



From the President

MARK FIGONE

WANNA HEAR a funny story? There's this guy. He's 55, overweight, out of shape and suffers from the effects of two prior back injuries. This genius has decided to try to join his son's Boy Scout troop on its annual 50-mile backpack trip into the Sierra in the vicinity of Mammoth Mountain during the last week of July. He'll be carrying a 50-pound backpack over eight days at altitudes exceeding 11,000 feet. Complete whackadoodle, right? Yes, I probably am. Soon I will find out just how wacky when I will be attempting the first of five required 10-mile practice hikes. The 10-mile hikes will be with full pack weight. In addition, there is a mandatory 20-mile hike in late June, fortunately without full packs.

Why, you've surely asked yourself? Well, I love the outdoors. I used to do quite a bit of camping and backpacking back in my high school and college days. In recent years, my forays into the Sierra have been limited to car camping trips into areas where the trout are planted; a stupid and poor substitute for the wild native fish that I used to enjoy catching. I've watched with envy as my son departed on this trip each of the past four years and I listened to his stories upon each return and said to myself: "I'll go next year." I've watched

■ See From the President, page 4

Chief of Police Discusses Business Crime

BY CHRIS TREADWAY

THEFTS FROM businesses and shoplifting-related robberies in El Cerrito have increased dramatically, the city's police chief said at the Chamber of Commerce meeting on May 15th.

Much of the increase, according to guest speaker Chief Paul Keith, is due to a 2014 California proposition that has had the intended result of reducing the state

prison population, but has also had unintended consequences. Proposition 47, the Reduced Penalties for Some Crimes Initiative, raised the threshold for classifying a theft as a felony to \$1,000 worth of merchandise. A lesser amount is a misdemeanor. Thefts are often not for personal need, but for resale on the street, Keith said.

"What we're dealing with is people coming into a store and taking \$900 worth of items, under the threshold," he said. "If people are habitual thieves, state prison time is not on the table."

Petty theft incidents have almost doubled in the



Chris Treadway

past year as a result, he said, and larceny is up 31 percent over the past 10 years. Thefts are often done by one or more perpetrators "in serial fashion," each below the threshold, Keith said.

He called the Safeway store near the Del Norte BART station "kind of the epicenter of illegal activity" in town. In addition, "In the last year we've seen a major increase in robberies associated with shoplifting," he said. "Suspects are so used to not being confronted that they make threats when they do get stopped."

Keith said increasing business security is one of the department's primary goals, along with community collaboration and traffic and pedestrian safety.

The department is working with Walgreens and Safeway at the north end of town and Regency Centers, owner of El Cerrito Plaza. Walgreens has hired a security guard and improved surveillance cameras are being discussed for the Plaza.

Keith also noted that businesses that maintain their and have with a regular employee presence outside their storefront see fewer problems with vagrants. "If you see a business having problems with blight or theft, reach out to us," he said.

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Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

IT IS OFFICIAL. Our contact at 24-hour Fitness confirmed that the new club will open for business on Saturday, August 18th. Located at 10636 San Pablo Avenue (at the former



Moeser Lane Safeway site) the new facility will be a Super-Sport gym. Amenities will include cardio equipment, an indoor lap pool, sauna and steam rooms, and group cycling.

At this writing heavy construction is underway transforming the former grocery store into a deluxe gym. Keep an eye on the *Byline* for details on the grand opening including special offers.

The project is a big deal for El Cerrito as it will bring some needed life and activity into that shopping center and customers to our Chamber members doing business there. Plus, the firm is hiring 75 employees to run the place.

New byline in *Byline*. Chris Treadway needs no real introduction in El Cerrito as he's known all over town. I am pleased to announce the journalist, editor, and writer is now a correspondent for our Chamber newsletter. To contact him by email: c.treadway@elcerritochamber.org.

Help wanted. As usual, the Chamber will have a booth on Pomona Avenue in front of the Contra Costa Civic Theatre on July 4th. It's our way of participating in the City of El Cerrito/worldOne 4th of July Festival. We meet and greet the public and give away free Chamber gifts from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. We can use some help in staffing the booth. Volunteer for a couple of hours; it's easy duty. Email info@elcerritochamber.org.

New city staff. Maya Williams has been hired as the Assistant to the City Manager. That was the position Suzanne Iarla held until she departed El Cerrito last November. Her email address is: mwilliams@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

New Chamber Member is a Pickle



Open for business since April 23rd, Mr. Pickle's Sandwich Shop is a new member of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce. The shop is at 10810 San Pablo Avenue (at Schmidt Lane) and is open seven days a week. Pickle crew pictured above: Jung, Elizabeth, Janaye, Destinie, and Yamgia.

