nature apps, and more!

See the full schedule and map at ectrailtrekkers.org. Printed guides are available at City Hall, Jenny K., and other locations around town.

This free event is sponsored by El Cerrito Trail Trekkers and the City’s Environmental Quality Committee.

EL CERRITO’S BIG FOURTH OF JULY

■ Continued from page 1

Commission and individuals stepped up *big time* to help us raise nearly \$60,000 to finance the 2022 worldOne Festival. *Let’s step up and do it again.*

As our City continues its frugal ways toward sustainability — let’s continue to celebrate our July 4th tradition and unite as a community to financially help make this happen. This will allow our City to better focus on other needed services for residents throughout the year.

Over the next several weeks, our City website and email communications will explain how we can all contribute. Council Member Gabe Quinto and myself, along with the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce, will be reaching out to previous and new contributors to keep our worldOne July 4th Festival alive and well.

Contribute, or become a sponsor, and help make an independently financed July 4th event part of our new El Cerrito holiday tradition. Thank you!

SPONSORS NEEDED. LET’S DO IT AGAIN!

THE CITY OF
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RECREATION

BECOME A SPONSOR:
el-cerrito.org/july-4th-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	✓ x5	✓ x4	✓ x3	✓ x2	✓ x1	
Logo with Link to Your Website in Rec Dept E-News	✓ x5	✓ x4	✓ x3	✓ x2	✓ x1	
Recognition on 88.1KeCg97.7 Radio	✓ x5	✓ x4	✓ x3	✓ x2	✓ x1	
Your Stand Alone Banner at Event	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Included on Press Release Announcing Sponsors	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Recognition and Award at City Council Meeting	✓	✓	✓			
Vendor Booth at Event	✓	✓	✓			
1/4 Page Ad in rECguide	✓ x3	✓ x2	✓ x1			
worldOne Stage Announcement at Festival	✓ x3	✓ x2	✓ x1			
Logo on Event Map	✓	✓				
Logo on all Marketing & Promotion	✓	✓				
Main Stage Sponsorship Banner	✓	✓				
Logo on Event Signage	✓					
Event Area Naming Rights	✓					

Ask us about festival naming rights.

Questions? Email recreation@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Thank you for your consideration!

Sip, Relax, Repeat: Banter Brings Unpretentious Vibe to City

BY RACHEL MELBY

EL CERRITO has a new wine bar in town, and it's the perfect place to unwind after a long day or simply hang out with friends and neighbors. Owned by Claire Sullivan and Devin Hohler,

Banter is a welcoming space that invites you to enjoy a glass of wine (or beer), and small bites from their charcuterie menu.

The idea to open a wine bar came during the pandemic. It was then when Claire and Devin spent long afternoons enjoying wine and cheese in their backyard, longing for the company of others.

They signed their lease at 10368 San Pablo Ave. in June 2021, and although the wine business isn't new to them, opening a brick and mortar came with more trials and tribulations than expected—not least of which was a car crashing through a wall just after their building permits were approved. But their perseverance has paid off, as they've

emerged savvier than ever and ready to share their success with El Cerrito.

What's the vibe? "We want folks to simply come as they are," says Devin. "It should feel more like hanging out at home with a bunch of friends than going to a pretentious wine counter." Focusing on high-quality yet approachable wines will leave patrons feeling comfortable and well cared for.

To help set the mood, Devin plays vinyl records from his personal collection, and boasts an array of VHS movies above the bar.

As for the wine selection, the duo leans toward natural wines, but are quick to admit they're not dogmatic about it. You won't find their wines in any grocery chains or major wineries, so come prepared to try out something new.

Currently, Banter Wine Bar is open Thursday through Saturday from 4-9 p.m., but the owners have

a goal of eventually being open five days a week. They're excited to continue growing their business and building a community of loyal customers who appreciate good wine, good company, and a good time.



Rachel Melby

50 Years of Tradition and Virtue at El Cerrito Martial Arts School

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SUZAN CHIANG

IT WAS A beautiful day on April 22, 2023 when Wen Wu School of Martial Arts celebrated their 50th Anniversary. The event was held at the Community Center with over 300 guests, including Mayor Lisa Motoyama, movie stars Daniel Wu and Michael Worth, and Venerable Dharma Master Chueh An.

