ElCerritoChamber.org



Linking business and community since 1936

From the President

MY DEAR readers, it's back to school already! I hope you had an enjoyable summer and are ready to kick some butt for the remainder of 2023. In this edition, I wanted to touch on a topic which happens to be very close to my heart; the importance of supporting our local restaurants.

Supporting local restaurants extends far beyond savoring delectable dishes; it's an investment in the heart of our communities. These culinary gems, often run by passionate individuals or families, contribute to the vibrancy and identity of our neighborhoods.

Economic Boost. Choosing to dine at local restaurants keeps money circulating within the community. The See From the President, page 7

Mayor Lisa Gets Another Big Scissors Workout

10895 San Pablo Ave. · El Cerrito, CA 94530 · 1-510-705-1202



Freddie's Shop opened for business on Saturday, August 19th, and El Cerrito Mayor Lisa Motoyama, along with store owner Jon Amolo, cut a ribbon to make the event offical. The new lifestyle goods store is at 7523 Fairmount Ave., near Fatapple's. Open Thursday-Friday 12 to 7; Saturday-Sunday 11 to 5.

Vote for the Best of El Cerrito Now

By Robert Rogers

THE CITY IS abuzz with the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce's "Best of El Cerrito" Campaign. Our premier annual event in support of the local economy is a summer sensation! It is sizzling social media algorithms, stuffing email inboxes, and peppering conversations all over El Cerrito, from dinner tables to bus stops. Now it's time to vote for your El Cerrito favorites!

Visit elcerritochamber.org/best-ofec to make your voice heard today!

This year you have nominated more than 700 businesses across 150 diverse



categories. Highest vote getters will be crowned "Best of El Cerrito" and then heaped with marketing perks, positive word of mouth, broad prestige, and award-winning swag for their staffs and places of business, both digital and analog.

Voting ends September 22nd and winners will be announced soon after.

"We are getting so much positive feedback from nominated businesses," said Chamber Manager Georgina Edwards. "Business owners are excited and honored to be nominated, and they're sharing their beautiful nomination badges on social media and elsewhere to help garner votes."

See Best of El Cerrito, page 7

\star NEW MEMBERS \star

STIIIZY El Cerrito 10770 San Pablo Ave. • El Cerrito 94530 510-916-1267 stiiizy.com

Richmond Pizza House

12343 San Pablo Ave. • Richmond 94805 510-766-5555 richmondpizzahouse.com

Negar Souza & Feri Niroomand Realtors – Red Oak Realty 7502 Fairmount Ave. • El Cerrito 94530 510-543-7016 BayAreaRealEstateConnection.com

Teach Outside

Heather Taylor 2369 Ellerhorst St. • El Cerrito 94530 info@teachoutside.com teachoutside.com

Plank + Power

11163 San Pablo Ave. • El Cerrito 94530 510-334-9522 plankandpower.com

Billy Ray Huntsman, Realtor

billyray.huntsman@exprealty.com 415-297-8985 billyrayhuntsman.exprealty.com **Continental Auto Body & Paint** 1011 San Pablo Ave. • Albany 94706 510-524-0563 continentalautobody.com

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Freddie's Shop 7523A Fairmount Ave. • El Cerrito 94530 jon@freddies.shop freddies.shop

Maya Arechiga Realtor – Red Oak Realty

7502 Fairmount Ave. • El Cerrito 94530 510-701-3991 MayaArechiga.com

Join the Chamber and your business can appear here





"Oh, I work for the City."

THAT'S THE TYPICAL answer from L El Cerrito's unpretentious city manager if you ask her what she does. On September 10th, Karen Pinkos marks 22 years as a City employee. She loves both her job and El Cerrito.

City manager since December 2018, it has so far been a interesting ride. The state auditor's smack down, a pandemic, furloughs and pay cuts for all staff while the City's financial house began a rebuild, and at the same time, dealing with everyday stuff like keeping this multi-million dollar enterprise known as the City of El Cerrito operating. Well, it certainly has not been boring!

