

Business: Vinyl firm is finding its groove. C7



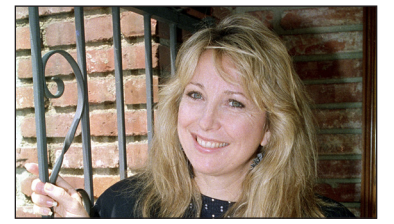
Local: Zoppé Family Circus sets up shop for new run in Redwood City. B1



Sports: Kurtenbach: Can one great quarter spark 49ers' resurgence? C1



State: Prolific actress Teri Garr dies at 79. B4



The newspaper of Silicon Valley

The Mercury News

BayArea NewsGroup 111

Volume 174, Issue 133

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024

24/7 COVERAGE: MERCURYNEWS.COM » \$3.00

SANTA CLARA COUNTY HOMELESSNESS

IT'S NOT THE BEST THING



RAY CHAVEZ — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sofia, 2, sits on a box spring next to her grandmother, Sandra Barrios, in their RV dwelling at the Columbus Park homeless encampment in San Jose on Saturday. Officials consider that encampment to be among the most dangerous in the area.

Growing number of toddlers live in a dangerous area encampment

By Ethan Varian
evarian@bayareanewsgroup.com

A red Radio Flyer wagon. A tiny pink chair adorned with the face of a Disney princess. A jumbo pack of Huggies diapers.

These are a few of the items spread across one of San Jose's most dangerous homeless encampments.

It's evidence that children, including infants and toddlers, live or spend time with their families in trailers and RVs at the longtime encampment at Columbus Park, just south of San Jose Mineta International Airport. Some are migrants who recently fled gang violence in Central and South America.

Children are not uncommon at homeless camps across the Bay Area and California, and this news organization counted at least eight at the Columbus Park site. According to the latest



SHAE HAMMOND — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Angelika Cordova gives her son, Jeremiah, 2, a bottle of water at the Columbus Park encampment on Oct. 8.

statewide tally in 2023, an estimated 3,500 children under the age of 18 went to sleep each night without a roof over their heads, a 40% spike from a year earlier.

In August, the Bay Area News Group wrote about a family with a 7-year-old boy while they were living at a secluded encampment by the railroad tracks in South

San Jose.

But the Columbus Park camp, a collection of dozens of lived-in trailers and RVs, has a reputation for being especially unsafe. Homeless residents say drug use is widespread and gunshots sometimes ring out at night. In February, authorities charged two people in connection with a fatal stab-



BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

bing at the camp.

Citing privacy concerns, local homeless service providers declined to share how many children they've counted at the encampment. City officials also declined to provide a tally.

Angelika Cordova lives in a dilapidated trailer at the park with her 2-year-old son, Jeremiah. Cordova, 30, said she worries about preventing the bouncy toddler, who teeters around the camp in

CHILDREN » PAGE 5

BAY AREA SPORTS BONANZA

San Jose eager for marquee spotlight

City hires a 'czar' to coordinate events in 2026 that will include the Super Bowl and World Cup

By Devan Patel
dpatel@bayareanewsgroup.com

San Jose will hire a "czar" to quarterback the coordination of the major sporting events in its backyard in 2026 — including the FIFA World Cup, Super Bowl LX and NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament games — as the city looks to maximize its visibility and kick a significant amount of cash into the local economy.

Along with the three marquee sporting attractions that will be played at either Levi's Stadium or the SAP Center, San Jose officials see 2026 as an opportunity to showcase the city and bring thousands of tourists back regularly by creating "events around the events."

"We have the Super Bowl, six World Cup matches, and March Madness, and we want to capture that energy," San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan told The Mercury News. "We need a dedicated and experienced executive with a history of coordinating major sporting events."

San Jose is allocating \$350,000 for the 12-month executive position, which is budgeted as "Road to 2026 Executive Leadership."

While San Jose just approved the role, city officials have already begun the planning, engaging numerous city departments and business partners — including, but not limited to, the Bay Area Host Committee, San Jose Chamber of Commerce, San Jose Downtown Association, the San Jose Sports Authority, and the city's professional teams.

"This is a short-term position which will be critical to playing a coordinating role across city departments and also with participating partners," Assistant Economic Development Direc-

2026 » PAGE 5

ALREADY SERVING 30 YEARS

The attacker of Pelosi's husband gets a life term on state charges

David DePape gets additional time for aggravated kidnapping, burglary, more

By Janie Har
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO » The man who was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison for attacking the husband of former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi with a hammer in their Bay Area home was given a life term without the possibility of parole on Tuesday following a separate state trial.

A San Francisco jury in June found David DePape guilty of charges including aggravated kidnapping, first-degree burglary and false imprisonment of an elder.

Before sentencing DePape to life for the kidnapping conviction, Judge Harry Dorfman rejected defense attorneys' arguments that he be granted a new state trial for the 2022 attack against Paul Pelosi, who was 82 years old at the time.

"It's my intention that Mr. DePape will never get out of prison, he can never be paroled," Dorfman said while handing out the punishment. He later said, "I don't feel sympathy for you. I feel sympathy for the victim in this case, who's lucky to be alive."



DePape

DEPAPE » PAGE 5

PLEDGES TO BE A UNIFIER

Harris delivers her closing statement

VP's final campaign stop is at same spot Trump used prior to Capitol insurrection

By Zeke Miller
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » Kamala Harris promised Tuesday to "put country above party and above self" in the closing argument of her presidential campaign, delivering her message from the same site where Donald Trump fomented the Capitol insurrection, to emphasize the sharp choice voters face.

One week out from Election Day, the vice president used the address from the grassy Ellipse near the White House to pledge to Americans that she would work to improve their lives

while arguing that her Republican opponent is only in it for himself.

Trump "has spent a decade trying to keep the American people divided and afraid of each other: That's who he is," Harris said. "But America, I am here tonight to say: That's not who we are."

She looked to sharpen that contrast by delivering her capstone speech from the place where Trump on Jan. 6, 2021, spewed falsehoods about the 2020 presidential election that inspired a crowd to march to the Capitol and try unsuccessfully to halt the certi-



STEPHANIE SCARBROUGH — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris arrives for her campaign event near the White House on Tuesday.

fication of Democrat Joe Biden's victory.

"Look, we know who Donald Trump is. He is the person who stood at this very spot nearly four years ago

and sent an armed mob to the United States Capitol to overturn the will of the people in a free and fair election," she said.

HARRIS » PAGE 5

NEWS ON YOUR PHONE

Download the Mercury News mobile app for iPhone or Android.

INDEX

Business C7
Classified B5

Comics/TV B8
Local B1
Lottery A2

Obituaries B4
Puzzles B2, C5, C6
Weather B10

WEATHER

H: 64-68 L: 50-53
Full report on B10



MediaNews Group
Subscribe:
MercuryNews.com
©2024



6 40493 00001 1