

FRIDAY, April 1, 2016

No. 1 in Palo Alto and the Mid-Peninsula

Phone thieves try to drive over witness

BY JEN NOWELL
Daily Post Staff Writer

Mountain View police are searching for two people who stole two cellphones from a Sprint store, and then tried to run over a witness with their car, police said yesterday.

The information and photos of the two people were originally posted on the police department's Facebook page just before noon yesterday.

[See PHONE, page 66]

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Rent control may hit ballot

BY JEN NOWELL
Daily Post Staff Writer

Mountain View and Burlingame, along with other cities in the Bay Area, could have initiatives on the ballot this November for rent control if a coalition of residents has it their way.

The Mountain View Tenant Coalition, which rallies against rent increases and unjust evictions, is expected to file

Petitions for initiatives to start in 2 cities while another city may freeze rents soon

a notice with city officials in the next few days, notifying them of their plans to file a rent control ballot initiative, city spokeswoman Shonda Ranson told the Post yesterday.

But she said she doesn't yet know what the measure will look like.

The median monthly rent for apartments in Mountain View between Feb. 24 and March 24 was \$4,200, in Palo

Alto, \$5,750; Redwood City, \$4,050; Burlingame, \$4,597; San Mateo, \$3,967, and in Richmond, \$2,250, according to the real estate information service Trulia.

At a meeting in October, the majority of City Council turned down rent control. But since that time, council has approved a rent mediation program that [See RENT, page 66]

THE UPDATE

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CRUZ LEADS TRUMP: Ahead of Tuesday's Wisconsin primary, Ted Cruz leads Donald Trump 40% to 30% among Republicans in that state, according to a Marquette Law School poll. John Kasich was third with 21%. Among Democrats, Bernie Sanders leads Hillary Clinton, 49% to 45%.

SOCCER PAY BIAS: Five stars from the World Cup-winning U.S. women's national team have accused the U.S. Soccer Federation of wage discrimination in an action filed with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Alex Morgan, Carli Lloyd, Megan Rapinoe, Becky Sauerbrunn and Hope Solo say they are paid nearly four times less than their male counterparts on the U.S. men's national team.

FEASTING AMID FAMINE: Experts say North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un's weight has ballooned to 300 pounds, yet he is warning that the nation could be headed for another famine like the one that killed 3.5 million [See THE UPDATE, page 4]



KIM



BOSS CHECKS IN

Apple CEO Tim Cook talks with his 79-year-old yoga teacher, Lily Anne Hillis, during a visit yesterday to the Apple Store at 340 University Ave. in Palo Alto. Looking on at left is store leader Baha Cinar and at right is Orenthia Ewing. The new Apple iPhone SE and 9.7 inch iPad Pro were available for sale yesterday. Photo by Eric Risberg, AP.

A case of political payback?

Official is targeted after questioning trip

BY JOSEPH MAYTON
Daily Post Staff Writer

Two weeks after San Mateo County Harbor District board member Virginia Chang Kiraly blew the whistle on fellow board member Sabrina Brennan's request to be paid \$1,057 for a trip to Morro Bay, an ally of Brennan is attempting to have Kiraly removed from the board.

Kiraly says it's political retaliation. A Brennan supporter, John Lynch, is [See PAYBACK, page 66]

KGO 810 fires newsroom in shakeup

Hires Armstrong & Getty; sends Owens to KSFO; eyes changes for KFOG

been doing the morning show on Talk 910, will move to KGO and replace the morning news from 6-10.

At noon yesterday, KGO began playing a recording of people talking about San Francisco and songs about the city. The recording will apparently be played over and over on a loop until the new format begins at 6 a.m. Tuesday.

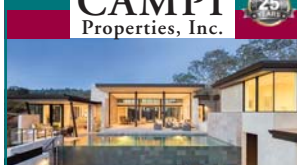
Atlanta-based Cumulus Media, the [See KGO, page 66]

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PHONE

day, but later in the afternoon it was removed.

When asked why the post was deleted, police spokeswoman Katie Nelson said, "Unfortunately, I cannot detail why the post was removed, only that, as you are aware, it was."

But she did confirm the two people responsible for the crime that occurred at about 6:50 p.m. Wednesday had not yet been caught.

The couple, identified as a 60-year-old man and 55-year-old woman, were inside the Sprint store at 1040 N. Rengstorff Ave., when the woman grabbed two cellphones from the counter, police said.

The man allegedly pushed a customer during the incident.

The couple then ran to their car, a white 2004 Volvo S60, and as the woman was backing up, she allegedly noticed someone trying to take a picture of their license plate, police said. She accelerated and tried to hit the person, but instead struck a parked car before fleeing.

Anyone with information is being asked to call police at (650) 903-6395.

RENT

allows tenants to bring landlords to the table if a rent increase surpasses 7.2% in a year.

Councilman Lenny Siegel, who has spoken in favor of rent control, told the Post yesterday that he heard previously that the tenant coalition was planning on a rent control measure that would set limits on rent increases and include just-cause evictions.

The city forced the hand of the tenant coalition, Siegel said.

"Something's got to be done, and if the city is not willing, then we have to go with something that is less flexible," he said.

The Post was unable to reach representatives of the tenant coalition yesterday.

Burlingame

Meanwhile, a group of Burlingame residents announced yesterday that they will begin circulating a petition in order to obtain signatures to put to the voters in November an initiative to end the city's restrictions on establishing rent controls.

The ballot initiative is being pushed by the Burlingame Advocates for Renter Protections.

Burlingame voters in the 1980s passed legislation that barred the city from passing rent control ordinances.

San Mateo

In San Mateo, City Council on Monday will hear an ordinance proposal that could freeze rents on many apartments in the city. It would not apply to single-family homes and condos, and state law prohibits rent control on apartments built after Feb. 1, 1995.

