

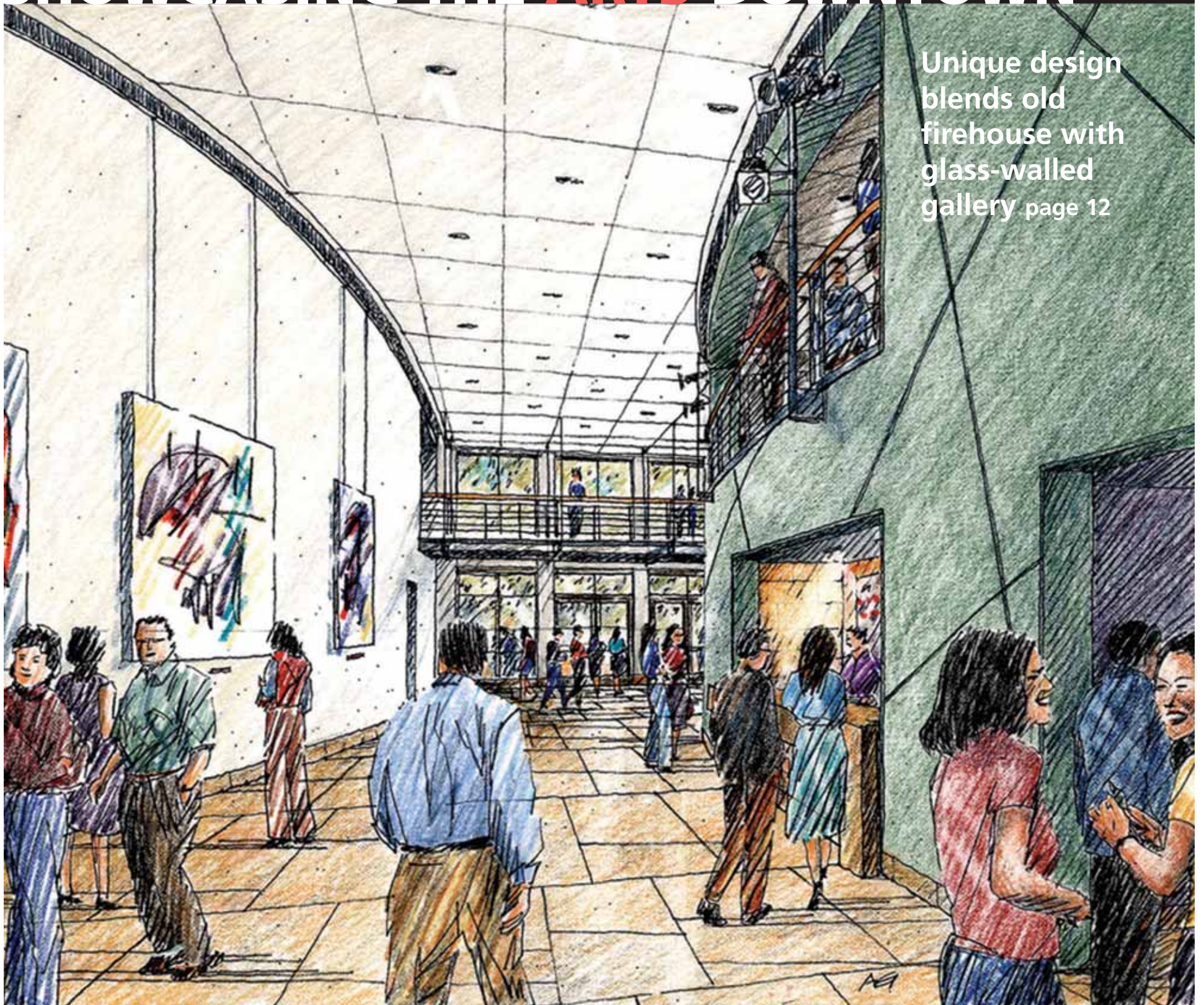
PLEASANTON WEEKLY

Vol. VII, Number 12 • April 21, 2006

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Unique design
blends old
firehouse with
glass-walled
gallery page 12

**INSIDE
this week**

Assasination plot

Game with fake guns
has parents worried

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Busy Council

Roundabouts, Stoneridge,
Staples Ranch all discussed

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Real treasure

Local woman wins
in national treasure hunt

Section 2

Critical thinking

Don't believe everything you
read about housing prices

page 30



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Around Pleasanton

by Jeb Bing

Award-winning TV30 needs room to grow

There was much fanfare last July as TV30, our local community television system, announced that it had hired 30-year veteran producer Glenn Davis to head the once-beleaguered system. Since then, the station has been revamped, hired experienced production and on-camera talent and recently won two prestigious Telly Awards, one for excellence in local broadcast news and the second to reporter Betty Yu for a news segment she hosted, entitled "Civil War Veterans." Using part of a one-time \$1.8-million grant the station received from Comcast and the four cities it serves—Pleasanton, Dublin, Livermore and San Ramon—Davis replaced TV30's old analog broadcast system and cameras given to the station years earlier by the Livermore Lab and Bay Area studios. If you haven't watched the new TV30's all-digital format, tune in to Channels 28, 29 and 30 to see how the new programming competes favorably with every other cable and network channel.

Now comes the tough part. The station is out of room and its future, indeed Davis' mission when he was hired, is to expand TV30's production work on infomercials to help pay more of its own way. Davis had counted on a new studio and production facility that were designed and ready to be built behind its current location in an old Village High School classroom. A new building along with two classrooms to be loaned to the station by the Pleasanton school district would cost \$1.3 million and were to provide two studios, larger production and editing rooms and much more. But when Davis looked at the plans, he found the local architect who did the work had used typical plans for a basic community television station. After two years of designing and obtaining the required state approvals, since the building would be located on a public school site, TV30 was going to gain only 1,200

more square feet. The new design, in fact, would add only 25 square feet to the control room, the essential part of a busy station such as Pleasanton's, and the configuration of the classrooms and new building would be worse than what the station has now.

TV30 isn't just any community television station. Many of these public broadcast systems around the country have almost no staff, are run by pushbuttons that air whatever canned videos local organizations have produced and serve as training grounds for high school students interested in video and media careers. The award-winning TV30, on the other hand, has popular and top-rated local programming, such as "In a Word," "Everything Local" and a four night-a-week local news show that covers events in the four-city area that no other television station carries. Whether it's cameras rolling at First Wednesday downtown street parties in Pleasanton or San Ramon festivals, TV30 crews are there in a new, all-digital, fully equipped TV30 van. City Council meetings in all four cities, many school board meetings and other government functions are also taped and aired by TV30, both live and rebroadcast at times convenient for viewers who want to see and hear what their local government is doing.

Before spending the \$1.3 million allocated for expansion, Davis and the TV30 board of directors need to explore other possibilities, such as the now-vacated Dublin Senior Center. As much as I'd hate to see TV30 move away from its roots, more space is essential if Davis and his talented crew are to do their job in giving all of us more first-rate productions and programming. The TV board meets next Thursday in the Dublin Civic Center. You can contact Glenn Davis and board members at www.tv30.org. ■



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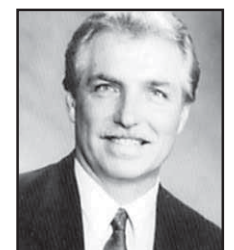
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About the Cover

This architecturally-striking glass, tile and steel lobby designed for the \$11-million Firehouse Arts Center planned for Railroad Avenue could be downtown Pleasanton's most contemporary-style building, but not without controversy. Although the City Council has approved final design work, critics say the architecture doesn't fit in with the city's historic downtown. Design by ELS Architecture and Urban Design of Berkeley.

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Streetwise

Q: How should the U.S. address illegal immigration?

Asked downtown



Doug Weiss

Owner of Petway

You really can't blame people for trying to make a better life for themselves. Some of the conditions they are fleeing are pretty awful and the U.S. has so much to offer. On the other hand, the illegal immigrants affect our economy and take jobs. It's a tough issue.

Kevin O'Sullivan

Firefighter

We should grant amnesty to the people already here doing the jobs no one else wants to do. Then we need to tighten up the border security and follow the proper process to enter the country.



Kathy Jackson

Fulltime Mom

I think the government needs to enforce the law or change it. Otherwise, we're simply circumventing the democratic process. We should issue temporary work visas so we know where and who they are. Tax their income so they can support the system they are drawing on. Tightening up the borders will also strengthen our national security.

Ignacio Jimenez

Checker at Safeway

I think the government should give temporary visas for people to work in the U.S. If people had visas they wouldn't have to come illegally, they could come and work and help their families.



Lorena Sandoval

Retired

Illegal immigrants do a lot of necessary work in the U.S. I think the ones living here should be given legal status. Many people, especially from Latin American countries, are fleeing because of political corruption in their countries. People come here because they have to survive.

2006-2007
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Have a Streetwise question? E-mail: editor@PleasantonWeekly.com
Compiled by Sandy Christman

Newsfront

News Digest

Library book sale

The Friends of the Pleasanton Public Library will host a spring book sale Friday through Sunday, May 5-7, in the library's main meeting room. The Friday night sale will run from 7-9 p.m. and is for members of the Friends group only, although the public can participate that evening by joining the organization at the door. The sale is open to the general public is from 10 a.m.—4 p.m. Saturday and from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday.

More than 40,000 donated books of all types from bestsellers to biographies to children's picture books will be for sale with paperbacks costing 50 cents and hardbacks and trade backs \$1. Videos also will be offered for sale.

The Friends of the Pleasanton Library is a nonprofit organization created to support the Library. All revenues from the book sale will go to purchase new library materials, programs or equipment. For more information, contact Nancy Bering at 462-4368.

Career Fair

Las Positas College and the Tri-Valley One-Stop Career Center are hosting a free Career Information and Employment Fair Tuesday, April 25 at the Las Positas College Student Center, Building 1700. From 10:35 a.m.-2 p.m., students and community members will have the chance to meet with prospective employers and hand out their resumes. Featured employers include 24-Hour-Fitness, Dynamic Office & Accounting Solutions, Hacienda Child Development Center, HFC member-KSBC Consumer Lending Group, Nellcor/Tyco Healthcare, Nobis Financial Group, the San Ramon Valley School District and more. Visit www.laspositascollege.edu/employmentcenter/employmentfair.php for a complete list. Call Katherine Dizon at 485-5272 for more information.

Earth Day

Zone 7 Water Agency and the city of Pleasanton are sponsoring an Earth Day event at the Pleasanton Public Library Saturday, April 22 from 1-5 p.m. Families will learn why water conservation is critical, how local storm water systems work, the importance of groundwater and how to fight pests and grow great plants.

