



Festival of ice

Chabad of the Tri-Valley plans Chanukah celebration with giant 500-pound ice menorah

by Janet Pelletier

Last year, children used over 2,000 pieces of Legos to create a colorful and kid-friendly 9-foot menorah for the Jewish community's Chanukah celebrations.

But this year, the menorah will have an extra coolness-factor: the candelabra holding nine candles will be carved out of a 500-pound block of ice.

"You have to keep it interesting," said Rabbi Raleigh Resnick of Chabad of the Tri-Valley.

"Our goal really is to bring the joy of Chanukah to the community and especially the children," he added. "In the Jewish community, we want them to feel a sense of belonging, a sense that they can celebrate the season as well and therefore, we always try doing things for the community that will bring new excitement, bring something new and innovative."

The ice menorah will be kindled at 5:30 p.m. this Sunday at Hart Middle School, 4433 Willow Road. Hot latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiot (doughnuts) will be served and there will also be Chanukah-inspired crafts and music and dancing.

The following Sunday, Dec. 28, there will be the annual Chanukah Wonderland display, also hosted by Chabad of the Tri-Valley, and celebration at Stoneridge Shopping Center. The event will kick off at 4 p.m. with various activities such as an olive oil press show, wax candle making, face painting, Chanukah treats, games and crafts, live music, prizes and raffles. The lighting of a traditional menorah will take place at 5 p.m. Admission is free and the entire community is welcome to attend.

The Chabad house erected a 9-foot menorah in downtown Livermore Thursday, and Livermore Mayor Marshall Kamena will inaugurate the menorah in a ceremony on Tuesday.

Rabbi Resnick said he estimates there are close to 10,000 Jewish people in the Tri-Valley area.

"One of the reasons we do the Chanukah celebration in the mall and outdoors—we're trying to reach people who wouldn't necessarily just walk into the synagogue," he said.

Chanukah begins at sundown Sunday and lasts eight days.

This year, Rabbi Resnick said emphasis will be placed on a more somber tone—remembrance—for the Jewish couple killed in the India terrorist attacks last month. Rabbi Resnick, who moved to the Pleasanton area with his family three

years ago from Brooklyn, N.Y., knew Rabbi Gavriel Noach Holtzberg and his wife, Rivka Holtzberg, who were also from New York, personally.

"The menorah's all about adding light, so we're going to add these candles of light in honor and in memory of all the victims, especially the rabbi from Chabad (in India)," Rabbi Resnick said. "Our response to terror and to darkness is by adding more light and more goodness and kindness to the world."

Congregation Beth Emek, which is located on Nevada Court off of Bernal Avenue, has also been preparing for Chanukah celebrations this month. Many of the events have already begun. On Sunday, third-graders participated in a Chanukah Bash, where they made menorahs and ate traditional foods such as latkes and sufganiot.

The congregation, which partners in many activities with

Congregation Shir Ami in Castro Valley, will hold a family day at the Contemporary Jewish Museum on Dec. 25. The day begins at 11 a.m. and attendees can create holiday artwork and watch family-friendly performances. Admission is free.

On Dec. 12, Jewish teens celebrated with a Chanukah party of their own. They participated in a short Shabbat service, ate latkes and played dreidel and video games. It was a chance for the youths to feel a part of something, said Hana Hartman, a Castro



Teens from Congregation Beth Emek in Pleasanton and Congregation Shir Ami, including Hana Hartman (far right), celebrated Chanukah recently, eating latkes and playing dreidel.

Valley High School sophomore.

"Most of the time, the kids that we go to temple school with or synagogue with don't go to our schools and we don't get to see them often," the 15-year-old said. "It's a lot of fun to hang out in that environment. I hear from a lot of people that being in a Jewish environment is a lot more rewarding than being in a secular environment because even if you don't know everyone there, you have that one thing in common."

Another regional group is the Tri-Valley Cultural Jews, a relatively newer organization for people who are culturally Jewish but do not identify with the religion. They will be hosting a Chanukah party at 10:30 a.m. this Sunday at the Bothwell Center, 2466 8th St. in Livermore. Guests are asked to bring a potato and a brunch dish to share.

For more information on Chabad of the Tri-Valley, visit www.jewishtrivalley.com. For information on Beth Emek, visit www.bethemek.org and for information on Tri-Valley Cultural Jews, visit <http://eastbaysecularjews.org> or call 485-1049. ■



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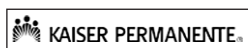
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Now Showing

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas

★★★★

Rating: PG-13 for intensity and disturbing themes
1 hours, 34 minutes

Mark Herman crafts a taut World War II drama that packs a controversial wallop.

It's Germany in the 1940s and the tenor is sheer apprehension. A well-placed SS commandant (David Thewlis) is promoted up the ranks and sees fit to relocate his wife and children from Berlin to the relative safety of the German countryside.

Much to the dismay of 8-year-old Bruno (a remarkable Asa Butterfield), who likes his comfy life and hates leaving his friends behind. Bruno's mother (Vera Farmiga) isn't thrilled with the move either but she stands by her man the old-fashioned way, cajoling the children with promises of new playmates and plenty of fresh-air adventure.

Bruno and sister Gretel (Amber Beattie) are home-schooled by a severe Third Reich tutor. While adolescent Gretel develops a fondness for the sinister stylings of the Hitler Youth (and a crush on the live-in Nazi lieutenant) Bruno tunes out the propaganda and just yearns to explore.

In an ironic twist of fate the family's new home backs up onto a concentration camp, though mom and her offspring naively believe it to be a working farm labored by displaced Jews. Inevitably Bruno



locates the camp and meets an 8-year-old prisoner named Shmuel (Jack Scanlon) who finds solace in the hush near the high-voltage fence.

With heartbreaking innocence the lonely Bruno befriends the boy in the striped "pajamas," unable to comprehend the enormity of such an atrocious government experiment. He inquires about the potentially entertaining "numbers game" (from the prisoner ID printed on Shmuel's clothes) and professes curiosity about the foreign nature of manual labor and Shmuel's incessant hunger.

This unique and child-like point-of-view lends a steely edge to the treacherous posings of the responsible officials who are trying to keep their vicious extermination program under wraps. An increasingly anxious Dad sinks deeper into the Grand Plan in the name of making Germany great again.

Nazi war films have come and gone but few have displayed such a fresh and poignant perspective. Roberto Benigni got close with "Life is Beautiful"—another narrative with trusting virtue as its central theme.

Ultimately Mom gets her wake-up call, gradually (and a tad melodramatically) seeing through the pretext but too little too late. An ominous ideology is set in motion and there's no turning back, culminating in an unforgettable climax sure to make its mark long after the lights have come up.

—Jeanne Aufmuth

Ready to Rent

Hamlet 2

Focus Home Video DVD
1 hour, 92 minutes
Director: Andrew Fleming

With the announcement of budget shortfalls in California last week, and the resulting slashes of school programs such as sports and drama, writer/director Andrew Fleming and Pam Brady's "Hamlet 2" takes on an unexpected, added pathos than it did when it released over the summer. The movie, which plays out like an episode of "Strangers With Candy" meets "South Park's" musical numbers (Brady co-wrote the songs for 1999's "South Park" movie) presents a let's put on a show plot that is trying to save high school drama in Flagstaff, Ariz. This movie has been done before (see all of Christopher Guest's movies including "Waiting for Guffman" and the episode of "South Park" where the killer Thanksgiving turkeys attack their annual pageant), but "Hamlet 2" has so many small, idiosyncratic moments and one good performance from comedian Steve Coogan, who takes the old stereotype of the effete high school drama teacher and adds a little something extra.