It was founded in 1972 by the late Dr. Y.C. Chiang and Hui Liu, as a foundation for Chinese culture, arts, and health. Celebrities in their own rights, the founders gave their lifelong dedication and wisdom through the community. Their love and passion for Chinese cultural arts transformed into brush paintings and calligraphy which have been exhibited worldwide.

At the celebration Mayor Motoyama stated that El Cerrito celebrated its 100th anniversary, Wen Wu School has already contributed 50 years within the city.

Guests were also treated to demonstrations including Gong Fu, Taichi, Qigong and Lion Dance! An exquisite art exhibition and silent auction enlightened guests to the other talents of both founders as well.

Learn more about Wen Wu School at wenwuschool.com. Wen Wu School of Internal Martial Arts is located at 10124 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito. Phone: 510-524-1057.

Upper photo: Chiang siblings reunited with longtime student and movie star, Daniel Wu, who also won the winning bid at the celebration's silent auction. He's holding a rare, one-of-a-kind painting by Yun Chung Chiang. Lower photo: Taichi students' performance during the 50th Anniversary celebration.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

2 Improve customer experience: Customer experience is critical to the success of small businesses. By improving the in-store experience or online shopping experience, businesses can attract and retain customers, leading to increased revenue. Small businesses should focus on providing personalized services, such as offering tailored recommendations or creating loyalty programs. These efforts will help create a positive experience and foster customer loyalty.

3 Leverage social media: Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer an affordable and effective way for small businesses to reach out to potential customers. By leveraging social media, businesses can increase brand awareness, engage with customers, and generate leads. Small businesses can use social media to promote their products and services, share customer reviews, and run special promotions, leading to increased sales.

4 Expand product offerings: Small businesses can increase revenue by expanding their product offerings. By analyzing customer needs and preferences, businesses can identify new products to offer. Additionally, businesses can consider partnering with other businesses (collaboration) to offer complementary products or services, creating new revenue streams.

5 Seek community support: Small businesses can seek support from their community to increase revenue. By participating in community events and partnering with local organiza-

tions, such as the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce, businesses can build brand awareness and attract new customers. Additionally, small businesses can consider offering discounts or hosting events for community members to encourage patronage.

In conclusion, small businesses can increase their revenue in 2023 by adopting various strategies, such as embracing e-commerce, improving customer experience, leveraging social media, expanding product offerings, and seeking community support. By implementing these strategies, small businesses can increase their revenue, build a loyal customer base, and thrive in a competitive marketplace.

As always, thank you for giving me your most valuable commodity, your *time*.

TURNABOUT SHOP

■ Continued from page 4

1917, when a group of young women joined together to raise funds to buy a Dodge automobile to help local nurses combat the Spanish flu pandemic.

The narrow but deep store is a few doors south from Rialto Cinemas Cerrito, and it holds more twists and turns of inventory inside than you could possibly know from outside the store front.

For information on volunteering or donating items, visit the shop at 10052 San Pablo Ave. from 12:30-3:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday or call 510-525-7844.



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REAL ESTATE

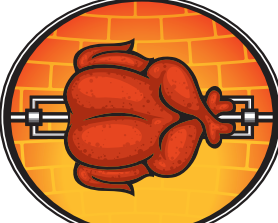
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★ ★ ★ TWO MIXERS THIS MONTH ★ ★ ★

MIXER NO. 1



CapeQueen Cosmetics & Salon

Invites you to an

Open House at Sola Salon

at El Cerrito Plaza (next to Foot Locker)

Saturday, May 6th • 2 to 4 p.m.

TACOS provided by



MIXER NO. 2

West County Spring Mega Mixer

Hosted by these Chambers of Commerce:
Bay Front • Crockett • El Cerrito • El Sobrante • Oakland Latino

Thursday, May 11 • 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

FOUR FOOLS WINERY

13 Pacific Avenue, Rodeo

FREE to chamber members • Non members \$10
TICKETS & RSVP: [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)

For more Information: admin@bayfrontchamber.com

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a raffle prize to promote
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