

PLEASANTON WEEKLY

Vol. VIII

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INSIDE this week

Prostitution bust
Police shut down Main Street massage shop
page 5

Seton expansion
Catholic church construction begins Sunday
page 8

Back in time
Celebrate Pleasanton's heritage this weekend
page 8

On a roll
Amador, Foothill football off to a good start
page 33

Rate drops, hopes up
Local cut impact to be seen down the road
page 45

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Results are in! Find out who our readers named the tops in the town

Pleasanton Weekly's
BEST OF PLEASANTON
2007

page 16

\$60

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Around Pleasanton

by Jeb Bing

Our "Best of Pleasanton" just keeps getting better

Thanks to all of you for making this "Best of Pleasanton" a resounding success. With more categories and a record number of voters, I think you'll find the readers' choices both informative and guidelines for what you want to do, where to shop, what to buy and where to go to meet your friends for a fun-filled time in Pleasanton. This is the largest "Best of Pleasanton" issue ever with a wide array of voting opportunities that's had the town talking since we started the poll during the summer. Along the way, I've heard from many of you by email, on the phone, in my office and at public events where our paths have crossed. Without exception, you told me you had as much fun looking at the drop-down lists and casting your votes as we did here at the Weekly in tracking the votes and tallying them up.

This annual poll has picked up momentum since we published our first "Best of Pleasanton" in 2000, just seven months after we launched the Pleasanton Weekly. Back then, we used entry forms—or ballots—that you sent in of brought in. Many of you stopped to chat or called with suggestions for next year's poll, which we made sure to add. Take the Best Place to Get a Traffic Ticket, which garnered some of the heaviest voting of this year's poll. That came from an irate commuter who rushed into our office with a Best Of ballot form in one hand and a speeding ticket in the other. He complained that Sunol Boulevard where he received the ticket was the worst street in town, and he was right. That street leads the list every year.

Our receptionist that first year used to take bundles of handwritten ballots home at night to sort them out. Occasionally, she would cull out a few that looked suspicious, such as one set of 40 ballots for the best shoe repairman, all written in the same handwriting and helpfully held together with a large paper clip. Ballots in those early years came in various forms and places, mostly by mail or being dropped off, but also stuffed through our office mail slot overnight and even given to me at City Council meetings and other public events where I put the votes you gave me in a pants pocket. The cleaners found a few of those, but I think all were eventually tallied.

Technology has improved and along with it our voting process. This year, the "Best of Pleasanton" was done entirely online with phenomenal response, telling me that Pleasanton has well adapted to the Internet and keyboard communications. I spotted several of you voting on your laptops at Tully's downtown which, as readers said, is also the Best Independent Coffee House. Thanks to our new Wi-Fi downtown, we even had a laptop at our Pleasanton Weekly booth at First Wednesday on Main Street, where readers stood in line to check out the categories and cast their votes.

We were pleasantly surprised by the large number of write-in votes. Although these were ones and twos for the most part, and therefore not winners, they gave us new category ideas for next year which, I promise you, will be the "best" once again.

Enjoy. ■

About the Cover

A surprising number of voters turned out to the online-only polls for the Pleasanton Weekly's annual Best of Pleasanton. With categories featuring the best of the best from Around Town to Personal Care to Let's Get Physical, it's been compiled to be a map to Pleasanton's finest.

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Thoughts from *Marty Sborov*



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Streetwise

Q: What is the best decision you have ever made and why?

Asked Downtown



Dianne Staszko

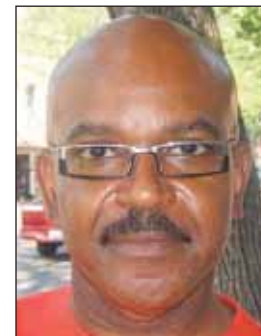
Retired

The best decision I ever made was to marry my husband Ron and have our five children. We have been happy all of our lives and our children have been blessings to us. They have given us 10 grandchildren.

Bennie McKay

Owner of Acc'sentials

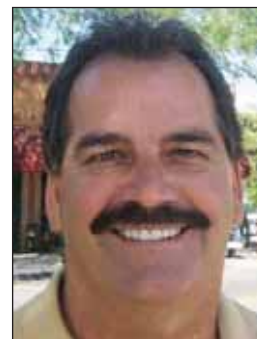
What an opened ended question. From a business perspective the best decision was to keep my shop here in Pleasanton. My new location is fabulous and my clientele is supportive. It is an exciting journey.



Alan Hammond

Manufacturing

Self-employment is the best decision I have made. The freedom and flexibility it allows you can't be measured. All risk. All reward. Instead of working for someone else, whatever you put into your business you benefit from.



Rodica Zidaru

Medical Clerk

I married my husband 30 years ago when I was 17. It was gut instinct but it was the best decision I have ever made. We met in Romania on a blind date. Our country was a communist country. I encouraged him to come to the U.S. so that he could use his talents in a free country. My children and I joined him four years later and it has been a wonderful life.



Ingeborg McCarty

Homemaker

One of the best decisions I have made in my life is waiting to be older to have children. I feel as parents, my husband and I are more patient, possibly more tired, but definitely more patient. Instead of feeling torn to travel the world or be busy in other ways that might be a sacrifice for the children we are able to give 100 percent.



Have a Streetwise question? E-mail: editor@PleasantonWeekly.com

Compiled by Cybele Ryan

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Newsfront

News Digest

Thousands walk for suicide prevention

The Tri-Valley chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) will join thousands in the Out of the Darkness Northern California Community Walk Sept. 29 at Crissy Field in San Francisco. AFSP statistics show that close to one million people make a suicide attempt each year and every 16 minutes someone dies by suicide in the United States. This year, the group hopes to raise \$100,000. To be a sponsor or to register to walk, visit www.outofthedarkness.org.

Adult school offers classes for parents

Amador Valley Adult School is offering several classes that are designed to help parents. Positive Parenting (formerly Sharing Ideas for Parenthood) is a county-approved course that teaches parents of young children positive disciplining methods. Other classes focus on college admissions, teens and more. Call 426-4280 for more information.

Lisa Maatz to speak at women's workshop

Lisa Maatz, director of public policy for the American Association of University Women, will speak at the Livermore-Pleasanton-Dublin branch's workshop at 2 p.m. Oct. 7 at the City of Alameda Main Library, 1500 Oak St. The presentation will provide a better understanding of the strategies used to advance the association's public policy agenda. Among the topics discussed are pay equity of jobs, the ban on abortion and the state of Title IX. A \$5 donation is requested. For more on this event, call 846-9739.

'Arsenic and Old Lace' opens tonight

In the first show of Pleasanton Playhouse's 24th season and 11th year of Studio Theatre, "Arsenic and Old Lace" opens tonight and runs through Oct. 14. Performances are 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays at the Studio Theatre, 1048 Serpentine Lane, Ste. 309. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors 60 and older, and \$18 for juniors 18 and younger. Purchase them online at www.pleasantonplayhouse.com or call 462-2121 or 484-4486.

Corrections

The Weekly desires to correct all significant errors. To request a correction, call the editor at (925) 600-0840 or e-mail: editor@PleasantonWeekly.com

Main Street business busted for alleged prostitution

Undercover officer arrested massage parlor owner after receiving reported sexual advance

by Emily Atwood

Tranquility Health Center on 739-E Main St. was closed in July after an undercover prostitution operation revealed illicit acts performed by employees, police reported this week.

Sgt. Barry Mickleburgh of the special investigations unit said an undercover officer made an appointment at the center on July 27.

"When he arrived, he was disrobed and inappropriately touched," Mickleburgh said. "He was told if he wanted [the inappropriate behavior] to continue it would be \$40 extra."

The undercover officer then arrested the owner, who was booked at Santa Rita Jail, and the business was shut down.

Police were tipped on possible illicit activity when surrounding businesses began complaining about the high traffic of male customers at Tranquility Health Center. Police then conducted an investigation to see if the business was in compliance with the city ordinances. Together with the Alameda SAFE (sexual assault felony enforcement) Task Force, they

(continued on page 12)



Tranquility Health Center, (left), once located at 739-E Main St., was shut down by police for alleged illicit behavior.

Emily Atwood



From left, volunteers James Woodwell, Aubrey Wright, Caroline Woodwell and Tyler Lomas load trash cleared from Arroyo de la Laguna onto trucks provided by the City of Pleasanton and the Zone 7 Water Agency.

Brian Lorimer

Creek cleanups net 1,200 pounds of trash

Shopping carts, tires, a couch and recyclable material also found in creekbeds

Saturday was a productive day for volunteers who helped cleanup Pleasanton water channels.

In total, crews removed 1,285 pounds of trash, 109 pounds of recyclable material, 30 tires, a couch and four shopping carts from the arroyos, according to Boni Brewer, a spokeswoman for Zone 7 Water Agency.

The water wholesaler, joined by the city of Pleasanton, hosted the cleanup as part of the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day.

According to Zone 7, approximately

50,000 volunteers come out and clean more than 700 sites across the state, including arroyos, reservoirs and rivers and all 1,100 miles of the state's coastline. The annual event is organized by the California Coastal Commission.

In Pleasanton, 160 volunteers ventured to five different areas. Members of the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints cleaned a stretch of Arroyo de la Laguna from Bernal Avenue north to

(continued on page 12)

Agencies join to form East Bay emergency system

Network, with 30 participating cities signed on, expected to improve communications in disasters

by Janet Pelletier

Area officials have formed what they believe will be a substantially improved communication system in the event of an emergency or natural disaster such as the Loma Prieta earthquake and the Oakland fire.

Nearly 30 cities, including the city of Pleasanton, have partnered to form the East Bay Regional Communications Joint Powers Authority. Local mayors, other elected officials and public safety responders participated in a press conference last Friday at the Alameda County Emergency Operations Center in Dublin to announce the launch.

The partnership is historic because other cities and agencies across the state have just a pseudo disaster plan in place, said San Ramon mayor H. Abram Wilson.

Alameda County Sheriff Greg Ahern added that better communication between agencies is something that has been lacking.

"This is not a great day—that will come later," said Contra Costa County Sheriff Warren E. Rupf. "But it is a day of remarkable progress."

The collaboration means there will be a uniform emergency communications system in place that will alleviate problems that arise when radio technologies are incompatible. The result is that first responders can't effectively connect with one another because they currently operate across multiple frequencies such as 800mhz, 900mhz, low band, VHF and UHF.

According to a fact sheet, there are more than 15 different communications systems working in several radio frequency ranges. With technology rapidly changing, the current systems are becoming out of date and will need replacing in the next five years, the sheet also states.