This movie, along with "South Park," demonstrates the influence that program has had on American culture for its current 10-year run. Specifically, its parody as high art through low art, which is not unique and especially on television (the good include the "Smothers Brothers" and "Saturday Night Live"), but since South Park's resurgence on Comedy Central, it has ushered in an era of rapid producing parody. Due mainly to the advances in computer technology, shows like "South Park" (and even the weekly commentary "The Soup") can take the news of last week and wrap a commentary around it while its still fresh in the public's minds. The jokes may be base (and here is where taste comes in), and even nihilistic, but still entertaining nonetheless.

I don't know, however, what sad-sack drama teacher Dana Marschz would think of "South

Park," but his desperate sanguinity would probably find something akin to Shakespeare in it. In fact, his optimism is to detrimental, it blinds Marschz to his wife Brie's (Catherine Keener) affair with their lodger; his students lack of dramatic talent; the principal's hatred of him and the sad crux that Marschz is absolutely no genius.

In fact, his only forte is to turn movies into stage plays with his only two good students as the entire cast. So, when the principal tells Marschz that drama is to be axed due to budget shortfalls and lack of enthusiasm by the community for his latest "Erin Brockovitch" production, Marschz has a much needed nervous breakdown which results in a mad epiphany: an original work entitled "Hamlet 2" whose plot employs the exorcism of some very dark demons in Marschz's past, and a time machine.

What "Hamlet 2" does well is keep its funky sense of humor up. It's major draw, the irreverent songs and dances in "Hamlet 2" are somewhat flat—"South Park" does it better I feel due to their animated character's deliberate tempos—but there is still a boppy goofiness to them, such as the show-stopper "Rock Me Sexy Jesus," which feels like it came from Marschz's daft psyche. The draw here is Coogan occupying a large character in a very quiet way. We know, and he knows, that Dana Marschz is a loser, but Coogan consciously or not infuses a comic suffering that makes Marschz feel needed, which is the point of all art, high or low.

—Joe Ramirez



Student art 'wows' judges

Winners advance to county level for the PTA Reflections art program

Budding Pleasanton artists were recently recognized for their talents in the sixth annual Reflections Arts Recognition Program, put on by the Pleasanton PTA Council.

More than 350 students in kindergarten through 12th grade entered works in six categories: musical composition, literature, photography and visual arts, film/video production, and dance choreography. Each piece was to represent this year's theme, "Wow..."

Over 65 entries were submitted to Pleasanton PTA Council for recognition and were presented with certificates at the December 1st Recognition program. Of these, the work of 19 students were chosen to represent Pleasanton PTA Council Jan. 20 at the next level, Peralta District PTA, which encompasses all of Alameda County:

Literature

- Rachel Pettey, Fairlands Elementary, Primary Division
- Katie Lin, Vintage Hills Elementary, Intermediate Division
- Kara Carlstrom, Harvest Park Middle, Middle/Jr. Division
- Joshua Martin, Amador Valley High, Senior Division

Photography

- Austin Larson, Hearst Elementary, Primary Division
- Shawn O'Hare, Walnut Grove Elementary, Intermediate Division
- Sakshi Agarwal, Harvest Park Middle, Middle/Jr. Division
- Catherine Wang, Amador Valley High, Senior Division



Sung-Wook Hwang

Visual Arts

- Tiffany Rhee, Hearst Elementary, Primary Division
- Sung-Wook Hwang, Hearst Elementary, Intermediate Division
- Rachel Kim, Harvest Park Middle, Middle/Jr. Division
- Katie Kilduff, Amador Valley High, Senior Division

Musical Composition

- Brendan Hwang, Hearst Elementary, Primary Division
- Karthik Suresh, Alisal Elementary, Intermediate Division
- Shreya Magesh, Harvest Park Middle, Middle/Jr. Division

Film/Video Production

- Jonah Kane, Vintage Hills Elementary, Primary Division
- Daniel Huang, Harvest Park Middle, Middle/Jr. Division

Dance Choreography

- Rachana Doraiswamy, Fairlands Elementary, Intermediate Division
- Krishnapriya Somasekharan, Amador Valley High, Senior Division

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Calendar

Auditions

'Livermore's Got Talent' 2009 Auditions

The auditions are open to all ages and Bay Area residents for all talents (singing, juggling, dancing, bands, piano, etc.). Applications will be accepted until Jan. 3. The finals will be performed on Feb. 28, at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore. Application fee is \$25 and are available at www.livermoresgotalent.com.

Training Class from 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, Dec. 22-Jan. 2, at the Dolores Bengtson Aquatic Center, 4455 Black Ave. Cost is \$165 for residents; \$190 for non-residents. To register, visit the Aquatic Center office, 4455 Black Ave.; the Parks and Community Services Department office, 200 Old Bernal Ave.; mail a check to City of Pleasanton, Attn: Aquatics, P.O. Box 520; call 931-3420 or visit www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/recreation.

Book Clubs

Great Books of Pleasanton The Great Books of Pleasanton book club meets at 7:30 p.m. the fourth Monday monthly at Towne Center Books, 555 Main St. Call Sadie at 846-1658.

Clubs

'Finding Your Voice' California Writers Club Tri-Valley Branch will offer writers of all genres the opportunity to learn about their craft and share their work from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 20, at Oasis Grille, 780 Main St. Guest speaker is B. Lynn Goodwin, author of, "You Want Me to Do What: Journaling for Caregivers." Cost is \$21 for members; \$27 for non-members, including lunch. Reservations are required by calling Fred at 462-7495 by Dec. 17.

Civic Meetings

City Council The Pleasanton City Council meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays at City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Ave.

Housing Commission The Pleasanton Housing Commission meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Ave.

Human Services Commission The Human Services Commission meets at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month at City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Ave.

Parks & Recreation Commission The Pleasanton Parks & Recreation Commission meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month at City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Ave.

Planning Commission The Planning Commission meets at 7 p.m. the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at the City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Ave.

School Board The Pleasanton Unified School District Board meets at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday monthly during the school year in the district office board room, 4665 Bernal Ave.

Youth Commission The Pleasanton Youth Commission meets 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month at Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd.

Pleasanton Job's Daughters Job's Daughters International is an organization for young ladies (minimum age 10 for full membership) who enjoy dances, sleepovers, parties, social events, snow trips and more. The girls develop confidence, good character, life-long friendships, moral and spiritual values, and leadership abilities. The group meets at 7 p.m., on the fourth Monday of every month, at Pleasanton Masonic Center, 3370 Hopyard Rd. Visit www.bethel14.com.

Pleasanton Mothers Club The Pleasanton Mothers Club provides a social, supportive and educational outlet for moms and their families in the local community. They meet at 7 p.m. the third Tuesday monthly. Call 927-2444 or visit www.pleasantonmotherclub.org.

Tri-Valley Rotary Club Meeting The Tri-Valley Rotary Club is one of the newest and most diverse Rotary Clubs. Club members meet Tuesday nights from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Girasole Grill, 3180 Santa Rita Road. The cost is \$20. Email info@trivalleyrotary.org.

