



Dennis Evanosky

Jack Stevens (left) from American Legion Post 647 and Bagpiper Sgt. Jim Marsh (center) salute as the 4th Marine Division's Color Guard dips the Marine Corps flag for the National Anthem at Monday's Memorial Day Ceremony at Veterans Park.

Alameda Remembers

Dennis Evanosky

After a year's delay due to COVID-19, members of Alameda's veterans' organization gathered to commemorate fallen soldiers at the Memorial Day Ceremony at Veterans Park.

As he had done so frequently in the past, KTVU's Sal Castenada returned to act as the event's master of ceremonies.

Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft addressed those assembled to remember the fallen.

Ceremonies included placing of wreaths by — among other groups — Blue Star mothers, who have family members currently serving our country and Gold Star families, who have lost family members who died while serving our country.

Sgt. Jim Marsh returned to play "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes and Melody Minto played Taps. Members of American Legion Post District 10 did a rifle salute to honor the fallen.

Marine Corps veteran Joe Loparo, who was instrumental in organizing this year's march, asked those in attendance to especially remember World War II veteran Gene Maurice who passed away in April.

Maurice served aboard *USS Saginaw Bay* off the coast of Iwo Jima during the fierce fighting there. An Alameda High School graduate and member of the school's band, he played Taps on his bugle at the city's Memorial Day service for years.



Alameda Police Department

Alameda Police Department bodycam shows Mario Gonzalez speaking to police some 10 minutes before officers brought him to the ground. Gonzalez died in the ensuing struggle.

Claim Filed

Gonzalez family files claim against the City and police department

Ekene Ikeme

The family of Mario Gonzalez filed a legal claim against the City of Alameda a month after his death while in the custody of Alameda Police Department (APD) officers.

Attorney Julia Sherwin of the Oakland law firm, Haddad & Sherwin LLP, filed the claim on behalf of the Gonzalez family on May 20. Gonzalez's four-year-old son, Mario Luciano Gonzalez-Cortez; his son's mother, Andrea Cortez; his mother, Edith; and his brothers, Efrain and Gerardo; are all named as claimants on the petition. Each person brings a claim against the city individually because they were all dependent on Gonzalez, according to the claim.

Their damages are in excess of the minimum jurisdictional limits of the Superior Court for the State of California, and include wrongful death, appropriate survival claims, loss of life, physical pain and suffering, loss of services, relationships and support, emotional distress, medical and funeral expenses, violation of constitutional rights, and exemplary, punitive, and statutory damages. The family is seeking all damages and money allowed by law, according to the claim.

The claimants are also demanding a preservation of evidence and records related to the incident.

Gonzalez, of Oakland, died on April 19 after an altercation with several APD officers at a public park on the 800 block of Park Street ("Suspect Dies in Police Custody" April 20).

The claim states Gonzalez died due to "restraint asphyxia" from excessive force and improper restraint from the responding officers.

APD officers Eric McKinley, James Fisher, and Cameron Leahy and APD assistant Charles Clemmens arrived at the scene after APD received two reports of an intoxicated man, Gonzalez,

near their homes. The calls went to the APD non-emergency hotline. Gonzalez appeared to be confused and possibly intoxicated at the time, but not a threat to himself or anyone else.

The responding officers restrained Gonzalez without reasonable suspicion or other legal cause. They brought Gonzalez to the ground and placed significant weight on his back, shoulders, neck, and legs for over five minutes in violation of generally accepted law enforcement standards, according to the claim. Gonzalez struggled to breathe until he was motionless.

The claim names McKinley, Fisher, Leahy and Clemmens as defendants. Other APD personnel including the Chief of Police, and supervisory personnel were named in the claim. Lastly, APD and City of Alameda were named as defendants in the claim.

The claim states the City of Alameda is responsible for claimants' injuries through "its own acts and omissions, negligent and otherwise, by failing to properly and adequately hire, investigate, train, supervise, monitor, instruct, and discipline its police officers and other law enforcement personnel, including the officers identified herein."

A damaged party must file a legal claim before filing a lawsuit. After sending the claim to each person or entity, the damaged party must wait for a period of time before filing a lawsuit in court. This period is typically at least 30 days.

The city has not responded to the claim. There are three ongoing independent investigations into the death of Gonzalez ("Gonzalez Investigations" April 27).

Sherwin is a civil rights trial lawyer with expertise in restraint asphyxia. She advised Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and special prosecutor Steve Schleicher in the trial of Derek Chauvin, who was found guilty of murdering George Floyd last summer.

