

Local: Lunch spot gets new identity, life. **B1**




Business: The growing use of AI to make music sparks debate. **C9**



Sports: Nakase slams officials after Valkyries are blown out. **C1**



Nation: Motive in Kirk killing uncertain. **A3**



 **WINNER OF THE 2017 PULITZER PRIZE FOR BREAKING NEWS REPORTING**

EAST BAY TIMES

BayArea NewsGroup \$3.00 | MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025 | EASTBAYTIMES.COM 000

SOCCER COACH SPEAKS OUT

‘I UNDERSTAND I TOOK A LIFE’



Former pro soccer player and coach Dave Gold stands in his Almaden Valley home on Sept. 8. Months earlier, Gold said he fatally shot Ronald Morriss, his longtime friend and soccer teammate, in self-defense. **ARIC CRABB — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

After being cleared of charges, Dave Gold recounts confrontation in June at his Almaden Valley home, where he shot and killed friend Ronald Morriss

By Robert Salonga
RSALONGA@BAYAREA
NEWSGROUP.COM

SAN JOSE — A renowned South Bay soccer coach, whose roots go back to playing for a forerunner of the San Jose Earthquakes, is speaking publicly for the first time about a violent clash in June inside his Almaden Valley home where he fatally shot his longtime friend, former teammate and coaching colleague. Dave Gold has been cleared of criminal liability in the death of Ronald Morriss. Now he wants to detail his experience to the wider public, particularly the local soccer community in which he has spent most of his American career, after spending months being confronted with rumors, innuendo and conjecture about what happened between him and Morriss the night of June 6. “A lot of people hate me. They think I’m an evil man. We have the same friends, players that played with us.



The victim, Ronald Morriss, is shown in an undated photo. Gold said Morriss, a guest in his house, had been drinking heavily and threatened him. **COURTESY OF DAVID GOLD**

I get it,” Gold, 69, said in an exclusive interview with The Mercury News. “I understand I took a life. You know, he’s my oldest friend. ... We coached together, played together. It hurt me that I couldn’t get the truth out.” According to Gold’s telling, Morriss was staying at

his home, as he often did when his marble and tiling business brought him to the Bay Area, since Morriss lived in the San Luis Obispo County town of Templeton. Morriss had been drinking heavily, Gold said, prompting an argument, and eventually, he asked Morriss to leave the house. Gold’s girlfriend was also home at the time. Gold said that led Morriss, 69, to threaten his life before heading upstairs to pack his bags. On his way back down, Morriss tripped on the stairs, which Gold said prompted Morriss to start aggressively moving toward him. “Then he goes, ‘No, I’m going to kill you. I’m going to kill you now,’” Gold said. While Morriss was upstairs, Gold had armed himself with a small revolver that he put in his pocket. Gold offered two reasons for this: He had undergone spine surgery, limiting his mobility; and four years ago, he was

See **GOLD** on Page A6

SCIENCE

Nuclear fusion excites 2 cities

Livermore and Alameda hope to woo Fremont startup’s plant as well as more than 200 jobs

By Kyle Martin
KYMARTIN@BAYAREANEWSGROUP.COM

The race to bring a \$1 billion nuclear fusion plant to their city has officials in Livermore eager to make a deal. Despite no firm commitment from the startup behind the project, Pacific Fusion, the Livermore City Council last week unanimously approved the company’s plan to develop a 225,500-square-foot facility on a vacant stretch of West Jack London Boulevard. But Livermore is facing off with two other cities in its bid to secure the project — Alameda and Albuquerque are also trying to lure the Fremont-based company. The “finalists” are making their pitches for why their city should be Pacific Fusion’s headquarters. Alameda is offering VIP treatment, Albuquerque says it has “built the talent,” but the mayor of Livermore says the Tri-Valley city, home to the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, shouldn’t be ruled out. “Work comes to Livermore because it can be done nowhere else on earth,” Mayor John Marchand said last week. “I think if this is going to succeed anywhere, it’s going to be in Livermore.” Pacific Fusion, a company founded in 2023 and backed by \$900 million from venture capital companies, has promised to bring more than 200 engineering, technician and scientific jobs to its new home. The company plans to develop new ways to generate renewable energy, with the goal of becoming one of the first to break ground anywhere on a nuclear fusion plant. Such a facility is already underway in rural Washington state, where Helion Energy is building the “world’s first nuclear fusion power plant” with an agreement to provide electricity to Microsoft, according to KCPQ-TV, Seattle’s Fox affiliate. According to Pacific Fusion spokesperson Alex Doniach, the company expects to make a decision sometime later this year, after factoring in “where we can build most quickly and cost effectively” and with “community support and partnerships.” Doniach, who stressed that the facility would not add power

See **LIVERMORE** on Page A6

COMMENTARY

Shanahan and Jones have last laugh



Dieter Kurtenbach
COLUMNIST

It’s crazy to think about, but there’s a parallel universe out there, maybe situated right next to ours, where Kyle Shanahan got exactly what he wanted: Mac Jones, the No. 3 overall pick in the 2021 NFL Draft; the player hand-picked by the Niners’ coach to be his team’s next franchise quarterback after Jimmy Garoppolo. Now, that’s not the world we’re living in today. Not even close. But on Sunday in New Orleans, for three hours, we might have broken the laws of space and time and gotten a little peek into that other universe.



Niners quarterback Mac Jones talks with head coach Kyle Shanahan during the second half of Sunday’s game against the Saints in New Orleans. The Niners won 26-21. **BUTCH DILL — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Because there he was, Mac Jones, leading the 49ers’ offense to a gritty 26-21 win over the Saints. Now we all know that after Sunday, the less-than-scrupulous

See **KURTENBACH** on Page A6

POLITICS

How free is speech with your employer?

Kirk’s shooting death tests laws and norms over social media use

By Cathy Bussewitz and Wyatt Grantham-Philips
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — In the days following the fatal shooting of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, numerous workers have been fired for their comments on his death, among them MSNBC political analyst Matthew Dowd. Several conservative activists have sought to identify social media users whose posts about Kirk they viewed as offensive or celebratory, targeting everyone from journalists to teachers.

Right-wing influencer Laura Loomer said she would try to ruin the professional aspirations of anyone who celebrated Kirk’s death. It’s far from the first time workers have lost their jobs over things they say publicly — including in social media posts. But the speed at which the firings have been happening raises questions about worker rights versus employer rights. In the U.S., laws can vary across states, but overall, there’s very little legal protection for employees who are punished for speech made both in and out of private workplaces. “Most people think they have a right to free speech ... but that

See **KIRK** on Page A6

SUBSCRIPTION
Call 925-276-9254 for a subscription. To place a classified ad, call 925-933-2020. Copyright © 2025, East Bay Times 24/7 coverage at eastbaytimes.com

WEATHER
H: 84-97 **L:** 57-64
Full report on **B8**



INDEX
Business B9
Classified A5, A8, B5
Comics/TV B6-7
Local B1
Lottery A2
Obituaries B4

Volume 114, issue 107
Puzzles B5, C7-8
Sports C1
Weather B8