Tri-Valley Wood Carvers Tri-Valley Wood Carvers meet each Tuesday at the Pleasanton Senior Center, wood shop room, from 12 to 4 p.m. The regular business meeting is held the second Saturday of the month, at the Pleasanton Senior Center, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Call Ken Morgan, 462-6586.

Classes

American Red Cross Lifeguard Training Class City of Pleasanton will offer an American Red Cross Lifeguard

Events

Second Annual Festivus Jubilee

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Come celebrate the second annual Festivus Jubilee from 6-9 p.m., Tuesday-Wednesday, Dec. 23-24, at Willow Tree Restaurant, 6513 Regional St., Dublin. The night will include great comedians, festive activities and dinner. Cost is \$37. Call 519-0280.

Exhibits

Come Home for the Holidays The exhibit at Museum On Main, 603 Main St., runs through Jan. 11 and will showcase winter holiday traditions in Pleasanton and Pleasanton's sister cities Tulancingo, Mexico, and Blairgowrie, Scotland. The cost is a \$2 donation. Call 462-2766 or visit www.museumonmain.org.

Unifying Threads Experience a variety of handmade textiles suitable to wear, show or give from Nov. 15 to Dec. 31 at Worthington Gallery West, 739 Main St. The show benefits the Cuna Indians as well as Oxfam's: Sisters on the Planet. Call 485-1183.

Fundraisers

Storewide Semi Annual Sale A special semi-annual storewide sale will be from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 19 and 20 at the American Cancer Society Discovery Shop, 1987 A Santa Rita Rd. There will be two days of 50 percent savings on clothing, knick-knacks, shoes, handbags and jewelry, and Christmas items. Call 462-7374.

Bay Area Food Bank LilyAnn's Lingerie is collecting food for the Bay Area Food Bank and will offer a discount when you bring in two cans of food through December, at LilyAnn's, 350 Main St. A barrel is outside the store for donations. Food items that are needed include canned meats, fish, vegetables, fruits, beans and soup; peanut butter; cereal; dry milk and pasta. Call 846-1950.

Calendars Support the Classrooms The doorways of downtown Pleasanton are featured in calendars that will help raise money for Foothill High and Lydiksen Elementary schools. The calendars sold out at registration, netting over \$2,000 for the schools; more are being sold at the following downtown businesses: Towne Center Books, The Berry Patch, Milfleur and Sincerely Yours; as well as at the farmers' market Saturday.

Health

Gentle Yoga for 55+ Are you an active person 55+ years young? This free, gentle yoga class helps stress, flexibility, balance and overall health and is excellent for special/chronic conditions. Call Pleasanton school district at 426-4280 for times and locations.

Yoga for Multiple Sclerosis Every Tuesday through Dec. 30 from 1:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m., Downtown Yoga, 220 B Division St., hosts a series of gentle stretching movements that can help to reduce stress within the body. Call 462-5285.

Holiday

'Celebrate the Season the Celtic Way' Golden Bough presents a festive family program that incorporates old world carols and other Celtic songs of the holidays at 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 20, at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. Tickets are \$15, \$20 and \$25. Call 931-3444 or visit www.pleasantoncivicarts.org.

Breakfast with Santa Living Vine Fellowship, 4100 First St., hosts a pancake breakfast, storytime with Santa, puppet show by the Fratello Marionettes, face painting, crafts and more from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Dec. 20. Tickets are \$5 before Nov. 20 or \$7 after. Call 727-7094. Register online at www.livingvinefellowship.com.

Chanukah Party Come and celebrate Chanukah at a party from 10:30 a.m.-1:15 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 21, at Bothwell Center, 2466 8th St., Livermore. Games and activities for adults and kids; bring a dish to share for brunch, a potato, and a new or very gently used coat for One Warm Coat. Call 485-1049.

Discovery Shop Holiday Store The American Cancer Society discovery shop holiday store, 1987 F Santa Rita Road, is open through Dec. 20 with decorations, trees and ornaments. Proceeds benefit ACS.

First Christmas Magic Show American Legion Post 237 presents its first Christmas Magic Show at 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 20, at the Veteran's Memorial Hall. Fun for the whole family including a visit from Santa. Cost is \$10; children under 5 are free. Proceeds benefit Veterans Programs. Call 784-6808.

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Holiday Events at Stoneridge Shopping Center Stoneridge Shopping Center will host numerous holiday events during the month of December. An appearance by Oakland A's Ryan Sweeney and Travis Buck from 4-6 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Santa set in the Grand Court. Cost is \$5 or more to benefit the Simon Youth Foundation. Breakfast with Santa at 10 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 7, in the Grand Court. Pet photos with Santa from 9:45-10:45 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 14. A Chanukah Celebration with Chabad of the Tri-Valley from 4-5:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 28. The mall is located at One Stoneridge Mall Rd. Call 737-4100.

Holiday Food Drive Pleasanton CPA firm, JL Consulting, is coordinating a holiday food drive benefiting people in need served by the Alameda County Community Food Bank. Donations of nutritious, non-perishable foods can be dropped off at 1024 Serpentine Lane, Ste. 105 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays until Dec. 12. Call 846-1859 or email info@jlcpa.net.

Holiday Posada Join the festivities for singing, pinatas and refreshments at the Pleasanton/Tulancingo Sister City Holiday Posada from 7-8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 21, at Veteran's Hall, Main Street. This event is free, but donations are accepted. For more information, call Sandi Cornfield at 426-5389.

Live Nativity Scene A live nativity production will take place at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 20, in the back parking lot of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at Valley Avenue

and Paseo Santa Cruz. This event is free; refreshments will be served. Call 462-1727.

Valley Dance Theatre to Perform The Nutcracker The Valley Dance Theatre presents "The Nutcracker" with music by the Livermore-Amador Symphony pit orchestra with carols by Harmony Fusion Chorus and the Valley Concert Chorale. Shows are at 7 p.m. Dec. 13, 19 and 20, and at 2 p.m. Dec. 13, 20 and 21, at the Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Tickets are \$23-\$31 for adults and \$17 for students 17 and younger. Call 373-6800 or visit www.bankheadtheater.org

Youth Chorus and Bell Choir Performance A youth Christmas chorus and bell choir will perform at 7 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 21, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Valley Avenue and Paseo Santa Cruz. This event is free. Call 462-1727.

Kids & Teens

Library Book Clubs Begin Students are invited to join either our fourth and fifth or sixth to eighth grade book clubs, which meet Wednesdays from 7 to 8 p.m. starting in September at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Come for good books, snacks and lively conversation. Registration begins Aug. 18, and is limited to 18 per club. Call 931-3400 ext. 8.

On Stage

A Christmas Carol: The Musical Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre presents a Children's Holiday Workshop production of "A Christmas Carol: The Musical." Shows are Dec. 19-20.

Carols and dance are weaved throughout the story. A \$10 donation is suggested. Visit www.trivalleyrep.com.

Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show Political satirist Will Durst and his comedic troupe will spoof 2008 with stand-up, sketches and improv at 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 26, at Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Tickets are \$12-\$75. Call (415) 820-9628 or visit www.willdurst.com.

The Four Freshmen Celebrate New Years Eve LVPAC favorites, The Four Freshmen, host a gala New Year's Eve party complete with champagne and dessert in the Bankhead Theater lobby, 2400 First St. in Livermore, following the performance. Fireworks will be at 9 p.m. with community-wide revelers outside. Tickets are \$60-\$95. Call 373-6800 or visit www.livermoreperformingarts.org.