Sales tax. The California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA), formerly known as the Board of Equalization, offers periodic classes providing an overview of sales and use taxes. If you have a new business or are just plain confused these classes could be helpful.

All are classes are held at the CDFTA office at 1515 Clay Street, #303, in downtown Oakland. Register online at www.cdtfa.ca.gov and search for seminars.

New Business Orientation
Tues., June 5; 9-10:30 a.m.

Basic Sales & Use Tax for Restaurants
Tues., June 12; 9-10:30 a.m.

Basic Sales & Use Tax
Wed., June 13; 9 a.m.-noon

Basic Sales & Use Tax/Liquor Stores
Tues., June 19; 9-10:30 a.m.

Contractors Sales & Use Tax
Tues., July 10; 9-10:30 a.m.

Straws. An email received from Laurateen Brazil at the City of El Cerrito asks restaurant operators to provide straws only on request. Text follows:

Did you know that over 500 million disposable straws are used and discarded every day in the United States. That equates to more than 175 billion straws a year that make it into our landfills, waterways, and oceans.

How you can help. *Provide straws only if requested or stock alternative straws made from paper, glass or aluminum. For a list of vendors that provide sustainable products in bulk, call the City's Operations + Environmental Services Division at (510) 215-4350*

ECMP. The deadline for ad copy to appear on the next El Cerrito Marketing Program card will be August 15th. This means the cards will reach the approximately 14,000 addresses in El Cerrito and part of Richmond at the beginning of September. For more information or to reserve space on the mailer, please contact Lisa Martinengo at the Chamber office. You can email to: ads@elcerritochamber.org.

Lunch. I'll see you at our lunch meeting on June 19th. Then no more meetings until September. Enjoy your summer.

Questions? Comments? Submissions?

Contact the *Byline*
byline@elcerritochamber.org

What “Loving Day” Means is More Important than Ever

INCOURAGE *Byline* readers to join friends and neighbors on Wednesday, June 13, 2018, at the third annual El Cerrito Loving Day celebration. Loving Day honors the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Loving v. Virginia*, the case that overturned the ban on interracial marriage. On Loving Day, multiculturalism, diversity, and families of all kinds are celebrated. In this age of fear mongering and polarization, it's very important that the messages of equality, acceptance, kindness and compassion are widely heard. Loving Day honoring in El Cerrito will feature events on Wednesday, June 13th and Saturday, June 16th. Keep reading for more details.

The local background to this event began in May 2015, when the El Cerrito Human Relations Commission unanimously moved to recommend that the City Council recognize “Loving Day” for the first time on June 12, 2015. On June 2, 2015, the city council unanimously passed a resolution declaring June 12, 2015, as “Loving Day” in the city of El Cerrito. In addition to that, letters were sent to many elected officials, informing them of the city's action to encourage more cities, the state of California, and the federal government to celebrate Loving Day as a day of recognition for civil rights, multicultural communities, and bringing people together of different races, cultures, nationalities, and religious beliefs. In the age of Trump, whose election seems to have ushered in an ugly wave of growing mistrust and intolerance, spreading this positive message is of utmost importance.

Loving Day is a movement that began in 2004 by then-graduate student Ken Tanabe in New York to recognize the day that the U.S. Supreme Court issued its landmark ruling in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) that outlawed bans on interracial marriage in the United States. Mildred and Richard Loving, an interracial couple, were married in 1958 in Washington, D.C., because it was illegal for them to marry in their home state of Virginia. When they tried to return home to live per-

manently, they were arrested, convicted, and threatened with jail time unless they left the state. The Lovings decided to fight this ruling, eventually winning in a unanimous decision by the U.S. Supreme Court after nine years of appeals. This ruling is considered one of the most notable civil rights deci-

sions in U.S. history. More information on Loving Day can be found at www.lovingday.org.

In our town, we can come together at two events. The first is on Wednesday, June 13th, at the Off-the-Grid food truck gathering. Enjoy live music, food and beverages available for purchase from the trucks, and celebrate together! Several community groups will be tabling, too. On Saturday, June 16th, join in the festivities for a film

screening, discussion and more. Here is more information on both events:

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Party at El Cerrito Off the Grid

Fairmount Avenue between San Pablo and Carlson; 6-8:00 p.m.

Music, Food, Dancing

Saturday, June 16, 2018

Movie at Rialto Cinemas Cerrito; 10 a.m.

