

City in shock

District to hold suicide prevention forum > page 5

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Pleasanton Weekly

Vol. VIII, Number 40 • November 2, 2007

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Around Pleasanton

by Jeb Bing

Testa: Still badgering the educators

Julie Testa was back at a familiar place last week—standing at the lectern in the Pleasanton school board meeting room talking about overcrowded conditions in our schools and what could be done about them. A frequent speaker in years gone by, Testa is probably the last of the once-active ROCA group, Reduce Overcrowded Campus Alliance. But she's still not ready to forgive or forget those who kept turning down ROCA's bid for a third comprehensive high school. Last week, she called again for enrollment relief, particularly at Amador Valley High School which she claimed is at 151 percent of capacity, but urged that smaller steps be taken to alleviate the crowds even without building a third high school.

Still there was an "I told you so" hint in her voice as she described several new state grants and funding programs she said the district had missed. Needless to say, School Superintendent John Casey and his staff, who are regularly in touch with school administrators in Sacramento, weren't pleased to hear their competence being questioned, especially at a public, televised school board meeting. A phone call or sit-down discussion in advance might have smoothed the waters, which got somewhat steamy as Casey responded to Testa's points.

A bright mother of three, Testa is a household name to a generation of Pleasanton school politicians, district staff and hundreds of parents who have worked with or against her in a number of school board elections. Always a campaigner, but never a candidate, Testa started studying up on local school issues after the district announced it was selling its Del Prado neighborhood school site in the late 1980s. She started attending school board meetings and was astonished to hear that the district also planned to sell a site on Sycamore Road where a third high school was planned. The board determined the site at the far southwest corner of the city not an appropriate location that Pleasanton didn't need another high school anyhow.

That was in late 1992, a time she remembers because she was pregnant with her third son, Kendall,

who is now a freshman at Foothill High. That was also a time before the meetings were broadcast on community television, so Testa carried word of the sale to others.

Already concerned about rising enrollments at the city's elementary, middle and high schools in a town where houses were being built by the hundreds, ROCA was formed to place caps on enrollment, particularly at the two high schools, and to lobby for more.

At the school board meeting, Testa's statistics raised eyebrows. She's also seen at these meetings carrying a huge stack of expanding files filled with current data and usually does her research homework. So when she said our schools are 150-175 percent overcrowded, everyone took notice, particularly parents. It's true that most of our schools have more students than they should under school board guidelines, but they're hardly off by that much. Enrollment guidelines call for 600 students in elementary schools, with acceptable fluctuations up to 10 percent more. Middle schools are set at 1,000, again plus 10 percent, with Amador at 2,000, plus another 200 acceptable for fluctuations. Foothill is slightly lower.

Even with 2,500 kids at Amador today, the district considers that a bubble due to a large number of new homes being built in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As those "extra" students move toward graduation, high school enrollment should drop. Testa's figures, however, were based on state guidelines that measure school size by campus acreage. Landlocked among office centers and homes, Amador's 2,500 students are in a school on just under 40 acres, whereas the new state guidelines call for at least 60 acres. Foothill, with about 2,300 students, is a bit better off on 43 acres, but still under suggested—but not mandated—guidelines. Build up another story or two as schools in central city locations do, and the student-to-acre ratio improves. Still, Testa's public airing of enrollment concerns and new state funding opportunities, even in a mini-confrontational presentation, is good. I'm glad she's back in her public watchdog role. ■

About the Cover

Bay Area newspapers had vigorous competition until last year when MediaNews added the Contra Costa Times and the San Jose Mercury to its local news empire. Now we have a diminishing number of diverse voices. Cover design by Shannon Corey. Vol. VIII, Number 40

The Pleasanton Weekly is published weekly by Embarcadero Publishing Co., 5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite 100, Pleasanton, CA 94566; (925) 600-0840. USPS 020407. The Pleasanton Weekly is mailed free upon request to homes and apartments in Pleasanton. Voluntary subscriptions at \$30 per year (\$50 for two years) are welcome from Pleasanton residents. Subscription rate for businesses and for residents of other communities is \$40 per year. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Pleasanton Weekly, 5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite 100, Pleasanton, CA 94566. © 2007 by Embarcadero Publishing Co. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

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Streetwise

Q: What do you think of the newly signed legislation requiring semiautomatic handguns sold or made in California to micro stamp each bullet fired?

Asked Downtown



Michael Brown
Insurance Broker

From a gun control perspective it sounds like a good idea. It would make it easier to trace bullets and solve crimes. As for stolen handguns, it may complicate things a little. Owners would need to be sure they have reported their handgun stolen.

Peter Hodge

Utility Construction

I think it's a waste of money. I'm a gun rights advocate. To me guns don't kill people, people kill people. Many guns used in crimes are stolen. Criminals are criminals because they are willing to do illegal things such as perpetrate crimes with stolen weapons. This legislation will be irrelevant in these situations.



Bob Garcia

Retired

I see no downside to that. The positive would be that guns used in crimes could be traced back to the owner. It might be a deterrent to gun owners if you could be wrongly accused of a crime committed with your stolen handgun. Maybe it will discourage people from buying guns, at least semi-automatics.

Leslee Middlebrook

Personal Trainer

I definitely think if people are going to own guns there should be stronger laws to regulate them. Unfortunately, those who will use guns for harm will get them from the black market. I still support the idea because I believe we need stronger regulations.



Brunni Trapani

Instructional Aid

I think any effort made toward safety regarding guns is very important and anyone who uses these types of weapons for sport or law enforcement would not have an issue with these safety guards. I think it will benefit the public in general.

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

Compiled by Cybele Ryan

Newsfront

Daylight-saving time is ending



Set your clocks back one hour at 2 a.m. this Sunday.

News Digest

Meat and seafood for sale

The Foothill High School boy's soccer team is having a meat and seafood sale from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at the school's parking lot, 4375 Foothill Road. The USDA-inspected beef and quality seafood will be sold at warehouse prices. Money raised will benefit the team's general fund. Email foothillsoccer@yahoo.com for more information.

Entries needed for holiday parade

The City of Pleasanton's Hometown Holiday Celebration committee is seeking community and athletic groups, marching bands and floats to participate in its annual parade at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 1. This year's theme is "Remembering Days Gone By" in honor of the rededication of Pleasanton's 1930s-era Veterans Hall. Deadline for entries is Nov. 21. Forms are available at www.hometownholiday.com or by calling 931-3432.

Dilbert creator holds book signing

Scott Adams, New York Times best selling author and Dilbert comics creator, will be signing books from 5 to 7 p.m. Nov. 7 at Stacey's at Waterford, 4500 Tassajara Road. Adams is the co-owner of that restaurant and Stacey's Café in downtown Pleasanton. For more event information visit www.eatatstaceys.com.

Public invited to clean water workshops

Local agencies, including the Alameda County Water District, Zone 7 Water Agency and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, will host two clean water workshops. The first will be held from 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday at the Livermore Public Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave. and will feature speakers on fire safety and water pollution prevention. The second will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Nov. 14 at the Livermore City Council Chambers, 1052 S. Livermore Ave. and will feature speakers on grazing, erosion management and conservation easements. Call 510-668-6533 for details.

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

New details emerge about Foothill crash

'Large container of vodka found in car,' 19-year-old girls were dropped at their car in Dublin

by Janet Pelletier

New details are coming out about a car crash that killed 19-year-old Laurel Williams, a 2006 Foothill High School graduate.

Williams was the passenger in a Ford Mustang driven by her friend Katie McKewon, 19, that collided head-on with a Mercedes SUV on Foothill Road Oct. 20, killing her and leaving both McKewon and the 70-year-old driver of the Mercedes in critical condition. McKewon was thrown from the car through the passenger side window. Both have

left the hospital and are recovering, according to police.

A makeshift memorial of flowers, stuffed animals and notes was erected next to the accident site on Foothill, just north of Highland Oaks Drive.

Sgt. Mike Collins of the Pleasanton Police Department said an initial investigation shows Williams was wearing a seatbelt at the time of the accident. He said McKewon was not, "though we're awaiting forensic examination of the seatbelt and its associated mechanisms by certified experts."

Collins also revealed evidence

that was found in the Mustang.

"A large container of vodka was found in the car, less than half full," he said.

The accident occurred at about 10 a.m. that Saturday morning. The girls had been at what was described as an "all-night party" in Pleasanton and were dropped off at McKewon's car in Dublin that morning, Collins said.

While there's been speculation that parents were present at the party both girls attended, Collins disputed that.

"Person(s) over 21 were at the party but everyone present was

within a few years of each other in age," he said. "No parents were involved. The investigation as to where the alcohol came from and who provided it continues, with leads developing daily. The Vehicle Code, Penal Code and Business and Professions Code all provide chargeable violations, should we determine other individuals were involved in supplying the alcohol that led to this tragedy."

Sgt. Collins said toxicology reports are expected Tuesday at the earliest.

Sam Grow, a driving instructor

(continued on page 10)



Kerry Nally

Whole lotta shakin' going on

Store employees and a few customers help straighten shelves and sweep the floor of broken bottles after Tuesday night's tremors caused minor damage at Lucky's supermarket in Pleasanton. The U.S. Geological Survey reported that a 5.6-magnitude earthquake, based in the Alum Rock area of San Jose, hit along the Calaveras fault at 8:04 p.m. The USGS reported at least 16 aftershocks all measuring under 2.0 within a span of the next few hours.

Teenage deaths shock Pleasanton

District prepares a town hall meeting on suicide prevention
by Emily Atwood

A town hall meeting addressing recent allegedly intentional teen deaths is scheduled from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 10, at the Amador Valley High School library. The Pleasanton Unified School District joins with Unite for Life, Hope Hospice and Axis Community Health to provide suicide prevention resources.

Classmates and parents expressed shock and grief this week over the deaths on the Weekly's online forum, www.pleasantonweekly.com. One of those who died was a 16-year-old boy at Amador Valley High School who was killed by a train near the school early Monday morning. The other was a 16-year-old Village High School student who died Oct. 24.

The Pleasanton Weekly has chosen not to identify these students.

Kevin Johnson, senior director of pupil services for the district, said an anonymous student support tip line has been set up at 417-5199, a goal the Personal Development Committee previously set to be

available by yesterday.

"The line will have pupil services staff checking it every morning and afternoon that school is in session," he said. "[It will be used to] give a heads-up regarding situations where we can direct calls to the appropriate person or resources in order to assist students."

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), suicide is the third leading cause of death among those ages 15-24. The organization says prevention of youth suicide is done through early recognition and treatment of depression and other psychiatric illnesses.

AFSP is holding a conference Nov. 17 at the ValleyCare Medical Plaza. It's geared toward suicide survivors—those who have dealt with the loss of a family member or friend. Survivors Day offers healing, support, information and empowerment for those affected by suicide. Registration is \$15. Space is limited, so call 872-5634.

Visit AFSP's Web site at www.afsp.org. The National Suicide Hotline can be reached at 1-800-SUICIDE. ■

Vet's parade honors military for sacrifices

11th annual Tri-Valley Veteran's Day Parade is Sunday, theme honors U.S. Coast Guard

by Janet Pelletier

Between 3,000 and 4,000 people will celebrate those serving in the military at the 11th annual Tri-Valley Veteran's Day Parade Sunday.

The parade will begin at 1 p.m., forming on Old Bernal Avenue, turning onto Main Street and proceeding north, ending at the Veterans Plaza Park on Peters Street.

This year's theme will be a tribute to those serving in the United

States Coast Guard, according to VFW Post 6298 post commander David Ham, called "Guardians of the Sea."

"The Coast Guard has not been recognized in our parades," Ham said. "We thought it was way overdue that we recognize them. We try to choose something that speaks well for the community and I think that choosing the Coast Guard does that."

As every year, the parade will feature a number of military vehicles and former and current service

members.

"We're going to have a Coast Guard boat brought in down Main Street—a 25-foot Coast Guard Cutter from Vallejo," Ham said. "We've got more military vehicles this year than last year."

He added that any service members, and especially members of the U.S. Coast Guard are encouraged to participate in the parade.

