Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021



Volume 157



EVAN REINHARDT | SPARTAN DAILY PHOTO & QUOTE OF MUWEKMA OHLONE TRIBE CHAIRWOMAN CHARL FNF NIJMEH

Local Indigenous tribe condemns SJSU anthropology professor

By Amani Hamed

Controversy began after Elizabeth Weiss, San Jose State anthropology professor and researcher, posed with an Indigenous person's skull in the SJSU's anthropology laboratory archives.

possessio

Weiss posted a photo of herself holding the skull, ungloved and smiling, on Twitter with the caption "So happy to be back with old friends @SJSU" on Sept. 18.

The tweet still appears on Weiss's Twitter account.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, an Indigenous group that has inhabited San Jose since before Spanish colonization in 1769, responded with a letter written by tribe chairwoman Charlene Nijmeh to SJSU administrators and local legislators.

"I felt compelled to respond to the recent Twitter post . . . by SJSU Anthropology Professor Elizabeth Weiss in which she stands smiling while holding the skull of one

of my ancestors in her hands," Nijmeh said in the letter. She said the photo "dredges up" painful history, the tribe's worst memories.

"A time when we were labeled soulless savages, who had no right to the land we inhabited, the children we bore, and the freedoms inherent to all living beings," Nijmeh said, regarding Weiss holding the skull.

She said it reminds her of the way Native American people and their bodies were treated as property.

"When you see that, it goes back to the colonizer days," Nijmeh said in a phone call. "We were just the possession."

Excavation site

The remains were excavated from the Ryan Mound, also known as site CA ALA 329 in Alameda County, according to the 1993 Archives of California Prehistory.

Alameda County cities include Newark, Fremont,

Union City, San Leandro, Dublin and Oakland, according to the county's website.

Anthropologist Alan Leventhal, who wrote his 1993 master's thesis on the Ryan Mound, said it's a "shellmound," a site where Indigenous inhabitants of the Alameda County region interred people of high status with artifacts including jewelry made from shells, denoting their status.

Radiocarbon dating showed the Ryan Mound use spanned from about 400 B.C. to just prior to Spanish colonizers' historic contact in 1769, according to Leventhal's thesis.

The first 12 burials were excavated from the mound in 1935 after part of the mound was destroyed during the unsuccessful creation of a reservoir in 1925.

Following the first systematic excavation by Stanford anthropologists, SJSU excavated the rest of the site in

1962, Leventhal stated in his thesis.

He said between 1962-68, SJSU excavated the Ryan Mound nearly "to the sterile sub-soil."

In 1982, a collection of about 283 identified individuals' remains were moved from Stanford to the SJSU department of anthropology's laboratory facility, under osteologist Robert Jurmain's direction.

Anthropological collection

According to Jurmain's subsequent analysis of the remains, there could be about 298-320 individuals represented in the SJSU collection, though there were 284 established grave lots discovered at the Ryan Mound. An additional 139 potential individuals from

CONTROVERSY | Page 2





Left:





Gloria Arellanos-Gonzalez. former Muwekma Ohlone Tribal councilmember. holds up a traditional abalone and beadwork necklace on Oct. 11. Right: Arellanos-Gonzalez (left), tribe chairwoman Charlene Nijmeh (middle) and tribal councilmember Monica Arellanos gather at the Coyote Hills **Regional Park** Visitor's Center. **Below: Arellanos shows sacred** Muwekma Ohlone objects: an abalone shell, dried white sage and turkey feathers.

CONTROVERSY

Continued from page 1

the 1950s excavations were held at Stanford's archives and were reinterred in 1991 at the request of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.

Prior to posting the Sept. 18 photo, Weiss published a Mercury News op-ed science" on Aug. 31.

In the article, Weiss said Assembly Bill 275, an amendment to the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (or CalNAGPRA) existing Native American tribe's association with excavated remains.

CalNAGPRA is California's version of the federal NAGPRA law. First passed by congress in 1990, the law is meant to facilitate the return of archaeological findings to living tribes that can prove their connection to remains and artifacts, according to the National Parks Service NAGPRA's website.