10070 San Pablo Avenue

Please reserve tickets via Eventbrite, space is limited

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-case-against-8-free-screening-discussion-tickets-46033086200>

Join us for a public screening of the award-winning Sundance film, “The Case Against 8.” This film gives a behind-the-scenes look inside the case to overturn California's ban on same-sex marriage. Kris Perry and Sandy Stier, one of the couples featured in the movie, will lead a Q&A session and book signing immediately following.

For more information, interest in hosting a display table at the Loving Day celebration, or to volunteer, please contact HRC staff liaison Kristen Cunningham at (510) 215-4304 or by email at kcunningham@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

The views expressed here are mine and do not necessarily represent those of the Chamber Board. Email: lmartinengo@elcerritochamber.org; cell: (510) 778-5883.



Manager's Musings

LISA MARTINENGO

RACIAL EQUALITY
MARRIAGE EQUALITY
HUMAN EQUALITY

Hear About Real Solutions for Addressing the Housing Crisis



THE BAY AREA's housing crisis won't solve itself. It requires collaboration between local communities, government leaders, and diverse stakeholders. As the Bay Area has seen a surge in new jobs, it has also seen the demand for housing skyrocket bringing about calls for new regulations on housing providers such as private housing price controls. Learn about some of the local and statewide efforts to regulate the private housing market, how the housing industry is responding and most importantly, the real solutions to solve our housing crisis that demand action today.

Our guest speaker at the June Chamber of Commerce lunch meeting will be Joshua Howard, Senior Vice President, Northern California, of the California Apartment Association

Make your reservation now. Lunch is provided by Cafe N!ne.

Tuesday, June 19th at Noon • El Cerrito Royale, 6510 Gladys Ave., El Cerrito
RSVP to info@elcerritochamber.org • All attendees: \$20 (\$22 PayPal/credit) lunch included

Buying Insurance Is a Walk on the Beach With Bossa Nova!

BY LISA MARTINENGO

OWNER, LUCIANA VITIELLO, was born and raised in Sao Paulo, Brazil, South America's most populous city. She attended university, got an MBA, and went to work for a travel company dealing with student education tours. Luciana began as a guide, but eventually moved into accounting. The year 2000 brought the desire for a big change and Luciana decided to move to the U.S., specifically to South San Francisco, to live with a family member already there. With her business skills, Luciana had no problem finding work in bookkeeping or accounting for a number of local businesses.



It was in 2002, that she started working for an El Cerrito business called BMV Insurance. BMV's owner, Ben Valdez, helped see that Luciana learned the details of the insurance business. In 2003, after training workshops and studying, she took the exam in San Francisco and received her first license certification to sell insurance. Insurance agents must re-certify with the state board every two years by completing an online exam.

In 2005, Luciana became a full business partner and two years later, she and Ben Valdez parted ways allowing

Luciana to buy out his share of the business. She rebranded as Bossa Nova Insurance Services. Very conveniently, her husband had opened a Brazilian gourmet import shop next door and together the two businesses bring a little more Brazilian flare to El Cerrito. The import store offers familiar food items and other products to the many Brazilians living here.

Bossa Nova offers complete services for property and casualty insurance only, dealing with all the major providers. This covers homeowners, renters, auto, workers compensation, general liability for commercial accounts, and more. The business gets commission for what it sells, but it's the customer's happiness that is of utmost priority for Luciana and her three employees. Luciana and her family (with three boys!) make their home in Albany, so they are fully invested in the vitality of the local business and overall community. That's why they became El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce members several years ago.

One more amazing service that is a big time saver and stress reducer; along with insurance for your new car, Bossa Nova can handle the car registration and transfer paperwork! No more hassle with the DMV. Luciana is also a certified notary public after getting licensed in 2012.

Please call or visit Bossa Nova Insurance Services for your insurance needs. They are located at 10468-A San Pablo Avenue, between Waldo and Stockton avenues. To phone call (510) 559-1066.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

my son develop over the past few years into a fine young man in no small part due to his participation in Boy Scouts. I'm proud to say that he was just chosen as the senior troop leader and he will be leading his trek this year on this 50-miler. Frankly I'm dying, not literally I hope, to see him perform. I just can't put it off any longer. Will I be able to get it done? We shall see.

In case you missed it, we were joined last month at our luncheon by Police Chief Paul Keith. Chief Keith spoke to us about the current nature of crime in El Cerrito as well as some of the specific efforts the ECPD is making to deal with crime.

