

# Alameda Sun



Locally Owned, Community Oriented

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**Alameda Sun  
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**Date Rise Set**

Today	06:55	17:51
Feb. 20	06:54	17:52
Feb. 21	06:52	17:53
Feb. 22	06:51	17:54
Feb. 23	06:50	17:55
Feb. 24	06:48	17:56
Feb. 25	06:47	17:57

## Board Makes Interim Supe's Job Permanent

McPhetridge appointed on his birthday

**Michele Ellison**  
*The Alamedan*

Alameda Unified School District's (AUSD) board of education voted on Tuesday, Feb. 10, to give Interim Superintendent Sean McPhetridge some birthday presents: a new contract and a shorter title.



Courtesy AUSD  
**Sean McPhetridge**

The board voted unanimously to offer McPhetridge the school district's top spot on a more permanent basis, removing the word "interim" from his title and approving a \$220,000-a-year contract that went into effect the following day. Feb. 10 was McPhetridge's 50th birthday.

"I'm humbled, and I'm honored, and I'm thankful and I'm grateful to this city, and to the people who work in these schools," McPhetridge said. "I hope I continue to pass the audition."

McPhetridge also won the unanimous support of AUSD's employee unions, whose leaders all came out Tuesday to urge the board to make him the district's permanent chief. They called him honest, accessible

and caring. They praised him for rebuilding relationships with the community and district staff.

"He has brought heart back into AUSD," said Karen Keegan, president of California School Employees Association Local 27.

McPhetridge signed on as the district's interim superintendent last August, two weeks after his predecessor, Kirsten Vital, left to run the Capistrano Unified School District and two weeks before the start of the school year.

McPhetridge started working for the school district in 2000, when he left a job teaching at San Quentin State Prison and took one as instructional vice principal at Alameda High School. He also served as AUSD's director of secondary and career technical education and principal of the Alameda Science and Technology Institute early college magnet high school. He been credited with saving that school from closure.

McPhetridge's contract will remain valid through June 30, 2018, — with an automatic, one-year extension if McPhetridge gets a satisfactory job evaluation. It includes benefits and premium pay for his advanced degrees.

Read more Alameda news at [www.thealamedan.org](http://www.thealamedan.org).



File photo

Birds take refuge in the Elsie Roemer Bird Sanctuary as oil booms help corral an oil spill on San Francisco Bay in this 2010 photograph.

## Refuge, Retreat: Elsie Roemer's Legacy

**Klaus Mitterhauser**

In 1965, the Golden Gate Audubon Society began working with Alameda conservationist Elsie Roemer to stop the Utah Construction and Mining Company from filling in salt marshes on Bay Farm Island. Conservationists, including Roemer, worked to preserve some of these marshes, including one along the shores of San Francisco Bay at the southern end of Broadway. When developers wanted to purchase this marsh, the East Bay Regional Park District stepped in and made it a part of Crown Beach.

In 1979, Roemer's friends approached the district and asked that it create a bird sanctuary on the marsh and name it for Roemer. The Alameda Sun presents, in two parts, writer Klaus Mitterhauser's description of his experiences at this sanctuary.

**Part one**

The city of Alameda harbors a bird sanctuary and saltwater marsh for all to enjoy. A visit to this place near the intersection of Broadway and South Shore Drive is particu-

larly enjoyable. Here, the 24-hour cycle of ebb and flow of the tides on San Francisco Bay offers an ever-changing contour of sand dunes along Alameda's shore.

This natural phenomenon attracts hundreds of shore birds here. During low tide, the beach may stretch out half a mile into the bay. Tiny lagoons and puddles remain along the two-mile long beach. Small streams form, and then run back into the bay. The gentle surf laps on the sand and sculpts a wavy appearance mixed with crushed sea shells. Piles of sea weed and tang lay in clumps. Footprints of joggers and hikers mark the wet sand along with feathers, drift wood and abandoned sand castles.

Here, hundreds of sanderlings, the smallest species of sand pipers — the size of sparrows — fly in swarms along the water's edge and land in elegant choreography to feed. They scurry so fast across the sand that their thin legs become invisible to the observer as they pick tiny shrimp or other aquatic morsels. Every so often the flock rises, curves along the water in synchronized squadrons and lands again to repeat the feeding frenzy.

Sea gulls of various sizes and colors sit, sleep or cruise the sky, forever hungry, looking to feed on scraps of food or even garbage. I arrive with my bag of bread crumbs,



East Bay Regional Park District

Elsie Roemer in a photo taken in 1979, the year the East Bay Regional Park District named the bird sanctuary for her.

and the fight starts at once both on the ground and in the air as I throw the food.

Screaming and hovering two feet above my head, the gulls keep greedy eyes on me while doing aerial acrobatics to catch the crumbs. On the ground the older gulls flutter and peck at each other while young and more agile birds grab it first. The elder birds stand back screeching in protest as soon as the crumbs hit the sand.

Next time we'll get up close to the sanctuary's pelicans, cormorants, geese and egrets.

## News in Brief

**Sun Staff Reports**

**High Street Bridge Closes for Repairs**

The Alameda County Public Works Agency will begin repair work on the High Street Bridge on Monday, March 2. The bridge will close to traffic Monday through Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The county expects to complete the work by April 27.

The work is also expected to affect maritime traffic. The county urges boaters to consult the Coast Guard's weekly notices to mariners. Detour signs will be in place to guide motorists. The schedule is subject to change. Up-to-date information is available online at [www.acgov.org/pwa/updates/high-park\\_bridge\\_project.htm](http://www.acgov.org/pwa/updates/high-park_bridge_project.htm)

**Toastmasters Compete This Month**

The Island City Toastmasters Club will be conducting a table topic contest and tryouts for the International Speech Contest at its Monday, Feb. 23, meeting at Waters Edge Lodge, 801 Island Drive.

