



From the President

JEFFREY WRIGHT

HERE WE COME 2021! A new year, a fresh start, and opportunities waiting to be seized. Let us move forward with a conquering and enthusiastic attitude. *Charge!!!*

In my November 2020 column I shared a story about my desire as a little boy to get behind the wheel of the car and become the “driver” and how this strong urge resulted in the family Buick rolling into the middle of the street with me at the helm. That column resulted in an email exchange of car stories with Chamber member “BJ” Thorsnes and believe me when I say that BJ has some great car stories!

As we are starting this new year, I thought I would share another car story with you because I like car stories and this one ties into business and how a car influenced me in wanting to be a businessman, more specifically a “real estate man.”

Many of you already know that I am a second generation real estate broker. My father started working part time as a salesperson for his brother-in-law, William D. Martin of the William D. Martin Realty Company here in El Cerrito. As a matter of fact, W.D. built

■ See From the President, page 7

Introducing Mayor Paul Fadelli



Chris Treadway

BY CHRIS TREADWAY

INCOMING MAYOR Paul Fadelli is very familiar with El Cerrito's past and very upbeat about its future. But the future will largely have to wait as the city digs its way out of a financial crisis that has only worsened as the COVID-19 health emergency continues.

Fadelli, 70, made that point several times in an interview less than a month after he was elected to a second term on the City Council.

Election Results

BALLOTS FOR seats on the Board of Directors were counted and results announced at a December 15, 2020, video member meeting. The two-year terms are staggered and five director positions were on the ballot for 2021-22.

The complete tally is as follows:

| | |
|--|-----|
| John C. Stashik, Premier Graphics | 26° |
| Aissia Ashoori, City of El Cerrito | 24° |
| Mark Figone, East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc. ... | 20° |
| Scott Harris, ClientClicks | 20° |
| Sonja Givens-Thomas, El Cerrito Royale .. | 15° |
| AnnMarie Baines, The Practice Space | 13 |
| Russell Doi, Mutual of Omaha | 12 |

* Indicates elected

Officers are selected by the Board of Directors and for this year are listed below:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| President | Jeffrey Wright |
| Vice President | Matt Khadivian |
| Treasurer | John C. Stashik |
| Secretary | Aissia Ashoori |

“I ran for the City Council four years ago to continue making it better,” he said. “Over the last year I’ve dramatically changed my role because of what we’re saddled with. I’m going to do the best I can, but I don’t think I’m going to make many friends.”

Fadelli grew up in El Cerrito and has seen the progress it has made in recent years after an extended time of stagnation. New development has opened on San Pablo Avenue, more is on the way, and the city is among the few meeting its state mandate to provide new housing.

He is optimistic for the future, particularly the development plans at the El Cerrito Plaza BART station complementing the adjacent shopping center that he said could be the catalyst for “a new downtown” on Fairmount Avenue and possibly include space for a new library.

■ See Mayor Paul Fadelli, page 4

Chamber Events

VIDEO MIXER

Thursday, Jan. 14th at 6 p.m.
Rockin’ Robbie’s Music Works

■

MEMBER MEETING

Tuesday, Jan. 19th at noon
Annual Chamber
Installation Meeting

■

Email: info@elcerritochamber.org
for the Zoom links to both events



Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

HAPPY NEW YEAR. Don't look back. Hopefully, everyone will get their vaccine and life can return to the *real* normal, not that stupid "new normal," sometime in 2021. As the year progresses the pandemic can fade out of sight in our rear view mirrors for another century. Things can begin to improve for our members, their businesses, and everyone in general.

Dr. Fauci predicts herd immunity is possible by summer. But the good doctor recommends to continue wearing your mask.

Personally, I want to make up for time lost during crappy 2020. Cease treating everyone as a dangerous virus threat. Hugs. Dine-in again. Take long trips. Go to concerts and shows. I can't wait for Jimmy Buffett to cheer us up in the Bay Area; *fin's up!* (Do you know Mayor Fadelli is a Parrothead?) My vagabond shoes are longin' to stray...

