

SARATOGA

APRIL 2023

Spotlight

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Saratoga
The Heart of Saratoga

MAYOR

*Kookie
Fitzsimmons*

A passion for
community,
her hometown,
& chocolate
chip cookies!



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February 7	March
March 7	April
April 7	May
May 7	June
June 7	July
July 7	August
August 7	September
September 7	October
October 7	November
November 7	December

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Dear Neighbors,

April showers bring...well, probably more showers!

This month, we have the pleasure of featuring Mayor Kookie Fitzsimmons. We're sure you will enjoy learning more about Kookie, her love for her hometown Saratoga, volunteerism, and her pursuit of the very best chocolate chip cookie recipe!

You'll also have a chance to read about upcoming community events and more in this month's issue.

Please feel free to send us any content you would like to share. At *Saratoga Spotlight*, we love sharing what's going on in our community!

See you in town,

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MAYOR

Kookie Fitzsimmons

**A passion for community, her hometown,
& chocolate chip cookies!**

By David Nielsen

Photos by Khushboo Goyal, Shutter Magic Photography

Kookie Fitzsimmons loves her hometown of Saratoga, and it doesn't take long for one to realize that!

She is proud of her ancestry, her father's Irish heritage and her mother's Italian heritage. She grew up in Saratoga and attended Sacred Heart School, where she was named Most Valuable Player on two championship volleyball teams, as well as being chosen by her peers to represent the school on the first all-star softball team.

In the 6th grade, Kookie was put on the 7th grade volleyball team. Being on this team taught her how to be a team player. At first, the 7th grade girls were not welcoming when she was placed on the team. She was hesitant to be there, but her coach convinced her that

she deserved to be on the team and that she could do it. She worked with the other girls, they started winning games, and with time, she was accepted. Being left-handed, Kookie was only comfortable serving overhanded, where everyone else served underhand. No one on the opposing teams could return her serves, so her team won most of their games. Being on this team taught her valuable life lessons that she is still benefitting from today.

She then attended Saint Francis High School, where she was the editor of the school yearbook, on the Speech and Debate team, and newspaper contributor. After graduating high school, she went on to attend UCLA and the College of Notre Dame.

Road trips in the family station wagon are fond and fun memories of Kookie's childhood.

While she and her four siblings are no longer children in the back of the station wagon, they keep the adventurous spirit alive! One of her favorite memories is when her 92-year-old dad took her and her sisters to the Weeki Wachee Sirens of The Deep Mermaid Camp in Florida seven years ago! They had a blast, learning to swim in mermaid tails in pristine, first-magnitude spring water. Her sisters had gone to the camp in 1995 and Kookie always wanted to go too. So, when they were finally able to make time in their busy schedules, they all went together in 2016. It was a lot of fun and Kookie was so happy that her father, who has since passed, was able to be there.

Swimming is in Kookie's blood, having learned to swim before she learned to walk at around 9 months old. Her mother made sure that her children knew how to swim. She actually trained on the Santa Clara Swim Club in the same pool with Olympic medal winner Mark Spitz!

Just 5 months after her mother lost her 7-year battle with breast cancer, Kookie, herself was diagnosed with breast cancer in May 2003. It was devastating news. Following her treatment, a friend who was a Department of Defense consultant for breast cancer research, and a breast cancer survivor herself, told Kookie that she would be a great consultant as well. She agreed to contribute her time, so on an annual basis from June 2009 to April 2014, Kookie would travel to Virginia to consult with doctors vetting research proposals in competition for Congressional funding. She sat in the same room with doctors, sharing her experience and what she had gone through with chemotherapy and radiation. As a voice at the table, Kookie was able to vote on what research would be funded. The experience was incredibly rewarding.



Kookie with Tiger Teerlink, Wreaths Across America 2022

This was also during the time when she had a full-time job at Stanford, where she worked to guide and support study participants through the process of participating in cancer research.

