Summer Reading Program Is Fun for All

CONTRA COSTA LIBRARY’s theme for this year’s summer reading program is STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math). Children and adults can sign up for the summer reading program, then log their reading between June 1 and July 30. Participating kids are rewarded with prizes for reading a required number of hours. Adults who complete the summer reading program will receive a book. See page 7 or visit the library website at ccclib.org/locations/elcerrito.html for more details, including a list of Summer STEAM events happening at the El Cerrito library.

Library programs for children, including educational programs and reading resources, are critical to providing our students with the resources they need. It is a goal of the City to have a safe, modern, energy efficient library that meets the technological and educational needs of El Cerrito residents. The current library was built in 1948 and is too small to meet the needs of the community. Over the past few years, the City has completed an Updated Library Needs Assessment and has recently solicited feedback from nearly 600 residents regarding their library service priorities and needs. If you have not already done so, please join the conversation by filling out the brief online survey at www.el-cerrito.org/library.

For more information about library service priorities, please contact Assistant City Manager Karen Pinkos at 215-4302 or kpinkos@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Celebrate the Hillside Natural Area

THE THIRD ANNUAL Hillside Festival celebrates El Cerrito’s unique Hillside Natural Area (HNA) on Sunday, May 15, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Take this opportunity to explore El Cerrito’s urban wilderness. The HNA consists of approximately 102 acres of City-owned open space with native plants in both oak woodland and riparian environments and trails for recreation as well as emergency access.

In 2013, the El Cerrito Trail Trekkers, the El Cerrito High School Mountain Bike Club, Friends of Five Creeks, and others came together and formed the El Cerrito Open Space Campaign to advocate for and raise funds to support the City’s purchase of the 8-acre Madera Property, now part of the HNA.

If you wish to support maintenance, restoration, and other improvements to the HNA for public safety and enjoyment, both the City and El Cerrito Trail Trekkers accept donations. For more information about the HNA or how to donate, visit www.el-cerrito.org/HNA.

For details about the festival, see page two, or visit the El Cerrito Trail Trekkers website at www.ectrailtrekkers.org.

Above: National Parks Service Ranger Dan Sanchez leads a talk at the 2015 festival.
PHOTOS: COURTESY DAVE WEINSTEIN
UPCOMING EVENTS!

Thursday, May 12
BIKE TO WORK DAY
Walk or roll to El Cerrito’s “Energizer Station” for free goodies, bicycling information, or to chat with City staff about both bike and pedestrian topics. Call 215-4350 for more information.

When: 7–9 a.m.
Where: Ohlone Greenway near the bike lockers at El Cerrito Plaza BART Station

Sunday, May 15, 2016
HILLSIDE FESTIVAL
Enjoy nature and history hikes, activities for kids, music, and more at the third annual Hillside Festival, presented by the El Cerrito Trail Trekkers and the City’s Environmental Quality Committee. Learn how you can help to preserve the Hillside and protect its habitat. All activities are free. Visit www.ectrailtrekkers.org for program details and more information, or call event coordinator Dave Weinstein at 524-1737.

When: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Where: Hillside Natural Area trailhead Schmidt Ln. at Navellier St.

Saturday, May 21, 2016
CITYWIDE GARAGE SALE
Shop the annual Spring Citywide Garage Sale. Find great deals and keep items out of landfill! Listings will be available after May 12. Go online or pick one up from a self-serve literature stand at the Community Center or Recycling Center. Visit www.el-cerrito.org/garagesale or call 559-7686 for details.

When: 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Where: various locations

May 30
MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY
City administrative offices will be closed.

Saturdays
June 4, July 2, August 6
BAXTER CREEK WORK PARTY
Join other volunteers and City staff at this monthly work party to help remove invasive species and restore native habitat. Email spreec@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call 215-4333 for more information.

When: 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Where: Conlon Ave. at the intersection with the Ohlone Greenway

June 7, 2016
ELECTION DAY
To find your polling place, check your sample ballot, go to www.cocovote.us, call the County Elections Office at (925) 335-7800, or call the City Clerk at 215-4305 during regular business hours.

When: Polls open, 7 a.m.–8 p.m.

