

Gandalf II the Great

The atypical police K9 is the
face of a new animal safety club



Gandalf II, a Chihuahua, is the face of the new safety club put on by the Pleasanton Police Department and local students. He has helped all kinds of people in his four years on the force.

by Emily Atwood

The little black, furry Chihuahua may not seem like a police dog, but after four years on the force, he's proven to be a valuable asset for his role in public service.

Gandalf II joined the Pleasanton Police Department to serve as a key component to the department's public relations. Animal Services Officer Roy Ficken said the story of Gandalf II's involvement plays out much like the classic children's book "Officer Buckle and Gloria." In fact, this similarity was pointed out by a Girl Scout leader after Ficken and Gandalf II made a presentation to the troop.

In the book, Officer Buckle can't get children to pay attention when he speaks to them. Then he brings along a poodle named Gloria, and the kids become mesmerized and are hanging on every word.

It was about five years ago that Ficken attended a dinner for the Tri-Valley Animal Rescue. He had gone seven years without a dog and was looking for another canine companion. When he was showed a group of puppies, he had an immediate connection to the runt.

Gandalf II's health wasn't great and it looked like putting him down was the answer. It was then discovered that he had Addison's Disease, an adrenal insufficiency that affects

dogs and humans. Now, a little medication twice a day and he's a happy, healthy dog.

This rough start has actually helped Gandalf II reach the community. When a child has trouble taking medication, Ficken said Gandalf II's story encourages them. His small, cute face also lends a paw in all kinds of situations. Recently, Ficken said an elderly woman was lost while trying to drive to meet her family in Pleasant Hill, only to end up frazzled in Pleasanton.

"Gandalf got onto the seat of her car and helped calm the woman," he said. "By the time her family arrived, we were talking about Roosevelt."

Most of his public appearances are during DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) presentations at schools and city events.

Yet, his latest assignment is being the face of the Gandalf II Safety Club. This first project is led by Amy Black, a student at Amador Valley High School. She is the editor of the club's quarterly newsletter, which includes safety tips, games and of course, a message from Gandalf II.

Black and assistant editor Lincoln Gill collaborated with Ficken as members of the Explorer Program. The programs is for teens ages 14 to 18 to learn more about aspects of law enforcement, as the participants are interested in becoming police officers.

"We want to reinforce the concepts that

[elementary-age children] learn in their schools, like DARE and stranger danger," Black said. "We also teach them to be safe around pets and wild animals."

The newsletter production crew is comprised of Black, editor; Gill, assistant editor; James Wu and Nimish Patil, graphics designers; Valerie Yim, photographer; Sarah Peterson and Linda Xie, journalists; Aseem Prasad, fun corner coordinator; and Michelle Naegle, comic artist. They meet about once a month to discuss what will be in the next issue and how it will be put together. Teachers volunteer to help edit the newsletter before it's sent in to the police department for final approval.

As the group prepares to publish the second issue of the Gandalf II Safety Club newsletter in January, Black said she hopes to reach the children through its content.

"We're hoping to have more of the same, with game and puzzles," she said. "We wanted to try having a career spotlight for kids looking to work with animals when they're older. We'll also have another contest."

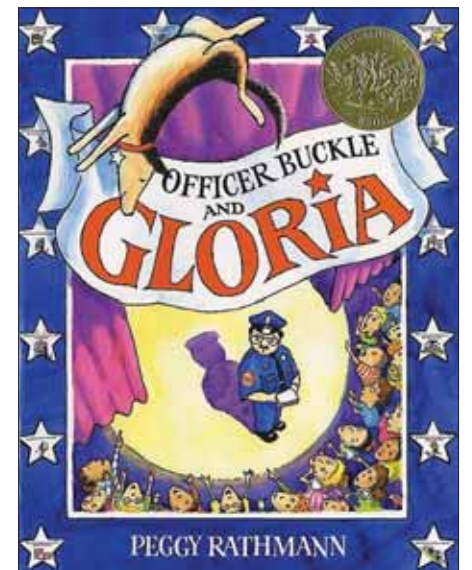
Ficken is proud of the newsletter and said the safety club focuses on common sense practices.

"People need to know how to handle animals and how to address animals," he said.

As for Gandalf II's role in the club, Black said she thinks he's a good way to connect

with kids.

"I think it's great for kids to be able to have that experience with getting to know the police department," she said. "It's really a community-oriented police department." ■




Animal Services Officer Roy Ficken said Gandalf II's role is a lot like that of Gloria, the poodle featured in the book, "Officer Buckle and Gloria."

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Now Showing

Atonement

★★★

Rated: R for war violence, language and mature themes.
2 hours, 2 minutes.

Pre-war England has never looked as lush as in Joe Wright's intensely crafted romantic drama.

Based on Ian McEwan's exceptional novel of the same name, "Atonement" reflects a simpler, easier time. Glamorous Cecilia Tallis (a stunning but rail-thin Keira Knightley) lives in the lap of luxury on her family's country estate, feigning casual indifference to the attentions of the housekeeper's handsome son, Robbie Turner (James McAvoy).

The vivid imagination of Cecilia's younger sister, Briony (adolescent wunderkind Saoirse Ronan), sets narrative elements in motion. Briony, a willful sprite who spends hours at her typewriter churning out histrionic theater, discovers Robbie and Cecilia in a compromising position and, feeling slighted by a discovery far beyond her ken, tells a shocking lie with devastating consequences for all.

In the grand tradition of such epic historical romances as "The English Patient," "Atonement" magnifies its inescapable destiny with dazzling

bravura. The onset of World War II scatters friends and lovers to the winds and outs skeletons of the not-so-distant past. Larger-than-life melodrama sweeps across the landscape as Cecilia volunteers as an English military nurse and Robbie toils in the death fields of France.

Director Wright steps out of the box, infusing his vast weeper with the glorious fundamentals of sight and sound. A split point of view offers the turn of events from both Briony's immature eye and the flinty precision of adult reality. Action is set to the notes of clickety-clackity typewriter keys, a staccato rhythm of impending doom and the inevitable march of time.