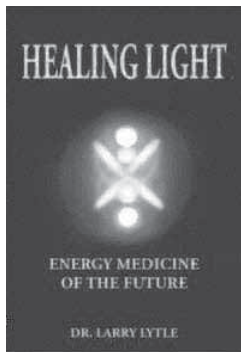
The Friday press conference comes just three days after it was announced that the cities of San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose would be forming a similar network, the Bay Area Public Safety Interoperable Communications Initiative.

That partnership is expected to help link the entire region to a common communications network.

(continued on page 11)

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Giant neighborhood garage sale Saturday

More than 50 homes in Stoneridge community showing their wares

by Janet Pelletier

The saying “one man’s trash is another man’s treasure” rings true twice a year when participants in the Stoneridge Neighborhood Garage Sale unload their unwanted items on their driveways and front yards.

On Saturday, residents from at least 53 homes will be selling items. The community garage sale, which was founded by Stoneridge residents Penny and Gary Palmatier, was started 10 years ago with just 15 homes.

“I’m in real estate and my husband and I have been brokers in the community since 1985 and you know, it’s a way to get our names out there and yet it’s good for the community,” Penny Palmatier said.

“I keep telling people we are not garage sale junkies, we are real estate brokers,” she added jokingly.

The garage sale is comparable to a flea market because there will be a wide variety of items for sale in a centralized location.

“There’s everything,” Palmatier said. “I was on a crusade looking for jigsaw puzzles because my father-in-law came to live with us and I must have found 32 jigsaw puzzles. There’s furniture, medical equipment, clothes, jewelry, plumb-

ing stuff, computers—anything you can conceive of, there is.”

The perimeters are from Foothill Road to Interstate 680 and Stoneridge Drive to West Las Positas Boulevard.

“It’s always somewhere between 50 and 75 homes,” Palmatier said. “Quite frankly, a lot more will just open their doors and start selling stuff without calling me.”

All of the items that don’t get sold will go to Goodwill.

Since the garage sale has been around for a decade, Palmatier said she gets a lot of fellow neighbors who are repeat participants, but added that she receives new ones as well. Those who are affiliated or members of local organizations partake in the sale such as the Tri-Valley Republican Women’s Federated, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts.

“It’s fun for the kids,” Palmatier said. “The kids get to clean out their rooms.”

The sale will be held from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be maps included with directional signs posted on the sale’s perimeters. For information, visit Palmatier’s Web site at www.eastbayareahomes.com. ■

REAL ESTATE ADVISOR

Diana Korpi



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dog is confined to part of the house, such as a basement, be sure to put up a sign informing people of that fact. Talk with your Realtor about the best way to manage your pet while your house is being shown, and make sure that this information is included in the MLS listing.

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Livermore Airport to hold open house

by Jeb Bing

The Livermore Municipal Airport will hold its 12th annual open house from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. tomorrow, with hundreds of artifacts on display along with live entertainment and refreshments.

John Davelaar said the free community event will offer the public an opportunity to talk to pilots and see general aviation airplanes, as well as military/Warbirds, antique/classic, experimental/homebuilt and aerobatic types of planes. Local Chapter 633 of the Experimental Aircraft Association will be signing up youths from 8 to 17 years old for "Young Eagle."

The Pleasanton Community Concert Band will perform, along with the Diablo Dixie Devil Jazz Band during the day. In addition, firefighters from the Pleasanton Livermore Fire Department and Livermore Police Department officers will be on hand to talk about their emergency response equipment.

Parking is free in the airport lot. What is now the Livermore Municipal Airport was built in 1929 in Rincon Avenue.

In 1965, the airport was moved to its current location near the Isabel Road-I-580 interchange.

The airport is the 11th busiest in California with 253,000 operations each year. ■

Museum On Main seeks director

The Amador-Livermore Valley Historical Society is looking for an executive director that will take the helm of the Museum On Main Street, which it operates.

Under direction from the museum's board of directors, he or she will plan, direct and coordinate operations of the museum and take responsibility for making policies, managing daily operations and planning the use of materials and human resources.

Collaborating with the city's

civic arts manager, the new executive director will develop educational programs and an interpretive plan for the museum and the under renovation Alviso Adobe Community Park.

Applications will be accepted through 5 p.m. Sept. 28. Resumes may be sent to the city human resources department, City of Pleasanton, 123 Main St., P.O. Box 520, Pleasanton, CA 94566. For information, visit www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/employment.

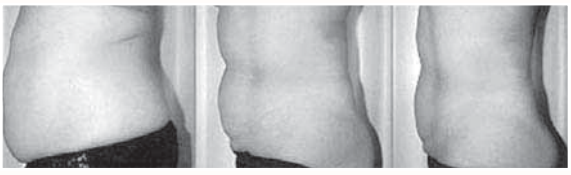
—Janet Pelletier

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Museum goes back in time for Heritage Festival

Two-day arts and crafts event takes over downtown

by Emily Atwood

The front lawn of the Museum On Main Street will be transformed into Pleasanton of yesteryear as they celebrate Heritage Festival this weekend. Saturday and Sunday's old-fashioned socials are just part of the fun that will take people of all ages back in time through sights, sounds and even tastes.

Volunteer Bonnie Green is coming back playing 19th century tunes to sing and dance to. Cotton candy, popcorn and shaved ice will be available munch, as well as candy and other goodies being sold at the country store. The store will also feature bonnets, replicas of raccoon skin caps, historical books, wooden toys, old-fashioned craft projects and more.

This event supports the Museum On Main, allowing historical artifacts and memories to be preserved and sustained. Currently on display is a quilt exhibit called Pieces in Time. Made from 1885 to 1975, all 24 quilts were made by local residents. Time is running out to see this exhibit, as it runs through

Sept. 30. Kids can also join in the quilt fun by coloring their own pattern. The local history room will also be open for first time and return visitors.

Ghost Walk Tour tickets will also be on sale this weekend. The tour takes place Oct. 12-13. Several downtown buildings are said to be haunted, and the tour has become very popular. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$6 for children; or \$2 for adults and \$1 for children who are members.

The Museum On Main festivities are only part of the Heritage Festival. Main Street will be home to artwork from over 200 artisans. The Pioneers of Pleasanton exhibit will feature demonstrations from "old time" experts and wranglers from Brentwood's Kalana Corral will be on hand rounding up ponies and all other sorts of fun.

For more on the Museum On Main Street, call 462-2766 or visit www.museumonmain.org. Details on what's happening downtown can be found at www.pleasantondowntown.net. ■

Catholics to break ground Sunday on new youth center

Bishop of Oakland to join in ceremony for \$4.8-million gymnasium

by Jeb Bing

The Catholic Community of Pleasanton will join in a groundbreaking Sunday for its long-sought \$4.8-million activity center at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, which will add needed space for Catholic Youth Organization programs and others.

The Rev. Allen Vigneron, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Oakland, will preside at the ceremony, which is scheduled to be at 2 p.m. at the church, 4001 Stoneridge Dr.

The Rev. Dan Danielson, senior pastor of the St. Elizabeth Seton and St. Augustine Catholic Church, said the new facility will include a full gymnasium, storage areas, showers and bathrooms. The complex will eventually include a large conference room, a dedicated Youth Room, as well as additional meeting rooms, a kitchen, and a childcare facility for young children while their parents are attending church functions.

"This is the first building of its kind to be constructed according to the sustainable design standards, called LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), in the city of Pleasanton," Danielson said.

"It will be extensively used by the over 550 boys and girls who participate in the CYO basketball

program, as well as by the high school youth program and other groups," he added. "The showers are being provided in part to make the facility able to be used to house people in the event of an emergency in the community."

The project is expected to take a year to complete, and will open for next fall's sports season.

The City Council approved plans for a 22,296-square foot parish center and gymnasium at St. Elizabeth Seton last January. With funds available to build part of the facility, the gymnasium will be built first with the parish center to follow later.

The multi-million-dollar project faced scrutiny from city planners and the Planning Commission for most of 2006. Councilman Matt Sullivan cast the lone vote against the project after some from the adjacent Pleasanton Village community objected to placing the new structure on the Rheem Drive side of St. Elizabeth Seton. They said the added traffic would adversely affect this community. Sullivan argued that he felt not enough had been done by the church to resolve those concerns.

But others on the council disagreed.

"I think the church has done an outstanding job in planning this

project," said Councilman Jerry Thorne. "I think there has been sufficient time to consider this application and I can't support delaying this any further."

Councilwoman Cindy McGovern, who urged the council to approve the project, won majority approval from her colleagues as well as the church's agreement on final approval conditions:

- The church is to form a pastoral council to meet regularly with the Pleasanton Village Homeowners Association on any concerns the group has with church activities;
- The city will create a pedestrian crosswalk on Rheem Drive for overflow crowds that might park in lots between Rheem and Santa Rita Road and walk across Rheem to church-related activities;
- The city will conduct noise measurements once the gymnasium is built and in use;
- The church architect will lower the proposed 34-foot-high roof line of the gymnasium "as much as possible" to meet the city's 32-foot height limit in that neighborhood, and,
- A proposal to allow on-street parking along Stoneridge Drive in front of the church property during peak attendance on Sunday nights was denied. ■

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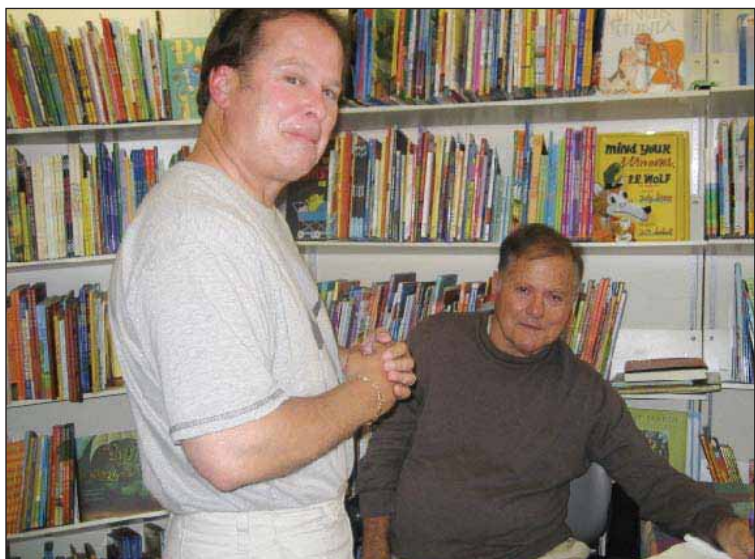


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Kevin Johnson (left), director of pupil services for the Pleasanton School District and longtime teaching associate of Everett "Skip" Mohatt at Amador Valley High joins him at book signing for Mohatt's newest book, "Beyond Ceilings."

