

Business: Job listings at 3-year low. C9

Local: Last Free Comic Book Day for Flying Colors. B1

Sports: Kurtenbach: In gut-punch for Oakland, the A's look good. C1

Weekender: Famed SoCal fest comes to SF. G1



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HOMELESSNESS



PHOTOS BY SHAE HAMMOND — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Heidi White walks to her RV at a safe parking site in San Jose on Friday. Although the city has promised to find her an affordable apartment, she's waiting six months so far for officials to make good on their promises.

Are RV safe parking lots actually helping?

San Jose doubles down as it opened one site last year and expects another this fall — but those who park there say they don't see a future

By Ethan Varian
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After months living out of an RV at a sprawling homeless camp north of downtown San Jose, Heidi White was relieved to move her 1995 Ford motorhome into the city's first long-term-managed 24/7 safe parking lot.

She no longer needed to worry about encampment fires or drug dealing outside her door, and staff running the site atop a tree-dotted lot next to the Santa Teresa VTA light rail station in South San Jose promised to help her find an affordable apartment.

But six months later, White, 56, who lives with her dogs Pumpkin and Jake, said she's no closer to securing a lasting home. While she and around 10 other vehicle dwellers said they're thankful for having a safe place to stay, they described feeling stuck at the lot, without a clear plan for what comes next.

"They brought us here under the pretext that they were going to help us get out of our RVs and get into homes," White said.

As residents grow increasingly frustrated with an estimated 700 lived-in RVs scattered across San Jose's streets and parks, the city is among the latest in the Bay Area to turn to safe parking lots — while also adopting tougher restrictions on oversized vehicles parked on city streets.



White looks out her window at the safe parking site in San Jose where she lives with her dogs Pumpkin and Jake. She is frustrated that she is no closer to securing a lasting home.

City officials have pitched the sites — which provide utilities, security and case management — as a fast and cost-effective way to help people off the street and into permanent homes. But with a severe shortage of affordable housing in the region, most VTA lot residents have been waiting at the site for months.

According to the city, just seven of the 55 households that have stayed

at the 42-space lot since opening last July have found lasting homes. Three moved to shelters, and three voluntarily returned to the street. The rest remain at the site, which has no strict time limit on stays.

The VTA lot — and a second site in North San Jose for up to 85 RVs set to open this fall — has also faced delays and neighborhood opposition, un-

RV PARKING » PAGE 5

CONGRESSIONAL RECOUNT

Evan Low heads to November election

Assemblyman wins by 5 votes over Joe Simitian after contentious recount to face Sam Liccardo in the fall

By Grace Hase
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And the winner is ... Evan Low.

The assemblyman is heading to the November election after knocking Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian off the ballot — by just five votes — in an extraordinary Silicon Valley congressional race that captivated political onlookers nationwide.

The highly awaited outcome is an astounding finish to a March primary that ended in a historic tie for second place in the District 16 race, triggering a recount that dragged on for nearly three weeks — and started with Low vigorously trying to halt it before it even began.

"My team and I knew that succeeding the esteemed Anna Eshoo would be challenging, so we see a race ending in a tie followed by a recount as character building for your next representative in Congress," Low wrote in a social media post. "We are very excited that my advancement into the general election was reaffirmed and I now look forward to the real work of tackling the big issues facing our country like reproductive freedom and affordability."

With the last of dozens of challenged ballots resolved Wednesday and more than 182,000 votes counted in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, the final result is 30,261 to 30,256, with Low coming out on top to square off against former San

RECOUNT » PAGE 5

IMMIGRATION

Feds believe that they have fixed H-1B visa loophole that opened way for fraudsters

By Ethan Baron
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Fraudsters exploiting a change in the application process for the controversial H-1B visa largely have been shut down by a new rule, federal authorities believe.

After U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in 2020 imposed a new, two-stage application process for the visa intended for workers with specialized skills, unscrupulous businesspeople colluded to game the lottery-based allo-

FRAUD » PAGE 5

GAZA WAR DEMONSTRATIONS

Protests erupt in violence, chaos at some U.S. campuses, but not here

Restrained approach at Cal as demonstrators engage with poetry readings, speeches

From staff and wire reports

Protests over the war in Gaza erupted in violence and clashes with authorities at some college campuses across the nation Wednesday but continued peacefully at universities in the Bay Area where demonstrators also held May Day rallies in Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose.

A brawl erupted at UCLA after a pro-Palestinian encampment was "forcefully attacked," the school's chancellor said Wednesday, while activists at the University of Wisconsin in Mad-

ison clashed with police officers who destroyed their tents, and close to 300 protesters were arrested in protest crackdowns at Columbia and The City College of New York, officials said.

An encampment at UC Berkeley that popped up April 22 doubled in size over the weekend to an estimate of 150 tents but the protest remained peaceful Wednesday. University administrators have taken a restrained approach with demonstrators who continued Wednesday with activities including poetry readings, question and answer sessions and speeches.

At Stanford University, where students reestablished a protest encampment on White Plaza, university officials continued to monitor the demonstration and protesters reported

receiving warnings and citations from the Office of Community Standards for participating in the overnight sit-in. But there were no clashes with police.

Gaza protesters marched for May Day in downtown San Jose, Oakland and San Francisco.

"We're here fighting for increased funding for teachers and education in Oakland, protecting immigrants' rights, while opposing US sponsored war, military aid, and intervention in countries like Haiti, Venezuela, the Philippines and Palestine in particular," Wassim Hage of the Arab Resource and Organizing Center, part of the Oakland Sin Fronteras coalition, said in a statement.

Employers at the Port of Oakland

PROTESTS » PAGE 5



ETHAN SWOPE — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Demonstrators clash at an encampment at UCLA in Los Angeles early Wednesday. Dueling groups of protesters have turned violent at the university campus.

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INDEX

Business C9
Classified B7

Comics/TV B10
Lottery A2
Local B1

Obituaries B6
Puzzles B2, C6-8
Weather B12

WEATHER

H: 75-77 L: 53-55
Full report on B12



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