



From the President

MATT KHADIVIAN

MY DEAR readers, I hope you all are having a warm and fantastic summer so far. In this edition, I want us to examine CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency), and why you should be paying very close attention to its development.

CBDC is a digital form of a country's fiat currency, issued and regulated by the central bank. (Think Bitcoin that is controlled by the government, as opposed to you as the rightful owner.) CBDC is designed to serve as a secure and legal means of digital payment, similar to physical cash. It is different from traditional digital payment methods like credit cards or mobile wallets because it is backed by the central bank and operates on a centralized ledger system. CBDC aims to provide individuals and businesses with a digital alternative to physical cash, enabling faster, more secure, and more efficient transactions while maintaining the central bank's control over the money supply. (You would be saying goodbye to the cash under your mattress.)

Governments could potentially use CBDCs to exercise greater control and surveillance over individuals' financial transactions. Here are a few ways CBDCs could be used for control and censorship:

Transaction Monitoring: CBDCs could enable governments to monitor and track all transactions in real-time. This level of transparency could

■ See **From the President**, page 7

¡Bienvenidos! Masa Taqueria Now in El Cerrito



John C. Stashik

Masa opened their El Cerrito location on June 20th. Lined up and ready to welcome customers were: Jonathan Bermudez (general manager), Ignacio Bermudez, Kyle Bermudez, Maily Santay, Dayanara Mendoza, Jasmin Baron, Andrea Bermudez, Lilian Banegas, Dalis Ambrocio, and Olga Perez. The restaurant with both drive through and patio dining will be open every day from 7 a.m. until midnight. Masa is located at Panama and San Pablo, opposite the Natural Grocery Prepared Food Annex. See page 6.

Best of El Cerrito 2023 Launches Now

BY ROBERT ROGERS

BACK BY POPULAR demand, the 2023 edition of the "Best of El Cerrito" Campaign has officially started! Visit elcerritochamber.org/best-of-ec to nominate your favorite businesses in our city.

The nomination phase will extend through July and be followed by voting in August. Winners will be announced in September. Winning businesses are showered with a range of valuable marketing perks and minted with far-reaching prestige.

Nominating and voting for local businesses is a powerful gesture to support our city and neighborhoods. Our thoughts and votes make a huge difference, and just with an easy click!

By highlighting and rewarding beloved members of our world-class business community, we collectively enhance our spaces, draw customers, support families, bolster revenues, and help every facet of El Cerrito thrive. We El Cerritans are leaders in a growing, global, "shop local" movement. Shopping local with some of our dollars has never been more important than it is today.

Last year's inaugural campaign was a sensation. The effort tapped the tremendous energy of residents and patrons to the tune of 22,000 votes and 125 local businesses being crowned "Best of El Cerrito" winners in their categories.

We came together as a community in a huge way.

The award ceremony at Juku co-working and events/activities space at 7019 Stockton Ave. drew a huge and diverse crowd, including top elected officials and business moguls.

■ See **Best of El Cerrito**, page 7



NEW MEMBERS

TASHI DELEK

11224 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito

510-232-9316

tashidelekelcerrito.com

Open Tuesday-Saturday for Lunch & Dinner

El CerritoHonda

11755 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito

510-860-4470

elcerritohonda.com



Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

ONE OF THE things I like to do when traveling is visit local chambers of commerce. After all, I've been in this "chamber business" for longer than I care to recall. Recently, when visiting the little Alpine County hamlet of Markleeville, I had the pleasure of meeting Meghan Wolff who runs the Alpine County Chamber of Commerce. We had a great time "talking shop."



Alpine, with less than 1300 people, has the smallest population of our state's 58 counties. Highway 4 runs the length of the county and when Ebbett's Pass at 8730 ft. is closed for the winter, the town of Markleeville on the eastern side is isolated from Bear Valley to the west. In fact, to access the Alpine Chamber's office during the winter it could be necessary to do so from Nevada.

