

Deadline looms

Oak Grove referendum signatures due Dec. 6 ► **page 5**

Cramped for space

Holiday Fund dollars to help ValleyCare ER

► **page 34**

Vol. VIII, Number 44 • November 30, 2007

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PLEASANTON WEEKLY

Hanukkuh happenings

Age-old holiday is given a modern twist

► **Section 2**

PLEASANTON

Main Street parade heralds season's launch, downtown tree lighting

SANTA CLAUS COMES TOMORROW

Page 14

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Around Pleasanton

by Jeb Bing

Holiday parade champ heads to Alabama

My good friend and neighbor Jan Vader will make her final appearance tomorrow night as chair of the annual Pleasanton Holiday Parade on Main Street. The parade has been one of the city's most festive, best-liked parades ever since it started 35 years ago. But under Vader's leadership it has more than tripled in size with 15,000 expected to line Main Street sidewalks to watch more than 65 entries and 3,000 participants go by. It's her job to start early in the day to mark off specific areas in the Amador Valley High School parking lot where floats, bands, walking units and the fire truck to carry Santa can assemble. Most arrive starting at 4 p.m. and should have their parade position numbers to show to Vader and her volunteers. At 5:15, she leads the Amador marching band out onto Santa Rita Road to take up its formation in front of the Amador Theater. At 5:25 p.m., when police close off Old Stanley and Del Valle Parkway, she escorts the band to Ray Street and the Pleasanton Hotel. At 5:30, she will give the signal for the parade to start.

Vader got her start at handling large downtown crowds by working with Marty Dutchover during the years of the Pasta Festival. In 1995, she was named parade marshal of the Christmas parade, later handling the formations job and then to parade chair nine years ago. Always in search of volunteers to help, she even recruited her own family. Her husband Terry, who just retired from Northrop Grumman Corporation, became parade marshal when Jan moved to the top post. Daughter Traci was 14 when she started handling communications to the announcers at the four review stands, a position she held for 10 years before moving to Patterson. Son Chad pitched in while a student at Amador and before he moved to Huntsville, Ala. Jan Vader, after 39 years with AT&T and its predecessor telephone and communications companies, retired earlier this month. Terry and Jan plan to sell their

upper Vintage Hills home next spring and join Chad and his family in Huntsville.

That will create a leadership gap that Becky Hopkins of the city's Parks and Community Services Department is already seeking to fill, with several candidates scheduled to be on hand as understudies with Jan Vader tomorrow night. Volunteers are vital to holding a smooth, well-run parade, ushering in parade participants at Amador early in the late afternoon and then making sure parents have parking places at the end of the parade route to find their children, who are among more than 1,000 young Scouts, dancers and others who will walk the entire length of Main Street.

In her 12 years of handling the parade, Jan Vader had few problems in getting the parade started on time and over before children lose their interest in waiting for Santa, who always comes at the end. This year's event could last over an hour, which she thinks is stretching it a bit, which is why she keeps the floats, cars, bands and walkers bunched close together as she spaces them out at Ray Street. Only the Balloon Platoon, which performs all along the route, has more time to complete the journey, which is why Vader places them near the end.

There have been a few delays beyond Vader's control. A freight train barreled through the Santa Rita crossing a few years ago, delaying the final third of the parade. At another time, a fire required Santa's high rise truck to leave the Amador parking lot, but the fire department quickly found an older unit to accommodate the star of the parade. Even the weather has been cooperative with rain canceling out only one parade in 1999. Tomorrow night's forecast is for clear skies but cold temperatures so Jan Vader will be bundled up as she stands at Ray and Main, waving goodbye to Santa and the Pleasanton Holiday Parade that has been a festive success for so many years thanks to her. ■

About the Cover

Santa Claus makes his 35th annual appearance at the Pleasanton Holiday Parade on Main Street tomorrow night, with the parade starting at 5:30 p.m. and the festive tree lighting and community sing-along after Santa passes by at about 7 p.m. in front of the Museum On Main. Cover design by Manuel Valenzuela.

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Streetwise

Q: What do you think about the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's efforts to restrict residents from using wood burning fireplaces on poor air quality days?

Asked Downtown



Jim Santa Maria

Retired Program Manager

It's a good idea. More people should get involved in doing their part to reduce pollution. It seems like such an obvious item to take care of. With more public education about the issue I would hope folks would voluntarily jump on board.

Eric Cruz

Scientist

I think it's a good idea which would support the other activities we have throughout the year such as "Spare the Air Day" and riding BART. I don't use a wood burning stove or fireplace as a primary source of heat so it is easy for me to support that idea.



Amanda Burr

Teacher

I think restricting wood burning is a great idea but in terms of actually ticketing or fining people I don't know how that would work or whether I could support that. Raising awareness on how to improve air quality would be a good start.



John Vlahos

IT Consultant

It's a great idea. I have noticed the smokiness in the morning air to the point that it has bothered my breathing and restricted my bicycle riding. The answer is advertising, education about air quality and the dangers associated and hope that 80 percent of the population chips in to help the problem.



Tracy Chesney

Massage Therapist

It's a really good idea. In England no one is able to burn wood at all. We had to have gas logs. We have a gas log fireplace here; my husband insisted on it because of the pollution wood causes. We would never burn wood.



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

Compiled by Cybele Ryan

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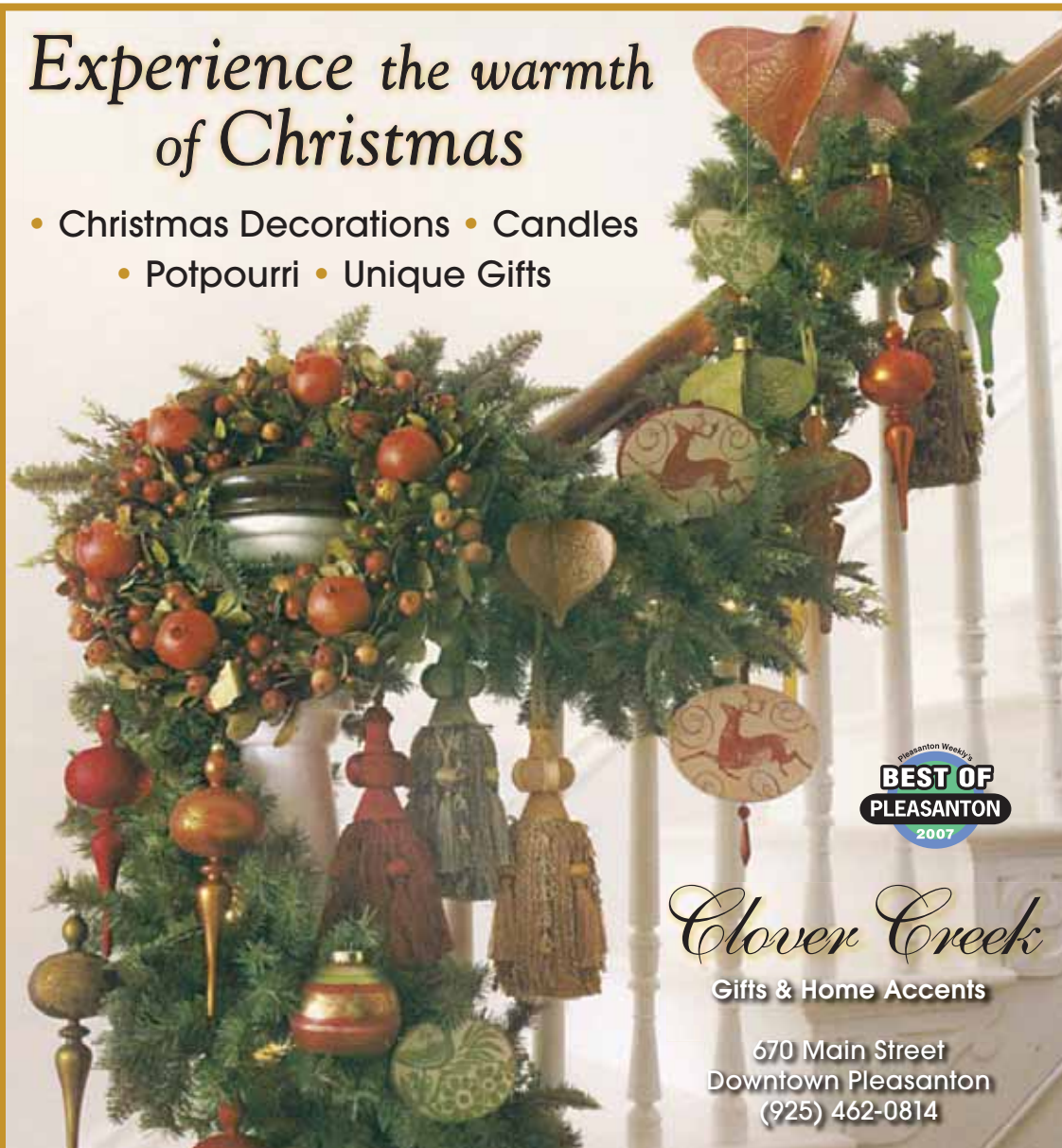
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Newsfront