Sunday, June 12
LOVING DAY
The Human Relations Commission invites everyone to celebrate and strengthen El Cerrito’s multicultural community. Loving Day celebrates the 1967 Supreme Court decision in Loving v. Virginia that ended the ban on interracial marriage. Visit www.el-cerrito.org/LovingDay for more details about the event.

When: 12 noon–3:30 p.m.
Where: City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Ave.

Sunday, June 12
BIKE THE BRIDGES
El Cerrito Police Department proudly supports Bike-the-Bridges, an annual bicycle ride to benefit the Special Olympics. Riders can choose a 25 mile, 100K (62 mile), or Century (100 mile) ride. All rides are followed by lunch at the Waterfront Park in Martinez, including a craft beer festival and live music. Pre-registration required. For more details or to get involved, call Katie Ostrom with Special Olympics Northern California at 925-944-8801, extension 224, or ECPD Sgt. Shawn Maples at 215-4435, or visit www.el-cerrito.org/bikethebridges.

When: Ride begins at 9 a.m.
Where: Waterfront Park, Martinez

SWIM CENTER SUMMER SCHEDULE
Recreational Swim
Recreational Swim is a non-structured time for people of all ages to enjoy the water and to have fun in both El Cerrito pools.

When: Monday to Friday 1:15–3:15 p.m.
Saturday 1–4 p.m.
Sunday 11:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Splash Park
The Splash Park is also open during Recreational Swim times.

When: Monday to Friday 9:30–11:30 a.m. and 4–6 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m.–12 noon

Adult Lap Swim
Teens and adults, ages 14 and older, interested in working out on their own can use the pools during lap swim times. Beginners to experts welcome. Lap Swim shares the pool space with other programs. Check the schedule for number of lanes available.

When: Mornings Monday 6–8 a.m. and 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Tues./Wed./Thurs./Fri. 6 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Afternoons Monday to Friday 1:15–3:15 p.m. Mon./Wed./Thurs. 6–8 p.m. Tuesday 6–7:15 p.m. Friday 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Schedules are subject to change. Please go to www.el-cerrito.org/recreation or call 559-7011 for the most up-to-date information.

Where: El Cerrito Swim Center 7007 Moeser Ln.
Family Fun Nights provide 3 hours of open swim in both pools and the Splash Park on select Fridays throughout the summer. Special discounted family rate of $15 covers two adults and two children. (Children must be accompanied by an adult.)

When: 4:30–7:30 p.m.
Where: El Cerrito Swim Center
7007 Moeser Ln.

El Cerrito’s Minimum Wage Rate increases to $11.60 per hour on July 1, 2016. Employers and workers with questions about the new El Cerrito minimum wage can visit www.el-cerrito.org/wages, call 215-4318, or email questions to wages@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Are You a Poet? Let Us Know It!

The Arts and Culture Commission (ACC) recently established a Poet Laureate Program as part of their mission to promote literature and the arts in the City. The laureate will share poetry in various community settings as a way to inspire writing, personal expression, and poetry performances.

The City has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a poet laureate and is accepting proposals through Wednesday, June 1. The poet laureate must:

- be a resident or work full time in El Cerrito
- be at least 21 years old
- demonstrate a commitment to poetry writing, spoken word performance, community involvement, and outreach

The Commission will select one resident to serve a two-year term as the City’s poet laureate. The laureate’s duties will include performance of at least two readings and development of at least three community events each year. He or she will receive an honorarium. The position is funded by the City’s Art in Public Places Program, which requires new building projects with development costs of $250,000 or more to devote 1% of their development costs to public art.

Visit www.el-cerrito.org/poets or contact ACC liaison, Suzanne Iarla, at 215-4318 or siarla@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us to find out more.
Help build the El Cerrito–Kensington Community Wildfire Protection Plan

As soon as the April rains finish, it’s time to prepare for wildfires. Help the the Diablo Fire Safe Council identify ways to reduce the risk of wildfires in El Cerrito and Kensington by providing input to a comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the two communities.

Share your concerns and local knowledge of wildfire risks and hazards by taking a short survey at fluidsurveys.com/s/El_Cerrito-Kensington_wildfire_recommendations/. You can also help to develop the CWPP by going online to www.diablofiresafe.org/El-Cerrito-Kensington-CWPP-AP.html for the latest updates, upcoming community meetings, and a draft of the CWPP.