With Markleeville's population a mere 200 people, the enthusiastic Ms. Wolff has a mission to support businesses and residents throughout Alpine County. One unique member benefit offered by the Alpine Chamber is trash service. For \$75 a year, members can utilize a dumpster near the office in Markleeville. That's a big deal in a very small community and a service that encourages businesses to join to the Chamber.

Serious thought is being given to creating a newsletter just like this *Byline* at the Alpine Chamber. You just know that a copy was presented to Meghan during my visit.

The 14th store in northern California and the 31st in the chain, STIIIZY opened for business in El Cerrito on June 3rd. Eager customers lined up for two blocks awaiting the grand opening. L to R: Jose Pecho, VP of Real Estate and Community Affairs, Austin Bonner, general manager, El Cerrito Mayor Lisa Motoyama, and Jennifer Arteaga, regional manager of STIIIZY.



John C. Stashik

City news. The City Council adopted a one-year budget on June 20th. Mayor Lisa Motoyama told the *Byline*:

"City Manager Karen Pinkos is rightly pleased that the hard work of staff has developed a balanced budget maintaining a very healthy fund reserve that also received a recommendation from the Financial Advisory Board. Council adopted the budget unanimously and looks forward to a robust discussion of the FAB's recommendations for the General Fund reserve, including the Emergency and Disaster Recovery Fund and a 115 Trust for pension obligations at the August meeting."

More City news: arriving at City Hall on July 17th is Crystal Reams, the City's new Finance Director and Treasurer.

NEWS & VIEWS

A welcome sight after a long absence was the above six-page publication which mailed to every city address last month. If you didn't receive a copy, they're available at City Hall. It's another way to keep informed of news about town.

Scissorsman. Happy Birthday #93 to Jerry Sandlin on July 7th at the Grand Barber Shop at 10054 San Pablo Ave. (near Rialto Cinemas Cerrito). Shout Semper Fi to this proud Marine Corps veteran.



Five days a week. The 514 Lounge is now open Wednesday through Sunday from 4 until 9 p.m. This little gem is located at 11236 San Pablo Avenue, just south of Potrero. Bar nibbles can be had from the next door neighbors: Tashi Delek and Antojitos Guatemaltecos.

Sylvia Mori is an award winning artist who has been creating mosaics for 18 years. One of her works hangs in the library and another at City Hall. Here's a photo of Sylvia in her El Cerrito studio creating yet another work of art.



John C. Stashik



Hao C. Tran, a local guy, has stories from the perspective of a *Viet Kieu*, a Vietnamese living overseas. Tran left Vietnam shortly before the war ended, not to return for 20 years. His stories are in a recently published memoir titled "Skinny Woman in a Straw Hat." The book is available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

■ See Past Prez Palaver, page 3

PAST PREZ PALAVER

■ Continued from page 2

□



John C. Stashik

Tea time. Trevor Harvey and Binta Ayofemi are the owners of a new business at 10281 San Pablo Avenue called Tea Drinkers (spelling is correct). Trevor is a tea connoisseur; Binta is an artist. Give her the credit for the beautiful wooden table the size of a tree. Open 10 to 5 Wednesday through Sunday, the huge shop would be a great place for meetings. With tea, of course.

□

Freddie's. Keep your eyes peeled on upper Fairmount Avenue as Freddie's Lifestyle is eager to open for business.

El Cerrito's Biggest Event

July 4th at Cerrito Vista Park



El Cerrito Recreation

□

Fun stuff. *INDIANA JONES* is now showing at the Rialto Cinemas Cerrito in *The Dial of Destiny*, starring (who else) Harrison Ford. Get tickets now; this probably only runs for a week.

□

Red, white and blue. Visit the Chamber of Commerce booth at the worldOne/City of El Cerrito Fourth of July Festival. Pick up a free gift from Premier Graphics, while supplies last.

ELEVATION 66 Brewing Company

BY LINDA VAN LOON

ELEVATION 66 held their spring beer pairing dinner on May 28th. Four courses developed by chef Bruce Lengacher were paired with select house brews. Bruce and his kitchen staff produced flawless dishes and the wait staff did an outstanding job.