Today, the City has a healthy general fund reserve, an emergency fund, is hiring again, and residents along with business owners and City staff, are optimistic. We truly appreciate you, Karen, as you continue to work for the City.

$\star \star \star \star$

Error. Last month a list of worldOne/ City of El Cerrito Fourth of July sponsors appeared in the Byline. Unfortunately omitted was the generous \$2500 Stars & Stripes level contribution from El Cerrito Royale, which is acknowledged here and now.

Did you know? Nine residents at El Cerrito Royale have ages of 100-plus. Aiko "Jean" Nakazono is 103. The 102 year olds include Florence Bryndza, Dorothy Chambers, and Phyllis Cobb. The five folks right at the century mark are Aida Brenneis, Roger Ferragallo, Betty Moore, Rose Texara, and Yetta "Geri" Wagner. All will be honored September 6th on Centenarian Day.

MNF @ 514. The 514 Lounge, at 11236 San Pablo Ave. (next to Tashi Delek) will open for Monday Night Football starting September 11th.



Team effort. Meet the Freddie's Shop staff (see page 1). Besides Jon, there's Linda and Bella. Where's Freddie? He is five years old and makes occasional appearances.

Expanding. Our home town Nation's Giant Hamburgers, which owns and operates 29 restaurants in and near the Bay Area, will begin franchising. (The story of Nation's appeared in the June 2022 Byline.) The company stated it was looking for franchisees in California which means that soon those giant burgers, pies, and all day breakfasts will become available in new markets. Presumably, the Wild Alaska Salmon Burger will remain on menus at franchised stores. Pies are currently baked at corporate headquarters in El Cerrito.

Hot chicken. Another new El Cerrito Plaza restaurant, the southern California favorite called Dave's Hot Chicken, is ready to open. September 11th is the target date (give or take). Watch for it.

"8 weeks." That's the word on opening the new El Cerrito Plaza location of Ike's Love & Sandwiches in the former Supercuts space. Let's hope so.

BMO is the name replacing Bank of the West. That rolls right off the tongue, sort of like the railroad called CSX. New signage is up at the ex-Bank of the West Plaza.

Ex-OSH. Construction is well underway at the new Security Public Storage building on Eastshore Blvd. There will be no huge difference on the outside except for new self storage lockers. Inside will be hundreds of lockers on two floors. Residential housing is something to be addressed much later. The upside is a new business in town and a vacant building modernized and put to a good use. *Everyone* has stuff to store!

At least *something* is happening at the old OSH lot. Now check the progress of the Wang development across the street from fire station 51. Top photo: July 2021; the bottom photo: August 2023.





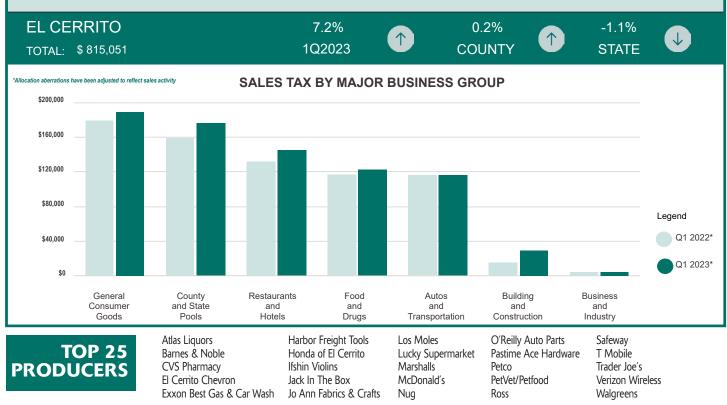
BOLO! (Be on the Lookout.) Known far and wide by music fans, the Down Home Music Store is an El Cerrito treasure. Founder and owner Chris Strachwitz passed away on May 5, 2023, at the age of 91.

There is speculation that this unique record store may be forced to relocate in less than two years. The Strachwitz estate could choose to sell the San Pablo Avenue property in which case a new owner may decide to repurpose the building or even construct multi-unit housing.

