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Apples move on a conveyor belt to be inspected for quality before being processed at the Manzana Products Co. in Sebastopol. The processing plant is headed to Yakima County in Washington state. Photos by Jessica Christian/S.F. Chronicle

# When apples fall too far from factory

Manzana to relocate to Washington as Bay Area orchards recede

**By Julie Johnson**

Inside one of the nation's largest organic apple canneries, glass jars rumble down conveyor belts to robot arms delivering squirts of apple juice, apple sauce and apple cider vinegar. A hulking stainless steel machine fills plastic fruit pouches before they tumble down the line to be pasteurized and cooled.

Manzana Products Co. started nearly a century ago as a fruit-drying hub in Sebastopol's Green Valley, at a time when fruit trees far outnumbered grapevines. It grew into a major apple processing plant. But Sonoma County's apple harvest has been declining for decades, and today most of Manzana's apples are trucked in from

*Manzana continues on A9*



Glass bottles are filled with apple cider vinegar at Manzana, which means apple in Spanish. Sonoma County's apple harvest has been declining for decades.

## DA opens probe into nonprofit's finances

San Francisco Parks Alliance also under investigation by city attorney

**By Michael Barba**

City prosecutors have launched a criminal investigation into the nonprofit San Francisco Parks Alliance, a prominent fundraiser for the city's open spaces that admitted last week to misspending at least \$3.8 million, the Chronicle has learned.

An investigator with the San Francisco District Attorney's Office contacted at least two people with ties to the Parks Alliance after the Chronicle began revealing the breadth of the organization's financial crisis on April 28. The investigator is assigned to the office's special prosecutions unit, which handles public integrity, corruption and other types of cases. The unit is part of the white-collar crime division.

One of those contacted by the office was Nicola Miner, a philanthropist whose family's charity, the Baker Street Foundation, gave \$3 million to the Parks Alliance to help develop Crane Cove Park in the Dogpatch neighborhood. The Parks Alliance admitted in an email to her foundation last week that it had improperly spent \$3.8 million in restricted funds on its operating expenses, including about \$1.9 million donated by Baker Street

*Nonprofit continues on A10*

## State Farm eyes higher rate after emergency hike

**By Megan Fan Munce**

A week after securing approval to raise home insurance rates by an average of 17%, State Farm General revealed plans to ask regulators for an additional 11% increase, as well as considerably higher rates for condo owners and renters.

The 17% increase, set to go into effect in June, was granted last week by Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara following a monthslong proceeding that was classified as an "emergency" following the Los Angeles fires.

But State Farm had originally requested a 30% rate hike in June 2024 — and now, with the 17% emergency rate hike approved, it wants to return to its original number. The request, if granted, would go into effect in

*State Farm continues on A8*

## Private equity increases holdings in Napa Valley's wine industry

**By Esther Mobley**

A form of investment once rare among California wineries is quietly reshaping the industry.

Private equity firms — notorious for buying up private companies, often with the goal of selling them quickly — have lately accelerated their investments in California wineries, targeting famous Napa Valley estates. The Duckhorn Portfolio and Far Niente Wine Estates have had private equity ownership for several years. Newly backed wineries include Spring Mountain Vineyard and Silver Oak Cellars.

"There's private equity in

*Wine continues on A9*



Spring Mountain Vineyard, owned by MGG Investment Group, is one of several Napa estates with private equity backing. Santiago Mejia/S.F. Chronicle

## Watchdog says patients were abused at hospital

**By Cynthia Dizikes and Joaquin Palomino**

The state's watchdog agency for people with disabilities has found that a for-profit psychiatric hospital in Southern California abused patients for years by excessively and improperly strapping them down and drugging them in violation of federal and state regulations.

The report released Monday by Disability Rights California examined patient care at College Hospital in Cerritos (Los Angeles County), one of the facilities in

*Hospital continues on A10*