

## METRO

## HEADLINES: Around the Bay

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**SAN FRANCISCO**— Wednesday marked the 106th anniversary of the massive 1906 earthquake that devastated San Francisco. Several hundred citizens gathered at Lotta's Fountain in the City to honor the 3,000 who died in the quake.

**OAKLAND**— The East Bay Regional Park board agreed Tuesday to outlaw medical marijuana use within 1,000 feet of developed recreation areas. The move was made in response to complaints from parents that users smoke near children. Park officials also said they worry park users' getting high near swim lakes and reservoirs creates unacceptable risks of drowning.

**OAKLAND**— Two Oakland men pleaded not guilty Tuesday to charges that they wounded a shopper in a Black Friday shooting outside a San Leandro Walmart. The men are facing several felony charges, including attempted murder, while Phillips is accused of robbery and attempted robbery. They were arrested in connection with the non-fatal Nov. 25 shooting when an attempted robbery on the first day of the holiday shopping season turned violent.

**OAKLAND**— Two new measures in Oakland are being pushed for the November election that adequately reflect the makeup of the city's elected leadership, according to an *SF Chronicle* article. The two measures include one pushed by Councilman Ignacio De La Fuente that will repeal ranked-choice voting in city elections and another by Councilwoman Jane Brunner, who proposes limiting the terms of City Council members and city attorney to three four-year terms as opposed to having no term caps.

**FREMONT**— Cinemark will open a brand new, all digital 16-screen movie theater in Fremont's Pacific Commons new shopping center, The Block. "It has been almost five years since the city has enjoyed its own neighborhood theater," said Cinemark CEO Tim Warner.

**SAN JOSE**— A man on his way to his flight to San Jose got naked at the Portland International Airport Tuesday night. He refused to go through a full body scanner, and his clothes tested positive for explosive material by the TSA. The man said his dignity had already been stripped from him by the investigation, so he simply took off his clothes to show he wasn't carrying a bomb. He stayed in the nude until police arrived.

**CASTRO VALLEY**— Construction on Castro Valley's Veterans Memorial will begin in the coming weeks. The memorial will be placed in a corner of the Community Center Park at Lake Chabot Road and Quail Avenue. The memorial will feature six benches and 750 engraved bricks.

# 52nd Anniversary of Local Bookstore May be its Last

By JOSEPH GEHA  
Assistant Metro Editor

Leilani Tacata, 11, of Petaluma spent her Saturday afternoon with her dad, John, of San Leandro, browsing the Book Shop for her soon to be favorites, saying she feels a more personal connection to the store as opposed to ordering books online because of the people.

The 52-year-old Hayward landmark may be nearing the final pages in its long and storied history.

The Book Shop, located in downtown Hayward, is struggling financially and could face the reality of having to shut down as early as June.

Don't tell that to Renee Rettig, a quirky 16-year veteran employee and local institution of the store, whose passion for books, sharing her knowledge and serving customers is constantly on display.

"This is something that is absolutely going to endure," says Rettig.

"We are merely caretakers of something that is so much bigger than ourselves," she added with a quiet zeal, referring to the inspiration and guidance she received from the previous two owners and their shared fervor for books.

Recent national trends might suggest her belief is well founded.

American Booksellers Association (ABA) Technology Director Matt Supko says the common narrative about the struggling independent bookstore had its time, but may not be true any longer.

"We have data that suggests independent bookstores are doing pretty well right now," said Supko. "All through the 1990s and 2000s, ABA

members went down, but over the last two or three years, we've gained close to 100 members. We're seeing more bookstores opening and less stores closing."

Carl Baker-Madsen — an East Bay native, one of four partners in the current and third ownership group of the Book Shop — is a retiree with a passion for books, reading and a former patron of the Shop, but admits that the bookstore is the first business he has been in charge of.

"The outlook for the store is not really that rosy," says Baker-Madsen.

Facing rising rent costs and consistently hemorrhaging cash over the past few years, June may serve as the denouement to this local retail outpost's story.

While the Shop may not be constantly bustling with activity, you'd be hard pressed to find a patron of the store who doesn't speak highly of their wWwWpersonal connection to it.

Stephen Johnson, 68, of Oakland makes the drive when time permits to visit the Book Shop.