The CWPP is a collaborative plan that identifies fire hazards, prioritizes ways to protect against those hazards, and recommends measures to reduce the risk of buildings catching fire. The Diablo Fire Safe Council is working with the El Cerrito Fire Department, Kensington Fire Protection District, homeowner groups, and others to develop the plan.

Initial recommendations from community stakeholders include fire prevention education, demonstration gardens, hazardous fuel reduction projects, and emergency evacuation planning.

For more information, contact Cheryl Miller, Executive Coordinator, Diablo Fire Safe Council at 282-1265 or DFSCMiller@comcast.net.

Cost Share Assistance Up to $5,000 Available to Reduce Hazardous Fuels

El Cerrito and Kensington residents with hazardous wildfire fuels growing immediately around their houses, or in adjacent open spaces, may be eligible for a cost share program offered by the Diablo Fire Safe Council. Up to $5,000 per project is available to groups wishing to hire a contractor to clear the area around their buildings and create defensible space.

Projects can include:
- **chipping** or green waste removal of homeowner cut material,
- **mowing** or “weed whacking” (as a part of a larger project)
- **tree thinning** (cutting of small trees) or “limbing-up”
- **brush cutting** or cutting of juniper
- **grazing** (goats grazing in blackberry or coyote brush shrubs)

Funding is provided by a grant from the Cooperative Fire Program of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Pacific Southwest Region, through the California Fire Safe Council. You can download an application at www.diablofiresafe.org/pdf/Cost-Share_2015-16_application_package.pdf

If you have a project idea, contact Cheryl Miller with the Diablo Fire Safe Council at DFSCMiller@comcast.net or 282-1265 to discuss details.

Renew Your Business License

Business owners in El Cerrito must renew their business licenses to keep them current. Existing business licenses will expire on June 30 and your renewal form and payment must be received by July 31 to avoid late penalties. Complete business license renewals online at www.el-cerrito.org/BLrenewals2016 or in person at City Hall. Business owners will receive courtesy renewal notices before the expiration date.

The City of El Cerrito requires that any person who engages in a business, trade, profession, calling, or occupation, or who provides a service within city limits, must procure a business license and pay the appropriate fees. Anyone renting a commercial or residential property to a tenant is also engaged in business and needs a business license.

Please note that you may require additional permits and licenses in order to operate a legal business in El Cerrito. For example, you may need a taxicab, bingo, or conditional use permit, or a tobacco retailers license. You may also need federal, state, or county licenses and permits, such as a California seller’s permit or a state contractor’s license. For more information, contact Andrea Arriaga, Business License Clerk, at 215-4335 or aarriaga@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.
City of El Cerrito/worldOne 4th of July Festival

CELEBRATE AMERICA’S BIRTHDAY on Monday, July 4th, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (music until 6:30 p.m.) in El Cerrito’s beautiful Cerrito Vista Park! The long-running, award-winning 4th of July Festival has been a hometown institution for years. Join your friends, visit community exhibits, buy arts and crafts, play carnival games, enjoy live entertainment, eat carnival foods, and celebrate El Cerrito’s diversity. Kids will enjoy the rides, inflatables, and an animal-free circus show!

VENDOR AND INFORMATIONAL BOOTHS
Interested in a vendor booth for your business or organization? Information is online at www.el-cerrito.org/july4. Spaces are limited, so please register soon.

VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSORS NEEDED
The City relies on the generosity of donors and sponsors to make the Festival possible and greatly appreciates both new and ongoing supporters. Volunteers are also needed to help at the festival. Non-profit (501c3) groups may be eligible to earn money for their organization in exchange for volunteer hours. To volunteer as an individual or to register your non-profit group to work at the event, please contact the Recreation Department and request a volunteer application. Businesses, organizations and individuals interested in making a donation should contact Chris Jones, Recreation Director, at 559-7005.

For more details about the event, including a list of 2016 mainstage performers and information about the special performance on July 3, go online to www.el-cerrito.org/july4, visit the worldOne Radio website at www.worldoneradio.org, or call the Recreation Department at 559-7000.

The 2015 City of El Cerrito & worldOne 4th of July Festival was made possible by the generous support of local businesses including Honda of El Cerrito, Marin Clean Energy (MCE), The Mechanics Bank, East Bay Sanitary, and other local businesses.

