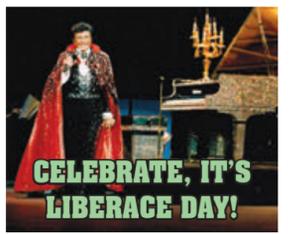


Alameda Sun



Locally Owned, Community Oriented

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INSIDE

HOMETOWN

Fire Wire
page 2

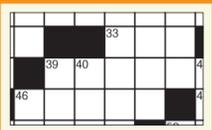
Police Blotter
page 3

All the doings
of Island safety
& law personnel



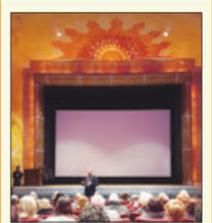
SPORTS

Spring Preview Page 8
Get the lowdown on softball,
other local sports teams.



PUZZLES

Crossword Page 7
Sharpen your pencils for that
famed newspaper tradition.



HOMETOWN NEWS

Shallow Waters Page 10
Documentary discussed
difficult Alameda history.



LOCAL HAPPENINGS

Events Calendar Page 9
Oscar Night fundraiser slated
along with other local events.

CONTENTS

- HOMETOWN NEWS...** 2
- OPINION** 4
- CLASSIFIED** 6
- PUZZLES** 7
- SPORTS** 8
- LOCAL HAPPENINGS** . . 9

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Alameda Sun Almanac

Date	Rise	Set
Today	07:11	17:35
Feb. 5	07:10	17:36
Feb. 6	07:09	17:37
Feb. 7	07:08	17:38
Feb. 8	07:07	17:39
Feb. 9	07:06	17:40
Feb. 10	07:05	17:41

Body Found in Estuary is Wife of Filmmaker

Sun Staff Reports

The body of a Berkeley woman who had been missing for six days was found floating in the Oakland Estuary last Thursday, Jan. 28.

The body of Diana Gail Hajisaari, also known as Gail Saari, was located by the Oakland Police Department Air Support and Marine units about 2:45 p.m. that Thursday in a tidal canal behind homes on the 3300 block of Fernside Boulevard. Family members reported Gail missing on Friday Jan. 22.

A man told police he saw her disrobe and get into the water around noon on Jan. 22, the day family members reported her missing, while he was at the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Park, which is not far from the Estuary. The witness told police he thought she was going for a swim.

The man who saw her get into the water did not tell authorities about it until the next day when he saw fliers that had been posted about her disappearance. Extensive searches had been conducted both by boat and aircraft and an Oakland police helicopter crew spotted the body in the water Thursday afternoon.

Gail, 62, was a publications editor at the Independent Institute, a non-profit, scholarly research and educational organization which sponsors comprehensive studies on political economy. She left her office on Swan Way in Oakland

about 10 a.m. Jan. 22, leaving behind several personal items such as her purse, keys, phone and inhaler, according to reports.

Before working at the Independent Institute, Gail was the managing editor for CMP Media and Backbeat books where she produced trade books on music, digital video and computer engineering. She had also lived and worked in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of

Malaysia, for several years where she was managing editor for *Malaysian Nature Society* magazine, according to her resume on gail-saari.wordpress.com/resume. She received a Bachelor of Arts from University of Tennessee

and a Master's degree in Arts in International Affairs from Ohio University.

Gail is the wife of Malaysian filmmaker U-Wei Saari, according to the Malaysian newspaper, the *Rakyat Post*. He is also known as Zuhir bin Saari. Saari has 10 film credits, according to imdb.com, including his 1995 film *Kaki bakar*, which was the first Malaysian film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. Saari is the first Malaysian director to be invited to show at the prestigious Directors' Fortnight at Cannes.

Saari declined to respond to comment, according to several Malaysian media outlets, but did leave a short statement to Bernama.com, a national news agency in Malaysia that said, "Thank you and call for prayers for her."



Eric J. Kos

Local officials and members of the public gathered on Park Street last Saturday to dedicate a new public bench honoring former Alameda Unified School District board president and commissioner on disability issues, Nielsen Tam.

New Bench on Park Street Honors Tam

Disability commissioner, school board pres. remembered

Sun Staff Reports

The 1300 block of Park Street features a new public bench styled to make rising from it easier for seniors and people with disabilities. The bench was dedicated with a plaque honoring longtime community member Nielsen Tam.

Tam served on the Alameda Unified School District board from 2008 until his death and as its president from 2013. He also sat on the city's Commission for Disability Issues. He passed in May 2015.