The pacing falters only slightly with a jarring segue from sumptuous wealth to the harsh certainties of the battlefield. Wright's skill behind a camera is evident, culminating in a glorious, much ballyhooed extended tracking shot that's as heartbreaking as it is inspiring.

At its core are the human impulses we love to hate: jealousy, anger and deceit. Star-crossed lovers Cecilia and Robbie are blessed with smart if not sizzling chemistry and enough star wattage to render "Atonement" one of the year's finest films.

—Jeanne Aufmuth



Ready to Rent

The Simpsons Movie

Fox Home Video DVD
Director: David Silverman
1 hour, 27 minutes

"The Simpsons Movie" begins with the traditional, monolithic Twentieth Century Fox logo emblazoned by the eternal searchlights that alight it while the Fox theme, a blip of military inspired pomp, drums accordingly along on the soundtrack. This reverential air is broken, however, by a figure that emerges from behind the logo only to sing off-key in equally dramatic pitch. This waif is the ever clueless Ralphie who, if you're familiar with "The Simpsons" TV show has, for the last 20 years, been responsible for the most naive and inappropriate questions at the most appropriate times; that one cute kid whose charms slough off quickly because his obliviousness is more detrimental than it is entertaining—a neutered "Dennis the Menace." This is only one of the novelties that stuck with me in Director David Silverman's big screen version of the small screen family whose weekly adventures in Springfield have attracted some of the world's most important celebrities and political leaders as well.

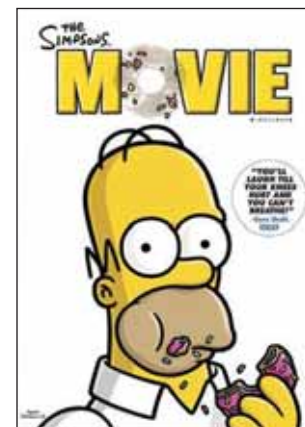
What then could there be gained by a making a movie whose weekly adventures is distributed freely, and whose own main character (namely Homer) taunts the audience with this conundrum within the first two minutes of the movie? I say more of the same, but in a bigger venue now made small again by video; one, which I hope that Homer exploits further because I personally love "The Simpsons" and Homer's moronic ridicule. I love it because it is crass and juvenile, but in a very affectionate and savvy way. The writers are right on with their jokes (most of the time), and there have been many including Conan O'Brien, James L. Brooks ("Taxi" and "Cheers") and of course its creator Matt Groening, whose character visualizations: the oversized head, yellow skin and puckish, rounded noses add up to an exaggeration of the deco style cartoon characters of the '30s and '40s that

populate the alternate universe of Springfield, anywhere USA.

As in the show, it is Homer (Dan Castellaneta) who is responsible for a screw up on a grand scale, which echoes in the halls of such hallowed institutions such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the presidency. It all starts with his senile father's vision in church of a Springfield apocalypse and the beginning of an uncomfortably close relationship between Homer and a swine he dubs "Spiderpig" (at one point, Homer hoists the pig up so it can crawl along the ceiling while he sings "Spiderpig, Spiderpig" to the tune of the famous wall crawler). It is also some illegally discarded pig waste that mixes with the dredges of the local nuclear plant that makes a toxic so poisonous, the EPA and its director, the megalomaniac Russ Cargill (regular Albert Brooks), decide to contain the town in a dome, where society quickly degenerates and finds Homer and his family to blame.

Is "The Simpsons Movie" any better or bigger than the free TV show? Well, its longer, but not uncomfortably so. The satire, especially concerning big bureaucratic government, is somewhat tired, uninspired and strangely A-political; we've seen it before and for free with the exact same characters and with more chutzpah. However, the rest of the movie works because it feels comfortable without being lazy. It's a movie for the fans and maybe the casual viewer who have watched the show for the last two decades and still chuckle when Homer dazedly mutters "MMMM...Doughnut."

—Joe Ramirez



Kiss 2007 goodbye with Will Durst

Popular comedian's annual year-end show to be held in Livermore

Don't fret. Just because the Amador Theater is undergoing renovations doesn't mean the wildly popular year end comedy show won't be coming to the Tri-Valley this year.

That's right, Will Durst has once again gathered his motley crew of jokesters for the annual Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show XV. In its 15th year, the show will be held at 8 p.m. Dec. 28 at the Bankhead Theater, 2400 First Street in Livermore.

The show—appropriate for an adult audience—combines standup comedy, improvisation and sketches based on major news of the year.

Time is of the essence—as the countdown to the end of the year is quickly approaching, so is the countdown of available tickets. Tickets range from \$15 to \$25 and are available by visiting www.livermoreperformingarts.org or calling 373-6800.

Durst will also be performing Dec. 26 at the Julia Morgan Center for the Arts in Berkeley, Dec. 29 at the Hoffman Theatre at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek and Dec. 30



Will Durst

at Little Fox in Redwood City.

For more about Durst and other performances, visit his Web site at www.willdurst.com.

—Emily Atwood

Deck the halls with arts

Ornament sales to benefit Bankhead Theater



These are just some of the ornament designs available for Ornaments for the Arts fundraiser benefiting Bankhead Theater.

Since opening in October, the new Bankhead Theater in Livermore has brought performances like *The Nutcracker*, Bernadette Peters and *La Boheme*.

Located in downtown Livermore at 2400 First St., the theater is home to local talent like the Pleasanton Playhouse, the Livermore-Amador Symphony, Valley Concert Chorale, Del Valle Fine Arts, Livermore Valley Opera, California Independent Film Festival, Valley Dance Theater and the Cantabella Children's Chorus.

It was the goal of Len Alexander, executive director, to have the theater be open more than it's closed. The group scheduled more than 200 shows to take place from the open-

ing in October to August 2008. Yet the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center (LVPAC) said the ticket sales cover about 60 percent of the theater's operational expenses.

So in order to meet needs, LVPAC is holding a fundraiser called Ornaments for the Arts. A \$20 donation will get a sponsorship ornament to be hung on a tree in the grand lobby of the theater throughout the holiday season. At the end of the year, LVPAC will mail the ornament back along with a tax-deductible receipt.