1st course: Cremini Carpaccio. Thinly sliced whole cremini mushrooms, fresh arugula, bacon bits, and shaved parmesan were tossed with a tangy apple cider vinegar dressing. Paired with Laurel Leaf Pale Ale (5.5% ABV), a crisp brew with subtle hints of bay laurel leaves, it was a perfect appetizer.

2nd course: Shrimp and Cheesy Grits. Succulent shrimp were bathed in a piquant sauce of diced tomatoes, garlic, fresh thyme and parsley, and the Cajun/Creole "holy trinity" of chopped

green bell pepper, celery, and onion. Ramble Tumble Red Ale (7.0% ABV) provided a deep and nicely bitter offset to the dish's spiciness.



3rd course: Braised Chuck Flat Short Ribs. Chuck flat is a boneless marbled cut of beef between ribs and brisket which provided a luxurious base for the gravy with parsnips, carrots, celery, onions, and fresh herbs. It was served with warm Acme sourdough bread for dipping and a small potato

pave with pickled onion. Two Beagle Brown Ale (5.5% ABV), a dark but not heavy brew, was an excellent counterpoint to the rich dish.

4th course: Deconstructed Lemon Bars. A round of crisp shortbread topped with creamy sweet-tart Meyer lemon curd was served on a puree of fresh Himalayan mulberries, blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries with a touch of cinnamon and cassis and fresh mint. A dessert to die for! Contra Costa Kolsch (5.0% ABV) provided a crisp, clean accompaniment.

Many thanks to David and Esther Goodstall for hosting the spring dinner. Stop by Elevation 66 great craft beer and good food. Open every day.

Elevation 66 is located at 10082 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito. Keep apprised of the next food and beer pairing evening at elevation66.com.

Angelo's Gourmet Delicatessen: An Iconic Staple of West County

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANDREW MELENDEZ

NESTLED within San Pablo Avenue stands a small industrial gray building adorned with a terra-cotta awning out front. Angelo's Gourmet Delicatessen is a beloved establishment that has been serving locals across the Bay Area for decades. This family-owned deli is a shining example of the spectacular food culture in west Contra Costa County that

has spanned generations, with people of all ages flocking to this cherished spot for unforgettable flavors.

Walking into Angelo's, I was immediately enveloped in a sense of nostalgia. The old-fashioned decor, complete with vintage photographs

and memorabilia, transported me back in time. This is a place where stories have been shared, laughter has echoed, and memories have been created. A comforting ambiance welcomes each and every visitor that steps foot into this establishment.

The menu is a testament to the dedication and passion of the owners and staff. Offering an array of sandwich combinations, Angelo's has perfected the art of crafting flavorful meals. From classic favorites to its signature specials, you can always count on an excellent culinary experience.

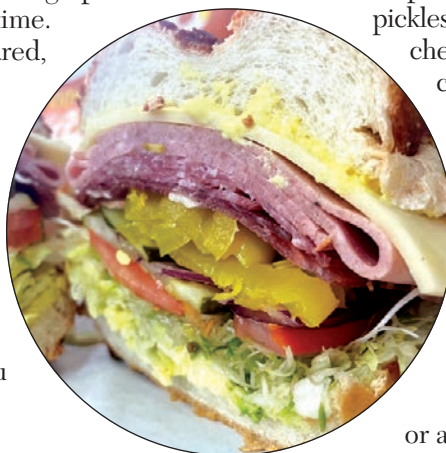
The Angelo's Sandwich, a true masterpiece and signature meal, stole the spotlight during my visit. Made with a delightful combination of mortadella, salami, and



capicola meat, each bite delivered a burst of savory taste that was complemented by fresh toppings like tomatoes, pickles, red onions, and a thick slice of mozzarella cheese. All of this was nestled between a Dutch crunch bread that added a subtle sweetness and elevated the overall flavor profile.

Angelo's Gourmet Delicatessen is more than just a place to grab a sandwich—it's an embodiment of the rich culinary heritage of west county. Since its very beginnings, it has stood as a symbol of resilience, consistency, and an unwavering commitment to delivering delicious food.

