



INSIDE



HOMETOWN NEWS

Fire Wire Page 2
Police Blotter Page 9
 All the doings of Island safety & law personnel



GOOD DEEDS

Classes adopted Page 4
 Education foundation helps support local teachers.

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THE PUZZLES PAGE

Sudoku & more Page 4
 Sharpen your pencils for that newspaper tradition!



SPORTS

Jets Downed Page 5
 Season over for West End's football superstars.



WEST END NEWS

Visit with Santa Page 11
 North pole resident to drop by Webster Street soon.

CONTENTS

- HOMETOWN NEWS... 2
- THE CITY PAGE... 3
- PUZZLES & KIDS... 4
- SPORTS... 5
- OPINION... 6
- CLASSIFIED... 7
- LOCAL HAPPENINGS... 8
- POLICE BLOTTER... 9

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 News: (510) 263-1470
 Ads: (510) 263-1471
 Fax: (510) 263-1473

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Alameda Sun Almanac

| Date | Rise | Set |
|---------|------|-------|
| Today | 7:09 | 16:50 |
| Dec. 6 | 7:10 | 16:51 |
| Dec. 7 | 7:10 | 16:51 |
| Dec. 8 | 7:11 | 16:51 |
| Dec. 9 | 7:12 | 16:51 |
| Dec. 10 | 7:13 | 16:52 |
| Dec. 11 | 7:14 | 16:52 |

Voters Pass Drain Fee

Ekene Ikeme

The City Council will certify the Water Quality and Flood Protection Initiative at its Dec. 17 meeting after Alameda property owners voted in favor of a fee hike.

The initiative is designed to help finance increased costs of the city's storm-water system. After months of studies and community meetings the city mailed property owners a ballot to vote on the initiative on Oct. 10. The deadline to return the ballot was Nov. 25. The city tallied all the votes on Nov. 26 and concluded that 57 percent of Alameda property owners voted "yes" to approve the initiative. The measure needed a simple majority to pass. Only Alameda property owners voted on the measure because the fee would be imposed on property taxes.

If the measure failed the city's Public Works Department would have had to eliminate or significantly cut existing programs such as street sweeping and storm-drain maintenance.

"It means we don't have to think about some of those difficult decisions anymore," said Alameda Public Works Director Liam Garland.

The new plan will increase property taxes of homeowners of com-

mon-sized properties (.08 to .14 acres) by \$78 per year. Homeowners of small properties (less than .08 acres) will see an increase of \$43.73 annually, while homeowners of large properties (more than .14 acres) will see an increase of \$85.07. This will be added to the \$56 per year property owners already pay for the Clean Water Program. Property owners of apartments, commercial buildings, office space, churches and more will also see an increase determined by how many acres they own.

Since 1992, Alamedans were charged a fee that financed the city's storm-drainage system. But the fee of \$56 had not increased in about 15 years, according to a city report. This led to an annual deficit of \$1 million as costs increased. The city also has at least \$30 million in high-priority unmet needs including pump stations and pipes from the 1940s and earlier," according to a study from the city. The fee increase will provide the city an additional \$2.9 million in storm drain funds, according to the report.

The increased fee will fund repairs and new pump stations, which is vital to combat potential flooding as sea levels rise; improve lagoon systems, enhance street sweeping procedures and maintain and install new trash capture devices. These devices are key to keeping the shoreline free of trash and other debris.

Trash-capture devices are connected to a catch basin, a drain that collects rain water, underneath the road surface. Trash, leaves and other debris clog the drains. The trash capture device blocks trash and debris from entering the drain, while allowing the rainwater to flow through. Public Works employees then clean the trash and maintain the device four times a year. These devices range from \$500 to \$1,000 each, according to Garland.

The new fees will appear in the November 2020 property tax bill. In July 2020, city staff will make a mid-cycle budget adjustment accounting for the increased revenue from the new fee. The Public Works Department will also consider plans on how best to allocate the new revenue source.