Kookie has her mom and brother to thank for her name. When she was 2 years old, her brother, Mike, told her, “Your face looks like a chocolate chip cookie,” because of her freckles. From then on, it was used as her name, and her mother decided to spell it with a ‘K’ based on a character from the TV show, “77 Sunset Strip.” As she is often asked, it is pronounced “cookie.” Speaking of chocolate chip cookies...Kookie has been in a decades-long quest to create the world’s best chocolate chip cookie! She says that she is close but admits that the recipe still has room for improvement.

While the cookies are baking, Kookie also enjoys creating greeting cards. It is something she enjoyed doing as a child and has just recently started again. It brings her a lot of joy creating the cards, sometimes spending hours at a time immersed in the artistry and creativity. She loves sharing the genuine sentiments with family and friends, old and new.

For the past 30 years, Kookie has been passionate about volunteering her time and serving her community. And she hopes that she is able to inspire others to do the same. She has been President of the Village Merchants Association; Chair of the Blossom Festival; Chair of the Village Halloween Costume Walk; A Charter Member of the Saratoga Business Development Council; A Rotarian for 23 years; A Planning Commissioner for 6 years; A volunteer with West Valley Community Services; and a volunteer for cleanup projects on Highway 9.

Kookie has lived in a home near Sacred Heart for the last 24 years, and just a few blocks, on the same street, from her childhood home. She loves living so close to where she grew up. It helps her to keep those fond memories alive! Her Craftsman-style home is over 100 years old, and she enjoys its unique character. The creek running through her back yard reminds her how important it is to slow down to enjoy the natural beauty of Saratoga. Though she hasn’t gone far, she’s exactly where she wants to be and is so very happy to be living here!

As Kookie loves her home and life in Saratoga so dearly, she is grateful for any free time she has to enjoy herself right here. So, when she does travel, it’s usually not too far from home. Carmel and Lake Tahoe are her two favorite places to visit. She never misses a visit to one of her favorite bakeries in Carmel where she gets the best chocolate-dipped shortbread cookie!

“You can clearly see that I love Saratoga, and one of the main reasons for that is the community spirit I see in every neighborhood and throughout the City as a whole. Saratoga is a truly special community with residents that are dedicated to keeping it that way. I’m so proud of the way we support one another. I regularly see residents rally to do so much for our youth and seniors, attend community events, volunteer for community organizations, participate in Neighborhood Watch, and so much more,” says Kookie.

Kookie’s message to her Saratoga neighbors, “It’s an honor to serve as your Mayor this year, and I hope you say hello when you see me out and about around town. I look forward to all we will accomplish as a community together and am enthusiastic about all we can do to support each other. I encourage you to be proactive residents—promote children’s participation in group activities and team sports, support the endeavors of fellow community members of all ages, and be an advocate for those in need, even when the topic may not impact you. If we all work together to instill these life lessons in Saratoga’s youth early, it will help them throughout their lifetime.”



“Your face looks like a chocolate chip cookie!”



Kookie with Eagle Scout, Erin Handlesman



Rotary Highway 9 Cleanup



Mermaid at Weeki Wachee

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Medicare Star Ratings

By Lucille Maravilla

I often get questions about star ratings when someone is trying to decide which Medicare Advantage plan or Medicare drug plan to choose. A star rating must always be listed with each plan whenever Medicare plan information is published. (Medicare Supplement plans are standardized and not rated.)

**Here are facts and updates to know about the rating system.**

Star ratings are measurements the Center for Medicare Services (CMS) uses to rate the quality of Medicare Advantage (Part C) and Medicare drug (Part D) plans. These numbers help consumers compare plan quality and how CMS determines quality payments to insurance companies.

Medicare Advantage plans are based on 38 quality measurements in 5 major categories: screenings, tests and vaccines, chronic conditions, member experience, member complaints and customer service. Part D prescription drug plans are rated on 12 quality items.

