

# Alameda Sun

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**Alameda Sun Almanac**

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## Pedestrian Deaths Spur Anxiety

Dennis Evanosky

Two pedestrian deaths over a 12-day span have put Alameda on edge. On Jan. 31 an alleged drunk driver struck and killed a pedestrian on Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway. When officers from the Alameda Police Department (APD) arrived, they arrested the driver. Police learned that the state of California had suspended his driver's license. They also learned that the driver had taken the car allegedly involved in the death without the owner's permission.

Eleven days later, Alameda Fire Department (AFD) firefighters and paramedics responded with APD to a report of a collision at Encinal Avenue and Walnut Street. When they arrived, they discovered that an automobile had struck a 60-year-old pedestrian. Paramedics transported the victim to the hospital, where she later succumbed to her injuries.

The collisions that caused both these deaths remain under investigation.

The current rash of pedestrian-involved accidents in Alameda stretches back to last September, when automobiles struck seven children walking or riding bicycles on Alameda's streets. The following month, six-month-old twins and their mother escaped injury when an automobile crashed into their Lincoln Avenue home. The driver of the SUV had lost control while trying to avoid colliding with another vehicle.

In November 2019, the Alameda City Council adopted a resolution establishing Vision Zero as the

City's guiding principle for transportation planning, design and maintenance. The city plans to complete a Vision Zero Action Plan early next year that includes specific actions and policy changes to increase street safety in Alameda.

"A variety of tools can help drivers slow down," the city states on its website. Most of these tools involve what the city calls "the three E's": engineering, enforcement and education. The city is aiming to slow traffic "in order to improve safety for people who walk, bike, drive or use public transit."

Last year, the city completed a traffic-calming project — a "road diet" — on Main Street between Pacific Avenue and the Main Street Ferry. This West End project added bike lanes, converted the street from four lanes into two with a center turn lane and improved traffic-signal timing.

The Alameda Sun joins Frank Muñoz in inviting Island City residents to a town-hall meeting from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 5, in the multi-purpose room at Love Elementary School, 2025 Santa Clara Ave.

Vice-Mayor John Knox White and Councilmember Jim Oddie will moderate the meeting, which will focus on traffic and pedestrian safety. Hear from city staff on recent safety improvements across the Island, priority intersections for work happening throughout the year, as well as long-term safety projects. Questions and comments are welcome.

Contact Dennis Evanosky at [editor@alamedasun.com](mailto:editor@alamedasun.com).



The VA parking lot at Alameda Point will have solar canopies similar to the ones in this photo of the parking lot at Abbott Diabetes Care on South Loop Road in Harbor Bay Business Park.

## VA Plans to Use Oil

Underground fuel storage tank to help heat Point facility

Photo & story by Richard Bangert

Using fuel oil for heating is so yesterday, yet that is exactly what the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) plans to use for its heating system at its proposed facilities at Alameda Point. The heating system for the VA's medical clinic and offices, as currently proposed, will utilize a boiler system heated by fuel oil. The VA Project Manager, Kelvin Slaton, recently confirmed that the VA will be installing an underground fuel oil storage tank for boilers and

a backup generator. Slaton did not respond by press time as to why the VA did not choose a solar-powered, electric-heat pump.

One reason for not choosing an electric heat pump could be the high electricity demand of heat pumps. This makes the pumps more costly to operate compared to heating with natural gas or fuel oil. But the VA has enough land at Alameda Point to set up a small solar facility with battery storage for its own facilities and even sell the excess power.

The VA's 2013 federal environmental impact report said that its clinic building would be super green, with LEED certification. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. It would meet this standard in part, said the report, by use of a 90 percent efficiency boiler. Today, seven years later, it is hard to imagine a project in California in 2020 claiming to be green while burning fuel oil, especially when greener alternatives are available.

**The VA's 2013 federal environmental impact report said that its clinic building would be super green ...**

The 2013 environmental report gave a token nod to solar power by saying 10 percent of the VA's electricity demand would be supplied by solar panels on parking lot canopies. But why stop there when they have so much land and the added upfront costs for solar panels and batteries could be partially offset by selling excess electricity?

The solar facility could be located on the land set aside for an 80-acre columbarium that will be built in phases over the next 100 years. The first phase of the cemetery will use 20 acres. Thereafter, roughly six acres of columbarium niches

VA: Page 3

## AB5 Raising Hackles

Eric J. Kos

Nonprofit arts organizations in the Island City have raised alarm over the passing of Assembly Bill 5 (AB5) aimed at leveling the playing field of the gig economy. The impact of the bill on arts organizations, freelance artists, writers and musicians has been expensive.

Alameda's performing arts group since the 1930s, Altarena Playhouse — known as Northern California's longest-running performing arts venue — has expressed concern over its future; the diverse offerings of Rhythmix Cultural Works are threatened; Island City Opera canceled its 2020 season.

"I recently created the Coalition of Community Artists," wrote Altarena Board President Becky Davis. "This informal union of more than 40 nonprofit community theaters and other performance art companies in California seeks a two-year grace period to create a separate set of clauses regarding employee status for the industries represented by our members."

Davis expressed concern that AB5 could cause the closure of hundreds of small, nonprofit community theaters and other performance art organizations across the state, like Island City Opera. According to Davis, one nonprofit community arts group that was in operation for more than 50 years did just fold.