News Digest

Parenting classes offered in December

The Pleasanton Unified School District and Amador Valley Adult and Community Education present parenting classes in the month of December. Part two of "1-2-3 Magic: Discipline for Children Ages 3-9" will be held at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 11 in the Pleasanton Middle School multipurpose room, 5001 Case Ave. "Applying the 40 Assets in Your Family" will take place at 9:30 a.m. Dec. 8 also at PMS. Call 426-4280 for details and to register.

Festival screens 'A Christmas Story'

The California Independent Film Festival will again screen the holiday classic "A Christmas Story" at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at the Vine Cinema in downtown Livermore. Two of the movie's stars, Scott Schwartz (Flick) and Ian Petrella (Randy), will be in attendance. Tickets are \$10 and are available at the door or in advance by calling the festival office at 371-1104.

LPC celebrates Le Semana Cubana

Las Positas College hosts Le Semana Cubana (the week of Cuban culture) next week with a schedule of activities including traditional Cuban drumming, salsa dancing, films, a Rumba demonstration and a percussion master class. The events run Dec. 3 to 8 and will focus on the history, art, dance and religions of the Cuban people. For a schedule of activities and more information, visit www.laspositascollege.edu or call 424-1212.

Correction

Due to an editing error, a digit was left out of "Sign Oak Grove petition, give Pleasanton a voice," Guest Opinion, Nov. 23, page 17. The correct sentence reads "If this ridgeline preservation ordinance had been developed and adopted, the Oak Grove development would not have been approved since it has ridgetop streets and driveways, houses of up to 12,500 square feet (plus an additional 800-square-foot garage) within 100 vertical feet of the ridgeline, and grading on slopes of 25 percent or greater in these picturesque southeast hills."

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

Down to the wire in Oak Grove project fight

Opponents face Thursday deadline to force vote as 'Keep our Park' group says don't sign

by Jeb Bing

Opponents of a City Council-approved plan to allow the construction of 51 estate homes on the hilltop above Kottinger Ranch and Vintage Hills will be making a final dash in the next seven days to make sure they have enough signatures to force a vote on a referendum to overturn that decision.

At least 75 members of a group called "Save Pleasanton's Hills" have been canvassing neighborhoods and walking the streets of downtown Pleasanton gathering signatures on petitions. They need 3,672 signatures—or 10 percent of the 36,720 who voted in last November's municipal election—to qualify their measure for the

ballot box.

"We will have many more than that by Dec. 6, when we have to submit our petitions," said former City Councilwoman Kay Ayala, who is leading the effort with Karla Brown, vice president of the Kottinger Ranch Homeowners Association. "I stood outside the post office yesterday and had 44 sign my petition in just a short time. Once people understand what the council did and what could happen in the hills, they're signing in droves."

At issue is a plan that the council approved to allow three offshore developers—Jennifer, Frederic and Kevin Lin—to build 51 homes on 77 acres that they own at the end of Hearst Drive in Kottinger Ranch, an upscale

neighborhood that the Lin family also built in the 1990s. These new homes would range in size from 8,000 to 12,000 square feet and would be among the largest homes in Pleasanton.

As part of the agreement approved by the council, the Lins would give the rest of the hilltop land they own—496 acres—to the city of Pleasanton. The city, in turn, plans to build hiking trails and equestrian paths on the land, along with a staging area, parking lot and rest rooms. Except for the trails and an emergency fire and evacuation road, the hilltop acreage would be left as open space.

The open space also would be part of a 2,000-acre swath of permanent open space the City Council is hoping to acquire

as other developers seek building approvals, extending from Callippe Preserve Golf Course to Shadow Cliffs Regional Park.

Ayala opposed the council action at the time and launched the referendum initiative the day after the vote. She has 30 days to obtain the necessary signatures with the deadline set at 5 p.m. next Thursday.

"We're determined to have enough to qualify," Ayala said.

Once the packets of signatures are submitted, City Clerk Karen Diaz will review the petitions to make sure they are in order, and then send them to the Alameda County Registrar's Office for an official count. That office must determine that at least 3,672 of

(continued on page 10)

Home Depot goes to City Council

Final approval not planned until either Dec. 18 or Jan. 15 meetings

by Janet Pelletier

As the last of a series of meetings by a city-formed work group on the Home Depot project wrapped up last month, the plan for a second store will go before the City Council next Tuesday.

The council pulled back its final stamp on the project a few months ago in favor of forming the work group to conduct more research and work with residents on their concerns.

Next Tuesday's meeting will be a review and discussion of the proposal by the council. The project isn't expected to go for final approval until either the Dec. 18 or Jan. 15 meeting, according to city Planning Director Jerry Iserson.

The last work group session, held Nov. 1, was a continuation of an Oct. 17 meeting. The October session dealt with the fiscal and economic analysis of the Home Depot as well as a traffic study.

The Home Depot will be the anchor store in a new shopping center at the corner of Valley and Bernal avenues and Stanley Boulevard.

The most recent work group meeting drew a smaller crowd. Its focus was on traffic and delivery trucks traveling to and from the Home Depot. Iserson said approximately 20 to 25 trucks would make deliveries per day at the Home Depot, meaning 40 to 50 truck trips per day.

The city had initially planned a condition of the project's approval that all delivery trucks would have to reach the store through Livermore, coming down Stanley Boulevard, but Iserson said that has since been changed.

