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Virus from China halts local events; masks selling out

BY SARA TABIN
Daily Post Staff Writer

Concerns about the spreading coronavirus have put a halt to two Palo Alto Lunar New Year celebrations.

The Palo Alto Chinese New Year Fair, scheduled for Feb. 16, was cancelled because organizers felt they could not guarantee that the fair would be safe for families. The festival, which started in 2015, is put on by nonprofit group [See VIRUS, page 18]

Murder near Home Depot

BY EMILY MIBACH
Daily Post Staff Writer

A man was shot and killed in East Palo Alto last night, and police pursued the shooter who eventually got away.

At 8:06 p.m., police responded to a report of a gunshot on the 900 block of Mouton Circle, in the neighborhood

near Joel Davis Park behind the Home Depot. They found a shooting victim on the ground. The man died shortly after police arrived, police said in a short statement.

The suspect drove away from the scene, then got out of the car and started running.

Police cordoned off the area of Tins-

ley Street and Clarke Avenue in an attempt to find the shooter. Officers were still looking for him as of 9:30 p.m.

East Palo Alto Police were using Menlo Park's police dog to try to sniff out the suspect.

This was the first murder in East Palo Alto in four months.

On Sept. 7, Victor Gomez Rios, 24,

of Menlo Park was shot and killed during what police say was an "illegal transaction." His killer is still at large.

In the early 1990s, East Palo Alto was known as the murder capital of the nation, but the murder rate has dropped in recent years. There were three murders in 2018 and only one last year.

THE UPDATE

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CORRECTION: A story and graphic yesterday should have said that the Alameda de las Pulgas and Santa Cruz Avenue corridor, known as the "Y," is located in unincorporated San Mateo County near Menlo Park. San Mateo County will unveil plans for the corridor at a meeting at 7 p.m. tomorrow at Las Lomas School, 299 Alameda de las Pulgas, Atherton.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE showed a strong gain in January, bolstered by continued strength in the job market. The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index rose to a reading of 131.6 this month, up from 128.2 in December. Lynn Franco, senior director of economic indicators at the Conference Board, says the increase reflects a more positive assessment of the current job market.

KOBE CRASH PROBE: The helicopter carrying Kobe Bryant didn't have a recommended warning system to alert the pilot he was too close to land but it's not clear it would have averted the crash that killed nine because the pilot may have lost control as the aircraft plunged into a fog-

[See THE UPDATE, page 4]

Is this enough housing?

Friday is deadline for Senate to OK SB50

BY ELAINE GOODMAN
Daily Post Correspondent

Despite looming state legislation that threatens to override cities' control of building height and density as a way to speed housing development, cities haven't substantially stepped up their home production, housing advocates say.

The legislation, Senate Bill 50 by Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco,

faces a critical vote this week: If the Senate does not vote to approve it by Jan. 31, it will die.

SB50 would allow four- or five-story buildings within a half mile of train stations, regardless of city height limits. Density limits and parking requirements would be relaxed near bus routes or in "job-rich areas."

Some cities and local officials have balked at SB50 because it would take away a degree of local control of development projects. So one might wonder [See HOUSING, page 18]

HOMES APPROVED IN 2019

	Units
Palo Alto	206
Mountain View	1,711
Los Altos	226
Menlo Park	170
Redwood City	616
San Carlos	60
Belmont	352

Includes accessory dwelling units or ADUs.



State Senate candidate Shelly Masur.

Candidate Masur is focused on education

BY EMILY MIBACH
Daily Post Staff Writer

Shelly Masur, currently a Redwood City councilwoman who was previously a Redwood City school board member, wants to take education issues head-on if she is elected to the state Senate, replacing termed out Sen. Jerry Hill.

"My goal is to continue to be a leader on education," Masur said, adding that she would be one of the few state senators with a back-

This is part of a Daily Post series about state Senate candidates in the March 3 primary.

ground in education policy, and would want to be on the Senate's education committee.