The star ratings were introduced in 2008. It's difficult to get a 5-star rating. For 2023, 11 percent of contracts received the top score out of 507 plans. The average 2023 star rating was 4.15. The average ratings were highest on customer service measures like call center availability and timely appeals decisions.

Few plans score below 3 stars. In 2023, 37 contracts received 2.5-star ratings, and just 4 contracts received two-star ratings. Average scores were lowest for health plan and drug plan quality improvement initiatives.

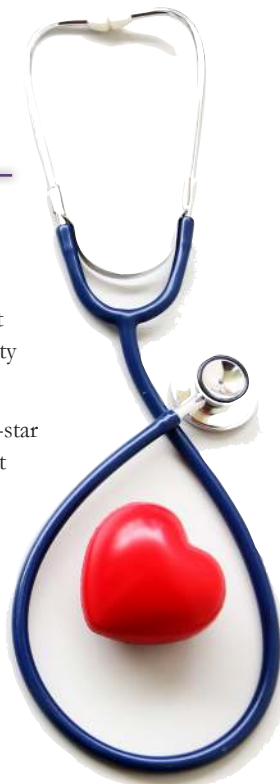
Nonprofit plans tend to score more 5-star ratings. In 2023, 21 percent of nonprofit plans received the top rating, while just 7 percent of for-profit plans earned top scores. This year, 11 percent of Medicare Advantage plan beneficiaries were enrolled in 5-star contracts and 51 percent enrolled in contracts rated 4 stars or higher.

Star ratings can have a big impact on an insurance company's finances. Plans with 4- and 5-star ratings receive quality bonus payments from CMS. But plan ratings can also affect enrollment periods. Medicare enrollees can switch to a 5-star plan, if one is available in their area, once outside of the Medicare Open Enrollment Period (October 15 - December 7). Additionally, enrollees in a Medicare Advantage plan with fewer than 3 stars can switch to a higher rated plan at any time during the year.

Star ratings dipped in 2023 after hitting their highest ever levels in 2022. The end of several Covid era provisions accounted for much of the change. Financial analysts estimate that Medicare Advantage and Medicare drug plans could lose around \$800 million in revenue from star rating changes in 2023. Some insurance companies have made improving star ratings a top priority for 2023.

Though some methodology changes implemented by CMS made higher ratings more difficult to obtain, these changes should make ratings more stable from year to year.

Consult a Medicare agent if you have questions about these ratings. A knowledgeable agent can do a detailed comparison of Medicare plans offered in your area. Get help finding a plan that meets your needs versus one that creates service headaches.



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Growing 2 Shine!

Growing Food & Community Together

By Rebecca Jepsen

Due to recent hail storms and an onslaught of atmospheric rivers --- my garden is on hold! ☹️

Unprecedented Weather

Well, I have been writing about the drought for the last 7+ years...I think I (and all my friends) may have overdone the "rain dances"! We haven't seen this kind of precipitation here in Northern California in decades. So, are we out of the drought? That is the multimillion \$ question. Experts say we are certainly looking good. Statewide we are at around 175% of normal snowpack thus far and our reservoirs are getting full. As we move into April the showers are most likely going to taper off and when the final count is in, I am hopeful that we will be able to declare that we are finally drought-free – at least for the moment.

I am definitely turning into a Winter-Weather-Wimp, so I am going to push my planting out about a month this year. IF the sun comes out and you just can't wait to dig into the dirt (and/or the mud) below are the things you can plant and grow.

Check back with me next month to see if I was able to keep my hands clean. ☀️

Green Tip of the Month

The Growing Natives Garden Tour is back! The South Bay tour is 4/1 and the North Bay tour is 4/2, both from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. For more info go to gngt.org. There are also several Earth Day events happening throughout April. To check out local events go to: www.eventbrite.com/d/ca--santa-clara/earth-day-events



What to Plant in April

Key: • Seed | • Transplant | • Bareroot

- | | | |
|------------|---------------|------------------|
| • arugula | • cabbage | • kale |
| • basil | • carrots | • lettuce |
| • beans | • cauliflower | • mustard greens |
| • beets | • cilantro | • potatoes |
| • Bok choy | • dill | • radishes |
| • broccoli | • fennel | • turnips |

Local nurseries should have a good supply of most of these.

