

Alameda

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Locally Owned, Community Oriented

FBI Sting Nabs City Inspector for Bribery

By Dan Abbott

A city building inspector allegedly attempted to trade favorable building inspections for payoffs from Alameda businesses that ranged from free Chinese food and a blender to cash payoffs, according to Alameda County court documents.

Hans Williams, 46, a combination inspector for the Alameda Planning and Building Department, was arraigned June 23 on two counts of soliciting bribes, after more than three months of investigation by FBI agents. Agents allegedly caught Williams discussing quid pro quo arrangements on video and audio surveillance devices. The FBI has turned the case over to the Alameda County district attorney's office.

Williams, a Dublin resident, was released on \$30,000 bail, and is expected to enter a plea when he returns to court July 7. If convicted, Williams could face up to five years in state prison.

Alameda County deputy district

attorney Trevor White said the FBI often conducts investigations of state and local crimes if public officials are suspected of wrongdoing. White declined to discuss details of the case, but acknowledged that allegations of corruption may expand to include others.

"The true scope of this case may be larger," White said, "or it may just be the two charges (against Williams)."

Williams is accused of offering Richard Chiu, a construction contractor whose extended Chinese-American family owns the Chef's Wok and House of Bagels as well as several undeveloped properties on Bay Farm Island, favorable safety inspections on remodeling work as early as December 2005. Chiu told the FBI he often intercedes on behalf of his family due to his better grasp of English.

According to Chiu, Williams arrived at the Chef's Wok for an inspection of remodeling work on

the restaurant's kitchen around Dec. 8, 2005. He allegedly asked if Chiu's family had any other projects in Alameda, and told Chiu he could overlook problems with the remodeling work, saying "You help me and I'll help you."

The help Williams was referring to included free food at Chef's Wok and House of Bagels, Chiu told the FBI, which Chiu said he arranged with family members.

In subsequent meetings, Williams allegedly asked Chiu to buy him a blender from Costco, and repeatedly discussed using Chiu's contractor discount to set up an account for him at Economy Lumber in Oakland, so that Williams could purchase materials for remodeling work at his Dublin residence.

Meanwhile, city records show that Williams repeatedly signed off on work in progress at Chef's Wok without comment, giving the

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Alamedan Crowned Nat'l Air Guitar Champ

Air rocker prepares for Finland

By Dan Abbott

Craig "Hot Lixx Hulahan" Billmeier is not the sort of person you would expect to wave a flag. But the 31-year-old



Several storefront windows where shot with BBs.

BB Gun Encin

By Elizabeth Shemar

A vandal fired a BB gun at Alameda storefronts on the block of Encinal Avenue last night, causing damage to several of them, Alameda police said.

Mark Hall was at his of MonArt School of the Arts at Encinal Ave. when he heard breaking around 10:55 p.m., and David Boersma. Police said then stepped outside and

'Tis the Season for Scholarships



Courtesy: Photo

The Alameda Chinese Club awarded scholarships to graduating seniors Delanie Wong of Alameda High School (left) and Paulani Mui of St. Joseph Notre Dame High School, at the club's annual scholarship banquet.

Board: Faces challenge of declining enrollment

College Board

The University of California system remains a prime destination for college-bound grads at Alameda and five other high schools, according to a report delivered by

the state system will also see more than a few Alameda faces, with about 17 percent of Alameda grads and more than 9 percent of Encinal grads opting to attend a state school.

Sting: Targets inspector

Continued from page 1

restaurant a temporary permit on Jan. 26, 2006. Ghuu acknowledged to the FBI that there were several flaws in the remodeling work that Williams overlooked.

Ghuu began to secretly record his conversations with Williams in mid-January, court documents show. On March 9, Williams told Ghuu he wanted more food from Chef's Wok, allegedly saying "The family wants more Chinese food, what can I do?" Ghuu alleges that Williams again took food without paying, and the next day Ghuu filed a complaint with the FBI. Federal agents subsequently provided Ghuu with audio and video devices to collect evidence against Williams, court documents reveal.

In subsequent meetings, Williams allegedly became more explicit in his requests for payoffs, apparently offering favorable inspections of Bay Farm

Island housing developments owned by Ghuu's family. During one recorded conversation, court documents show, Williams instructed that other public employees, including "my buddy from Alameda Power," would be willing to give blanket approval to electrical work at his request, immediately before asking Ghuu about opening an account at Economy Lumber.

On June 2, Ghuu told the FBI that Williams called him from one of his family's housing developments on Bay Farm Island, and allegedly asked Ghuu to give him cash instead of setting up the account at Economy Lumber, apparently nervous about receiving construction supplies at his home. Williams apparently met Ghuu's brother, construction contractor William Zhao, at the development, and borrowed Zhao's phone to call Ghuu. Ghuu told authorities he was not able to record the call as a result.

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crop, and we need to thank all the farmers involved," Forbes said of this year's graduating classes.

In Other News

The nonprofit Alameda Education Roundtable delivered its annual report to the board, detailing a total of \$89,364 in cash dona-

year in the district, from 15 to 22. Total suspensions dropped during the same period, from 2064 to 2047, possibly due to decreased enrollment.

Average daily attendance dropped four-tenths of a percent throughout the district — a seemingly small amount, but as board-

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