Masur, 55, was on the Redwood City School Board for 10 years before joining the council in 2015. During her tenure on the school [See MASUR, page 18]

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VIRUS

WizChinese and attracts thousands of people. Lead organizer Lily Chiu said Chinese community members were worried about coronavirus and asked for the event to be postponed or cancelled. Since the Lunar New Year already happened on Jan. 25 the organization decided it wasn't worth postponing the fair and cancelled it.

Chiu explained that many people travel to China over the Lunar New Year so some of them could have been exposed to the virus. She said many attendees bring children to the fair and that one of the highlights of the fair is a food tasting.

The fair is normally a way for the Chinese people in Palo Alto to build community and promote their culture, Chiu said. She said some of the event sponsors allowed WizChinese to keep donations for the event to use next year.

Avenidas cancels event

The Avenidas senior center also cancelled their event which was planned for Jan. 30 in the Cubberley Community Center.

CEO Amy Andonian said that even if the risk of infection is minimal the center wants to make sure its seniors are safe and healthy. She said some seniors had said they were worried that the event could expose them to the virus.

Andonian said people have emailed the center to thank them for watching out for the seniors' health. Andonian said postponing the event didn't make sense since the Lunar New Year has passed, but promised a bigger and better celebration next year.

China says 132 people have died and about 6,000 have become sick from an outbreak of a new strand of coronavirus in that country. Many of the people who died were elderly. There have been five cases reported in the United States, including in Southern California, but no deaths.

Symptoms of the illness includes fever, coughing and shortness of breath.

Questions about the virus

The Santa Clara Public Health Department held a press briefing yesterday about the disease with Health Officer Sara Cody.

Cody said there is still a lot that isn't known about the disease, including how it is spread, but there is no evidence of the disease spreading in the United States.

People who have travelled to China are most at risk. They should monitor their health for 14 days after returning to the United States, and should call a doctor and wear a mask to protect others if they get sick.

Cody said people who aren't sick don't need masks. It looks like residents are buying masks anyway.

A clerk at the CVS on University Ave. said yesterday that the store is out of face masks and has been advising people to buy them at Home Depot or ACE Hardware.

Hospital prepares

Stanford Hospital has also been preparing for a possible outbreak.

Stanford Health Care spokeswoman Julie Greicius said Stanford is working with the National Centers for Disease Control and local county health offices to monitor the disease and make sure Stanford is ready to care for patients.

HOUSING

if cities have tried to show they can ramp up housing production on their own, without the need for state intervention.

That hasn't necessarily been the case, some say.

"We still see significant opposition to new homes and apartments in many suburban cities and towns, and the existence of SB50 in the state legislature hasn't really changed that fact at the local level," said Michael Lane, deputy director of Silicon Valley at Home. Also known as SV@Home, the group advocates for affordable housing.

While some cities might seem to be producing a lot of housing, much of it is not affordable to moderate

or low-income households, SV@Home said in a blog post.

"Cities in Santa Clara County continue to fall far short of affordable housing goals, while on track to meet or exceed their targets for market-rate housing," the group said.

Housing quotas

Targets for affordable and market-rate housing production are set for cities through a state-mandated process called the Regional Housing Need Assessment, or RHNA. The latest RHNA covers a nine-year period from 2014 to 2022.

At the same time, jobs are being created faster throughout the Bay Area than new housing is built. From 2011 to mid-2017, the Bay Area added 531,400 new jobs but only permitted 123,801 new housing units, the Building Industry Association Bay Area reported.

Palo Alto approved 447 new housing units from 2014 to 2018 — only 22% of the RHNA quota of 1,988 units for 2014 to 2022, according to the state Department of Housing and Community Development. Palo Alto entitled 206 housing units last year, including 62 granny units, city officials told the Daily Post.

Mountain View approved 1,711 new homes last year, while Redwood City entitled 559.

"I think they should be ashamed," Matthew Lewis, communications director for California YIMBY, said of the cities' housing numbers. The group is a co-sponsor of SB50.

A change in the winds

But Lewis said he's seeing "a change in the political winds" when it comes to housing. He said more elected officials are now on board with SB50. Those include Palo Alto Mayor Adrian Fine, who issued a statement of support of the bill this month.

