

Vol. 13 No. 16  
January 16, 2014

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**HOMETOWN**

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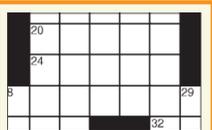


All the doings of Island law and safety personnel



**SPORTS**

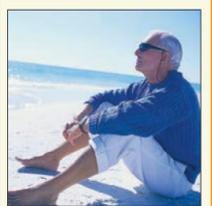
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Wonder Woman rewards low net score of 2013.



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Sharpen your pencils for the crossword and sudoku!



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Be sure to take the time to breathe right.



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Island writer, Oakland artist team up to pen comic series.

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**Alameda Sun Almanac**

Date	Rise	Set
Today	07:23	17:14
Jan. 17	07:23	17:15
Jan. 18	07:22	17:16
Jan. 19	07:22	17:17
Jan. 20	07:21	17:19
Jan. 21	07:21	17:20
Jan. 22	07:20	17:21



Ana L. Gonzalez

The 106-year-old commercial building at Park Street and San Jose Avenue remains in disrepair almost 10 months after a fire took its toll on the structure.

## Repairs Due in Springtime

Burned building appears on the mend

Ana L. Gonzalez

Almost 10 months have passed since the three-story commercial building at 1201 Park St. caught fire on March 26, 2013. Other than boarding up the windows — the owner has yet to make any repairs. Business owners on Park Street are questioning when the deteriorating structure will see new life.

"I think it's an eyesore for Park Street business owners and shoppers," said Laurie Sargentini, who owns Aphrodite's Closet. Sargentini was leasing ground-floor space in the 1908 building at Park Street and San Jose Avenue when its top floor burned. Flames spared Sargentini's inventory, but it did suffer water and smoke damage. She questions safety at her now-abandoned former storefront. She said that mold is growing inside the building. She believes that the mold is a bio-hazard and that the owner is doing nothing about it.

Julie Siemens Baron, who owns Julie's Coffee and Tea Garden, just down Park Street, said that she believes that the weather can play a role in how the building might continue to deteriorate. "I'm concerned about the rains coming, and what could happen to the building. Mold can set in. (This is) dangerous for pedestrians," she said.

Sargentini said that broken windows remain in disrepair. She said that the owner has just covered them with plywood. In addition, pieces of wood have been falling off the roof onto the sidewalk; something that she said puts those visiting Park Street in danger.

Realtor Joe Snell at Gallagher & Lindsey that manages the property said the owners are really good people. He said that they have been working on getting permit approvals from the city and on getting their insurance company to move forward with refurbishing the building.

"We are shooting to start construction at the end of March or beginning of April," said Snell. He called the building "historic," and said that as a result, "you are going to have some delay."

Alex Nguyen, assistant city manager, said that the property owners did receive a permit last March to repair the gable, but they haven't made any repairs yet. "We are about to send them a notice to encourage them to complete the repairs," Nguyen said.

The *Alameda Sun* reported that a fire broke out on the upper level of the building, and dispatch sent the Alameda Fire Department (AFD) to the scene around 2:37 a.m. It was one of four fires that firefighters faced that day. ("Fires keep AFD, APD Busy," March 28, 2013).

When asked about the current situation at the building, AFD Capt. Jim Colburn said that he didn't have any information about repairs. It's up to the owners now to decide when repairs will start, he said.

Sargentini believes that time is of the essence. "We are trying to build up this area," she said. "But not having this building repaired affects not only businesses, but also people."

"Look at the street. It's time to take care of it," Siemens Baron said.

## Governor Proposes Expanding Districts Sought for Alameda Point Development

Michele Ellison  
The Alamedan

Gov. Jerry Brown may help City Hall attain one of its key legislative objectives this year: Reclaiming the right to use property taxes to help finance the redevelopment of Alameda Point.

In a budget plan released last Thursday, Jan. 9, Brown began backing off his 2011 elimination of the state's redevelopment program. His plan offers to expand the use of existing special districts that allow cities to leverage future property taxes for military base reuse.

Specifically, Brown is proposing to expand the use of infrastructure financing districts, a seldom-used tool that has been in place since 1990. Under existing rules, cities and counties can put the districts in place to issue bonds — paid off with future property tax revenues — to fund highway, transit, water, sewer and flood-control projects, as well as libraries, parks and child-care facilities. The districts can only be put in place after winning the assent of two-thirds of affected voters, and they cannot use taxes that would otherwise go to schools.