Maybe this Chamber can eventually return to lunch meetings that people once enjoyed rather than Zooming. One day the City Council will meet in person just like old times. (Although, video meetings do have advantages like being able to view proceedings while multitasking with other stuff.)

□

New biz. Under new management, Café Nine has a target date of January 4th to open. Owner Merceda Crosby has been remodeling the deli at 11100 San Pablo Avenue (Bank of the West Plaza) and will keep the popular sandwich and beverage menu with the addition of her specialty cheesecake. FYI: Cracuccino remains on the drink menu.

Every time I specify a date here, it is best to always add an asterisk and footnote: *subject to change*. Predictions are a just a guess with continuing health regulation changes.

□

Getting closer. Owners of Penn-Dell's Bakehouse at 6491 Portola Drive here in El Cerrito are hoping to open later this month or February. You all know delays are a regular part of any con-



Bed Bath & Beyond at El Cerrito Plaza closed due to a fire before Christmas. No cause is known. Fire resources from El Cerrito, Richmond, and elsewhere, kept damage confined to the stockroom and prevented the blaze from spreading to nearby Barnes & Noble. However, corporate offices say the store "probably" will not reopen. Does California Proposition 47 play a part in any decision to close the store?

struction project and a pandemic doesn't help. So keep your eyes peeled and the *Byline* will update you when the doors will open.

□

"Coming soon" reads the banner on a building on San Pablo Avenue across from Safeway announcing **The UPS Store**. That'll be convenient for new residents of the **Mayfair** apartments a block to the north. New residents generate new business.

□

No power. The new 50-unit **Cerrito Vista** apartment building at 10963 San Pablo Ave. would be open and leasing if only PG&E would hook up the electricity.

□

Too little, too late. On page 6 you can read the sad story of **Albany Bowl**. There is a special place in many hearts for that beloved institution. My family introduced me to bowling there when I was a child. In fact, I bowled in several leagues. Ordered closed last March, the building has remained locked ever since due to pandemic health orders that have never been lifted.

The *Millionaires' Club*, also known as the United States Senate, agreed with the House to financial stimulus for businesses last year with PPP and EIDL loans. But not a dime of assistance has come since. Senators feel no pain.

Now after months of bickering, the Senate may have agreed to a new puny package. A bit late for the bowling alley

or any number of other small businesses. Rent, utilities, taxes, and other overhead continue while the Governor prohibits a business to operate. How long can that last?

As I said last month, the federal government's inaction has been absolutely pathetic. Unlike the feds, local government cannot print money yet local governments are hurting as much as small business. **Our city of El Cerrito needs assistance too.** Think about this next time you vote in national elections.

□

#ShopEatLocalEC. Here is my new routine. On Saturday afternoon, order pizza, popcorn, nachos or a burger from the **Rialto Cinemas Cerrito** and take it home to eat. It is a way to support our movie house, shut down since March. Everyone knows concessions are where the theater makes money so the idea is a good one.

Then during the week, get great pizza from **Fatapple's**. Out of the oven at 11 every weekday morning. Don't overlook their prepared dinners too; just heat and eat.

□

No more wading. For years, water has pooled at the curb in front of the main El Cerrito post office after a rain. Lots of it; like a small lake. Street repairs are now complete.

I saw a Caltrans supervisor and a team of laborers hard at work one night

■ See Past Prez Palaver, page 3

A New Year to Create and Heal

NOW THAT WE'VE entered 2021, we have a chance to reflect on the road we've traveled during the previous extraordinary year. We have settled into our day-to-day with a renewed understanding that is at times freeing, and at other times, paralyzing. The reality we lived in prior to "Shelter in Place" was our creation, but its permanence a mirage.

We face 2021 with hope and assurance that scientific innovation will pave the way towards resuming a fuller range of human experience.

We are eager to breathe easier, connect more often and in person. As we reconnect and begin resuming our "normal," it will not look the same. We will need to lean on each other to heal and find strength, courage and ingenuity to repair and rebuild.

More than a third of jobs in three California industries that rely on live events — sports, performing arts and catering — have disappeared. In the performing arts, employment is at just 34% of pre-pandemic levels. In El Cerrito, the arts have been hit hard by the pandemic; The Rialto Cinemas Cerrito, Contra Costa Civic Theatre, YMTC, and the many dance and arts studios and entertainment venues.