To learn more about Ornaments for the Arts, visit www.livermoreperformingarts.org.

—Emily Atwood

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At the launch of the 2007 Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund, 258 donors have contributed \$42,790 to the fund.
With the 100% match, a total of \$85,580 has been raised for the eight 2007 beneficiaries.

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Valley Humane Society

Pets posed with Santa Claus to raise money for Valley Humane Society, but more money is needed for the local animal shelter.

Valley Humane Society looks to the future

Animal shelter currently operating out of portables, needs funds to help build new facility, house dogs

by Janet Pelletier

For the past year, Valley Humane Society has been operating out of portables at its new location on Nevada Street.

But someday, the hope is that enough money can be raised to build a brand new animal shelter that is so desperately needed.

The humane society holds many fundraisers throughout the year including a dog wash and pet photo sessions with

Santa Claus, but it will need a lot more money to be able to reach its goal of building a long-term facility to house the many homeless cats and dogs that are brought to them.

That is why the Pleasanton Weekly has chosen Valley Humane Society as one of eight nonprofits to benefit from the Holiday Fund.

Valley Humane is the only animal shelter in Pleasanton. They house stray

(continued on page 34)

Open Heart Kitchen depends on Holiday Fund donations

Next year they hope to serve 180,000 meals in the Tri-Valley

by Emily Atwood

Open Heart Kitchen (OHK) is a nonprofit exists to help children, seniors, families and individuals in need in the Pleasanton, Livermore and Dublin by providing free, hot meals. With the organization's expansions of food service this past year, they are also in need of some help.

Starting in September, OHK added free hot meal services on Mondays at CrossWinds Church in Dublin. The organization also delivers boxed lunches for school-aged kids to eat over the weekend. In Dublin, there isn't much for the growing population of adults and older children in need.

According to the Tri-Valley Human Services Needs Assessment (May 2003), there aren't enough free meals for the homeless or working poor. In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau reported 719 households in Dublin living in poverty and 2,299 households in Dublin earning less than \$50,000 per year.

This year OHK Board President Nancy Richardson said they will have served about 158,000 meals. Next year they hope to serve about 180,000. With grant cycles ending soon, they need help to meet this goal.

When asked what it meant to be includ-

(continued on page 34)



How to Give

Your gift helps seniors, children and others in need

Contributions to the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund will be increased by the Tri-Valley Community Foundation. For every \$1 contributed, \$2 total will be donated to these local organizations. All contributions will go directly to programs that benefit Pleasanton and Tri-Valley residents. Contributions will be distributed by the Tri-Valley Community Foundation to the eight agencies listed below. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

This year, due to the tremendous need of all nonprofits, donations will be shared equally among the eight recipient agencies.

For more information call us at 600-0840 or e-mail editor@pleasantonweekly.com.

The following agencies will be supported by the Holiday Fund:

- **Axis Community Health:** Provides medical, mental health, addiction counseling and health education services to more than 20,000 patients and clients each year, regardless of their ability to pay. An estimated 70 percent have no medical insurance or are underinsured, including some that have recently lost their jobs and health benefits. Call 201-6017 or visit www.axishealth.org.

- **Emergency Room Expansion at ValleyCare Medical Center:** ValleyCare, a nonprofit health system, needs funds to expand its emergency room, built in 1991 to accommodate 13,000 patients a year and now handles more than 26,000. It will cost \$6.7 million to replace the facility and upgrade equipment, and the Holiday Fund will help get that started. For more information, contact Ken Mercer at 373-4566.

- **Hope Hospice:** Hospice care is unique because it works to not only meet the needs of those at the end of life but also supports the emotional and spiritual needs of the family as well. Hope Hospice care is provided regardless of the ability to pay and relies on contributions such as those raised by the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund. Visit www.hopehospice.com.

- **Open Heart Kitchen:** As the only nonprofit free soup kitchen in the Tri-Valley area, this service provides nutritious meals for low-income people in the Pleasanton-Livermore area at Trinity Lutheran Church in Pleasanton and Asbury United Methodist Church in Livermore. Visit www.openheartkitchen.org or call 580-1616.

- **Pleasanton Partnerships in Education (PPIE) Foundation:** The PPIE is a community-based organization whose mission is to enhance learning experiences for Pleasanton students through a partnership of business, education and the community. Its foundation offers education grants which will now benefit by Holiday Fund contributions. For information, call Debi Covello at 846-5620.

- **Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley:** This independent, nonprofit organization offers a variety of services at no cost to seniors or to their families. Programs include health maintenance, nutrition, fitness, disease prevention, partners-in-safety, in-home counseling, friendly visiting programs and nurses on staff who regularly visit clients. Call 931-5379.

- **Tri-Valley Haven:** Runs a domestic violence shelter as well as a homeless shelter for families and a rape crisis center. Its mission is to aid those who have experienced abuse and offers counseling, a legal clinic and other practical advice. Call 449-5845; 24-hour hotline: 800-884-8119 or visit www.trivalleyhaven.org.

- **Valley Humane Society:** This nonprofit group is all volunteers, with the mission to educate on responsible pet ownership. It assists in rescuing and placing abandoned or injured animals and operates an adoption center on Nevada Street in Pleasanton. It does not euthanize unless health problems dictate. Call 426-8656.

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The Tri-Valley Community Foundation is located at 5674 Stoneridge Dr., Ste. 112, Pleasanton, CA 94588. More information about the Foundation can be obtained by contacting the organization at the above address, by calling its President David Rice at (925) 734-9965 or through its Web site: www.tvcfund.org. The Pleasanton Weekly will make every effort to publish donor names for donations received before Dec. 31, 2007, unless the donor checks the anonymous box. All donations will be acknowledged by mail.

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Holiday Fund

Open Heart

(continued from page 33)

ed in the Holiday Fund, Richardson said "it means the world."

"The Holiday Fund is one of the biggest sources of donations that we get throughout the year," she said. "We have grants near the end of their cycle and we need to replace those."