Big crowd comes to see local author

Crowd jams bookstore for book signing, chance to hear how "Skip" Mohatt managed handicap

Book fans of retired Amador Valley high School teacher Everett "Skip" Mohatt crowded into the Towne Center Book Store Sunday to buy just-off-the-press copies of Mohatt's newest book, "Beyond Ceilings," and to hear the popular teacher describe his latest work.

Mohatt, who retired after a three-decade career as a teacher, coach and notably as the school's only Advanced Civic instructor to lead his class to a national championship victory at the annual "We the People" competition in Washington, D.C. in 1995 was in Pleasanton to sign copies of his new book. The 347-page book is the sequel to "Ceilings," which covers Mohatt's childhood in California's mother Lode country, up until 1948, when he was stricken with polio.

Mohatt, 73, opens the second book with his limited view of the ceiling over his hospital bed in San Francisco. He made progress from an iron lung to wheelchair to so-called "Canadian crutches"

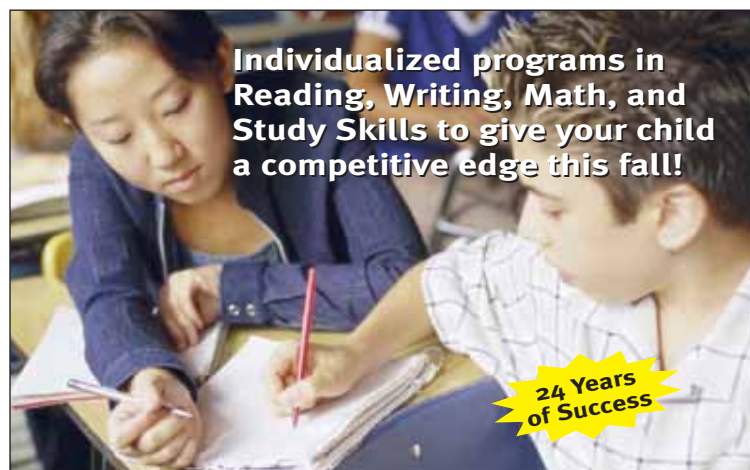
strapped to his forearms. In the book, he pays tribute to the many people along the way who helped and encouraged him.

In telling his story about his efforts to fit into a teenage world, marriage to college sweetheart Joyce Ingalls in 1956, and then being hired to teach at Amador, Mohatt makes use of italicized sentences and paragraphs which told Sunday's audience are his thoughts during all of the ordeals and triumphs. Given the chance to coach varsity basketball, his lifelong dream despite his handicap and despite skeptical school administrators, he went on to lead Amador teams to championship through 1980.

Amador Valley High's school gymnasium is named in his honor.

Mohatt said he has already started on the third and final book, which will mostly relate his experiences at Amador and in Pleasanton. This new book, he said, won't have the word "Ceilings" in it.

—Jeb Bing



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Pleasanton Real Estate News



by Gerarda Stocking

AMORTIZATION AND ARMs

If you make an additional payment toward reducing the principal balance on your loan, you hasten the loan's full payoff and avoid paying some interest as well. Most of us know how this works for a fixed-rate mortgage, but what about an adjustable rate mortgage (ARM)?

The main difference is that paying an additional amount toward your principal balance each month doesn't reduce the number of payments you'll make to completely pay off your ARM, as it will your fixed-rate mortgage. Instead, it will make the monthly payment smaller each time the loan's interest and payment rate adjust than it otherwise would have been.

The reason is simple. When an ARM adjusts, the new payment amount is based on the current loan balance, the new interest rate, and the remaining number of payments to be made on the loan. If you've been making additional payments toward your principal balance, it will be lower than it otherwise would have been, and your adjusted payment will therefore be lower.

It's worth a conversation with your real estate and mortgage advisors. Additional principal payments may save you a substantial amount of money and help to reduce your future monthly payments as well. So call Gerarda Stocking at 846-4000 or visit her website at www.gerardastocking.com.

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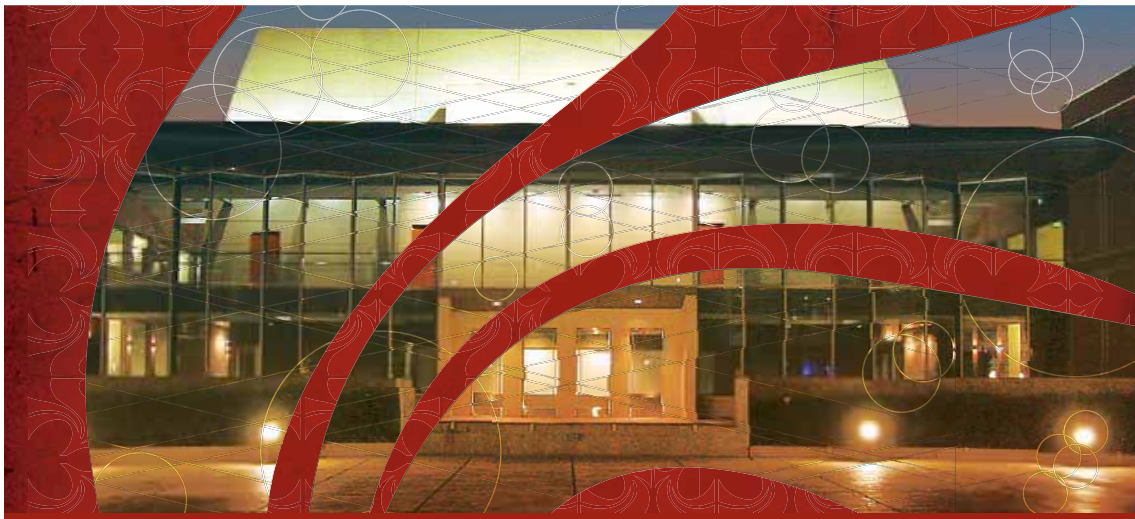
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Tiffany Weigel

New rooftop panels at Safeway supermarket in central Dublin are first of 23-store installation project by Pleasanton-based Safeway to boost renewable energy sources for company.

Safeway takes lead in renewable energy

Solar now provides half of power used at retrofitted Dublin store

by Jeb Bing

Pleasanton-based Safeway Inc. showed off its new rooftop solar panels Sept. 13 that are now providing up to 48 percent of the electrical power needed at its Dublin Boulevard store in central Dublin.

Kevin Herglotz, Safeway's Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Government Relations, said the panels cover nearly an acre of space on the south and east sides of the roof. They are part of a complete renovation of the store aimed at fulfilling Safeway's commitment to meet strict environmental guidelines in all of its operations.

As a result, Safeway is now one of the largest buyers of renewable energy with the Dublin store's solar panels part of a new environmental project to power 23 California stores with rooftop panels. Already, the gasoline station on Dublin Boulevard in front of the store is completely powered by wind energy, which the company purchases from a wind energy supplier.

Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton) toured the store, praising Safeway for retrofitting projects from low-energy lighting

to using recyclable materials to making sure that all disposables that can be recycled are sent to recycling centers.

"(Safeway's) Dublin solar project stands as a model for other companies to invest in the same renewable energy technology in California and elsewhere," he said.

Solar equipment at the central Dublin Safeway store and other planned locations will provide approximately 7,500 megawatts of electricity per year, enough to provide 20 percent of each store's average power usage and up to 48 percent of power usage during the peak hours.

Herglotz said the entire Dublin Safeway facility now utilizes renewable energy and is the prototype of environmental and energy conservation changes under way throughout the supermarket's chain of stores.

Safeway spokeswoman Teena Massingill said that by using solar energy at the Dublin store, Safeway is removing 487,000 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air, the equivalent of taking 50 passenger

(continued on page 11)

Valley Humane turns 20 years old

Anniversary picnic celebration includes BBQ, carnival games, raffle

by Emily Atwood

Pets have been given second chances for 20 years by the Valley Humane Society. The no-kill, non-profit organization is celebrating the milestone with "Picnic 4 Pets" Sept. 23 at their new facility located at 3670 Nevada St.

Featured festivities are food provided by Back 40 Texas BBQ, carnival games, face painting, balloons, henna tattoos, a 21-foot inflatable slide, dog olympics, a wine and beer garden and music.

There will also be a raffle and prizes. Raffle tickets are \$1 each

or six for \$5.

Mayor Jennifer Hosterman is the special guest, as well as other city officials and members of the fire and police departments.

VHS serves animals in Danville, Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton, San Ramon and surrounding areas and provides them with a safe and nurturing environment until loving homes can be found for them.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children aged 12 and under and can be purchased at VHS, Three Dog Bakery, 335 St. Mary St. at the event. ■

Emergency

(continued from page 5)

According to Alameda County project coordinator Bill McCammon, "the East Bay accord goes one step further by clearing a major obstacle to making such a network possible—successfully signing agreements with nearly three dozen local agencies with disparate needs and priorities toward a common goal."

Papers were filed Sept. 11 with the state of California, marking the official JPA formation.

McCammon, former Alameda County fire chief, said it's believed that the East Bay system will link up with neighboring communities sometime in the future.

The joint-powers authority will also "give public safety officials greater credibility as they seek to convince the local governments that investing in a regional system is a more sensible and cost-effective way to create a state-of-the-art communications backbone than the agency-by-agency approach that is the historic norm."

The East Bay network, which includes a new communications vehicle that will be the nerve center as well as other equipment, will cost more than \$60 million.

Officials are applying for federal grant funds to help pay for the associated costs. So far, about \$15 million has been raised. The JPA's first meeting will be Oct. 18 and the system is expected to be operational in two years. ■

Safeway

(continued from page 5)

cars off the road annually or planting 184 acres of pine trees. The entire 23-store solar program will remove 10.4 million pounds of carbon dioxide from the air, the same as taking 1,000 cars off the road or planting 4,000 acres of pine trees.

Safeway is now the largest purchaser of green wind energy in California and one of the top 25 Fortune 500 companies purchasing green energy nationwide, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. ■

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Jesse and Dianna Cardiel, joined by Jim and Pauline Zimmerman relax on some beach chairs and under an umbrella in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

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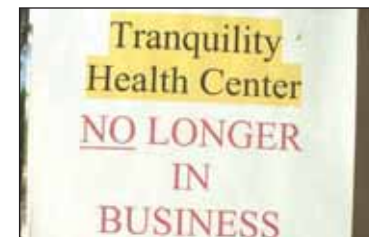
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Massage

(continued from page 5)

conducted a sting operation.

Mickleburgh said prostitution is uncommon in Pleasanton, although there have been prostitution arrests "from time to time." He said the last biggest bust was in July 2006 when 13 people were arrested for conducting online prostitution out of an apartment complex.

