



Locally Owned, Community Oriented

Vol. 17 No. 15
Dec. 21, 2017

INSIDE

HOMETOWN

Fire Wire
page 2

Police Blotter
page 3

All the doings
of Island safety
& law personnel



Local Death

Page 3

Retired Alameda Police Chief
Richard Young passes at 99.



Kid Fun In The Sun

Sudoku & More! Page 4

APD steps up to brighten the
holidays for the less fortunate.



Holiday

Page 6

The Eyestones present their
Gingerbread House Deluxe.



Local Happenings

Page 10

Will Durst & Friends are a
must for this week's to-do list.

CONTENTS

HOMETOWN NEWS... 2

PUZZLES/KIDS 4

SPORTS..... 5

HOLIDAY..... 6

CLASSIFIED 9

LOCAL HAPPENINGS... 8

HEALTH MATTERS... 11

Alameda Sun
is a publication of
Stellar Media Group, Inc.
3215J Encinal Ave.
Alameda, CA 94501
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JoanAnn Radu-Sinako

**Alameda Sun
Almanac**

Date Rise Set

Today 07:21 16:53

Dec. 22 07:21 16:54

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Dec. 25 07:22 16:56

Dec. 26 07:23 16:56

Dec. 27 07:23 16:57

Elementary School Renaming in Works

Dennis Evanosky

Alameda resident Rasheed Shabazz has launched an effort to rename a local elementary school after his research revealed that school's namesake held racist attitudes towards Africans and Asians. Henry Huntly Haight served as the first California governor elected after the Civil War. In his inaugural speech on Dec. 5, 1867, Gov. Haight denounced post-Civil War Reconstruction policy as discrimination against whites. He declared "Negroes" and "Asiatic races" "inferior." He also voiced his opposition to non-white voting rights, as well as immigration from Asia.

After recent efforts to eliminate white supremacist monuments to the Confederacy in the South and efforts to rename schools named after slaveholders, Shabazz researched Haight and developed the idea to change Haight Elementary School's name.

On Dec. 5, the 150th anniversary of Haight's speech, Shabazz emailed Haight Elementary School's PTA and Principal Tracey Lewis. He also contacted Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) Superintendent Sean McPhetridge and the members of the Board of Education.

"It is unacceptable to have such a diverse public school named after an individual with such racist views," Shabazz said. "At a school with a dynamic and significant Asian and African-American population, it's hard to imagine how to bring into existence a school, a city, or global community where 'everyone belongs here' when the school's namesake would view many of the students as inferior."

About 40 percent of Haight's students identify as Asian Pacific Islander and 9 percent as African American, higher than both populations' overall demographics throughout the Island City.

"We cannot develop 21st century learners and leaders when we have educational facilities named after people who represented the worst of 19th century thought," Shabazz said.

When Haight was in office, the Legislature refused to ratify two important amendments to the United States Constitution: the 14th, which granted citizenship and equal protection to the formerly enslaved Africans, and the 15th, which granted the right to vote to males, regardless of race. Haight moved to Alameda after his term as governor.

Shabazz addressed the Dec. 12 school board meeting about the issue. At that same meeting, AUSD Superintendent Sean McPhetridge called on the school board to direct AUSD staff to create a School Renaming Committee.

"It is clear that the man was a racist and a xenophobe," Superintendent Sean McPhetridge said. "We should not allow schools to be named after people whose views were reprehensible and counter to the foundational principles of our nation, our cities and our schools are meant to represent."

Renaming an Alameda school facility requires a petition of 100 signatures from a school's students, parents and teachers. Principal Lewis can then convene a School

RENAMING: Page 9

Old Containers Given New Purpose at Tire Shop

Sharanth "Lawrence" Kumarasivan

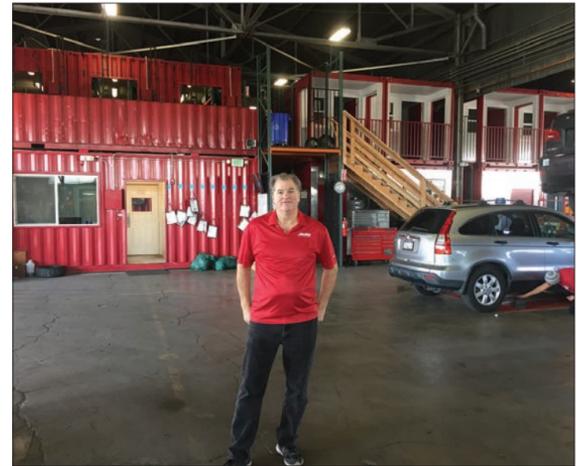
Alameda is a mecca to the architectural historian, featuring homes and commercial structures spanning most major architectural movements since the mid-1800s.