While they are always looking for sources of new funding, the non-profit group said the renewed giving sources have been very meaningful.

"We're on track [with our budget], but we're always looking to ensure we have adequate funds needed to serve the food," she said.

There are also other ways to help OHK. Volunteers are always welcome as they are the ones making, delivering and serving the food. OHK accepts food donations, like leftovers from large parties.

OHK recently announced David Walden as the latest member of the board of directors, joining Norma Foss, Barbara Gilmartin, Linda Nidever-Galles and Dolores Olness. The organization is also looking to hire an executive director.

To learn more about the organi-



File photo

Open Heart Kitchen volunteers make and serve hundreds of free, nutritious meals each week in Pleasanton, Livermore and Dublin.

zation, find meal service locations and get information about volun-

teering, visit www.openheartkitchen.org. ■

Valley Humane

(continued from page 33)

and unwanted cats in it's facility on Nevada Street and places dogs into foster care.

Last year, the shelter moved from an old and cramped downtown building on Spring Street. Purchasing land on Nevada Street, a 2,100-square-foot portable building was set up and operations transferred there. At the interim facility, there is an area called Kitty City where the organization has been able to house double the amount of cats.

Dogs, which weren't housed at the Spring Street facility due to lack of space, continue to have to be put into foster care for the same

reason. Valley Humane has plans for the long-term facility to be much larger than the portable and have kennels for dogs.

"We have this great base of foster families that are willing to take in animals into their homes temporarily until they get adopted," McNelley said.

A permanent facility won't become a reality for a few years and by then, the current estimated \$3-million price tag could escalate with rising construction costs.

In the meantime, the society needs money to pay for current expenses, such as medical costs. The Holiday Fund, as it has in year's past, will help the nonprofit pay for direct operating expenses such as vaccinations, cat litter and medical care. Many of the animals

brought to the shelter are injured or have special needs.

"The medical care is very expensive," McNelley said. "A lot of the vets that we work with are great and they give us discounts but you still have to pay for it somehow."

"Valley Humane Society has always been a sort of teeny, grass-roots organization and I think it's important that the Weekly readers know that we're the only animal shelter in the city of Pleasanton right now and we've been in this sort of state of limbo so anything they can do to help us out and help us get in sooner and more quickly is always appreciated," McNelley said.

For more information, call the shelter at 426-8656 or visit www.valleyhumanesociety.org. ■

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The Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund

The Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund was created to provide financial support from our readers for a select group of local nonprofit organizations to help alleviate the needs that exist, despite our community's prosperity. This marks the fifth year of the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund. It provides an opportunity to aid local groups at a time when the numbers of those without jobs or with low-paying jobs and few if any health benefits have increased.

The Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund drive could not exist without the help of the Tri-Valley Community Foundation and its generous donors. This will enable us to double your donation and allow your gift of \$1 to total \$2 to the nonprofits. An added benefit: Neither the Pleasanton Weekly nor the Tri-Valley Community Foundation will take any fees or expenses for administering the fund. One hundred percent of donations go to the intended grantees.

We appreciate your support of the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund and these worthy nonprofits.



Sports

Amador hires new girls softball coach

Practice starts Feb. 4 with games at end of month

by Jeb Bing

Amador girls baseball players have a new coach to help them continue their pursuit of EBAL championships and tournament victories.

Julie Marshall, a full-time employee in the insurance industry who teaches baseball and softball after work, has signed on as the off-campus coach at Amador. She is already conducting field workouts for girls interested in joining the softball team, with the first scheduled practices starting on Feb. 4.

"I'll be looking for girls with a good attitude about playing the sport, who have performance and athletic skills and want to play the game," Marshall said. "Of course, a little bit of experience helps."

Marshall said starting pitchers are often the hardest to find, although all good skills from all nine players are important to any winning team. She expects to cut the varsity team to about 13-14 girls by the time the season opens in late February. Marshall also coaches the Dons' girls JV team, which can accommodate more players.

Marshall, who lives in Stockton, has coached 16 to 18-year-old girls in club baseball sports leagues. ■

Sports Briefs

Ryan Gordon alumni game to be held next weekend

The fifth annual Ryan Gordon Foothill-Amador Alumni Soccer Game is looking for ex-soccer players from Amador Valley and Foothill high schools to play in the game, scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 29.

The game is an annual event that raises money for the soccer programs at Foothill and Amador in honor of Ryan Gordon, a 2003 Foothill graduate who was killed in a boating accident shortly after graduating. Gordon played soccer at Foothill for four years and was planning on attending Santa Barbara City College where he would continue his soccer career.

There are men's and women's matches featuring players who graduated in the '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s. Both games are at Foothill with the women scheduled for 4 p.m. and the men at 6:30 p.m. The public is invited and tickets will be available at the door for \$7 for adults and \$4 for students.

For more information, contact Curt Gordon at 426-1540 or curt.gordon@comcast.net.

Amador JVs take top places in wrestling tourney

Amador Valley High School's Junior Varsity wrestling scored in the top four places at the recent Hayward High School Haystack tournament this past Saturday.

The results were Chris Klein, fourth place, record: 2-2; Josh Rosenblatt, fourth place, record 2-2; Keith Sullins, competed; Max Beck, record 1-2, and Luis Peraza, fourth place, record: 2-2.

Others included Joey Silva, third place, record: 3-1; Greg Carson, competed; Chris Connolly, fourth place, record: 2-2; Daniel Deville, competed, record 1-2; Spencer Smith, third place, record 3-1, and

Robert Reger, first place, record: 3-0.

—Mark Hamilton

Under 14s take 2nd place in District Cup play

The U14 Rage B team came away with a second place finish in the recent District Cup soccer tournament. The Championship game was an all-Pleasanton affair as they met up with their fellow Rage team and fell just one goal shy of victory.

The Rage team that played was a strong, motivated, and determined team that made their opponents play defensively from the opening whistle. Coming into the tournament seeded 7th, they made handy work of their opponents in pool play. In game one, Erin O'Loughlin notched up two goals with Arielle Siegel adding another to cap a 3-1 victory over a Mustang team. Game two was much more even against another Mustang club and the Rage came out with a 0-0 tie.