Ready to Harvest Now

* asparagus * broccoli * cabbage * carrots * cauliflower * celery
 * fava beans * grapefruit * kale * leeks * lemons * oranges
 * pea shoots * radishes * scallions * raspberries * strawberries

If you have a garden (or real estate) question for Rebecca, email her at: rjepsen@ggsir.com; or call 408-357-3990.

Growing2Shine.com

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CHAMPAGNE, CHOCOLATES, & KATYA – *A Success!*

By Reiko Iwanaga

The Saratoga Foothill Club Historic Landmark Foundation presented a concert by Katya Grineva, entitled *Champagne, Chocolates, and Katya* on February 17, 2023, at the historic Saratoga Foothill Club clubhouse. The capacity audience enjoyed a romantic repertoire by renowned classical musician, Katya Grineva.

Members of the sold-out audience were enthusiastic in their appreciation of the musical offerings of a pianist who has played at Carnegie Hall 20 times. The ambiance and acoustics of the Julia Morgan-designed edifice enhanced the evening's presentation.

The Happy Hour Benefit Concert was a success in funds raised as well as in the general appreciation of the event. The 100+ year old building requires constant maintenance, and the Saratoga Foothill Club recently finished a major restoration of the exterior. Foundation members expressed gratitude to Katya Grineva for generously sharing her talent and to the public for supporting this benefit concert and making it a great success.

A special thanks to Pam Dunnett and Reiko Iwanaga who organized the fundraiser.

For additional information, go to saratogafoothillclub.org or, for club rentals, saratogafoothillclub.com.



Saundra Hill, Past President of Saratoga Foothill Club with Katya Grineva



Katya Grineva with Donna Hughes, Owner of Essential Care



On Left, Front to Back: Lotus Mahon, DDS, Stephen Gurunaiya, Katya Grineva, Dave Pidwell, Gay Crawford, Roy Crawford. On Right, Front to Back: Kelly Knowles, Donna Hughes, Min Thane, Tina Pidwell, Kay Walker, Bill Walker.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

By Mayor Kookie Fitzsimmons



While our region is known for excellent weather and mild winters, we saw severe storms this winter that brought unexpected challenges, such as fallen trees, flooding, erosion, and landslides in Saratoga. Some residents reported they were without power and unable to leave their homes for several days, a stark reminder of what we may experience in the event of a major disaster.

Saratoga is at risk of a number of hazards that have the potential to significantly impact our community, including earthquakes, geological instability, wildfires, and flooding. Although we may not be able to stop an emergency from occurring, we can help keep ourselves and our family safe when something unexpected occurs by preparing in advance.

The first and most important step you can take is to sign up for Santa Clara County's official emergency warning system at alertssc.org to receive up to date information on emergencies that may impact you while you are at home, work, or school. Taking steps now to ensure you receive critical information in a timely manner will help you make the best decisions for you and your family during a disaster.

I also encourage every household to create an emergency plan. In the midst of a disaster, you may not have time to thoughtfully consider where to go, what to take with you, and how to find loved ones. Your plan should include contact information for the people you care about, as well as an out of the area contact that can track your family's status in case you become separated.

Additionally, select different routes that you can use if you need to evacuate your home and other frequently visited locations, like your child's school. Pick a location where you will meet your family if you are separated, including a meeting place in your neighborhood, one outside of your neighborhood, and one outside of Saratoga.

Meeting places could be the home of a relative or friend, a store, library, or park. If you have pets, think about animal-friendly places to meet.