"We realized that that wasn't quite an honest approach," he said.

It's not as enforceable by police nor is it very realistic, he said, adding that it also wouldn't be fair to require Livermore to take the brunt of the traffic.

Instead, the city would allow commercial trucks under 3 tons to use a non-truck route for local deliveries. Some delivery trucks may be allowed to use Sunol Boulevard to reach the shopping center. No deliveries, on- or off-loading may be made between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. On weekends, the hours would be from 8 p.m. to 1 p.m., Iserson said.

(continued on page 12)



Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department Chief Bill Cody stands next to the special event emergency vehicle that was recently added to the fleet.

Fire department receives new EMT cart

Vehicle will provide emergency care during events

by Emily Atwood

A customized golf cart was added to the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department fleet this week. But don't expect to see any firefighters hitting the golf course in it.

Instead, the customized electric cart will be used to deliver emergency medical care during special events like the

county fair, downtown parades and street fairs. There are two seats in front with room for a gurney and a bevy of medical gear in back.

Outfitting the small vehicle with a siren, gurney, EMT equipment and a trailer brought the project to about

(continued on page 11)

Governor agrees to explore median barrier on Vasco Road

Rural thoroughfare has been site of 17 accident-related deaths since 2003

by Janet Pelletier

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed Assembly Bill 15, which seeks funds to construct a concrete barrier in the median of Vasco Road.

The bill was introduced by Assemblyman Guy Houston (R-San Ramon), who serves a small portion of Pleasanton, Livermore, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, Danville, Alamo, Oakley, Brentwood, Byron, Discovery Bay and Bethel Island.

Vasco Road, located on the north side of Interstate 580 in Livermore, is a well-traveled north-to-south route for people who commute to the Tri-Valley from Brentwood, Discovery Bay and Oakley. An estimated 22,000 cars pass through Vasco per day, up from 16,000 a decade ago, Houston said. It's also the site of numerous car accidents, many which are fatal.

According to Houston's office, since 2003, 17 people have been killed in accidents on the rural,

winding two-lane thoroughfare.

Houston said many of the accidents are the 'cross over' variety—meaning they could have been avoided had there been a barrier in the median of the road.

Constructing a barrier would require state and local funding, Houston said, adding that voter-approved bonds can provide millions of dollars through Proposition 1B.

"But commitments from local governments will be necessary to help cover the cost of the barrier," he said.

A report on the financial findings is due to the legislature no later than Sept. 30, 2008. ■



Guy Houston



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McNerney backs permanent tax cuts for veterans, families

Without relief, many face financial hardships, Congressman says

Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton) recently voted to permanently extend \$2 billion in tax breaks to veterans and military families.

Called the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2007, the bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives with unanimous support.

"Our men and women in uniform—and their families—have sacrificed greatly for our nation," McNerney said. "With lengthy and multiple deployments, soldiers and military families often face undue financial hardships. We should do all we can to ease that financial burden and to aid military families in achieving the dream of home ownership."

The bill, H.R. 3997, would make

permanent a measure that permits the consideration of combat pay as earned income for the purpose of determining eligibility of the Earned Income Tax Credit. The provision is set to expire at the end of the year.

The bill also would make thousands of veterans eligible for low-interest loans by making permanent and modifying qualified mortgage bonds used to finance residences for veterans.

In addition, McNerney said the



Jerry McNerney

bill would make permanent existing tax code provisions to:

- Permit active duty reservists to make penalty-free withdrawals from retirement plans;
- Permit an employer to make contributions to a qualified retirement plan on behalf of an employee killed or disabled in combat;
- Count extra pay for active duty military personnel from their previous civilian employer for retirement purposes; and,
- Permit recipients of military death benefit gratuities to roll over the amounts received, tax-free, to a Roth IRA or an Education Savings Account.

The bill now goes to the U.S. Senate for consideration.

—Jeb Bing

Negative stories about real estate often miss the mark

On April 12, there was an article in the Wall Street Journal entitled, "Hot Homes Get Cold."

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Above Left: View of future regional trail in the new park at Oak Grove. Above Right: Photo of the new Oak Grove park by Keep Our Park Chair, Jerry Pentin, a Parks and Recreation Commissioner

THE NEW PARK AT OAK GROVE IS WORTH KEEPING...

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—Kurt Kummer, Parks & Rec Commissioner

"I believe this development represents a model of productive compromise with lasting benefits to residents and the environment."

—James Van Dyke, Vintage Hills resident

"Oak Grove is the keystone property in the Pleasanton southeast hills to help spawn the remaining open space connections between the Vineyard Corridor and the Callippe Preserve."

—Jon Harvey, Kottinger Ranch resident

"Similar to what the city achieved with the Bernal property, Oak Grove provides nearly 500 acres of public open space in exchange for minimal development within the context of a collaborative neighborhood process and the support of four out of five council members."

—Mayor Jennifer Hosterman and City Councilman Matt Sullivan

"Far from saving open space, the petitions jeopardize over 15 years work by environmental, open space and trails advocates to protect our southeast hills. Every signature brings Pleasanton closer to losing a 500 acre park at Oak Grove."

—Becky Dennis, former City Councilwoman

Quotes pulled from Letters to the Editor 2007

"What was the result of the many informed citizens working within the democratic system? We garnered mega-concessions from the developer: homes reduced from 98 to 51; 496 acres of open space dedicated to the city and protected in perpetuity by a conservation easement; a public trail system and staging area constructed at no cost to the city."

—Dolores Bengtson, Retired Director Pleasanton Parks & Community Services

"Pleasantonites, what has happened to our ability to look beyond our own neighborhoods and see what is best for the community? Please before you sign, get the facts at KeepOurPark.org, or just say 'NO.'"

—Christine Steiner, Seniors Advocate



Photos of Pleasanton's newest and largest park at Oak Grove. Taken by Keep Our Park Committee member Becky Dennis while walking in the future park.

For a complete listing of endorsees or to add your name to our list, go to:

www.KeepOurPark.org

Community of Character awards go to three in Pleasanton

Chamber makes presentations at Business Expo

by Jeb Bing

The Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce has given its annual Community of Character awards to three individuals at a special program that was part of its Business Expo.

Chamber Chairman John Sensiba made the awards to Jaime Dowell, Studio 7 Fine Arts; Marlene Peterson, director of Senior Support Services of the Tri-Valley, and Kenneth Billheimer of Hearing Services of Pleasanton. Sensiba said the three "exemplify the Community of Character traits: Compassion, Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility and Self-Discipline."

Billheimer, whose audiology practice is at 4460 Black Ave., was cited for working with the Ears of the Lion, a program sponsored by the Pleasanton Lions Club, to offer low-income senior citizens hearing aids at reduced costs, with his services provided free of charge.

Marlene Peterson was honored for her work as director of the Senior Support Program. It was started in 1981 to provide in-home services to assist the frail elderly in the community to maintain their independence while living at home. The program serves senior citizens 60 years or older in Pleasanton, Livermore, Dublin and Sunol. The goal of the program is to prevent premature institutionalization, promote independence and preserve dignity.