The match up was against the Livermore Earthquakes and knowing they needed a convincing win to move onto the Championship match, the girls played aggressively. Arielle Siegel was first to score off a tremendous penalty kick shot just outside the 18. Nat Tionco was up next firing on all cylinders and making it 2-0 Rage. Finally Karoline van der Zee netted the Rage's third score off a nice cross from Nicole Ponzini. The victory here was enough to send the girls onto the Championship game against their fellow Rage team.

The championship game was what it should be with both teams playing aggressively. Nicole Ponzini scored her second goal of the tournament and when the final whistle blew it was 2-1.

—Sally Parsons

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PET OF THE WEEK



CATHERINE HANSEN RUSH

Look at that smile!

Foxy, a 1-year-old, spayed female Great Dane/Labrador Retriever mix is thinking of her favorite holiday song, "I'll be home for Christmas." At 78 pounds and growing, this friendly and outgoing dog wouldn't have any trouble pulling Santa's sleigh should Rudolph want to take a night off. Foxy has beautiful brown eyes and those ears look like they would keep her aloft! For more information about Foxy, visit her at the Tri-Valley SPCA, 4651 Gleason Drive in Dublin. It's open Wed. and Thurs. from 1 to 8 p.m. and Fri. through Sun. from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 479-9670 or visit www.eastbayspca.org.

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Real Estate

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Pleasanton, Peninsula top NAR list of West's most expensive homes

Median prices rise in most metro areas, although gains are modest

by Jeb Bing

The vast majority of metropolitan areas showed rising or stable home prices in the third quarter with most experiencing modest gains compared with a year earlier, despite a broad decline in existing-home sales, according to the latest quarterly survey by the National Association of Realtors.

In the third quarter, 93 out of 150 metropolitan statistical areas showed increases in median existing single-family home prices from a year earlier, including six areas with double-digit annual gains and another 21 metros showing increases of 6 percent or more. A total of 54 had price declines and three were unchanged. Regionally, prices rose in both the Northeast and Midwest, as did the national condo price.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, said the data underscores the fact that all real estate is local.

"Some metro areas are hot while others are experiencing localized problems," he said. "The report also shows that home prices in the vast midsection of America, from the Appalachians to the Rockies, are affordable and, perhaps, even undervalued."

"This quarterly metro home price report is the most meaningful long-term series available on price performance because it looks at all of the available transactions in a given area," Yun added. "Unlike other home price series that are based on county records and mortgage securities, which are collected well

after the actual transaction date, NAR has the most timely information directly from multiple listing services. We also report actual market prices rather than just the percentage changes so people can compare housing values around the country."

Even with most areas showing improvement, a disruption in higher priced sales impacted the national median existing single-family home price, which was \$220,800 in the third quarter, down 2.0 percent from the third quarter of 2006 when the median price was \$225,300. The median is a typical market price where half of the homes sold for more and half sold

for less.

NAR President Richard Gaylord, a broker with RE/MAX Real Estate Specialists in Long Beach, said consumers need to understand what's going on in their own area.

"There is no such thing as a national housing market," he said. "It doesn't perform like the equities markets. What's really important for consumers is to make informed decisions based on individual needs, desires and timelines in a given area. Most people plan to stay in a home for 10 years, and for buyers with a long-term view, housing is an excellent investment."

The typical seller purchased their home six years ago, with the median price in the third quarter of 2001 at \$159,100. Despite the dip in the national median price over the past year, the median increase in value for home sellers who bought six years ago is 38.8 percent.

"Nearly every market is showing positive long-term gains, with a home equity accumulation of \$61,700 over the past six years for a typical U.S. homeowner," Gaylord said. "Even in most of the places that are undergoing a large price decline, long-term increases are quite respectable. For example, the Sarasota area of Florida is showing a median rise in home value of \$112,000 over the typical holding period, and ranks well above norm for overall gains."

In the third quarter, the largest single-family home price increase was in the Bismarck, N.D., area, where the median price of \$161,600 rose 15.1 percent from a year ago. Next was the Salt Lake City area, at \$246,700, up 14.1 percent from the third quarter of 2006, followed by Yakima, Wash., where the third quarter median price increased 13.6 percent to \$163,200.

Although most of the areas showing price declines were down modestly, three metros experienced double-digit drops.

Median third-quarter metro area single-family home prices ranged from a very affordable \$81,600 in the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman area of Ohio and Pennsylvania to more than 10 times that amount in the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara area, where the median price was \$852,500. The second most expensive area was Pleasanton at \$830,000, followed by San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont at \$825,400, and the Anaheim-Santa Ana-Irvine area (Orange County, Calif.) at \$700,700.

Other affordable markets include the Saginaw-Saginaw Township North area of Michigan, with a third-quarter median price of \$84,900, and Decatur, Ill., at \$85,900.

In the condo sector, metro area condominium and cooperative prices, covering changes in 59 metro areas, show the national median existing condo price was \$226,900 in the third quarter, up 2.0 percent from \$222,500 in the third quarter of 2006. Forty-one metros showed annual increases in the median condo price, including six areas with double-digit gains; 18 areas had price declines.

The strongest condo price increases were in Bismarck, N.D., where the third quarter price of \$133,300 rose 22.3 percent from a year

(continued on page 39)

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Home prices

(continued from page 38)

earlier, followed by the Austin-Round Rock area of Texas, at \$171,700, up 19.2 percent, and the Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton area of Oregon and Washington, where the median condo price of \$210,200 rose 14.9 percent from the third quarter of 2006.

Metro area median existing-condo prices in the third quarter ranged from \$114,000 in the Rochester, N.Y., area, to \$663,700 in the San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont area. The second most expensive condo market reported was Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, at \$388,800, followed by the San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos area at \$351,900.

Other affordable condo markets include Wichita, Kan., at \$117,100 in the third quarter, and the Cincinnati-Middletown area of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana at \$117,500.