Whether you're a long-time local resident or a visitor passing through, a visit to Angelo's Gourmet Delicatessen is a must if you want to experience the true essence of west county's food culture.



12025 San Pablo Avenue (one block south of Macdonald Ave.), Richmond
Phone 510-234-2485 • Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day (closed Sunday)



STIIIZY
 EL CERRITO

Grand Opening Celebration

An excited mayor of El Cerrito has the Big Scissors under control as a ceremonial ribbon is snipped opening STIIIZY in El Cerrito on June 3rd at Schmidt Lane and San Pablo Avenue. Mayor Lisa Motoyama welcomed this new business to the city. Austin Bonner, general manager, assists the mayor while city council members, Chamber directors, and store staff look on.

Barber, Bodybuilder, Bard.



Phil Playle's Incomparable Barbershop

BY ROBERT ROGERS

WHEN YOU sink into the brown leather of Phil Playle's vintage barber chair, you're in for more than just an expert trim.

This magic chair is your cockpit. Settle in for a voyage through El Cerrito's colorful history.

Let your eyes wander over the sketches of storefronts decades gone. Let your senses linger on a dusty sign. Don't miss the old posters. Travel through time and space via black and white photos from here and around the world.

Phil is your loquacious tour guide. Phil is 81 now, but he's been training with iron since the 1950s. The former bodybuilder's frame is sturdy as his steel barber gear, his mind sharp as a straight razor.

Phil rattles off history with such precision, you swivel your head to look for his teleprompter (spoiler: there isn't one!). Every piece of memorabilia in his shop has a rich story. Phil is ready to tell the stories with pace, verve, and humor.

"For me, it's ..." Phil pauses to recline in one of his chairs "... the real deal. It's life. You don't have to get a haircut to come in here and hangout and have a good time, but if you do get a haircut, you'll get a good one."

It would take a book to scratch the surface of Phil's catalogue of homespun yarns.

But we can drop a few details here: Yes it's true that he worked on John Fogerty's locks. He also kept the heads of Oakland sports legends Reggie Jackson and George Atkinson looking fresh and dapper. He watched pioneering bodybuilder Bill Pearl at a show at Berkeley High in

1963 ("I can see it like it was last night!"). He and his buddy debunked Wilt Chamberlain's claim that Wilt could deadlift 1,000 pounds. That tawny buck mounted on the wall was taken by his father in Montana in 1955. Phil's dad cut the hair of physicist Robert Oppenheimer in the early 1940s.

Phil started working out with weights at the Berkeley YMCA in 1957. He never stopped. He still trains three days per week.

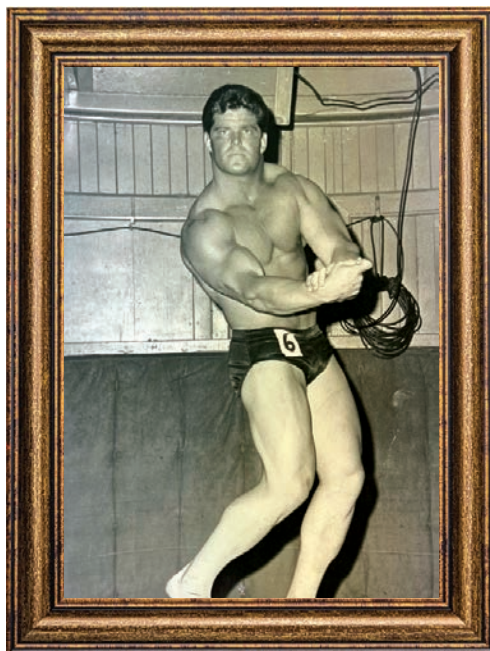
Phil is a man of optimism and strength. But there's a melancholy side too.

A special photo occupies premium real estate on his wall. It's impossibly beautiful. There's a oval spectrum of saltwater blue. The ocean is curved by the hand of God into a tube that narrows as it deepens, drawing you in. Inside this aqua pipeline, at its tightest aperture, is a man on a surfboard. The man has bravely and adroitly harnessed the power of the wave. He's achieved a fleeting moment of brilliant fusion with the ocean. It's a moment that never occurred before, and can never exist again. This pinnacle moment is truly unique in the history of world.