The city recently became home to a property representing the next bold leap in construction — container architecture.

The new Big Discount Tire Pros shop incorporates 21 previously used shipping containers into its design. The company moved here from its former facility on Park Street, a historic brick-vener structure dating back to the 1950s.

Container architecture is a sensible form of construction due to a shipping container's inherent strength, wide availability and relatively low costs compared to building with traditional materials. According to ArchDaily.com, containers can be likened to Lego blocks — they can be stacked and expanded in any number of combinations, to suit whatever the need of the project.

Container architecture is also sustainable, as it uses containers that would otherwise be laying idle in a scrapyard. In the Bay Area, there is immediate concern for mitigating container buildup. Significantly more goods travel between China and the U.S. than vice versa. It is not economical nor physically safe, in some cases, to carry back the empty contain-



Lawrence Kumarasivan

Big Discount Tire Pros owner, Guido Bertoli, poses in front of some of the shipping containers that make up their new location.

ers, and freighters are eager to sell them off. Throughout Oakland (except the Hills), it is a familiar sight to see such containers, stacked and rusting in storage yards awaiting potential buyers.

It is through this pipeline that Big Discount acquired the necessary containers for its facility. According to owner Guido Bertoli, the containers were purchased from Transport Products Unlimited (TPU), a firm specializing in adapting used containers to habitable standards. TPU, in turn, purchases the unprocessed containers from the shipping companies themselves.

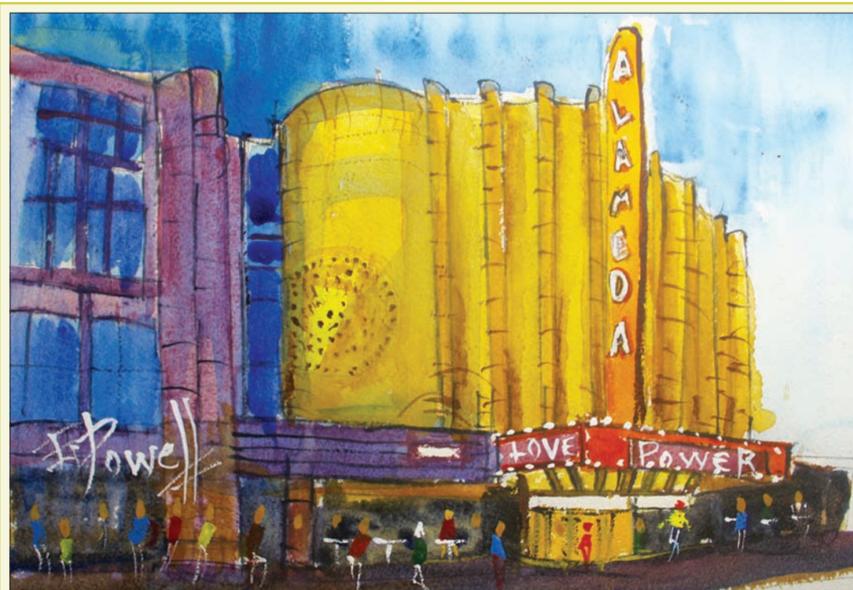
Bertoli made sure to primarily use "one-trippers," containers that made only a single journey before being sold to TPU. Such containers don't have dents or weathering, remaining aesthetically pleasing to customers, according to Bertoli.

Big Discount has the honor of being Alameda's first large container-based structure, and could set a valuable precedent for the city's future. "The city didn't have a prior experience with overseeing a container project, and now they do," said Bertoli. "It was a patient process waiting for all the permits."

Bertoli was not the first, however, to envision containers used in Alameda. A prior design proposal for the Alameda Gateway project on Park Street called for shipping containers, before getting nixed in 2015. Bertoli commissioned the same architecture firm charged with the Gateway proposal — Timbre Architects — to design his tire garage.

The Big Discount garage design aimed to provide a modern experience for the customer,

TIRE PROS: Page 3



Photos courtesy George Powell

(above) The Alameda Theatre and Cineplex is but one of many subjects that have flowed from George Powell's brush.

(left) George Powell remains busy fulfilling his life-long passion for art.



he joined the Navy. His service in the Gulf War awakened old demons. In 1996 he retired from the military and returned to his passion.

"I began to paint," he said.