Peterson said that in 1981 the Senior Support Program served



Shown with Chamber representatives and City Manager Nelson Fialho (far right) award winners included Jaime Dowell (second from left), Marlene Peterson (third from left) and Kenneth Billheimer (not pictured).

25 seniors. This past year, those services have gone to more than 1,200.

Jaime Dowell, owner of Studio 7 Fine Arts on Main Street, was honored for her community work.

"She is a great example of all of the character traits rolled into one," Sensiba said. "As a business owner, she believes in giving back to the community. She doesn't just talk about the importance of the arts in Pleasanton but is passionate about making things happen."

He said she spends a lot of time hosting a number of events at her gallery to increase aware-

ness and engage the community in the Firehouse Arts Center campaign. She also serves on the board of the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Foundation, where she is this year's secretary, and recently donated a lot of time and effort to the Pleasanton library to help in the framing of a series of children's book covers.

The annual Business Expo, hosted by the city of Pleasanton and the Pleasanton Chamber, attracted 400 to what is considered to be the largest business networking event of the year, with some 80 businesses displaying their products and services. ■

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Oak Grove

(continued from page 5)

the signatures are currently registered voters in Pleasanton.

If certified, the Registrar will advise the City Council, which must decide whether to rescind its approval or let the measure go to a vote. That decision will likely be made at the council's second meeting in January or its

first meeting in February. If the decision is to ask voters to decide, the issue is expected to be on the California primary ballot on June 3, 2008.

As hard and fast as the Ayala group is working, an even larger group of political, civic and business leaders is moving just as quickly to urge Pleasanton voters not to sign the petitions. Led by former Councilwoman Becky Dennis, who served on the council with Ayala, a group known as "Keep Our Park" has posted its supporters at many of the same street corners, coffee shops, schools and other busy locations.

One of the best recognized advocates for allowing the Oak Grove project to move forward is former Mayor Tom Pico, who has been standing on street corners where he used to wave to motorists in his political campaigns. A paid consultant to the Lin family and its Oak Grove project representatives, Pico now waves a "Do not Sign" banner instead. ■

SPECIAL NOTICE FROM PLEASANTON NATIONAL LITTLE LEAGUE REGARDING 12 YEAR OLD BASEBALL PLAYERS

Due to a recent change in the Little League Baseball regulations, all 12 year olds must be placed onto a Majors Division Team in 2008. Due to this change, the PNLL expects to add extra teams to the Majors Division. In order to ensure that all 12 year olds are placed on a Majors Team, the last day to register a 12 year old for next season is December 8th.

To register a player, please log onto www.sportability.com or www.pnll.info

In addition to completing the online registration, all 12 year old players must attend player evaluations. Player evaluations help ensure that all teams are equally balanced.

Major Division player evaluations are scheduled for December 1-2 and December 8-9 at the adult softball fields at the sports park. The scheduled evaluations times are:

Saturday 12/1 from 9 to 12
Sunday 12/2 from 2 to 4
Saturday 12/8 from 9 to 12
Sunday 12/9 from 9:30 to 11:30

Again, this notice applies to 12 year old players only. Please see the PNLL website for additional information on registration for all other player age divisions.

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Bank near mall robbed Friday

Around 1:12 p.m. Friday a man reportedly robbed a Washington Mutual Bank on Stoneridge Mall Road threatened to use a gun, although no weapon was seen.

[READ MORE/COMMENT](#)

TownSquare Forum

PLEASANTON WEEKLY
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Fire

(continued from page 5)

\$30,000. Fireman's Fund Insurance Company and UnionBanc Insurance Services (based in Hacienda Business Park) awarded LPFD with a \$19,000-grant through the Fireman's Fund Heritage program. The grant allowed for the purchase of the vehicle, while the rest of the funds needed was provided by the Livermore Police Department's asset seizure funds, Farmers Insurance in Pleasanton, Wal-Mart in Pleasanton and the California Refuse Removal Council.

"[The cart] will expedite the response time for reaching a citizen requiring medical attention during the many street fairs and special events held in our communities"

—Bill Cody, Fire Chief

Previously, Fire Chief Bill Cody said the department responded to event emergencies with EMTs (emergency medical technicians) lugging heavy backpacks on foot or depending on nearby fire stations to



Emily Atwood

The electric cart, which holds the gurney and medical equipment, will be used to provide emergency medical services to people at community events.

respond with trucks and ambulances like they would to a 911 call.

"[The cart] will expedite the response time for reaching a citizen requiring medical attention during the many street fairs and special events held in our communities," Cody said, adding that electric carts are easier to maintain and less expensive than a fire truck and ambulance.

A similar cart was used by the Alameda County at the fair this year and Cody added that the compact size and mobility of the unit would work better than a fire truck and ambulance in crowded events.

Vice Mayor Cindy McGovern and City Councilman Jerry Thorne were

on hand to share the city's appreciation of the vehicle and the department that serves the community. McGovern said since Pleasanton loves to close down Main Street to traffic and host events, this vehicle would be an asset in making sure attendees are safe.

A representative from the Fireman's Fund said they recognize the financial challenges departments face, which is why they've set up the Heritage program. Calling it an investment, the company has donated \$14.5 million to 480 departments, with \$4 million of that going towards California departments. ■

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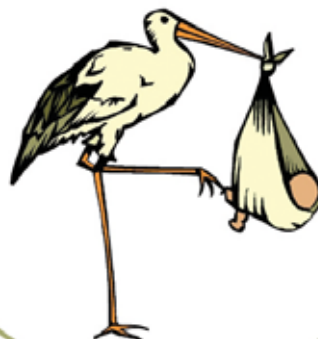
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(continued from page 5)

While trucks being limited to traveling via Livermore seemed to appease most residents who are concerned about already bad traffic conditions in the city, at least one resident who lives in Ruby Hill said it would adversely affect her neighborhood.

"(Highway) 84 is not a freeway, it's an expressway," she said. "It is always crowded in the morning."

Many were skeptical of how the city planned to enforce where trucks were coming and going from. Iserson said another condition of the project's approval would be a requirement that Regency Centers, the developer, would provide an on-site monitor who would check to make sure trucks are following protocol. A video surveillance camera will be installed to help monitor for compliance and Regency would also be required to fund the cost of one-half of a police officer, who among other duties, would patrol the shopping center for the first year of its operation.

One man questioned the viability of the officer being needed for only one year and suggested the city may find itself paying for enforcement out of its own pocket for years after that.

Iserson said the city's code enforcement team would also impose fines on violations of up to \$1,000 per year. ■

Hometown Holiday Celebration

Remembering Days Gone By

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6:30 PM - Tree Lighting Ceremony

Lighting of the newly-designed and decorated tree by Mayor Jennifer Hosterman
(Lawn area at the Museum on Main under the arch at Division Street)

Visit from a very special guest, Santa Claus

Sing-a-long around the Holiday Tree



New This Year! Toys for Tots Drive

U.S. Marines, Livermore-Pleasanton Firefighters and Firefighters Local 1974 will collect toys along the parade route, at the four stages, the parade formation area and at Division Street.