Phil's sharp eyes catch a visitor's gaze into his photo.

"That's my son up there," Phil says. His voice softens. A barely perceptible change washes over his square-jawed visage. "That was my son's last wave. His board hit him and knocked him out. It took them quite a while to find him. He was a good guy."

Visit Phil's Barbershop at 7519 Fairmont Ave., open Wednesday through Saturday. When Old Glory is flying in front of the shop, Phil is ready to cut your hair or simply chat. His phone number is 510-525-6218.



REMINDER

Your City of El Cerrito Business License tax must be paid by July 31, 2023. Rental properties must be registered and need a valid business license. Any questions? Call 510-215-4314 or email businesslicense@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Handcrafted Tamales and More at the New Masa in El Cerrito

BY CATALINA HU

IF YOU LOVE tamales as much as I do, you are in luck! Masa, a popular Richmond taqueria famous for its handmade tamales, finally opened its El Cerrito location on June 20th after over a year of preparation!

On an evening a day after opening, there was a line of hungry people of all ages and ethnicities outside of Masa waiting to try the newest restaurant on San Pablo Avenue. People were checking out the new giant drive-thru monitor, the new cactus landscape, and the menu with big smiles and excitement.

In addition to a selection of traditional meat tamales, Masa offers several vegetarian tamales including veggie tamales, pineapple tamales and strawberry tamales. Not a fan of tamales? Masa has something for everyone —burritos, tacos, torta, tostada, flautas, ceviche, fries, etc. Can't decide? Try a combination plate!

I tried the veggie tamales, tamales de rajas, and pineapple tamales. They were piping hot, moist and flavorful. The house made hot sauce added the perfect kick but wasn't excessively spicy. I love seasoned waffle fries, so I had to get those instead of tortilla chips. Be sure to visit often and try their agua frescas made with seasonal fresh fruit. The cucumber pineapple agua fresca is my favorite so far.

The small restaurant, where Jack In The Box used to be, offers only outdoor seating. After the dinner rush was over, the general manager, Jonathan Bermudez, explained that the entire outdoor seating area will soon be redesigned as material shipments arrive. In the upcoming weeks, they will be adding heating lamps, new outdoor dining furniture, and bike racks. I can't wait to see the transformation!

Masa currently is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, but the plan is to eventually open from 7 a.m. to midnight. If you love authentic freshly made Mexican food, stop by Masa at 10409 San Pablo Avenue. You won't be disappointed!



Catalina Hu



John C. Stashik

FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

provide governments with extensive knowledge of individuals' financial activities, allowing them to scrutinize and potentially censor certain transactions deemed undesirable or against government policies.

Restricted Usage: Governments could impose restrictions on how CBDCs can be used. They might prohibit certain types of transactions, such as purchasing specific goods or services, transferring funds to certain individuals or organizations, or engaging in activities that the government deems politically sensitive or illegal. By controlling the usage of CBDCs, governments can exert greater control over the financial behavior of their citizens.

Social Credit System: In some cases, governments could integrate

CBDCs with a social credit system, which assigns individuals scores based on their behavior and compliance with government regulations. (Look up China on this.) CBDCs could be used to reward or penalize individuals based on their social credit scores, allowing the government to control and influence people's financial access and privileges.

Financial Surveillance and Taxation: CBDCs can provide governments with a comprehensive view of individuals' financial activities, making it easier to enforce tax compliance and combat money laundering. While this can be seen as a positive aspect, it also increases the potential for governments to scrutinize and regulate individuals' financial behavior more extensively.

It's important to note that not all governments would necessarily use CBDCs for control and censorship. The extent to which CBDCs are used in such a manner would depend on the political, legal, and regulatory frameworks established by each government. Additionally, the implementation and design of CBDCs could incorporate privacy features and safeguards to protect individuals' financial privacy and prevent excessive government control. (In my opinion and considering how human beings normally respond to temptation and power, the positive aspects of CBDC seem like far-fetched ideas.)

"Absolute power corrupts absolutely." As always, thank you for giving me your most valuable commodity, your time.