Fellow commissioners, Mayor

Trish Spencer and Councilwoman Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft spoke in memory of Tam. Commissioner Elizabeth Kenny said the new plaque in his honor "belongs here, at the heart of our community."

Tam's community service included stints on the boards of the Alameda Food Bank, Girls Inc. of the Island City, the Alameda Point Collaborative, the Alameda Multicultural Center and the Boys & Girls Club of Alameda. He was also active in the Buena Vista United Methodist Church and the

Alameda Soccer Club.

Tam's wife, Judy joked at Saturday's dedication that he had contributed to so many local charities he had to hide some of them from her.

The bench located outside 1323 Park St. features extra tall legs allowing easier access for those with limited mobility.

To communicate with the city's Commission on Disability Issues, write to disabilitycomm@alameda.ca.gov, or call Kerry Parker, City Staff Liaison, at 747-7930.

Point Lagoon Ferry Service in Limbo

Richard Bangert

The new residential and commercial developer at Alameda Point has set aside \$10 million toward the construction of a passenger ferry terminal at the Seaplane Lagoon. The Bay Area's ferry agency — the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) — however, has made it clear there is currently no funding to operate a ferry there.

WETA "will entirely exhaust its available operating subsidies on an annual basis, relying upon projected increases in ridership and fares to cover increasing operating costs for existing services," stated a draft 10-year short-range transit plan that WETA issued in January for public comment. "WETA's ability to increase service levels and meet future demand for ferry service will be restricted until new regional or local sources of operating subsidy are secured," the draft stated.

WETA's revenue picture is more limited than other regional transit agencies, such as BART. In WETA's case, half of its operations funding comes from fares. Most of the other half—\$15.3 million—comes from bridge tolls through Regional Measure 2, which was passed in 2005. A Harbor Bay parcel assessment funds 10 percent of the Harbor Bay service

WETA will be receiving about \$1 million a year from the 2014 voter-approved Measure BB transportation sales tax. But it won't help expand ferry service. Instead, WETA will keep those funds in reserve to cover inflationary operating expense increases and events that increase these expenses like the Super Bowl or a transit strike, according to Kevin Connolly, WETA's manager of planning and development.

BART, on the other hand, receives more than 70 percent of its operating budget from fares. Revenue from close to 20,000 parking spaces at BART stations is the largest source of non-passenger fare revenue. It also receives funds from a regional sales tax and a regional property tax, both of which increase over time.

WETA does not charge for parking on the roughly 600 parking spaces that it has direct responsibility for; a parking fee charged at the Vallejo Terminal goes to the city of Vallejo, rather than to WETA. In addition WETA receives no property tax revenue; sales tax revenue is limited to the token amount from Measure BB.

"When WETA was formed in 2009, there wasn't a good understanding of the cost of operations and expansion," said Connolly. "The structural

WETA will be receiving about \$1 million a year ... but it won't help expand ferry service.

deficiency with the bridge toll funding is that it's a set amount, and it does not escalate over time." He pointed out that as the years roll on, the \$15.3 million that comes from bridge tolls loses its value in terms of dollars due to inflation.

"It gets to a point where fares are covering an increasing amount, or we're increasing fares a lot," he said. "The ferry service could be priced out of reach of most people and only be available to people with high incomes. The solution is to either fix the existing funding to allow an escalation with inflation so it maintains real value, or find another funding source."

New ferry service out of Richmond, scheduled to begin in 2018, is one example of bringing in a new source of revenue. Last year, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority pledged \$38 million toward the operating costs of the Richmond-to-San Francisco ferry service over the next 10 years. New boats to provide the service will be purchased with the help of \$12 million in bridge toll funds awarded by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and \$30 million in state grants.

Treasure Island ferry service, also scheduled to begin in 2018, will be funded by the project itself with its 8,000 residential units, hotels and commercial space. Part of the funding will come from a vehicle toll to exit that island.

Connolly suggests that emergency response funding could help underwrite WETA's ferry operations. WETA gets emergency response funding for facilities, such as its maintenance facility at Alameda Point. But it receives no operations funding for maintaining the ferry system's emergency readiness.

"We're tasked to do it," said Connolly, "but there's no funding attached to it. So, that could be a source." About 20 percent of operations relates to emergency preparedness, according to Connolly.

Newly available California Cap and Trade funds from greenhouse gas emissions are a potential source of funding that WETA is looking into.

The city and the current mixed-use developer are studying the costs to build the proposed Seaplane

Lagoon passenger ferry terminal. "The operating expense will be about the same as Harbor Bay ferry service, a little more than \$3 million a year," said Connolly. "Plus, there is the cost of a new vessel."