We must find a way in the new year to better support the entrepreneurs and creators that enrich our community, not just because they are important to the fabric for place making, but because, undoubtedly, art will help heal wounds and fortify us to create our "new" future together.



Community Matters

GEORGINA EDWARDS

PAST PREZ PALAVER

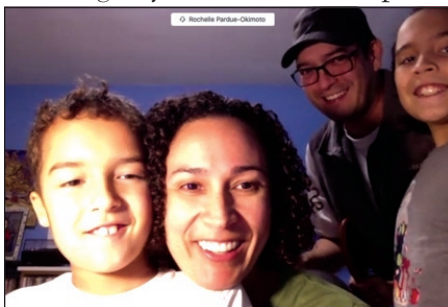
■ Continued from page 2

and said "thank you Caltrans" which brought a smile.

But you and I really know that Caltrans didn't just decide to show up and fix the street; there was a push from our own Public Works people. I emailed Yvetteh Ortiz, Public Works Director, to express appreciation. Ms. Ortiz quickly replied that the repair was the doing of Ana Bernardes, our Engineering Manager. Yes, Ana has probably gotten her feet wet in that lake a few times herself. This is a huge improvement and the reason that Public Works is my favorite department.

□

Signing off at her final meeting on December 15th, City Council member Rochelle Pardue-Okimoto's family all got into the picture as she said goodbye. It's from grainy video, but I love the photo.



□

Crab delayed, crab denied. Hudson Fish, the seafood vendor at the Farmers Market at El Cerrito Plaza on Saturdays, reports crab season is to open January 23rd. (Maybe.) Whales have been a problem this time and Shamu and pals cannot be disturbed by crabbers.

My favorite events in El Cerrito are the two crab feeds: one by EC Recreation and the other by Police Employees Association, typically held early in each year. Obviously, they're toast this time. So, buy your own crab at the Farmers Market and crack it at home.

□

Cops. There has been public comment to the City Council about defunding our police department. Lately, that has been via identical form letters signed by different people. The thought seems to be that the City can get its budget in balance by cutting public safety spending.

True, police and fire cost money. But public safety is a top priority when it comes to local government and where most people would direct tax money.

When dialing 9-1-1 we *all prefer fast response over a busy signal*. As few as four police officers can be on the street at a given time.

Business owners need police services too and contrary to some opinion, El Cerrito is *not* a low crime community. Therefore, one may conclude that reducing police resources hurts local business and that can have a negative impact on the economy. There will be a City Council meeting on January 19th and members may want to keep apprised of this issue. The City's website explains how to participate in the video meetings.

As for the City budget, there are smart people, management, staff, and council, working on that difficult problem. I trust them to get it right. It'll happen.

Our Music Scene Back in the Day

Chris Sterba will give a free talk by Zoom video on January 31st at 3 p.m. He'll cover Hambone Kelly's, a cooperative night club here in El Cerrito created by jazz legend Lu Watters. This is part of the El Cerrito Historical Society's annual meeting. Go to elcerritohistoricalsociety.org for login information. For additional information, email Dave Weinstein at davidsweinstein@yahoo.com



HAMBONE KELLY'S
200 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito
Phone: (415) 885-1111

● Open Daily at Four (Except Mon.)
● Dinners 5 to 8 p.m. (A la Carte \$11.95)
● Old Time Movies 6 to 8 p.m.
● Lu Watters Jazz Band 9 p.m.
● Ideal for Banquets

AUGUST 1949

| DATE | TIME | PRICE | SEAT | DATE | TIME | PRICE | SEAT |
|------|------|--------|------|------|------|--------|------|
| 2 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st | 6 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st |
| 3 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st | 7 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st |
| 4 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st | 8 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st |
| 5 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st | 9 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st |
| 10 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st | 11 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st |
| 11 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st | 12 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st |
| 12 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st | 13 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st |
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| 29 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st | 30 | 8:00 | \$2.00 | 1st |

WE CAN ACCOMMODATE 500 PEOPLE
OR MORE. RESERVATIONS WELCOME.