The meeting takes place from 7 to 9 p.m.; the public is welcome to attend and observe speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training.

The Table Topics Contest speeches are shorter, impromptu presentations lasting one to two minutes. Each contestant speaks on the same surprise topic. The results are often humorous.

The International Speech Contest proceeds from the club level up through three levels to the World Championship of Public Speaking. This event is held each August at the Toastmasters International convention. Contestants prepare an original, often deeply moving presentation lasting from five to seven minutes.

For further information about Toastmasters, email Mari Clark at [toast57@prodigy.net](mailto:toast57@prodigy.net).

**Spirits Alley Could Win Travel Award**

In a brand-new contest, the city of Alameda's newly designated "Spirits Alley" neighborhood has been named a finalist for the "Best Municipal Makeover" award. In its inaugural Sunset Travel Awards Contest, *Sunset Magazine* chose Spirits Alley as one of five finalists for the category.

Spirits Alley is a neighborhood of well-known distilleries and wineries that now occupy a row of historic airplane hangars at the former Alameda Naval Air Station. Since the base closed in 1997, the hangars had been under-utilized as places for light-industrial and warehousing businesses.

"We are fortunate that artisan wineries, distilleries and a craft brewery have located here, recognizing the natural beauty of Alameda Point and embracing our history as a Naval Air Station," said Mayor Trish Spencer. "Their success, along with complementary food establishments, brings renewed vibrancy to the Point. We are proud of their recognition as one of the top visitor attractions in the Western U.S."

Visitors enjoy world-class views of the San Francisco skyline while touring the distilleries and visiting the tasting rooms at Spirits Alley, including: Hangar 1 Vodka, Rock Wall Wine Company and Faction Brewing Company.

The travel award winners will be announced in May and featured in the June 2015 issue of *Sunset*. The finalists were selected from nominees covering the 13 western states as well as British Columbia and Alberta, Canada. For more information about the travel awards, visit [www.sunset.com/travel/sunset-travel-awards](http://www.sunset.com/travel/sunset-travel-awards).

## Local Deaths

### Rita Jean Albright Scott

July 10, 1922 – Feb. 13, 2014

Rita Jean Albright Scott, a 92-year resident of Alameda, passed away peacefully on Friday, Feb. 13, in Roseville, Calif., after a long illness. She was born on July 10, 1922, to Viola Mae and George Clark Sutherland. Her brother, Jack, from Moraga and sister, Betty Friedrich, from Alameda preceded her in death.

Rita loved people, parties and her home town. Family was everything, and she was blessed abundantly. She married her high-school sweetheart, Lloyd "Mif" Albright. They had a daughter, Carol Davis (Dick) and a son Steven (Teresa). They gave her nine grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

Mif and Rita were devoted to golf. Mif served as a golf commissioner. It was his dream to have a course in Alameda that — in addition to the two 18-hole golf courses — all levels of golfers could play.

Sadly, Rita lost Mif much too soon. He died in December 1979. One week after his death the Alameda City Council voted to proceed with the construction of a par-3 golf course and to name the course for Mif.

**LOCAL: Page 5**

## Mystery Goo Identified

**Sun Staff Reports**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife announced that the mysterious gray goo that killed 170 seabirds along the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay last month contained a mixture of non-petroleum-based fats and synthetic oils. These include silicone fluids, tung oils, resin, as well as edible and inedible seed oils from plants. The department stated that its

researchers have not yet determined the source of the material, which had degraded to a sticky, thick consistency that was very difficult to remove from the feathers of the affected birds. It severely compromising their ability to stay warm, float, fly and locate food.

The investigation continues. The department asks that anyone with information on the incident, call CalTIP at 888-334-2258.

## Retirement Community Model Homes Open

**Sun Staff Reports**

Oakmont of Mariner Point, a luxury senior living community, invites the community to view model homes specifically designed to serve Alameda County's aging population. The community, located at 2400 Mariner

Square Dr., is scheduled to open for move-ins this spring and is now accepting reservations. Onsite walk-in and scheduled appointments are welcome from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week.

Oakmont of Mariner Point

## Hospital to Focus on Overdue Bills

**Michele Ellison**  
*The Alamedan*

The Alameda Health Care District board of directors have voted to change Alameda Hospital's budget. At its Feb. 2 meeting the board voted to use \$1.9 million in parcel tax funds to pay down overdue bills. The decision more than doubled the \$841,197 originally allocated for that purpose last October. The directors also voted to use parcel tax money to pay off a \$405,000 loan from the Alameda Hospital Foundation. The non-profit foundation was established in 1985 to raise and manage funds to support Alameda Hospital's mission.

Alameda Hospital CEO Bonnie Panlasigui pointed out that the foundation has committed up to \$200,000 toward projects like refurbishing the hospital lobby. The foundation agreed to forgive \$25,000 in interest due.

Panlasigui said that paying down old bills will ensure that supplies the hospital needs keep flowing and reduces anxi-

ety about whether the hospital will have beds and other supplies it needs.

The hospital has \$7.7 million in overdue bills, about \$5 million of them 120 days old or older, a presentation to the board showed.

Alameda Hospital's affiliation deal with Alameda Health System came with a caveat: The \$5.8 million a year Alamedans pay in parcel taxes can only be spent here on the Island. This year's budget marks the first time that a specific budget for the \$298-a-year tax was spelled out.

This year's parcel taxes are also being budgeted to pay off a \$1.5 million loan plus interest from Alameda Hospital's new parent company, Alameda Health System.

Board president Mike McCormick asked for more details on the accounts payable expenses so that he can be assured the money isn't leaving Alameda.

Read more Alameda news at [www.thealamedan.org](http://www.thealamedan.org).