Bernal plan heads to planners Wednesday

Illustrative' map could go to voters Nov. 7

by Jeb Bing

A revised and possibly final conceptual plan for developing the 318-acre public land known as the Bernal property will be considered by the city Planning Commission at 7 p.m. next Wednesday, the latest public hearing as the plan heads for voter approval on Nov. 7.

The public probably won't see many of the hundreds of pages of detailed planning documents, maps, charts and lists that are in three basic booklets that provide direction for how the property could be used. For certain, all the homes and apartments allowed on the 516-acre total Bernal property are built or under construction, with most of them occupied. An additional 750,000 square feet of office space in a proposed four-story-high, eight-building complex at the

southwest edge of the property, alongside I-680, has not been built, although South Bay Construction still has city permits to build the structures once the market for new office space improves.

The public lands were given to the city free of charge by a consortium of developers, led by Greenbriar Homes, which bought the property from its longtime owner, the city and county of San Francisco. Ever since, task forces, commissions and committees have held scores of pub-

lic hearings on how to develop the public site. A voter-approved referendum in 2002 ruled that no more housing would be allowed on the property, even low-income, affordable or senior housing as some groups had proposed.

Today, as a conceptual plan for Bernal moves forward, only one use has been approved by the council: three baseball fields in what will be a 10-field sports park on

(continued on page 9)

Playing with pigs



Rebecca Guyon

Justine Lui-Kwon (left) and fellow preschool students at Carden West Elementary School have fun playing with pigs brought to the school by Abbie 4-H President Jamie Heiman, a senior at Amador Valley High School. Jamie's mother, Gayli, is a pre-K teacher at Carden West. The mother-daughter team has set up this day-long "pig pen" for the past five years, ever since Jamie got involved with raising pigs, to teach the students about farm life. "Being a 'farm kid' I wanted to promote farm life to these 'city kids,'" Gayli said. Students meet the real pigs while they are learning about farm animals in class. This year's pigs, who are currently unnamed but affectionately called "Shake 'n Bake," came from Jaime's grandfather's farm in South Dakota. She is raising them to enter in the Alameda County Fair.

Assassins descend on Pleasanton

Shooting game has police, school officials worried

by Rebecca Guyon

While many students spent this past week enjoying their spring break by hanging out with friends or going on family vacations, a group of high school students spent the time learning how to be "assassins." Also known as "Killers" or "Paranoia", "Assassin" is a live-action role playing game where players try to "kill" each other by shooting an assigned target with a water or other type of toy gun. The goal is to be the last surviving assassin. Originally played on college campuses as an orientation week game, several large-scale games have been organized in San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, and now, Pleasanton.

Students from the senior and

junior classes of Foothill High School have organized and are currently engaged in a game of Assassin, according to a web page devoted to the game on the Web site MySpace.com. The page is named "Assassin FHS" and has a photo of the sign in front of Foothill High School posted. Students formed teams of two and every team name, along with the first and last name of the team members, are posted on the site. According to the site, there are 52 teams playing, meaning 104 students are engaged in the game.

Although the page does not say when the game officially started, the last login date is listed as April 17, 2006 and there is a "score board" listing what teams have made "kills" so far.

There is a long list of rules assigned to the game, rules that

include no playing on school campus, at school events, at places of employment and after 7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays with game play resuming at 6 a.m. the following morning. Players are also not allowed to break into any homes or shoot someone in a car, parked or not. According to the web page, each player is required to use a "black rubber bullet" gun and it directs students to purchase the gun at the "liquor store next to Cosmos Barber Shop." Each team must also put in \$14 to play and at the end the money is distributed to the organizers, two students from Foothill, who take 25 percent of the pot and the rest of the money is distributed to the winning teams with first place taking 45 percent, second place taking 20 percent and third place taking 10 percent.

Foothill Vice Principal Matt Campbell said he first heard about Foothill students organizing an Assassin game two weeks ago when a student casually asked him during lunch what he thought about it.

"I started asking questions, but the students were pretty quiet about it," Campbell said. "They try to be quiet about it because it's a game that's played in the shadows of our community."

Campbell said he had no idea how many students were involved with the game or if it's still going on. School Resource Officer Van Rader said he thought 15-20 students are playing, although he has not seen any students engaged in the game. Amador Valley High

(continued on page 6)

Here's the scoop.

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This industry report shows clearly how the traditional ways of selling homes have become increasingly less and less effective in today's market. The fact of the matter is that fully three quarters of home sellers don't get what they want for their home and become disillusioned and – worse – financially disadvantaged when they put their home on the market.

As this report uncovers, most home sellers make

seven deadly mistakes that cost them literally thousands of dollars. The good news is that each and every one of these mistakes is entirely preventable.

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Go Green garden is a hit

Valley View students learn about plants in 'outdoor science lab'

by Rebecca Guyon

Students at Valley View Elementary School will be thrilled when our rainy weather wraps up, and not just because it means they can return to the playground during recess. After a year of planning, the school is opening a school-wide garden as part of the Go Green Initiative. The garden, which will be formally dedicated next Wednesday, is part of an integrated curriculum plan, allowing students to study the science of plants with hands on learning.

"I think (the garden) brings a richer education experience because everything is hands on," said Patty Ingram, the Go Green coordinator for Valley View and a parent of three students in the school. "We've named it the 'outdoor science lab.' It's a good tool for us to have on campus."

Each grade level has a section of the garden to use however they'd like, said Ruth Gray, a parent volunteer garden coordinator. Some grade levels decided to split their area by class and others are working together to plant a cohesive space. The garden is filled with a mixture of flowers, herbs and vegetables, all chosen and planted by the students. Because the garden is part of Go Green, a national program started in Pleasanton that teaches students environmental awareness through school activities, the garden is maintained through natural pest control methods and there are plans to include a compost pile and worm farm once the project is further along.



Delaney Gray and Saoirse Dwyer, students in Gabriella Sullivan's third grade class at Valley View Elementary School, work in the Go Green garden.

Ruth Gray

"I don't think many of the students had really been in a garden before, judging by how many were freaked out by the worms," Gray said. "But they are having fun out there. Some might not get the opportunity to work in a garden except here."

Although the garden is geared toward science curriculum, teachers may also use it in other subjects by having students sit in the garden and write in their journals or have them write an essay about what they've learned.

The project started a year ago after a parent suggested building a school-wide garden during a Go Green meeting. Valley View already had a small garden, but it was mostly used by the kindergarten students, Ingram said. Parents at the meeting loved the idea and Valley View Principal Charles Young was very supportive of the project. The

Go Green committee presented the idea to all the Valley View teachers to see if they were interested since they'd be mostly responsible for its upkeep. Of course, they were all excited and on board with the project, Ingram said, so plans were drawn and the garden was under-way.

The garden beds were built and filled with dirt a few months later by a Boy Scout from Troop 943 as part of his Eagle Scout project. A Boy Scout from that same troop later put in benches, planted a tree and put in a pathway, also for his Eagle Scout project. The work of both scouts was a huge help in getting the garden done, Ingram said. Now, students are already starting to plant in the garden with their classes.

"If you could see the kids when they go into the garden, they're so

(continued on page 9)

Assassins

(continued from page 5)

School Vice Principals Greg Giglio, Estella Santos and Rick Sira wrote in separate e-mails that they had not heard of Amador students playing the game, but such activities would not be tolerated on campus.

"The only thing the school can do about it is, if we hear any activity happening on campus, make sure the students are held accountable for

playing on campus," Campbell said. "But as long as they do it off campus, not during school time, all we can do is inform them that it's not a game we think they should play."

While many parents may not be familiar with the game, it has actually been around for years. Campbell said that a group of Foothill students successfully organized a game two years ago, but he didn't know how many students were involved or how long the game went on. In fact, Rader said that students from all three high schools used to frequently organize games, but the appeal waned as the police department made an effort to inform the students about its possible dangers.

Interest seems to have picked up again as Assassin recently gained national attention with its popularity among adults, most of whom work regular jobs and live comfortable lives. These large-scale, city-wide adult games are organized via a Web site titled "StreetWars: Killer" where players sign up and then receive information about their "target."

According to the FHS Assassin game's web page, the idea came from a group of students at Amador.

"It was started by people at Amador and, props to them it's a great idea so we decided to do it for

Foothill," the page reads. Rules for the game are also cited as coming from "Shotty's Assassin page at Amador," however that page is no longer posted on MySpace.com.

Campbell said that even if the activity is not happening on campus, school officials are concerned about students playing the game.

"When we have students out in the community who are bringing out a gun and nobody else in the community knows what's going on, people could have a serious reaction to it and call the police," he said.

If students are found brandishing a toy gun, they could potentially be arrested for possession of a look-a-like weapon, Rader said. Other dangers include being arrested for trespassing or, in the case of games that use an air soft gun, a gun that shoots plastic pellets, students could be injured. The FHS Assassin game's page specifically says students are not allowed to use air soft guns. No one has been arrested during a game in Pleasanton for these offenses, but Rader said he knew of it happening in other communities.

"Even though the students think it's done on their time, they are playing it in neighborhoods and I do think guns brought out in public could have serious repercussions," Campbell said. ■

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Council votes to OK auto mall, Staples Ranch plan

Agreement keeps Stoneridge extension option open

by Jeb Bing

The City Council approved two controversial measures with unexpected ease Tuesday—one to determine the cost of ripping out the Vineyard Avenue roundabouts and the other to keep a right-of-way in place for extending Stoneridge Drive to Livermore if a future council decides to make that move.

More than 2,200 residents who drive on Vineyard Avenue were sent notices of the council meeting, but only Ruby Hill homeowner Dan Carl spoke at the meeting. Using a chart, he showed that 50 percent of the vehicle accidents on Vineyard between Ruby Hill and Montevino Drive occurred at one of the street's two roundabouts. He called them "dangerous" and urged that they be removed.

But Councilman Matt Sullivan disagreed. He said the accidents were speed-related and had the motorists slowed down to the 10-15 mph speed recommended for rounding the circles, there would have been no accidents.

"I have driven that road many times and have no trouble navigating those circles," Sullivan said. "My daughter who has a learner's permit also has no problem."

"We're going to have people going 65 mph down that road," he added. "If we have accidents then, it's really going to be nasty. If we really are concerned about safety, then we should only remove those roundabouts if we put something else there to control traffic."

Mayor Jennifer Hosterman agreed.

She reminded the council that the roundabouts were installed to provide smoother access to Neal Elementary School. Traffic engineers said at the time that they would allow school traffic to move into and out of the two Thiessen Street intersections without stopping, where a traffic light would lead to traffic backups during peak hours.

Neal School has not yet been built, and drivers have protested that the circles are not needed now, and may never be needed if Neal isn't built.