JAZZ CONCERT EVERY SUNDAY—JAZZ STARTS AT NOON

Lu Watters plays trumpet as Turk Murphy watches at Hambone Kelly's. The business opened as the Hollywood Club in the mid-1930s and later operated as Sally Rand's Club. Hambone's was located where today's Wells Fargo Bank branch is.

MAYOR PAUL FADELLI

■ Continued from page 1

"I think even a year ago I was calling El Cerrito a Renaissance city because of all the development and the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan," Fadelli said.

But while he looks at the future, Fadelli and the city must deal with the present and a new municipal austerity to bail out the city budget ravaged by the depths of a pandemic.

"I see a lot of hope in El Cerrito," Fadelli said. "This city has good bones. But I don't want to sugarcoat the next three to four years at all."

El Cerrito entered the year already in a perilous financial state outlined in a California State Auditor's report. El Cerrito is ranked seventh among top California cities facing fiscal challenges and considered high-risk, with large obligations and minimal general fund reserves.

Budget reductions made early this year were supposed to put the city back on the way to solvency, but that was based on the assumption of a normal cash flow that largely evaporated with the onset of the pandemic.

"We like to call ourselves a full service city and that's a wonderful concept, but the past 10 years probably should have been pay-for-what-we-can-afford," Fadelli said.

Revenue from sales tax, fees and other sources have slowed to a trickle during the pandemic shutdown and will take time to regenerate even if the promise of vaccines begins to return society to some state of normal. Which all means more city budget cuts and service reductions are on the way in 2021.

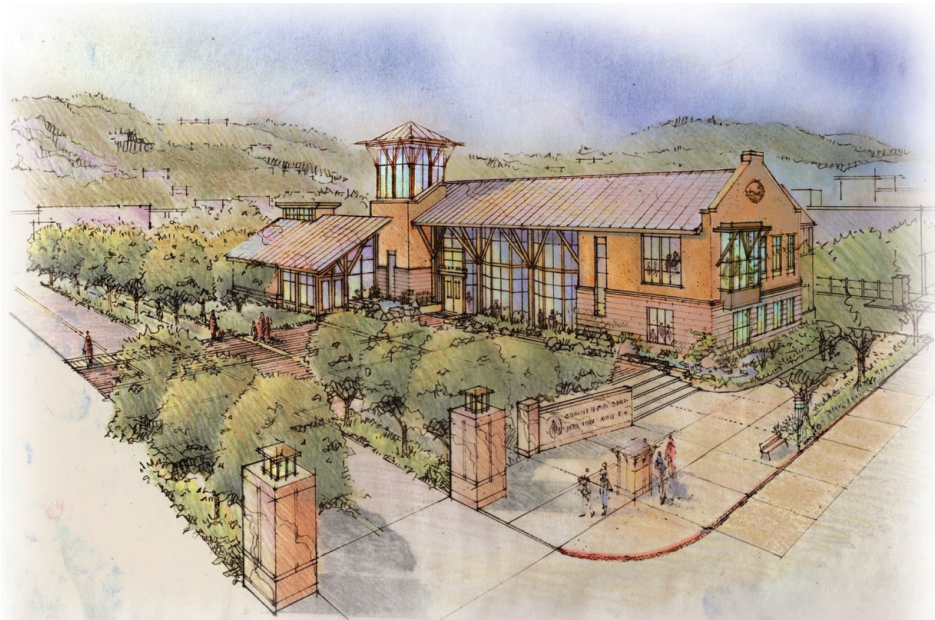
"We need to build our revenue back up," Fadelli said, calling it his top priority. "It will probably take my whole

term before we have reserves back in our coffers."

He noted that El Cerrito is no longer alone as the pandemic has plunged all Bay Area cities into financial straits.

"I see a lot of hope in El Cerrito...This city has good bones."

"It's happening everywhere," Fadelli said. "Yes, we could have managed our budget better, but had the coronavirus not happened, we could have managed it by now."



Instead, the city will have to make difficult and likely unpopular choices.