At the initial hearing, a judge revoked the Tranquility Health Center massage permit. The owner reportedly is appealing the decision and will have a hearing in October.

The massage business permit process includes a background check and owners are given an informational packet which says the permit can be revoked if the business is found in violation.

"Owners are responsible for whatever happens in the business," Mickleburgh said, adding that the owners often know or should know if employees are engaging in illicit acts. ■

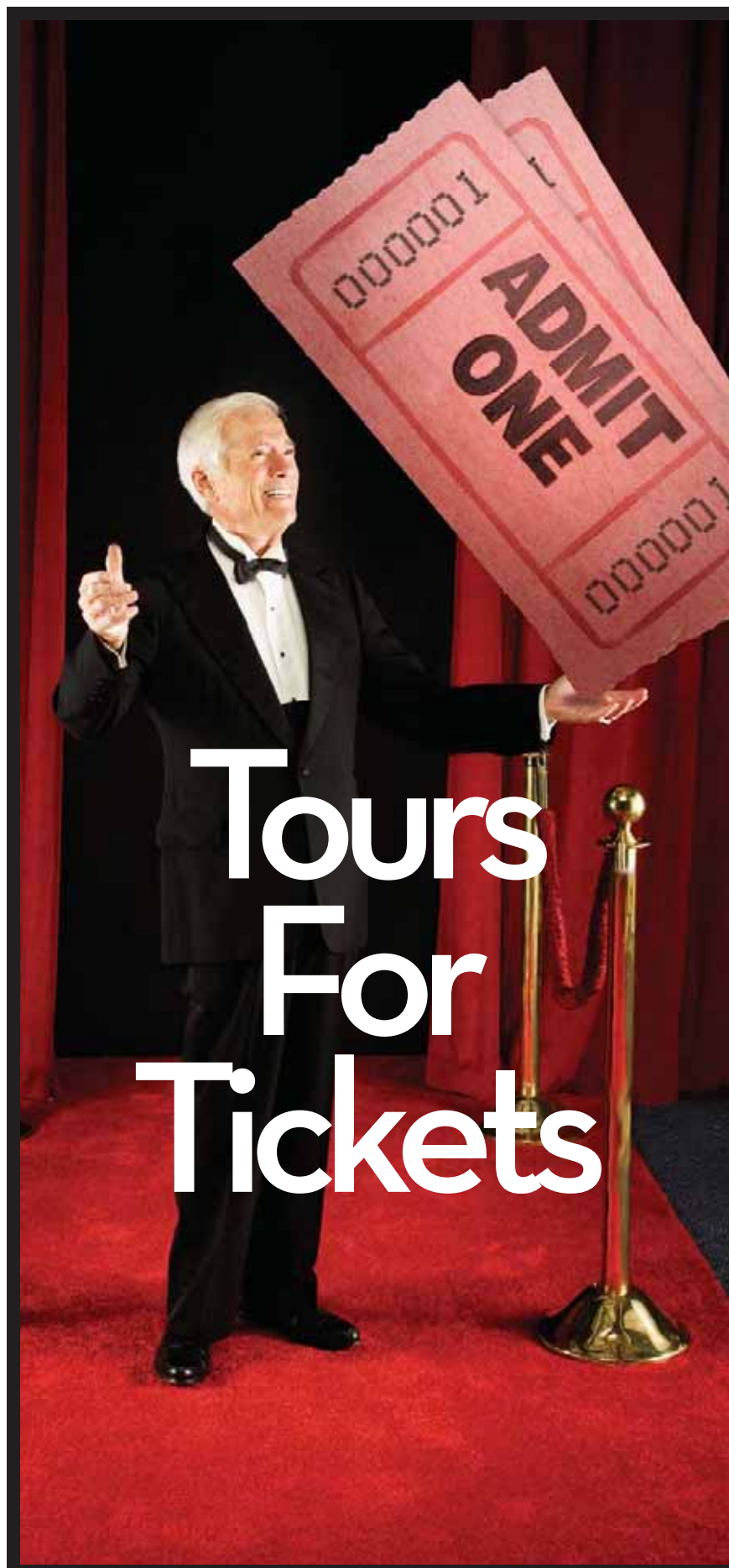
Cleanup

(continued from page 5)

I-580; Cub Pack 916 worked on Arroyo Mocho on the south side of West Las Positas Boulevard; Cub Pack 934 took a different portion of Arroyo Mocho on Santa Rita Road; Congregation Beth Emek members cleaned up Arroyo Del Valle near Nevada Court and Bernal Avenue and Cub Pack 920 took the portion of Arroyo Del Valle near Main Street downtown.

While this year nearly 1,300 pounds of trash were removed, last year's totals were much higher. A total of 3,500 pounds of trash were cleared. Brian Lorimer with the city of Pleasanton said the waterways have become less polluted over time, but the annual community cleanups are important to spread awareness about the effects of littering and dumping.

—Janet Pelletier



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Opinion

Editorial

Remember Neal School?

It's been a long time since we've talked about Neal Elementary School, but now it's time to take another look because of a pressing need to find more space as enrollment increases again. Already, Amador Valley High School is bursting at the seams with 2,587 students, which is the second year in a row that Amador has passed its "preferred" enrollment of 2,500. Foothill High is not far behind with 2,343 students. The increases are also surprisingly affecting the middle and elementary level.

Neal Elementary was planned for a 13-acre site the school district bought for just \$2 million in 2001. It would be the district's 10th and last elementary school to accommodate projected enrollment through buildout, a 29,000 voter-mandated housing unit cap that controls home and apartment growth. Pleasanton now has about 27,500 units already built or approved by city planners, so meeting the cap is not all that far away.

Neal was supposed to be built and open by now, but a multi-million-dollar legal battle between the district and prominent local developer Signature Properties has put the school on hold. At one time, estimates to build Neal were about \$8.5 million, which Signature agreed to advance with a long-term, interest-free payment plan to help the district get the school built quickly

to meet surging enrollment. But when Superintendent John Casey was hired that year, he found the cost of Neal was \$13.5 million and growing. It's anybody's guess what the school would cost today. Casey, other school officials and even the City Council said a contract Signature executives had signed pledged them to making up any cost differences between the \$8.5-million estimate they had made and whatever it actually cost to build the school. Signature sued in Superior Court to clarify that it has never made such an agreement; the school district, with the city of Pleasanton joining in, counter-sued to force Signature to pay up. The legal battle, now in its fourth year and after scores of depositions and other pre-trial hearings, is scheduled to go to trial later this year.

In recent years, not much has been said about Neal Elementary as the legal skirmishing continued. The \$650,000 the school district sets aside each year to cover first-year operating costs at Neal is now routinely transferred over to more pressing needs. The state's own budget crisis in 2004 also curbed financial increases to school districts, including Pleasanton's, placing a new school farther down the list of funding priorities.

Now Neal discussion is back and more in need than ever. An additional 91 students surprised the school district, their numbers coming in higher than what the district's demographer had projected for this year. District officials are watching the numbers-gathering effort closely now, awaiting the demographer's projections for the 2008-09 school year in a report due in December. Also uncertain for enrollment planning is a state push, backed by the Association of Bay Area Governments, to cancel out the housing cap to make room for less expensive housing. Casey believes the district can meet slightly increased enrollment figures on a continuing basis.

It's good that families are continuing to move to Pleasanton. Districts with declining enrollments face huge problems in attracting new dwellers. Prospective buyers also worry about over-crowded schools. Casey and the school board may have to seek help from all of us with a parcel tax or new bond issue. Let's first get Neal Elementary built. The district has the land. It has a state-approved design. It's time to resolve the legal dispute or seek an early trial so that we can get on with building Neal School.

"An additional 91 students surprised the district; their numbers coming in higher than what the district's demographer had projected for this year."

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Letters

Thanks from Valley Humane Society

Dear Editor,

The volunteers at Valley Humane Society want to thank the community for the support of our garage and garden sale on Aug. 25 to raise money for the Just Like New Fund, which helps pay for medical expenses of sick or injured animals in the Tri-Valley.

*Jackie Barnett
Pleasanton*

Support Pleasanton First

Dear Editor,

Pleasanton voters, beware. A group is attempting to gather signatures for an "open space" initiative on Staples Ranch. This misguided initiative is not what it appears to be.

Please don't sign it!

In reality, this initiative will ensure that control of the property will move away from Pleasanton and into the hands of either Livermore or Dublin. That means that our parks, schools, libraries, youth sports, cultural arts, seniors and emergency services will suffer.

Local open space advocates, including the Sierra Club, don't endorse it, and neither should you. Don't be fooled. To protect Pleasanton's interests, it's simple—just say no!

To learn more, visit www.pleasantonfirst.com and join friends, neighbors, park and trail enthusiasts, youth sports groups, seniors, local businesses, and school and city leaders in supporting Pleasanton First.

*Eric "Otis" Nostrand
Pleasanton*

Petitioners give false information

Dear Editor,

I spent the evening of Sept. 5 at First Wednesday a few yards away from people gathering signatures for the Staples initiative. I was shocked to learn that they were falsely, but apparently eagerly, reassuring voters that Alameda County would never try to develop Staples Ranch on its own. Why? They mistakenly believe that Staples Ranch is located outside the county's voter protected Urban Growth Boundary.

This is flat out wrong, as anyone can see from the Association of Bay Area Governments' UGB map: (<http://www.abag.ca.gov/planning/images/alameda%20SG.pdf>).

Furthermore, the map shows that Livermore's UGB is open at the Staples Ranch property. If the map is correct, Livermore would not need voter approval to annex and develop the property either. The same open boundary exists between Dublin and Staples as well. Oops.

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

Please don't follow people who can't read a map. Staples Ranch will get lost.

*Becky Dennis
Pleasanton
Former City Council member*

Oak Grove just like past developments

Dear Editor,

Once again we have people protesting a new development for selfish reasons.

I used to have a nice view of a ridge that was just east of Vintage Hills. Then Grey Eagle went in. I then got a view of some big houses. Trees have grown and I cannot see the houses any longer. The trees in Oak Grove will grow also. Houses in Kottinger Ranch now clutter up what used to be some nice-looking hills and open space. At the time both of these developments went in, the homes in them were considerably larger than the ones in nearby neighborhoods.

As for traffic, I'm sure the people living in neighborhoods adjoining Grey Eagle and Kottinger Ranch had a lot fewer traffic problems before those developments went in.

Sure, I'd like to see Oak Grove left undeveloped but it would have been nice if the Grey Eagle area and the Kottinger Ranch area were also undeveloped. For at least 50-60 years, the way of life in Pleasanton has been "bigger and better houses" in new developments (all of which have made Pleasanton a better place to live). Should things change now just because you are here?

