

SCIENCE  
ROCKS

Explosive, edgy music tells the life story of Galileo.

DATEBOOK, B7



GARVEY TO SKIP  
GOP CONVENTION

Senate candidate steers clear of potentially controversial company.

BAY AREA & BUSINESS, A4



FAMILIAR  
FIRST FOE

Niners to face Rodgers, Jets in season opener.

SPORTING GREEN, B1

# San Francisco Chronicle

SFCHRONICLE.COM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

CONTAINS RECYCLED PAPER

\$3.00



Photos by Shuran Huang/Special to the Chronicle

U.S. Rep. Jennifer Wexton, D-Va., uses a text-to-speech application to speak with a reporter on Capitol Hill. She was diagnosed with a degenerative brain condition known as progressive supranuclear palsy.

## Disabled lawmakers take lead on changes

New members of Congress not afraid to seek accommodations

By Shira Stein

WASHINGTON — As House floor speeches go, the subject of recent remarks by Rep. Jennifer Wexton, D-Va., was unremarkable — she proposed renaming a small-town Virginia post office. But the speech nevertheless marked a new era for people with disabilities: Wexton's words came from an app, not her own voice.

Wexton, 55, was diagnosed with a rare neurode-



Wexton said using augmentative and alternative communication, or AAC, makes it easier for her to do her job and be understood.

generative disease in September 2023, a condition she describes as "Parkinson's on steroids."

Progressive supranuclear palsy has affected the once-powerful voice she used as a trial attorney, state legislator and a candidate for the House. Now, her voice comes from a computer. Wexton, like other people who have difficulty speaking, uses an assistive app that converts written text into speech. **Changes continues on A8**

## Performer made Giants' Lou Seal lovable

When Lou Seal took the field at Candlestick Park for his debut on April 4, 1997, he was an insult to mascots and seals.

The San Francisco Giants' costumed pinniped stood awkwardly, seemingly burdened by the weight of a too-big headpiece — an oversize pair of mirrored Oakley-style sunglasses completely hiding his eyes. His whiskers were a little too

PETER HARTLAUB  
TOTAL SF

long, his nose a little too pointy. Dark brown fur obscured his features, except for white, fang-like teeth.

"It looks like a rat," then-San Francisco Examiner columnist Bruce Jenkins wrote three days later, the first of several poor reviews.

Lou Seal is now a be-

loved institution, front and center for thousands of games and three world championships. He roams Oracle Park with swagger, accompanied by a small entourage of attendants for crowd control and greeted like an old friend by fans young and old. With apologies to South Korean star Jung Hoo Lee and the broadcast team of Kruk and Kuip, he may be more valuable to the brand than anyone in the

building.

But forgotten in time is the painful road to the top, which included initial ridicule, a reboot and a crucial secret ingredient: a virtually unknown performer who crafted much of the mascot's personality. Hired in 1999, he has been the only person to wear the suit full time in the China Basin ballpark and will have inhabited Lou Seal for 2,093 consecutive days. **Mascot continues on A10**

## Exhibit projects dragging at S.F. Zoo

Some fear focus on pandas could delay other animal habitat updates

By Tara Duggan and Michael Barba

Three years ago, the San Francisco Zoo enthusiastically shared plans to convert an old sea lion exhibit into a new habitat for a pair of Andean condors.

The exhibit was supposed to open by last year, but today, a banner advertising the "future home of Andean Condor" hangs in front of an overgrown lot. While the birds were brought to the zoo eight years ago, the only sign of progress on their future home is that the sea lions' former swimming pool is now filled with concrete.

The stalled condor habitat is one of several recent infrastructure projects at the zoo that have faced delays or remain unfinished, raising questions about whether the institution is equipped to take on its most ambitious project in decades: hosting a pair of giant pandas.

Under a tentative agreement reached by Mayor London Breed last month, the zoo plans to build housing for the pandas due from China in 2025. The project comes with an estimated price tag of up to \$25 million for housing alone, including the \$3 million to \$5 million needed to construct a temporary home for the bears while a permanent enclosure is built.

While the zoo seeks to accomplish both at the same time, more than a dozen people with deep connections to the zoo, ranging from zookeepers to a major donor, told the Chronicle that the nearly century-old institution should consider fixing its aging facilities. **Zoo continues on A9**

## 4 men sentenced in case affected by Antioch scandal

By David Hernandez

Four men were sentenced to state prison for terms ranging from 13 to 20 years in a double-shooting case that was compromised because Antioch police officers exchanged racist text messages about the men during the investigation.

The men were sentenced last week after pleading no contest to involuntary manslaughter and attempted murder as part of a plea deal. The March 2021 shooting left Arnold Hawkins, 23, dead and another man injured.

Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge David Goldstein sentenced 23-year-old Terryonn Pugh to 20 years in prison, 25-year-old Eric Windom to 19 years in prison, 23-year-old Trent Allen to 19 years in prison and Keyshawn McGee to 13 years and eight months in prison.

The defendants faced life without parole before the case fell apart when a separate investigation uncovered the text messages.

Chief Assistant District Attorney Simon O'Connell said the resolution of the case "promotes public safety." **Case continues on A9**

## Family feud could break up historic Napa winery

Likened to a 'soap opera,' 7 siblings fight over whether to sell Monticello

By Jess Lander

The future of a Napa family winery hangs in the balance, as a divisive family feud could end in the sale of the 54-year-old Monticello Vineyards.

Founded in 1970, Monticello isn't a household name. But the elegant estate, named and designed after Thomas Jefferson's Virginia residence, epitomizes the region's trail-

blazing generation of ambitious family-owned wineries that's rapidly shrinking. Similar wineries have been sold to national and foreign conglomerates, and while "Succession"-like family feuds are often the crux of a winery's motivation to go corporate, these conflicts rarely go public.

But Carolyn Corley, whose father founded the winery where she took

her first steps, says she is desperate.

She said she fears that several of her siblings are looking to sell Monticello to the highest bidder and will "trample" their late father's legacy in the process. She has accused the privately held winery's board of directors, and four of her brothers who she says want to sell, of misleading shareholders to support their interests.

Two of her brothers, who are Monticello's board chairman/presi- **Feud continues on A7**



Carolyn Corley, right, with her father, Jay Corley, in the early days of Monticello Vineyards. Carolyn Corley wants to keep the winery in the family but fears some of her brothers want to sell.

Courtesy of Carolyn Corley

