



From the President

JEFFREY WRIGHT

THE OTHER DAY my brother-in-law sent me a text message that was a video of his turntable playing a Luther Vandross album with the original album jacket positioned to the right of the turntable. You might be wondering what the significance of the text message was and why it has any relevance to my column. Well, because your inquiring mind is burning, and hungering to know why, I will not deny you.

Late last year I represented my brother-in-law and my sister in the purchase of a replacement home. They relocated back to Northern California from Southern California. My brother-in-law had a great man cave at the old house but now he has an even greater one. He put in a custom-made bar and behind the bar is custom shelving where he has his extensive record album collection on display. He sent me the text message video with the caption “finally hooked up, just a sample.” He has all those old albums that he can play on his Bluetooth enabled turntable, wirelessly transmitting the sound to his high-quality speaker system. This affords him the opportunity to blend his old school record albums with newer technology. His music catalog on his computer and thumb drives is available but playing the

■ See From the President, page 5

Mayfair ‘Mods’ Now Under Construction



Chris Treadway

Modular units are built at Factory_OS on Mare Island. Assembled units will be trucked to El Cerrito.

BY CHRIS TREADWAY

CONSTRUCTION has finally started on the vacant property in front of the Del Norte BART station, even though it may not be visible to passersby or the pigeons that daily congregate on the site.

A construction trailer was recently put on the one-block Mayfair property, a former supermarket acquired by the city Redevelopment Agency over 30 years ago, but the sawing and hammering are happening 19 miles away in a 258,000-square-foot former U.S. Navy maintenance building at Mare Island in Vallejo, where a startup construction and development combine have been at work on the project since June.

Chamber members and city officials took a tour of the Factory_OS facility on September 10th and came away impressed with the methods, innovation and efficiency on display at the modular housing facility.

“As the only current council member who grew up in El Cerrito, I have waited



Old sign shows Navy heritage of the factory.

over 40 years to get something built at the Mayfair lot,” said Gabe Quinto, who noted that the modules are locally built and built by union labor.

City Manager Karen Pinkos said after the tour that the process is “innovative and just impressive.”

Factory_OS is doing the construction for its partner, Holliday Development of

■ See Mayfair Modular Housing, page 6

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Past Prez Palaver

JOHN C. STASHIK

ONE MONTH AGO I mentioned the Dynamex decision by our state's high court that adopted a new legal standard for determining whether workers are *employees* or *independent contractors*. Lo and behold, the governor signed AB 5 into law. Now ride share giants Uber and Lyft are in a tizzy as their business model relies on employing "gig workers" at starvation wages for essentially providing taxi service.

Watch those two behemoths squirm pending lawsuits or a ballot initiative to overturn the new law. Both companies are worth millions of dollars, have never made a profit, yet continue thumb their corporate noses at any and all regulations they disagree with; behavior that would put a small, legitimate business out of business pronto.

The cynic in me says Uber and Lyft will spend mega millions attempting to overturn the new law or carve out a special exemption to keep their *non-employees* driving for peanuts. Without those drivers there would be no business. All the money that may be spent on fighting the new standard could instead be used to actually comply with the law and pay employees a real wage. But I don't claim expertise in the "ride share" business.

Happenings. DD's Discounts opened on September 28th next to the Del Norte Ross at Cutting & San Pablo. Ross owns the store.

Outline General Contractors now occupies the former El Cerrito Electric shop at 10362 San Pablo.

Terry Kotsatos, financial advisor at El Cerrito's Edward Jones office, is moving to 1301 Solano Ave., in Albany, by Oct. 12th. An active Rotarian, Terry is also a member of this Chamber. When an open house date is decided you'll read about it here.

Quality. Eskaton, a northern California nonprofit, recently received national recognition as a Community of Quality

Need an Ambulance? Call the Chamber.

Who knows where this idea went? A bit dated, but possibly a plan for a new public safety building. Just kidding, of course.

El Cerrito Marketing Program

Next Deadline:
Nov. 5, 2019.
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for outstanding management of Hazel Shirley Manor in El Cerrito by the National Affordable Housing Management Association.