"I've had a number of discussions with Dr. Casey (the Pleasanton school superintendent) and he assures me that Neal School will be built, it's just a question of when," Hosterman said.

In the end, Council members Jerry Thorne, Cindy McGovern and Steve Brozosky prevailed in a 3-2 vote to ask Public Works Director Rob Wilson to prepare construction plans. Wilson will then seek bids to take out the roundabouts and repair Old Vineyard Avenue temporarily as a detour while the two-to-three month roundabout project is underway.

The council will consider the issue again in May or June when the bids are submitted, showing how much the project will cost.

In other action, the council agreed unanimously to sign a "Memorandum of Understanding" with Alameda County to proceed with plans to buy and annex the 124-acre Staples Ranch site at the eastern edge of the city.

The move will allow Pleasanton to re-zone the land to provide a 36-acre auto mall, a 45-acre, 800-unit senior care facility, a 17-acre site for retail business and offices and

another 17-acre site for use as a public park or sports fields.

The agreement also requires that the city keep a right-of-way for a four-lane extension of Stoneridge Drive to El Charro Road and Livermore. Although all members of the council have said they plan to delete the proposed extension from the new General Plan that they are updating, the county agreement would keep the right-of-way in place in case a future council votes to restore the extension plan.

The auto mall will provide space for Hendrick Auto to build a larger sales and service facility near El Charro Road and I-580. The dealership, whose business provides an estimated \$2 million in tax revenue to the city, told officials last year that it would have to find a business site outside of Pleasanton if the Staples Ranch auto mall could not be built. ■



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Emergency

(continued from page 5)

ValleyCare's ER is 4,000 square feet. The lack of space means that patients are forced to wait on gurneys in hospital hallways outside of the ER 26 days out of every month.

The project, which would be completed in three phases, would expand the space to the recommended 10,000 square feet, increase treatment areas from 12 to 23, add two private registration stations and expand the waiting area to accommodate seating for 30 people. By staggering each project, the ER will be able to stay open throughout the construction.

Alameda County has already pledged \$1 million of Measure A funds, which was passed in 2004, to the project. That means ValleyCare still needs to raise \$5.7 million.

Community members, companies and organizations can contribute to the project by making a donation or pledge of financial assistance. Contact Ken Mercer, vice president of the ValleyCare Foundation, at 373-4566 for more information or visit www.valleycare.com.

—Rebecca Guyon

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D.A.R.E. officer reflects on students and drugs

Training conference brings officers to Pleasanton

by Rebecca Guyon

Every community is affected by drugs, and as Pleasanton's D.A.R.E. officers know, our community is not 100 percent drug free. However, it is rare that the DARE officers will encounter children in the fifth grade classes they teach who had direct exposure to serious drugs. That's not the case for Happy Snodgrass, a DARE officer in Hemet, Calif., who said many of her students have parents who have been arrested for narcotic use and possession.

Snodgrass was one of more than 200 California DARE officers who met in Pleasanton this week for the annual California DARE In-Service Training. While in Pleasanton, Snodgrass spoke with the Pleasanton Weekly about the work she does to help students make healthy choices, even when they are surrounded by adults who are not doing the same.

Hemet is a city in Southern California about 100 miles east of Los Angeles located in Central Riverside County and is part of what is considered the Inland Empire Region, one of the fastest growing regions in the country. As of 2005, Hemet's population is 66,455, but it continues to grow as people from Orange and San Diego counties move in to escape expensive housing prices. Hemet, however, is not a rich town. In

2002, the median housing income was \$28,875. While low-income is not synonymous with increased drug use, Snodgrass has worked with many students who, even at the age of 10, already know about drugs and addiction.

"It's frustrating when I hear critics of DARE say it's ineffective because they don't take into account the number of students who come from households where addiction is the norm," she said. "When you teach a child that dependence on alcohol, drugs and tobacco is negative and then they go home and mommy and/or daddy are using these things, it's a fine line to walk to try to explain to these kids that people who are doing these things are making unhealthy choices when 'these people' are the parents who they love."

Snodgrass handles these situations by focusing on the action instead of the people who do it.

"I focus on the behavior," she said. "I don't say the people are evil or nasty, but that they make bad choices and even people we love can make bad choices." The hope is that the students will then be able to make choices for themselves that will put their lives in the right direction, she added.

Sometimes, especially in the case of tobacco addiction, parents can benefit as much from DARE as the students.

"I have had a few parents each year come and thank me for what I'd taught their child because it encouraged them to stop smoking," Snodgrass said.

However, parents can sometimes do more harm than good. Snodgrass remembers a student who came up to her after a class on the effect of alcohol on the body. The student was worried about how alcohol could affect his development. As the conversation went on, the student said his mother had given him alcohol when he was young and was arrested and in jail for that behavior.

"By the time he was 5 years old he had consumed alcohol on more than one occasion because it was given to him," she said. Snodgrass talked with the student about how it could possibly affect his development, but that what had happened was out of his control and now he could make better decisions for himself. "In some ways it was a good thing because he had a greater appreciation for how important it is to make good decisions," she said.

Whether teaching DARE in Pleasanton, Hemet or any other town in the U.S., DARE officers hope to teach students the importance of decision making.

"The common theme through out all the DARE programs is to empower kids to make better choices," she said. ■

Drugs in downtown Pleasanton

Police suspect teens use, sell drugs at local home

While Pleasanton may not have as dramatic a drug problem as other cities, drugs are still present. In fact, police are currently running surveillance on a duplex at the intersection of Division and Anderson streets that has reportedly be a site where teens and young adults are using and purchasing marijuana, said Sergeant Don Saulsbury who leads the police department's special investigations unit.

Police first started watching the house two months ago after receiving a tip from Officer Mike Steiner, the school resource officer for Amador Valley High School, and receiving calls from neighbors, Saulsbury said. Patrol officers drove by the house and said they observed about 10 students ages 16-20 coming in and out of the house in the late afternoon hours.

"They come in after school to

meet a friend, score some dope and party," Saulsbury said.

Two teens, both 16 years old and from Pleasanton, were arrested in front of the house on April 7 for possession of marijuana, but because they are juveniles, their names cannot be released.

Police are also investigating whether methamphetamines are being sold and used in the duplex, Saulsbury said.

—Rebecca Guyon

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Bernal

(continued from page 5)

the eastern edge of the site near the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. Work on those fields, two to be lighted for league play and one designated as a practice field, will begin this fall with the first games likely to be played late next year.

"I call it an illustrative plan," said consultant Wayne Rasmussen, who is a former principal planner for Pleasanton. Pointing to different sectors of the plan, he showed sites designated for a cultural arts center, community center, teen center, 4-H club demonstration farm, wetlands, meadows and picnic grounds.

Prepared by San Francisco land use architect Michael Fotheringham, the main planning document, the Bernal Property Phase II Specific Plan, identifies sites that could be developed as trails, marshland, an amphitheater, picnic areas and even a community vegetable garden.

"Over the years of discussion, we've had many proposals for this property," Rasmussen said. He recalled one public hearing on a hot August night at the Pleasanton Senior Center when a Tri-Valley hockey team, in full uniform, pleaded with planners to build an ice rink on Bernal. Others cited the need for a public cemetery, sug-



Planning consultant Wayne Rasmussen shows illustrative Bernal Park site map going to Planning Commission Wednesday.

gesting a 15-acre hillside behind the Applied Biosystems complex off Sunol Boulevard.

"In the end," Rasmussen said, "people told us that they wanted Bernal to be a community park with the look and feel of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. That's what Fotheringham has designed for us."

The master plan for Bernal shows the proposed cultural arts center at the northeast corner, near Bernal Avenue and the railroad tracks, with the sports fields and amphitheater extending south towards Valley Avenue, which is now being built through the Bernal property. Pleasanton Avenue, which now ends at Bernal Avenue, will be extended into the park and run alongside the sports fields to

connect to Valley Avenue. Large meadows will protect the homes and apartments west of the lighted sports fields, with a lake planned between Valley Avenue and the 680 freeway.

Although no commercial developments will be allowed on the public park site, Rasmussen said some agricultural land could be leased out to local restaurants that might want to grow their own produce there, much like Mudd's Restaurant does in San Ramon. Other uses could be designated for nonprofit groups to sell Christmas trees or pumpkins for Halloween.

In their final planning documents, city planners, Rasmussen and Fotheringham left no room for an ACE train station, which County Supervisor Scott Haggerty has long asked the city to move from the county Fairgrounds parking lot.

Rasmussen told a Pleasanton Chamber government affairs committee last week that the ACE station will have to stay where it is or be relocated elsewhere. One suggested site is at Valley Avenue near Stanley Boulevard.

After the Planning Commission meeting next Wednesday, the Bernal planning documents will be reviewed again by various other city and civic committees and commissions before having a final review by the City Council in June. ■

Go Green

(continued from page 6)

happy; they just love it," Ingram said.

Funding for the garden, which cost more than \$10,000, came from several sources. The Altamont Settlement Agreement Advisory Board awarded the school a \$4,500 education grant and the Pleasanton Schools Education Enrichment Foundation awarded the project \$1,700. The rest of the money came from Valley View's Go Green fund and the Parent Faculty Club. Monies for the project go toward buying plants, tools and other supplies needed to get the garden started, Ingram said.

Volunteers are also needed to help students in the garden and the school is hoping parents will want to pitch in.

"We're trying to work it where

there is a 'garden mom' for each classroom," Gray said. "We're hoping that as more people know about it and as their children walk them in and show them what they're doing, that's when the light bulb

will go off and more people will get involved."

As the weather clears up and the plants start growing, students, teachers and parents can't wait to see what the garden will provide. ■

Take Us Along

Art and print

Nancee Consos reads the Weekly at the home of Vincent van Gogh during her trip to Arles, France.



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Opinion

Editorial

We can make our schools even better

School Superintendent John Casey, in speaking last week to the Valley Marketing Association of Realtors and next month to a Chamber of Commerce committee, is fast-becoming the school district's chief lobbyist for proposals being advanced by its Excellence Committee. And with good reason. While Pleasanton schools score near the top in academic achievement rankings statewide, Casey and his team of highly-rated educators believe, just like leading industries, that you never settle for the status quo. The committee, formed last October and made up of a wide range of stakeholders, has been charged with identifying policies, programs and practices which would enhance services to students across the district. Although it was recognized that Pleasanton is a high performing district, Casey believes it can be even better. In their report, the committee lists 22 priorities, a list that includes items such as adding "Site Managers at Middle & High Schools" at a cost of up to \$562,641 and "Class Size Reduction in Science & History 6-12 Grades," which would cost \$2,088,166. Other priorities include world language teachers for elementary schools, credentialed librarians for the district's three middle schools and expansion of vocational education and ROP programs.