Backup plans are always important. Down Home needs one. Any commercial Realtor reading this page should check their inventory of possible sites for this record store. Preference is to stay in El Cerrito on San Pablo Avenue if relocation should become necessary. See Past Prez Palaver, page 3

CITY OF EL CERRITO SALES TAX UPDATE

1Q 2023 (January-March)



PAST PREZ PALAVER

Continued from page 2

Spin Cycle. That would make a great name for a *Byline* column. However, it really is the new name of the laundromat at El Cerrito Plaza, part of a chain operating in many cities.

City news. At the August 15th meeting the El Cerrito City Council took a major step to secure the City's financial stability. When asked for a statement, **Mayor Lisa Motoyama** told the *Byline*:

The City Council set our city on a firm and steady footing for the long term at our meeting on August 15th. I am so proud that my colleagues joined me in approving a \$9 million Emergency Disaster Relief Fund as a restricted part of our fund reserve. We know, coming out of the pandemic, that unforeseen disasters will happen. These funds will enable us to respond and keep providing services when the unthinkable happens. We thank the FAB for their work and recommendation to bring this and the Section 115 Trust to Council.

Current El Cerrito Sales Tax Breakdown

3.94%	State General Fund
.50%	Contra Costa County Transportation Authority
.50%	BART in Contra Costa County
1.81%	County health, social services, public safety, transportation
.50%	Public Safety (Prop. 172)
1.00%	El Cerrito General Fund (Bradley Burns)
.50%	El Cerrito Measure A (Smooth Streets)
1.00%	El Cerrito Measure R (2015 Transactions & Use Tax)
.50%	Contra Costa County Measure X
10.25%	Total El Cerrito rate
	Source: El Cerrito FY 2021-22 Budget Book, page 43

At the same meeting, we also approved the establishment of a Section 115 Trust so that we can start to save towards our pension liability, approved the Housing Element after working with the State Housing and Community Development Department for over 10 months and held a public hearing to address fire hazard abatement at two properties in the city. We hope that the residents know we are working to make El Cerrito more fiscally resilient and safer.

This just in. The state has awarded El Cerrito a \$20 million grant to spur development of climate-friendly homes. Administered by the Dept. of Housing and Community Development, this will pay for certain infrastructure improvements to expedite the building of new housing in this city. El Cerrito's grant is part of \$239 million from the state to various cities to fund critical infrastructure and amenities.

Healing the Planet, One Face at a Time

Story and photo by Robert Rogers $\mathbf{F}^{\text{or Lynne Williams}},$ health and well-being are more than skin deep.

"My mission when we first started was to heal the planet one face at a time," said Williams, while padding around her light-colored, sleek skincare studio lobby. "We have a super inviting atmosphere here," Cox said. "Anyone who comes in, they tend to come back, and grow from clients to friends."

Face Magic has been in business in the area for more than 30 years, and at the current location for the last eight. The business and its philosophy was engendered by Lynne's

own skin health

challenges. Fit-

tingly, it was an

esthetician who

I couldn't stop

breaking out," Lynne said.

"But I went to

tician, and she

guided, taught

I only realized

after that I had

hands that care,

too."

and inspired me.

see an esthe-

changed her life. "Back then,

It was early morning, before her first clients. The space was bathed in natural light.

"You see, when we help each other feel good about ourselves, what we in turn give to the world is good too."

It's the holistic approach to skincare and esthetics that has solidified Face Magic Skin Care as an El Cerrito insti-



The Face Magic team: Manuel Mendoza, Keyana Cox, Lynne Williams

tution that's enhanced thousands of lives.

Lynne and her husband, Manuel Mendoza, are both licensed and accomplished estheticians. Their tried and true formula revolves around personalized skin care, first-class product lines, deep professional experience, and a broad understanding of physical and mental health. This suite of strengths is vital to providing expert skincare services, since everything about our physical and mental status can impact skin health and appearance.

"We have been doing this work long enough that we have generational clients," Lynne said. "We see the grandmother, mother, daughter, and grandchildren."