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ELVES BY GLORIA MATSUMOTO

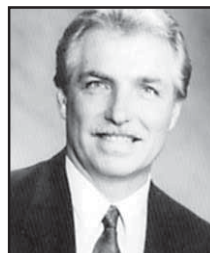
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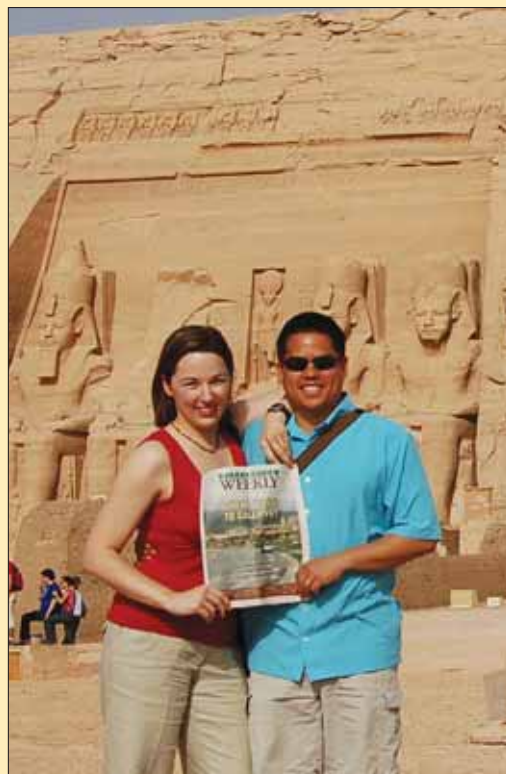


Mission: Philippines

While on a mission trip to the Philippines, Bob Wheeler took a piece of home with him on his travels. Here, he is pictured in front of Grace Church in Nazarene. Bob was part of a team that built classrooms for the church, located 40 miles south of Manila.

A Chip off the old Weekly

Pleasanton residents Katie, Jackie, Maddie, and Sam Dowden read the Weekly with Chip from the cartoon series "Chip 'N Dale" at the DisneyWorld Beach Club Resort on their spring break in Florida.



Read like an Egyptian

Jenny Mack and Patrick Markel of Pleasanton bring a copy of the Weekly to the temple of Ramses II in Abu Simbel, Egypt—in case he needed some reading material in the after life. Their trip also included a cruise down the Nile River and scuba diving in the Red Sea.



Some ice reading

After a strenuous ice climb to the summit of Mt. Rainier in Seattle, Wash., Bill Schall and Steve Bieszcza managed to read the Weekly by sunrise. How's that for lighting?

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SANTA CLAUS COMES TOMORROW

Main Street parade heralds season's
launch, downtown tree lighting

by Jeb Bing

Pleasanton kicks off its 35th annual Holiday Parade at 5:30 p.m. tomorrow on Main Street with an hour-long procession of 65 marching units, organizations, scouts, the famed Balloon Platoon, clowns and music provided by both Amador Valley and Foothill high school marching bands.

Local politicians also will join in the festive parade, one of the biggest and best-attended in downtown Pleasanton each year. Leading the group will be Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton) and his wife Mary, Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty and Mayor Jennifer Hosterman and the other four on the City Council—Cheryl Cook-Kallio, Cindy McGovern, Matt Sullivan and Jerry Thorne—riding in a horse-drawn carriage decorated for the holidays.

The star of the parade, riding atop a fire truck at the end, is Santa, himself. If you notice a special twinkle in the eyes of Jolly Old St. Nick when he looks down at you, it could be that you know each other.

This Santa has been in all the parades since they started in 1972. You'd no doubt recognize him without the beard. He's Frank Brandes, the city's mayor from 1979-1980 and 1985-1986, one of the longest-serving councilmen

ever during the years between 1976 and 1990, a retired executive of Sears Roebuck and also the longest-serving boys baseball coach, having Pleasanton Little League, Babe Ruth and Pony teams for the last 36 years. He's already gearing up for spring registration and play.

Brandes and his wife Judy moved to Pleasanton in 1971 just as the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce was talking about starting a Christmas parade. Having dressed as Santa to appear at selected friends' and neighbors' homes to bring toys and early Christmas greetings to their children, Brandes volunteered to serve as Santa in the 1972 inaugural parade. He had his own suit, won loud applause and thrilled hundreds of children along Main Street, and he's played the role ever since.

"There's no thrill greater than seeing the hope, expectations, happiness, excitement and love of the hundreds of kids who come up

and talk to me when I'm dressed as Santa," Brandes said. "It's a great feeling."

Brandes is concerned, however, by the growing popularity of the Pleasanton parade, which this year will stretch for more than a mile and last well over an hour. That's followed by another hour of caroling and greetings from a platform in front of the Museum On Main until Hosterman pulls a lever lighting the Holiday Tree. This year, with new lights and special ornaments carefully placed by volunteers from the city Parks and Community Services Department, the tree should be the most spectacular ever.

"When the parade started in 1972, it was just a small procession and ended quickly, so that no child had to wait long to see Santa," Brandes said. "Now it lasts over an hour and I can see from my high perch on the fire truck that some families have left before Santa passes by and a good number of the very young ones are fast

asleep."

"We need to consider this in planning future parades," he added. "Maybe Santa should lead off the parade or at least make an appearance half way through."

Have 5-year-olds changed over the 35 years Brandes has been greeting this age group, which is one most intently among the "believers?"

"Not really," Brandes said. "They're always full of enthusiasm and wonderment. They're still believers, but then so am I."

Brandes fields questions like the old pro that he is. Where are the reindeer? he's asked. Oh, they're down at the park where the fire truck picked me up. How do you get down the chimney if we don't have one? That's easy. Your parents just leave the back door open for me.

Once the parade's over, Brandes stays dressed to make neighborhood visits, which he'll do right up to Christmas Eve. ■



Look closely at the twinkling eyes of Jolly Old St. Nick and former mayor who has played the role of Santa Claus on a fire truck, will appear at the end of tomorrow's parade about 7 p.m. at the Museum On Main.



Holly Johnson

Old St. Nick and you might recognize Frank Brandes, longtime Pleasanton councilman of Santa for all 35 years of the city's downtown Holiday Parade. Brandes, riding atop row night's parade, which will be followed with the traditional tree lighting ceremony at



City of Pleasanton

Santa greets children inside the Museum On Main before and after the annual Holiday Parade, which kicks off at 5:30 p.m. tomorrow on Main Street, starting at Ray and the Pleasanton Hotel.

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Opinion

Editorial

Grassroots Staples agreement bodes well for us

Two grassroots citizens' groups that had differing views on how the 124-acre unincorporated Staples Ranch area should be developed have buried the hatchet and agreed to a joint strategy that bodes well for the project and serve Pleasanton. These groups announced their accord at a recent meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission where developers also outlined their plans for building on Staples. The acreage, located at the intersection of I-580 and El Charro Road, is owned by Alameda County which has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for selling 37 acres to the Hendrick Automotive Group for a new auto mall, 46 acres to Continuing Life Communities of Southern California, an independent and continuing care facility for seniors, and 11.3 acres to Fremont Land, a retail shopping center developer that plans to build and operate a complex of stores, restaurants and offices. The rest of the site will be used for parks, sport fields and possibly a four-rink ice skating/hockey facility that has been proposed by a subsidiary of the San Jose Sharks. All of Staples Ranch, under the plan agreed to with the county, would be annexed into Pleasanton.