"This proposal will help ensure the new tools are available for key local priorities such as urban infill, transit-oriented development and the provision of affordable housing," Brown stated in his budget proposal, which lists other items cities could use the districts for if lawmakers approve his proposal.

Brown is proposing changes that would allow the districts to be set up to fund the new uses with the approval of 55 percent of voters, along with any cities, counties or special districts that would lose property tax funds if a district is put in place.

Brown had nixed California's redevelopment program to help

close the state's deepening deficits; his budget proposal projected that the elimination of redevelopment freed up more than \$4 billion the state will use to help cover its school funding obligations through 2015. But the state has also faced more than 100 lawsuits over lawmakers' decision to end the program and the state's handling of the wind-down — lawsuits Brown said could put \$3 billion "at risk."

The redevelopment program also attracted criticism as cities used money diverted from schools, counties and special districts to help build shopping malls and other sales tax generators, instead of focusing the dollars on fighting blight and building affordable housing. But Brown said his proposal would protect money for schools and give the other entities a vote, while limiting how diverted taxes can be used.

The city official overseeing redevelopment efforts at the Point was cautiously optimistic about the proposal Thursday, saying city officials are examining it in further detail.

"In general, we are glad that the governor is opening the door to (expanding use of the districts), especially for military bases, and hope that this will help us redevelop Alameda Point," Alameda Point Chief Operating Officer Jennifer Ott said.

About a third of Alameda was in a redevelopment area before the program was shut down, including Alameda Point and Alameda Landing, which is still seeing some ben-



Courtesy photo  
Gov. Jerry Brown

**About a third of Alameda was in a redevelopment area before the program was shut down.**

efits from the program. City leaders have approved one of two special taxing districts for Alameda Landing that will fund roads, parks, police and other services by charging the development's property owners extra taxes to fund them.

City leaders eager to redevelop the Point — and to find money to cover the \$650 million new roads, sewers and other infrastructure it will cost — have been working with legislators on bills to expand the use of the districts to include former military bases. But Ott said it's not yet clear how much money could be raised by a district set up under the new rules Brown is proposing.

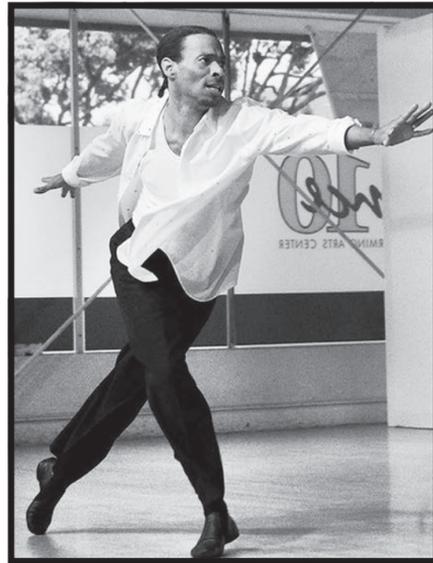
A recent study of the budget impacts of developing Alameda Point showed that it would not cost the city additional money to provide services there — unless a financing district that consumes property taxes is set up. City policy requires Point development to be "fiscally neutral," so setting up a special district could force the city to levy extra assessments — which Ott said would cut into the funding Alameda could raise for development.

"We will have to understand the economics of every project to determine whether it makes sense to use an (infrastructure financing district)," Ott said. "That said, we will be happy to have another tool in our toolbox."

Read more Alameda news at <http://webh.it/alamedasun>.

## Beloved Dance Instructor Passes Unexpectedly

Ekene Ikeme



The Alameda performing arts community is mourning the sudden and tragic death of a dance instructor. Alameda High and Dance 10 Performing Arts Center Instructor Bryant Cash-Welch died unexpectedly last Thursday, Jan. 9, of a heart attack.

Cash-Welch, 48, taught hip-hop, jazz and musical theater at Dance 10, 900 Santa Clara Ave. "We are all saddened by this loss but we know that his youthful energy and spirit will live on forever at Dance/10," read a statement from the studio to its students and their parents. "He has been an integral part of Dance 10 for over 15 years."

Cash-Welch has an impressive resume to go along with his work at Dance 10. He performed with such notable names as Whitney Houston. He was also a choreographer whose credits include *West Side Story* (Harmony Players & Co, 1999), *Babes in Toyland* (Bay Area Educational Theater Co., 2001), *Grease* (Head Royce Academy, 2003) and *Hairspray* (St. Joseph Notre Dame).