"The reason I come here is because it has a gigantic collection of used paperback mysteries that are all almost out of print that you can't get anywhere else," said Johnson with a smile.

As the sole remaining independent bookstore in a city the size of Hayward — Alameda County's third largest city with just over 144,000 residents — the Book Shop may seem an unlikely casualty.

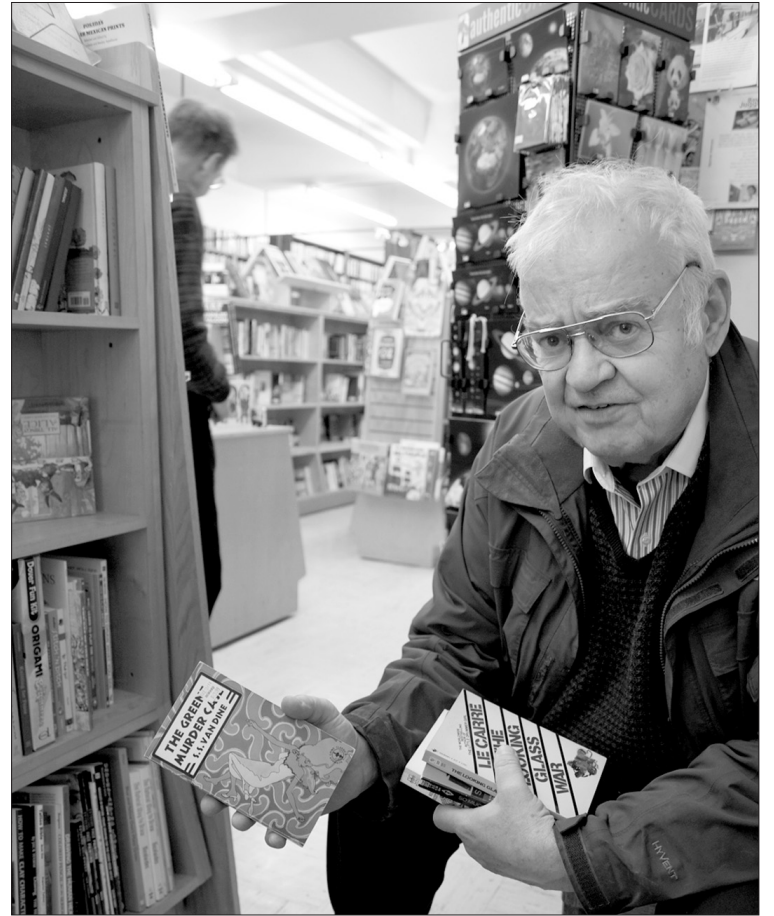
While no single root of the trouble is evident, there are myriad of underlying issues that could be playing a role in the lack of revenue for the store.

Roughly 19 percent of Alameda County residents over the age of 16 are illiterate, according to a 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

That means nearly one in every five residents is lacking basic literacy skills.

More troubling are the numbers from the 1992 NCES assessment of the same kind, which showed a 13 percent illiteracy rate, suggesting that the illiterate population in Alameda County is on an upward track.

Another factor is the prevalence of e-book sales. Amazon's Kindle e-reader and controversially low price points on e-books (most popular titles start at



Stephen Johnson of Oakland enjoys the rare selections at the Book Shop.

PHOTO / Joseph Geha, *The Pioneer*

\$9.99) have caused waves in the industry.

Although Amazon is notorious for not releasing hard numbers to the media, what they have said is telling. In mid-2011, Amazon announced its e-book sales had officially eclipsed paperback sales from the site.

During the last nine weeks of 2011, Kindle sales including the Kindle Fire tablet increased 177 percent compared to the previous year during the same time frame.

Amazon's current market cap is valued at nearly \$86 billion.

Amazon's dominance and influence in the pricing game surrounding e-books helped name it as a possible target and motivating factor pushing Apple and five publishing houses to collude to fix prices on e-books, as is currently being alleged by the U.S. Department of Justice.

While the Book Shop sells e-books through a reseller contract with Google, it hasn't taken hold.

"We're trying to get our customers to realize that we sell e-books, because nobody really knows," says Baker-Madsen. Google recently announced that it would discontinue the reseller program as of January 31, 2013, due to low numbers.

The biggest reason for the lack of customers could possibly be the people of Hayward.