Seniors

Brain Matters Our brains are vital organs that deserve the same attention to care and maintenance as our hearts. Engaging in active learning will help maintain brain health. This new weekly program, meeting at 10 a.m. every Friday starting Sept. 5, combines lectures and interactive workshops dedicated to improving brain health and function. The cost is \$1.50 for residents or \$2 for non-residents. Call 931-5365.

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A holiday safety reminder from the Pleasanton Police Department

Drunken Driving

California law makes it unlawful for anyone to drive while impaired by alcohol or drugs. This holiday season, law enforcement officers from Pleasanton, Livermore, Dublin, and across the county will again be participating in the AVOID THE 21 campaign. From Dec. 12 through New Year's Day, the 21 police agencies in Alameda County will saturate the streets with special DUI enforcement teams and checkpoints. Last year, the AVOID campaign netted 3,360 DUI arrests across the state. The best way for you to avoid being arrested is to NOT drink and drive.

Remember:

- Alcohol-related traffic collisions kill more young people between 1 and 24 than any other single cause.
- A blood-alcohol level of .08 percent or more is a presumption of guilt but even with a lower percentage, you can still be arrested if you're believed to be impaired.
- It is a crime for anyone under the age of 21 to drink alcohol and anyone under the age of 21 caught driving with a blood-alcohol level of .01 percent or greater will automatically lose their driving privilege for one year.
- If you have been drinking, it's better to be safe than sorry — Call a taxi or a sober friend.

For more information about this or other topics, contact the Crime Prevention Unit at (925) 931-5233 or (925) 931-5240.

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Pleasanton Real Estate News



by Gerarda Stocking

WHEN TO BUY IN A BUYERS' MARKET

In a buyers' market, sales are obviously slower than in a sellers' market. What constitutes a buyers' market, after all? An abundance or over-abundance of homes on the market for sale. With so many homes available for sale, and fewer potential buyers of those homes, sales slow, price appreciation slows or even turns negative, and the newspapers are full of stories about what a dreadful real estate market we're experiencing. In a sellers' market, there are far more ready and able buyers than there are homes for sale, and homes sell quickly.

What is particularly remarkable is the amount of expert advice thrown at us in a buyers' market. Somehow, as prices ease and it becomes possible to negotiate terrific terms with those who are anxious to sell their homes, the market gurus decide it's not a good time to buy. Wait a year, they often say. Avoid the carnage.

Trouble is—as a very rich man named Bernard Baruch often observed—the very best time to buy is precisely when no one else is buying. The reasons should be obvious, but they are compelling only for the wisest among us.

If it's harder to sell a home and you'll get a lower price in the sale, but it's easier to buy a home and you'll get a lower price in the purchase, things not only even out—you can often end up ahead in your sale and purchase in a buyers' market. Why the negativity, then? Because people start to believe that prices will just keep falling (probably the same people who, in a sellers' market, believe prices will just keep rising).

The bottom line: When you need to move, and you find the right house, let market conditions be a secondary consideration. The right time to buy is when you find the right house at the right price with the right terms. Simple, but true. For more information call Gerarda Stocking at 846-4000 or visit her website at www.gerardastocking.com.

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Pleasanton PC Users Group The PC User Group meets monthly at 10 a.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. You don't need to be an expert to attend, we have all skills levels in our meetings. Call 931-5365 or visit pleaseniior.googlepages.com for more info.

Spiritual

Bible Study Fellowship The 33-week study of The Life of Moses begins Sept. 8. Women's classes meet at 9:25 a.m. Wednesdays at Cedar Grove Church, Livermore; and 6:55 p.m. Mondays at Valley Community Church. Men's class meets at 6:55 p.m. Tuesdays at Community Presbyterian Church in Danville. Call 877-273-3228.

Christmas Eve Service Tri-Valley Unity Church will host a Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 24, at the Radisson Hotel, 6680 Regional St., Dublin. Celebrate the birth of Jesus and the birthing of a new Christ consciousness in each of us. Call 829-2733 or visit www.trivalleyunity.com.

Faith Chapel Assembly of God Faith Chapel Assembly of God, 6656 Alisal St., has Sunday school for all ages at 9:30 a.m. and worship at 10:30 a.m., with nursery for both services. Children's church, ages 3-12, meets at 11:15 a.m. Women's Bible study meets at 10 a.m. Wednesdays. A prayer at 6 p.m. is held the first and third Monday of the month. Call 846-8650 for more programs.

Returning Catholics Program Inactive & Returning Catholics: Consider this an invitation to take another look at the Catholic church. We provide discussion of important issues in today's church, education on current belief and practice. Tell your story and renew your faith in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. Meetings are from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, 4001 Stoneridge Dr. Call 474-2760.

The Longest Night Come discover God as a light in your personal darkness at a special service of prayers, scripture and meditations at 7 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 21, at St. Clare's Episcopal Church, 3350 Hopyard Rd. Call 462-4802 or visit www.stclare-pleasanton.org.

Sports

Cheer Clinic Foothill High School's nationally ranked cheer squad will be holding a cheer clinic from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Dec. 20. They will teach new dances, cheers, jumps, motions and other fun cheer games. The cost is \$45, or \$40 before Nov. 30, which also includes a T-shirt, certificate, prizes and lunch. A parent performance will be at the end of the day. Space is limited. For registration and information, email Suzanne Oliveira at suz96GT@aol.com or call 510-226-8832 or Kim DeJoy at kdejoyfhscheer@comcast.net or call 360-6102.

Softball Clinic Triple Threat Training will host a softball skills clinic from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday, Dec. 22, at Amador Valley High School, 1155 Santa Rita Rd. The clinic is for kids from 8 years old through 8th grade. Cost is \$100; there is an additional fee for a hitting video analysis. For information, contact Julie Marshall at marsh32@yahoo.com.

Sunday Morning Intermediate Ride Join intermediate cyclists every Sunday for this no-drop road ride. Routes vary weekly and last between two and three hours. Riders warm up together and split into smaller groups based on skill level(A: 60 miles, B: 35 to 40 miles). Bring water and a snack. Rides depart from Cyclepath Pleasanton, 337-B Main St.

Support Groups

Death Support Group The death of

a loved one is unlike any other loss. Whether the death was sudden or one with warning, the reality of death leaves most of us in a state of shock. Join this group at 7:30 p.m., on the second and fourth Thursday of every month, at St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 4001 Stoneridge Dr. The meetings are open to all, regardless of religious orientation. Call Mary at 846-5377.

Family Members of Frail Elders

This group is to support family members as they experience the many emotions involved in supporting, caring for and loving the frail elders in their family. It meets at 7 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month at Eden Villa Assisted Living, 4115 Mohr Ave. Call 872-8721.

Overeaters Anonymous Do you worry about the way you eat? You are not alone. Overeaters Anonymous may have the answer for you. This

is not a diet club. OA is a fellowship of people recovering from compulsive overeating, starving and/or purging. OA offers mutual support and a helpful plan of action. They meet at 7 p.m. every Tuesday at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 678 Enos Way, Livermore. Visit www.diablovalleyeo.org.