*Fran Hirst
Pleasanton*

McNerney has support from South Carolina

Dear Editor,

Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton) is a wonderful candidate for Congress. So wonderful, he has me convinced over on the East Coast that I should vote for him. Boy, do I wish I could.

McNerney's take on foreign policy is a stance no other candidate in this race, or who would enter, has tackled. Jerry has no fear of terrorism because he knows his plan will work; a plan that includes a rational assessment of the actions taken to secure our country. Not on-the-fly policies our government has now.

McNerney takes the lead on health care. Our system needs major reform. We all have to make some adjustments. Jerry plans to change the status quo in our favor.

Jerry McNerney is the right man.
*Jamie Sanderson
Georgetown, South Carolina*

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Talking Points

by Gina Channell-Allen



Ghost writers

Anonymity, immediacy are an online blessing and curse

The popularity of our online Town Square forum has grown exponentially in the last few months. The forums allow for immediate discourse among participants on any number of subjects. It's a modern version of a coffeehouse—visitors can get on their soapboxes about everything from the latest movie to current events and they never have to leave the comfort of home.

One part of the Weekly's mission is to get community members talking amongst themselves and to us by opening the lines of communication. However, in addition to opening up the lines of communication, online forums such as Town Square also open up a big can of worms.

We recently received an email requesting the forum "rules." Primarily this requestor was interested in anonymous posts and those written under pseudonyms.

In print we have always required that letters to the editor include the author's name. Many newspapers even call to verify the authorship. Old-school journalists (myself included) have been taught that opinions, facts and quotes must be attributed. And shouldn't people stand behind their opinions? If it's not worth signing your name to, then it can't be relevant, right?

On the other hand, how many opinions, ideas and comments have been squelched because of the writer's fear of mocking, hostility or even retribution?

New media means new rules and a new way of thinking. To open up the lines of communication, journalists have been forced to embrace anonymity. Or at least endure it. It goes against every fiber of our journalistic beings because we equate anonymous forum posts to unnamed sources, which are taboo.

Alas, anonymous posts do have some merit as they can bring to light issues that otherwise would have remained in the dark. (Remember "Deep Throat?") However, just as with unnamed sources, one must

question the authenticity of the statements. Questionable authenticity and the fact that posts are immediate (without editing) make editors cringe.

This immediacy, though, has provided an opportunity to witness another nuance of new media: "self-editing" and "self-correcting"—where the forum users correct and question. For example, we once had a post that blasted a local restaurant for its food and service. Several other visitors spoke up in defense of the restaurant—the number of which outweighed the one bad report. We have also had posters correct facts, submit different facts and ask questions to garner more information.

This "self-editing" works for anonymous posts, too. We have noticed that if a topic is getting too many posts that seem to be coming from one person using different names, or one person is just monopolizing the conversation, the self-correction is that the topic dies. Nobody wants to read or respond to a meaningless diatribe, especially if it seems to be a schizophrenic debate between a poster and his pseudonym.

Do I believe comments posted with the author's true identity are more credible? Yes. But have I received information or a lead from an anonymous source that otherwise would have never surfaced? Yes.

So we at the Pleasanton Weekly choose to focus our attention at the conversation, facts and tone as opposed to the identity of the poster. But we question authenticity and accuracy, and encourage you to do the same.

Gina Channell-Allen, a 20-year journalism veteran, is the president of the East Bay division of Embarcadero Publishing Company, president of the Pleasanton Weekly and publisher of the Danville Weekly. Send questions to gallen@pleasantonweekly.com.

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Your Turn

The Pleasanton Weekly encourages comments on our coverage or issues of local interest.

Submit letters to the editor of up to 250 words and guest opinion pieces up to 500 words with a short bio to editor@PleasantonWeekly.com. Include your name, address and daytime phone number so we can reach you. We reserve the right to edit contributions for length, objectionable content, libel and factual errors known to us. Anonymous letters will generally not be accepted.

Submitting a letter to the editor or guest opinion constitutes a granting of permission to the Pleasanton Weekly and Embarcadero Publishing Company to also publish it online, including in our online archives and as a post on Town Square.

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HERE ARE THE



PLEASANTON

by the Pleasanton Weekly staff

With 96 percent of us telling an independent survey group last spring that we think Pleasanton is a great place to live, work, shop and just have fun, it's no surprise that we're also a city of many "bests." That's why this 2007 "Best of Pleasanton" issue is the largest in the seven years we've been asking your opinion and explains why you cast the most votes ever in categories that ranged from best restaurant to best place to have a first date, although we heard from a number of happily married old timers who said they just wished there had been a Pleasanton full of all these opportunities "back then." Some sent us emails or phoned suggesting categories we didn't have, including one gentleman who wanted us to ask the best place to be buried, and another who wanted the best place to have his teeth pulled.

AROUND TOWN

Although these suggestions probably have importance at some point in our life, we kept the questions and categories more upbeat. East Bay BMW was the top vote-

getter as the Best Auto Dealership, which is why we saw so many mid-life crises being solved in the flurry of top-down BMW convertibles in town this summer. Other dealers weren't far behind, though, with Acura of Pleasanton, Lexus of Pleasanton, Volvo of Pleasanton and Mercedes Benz Hacienda Motors winning enough votes to put any of them in the driver's seat, so to speak.

And then there was the other side of driving a flashy car in a city known for its tough-looking, stern-speaking police officers. Despite all of the suggested locations, readers said the Best Place to Get a Traffic Ticket in Pleasanton is "anywhere" and everywhere. That pleases Police Chief Mike Fraser who's determined to encourage drivers to obey speed limits, helping all of us by installing flashing signs throughout town that show us just how fast we're driving.

Often it seems as if most cars are heading downtown still the Best Place to People Watch, Best Place to Meet New People and Best Place to Get

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WINNERS

BEST OF PLEASANTON 2007



PLEASANTON

Together with Friends. While leaning over the second level railings at Stoneridge Shopping Center have been a favorite of teenagers since the mall opened nearly 30 years ago, those teens have since grown up, married and voted our downtown as the best place to congregate.

And why not? Downtown Pleasanton is a historic district that is home to more than 575 businesses. From an array of hair stylists, med spas, coffee shops and outstanding restaurants, readers agree there's no place like Pleasanton's downtown. Livermore is trying, Dublin has its chain stores and Walnut Creek has its high rise department stores, but Pleasanton has nostalgia. One reader who stopped by the office to cast her vote called our downtown "classy."

Speaking of voting, the numbers soared again this year as we moved fully into the digital age, letting readers vote from their computers at home, work, even while keyboarding their laptops at Tully's (voted **Best Independent Coffee House**) or using the city's new

Wi-Fi system anywhere downtown. Besides voting on all 220 questions in 45 categories, many voters took the extra step of writing in their own answer to a hypothetical question they posted that was not on the drop-down menu. Not satisfied with **Anywhere in Pleasanton** to get a traffic ticket, another 300 selected their own favorites, with Santa Rita Road, Bernal Avenue and Vineyard Avenue as close runners-up. Only one wrote in "nowhere," adding "I'm a professional driver" (whatever that means). One reader wrote in Foothill High in the Stepping Out, **Best Theater Company** category, which **Pleasanton Playhouse** won overwhelmingly. Ecumenically, there were other write-ins for the Foothill and Amador Valley annual Spring Musical, which is always a highlight as each school year nears an end.

Besides auto dealerships, many of us work to keep our less-than-new (meaning old) cars clean and running. **California Shine** won hands down in the **Best Auto Detail** category, with **Precision Auto Repair** winning 2-1 over Scott's Automotive for the **Best Car Repair** facility. This long list of repair shops also had a long list

(continued on page 18)

Thank You for voting us "The Best"!

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Best Of Pleasanton

BEST HARDWARE STORE



Jim Rhodes talks to Bill Becker of Workbench TrueValue Hardware to stock up on supplies.

Best of

(continued from page 17)

of voters, just not enough for any of them to reach the top. When it comes to keeping these cars clean, **Pleasanton Car Wash** garnered the most votes in the **Best Car Wash** category, but close behind was Dublin Auto Wash and California Shine Co. **Big O Tires** scored again in our readers' vote as the **Best Tire Store/Service Center**, but Rynck Tire & Auto wasn't far behind **Shear Magic** squeaked through

as the **Best Dog Groomer**, which

is good since our editor takes his Golden Retriever there. But close behind was the Pleasanton Pet Hotel, followed, again closely, by VIP Grooming and Dapper Dog Mobile Grooming. Yo Momma received a write-in vote, though we're not sure where that groomer is. Of course, if you have a dog, it's good to have a veterinarian and

(continued on page 21)



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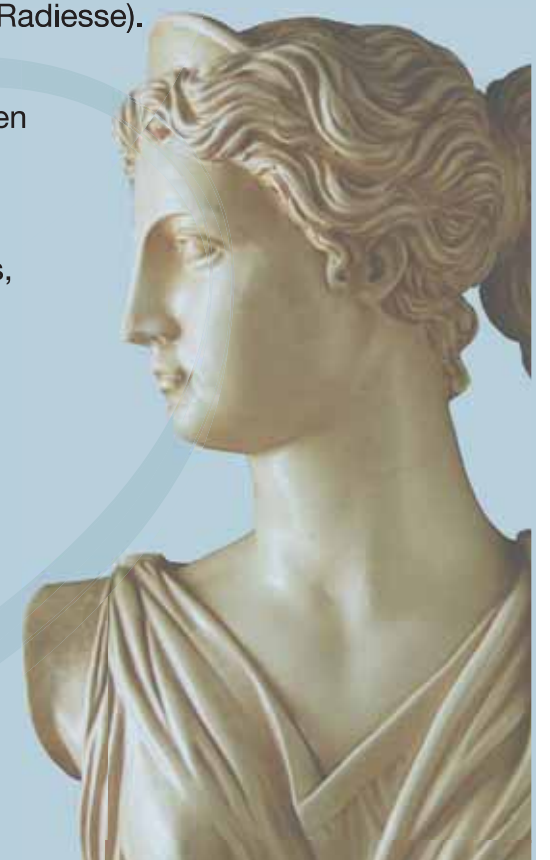
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Best of

(continued from page 21)

difference between a zucchini and squash.

While you're out, walk on down Main Street, to **People Watch**, which, as we pointed out earlier, is our readers' overwhelming choice in this category. There are others, too, including Tully's Plaza, but, hey, that's Main Street, too. So are the First Wednesday street parties and farmers' market. A curious pick, though, is the DMV, which was on our drop-down list and grabbed the votes of a number of readers.