"Oral traditions, and tribal traditional knowledge in general, are awash with tales of creation, mythical creatures and supernatural events," Weiss said remains is unconstitutional. in her op-ed. "CalNAGPRA chooses religion over science."

CalNAGPRA requires a "preponderance of the evidence" proving a tribe is connected to the remains and artifacts it seeks to claim, according to the

The law lists 10 criteria through which "state cultural affiliation" or proof of a living tribe's connection to Indigenous remains.

The criteria includes geography, kinship, biology, archaeology, linguistics, folklore, oral tradition, historical evidence, tribal traditional knowledge and other information or expert opinion.

Weiss said she disputes the law's inclusion of oral tradition, folklore and tribal traditional knowledge because it allows for "creation myths" to be used

Some of the later remains, Weiss said, buried around the early 1700s, are likely related to the Muwekma Ohlone people in ways that can be proven by science but the remains shouldn't be repatriated.

"I'm against repatriation of any remains," Weiss said in a Zoom call "Because I think the collections are important."

Charlene Nijmeh said while she and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe aren't against anthropology as a science, the issue isn't related to religion and science being antithetical.

Nijmeh said the problem is possession and lack of consent in a post-colonial

"Actually, we have a long history of working with anthropologists and archaeologists," she said.

In the early 1900s, anthropologist Alfred Kroeber popularized the hypothesis that San Francisco Bay Area Indigenous inhabitants were extinct, which he later refuted himself, according to the tribe's website.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe formed working relationships with several Bay Area anthropologists and archaeologists to exhume and study sets of remains that were accidentally discovered.

One site was a construction area beneath a Holiday Inn in San Jose. Another was a single skeleton found beneath the backyard of a Palo Alto woman who was having a sewer line repaired, according to the archaeological findings posted on the tribe's website.

Those findings helped prove the current Muwekma Ohlone people are Indigenous to the Bay Area and not Mexican and Spanish descendants of those who built the state mission system.

"This is very sacred to us, to be responsible for our dead," Nijmeh said. Kisha Supernant is an archaeologist, the Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology director and University of Alberta, Canada archaeology associate

professor, according to an interview with CFWE Radio in Northern Alberta. Supernant is also Métis, an Indigenous group recognized after first contact with European colonizers who have mixed Indigenous and

Her father was taken into foster care as an infant during what is now known as the "Sixties Scoop," a period when policies were enacted that took

thousands of First Nations children and placed them with white families, according to a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation webpage on the period.

"This is about who gets to make decisions about the past," she said. "The decision needs to sit with Indigenous peoples because it's our relatives.

This is not a religious perspective; they belong most closely to us. What right do you have to keep them?"

Supernant said she uses her expertise with ground-penetrating radar to map former Métis village sites and assist in the search for the graves of children buried at former residential schools.

Residential schools were government-funded, church-run schools where First Nations children were removed from their families and sent to be entitled "California law on Native Americans' remains favors religion over forcibly assimilated into white culture and society, according to a June 25 Washington Post article.

Instituted from 1883-1997, the residential school system displaced more than 150,000 First Nations children from their homes, many of whom died violates the first amendment by allowing religious testimony as evidence of an of severe neglect and were buried on the schools' grounds, according to an Aug. 21 Scientific American article.

"This whole science/anti-science thing, it's a red herring," Supernant said in a Zoom call. "This is not about science. This is about power."

Science and religion

In her book "Repatriation and Erasing the Past," Weiss states religious testimony used to determine connections between living tribes and Indigenous



I would say that the people who are living, who feel that it has an impact on them, this is a religious impact. I don't think we should expect non-religious people to follow



Elizabeth Weiss SJSU anthropology

religious thinking. I think that humans need to start letting go of these things.

She said any religious arguments for reinterring Indigenous remains is a violation of the First Amendment and "an intrusion of religion into science." "It does not extend to requiring other people to follow your religion," Weiss said when asked if archiving Indigenous bones limited the Muwekma Ohlone's at all.

Nijmeh said the unified Muwekma Ohlone religion has been lost to colonization and tribe members have varying spiritual and religious practices. "But we've always known that our dead need to be respected," she said.

