

## STARS BID FAREWELL

Reggie Jackson Classic Coliseum's last hurrah.

SPORTING GREEN, B1



## PRESCRIBED BURNS HALTED

Critically dry weather raises fire risk on federal lands, U.S. Forest Service says.

BAY AREA & BUSINESS, A4



## BROAD APPEAL

All-American program shines at S.F. Symphony.

DATEBOOK, B9

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*"I think that kind of opened my eyes a little bit to how much hate people might have for me."*

Brooke Slusser, San Jose State University volleyball player



Santiago Mejia/The Chronicle

Brooke Slusser, a setter for San Jose State University, has said in court papers that a Spartans volleyball player is transgender and should not be allowed to play. Slusser has continued to compete alongside the teammate.

## Who is player trying to ban trans athletes?

SJSU's Slusser tries to walk a fine line of joining lawsuit, being a good teammate

By Marisa Ingemi

By most indications, Brooke Slusser thrived in her first season with the San Jose State women's volleyball team. After transferring from Alabama, she was named honorable mention All-Mountain West Conference after the Spartans' 13-18 season last year.

Off the court, the Denton, Texas, native seemingly adjusted well to life in Northern California, living in San Jose State housing with three teammates.

"It was really scary deciding to leave Alabama, but transferring to SJSU was the best decision I ever made," Slusser told SJSU News in December. "I'm happier than ever and back to loving vol-



Yalonda M. James/The Chronicle

Some of Slusser's public statements have been questioned, have been denied by school officials or do not survive scrutiny, a review by the Chronicle found.

leyball again."

This fall, the Spartans won their first nine matches with Slusser as a co-captain and

starting setter and appeared poised to contend for an NCAA Tournament berth. But on Sept. 23, Slusser

made an unprecedented move: She joined a lawsuit seeking to change NCAA guidelines that allow transgender women to play for women's sports teams. In court papers, Slusser said a Spartans player — one of her roommates — is transgender, and she should not be allowed to play.

In the past few weeks, Slusser — who is a scholarship player — has tried to make a case that her teammate poses a safety risk to other players and is unfairly taking a scholarship from a cisgender woman. She has appeared on the national television programs of conservative personalities Laura Ingraham and Megyn Kelly and been interviewed several

Slusser continues on A8

## Control at stake in school election

Four seats in play as district seeks to avoid state takeover

By Jill Tucker

The San Francisco school board race on the November ballot might be well down the ballot from the divisive presidential election and even below the city's heated mayoral race, but the outcome in the education contest is no less crucial.

The next school board will arguably face one of the most difficult periods in the district's recent history with massive budget cuts needed to avert insolvency and an overhaul of the student assignment system pending along with a new payroll system to replace a bug-riddled \$40 million platform.

The four members elected in the Nov. 5 election will join the seven-member board when they're seated in January and will likely grapple with school closures within the next four years, as enrollment continues to decline by an estimated 5,000 students.

At the same time, they will need to earn back public trust, which waned during the pandemic and nose-dived in recent months amid massive administrative dysfunction and a botched school closure

SFUSD continues on A9

## Peskin's gains in polls thrill progressives, alarm critics

By J.D. Morris

As Supervisor Aaron Peskin tried to spread the word about his mayoral campaign in San Francisco's Mission District on Wednesday morning, he kept encountering the same response. Over and over, passersby said they had already voted for him or planned to do so.

Peskin wasn't surprised by the reception he received at the 24th Street BART plaza in one of the city's most progressive neighborhoods.

"There is hope and excitement that a grassroots candidate might actually be able to prevail in this contest," Peskin said with a smile, clutching campaign literature that sought to distinguish him from Mayor London Breed and two other leading candidates, Daniel Lurie and Mark Farrell.

"It's getting closer to the election. Every-

Peskin continues on A9

## Napa winery capitalizing on once-secret views

By Jess Lander

A narrow road off Napa Valley's Silverado Trail famously climbs to one of Wine Country's most stunning viewpoints complete with a Michelin-starred meal at the Auberge du Soleil resort. Yet for years, it's been a well-kept secret that just a quarter-mile past Auberge, Rutherford Hill Winery offers the same view from its rustic picnic grounds for far less than the cost of a multicourse dinner.

But Wine Country tourism has evolved dramatically since Rutherford Hill Winery was founded in 1972, so this quiet hilltop estate is following the lead of other Napa Valley classics — like Domaine Chandon, Heitz and Cakebread — that have recently undergone extreme, multimillion-dollar renovations. The pinnacle of Rutherford



Brontë Wittpenn/The Chronicle

Rutherford Hill Winery left its original winery, built in 1968 by noted vintner Joseph Phelps, untouched in its renovations.

ford Hill's transformation, which it revealed on Friday, is a trio of sky lounges: private wine tasting decks that float 400 feet

above Napa Valley's famed Oakville and Rutherford regions. "Napa has changed," said Megghen Driscoll, vice president

### RUTHERFORD HILL WINERY

Where: 200 Rutherford Hill Road, Rutherford

Hours: Open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Contact: 707-963-1871

Website: rutherfordhill.com

of communications for Terlato Wine Group, Rutherford Hill's parent company. "It's just fancier, and people have a different expectation."

Rutherford Hill is part of the Class of 1972, a group of pioneering wineries, including Caymus, Chateau Montelena and Silver Oak, which were founded the same year and kick-started California's modern-day wine movement. Yet Rutherford Hill

Winery continues on A7