This development plan, which is now proceeding smoothly, was threatened earlier by a group called Friends of Pleasanton, headed by Matt Morrison, Richard Pugh and others. Although not opposed to the auto mall, the Friends organization felt that plans for Continuing Life Communities and the Sharks facilities were moving too fast without adequate community-wide review. The group wanted the process slowed and more emphasis be placed on reserving a large part of Staples for open space and athletic fields. An initiative was launched to obtain enough signatures to put their concerns to a vote, a move that could have taken a year to complete and possibly caused the county to develop Staples itself or to ask Livermore or Dublin to annex the land. Although Staples is within the sphere of influence of Pleasanton, it's owned by the county which was unwilling to wait until November 2008 or beyond to sell of the parcels for needed county revenue.

To counter the efforts by Friends of Pleasanton, another citizens' group was formed, called Pleasanton First. Headed by former councilwoman Becky Dennis and businessman Dan Faustina, its strategy was to encourage registered voters in Pleasanton—those whose signatures would be required to put the Friends measure on the ballot—not to sign the petition. With backing by the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce and more than 100 business, civic and political leaders, including some from the City Council, it raised a war chest of thousands of dollars in pledges to block the initiative.

That's when the Friends and First groups looked across the table and saw that their interests in developing a viable, tax-revenue-generating Staples Ranch while also preserving much of it for parkland and open space were nearly identical. After several weeks of negotiation, the leaders from both groups hammered out a joint statement which Pugh and Faustina read together at the start of the joint Planning Commission-City Council workshop. With the council's concurrence, they agreed to allow the developments to go forward with the caveat that amenities such as sports fields, passive recreational areas and a community park site be subject to "a more comprehensive master planning process" and that all considerations of development, design and land use "be an open and transparent process involving the community at large."

For many in Pleasanton, this is the process our political leaders and government have always followed. But the heavy hand of Alameda County, coupled with an overly ambitious effort to get Staples projects underway, sent different signals to those who live near Staples Ranch and felt left out of the planning process. Their concerns were a good reminder that every part of town needs to be involved in land use and development considerations to make sure that any actions taken have a positive impact of the welfare of all those who live in Pleasanton.

Talking Points

by Gina Channell-Allen



When it comes to newspapers, time is of the essence

"I emailed the press release on Wednesday and it wasn't in the paper today. What happened? Isn't our event worthy of coverage?" writes an angry resident.

Occasionally, Weekly staffers will be approached by someone who has tried to get an event or other story in the paper and is incensed that it didn't make print. There are several reasons for this, including that the information got pulled to make room for a breaking story or we were missing pertinent information. Most often, though, it is a matter of time.

In addition to this being frustrating for the person submitting the information, it's frustrating for the staff. In a world where everything is immediate, it is difficult to remember that there are several steps in newspaper production between computer and mailbox. And all these steps take time.

The first time-consuming step is the layout of the publication. The production manager usually sizes

the paper according to the number of ads and places the ads or positions for the ads. (Yes, the ads go on the page before the stories.) After each story is written, it is edited and after every ad is produced it is proofed for things such as spelling errors and design flaws. The pages have to be designed and then the pages are proofed. Then the time-consuming part of the process ensues: the electronic pages are sent to the press, plates are made, and the paper is printed, folded and bundled. The papers are transported from the press and a majority goes to the post office, while a small portion goes to our office to be distributed to the boxes you see on the street.

All things considered, it's amazing that we can send the paper to the press on Wednesday and have it in your mailbox on Friday. And there are so many opportunities for the system to fail because we are reliant on so many outside factors and forces—the press and post

office, for example.

And then there are holidays. Not only do our employees want to enjoy holidays, presses close and the U.S. Postal Service doesn't deliver. So we have to adjust our schedule to accommodate their schedules.

A good rule of thumb, especially during the upcoming holiday season, is to get your information to the editors at least 10 days before you would like to see it in the newspaper. Two weeks is better.

And if you have any questions about the deadline schedule—or the holiday deadline schedule—call our office and we'll be able to help you.

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

Make an informed decision on Oak Grove

Dear Editor,

Pleasanton voters, beware! A group of disgruntled residents are out gathering signatures to subvert years of public planning for Pleasanton's newly approved 496-acre Oak Grove park. Don't be fooled—separate fact from fiction before signing any petitions.

Fact: If referended, the city will have to give back the 496-acre park. There will be no public access, no multi-use trails and no regional link connecting Shadow Cliffs with Callippe Preserve.

Fact: We lose the permanent open space along our southern border that Oak Grove affords. With no easement permanently protecting this open space, the door opens for future development and traffic, and puts more oak trees and streambeds back at risk.

Fact: Instead of 51 homes, the property reverts back to the 98 homes for which it's zoned.

Fact: We've got control of the home design process. In spite of the doctored photos you may have seen, no homes have yet been approved. In fact, the review process is similar to that of the homes at Kottinger Ranch, with the opportunity for public input on all 51 homes.

Fact: Four out of five City Councilmembers, the majority of our Planning Commission, almost all of our Parks and Recreation Commission, several of our school board members and many of our housing commissioners and Trails ad hoc committee members all strongly support this project. Why? Because it's an extraordinary deal for Pleasanton!

Please make an informed decision—decline to sign the petitions. If you've already signed and would

like to remove your name, visit www.keepourpark.org.

Eric "Otis" Nostrand, Pleasanton

Priest controversy involves 3 questions

Dear Editor,

The controversy over Fr. Greene can essentially be boiled down to three questions.

1) If, as some have suggested, no one's trying to hide anything, why did Fr. Patrick Green change his name to Pdraig Greene)?

2) Why didn't the bishop inform local parishioners about Greene's past (especially in light of repeated promises to be more 'open' about clergy sex crimes)?

3) The bottom line: Why take the risk of making him the pastor of two churches?

*David Clohessy
National Director, SNAP
Survivors Network of those
Abused by Priests
St. Louis, M.O.*

Show some respect for petition gatherers

Dear Editor,

Last Saturday, I collected signatures at the Farmer's Market for the Save Pleasanton's Hills petitions (www.savepleasantonhills.com).

The opposition tried hard to interfere by hovering nearby and shouting at prospective signers to "hear all the facts" before signing.

Regardless of how anyone might decide on this issue, tactics like those are offensive. I was especially disappointed to see a member of the current City Council leading the effort.

Anne Childs, Pleasanton

Corrections to guest opinion

Dear Editor,

Thank you to the Weekly for printing my guest opinion ("Sign

Oak Grove petition, give Pleasanton a voice," Nov. 23, page 17). I also appreciate the time you gave me to get it submitted. I have a few questions. First, why was Southeast Hills not capitalized through out my piece? Look at my piece and the General Plan and you will see that Southeast Hills is capitalized as the geographical name of this part of our ridges. For three references go to pages II-3, II-17 for the quote "Preserve scenic hillside and ridge views of the Pleasanton, Main, and Southeast Hills ridges," and X-2 where the quote "The Southeast Hills provide a major..." is stated. The General Plan recognizes this area as a valuable, major geographical section of our community.

I also noticed that in paragraph four it says 2 percent rather than the 25 percent slopes for grading. Please reference the attachment which is from the original email to the Weekly. The error of the 2 percent versus 25 percent significantly alters my guest opinion. Many people may get to this paragraph and think this is nothing to worry about and stop reading.

