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BACKYARD GROWING

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 Try and avoid the oak root fungus this holiday season.

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Alameda Sun Almanac

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Today	7:19	16:52
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Del Monte Project Rebooted

Sun Staff Reports

Real estate development and acquisition company Wood Partners announced on Monday that it plans to break ground for Alta Buena Vista, a 372-unit luxury mixed-use project at 1501 Buena Vista Ave., the site of the long-closed Del Monte Warehouse at the northeast corner of Sherman Street and Buena Vista Avenue.

The California Packing Corporation, or "Calpak," as it was widely known, built the 240,000-square-foot brick warehouse in 1927. Calpak named the building for its premium brand, Del Monte. Architect Philip designed most of the company's warehouses in the same style, one often referred to as "modernist brick."

Wood Partners states in its press release that it plans "a 10-acre community (that) will blend the old and the new, mixing

the existing six-acre historic brick Del Monte Warehouse — built in the 1920s — with new apartments and retail spaces designed by BAR Architects." The partners also state the Alta Buena Vista will be the largest budgeted development in their 20-year company history.

Tim Lewis Communities had originally planned to develop this property, but has sold it and the entitlements to Wood Development Company. Wood will be developing the property as originally approved by the city in 2014.

"The City of Alameda is thrilled to see the rehabilitation of this historic landmark finally underway and the construction of the much awaited, Clement Avenue extension behind the building," said City Planner Andrew Thomas, who also said the project will help relieve traffic congestion by removing truck traffic from Buena Vista Avenue.

News in Brief

Sun Staff Reports

Hospital Retrofit Gets Underway

The Alameda Health System (AHS) Board of Trustees and the City of Alameda Health Care District Board of Directors announced on Tuesday that they have approved the funding for seismic retrofit work for Alameda Hospital. According to a jointly released press release, the \$25 million project will assure that Alameda Hospital will meet state-mandated requirements that hospitals "retrofit, replace or remove acute-care services for buildings posing significant seismic risk."

The law required that California hospitals comply by Jan. 1, 2020, but the state's Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development granted Alameda Hospital an extension to 2021. AHS and the city's Health Care District entered into a joint powers agreement in November 2013. The following May, AHS took over operations at Alameda Hospital. The district

retains ownership of Alameda Hospital's real property and continues to oversee the parcel tax used for the hospital's operation.

Small Public Art Grants Pilot Program to Open in January

The City of Alameda Public Art Small Grants Pilot Program will kick off early next year with new funding opportunities for cultural events and physical art installations in Alameda. The program will provide small grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 to individual artists and arts organizations. All events and installations must be located within Alameda, in an accessible location, and free to the public.

Program guidelines and applications will be posted on the city's website on Jan. 2, 2020. Applications will be due in late February, and grants will be eligible for use starting May 1, 2020.

A program overview and question-and-answer session will be held Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, at 7 p.m. in City Council Chambers, 2263 Santa Clara Ave., third floor.

Island Joins Bird Count

Marjorie Powell

Because of geography, Alameda falls within the scope of the Golden Gate Audubon Society's Oakland Christmas Bird Count. The count takes place within a 15-mile-diameter circle centered in downtown Oakland. Alameda birders and others who join the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), are part of the Oakland Count. The Oakland Count started in 1938, took a few years off during World War II, and is now in its 79th year.

CBC began 119 years ago, in 1900, to replace the annual hunt competition and as an alternative to the killing of birds with fantastic feathers, which at the time, graced hats worn by fashionable ladies.

The count has become an annual tradition among birders from the northern tip of Canada, to the Drake Passage, to Antarctica. Local groups select a day between Dec. 14 and Jan. 5 for their count. Oakland's is always on a Sunday early in the count period. In addition to those who join a count group, some watch the birds in their own yards or bird feeders and submit those numbers.

The more than two dozen birders who counted birds in Alameda last Sunday were part of more than 300 birders who participated in the Oakland Count, which during several recent years has had the largest number of counters in the field of any CBC.

Alameda Wildlife

This year, birders in Alameda worked in two groups, led by Leora Feeney on the Main Island and by Rusty Scaif on Bay Farm Island, started at 7 a.m. and birded until some time in the afternoon. Many then adjourned to the traditional dinner, at which each group shared a report. Everyone cheered the new or rare birds seen and mourned the species that were not seen.

This year, birders saw more than 175 different bird species throughout the Oakland Count circle, some in large flocks; this is fairly consistent with past years. Highlights of the Bay Farm Island count included an orchard oriole, an eastern bird seen occasionally on the west coast, and a tropical kingbird. Both were first in 44 years for the count. The western Alameda team saw 22 snowy plovers on Crown Memorial Beach and three burrowing owls at the Alameda Wildlife Reserve at Alameda Point.

While the count totals are not yet final, as the leaders check and re-check the reports from their sub-groups, the total species seem higher than recent years, perhaps due in part to Sunday's excellent weather.

The total numbers of birds seen for each species are submitted to the nationwide CBC database and provide one valuable source of

☛ **BIRD:** Page 3



Volunteers gathered to count birds on the Main Island last Sunday as part of the Christmas Bird Count.



Courtesy The Ocean Cleanup

The Ocean Cleanup Returns Successful

Effort left from Alameda; collects first load of plastic

Sun Staff Reports

Above, CEO and founder of The Ocean Cleanup, Boyan Slat, reported on the success of his mission to experiment with methods of collecting plastic waste floating in the Pacific Ocean. Slat's project left from Alameda Point in fall of last year ("Ocean Cleanup Set to Launch," Sept. 4, 2018).

The Dutch nonprofit gathered the media in Vancouver this week to present 60 cubic meters of plastic collected for a press conference announcing the project's next steps. The plastic removed from the ocean will be recycled into products that will be sold to fund the remainder of the project. Descriptions of the recycled

products are forthcoming. To reserve an item in advance, for a \$50 donation, visit www.theoceancleanup.com.