"Nonprofit community arts groups were simply not adequately funded to comply with AB5's dras-

tic increase in employment costs on such short notice," wrote Davis. "These changes are increasing budgets anywhere from 15 to 40 percent to much more. These kinds of increases are devastating for small-to-medium nonprofits."

Davis created an online survey for people to send information or concerns at <https://forms.gle/XqH5pb5o5jWT2Mdc6>.

Any arts nonprofit interested in joining the coalition may contact Davis at [becky.davis@altarena.org](mailto:becky.davis@altarena.org).

## APD Now Accepts Texts at 911

Sun Staff Reports

Cellular users within Alameda city limits now have the ability to text emergencies to Alameda Police Department's (APD) Communication Center. Texting is an option when it is unsafe to use one's voice to make a 911 call, if unable to speak due to an emergency or for the hearing or speech impaired.

**How can I contact 911?**

Always make a voice call, text if unable. When contacting 911 in the event of an emergency, initiating a voice call is always preferred. The tone of voice, background noise (yelling, threats, gunfire, etc.), instantaneous responses and other vital details in a voice call can assist in rendering appropriate aid, updating emergency personnel and be used as critical evidence in the future. If the situation does not allow for a voice call, then a text is appropriate.

**How do I text APD?**

To initiate a text conversation with 911 dispatchers, compose a new text and type 911 into the recip-

ient field. Then describe the emergency and location and press send.

**Can I text APD for non-emergency concerns?**

No. Please reserve 911 lines for emergencies only. Non-emergency texts received will be directed to call APD's non-emergency line at 337-8340 before having an officer dispatched.

**Do all cellphone carriers have the ability to text 911?**

All members of the "big four" (Verizon, Sprint, AT&T and T-Mobile) have Text-to-911 capabilities. Cricket customers share the AT&T network while MetroPCS customers share the T-Mobile network. All other customers should check with their carriers on Text-to-911's availability.

**What if I live here, but my phone is not registered here, or I don't live in Alameda?**

As long as the text originates from any covered cellphone within city limits, the message will be

sent to APD. For alternative cities, please contact that agency directly. Text-to-911 will deploy statewide by Jan. 1, 2021.

**Can I send pictures?**

No, Public Safety Answering Points in California are not receiving pictures (multimedia) at this time.

**Can I text in any language?**

No, translation services are unavailable at this time. Please text in English.

**What are the limitations to texting 911?**

- Do not send short message codes, emojis or acronyms like: lol, btw, smh, etc.
- Location accuracy varies by carrier and cannot pinpoint exact

## Support AMOW at Two Upcoming Events

Sun Staff Reports

Alamedans have two opportunities — one tonight, and one next month — to support Alameda Meals on Wheels' (AMOW) efforts. AMOW is a locally-funded, seven-day-a-week program that has been delivering hot, nourishing meals to Alameda residents since 1973.

Each day, holidays included, volunteers deliver a mid-day meal to more than 140 Alameda residents of all ages who need assistance — whether due to recent surgery or hospitalization, because they aren't able to get out to grocery shop, or because they can't cook their own meals. Subscribers pay on a sliding-fee scale, based upon their ability.

**Dine & Donate**

A "Dine & Donate" fundraising event sponsored by East Ocean Seafood Restaurant, takes place tonight, Thursday, Feb. 20. Dine any time between 5 and 9 p.m., and the restaurant will donate 15 percent of its dine-in sales. Enjoy a seafood dinner while helping those in need.

East Ocean is located at 1713 Webster St. For more information, call 865-3381.

**Community Champions Week**

The month of March will mobilize hundreds of local Meals on Wheels programs across the country to reach out to their communities and build the support that will enable programs to serve America's seniors all year long.

The 18th annual March for Meals campaign gives businesses, organizations, elected officials and neighbors who contribute in their communities an opportunity to support homebound seniors in a variety of ways. Community Champions Week gives community members a chance to see how Meals on Wheels delivers more than just a meal.

To join AMOW for Champions Week March 16 through 20, and deliver a meal alongside an experienced volunteer, contact Rosemary Reilly at [alamedamow@aol.com](mailto:alamedamow@aol.com) or call 865-6131.

**Or just donate**

Can't attend, but still like the idea of donating to Alameda Meals on Wheels?

Visit [www.alamedamealsonwheels.org](http://www.alamedamealsonwheels.org) to make a secure donation online.



## Photo Exhibit Opens Next Thursday

Sun Staff Reports

A new exhibit of images from local photographer and member of the Alameda Photographic Society, Phillm, opens Thursday, Feb. 27, at 7 p.m. in the West End Library, 788 Santa Clara Ave. *Life through the Imperfection of a Plastic Lens* displays photographs taken with a Holga plastic toy film camera. The artist will discuss the value of embracing mistakes, the joy of the analog process and the power of letting go. For more information, call 747-7767, or see [www.alameda.ca.gov/library](http://www.alameda.ca.gov/library).

Courtesy photo  
 Alameda shutterbug Phillm uses a Holga camera. The Holga is a medium-format, 120-film camera, made in Hong Kong, known for its low-fidelity aesthetic.