Our favorites are adding more counselors at all of our schools, beefing up technology programs and equipment, which we all know is a continuing updating need, and class size reduction. Anyone with children in kindergarten through the third grade in Pleasanton schools knows how valuable the district's 20 to 1 student-to-teacher ratio is for a child's learning experience. Many of us were among 30 or more classmates when we were in those grades, and most K-3 grades in California and other states still have those numbers, even more. The Excellence

Committee believes that it is intuitively clear that students benefit from smaller class size, that teachers have more opportunity to meet individual students' needs and that even the most shy or withdrawn student is more likely to participate in class and group activities in a smaller class environment. Now the committee, with Casey's support, wants to cut class sizes to 25 in the fourth and fifth grades, and to an average of 25 in English and math classes in middle schools and high schools.

The counselor shortfall in Pleasanton is deplorable with the only caveat that it's even worse in other districts. After the state budget crunch cut finances several years ago, counselors along with art teachers and teacher aides were among the first to be dismissed. The fiscal conservative policies of the Pleasanton district allowed reserve funds to be used to keep employment steady. Now, Casey believes, is the time to improve the ratios, which for Pleasanton high schools is now 695 students for every one counselor. Do your math on this one if you have a high school student who almost never sees a counselor. There isn't enough time in the school year to make the rounds, which usually means that the brightest, most gifted students never have a chance to sit with a skilled professional to talk about future careers and college programs. The Excellence Committee wants to improve those ratios to 350:1 at Amador Valley and Foothill high schools, 200:1 at Village High, 400:1 at the middle schools and to hire a fulltime counselor at each of our nine elementary schools. The cost: \$1.3 million.

To become better, our schools need much more, which is why we're glad to see Casey on the speaking circuit to spell out the proposals, including the school board's plan for a tax hike to cover the costs.

Letters

Close gap first

Dear Editor,

Issue: Pleasanton Weekly March 31, 2006.

Topic: Pleasanton Unified School Board 55-member Committee!

Priorities: It seems incredible that this committee has presented a wish list to the school board which will require a new parcel tax for Pleasanton residents (News, "Board reviews top priorities for improving schools") and does not include on the list a goal to close the academic achievement gap of the school district as measured against the national NAEP results (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc/reading_math_2005). These national scores, which indicate comparisons of all participating schools in the nation, show the California public schools on a par with states like Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and 20 plus points behind the leading states of Massachusetts, Delaware, New Jersey and Minnesota, in reading and math for eighth graders. The PUSD Superintendent loves to publicize how well the district is performing on the annual API California Dept. of Education tests but never mentions comparisons to the national results. It ain't pretty! So I would ask the committee of 55 to establish a new number one priority and forget about counselors, class size reduction (already discredited as insignificant), technology support, etc., until the district is in a position to point to increased success in reading and math compared to the best of the national districts. And a new tax shouldn't

be required to accomplish reading and math goals, which most residents will agree are current expectations of the school district.

Joe McAdams
Pleasanton

Many special interests

Dear Editor,

I was mystified by your choice of projects to criticize in your editorial on April 7, 2006 ("Special interest spending has to stop"). Why would you go after such a small potato item as Kottinger Creek? I am surprised that you did not single out the new golf course. The World Golf Foundation estimates there are about 26 million golfers in the United States. That is 8.7 percent of the national population. The Foundation also lists golf as the 12th most popular leisure time activity in America. It came in right after weight lifting.

In my view, those facts certainly qualify golf as nothing more than a special interest, but we saw fit to spend \$25 or \$30 million on Callippe Preserve.

We have also spent millions on youth sports parks. I consider those a special interest item also. One I happen to make use of. Not everyone in town believes those were essential. I happen to think they are far more essential than Callippe Preserve. I suspect, however, a lot of Pleasanton residents wish we had neither of those because they are both special interests.

The Friends of Kottinger Creek are not working to restore the creek to the condition of 100 years ago. They are working to undo the damage the city has done to the creek over the last 40 years. I have witnessed the destruction of the creek by one poor decision after another over that time. It is time for the city to put things right.

Mark E. Smith
Pleasanton

Guest Opinion

One Pleasanton

by Don Odell and Dave Bouchard

Pleasanton has over 67,000 residents and 50 plus neighborhoods. Residents in each of these neighborhoods have interests that are of importance to them for their quality of life. The question is how do we, as a community, respond to the needs of each neighborhood and still address the overall quality of life in our wonderful city?

Believe it or not, the answer is probably no more complicated and just as simple as how we address issues in our families. Take for example family vacations. We've all had the experience of trying to decide what to do for the family vacation. The parents are searching for somewhere to go where they can relax and enjoy some peace and quiet from their everyday hectic lives. The youngest child wants to go somewhere she can be entertained and preferably bring a friend so that the anticipated boredom of quality family time can be avoided. The oldest child sees no reason at all why she has to go. After all, now that she can drive she should be trusted to stay home and be with her friends. When it's explained to the youngest that a friend will not be appropriate, the response is that you never loved her anyway and this is further proof of that truth. When it is explained to the oldest one that it is important that she be with the family as the time for the family to be together is limited, the response is that you have never trusted her. In the end the decision is made taking into consideration everyone's issues; the family goes on their vacation and the end result is that everyone enjoys themselves and comes back ready to address the next crisis.

What we learn from this experience is that even though people have their own self-interest and

sometimes those interests appear to be in direct conflict, the family that survives is the one that puts those interests aside, compromises where needed and moves forward.

Our city needs to take a lesson from the family vacation. It's true that each neighborhood has special interests and needs. To the maximum extent possible the rest of the City needs to be aware of those issues and try to address them so that the neighborhood has the quality of life they reasonably anticipate and desire. However, each neighborhood must realize that sometimes what they want conflicts with what is good for the city as a whole. In those cases, the neighborhoods need to be willing to work with others to assure that the quality of life for the entire city is preserved and promoted.

In the end, we are one community made up of many families. When the community as a whole advances and improves, those advancements and improvements flow to every citizen. We encourage spirited and healthy debate on the issues and decisions based on what is best for the affected neighborhoods unless the issue transcends neighborhoods and has city-wide impacts. In those cases, we would like to see the common good promoted with as much sensitivity as possible to neighborhood impact. Just like the family vacation, we need to move forward and address the next issue as One Pleasanton. ■

Don Odell is Chairman of the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce and a partner with the law firm McNichols, Randick, O'Dea & Tooliatos in Pleasanton. Dave Bouchard is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber.



Your Turn

The Pleasanton Weekly encourages comments on our coverage or on issues of local interest. No anonymous letters or "open letters" to other organizations or individuals will be printed. Please provide your name, street address and daytime telephone number. Please keep length to 250 words or less. We reserve the right to edit contributions for length and style and for factual errors known to us.

Letters: Mail or hand deliver to Pleasanton Weekly, 5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite 100, Pleasanton, CA 94566

Fax: (925) 600-9559 **E-mail:** editor@PleasantonWeekly.com

Code of ethics The Pleasanton Weekly seeks to adhere to the highest level of ethical standards in journalism, including the Code of Ethics adopted Sept. 21, 1996, by the Society of Professional Journalists. To review the text of the Code, please visit our web site at www.PleasantonWeekly.com

Hau'oli Piha makahiki, la ho'mana'o *

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Unique design blends old firehouse with glass-walled gallery

by Jeb Bing



SHOWCASING THE ARTS

A unique design for the proposed \$11-million Firehouse Arts Center that will blend historic and modern glass and steel architecture unlike any other building in downtown Pleasanton has been approved by the City Council.

The action, which was not without its critics, was the final step in allowing ELS Architecture and Urban Design to move forward on construction plans for the Railroad Avenue theater and art center, which planners hope to have ready in November for public bids from contractors. Only then will the actual cost of the project be known.

"Seeing this design plan for the first time, I think there's too much monolithic glass," complained Charles Clark. "It looks like something you would find in Hacienda Business Park, not downtown."

But others, including representatives of the Pleasanton Downtown Association, Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce, Cultural Arts Committee and John Loll, who would use the facility for a children's theater company that he wants to establish here, praised both the design and the project.

"This project will bring people to dine, shop and hang out in our downtown, and that's what we all want," said Judy Wheeler Ditter, president of the PDA and owner of Towne Center Books on Main Street. "We don't want to do anything that would delay this project or increase its costs."

The downtown art center has been a dream of the Pleasanton arts community for more than a decade, starting with a commitment by the Downtown Parks and Trails Committee in the 1990s to convert the historic fire station into public uses if the facility was vacated. It also became part of the Downtown Specific Plan. Efforts to make use of the building intensified after the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department moved its headquarters to a new facility on Bernal Avenue at Nevada Street and Fire Station No. 4 moved into a new station on Bernal last year across from the Fairgrounds.

Unlike building an arts center or theater from the ground up, ELS said the renovation of the historic firehouse could be more costly. In its final design, the Berkeley architectural firm calls for renovating the 2,450-square-foot original firehouse, demolishing the rest of the building that was constructed in the 1960s and then adding a 20,263-square-foot

addition for theater, gallery display, classrooms and support functions.

Most striking, or controversial depending on which side of the architectural fence you're on, are the lobby and art display center that consist of curved walls and all-glass exteriors. To be located at the end of Division Street, the lobby and art displays can be seen from Main Street on the west and Lions Wayside Park on the east with uninterrupted views of Main and First streets through the glass enclosure.

Most striking, or controversial depending on which side of the architectural fence you're on, are the lobby and art display center that consist of curved walls and all-glass exteriors.

ELS architects Kurt Schindler and Ed Noland said the rest of the building will include wood and a roughened texture of plaster that would be hand-molded to the design and color of the original firehouse brick. Because the brick was manufactured locally by a firm no longer in business, the architects said it would be difficult and very expensive to try to duplicate the old brick for use on the addition.

They said the glazed lobby would align with the east end of Division Street and become the focal point for pedestrians and patrons as they walk toward the center. The Lions Wayside Park side of the new arts center is designed with a curvilinear wall that will be clad with tongue and groove vertical cedar siding that will be designed to tie the different architecture together as viewed from the landscaped park. The wood is expected to enhance the historic brick colors of the old firehouse.

The Firehouse Arts Center will provide the city with a:

- 240-seat theater with flexible seating, to be used for youth theater productions, chamber music,

small dramatic productions, musical concerts, lectures, literary events, community meetings and film and video presentations.