Art show. This year the El Cerrito Art Association will kick off their annual art exhibition and sale with an artists' reception on Friday, October 4th, at 7 p.m. in the Community Center. For the remainder of the weekend the show runs from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, and 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Sunday. More information: www.elcerritoart.org.

CCR. The upstairs gallery at City Hall will feature *Creedance: the First Decade 1959-1969*, October 7-25. Curated by Alec Palao, the exhibit features rare photos and artwork illustrating the early days of El Cerrito's own Creedance Clearwater Revival. Join a

special reception at City Hall on Friday, October 11 from 7 until 8:30 p.m.

On Sunday, October 13 at 2 p.m., a free talk by Alec Palao will discuss CCR's local background. Location: the Community Center.

Plaza improvements. New paint has given a fresh look to El Cerrito Plaza. A new color scheme adorns the buildings owned by Regency Centers at the Plaza along with revamped landscaping. More improvements are planned to add character to the shopping center.

Holiday lights will be installed by Regency in the coming weeks in time for the heavy shopping season.

As for holiday lights on a block or two of San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito's public works department is working on the logistics. Maybe something to report in the next *Byline*.

Rushed Through Law Does Not Help Employee/Contractor Issues

IT'S FRUSTRATING that California legislators rammed through AB5, a poorly written edict that could have far-reaching negative impacts on countless businesses and individuals throughout the state. While aiming to strong-arm the ride-sharing giants and other gig or app type businesses into treating their drivers fairly, the lawmakers approved a law which might make things worse for many people in various fields which have nothing to do with Uber, etc. Yes, certain professions have been excepted, but what about musicians, or personal trainers, for example?

Even former Senator Barbara Boxer, wrote a piece in the *Chronicle* late August, discouraging the passage of the bill as written, an act that dismayed many progressives. To me, she seem to be proposing an even-handed approach, as shown in the statement from her editorial, "There is a way for everyone to win here. By keeping driver flexibility but adding much-needed benefits like better pay, workers compensation, better cost reimbursement, and a way for workers to be heard." I will be doing some research by checking with our members and how or if they will be affected. Please contact me, if you have thoughts or opinions about any of this.

Not familiar with AB 5? Here's a synopsis from the *National Law Review*, written by Connie N. Bertram.

□

AB5 codifies the California Supreme Court's holding in *Dynamex Operations West, Inc. v. Superior Court of Los Angeles*, and adopts an "ABC" test to determine whether a worker is classified as an "employee" for purposes of California's Labor Code, unemployment insurance law, and wage orders. Under the "ABC" test, for a worker properly to be classified as an independent contractor, the putative employer must satisfy three conditions:

- The worker is free from the employer's control and direction in connection with the work performed, both under the contract and in fact;



Manager's Musings

LISA MARTINENGO

- The work being performed is outside the usual course of the employer's business; and
- The worker is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, or business of the same nature as the work performed.

The bill contains numerous exceptions for occupations and contracting arrangements that will not be subject to the ABC test under either AB5 or *Dynamex*. Certain professionals, including lawyers, doctors, engineers, accountants, investment advisors,

insurance brokers, and others, will continue be governed by the pre-*Dynamex* common law standard. Independent contractors providing certain types of services (including, marketing, human resources, design, photography, writing, and editing) will not be subject to the ABC test if they meet a separate, six-factor test focusing largely on whether they operate an independent business. Construction subcontractors and bona fide business-to-business contracting relationships are also exempted from the ABC test.

If passed, the bill will upend numerous independent contractor relationships in the state and subject businesses that retain independent contractors to a patchwork of local minimum wage laws (21 in the Bay Area alone), meal and rest break requirements that are difficult for employers to police, and the requirement to provide wage statements containing nearly a dozen categories of information.

Businesses in California that use independent contractors should immediately begin working with counsel to plan for AB5's January 1, 2020, effective date by either ensuring that existing contractor relationships pass the ABC test or meet the requirements of one of AB5's exceptions and/or preparing to transition certain contractors to W-2 employment status.

The views expressed here are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of the Chamber board. Email: l.martinengo@elcerritochamber.org; cell: 510-778-5883.

Local Service. Global Reach. Plus Free Shredding on Oct. 17th!

ON October 17th, Cooperative Center FCU will join with 56,000 credit unions around the world in celebration of International Credit Union (ICU) Day.[®] One way Cooperative

Center likes to commemorate the day is by helping people safeguard their personal information by offering free onsite shred services between noon

and 4 p.m. at 2001 Ashby Avenue in Berkeley.

There are 200+ million credit union members around the world—more than 100 million in the U.S. alone—and Cooperative Center joins them in celebration of the not-for-profit cooperative spirit that all credit unions share.

This cooperative spirit has led to life-changing opportunities for people all over the world who've wanted to start a small business, own a home or continue their education but were denied access to other financial institutions. In many

parts of the world, people's first taste of democracy is through their credit union, where "one member, one vote" is the governing structure.

Members of the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce and their employees are welcome to stop by and celebrate with Cooperative Center, a movement that concerns itself with the financial success of all people.

For more information about offering the free benefit of credit union membership to your employees, please contact Linda Meza at lmeza@coopfcu.org or 510-295-1657.

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BY LISA MARTINENGO

NEED HELP redesigning your vintage house or to bring it to code? Want to be sure your ADU is compliant with the ADA (accessory dwelling unit and Americans with Disabilities Act)? Need mandatory property inspections made? Is the sidewalk in front of your store or home cracked and uneven? All these jobs and many more, are handled by the KLC team with professionalism and efficiency.

The KLC office in El Cerrito offers myriad specialized services relating to design, building and construction. Owners, Ronald and Maria Campos and their staff are highly trained and experienced in many technical contractor services needed for both large and small scale projects.

Ron's childhood and university years were in the Philippines, as well as many years spent in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In fact, Ronald and Maria met, got married and began their family there. That's where the KL in the KLC business name comes from! The family emigrated to the U.S. in 1995. With his engineering degree, and

experience, it didn't take long for Ronald to get the necessary U.S. contractor and engineering licenses. He worked for a firm that had Chevron as one of its biggest clients and opened his own consulting and service company in 2010.

KLC has done work for the City of El Cerrito, and the Chevron refinery, as well as many smaller projects. Since he "wears two hats," the engineering, inspection hat and the contractor, building hat, Ron and the firm are busy in these times of increased development projects. They are the go-to provider for residential, commercial and industrial projects, performing structural inspection mapping, designing, planning, engineering and building.

The office is located at 11100 San Pablo Ave., Suite 207, in El Cerrito.

On the Web: www.klceea.com. Contact by telephone at: 510-232-0300; email: info@klceea.com.

We are glad to have KLC Consulting Engineers, Architects and Builders, in El Cerrito and as Chamber members.



Maria and Ronald Campos, principals of KLC, recently received their membership plaque.

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Election Time Nears

TERMS FOR four directors will end on January 21, 2020. They are Sil Addiego, Fred Fassett, Nic Tang, and Jeffrey Wight. Directors serve two years.

President Wright will appoint a nominating committee at the October lunch meeting; the report from that body will be announced at the November meeting. Then, ballots are mailed to all regular members in good standing if there multiple people running.

Any member interested in serving on the board of directors is encouraged to contact President Jeffrey Wright. The best way to make contact is by email: j.wright@elcerritochamber.org.

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

■ Continued from page 1

albums is his nod to some of the great times of the past.

As for this edition of my column, the operative word is *change*. As a kid growing up in the '60s and '70s we played albums and 45's on the record player. My earliest memories are of my parents Magnavox Hi-Fi, short for high fidelity in case any "youngsters" are reading the column. The music delivery systems graduated from albums, to eight track players to cassettes, and then on to CD's, MP3, etc., so on and so forth. Things have changed on the one hand, but on the other hand they have stayed the same because music is still music. Two things come to mind, first, the expression "there is nothing new under the sun" with its origins being biblical in nature, and second, the lyrics to jazz guitarist George Benson's song "Everything Must Change." It starts off "*Everything must change, nothing stays the same. Everyone must change, nothing stays the same.*" A little further into the song the lyrics are "*there are not many things in life you can be sure of, except rain comes from the clouds, and sun lights up the sky, and hummingbirds do fly.*" There are some absolutes in life along with some change and variation

Business and commerce have been going on since the beginning of civilization and it's still going on, however, it has changed. In my lifetime I've witnessed the retail sector move from free standing stores to enclosed malls, then a shift to open air plaza style shopping such as Emeryville's Bay Street and San Jose's Santana Row. Amazon came on the scene and upped the ante with online shopping and home delivery. Retail sales are still taking place but now in expanded variations.