If you must evacuate and have no place to stay, dial 2-1-1 to find a free public shelter. The operator can provide guidance on which public shelters are best for specific needs, such as people with disabilities and pets that are not service animals.

In addition to creating a family plan, build an emergency supply kit that will help you make it through the first 72 hours after a disaster occurs. Your supplies should include a Go Bag to use if you need to evacuate, as well as a Stay Kit in case you need to remain in your home. Both kits should include important documents, a paper contact list, water, prescriptions and eyeglasses or contacts, first aid supplies, non-perishable foods, flashlights, cash, a complete change of clothing and shoes for each family member, backup batteries and chargers for cell phones or other devices, personal hygiene items, and food and supplies you may need for your pets.

Learn more about how you can prepare yourself and your family, as well as help your community during a disaster, by signing up for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. The training, provided by Santa Clara County Fire Department, includes a mix of online classes and in-person skills training. The next academy starts in May 2023. Sign up online at <https://may2023cert.eventbrite.com>.



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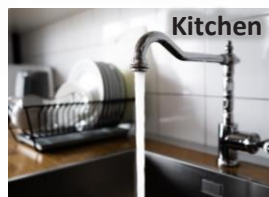
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SARATOGA MUSIC BOOSTERS *Pancake Breakfast*

By Shannon Ma



"Pancake Flippers" as follows:

Stephen Gurnavaiya, David Guidry, Cynthia Chang, and Scott Adler

Once a year, on a Sunday morning, the Saratoga High School campus is buzzing with music, food, and conversation. Steaming pancakes are flipped fresh off the griddle. Lively melodies from Saratoga's music ensembles swell from the Quad. Eager students, parents, grandparents, and young children line up for a vibrant breakfast spread: all-you-can-eat pancakes, sausages, strawberries, and orange juice. This annual event, our beloved Pancake Breakfast, will be held on April 30, 2023, at Saratoga High School, from 8am to 12:30pm. It is hosted by Saratoga Music Boosters (SMB), an all-volunteer charitable organization supporting music education in Saratoga's public schools. Tickets can be purchased on <http://bit.ly/smbpb2023>.

The Pancake Breakfast is an ideal place to connect with the Saratoga community while supporting the hundreds of student musicians in Saratoga's music program. Guests can enjoy breathtaking live performances by orchestra, band, choir, guard, and percussion ensembles from Saratoga High School and Redwood Middle School. There will even be "celebrity flippers" serving pancakes; familiar faces will include Assembly Member Evan Low, Mayor of Saratoga Kookie Fitzsimmons and council member Tina Walia, the Administration from our District and Saratoga High School, and many more. The Silent Auction is not to be missed, with a vast collection of items to bid on.

We are fortunate to have such a heartwarming annual tradition like the Pancake Breakfast in our community. Join Saratoga this April 30th to bask in a sunny, musical, and delicious breakfast.



SARATOGA *Blossom Festival*

By Annette Stransky

Antique cars, art, crafts, live music and more will be part of the 2023 Saratoga Blossom Festival held April 29 from 10AM-4PM at the Heritage Orchard and Saratoga Civic Center, 13777 Fruitvale Avenue. The event is free and open to the public. Activities include a wide range of music; organizations such as the Master Gardeners, Beekeepers of Santa Clara Valley and more; local civic organizations such as the Saratoga Library, AAUW, Rotary, BookGoRound, Saratoga historical characters; book authors; Saratoga history lectures; and artisans. Gourmet food trucks will also be part of the fun. Over 15 children's activity tables, petting zoo, and entertainment for all ages. The Girl Scouts are handing out flowers commemorating the historic festival. First produced in 1900, this historic event ran successfully for 41 years. Come help celebrate this tradition. Produced by the Saratoga Historical Foundation and sponsored by the City of Saratoga. For more information: 408-867-4311 or www.saratogahistory.com.