Total state existing-home sales, including single-family and condo, were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.42 million units in the third quarter, down 13.7 percent from a 6.29 million-unit pace in the third quarter of 2006.

"The housing market correction is clearly focused on transaction volume and not in home prices," Yun noted.

According to Freddie Mac, the national average commitment rate on a 30-year conventional fixed-rate mortgage was 6.55 percent in the third quarter, up from 6.37 percent in the second quarter; the rate was 6.56 percent in the third quarter of 2006.

Last month, Freddie Mac reported the 30-year fixed rate was down to 6.24 percent.

Only two states showed annual gains in existing-home sales from the third quarter of 2006, while complete data for two states were not available. In North Dakota, the level of third-quarter sales rose 2.9 percent from a year

ago, while Vermont increased 0.8 percent.

"The biggest decline in sales appears to be concentrated in areas that had significant levels of speculative investment, including Nevada, Florida and Arizona," Yun said.

Regionally, the median existing single-family home price in the Northeast rose 3.2 percent to \$286,300 in the third quarter from the same period 2006. Total existing-home sales in the region declined 7.3 percent to an annual pace of 973,000 units in the third quarter from the same period a year ago.

The strongest price increase in the Northeast was in the Binghamton, N.Y., area, at \$119,600, up 11.4 percent from the third quarter of last year, followed by Reading, Penn., with a median price of \$162,900, up 7.0 percent, and Atlantic City, N.J., at \$273,100, up 6.2 percent.

In the Midwest, the median existing single-family home price increased 0.5 percent to \$170,800 in the third quarter from the same period in 2006. Overall, existing-home sales in the Midwest fell 10.8 percent to a 1.27 million-unit annual level in the third quarter compared with a year ago.

After Bismarck, N.D., the strongest metro price increase in the Midwest was in the Green Bay, Wis., area, where the median price of \$162,900 was 7.2 percent higher than a year ago. Next was Akron, Ohio, at \$124,700, up 6.9 percent from the third quarter of 2006, and Gary-Hammond, Ind., at \$144,300, up 6.7 percent.

The median existing single-family home price in the South was \$180,800 in the third quarter, which is 3.6 percent below a year earlier. Total existing-home sales in the region were at an annual rate of 2.16 million units in the third quarter, down 14.3 percent from the third quarter of 2006.

The strongest price increase in the South was

(continued on page 40)



A Great Big



Thank You

To all the Buyers, Sellers and cooperating Brokers/Agents who helped to make 2007 another great year in sales for us. We take great joy in helping our clients realize their real estate dreams.




May this holiday season be a blessed one for you and your family and may you enjoy great prosperity in 2008!

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Real Estate

Sales at a Glance

Source: California REsource

Pleasanton	Dublin	Livermore	San Ramon
Total sales reported: 9	Total sales reported: 4	Total sales reported: 16	Total sales reported: 16
Lowest sale reported: \$560,000	Lowest sale reported: \$432,000	Lowest sale reported: \$336,000	Lowest sale reported: \$417,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,400,000	Highest sale reported: \$517,500	Highest sale reported: \$1,467,000	Highest sale reported: \$1,269,000
Average sales reported: \$888,778	Average sales reported: \$483,625	Average sales reported: \$741,750	Average sales reported: \$774,094

Home Sales

This week's data represents homes sold during November 2007

Pleasanton

- 1269 Donahue Court** M. & C. Chang to M. & E. Du for \$1,020,000
- 1046 Nolan Court** Morgan Trust to Mitchell Trust for \$735,000
- 3630 North Glacier Court** Bank of New York to G. Liu for \$560,000
- 8015 Oak Creek Drive** Countrywide Bank to C. Chang for \$1,400,000
- 1774 Paseo Del Cajon** D. Parlee to Voulgares Trust for \$850,000
- 4280 Payne Road** Usedorn Trust to H. & K. Elias for \$664,000
- 2025 Raven Road** J. & J. Camillucci to G. Reznick for \$925,000
- 590 Trebbiano Place** Laberge-Shusterman Trust to N. Shankar for \$1,225,000
- 1503 Trimmingham Drive** Stegeman Trust to E. Taylor for \$620,000

Livermore

- 1364 Arroyo Road** Arroyo Crossing to J. & E. Bueno for \$952,500
- 2226 Cabernet Way** Arroyo Crossing to R. & T. Stoner for \$1,358,000
- 2176 Crossroads Place** R. & B. Dolezal to K. Lutz for \$1,105,000
- 6467 Dove Court** L. & J. Reid to D. Joyce for \$740,000
- 1644 El Padro Drive** M. & K. Oliver to A. Bohart for \$529,000