For the Muwekma Ohlone, reburying their ancestors' remains is less about religion and more about their connection to the land and honoring the wishes

"Well, I just really don't think it matters," Weiss said. "I personally think that once you're dead, you're dead. I don't believe in spirituality. I have none of those beliefs, it doesn't matter."

Nijmeh said she also wants the remains repatriated to end a legacy of "inherited trauma" that began with colonization and continues by keeping the

"This goes back to first contact, when we were beaten, raped, killed and we look at today's society and why some of our members are alcoholics and drug addicts and we do things we don't even understand," Nijmeh said. "Well, this has to do with that inherited trauma that was put on us from first contact and we're suffering today. The colonizers have to acknowledge it as well."

She said her grandmother, who was the tribe chairwoman during the '60s, was upset by the Indigenous remains' excavation and fought to leave burials undisturbed, repatriated and reburied. "For us, it's very sacred. My grandmother used to always say under her

NEWS

breath, when she was roaming around the house cleaning- at this time she had Alzheimer's and had deteriorated from that disease- she would always say that 'our people need to stay in the ground,' "Nijmeh said.

Weiss said the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's feelings of being harmed by the excavation of remains stems from religious thinking.

"I would say that the people who are living, who feel that it has an impact on them, this is a religious impact," Weiss said. "I don't think we should expect non-religious people to follow religious thinking. I think that humans need to start letting go of these things."

In an Oct. 9 Mercury News op-ed, Nijmeh said the issue isn't science contending with religion but Weiss disregarding the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's humanity and its struggle to protect sacred sites including burial grounds.

"The issue is not 'religion vs science' as she claims but rather 'respect vs disrespect' and 'decency vs indecency," Nijmeh said. "The disregard for the rights and beliefs of others is how people justify genocide In her book, published in 2020, Weiss advocated for "Science Over

Sensitivity," a subheading of her book's conclusion.

"Rather than be concerned about sensitivity, respect and sympathy, we should remember our ethical obligation to help explain the world around us and therefore protect the scientific truth from the demon-haunted world, as [paleoanthropologist] Geoffrey Clark would say," Weiss says in the book.

Criticism

Weiss said her book was denounced by more than 900 anthropologists during a talk she gave to the "Renegade Institute for Liberty" at Bakersfield College on Zoom entitled "I Will Not Be Silenced: Free Speech In Academia,"

"While anthropologists could easily ignore the antiquated thesis put forth in this book, we are deeply concerned with the explicitly racist ideology espoused by the authors and the complete lack of engagement with Indigenous communities," experts wrote in a Dec. 19, 2020 open letter to the University of Florida Press.

During her Bakersfield College talk, Weiss said the letter was part of a larger "cancel culture campaign," mostly taking place in Twitter comments responding to her photo of her and the Indigenous person's skull from the being courteous," the student said. "So if you're going to interact with something archives and her Mercury News op-ed article.

Many comments on Twitter called Weiss a grave-robber and a white handle them carefully with the proper [personal protective equipment]."

Weiss said several of the bones she and other anthropologists excavate protocol for remains handling was outlined in an Oct. 6 campuswide email from and use for research originate in Europe and are part of cemeteries that have SJSU President Mary Papazian. been disturbed by construction or flooding.

She said anthropologists don't "grave-rob."

to me. We just don't do that," Weiss said. She said the Ryan Mound is a Muwekma Ohlone burial mound

"from several villages, probably, that overlapped use over a long period tribes, to prescribe a stricter set of protocols to gain access to the remains and

Charlene Nijmeh said she feels the remains should never be disturbed

"It was not our fault that they built an "Urban City" on top of my ancestors," Nijmeh said in her Sept. 29 letter to local legislators and SJSU administration. "We were here first. Our ancestors inhabited the SF Bay Area Region over the photograph she took in the archives. 10,000 years ago and we, the Muwekma Ohlone people, still reside in our

Weiss has been called unethical for handling the bones without gloves. said Weiss handled the bones without gloves during class and passed several dignity and respect." bones in the collection to students who were also ungloved.