Of particular interest to me, he spoke about Proposition 47, passed by California voters in 2014. Proposition 47 essentially converted many nonviolent offenses, such as drug and property offenses, from felonies to misdemeanors and allowed people currently incarcerated for crimes covered by the measure to petition for re-sentencing. In November 2015, a report by the Stanford University Justice Advocacy Project authored by the co-author of Proposition 47, found that it had reduced the state's prison population by 13,000, and that it would save the state about \$150 million that year. But a critical side effect has been a very large

increase in property crime and robberies of which I and several acquaintances have fallen victim. Was it worth it? I'm not convinced.

Thanks again to all who attended the lunch, to Lisa Martinengo for pulling it all together, to Sasa Kitchen for providing a great meal and finally to Chief Keith for a great discussion. Chief Keith is doing a fine job as our police chief and was a great choice on the part of council to lead the ECPD.

Once again, the Economic Development Committee and the El Cerrito Chamber are organizing El Cerrito's annual Restaurant Week. This year's

■ Continued on next page

HARRY KIEFER

BY CHRIS TREADWAY

HARRY KIEFER, a respected longtime member of the business community, died April 15th at 94 in Walnut Creek.



For more than 40 years, Kiefer ran Kiefer Furniture, started by his father, Leo.

Kiefer had other opportunities, his son David said, but chose to carry on the family business and make El Cerrito his home.

Kiefer had served in the military in the Army Specialized Training Program, which turned out a number of people who went on to academic careers. After discharge, he earned an electrical engineering degree at UC Berkeley, opening additional opportunities.

But Kiefer instead chose to remain where the family had its home and the business it opened in late 1938 in one of the former buildings of town founder William Rust on San Pablo Avenue at Fairmount.

When the Kiefers opened shop in El Cerrito after fleeing Nazi Germany, “They were welcome here,” David Kiefer said. “He was one of the gang, and he liked that.”

Kiefer came aboard the family business full-time after graduating UC in 1948. “My father was the one who really expanded the business,” David Kiefer said.

A second location at San Pablo and Central avenues was acquired, and eventually other nearby storefronts were added, including the closed Cerrito Theatre, used for storage as the business moved its focus from dry goods to furniture. The new location stayed

open through 2001. The original building was razed in 1963. He and his wife, Edith, who died in 2008, were married 58 years and raised three children.

Kiefer was active with the Chamber and served a term as president in 1985. He was also active El Cerrito Lions and Temple Beth Hillel in Richmond.

Memorial donations can be made to Temple Beth Hillel, the Lions Eye Foundation, or The Jewish Federation of the Greater East Bay.



Harry Kiefer shown in 1979 promoting the El Cerrito Round-Up.

El Cerrito Historical Society from Chamber of Commerce archives

Continued from page 4
dates are October 11-17. This event was conceived by or very own Bill Kuhlman with the intent of showcasing, promoting, and supporting the large variety of cuisine that is available in El Cerrito. We have over 60 restaurants here in El Cerrito so I encourage you get out and sample them.

Don't forget that El Cerrito business licenses expire on June 30th. If yours is due, you can renew it at <http://www.el-cerrito.org/index.aspx?NID=151>. Also, remember to come see us at our booth at the El Cerrito's annual Fourth of July Festival at the Community Center and Cerrito Vista Park.



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CHAMBER LUNCH MEETINGS

Tuesday, June 19
See program on page 3

No lunch meetings in July or August

Tuesday, September 18
Special Guest: City Manager Scott Hanin

Farmers Market

AT EL CERRITO PLAZA

Open Tuesday & Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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El Cerrito

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Linking Business and Community Since 1936

Calendar of Events

- June 5 Road Scholar travel program. EC Public Library, 6 p.m.
- 6 Chamber board meets. 9 a.m., City Hall.
- 9 Fix-it clinic. 12:30-4 p.m., El Cerrito Public Library.
- 11 City Council meets, 7 p.m., City Hall.
- 15 "Ragtime" premiere, 8 p.m. Runs through July 22. Contra Costa Civic Theatre. www.ccct.org
- 18 City Council special meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall.
- 19 Chamber lunch meeting; see page 3 for information.
- 19 City Council meets, 7 p.m., City Hall.
- July 4 Annual Fourth of July Festival. Cerrito Vista Park. All day.
- Sept. 13 Cerrito Classics: "Raiders of the Lost Ark." 7 p.m. Rialto Cinemas Cerrito.

A complete directory of Chamber members can be printed from the website:
www.elcerritochamber.org

Chamber Officers & Staff

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