Volunteering

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue Do you love animals? Become a volunteer or a Foster with Tri-Valley Animal Rescue. Orientations are held at East County Animal Shelter (ECAS) from 1 to 2:30 p.m. the second Saturday and fourth Sunday of each month. Registration is not required to attend the orientation. Call 803-7043 or visit www.tvr.org.

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Sports

Parent photographers

Send a jpeg to Editor@PleasantonWeekly.com of the best action shot from your child's game for consideration for our Sports page. Remember to include caption information: who, what, when, where—and the score.



Ryan Gordon Alumni Games approaching

by Janet Pelletier

Foothill and Amador Valley high school alumni will battle it out next weekend all in the name of a good cause.

The annual Ryan Gordon Alumni Soccer Games will be held Dec. 28 at Amador. The women's games will begin at 2 p.m. and the men's at 4:30 p.m.

This is the sixth year of the games, which honor Ryan Gordon, a Foothill student who was killed in a boating accident the summer after graduation in 2003. Gordon was an avid soccer player for his high school and for Ballistic United Soccer Club.

Ryan's father, Curt Gordon, said 30 players have signed up for the games so far, which are being held on a Sunday for the first time. The money raised from the games benefit a scholarship fund that awards Pleasanton high school graduates who plan to play soccer in college, something Ryan Gordon had hoped to do.

Though the games have had success raising funds to keep the scholarship program running, it has been a challenge getting alumni from class-

es older than 2003 to participate. Some of that challenge has been getting the word out to those alumni without having their contact information. Players from the '70s, '80s, '90s and '00s are encouraged to try their hand—and feet—in fun competition and some cross-town rivalry.

Participants do not have to be alumni of the high school soccer programs; they can be FHS or AVHS alumni who are merely interested in playing in a competitive soccer game. Each game, both the men's and the women's, will be divided into periods for the older players and the younger players. Gate entrance to see the games is \$7 for adults, \$4 for children.

Those interested can register at All-Star Sports, 3037-A Hopyard Road. Another way to register is to download an application at www.busc.org and mail it to Curt Gordon, 205 Heritage Lane, Pleasanton, CA 94566. Gordon can be reached at 426-1540 or curtgordon@comcast.net. Cost to play is \$20. Players and fans are invited to the Hop Yard Alehouse after the games. Fifteen percent of proceeds there will benefit the high schools' soccer programs. ■

Pleasanton swimmers breaking records

The National Team of the Pleasanton Seahawks had a strong showing at Winter National in Atlanta, Ga. Catherine Breed placed sixth in the 1650. Her time was 16:17.91, which is a new 15-16 Pacific Swimming record that was formerly held by Olympian Natalie Coughlin. Alison Brown also had strong swims in the 1650 and the 400 individual medley.

The Seahawks sent a team to the Oregon Senior Champs in Corvallis, Ore. last weekend and due to a number of fantastic performances, they came home with first place. Event winners include Katrina Anderson in the 200 back, 200 IM and 1650 free and Marissa Brown in the 400 IM. While half the senior group was in Oregon, the other half of the Senior group was at the Senior Plus meet in Walnut Creek. There were some fast swimmers there: Alison Brown in the 200 free 1:52.50 in the 200 free and 4:53.09 in the 500 free, Natalie Wong in the 500 free with a time of 4:06.50, Catherine Fong in the 200 fly with a time of 2:18.90 and 58.2 in the 50 free and Jeff Fong with a 2:06.00 in the 200 fly and 56.7 in the 100 back.

Softball clinic offered Monday

A softball skills clinic conducted by Triple Threat Training will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday at Amador Valley High School.

Julie Marshall's Triple Threat Training, along with special guest, UCLA's All American Lyndsey Klein will be conducting the clinic. The program will include hitting, throwing, defense, bunting and sliding and is for kids from 8 years old through eighth grade. Cost is \$100. There is an additional fee for those who want to have a hitting video analysis done. For more information and registration documents, email Julie Marshall at marsh32@yahoo.com. ■

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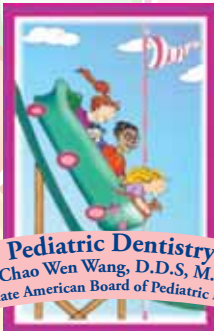
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 Average pay \$20/hr or \$57K/yr incl. Federal Benefits and OT. Placed by adSource, not affiliated w/ USPS who hires. 1-866-616-7019. (AAN CAN)

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Mountain View, 3 BR/2 BA
 \$132,500 Mobile home in Mtn View, built 2001. 1100 sf, large kitchen, lots of windows. Near downtown. Low space rent of \$577/month. For info: Peter Lee, Keller Williams Palo Alto, at 650-454-8518.

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 40 acres \$29,900. Outstanding Views. Access to BLM Canyon Rec Land. Financing. Call 1-866-696-5263 x4843. (Cal-SCAN)

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Home Staging, Marketing

PET OF THE WEEK



A home for Christmas

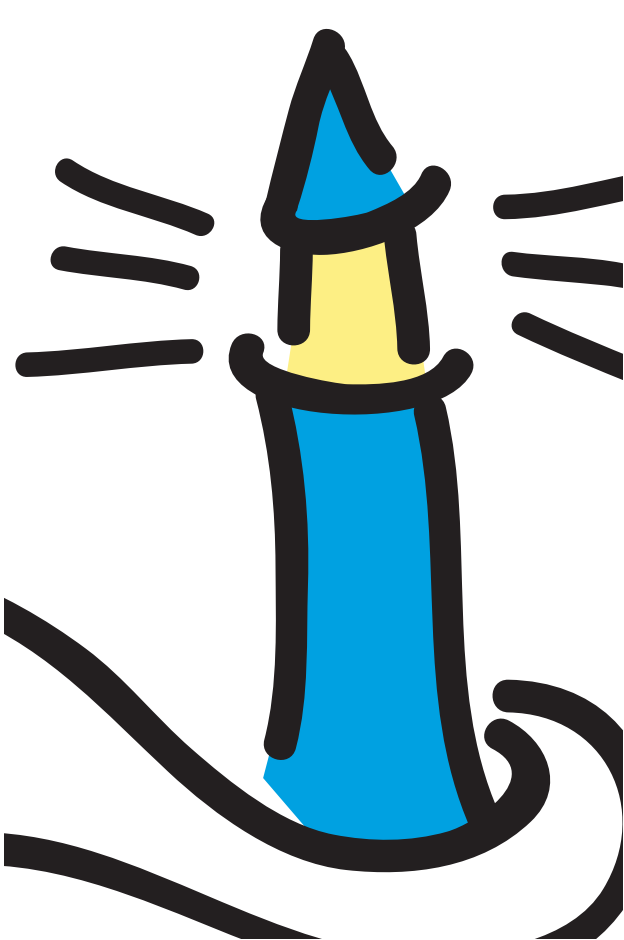
On Comet, on Cupid, on Donner, on Dixon. Dixon? Who's Dixon? He's just another one of Santa's little helpers! Dixon is a friendly fellow who would love to be home for the holidays. A beautiful, black and white, neutered male housecat, Dixon would love to curl up on a warm hearth of his very own. He promises to keep one eye open for Santa Claus! Dixon loves attention and the top item on his Christmas list is a loving new family! Visit Dixon (pet # 81895), and his many friends, at the East County Animal Shelter, 4595 Gleason Drive in Dublin, open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call 803-7040.

CATHERINE HANSEN RUSH

Bring in new business for the Holidays.