In the Around Town catch-all categories, readers named **Tri-Valley PC Medic** as their **Best Computer Repair** facility, which had a 5-1 lead over the second runner-up. Voted the **Best Photographer** in town is **Lani Allen**, whose photo of two children crossing a wooden bridge in the Ridgeland graced the cover of "Info Pleasanton" last week. **Jazz N Taps** took the most votes as the **Best Place for Dance Lessons**, followed closely by Tiffany Dance and Jamie's Dance Company. **Hometown GMAC** was voted the **Best Pleasanton Real Estate Office**, with Keller Williams, Alain Pinel, Prudential, Coldwell Banker, Mike Carey, United California Brokers (UCB) and J. Rockliff as runners-up. Voted the **Best Tutoring School** was **Sylvan Learning**, with Steps and Kumon Math & Reading close behind.

If this is all too much mix and match, shop and compare and brand name recognition for you, go out and get a good DVD or video (yes, they still market those) at **Hollywood Video**. It won the most votes in the **Best Video/DVD Store** in Pleasanton, although Netflix in its red-colored mailer that goes straight to your door was a close second. It will be interesting to see how technology changes this category in the 2008 "Best of Pleasanton."

SPECIALTY RETAIL

Everything from the best men's and women's clothing stores to honors for best bicycle shop, florist, lingerie store and best places to buy athletic equipment, cookware or toys comprise the specialty retail section of the "Best Of Pleasanton."

A number of people are passionate about the **Passionate Athlete**, a sports store located at 440 Main St. Residents said that was where they got their kicks for **Best Women's Clothing Store**, that is. The Passionate Athlete received 64 votes in total. Hip fashion boutiques All About Me and Sugar Shack followed a close second and third, with 56 and 47 votes respectively.

Though beauty is in the eye of the beholder, all eyes were on **Studio 7 Fine Arts**, 400 Main St., for **Best Art Gallery** in town—winning 107 votes and leaving others

in the dust.

When residents are looking to get out of their cars and ride on two wheels, they venture to **Bicycles! Pleasanton** at 537 Main St., giving the bike shop 106 votes for **Best Bicycle Shop**. Newly-opened store Cyclepath (in the Bank of America building downtown), was a close second with 84 votes.

By and large the bookworms in town purchased the latest Harry Potter book at **Towne Center Books** at 555 Main St, named **Best Book Store**. If the recent release party that was attended by hundreds of Potter fans wasn't enough proof, 255 votes were made for the bookstore. Town Center Books also gained another distinction—the biggest vote-getter in our "Specialty Retail" section.

For those days you want to say you're sorry, happy anniversary, happy birthday or just to let someone know you're thinking of them, you've got **Dorothy's** on speed

(continued on page 24)

Pleasanton Weekly's
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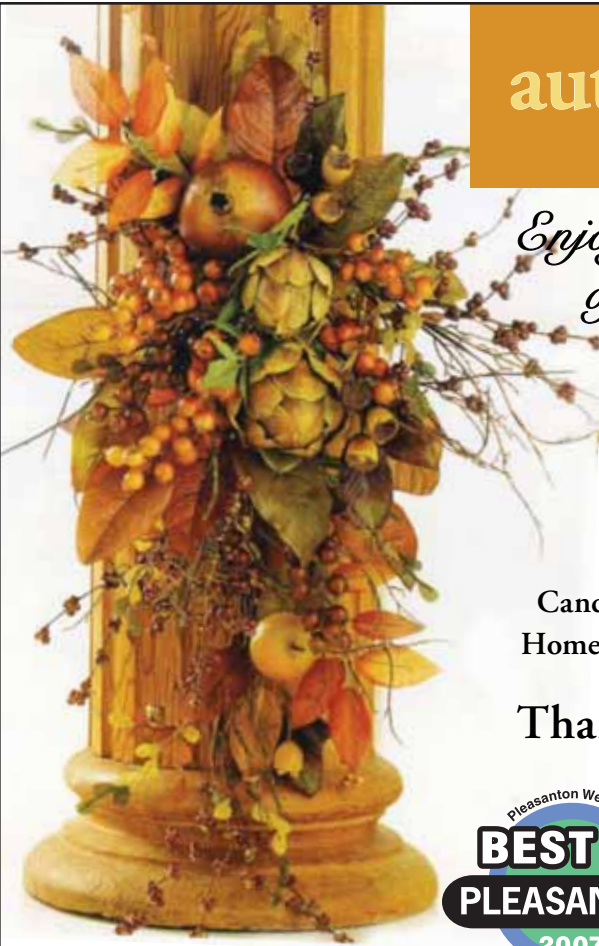
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Best of

(continued from page 23)

dial. The flower shop at 1991-L Santa Rita Road won the category **Best Florist** with 69 votes, narrowly defeating another popular florist in town—Alexandria's—by one vote.

Need protein, vitamins, or an energy bar? Residents look no further than **Valley Health Mill** on 3037-J Hopyard Road, named the **Best Health Food Store**. The shop received 138 votes, surpassing the first runner-up Harvest House by more than 100 votes.

California Stampin', located at 5480-2 Sunol Boulevard in the Raley's shopping center, stamped out the competition in the **Best Hobby/Craft Store** category with 78 votes.

Pleasanton residents get bedazzled at **Cardinal Jewelers** at 4001-3 Santa Rita Road in the Rose Pavilion shopping center. The store, which has been in business since 1977, received 50 votes for **Best Jewelry Store**. Downtown jewelry shop Jeweler's Gallery trailed in second with 36 votes.

It's not hard to win the **Best Lingerie Store** when you're the only intimate apparel shop in downtown. **Lily Ann's Lingerie** at 350 Main St. received 127

votes. Nary a resident considers Macy's lingerie department or that of Nordstrom's in the same realm.

Bennie McKay and his store **Acc'sentials**, 520 Main St. is where you want to go to get that nice business suit you need for an important job interview. McKay's collection of fine men's clothes won him **Best Men's Clothing Store** with 97 votes. For the more casual dresser, western wear store Christesen's won second best honors.

There's no other place Pleasanton animal lovers would take their pooches than **Three Dog Bakery**, 335 St. Mary St. With 73 votes, the bakery won **Best Pet Store** for its array of dog treats. Petway, a pet store on Sunol Boulevard in the Raley's shopping center, came in second.

Longtime favorite **Domus**, 652 Main St. won **Best Place to Buy a Gift**—no surprise considering the specialty home d'Écor shop has won the same category since the Pleasanton Weekly began "Best of Pleasanton." It received 200 votes. The shop also wiped out the rest with 191 votes for **Best Place to Buy Cookware**, but maybe they should watch their backs for next year's "Best Of"—recently opened cooking store **Pans on Fire**, also downtown, received 89 votes.

Ingram & Brauns Musik Shoppe, 3160 Santa Rita Road, apparently makes beautiful music

(continued on page 27)

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Pleasanton Weekly's
**BEST OF
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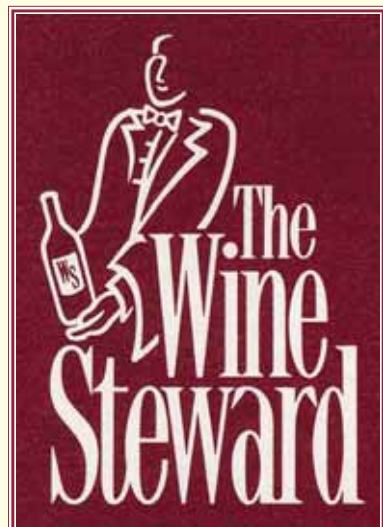


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BEST AUTO REPAIR



Kevin Green (Left) works with service advisor Ben Freitas to schedule Precision Auto Repair customers.

Best of

(continued from page 24)

with residents because it was named the **Best Place to Buy a Musical Instrument** by readers with 101 votes. The Pleasanton store is owned by John Ingram and Bernhard Brauns.

Those looking for the latest Raider or '49er gear head to **Sport Chalet** at 4555 Rosewood Drive. The **Best Place to Buy Athletic Equipment**, Sport Chalet was voted for 86 times. Downtown specialty shop Fleet Feet, popular with the runner crowd, was a close second with 78 votes.

For those hard-to-find, unique gifts for children, residents said they frequent **G.R. Doodlebug**, located at 350 Main St., naming it **Best Toy Store** with 143 votes.

And last but certainly not least, wine aficionados head to **The Wine Steward**, 641 Main St. and site of the old Roxy Theatre downtown, for their "vino" and related accessories. The wine store received 247 votes in all for **Best Wine Store**.

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

It's not just the name of a famous Olivia Newton John song—Let's Get Physical is a motto many around here live by. And just what did people say was the best bike or walking trail, health club, martial arts studio, place to jog or walk a dog and do yoga and pilates?

While there are a number of great places to **Take a Bike Ride or Walk** around town, residents said they like the **Pleasanton Ridge** the best. And those who gave the ridge 136 votes must be up for a challenge because the steep incline in the hills west of Interstate 680

is not for lightweights. While the journey up the giant hillside may be rough, it's all worth it because the view of the Tri-Valley is breathtaking.

For those who prefer their exercise out of the elements, **Club Sport** was the top vote-getter in the **Best Health Club** category with 150 votes. Located at 7090 Johnson Drive, the large facility offers traditional workout machines, tennis and racquetball courts, yoga, dance classes and more. Trailing in second and third with 41 votes a piece were Express Fitness and 24 Hour Fitness. Though not an original contender in the category, Fitness Together in Ruby Hill got 17 write-in votes!

Celebrating a decade in business, **Kicks USA** received another milestone—recognition as the **Best Martial Arts Studio** with 40 votes. Kicks, located at 148B Ray Street in downtown, offers special programs catered to children, women and men alike. Jue's Taekwon Do on Sunol Boulevard in the Raley's shopping center came in second place with 29 votes.

Since Pleasanton lives up to its name as being pleasant and scenic, residents just couldn't pick one place as the **Best Place to Jog** and instead chose **Any Pleasanton Neighborhood** with 66 votes. A major center of athletic activity, the Sports Park was chosen second with 53 votes, followed by the Ironhorse Trail in third with 32 votes.

Residents also seemed to be indecisive when it came to **Best Place to Walk a Dog**. While Pleasanton has more than 40 parks, voters said **Any City Park** is up to snuff, with 78 votes. The Muirwood dog park was a second favorite with 39 votes, followed by the Sports Park with 36 votes.

There's no better place to do the

(continued on page 28)

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Pleasanton Weekly's BEST OF PLEASANTON 2007

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**BEST PLACE TO BUY A
MUSICAL INSTRUMENT**



When Pleasanton students need to find a clarinet, saxophone or flute for band, they head to Ingram & Brauns Musik Shoppe.

