

Alameda Sun

Locally Owned, Community Oriented



IT'S TELL AN OLD JOKE DAY!

Vol. 13 No. 43
July 24, 2014

INSIDE

HOMETOWN
Fire Wire
Page 2

Police Blotter
Page 3

All the doings of
Island safety and
law personnel



HOMETOWN NEWS
Good Deeds Page 2

Local student travels to the
capitol for good cause.



LOCAL HAPPENINGS
Art & Wine Page 6 & 7

Check out the schedule of
bands at the annual faire.



PUZZLES
Thinking fun Page 5

Sharpen your pencils for that
famed newspaper tradition.



SPORTS
Sail race Page 7

Local boaters victorious
in race to Hawaii.

CONTENTS

HOMETOWN NEWS... 2

OPINION 4

PUZZLES 5

LOCAL HAPPENINGS .. 6

SPORTS 7

CLASSIFIED 8

REAL ESTATE FOCUS ... 9

Alameda Sun
is a publication of
Stellar Media Group, Inc.
3215J Encinal Ave.
Alameda, CA 94501
News: (510) 263-1470
Ads: (510) 263-1471
Fax: (510) 263-1473

For breaking news and
other content, visit
www.AlamedaSun.com



Alameda Sun
Almanac

Date	Rise	Set
Today	06:06	20:26
July 25	06:07	20:26
July 26	06:07	20:25
July 27	06:08	20:24
July 28	06:09	20:23
July 29	06:10	20:22
July 30	06:11	20:21

Rising Rents Pinch Tenants

Michele Ellson
The Alamedan

Alamedans are feeling pinched by rising rents, new survey results released by housing advocates Renewed Hope show.

About two-thirds of the 189 survey respondents said their rent has increased over the past 12 months, and 15 percent said their rent has gone up more than 10 percent — the ceiling typically recommended by Alameda's Rent Review Advisory Committee, which offers non-binding mediation for rent disputes.

Even people whose rent hasn't been increased said they fear they could see their rents escalate beyond what they can afford to pay, comments offered by survey participants show. More than half of Alameda's residents rent their homes, as shown in U.S. Census data. Renewed Hope issued the survey in an effort to provide data to build or refute anecdotal concerns that rents are on the rise in Alameda and that renters are being forced to leave the Island.

"It looks like over half of the respondents have had a rent increase in the last year and, while some haven't and have said their landlords are decent and understanding, there are clear indications of pressure on everybody," Renewed Hope's Laura Thomas said. "Many said one more rent increase would be their undoing and many are long-time residents. It's something anyone who cares about Alameda should be alarmed over."

Angie Watson-Hajjem of ECHO Housing, which provides free counseling for tenants and landlords detailing their housing rights and responsibilities, said the nonprofit is getting fewer calls about rent increases in Alameda than it did last year.

Though the local Realtors' association is fighting the attempt, Renewed Hope has pushed city leaders to consider adopting some form of rent control, saying the city's existing rent review committee, which provides non-binding mediation for landlords and tenants who are willing to participate in the process, is good enough. Some rent control opponents have said they fear controls could hamper investment in Alameda, while others argue that a lack of supply is the real problem — a problem the council is addressing by considering the development of hundreds of new homes, many of them affordable to residents with lower than average incomes.

Neighboring cities where such controls are in place include Oakland, Berkeley, Hayward and Fremont.

The City Council agreed on July 15 to consider creating a task force to look into whether rising rents and evictions are a problem in Alameda, though council members stopped short of including it in a state-mandated housing blueprint that lays out the city's policies and programs supporting housing development. City staffers pledged to spend the rest of the summer

figuring out how such a task force should be structured and to present a plan for forming one to the City Council in September.

Some council members said in February 2013 that they may consider exploring the possibility of rent control after hearing from the family of an elderly couple whose rent was raised 67 percent after a new owner bought their building, an increase that forced them out of their longtime home.

Several of the renters who participated in Renewed Hope's survey detailed rent increases of hundreds of dollars in a single year — increases that they say have pushed tenants out of their homes. And several complained their landlords aren't maintaining or improving their properties with the additional rent they're charging.

One participant said all but two of the existing tenants in the building where they live moved out after a new landlord increased rents by \$200 a month or more. That person said their landlord is seeking \$1,850 for one-bedroom apartments.

Another survey participant said that since August 2013, the landlord has raised the rent by \$450 a month.

Renters who participated in the survey said housing costs are eating up as much as 90 percent of their income; housing costs of more than 30 percent of a household's income are considered burdensome.