NEW KOREMATSU MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPUS OPENS
On March 28, the West Contra Costa School District welcomed 7th and 8th grade students to the new Korematsu Middle School campus on Donal Avenue (the former site of Castro Elementary School). The Police and Public Works Departments worked closely with the West Contra Costa Unified School District to minimize traffic impacts on the streets surrounding the school and to improve auto, bus, pedestrian, and bicycle safety. Signs and curb markings will be completed shortly while the City seeks funding for other long-term improvements such as a bicycle boulevard on Norvell Street, as identified in the City’s recently adopted Active Transportation Plan.
City Curbside Garbage, Recycling, and Green Waste Services

When it comes to reducing the amount of garbage sent to the landfill, the City of El Cerrito provides many opportunities for El Cerrito residents, businesses, and institutions to practice the 4 Rs—reduce, reuse, recycle, and rot (compost). The following is a quick guide to recycling and garbage services in El Cerrito.

Curbside Services
Recycling, green waste, and garbage services are provided on a weekly basis to all single-family homes and on a more frequent basis, as needed, to businesses and multifamily buildings. Please place all carts on the street, with lids closed, and wheels against the curb by 6 a.m. on your collection day. Leave 18 inches between carts and at least 3 feet from parked cars.

The City provides curbside recycling and contracts with East Bay Sanitary for garbage and green waste pickup services.

Recycling (Grey Cart)
The City accepts any paper products, bottles, cans (glass, metal, and plastic), and film plastics that will easily fit in your grey recycling cart. Bulky plastic items and scrap metal should not go in the curbside bin. To ensure the proper and safe processing of recyclable materials, please:

- clean all containers of food contamination
- take bulky or oversized items to the Recycling Center rather than leave them in or around the bin

Green Waste and Food Scraps (Green Cart)
Place all yard waste, food scraps (including meat and bones), and food-soiled paper (such as paper plates, napkins, and cups) in the green cart. Material from your green cart is turned into compost at a local facility in Richmond. Please do not include such items as animal feces, plastic utensils, plastic bags, milk cartons, used tissues, or plastic-coated paper products such as milk cartons, in your green cart.

Garbage (Blue Cart)
Even after separating out all of the items that can be recycled or composted, a small number of things should still go to landfill:

- polystyrene food packaging (such as vegetable and meat trays)
- plastic mylar (such as snack bags and wrappers with a silver lining)
- ceramics and other dishware
- animal and human waste (including kitty litter, diapers, and used tissues)
- painted or treated wood
- incandescent bulbs

Items that Should Not Go Into Any of the Curbside Carts
California law requires everyone to properly dispose of batteries, fluorescent bulbs, electronics, pharmaceuticals, medical needles (also known as “sharps”), and all hazardous waste (such as pesticides or paints). The Recycling Center will accept most of these items free of charge from El Cerrito residents.

The sticker on the lid of each cart displays information about the items that belong in the cart, but if questions remain, contact the Recycling Center for help.

The Center is located at 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito. To find out more, go online to www.ecrecycling.org, email the Operations + Environmental Services Division at green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call 215-4350. To contact East Bay Sanitary, visit www.ebsan.com, call 237-4321, or email info@ebsan.com.

Curbside recycling guides are available upon request in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Items Accepted at the Recycling + Environmental Resource Center
Many items that cannot be discarded at the curb can be dropped off at the Recycling Center. The Center accepts many hard-to-recycle or hazardous materials. Here are some examples:

- batteries, including auto, household, power tool, and computer batteries

Participate in the City Budget Process
The city’s biennial budget is a planning tool that matches services desired by the community to the estimated resources available to provide those services. The budget provides a financial plan for the next two fiscal years, as well as a “10 year financial plan” to anticipate future needs and opportunities.

The Operating Budget provides funding for all City services including police, fire, recreation, community development, public works, and administrative services. During the budgeting process, the City Council establishes priorities for services and matches those services to estimated available resources. The public is encouraged to participate throughout the budgeting process. Both the City Council and the Financial Advisory Board will hold public meetings about the budget. It is anticipated that the Council will adopt the budget in June.