FUN FACTS ABOUT APRIL

By Grace Schulte

April is the fourth month of the year and commonly reminds many that it's time to start that pesky spring cleaning. For those born in the month of April, the birthstone is a diamond and the flower is a daisy! April hosts celebrated days such as Easter, Earth Day and World Autism Awareness Day. Here are some other fun facts about April!

1. The name April is thought to have originated from the Latin word aprilis. This word is a derivative to the Latin word aperire which means "to open." This is believed to be a reference to trees opening in the springtime\
2. Another popular belief is that the name might be derived from the Greek goddess Aphrodite (Aphros).
3. April was also sacred to the goddess Venus, Aphrodite's Roman mythology counterpart.
4. April in the Southern Hemisphere is actually equivalent to October in the Northern Hemisphere.
5. In England, there are many cuckoo festivals in April. When cuckoo birds return from migrating to Africa for the winter, it's recognized that spring has finally arrived!

6. April Fools' Day isn't celebrated in every country, but in Scotland it's celebrated over the course of two days!
7. The commonly known phrase, "April showers bring May flowers," can be traced back to English poet Thomas Tusser in the 1500s. Back then, he actually wrote "Sweet April showers do spring May Flowers."

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Protecting the Planet and Forging a Sustainable Future

By County Supervisor Joe Simitian



"You have to understand the urgency of climate change."

This is a refrain I hear time and again from constituents. I couldn't agree more.

April 22 is the 53rd anniversary of Earth Day, and while we've made great strides, there's so much more to be done. Making progress on the environment—on every possible front—has long been a priority in my public service.

In my first term in the California State Legislature, I was a co-author with then-State Senator Byron Sher of the landmark 2002 Renewables Portfolio Standards Program bill, which required California electricity providers to acquire at least one-fifth of their power from clean, renewable sources—like wind, solar, and geothermal—by 2017.

This was an ambitious objective, and not an easy sell. Many predicted that the state would fail to meet this goal. But it was clear what was on the horizon if we didn't make big changes in how California generated electricity: dirtier air, increased greenhouse gas emissions, depleted resources.

So, three years later as a State Senator, I wrote legislation moving the deadline for 20% renewables up to 2010 and strengthening the program's monitoring and economic efficiency. I soon went even further, introducing bills to increase clean renewables to fully one-third of the state's electricity retail sales. It took three attempts over four years, but in 2011, while I was serving as Chair of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee, "33% Renewable Energy by 2020" was finally approved and signed into law. U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu called it a "groundbreaking piece of legislation."

I'm proud to have helped California meet—and then exceed—those initial goals, laying the foundation for the state to become a national leader in renewable energy. Subsequent legislation has now pushed the mandate to 60% renewables by 2030 and requires all the state's electricity to come from carbon-free resources by 2045.

It is deeply gratifying that in my 12 years as a State Legislator, I routinely received "100%" environmental ratings from the California League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, and Vote the Coast, and received recognition from the Bluewater Network, Breathe California, Environment California, Californians Against Waste and Green California.

What I learned early on about addressing climate change was that we needed to rethink our relationship with the environment—a lesson that is even more applicable today, as increasingly severe impacts related to climate change move from "someday" to "now."

Since returning to the County Board of Supervisors, I've welcomed the opportunity to continue helping our region be on the leading edge of this new way of thinking, whether it's preparing our communities for the "new normal" in extreme weather events; decreasing our carbon footprint; improving land stewardship; safeguarding air and water quality; strengthening awareness and oversight; or, creating more equitable access to resources and protections.

I led the County's participation in Community Choice Energy and was a founding Director of Silicon Valley Clean Energy, which in 2017 began providing residential and commercial customers carbon free electricity options at competitive rates, with the profits re-invested locally.