The ordinance would also make it more difficult for landlords to evict tenants. The legislation in San Mateo is an "urgency" ordinance, meaning it can be approved faster without multiple public hearings.

In Richmond, Councilwoman Gayle McLaughlin told the Post yesterday that a coalition of renters and homeowners in that city are gathering the needed signatures for a ballot initiative.

The city of Richmond passed a rent control and just-cause eviction ordinance last year, but the California Apartment Association gathered signatures for a referendum, forcing an appeal, McLaughlin said.

"Now we are working to take it to the voters and we will win it there," she said.

McLaughlin added that she is glad to hear other cities are taking up the issue.

"The housing crisis is atrocious," she said. "Hurting so many people in so many places."

PAYBACK

asking California Attorney General Kamala Harris to investigate whether it's a conflict of interest for Kiraly to serve on both the board of the harbor district and the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

Lynch didn't want to talk to the Post.

"I feel it's important," Lynch told a reporter, and then said "I don't have to talk to you," and hung up.

Conflict alleged

Lynch said in his letter that there's a conflict because "both districts perform water rescues, provide emergency services, and respond to mutual aid requests on the San Francisco Bay."

However, attorneys for the harbor district and fire district have said previously that Kiraly doesn't have a conflict by serving on both boards. The county department of elections has said the same thing.

"This is coming up now because Commissioner Brennan is retaliating against me for uncovering her fraudulent expenses for her trip to Morro Bay," she said.

At the harbor district's March 15 meeting, Kiraly questioned why the district was going to pay Brennan \$1,057 as reimbursement for a trip to Morro Bay to attend a Coastal Commission Meeting in February. The main topic of the meeting was whether the commission would fire Executive Director Charles Lester.

The harbor board wasn't aware of Brennan's trip in advance and had taken no position on Lester, but Brennan attended the meeting along with hundreds of environmental activists who wanted Lester retained. He was fired, however, in a 7-5 vote.

Brennan declined money

Despite Kiraly's questions, the harbor board approved the payment to Brennan. However, Brennan has declined to cash the check after the controversy erupted.

Kiraly said yesterday that Lynch's letter is part of an effort by Brennan to push her off the board in retaliation for questioning the trip reimbursement.

Lynch was a supporter of Brennan in her previous campaign for the harbor district board, and was listed on her website as a backer.

But Brennan told the Post that she didn't have any involvement in Lynch's letter.

"I admire Commissioner Kiraly's dedication to public service," Brennan said in a message to the Post. Brennan said she was under the impression that county officials "said it was fine to serve as both a harbor commissioner and a fire director."

Kiraly said the timing of Lynch's letter is "suspect" coming so soon after the trip controversy.

Kiraly said she wants to see transparency in the harbor district, especially when it comes to money.

Both Kiraly and Brennan will be on the ballot this November for the harbor district. All voters in San Mateo County vote in harbor district board races.



KIRALY



BRENNAN

KGO

owner of KGO and KSFO, wasn't talking about the changes yesterday, but several radio industry websites said KGO's new lineup will feature new local hosts and nationally syndicated programming. Long-form news programming will not be part of the mix.

The move comes at a time when the ratings for radio stations across the country are falling because listeners are switching to online services like Pandora or satellite programming.

For more than 30 years, KGO-AM was the top radio station in San Francisco in terms of ratings and revenue. When Cumulus acquired the station in 2011, it dumped several popular hosts including Gil Gross, Gene Burns, John Rothmann, Len Tillem, Bill Wattenburg and Ray Taliaferro, in favor of an all-news format with the exception of Owens' show. Ratings plummeted. The station eventually returned to the talk format except during the morning and afternoon drive times, but the audience didn't return.

Sudden firings

Yesterday, the station fired more than 20 employees without any advance notice.

Media blogger Rich Lieberman, who broke the story about the changes at KGO, said those who were shown the door include anchors Jennifer Jones-Lee, Jon Bristow, sportscaster Rich Walcoff, reporters Jason Middleton, Kristin Haynes and Kim McCallister, afternoon host Chip Franklin and Mike Amatori, the voice on many commercials on KGO.

Owens' move to "Hot Talk" KSFO might be awkward since he's politically middle-of-the road. The rest of KSFO's schedule is filled with conservative hosts such as Rush Limbaugh, Michael Savage and Sean Hannity.

Owens, in his last show on KGO yesterday, wondered how he would be treated by KSFO's conservative audience when he starts his show there next week. He'll do the afternoon drive shift, from 3 to 6 p.m. He had been at KGO for 40 years

holding down the 9-noon time slot.

"I've been saying 'KGO' all my life and on Monday I'm going to say 'KSFO.' I'm going to look at this as a new adventure," Owens said yesterday.

Armstrong & Getty, who broadcast from Sacramento, are politically more conservative than the typical KGO host, which may signal a shift in philosophy at that station.

Armstrong & Getty work for Cumulus' arch rival, iHeart Media, and are syndicated on several West Coast radio stations.

Cumulus also owns KFOG-FM (104.5, 97.7), which will also see a format change. KFOG's deejays were pulled off the air yesterday, some were fired, and the station is just playing music with no local hosts until its new format starts on April 20.

Like KGO-AM, KFOG's ratings have fallen in recent years. KFOG's current format, which is called "adult album alternative" in the radio industry, features an eclectic mix of blues, reggae, folk and rock from the 1960s to the present. The station has had a loyal group of listeners known as Fogheads. KFOG's best days, in terms of ratings, were in the 1990s and early 2000s, and the station began to drop after long-time morning man Dave Morey retired in 2008.



OWENS



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