"As we cut, maintaining city services won't be easy," Fadelli said.

He noted that the fire and police departments take half the general fund expenditure. "That has a dramatic impact," he said. "Every department is going to have to try to be innovative with budgeting."

Fadelli suggested that some functions now done by police could be handled in other ways. "There are some incidents that officers with guns shouldn't go to," he said. "We have enough crime in the city and cops can be working those issues and we can have some other kind of response."

The City Council will also consider reducing Recreation Department staff with programs idled.

"It's not a decision we want to make, but we have to do it. We have to get the city back to financial solvency," Fadelli said. "We're depending on a lot of people, including our future auditor," and the newly elected council members should also have a say.

There are certain reductions the new mayor does not want.

"I want to keep Fire Station 72 (on Arlington Boulevard) open," he said. "I'm a big supporter of the pool and want to keep it active and open. I'm a big supporter of library funding. People

need to have something they can depend on."

Fadelli also supports continuing fire fuel reduction work in the Hillside Natural Area, but said the city should seek grants to help cover the cost.

Support for the library is not the same as the goal of building a new branch, however.

A 2016 bond measure for a new library got

62 percent approval, short of the two-thirds required to pass.

"I want a new library, but we have to be realistic that our situation pushes back the issue until we get a handle on our finances," Fadelli said. "We need a bond rating and have to prove we have taken action to get our fiscal house in order."

While the public has been supportive in recent years — approving higher sales tax, a parcel tax extension, and a measure that made El Cerrito a charter city and allowed it to institute a real estate transfer tax — "We can't be asking about taxes until we see how we're doing in a couple of years," Fadelli said. "The City Manager is very adamant

■ Continued on next page

■ Continued from page 4

about that. It's about restoring the city's finances and doing with less instead of asking for more."

He raised the idea of holding a workshop on new revenue streams during the coming year and mentioned parking meters, finding a new tenant for the OSH site, and permitting a cannabis dispensary as possible options.

Another important element is the El Cerrito Plaza BART station, where new development is being planned on the parking lots that Fadelli said has the potential for creating "a new downtown" on Fairmount Avenue.

Still to be resolved with development at the station are the loss of commuter parking and the need for library parking if it materializes in the project.

"We need to get input into what the project is going to be like," including

library space, Fadelli said. "We're at the beginning of a three-year process to figure it out."

He noted that parking studies will be done for the North Berkeley and El Cerrito Plaza stations.

"I think there are going to be new parking policies around the (Plaza) station," Fadelli said.

He said that while BART has already held two public events on developing the station, he wants more held to ensure the community has ample opportunity to provide input.

Fadelli envisions development with "a full range of housing, retail and hopefully a library" at the station.

He said a library that includes a community room with cafe and space to rent out for events could be an attraction drawing people not only from El Cerrito, but also Berkeley and Richmond.

But he cautioned that "El Cerrito needs to get its act together before we start talking about a library," adding, "I have concerns about parking."

As far as the tone he will set as mayor, Fadelli said "There are those who talk about getting rid of city commissions and committees. I think we need a way to get more people involved."

He also said that he will propose adding social and racial equity as a consideration to agenda items that come before the council.

Fadelli summed up by saying "I want people to understand how serious this is and how difficult this is going to be. I'm hoping for their input and patience."

"Development at the Plaza and Del Norte BART stations are part of how we are going to come back. It may be a few years before it happens, but I think it's going to happen."

Music Always Works: Local Treasure Here to Stay

BY GEORGINA EDWARDS

IMAGINE THE thrill of starting the next chapter as an intentionally community oriented small entrepreneur, longtime musician, and retired band teacher by purchasing a second store in El Cerrito on March 1, 2020. She'd heard that Music Works' owner Joanne Wong was contemplating retirement after 35 years. Robin Eig couldn't bear the thought of losing another great music store in the Bay Area, so she bought it!

On their website, rockinrobbies.com, you can read that the excitement for a grand opening percolates. As all of us learned to embrace in 2020, things shift. We evolve faster than it seems we can keep up with, but we manage, and yes, even grow stronger!