"We'd like to have them come and join us," he said. "We've gotten the word out a little bit and we're starting to get some calls from

some old 'coasties'—that's what they call them."

To participate, call Ham at 580-6661.

About 1,000 people participate in the parade and between 3,000 and 4,000 are expected to fill sidewalks along Main.

Those who will be a part of the parade review stand include Rear Admiral Mary O'Donnell of the Coast Guard (retired), Command Master Chief Lani Cale-Jones of

(continued on page 8)



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Of Note



Fire Department promotes seven

The Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department has promoted seven officers from within.

Together, the seven have served in the fire service for approximately 45 years. Those promoted include: Ken Atkinson, promoted from firefighter/paramedic to fire captain; David Bardsley, promoted from firefighter/paramedic to fire engineer; Craig Berchtold, promoted from firefighter/paramedic to fire engineer; Chet Melnarik, promoted from firefighter/paramedic to fire engineer; Bob Myers, promoted from firefighter and engineer with another department to fire captain; Loy Proudfoot, promoted to fire engineer and Jim Watson, promoted from firefighter/paramedic to fire engineer.

The officers took an oath of allegiance, received a department badge and helmet shield signifying the official start in their new capacity as captains and engineers.

Girl Scout troop earns Bronze Award



Members of Junior Girl Scout Troop No. 2967 of Hearst Elementary School earned their Bronze Award.

(continued on page 7)

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Of Note

(continued from page 6)

The girls organized and provided school supply kits for their service project. In May, they distributed flyers at school for the parents to purchase the school supplies by grade level from the troop based on a supply list furnished by the Hearst teacher staff. The school supplies were offered to the parents "at cost." The girls received numerous compliments and thanks for saving the parents time and money. Many parents commented that they normally need to shop at different stores to purchase all the suggested items. In August, the kits were available for pick up during walk-through registration and over 300 were delivered.

The Bronze Award is the highest honor a Junior Girl Scout can earn and requires her to learn the leadership and planning skills necessary to follow through on a project that makes a positive impact on her community.

The girls receiving the award include fifth-graders Marissa Mancebo, Patricia Wang, Saira Grewal, Courtney Dinelli, Kristin Dinelli, Ashley Person, Caitlyn Peal, Shelby Slate and Emma Himsl.

Scouting for costumes



Girl Scout Troop 941 from Pleasanton recently organized a Halloween costume drive collection benefiting students at Marilyn Elementary School in Livermore. Above they are modeling some of the costumes. The troop, along with students from Alisal and Hearst elementary schools and other Girl Scout troops, helped gather costumes that were distributed last Saturday. Help was also provided by Don McAllister, who heads up a food program at Marilyn Elementary.

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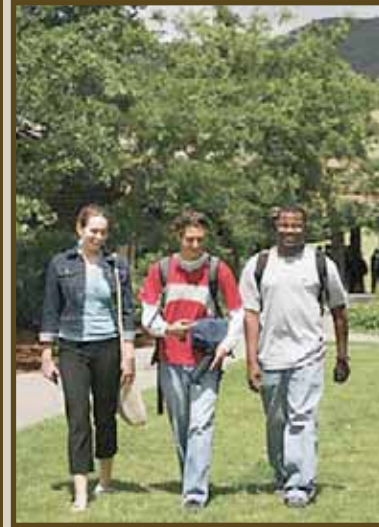
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School district warns about staph infection

Middle school student had skin infection, was cleared to come back to school

by Janet Pelletier

Some parents who have children attending Harvest Park Middle School are a little on edge after a letter went home Oct. 25 notifying them that a student recently had a staph infection.

Staph infections—clinically called Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)—can be spread through skin-to-skin contact and can even be deadly in some instances.

The infection is commonly found on the nose and on skin surfaces. To most, it's not serious and can be treated by antibiotics, but can be harmful if it gets into an open wound and reaches the bloodstream.

Kevin Johnson, senior director of pupil services for the Pleasanton Unified School District, said the middle school girl who was infected has been cleared by a physician to come back to school because she's no longer considered communicable.

"The student ended up talking to other students about it and one of the kids brought it to the attention of the school," Johnson explained as to how the district and school found out about the infection.

He declined to say how the girl was infected.

A letter explaining the situation and what health measures parents can take to ensure their child's safety was given to students to take home. Harvest Park Principal Jim Hansen said word of the infection got to the school nurse a day earlier and he found out Oct. 25, the same day the letter was sent home.

An automated phone message circulated to students' homes Oct. 25 as well, although some parents are complaining the message could have been misleading.

Kerry Nally, who has a son who goes to Harvest Park, said when she received the call, it showed up on her phone as an out-of-area code. She added that it took five to seven seconds for the message to begin playing.

"I just worried that other par-

ents may have already hung up the phone before the message came on, thinking it was a telemarketer," she said.

Hansen said he was unaware that the phone call appeared to be a long-distance and that there was a delay in the recording. He declined to say the age or grade level of the girl who was infected.

"Other than the letter and in trying to notify people as to how to protect themselves, we met (Oct. 26) with our attendance clerks to talk about the issue as well and talk about some of the steps we could take in terms of hand sanitation and open sores, and sharing information so people can be aware of what is going on because this is an issue that's out there," Johnson said. "(People are) becoming more and more aware as it receives more (news) coverage."

Johnson said the district routinely cleans school campuses.

"The custodial staff is aware of what happened at Harvest Park, but the reality of it is there are cases out there that can happen anywhere," he said. "The protection is ongoing at all of our schools—it's not just special to Harvest Park because of this one incident."

"We have protocols in place at the school," Hansen added, "and we're continuing to follow those protocols." ■

Some tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on preventing a staph infection include:

- wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- keep your cuts and scrapes clean and cover them with bandages
- do not touch other people's cuts or bandages
- do not share personal items like towels

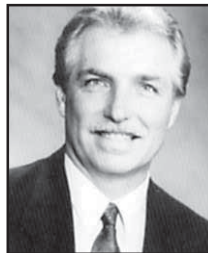
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20937 (09/07)



Vets

(continued from page 5)

MLC Pacific, VFW District 14 Commander Gene Cota and Jeb Bing, publisher of the Pleasanton Weekly, who will be the parade announcer.

When the parade ends at about 1:45 p.m., a service will follow at Veterans Plaza Park, 550 Peters

Ave.

Participants in the service include Pleasanton Mayor Jennifer Hosterman, San Ramon Mayor H. Abram Wilson and Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton). The Pleasanton Community Concert Band will perform songs and the keynote speaker will be Rear Admiral Craig Bone, commander of the 11th Coast Guard District. ■

Fall carnival benefits developmentally disabled

Fundraiser to include live band, ring toss, cake walk, swing dancing, prizes, silent auction

by Janet Pelletier

The Arc of Alameda County wants to invite the public to a fall carnival that will include a ring toss, cake walk, swing dance lessons and performances, prizes such as diamond earrings and a silent auction. Proceeds will benefit the nonprofit, which helps developmentally disabled people become more independent.

Called Arc After Dark: A Fall Carnival, the event will be held from 6 to 10 p.m. Nov. 11 at the Veterans Memorial Building, 301 Main St., according to Debbie Deane, one of the event's organizers.

Deane said she is passionate about Arc because the organization helps people such as her friend Chelsea Steger, 24, become more self-sufficient.

Steger's mother, Marilyn Steppe, is also a member of Arc.

"Chelsea is blind and physically disabled," Deane said. "She is working at this workshop and it's just amazing—that someone like Chelsea with all of her problems has found something to give her life meaning. I thought it was very inspiring."

Locally, the Arc has a Tri-Valley center at 1951 Rutan Drive in Livermore, where the disabled can go to perform work and earn money.

"That is part of the drive behind many of the programs at the Arc, is to help them to become independent and not be victims," Deane said. "There are a lot of people out there that would victimize someone

like this."

The clients are employed on contracted jobs.

"There's a group on Mondays that goes out to wash fire department vehicles," she said. "They also go to grocery stores to help bag groceries. From the center, they can be taken to these off-site jobs."

In order to do work at the Tri-Valley Arc center, they need office equipment such as tables and chairs, which center Director Rosie Llamado has been bringing in from her home. Proceeds from the fall carnival will help pay for those types of items, Deane said.

"It's terribly under-funded as most state things are. They need tables just to help them with the space for various contract work," she said.

At the carnival, attendees will have opportunities to win such prizes as a pair of diamond earrings; a week's stay in Whistler, British Columbia; golf foursomes at area courses; beach cruiser bicycles and more.

Clients of the Arc will also sell balloons and each balloon will have a ticket inside that will be redeemable for a prize. Dinner will be catered by the Pampered Chef. Cost to attend is \$50 per person. A live band will perform as well as a dance group from It's All About Dancing in Livermore, who will also offer swing dance lessons.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call Rosie Llamado at 510-760-2376. ■

6th-grader stable after being struck by car

Girl suffers broken leg in accident at PMS

by Emily Atwood

A sixth-grader at Pleasanton Middle School was struck by a car while crossing Case Avenue after being dropped off for school last Friday. She reportedly broke her leg and was quickly transported to Children's Hospital Oakland by way of ambulance.

PMS principal John Whitney said it was an accident as she was dashing off to school and not in a crosswalk. He said she is in stable condition.

While he said the kids usually do a good job about using one of the two crosswalks in front of PMS and Hearst Elementary School, they "assume that drivers can always see them." He also added that they kids had another reminder on PMTV, the school's television program.

At this time the speed and attentiveness of the driver is unknown.

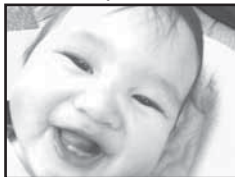
Calling the scene "heartbreaking," Whitney was encouraged by how the incident was handled.

"We are so lucky," he said. "The scene this morning—the level of concern and expertise, calmness and everything else—it couldn't have been handled better. We feel really good about the way in which our community rallies."

Earlier in the year Whitney reports that one child was bumped by a car while riding his bike, but that serious injuries like these are rare.

"It's a long street," he said. "We have the two crosswalks manned by crossing guards. Yet kids and adults make a dash rather than use the crosswalk." ■

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Cathy Johnson

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Crash

(continued from page 5)

at Driversity in Dublin, was one of the first people on the accident scene, along with his 15-year-old driving student.

The Vallejo resident said he had his student call 911 on his cell phone, as did others who came upon the scene, but it seemed like an eternity before emergency service personnel responded.

"I'd say it was 15-17 minutes," he said. "Lord, that's the reason you carry a cell phone—if you have a problem or an accident."

Since the accident, he said he and his driving student have been emotionally scarred from what they witnessed. He added that he's contacted the CHP and state senators in the Vallejo area in an effort to change the way 911 calls are handled.

Both Collins and Officer Steve Creel of the California Highway Patrol. Dispute Grow's claim of a response delay after researching the police call logs.

"While it's true he did arrive on scene, so did many others," Collins said. "They had no problem getting through. The collision occurred at (9:58 a.m.) and, as a result of peoples' 911 calls, officers were dispatched within two minutes at (10 a.m.). The first officer arrived on scene at (10:02 a.m.), with two more at (10:05



Janet Pelletier

A makeshift memorial to Laurel Williams was set up near the crash site on Foothill Road, north of Highland Oaks Drive.

a.m.) and another at (10:07 a.m.) "Mr. Grow, while no doubt a saged driving instructor, may well have fallen victim to the same time perception issues many persons experience during emergencies...a minute will sometimes seem like an hour," Collins added.

Creel said 911 calls made from a cell phone, like Grow's, go to the CHP's Golden Gate Communications Center in Vallejo. Once a dispatcher at that

center receives the call, they then transfer the caller to the appropriate jurisdiction or area where the emergency occurred, he said.

While Creel said this incident was handled appropriately, there have been incidences where delays occur.

"Cell phones give you a general location or no location," he said. "So, a lot of times, it's like playing '20 Questions' with somebody where they may have as little as that they're calling from Foothill Road

Take Us Along

How Lo can you go?

The Lo family (Allan, Bernice, May, Byron and Brendan) visits the magnificent Grand Canyon in Nevada. The family hiked halfway down the canyon and saw the canyon up close. Allan reports that "it was one of those must-do trips."

but they have no other data, so the dispatcher has to ask what county they're in or what city they're near."