1127 Florence Road Yalom Trust to R. Lawrence for \$728,000

421 Hillcrest Avenue Haugen Trust to P. Simpson for \$438,000

2807 Lemon Shea Homes to S. Shimamura for \$663,500

1812 Locust Street K. Cheung to J. & R. Rosa for \$382,000

461 McGraw Avenue CalMac Transportation to McGraw Investors for \$1,467,000

2342 Merlot Lane R. & J. Broxham to J. & S. Rombough for \$1,337,000

161 North L Street #105 Signature at Station Square to D. MacAulay for \$477,000

492 Rincon Avenue P. Miller to M. Cross for \$400,000

713 Sandpiper Common Herral Trust to B. Wilson for \$336,000

751 Sandpiper Common A. Bohart to L. Maurice for \$360,000

247 Swan Drive R. & K. Kelly to P. Zagorski for \$595,000

Dublin

8870 Bandon Drive E. Lozano to A. Tran for \$495,000

7984 Cranford Lane T. & B. Crawshaw to A. & A. Heller for \$517,500

6408 Dijon Way S. Tieu to V. Piuneu for \$490,000

3290 Maguire Way #301 J. & H. Prera to H. & M. Winitzer for \$432,000

San Ramon

511 Alta Loma Place J. Scott to W. Lim for \$625,000

2232 Amaryllis Circle M. & T. Sebastian to N. & R. Perugupalli for \$550,000

3126 Browntail Way Shapell Industries to B. & N. Shah for \$712,000

2463 Canyon Lakes Drive R. & S. Schultz to G. Tessler for \$825,000

709 Jade Crest Court G. Myers to Devany Trust for \$1,269,000

130 Lipton Place Long Beach Mortgage to W. Lim for \$566,000

5511 London Way Centex Homes to F. Wang for \$1,060,500

10152 Nantucket Drive Deys Trust to C. & F. Tierney for \$1,100,000

153 Paddington Court Brookfield Campton to Y. Sun for \$829,500

165 Paddington Court Brookfield Campton to J. Lo for \$810,000

135 Reflections Drive #13 San Ramon Reflections to K. Crean for \$417,000

5305 Sherwood Way Centex Homes to G. & R. Jones for \$600,000

4549 Sweetgale Drive C. Holbert to M. Mejia for \$800,000

2402 Talavera Drive L. Yeh to Chien Trust for \$695,000

1018 Vista Pointe Circle Long Beach Mortgage to A. Chan for \$575,000

443 Watsonia Court Shapell Industries to S. Nuthakki for \$951,500

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Short Sale

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Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 998-3078

4677 Helpert Ct. **\$729,000**
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 463-0436

PLEASANTON

1 Bedrooms

68 Peters Ave. **\$319,000**
Sat 11-2 Keller Williams 398-0234

4 Bedrooms

3202 Prairie Dr. **\$1,098,000**
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 463-0436

DUBLIN

4 Bedrooms

8333 Creekside Dr. **\$1,100,000**
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 463-0436

DANVILLE

4 Bedrooms

842 Matadera Cir. **\$1,282,888**
Sat/Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 260-2508

Home prices

(continued from page 39)

in the Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord area of North Carolina and South Carolina, at \$220,100, up 11.0 percent from a year ago, followed by the Beaumont-Port Arthur area of Texas, with a 10.2 percent gain to \$129,100, and Corpus Christi, Texas, at \$140,500, up 7.6 percent.

The median existing single-family home price in the West was \$338,100 in the third

quarter, down 3.8 percent from a year ago. The existing-home sales pace in the West of 1.01 million units fell 21.5 percent from the third quarter of 2006.

After Salt Lake City and Yakima, the strongest metro price increase in the West was in the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara areas, which increased 9.4 percent from a year ago, followed by the San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont-Pleasanton area, up 8.6 percent from the third quarter of 2006. ■

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Danville, CA 94526
925.855.4000

Blackhawk
4105 Blackhawk Plaza Cir.
Danville, CA 94506
925.648.5300

Pleasanton
5075 Hopyard Rd., #110
Pleasanton, CA 94588
925.251.2500

Livermore
1983 Second Stree
Livermore, CA 94550
925.667.2100

Lafayette
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Thinking of Selling Your Home After the Holidays?

A special report is now available! It reveals the **nine most common mistakes** made by other sellers and how you can avoid falling into these same traps.

Mistakes are costly to sellers in the current market! Don't hesitate; call now for this **SPECIAL FREE REPORT.**

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Jim Walker

397-4300

Warm Holiday Wishes, from Our family to yours!



OPEN SAT 11-2



68 Peters Ave., Pleasanton

Offered at \$319,000
Adorable & Affordable 1 bdrm 1 bath condo upper unit in the heart of downtown Pleasanton! Newly updated kitchen with granite counters and new appliances. New laminate & carpet flooring. New paint, new furnace. Indoor laundry. Private covered balcony. Low HOA dues 135\$ month!. Call the serrateam for more info.



10894 Inspiration Circle, Dublin

Offered at \$1,399,000
Amazing panoramic views from every room! 1/2 Acre lot. Highlander Model 5 br 4.5 ba w/ gourmet kitchen, granite slab counters & stainless appls. Cherry hardwood floors, 1bdrm 1.5ba downstairs.

Two fireplaces large master suite w/ private balcony, soaking tub & walk in closets. Many upgrades to see. Beautiful backyard w/ rose garden, lawn and patio areas. Room for a pool. 3 car garage. Private court entry. No rear neighbors just open space. Call the Serrateam for more info



Dennis & Stella Serrao

398-0234

OPEN SUN 1-4



3202 Prairie Dr, Pleasanton

Offered at \$1,098,000
Wrap up this wonderful Foothill Knolls home for Christmas. Located at the base of the Foothills in Pleasanton. This 4 bdrm 3 bath home is over 2300 sq ft and is situated on an over 11,000 sq ft lot with beautiful views from every window. Hardwood floor entry,

living rm with vaulted ceilings, cozy fireplace and formal dining. Spacious kitchen with breakfast bar & garden window overlooking the garden. Family rm with wet bar & fireplace. One bdrm & full bath downstairs. Great 3 car garage!

OPEN SUN 1-4



Home For The Holidays
8333 Creekside Drive, Dublin

Offered at \$1,100,000
Stunning Bordeaux Estates home on an 18,000 sq ft lot, with 4 bedrooms, 3 baths & over 3600

sq ft. Gourmet kitchen w/ oak cabinetry & family rm w/ wet bar. Large master bdrm w/ oval tub & walk-in closet. One bdrm & bath downstairs that is perfect for in-law or nanny set up.



Dave & Sue Flashberger

463-0436

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GREAT MISSION PARK LOCATION



5539 San Juan Way, Pleasanton

Offered at \$848,950

Outstanding home in Mission Park. 4 Bedrooms plus office, 2 1/2 baths with newer windows and doors, newer roof, hardwood floors, updated kitchen/baths and private yard. Best location with easy Commute access, close to schools and shopping.



Melissa Pederson

397-4326

SINGLE STORY



667 ALAMEDA STREET LIVERMORE

Offered at \$500,000

Pride of ownership shows in this 1130 sq. ft. charmer with \$20k in new stamped concrete driveway, walkway and back patio. 3 bed/2bath - small home feels BIG!