Fortunately for Rockin' Robbie's Music Works and the first store in Concord, Robin has been practicing how to transpose through many chapters of her life. In her voice, you connect immediately with the joy and enthusiasm for music and the role it plays in creating meaning and connection.

Though it's been some time since she was a band teacher at Kennedy High and other schools in West Contra Costa, she delights in sharing that a staff

member is also a percussion specialist teacher for the El Cerrito band.

Though she made the tough decision to lay off all the employees in both locations immediately in mid-March,



Robin Eig

she dove into doing everything and anything she could to keep the businesses going, embracing online retail and transforming herself into a door-to-door, pandemic savvy "curbside delivery" maven.

Soon enough, Robin noticed that the local store music business was transforming during these months as uncertainty and changes in our daily rhythms also gifted us the chance to contemplate and reflect.

Many of us decided to pick up long ago neglected instruments or even finally try and learn something new. In

El Cerrito, seems we have a particularly strong affinity for music making with ukuleles and guitars!

By Summer, Robin was bringing back employees to work at both stores. Of course, with the staff and musical community in our town, they are looking forward to a music filled grand reopening "when it's safe to do so."

Meantime, Rockin' Robbie's Music Works at 11225 San Pablo Ave., is delighted to be part of El Cerrito and is thriving and connecting with customers that come to buy their next special instrument, families renting instruments for their band or orchestra kids, and students of all ages that now learn over Zoom or Facetime.

Long time staff are also collaborating and re-imagining ways to educate and share music. For example, guitar teacher Rob Michael is working with Steve Weems on expertly produced "on demand" guitar lessons (stay tuned!).

Even, on some days, Robin's thrilled to be using the all time favorite retail question, "Who's next?"



#ElCerritoProud
#ShopEatLocalEC

Coronavirus Casualty: Albany Bowl Closes After 71 Years

BY CHRIS TREADWAY

THE NEON outside is off, the lanes inside are dark, separated by COVID-19 safety partitions that were installed but never used.

Albany Bowl is closing permanently, owner John Tierney confirmed, unable to wait out the coronavirus shutdown any longer.

The popular 71-year-old bowling center has been closed for nine months due to the coronavirus pandemic and there is no way to predict when businesses will be able to resume operations.

Tierney, who has owned the center since 1985, said he had spent some \$700,000 out-of-pocket since the shutdown and simply can't continue.



John Tierney

Tierney said he paid his employees as long as he could, including benefits, but ultimately had to lay everyone off. He personally called each of his 40 employees to relate the sad news.

The intention, before the new stricter shutdown was enacted in December, was that the center would reopen with safety measures to accommodate customers at reduced capacity.

Clear plastic partitions were mounted between the seating areas at each lane and sanitizing stations were installed all around the center.

The lanes were refinished and the center's interior repainted.

Tierney even posted a letter on his Facebook page in November saying "We will see you soon!" and concluding "Bowling is the greatest."

But the reopening was not to be.

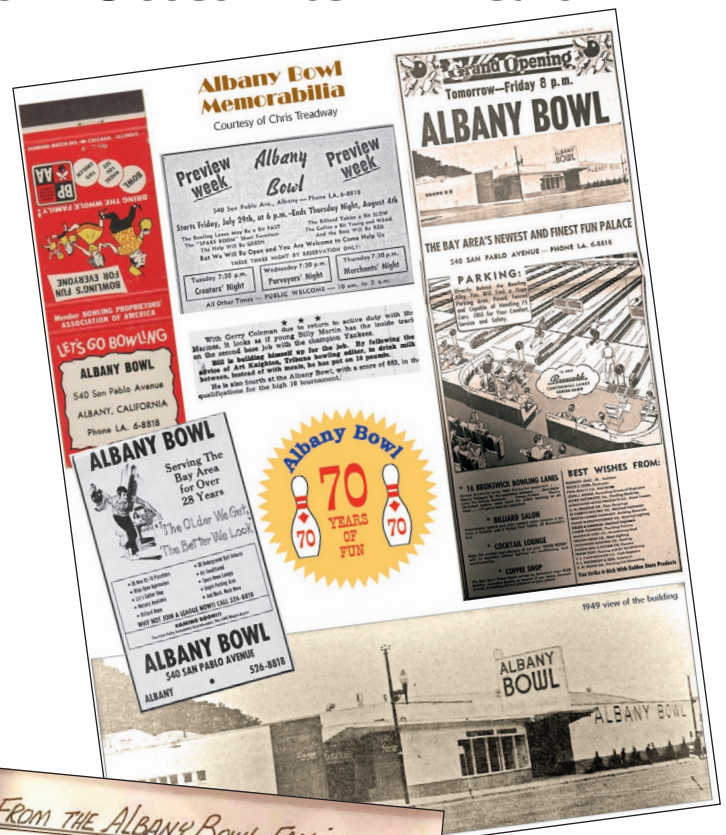
Albany Bowl featured a restaurant, cocktail lounge, billiard room and a large parking lot to go along with its 36 lanes when it opened on August 5, 1949.