For more information, or to get involved, visit www.el-cerrito.org/budget or contact Administrative Analyst Stacey Johnson at sjohnson@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or 215-4310.
CFL bulbs and fluorescent tubes are accepted, but no more than 15 bulbs or 30 ft. of tubes per visit. Non-West Contra Costa County residents and all businesses pay a bulb/tube recycling fee.

electronics, including cell phones, computers, toner cartridges, small household appliances, and televisions

medicines and sharps, such as unwanted or expired pills, creams, inhalers, and liquid medicines are recyclable to residential customers only. Empty pills into a zip-lock plastic bag and place the used medical sharps in thick plastic containers or thick plastic jars with screw-on lids.

polystyrene foam, clean, white #6 polystyrene foam in block or sheet form

scrap metal, large sizes of scrap steel and aluminum, and appliances such as water heaters, washing machines, or stoves

scrap textiles in any condition, such as clothing, bedding, shoes, belts, gloves, pillows, towels, and machine washable floor rugs also accepted. Wash and bag the items in clear plastic and drop inside the green and white USAgain bin.

The Center also accepts many items that can be re-used by others.

DROP OFF OR PICK UP:

used books, magazines, toys, bicycles, bicycle parts, and small useable household appliances and other items at the Exchange (but not large furniture)

vegetable and other plant seeds in the “Seeds of El Cerrito” library inside the Recycling Center office

Donations are also accepted for the following organizations:

Goodwill accepts donations of clean, useable clothes, shoes, linens, books, and small to medium household items (Goodwill donations are tax-deductible.)

Contra Costa County Food Bank accepts unused, pre-packaged food with current “Best Used By” dates

Lions Club Eyeglasses collects and re-distributes used prescription glasses

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**Introducing Interim Police Chief Keith**

CAPTAIN PAUL KEITH has been selected to serve as El Cerrito’s Interim Police Chief following the departure of Police Chief Sylvia Moir for Tempe, Arizona last month.

Keith has worked for the El Cerrito Police Department for over 15 years. Most recently, he served as Captain and was responsible for the oversight of department operations, goals, and budgeting. A California native, Keith has a Bachelor’s Degree in History from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from California State University, East Bay.

Chief Moir already had an extensive background in crime prevention, community involvement, and leadership development when she was sworn in as El Cerrito Police Chief in July of 2010. City Manager Scott Hanin says of her, “Sylvia has been an integral part of our team and she will be missed in our organization as well as in the community. I know she will go on to do wonderful things in Tempe.”

For more information on the department’s activities and recent accomplishments, visit [www.el-cerrito.org/police](http://www.el-cerrito.org/police) and download the 2015 Police Department Annual Report. The report provides an overview of the Department, including crime statistics, community engagement efforts, and employee awards/recognition. To reach the Police Department’s administrative office, call 215-4400 during business hours.

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**JOIN IN THE SUMMER READING PROGRAM**

Readers of all ages can immerse themselves in STEAM this summer by reading books with elements of science, technology, engineering, art, and math (“STEAM”) as part of the Library’s summer reading program.

Summer STEAM programs at the El Cerrito library include:

**Crazy 8s Club**

Saturdays, July 2, 9, 16, & 23, 11 a.m.
Fun, hands-on math activities for elementary school children

**S.T.E.A.M. Saturdays**

Saturdays, Aug. 6, 13, 20, & 27, 11 a.m.
STEAM activities for kids

The El Cerrito Library is located at 6510 Stockton Avenue. For information on hours, collection details, and events, such as children’s story times, teen homework help, and a monthly book club for adults, please call the El Cerrito Library at 526-7512 or visit the library website at [ccclib.org/locations/elcerrito.html](http://ccclib.org/locations/elcerrito.html).
Spring Pruning Reduces Fire Risk

The rapid growth of weeds and other vegetation in the spring increases the risk of fires. To help reduce this risk, the Fire Department inspects all El Cerrito properties starting in May of each year. If the department identifies your property as a fire hazard, you will receive a notice requiring you to fix all problems.

If you need guidance in resolving a fire hazard notice on your property or want to know more about the City’s Vegetation Management Standards, go online to www.el-cerrito.org/fire or call Fire Captain Chris Renshaw at 215-4457.

Did you know El Cerrito residents are entitled to one additional pickup of green waste at no extra charge? To schedule your free pickup or to find out more, please call the East Bay Sanitary Company at 237-4321.

Remember, you make a difference by keeping your home, your neighborhood, and our City “Wildfire Safe.”