Even tenants who haven't faced rent increases said they're fearful one may be coming, particularly as rents are raised significantly in surrounding units. One survey participant said they've avoided asking their landlord for repairs because they fear a call could trigger a rent increase, while others said they can't move because there's nothing

RENTS: Page 12

Help Solve Homicide

Dennis Evanosky

A mother and grandmother are still mourning almost three years after the death of three-year-old Eden Marie Lynch. The little girl passed away at Children's Hospital in Oakland after suffering what the Alameda County Coroner called "blunt force trauma to the head."

According to Eden's grandmother, the three-year-old was living at 2236 San Antonio Ave., Apartment G, with her father and his girlfriend. On Aug. 31, 2011, the girlfriend took the child to Children's Hospital in Oakland. According to the California Health and Welfare Agency (CHW), the girlfriend found Eden Marie in "a seizure-like state with her eyes rolled back and feet rigid."

According to CHW, the doctors at Children's Hospital reported the Eden's was nonresponsive and her condition was "very bad and it was unlikely that she would survive until morning." CHW reported that Eden's right eye was black and that she had scratches below her right eye.



Richard Bangert

Caspian Terns nest on a newly created island in the expanded wetlands on the southwest corner of Alameda Point. This species last nested on the Point in 1999.

Milestones Reached in Point Cleanup

Richard Bangert

The Seaplane Lagoon's north side will be looking like its old self in a few months. The Navy has begun dismantling the water-proof concrete-walled containment system that was used for three years for dewatering and testing of soil dredged from the Seaplane Lagoon, marking a major cleanup milestone. Prior to that dredging work, much of the lagoon's north frontage served as a staging area for replacement of storm drain lines contaminated with radium-226.

Construction of a new and improved soil cover over a waste disposal site concluded this spring, marking another milestone. The 110-acre site on the southwest corner of Alameda Point took 10 years of haggling about potential environmental impacts before a cleanup plan

was adopted in 2010. Work began in early 2013. The dome-shaped soil cover required 500,000 cubic yards of barged-in soil to complete.

At the far northwestern corner of the Point, work is about to begin on another long studied and analyzed waste disposal site. In a few months, the Navy will be installing an interlocking steel retaining wall along 200 yards of the Bay shoreline to contain contaminated burned waste material that was bulldozed into the Bay more than a half century ago. Water dye tests showed no toxics are leaching into the Bay, but members of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) questioned whether the barrier would withstand a catastrophic earthquake. Partially covered by runway pavement, the entire 30-acre site will receive a three-foot soil cover. The work is expected to be completed in 2015. The area will be available for passive recreational use such as hiking trails when the city receives the land.

One of the longest-running and most problematic cleanup sites is at the old Naval Air Rework Facility (NARF), also known as Building 5, covering nearly one million square feet. Radium paint used for aircraft dial painting, and chemicals associated with engine repair work led to contamination that is still being remediated. The entire floor area will be scanned again for radiation in 2015. Next year the Navy will also return to the site for final groundwater cleanup treatments targeting contamination remaining after a cleanup effort a decade ago.

Next door to the Bladium Sports Club on West Tower Avenue, another previously treated groundwater cleanup site will be treated again. Workers have already begun boring holes in the pavement for a network of hoses that will be used for introducing contaminant-eating bacteria into groundwater.

On July 12, the Navy's annual cleanup site tour visited four of

the cleanup areas. The most impressive stop was the 110-acre landfill site mentioned above. For the first time in more than 15 years, members of the public were allowed to walk around and enjoy the magnificent views from the embankment that is closer to San Francisco than to city hall.

Tour participants were able to see the area's expanded wetland with a new tiny island. Caspian Terns started nesting on the island a few months ago, another type of milestone. "The last time Caspian Terns were seen in that area nesting was in 1999 when only one nest was detected," said Alameda wildlife biologist and Alameda Point bird surveyor Leora Feeney. The 79-acre soil cover on the landfill will be seeded with flowering native grasses later this year. The vegetation mix was chosen by the RAB.

According to the Navy's environmental cleanup coordinator, Derek Robinson, \$513 million has been appropriated to date for Alameda Point cleanup, although some of it remains to be spent on upcoming work. His office, the Base Realignment and Closure Program, estimates another \$80 million will be needed by the time remaining projects and follow-up monitoring are completed.

Later this year, the Navy is expected to transfer the 33-acre North Housing site and seven-acre former Island High School site that sit next to Alameda Landing and Estuary Park to the city, marking another milestone on the long and winding cleanup road to civilian use.