The city's storm-water system is comprised of 11 pump stations, 26 pumps, 126 miles of storm drains, two lagoon systems, 278 outfalls, 2,879 catch basins and 1,967 access holes. It also includes the more than 200 miles of curbs and gutters that assist with storm-water runoff.



Ray Velasco, an Alameda resident and avid surfer who cleans up plastic litter on the shoreline, displays the plastics he culled from San Francisco Bay over the past nine months. Velasco is glad the fee passed and new trash-diversion functionality will be added to Alameda's storm drains.

Help Spread Cheer this Holiday

Volunteer to visit the elderly locally

Sun Staff Reports

For the holiday season in 2014, Ann Bloxberg found her holiday spirit in visiting local skilled nursing and rehab facilities right before Christmas to spread holiday cheer among the residents. At first she and her volunteers gave gifts to about 150 elderly folks. In 2018 her project had grown to reach more than 300. This year, she anticipates reaching as many as 400.

"I started this group when I realized, for the first time in my life, I'd be spending a Christmas without any family, including my kids," said Bloxberg. "While speaking to my mom, she mentioned that she was dropping off a few gifts at a nursing home and signing them simply, 'From Santa.' It got me thinking and I decided to outreach to local facilities to ask about getting gifts and spending time with elderly folks who didn't have any family."

Bloxberg then called several facilities and didn't get any calls back. Then one day, four facilities called at once, and the project grew from there.

"I didn't know how I'd be able to choose only a few people to give to, so I turned to social media asking for volunteers to visit and help donate gifts," she said. "A fantastic group of people came through — including Santa!"

According to Bloxberg, some volunteer families have shown up each year and have made the program a

part of their holiday family traditions. To volunteer time, donate gifts or create a new "Mission of Merriment" call (415) 515-5832 or visit www.presentswithpresence.org.

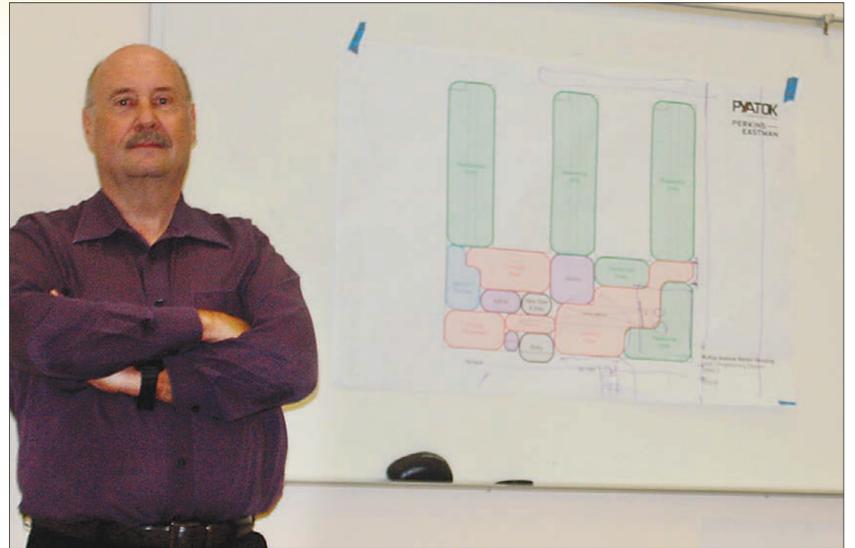
About Active Alameda

Elizabeth Recharte

On Nov. 7 the Alameda Main Library hosted the City of Alameda's Active Transportation Plan Open House. The well-attended event promised to be one of several held with the aim of acquiring feedback from the community on the state of biking and walking in Alameda.

Multiple tables covered with large maps allowed participants to circle areas of the city they felt needed special attention to become safer and more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. The audience was invited to add to a wall of suggestions in brightly colored markers. At one table, residents offered thoughts on the current state of biking or walking in Alameda. In one room, residents were asked for three adjectives. However, the same descriptor kept coming back over and over: Dangerous. The community came to agree, walking in Alameda is dangerous.