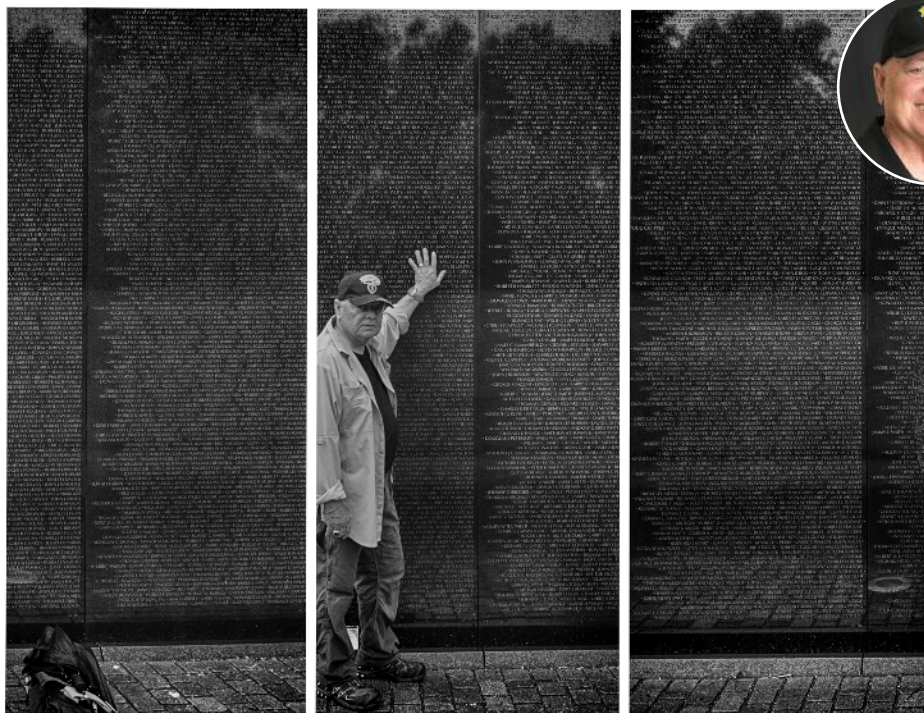
In 2022, 100% of our County's electricity was powered by renewable energy sources—one of many Sustainability Master Plan goals achieved last year. Over the next year, the County's big picture environmental efforts will include:

- Carbon Neutrality for County Operations Plan.
- "Diesel Free by '33" study for alternative fuel use in County equipment.
- Energy Resilience and Community Climate Action roadmaps for unincorporated areas.
- Updated Countywide Trails Master Plan Map.

Looking forward, we want development that is wise and well managed—complemented by parks and open spaces that provide opportunities for contemplation, recreation, and inspiration. We want robust emergency preparedness and resilience for all communities, energy sources that look to the future, and education that helps foster new ideas and a new generation of environmental experts and advocates.

There's so much we can accomplish through partnership and collaboration, while being mindful—on Earth Day, and every day—of how much we can do as individuals to safeguard our planet.

Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian represents the Fifth District which includes Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Saratoga, Stanford, portions of San Jose and unincorporated communities in the Santa Cruz Mountains. He was elected to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in 2012 and re-elected in 2016 and 2020. Stay up to date on issues and events happening in District Five by signing up for Supervisor Simitian's newsletter: district5.sccgov.org/newsletter.



VETERANS NEED VETERANS

By SGT Clyde R. Horn,
Photos By SGT Clyde R. Horn

I'm thankful that we have recently joined with The Memorial & Support Foundation located in Los Gatos, CA to add additional support and referrals.

The Foundation has erected a world-class Veteran Memorial that includes honoring US military members, veterans, first responders and 9-11 heroes. (honoravet.org). The Memorial, "The Flame of Liberty", is a place I go to often to pause, meditate, and reflect.

In 2008 I began to meet with fellow veterans in a group therapy session at my local VA Clinic in San Jose. I was devastated with Post Traumatic Stress along with my fellow veterans and active military and their issues. I needed help to find ways to heal. Having fellow veterans among me helped me share my trauma with trust and discovery. To be honest, this saved my life. The group thrived because we had a great facilitator and each other.