- Art Gallery designed to display all forms of fine art. The gallery would be operated to support local arts organizations and its members and would also be designed to achieve a reasonable level of museum and gallery accreditation.
- Classrooms for multiple applications, including dedicated arts workshops, fine arts and crafts classes, rehearsals, meetings and lectures.
- Box office to support events at the center and possible to serve as a central downtown box office for community organizations and events, much as the old Lions ticket office did on Neal Street.
- Public restroom facilities, designed to serve those visiting the art center and gallery and also open to the public during the regular hours of the center.

Although a majority of council members voted to accept ELS's final design proposal, Councilman Matt Sullivan said no, siding with those who felt the modern glass and steel lobby and art gallery were too different a design for Pleasanton's historic downtown.

"I'd like to see something that's more of a classic design or that better meets the downtown design guidelines," Sullivan said.

Although he praised the project as a "significant asset" to the community and the downtown, he suggested taking more time before approving the final plan to make sure it followed the same careful review process that the city requires of other projects.

Councilwoman Cindy McGovern agreed. She urged that the project be subjected to the same review process by having the city's architectural review consultant Larry Cannon consider the design plans.

Local architect Charles Huff said that the design process for the project failed to go through the same rigorous reviews that he and other architects and developers must do before gaining city planning department approvals.

"I would like to see this design scaled down a little bit in terms of how it relates to Railroad Avenue and the business district in front of it," Huff said. "I would also like to see more use of brick and some semblance of architectural design that looks like the

original firehouse, some orientating buildings together."

"I think we should step back and go back to the city staff and have it go through a review process that other projects have added.

But others said they were pleased with the proposed design and don't want it delayed.

"This design is absolutely gorgeous," said Jennifer Hosterman. "Sure, it doesn't look like any other building in downtown Pleasanton should it. It's a very different kind of function with a different kind of function. It will help us re-imagine our downtown and go a long way toward our downtown core and provide a focal point between Railroad Avenue and Main Street."

Councilman Steve Brozosky said that construction costs continually increase and should move forward with the design and up construction bids as quickly as possible.

"This project showcases the city's vision of what it was intended to do," Brozosky said. "If you walk down Main Street, you will see a building and want to go down Division Street. It is. It is planned as an arts center and will be an economic engine to downtown Pleasanton. I'm excited about it."

Greg Reznick, president of the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Foundation, said his group has donated \$1 million toward the estimated \$11-million Firehouse Arts Center and theater building. The city government has already spent the other \$8.8 million.

Besides the cost of building the center, operating expenses are projected to be included in the costs of the project. The project will provide a path from Lions Wayside Park to provide access to the arts center and its relationship to the Alameda County-owned corridor, which will be needed for the arts center.

For more information on the project, contact Greg Reznick by e-mail at greg@pleasantonartsfoundation.org or visit the organization's website at www.pleasantonartsfoundation.org.



DOWNTOWN

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This rendering of the proposed design for the Firehouse Arts Center (above) illustrates plans to change the entire look of the firehouse, including adding a glass wall to showcase an art display and lobby. The project is estimated to cost \$10.8 million. The art center will occupy the building that once housed a Livermore-Pleasanton fire station, pictured below circa 1958 when it was a fully operating firehouse.



P.F.D. 1958
4444 Railroad Avenue
Pleasanton, CA

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WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES

City Council - Planning Commission

Joint Workshop

Tuesday, April 25, 2006 @ 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal

- **General Plan Land Use Element Workshop No. 7**
Discussion of land use issues, including: land use options for future development; land designated Public and Institutional on the General Plan, and Senior Continuing Care Units.

Planning Commission

Wednesday, April 26, 2006 @ 7:00 p.m.

City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal

- **PCUP-164, Yu-Chin Chin, Young Ivy Academy**
Application for a conditional use permit to operate an after-school program at 5460 Sunol Boulevard, Suite 3 and 4, and to relocate Where the Music Begins (PCUP-141) from 5460 Sunol Boulevard, Suites 3 and 4 to Suite 1, within the Oakhills Shopping Center.
- **PCUP-151, Mario Montalvo, Vision Food Services**
Application for conditional use permit to operate a food distribution service with vending machine/food product warehousing at 5776 Sonoma Drive, Suite B.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND OTHER MATTERS

- Consideration of the Draft Bernal Property Phase II Specific Plan, Draft Bernal Community Park Master Plan, and the Combined Final Environmental Impact Report for Both Plans.
- **PUD-99-14, Kazuo Hatsushi**
Application for PUD development plan approval of a new development consisting of 13 new and one existing single-family homes on an approximately 15-acre site located at 2756, 2770, and 2798 Vineyard Avenue in the Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan Area.
- **PREV-560, Charles and Scott Austin**
Work session to review and provide comment on an application for preliminary review for an eight-lot cluster of single-family homes and permanent open space to be located at 3459 Old Foothill Road.
- **PUD-51, Generations Healthcare, Inc**
Application for PUD rezoning of a 0.49-acre open area from P (Public and Institutional) District to PUD-MDR (Planned Unit Development - Medium Density Residential) District and for development plan approval for a two-lot single-family residential project to be located in the front of the existing convalescent facility located at 300 Neal Street. Also consider a Negative Declaration prepared for the project

Trails Ad-Hoc Committee

Monday, April 24, 2006 @ 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal

The agenda for this meeting is currently unavailable. Please visit the City's website at the address listed below to view the complete agenda

The above represents a sampling of upcoming meeting items. For complete information, including any agenda amendments, please visit www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/community/calendar

Community Pulse

Police Bulletin

Thefts from lockers at 24-Hour Fitness

Three separate reports of thefts from lockers in the men's locker room at the 24-Hour Fitness at 5860 W. Las Positas Boulevard were reported to police last week.

The first victim reported the theft took place sometime between 3:15 and 3:43 p.m., Monday April 10. His gym bag, along with its contents and his keys were stolen for a total loss valued at \$794, police said.

The second victim reported the theft took place sometime between 3 and 5:50 p.m., April 10. Police said that all of the victim's property, which included his clothes and shoes, along with the padlock were missing from the locker for a total loss valued at \$1,460, police said.

The third victim reported the theft took place between 5 and 6:20 a.m., Thursday April 13. His postal uniform, raingear, bicycle helmet, backpack, shoes, socks, wallet and combination lock were missing. The loss is valued at \$472, police said.

In order to complete these crimes, the suspect or suspects must have brought tools with them in

advance to remove the padlocks, showing intent to burglarize, police said.

Laptop computer stolen from local business

A laptop computer was stolen from an office at Keller Williams Tri-Valley, 5994 W. Las Positas Boulevard the evening of Monday, April 10, police reported.

The employee reported the laptop was sitting on her desk, right next to the window, which is located on the south side of the building, an area isolated from public view. The suspect threw a large river rock through a double-pane, tinted window, damaging the blinds, police said. The opening was large enough for the suspect to reach in and pull the laptop, docking station, mouse and cords through the window, according to police.

Police checked the window and docking station for fingerprints with negative results. There are no suspects at this time. An estimated loss was valued at \$2,021 for the laptop and \$500 for the damage, police reported.

Police Report

The Pleasanton Police Department made the following information available. Under the law, those charged with offenses are considered innocent until convicted.

April 10

- Theft: 6
- Vandalism: 1
- Burglary: 3
- Minor in possession of alcohol: - 1:34 a.m. in the 5100 block of Hopyard Road
- Assault: - 4:15 p.m. in the 800 block of Clara Lane - 8:34 p.m. in the 4500 block of Pleasanton Avenue

April 11

- Theft: 4
- Vandalism: 1
- Burglary: 3
- DUI: 1

- Possession of a loaded/stolen handgun: - 1:46 a.m. at the intersection of Hopyard and S. Valley Trails roads
- Assault: - 7:20 a.m. in the 2700 block of Longspur Way
- Possession of marijuana: - 8:30 p.m. in the 5300 block of Hopyard Road
- Possession of cocaine: - 10:30 p.m. in the 3900 block of Santa Rita Road

April 12

- Theft: 3
- Vandalism: 2
- Burglary: 1
- DUI: 1
- Public drunkenness: - 1:45 a.m. in the 4500 block of Chabot Drive
- Possession of synthetic drugs: - 1:22 p.m. at the intersection of California Avenue and Stanley Boulevard

April 13

- Theft: 4
- Vandalism: 1
- Burglary: 1
- Found property: 1
- Threatening phone calls: 1
- Annoying phone calls: 1
- Public drunkenness: - 1:19 a.m. in the 5300 block of Hopyard Road
- Battery: - 10:54 a.m. in the 3100 block of Santa Rita Road - 9:54 p.m. in the 3400 block of Virgil Circle
- Supplying pornographic material to a minor: - 6 p.m. in the 4600 block of Del Valle Parkway

April 14

- Theft: 5
- Vandalism: 2

- Burglary: 2
- Possession of synthetic drugs: - 2:35 a.m. in the 400 block of Main Street

April 15

- Theft: 4
- Vandalism: 2
- Burglary: 1
- DUI: 1
- Annoying phone calls: 1
- Public drunkenness: - 1:41 a.m. in the 3000 block of Hopyard Road - 6:39 a.m. in the 1000 block of Germano Way
- Assault: - 9:26 p.m. in the 3300 block of Smoketree Common Drive

April 16

- Theft: 1
- Vandalism: 3
- Burglary: 1
- DUI: 2
- Public drunkenness: - 3:40 a.m. in the 4300 block of Valley Avenue

ACCIDENTS

April 10

- 7:55 a.m. - Injury accident at the intersection of Morganfield and Santa Rita roads

April 12

- 9:25 a.m. - Injury accident at the intersection of Valley and Bernal avenues
- 7:36 p.m. - Non-injury accident at the intersection of I-580 and Hopyard Road

April 13

- 7:36 p.m. - Non-injury accident at the intersection of I-580 and Santa Rita Road

April 16

- 7:11 p.m. - Injury accident at the intersection of Owens and Rosewood drives

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Calendar

Weekend Preview

Saturday Book Signing

Local author Jessica Barksdale Inclan (right) will be signing books at the Barnes and Noble in Dublin from 3-6 p.m., Saturday, April 22. Inclan is the author of several novels including "Her Daughter's Eyes" and "The Instant When Everything is Perfect", which was released in February. Inclan will be joined by M.J. Ryan, author of several self-help books including "The Happiness Makeover." Ryan will be signing books from 1:30-3 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Tri-Valley Writers Association.



p.m., Tues., April 25 in the City Council Chambers, 200 Old Bernal Ave. Direct questions to Janice Stern at 931-5606 or jsstern@ci.pleasanton.ca.us.

Planning Commission

The commission meets 7 p.m. the second and fourth Wednesday monthly at City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Ave. The next meeting is April 26.

School Board

The Pleasanton Unified School District Board meets 7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday monthly in the district office board room 4665 Bernal Ave. The next meeting is April 25.