The lanes have been modernized with the latest in bowling equipment several times since then and the cocktail lounge is now a sports bar as Albany Bowl competed to stay up-to-date.

Tierney owned the bowling center for more than half of its existence and worked tirelessly to promote it, joining business groups around the area.

Along with leagues and casual bowlers, Albany Bowl has been a popular choice for birthday parties and other celebrations, business events, fundraisers and promotional events. It has maintained close ties to UC Berkeley, which used it as the university's bowling facility.

"We've had so many families coming through this bowling center — three and four generations," Tierney said. "It's sad for the community, it's sad for the families, it's sad for the special needs families that came here."



FROM THE ALBANY BOWL FAMILY
TO ALL MY FRIENDS & FAMILIES
THAT BOWL IN OUR SURROUNDING
AREA.
IT'S SUCH A SAD DAY FOR ALL OF
US TO AGAIN HAVE OUR BOWLING
CENTERS CLOSE AGAIN DUE TO
SCIENCE & COVID-19.
WE MUST STAY STRONG, HELP
EACH OTHER, AND ALWAYS WEAR A
MASK.
MY FAMILY JOEY, BRITTANY, & MYSELF
NEEDED TO WISH ALL OF YOU TO
HAVE A GREAT HAPPY THANKSGIVING
AND GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU.
WE WILL SEE YOU SOON!
BOWLING IS THE GREATEST,
JOHN TIERNEY

Above: a Byline page from August 2019 celebrating the 70 year anniversary of this Albany institution.

Left: a note to customers from John Tierney and family expressing hopes of reopening soon. "We must stay strong..."

Below: Bowling shoes and billiard balls ready for a reopening that sadly will never happen.

Albany Bowl memorabilia courtesy of Chris Treadway.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

his office complex in 1966 at the corner of Cypress and San Pablo Avenue, and one of the anchor tenants at the time was Miracle Auto Painting.

Inasmuch as W.D. was married to my mother's sister Alverness, we would sometimes go to their house for a visit. At the time, we were living in the flatlands of Richmond and they lived on Burns Court in the El Cerrito Hills. It was always exciting going to their house because we had to travel high up the hill, and upon arrival I would go to the big deck off the living room and take in the great view of San Francisco, the bay and most importantly their swimming pool at the patio level! By today's standards it was a nice house, nothing fabulous, but in the eyes of a six-year-old, this was "lifestyles of the rich and famous."

I was already impressed when I would go to the real estate office with my father and observed the fact that W.D. had his own private office while everyone else had a desk that sat out in the open. Combine that impression with visiting their home and while talking to my aunt in their bedroom, I took note of the open closet door lined with business suits neatly hanging in the closet along with dress shirts and a row of expensive shoes, many of which were Alligator with cedar shoe trees in them. Our family was living what would be deemed as a "comfortable" working, middle class lifestyle. That was all good, however, I could clearly see a distinct difference in the two lifestyles.

On one occasion when we were visiting their home, W.D. asked my father if he wanted to take a ride with him. W.D. was going to Golden Gate Fields race track to retrieve his father-in-law, my grandfather, who had come over from San Francisco to play the ponies. He would catch the bus over, play the horses and then visit while he was on

this side of the bay. I was always a great tag-a-long, so my dad asked me if I wanted to go, and I said yes.