Lastly, I see the last sentence of my opinion was removed. I know that did get us down to the 500 words. Just wondered why it was left out as it was my way of introducing our Community of Character into the piece. I do not know if you rerun pieces with the errors corrected. Please let me know what we may do to correct the guest opinion.

Cindy McGovern, (Vice Mayor)

Referendum will cause loss of parkland

Dear Editor,

As a Trails Ad Hoc member and advocate, the Oak Grove project provides a unique opportunity to the residents of Pleasanton. Of the 562 acres, the property owner will dedicate 496 acres to the city of Pleasanton as open space parkland. In addition, the property owner will construct a regional trail along the entire eastern boundary, miles of Class A and Class C multi-use trails and a staging area. The amenities of the 11 stall staging area include a restroom, potable water, horse-trailer parking and a watering trough. The creation of this regional trail through Oak Grove will connect Callippe Preserve and Shadow Cliffs, which are vital components of the Pleasanton Master Trail Plan. It will allow access to all Pleasanton residents to enjoy this pristine open space.

The Oak Grove referendum will cause Pleasanton residents to lose this park and the public access. Please don't sign the petition. If you regret signing the petition, you can withdraw your name from the petition at www.keepourpark.org.

*Deborah Wahl
(Trails Ad Hoc Committee member)*

Extreme danger—fit to be fried?

Dear Editor,

When I read the article about frying a turkey, ("Fit to be fried," Living, Nov. 16, page 29), I was

shocked to read in the "Safety first" sidebar that a fire extinguisher and a hose were somehow equivalent when fighting a grease fire. Honestly, I can't think of a more explosive combination than water on a grease fire.

Calling 911, shutting off the heat to the grease (if you can do so safely), and expending that fire extinguisher all are good ideas. Another good idea would be for Pleasanton Weekly to interview a safety professional (for example, one of the skilled and experienced firefighters that serve our community) and publish an article on home safety during the holidays.

Steve Taylor, Pleasanton

Achievement possible with focus

Dear Editor,

Kristin McDeavitt, it was nice to read your article ("Having the homework blues," Guest Opinion, Oct. 26, page 18). You write very well, and I enjoyed reading about your experience.

You conclude, in part, that students "allow far too many distractions." Hold that thought forever. Distractions are forever, and they are always a choice.

If you were to ask everyone you respect or admire, whom they, in turn, respect or admire, everyone named will have this in common: they focused on the things for which they are now respected or admired.

People focus on different things at different times in their lives, but everyone who achieves anything does so because they have focused on it, for as long as necessary.

The insidious side is that "distractions" can also attract focus... your friends who focus on TV, cell phones, the Internet, or whatever else is "distracting" them, are probably very good at those "distractions," and getting better all the time. They know the latest TV show details, the fastest way to text message, the quickest way to add something to a Web page. The sad part is they are very likely unaware of how much their focus on those things has helped them become so expert.

You are right to experiment and verify things for yourself, to change your goals from time to time, to explore new things throughout your life. But no matter how you choose to spend your time, keep the results of your recent exercise in mind: no matter what you choose to pursue in life, you will only be successful in the areas you focus on, and you make those choices every day—forever.

Ralph Frey, Pleasanton

Council meeting Dec. 4 for Home Depot

Dear Editor,

Most people know intuitively that it does not make sense for Pleasanton to re-zone the property on Stanley/Bernal to allow the proposed Regency/Home Depot project. As we approach build out and remaining space is limited, we must ask ourselves, Do we really want a second Home Depot? The residents of Pleasanton overwhelmingly say No. Recent data shows the revenue

projections are a fraction of what was originally contemplated and the traffic and code enforcement issues are much more serious than were originally projected.

So many people think it's a done deal but it is not. I urge all Pleasanton residents to come to the City Council Meeting at 200 Old Bernal Ave. on Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. and to write to City Council at mlcampbell@ci.pleasanton.ca.us as soon as possible. I am certain our elected City Council Members and Mayor will act on the people's behalf but the people must speak up. Now is the time to say no to tractor-trailers in our neighborhoods and no to increased traffic in the worst traffic bottleneck in Pleasanton.

Heather E. Truro, Pleasanton

Sign referendum if you value small town

Dear Editor,

Many years ago when the lights came on at the "Hayward Hotel" atop Pleasanton's western hills it was too late to preserve a natural, unbroken ridgetop no matter how disconcerting the view became for many of us. The construction of one home was the single driving instigator for a community movement to preserve Pleasanton Ridge, but every time one looked where the western expanse met the night sky right in the middle was that streetlight and we couldn't do a thing about it.

A big thank you goes to Kay Ayala, Karla Brown-Belcher, and the many Pleasanton residents who are circulating both a referendum to allow all residents to decide whether the Oak Grove southern hilltop development is a good project and an initiative to amend Pleasanton's General Plan to prohibit large developments from building on hills with 25 percent-plus slopes or within 100 vertical feet of a ridgeline.

If you value the sense of a small-town Pleasanton nestled within our natural skyline of hills, please sign both the referendum and the initiative. It really doesn't do a whit of good to miss something after it's gone.

Matt Morrison, Pleasanton

Save Pleasanton's Hills using hyperbole tactics

Dear Editor,

Proponents behind the Save Pleasanton's Hills referendum are using hyperbole and misleading Photoshop renditions of homes they claim will be placed on our ridgelines in the southeast hills of Pleasanton. They are running out of time to gather signatures, so they're resorting to measures that omit the full truth about the Oak Grove project.

In contrast, KeepOurPark.Org encourages Pleasanton residents to be fully informed about Oak Grove, and to politely decline to sign any petition.

KeepOurPark.Org supports the many years of collaborative effort by our slow-growth City Council, the Oak Grove property owner, and the project's neighbors (i.e. Kottinger Ranch) in securing 496 acres of open space for a natural

(continued on page 19)



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Guest Opinion

Decisions should be based on evidence not emotion

by Cheryl Cook-Kallio
and Jerry Thorne

Have you been approached by people with clipboards asking if you want to save the hills? The sound bites are attractive. However, let's look at the facts.

We understand that at the most basic level a referendum allows the voters to weigh in. However, a referendum reverses the City Council's decision, a group elected by the voters to make these kinds of decisions, based on research and discussion over a long period of time.

Our concern is that voters end up making decisions on who has the best sound bite. The council is faced with defending a decision in five minutes or less, that took years on which to arrive. A consensus plan for this project was developed after four years of discussions with the city, developer, landowner, homeowner's association representatives, trails and open space advocates, the fire chief and city staff. It was a transparent process that included no less than nine public meetings/hearings, numerous planning commission meetings



and two six-hour council meetings. Councilmembers also received hundreds of emails and phone calls discussing the issue. This is a compromise based on a community dialogue that has taken place over the past four years.

It is difficult for the proponents of the referendum to replicate a four-year process in a few minutes of discussion with you and therefore easy to manipulate the facts. Everything the council maintains is public record. We want people to make decisions based on evidence.

Fact: This development reduces the number of homes from 98 to 51.

Fact: The city receives 496 acres of open space in perpetuity, a million dollars for traffic mitigation, 20 affordable housing units, a water tower and a fire engine.