Class Reunions

Amador Valley High School Reunion, 1996

Amador Valley High School will be holding a 10-year reunion for the class of 1996 7 p.m.-midnight, Sat., June 24 at Pan Pacific Hotel, 500 Post St., San Francisco. E-mail Christina_Mantha@yahoo.com, visit www.reunionmakers.com, or register on classmates.com.

Clubs

Athletic Boosters Club

The Amador Valley High Boosters Advertising meeting will be held 7 p.m., Mon., April 24 at 1155 Santa Rita Rd. in room G-1. Call Kent, 413-0378 or e-mail www.zenkenet@comcast.net.

Del Valley Folk Dancers

Join beginning and experienced Balkan, Israeli, and other world dancers from 7:45-9:30 p.m. every Tuesday at the Livermore Academy of Performing Arts, 315 Wright Brothers Ave., Livermore. Cost is \$4. Dress casual. Call George at 447-8020.

Everything Poetry

This poetry work-group meets from 9-11 a.m. the first Saturday monthly to critique poetry and the third Saturday monthly for a workshop pertaining to an aspect of poetry

Careers

Career Information and Employment Fair

Las Positas College and Tri-Valley One-Stop Career Center are hosting the free Career Information and Employment Fair 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Tues., April 25 at Las Positas College, 3033 Collier Canyon Rd., Livermore, Building 1700. Dress professionally and bring copies of a current resume. Call Katherine, 485-5272.

Civic Meetings

City Council

The council meets 7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday monthly at City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Ave. The next meeting is May 2.

General Plan Land Use Workshop

The joint City Council-Planning Commission General Plan Land Use Joint Workshop #7 will be at 6:30

Author Visits

Gennifer Choldenko

Meet Gennifer Choldenko, award-winning author for children and young adults, 4 p.m., Fri., April 21 at Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Call 931-3400, ext. 8.

Lara Vapnyar

Join Lara Vapnyar, author of "There are Jews in My House," at the Read It and Eat luncheon 11:30 a.m., Thurs., April 27 at Towne Center Books, 555 Main St. Cost for lunch and book is \$28 and lunch is \$10. Call 846-8826 to RSVP.

Margaret Lobenstine

Meet Margaret Lobenstine, author of "Renaissance Soul: Life Designs for People With Too Many Passions to Pick Just One," noon, Mon., April 24 at Towne Center Books, 555 Main St. Call 846-8826.

Mike Leonard

NBC's Today show and author of "The Ride of Our Lives" will speak at 2 p.m., Sun., April 23 at the Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Call Penny, 931-3405.

MJ Ryan and Jessica Inclan

The Tri-Valley Writers Association is sponsoring a book signing and membership drive. Author MJ Ryan will be available from noon-1:30; Jessica Inclan from 1:30-3 p.m.; and other TVWA authors from 3-6 p.m., Sat., April 22 at the Barnes and Noble in Dublin.



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Pleasanton, CA 94566

business at Towne Center Books, 555 Main St. Bring ten copies of a poem. Call Michelle, 931-5350 or e-mail mrusso@ci.pleasanton.ca.us.

Express to Success Network
Women's Express to Success Network meets 6-8:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday monthly at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 5115 Hopyard Rd. Help by donating gently used career wear. Visit www.expressstosuccess.org or e-mail info@expressstosuccess.org.

Events

16th Annual Bike Tour for Cyclists
The Northern California Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society hosts the 16th Annual Bike Tour, rain or shine, on Sat., April 22 at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Ave. Check-in time for the 75-mile route is 6:30 a.m., 50-mile route is 7 a.m., and 25-mile route is 8 a.m. Call Alicia, (510) 268-0572, ext. 116 or e-mail alicia.schwemer@can.nmss.org.

Augustin Bernal Hike
Hike 4-5 miles with an elevation gain of about 800 feet 8:50 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Sat., April 29. Cost is \$18. A group picture and a discussion facilitated by Sue Evans during lunchtime is included. Call 484-0239 or sign up at the Pleasanton Recreation Department. Pre-registration is required.

Crystal Apple Award
The Crystal Apple Award allows youth of the Pleasanton Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to recognize and thank teachers who have had a positive impact on their lives and will be presented 7 p.m., Sun., April 30 at LDS Stake Center, 6100 Paseo Santa Cruz. Call 462-1727.

Earth Day
Celebrate Earth Day 2006 with Zone 7 Water Agency and local cities on Sat., April 22 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

at Robertson Park, 1100 Arroyo Rd., Livermore and from 1-5 p.m. at the Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Call Barb, 964-1751 for Pleasanton and Irv, 998-5312 for Livermore.

Festival Opera
Join Festival Opera in celebrating its 15th anniversary aboard the Galaxy Commodore yacht 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Sun., April 30. Tickets are \$150, light buffet, hosted bar and entertainment included. Call Helen, 944-9610.

First Wednesday Street Party
The Pleasanton Downtown Association will launch its summer First Wednesday street party with a Cindo de Mayo theme from 6-9 p.m., Wed., May 3 along Main Street in Downtown Pleasanton. Admission is free. Call Nickie, 484-2199.

High Tea and Hollywood Hats
Join Gloria Heidi for an elegant tea social 2-4 p.m., Wed., May 3 at the Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. as she entertains you with her one-woman show featuring songs, stories and legends of Hollywood stars. Cost is \$15 residents, \$18 non-residents. Call 931-5365 to RSVP.

Kalaikoil Music, Dance, & Arts of India
Students from Kalaikoil Music, Dance & Arts of India will perform Tanjore style of Bharatanatyam 2 p.m., Sat., April 22 at the Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Admission is free. Call 931-3400, ext. 8.

Passport to Pleasanton
The Pleasanton PTA Council is hosting Passport to Pleasanton, a multicultural festival held from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Sat., April 29 at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Ave. Admission is free. Parking is free at Gate 12 on Valley Ave. Call Debbie, 600-0958 or e-mail look49@comcast.net.

Poetry reading
Join Cynthia Bryant, Carolee Harari, Tamara Grippi, Peggy Messerschmidt, Martha Meltzer, Alice Knight and Liz Fortini for a poetry reading 7:30 p.m., Fri., April 28 at Towne Center Books, 555 Main St. Call 846-8826.

Red Cross Blood Drive
Donate blood 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Tues., April 25 at DCA Corporate Center, 4140 Dublin Rd., Dublin or 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri., April 28 at Toyota Motor Sales, 2451 Bishop Dr., San Ramon. Call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.

Rosenblum Dinner
Enjoy a 5-course Rosenblum dinner 7 p.m., Wed., April 26 at Pleasanton Hotel, 855 Main St. Cost is \$70 plus tax and gratuity. Call 846-8106 or visit pleasantonhotel.com.

Rotary Wine Train
Enjoy a two-hour train ride on the historic Niles Canyon Railway down scenic Niles Canyon 3 p.m., Sat., May 13. Enjoy wine from Livermore Valley's wineries, hor d'oeuvres, desserts and live music. Cost is \$20 adults, \$10 children, \$18 each for groups of 10 or more before Mon., May 1. Proceeds will benefit the Rotary Scholarship Fund. Call 447-4300.

Saving Strokes
American Heart Association is hosting the 2nd Annual Saving Strokes event Sun., April 23 at Pleasanton Golf Center. Physical therapists and trained PGA golf professionals will be there to introduce stroke victors to the physical and social benefits of golf. Call Keisha, (510) 904-4000.

Ship of Hope
Cruise with the "Ship of Hope" to the Greek Isles from 6-11 p.m., Sat., April 22 at Castlewood Country Club, 707 Country Club Cir. Tickets are \$75 per person, \$750 for a table of 10. Call 829-8770 to RSVP.

Six Dreams in Four Days
Habitat for Humanity East Bay's Earth Day Build-A-Thon will take place from Thurs., April 20 through Sun., April 23 in Livermore. Help build frames of six homes in four days. Breakfast, snack and lunch will be provided. Call Patti, (510) 251-6304, ext. 313 or visit www.habitatEB.org.

Spring Book Sale
The Pleasanton Library is hosting the Spring Book Sale 2006 7-9 p.m., Fri., May 5 for members only, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sat., May 6, and 1-4 p.m., Sun., May 7 at 400 Old Bernal Ave. Adult volunteers are also needed to help set up and during sale hours. Call Nancy, 462-4368.

Spring Floral Extravaganza
Blackhawk Bloomers presents Spring Floral Extravaganza, featuring floral designer for the Ritz Carlton and Four Season Hotels, Jun Pinon, 11 a.m., Wed., April 26 at Blackhawk Country Club in the Lakeside Ballroom, 599 Blackhawk Club Dr., Danville. Cost is \$50, lunch included. Call Lotty, 736-3665 to RSVP.

Spring Wine & History Tour
Museum On Main is sponsoring the "Spring Wine & History Tour" 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun., April 23 at 603

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Main St. Tickets are \$50 and must be purchased by 4 p.m., Sat., April 22. Call 462-2766.

Exhibits

Bouquets to Art
Worthington Gallery West presents "Bouquets to Art," a floral exhibit, Sat., April 8 through Sun., May 7. Artist reception is from 4-6 p.m., Sat., April 8 at 739 J. Main St. Call 485-1183.

Film

Black and White
The Pleasanton Library and Las Positas College presents a series of classic black and white films 7 p.m. on the first Thursday monthly at Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Admission is free. Call Penny, 931-3405.

Fundraisers

Big Bucks Purple and Gold Gala
Amador Valley High's Athletic Booster Club is hosting the 20th Annual Big Bucks Purple and Gold Gala featuring dinner, raffles, auctions and more 6 p.m., Sat., May 6 at CarrAmerica Conference Center, 4400 Rosewood Dr. Call Lori, 426-6786 or visit www.amadorsports.com.

Bingo
Choice for Children Education Foundation hosts Bingo at 4 p.m. every Sunday at Bingo Ranch, 3070 Pacific Ave., Livermore. All proceeds benefit Livermore Valley Charter School. Call Maria, 201-3422 or e-mail ccef@lvcs.org.

Blankets for Babies
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at ValleyCare and Lucile Packard are collecting sewn, knitted, and crocheted 24- or 36-inch blankets. Call 426-4307 or 426-9635.

Dictionary Project
Bay East Association of Realtors partners with a national non-profit, The Dictionary Project, to provide dictionaries for third graders in local schools. There are more than 200 classes waiting to be adopted. One call per Realtor member. Call Marla, 730-3269 or e-mail marlak@bayeast.org.

Entertainment Books
Entertainment books are on sale for \$25 available at the Apoption Center, 273 Spring St. Proceeds go to Valley Humane Society programs. Call 426-8656.