Best of

(continued from page 27)

"downward dog" than **Downtown Yoga**. Voters said the yoga studio, located at 220B Division St., was the cat's meow in the **Best Yoga/Pilates** category with 87 votes. That may be because Downtown Yoga has specialized prenatal classes and a number of programs for beginners to experts and everything in between. Popular health club Club Sport came in second with 35 votes.

EPICURE

Readers fine tuned their palates and found the best places to experience the finer tastes in life. From Chinese food to French fries, margaritas to dining on a budget, epicurean delights are often just around the corner.

For those with ample cooking talent, but lacking time and ingredients, **GourMade Cookery** edged out Dinner My Way for the **Best Assemble Your Own Meal Store**. Located at 7060 Koll Center Parkway, GourMade sched-

ules cooking sessions where bulk meals can be prepared all at once.

Excellent food isn't always the mark of a great restaurant. Those who enjoy a good dining experience loved **Blue Agave Club**, an "alta cocina" (high cuisine) Mexican restaurant at 625 Main St. This year's **Best Place to Have a First Date** as well as **Best Atmosphere** and **Best Outdoor Dining**, it's known for its curb appeal featuring a spacious patio filled with bright colors.

At the end of the work day, what many people really want to know is where to find the **Best Margarita**. Considering they have a menu devoted to tequilas and margaritas, it's not hard to believe the Blue Agave Club won in this category.

But when it comes to readers' favorite Mexican restaurant, **Alberto's Cantina** at 435 Main St. won **Best Mexican Restaurant** for the second year in a row.

It was hard to choose a **Best Barbecue** winner, so hard in fact that it was a tie. Last year's winner **Red Smoke Grill** at 4501 Hoypard Road and **Armadillo Willy's** at 4480 Tassajara Road in Dublin made the cut. Proving great



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- Pleasanton for voting us The Best Mexican Restaurant.

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taste doesn't fade like memories, the closest competition came from Roderick's Bar-B-Que & Seafood which recently closed its doors.

Vic's All Star Kitchen brings home the bacon for the second year in a row. Voted **Best Breakfast**, readers enjoy the local feel of this sports-themed restaurant at 201-A Main St.

Forget the golden arches; the **Best Burgers** and the **Best Take-Out Restaurant** in Pleasanton are found under the yellow arrow at 6015 Johnson Drive. With classic ingredients and a secret menu—see what happens when you order a Protein Style burger next time you visit—**In-N-Out Burger** continues to be a local favorite.

No burger is complete without a handful of French fries, but to get the best in town you'll have to head over to **The Hop Yard Alehouse**, 3015-H Hopyard Road. The popular brewery won **Best French Fries** and **Best American Food Restaurant**. A close second was Stacey's Café, co-owned by Dilbert creator Scott Adams.

In a landslide vote, **High Tech Burrito** at 349 Main St. again won **Best Burrito**. Patrons love the downtown setting and of course the beans, rice and other fillings bursting at the tortilla seams.

P.F. Chang's is the newcomer favorite when it comes to Chinese food. The newest external addition to Stoneridge Shopping Center, P.F. Chang's was voted **Best Chinese**

BEST HOBBY/CRAFT STORE



From left, Cathy Widas, owner Michelle Taus and Robyn Binder stand on the sales floor of winning store California Stampin'.

Restaurant after being open since November 2006.

While one person wrote in "my mom," the majority of readers voted **Sugandh Indian Cuisine** as the **Best Indian Restaurant**. Located at 4515 Rosewood Drive, it narrowly won over Tabla.

In another landslide vote, **Oasis Grille** was named the **Best Mediterranean/Middle Eastern Restaurant**. Located at 780 Main St., it is known for its tasty kabobs and flavorful meats.

Meat lovers know that **Hap's Original Steakhouse** is the happening place to be. Named the **Best Steakhouse**, the grilling professionals know how to make it exactly the way fine beef connoisseurs want it.

Eaters looking for flavorful meals without meat head to **Sweet Tomatoes** on 4501 Hopyard Road. The buffet-style restaurant makes it easy to get exactly what you want and therefore was voted **Best Vegetarian Cuisine**.

Voters made it easy to find the best among the sea of Italian restaurants in town. Local family owned **Girasole Grill**, 3180 Santa Rita Road, won **Best Italian Restaurant** over Fontina Ristorante.

It was really no contest when it came to choosing the **Best French Restaurant**. Located at 210 Rose Ave., **Claude & Dominique Bistro** is known for its authentic cuisine and romantic setting.

Whether your favorite pizza topping is pepperoni, extra cheese or veggies, readers favorite pizza came from **Gay 90's Pizza and Pasta**, 288 Main St. This is the second year Gay '90s won **Best Pizza**.

With only five votes separating first and third place, it's obvious that Pleasanton Weekly readers can't get enough Thai food. **Lux Thai** on 4301 Valley Ave. beat out Sri Thai and Pleasanton House Thai for the honor of **Best Thai Restaurant**.

Main Street is a popular place to go, especially with the plethora of food offerings. Weekly readers had the big task of choosing just one to be the **Best Main Street Restaurant**. **Fontina Ristorante**, 349 Main St., won over Stacey's Café by four votes.

After narrowly losing in two categories, **Stacey's Café** finally won big. An overwhelming majority said it was the **Best Place for a Business Lunch**.

Rising above last year's second place spot, **Barone's** was named the **Best Romantic Restaurant**. Located at 475 St. John St., the continental cuisine of pasta, seafood and meat entrees is served both indoors and on their outdoor patio.

When it comes to seafood specialties, **Strizzi's** was voted the **Best Seafood Restaurant**. Head to the eatery, on 649 Main St., to sample seafood offerings from salmon sauté to scallops piccata.

For those who prefer their fish uncooked, they go to **Sozo Sushi** at 2835 Hopyard Road, voted **Best Sushi**. With lunch, dinner, a sushi bar and party trays, it's easy for Sozo lovers to satisfy sushi cravings. Senro Japanese Bar and Grill wasn't far behind in readers' votes.

According to Weekly readers, variety is the key to satisfying the sweet tooth. That is why they voted **Cold Stone Creamery** as the **Best Ice Cream/Yogurt Shop**. Lively employees singing for tips and creating hundreds of custom ice cream flavors make this shop the cherry on top...of the competition.

Winning by just two votes, **Noland's Cake Shop**, 205 Main St., takes the cake for **Best Bakery** over Primrose Bakery. Specializing in cakes for all occasions, they are known for their expansive flavor offerings and creative designs.

Wine drinkers head out of the city limits to get their favorite fix at **Wente Vineyards**. The winery, located at 5050 Arroyo Road in Livermore, it won **Best Winery**. Mitchell Katz won second place and, for many, is the

(continued on page 30)

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Pleasanton Weekly's **BEST OF PLEASANTON 2007**

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Pleasanton Weekly's **BEST OF PLEASANTON 2007**

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One Pound Tri-Tip and Whole Chicken	\$32.99
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One Pound Tri-Tip and Whole Slab	\$36.99

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Small Side Salad, French Fries, Roasted Corn Salad, Potato Salad, Creamy Cole Slaw, Santa Maria Style Beans, Chicken Tortilla Soup, Mashed Potatoes

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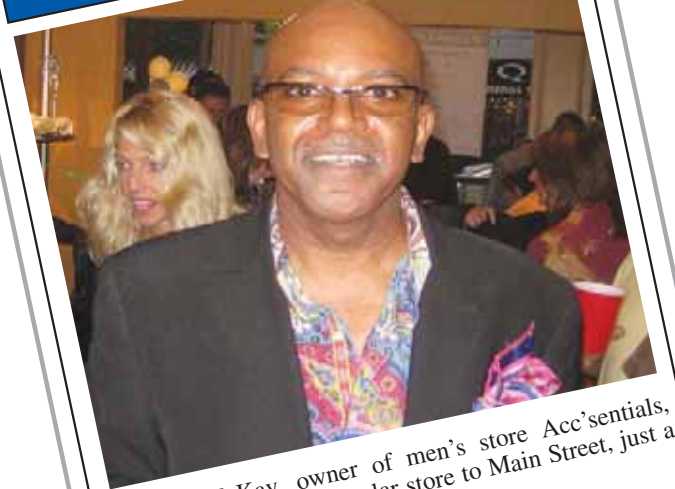
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Best Of Pleasanton

BEST MEN'S CLOTHING STORE



Bennie McKay, owner of men's store Acc'sentials, recently moved his popular store to Main Street, just a couple blocks from its old location.

Best of

(continued from page 29)

hometown favorite.

The winner of the **Best Independent Coffee House** may be in the eye of the coffee cup holder. **Tully's Coffee**, on Main and Angela streets, won over the neighboring Coffee Beans & Bistro. While it's hard to imagine the infamous downtown hangout not being unique to Pleasanton, Tully's is a chain with several Bay Area locations. The debate over technicalities and best coffee will probably last a while, so grab your favorite caffeine-infused cup o' Joe to prepare.

STEPPING OUT

When it's time to let loose, Weekly readers know exactly where to go to have a good time.

Downtown once again is the social center of town by winning **Best Place to Meet New People**. Once those new friendships develop, head back downtown because it was named the **Best Place to Get Together With Friends**.

If it's a Friday night in the summer, readers said they like to bring those friends across Main Street to Lions Wayside Park, at First and Neal streets, for the **Concerts in the Park**. Winning the **Best Place for Live Music** and the **Best Place for a Picnic** comes as no surprise as the park can barely contain the music lovers.

Those still in the dancing mood after a rousing concert head to nightclub **Aura** at 4825 Hopyard Road. Dubbed the **Best Place for Dancing** for two years in a row, the club offers entertainment Wednesday to Saturday in two posh rooms each with a bar and VIP service. Placing second was the Pleasanton Hotel on Main Street which has live music and dancing.

Sometimes stepping out is as simple as grabbing a drink after punching out your timecard. With all the

beers on tap, the beer clubs and the Hall of Foam, it's no surprise that the **The Hop Yard Alehouse & Grill** won the **Best Place for an After Work Drink**.

With so many acclaimed performances, local favorite the **Pleasanton Playhouse** easily won the **Best Theater Company** category. Several write-in votes also lauded the Foothill and Amador Valley high school productions and the Tri-Valley Young Performers Academy.

PERSONAL CARE

Whoever said looking good was difficult must not have experienced what Pleasanton's personal care specialists have to offer. When the Pleasanton Weekly asked readers to tell us who helps them look so fantastic, the secrets began pouring in at an alarming rate.