Asking additional questions with a caller prolongs the time in which an ambulance or police can respond.

Creel said people calling from a cell phone who witness an accident should immediately figure out their exact location, right down to the

street's block number if possible, and relay that to dispatchers. Another option would be knocking at a nearby residence and using a landline telephone. He added that new technology is in the works, called 911, that would work as software on cell phones that would allow dispatchers to more easily identify through global position systems (GPS) where callers are calling from. ■

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Community Pulse



WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES

City Council

Tuesday, November 6, 2007 @ 7:00 p.m.
Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Consider the Financing Plan for the Bernal Specific Plan as recommended by the Bernal Financing Committee
- Approve plans and specifications, review of bids and award of contract to Valley Crest Landscaping Development Inc., in the amount of \$6,778,079.80 for Bernal Community Park Sports Fields Phase I, CIP No. 007065; and approve said project budget
- Approve modifications to the Guidelines for the City's Down Payment Assistance Loan Program

Human Services Commission

Wednesday, November 7, 2007 @ 6:00 p.m.
City Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Review of Commission Meeting schedule for December 2007, January and February 2008

Library Commission

Thursday, November 8, 2007 @ 7:00 p.m.
Library Community Room, 400 Old Bernal Avenue

- Visit our website at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us to view the agenda for this meeting.
- The December 13, 2007 Library Commission meeting has been cancelled

Civic Arts Commission

- The November 5, 2007 meeting of the Civic Arts Commission has been cancelled. The next scheduled commission meeting will be held on December 3, 2007

Parks & Recreation Commission

- The November 8, 2007 and the December 13, 2007 meetings of the Parks and Recreation Commission have been cancelled. The next scheduled commission meeting will be held on January 11, 2008.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Employment Opportunity

Paratransit Driver Trainee (part-time, temporary)
(Payroll Title: Recreation Program Aide)
\$9.57 per hour
Open Until Filled

The Paratransit Program seeks part-time, temporary Paratransit Driver Trainees to learn how to transport seniors and disabled residents in the local area. Upon successful completion of the Trainee phase, applicants would be reclassified as Paratransit Drivers, and could be placed on the Paratransit Driver eligibility list to be assigned to work as a Paratransit Driver (see attached Driver Training Guidelines). The program is based out of the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Boulevard, Pleasanton.

The Position: Under supervision of the Paratransit Supervisor, Paratransit Drivers Trainees will undergo 16 hours of Class B driver training. Within 30 days after completion of training, applicants are expected to obtain their Class B drivers license. Pleasanton will provide a vehicle for use in the driver's license test. Upon successful completion of the Class B test, Trainees will be reclassified as Paratransit Drivers.

If you are interested in this positions or would like additional information please contact the Human Resources department at (925) 931-5048 or visit our website at <http://www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/employment/opportunities/>

**ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
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The above represents a sampling of upcoming meeting items.
For complete information, please visit
www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/community/calendar

Police Bulletin

Suspected Ruby Hill thief arrested Foot chase ends in teen arrest

A resident of the Ruby Hill neighborhood reportedly saw two individuals rifling through his vehicles in the driveway of his residence around 12:25 a.m. last Tuesday.

According to police, the man immediately called 911 and when officers arrived they located a suspicious vehicle leaving the community. Police stopped the vehicle and discovered 20-year-old Eduardo Reyes allegedly had stolen property from the vehicle in his possession.

Reyes was arrested and booked into jail for theft and possession of stolen property.

A 15-year-old boy was arrested Monday at a residence on Muirwood Drive. The resident called police saying the teen was allegedly trying to break into the home through a bathroom window.

Officers reported to the neighborhood and began a K-9 search for the suspect. During this time a resident on Elmwood Drive reportedly saw the suspect running towards Joshua Circle.

Police say the boy, from Pleasanton, was running through backyards and at one point jumped over a sound wall bordering southbound I-680. Officers arrested him on Elmwood Circle.

Police Report

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

Oct. 19

- Theft:
 - 8:54 a.m. in the 1700 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; identity theft
 - 3:29 p.m. in the 5700 block of Owens Drive
 - 9:05 p.m. in the 3900 block of Stoneridge Drive; petty theft
- Vandalism:
 - 10:35 a.m. in the 3500 block of Touriga Drive; worth over \$400
 - 11:30 a.m. in the 7200 block of Johnson Drive; worth less than \$400
- Drug/alcohol violations:
 - 7:28 p.m. at the intersection of Santa Rita Road and Stoneridge Drive; DUI
 - 11:40 p.m. in the 5100 block of Hopyard Road; marijuana possession
- Truant:
 - 12:44 p.m. in the 7400 block of Alder Court

Oct. 20

- Theft:
 - 11:00 a.m. in the 8000 block of Canyon Creek Circle; identity theft
 - 1:16 p.m. in the 5800 block of West Las Positas Boulevard; petty theft
 - 6:39 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
 - 7:55 p.m. in the 1900 block of Santa Rita Road; identity theft
- Vandalism:
 - 5:01 p.m. in the 400 block of Kottinger Drive; worth less than \$400
- Burglary:
 - 4:14 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; shoplifting
- Public drunkenness:
 - 1:30 a.m. in the 4800 block of Hopyard Road
 - 9:32 a.m. in the 4200 block of Rosewood Drive
- Assault:
 - 1:18 a.m. in the 1800 block of Santa Rita Road

Oct. 21

- Theft:
 - 12:22 p.m. in the 200 block of Kottinger Drive; grand theft
 - 1:10 p.m. in the 5500 block of Springdale Avenue; grand theft
 - 237 p.m. in the 900 block of Crellin Court; petty theft
- Vehicular burglary:
 - 10:24 a.m. in the 4800 block of Bernal Avenue
- Drug/alcohol violations:
 - 12:13 a.m. in the 6200 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; consumption of alcoholic beverages by minor on private property, marijuana possession
 - 1:34 a.m. in the 4800 block of Hopyard Road; public drunkenness
 - 4:26 p.m. in the 5500 block of West Las Positas Boulevard; public drunkenness
 - 6:15 p.m. in the 1700 block of Santa Rita Road; DUI
 - 10:54 p.m. in the 4500 block of Augustine Street; DUI

Oct. 22

- Theft:
 - 8:40 a.m. in the 2100 block of Greenwood Road; stolen vehicle
 - 10:32 a.m. in the 7100 block of Johnson Drive
 - 1:22 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive
 - 3:09 p.m. in the 1100 block of Concord Street; grand theft
 - 10:05 p.m. in the 6900 block of Koll Center Parkway; stolen vehicle
- Burglary:
 - 4:29 p.m. in the 4100 block of Walnut Drive
- Vandalism:
 - 8:03 a.m. in the 7200 block of Johnson Drive; worth over \$400
 - 4:05 p.m. in the 4100 block of Walnut Drive; worth less than \$400
 - 4:29 p.m. in the 4100 block of Walnut Drive
- Mental health danger:
 - 12:47 p.m. in the 2500 block of Heatherlark Circle
- Assault:
 - 1:34 p.m. in the 6200 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

Oct. 23

- Petty theft:

-12:39 p.m. in the 5800 block of West Las Positas Road

- Vandalism:
 - 9:29 a.m. in the 900 block of Kottinger Drive; worth less than \$400
- Burglary:
 - 6:12 p.m. in the 5800 block of West Las Positas Boulevard
- Mental health danger:
 - 12:28 p.m. in the 5600 block of Owens Drive
- Marijuana possession:
 - 6:12 p.m. in the 5800 block of West Las Positas Boulevard

Oct. 24

- Theft:
 - 7:41 a.m. in the 4500 block of Sierrawood Lane; petty theft
 - 8:06 a.m. in the 4600 block of Sierrawood Lane; petty theft
- Vehicular burglary:
 - 5:09 p.m. in the 6700 block of Koll Center Parkway
 - 5:14 p.m. in the 2100 block of Valley Avenue
 - 5:58 p.m. in the 3100 block of Santa Rita Road
 - 6:24 p.m. in the 4700 block of Willow Road
- Drug violations:
 - 4:16 p.m. in the 5500 block of West Las Positas Boulevard; possession of a controlled substance for sale

Oct. 25

- Theft:
 - 11:05 a.m. in the 6800 block of Prospect Court; identity theft
 - 11:14 a.m. in the 20 block of Rue Notre Dame de Champs
 - 3:04 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; petty theft
 - 3:55 p.m. in the 1600 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
 - 3:55 p.m. in the 3800 block of Vineyard Avenue; identity theft, providing false identification to officer
 - 7:53 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
 - 10:07 p.m. in the 4400 block of Rosewood Drive; identity theft
- Drug/alcohol violations:
 - 1:28 a.m. at the intersection of Kamp Drive and Magnolia Circle

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Transitions

Obituaries

William Richard Russell

William "Billy" Richard Russell died Oct. 29 in Pleasanton. He was 16.

Mr. Russell was a junior at Amador Valley High School. His hobbies and interests included World of Warcraft, Counterstrike, Web sites such as Myspace.com and YouTube.

He was born Sept. 2, 1991 in Palo Alto.

He is survived by his mother Deborah Nelson-Russell, her significant other and father figure, Nick Valleria, both of Pleasanton;

and biological father, Daniel G. Russell of Concord.

Other survivors include his brother, Daniel Prentis Russell, 20, of Pleasanton and Long Beach; and sister, Samantha, 25, of San Ramon.

Friends and family gathered for a memorial service Thursday at Valley Community Church.

His ashes will be scattered in the ocean at a later date by family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of William "Billy" Richard Russell to: The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Tri-Valley, 1989-A Santa Rita Road., PMB 129, Pleasanton, CA 94566.

Sophie Louise Borris

Sophie Louise Borris, beloved daughter of Susie Larsen and Robert C. Borris, Jr., and loving sister of Tanya Borris, died Oct. 24 at the age of 16.

Ms. Borris was born Aug. 1, 1991 and was a resident of Pleasanton.

She was a student at Village High School in Pleasanton, where she was interested in everything Russian and even taught herself to speak the language. Ms. Borris loved art and drawing and playing the guitar. She was also an accomplished rider on her horse, Salem.

Her brothers, Nicholas Borris of Dublin and Nathan Borris of Berkeley will miss her. She is also survived by grandparents Merete and Villy Larsen of Odense, Denmark and preceded in death by her grandparents Dr. Robert C. Borris and Toni Borris of Castro

Valley. She leaves behind a grieving family including numerous cousins, aunts and uncles in California and Denmark.

Family and friends are welcome to attend a Memorial Mass at 10 a.m. today at St. Raymond's Catholic Church, 11555 Shannon Ave., Dublin. A private family reception will follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations be made in Ms. Borris' name to the Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation, 2890 Mitchell Drive, Walnut Creek, CA.



Engagement



Elizabeth Kruger and Michael McCartney

Elizabeth Sarah Kruger and Michael Dale McCartney are engaged to be married in June 2008.

Elizabeth is the daughter of Jeffrey and Cherie Michael of Pleasanton. A 1999 graduate of Amador Valley High School, she went on to Cal State East Bay, graduating this year. She is continuing her education in psychology.

Michael is the son of Charles and Teresa McCartney of Rio Vista, Calif. He is a 1995 graduate of Amador Valley High School. He went on to the University of Phoenix, where he graduated in 2005. He is employed as a senior sales executive for KIS Computer Center in Fremont.

The wedding ceremony will be held at the Lafayette Park Hotel in Lafayette and a reception will follow. The couple plans to honeymoon in the Caribbean. They will reside in Pleasanton.

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Weddings

Ann Swank and Ryan Milligan

Ann Marguerite Swank and Ryan Edwin Milligan were married Sept. 29.

Ann is the daughter of Beth and Dennis Swank of Pleasanton. She graduated from Foothill High School in 2001. Ryan is the son of Gabi and Ray Hurtado of Dublin and Carin and Ed Milligan of Pleasanton. He also graduated from Foothill in 2001.