Italian Catholic Federation Scholarship
Italian Catholic Federation presents "Primavera Dinner Dance" 6 p.m., Sat., May 6 at St. Michael's Parish Hall, 372 Maple St., Livermore. Reservations required by Tues., May 2. Cost is \$26. Call Mary, 447-8471, Helen, 462-3798 or Rose, 846-4227.

Kidsave's Summer Miracles
Buy raffle tickets for \$50 each or three for \$100. Only 2,000 tickets available. Winner will choose from two vacations, Monaco or Florida. All proceeds support Kidsave's Summer Miracles and Weekend Miracles programs. Drawing will be held 9 p.m., Sat., May 20. Call 310-479-5437.

Recycle for Breast Cancer
Recycle electronics, empty ink jet and toner cartridges to support the fight against breast cancer. Free pick up, drop off, or prepaid envelopes and shipping labels available. Call Larry, 735-7203 or e-mail larry@recycleforbreastcancer.org.

Youth Food Drive
Donate nonperishable items for local food pantries from single-family residences in Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin, Sunol, San Ramon, Danville and Alamo at the 4th Annual Tri-Valley Youth Food Drive 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Sat., April 29. Call David, 998-6513 or visit www.youthfooddrive.com.

Health

Exercise Class
The Pleasanton Department of Parks and Community Services offers morning and evening adult exercise classes at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., and at the Veterans Memorial Building, 301 Main St. Cost varies from \$3 to \$4.50 per class. Call 931-5340.

Free Dyslexia Screening
Learning Rx is offering a free dyslexia screening until Sun., April 30. Call 416-1400 or visit www.learnin-grx.com.

Kids & Teens

AAU Track & Field Sign Ups
Youths between 6-18 years of age are welcome to join the Tri-Valley Track Club. Practices are held 4 p.m. every Wednesday and 3 p.m. every Sunday at Sunset Park, 1040 Florence Rd., Livermore. Call 862-085 or 518-9356.

Art Competition
Congressman Richard W. Pombo invites all high school students residing in the 11th Congressional District to participate in "An Artistic Discovery." Submit entries by Fri., May 12 at one of Pombo's district offices. Visit www.house.gov/pombo/students/students.htm.

Little League
Registration for Farm (ages 7-8) and T-Ball (ages 5-6) is still open. Visit www.pleasantonamerican.org or e-mail pallregistrar@comcast.net. All games are played at the Sports Park. Call 890-7679.

Mother's Day Gifts
Make a Mother's Day gift 6 p.m., Wed., May 3 at Pure Girls. Call 485-4380.

Self-Defense Clinic
Pure Girls is sponsoring a mother/daughter self-defense clinic 7:30 p.m., Thursdays, April 20, 27 and May 4. Cost is \$30 per pair, \$20 per individual with a 10 percent discount if you sign up for all four sessions. Call 485-4380 to RSVP.

Ten Star All Star Basketball Camp
Boys and girls age 10-19 are eligible to apply for the Ten Star All Star Summer Basketball Camp in Thousand Oaks, Calif. College basketball scholarships available for players selected to the All-American team. Call (704) 373-0873 for a free brochure.

Young Artists Achievement Awards 2006
Artists age 14-20 who live in or attend school in Pleasanton may enter to win a \$500 prize in creative writing, visual arts, music or dramatic arts. Deadline is Mon., April 24. Call Rebecca, 426-3815 or visit www.pleasantonarts.org.

Lectures/Workshops

Boundaries in Dating
The book "Boundaries in Dating" by Blaine Carman will facilitate this workshop being held from 1-5 p.m., Sat., April 22 at CrossWinds Church, 6444 Sierra Ct., Dublin. The early bird fee is \$30 if paid by April 15; thereafter and at the door, \$40. Childcare available for \$20. Indicate interest in childcare when registering. Register at www.crosswindschurch.org/workshops. Contact Claudia at 560-3826 or csiglin@crosswindschurch.org, for questions.

Spring Bereavement Workshop
If you are dealing with the death of a loved one, join the 7-week workshop and begin to heal 7:30 p.m., every Thursday, April 27 through June 8 at St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 4001 Stoneridge Dr. Suggested one-time donation is \$15. Registration is required. Call Mary, 846-5377.

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Pleasanton Real Estate News



by Gerarda Stocking

THE SCOOP ON SECOND HOMES

Second homes may seem the province of the super-rich, jet-setters with homes scattered across the globe in the most desirable places. It turns out, however, that over nine million homes in America are second homes. About three quarters of these are vacation homes for their owners, and though they're certainly not all elegant, they are very often prized possessions that provide their owners with a great deal of pleasure and, eventually, profit.

Often, it isn't easy to gain the needed financing with which to purchase a vacation home. The best source in many cases is the equity in your primary residence, which you can generally borrow in a lump-sum second loan at a favorable rate. (In some cases, you can accomplish this with a cash-out refinancing of your existing mortgage, as an alternative.)

Some benefits: The mortgage obligation for the second home can be added to the existing mortgage in most cases for purposes of interest deductibility. Property taxes should also be deductible. And if you rent the house out to others for less than two weeks in any given year, the rental income is tax-free. Above all, though, there is the chance to enjoy a vacation home and watch its value climb—and perhaps, at retirement, to move into the home either for the remainder of your life or for at least two years, so that you can enjoy the \$500,000 gains exclusion from taxation (for married couples filing jointly, \$250,000 for singles) if you sell. For tax questions please consult your tax advisor. For more information just call Gerarda Stocking at 846-4000 or visit her website at www.gerardastocking.com.

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**NOTICE OF LAND USE JOINT WORKSHOP
NO. 7 OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND
PLANNING COMMISSION REGARDING THE
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

The City Council and Planning Commission will discuss land use issues, including: (1) options for counting senior continuing care housing units under the residential cap; (2) land designated Public & Institutional use on the General Plan; (3) potential changes to regulations controlling residential density in the hill areas; and (4) options for future General Plan land use. The City Council and Planning Commission will provide feedback regarding a preferred range of Land Use Options.

The Workshop is scheduled to be held on **Tuesday, April 25, 2006, at 6:30 p.m.** in the **Pleasanton City Council Chambers** located at 200 Old Bernal Avenue. All interested persons are encouraged to attend and participate in the workshop.

If you should have any questions, please contact **Janice Stern, Principal Planner**, by phone at **(925) 931-5606**, or by e-mail at **jstern@ci.pleasanton.ca.us**

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Live Music

Blues Music

Enjoy the Blues from 7:30-10 p.m., Thursdays: May 4 with Shinola; May 11 with Amy Lou's Blues; May 18 with Knee Action Blues; and May 25 with Highwater Blues at the Pleasanton Hotel, 855 Main St. Admission is free. Call 846-8106.

Miscellaneous

Rabbit Education and Adoption

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue is hosting a bunny event, focusing on education while showcasing homeless bunnies from 1-4 p.m., Sat., April 29 at PetsMart, 6960 Amador Plaza Rd. Call Marisa, 447-2130 or e-mail bunny@aino.com.

On Stage

Comedy Wednesday

John DeKoven's Comedy Showcase is every second and fourth Wednesday monthly at Main Street Brewery, 830 Main St. Cover charge is \$7 with a two drink minimum. Call 264-4413 or visit www.trivalleycomedy.com.

Political Notes

Proposition 82

Brandon Castillo will speak at the luncheon on Proposition 82 11:30 a.m., Tues., April 25 at Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Dr., Danville. Cost is \$22. Call Roxanne, 837-6253 to RSVP.

Recreation

DBAC Swim Team Tryouts

Dolores Bengston Aquatic Center recreational swim team is accepting applications for the summer swim team. All new swimmers must attend May 6. Call 931-3420 for fees and guidelines.

Enrichment Classes

Pleasanton Parks and Recreation offers enrichment classes ranging from art, aquatics, sports, health and cooking at 200 Old Bernal Ave. Call 931-5340 or visit www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/parks.html.

Seniors

Bingo

Play Bingo 12:30-3 p.m. on the first, third, and fifth Monday monthly and 1-3 p.m. every Friday at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Cost is \$1.25 for residents, \$1.75 non-residents. Game cards are 50 cents. Call 931-5365.

Spiritual

Community Bible Study

An interdenominational bible study invites women in the community to a study of Ephesians from 9:30-11:30 a.m. every Thursday until May 18, at 4300 Mirador Dr. Childcare is available. Call 820-3481.

Faith Chapel Assembly of God

Sunday school for all ages begins at 9:30 a.m., worship at 10:30 a.m., and Children's Church Program (ages 3-12) at 11:15 a.m. Every Wednesday the Women's Bible Study meets at 10 a.m., Choir Practice and Boys & Girls Mission Crusade Club (grades K-5) all begin at 7 p.m. Singles and Young Married home bible study meets at 7:30 p.m. every Thursday. Seniors 55+ meets at 7 p.m. the third Thursday of each month. Call Sophia, 846-8650.

Tri-Valley Unity Church

Tri-Valley Unity Church meets 10 a.m. every Sunday at the Radisson Hotel, 6680 Regional St., Dublin. Worship service and children's school will be offered as well. Call 829-2733 or visit www.trivalleyunity.com.

Support Groups

Domestic Violence

A Domestic Violence Support Group is meeting from 5-6:30 p.m., every Thursday at the Tri-Valley Haven for Women in Livermore. There will be a fee of \$40 for every eight weeks or based on a sliding scale. For information and registration, contact Elizabeth, 449-5845 ext. 109.

TV30

Pleasanton City Council

The Pleasanton City Council meeting from Tues., April 18 will air 6 p.m., Sat., April 22 on channel 29.

Sandia Now

Join Mike Janes for a look at the Sandia National Laboratories 50th Anniversary Celebration 1:30 p.m., Sat., April 22 on channel 30.

Tri Valley Sports Final

A recap of the week's local sports action will air 7, 9:30 a.m., 1, and 10 p.m., Sat., April 22 on channel 30.

Volunteering

Alameda County Community Food Bank

Volunteers are needed to staff the Emergency Food Hotline from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m., Mon-Fri. Call (510) 834-3663 or visit www.accfb.org.

Assistance League

Assistance League, a nonprofit organization, needs volunteers to assist with ongoing philanthropic projects and meets at 7 p.m., the third Thurs. of every month at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1225 Hopyard Rd. Call 484-1354 or www.amadorvalleyassistanceleague.

**DRAFT BERNAL PROPERTY PHASE II SPECIFIC
PLAN, DRAFT BERNAL COMMUNITY PARK
MASTER PLAN, AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT REPORT REVIEW**

In 2001, the City of Pleasanton acquired a 318-acre portion of the Bernal Property (located south of Bernal Avenue along both sides of I-680) through a public land dedication agreement with the developer of the remaining 198 acres of the Property. The City has since evolved a draft specific plan for the 318-acre area, a draft community park master plan for approximately 50 acres of land within the Specific Plan area, and a combined final environmental impact report (final EIR) through an extensive community planning process.