PLEASANTON WEEKLY

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Real Estate

Home sale of the week



210 East Angela Pleasanton – \$906,000

This totally remodeled downtown home offers 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and is just 1.5 blocks to Main St! Upgrades include imported Travertine, hardwoods, new roof and paver driveway, crown moulding and custom millwork throughout. It offers a spacious, open floorplan and fully landscaped yards. Sold by Mike Carey of Investment Real Estate. (925) 846-0506

FHA conventional loan limits to be lowered Jan. 1

'Jumbo' mortgages above \$625,500 could be costlier, harder to obtain

by Joe Brown

If there is one thing that can be said about 2008, it is that it was a year of ups and downs.

Whether in the stock market or real estate market, every month seemed to hold a surprise, for better or worse. We're in for another change come Jan. 1 that could affect those looking to purchase a home.

Back in March, as part of the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) temporarily increased its limits on Federal Housing Administration loans. Most counties in the Bay Area (including Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz) were considered high cost areas and the limit for a home's mortgage was raised to \$729,750. The goal of the increase was to encourage more lenders and borrowers to use FHA loans in the tight credit market, creating economic stability in communities across the country and giving nearly 240,000 additional homeowners and homebuyers a safer, more affordable mortgage alternative.

Starting Jan. 1, 2009, the expiration date of the Stimulus Act, FHA loan limits will decrease across the country. Loan limits for the counties mentioned above will adjust to \$625,500, except for Monterey County, which will decrease to \$483,000, Napa County to \$592,250 and Sonoma County from \$662,500 to \$520,950. The lower limits are set at 115 percent of the median home prices in each market. But despite the planned decreases, limits are still well above the \$362,790 level that was in effect prior to the Stimulus Act and usually enough to buy a respectable house, condominium or townhouse in most markets.

The FHA insures loans made by traditional lenders, lowering the default risk the

lenders face for buyers who are not able to put down 10 or 20 percent when purchasing their home. FHA usually only requires about a 3 percent down payment. It is also the only government agency that operates entirely from self-generated income, costing taxpayers and the government nothing.

Since their inception, FHA and HUD have insured more than 34 million mortgages and helped millions of people break into the real estate market. Last year, FHA backed about \$60 billion of residential mortgages, but that number is expected to increase to \$224 billion by the end of the year.

It should also be noted that the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight (OFHEO) has approved Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to maintain their conforming loan limit of \$417,000 in 2009. This will be the fourth year in a row that the companies will be allowed to purchase mortgages at or below that rate on a national level. Anything above that amount would be considered a jumbo loan, which typically carries a higher interest rate and down payment requirement for buyers.

In higher cost areas, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Sonoma Counties, the conforming loan limits have also been adjusted by 115 percent of the median home price and have been set as the same rate as the FHA limits listed above. For a complete list of conforming loan limits, visit www.efanniemae.com.

For more information about FHA loans and to get pre-qualified, visit the HUD Website at www.hud.gov or contact a Princeton Capital/Coldwell Banker Home Loans representative or other qualified real estate mortgage representative.

Joe Brown is president and chief operating officer of Coldwell Banker in the Silicon Valley, Monterey Bay and the East Bay.

OPEN HOMES THIS WEEKEND

BLACKHAWK

6 Bedrooms
4279 Silver Meadow Court \$2,988,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 997-1435

LIVERMORE

3 Bedrooms
306 Clarke Avenue \$369,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel 339-3077

4 Bedrooms
2690 Tuscany Court \$1,047,000
Sun 1-4 Prudential Ruby Hill Realty 417-2250

PLEASANTON

3 Bedrooms
7748 Creekside Drive \$599,950
Sun 1-4 Hometown GMAC, George McKean 998-1798

673 Abbie Street \$899,500
Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel - Blaise Lofland 846-6500

4 Bedrooms
241 Napier Court \$1,469,000
Sun 1-4 Coldwell Banker 362-2018

5 Bedrooms
1368 Royal Creek Court \$1,238,888
Sun 1-4 Brigitte Huntemann, Keller Williams 260-2508



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3651 E. Ruby Hill Dr., Pleasanton



7 BR/6.5 BA, 7,673 sq. ft., with guest house and Grecian pool. Offered at \$3,600,000

836 Piemonte Dr., Ruby Hill, Pleasanton



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Do you have home buying or selling plans in the New Year?
Let us help you get started!

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Jensen Tract 3 bed/2bath
Birdland/The Gates 3 bed/2bath
Ruby Hill 4 bed/4bath/bonus

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OPEN 1-4

11809 Dunstown Court, Dublin

Gorgeous Town House with a super floor plan with 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, plus spacious loft area. Master is downstairs with private patio and updated bath. Newly installed hardwood floors in kitchen, dining and living area. Completely updated kitchen with granite counters, newer cabinets and stainless appliances. Quiet end unit. Approximately 1,137 square feet of living space.

Offered at \$399,000



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FREMONT
44763 AGUILA TER \$3,500,000
Gorgeous custom home! Awesome views!! Lots of upgrades*exclusive neighborhood* top rated schools*perfect home for entertaining*large gourmet kitchen*full wet bar*built in bbq*inground pool/spa*formal dining room*extra large family room*office/library*loft w/deck upstairs*must see!
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CASTRO VALLEY
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Fantastic custom home**court location**great views of canyon and creek**large master suit with fireplace**fabulous gourmet kitchen**call for showing**
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PLEASANTON
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Incredible Views of Mt. Diablo and Pleasanton Hills. Located on a Quiet St. with Complete Approved Building Plans for a 6300+ Sq Ft Mediterranean Style Dream Home. Bldg Prmit Pd. New Retaining Wall is Securely in Place. Owner Financing for Lot.
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LIVERMORE
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PRICED TO SELL! LOCATION - LOCATION. Total of 2.40 acres includes house and acreage behind house. Gorgeous views, great area. House needs some work. 2 acres behind house. Loads of potential.
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1986 CORNFLOWER CMN \$419,000
Lovely open floor plan. Corner lot-walk to pool. Must see! Please submit all offers!
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LIVERMORE
674 CATALINA DR \$509,000
Popular 4 bedroom single story in Desirable Sunset West neighborhood. Close to schools/shopping, easy commute location. Gorgeous remodeled oak/tile kitchen. Beautiful hardwood and tile floors. Inviting Cobblestone paver courtyard. This is your dream home! Call Today!
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878 WAVERLY CMN \$585,958
Serene sanctuary in the rolling hills! It is also the perfect home for entertaining with high ceilings, a flowing floor plan, a gourmet A&E with a hardwood floor and open living-dining room with a private glassed atrium featuring the tinkling sound of a water fountain. Sanctuary or Party?
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2729 KENNEDY ST \$375,000
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LIVERMORE
5665 VICTORIA LN \$1,299,950
Location Location Location Sharp horse property located on a private road nestled amongst custom estates in the heart of the Livermore wine country Almost 6 flat acres with 4 barns & fenced pastures Updated Kitchen w hickory cabinets, newer s/s appl, laminate flooring throughout
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40365842	Active	\$299,900.00	4569 BONRAVEN WAY	ANTIOCH	3	2	1,902
40370605	Active	\$105,500.00	9 MADRID LN	ANTIOCH	2	1	1,251
40370930	Active	\$209,900.00	3508 SHAW CIR	ANTIOCH	4	2	1,676
40343512	Active	\$349,995.00	20115 REDWOOD RD Unit 24	CASTRO VALLEY	2	2	866
40363292	Active	\$179,900.00	393 WILLOW AVE	HAYWARD	2	1	840
40370612	Active	\$260,900.00	187 MESA CT.	HERCULES	3	2	1,434
40374761	Pending	\$869,500.00	2599 COWAN WAY	LIVERMORE	5	4	4,600
40380823	Active	\$294,900.00	263 MARTIN AVE	LIVERMORE	3	2	1,400
40382014	Active	\$286,200.00	39865 CEDAR BLVD Unit 242	NEWARK	2	2	1,071
40374088	Active	\$229,900.00	1153 FETZER LN	OAKLEY	4	2	2,041
40353651	Pending	\$425,000.00	5648 BELLEZA DRIVE	PLEASANTON	2	2	1,302