The bride and groom were high school sweethearts, with their first date being a freshman homecoming



Margaret Natasha Drew and Kieran Sean Fitzpatrick

Margaret Natasha Drew and Kieran Sean Fitzpatrick were married Oct. 6 at the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration in New York City. A reception followed at Princess Manor.

Tasha is the daughter of Elaine and Rob Drew of Pleasanton and was valedictorian for the 2001 graduating class of Amador Valley High School. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science from the University of Southern California in 2005.

Kieran is the son of Tom and Dierdre Greene of West Palm Beach, Fla. He graduated from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Both Tasha and Kieran work as computer engineers for Lockheed Martin in Orlando, Fla.

Tasha's sister, Tamsen Drew of San Francisco, served as maid of honor; Kieran's brother Des Fitzpatrick was best man. Among the seven bridesmaids were Gretchen Hober and Marisa Bolander, both of Pleasanton. Other bridesmaids included Tasha's USC sorority sisters, who joined in singing the school fight song at the reception.

The couple spent their honeymoon in Scotland, traveling via Iceland. They will make their residence in Orlando.

dance. After 10 years together, they finally made it official.

The wedding ceremony and reception were held at Tarpy's Roadhouse Restaurant in Monterey. The restaurant is located inside the house built by Ann's great-great-grandfather Charles A. Ryan. The ceremony was performed by her grandfather, a Methodist minister, Rev. James Kubik (who lived in the house as a child).

Ann is employed as an account services representative for Honda Financial Services. She is also an artist and an author. Ryan is employed as an account executive in household finance for HSBC. The couple honeymooned in Disneyworld in Orlando, Fla. They reside in Pleasanton.



Births

The following information on Pleasanton births was provided by ValleyCare Medical Center.

Sept. 27

Kimberly Myrczk and Stephen Luark, a girl

Sept. 28

Nina and Peter Kinkead, a girl

Oct. 4

Claudia and Danzel Berdo, a girl

Lori and Michael Gagnon, a girl

Oct. 5

Stacy and Omar Morales, a boy

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BREAKING the news MediaNews and

"Our citizens may be deceived for a while, and have been deceived."

by Sam Chapman

Industries facing unprecedented financial pressures and massive consolidation are not unusual in today's global marketplace. One particular industry, however—newspapers—has a unique niche in the broader world. It's an industry upon which the very health of our democracy may depend.

A variety of observers are sounding an alarm about the cost to our society of the diminishing number of diverse voices and declining quality of journalism. Some are offering radically different visions for the future of journalism:

- Professor John McManus of San Jose State University believes that newspapers are the "nervous system of democracy" and that the decline of newspapers and news coverage is a civic version of the debilitating disease ALS, leading to a paralyzed democracy.

- Sonoma State's Peter Phillips argues that "media consolidation is creating a new form of censorship in the United States and undermining democracy in the process."

- Stanford professor Ted Glasser says it's time to consider entirely new models; we should stop saying we have to accept the realities of the marketplace. He says we need to ask a different question: What kind of journalism do we need and what kind of conditions do we need to sustain it?

Ground zero: The Bay Area

Rupert Murdoch's purchase of the Wall Street Journal garnered much national attention recently, but the Bay Area is truly at ground zero for the developments that have prompted fears about newspaper consolidation.

The Bay Area media landscape has changed

fundamentally in just the last couple of years—and the new dominant player on the scene is Dean Singleton's MediaNews. Only two years ago the three major daily papers in the Bay Area were the San Francisco Chronicle, San Jose Mercury News, the Contra Costa Times and its local Valley Times edition,

In total, MediaNews owns 57 daily newspapers and some 120 non-daily publications in 13 states and is the fourth largest newspaper company in the country.

and the Tri-Valley Herald. Several years ago, the Chronicle was acquired by the Hearst Corporation. The Mercury and the Times and its affiliates were owned by Knight Ridder. The Denver-based MediaNews owned the Tri-Valley Herald, as well as the San Ramon Valley Herald, the Hayward Daily Review, the Oakland Tribune and a number of smaller

papers. Bay Area newspapers competed with each other for news coverage and advertising. There weren't as many independent voices as, say, 20 or 30 years ago, but there was still vigorous competition.

Then in 2006, Knight Ridder, under pressure from stockholders, sold its Bay Area properties. The deal resulted in almost every daily newspaper in the Bay Area being owned by MediaNews.

The Contra Costa Times Web site links to a list of 31 other MediaNews newspapers in Northern California alone, and that list doesn't include the weeklies it owns in the same area. Its holdings in Southern California are also extensive. In total, the company owns 57 daily newspapers and some 120 non-daily publications in 13 states and is the fourth largest newspaper company in the country.

On July 28, MediaNews announced a consolidation of the news operations of all its East Bay papers (as well as the San Mateo County Times and a number of weekly papers) along with accompanying staff cuts. MediaNews' East Bay publisher John Armstrong said the consolidation will "eliminate wasteful redundancies, streamline management and redirect staff and resources to our interactive services and other priorities, such as watchdog journalism."

John Bowman, former executive editor of the San Mateo County Times, had a different take about MediaNews' entry into the Bay Area—and this was before the recent talk of staffing cutbacks: "They're way past the point of diminishing returns, of penny-wise and pound-foolish ... Thin staffs provide less volume of news, less investigative and less enterprise stories ... Copy desks are so thinly staffed that they are making an incredible number of errors. These errors are in the headlines and (photo captions) so they are glaring. They are the kind of errors that destroy our credibility."

Faced with the prospect of deteriorating news quality, Bowman submitted his resignation after a 31-year career in the news business.

The one remaining major Bay Area paper not a part of MediaNews is the Chronicle. However, the Hearst Corp. contributed \$300 million to help finance the Knight Ridder/MediaNews deal (via middleman McClatchy publishing company) and in return received a

Stanford professor Ted Glasser says we need to ask: What kind of journalism do we need and what kind of conditions do we need to sustain it?

30 percent interest in non-Bay Area holdings of MediaNews. Hearst and MediaNews have been discussing consolidating and cooperating in various operations, but were put on hold pending an antitrust lawsuit filed by former San Francisco political consultant Clint Reilly. The suit, which challenged the unprecedented consolidation, was settled shortly before trial last spring.

San Rafael resident Dan Fost has had a unique perch from which to view these developments—he was a reporter for the Marin Independent Journal for many years when it was owned by Gannett, before spending nearly a decade as the Chronicle's media columnist. He decided to leave the paper in

MediaNews papers in the Bay Area



= MediaNews owned newspapers



= Other daily newspaper ownership

For more information on media consolidation:

Grade the News: www.gradethenews.org

Media Alliance: www.media-alliance.org

Project Censored: www.projectcensored.org

The Project for Excellence in Journalism's annual State of the Media report can be found at www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2007/sitemap.asp

Also see Free Press at: www.freepress.net/content/about

Media Reform Information Center: www.corporations.org/media

Columbia Journalism Review: www.cjr.org/index.php



... but as long as the presses can be protected, we may trust to them for light." —Thomas Jefferson

and the seismic shift in Bay Area newspapers

August to become a freelance journalist. He says the Chronicle staff never could figure out why Hearst would subsidize Singleton's purchase of the Mercury News and Contra Costa Times and wonders whether the Reilly lawsuit prevented a consolidation of the Chronicle into the same media empire.

Fost believes there is still a lot of talent at the Chronicle, which has been directed by editor Phil Bronstein to focus more on journalistic crusades to solve civic ills and "master narratives," such as "Green Living" that cut across the Bay Area and to which almost any story can be tied. Fost observes that Singleton is clearly excited by the prospect of being able to sell the whole Bay Area in one ad buy, but laments that "newsrooms always get the worst of the deal." He says when he worked for Gannett, news staffing was not lavish—but it's even much smaller now with MediaNews. What makes him the saddest is that, on the whole, there are fewer people in journalism holding fewer people accountable—which can't be healthy for our society and our democracy.

UC Berkeley law professor Stephen Barnett says it's "shameful that the U.S. Justice Department has walked away" from applying antitrust laws to the Bay Area consolidation. He says there are many other cities with examples of newspaper consolidation, but he can't think of any other area of similar size where the consolidation extends so far beyond the central city through the suburbs. He notes that "enforcement of antitrust laws is generally weak, and it has been super weak for newspapers because of their political clout."

News perspectives: And then there was one...

Neil Henry, a journalism professor at UC Berkeley and author of "American Carnival: Journalism Under Siege in an Age of New



Dean Singleton and MediaNews control 32 Northern California newspapers including the Contra Costa Times, the Oakland Tribune and the San Jose Mercury News.

Media," says the Bay Area has suffered more than most areas and that when fewer and fewer organizations own and deliver the news, it can't help but be harmful for democracy. What we need is a variety of sources. He points out that when we had a dozen independently owned papers covering a major story, there might be a dozen perspectives. Now, with MediaNews, they only need one reporter covering the story.

Henry covered Africa for the Washington Post between 1989 and 1993 using telexes and a 15mm camera. In those days all major television networks had bureaus in Africa, as did major newspapers and news services. Today there is no American television or cable network based on the continent. Coverage is limited to the New York Times, Washington Post,

Los Angeles Times and some news services that can be counted on one hand. Henry points out that we are experiencing a great paradox of wonderful new tools and a dazzling array of information available on the Internet, but those who contribute the substance—journalists—are dwindling and endangered.

Award-winning media critic Ted Glasser says the Bay Area's media consolidation is emblematic of a larger problem and leads to three things: fewer journalists; homogenization of coverage (with the same story appearing in multiple newspapers); and journalism as an institution in our society ends up being the one institution that's not covered well by the media.

Glasser says the picture is not improving and the further we head down this path the

more the story needs to be covered—and the less it is. That's the paradox.

Don't expect Bay Area daily newspapers, virtually all of which are a part of the deal, to make much of an effort to cover it—which is exactly the nature of the problem it raises.

Show us the money

While there has been minimal local coverage of consolidation, daily newspapers in general have been especially tuned in to the story of their own financial plight and have covered it as a major story in recent years. Daily newspaper readership is down mostly because younger adults are increasingly getting their information online or from sources other than newspapers.

The circulation of daily newspapers is dropping across the country, down more than 11 percent from 1990 to 2005. The local dailies are prime examples. The San Francisco Chronicle recently topped the list of 20 major dailies in percentage circulation decline, dropping 15 percent between March 2005 and March 2006, according to Editor and Publisher magazine. The next largest decline was The Boston Globe at 8.5 percent.

Paid circulation declines coupled with decreased advertising revenue have clouded the future of daily newspapers. Craigslist and other online competition have drastically cut classified advertising revenues, which had been the major profit center for most daily newspapers. Much other advertising is also shrinking or moving online. The value of daily newspapers as businesses has also declined. The stock of the McClatchy Co., owner of the Sacramento, Fresno and Modesto Bees and other media holdings across the country, was recently downgraded to junk bond status by

(continued on page 16)

Tales of two journalists

Two Bay Area journalists who worked for respected Knight-Ridder newspapers and who both have an obvious love for journalism have serious concerns about the future of local journalism in the MediaNews era.

Elisabeth Rubinfien worked for the San Jose Mercury News, most recently serving as metro editor, in charge of city and local coverage, for 12 years until she left in July. She saw the news staff decline from about 400 staff to around 200 and experienced the first year of MediaNews ownership. During Silicon Valley boom times she says the paper saw itself as being one of the best, certainly best in its size category. When its parent Knight Ridder dissolved in the McClatchy-MediaNews sale, many were sad to lose such a venerable and respected organization and "there was sadness that journalism in America would lose a national voice." This was particularly true because MediaNews in the Bay Area was not as respected as Knight Ridder. However, Rubinfien said there was a window when it looked like MediaNews might invest in "local."

"Dean Singleton talked about being positioned well to help define what the future of newspapers in the morning would be," she says.

While feelings were mixed, the dynamic process was

an "exciting prospect." Maybe he would invest online in a big way. What they saw, Rubinfien relates, "was six months of hands-off followed by six months of cutting another 15 percent and shifting some resources to online. The contraction was at a point where they had to cut some local news gathering to do other things. Shifting resources is not investment."