Follow Richard Bangert at <http://alamedapointenvironmentalreport.wordpress.com>.



Dennis Evanosky

Navy spokesperson Derek Robinson recently led a bus tour of Alameda Point.



Courtesy photo

Eden Marie Lynch

that day she saw "Eden falling down approximately six or seven cement slab-type stairs." The report stated that a doctor at Children's Hospital said that "something was going on for a number of days" and that the doctor maintained that there was "unaccounted trauma that did not occur from the minor falling down the stairs on Aug. 22, 2011."

The coroner has ruled Eden's death a homicide. Eden's mother and grandmother are asking that anyone with information about the case call Alameda Police Department's Violent Crimes Unit at 337-8385.



Photo by Jun de la Cruz.

United Pilipinos of Alameda award winners show off their plaques after the July 13 ceremony honoring them.

Filipino Students Honored

Sun Staff Reports

On Sunday, July 13, the United Pilipinos of Alameda (UPA) held its 40th annual outstanding student of Filipino ancestry awards ceremony at the Harbor Bay Community Center. Councilman Stewart Chen gave the keynote address.

Every year, public and private schools in Alameda nominate deserving students to win this award based on their academic achievement, character and leadership abilities. In addition to honoring the students, it is also an

opportunity for the UPA to use this occasion to publicly acknowledge the important role of parents and share their pride and sense of accomplishment.

This year's winners were: Jenna Ah-Hing, Bay Farm Elementary School; Waverley Achacos, Earhart Elementary School; Jahn Tibayan, Edison Elementary School; Bianca Hermosa, Franklin Elementary School; Glenann Bautista, Lum Elementary School; Tyler Reyes, Maya Lin Elementary School; Sasha Aninipot, Otis Elementary School;

Justin Leung, Paden Elementary School; Mona Ella Hidalgo and Marc Luis Pingul, Ruby Bridges Elementary School; Edbert Frez, St. Joseph Elementary School; Alexandra Hauck, St. Philip Neri Elementary School, Michaela Soriano, The Academy of Alameda; Kyle Bolanos, Lincoln Middle School; Josie Pascua, Wood Middle School; Jessica Cavalli, Alameda High School; Jessica Vicman, Encinal High School; Manuel Carbajal, Island High School; and Janelle de Dios, St. Joseph Notre Dame.

News in Brief

Sun Staff Reports

Midway Dinner, Concert, Benefit

Members of a study group at the Home of Truth are sponsoring "Island Heart Fest," a dinner and concert to raise funds for the Midway Shelter and the Home of Truth Building Fund. The event takes place this Saturday, July 26, at the Home of Truth, 1300 Grand St.

The Home of Truth was founded by Annie and Harriet Rix more than 100 years ago, so study group members thought it was important to donate some of the proceeds from the event to a women's shelter. Dinner will start at 6 p.m. in the rear courtyard. The concert and sing-along will start at 7 p.m. in the main building. The suggested donation is \$15.

Grand Opera Comes To Alameda

Island City Opera opens its inaugural season next Saturday, Aug. 2 with a 2 p.m. free concert in Franklin Park on the 1400 block of San Antonio Avenue. The event will feature a range of favorite arias, duets and ensembles.

Just this past spring, Island City Opera was founded earlier this year to bring great opera to Alameda, support the ambitions of promising and established performers and encourage a love of the art of opera.

"Island City Opera invites Alamedans to be inspired by beau-

tiful and powerful singing here in our own neighborhood", said executive director Eileen Meredith. Internationally acclaimed soprano Olivia Stapp will serve as master of ceremonies on Aug. 2; performers include Buffy Baggott and Eileen Meredith.

For more information about upcoming events and to learn how to get involved, visit www.islandcityopera.org or contact Allison Melendez at 263-8060 or amelendez@islandcityopera.org or stop by the Island City Opera's office at 1333 Bay St.

Girls Inc. Hosts Eurakathon

Join Girls Inc. next Thursday, July 31, for the Fourth Annual Eurakathon, an event showcasing the accomplishments and work completed by teens in Girls Inc. of the Island City's Euraka! Teen Achievement Program. The event will be held from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Joseph Notre Dame High School, 1011 Chestnut St.

Eureka! is a three-year, national program for girls to explore career and post-secondary education options by combining an intensive four-week summer program that focuses on hands-on activities in science, technology, engineering, math, sports, and personal development. In the third and final year of the program, participants participate in a 4-week job shadow experience with local businesses and organizations.

For more information or to RSVP call 521-1743 ext. 204 or email kkind@girlsincislandcity.org.