It's the community feel and the love of El Cerrito that adds to the professional expertise for which Face Magic is so renowned. Lynne and Manuel rave about their spot on charming Fairmount Avenue. Lynne cheerfully notes that there are five park benches on their block, and Manuel chips in with "and people use them!" Lynne also rattles off the names of other businesses in the area, throwing in a compliment or two about each. Manuel offers that legendary Fatapple's Restaurant & Bakery is the hub that brings it all together.

And there's another member of the winning team: Office Manager Keyana Cox, whose upbeat personality melds perfectly with the Face Magic culture and earns raves from Lynne and Manuel. Another aspect of Face Magic's success is that they couple expertise with caution. On occasion, they come across concerning signs while working with a patient. They know how to spot issues that need follow up, including lumps and irritations. If there is any doubt, Lynne and Manuel are quick to urge a visit to a

licensed dermatologist. "We have sent people to the dermatologist that presented with signs of skin cancer," Lynne said. "Early detection is key."

As afternoon came and a day of helping clients from El Cerrito and beyond drew to a close, Lynne reflected on her work and mission. Health and beauty as holistic concepts. What is inside exudes outside. We look as good as we feel. Lynne, Manuel, and Keyana are committed to helping you be your healthiest.

"Our goal is to not only provide care here, but to teach you to provide for yourself the best you can at home," Lynne said. "Together, we can't stop the hands of time, but we can slow it down dramatically."



7515 Fairmount Ave. El Cerrito 510-526-3223 **facemagicskincare.com**

► FRESH ► HEALTHY ► DELICIOUS "AN EXCEPTIONAL JAPANESE CUISINE EXPERIENCE..."

By Andrew Melendez

N ESTLED IN the heart of El Cerrito, Sushi Matsu is a culinary gem that beckons sushi aficionados and Japanese cuisine lovers alike. As I stepped through the door, the ambiance transported me to a world where tradition gracefully melds with contemporary elegance. The



interior of the restaurant, adorned with intricate flourishes of old-world Japanese style, exuded a sense of serenity that set the stage for an unforgettable dining experience. The menu at Sushi Matsu show-

cased an extensive selection of sushi,

sashimi, and other Japanese delicacies. Each dish was prepared with care and precision.

Among the myriad of options, two particular meals captured my attention: the Rainbow Roll and the Chicken Teriyaki Don.

The Rainbow Roll's vibrant presentation immediately caught my eye, boasting a delightful combination of avocado green and orange tobiko. Succulent crab meat blended harmoniously with freshly picked avocado, while a bed of savory white rice provided the foundation. Each bite was elevated by the generous topping of bright tobiko, resulting



in a burst of briny goodness.

But it was the Chicken Teriyaki Don that truly stole the show, delivering a symphony of textures and flavors that left me awestruck. This main course presented tender cuts of grilled chicken, expertly glazed with a savory teriyaki sauce. Adorning the top of the bowl were thinly sliced

white onions, adding a subtle pungency that mingled beautifully with the other ingredients. The dish reached new heights with the addition of tamagoyaki, delicately sweet and pleasingly light. A touch of crunchiness came from the pickled daikon, offering a refreshing contrast. Completing this ensemble was a dollop of softly-flavored seaweed. All of these elements laid over a bed of fluffy white rice, which seamlessly blended with each bite.



Owner Angie Yang invites you to experience a savory culinary adventure



Sushi Matsu is simply an exceptional Japanese cuisine experience in El Cerrito. Every detail, from the careful selection of ingredients to the skilled preparation, speaks volumes about their dedication to providing an exquisite dining experience. Sushi Matsu promises to transport you to a realm of culinary delight that will leave a lasting impression.

The Rainbow Roll

Sushi Matsu • 10561 San Pablo Ave. in El Cerrito 510-529-4585 • Great Sushi Matsu.com





Meet the Tashi Delek family: owner/chef Phurba Sherpa, wife Lhakpa Kami, father Dorjee lama Sherpa, mother Nyimi Sherpa, and sister Pema Yangee (Shanti).



Sondheim on Sondheim A Sensational Musical Tribute

Fri.-Sat. 7:30 p.m. & Sunday 2 p.m. Through September 10th

> Tickets: ccct.org Contra Costa Civic Theatre

PRESTO! and you're there





El Cerrito Council Member Paul Fadelli and Hercules Council Member Chris Kelley, both Commissioners on the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), were on hand at the El Cerrito Plaza on August 12th to demonstrate CCTA's autonomous shuttle vehicle.

Local shoppers at the Plaza – near the El Cerrito Saturday Farmer's Market – were able to see, sit in, and learn more about the autonomous vehicle, called PRESTO, which is now providing free trial rides at Bishop Ranch in San Ramon. There are plans for another trial at Rossmoor next year in Walnut Creek.

Commissioners Fadelli and Kelley, and the CCTA staff, explained the need to develop new "first and last mile" transportation options that can provide other ways for drivers to get to transit connections. In the future, residents in the El Cerrito and Berkeley hills will possibly be able to walk or bike to a vehicle like PRESTO to get to a BART or AC Transit connection without driving.



Tashi Delek Cuisine Celebrates 10 Years

It was a packed house at Tashi Delek for an August 16th mixer. Owner/chef Phurba Sherpa offered his most popular menu items buffet style at a special price of just \$15. You can enjoy this Tibetan Indian and Nepali cuisine anytime at 11224 San Pablo Ave., near Potrero.

Schatzie, Post Junket



Schatzie Frisch, the Renegade Deli Heiress and headcheese queen of El Cerrito's famed The Junket deli, stands next to the Cigar Box Kitchen headcheese guitar she painted. The Junket's shelf life expired December 30, 2021 (See *Byline*, February 2022, for that story.) To see more headcheese art visit: SchatzieFrisch.com.

Steve Zwetsch runs the Local Artist Guitar Series and collaborates with artists who create pieces of art on a box which he then turns into a playable guitar or ukulele. See CigarBoxKitchen.com. He is the current El Cerrito Recycling Center creative reuse artist in residence. The exhibit is on the second floor of City Hall.



September 2023

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from page 1

revenue generated helps create jobs, stimulate the local economy, and foster growth, contributing to a healthier financial ecosystem.

Cultural Preservation. Local eateries often reflect the unique flavors of a region, preserving culinary traditions and celebrating diversity. By supporting them, we promote cultural exchange and gain a deeper understanding of the rich tapestry of our society.

Personal Connections. Unlike chain establishments, local restaurants offer personalized experiences. Building relationships with the owners, chefs, and staff creates a sense of belonging, transforming dining into a social event that transcends mere sustenance.

Environmental Impact. Local restaurants often source ingredients locally, reducing the carbon footprint associated with transportation. This commitment to sustainability aligns with our collective responsibility to care for the environment.

Celebration of Entrepreneurship. Local restaurants are often born out of passion and entrepreneurial spirit. By patronizing them, we encourage creativity, innovation, and the pursuit of dreams, fostering a dynamic atmosphere for future generations.

As you can see, supporting local restaurants is more than a culinary choice; it's a statement of support for our community's growth, cultural heritage, and shared aspirations. By savoring the flavors of local kitchens, we nurture the essence of what makes our neighborhoods truly special.

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



BEST OF EL CERRITO

Continued from page 1

Voting is super easy and fun! Simply visit elcerritochamber.org and follow the prompts.

Nearly half of U.S. economic activity is still generated by resilient small business, and the ratio is higher in this great city!

When you support local business, you are voting with your dollars. You are investing in every facet of your community and its public resources.

Due to robust growth in participating and generous sponsors, this year's award ceremony will be held in the beautiful showroom of El Cerrito Honda at 11755 San Pablo Ave. The event is set for October. The date will be announced.

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., and TTL Team/Red Oak Realty.

Scan this code to vote







Kristen Kong finishes another utility box makeover at Liberty & Fairmount, making El Cerrito more beautiful one box at a time.



September 2023

Page 7



Subscribe or Comment

Contact the Byline at byline@elcerritochamber.org



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TWO EVENTS THIS MONTH OPEN TO ALL