Five us began to meet after our group therapy session on our own at a coffee shop to have lunch together. A bond that is hard to explain happened. We realized we expanded our healing by just being together. We needed support to get through the week. We shared similar experiences, revealed our deepest secrets, began to learn how we could receive disability benefits through the Veterans Administration, cried, laughed, and bonded.

The meetings at local coffee shops continue to this day. I host this group that is now called "THE VETERANS SUPPORT BREAKFAST". Any veteran of any branch, male or female, in war or peace time, is welcome to attend. Since 2008 we veterans have helped one another with support. Currently we are meeting at Denny's, 1140 Hillsdale Ave, San Jose, CA 95118 at 9:00 AM every Friday. Denny's allows us to use their conference room for free. We meet for approximately one hour every Friday.

Trauma is devastating to anyone who has experienced it. Many of us in the support group experienced disabling trauma. We move forward when we can get and give support to each other. We have discovered it is invaluable to meet weekly. Our meeting is simple. I tell a few jokes to start off the meeting, we share a breakfast together, we go around the room sharing our week, revealing if we need support or not. I give a short 5-to-10-minute talk about veteran's issues, and we then give feedback to one another. The meeting is purposely informal and non-judgmental. If one of us needs support, we do what we can to help. Ridesharing, home visits, information gathering, private talks, emergency help, family support.

If you have a person you care for that is a veteran or active military and needs support, tell them about the Veterans Support Breakfast as a place that understands veteran trauma, issues, and comradery. We welcome and support one another!

Hi there! I'm Khushboo - a wife, mother of two adorable boys, and the owner of Shutter Magic Photography. My mission is to help you celebrate your life by capturing memories for you and your loved ones to share and cherish over the years. I take pride in creating a visual story and I am committed to capturing beautiful moments for my clients to treasure. Shutter Magic Photography specializes in couples, maternity, family and senior portraits.

"The memories we make with our family is everything."

— CANDACE CAMERON BURE

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SAVE THE DATE
SARATOGA SPRING

By Kelly Medrano

*Wine
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The Saratoga Spring Wine Experience will be held the day before Mother's Day, on Saturday, May 13, 2023, from 2:30PM - 5:30PM. Please save the date and join us for tastings with a sprinkle of Spring Shine!

ADVANCE TICKETS: \$55 (March 1 - April 30)

GENERAL TICKETS: \$65 (May 1 - May 12)

DAY OF WINE EXPERIENCE: \$75 (May 13)

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www.saratogachamber.org or call (408) 867-0753.

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The Easter Bunny's Guide to *Easter Baskets*

By Grace Schulte

The Easter Bunny hasn't always been amazing at making Easter Baskets, and believe it or not sometimes they still could use some work. Regardless, the Easter Bunny works incredibly hard to deliver these goodies, so there's still a lot of credit to be given! Recently, my friends and I were talking about the best baskets that we've received so far. Here are some of the things we noticed about them.

Planning in Layers

It looks like the Easter Bunny tends to arrange baskets in layers. The tallest goodies were always at the center back with the others surrounding it. This created a framed illusion around that focal point and made for an aesthetically pleasing basket.

Utilizing the Space

The Easter Bunny didn't just place all the goodies in an empty basket. All of our favorite baskets had some kind of base on which our goodies sat. A few of us found that there was old newspaper or floral foam underneath the decorative grass. It seems the Easter Bunny found a way to reduce the amount of decorative grass needed in a cost-effective way—talk about creativity!

Adding Something Fun

One thing all of our favorite baskets had in common was some kind of additional fun item. Sometimes it was bunny-made cake pops, cookies, or cupcakes packaged in cute baggies signed "E.B." Other times it was a cute keychain, a small customized water bottle, or an Easter plushie. Somehow the Easter Bunny always came up with great ideas to add a little something more!



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Spotlight



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