A good hair stylist is often more than just someone who trims your hair every few weeks, but they become a trusted friend and sometimes even a miracle worker. With all the salons to choose from in Pleasanton, Weekly readers named **Fusion 3 SalonSpa** the **Best Hair Salon for Women**. Located at 722 Main St., between St. John Street and Spring Street, the posh Aveda concepts salon offers esthetics in addition to coloring and cuts with a complimentary hand and neck massage.

Great hair care isn't just for women, as votes overwhelmingly show men flocking to **Cosmo's Barber Shop** on 4275 First St., between Kottinger Drive and Ray Street. Quick, reliable and cheap—a cut costs a mere \$10—it's obvious why many have been coming to Cosmo's for over a decade and have named it the **Best Hair Salon for Men**.

When striving to look your best, clean and pressed clothes make a big impression. It was a close contest—proving that Pleasanton has many great options—but **VIP Cleaners** at 3120 Santa Rita Road, Ste. E was just above Vintage Hills Cleaners, Hacienda Cleaners and Hopyard Cleaners to win **Best Dry Cleaner**. It was friendly and

PLEASANTON WEEKLY'S

BEST OF 2007

affordable service that won over the Weekly readers.

No detail is to be overlooked when it comes to pampering, and hands and feet were not overlooked in the personal care department. Two downtown stores were neck-and-neck in the **Best Manicure/Pedicure** contest, but **Blondie's** on 560 Main St. came out on top. The store is also known for its impressive shoe offerings. Fancy Nails, located at 818 Main St., was a very close runner-up.

And what is pampering without a good massage? If reading the Weekly over a cup of coffee isn't relaxing enough, readers headed to **Pleasanton Spa** for the ultimate relaxation experience. Located at 6155 Stoneridge Drive at Hopyard Road, the **Best Massage** winner invites patrons to escape the daily grind with treatments like a 60-minute lavender vanilla essence and deep Swedish massages. They also offer facials, wraps and other specialties that are sure to melt away stress and fatigue.

Advances in technology don't always mean having to upgrade to a new cell phone or computer, it can even help upgrade to a new you. Dubbing themselves the ultimate medical makeover, Weekly readers agree that **Essence MedSpa** is a medical spa miracle when they voted it **Best Medical Spa**. Conveniently located downtown, 234 Main St. Ste. C, their services cater to those looking beyond a "superficial beautification process." MD Spa was a close second.

Thanks to the readers for sharing what keeps them looking so fabulous. Whether help comes from the eastern practice of acupuncture or the latest in medical spa treatments, there's a wealth of professionals to help Pleasanton look and feel its best.

AT HOME

With thousands of homes built during the boom-time construction years of the 1970s, '80s and '90s, many are ready for upgrades, renovation and new furnishings. Voters chose from a wide selection of retailers, vendors and service companies—many from personal experience in undertaking these projects, with a vast majority of votes going to **Workbench TrueValue Hardware** in Mission Plaza. Could it be homeowners are doing the work themselves? Workbench, of course, has competition from nationally-known Home Depot, which was a close second in this **Best Hardware Store** category. No doubt Home Depot sees all this interest here among Pleasanton fixer-uppers as one reason to proposed building a second home improvement store at Bernal Avenue and Stanley Boulevard, a plan still under review by city officials.

When it comes to making improvements outside the home, readers picked **Bruce's Tree Service** as the **Best Landscaper/Designer**, and **Pleasanton Pool Service**

Around Town	
Best Auto Dealership	East Bay BMW
Best Auto Detail	California Shine Co.
Best Car Repair	Precision Auto Repair
Best Car Wash	Pleasanton Car Wash
Best Computer Repair	Tri-Valley PC Medic
Best Golf Course	Callippe Preserve Golf Course
Best Pet Groomer	Shear Magic Grooming
Best Photographer	Lani Allen Photography
Best Place for Dance Lessons	Jazz N Taps
Best Place to Get a Traffic Ticket	Anywhere in Pleasanton
Best Place to Have a First Date	Blue Agave Club
Best Place to People Watch	Main Street
Best Real Estate Office	Hometown GMAC
Best Tire Store / Service Center	Big O Tires
Best Tutoring School	Sylvan Learning Center
Best Veterinarian	Hopyard Animal Hospital
Best Video / DVD Store	Hollywood Video
Personal Care	
Best Acupuncture	The Sun Clinic
Best Dry Cleaners	VIP Cleaners
Best Hair Salon for Men	Cosmo's Barber Shop
Best Hair Salon for Women	Fusion 3 Salon Spa
Best Manicure / Pedicure	Blondies
Best Massage	Pleasanton Spa
Best Medical Spa	Essence Med Spa
Specialty Retail	
Best Womens Clothing Store	Passionate Athlete
Best Art Gallery	Studio 7
Best Bicycle Shop	Bicycles Pleasanton
Best Bookstore	Towne Center Books
Best Florist	Dorothy's
Best Health Food Store	Valley Health Mill
Best Hobby / Craft Store	California Stampin'
Best Jewelry Store	Cardinal Jewelers
Best Lingerie Store	LilyAnn's Lingerie
Best Mens Clothing Store	Acc'sentials
Best Pet Store	Three Dog Bakery
Best Place to Buy a Gift	Domus
Best Place to Buy a Musical Instrument	Ingram & Brauns
Best Place to Buy Athletic Equipment	Sports Chalet
Best Place to Buy Cookware	Domus
Best Toy Store	GR Doodlebug
Best Wine Store	Wine Steward
Epicure	
Best Assemble Your Own Meal Store	GourMade Cookery
Best American Food Restaurant	The Hop Yard Alehouse & Grill
Best Atmosphere	Blue Agave
Best Bakery	Noland's Cake Shop
Best Barbecue	Red Smoke Grill
	Armadiillo Willy's
Best Breakfast	Vic's All Star Kitchen
Best Burger	In-N-Out Burger

Best Burrito	High Tech Burrito
Best Chinese Restaurant	PF Chang's
Best French Fries	The Hop Yard Alehouse & Grill
Best French Restaurant	Claude & Dominique's Bistro
Best Ice Cream / Yogurt Shop	Cold Stone Creamery
Best Independent Coffee House	Tully's
Best Indian Restaurant	Sugandh Indian Cuisine
Best Italian Restaurant	Girasole Grill
Best Main Street Restaurant	Fontina Ristorante
Best Margarita	Blue Agave
Best Meal Under \$20	High Tech Burrito
Best Mediterranean / Middle Eastern Restaurant	Oasis
Best Mexican Restaurant	Alberto's Cantina
Best Outdoor Dining	Blue Agave
Best Pizza	Gay Nineties Pizza & Pasta
Best Place for a Business Lunch	Stacey's Café
Best Romantic Restaurant	Barone's
Best Seafood Restaurant	Strizzi's
Best Steakhouse	Haps
Best Sushi / Japanese Restaurant	Sozo Sushi
Best Take-out Restaurant	In-N-Out Burger
Best Thai Restaurant	Lux Thai Cuisine
Best Vegetarian Cuisine	Sweet Tomatoes
Best Winery	Wente Vineyards
Let's Get Physical	
Best Bike or Walking Trail	Pleasanton Ridge
Best Health Club	Club Sport
Best Martial Arts Studio	Kick's USA
Best Place to Jog	Any Pleasanton Neighborhood
Best Place to Walk a Dog	Any Pleasanton Park
Best Yoga / Pilates	Downtown Yoga
At Home	
Best Antique Store	Tattered Treasures
Best Carpet Cleaners	Glover's Steam Cleaning
Best Carpet Store	S&G Carpet
Best Flooring Store	S&G Carpet
Best Handyman	Pleasanton Home Repair
Best Hardware Store	Workbench TrueValue Hardware
Best Home Consignment Shop	Savvy Seconds
Best Home Furnishings	Clover Creek
Best Kitchen / Bath Remodeler	KDC Kitchens
Best Landscaper / Designer	Bruce's Tree Service
Best Outdoor Furniture Store	Serenity Stoneworks
Best Plumber	Valley Plumbing
Best Pool Service	Pleasanton Pool Service
Best Roofer	Tri-City Roofing
Stepping Out	
Best Place for a Picnic	Friday Concerts in the Park
Best Place for an After Work Drink	The Hop Yard Alehouse & Grill
Best Place for Dancing	Aura
Best Place for Live Music	Concerts in the Park
Best Place to Get Together With Friends	Downtown Pleasanton
Best Place to Meet New People	Main Street
Best Theater Company	Pleasanton Playhouse

(continued on page 32)

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BEST PET STORE



Three Dog Bakery owner Kathy Moreno gives her black lab Sanchez a doggie treat, which the store bakes and sells.

Best of

(continued from page 31)

hands down as the **Best Pool Service**. Newly-opened **Serenity Stoneworks** on Main Street took the lead as the **Best Outdoor Furniture Store**, and **Tri-City Roofing** as the **Best Roofer for Pleasanton** homes. Close behind, though, were Altamont Roofing and Wicks Roofing Company.

Opening the door and going inside, readers voted **S&G Carpets** as the **Best Carpet Store**, ahead of Silmar, which came in second. S&G Carpets won again as the **Best Flooring Store**, with Pleasanton Hardwood, The Floor Store and Silmar close behind. Readers who said their older carpet is still in good shape chose **Glover's Steam Cleaning** as the **Best Carpet Cleaner**, with Tiger Carpet Cleaning coming in second.

The rage these days is to upgrade the 1980s-1990s look in kitchens and bathrooms, and readers selected **KDC Kitchens** as the **Best Kitchen/Bath Remodeler**. Morgenroth, Homestead Remodeling and Hilt Construction followed closely in this category. Most kitchen and bathroom projects often require a

plumber—a need that comes in high volumes after too much turkey fat is poured down kitchen drains after Thanksgiving—and **Valley Plumbing** won the most votes in the **Best Plumber** in Pleasanton category. Savior Plumbing and Tri-City Plumbing trailed, but each with sizeable numbers of reader votes.

Readers chose **Pleasanton Home Repair** as the **Best Handyman**, **Savvy Seconds** as the **Best Home Consignment Shop** and **Clover Creek** for the **Best Home Furnishings**.

Also in this "At Home" voting section was a question to readers on what they believe is the city's **Best Antique Store**. **Tattered Treasures** won that vote hands down, with Cattelan's not far behind.

With Pleasanton still growing, school enrollment bursting at the seams, the housing market cautiously but still successfully working its way through the subprime mortgage loan dilemma that seems to have escaped most of us and businesses expanding and new ones opening up, we look another exciting "Best of Pleasanton" in 2008. See you then. ■

Thank you for choosing us Pleasanton's Best!



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