ECO-FRIENDLY



951 MINGOIA STREET PLEASANTON

Price improvement: Offered at \$1,619,000

Pleasanton's best kept secret -

Private neighborhood just west of Ruby Hill at Vineyard and Machado. 3992 sq. ft. 4+ bed/3.5 bath with 4 car garage.

www.FabulousProperties.net



Donna Garrison & Susan Schall

397-4165 & 397-4244



4656 Black Avenue, Pleasanton

Offered at \$730,000
Great Pleasanton Valley home boasts remodeled kitchen with new tile. Dual pane windows w/security & fire alarm systems. All new cut Berber carpet throughout, 40+ yr roof. Professionally landscaped with sprinkler system. Walk to K-12 schools, shopping and 1 block to Aquatic Center.



Melissa Pederson

397-4326



768 Vetta Drive, Livermore

Offered at \$935,000

Great Prima Single-Story Home! Lovely 4 bedroom, 3 baths, 3-car garage with side-yard access. Lots of interesting upgrades. Best location in So. Livermore!



Gene & Cindy Williams

918-2045



1717 COURTNEY AVE. CHAIN OF LAKES, PLEASANTON
Offered at: \$1,950,000

Absolutely gorgeous home in highly sought after neighborhood located near award-winning Mohr Elementary School. Completely remodeled in 2006, home offers 3 BR (can be convert to 4), 3 BA, in 3338 sq. ft. large corner lot, pool/spa and showcase garage!



Dave & Fran Cunningham 426-7957

Happy Holidays From The Cunninghams!

Wishing You A Great 2008!



Dave & Fran Cunningham 426-7957



1290 Via Di Salerno, Ruby Hill, Pleasanton
Offered at 2,520,000

Stunning Mediterranean Villa in Ruby Hill featuring elegant architectural detailing, 5,800 sq. ft., 5 BR, 4.5 BA, Bonus Room & Exercise/Media Room. Rear yard offers pool/Spa



Dave & Fran Cunningham 426-7957

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459 Main Street



Featured Properties



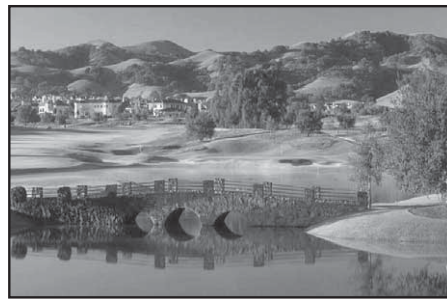
Livermore – You'll love this charming 3 BR 2 BA home with 1198 square feet. This home features new carpet & interior paint, a cozy family room with fireplace, inside laundry, large backyard, & a 2 car garage with mechanic's office/bath combo. Conveniently located to shopping, schools, & seconds from May Nissen swim/park. Priced to sell!
311 Rincon Avenue \$499,000



Pleasanton – 3 Bedroom 2 Bath Home with over 1500 square feet of living space in Pleasanton Valley. Located in the Heart of Town, Walking Distance to Schools and Swim Club. Hardwood Floors, New Air Conditioning and a Court Location. Has Been a Rental and needs Some Cosmetics, and is Priced Accordingly!
1643 Tanglewood Court \$699,950



Livermore – Gorgeous home with upgrades galore! This 4 bedroom plus an extra large loft/office home has 3 baths, 2505 square feet and a 7704 square foot lot. Decorated by a professional designer, so it's model perfect. Granite slab counter tops, custom window coverings, a gas fireplace, and a wonderfully large lot! This home is a must see!
1794 Maralisa Lane \$749,000



Pleasanton – A Rare Find! A Vacant Lot in the Gated Community of Ruby Hill! Located on a Quiet Cul-de-sac, This .59 Acre Lot Comes With Approved Plans for a 6,500 Square Foot Mediterranean Home. Landscape Plans are Available as Well. This Lot is an Opportunity Found! *Picture is not of actual home site, but the Ruby Hill Golf Course.*
1831 Sannita Place \$1,199,000



Livermore – Lushly landscaped 1/3 acre lot on a court! This 4 bedroom 3 bath home has been updated throughout with Granite, Marble, Stainless Steel Appliances, and Maple cabinets and floors. The downstairs office could be a 5th bedroom. There's a library/computer room off the big family room, 3 fireplaces, a balcony to view the sunsets, a salt water pool with waterfall and a beach entry.
1461 Sauvignon Court \$1,265,000



Pleasanton – An invitation to live your best life is extended from the moment you step across the stunning entry foyer and into this sumptuously appointed custom estate. The incredible 5 bedroom floor plan has all that you desire, a great room with game area and bar, a home theater, fine study, a spacious master suite and a true gourmet kitchen!
3916 Vierra Street \$2,699,000



Pleasanton – The "Window of Opportunity" is Wide Open at Ruby Hill. Take a look at this Beautiful Custom-Built 5 bedroom 5.5 bath Italian Villa. "Timeless" in so many ways: a Golf Course Setting (4th Hole), Quiet Cul-de-sac Location, Park-like Yard (Fountain, Pool, Spa), and Quality Features Throughout. Don't miss this opportunity!
2809 Vizzolini Court \$2,895,000



Livermore – This house will redefine luxury! Every detail has been thought out from imported Corinthian marble columns, coffered ceilings, slab granite baths, Alder kitchen cabinets like fine pieces of furniture to the breathtaking setting. 11.7 acres of grapes, 2 acres for residence and a parcel for a tasting room!
225 E Vallecitos Road \$4,599,000



Ruby Hill Division - 101 East Vineyard Ave, Suite 103
 Livermore, CA 94550

925.417.2250



RE/MAX ACCORD

VISIT WWW.REMAX.COM 5870 Stoneridge Mall Rd, Suite 150 925-847-8900

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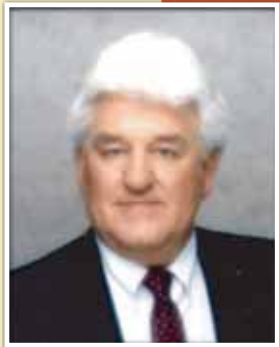
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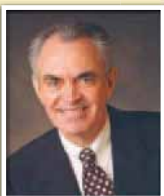
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