



## Police Chief Retires



Photo credit: City of Alameda

### Sun Staff Reports

Alameda Police Department (APD) Chief of Police Paul Roller announced his retirement from the department Wednesday, July 22.

"Being the Chief of Police here has been the honor and opportunity of a lifetime," said Police Chief Roller in a press release published on the City of Alameda website. "After 31 years and family and friend discussions, I had made the personal decision to retire back in January."

Roller has been with APD since April 1992. He was named interim chief of police on June 1, 2013 and was appointed the position permanently on Nov. 17, 2013.

During his time with APD, the Alameda native held several different positions in many different departments. He worked as a patrolman, on the Violent Crimes Unit and the Youth Services Section.

He was also a Field Training Officer and member of the Crisis Negotiation Team. Roller was promoted to sergeant in 2002, spending additional time in patrol and supervising the APD Jail, Identification Section, and Property and Evidence.

Roller was promoted to lieutenant in 2009 and then to Captain in 2011. In 1997 he was awarded the Department Medal of Merit for his actions following a violent bank robbery in March of that year.

"I am proud of the progress and many accomplishments that APD has enjoyed over the past seven years, but the time is right for me to move on to the next chapter of my personal and professional life,"

said Roller. Before joining APD, Roller was an Investigator for the State of California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control from 1989 to 1992.

Roller's retirement comes while the department is being investigated for the detainment of Alameda resident Mali Watkins on May 23. Watkins was dancing in front of his home when he was approached by officers and during the encounter was taken to the ground by several officers. The well-publicized incident has drawn media attention nationwide and criticism locally. The incident, along with the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, sparked several protests in Alameda. Following unrest by residents, Roller called for APD officers to stop responding to calls concerning people with mental health issues. However, city officials stopped that plan. Roller did ask for and was granted an outside investigation into the incident. City officials praised Roller's tenure as chief of police and his dedication to the department and the city.

"I appreciate the dedication that Chief Roller has shown towards both the community and the Alameda Police Department during his tenure," said City Manager Eric Levitt.

## COVID-19 Testing

Ekene Ikeme

Alameda's COVID-19 testing site has been plagued with temporary shutdowns and confusion since it began operating Wednesday, July 22.

CityHealth Urgent Care, a healthcare organization based in San Leandro that is conducting Alameda's COVID-19 testing site, temporarily shut down the site on July 24. The site, at 300 Wind River Way, has transitioned from a walk-in testing format to an appointment-only format a day after the testing site opened. The company was bombarded by people seeking coronavirus tests on its first day of operation, according to the City of Alameda. The city announced in a press release, "the testing site saw attendance beyond expectations." The organization announced plans to administer up to 500 tests per day, however, CityHealth said it administered more than 1,000 tests on the first day.

There is testing currently being conducted at The Research Park site inside the Marina Village Business Park. Vehicles can be seen entering the curbside testing site. It is most likely testing is being administered to people who made appointments before the appointment feature was disabled. CityHealth announced it would



Zac Bowling

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There were also unforeseen health insurance issues on the first day of testing, according to the City. "Simultaneously, there was an unanticipated and unfortunate issue with liability insurance coverage," according to the City.

CityHealth shut down operations because of the two problems.

"To allow for the site to be reconfigured to ensure safe and efficient testing and to address insurance issues, the new facility is temporarily pausing operations," according to the City.

CityHealth declared that testing would be free for anyone with proof of insurance. CityHealth is billing the insurance provider of people who take the test. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is covering the cost of COVID-19 testing for those who do not have insurance.

CityHealth initially said testing would run through Sept. 22. It is unknown if CityHealth will schedule new testing appointments.

The City of Alameda is just a facilitator in helping the site open and does not run the testing operations.

## East End Neighbors Are Fed up with Speeders

Larry Freeman

Alameda residents on Garfield Avenue made a statement on July 27, calling on motorists, city officials and the Alameda Police Department (APD) to take steps to curb speeding drivers and the area's all-too-frequent stop-sign runners.

Garfield neighbor Frank Filici recently snatched a 6-year-old from the street as the youngster chased a runaway ball that skirted between cars into the street. A speeding driver in a silent electric vehicle drove by, heedless of the young man or his ball. This inspired Filici to ask several neighborhood youngsters to sketch a chalked appeal and body images outlines on the pavement.

One of the children in the photo, Milo Smith, and his mother, Kelley Smith, were nearly struck a week earlier in a nearby crosswalk after the driver of a speeding delivery truck blew through the stop sign at the intersection of Garfield Avenue and Fernside Boulevard, a busy artery on the East End that has lost much of its former traffic enforcement over the years.

"I am especially concerned because Garfield is a thoroughfare for students who bike and walk to Edison School in one direction and Lincoln Middle School in the other," said Kelley Smith.

In another incident a delivery truck nearly hit two people on the street. The truck driver slammed on the brakes and careened, out of control at Garfield and Fernside. The truck skidded through three crosswalks. It raised up on its two left wheels, nearly toppling over into the center of the intersection. The driver barely missed plowing into the stop sign post and a power pole across the street. He left 40-foot-long, tire marks before speeding away.

A driver, who had stopped at the scene, blew his horn at the truck to



Larry Freeman

Parents look on as youngsters dramatize the need for drivers to slow down on Garfield Avenue.

no avail. Thankfully the errant truck and its carefree driver did not hit any vehicles, pedestrians or bicyclists. "If someone had been in the wrong place at the wrong time, a serious or fatal injury would have occurred," one of the witnesses said.

The unmarked truck never stopped and was gone in no time, too late for anyone to get a license plate or identify the driver. Alameda Police Officer Eric McKinley arrived and took a report on scene about 30 minutes after the incident, too late to apprehend the driver who might have been subjected to a reckless driving charge at the officer's discretion.

While McKinley was taking his report, three more drivers — either oblivious or indifferent — ran the same stop sign even though the

uniformed officer stood in plain view on the corner. At one point McKinley called out "Stop sign!" to one driver who looked blankly at him and drove on.

"We've grown tired of seeing all the speeders on Garfield where kids often play and ride," said Wesley Smith, mindful of the two truck incidents and a myriad of others in the vicinity.

Residents on Garfield plan to petition City Hall and Public Works to put speed bumps on Garfield to slow drivers or dissuade them from using the street as a shortcut from High to Fernside. Neighbors also plan to call for other protective measures on Fernside.

They also hope that APD will step up traffic enforcement in the area.



U. S. Coast Guard photo; Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Giles

## Hail and Farewell: Coast Guard Holds Change of Command

United States Coast Guard Rear Adm. Brian K. Penoyer joined Vice Adm. Linda L. Fagan and Rear Adm. Peter W. Gautier in a properly distanced salute on Coast Guard Island on Thursday, July 23, during a change-of-command ceremony. Fagan presided over the ceremony that marked Penoyer replacing Gautier as commander of the Eleventh Coast Guard District.



Jimmy Olson

## No Sign of Andrew Jackson

Jimmy Olson

City Workers recently removed the sign that had defined Jackson Park. In 1895, the city opened "Alameda Park" on property that once belonged to local railroad baron A. A. Cohen. In 1909, the city renamed the park for President Andrew Jackson. The city's Recreation and Parks Commission voted to rename the park. A new name has not yet been chosen.

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July 31	6:12	20:19
Aug. 1	6:13	20:18
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Aug. 3	6:14	20:16
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