"The clean up ... is not just a technical challenge, but also financial, because [with] international waters, there's not an owner of the Garbage Patch that sees the value in cleaning it," said Slat.

1973 Measure A Primer

Dennis Evanosky Part One in a Series

The five-and-one-half weeks between Feb. 7 and March 17, 1973, brought surprise, tragedy and change to Alameda. On Feb. 7, a U.S. Navy fighter-bomber crashed into the Tahoe Apartments on Central Avenue. On Tuesday, March 13, Alamedans went to the polls and passed Measure A, putting a damper on almost all real-estate development on both the Main Island and Bay Farm Island. Then four days after the vote, just after 10 p.m. Saturday, March 17, the fire department responded to a call that Porter Elementary School was on fire.

Of those three events, evidence of only one remains. The Tahoe is gone. The crash destroyed the apartment building. The Sycamore stands there today at 1810 Central Ave. The school is gone. It stood on today's Alameda High School campus not far from Oak Street and Alameda Avenue. The vote lives on, however, engraved in the City Charter as Article XXVI — 26 for those not versed in Roman numerals. The article reads:

"Sec. 26-1. There shall be no multiple dwelling units built in the City of Alameda.

"Sec. 26-2. Exception being the Alameda Housing Authority replacement of existing low-cost housing units and the proposed Senior Citizens low-cost housing complex, pursuant to Article XXV of the Charter of the City of Alameda.

Almost 20 years later, on March 5, 1991, Alamedans went to the polls again and added the following to Article XXVI:

"Sec. 26-3. The maximum density for any residential development within the City of Alameda shall be one housing unit per 2,000 square feet of land. This limitation shall not apply to the repair or replacement of existing residential units, whether single-family or multiple-unit, which are damaged or destroyed by fire or other disaster; provided that the total number of residential units on any lot may not be increased. This limitation also shall not apply to replacement units under Section 26-2."

Alamedans backing the vote for Measure A in 1973 included a group calling themselves, "The Committee of Concerned Citizens." Activists in the group included Inez Kapellas, who had unsuccessfully run for City Council in 1965; Joan Narahara, who had survived internment in Topaz, Utah, during World War II; and Frank

Ratto, a respected journalist and historian, whose family had lived on Bay Farm Island since 1905.

The 1973 vote changed Alameda's political landscape beyond the passage of Measure A. The results introduced a three-man slate to the City Council. The newcomers ousted their incumbent opponents by claiming that currently seated members favored uncontrolled growth in Alameda. Among the three victors was Chuck Corica, who — among his many accomplishments — would later play a key role in getting the 1991 Measure A on the ballot.

Opponents to the 1973 Measure A invested \$30,000 to see it defeated, while the measure's grassroots proponents invested \$1,276 in victory. The uncontrolled growth that Alamedans feared would come not on the Main Island, but largely from Utah Construction and Doric Development's projects on Bay

Farm Island. The day after voters approved Measure A in 1973, Mayor Terry LaCroix said that passage of Measure A is definitely a message to the City Council to disapprove the proposed rezoning for Harbor Bay.

Doric Development's Ron Cowan said that he agreed that the vote was "an expression of feeling against our project." He didn't throw up his hands in despair, however. "We now have to study what effect passage of Measure A will have." The effects went beyond anything Cowan could have imagined in 1973. They echo today on Alameda Point.

The Planning Board will take up this 46-year-old measure and all its trimmings at its Monday, Jan. 13, 2020, meeting. The *Alameda Sun* will explain the history of this contentious piece of the City Charter over the next four weeks.

Quartet Nabbed after South Shore Robbery

Sun Staff Reports

Alameda police officers used the help of two witnesses to arrest four people for allegedly stealing from a TJ Maxx store Sunday, Dec. 15. Bruce Davis, 60; Tiffany Thurman, 40, Elton Hankins, 56; and Shirley Johnson, 32; were all charged with felony grand theft and second-degree burglary.

The incident took place at the TJ Maxx at 2250 South Shore Center around 2 p.m. An Alameda Police Department (APD) officer responded to a call of a suspicious vehicle at the shopping center's parking lot near Kohl's, according to APD reports. The officer at the scene did not find the suspicious vehicle, but canvassed the scene to further investigate the situation.

After leaving the parking lot near Kohl's the officer was approached by a patron who notified the officer of a possible theft had just occurred at the TJ Maxx. The unidentified witness was able to capture a photo of the fleeing vehicle, which matched the description of the vehicle previously reported to APD dispatch, according to APD reports. The officer at the scene was able to circulate the photo of the vehicle to officers in the area.

Minutes later another responding officer identified a similar vehicle and initiated a traffic stop

for a failure to have license plates displayed on their vehicle. During the stop, the officer observed several items with price tags still attached on the passenger's lap. The officer asked for backup. Once backup officers arrived, all four occupants of the vehicle were detained without resistance.

The officers searched the vehicle and found several stolen items. Another witness alerted officers that the suspects had thrown several items from the vehicle before they were stopped by police, according to reports. After collecting the items in the vehicle and the discarded items, authorities believe more than \$1,000 in merchandise was stolen by the suspects. Officers also discovered bolt cutters, burglary tools and drug paraphernalia on the suspects.

All four suspects are being held at Santa Rita Jail in Dublin as of Monday, Dec. 16, and their arraignments were held on Tuesday. Davis was also charged with conspiracy to commit a crime. He is being held on \$120,000 bail. Hankins was charged with possession of narcotics paraphernalia, providing officers with false identification and conspiracy to commit a crime. He is being held on \$127,500 bail. Thurman and Johnson are being held on \$70,000 bail.