At the time of the open house, seven children had been reported



Alameda Point Collaborative Executive Director Doug Biggs invites the public to tour the future Alameda Wellness and Medical Respite Center on McKay Avenue this weekend. Above, Biggs stands in front of plans for the center still under review.

Center Open House Set for this Saturday

Sun Staff Reports

Alameda Point Collaborative (APC) is hosting an open house at 10 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 7, at the Alameda Wellness and Medical Respite Center on McKay Avenue. APC will present the draft Good Neighbor Policy and provide updates on the design and development of the project. A question-and-answer session will follow along with a brief tour of the facility.

This facility will not operate as

a homeless shelter, rather it will provide housing and general care for highly vulnerable homeless elders with complex medical conditions. In addition the center will care for homeless patients recently released from hospitals who have medically complex conditions or who are undergoing intensive medical treatment.

Once open, the center will function as a senior housing facility with medical services and recu-

perative care. It will also act as a resource center with offices for case workers and outreach workers to meet with newly homeless Alamedans and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Registration is requested but not required. Registration will help APC ensure that enough hand-outs and seats are available. To register, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/alameda-wellness-and-medical-respite-open-house-tickets-84015254889.

Two Solutions Could Tame Streets

Initiate 20-mph city-wide speed limit, car-free Saturdays?

Part three in a series

Dennis Evanosky

Like other cities across the nation, Alameda is facing a dilemma. Should the city consider further regulating motor-vehicle traffic so that pedestrians and bicyclists are safer? Or should the Alameda Police Department always enforce the existing motor-vehicle laws as vigorously as it did on Monday, Nov. 18, when its officers wrote 143 citations, 33 in school zones? Should doing this make headlines or become regular practice?

During its November meeting, the City and County of San Francisco's Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) approved a resolution to set the maximum speed limit in the City by the Bay at 20 miles per hour (mph). This resolution passed after PSAC heard and approved a resolution that supported an emergency declaration to take action against the "increased pedestrian fatalities and injuries in San Francisco." PSAC's resolutions will now come before the Board of Supervisors.

What good does lowering the speed limit to 20 in Alameda do



In 1971, the City of Munich, Germany, converted Kaufinger Street, one of its oldest and busiest thoroughfares, into a pedestrian zone. Charles Gate (Karlstor), center, leads to and from the heart of the city.

if the current 25 mph speed limit is not regularly enforced? Simply stand on one of Alameda's "get-out-of-town" streets: High Street, Webster Street, Otis Drive, Lincoln Avenue, Tilden Way and Park Street come to mind. Watch how many drivers flout the speed-limit laws on these thoroughfares.

I commute from Oakland using

High Street. When I started writing this series three weeks ago, I decided to strictly obey the 25 mph speed limit driving in Alameda. I've been tailgated, shrugged at and had headlights flashed at me. I pulled over twice to let the speeders go by. I watched as one nearly hit a pedestrian in the crosswalk at High Street and Santa Clara Avenue.

I am certain that many of these scofflaws are driving 40 mph on High Street. What would happen to that pedestrian if struck by car traveling 40 mph versus someone struck by a car traveling at the speed limit of 25 mph? In a road-calm project proposal, Patrick Siegman of Siegman & Associates, Town & Transportation demonstrated that a "small increase in roadway traffic speeds results in a disproportionately large increase in pedestrian fatalities."

For example the proposal showed that the driver of a car traveling at 40 mph, who sees a pedestrian in the road 100 feet ahead will still be travelling 28 mph on impact. On the other hand the study showed that a driver obeying the 25 mph speed limit would have stopped before the pedestrian was struck.

What would happen to a pedestrian struck with a vehicle traveling at 28 mph? Studies round the numbers down to 30 mph. They show that if the car in question was able to slow down to 30 mph, there still remains a 50 percent chance the collision would end the pedestrian's life.

Elizabeth Recharte is an Alameda resident.