We descended the stairs into the double car garage where there sat a

was a defining moment for me. I could see the full span of the Golden Gate Bridge, the glistening bay and the San Francisco skyline. As we meandered down Moeser Lane with the slightest of

breezes tickling my scalp, right then I knew, even at my young age, that "this is living!"

For over 30 years I have owned a 1964 Cadillac De Ville convertible, triple black. When I put on a suit and tie, a pair of nice shoes,



sleek, shiny, 1966 black Cadillac De Ville convertible. W.D. and my father got in the front seat and I got in the back seat all by myself, swallowed up in sea of aromatic red leather upholstery. Then the magic started. First, he pressed a button and the garage door opened by itself. We also had a two-car garage but ours did not open at the press of a button! Then he backed the car into the driveway on what was a picture perfect day and pressed a button on the dash of the car, and to my amazement the top lifted and began to fold down behind me with the brilliant blue sky now in full view. As the car began to move down Burns Court, I was taking it all in. Left on Shevlin and right onto Moeser Lane. When we pulled onto Moeser Lane it

get in the Cadillac and let top down, it takes me back to what impressed me as a child. When I see my fellow Chamber board member Sil Addiego, he always makes me smile if not outwardly, then surely inwardly, because Sil is a part of that "real estate man" generation that I admired, suit and tie, always looking crisp, and today, he still maintains that standard. Besides that, for many years he was a Cadillac man as well!

I am going into 2021 with that same sense of bright-eyed amazement and enthusiasm that I experienced in the backseat of W.D. Martin's Cadillac. I plan on making 2021 a great year for me and I hope that all of you do likewise, to the extent that we can all merrily exclaim, now "this is living!"

Farmers Market

AT EL CERRITO PLAZA

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Last year's Theater Block holiday light display was sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and the City of El Cerrito.

Electrical connections courtesy of Elevation 66 Brewing Company, Noodles Fresh, and Pastime Ace Hardware.

Financial contributions were received from:
Chamber of Commerce, East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc.,
El Cerrito Royale, Mayor Paul Fadelli, and John C. Stashik.



ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President
Jeffrey Wright
Wright Realtors

j.wright@elcerritochamber.org

Second generation real estate broker and owner of Wright Realtors, Jeff has been President of the Chamber since January 2019.



Vice President
Matt Khadivian
El Mono Peruvian Restaurant

m.khadivian@elcerritochamber.org

Matt is the founder and owner of El Mono, El Cerrito's renowned restaurant, known for healthy and delicious South American comfort food at its best.



Secretary
Aissia Ashoori
City of El Cerrito

a.ashoori@elcerritochamber.org

Aissia works in the City's Community Development Department and oversees the affordable housing programs.



Treasurer
John C. Stashik
Premier Graphics

j.stashik@elcerritochamber.org

In the printing and advertising promotional products business, "Stash" is 21-year member of the Chamber, long time board member and editor of the *Byline*.



Sil Addiego
Coldwell Banker Bartels
Realtors

s.addiego@elcerritochamber.org

Former Chamber President and senior member of the Board of Directors, Sil is a local Realtor with Coldwell Banker Bartels in Pinole and an El Cerrito resident.



Mark Figone
East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc.

m.figone@elcerritochamber.org

President and an owner of East Bay Sanitary Co., Inc., the franchised garbage and green waste hauler for the City of El Cerrito.



Sonja Givens-Thomas
El Cerrito Royale

s.givens-thomas@elcerritochamber.org

Sonja is the Executive Director of El Cerrito Royale, El Cerrito's leading assisted living community.



Scott Harris
ClientClicks Internet Marketing

s.harris@elcerritochamber.org

Scott runs a marketing agency that focuses on helping small businesses with digital solutions that drive customer leads and increase retention.



Dominic Tang
Red Oak Realty

n.tang@elcerritochamber.org

"Nic" Tang is a Realtor based in El Cerrito. Fluent in three languages, he has an international clientele and handles both residential and commercial transactions.