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Date	Rise	Set
Today	5:48	20:26
June 4	5:48	20:27
June 5	5:48	20:27
June 6	5:47	20:28
June 7	5:47	20:29
June 8	5:47	20:29
June 9	5:47	20:30

City Eyes 'Mental Health Pilot Program'

Staff may look to the Eugene, Ore. program CAHOOTS

Dennis Evanosky

Part two of three

The City Council has instructed City Manager Eric Levitt to present a pilot program that would improve the way first responders answer calls for assistance in the future.

In addition to the reforms discussed in part one of this series (City Creating Response Pilot Program, May 27), Levitt's staff might look to a program that the City of Eugene, Ore., has successfully used for 32 years called Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets — better known by its acronym, CAHOOTS.

Eugene has integrated CAHOOTS into both Eugene and nearby Springfield's public-safety system. Had a similar program been in force in Mario Gonzalez's case, no police officers would have responded to the two phone calls made about Gonzalez.

Were the city to put a program like CAHOOTS in place, callers could have asked for crisis counselors, rather than police to respond.

To involve CAHOOTS, rather than the police in a call, Eugene or Springfield residents can call either 911 or the non-emergency line. Individuals might also flag down CAHOOTS vans and ask for help.

If an organization like CAHOOTS existed in Alameda, counselors would have spoken to and helped Gonzalez. Instead, police officers brought him to the ground and he died in their custody.

White Bird Clinic started CAHOOTS in 1989 as part of a community policing initiative. The clinic continues to partner with the Eugene Police Department.

White Bird designed CAHOOTS to provide an alternative to the way police responded to calls.

Its staff-members do not carry

weapons and have no authority to arrest or detain anyone against their will.

White Bird requires its counselors to have education or work experience in crisis counseling, social services and emergency medicine. The organization offers its services at no cost.

"CAHOOTS is a valued partner," the City of Eugene stated in a 2020 report, which went on to say that CAHOOTS "provides a needed service within the community."

The City of Eugene funds CAHOOTS through its police department. Statistics available online looked at fiscal year 2018

(July 2017 to June 2018). At that time, the contract budget for the CAHOOTS program was approximately \$798,000.

This money funded 31 hours of service every day, seven days a week. One CAHOOTS van was on duty 24 hours a day and another provided shift overlap coverage 7 hours per day. The report stated that Eugene has increased funding to add more hours of service.

The 2020 fiscal year budget included an additional \$281,000 on a one-time basis to add 11 hours of coverage to the existing CAHOOTS contract, bringing the 2020 total to \$1.07 million.

Mayor Shares Updates on Several Subjects

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft

We remember

Alameda's Memorial Day ceremony returned this year - scaled back, but capably organized by Alameda resident and veteran Joe LoParo. We can never fully repay the debt of gratitude we owe the American service members who gave their lives for our country, but we can honor their sacrifice by upholding the ideals of liberty, justice, and equality they died protecting. We must also continue to ensure the best possible care for our veterans, including access to medical and mental health services, housing, education, and jobs.

Alameda's history is intertwined with the military. The former Naval Air Station Alameda, in operation from 1940 to 1997, is now being redeveloped as Alameda Point; it was fitting that the first housing to be completed at the former Navy

base was Corsair Flats, a 60-unit apartment building for low-income seniors, including 28 units reserved for formerly homeless veterans.

Welcomes and farewells

We are also home to Coast Guard Base Alameda, and an officially designated "Coast Guard City." Last week, Base Alameda held a Change of Command ceremony to honor Capt. José Peña, Commanding Officer for the past three years, as he retired after 27 years of service, and transferred command to Alameda resident Capt. Jacqueline "Jackie" Leverich.

The Coast Guard has been a valuable community partner during the pandemic, assisting at the Alameda Food Bank and Oakland Coliseum mass vaccination site, and helping fight Northern California wildfires. As COVID-19

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Outage Delays Publication

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The staff at the *Alameda Sun* was unable to meet our press deadline for the first time in almost 20 years. The server that holds the items necessary to assemble the paper could not connect to the computers.

The *Sun* would like to thank David Ceccarelli at our press, San Francisco Media Company, for

allowing us an extra day to print the paper.

We would also like to take our hats off to the folks at Eon Technology for diagnosing our problem and especially to the people at our phone company, Langinners, for going the extra mile to make certain we could meet our new press deadline.

Concert Celebrates West End Healing Garden



Maurice Ramirez

Jason White (of Pinhead Gunpowder & Green Day) performs at Webster Street's healing garden. The event is the first Tiny Towns Outdoor Concert Series, hosted by the Ivy Room and Fireside Lounge. Visit the garden at Webster Street and Taylor Avenue. Another concert is planned for this Saturday, June 5.

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