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DESINGER TOUCHES \$359,950
2 BR 2 BA Apx 1103 sf, vaulted ceilings, att gar, spacious kit/gas stove, open flr plan views of hills 925.847.2200



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737 CENTRAL AVE
UPGRADED HOME ON LRG LOT \$539,000
4 BR 3 BA 9193 sf lot, bd/ba dwn, plntation shuttrs, bmboo hrdwd flrs, grnite in kit, bcktyrd w/ mult ptios 925.847.2200

869 SUNNY BROOK WAY
ABSOLUTELY GORGEOUS! \$1,560,000
4 BR 3 BA gourmet kitchen, hrdwd flrng, custom moldings, millwork, built-ins/ w/office/bonus rm, lrg yard 925.847.2200

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Open SAT/SUN 11 - 4 5008 CRANDALWOOD
ARDENWOOD BEAUTY \$600,000
3 BR 2.5 BA Walk to Forest Park Elementary- Lots Of Custom Amenities and 1589 SF. 925.847.2200

1687 QUAIL ST
GORGEIOUS HOME! \$1,500,000
5 BR 3 BA circular drive, 3 cr gar/2 car detached gar, 5bd, 3ba, 2 bonus rms, kit w/corion cntr, SS appli 925.847.2200

6098 SEQUOIA CT
FORMER MODEL \$575,000
3 BR 2 BA deck off kit/mstr. Lots of energy eff. upgrds. Lot nxt to grnbelt, wlk to park, shppng/trans 925.847.2200

FREMONT/ARDENWOOD
34820 DORADO COMMON
GREAT STARTER HOME! \$360,000
2 BR 2 BA Formal model, award winning Forest Park

LIVERMORE
3300 DYER RD.
PRICE REDUCTION! \$1,195,000
3 BR 2 BA 29.25 acre parcel w/2000+sq. ft. home, dutch barn w/2 flrs, steel framed shop w/2 rll-up drs 925.847.2200

PLEASANTON
4353 W RUBY HILL DRIVE
STYLE & COMFORT \$1,650,000
5 BR 4 BA aprx 4,300 sq ft-1/2 acre-Gourmet Kitchen-Lge Great Rm-Dwnstrs Master-Built is BBQ & Spa 925.847.2200

3263 VINEYARD AVE
PREMIUM LOT! \$199,900
2 BR 2 BA bcktyrd w/rdwd dck, seller help w/rent spce w/6800 at close! Refrig incl, tile in kit/ba/entry 925.847.2200

COLDWELL BANKER
RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

Pleasanton 925.847.2200 | 5980 Stoneridge Drive, Ste. 122



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HOMETOWN **GMAC** Real Estate

would like to wish you *Season's Greetings*

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Wishing you and yours a happy holiday season!

ALAIN PINEL
REALTORS

JUST REDUCED IN GOLDEN EAGLE ESTATES



1531 Honeysuckle Court, Pleasanton

This is the one you have been waiting for! Truly one of the best view lots and locations in Golden Eagle Estates. This gorgeous completely remodeled 5 bedroom, 3 full, 2 half bathroom, 5200 sq.ft. +/- custom home nestled on a flat court on over 1 acre +/- is complete with a bonus room overlooking a serene pool that is absolutely breathtaking! Stunning decorator touches abound throughout the house from the brand new classic gourmet kitchen to the relaxing spa-like master bathroom. This custom is sure to delight you! Go to www.1531honeysucklect.com for more information about this beautiful home!



JUST REDUCED IN CARRIAGE HILLS ESTATES



424 Matthew Court, Pleasanton

Beautiful 8 year old custom 4 bedroom, 3 1/2 bathroom 3220 sq.ft. +/- home on over a half acre lot on one of the most sought after courts in Pleasanton! Located on the southwest end of Pleasanton in Carriage Hills Estates, this home will amaze you as you enter through the front door into an open and breathtaking foyer with 14 foot +/- ceilings that looks right out to the fully landscaped backyard complete with a waterfall and a serene pond. It is a true masterpiece and a very rare opportunity! Call for an appointment to view this spectacular home! Go to www.424matthewct.com for more information about this beautiful home!



JUST LISTED IN CASTLEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB



21 Castledown Road, Pleasanton

Gorgeous 4 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom 3470 sq.ft. +/- home nestled on a 20,000 sq. ft. +/- lot, just steps from Castlewood Country Club. With stunning views and amazing architectural detail, one will feel like they are miles away in their very own private retreat! This is a unique home that you must see in person to really appreciate! Go to www.21castledownroad.com for more information about this beautiful home!



Call for pricing and to schedule an appointment to view these beautiful homes.



Susie Steele

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susiesteele@apr.com

*Whether you are looking to
sell your Luxury Estate or
purchase your first Dream
Home, I strive to satisfy
your Real Estate Needs!*

PLEASANTON | 900 Main Street | 925.251.1111 | www.susiesteele.com

The latest from The 680 Blog

A Holiday Wish for You

A few years ago, my family asked my dad, who's health was failing at the time, what he most wanted for Christmas. He replied "I just want peace in the world, and all of you to be happy, successful, and healthy." To which my older brother replied "would you settle for a sweater?" Gotta love pragmatism.

But other than shopping a little harder for deals and watching budgets a little more closely, this is not the season for pragmatism. It's a time to reflect, to take stock in all that is good in our lives. And a time to express gratitude for all that we have. And no matter how bad things seem right now, and I know for lots of us things are pretty bad, I hope we can see past the troubles, and be grateful for what we do have. Because we are incredibly blessed to be living in this beautiful area, to be part of this community, and to live in this country. And yes I know that the traffic is a pain, and there are money problems, and Zillow.com says your house is worth \$100,000 less than you paid for it, and you are feeling insecure about your



job, etc etc etc. There will always be problems and challenges, but there will also be opportunities and triumphs as well.

So my holiday wish for you is simple... may you get to spend time with your family and loved ones, and get a chance to slow down enough to realize just how fortunate we really are. Even if we occasionally have to settle for a sweater.

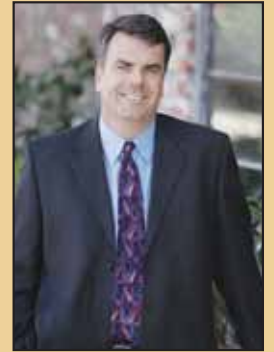


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PLEASANTON VALLEY (BIRDLAND)

PENDING



5058 BLACKBIRD WAY, PLEASANTON

Highly upgraded customized home in the heart of Birdland. New remodeled gourmet kitchen with granite countertops, hardwood flooring, and appliances. Five bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms. Approximately 2,745 square feet. Extensive new interior paint. Tile roof. Professionally landscaped, private rear yard with mature trees. Super location! Walking distance to all levels of school, neighborhood park, and aquatic center. Many upgrades... must see!
OFFERED AT \$899,500

PRIVATE CUSTOM ESTATE



3752 TRENERY DRIVE, PLEASANTON

Gorgeous Mediterranean custom home on premium +/- one acre estate lot. Private secluded location. This home has approximately 8,402 square feet (6,141 on main level), seven bedrooms plus private office, and seven and a half bathrooms. Expansive gourmet kitchen. Antique marble, and Brazilian cherry hardwood floors. Extremely private rear grounds—great for entertaining with in-ground swimming pool. Expansive lawn area and beautiful mature landscaping. Circular driveway and oversized four plus car garage. Conveniently located in town near services, activities, and walking distance to desirable Mohr Elementary! **OFFERED AT \$3,795,000**

OLDE TOWNE

OPEN SUN 1-4



673 ABBIE STREET, PLEASANTON

Premium secluded location in desirable Olde Towne on .30 acre lot. Walk to Downtown Pleasanton! Professionally landscaped, private rear yard with finished decks and your own personal vineyard! Three bedrooms, two and a half baths. Approximately 2,000 square feet. Hardwood flooring. Newer roof. Three car garage. Excellent condition!
OFFERED AT \$899,500

Silver Oaks Estates



BRAND NEW SINGLE LEVEL CUSTOM HOME FOR SALE!

Brand new single level custom home. This premium .45 acre lot is surrounded by Oak studded open space. At the gateway to the Wine Country. Panoramic views of Mt. Diablo / the Valley. 4 bd / 4.5ba, formal office, plus / bonus room. Approx. 4,716 sq ft. Lg gourmet kitchen with granite slab / stainless steel appliances. Lg master suite with fireplace. Hardwood and marble flooring. Photovoltaic (5 kw) solar system. Professionally landscaped front yard.
OFFERED AT \$1,699,000

SILVER OAKS PREMIUM LOTS ALSO AVAILABLE

- Wine Country Location
- Premium Level Lots
- Expansive Views
- Build Your Dream Home!

LOT	SIZE	HOME STYLE	PRICE
1	34,400	Single Story	\$649,000
2	23,670	Two Story	\$649,000
3	30,030	Two Story	SOLD!
4	20,300	Single Story	\$649,000
6	19,547	Single Story	SOLD!
7	22,494	Single Story	PENDING!

Visit www.SilverOaksEstates.com for more information.

P-TOWN WEEKLY REAL ESTATE INVENTORY AND SALES ACTIVITY WATCH

	Actives (last week)	Current Actives	**	Pendings (last week)	New Pendings	**
Single Family Homes Under \$1,000,000	105	102	↓	5	3	↓
Single Family Homes Over \$1,000,000	106	100	↓	1	2	↓
Single Family Homes Over \$2,000,000	33	31	↓	1	0	↓
Total # Of Single Family Homes In Pleasanton	211	202	↓	6	5	↓

This is a weekly watch for Pleasanton Residents to monitor active inventory and pending sales overall or by price range.

** Arrows represent an increase or decrease in the units in a given category.

PLEASANTON 900 Main Street



Thinking of selling your home?
Let Alain Pinel Realtors list your property.
We have qualified buyers. Contact us today.



ANDY PORYES BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$1,274,950**
New Price. Luxury 5 year old home offers 3265+/-sf with 5 bedrooms, 4 baths, pool/waterfalls, outdoor kitchen, high ceilings/lots of light.

TIFFANY ROSE BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$1,100,000**
Unbelievable single story in South Pleasanton. Private gate, huge 1/2+/- acre lot with huge possibilities! 4bd/2ba, 2167+/-sf. Separate guest unit.

SALLY MARTIN BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$999,900**
Upgraded 5bd/2.5ba, 3,250+/-sf. Great home! Slab granite kitchen/stainless appliances/island/cherry cabinets. Travertine floors. Custom millwork. Spacious bedrooms. Crown molding/upgraded carpets. Spa.

M.GILBERT/J.JONES BY APPT



PLEASANTON **\$949,000**
Westside 4bd/2.5ba updated kitchen with granite slab, newer appliances, wood flooring, crown modeling, 3 car garage, 2 fireplaces, no HOA, close to neighborhood parks. Must see!

TIM MCGUIRE BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$875,000**
4bd/2.5ba, 2164+/-sf home on a court. Remodeled custom kitchen with granite, maple wood floors, updated baths. 9000+/-sf lot with pool.

TIM MCGUIRE BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$829,000**
4bd/3ba 2146+/-sf in Pleasanton Valley. Maple kitchen cabinets with corian counters. New dual pane windows and French doors.

KIM OTT OPEN SATURDAY 1-4



UNION CITY **\$778,888**
Beautiful 4bd/3ba has vaulted ceiling/newer carpet/tile kitchen floor/fresh paint in and out/bonus room/1bd/1ba down. Newly landscaped back yard/easy freeway access. 3001 Belize Way

MARK LAFFERTY BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$749,950**
This Del Prado home is absolutely gorgeous. Features include dual pane windows/plantation shutters/ beautiful swimming pool/ downstairs master has walk-in closet/formal LR/DR/central heat and air.

DORIAN GLANVILLE BY APPT



SAN LEANDRO **\$749,000**
Stunning panoramic views of the Bay from this lovely, light, airy single-story on a level lot on a quiet cul-de-sac in Bay O Vista. Neutral decor with fresh interior paint/new wall-to-wall carpet.

JOYCE JONES BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$735,000**
Updates Galore! 4bd/2.5ba, upstairs bonus room, updated kitchen with granite counters, Brazilian Cherry wood floors, Cherry cabinets, Plantation shutters, surround sound, plush yards and pool.

TIM MCGUIRE BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$729,000**
3bd 2ba 1815+/-sf home on a court one block from the sports park. New Island Kitchen with Quartz counters, maple cabinets.

JOYCE JONES BY APPOINTMENT



PLEASANTON **\$699,000**
4bd/3ba plus family/bonus room with pellet burning stove, kitchen features; granite slab counter tops, tumble stone backsplash, stainless appliances, alarm, indoor laundry, updated baths, side yard.

MARK LAFFERTY BY APPOINTMENT



LIVERMORE **\$549,950**
Beautiful Sunset West property with almost 2300+/-sf of living space. Beautiful features.

MARK LAFFERTY BY APPOINTMENT



LIVERMORE **\$519,950**
This Rhonewood property is absolutely beautiful! Some of the features include: Professionally landscaped yards, swimming pool, dual pane windows, newer 50 year roof and much more.

MARK LAFFERTY BY APPOINTMENT



LIVERMORE **\$509,950**
Beautiful Sunset West property. Features include updated baths/formal LR with bay window/custom two-tone paint/central heat and air/dual pane windows/plus a newer roof.

STASIA POIESZ OPEN SAT & SUN 1-4



LIVERMORE **\$369,000**
Gorgeous remodeled 3bd/2ba home. Over 1100+/-sf living space. 2 car garage and a great back yard. Move-in condition! 306 Clarke Ave