A website has been created to collect donations in his honor. Visit [www.giveforward.com](http://www.giveforward.com) and search for Bryant Cash-Welch.

**LOCAL DEATHS:** Page 10

## News in Brief

**Sun Staff Reports**

**Chief's Daughter May Be Next American Idol**

The dulcet tones of Rachel Rolleri, 17, daughter of Alameda Police Chief Paul Rolleri, can be heard nationwide tonight, as the *American Idol XIII* auditions in San Francisco will air as part of tonight's show at 8 p.m. on Fox channel 2.



Courtesy photo  
Rachel Rolleri

The Danville resident, whose father protects and serves the Alameda public, sings and plays acoustic guitar before the show's three judges, performing a rendition of "Stay" by Sugarland.

Fans will have to tune in tonight to find out if she'll advance to the main show taped in Los Angeles.

Learn more about Singer-Songwriter Rolleri at [www.rachelrolleri.com](http://www.rachelrolleri.com).

**Alameda Troop honors new Eagle Scout**

Troop 73 of the Alameda Boy Scout Council held an Eagle Scout Court of Honor Jan. 10 for local resident Kevin Mercado. Mercado earned the honor in 2012 but

the ceremony recognizing the achievement was delayed until last week.

For his Eagle Scout project, Mercado organized and ran a used bike drive for Changing Gears Bike Shop at Alameda Point, collecting more than 100 bikes at three locations in town on Earth Day.

Mercado thanked his scout leaders, scout parent committee, fellow scouts and the community of Alameda for their support. Kevin just finished his first semester at UC Berkeley.



Courtesy photo

Scout Master Chris Freck awards Scout Kevin Mercado the Eagle Scout neckerchief he earned in 2012.

**Schools Can Warn Clean Water Grant Money**

The Clean Water Program (CWP) of Alameda County is looking to fund projects in local schools to educate students and teachers about the connection between storm drains and local creeks, wetlands and the Bay.

The program will review projects that raise awareness about keeping water healthy and clean while also reducing the littering behavior of students.

CWP is looking to fund multiple projects, each focused on a specific age group. Proposals for \$10,000 or more per project and school year will be considered, for a total of up to \$125,000 per year, for up to four years.

Eligible organizations include for-profit and non-profit groups, as well as government agencies.

Submit proposals by March 17.

To find out more about the program, visit [www.cleanwater-program.org](http://www.cleanwater-program.org)

## Duo Plead Guilty to Alameda Bank Heist

**Sun Staff Reports**

Two men entered a guilty plea for armed bank robbery in federal court in Oakland last Thursday, Jan. 9.

In their plea agreement, Calvin Earl Odom, Jr., 25, and Craig Goatley, 27, admitted to robbing the Citibank at 1526 Webster St. on Aug. 2, 2013, according to the U.S. Department of Justice spokeswoman Lillian ArauzHaase.

According to the plea agreement, Odom, of Berkeley, entered the bank first, pretending to be a customer and interacting with a bank employee in the customer area. Goatley, of Oakland, entered the bank next and stood in the teller line. When the teller called Goatley to come forward, he brandished what appeared to be a handgun, but was actually a pellet gun, and demanded money. The teller and the neighboring teller handed money over to Goatley.

While Goatley was robbing the tellers, Odom pulled out what appeared to be a black handgun, but was also a pellet gun, and told the bank employee with whom he had been interacting with that this was a robbery and not to move. The two men fled the scene with \$8,869, according to plea documents.

The two men were arrested on separate charges after a high-speed chase in a stolen car driven by Goatley on Aug. 14. Witnesses identified both suspects and Goatley was in possession of a cell phone with messages on it potentially referring to the robbery and photos taken of stacks of dollar bills, the complaint said.

Odom was identified as a suspect in the robbery after he left a note at the scene with his fingerprints on it. Odom was also indicted for the June 3 attempted robbery of a Mechanics Bank branch in Berkeley, but did not plead to that robbery last Thursday.

The two men were indicted on Oct. 10. Goatley and Odom will be sentenced on April 10 before U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers. The maximum penalty for armed bank robbery is 25 years in prison and because they will go to a federal prison they will serve the entirety of their sentence with no chance of parole.

A joint investigation by the Alameda Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations led to the arrests and Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian C. Lewis prosecuted over the case with assistance from Janice Pagsanjan.