Prior to the MediaNews purchase, Knight Ridder was already viewing foreign and national news as "commodity news" that can be obtained from the New York Times, the Washington Post or other sources. Readers can go to Web sites for the London Times, Al Jazeera or other sources. "While that's not untrue, it's dissembling," Rubinfien says. "If papers start believing what they are saying, close foreign bureaus and lay off staff, it will not be easy to re-create that capability."

Rubinfien sees MediaNews as doing a similar thing, only on a more local and regional level in the Bay Area. "The goal of newspapers has always been to produce something for everyone—watchdog journalism, fine writing, entertainment."

That said, sometimes you see decisions made that create a drift one way or the other. The Mercury News had devoted page three to a feature called "In Depth," which looked more closely at important issues. It recently eliminated "In Depth" in favor of a more chatty features and entertainment-oriented page. The paper had already cut special sections such as "Perspective," "Science and Health" and "Religion and Ethics."

"If you are supposed to be part of the process

that exposes commodification and you are doing it yourself, you are part of the problem," Rubinfien points out.

A Knight Ridder colleague who worked in Contra Costa County and did not want her identity known says that what concerns her is that there is such a need for government watchdog journalism because the public needs and wants to know what's going on in the community. She hopes that more community newspapers will take up the task of covering city councils and schools "to keep the news out there because we're not going to get it from MediaNews." She says we're also not getting serious investigative reporting. The Contra Costa Times once had a four-person investigative team that was dismantled as a luxury it couldn't afford.

Rubinfien believes that the wonderful thing about a newspaper is that it helps build community. There is a "serendipity of exposure," which connects people on issues that they wouldn't search for on the Internet. While the Internet is a fabulous tool, its function is different from newspapers. She says she has great respect for the process that goes into news gathering with its many layers of checks and balances. It produces a reliable final result, something she doesn't see as the case with one person writing on the Internet.

Breaking news

(continued from page 15)

Standard & Poor's ratings service. MediaNews' Singleton was quoted in his own Denver Post on Aug. 14 as saying that while advertising dollars may be falling away from large metropolitan dailies, newspapers with circulations between 20,000 and 250,000 are thriving. His perhaps overly rosy big-picture view isn't echoed locally. A July 20 memo linked from the San Francisco Peninsula Press Club Web site, written by one of his top executives, John Armstrong, tells another story. Reporting financial results for the Bay Area News Group-East Bay, which includes the Alameda Newspaper Group, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007, Armstrong says revenues fell \$21.3 million, or 8 percent from the prior year, and operating profits dropped \$4.5 million. Three-fourths of the decline came in advertising sales.

Armstrong spoke this month at the San Ramon Valley Exchange Club about the changing world of newspapers as their advertising revenues are lost to the Internet. As a necessary cost savings, he'd recently announced in the paper, the Times had to discontinue the popular format of its weekly TV section as well as reducing its Sunday Perspective to four pages. Its travel editor recently wrote her last column, saying her expense budget had been cut to zero, which meant she couldn't travel anywhere for her reports. A reader responded that the Times should focus on quality and the rest will take care of itself.

"I wish it were that simple," Armstrong said. "Quality may not be enough to carry the day."

He said MediaNews was merging the news staffs from its combined papers to produce quality news coverage, including watch-

dog journalism. But he didn't say what the lack of competition would do to the product.

The former "Valley" section in the Sunday Times now uses the broad-reaching label of "East Bay." The lead story of the East Bay section Sunday, Oct. 28, was about Martinez-base Contra Costa County Administrator John Cullen leaving that post; other stories on the front page were from Antioch, Richmond and Livermore.

MediaNews president Joseph Lodovic told Bloomberg News last month that Singleton plans to cut costs by combining operations such as news gathering. He cited copy editing as part of the process that could be done from a central site, but didn't mention work overload or lack of knowledge about subjects in other locations.

Where daily newspaper journalism is headed is unclear. Reports appear almost daily regarding cutbacks in newsroom staffs across the country. Major papers have cut back foreign bureaus as well as in their back yards. The San Francisco Chronicle announced May 19 one of the biggest cuts of any newspaper in the country, and now plans to sell its landmark building in downtown San Francisco. It planned to cut 25 percent of its newsroom staff by the end of the summer—100 positions from a staff of 400. The Chronicle has a poignant tribute to departed staffers called "Colleagues Remembered" on its Web site. Publisher Frank Vega said that revenue from advertising and other sources wasn't keeping pace with the cost of running the paper. The San Jose Mercury News has cut its newsroom staff by about half over the last seven years.

An example of what's happening in the industry is contained in a statement from publisher David Hiller of the Los Angeles Times, the daily paper generally regarded as best in the West. The April

announcement said the L.A. Times would offer voluntary buyouts in hopes of cutting its staff of 2,625 by up to 150 employees. Revenue for the L.A. Times and related units dropped 4 percent in the first quarter, compared to the previous year.

"The fact is we have to take actions to keep staffing in line with the revenue picture, which currently is falling in the core print business," wrote Hiller. "Up to 70 jobs could be cut from the newspaper's news operations, which would bring the newsroom staff to roughly 850. The L.A. Times news operation employed about 1,200 when the

their primary source is other bloggers. So 78 percent of bloggers get their information from newspapers or other bloggers. Of the remaining 22, it's unlikely that much of what they produced was original news. Rather, it's generally opinion and reaction in response to the news.

Newspapers, to compete with online sources, are transforming themselves into "information" companies and increasingly reporting news, when it happens, online. According to the Newspaper Association of America, more than 59 million people (37.3 percent of all active Internet users) visited

audience of Yahoo!" Most of the newspapers will feature Yahoo!'s HotJobs online employment listings. There's clearly an element of schizophrenic behavior here.

The question these companies must be asking themselves: "Do we join them and share some revenue—even if it's not enough to keep us going—but risk providing enough content to allow them to continue their growth which undermines our basic business?" The trend is clearly toward joining, which may be based on the theory that "if we don't, someone else will, and we won't share any of the revenue."

Bloomberg reported that Dean Singleton wants 20 percent of MediaNews sales to come from the Web by 2012; it is currently 7 percent.

Anyone for a game of monopoly?

McManus, who has been the primary force behind "Grade the News," a project focused on examining the quality of news delivered by Bay Area media, believes that as newspapers decline, we suffer a loss of civic vitality. Staff in government departments who had been accustomed to reporters hanging around, begin to cut corners because they operate in the dark. He says the public is not upset because it is not aware.

What's happening, McManus points out, is that investigative and enterprise reporting suffers and news becomes more public relations and entertainment driven. As an example, he did an examination of the Mercury News coverage of the "finger in the bowl of chili" story and says it ran for 33 days from the day it broke to the day Anna Ayala was arrested. It was in the paper every day and on the front page 11 times. Iraq made page one once, and that was a human interest story.

McManus is author of the book

"Media consolidation is creating a new form of censorship in the United States and undermining democracy in the process."

—Peter Phillips, associate professor at Sonoma State University and director of Project Censored

paper was purchased by Tribune Co. of Chicago in 2000."

In May the L.A. Times announced an additional cut of 57 more newsroom positions. Two consecutive Times editors, Dean Baquet and John Carroll, had resigned rather than preside over additional staff cuts.

Newspapers are dead! Long live newspapers?

Some popular wisdom has most print newspapers folding in the near future and news shifting online. Many in the blogosphere are already waving goodbye. There is one particularly troubling problem with that. If you trace the source of most serious news online, it generally leads back from Google or Yahoo! or sites such as <http://Digg.com> to newspapers. One survey of 100 bloggers found that 59 said their primary source of information is newspapers. Another 19 said

newspaper Web sites during the second quarter of 2007, a 7.7 percent increase over the same period a year ago. However, with a few exceptions, the revenue to support online newspaper sites still largely comes from print. No one has figured out how the brave new world of multi-platform information providers can produce enough revenue, presumably from online advertising, to ensure the survival of serious journalism.

At the same time that daily newspapers are hemorrhaging due to online competition, they are feeding the beast that is devouring them. MediaNews, Hearst and McClatchy announced in April of this year that they were joining with Yahoo! Inc. and other leading U.S. newspaper companies in a "definitive agreement that expands a growing partnership combining the newspapers' unmatched local news and advertising reach with the technologies and



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“Market-Driven Journalism: Let the Citizen Beware?” in which he argues that the formerly revered practice of news reporting for the public interest is being superseded by the corporate driven “commodification” of news, treating it like any other product. He served as an expert witness in the Reilly lawsuit challenging the McClatchy-Hearst-MediaNews deal and believes that Reilly succeeded in exposing and delaying the Bay Area consolidation but didn’t stop it.

He says MediaNews argued to the Bush Justice Department that it shouldn’t stop the acquisition because news is no longer a monopoly of newspapers. Television, radio and the Internet provide a wealth of different sources for news. While this argument has surface validity, McManus’ response is “name some.” With minor exceptions, no solely Internet-based sources are really reporting on your local community.

Peter Phillips, an associate professor at Sonoma State University and director of Project Censored, argues that “Media consolidation is creating a new form of censorship in the United States and undermining democracy in the process.” He describes a system where fewer than 10 major media corporations now dominate the U.S. news and information systems. Ninety-eight percent of all cities have only one daily newspaper and these are increasingly controlled by huge chains.

“Censorship in the United States today is seldom deliberate, but rather comes under the heading of lost opportunities,” said Phillips. “Mega-merged corporate media are predominately interested in the entertainment value of news and the maintenance of high audience viewing/reading levels that equate to profitable advertising sales. Non-sexy or complex stories tend to receive little attention within these corporate media systems.”

Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter Lowell Bergman has a more critical perspective on the current state of Bay Area journalism. A UC Berkeley professor (and one who has focused on the national picture), Bergman has pointed comments about a variety of local media operations and sees the news gathering public interest function as what’s in jeopardy:

- On the San Francisco Chronicle: “The people who are running the Chronicle have lost sight of why they’re running a newspaper.”
- Dean Singleton: “He’s into making money. He’s like Murdoch.”
- Local TV: “Most local stations in San Francisco are making 30 percent profits.” Federal FCC licensing standards at one time required more serious reporting. “The FCC now says that what’s in the public interest is whatever the public is interested in.”

The future is unwritten...

What does the future hold? McManus says one positive is that the value of news is continuing to increase. Our society, environment, economy and institutions are undergoing major changes due to new technologies and other forces. Knowledge remains a key to power,

and its shelf life grows ever shorter. And with the global economy and global wars, we need information from even more distant places and we need updates more frequently. It’s paradoxical that the most reliable source of the information we need about technologically driven changes is becoming a victim of the very technology it covers. McManus sees a rough five to 10 years as we transition to a more decentralized system of news gathering and reporting involving information accessible on a niche basis with micro-payments by the story or through specialized subscriptions.

Bergman believes that “sooner or later” a Bay Area Web site will emerge “where people go to find out what’s going on. Something will happen, and there is no place riper than this area because it’s

The press is mentioned and protected as an institution in the Constitution, but is run largely as a for-profit enterprise whose first interest is to make a buck for shareholders.

been underserved (with serious journalism) historically.”

Fost points to online magazines Salon and Slate (now owned by the Washington Post) as evidence that quality journalism can happen online and thinks there is a lot of potential, but sees a conundrum. The press is mentioned and protected as an institution in the Constitution, but is run largely as a for-profit enterprise whose first interest is to make a buck for shareholders. Fost would like to see the nonprofit world step forward and suggests Mother Jones and the Center for Investigative Reporting in the Bay Area as nonprofit examples. The risk is corporate sponsorships and attacks from the right (which Public Broadcasting has experienced), so the model is not perfect. He hopes the Chronicle can hold on long enough to do something great online but has a concern about a potential spiral of cutting content (the substance of its news and features) leading to fewer readers leading to fewer ads, leading to cutting more content.

Henry suggests that maybe the profit model for delivering news is out of date and points to the BBC (publicly funded serious journalism) as a successful, different approach.

Glasser says there are lots of people who recognize the problem in academia, but journalists are reluctant to talk about it in the context of national policy because of fear of government control. “It’s a real fear, but I don’t see the state as an enemy. National Public Radio provides the best radio journalism, and we forget how well it (government funding) has worked there.”

