



Jill Valavanis, visual arts director for the Sonoma Community Center, prepares to add a photo of Evelyn Berger to the facility’s outdoor Day of the Dead altar. The center scaled back its event due to safety concerns.

Fears of raids cloud Day of the Dead events

Celebrations canceled or downsized after earlier threat

By Jessica Flores
STAFF WRITER

Lingering apprehension trailing behind last week’s threat of a major immigration enforcement crackdown in the Bay Area will have a marked effect on Día de los Muertos celebrations this year.

Across the region, some event organizers canceled events or pared them back significantly to avoid putting celebrants in the crosshairs of federal immigration enforcement. Others are moving forward, but with emergency plans in place to keep people safe should federal immigration officers show up.

At least three organizers canceled parts of their Day of the Dead celebra-

Fears continues on A9



Omar Prevost hangs a Día de los Muertos banner at Fruitvale Village Plaza in Oakland, where Sunday’s celebration will go on as scheduled.

Crashing halt for auto racing in park

San Franciscans are accustomed to Golden Gate Park as a flexible space, hosting massive concerts and Bay to Breakers along with lakes for model boats, fly-fishing, meandering trails and a herd of bison.

But modern park-goers may find it impossible to imagine the scene on May 31, 1952, when the city’s marquee place of public respite was turned into a venue for high-speed auto racing.

PETER
HARTLAUB
OUR SF

“If you’re thinking about a nice, peaceful holiday drive in Golden Gate Park next Saturday ... don’t!” the Chronicle warned a week earlier. “Other drivers will be using the park that day and you wouldn’t want to mingle with them — not at 125 miles per hour.”

The park hosted three races from 1952 to 1954, on a 3-mile track that covered the western two-thirds of the park. The cars were fast, and the crowds were huge. But in true San Francisco fashion, so was the blow-back.

I first learned about the races a

decade ago when Chronicle librarian Bill Van Niekerken discovered several packets of photo negatives. Last week another artifact surfaced: one of the actual race cars.

First the history, and an answer to the question: How in the world was this allowed to happen?

The race was conceived by the Guardsmen, a group of young San Francisco businessmen who raised money to send underprivileged children to California summer camps.

With more up-front disposable income than most charities, they

Hartlaub continues on A9

Nuclear fuel found at former shipyard

Health department warns of contamination threat

By Laura Waxmann
STAFF WRITER

Alarming high levels of plutonium-239 have been detected at the long-troubled former Hunters Point Shipyard, prompting the San Francisco Department of Public Health to warn community groups about the contamination threat and press the U.S. Navy for answers about its ongoing cleanup of radioactive elements on the site.

The Navy operated at the shipyard from 1945 to 1974 and is responsible for cleaning the 500-acre shipyard on the southeastern edge of San Francisco in order to unlock the Superfund site for its long-planned redevelopment into a mixed-use neighborhood. For 11 months, the federal agency failed to notify the city’s health department about air samples that showed elevated levels of plutonium-239, ac-

Shipyard continues on A7

Zoning report sparks lawsuit, recall threats

By J.K. Dineen, J.D. Morris
and Ko Lyn Cheang
STAFF WRITERS

A bombshell city economic report on the impacts of Mayor Daniel Lurie’s proposed “Family Zoning” plan continued to roil San Francisco political waters Thursday with YIMBY groups threatening to sue the city and West of Twin Peaks neighbors saying they might launch a recall campaign against Supervisor Myrna Melgar should she support the plan.

The report, from the San Francisco Controller’s Office and released Wednesday, said Lurie’s proposed “Family Zoning” plan would generate far less housing than the planning department is projecting.

Instead of creating 36,000 units over the next five years, the report said that, in a best-case scenario, the rezoning of neighborhoods from the Marina to North Beach to the Sunset District would produce 14,646 units over 20 years — about 40% of the number of homes that San Francisco is required to plan for by 2031 under its

Zoning continues on A8

Time to fall back
Remember to set your
clocks back one hour.



Don’t
forget

Daylight
saving time
ends at 2 a.m.
Sunday.

Head Start leaders warn of shutdown’s toll

By Jessica Flores
STAFF WRITER

A group of Head Start program leaders and advocates in San Mateo County warned that some local child care centers may have to close classrooms next year if Congress doesn’t end the federal government shutdown and restore funding for the early education programs.

In a series of speeches at the Izzi Early Education school in South San Francisco, Rep. Kevin Mullin, D-San Mateo, stood alongside Bay Area Head Start leaders Thursday to highlight the importance of accessible early childhood education and child care, and to call on Congress to craft a bipartisan deal to reopen the federal government and restore funding for Head Start programs.

“There is no better public in-



Yalonda M. James/S.F. Chronicle

Jonas, center, climbs up a slide Thursday at Izzi Early Education in South San Francisco. The organization serves more than 600 children across San Mateo County.

vestment than tax dollars spent on early childhood education,” Mullin said. “Child care is the backbone of our economy. Without it, parents are unable to work and thousands of jobs are lost.”

Head Start is a federally fund-

ed program that provides early childhood education, health and family support to low-income families and their children ages 5 and under. On Monday, the National Head Start Association warned that if the government shutdown extends past Nov. 1, an additional 134 Head Start programs across the country were at risk of closing, impacting about 65,000 children and families.

In San Mateo County, Head Start program leaders said some of their grant funding for renovation and expansion plans was paused because of the government shutdown. If the shutdown lasts until next year and funding for local centers dries up, some leaders said they might have to close classrooms.

“We have two months to figure out how we’re going to keep our classrooms open,” said

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