The student said the exchange made him uncomfortable. "She had [the bones] out and I knew they would be for modeling certain educational concepts but I would think that she would want to show us proper bone handling etiquette with gloves, not just pass them around," said the student, a forensic sciences major, in a Zoom call.

respectful and wearing gloves when handling human remains. "There is really this emphasis [in other classes] on being respectful and

In addition to being called racist by some for her stance on repatriation, many people," Gonzalez said. "The ideas, words, and actions of a single faculty A student of Weiss, who wished to remain anonymous for privacy concerns, and the Department feels strongly that all human remains should be treated with

their handling while in "SJSU's care."

Repatriation

Weiss said repatriation of the remains would be detrimental to science, which benefits all of humanity.

The student said their other classes placed a greater emphasis on being

"There were probably some who didn't want to be didn't want to be buried



and some who would have loved to know that they're being useful years later and as sensitive as bones or human remains, then you must be respectful, you must some who didn't care," Weiss said.

Faculty and student access to the archives was restricted and an interim will be left untold.

"For decades, SJSU has curated collections of human remains, artifacts, and funerary objects with technical support from faculty affiliated with the "The thought of going into a cemetery to literally grave-rob is just comical department of anthropology and in consultation with native american tribes and indigenous peoples," Papazian said . "We have been asked, during initial consultations with several local Native American and Indigenous California

> artifacts housed on our campus." The interim protocol didn't mention Weiss or the photograph she took with one of the skulls but prohibited all photographic devices in curation spaces.

> When asked for a comment, Anthropology Department Chair Roberto Gonzalez responded with an email statement, mentioning Weiss and

> "Recently, an SJSU faculty member from our department posted a troubling social media post with human remains which was shocking and hurtful to member do not reflect the values of the Anthropology Department as a whole,

He said stricter access protocols to these remains are now in place to minimize

She said she believes it's impossible to know if those buried in the Ryan Mound

In her book "Repatriation and Erasing the Past," Weiss said if the collection at the SJSU archives is repatriated, the stories of the people represented by the bones

Charlene Nijmeh said the narrative that examines Native Americans as relics of the past ignores the struggles they face in the present day. "We're not in the past. We are here today and we can share our own stories,"

The present

On Nov. 6, the Muwekma Ohlone tribe held a flag raising ceremony at

Milpitas Vice Mayor Carmen Montano said the flag raising ceremony taking place at city hall on Calaveras Boulevard was especially significant because it was named after the skulls and bones from Muwekma Ohlone burials, found

Several younger Muwekma Ohlone Tribe members read the Muwekma Ohlone land acknowledgement and several tribe members joined Miwok tribe members in a ceremonial dance.

The occasion marked the first time Muwekma Ohlone Tribe members danced ceremonially in more than 100 years.

"Today, we attempt to repair the sustained ecological, environmental and cultural devastation to our tribe wrought by over 251 years of colonial processes of disenfranchisement through the politics of erasure," one young tribe member said, reading from the land acknowledgement.

"We respectfully request," another member read, "that everyone who lives, works or visits the City of Milpitas and surrounding towns to be respectful of our aboriginal lands and natural habitats and consistent with our principles of community, diversity and inclusion, strive to be good citizens on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, on whose aboriginal lands you are our guests."

> **Follow Amani on Twitter** @Amani_Marie_

Club Rugby season off to a trying start

By Estevan Lopez STAFF WRITER

The San Jose State men's rugby club team is looking for a fresh start to its season this fall.

The Spartans tied 2-2 their first match since Spring 2020 in the West Coast Sevens tournament on Oct. 10 against California Polytechnic State University.

Following the tournament, the club in half. team's first match of the new season was on Oct. 23 where they suffered a 48-21 loss against the California State University Maritime Keelhaulers on home turf.

back during a friendly rivalry scrimmage against University of California, Santa Cruz on Nov. 6.

A-side and B-side matches took place where they competed for the MacBeth-Porter Cup.

The purpose for an A-side and B-side in rugby is to establish a way for every player to have a chance at game action or in some cases if the teams roster needs to be split

The teams split the match as the Banana Slugs took the victory on A-side at 31-5 while the Spartans' B-side dominated 49-0.

