

NEWS

Huge fire burns future homes of 196 families

Flames and smoke that could be seen across the bay destroyed an under-construction Oakland apartment building yesterday, forcing hundreds of residents from surrounding buildings and frustrating officials struggling with a housing crisis.

'It was kind of horrific'

There were no injuries in the fire at the seven-story Alta Waverly apartment project, which had been due to house 196 families and have 31,000 square feet of retail space when it was completed next spring.

The blaze, which broke out at

about 4:30 a.m. at 2302 Valdez St., scorched the outside walls of nearby buildings and sent a giant crane on the construction site wildly spinning for a time.

"There was this enormous jet of fire," said Mark Ciana. "It was kind of horrific to see a fire of that scale."

Fears crane may collapse

Fearing the crane would collapse, authorities ordered at least 700 people out of buildings nearby and made firefighters themselves retreat temporarily, acting Fire Chief Darin White said.

It's unclear when people will be

allowed to return to their homes since fire officials still don't know how unstable the crane, the site's construction scaffolding and the building itself are, White said.

Over the next several days, crews will begin trying to figure out a way to bring the crane and the building down safely.

Similar to other fires

The fire is similar to a pair of suspected arson fires at a construction site in Emeryville in early July and mid-May. The two Emeryville fires, which were at an apartment building under construction, also started in the early-morning hours.



PROUD TEACHER

Photographer Richard Dischler stands by Roger Spinti's "Girl in Chair" last night at The Pacific Art League at 668 Ramona St. in Palo Alto. The gallery opened an exhibit featuring four local photographers: Tomas Garza, Paul Italiano, Michael Palma and Spinti, who are all students of Dischler. Photo by Matt Niksa.

Many of Mexican Museum's artifacts are fake

A majority of the oldest artifacts in the permanent collection of the Mexican Museum in San Francisco are either forgeries or not up to national museum standards, a new report has determined.

Only 83 of the 2,000 artifacts in the museum's pre-Hispanic, or pre-Columbian, era collection could be authenticated, the report said. The other 1,917 are considered decorative and

will probably be donated to schools or smaller museums.

The museum board told the San Francisco Chronicle in a story Thursday that it was shocked by the results

of the \$80,000 study conducted as a Smithsonian Institution requirement.

The Mexican Museum was founded in 1975. It was accepted as a Smithsonian affiliate in 2012.

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"We use milk cartons and keep them in the refrigerator until pick-up day." — Adam and Abi

"We use one of our pull-out trash cans to collect food scraps, instead of the pail." — Caryn H.

For more information, visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/foodscraps
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