He calls painting "a passionate commitment, a way of looking at and understanding life." He allows his point of view to come out through his brush. He once painted a poster for BART to help soldiers like himself who suffer with PTSD.

"Now my art is my life," he said.

He works in watercolor, oil and acrylics. Watercolor is his preferred medium. "I love how it bleeds on the paper and how sometimes I discover happy accidents."

"I use photographs and sketches from life," Powell said. "Most of my art is done from mental images, though."

He also enjoys painting outdoors, plein air. "My art is not a one-day-a-week affair," he said.

Among the places that Powell has displayed and sold his work are Studio One in Oakland, Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, the Art & Soul Fair at Oakland's Jack London Square and in Alameda at Art in the Park, at the Park Street Art & Wine Fair, at Frank Bette

ARTIST: Page 9

Local Vet Finds Peace As Well As His Muse

Dennis Evanosky

Artist George Powell understands the meaning of the word "survival" better than most of us. Powell is a veteran who served in both the Vietnam and Gulf wars. He suffers from wounds inflicted in Vietnam during a battle that cost 10 of his fellow soldiers their lives. He survived that battle (and others) at a cost.

When George returned from the Vietnam War, he found himself lashing out at those around him. He also turned away from others sought respite in isolation. Like so many other veterans, Powell had taken the war home with him. He suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but was able to turn to a passion that he always held in his heart — painting.

"All my life I wanted to be an artist," Powell said. "I found my first inspiration years ago on the silver screen."

He remembers going to the movies as a youngster and seeing *Lust for Life*, the story of Vincent van Gogh. Kirk Douglas starred as van Gogh. The 1956 film also featured another artist that impressed Powell, Paul Gauguin. Anthony Quinn won an Oscar for his portrayal of Gauguin.

When he returned home from a long, five-year stint in Vietnam, Powell used his GI Bill to attend the American Academy of Art. He graduated, but memories of the war and its horrors continued to haunt him.

He spent years on the streets, homeless and addicted to alcohol. When he couldn't find work,

Appeal of Costa-Hawkins Rent Control on Horizon

Attempts in Assembly, as initiative

By Dennis Evanosky

California state law bans local governments from imposing rent control on any new apartment construction. The law — the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act — defines new construction as dwellings with certificates of occupancy issued after Feb. 1, 1995.

Costa-Hawkins also prohibits regulating rents on single-family dwellings and individually owned condominiums and townhouses.

Moves to repeal this law have appeared on two fronts: one in the State Assembly, the other as an initiative to place the appeal on the November 2018 ballot.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1506 would flat-out kill the law, called the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act. The ballot initiative, known as the "Affordable Housing Act," would also spell the end for the law.

Last February, Bonta joined Assemblymembers David Chiu and Richard Bloom in introducing Assembly Bill (AB) 1506. "The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act prescribes statewide limits on the application of local rent control with regard to certain properties. This bill would repeal that act," the *Legislative Counsel Digest* advised.

The *Digest* also says what happened: "Appropriation: No; Fiscal Committee: No; Local Program: No." The bill never made it to the Assembly floor.

Proponents of the measure to repeal Costa-Hawkins, called the "Affordable Housing Act," will soon begin circulating petitions to qualify the initiative for the November 2018 ballot.

"Rents for housing have skyrocketed in recent years, they said in the Oct. 23 filing." Median rents are higher in California than any other state in the country, and among all 50 states.

In addition, advocates for overturning Costa-Hawkins point out that the federal government considers rent as not affordable if renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on that expense.

Proponents of the measure to repeal Costa-Hawkins, called the "Affordable Housing Act," will soon begin circulating petitions to qualify the initiative for the November 2018 ballot.

The state of California has found that not only do more than half of California renters pay at least that much, but one-third of the state's renters, some 1.5 million, pay 50 percent of their income for rent.

Supporters of the initiative will have 180 days from the summary date — currently set at Dec. 27 — to collect the necessary amount of signatures — 365,880.

Opposition for the repeal of Costa-Hawkins will come, as it did earlier this year, from the California Apartment Association (CAA) and other real estate interests.

The *Sacramento Bee* reported last February that pressure from these interest groups forced Bloom to put a hold on his attempt to repeal the law.

The *Bee* reported that, when Bloom attempted to move his Costa-Hawkins repeal forward in February, he "received significant pushback ... from landlords and Sacramento lobbyists representing the state's lucrative real estate industry."

The CAA fears that, "If new construction and single-family homes are not protected from rent control, private investment into rental housing will come to a screeching halt."

"This will stymie the building of new apartments thus worsening an already dire housing crisis."

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