The SJSU club team looks to be The Spartans immediately bounced avidly competing this season as it takes momentum into its next game on Tuesday, in which the location hasn't been announced.



PHOTOS BY TRAVIS WYNN | SPARTAN DAILY

The men's rugby club team scrums the ball in a game against UC Santa Cruz.





Left: A Banana Slugs defender attempts to tackle Spartans rugby club team member during a game at South Campus Recreational Field Nov. 6.

Right: Teams lift jumpers in a move called "line-out" in which a play restarts after the ball has gone out of bounds.

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ACROSS

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- 14. Whip 15. Bonds
- 16. Heredity unit 17. Something that cannot be
- 19. Killer whale
- 20. Cry of disgust 21. Sheriff's group 22. Moon of Saturn
- 23. Ostentation 25. Furze
- 27. Sphere
- 28. The fringe of a shadow 31. "Holy cow!"
- 34. Move furtively
- 35. Uncooked 36. Press
- 37. A wheeled platform
- 38. Found on most heads 39. "The Matrix" hero 40. Indistinctly
- 41. Itty-bitty
- 42. Conspires 44. Arrive (abbrev.)
- 45. Goat antelope 46. One sank the Titanic 50. Make fun of

- 52. Stags 54. Born as
- 55. Circle fragments 56. Piety
- 58. Body of water 59. Turf

30. Askew

41. Seize

43. Renter

44. Defacto

46. Sarcasm

47. Colonic

50. Story

53. Affirm

56. Blot

31. Brass component

32. Chocolate cookie

34. An indefinite location 37. Prank

33. Bags of wool

38. Parsley or sage

40. Harsh or arduous

48. Varnish ingredient

51. Historical periods

57. At this timeds

49. Old-fashioned adventure

- 60. Leave out
- 61. Existence 62. Aquamarine
- 63. Diminish

DOWN

- 1. Precipice 2. Female demon
- 3. Type of poplar tree 4. Which person?

- 5. Drink 6. Lift
- 7. Bones on your sides 8. Supposedly 9. South southeast
- 10. Self-interest 11. Bones of the spine
- 12. Ancient Peruvian 13. Low-fat
- 18. Surplus 22. Not false
- 24. Thrust with a knife 26. Unique 28. Tablets 29. Shower

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3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

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"Why couldn't the bicycle stand up by itself?"

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SOLUTIONS Nov. 17

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Queen leaves lasting music legacy

By Christopher Nguyen STAFF WRITER

It's been almost 30 years since British singer-songwriter Freddie Mercury, front man of legendary British rock band Queen, passed away on 10 favorite Queen songs. Nov. 24, 1991 in London. never be forgotten.

Queen first formed in 1971 and consists of singer Freddie Mercury, bass player John Deacon, drummer Roger Taylor and guitarist Brian May.

In 1973, they released their first debut album, "Queen."

success in their early music, their smash hit "Bohemian Rhapsody," a beautiful ballad blended with a mixture of rock and opera, was released Oct. 31, 1975 and secured their place in music history.

In the '70s, the average length of the song was around three minutes but Queen decided to break norms and can be heard when Iron Man make Bohemian Rhapsody a faces War Machine during solid six minutes, a length that Tony Stark's birthday in was deemed too long to ever see success, according to the Theme" can be heard in the band's webpage.

has surpassed 1 billion views on Queen's Official YouTube channel.

The first time I listened to Bohemian Rhapsody, I was hooked and played it on repeat. It's number five in my top

While Bohemian Rhapsody However, Queen has paved a is undoubtedly their most majestic musical path that will standout song, many other Queen tracks are widely recognized.

> Thunderous cheers can still be heard from fans whenever "We Will Rock You" is played in sports stadiums.

Queen can also still be heard in movies including "Wayne's While Queen didn't lack World," which was released on Feb. 14, 1992 and starred Mike Myers as Wayne Campbell and Dana Carvey as Garth Algar. When Campbell was cruising with Algar and his group, he inserted a tape containing Bohemian Rhapsody, which started in the middle of the song, and sang along.