The situation demands a better, more imaginative vision than we have had, says Glasser. We need

to look beyond models of market-based journalism that have defined us for the past 200 years. We need to understand journalism in the same way we define other public resources such as schools, museums or libraries. We allow librarians to make independent judgments about what books to put in a library.

It has everything to do with the news agenda and the mosaic we need in a multicultural society, Glasser says. We have to stop saying we have to accept the realities of the marketplace. Our country has the opportunity to provide a leadership role and take a serious look at alternatives to market-based journalism.

Thomas Jefferson’s concept of democracy was that in a society where a free and diverse press could write whatever it chose—while there would be abuses, exaggerations and inaccuracies—truth would ultimately emerge from an open marketplace of ideas. Newsbills and various forms of print from 200 years ago were more about the content—about conveying and advocating ideas—than about generating profits for enormous companies. Today that model has been largely turned on its head.

Knight Ridder (the newspaper company credited with the best, most objective coverage leading up to the Iraq invasion) dissolved because it was a publicly held company facing pressure from a major investment company stockholder. Others are in similar circumstances. Even the New York Times, which because of its two-tier stock structure has been somewhat shielded from such pressure, faced a protest from stockholders at its annual meeting in April led by a Morgan Stanley analyst. Daily newspapers, faced with Internet-related financial pressures, are rapidly joining electronic media and increasingly becoming small cogs in large corporations that consider news a product. This creates a formula for less meaningful news coverage and a society that is deprived of the serious, thoughtful and diverse information and views that Jefferson must have had in mind when he played a major part in crafting our democracy and enshrining protection for the press in the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Free, diverse, alert and seriously engaged media can provide the information and analysis needed to avoid realizing Elbert Hubbard’s view of democracy as “a form of government by popular ignorance.”

For serious journalism to triumph, consumers must demand quality and be willing to pay for it.

Perhaps George Bernard Shaw’s view is more appropriate: “Democracy is a device that insures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.”

Sam Chapman is publisher of the Pacific Sun, a Marin County weekly newspaper that is part of the independent and locally owned Embarcadero Publishing Co., the parent company of the Pleasanton Weekly and four other community newspapers. Jeb Bing contributed to this story.

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The Pleasanton Weekly is published every

Friday by Embarcadero Publishing Co.,

5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite 100

Pleasanton, CA 94566;

(925) 600-0840.

Mailed at Periodicals Postage Rate, USPS

020407. The Pleasanton Weekly is mailed

free upon request to homes and apartments

in Pleasanton. Voluntary subscriptions at

\$30 per year (\$50 for two years) are wel-

come from Pleasanton residents.

Subscription rate for businesses

and for residents of other communities is

\$50 per year.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Pleasanton Weekly, 5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite

100, Pleasanton, CA 94566.

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Opinion

Editorial

Oak Grove: A winning combination for Pleasanton

With the City Council expected to finally approve the Oak Grove 51-custom home development and open space measure Tuesday night, at least 100 volunteers are reported poised to strike out as early as Wednesday, each to seek 40 signatures from registered voters to overturn that approval. We hope they don't. Oak Grove, which is by far the longest simmering development project ever for Pleasanton, has gone from a once planned 100-home project along with an 18-hole championship golf course, to the 51 homes and a gift to the city of Pleasanton of 496 acres of heavily treed open space to be perpetually preserved for trails, equestrian paths and family picnics. As part of Pleasanton, it will be managed, maintained and policed by the city the same as the city's Augustin Bernal parkland and open space. It will also encourage other developers who own property in the southeast hills to work together with the community on a 2,000-square-foot swath of open space stretching from Callippe Preserve Golf Course to Shadow Cliffs Regional Park. The project, negotiated over the last two years with the property owners, Jennifer, Frederick and Kevin Lin, who live in Asia, is by far the best ever hoped for by the scores of city, civic, environmental and parks and recreation representatives who have devoted hundreds of hours to reaching this agreement. Why anyone would want to oppose a plan that serves the best interests of all of Pleasanton—even the Tri-Valley—is beyond us.

Of course Pleasanton is not immune to referendums. Some have worked, some not. But on almost every case, when citizens expressed their opposition to a land development decision by the City Council through a successful referendum, the applicants have come back with a better project to meet those concerns. This happened in 1993 when Ponderosa Homes' proposal for a 300-unit project on the Busch family farm off Valley Avenue and Busch Road won council approval. The council reversed its own decision later after opponents acquired enough signatures to put a referendum on the ballot. The result of that effort, and several years of mediation and compromise, is Ironwood, a new community nearing completion on that same 89-acre site.

We're likely to see another effort by the Merritt family to develop their 46-acre home-site on Foothill Road near Foothill High School. An earlier project proposed seven years ago also won council approval. That decision was reversed by opponents in the Highland Oaks and Laguna Oaks communities and other voters across town. Now Ponderosa has acquired development rights for the property and is holding early discussions with those communities before finalizing its plans and taking them to City Hall.

In our own poll taken on the Pleasanton Weekly Web site (www.pleasantonweekly.com), in letters and emails and in the recommendations prepared by many others, the Oak Grove project as now planned has the endorsement of many in Pleasanton who join us in calling for a favorable and final vote on Tuesday and the promised gift to Pleasanton—the largest land gift ever—of a hilltop preserve we can all enjoy.

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BEST OF PLEASANTON 2007

Talking Points

by Gina Channell-Allen



Words can be a weapon to destroy or tool to build

What a difference a word makes. Members of the Pleasanton Planning Commission have taken issue with a phrase we used to describe the continuance of an agenda item before the commission. A story two weeks ago said the agenda item was "repeatedly continued by the Planning Commission."

Use of that tiny, two-letter preposition, "by," had a big effect on the Planning Commission and on the Weekly staff.

After publication of that statement, we received emails from three of the members claiming we had "breached journalistic protocol," intentionally put the commission in a negative light, questioned our ethics and demanded a correction. The reporter, editor and I checked the official minutes, questioned several city staff members and, feeling justified in the use of the term "continued," and miffed our integrity had been questioned, wrote an equally scathing editorial.

In my humble opinion, both parties owe an apology and are owed an apology.

Because there are so many stories to cover in Pleasanton, and only so many reporters to go around, our editorial department sometimes employs what is referred to in the industry as "back covering." When there are conflicting assignments, editors will review meeting agendas and determine which assignment to cover. In many cases a reporter can go back to the meeting minutes and interview the principles to cover the story.

Meeting minutes are official documents and city staff members are trustworthy sources. And, although commission board members claimed

meeting minutes and city staff members are "secondary sources," they are indeed primary sources.

However, with that said, the commission members are also primary sources that, research revealed, have not been tapped for information as often as meeting minutes or city staff. We will seek to further open the lines of communication between the reporter who covers the commission, her editor and commission members.

It was in these meeting minutes and through city staff that the issue in question was referred to as "continued." However, as we said in the editorial, the continuances were at the request of the petitioner and the city staff, and not by the commission itself. The statement should have been, "continued in the planning commission," as opposed to "by the planning commission."

Did we inadvertently use the incorrect preposition? Yes, and we regret the error. Did it warrant scathing emails questioning our integrity? No; it wasn't intentional and a simple email or call pointing it out would have probably furthered a relationship that is obviously in need of care.

With that said, the parting shot in the editorial also did not further that relationship; it was uncalled for, and I apologize.

Apology: There's another small word that can have a big effect if we allow it.

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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Letters

Hawk item not continued by Planning Commission

Dear Editor,

In your story regarding Mrs. Hosterman's hawk, ("The mayor and her hawk: A saga," News, Oct. 19, page 5) your assertion that the permit hearing had been tabled in the past repeatedly by Planning Commissioners is false. On May 23 and May 30 and Oct. 10, city staff or the applicant postponed the item and the Commission was informed after the fact. When city staff pulled the item off the agenda right before Oct. 10 saying notices were printed improperly, it was a surprise of some of us Commissioners.

However, Planning Commissioners did not postpone the hawk item.

For two recent animal permits, staff produced reports within 4 to 6 weeks, easily arranged staff visits to the properties for site review/

noise readings, and scheduled hearing dates with the applicants (whowere children having to be up late on school nights), then the applicants appeared and the hearings took place.

Some residents wonder why the hawk item has taken 10 months longer than normal to produce a staff report, and why it was put on the "consent" calendar, reserved for items routine in nature, as the city has never dealt with permits for wild animals in residential neighborhoods, and wonder why the staff report didn't have the normal staff site review/noise readings contained in all other animal permit reports.

We have not been told why staff or the applicant has delayed this multiple times, but I am sure my fellow Commissioners are, and have been, anxious to hear this item so that our city staff and the Commission can get back to the business of the city.

Anne Fox
Planning Commission
Chairwoman

Pleasanton Weekly unfair to Planning Commission

Dear Editor,

On Oct. 19, the Pleasanton Weekly printed an article titled, "The mayor and her hawk: A saga." The article stated, "Hosterman, whose request to keep the bird in the backyard of her home in Vintage Hills has repeatedly been continued by the Pleasanton Planning Commission..." This was inaccurate and misleading.

The article went on to state that this item would be heard again next month, "unless it's tabled again by a commissioner who wants to keep the mayor on hold," inferring that a commissioner has intentionally delayed the mayor. In fact, no continuance has been initiated by a commissioner. Although the minutes from the May 23 and May 30 Planning Commission meetings noted that this item had been continued, the applicant and planning staff had actually requested the continuances; the third continuance of this item on Oct. 10 was initiated

by the planning staff due to a noticing error.

Although the Pleasanton Weekly was made aware of these facts, they refused to verify them or to print a correction. Rather, in their next editorial of Oct. 26, they continued to malign the Planning Commission by stating, "our curiosity is now raised over just what kind of politics Mayor Hosterman will face if the Planning Commission ever does get around to considering her petition."

This type of reporting is unfair and disheartening, especially when placing public service volunteers in such negative light. The citizens of Pleasanton deserve better.

Greg O'Connor
(Although I am the alternate on the Pleasanton Planning Commission, I am writing this letter as an individual citizen of Pleasanton.)

Circulating initiatives are ill-advised

Dear Editor,

The initiative is an important part of the democratic process we treasure in the U.S.A. However, it can be misused.

There are three ill-advised initiatives circulating around Pleasanton. I ask you to politely refuse to sign any of them. Each one is unclear and can have negative ramifications far beyond the intent of the authors. They have been written by very few in the quiet of their homes. They have not had any public discussion or public review. Two of the initiatives were written to subvert the public process that is now underway to annex Staples Ranch into Pleasanton.

Alameda County and the City of Pleasanton have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Staples Ranch. On Nov. 8, the City Council and Planning Commission are holding a workshop at the City Council chambers at 6:30 p.m. If you support an open and public process, I encourage you to attend the meeting and voice your opinion. This MOU is good one for Pleasanton. It is well thought out and comprehensive. It will keep much needed tax revenue in Pleasanton. It will provide community parks and senior housing among other things.

It is time to make a difference and put Pleasanton first.

Jan Batcheller
Pleasanton

Give input on Staples Ranch Nov. 8

Dear Editor,

Preliminary plans for the Staples Ranch property, owned by Alameda County, have been submitted for review by the City of Pleasanton for annexation and development in the near future. Your City Council has entered into an agreement with the county that would allow the plan to proceed through the normal approval process with open public hearings, where you, the citizens, can weigh in on the details of the plan prior to its final approval. Many amenities for the city, including a sports park, ice arena, senior

housing and open space near the arroyos are a part of this plan, balanced with commercial development that include an auto mall and a retail center. Nothing at this point has final approval; it all must be heard publicly by the city commissions with a final vote by the City Council. I urge you to support this process and not risk losing control of this property by signing initiatives currently being circulated.

When filed months ago, these initiatives truly jeopardized the Memorandum of Understanding between Pleasanton and the county, and frankly, sent the county looking for other options other than annexing to Pleasanton. To counter this, many citizens joined Pleasanton First, a coalition who's purpose is to inform the people of the facts (See PleasantonFirst.org) and urge citizens to "just say no" to signing initiatives that could result in our city losing millions of dollars in revenue, amenities, and most importantly land use control right in the heart of Pleasanton.