BEST OF EL CERRITO

■ Continued from page 1

Due to robust growth in participating and generous sponsors, this year's award ceremony will be held in the sprawling and elegant confines of El Cerrito Honda at 11755 San Pablo Ave.

The event is set for October. Stay tuned for the date.

Thanks especially to superstar local sponsors, great partners who care deeply for our El Cerrito community: El Cerrito Honda, Prospect Sierra, Negar Souza & Feri Niroomand/Red Oak Realty, AC Transit, Little Hill Real Estate, Shrem Law, Off the Block S.T.E.M.



10895 San Pablo Ave.
El Cerrito
510-234-6025
dohertytruck.com

**The Farmers Market will be closed
on July 4th, a legal holiday.**

Farmers Market
AT EL CERRITO PLAZA
Open Tuesday & Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SPONSORED BY





KIKAI
REAL ESTATE
BROKERED BY eXp REALTY

LITTLE HILL

REAL ESTATE

Buying, selling and investing in El Cerrito

- **Community commitment:** 5% of proceeds donated back to local organizations
- **Experience:** Years of negotiation and marketing prowess serving buyers & sellers
- **Expertise:** Hyper-local focus allows for critical pricing strategies and deep connections with other Realtors.
- **Results:** Read what my clients have to say. Check out littlehillrealestate.com

Rachel Melby
an agent at Kai, brokered by eXp
rachelalittlehillrealestate.com
DRE #: 02179456





Minuteman Press
WE DESIGN, PRINT & PROMOTE... YOU!



SIMPLE BUSINESS BUILDERS
Simple, Affordable Products to Grow Your Business



**PRINTING IN
BERKELEY
SINCE 1972**



This offering of our Best Selling Marketing Products at Exceptional Prices addresses the key pieces in marketing your business. As your Marketing Partner we can expand well beyond this core offering to help you create a marketing plan that exceeds your goals.

1101 FIFTH STREET, BERKELEY 510.540.7113 www.e-minutemanpress.com

Subscribe or Comment

Contact the *Byline* at byline@elcerritochamber.org



Chamber Officers, Directors & Staff

President	Matt Khadivian, El Mono Restaurant
Vice President	Kevin O'Neal, Well Grounded Tea & Coffee Bar
Secretary	Aissia Ashoori, City of El Cerrito
Treasurer, <i>Byline</i> Editor	John C. Stashik, Premier Graphics
Directors	Mark Figone, East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc. Scott Harris, ClientClicks Internet Marketing Rachel Melby, Little Hill Real Estate Robert Rogers, Supervisor John Gioia's office Jeffrey Wright, Wright Realtors Georgina Edwards
Manager	
<i>Byline</i> Correspondents	Catalina Hu Robert Rogers



SUMMER MEGA MIXER!
Thursday, July 20th, 5:30-7:30pm
Chambers & Communities Working Together!
All members of the business community are welcome.
Bring plenty of business cards and a raffle prize to promote your business!

FREE TO CHAMBER MEMBERS
NON-MEMBERS \$10
The Old Homestead
995 Loring Ave., Crockett
(Behind the Crockett Library)
TICKETS/RSVP @eventbrite.com
No Host Bar
Info: admin@BayFrontChamber.com

HOSTED BY 7 CHAMBERS!



HAPPY HOURS at Elevation 66

Beginning July 5th, from 3-5 p.m. Weekdays
10082 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito on the Theater Block

GOSH! Building Permit Update

IN JUNE 2023, the commercial project located at 1711-1755 Eastshore Blvd. received its building permit. The project will convert the vacant structure (which last housed an Orchard Supply Hardware) into a self storage facility, Security Public Storage.

Construction is slated to begin this summer. The remaining vacant parcel adjacent to the structure has a pending land use application for a project containing 310 residential units.

Subscribe to the Community Development eNews at el-cerrito.org/CommDev to receive updates regarding this project and other efforts underway.

Byline

Editorial, Typography
& Layout by



1-510-207-2195

Printed by Minuteman Press
1-510-540-7113

Proud members of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce