

Alameda Sun

IT'S
CESAR
CHAVEZ
DAY!



Locally Owned, Community Oriented

Vol. 15 No. 27
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#120 by JoAnnRadin-Sinako

Alameda Sun Almanac

Date	Rise	Set
Today	06:56	19:31
April 1	06:54	19:32
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April 3	06:51	19:34
April 4	06:50	19:34
April 5	06:48	19:35
April 6	06:47	19:36

Renters Start Petition for Ballot Measure

Coalition to put rent protection before Alameda voters

Dennis Evasosky

The Alameda Renters Coalition (ARC) has begun a petition drive to collect the necessary 6,461 signatures to put its ballot Initiative — The Alameda Renter Protection and Community Stabilization Charter Amendment — on the November ballot. The coalition, which filed the initiative with the city on Feb. 29, is aiming to collect 9,000 signatures. ARC is attempting to use the ballot initiative to amend the City Charter in response to what it defines as “a crisis of mass evictions and average rent increases of more than 50 percent over a span of only four years.” (“Renters Turn up the Heat,” March 3).

According to ARC’s outreach coordinator Brad Hirn, the coalition began its signature drive last Saturday with more than 30 trained volunteers. “We are holding additional trainings every week. We plan to blanket the city,” Hirn said.

ARC dates back to founder Angela Hockabout’s getting priced out of her rental home in 2013 with a \$450 per month rent increase. She felt like she had nowhere to turn, so she founded the coalition to help provide information and moral support for renters experiencing similar crises and to advocate for renters’ needs.

Almost overnight, Hockabout’s coalition became a central player in the debate over rising rents with a hotline for renters in crisis, connections to services and the real estate community, as well as a Facebook page to discuss rents issues.

“The Alameda Renters Coalition began when renters looking for support on Alameda-related

The coalition points out that the new ordinance “subjects renters, once again, to the threat of no-cause evictions.”

Facebook groups found only trolls and landlords,” ARC says on its website.

The members of the newly formed organization “saw a need for an online meeting place for renters only to get support and resources in an immediate fashion from those who have endured tenant-landlord difficulties. In its first three months the group grew from three to nearly 250 members.

The coalition saw a need to amend the City Charter. The City Council recently drafted and approved a rental ordinance. The coalition, however, has taken issue with some of its clauses. For example, the coalition is calling for rent increases that are tied to a relevant measure of inflation. ARC objects to the city ordinance because it places no cap on rent increases, but initiates a review process when a rent increase is more than 5 percent.

The amendment, now in its signature-gathering stage, would force landlords to tie rent increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rather than raising rents on a percentage basis. “We have consistently called for a rent cap at 65 percent of the Bay Area CPI, in line with numerous other California cities,” the coalition stated in a commentary that appeared in two parts in the

Alameda Sun (“Renters Weigh in on Recent City Ordinances,” Feb. 11 and 18).

Further the coalition is calling for a law that would apply to all rental units — from two-unit rental properties to larger buildings and complexes, including those specifically exempted by state law, like single-family homes.

ARC takes exception to a relocation benefit exemption for “mom-and-pop” property owners who own 4,648 or 28 percent of Alameda’s rental housing. “An exemption for these landlords will create a large separate group of tenants deprived of benefits available to other tenants,” ARC stated in the commentary. “This outcome would have the opposite effect of a tenant protection.”

The coalition also points out that the new ordinance “subjects renters, once again, to the threat of no-cause evictions. ARC also objects to what it calls a “poison pill” in the ordinance that allows landlords to escape all eviction controls by simply issuing a fixed-term lease.

The amendment proposed in the ballot initiative looks to Santa Monica’s 37-year-old rent control ordinance for inspiration. ARC modified and added to that ordinance and crafted one that fit Alameda’s circumstances.

ARC is also looking to the community for financial support. “People have been very generous and we have more than \$3,000 in donations so far,” said the coalition’s fundraising director Monty Heying, ARC has set up a “gofundme” page at www.gofundme.com/alameda-renters.

Contact Dennis Evasosky at editor@alamedasun.com.

Missing Alamedan Faces Bankruptcy Dismissal

Dennis Evasosky

John N. Beck II now faces dismissal of his Chapter 7 bankruptcy case. As it does with all people who file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, the court required Beck to at-

tend a mandatory hearing called the meeting of creditors.

The meeting would have allowed the trustee and Beck’s creditors to ask him questions under oath about his bankruptcy

papers and financial affairs.

When Beck failed to appear at a Feb. 9 meeting of creditors, Judge William Laverty continued the hearing, in effect rescheduling it. Beck has not been seen since Feb. 9 (“Alameda Man Disappears,” Feb. 19).

The court set a second hearing date of March 8. Beck again failed to appear, and the court immediately filed a request to dismiss the case.

If the courts grant the dismissal Beck’s creditors would be allowed to contact him about the debt owed to them. Beck’s creditors include the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which holds a \$113 million judgement against him.

The FTC filed a complaint against Beck in 2009 accusing him of running a get-rich-quick scheme. The courts found in favor of the FTC in 2012 and handed down the \$113 million judgement. Beck then filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. He converted the case to Chapter 7 last October.

See more about this case in “John Beck Still Missing as Case Unfolds,” March 3 and “Local Fails to Appear in Court — Again,” March 18.

Contact Dennis Evasosky at editor@alamedasun.com.



United States Coast Guard

Bertholf Seizes Drugs, Semi-submersible

Sun Staff Reports

The U.S. Coast Guard announced Monday that on March 3, Coast Guardsmen from the Cutter *Bertholf*, which is stationed in Alameda, seized more than 12,800 pounds of cocaine and apprehended four suspected drug smugglers from a self-propelled semisubmersible (SPSS) about 300 miles southwest of Panama. This seizure marks the second SPSS interdiction by the Coast Guard this fiscal year and the fifth such interdiction since June 2015.

Sun Staff Reports

Ferry Meeting Next Thursday

The Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) board of directors will be discussing ferry issues related to Alameda Ferry Service at 7 p.m., next Thursday, April 7, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 2263 Santa Clara Ave.

WETA operates ferries around the San Francisco Bay, serving the cities of South San Francisco, Vallejo, Alameda and Oakland. To learn more, visit: <http://sanfranciscobayferry.com/weta>.

American Sign Language at Altarena

Thanks to a grant from Bank of Marin, Altarena Playhouse in

Alameda will offer an American Sign Language-interpreted performance of its hit show *The Gin Game* on Friday, April 1.

The play will feature Dane Lentz, ASL Performance Interpreter. Visit www.altarena.org/ASL for more information.

April is National Poetry Month

All are welcome to join in the National Poetry Month celebration of California’s first Poet Laureate, Ina Coolbrith. The 150th anniversary of her birth and the centenary of her laureateship at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition will be commemorated at an open reading of the Alameda Island Poets First Wednesday poetry event, Wednesday, April

6, at Books Inc. on Park Street 7 to 9 p.m.

Open mic follows at this National Poetry Month Celebration presented by Alameda Island Poets. The event is free and open to the public.

Meet Your Councilman

Councilman Tony Daysog will hold his regular “last-Thursdays-of-the-month office hours” Thursday, March 31, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Blue Danube Cafe at 1333 Park St. He will be available to answer questions and offer comments on city issues.

Daysog will also be at the Farmer’s Market the following Saturday, April 2, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Contact Daysog at 747-4726 or tdaysog@alamedaca.gov.



Priscilla Fife

Bristling Vessels Escort Ferries

Sun Staff Reports

A United States Coast Guard Defender Class boat outfitted with a 7.62 mm machine gun accompanied ferry boats plying the waters between San Francisco and Alameda last week. Since the terrorist attacks in Belgium on March 22 the Coast Guard has been randomly escorting ferries on the bay. Petty Officer 2nd Class Barry Bena said that the escorts by the Coast Guard Island-based Maritime Safety and Security Team are tied to the terror attacks in Belgium and are purely preventative.

Frank Bette: The Man Behind the Art Center

Dennis Evasosky

Many people who stop by the Frank Bette Center for the Arts are curious about the history of the big golden yellow building at the corner of Paru Street and Lincoln Avenue. They also ask about the man behind the center.

According to Alameda Museum curator George Gunn, the architectural and construction firm of Hyde & Cox built 1601 Paru St. in 1894 for grocer William A. Gunn (no relation to George). The 1896 Polk-Husted Directory listed William as living at the address. In *An Architectural Guidebook to San Francisco and the Bay Area*, architectural historian Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny refers to 1601 Paru St. as the “Gunn Building.”

In *Documentation of Victorian and Post-Victorian Buildings in Alameda*, George Gunn notes that the year before they built the commercial structure at 1601 Paru St., Hyde & Cox built the residence at 1725 San Jose Ave. Contemporary records also show Hyde & Cox built at least one house in Berkeley.

By the mid-20th century Alfred Huntoon was using the building as an appliance repair shop. In 1962, Frank Bette purchased the building and converted it to suit his antique refinishing business.

Frank Bette was born “Franz Josef Bette” on May 26, 1903, in Siedlinghausen, Germany, about 175 miles east of Cologne. He lived in Siedlinghausen until he immigrated to the United States, leaving for America aboard the *Bremen* on April 1, 1927.

Bette went to Chicago, where

he lived with his maternal uncle, cabinetmaker Rudolf Schieber, on Winthrop Street. The 1930 census shows that Bette had Americanized his first name from Franz to Frank. On April 19, 1933 he applied for American citizenship.

Bette was still living in Chicago when he registered for the draft on Oct. 1, 1942. He listed his profession as a “skilled painter.” He served in the Air Force during World War II, working as a mechanic fashioning wooden propellers. After the war he settled in New Orleans, where he lived until 1949. He next moved to

San Francisco, where he found a job as a furnisher refinisher for Gump’s.

The 1957 telephone directory listed Bette as living in a flat above the businesses on the 1000 block of Central Avenue, between Weber and Ninth streets. He opened his first shop on that block. Five years later Bette purchased 1601 Paru St.

Bette died on June 5, 1999, just eight days after he celebrated his 96th birthday. He bequeathed his building “to be a place for meetings, readings, showings and other creative doings.” Seventeen years have passed. Were Bette to see how artists are using his building today, he would be pleased.

Bette rests at the Centerville Pioneer Cemetery in Fremont. A street at Alameda Landing bears his name.

Learn more about Frank Bette at www.frankbettecenter.org/the-frank-bette-legacy.html. Learn more about the Frank Bette Center for the Arts at www.frankbettecenter.org/the-frank-bette-center.html.

The center is currently at a crossroads in its history. See the letter from the board on page 4.



Adam de la Torre

Frank Bette

Support Fight against Cancer

Sun Staff Reports

American Cancer Society Relay for Life of Alameda is hosting two fundraisers in one this Saturday, April 2, at the Eagles Hall, 2305 Alameda Ave. The community is invited to enjoy dinner downstairs for \$15 or the “Relay around the World Fundraiser” upstairs for \$10 (\$5 for those who enjoyed dinner downstairs).

Dinner, a choice of New York steak, salmon or chicken, will be served from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Reservations are recommended and can be made by emailing strauss.mj@gmail.com

or by calling 521-3264. The fun-raiser upstairs is from 7 to 10 p.m. with a no-host bar. Raffle and silent auction with great prizes donated by local businesses. Live music will be provided by Alameda’s own Afterglow from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

These events will raise funds for the Relay for Life of Alameda, a 24-hour family-friendly community campout taking place June 25 to 26 at Encinal High School track. All proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society. To learn more, visit www.relayforlife.org/alamedaca.

Doolittle Walk on Tap

Sun Staff Reports

The Alameda Naval Air Museum is commemorating the 74th anniversary of the Doolittle Raiders with a history walk, lecture and lunch on Saturday, April 2.

The event is open to the public. It will kick off at 10 a.m. and finish by about 2 p.m. Visitors will begin with registration at 10 a.m. At 11 a.m. they will depart for the runways, via caravan or bike, where they will be updated on the Veteran’s Administration plans for a VA Hospital and Columbarium and

learn about the endangered Least Terns that nest on the old runways.

At noon, eventgoers will take a quick break for lunch, and shortly after will listen in on a question-and-answer session with historian Marshall Davis on the Raiders, Jimmy Doolittle and his interview with David Thatcher, one of two surviving Raiders.

The event is \$20 per person and just \$10 for museum members. The Alameda Naval Air Museum is located at 2151 Ferry Point. For more information, call 522-4262 or email tellus_anam@aol.com.