Wiener amended SB50 this month to try to give cities more leeway in how they address housing. Under the amended version, cities would have two years to craft their own housing plans that would accommodate a similar amount of housing as under SB50's "default" provisions.

The amount of housing cities must allow under these "local flexibility plans" isn't yet known, but would be determined by the state Department of Housing and Community Development.

In a press release on Monday, Wiener said the flexibility added to SB50 has drawn many new supporters. He listed 20 local officials who now support the bill, including Fine of Palo Alto.

But the changes to SB50 weren't enough to satisfy the League of California Cities, which said too many details are lacking.

"Without clearly identified criteria, we are unable to evaluate whether the 'local flexibility plan' is actually a viable alternative planning option," the League wrote in a Jan. 14 letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB50 moves to Senate floor for a vote

SB50 was shelved in May by Sen. Anthony Portantino, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee. He said at the time that he prefers giving local governments incentives when it comes to addressing the state's housing crisis, rather than legislating mandates.

The bill, as amended this month, was able to bypass the Appropriations Committee when Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins moved it to the Rules Committee. On Monday, it was moved from committee to the Senate floor for a vote.

MASUR

board, she dealt with budget cuts at the height of the recession and voted on applications for charter schools. She was also the CEO of Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation, a nonprofit that lobbies lawmakers.

Her view on charter schools

Masur is backed by multiple teachers unions and education leaders, and during her time on school board voted for charters to open up in Redwood City. She said she voted in favor of the charters because

she knew that if her board denied the charters, the county's board of education would still approve them, and felt it was better to have a more amicable relationship with the charters than an adversarial relationship. Masur also said she supported some of the changes passed by the legislature last year to increase the transparency of charter boards and allow school boards to deny charters in order for school districts to keep their funding.

Post is interviewing the candidates

Over the past two weeks, the Post has interviewed candidates in the March 3 primary for Senate District 13, which spans from Brisbane to Sunnyvale. The Post has already sat down with Burlingame councilman Michael Brownrigg, Menlo Park-based entrepreneur Josh Becker, Los Altos and Republican Alex Glew and former assemblywoman Sally Lieber. Keep your eyes out for an interview coming out later this week with candidate Annie Oliva, a Millbrae city councilwoman.

The Post asked Masur about a variety of topics such as her position on the housing bill SB50, transit and PG&E.

Masur said she's not sure what her first bill to introduce to the senate would be if she's elected because a lot can happen between now and when she would take her seat next year.

"I'd want to see what's needed," Masur said, adding that she imagines she will introduce a bill regarding school financing.

PG&E's future

On PG&E, Masur said she's worried about residents taking over the massive debts that PG&E has if the state or municipalities bought it.

Masur said that no matter who owns the utility, upgrades will need to happen, and that she'd rather see PG&E's investors pay for the upgrades than the public.

In order to prevent more of PG&E's misdeeds, Masur wants to see the company install technology so it knows immediately when a power line falls down in the woods. She also wants to strengthen the oversight of the governor-appointed Public Utilities Commission, which oversees state utilities. She'd prefer if the Legislature could appoint some of the members of the PUC board.

SB50

Masur supports SB50, the bill slated to increase housing near jobs, transit and education.

Masur has worked with Sen. Scott Wiener to amend SB50. One of the amendments that Masur sought was to allow cities to submit their own transit-oriented housing plans to the state if they wish to avoid the requirements of Wiener's bill.

Coordinating mass transit

As for transit, Masur said she wants to have all of the transit agencies' schedules and fares be coordinated. Masur pointed out that it can be a deterrent to take Caltrain short places, as it costs \$6 to get from Redwood City to Menlo Park, despite the two stations being about three miles away from each other.

Masur said she's not sure if a Bay Area-wide one-cent sales tax dubbed FASTER Bay Area is the right way to fund transit. Masur pointed out that many local cities would be approaching 11% sales tax if that tax is approved.

Instead of more sales taxes, which disproportionately penalize the poor and middle-class, she'd like to see more companies help with the cost of large transportation projects.

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