Looking back on our local public transit systems, before BART there was the Key System with rails running across the Bay Bridge. Many people are thrilled to have the option of local ferry service, which is great, but it is nothing new. Much more efficient today, however, it is certainly "nothing new under the sun."

My point in all of this is to acknowledge that change and variation will occur. In the future, El Cerrito will have a greater

variation in housing stock with increased density. San Pablo Avenue will eventually have a different look and the flow of public and private modes of transportation as well as parking will adjust accordingly. In my opinion the ideal vibe for El Cerrito to strive for is the same vibe that I get in my brother-in-law's man cave. The hospitality is great, the modern amenities are on point with theater style seating, 80-inch flat screen television, and a quality sound system. Even with all the modern technology and comforts, the old school elements from a different era are still present, vital and putting a smile on his face as well as the faces of his visitors. As for El Cerrito, let's be a "Bluetooth up to

date city" while at the same time maintaining our old school values, flavor and ambience. We can have the latest and greatest on a thumb drive but let's also maintain a modern turntable and speakers and keep playing some of the old school hits!

One last note on change. The El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce has been around since 1936 and even we have to change from time to time. Our election cycle is fast approaching and we are actively seeking candidates who may be interested in serving on our board of directors. It will be great to add some retailers and restaurateurs to the board. Please drop me an email if interested: j.wright@elcerritochamber.org

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More information in the next *Byline*

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MAYFAIR MODULAR HOUSING

Continued from page 1

Emeryville, on the market-rate portion of the Mayfair project, a six-story building with 156 residential units and 8,893 square feet of commercial space along San Pablo Avenue and Cutting Boulevard.

The second portion of the project is a five-story building at the north end of the property where nonprofit developer Bridge Housing plans “67 below market rate units with levels of affordability ranging from 30% to 60% of area median income,” according to the city website. “It will also include property management and service offices and amenity space for its residents.”

Bridge is still in the process of funding applications and that part of the project will begin construction after the Holiday project, said city Community Development Director Melanie Mintz. The City Council last month approved a pre-development loan to Bridge.



All photos except as noted: Chris Treadway

An unfinished module that will soon be part of a new home.

Holliday is building the common public plaza space the two buildings will share.

Factory_OS opened less than two years ago using assembly line methods to do the majority of construction stages off-site (OS) in a controlled setting unaffected by weather or other factors that can plague conventional methods.

While the final proof will be in the finished product, the promise is enticing, starting with the claim that construction can be done 40 percent faster and 20 percent cheaper than work done in the traditional way at a construction site.

The modules move through 33 stations in the cavernous building, which was gutted and custom-designed for the process similar to an automotive assembly line.

The configuration allows workers to access areas more easily than traditional methods, including underneath floor assemblies, in a controlled and orderly environment.

Each station is outfitted with air tools and connections



John C. Stashik

Chamber and city personnel on tour at Factory_OS in Vallejo.

and stocked with the materials for that shift’s work before the module moves on air casters to the next station.

The 200 floor employees work in two shifts, a day shift handling construction, and a smaller evening shift of 15 to 20 that cleans and restocks everything from a computerized inventory for the next day’s work.

Where a conventional construction crew knocks off for the day at dinnertime, the night shift works until 11 p.m. The day shift starts at 6 a.m., with no worries about neighbors disturbed by early construction noise.

“Every worker is a union member,” said Larry Pace, chief operating officer of Factory_OS. “Fifty percent of the workers come as unskilled labor that we’ve trained ourselves here. We work hand-in-glove with the Carpenters Union. We give them skills they can use for the rest of their lives.”

Many come from organizations such as San Francisco-based rehabilitation program Delancey Street, which Pace said is an investor in the venture.