> "Another One Bites the Dust," "Iron Man 2" and "Flash's 2012 movie "Ted."



AUDREY TSENG | SPARTAN DAILY

While Queen didn't lack success in their early music, their smash hit "Bohemian Rhapsody," a beautiful ballad blended with a mixture of rock and opera, was released Oct. 31, 1975 and secured their place in music history.

Even with it's unusual length, Bohemian Rhapsody saw mountains of success and stayed at No. 1 on the UK billboards for over nine weeks, according about Queen's journey to fame. to the same webpage.

40 years later, the single is still popular internationally and \$900 million from its estimated to be one of the greatest live article.

Queen has been successful that on Oct. 23, 2018 Hollywood released the movie "Bohemian Rhapsody," a biopic The movie did so well in the box office that it made over \$52 million budget, according to IMDB's webpage of the

The movie went on to win multiple awards, including four Oscars, according to a Feb. 25, 2019 Business Insider article.

Despite the film's success, it does contain historical inaccuracies including when Mercury revealed his AIDS diagnosis to his band members before they went to play for an audience at Live Aid. In reality, Mercury didn't know he had AIDS until after the concert.

The movie ended with Queen performing at Live Aid, touted performances of all time.

The release of the film helped revive people's interest in the band, according to the same Business Insider article.

Live Aid was a music-based fundraising initiative that held concerts in London and Philadelphia in 1985 to raise money for famine relief in Africa, according to a Nov. 24, 2009 History article.

Before the band played in the concert, they faced massive competition with performing acts including Elton John, David Bowie and The Who, according to a Feb 5. 2013 Rolling Stone

Queen stole the concert with a 20-minute lineup consisting of samples of their most popular songs, according to the same Rolling Stone article.

Many artists took notice of the path Queen laid out in music, allowing their legacy to continue long after their discontinuation.

Mercury's untimely passing was a great tragedy but, as the final song in Queen's "Innuendo" album "The Show Must Go On."

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an email to spartandaily@gmail.com

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EDITORIAL POLICY Columns are the opinion of individual writers and not that of the Spartan Daily Editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Editorial Board, which is made up of student



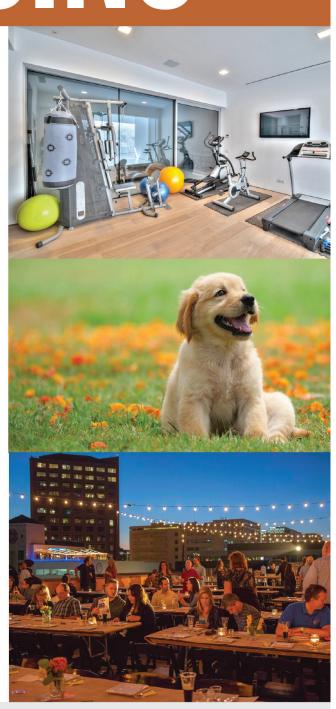


Sparta505 STUDENT HOUSING

NOW LEASING

FOR FALL 2022

- -STUDY LOUNGE ON EVERY FLOOR (WITH PRINTER/COPIER)
- -PETS WELCOME!
- -GYM AND GAME ROOM
- -2 CLUBHOUSES
- -COURTYARD WITH BBQ & PATIO FURNITURE
- -2 ROOFTOP TERRACES
- -2 MUSIC PRACTICE ROOMS
- -CONFERENCE ROOMS
- -PRIVATE FUNCTION RESERVATION ON MOST ROOMS
- -1 SECURED BIKE SPACE PER TENANT
- -PARKING GARAGE (60 SPACES) WITH 8 EV CHARGERS
- -CLEANING SERVICE AT EXTRA COST
- -PANORAMIC VIEWS



SHOWROOM

GRAND OPENING

MONTH OF THE STATE OF THE STA

ONLY 2 BLOCKS FROM



SUNDAY NOVEMBER 21ST

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

WEBSITE:



WEBSITE: 408.564.0718

PHONE: WWW.SPARTA505.COM

E-MAIL: INFO@SPARTA505.COM