

## PAC-12'S END HITS HARD

Killion: Team USA worried about dissolution's impact.

SPORTING GREEN, B1



## EAST BAY LEADER DIES IN CRASH

Peggy Moore campaigned for Obama, advised former Oakland Mayor Schaaf.

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## STEALING THE SHOW

Patti Austin's quip nabs SFJazz tribute spotlight.

DATEBOOK, B9

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Carlos Avila Gonzalez/The Chronicle

The blinking lights of a plane streak through the aurora borealis, also known as the northern lights, visible late Friday over Lake Berryessa in Napa County because of a geomagnetic storm.

## Yosemite operator censured for issues

Reports detail maintenance, safety problems at park under Aramark

By Kurtis Alexander

In April of last year, as winter began to fade at Yosemite, several diners enjoying views of the melting mountain snow while at the famous Ahwahnee hotel were suddenly shaken from their bliss. Chunks of the high ceiling above came crashing down.

The debris landed on tables in the hotel's grand Solarium, toppling wine glasses and scouring white linens, and, according to one employee who was there, prompted screams from spooked dinner guests. Some raced for the doors.

Park officials said at the time they weren't aware of the incident, while hospitality managers said they were looking into it, noting that periodic issues arise with old buildings. But newly released reports from the National Park Service suggest the mishap was part of a broader and more serious — even dangerous — pattern of neglect by the company that holds the multibillion-dollar contract to manage Yosemite's hotels, restaurants, tours and other visitor enterprises.

The ceiling collapse, which injured an employee, was one of at least three incidents at Yosemite in which a lack of facility upkeep by the concessions giant Aramark is believed to have led to injuries. The maintenance problems, along with issues of staffing and customer service, are documented by park officials in two recent performance reviews of the Philadelphia-based company. The most recent review was first obtained by SF Gate.

"The (park) service is extremely concerned about the risk to visitor and employee safety," park officials wrote *Aramark continues on A8*

## Alcohol program draws flak; city touts its impact

By St. John Barned-Smith and Maggie Angst

For a small slice of San Francisco's homeless population that struggles with severe alcohol addiction, nurses offer treatment not in a pill, but in a shot of vodka or a glass of beer.

It may sound counterintuitive, experts say, but it helps keep people off the streets and out of emergency rooms, jails — or the morgue.

San Francisco set up a "managed alcohol program" four years ago as a way to care for vulnerable homeless people who drank excessive amounts of alcohol and were among the city's highest users of emergency services.

Since its creation, the program, which started out with 10 beds, has served 55 clients, according to officials from the Department of Public Health. The now 20-bed program, which costs about \$5 million per year, operates out of a former hotel in the heart of the Tenderloin. Nurses dispense regimented doses of vodka and beer to participants at certain times of day based on care plans.

Such programs don't focus on sobriety, experts *Program continues on A9*

## Northern lights' stunning display

Phenomenon inspires people across Bay Area to snap photos

By Danielle Echeverria

The night sky over the Bay Area took on a purplish, reddish glow Friday as a powerful geomagnetic storm made the northern lights — or aurora borealis — visible farther south than usual.

Social media users reported seeing the phenomenon across the Bay Area from Marin and Napa to Fremont and Gilroy, sharing images of pink and purple skies.

A Chronicle photographer at Lake Berryessa captured bright, glowing

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Solar storms' surprising effects on health. **A2**

bands of pink, purple and even green-tinged lights over the lake.

While the aurora may be faint to the naked eye, experts said that cameras, even those on smartphones, can capture the hues very well.

"With new technology and our phones, we've been seeing some amazing aurora shots even further south," Brent Gordon, chief of the space weather services branch

at the Space Weather Prediction Center, said Friday morning. "So things that the human eye can't see, your phone can."

The geomagnetic storm reached Earth around 4 p.m. Friday and was the first observed G5 event since the Halloween storms of 2003, which caused blackouts in Sweden and damaged transformers in South Africa, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which forecasts space events.

The source of the storm "has mostly been a large, complex sunspot cluster

that is 17 times the diameter of Earth," the NOAA said in an X post.

The National Weather Service reported power grid irregularities and degradation to high-frequency communication and GPS.

For the best chance at seeing the colors, experts say people should try to get out of and away from big cities, where lights can make the phenomenon harder to see.

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## Chinese American voters may be shifting

By Ko Lyn Cheang

Min Jia Xian was working at her brother's Excelsior neighborhood dry-cleaning business when Chyanne Chen, a first-time candidate for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, dropped by on a campaign walk in April.

Chen, a labor organizer and Chinese immigrant, greeted Xian in Cantonese, chatted about the business, then asked if she could display campaign posters in the window. Xian said yes and pledged to support Chen's campaign.

Asked why, Xian had a simple answer: "Because

she is Chinese. Chinese people must speak up and must support Chinese people," she said in Mandarin, adding she thinks a Chinese politician will better advocate for her community's needs.

Chinese American voters in the city have long supported Chinese Ameri-

can candidates, but that may be starting to change.

In recent elections, Chinese American politicians, who've tended to be more progressive, haven't always won the support of increasingly moderate-leaning Chinese American voters galvanized during the pan- *Election continues on A8*

## Anti-war protesters interrupt UC Berkeley commencement

By Daniel Lempres, Kevin Fagan, Christian Leonard and Tara Duggan

UC Berkeley's campuswide commencement began peacefully Saturday morning but soon was disrupted by hundreds of pro-Palestinian protesters, mostly graduates in caps and gowns, who gathered in one area of Memorial Stadium to chant.

Though many universities nationwide altered or canceled commencement ceremonies in

the wake of campus encampments protesting Israel's war with Hamas, UC Berkeley's graduation went on as planned. While chanting made it difficult for many to hear the speeches, the 90-minute ceremony proceeded on schedule, and no one was arrested. Reactions to the political activity ranged from full-on support to anger, with at least one scuffle as guests left the stadium.

"This wouldn't be Berkeley without a protest," Sydney Rob-

erts, president of the Associated Students of the University of California, said after her speech was interrupted briefly by chanting.

In all, more than 7,700 graduates registered to attend the commencement, and an additional 25,425 guest tickets were sold, according to UC Berkeley media relations. The ceremony was too large for individual names to be read, and many departments and student groups *Berkeley continues on A7*



Don Fera/Special to the Chronicle

Pro-Palestinian protesters gather Saturday outside Memorial Stadium during UC Berkeley's graduation ceremony.