Supko notes that there are other independent bookstores in the Bay Area who are making "shop local" movements work for them, and are succeeding. He suggests that the results of bookstores depend less on money, race or class.

"It's more about the connection people have to the place they live. Do they feel a strong sense of value in shopping in [their] community?" asked Supko.

Rettig echoed that sentiment and admitted that it might be an unfortunate part of the narrative.

"There are a lot of folks that were using Hayward as a bedroom community and they found it more civilized to go over the hill to Pleasanton, Dublin or Walnut Creek to do their shopping," she said reluctantly.

Stephen Gutierrez, Director of Creative Writing at CSU East Bay and a fiction author expressed grief at the thought of a landmark like the Book Shop becoming a thing of the past.

"I just hope that there will always be select readers who honor the book, because I think there is something great there."



Rare books, such as this Elizabethan drama from 1889, can be found amongst the selection at the Book Shop.

PHOTO / Joseph Geha, *The Pioneer*

## ►From Obesity, Page 1

Her seven-year-old sister, Alejandra, an animated and bubbly child who says her favorite activity is to play tetherball, wants to be a doctor when she is older because she "likes to help people be happy" and loves solving math problems at her elementary school, offered an honest and frank perspective on what it is means to be healthy.

"Healthy means you have food at home and never not eat for dinner," she said. "My mommy said when she was little like me sometimes she didn't eat dinner. But we always eat dinner. My favorite is pasta and last night we had soup. I think my mommy is happy she has dinner now. I think that is what is healthy. So, I'm healthy I think."

Increasing rates of obesity in Latino children suggest the subsequent generation will be less healthy as it ages, affecting, among other things, health care costs, according to U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey Three-year Estimate.

According to a 2002 study, obesity is more costly to America's health care than smoking and drinking.

Overweight people spend 36 percent more on health care services, and on medication 77 percent, in comparison to a 21 percent in spending for current smokers.

The Office of Minority Health (OMH) say the overall life expectancy for Latinos is declining as a result of obesity and obesity-related health risks.

In 2009, for the general American population, two-thirds of adults and nearly one in three children were overweight or obese.

"It's a heartbreaking national issue, and we need to view it as such," said Mark Salinas, Hayward City Councilmember and lecturer in Ethnic Studies and Political Science at CSUEB.

In addition to poverty and unemployment, Salinas attributes this issue to the lack of healthy eateries and venues available in areas of high Latino population density.

The over-saturation of liquor stores, fast food locations and tobacco stores, known as the "food deserts," express a geographic and socioeconomic discrimination many ethnic minorities and poor whites suffer from.

"As a city councilman, I get

alarmed when kids have more access to unhealthy foods than they do healthy choices. Look at where we live, the entire city of Hayward is one of the most unhealthiest cities in the Bay Area, with an abundance of risk factors that contribute to the unhealthy like poverty, insurance, neighborhood segregation, air quality, and especially food," said Salinas.

"Our city mirrors a pattern across the United States about Latinos and where they live, and we should all work to tackle this together," he said. "Next year it might be another demographic, doesn't matter, but if rates become this high, for whatever ethnic group, we need to fix this, and in that way become a healthier nation as a whole."

Salinas says the solution begins at the policy level. Several programs in the Hayward area, like "The Breakfast Club" and "Let's do lunch Hayward, and breakfast too" work to provide healthy meals to children from low-income families outside school hours, as well as educating them as early as possible.

Salinas, says they provide for between 2,500 and 3,500 low-income children in the city of Hayward each

year, in the efforts of preventing obesity and its health problems as early as possible.

OMH reported overweight people are more likely to suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes and have high levels of blood fats or bad cholesterol. 2006 CDC data found Latinos were 1.5 percent more likely to die from diabetes than the general population.

"Education, it ultimately translates to kids with their heightened awareness and applying that new knowledge around health, and obesity and nutrition at school and practicing it. But in the end we absolutely need to establish it from a policy level, that means we institutionalize it," said Salinas.

For the Valdivia sisters, dinnertime with their family is one of the most important parts of their day, not because of the cuisine, but for the ongoing bond they develop with one another.

"I never think of what I am eating and how it might affect my body because I think for my parents we are just glad to be together and have enough to eat," said Karla. "My parents were really poor, but now we are happy. I think that's the healthiest thing."