Thankfully, we now have an opportunity to support the open process and have input at the beginning of this review by attending a workshop on the Staples Ranch project on Nov. 8 at 6:30 p.m. Please attend and let your ideas be heard. This city-directed, not initiative-driven process will result in diverse opinions being heard and a well thought out plan eventually adopted for the Staples Ranch property. Please put Pleasanton First and join others in this public review process Nov. 8 and in the future!

Sharrell Michelotti
Former Pleasanton City
Councilwoman

Amador band, colorguard disrespected

Dear Editor,

On Saturday, Oct. 27, at the Foothill Parade Competition on Main Street, the Amador marching band and colorguard marched for the pleasure of their hometown, at the invitation of Mr. Bob Moorefield, the director of the Foothill band. Mr. Moorefield and Superintendent John Casey were among the dignitaries on the reviewing stand, surrounded by an appreciable crowd.

Amador stood at attention, waiting to be announced. Imagine the feeling in the hearts of 225 of our finest students, our Director Mr. Jon Grantham, families and friends, when they were simply announced as "the other band from Pleasanton." An uncomfortable pause, nervous laughter, and a few boos were quickly overwhelmed by growing applause and cheers of the parents and friends who knew this is not the "other" band. They are the Amador Valley marching band and colorguard.

The Amador students, teachers, staff, families and supporters were disrespected on Saturday, in a town recognized as a Community of Character, of which one of the six expected behaviors is respect.

Thank you to the marching Dons

(continued on page 21)

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Guest Opinion

When in doubt, change the story...

by Phil Blank

When politicians make a mistake or take a position that proves unpopular, they will often change the story or create a new one in the hopes that people will forget the original error or issue.

It is a common behavior that we often see on the national front. The Pleasanton Weekly is taking the same approach by trying to divert attention from its recent and incorrect reporting on the planning process.



Recently, the Weekly claimed that the mayor's application to keep a red-tailed hawk was continued by the Planning Commission. This is not a true statement. However, rather than address that issue, the Weekly now suggests that "politics" may be at play and that could influence the planning process. It is not about the hawk, it is not about the mayor, and it is not about anything other than the Weekly's improper reporting of the facts. Instead of simply printing a correction, the Weekly sensationalizes the event and accuses others of 'politics' attempting to focus the attention elsewhere.

The Weekly does not understand the difference between the city planning staff and the Planning Commission. This is a very important distinction as it is generally the staff who determines when a project is ready for review and not the Planning Commission. In October, it was the planning staff and not the Planning Commission who asked for the continuance.

Both planning staff and the Planning Commission work long and hard on planning applications. Several months ago, the Planning Commission held extra meetings to do just that. Of course, this was not reported upon by the Weekly as they

were not in attendance to observe it. At the last meeting, the Planning Commission again suggested extra meetings. The Weekly was absent.

It is sad that the Weekly does not cover the Planning Commission. While all commissions are important, the Planning Commission has a great deal of impact on the community. Today, the Weekly's coverage can only consist of reporting on what is in the minutes or relying of individuals interpretations of those minutes. According to the Weekly, this approach is the "most complete and most comprehensive of any media." Reporting "in absentia" is not tolerated by any news-based organization and the citizens of Pleasanton deserve better.

Since the Weekly is speaking with everyone around the Planning Commission, perhaps they should speak to someone who is actually on the Planning Commission. In the past, the chair of the Commission has always been available to the media and I have been contacted by other news publications who wanted to hear first-hand a commissioner's perspective.

Based on its most recent editorial, the Weekly will continue to report on the Planning Commission without actually being there. This type of "virtual journalism" stretches the bounds of any objective journalism and, frankly, should not be allowed.

The Weekly was factually incorrect. The Planning Commission did not repeatedly continue this project nor has the commission, to the best of my knowledge, repeatedly continued any project. It is hard to admit when you have the wrong facts but the Weekly did in this case. It is also unfortunate that the Weekly is unwilling to admit the error.

Phil Blank works in Pleasanton as a vice president of information technology and has lived here since 1997. While not speaking for the Planning Commission in his editorial, Blank is currently its vice chair.

Letters

(continued from page 20)

and Mr. Grantham, for your display of respect and generosity, participating in our sister school's event and performing for a hometown crowd. Thank you to the audience members who cheered them on at such an awkward moment.

Lest any misperceptions be left on the Amador students and the Pleasanton community, the marching Dons are not the "other band from Pleasanton." They are the Amador Valley High School marching band and colorguard. They are our Amador pride!

Marilyn M. Palowitch
Pleasanton

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.

For more information contact Editor Jeb Bing at (925) 600-0840.



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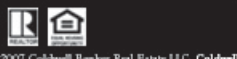
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Calendar

Author Visits

Famous children's author Brian Jacques Brian Jacques, author of the internationally acclaimed children's fantasy series Redwall, makes his only California library appearance at 9:30 a.m. Nov. 3 at the Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Books will be available for purchase and autographing (2 max). Limited free admission tickets given out at the door. Call 931-3400 ext. 8.

Classes

Wellness Workshops Come learn simple and effective ways to find balance in day-to-day living, build support and take on a positive, relaxed outlook on life. Come to one or both dates and start your life of wellness. These free workshops are from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Nov. 7 and 14 at Village High School, Room 704. Call 426-4283.

Clubs

November Meeting LAVGC The meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Nov. 6 in the multipurpose room of Alisal School, 1454 Santa Rita Road. The speaker will be Rella from Simply Succulent in Fort Bragg. She has an extensive knowledge of succulents and agaves. Plants will be available for purchase. Call 417-8809.

Tri-Valley Homebrewing Club Want to meet other brewers and

Weekend Preview



Painting pets

"Long-eared Owl, Lindsay Museum" by Pleasanton artist Gina Kaiper will be among the paintings included in the "LPC Paints Pets: A Holiday Show of Loved Ones" exhibit at the Tri-Valley SPCA, 4651 Gleason Drive, Dublin. The show will focus on oil and acrylic paintings of a variety of animals, including dog, cats and birds. It will run from Nov. 3 to Dec. 7, with a reception from 3 to 5 p.m. Nov. 16. The gallery is open from 1 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Email choffman@eastbayspca.org for more information.

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Tri-Valley Republican Women Federated Pat Vitucci, a nationally-prominent financial advisor, will speak from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Nov. 8 at the dinner meeting of the Tri-Valley Republican Women Federated at the Pleasanton Sheraton Hotel, 5990 Stoneridge Mall Road. The cost is \$26 for members or \$30 for non members. Call 426-1995.

Creek Gifts, 670 Main St. Tickets are \$5 or \$10 for three. Winners will be announced Dec. 3. Call 846-6015.

The ARC: A Fall Carnival Live music, dinner by Girasole, dancing and free lessons, fabulous silent auction, and carnival games all to benefit the tri-valley workshop of the ARC, an organization helping people with developmental challenges since 1950. The event will be held from 6 to 10 p.m. Nov. 11 at the Veteran's Memorial Building, 301 Main St. Tickets are \$50 per person. Call 485-5465.

Events

Holiday Bazaar The 35th annual holiday bazaar will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 2-3 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1020 Mocho St., Livermore. Handmade gifts, ornaments, holiday decorations, jams and jellies, baked goods and candies will be on sale.

Julia Morgan Re-enactment At 7 p.m. Nov. 15 at the Museum On Main Street, 603 Main St., "Miss Morgan" will reminisce about her experiences as a student in Berkeley and Paris in the 1890s, her philosophy of architecture and her colorful clients and associates, and her lifelong involvement with civic, educational, and philanthropic organizations. Visit www.museumonmain.org.

Pleasanton DeMolay Holiday Boutique From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 10 at the Pleasanton Masonic Center, 3370 Hopyard Road, a holiday boutique will be held. Space is still

Film

The Emerald Forest "The Emerald Forest" will be shown at 7 p.m. Nov. 3 at the IBEW Hall, 6250 Village Pkwy., Dublin. This lush, magical film stars Powers Boothe as a dam engineer whose son is abducted by an indigenous tribe in the rainforest. IBEW Movie Night is open to the public, wheelchair accessible, refreshments are served, meet & greet begins at 6:30 p.m. and an optional, short discussion follows the film. A \$3 donation is suggested. Call 462-3459.

Fundraisers

Foothill Boys Soccer Meat and Seafood Sale USDA inspected beef and quality seafood will be available for purchase at warehouse prices from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nov. 3 in the Foothill High School parking lot. Proceeds will benefit the Foothill High Boys Soccer general fund. Email foothillsoccer@yahoo.com.

Fundraiser Supports PDA Murals Raffle ticket purchases will benefit the Pleasanton Downtown Association murals. Starting Nov. 1, prizes will be on display in the window at the Old Republic Title Company. Raffle tickets can be purchased at Alexander's Main Street Gallery, 610 Main St., and Clover

Health

Free Flu Shots for Older Adults San Ramon Regional Medical Center is offering free flu shots for older adults from 9 a.m. to noon Nov. 9 at the South conference room, South building, 7777 Norris Canyon Road, San Ramon. Adults ages 65 and older can come starting at 9 a.m. and adults 50 years and older can come from 10 a.m. to noon, as the supply lasts. No reservations are accepted. Call 275-8230.

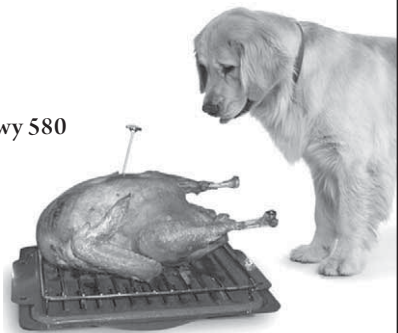
Kids & Teens

Crosspulse Rhythm Duo The Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave., presents Crosspulse Rhythm Duo at 2 p.m. Nov. 10. From banjos to body music, boxes & bells, Crosspulse Rhythm Duo makes music out of anything and everything. Jazz and world music, Appalachian banjo and step dancing traditions, even found sound are combined with athleticism, humor and skill. Call 931-3400 ext. 8.

Lectures/ Workshops

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DIABETES

FREE EDUCATION SEMINAR



Topic: Diabetes Management
Dr. Christiansen will discuss the newest diabetes medications and glucose monitoring technology.

Speaker: Dr. Mark Christiansen, MD

Date: Thursday, November 15, 2007

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Includes Diabetes Vendor/Products Fair

Location:
ValleyCare Medical Plaza
5725 W. Las Positas Blvd.
Conference Room 2
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Two blocks west of hospital

We invite you to register for this seminar by calling our Health Information and Physician Referral Line at **1-800-719-9111** or visit our website at **www.valleycare.com** — click on the classes link.

Presented by the ValleyCare Diabetes Program, under the direction of Endocrinologist Mark Christiansen, MD

Diabetes Center: (925) 416-6710

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Fire & Pollution Prevention Workshop Community Stewardship for Clean Water Workshop Series: Fire Prevention and Water Pollution Prevention will be held from 10:30 a.m. to noon Nov. 3 at the Livermore Public Library, 1188 South Livermore Ave. Call (510)668-6533.

Tri-Valley Early Childhood Education Conference The 2nd Annual Tri-Valley Conference will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 3 at Las Positas College, 3033 Collier Canyon Ave. Mary Sheedy Kurcinka is a well-known national speaker as well as a national best-selling author with books such as, "Sleepless in America" and "Raising Your Spirited Child." Many other workshops offered. Tickets are \$10-25. Call 249-3925 or visit www.childcarelinks.org.

Youth Employment Program The first Monday of each month beginning at 6 p.m. Nov. 5 at the Pleasanton

Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave., the Pleasanton Public Library and Tri Valley One Stop Career Center will help teens with employment, interviewing and resume skills. The counselor will assist with educational and vocational options. Call 931-3404.

Live Music

Concert Pianist Daniel Glover to Perform At 7:30 p.m. Nov. 10 at First Presbyterian Church, 4th and L streets, Livermore, concert pianist Daniel Glover will perform works by Beethoven, Alberto Ginastera, Mompou, and Liszt's Reminiscences of Don Juan. Tickets are \$25. Call 866-4003.