WETA's draft 10-year plan provides an overview of service and performance, along with projections of capital, operating expenses and revenues for the next decade. Preparation of the plan is a requirement of the Federal Transit Administration and is updated every two years. WETA is seeking public comments by Friday, Feb. 19 at sanfranciscobayferry.com/weta/srtp.

Jennifer Ott, chief operating officer for Alameda Point, said that the city is working on an agreement with WETA regarding the proposed Seaplane Lagoon ferry, and she could not disclose details. Ott said that she is hoping to bring the draft agreement to the city council in mid-March for approval.

Richard Bangert posts stories and photos about Alameda Point on his blog, AlamedaPointEnvironmentalReport.wordpress.com.

Petersen Takes Plea Deal

Dennis Evanosky

In the early morning hours of Sept. 28, 2014, officers from the Alameda Police Department (APD) arrested Stephen Petersen and charged him with arson. APD suspected Petersen of having a role in setting a series of arson fires that plagued the city earlier in that same evening. The Alameda County District Attorney dropped all charges against Petersen on Oct. 31, 2014.

While investigating Petersen for his alleged role in the fires, police reportedly found child pornography on his computer. The discovery precipitated a new investigation that led to new charges. Petersen turned himself in at the Hayward Police Department in February 2015 and was released on bail.

Negotiations between the Alameda County District Attorney and Petersen and his attorney led to the brokering of a plea-deal agreement. Petersen signed the agreement last Thursday, Jan. 28. The next day, Petersen stood before a judge and pleaded guilty to possession of obscene matter. He listened as the judge imposed the agreed-upon sentence: three years' probation and a requirement to register as a sex offender.

Contact Dennis Evanosky at editor@alamedasun.com.

Maya Lin Wins NFL Challenge

Dennis Evanosky

Players from the Oakland Raiders and representatives from the National Football League (NFL) visited Maya Lin School on Tuesday to reward students there for winning the Super Bowl Play 60 Challenge, a fitness program developed by the NFL and the American Heart Association.

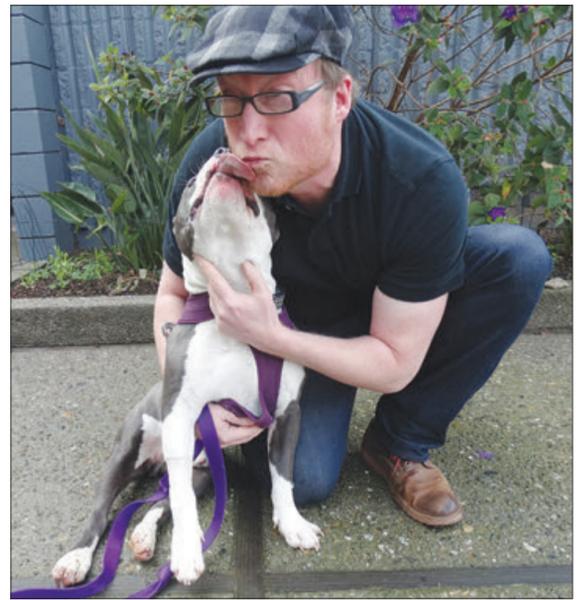
Maya Lin fifth-graders completed more minutes than 12,000 other students who participated in the program in seven Bay Area counties. The Maya Lin students also showed the most enthusiasm, an NFL source said.

On Tuesday morning, players from the Oakland Raiders will be available, NFL representatives, and the Raiders' youth mascot, the dancing Raider's

helmet, helped lead an assembly and clinic for the students.

Maya Lin School will receive a \$2,500 NFL Play 60 grant from the NFL and American Heart Association to help support the school's health and fitness education efforts.

In the course of the challenge, the students committed to getting 60 minutes of exercise both during and after school. Teachers led the exercise in class and logged the total minutes students completed. The challenge is part of the league's larger NFL Play 60 program, designed to tackle childhood obesity by getting kids active through in- and after-school, and team-based program, as well as online child-targeted outreach on NFLRush.com.



Be an Angel and Kiss Poe

Courtesy photo

Above, Alameda resident Les Hilger kisses Poe after paying for the privilege. Hilger's organization, Alameda Support Foundation, donated \$5,000 to the Angel Fund for sick and injured animals at the Alameda Animal Shelter. Poe has a neurological condition, but he'll still be in the kissing booth at the Fireside Lounge, 1453 Webster St., from 2 to 6 p.m. on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, when a donation to the Angel Fund will earn you a kiss from Poe.