The two draft plans and final EIR are scheduled for review and recommendations by the Pleasanton Planning Commission on **Wednesday, April 26, 2006, at 7:00 p.m.** in the **Pleasanton City Council Chambers** located at **200 Old Bernal Avenue, Pleasanton, California**. A public hearing(s) by the Pleasanton City Council regarding the two plans and the final EIR will also be scheduled and noticed in the near future following review by the Planning Commission. For additional information, please call Jerry Iserson, Director of Planning and Community Development, at (925) 931-5600.

All interested members of the public are urged to attend these meetings and provide their comments and recommendations.

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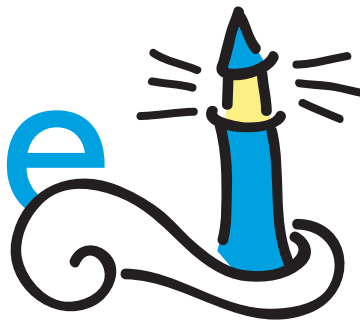
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RESEARCHING FRONTIER CALIFORNIANS

-Patrick Reddy, Edward "Ned" Reddy, Emily Page Conklin Reddy. Any information/letters contact Jaak Treiman red-dyresearch@att.net or call 818.340.5766. (Cal-SCAN)

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Pleasanton, 2751 Huff Dr., Apr. 22, 8 - 2

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Pleasanton, 2757 Glen Isle Ct, 4/22, 8-1

Huge Garage Sale - Includes household items, art work, kids/adult clothes. Kids toys/videos and so much more. Cash only please.

Pleasanton, 3190 Montpelier Ct, 4/22, 8-3

Garage Sale - Small furniture items, Air Hockey, 9 in 1 Game Table, Clothing, Outdoor furniture, and other items.

Pleasanton, 3735 Reflections Drive, Apr 22 from 9-2

Pleasanton, 5556 Paseo Navarro, April 22, 9-1

Pleasanton, 6310 Paseo Santa Maria, Sat April 22, 8a-3p

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**Kids eat free*
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LUNCH SPECIALS: Monday-Friday 11:30-2:00
 DINNER: Monday-Thursday 5:00-9:30
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THE PANDA

Dining Out

American

Chicago's Metropolitan Deli
 6003 W. Las Positas Blvd. & Hopyard, Pleasanton, (925) 462-1678. A new Rockin' Restaurant that features: Italian Beef, Chi-Dogs, Gyros, and more. We have over 50 menu items that are hot, juicy, fun and flavorful. Recently remodeled to create a festive atmosphere with a new bar, beers on tap and three sport TVs. We are family friendly with a nice Kids Menu, soft serve ice cream, shakes and sundaes. Come check out the flavors of Chicago right in Pleasanton's back yard!

Jim's Country Style Restaurant
 5400 Sunol Blvd., next to Raley's, Pleasanton, (925) 426-7019. Loved by locals and famous for its ranch-style omelets and large portions, Jim's serves up the country-style fixings from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. So if you're in the mood for chicken-fried steak, an omelet, a stack of pancakes, a deluxe sandwich or just a good old-fashioned burger, you won't be disappointed. Jim's friendly staff invites you to drop in and say, "Howdy!"

Pleasanton Hotel
 855 Main St., Pleasanton, (925) 846-8106. This restored Victorian "hotel" combines the ambiance of the past with the exciting contemporary cooking of Chef Neil Marquis. Also offering Mystery Dinner Theater and Winemaker Dinners, live music every Thursday, Friday and Saturday, some Sundays. Open for lunch, dinner and Sunday Champagne Buffet Brunch, patio dining, banquets and weddings to 200.

Red Smoke Grill

4501 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, (925) 734-0307. The place to go for great tri-tip, rotisserie chicken and baby back ribs. The wonderful staff serves up sandwiches, salads and family dinner meals. So come by for a glass of wine and a great meal. Crossroads Shopping Center on Hopyard just one block south of Stoneridge.

Swensen's

1991-A Santa Rita Road, Pleasanton, (925) 426-1266. Swensen's Ice Cream has called the Bay Area its home since 1948. Known for its delicious ice cream, smoothies, burgers, sandwiches, pho beef noodle soup and BBQ chicken, beef and pork over rice. Open 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Closed Monday.

Vic's All Star Kitchen

201 Main St., Pleasanton, (925) 484-0789. Located in the heart of downtown Pleasanton on Main Street, Vic's delivers a starry mix of American food, fast service and a bustling, cheery atmosphere. Owner Vic Malatesta has teamed his love of sports with his passion for good food to create a solid dining experience with a local sports theme. Open daily 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Evening banquets/daytime catering.

Brewpub/Alehouse

The Hop Yard American Alehouse and Grill

3015H Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, (925) 426-9600. Voted Best Watering Hole in Pleasanton, the Hop Yard offers 30 beers on tap and a variety of great food, everything from finger food to full blown meals. Ask about new banquet menu.

California Cuisine

Silver Palate Restaurant

680 Main St., Downtown Pleasanton, (925) 417-5900. Silver Palate's menu is based on a concept of wholesome cooking, using the most natural ingredients available. The ambiance of

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 GRILLE
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 For Reservations Call (925) 462-2800
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Dining Out

this restaurant evokes the light-filled expanse of a European marketplace, while the outdoor patio captures the best in al fresco dining. Choose from a wide selection of flavorful entrees and side accompaniments ... among them risottos, specialty soups, Kobe beef burgers, wild salmon, Organic Sonoma Mix salads and handcrafted desserts. Country Brunch Buffet every Sunday. Open seven days a week.

Catering

Fontina's Catering

349 Main St., Downtown Pleasanton, (925) 462-9299. The seasonal tastes of Fontina's award-winning menu can now be custom delivered to you—direct to your home or office. Our lunch and dinner specialties feature homemade soups and pastas, premium seafood and meats, and a newly expanded vegetarian menu. Let Fontina's Ristorante bring "the taste of Italy" home to you soon. For parties of 10 or more, we'll include free dessert, or we'll take 10 percent off your total bill (excluding tax).

Chinese

Chinese Szechuan

3059 Hopyard Road #G, Pleasanton, (925) 846-5251. Pleasanton's best-

loved Chinese restaurant. Family owned and run since 1987. Friendly service, delicious food, great prices. Lunch specials from only \$5.25.

Continental

Barone's

475 St. John St., Pleasanton, (925) 426-0987. Pleasanton's most romantic continental cuisine restaurant. Innovative pasta, seafood and meat entrees. Outdoor dining. Open for dinner seven nights, lunch Monday-Friday. Live music Friday and Saturday evenings. Full bar. Banquet facilities, rehearsal dinners, special events.

Indian

Chef India Cuisine

5100 Hopyard Rd., Pleasanton, (925) 463-8773. Newly arrived in Pleasanton, its lunch buffet features over 25 items on every week day. They have a special Brunch buffet on every Sat. and Sun. which features more than 30 items. The dinner menu is extensive with many authentic Indian dishes to choose from, along with a full bar and large dining facility. Chef India invites you to hold your banquet with them. Conveniently located near the cor-

ner of Hopyard and Owens (next to Chevron) with plenty of parking. Check their website www.chefindia.com for details.

Gold Indian Cuisine

824 Main St., Pleasanton, (925) 600-0202. Popular Livermore restaurant has opened a second location in downtown Pleasanton, presenting delicious North Indian food, seasoned to your taste: mild, medium or hot. Fresh menu daily. Parking in rear. Patio dining. Open for lunch 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Dinner seven days a week, 5-10 p.m.

Italian

Fontina Ristorante

349 Main St., Pleasanton, (925) 462-9299. This popular downtown restaurant gets rave reviews from



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Monday through Friday
11:30-2:30

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Dining Out

Japanese

Hasegawa Japanese
4855 Hopyard Road, across from Chili's Grill, (925) 734-0996. Japanese owner Kazutoyo "Joe Cool" Hasagawa has 26 years experience as a Suchi and Shabu-shabu chef. Traditional Japanese dining. Lunch served Monday-Friday. Dinner seven days a week.

Mediterranean

Athens West Restaurant
6999 Dublin Blvd., (925) 803-9601. Truly authentic Mediterranean cuisine featuring Greek specialties including delicious steaks and seafood. Large upscale dining facility with full bar located adjacent to the original Athens Burger Restaurant. Opens Tuesday-Sunday at 4:30 p.m.

Pizza

Gay Nineties Pizza Co.
288 Main St., Pleasanton, (925) 846-2520. Family oriented with an extensive menu. Renowned pizza, Italian dishes, salads and sandwiches. Patio dining. Antique games for the kids. Groups, take out, call-ahead lunch orders. Wine, beer, open seven days a week, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.

Little Caesars
2889 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, (925) 417-8880. Feeling hungry on a low budget? Original round large Pepperoni Pizza only \$5 every day, eight pieces of our famous crazy bread w/sauce \$1.99, 10 delicious Caesars wings only \$5. Look for other coupon specials in the dining section weekly. Hot-n-ready Pizza, all day, every day!

Vinny's 2 Go!
4001-5 Santa Rita Road, Pleasanton, (925) 463-0280. Vinny's 2 Go! is the

Hose Pavilion's newest authentic Italian pizzeria. Lunchtime favorites include New York pizza slices, meatball sandwiches and the popular Mona Lisa panini. Savory Meals 2 Go and fresh cannoli are available for fast pickup. Catering is offered for special occasions and office luncheons. Visit Vinny's 2 go! for quality, freshness and great taste!

Sandwiches/Deli

Togo's
3120-D Santa Rita Road, Pleasanton, (925) 846-8646; 5556-A Springdale Ave., Pleasanton, (925) 463-3090. Togo's has been voted "Pleasanton's Best Sandwich" for five consecutive years. Conveniently open seven days a week, Togo's features its popular "Endless Combo" (1/2 sandwich, 1/2 salad or small soup) ... choose any two for only \$5.19 plus tax. Everyday favorites include the Hot Pastrami #9 and the tasty Turkey-Avocado #24. Togo's also features specialty soups for winter.

Wine Bars

The Wine Steward
641 Main St., Pleasanton, (925) 600-WINE (600-9463). In historic Downtown Pleasanton is a full service wine shop with the largest selection and the most competitive prices in the East Bay area. Our friendly and knowledgeable staff can help you select a single bottle or perfectly pair wines for your next dinner party. Our Wine Bar is open Thursday through Saturday with a new theme every week—check our Web site, www.thewinesteward.com, for details.



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