Miscellaneous

Children's Book Art Reception The public is invited to a reception in celebration of original Children's Book Art donated to the Friends of the Pleasanton Library by Fern Skowlund. Come learn about and view this fun collection in the Children's area of the library, 400 Old Bernal Ave., at 7 p.m. Nov. 15. Light refreshments will be served. Call 931-3400 ext 8.

On Stage

The Diviners The Diviners is a poignant, lyrical play about a young boy who has a traumatizing fear of water and the former preacher who tries to rid him of his fear. Taking place in Middle America during the

Depression, the play is about friendship, community and the search for hope in difficult times. Shows run at 8 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday Nov. 9 through 18 at Las Positas College. Tickets are \$7 for students and seniors, \$10 for general admission. Call 424-1166.

Seniors

Greatest Generation The hotel invites World War II veterans and their families and friends to a reception after Pleasanton's Veterans Day Parade at 3 p.m. Nov. 4 at the Rose Hotel, 807 Main St. Call 846-8802.

Pleasanton Real Estate News



by Gerarda Stocking

COMING CLEAN: BATHROOMS

Okay, we all put off certain cleaning tasks, not quite knowing how to tackle them, until the in-laws come to visit and we realize they may see...

Our plastic shower curtain liner is infested with mildew. It smells and it makes sensitive noses sneeze and turn red. What to do? Throw the plastic liner in the washing machine with a couple of towels (whose job is to rub against the plastic during the wash and help clean it). Wash it in regular laundry soap. Then hang the liner up to dry. Don't put it in the dryer!

You might actually want to replace your plastic-lined shower curtain with a watertight nylon curtain like the one you may have seen the last time you stayed in a hotel. It looks better and performs well.

Fine, but what about the soap scum in the shower tile grout and elsewhere? Danny Seo, host of the Simply Green radio show, says that a melamine sponge with clean water will pick up the soap scum, as well as any grime and dirt, that we would usually spend a lot of time scrubbing away. There's also a new product—the Scrubbing Bubbles Automatic Shower Cleaner—that shoots a cleanser throughout a shower, doing all the work (they say) of preventing soap scum, mildew growth and lime scale. To find out more about real estate and financing call Gerarda Stocking at 846-4000 or visit her website at www.gerardastocking.com.

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Sports

Parent photographers

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



Amador Dons go after Cal High

Both teams meet after winning last week's contests

Amador Valley (6-2) takes on the California High Grizzlies (7-1) on the Pleasanton field at 7 p.m. tonight, with the two schools' Junior Varsity teams battling it out starting at 4:30 p.m.

California beat Granada 21-17 last week.

The varsity Dons are hoping for a repeat of last week's smashing of Monte Vista, 28-6. Coming into that game, the foremost thought in everyone's mind was how the Dons would rebound from the previous week's unexpected defeat at the hands of the Granada Matadors.

Playing inspired defense and aided by some erratic play by the Monte Vista offense, the Dons overcame a penalty-filled performance and rode their punishing running game to the rather convincing 28-6 victory over the Mustangs.

After kicking off to Monte Vista to start the game, the Dons' defense held the Mustangs to three incom-

plete passes before Joe Young received the Monte Vista punt on the Dons' 44-yard line. Pat Gondkoff quickly set the tone for the game, taking the first-down handoff from Pat Espiritu, then weaving through the entire Mustang defense from the left sideline to the right corner of the end zone to give the Dons the lead thirty-seven seconds into the game. Dillon Mullaney added the extra-point and the Dons had a 7-0 lead.

The Dons' defense bent but didn't break the remainder of the first half, even though they allowed the Mustangs to move close to the end zone three times. Monte Vista missed two field goal attempts, then the Dons forced a fumble with under 30 seconds to go before halftime.

On the offensive side, Joe Young swept around the right right side of the Mustangs' defense, then outraced all defenders to the end zone for a 46-yard touchdown early in the second quarter. JR Souza tacked on

another touchdown, bulling through the Monte Vista defense from two yards out later in the quarter to give the Dons a surprising 21-0 lead over the Mustangs, which they took to the locker room after recovering the Mustangs' fumble on the one-yard line.

The third quarter was a scoreless affair, with both defenses keeping the opposing offenses out of the end zone. The Mustangs' defense was aided by numerous penalties by the Dons, including two delay of game penalties in a row. The Dons' defense didn't need any help from the referees.

JR Souza scored his second touchdown of the game early in the fourth quarter to increase the Dons' lead to 28-0 and erase any doubt about the outcome. Monte Vista scored their only touchdown of the game with 40 seconds remaining to avoid the shutout. ■

—Paula Avriett

GOODGUYS

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Golfers claim spot in NCS

Lady Dons compete Monday in Ripon

With their third place finish at the North Coast Section Championships at Tilden Park Golf Club, Amador Valley High's Lady Dons lived to play again.

They will compete for the third time in five years in the NOR-CAL Championships.

Led by Joi Pentin's fourth place 76, the girls earned the right to play next Monday at Spring Creek Country Club in Ripon.

Emily Chiu added a solid round of 85 while Kamille Laffins shot her lowest round of the year, an 87. Captain Laurel Goveia carded a 90 and Leslie Santiago finished the scoring with a 91.

Alameda won the team competition with a 411 followed by Monte Vista's 413. The Dons out shot Mission San Jose by 4 strokes with a 429 to claim the final spot.

Recent NCS successes for the Lady Dons: 2007—3rd place; 2006—4th place; 2005—2nd place; 2004—2nd place; 2003—4th place. ■

Dining Out

American

Vic's All Star Kitchen

201 Main St., Pleasanton, (925) 484-0789. Vic's delivers a starry mix of American food, fast service and a cheery atmosphere. Owner Vic Malatesta teamed his love of sports with his passion for good food to create a solid dining experience. Vic's is open daily 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Evening banquets and daytime catering are available.

Bridges

44 Church St., Danville, 820-7200. Executive Chef Kevin Gin interprets

California-American cuisine with European and Asian influences with expansive lunch and dinner menus. Add dessert, wine and cocktails and you have Bridges' casual fine dining experience. Visit www.bridgesdanville.com for event and private party details.

Asian-Pacific

Mahalo Grille

425 Main St., Pleasanton, 462-2800. Treat yourself to a taste sensation at Mahalo Grille featuring a variety of Pacific seafood, Hawaiian fresh fish

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Closed Monday



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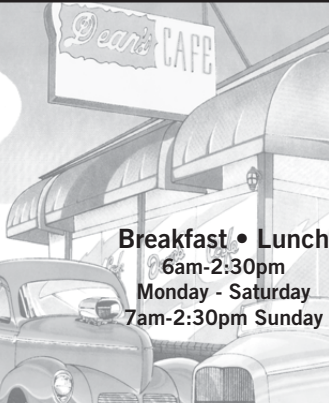
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and shell fish, and "Mahalo" signature selections. Also try our various vegetarian-friendly offerings, California wines and island cocktails. Visit www.mahalogrille.com.

Brewpub/ Alehouse

Main Street Brewery

830 Main St., Pleasanton, 462-8218. Pleasanton's only BrewPub serves lunch and dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Offering rotating guest brews and seasonal ales, some like Attaboy IPA are brewed with locally grown hops. To-go orders and parties up to 100 are available. Live music every Friday and Saturday, visit www.mainstreetbrewery.com for activities and specials.

The Hop Yard American Alehouse and Grill

3015H Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 426-9600. Voted Best Watering Hole in Pleasanton, The Hop Yard offers 30 craft beers on tap as well as great food. The full-service menu includes appetizers, salads and grilled fare that will bring you back time and again. Banquet facilities available. On the web at www.hopyard.com.

470 Market Place, San Ramon, 277-9600. Featuring a giant 8-foot projection screen for major sporting events, they also feature 30 beers on tap and a great grill. Go in for the beer, go back for the food. More at www.hopyard.com.

California Cuisine

Stacey's at Waterford

4500 Tassajara Road, Ste. C., Dublin, 551-8325. We serve seasonal California cuisine using the freshest ingredients, with delicious dishes including seafood, pasta, meat, wood fired pizza and even vegetarian choices. Available for special events on Sundays. Visit www.staceysatwaterford.com.

terford.com.

Stacey's Cafe

310 Main St., Pleasanton, 461-3113. Located on Main Street in downtown Pleasanton, Stacey's is open for lunch and dinner seven days a week, serving fresh California cuisine. Come as you are and enjoy our dining room, banquet room, outdoor patios and full bar. Visit www.staceyscafe.com.

Catering

Fontina's Catering

349 Main St., Downtown Pleasanton, 462-9299. Fontina Ristorante's award-winning menu can now be delivered to your home or office. Our lunch and dinner specialties feature homemade soups and pastas, premium seafood and meats, and a vegetarian menu. For parties of 10 or more, we'll include free dessert or 10 percent off your total bill (excluding tax).

Chinese

Chinese Szechuan

3059 Hopyard Road #G, Pleasanton, 846-5251. Chinese Szechuan is Pleasanton's best-loved Chinese restaurant. Family owned and run since 1987, it has friendly service, delicious food and great prices, including lunch specials and carry-out. A banquet room is available.

Panda Mandarin Cuisine

30 W. Angela St., Pleasanton, 484-4880. Panda offers several delicious specials using fresh ingredients and spices that make traditional northern Chinese cuisine such a delight. Open for lunch Monday through Friday, dinner Monday through Saturday, closed Sunday. A private banquet room is available. Visit www.pandapleasanton.com.

Continental

Barone's

475 St. John St., Pleasanton, 426-0987. Pleasanton's most romantic continental cuisine restaurant features

innovative pasta, seafood and meat entrees, outdoor dining, and a full bar. Barone's is open for dinner seven nights and lunch Monday through Friday, with live music on Friday and Saturday evenings. Ask about our banquet facilities and special events.

Fusion

Oasis Grille

780 Main St., Pleasanton, 417-8438. Visit downtown Pleasanton's exotic dining destination. Oasis features kabobs, rice and vegetarian dishes, to name a few. Check out our updated wine and exotic cocktail menus. We also cater! Visit www.OasisGrille.com.

Italian

Fontina Ristorante

349 Main St., Pleasanton, 462-9299. This popular downtown restaurant gets rave reviews from both locals and visitors. Fontina offers a changing, seasonal menu and daily specials—including homemade soups, pastas, seafood, chicken and vea—served in a comfortably elegant atmosphere. We have indoor and outdoor seating. Join us for Saturday and Sunday champagne brunch.

La Vite Ristorante

3037-G Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 485-4500. La Vite Ristorante was rated "A" by the Contra Costa Times restaurant critic and voted the best Italian restaurant by the readers of the Tri-Valley Herald. We're located off the beaten path of downtown Pleasanton in the Hopyard Village Shopping Center.

Girasole Grill

3180 Santa Rita Road at West Las Positas Boulevard, Pleasanton, 484-1001. Girasole, a locally owned family business, is an award winning California style Italian restaurant. We feature signature cuisine such as Scoozzi, Absolut! prawns, chicken gorgi, ppinach for Veronica, Tuscan pork and signature fresh seafood...just to name a few. We are upscale, but California casual with friendly prices.



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 3105-K Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 462-3131. Makoto Sato, Owner Operator has been serving traditional Japanese cuisine for over 25 years in Pleasanton. Enjoy the variety of our sushi bar and Japanese tempura and teriyaki sushi. We are open for lunch and dinner. We also do catering. Open Tuesday through Sunday and closed Monday.

Mexican

Blue Agave Club
 625 Main St., Pleasanton, 417-1224. Come downtown for fine dining and casual lunches in our outdoor patio. Our menu includes a variety of selections from classic tortilla soup and mole poblano

to grilled salmon (a house specialty) and filet mignon with a spicy Chipotle Chile sauce. We also specialize in premium "sipping" tequilas and carry over 200 different varieties. Visit www.blueagaveclub.com.

Pizza

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 288 Main St., Pleasanton, 846-2520. Gay Nineties is family-oriented with an extensive menu, including our renowned pizza, Italian dishes, salads and sandwiches. We also have wine, beer, patio dining and games for kids. Come for groups, take out and call-ahead lunch orders. We're open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

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