Constant care is taken to keep floors and stations clean and free of clutter.

Digitized blueprints can be accessed on a large screen at each station to double-check plans or make updates. The factory has an in-house sawmill and a large lumber inventory, and makes its own countertops.

Robots are used to help two workers install insulated window units weighing 400 to 600 pounds that would normally require eight people to install at an outdoor site.

“It’s literally just an assembly line,” Pace said. “That’s what it is.”



Air casters make moving heavy components easy.



This robot installs heavy windows.

The assembly line is on a large scale, specializing in “high-density, multi-family urban buildings of 30 units or more,” Pace said.

Assembled units come with windows, plumbing, wiring, and even all appliances all in place. They are then prepared and packaged for shipment to the jobsite, where they are connected together in stacks and rows before the external siding



Inventory and status reports are displayed on large monitors.

is attached. The final assembly will take about two weeks and the entire project about 15 months.

“We build inside out. We can go all the way down to tile, towel bars and appliances,” said Kevin Brown, a partner in Holliday Development.

The modules are built with a half-inch tolerance, Factory_OS officials said.

What’s in a Name?

BY CHRIS TREADWAY

THE MAYFAIR SITE in El Cerrito is finally being developed after being vacant for decades, but it was once a bustling hub as an early form of super-market since Franklin D. Roosevelt was president.

It opened in 1934 as the El Cerrito location of the Oakland-based Andrew Williams grocery chain, strategically located near Richmond and near the terminus of the Eastshore Highway that would open in 1937.

The store had numerous departments (bakery, deli), was larger than most of the other chain stores of the day and boasted parking for 100 cars. It was also open 24 hours, a policy that created friction between chain owner Andrew Williams and grocery unions.

His prototype was successful and Williams would open an even larger store at Broadway and MacArthur in Oakland in 1937.

Advance work and custom-preparation of materials also reduce waste considerably compared to conventional methods.

The company’s current project, called The Union, at 532

Union St. near the West Oakland Oakland BART station, has 100 units in 85 modules that took 10 days to put up and has a total construction period of 15 months.

Preparation for the Mayfair site will include grading, taking soil samples and pouring the concrete base.

Factory_OS is not the only enterprise taking the modular approach to construction. “We absolutely do have competition, but there isn’t anything in this



geographic area,” Pace said, citing factories in Boise, Idaho, and Vancouver, Canada.

The Vallejo startup also feels its setup is more innovative and efficient.

“We spent years putting this together,” Pace said. “It didn’t happen overnight.”

The Mayfair project is the city’s largest since the 128-unit Metro 510 housing complex was built at El Cerrito Plaza, Mintz said.



This is the northeast corner of Cutting and San Pablo showing the Andrew Williams grocery store. Eventually, the chain became part of Mayfair Markets. The building has been gone for ages, but the Mayfair name lives on.

The Andrew Williams chain was bought by Southern California-based Mayfair Markets in the early 1950s, with its locations using the name Andrew Williams/Mayfair for a couple of years and then becoming Mayfair Markets.

The Mayfair brand, once common around California, is what gave the site its name and its last use before the closed location was acquired by the El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency in 1987.



El Cerrito

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Ryan Maecker

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The Calendar

- Oct. 1 City Council meets, City Hall, 7 p.m.
 3 Ribbon cutting at BrightNow! Dental, 5:30-7:30 p.m., 11430 San Pablo Ave. at Blake.
 4 Five time Tony nominated musical "Bright Star" premieres at Contra Costa Civic Theatre. 8 p.m., ccct.org
 6 El Cerrito Scavenger Hunt. Meet at Mechanics Bank parking lot (9996 San Pablo Ave.). 2 p.m. sharp. Info: jpeat@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us
 13 10th Annual Sip & Savor. 2:30, Berkeley Country Club.
 15 Chamber luncheon; see above.
 15 City Council meets, City Hall, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 5 El Cerrito Marketing Program mailer deadline.
- Dec. 18 Chamber holiday luncheon. Details next issue.

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

Chamber Officers & Staff

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Sunday, October 13 • 2:30-5:30 p.m.
Berkeley Country Club

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