In the general plan, the area is zoned for 98 homes. If the referendum passes, it will still be zoned for 98 homes. It does not mean the zoning goes away. It means this particular project goes away until replaced with a different proposal. The project only contains



lots, which include ratios. Not one home has been approved. Each home will be considered individually and must meet requirements including environmental concerns, visibility, and size. This is the most comprehensive development agreement that has ever been prepared in Pleasanton. All approvals will be subject to a full public hearing process if requested by any Planning Commissioner, councilmember or member of the public wishing to appeal the decision of the zoning administrator.

Pleasanton is well planned because decisions are made in a thoughtful, deliberative manner. The 496 acres of park is a piece of what we hope to be 2,000 acres of continual open space defining the southeast border of Pleasanton. The council stands by its decision. We are asking people not to sign the petition because not signing supports the transparent democratic process used in a representative democracy.

We work for you and would be happy to discuss any concerns or questions by email or phone.

Councilwoman Cheryl Cook-Kallio was elected to the Pleasanton City Council in 2006.

Councilman Jerry Thorne was reelected that same year, having been first elected to fill an unexpired one-year term in a special election in 2005.

Letters

(continued from page 18)

park in Pleasanton.

A few facts about this project:

- only lots, with many, many conditions, have been approved, each and every home will, individually, have to be brought to the city for approval

- this project has decreased the number of homes allowed from 98 to 51, which also decreases the amount of traffic in half as well. The property owner also agreed to pay one million dollars in traffic mitigation fees.

- this park will not cost the residents of Pleasanton a dime. Ever. The property owner is deeding the 496 acres to the city, will build the staging area and trails at their cost and pay the endowment to the Tri-Valley Conservancy. The Oak Grove HOA will cover all maintenance costs.

To become better informed, please visit KeepOurPark.Org, and join our many community leaders who have chosen not to sign away this great opportunity for everyone in Pleasanton.

Jerry Pentin, Pleasanton

Beware of the wolf in sheep's clothing

Dear Editor,

Please sign the initiative to Save the Hills and Protect the Housing

Cap, and the referendum to overturn the 51 mega-mansions of the Oak Grove development. Pleasanton voters should have the right to decide on any development that will affect our surrounding hills.

The story has played out over and over in surrounding cities: Developers spending tens of thousands of dollars on four-color mailers and marketing phone calls thinly disguised as "surveys" to convince regular citizens that our hills can be bought. Pleasanton was just given 1,500 acres of parkland near the Pleasanton Ridge with no strings attached. Why should the southeast hills have to be scarred with hillside homes? An initiative passed by voters in the early '90s protected our western ridge and this one can similarly protect the rest of the hills around our city.

1) The initiative will actually protect against the developer revisiting this property, unless the 10-home limit and less than 25 percent slope conditions are met. 2) These ballot measures will not give away parkland. They will actually protect our views without paying the price of development on the hills. 3) Voters in Livermore successfully kept 1,200 Livermore trails homes off their hills by a 72 percent margin. Aren't the voters of Pleasanton just as wise? 4) Why would anyone be afraid of the people's vote? Who is paying for the glossy ads and

the expensive signage against voter input...Charter Properties! (A wolf in sheep's clothing.)

*Michelle LaMarche
(PUSD Environmental Awareness
Committee Member)*

Exercise right to vote with referendum

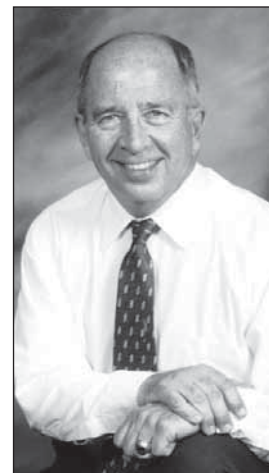
Dear Editor,

While at the Farmer's Market on Saturday, I saw our Mayor Hosterman and Councilman Sullivan asking our citizens not to sign the referendum against the Oak Grove development. Were these the same people that told us how strongly they support the referendum process at the Nov. 6 City Council meeting? I guess when they heard how many people are signing the referendum, they decided that this process wasn't so great.

Could these be the same people who complain about how the federal government is not listening to the will of its citizens? It seems like they don't want to hear the will of Pleasanton's voters in an open election. Let's all exercise our right to have a vote on the Oak Grove development by signing the referendum to put this choice on the ballot. The developer is spending thousands and thousands of dollars to try to suppress this right. All we ask is for all the people to have a vote.

Bill Rasnick, Pleasanton

(continued on page 20)



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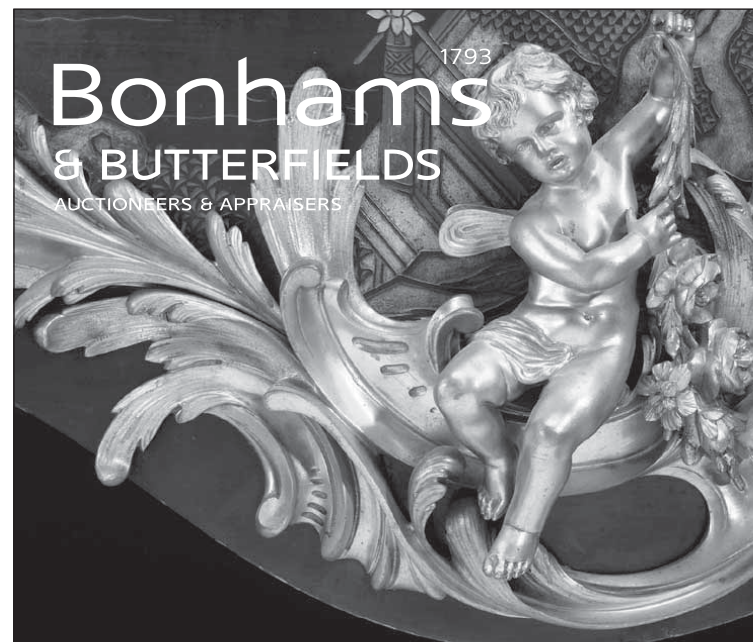
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Letters

(continued from page 19)

Opposition doesn't trust Pleasanton voters

Dear Editor,

Why all the scare tactics, misinformation and harassment of signature collectors by the hill initiative opposition (not to mention the expensive mailers by the Oak Grove developer)? Signing these initiatives does nothing but place these important items on the ballot for voters to decide on our hillsides. Seems they don't trust Pleasanton voters to make an informed decision that just might differ from their own views.

Editorials about Oak Grove by Mayor Hosterman and Councilman Sullivan state, "The plan then went through the normal Planning Commission and City Council public review process..."

The plan did not go through the normal process. In fact, the 51-unit plan that moved forward was the result of closed-door meetings held with many of those listed as opposing the referendum; the public was not invited and the Planning Commission was not involved. Afterwards, the Planning Commission repeatedly identified areas of concern in the EIR that were never addressed; so the Planning Commission majority voted against EIR certification and never even addressed the PUD or development agreement.

The article continued, "For the units potentially most visible from the valley floor, one-story limits, reduction in size..." Only three homes are restricted to a single story and only seven homes are held under 8,000 square feet.

The Save Pleasanton's Hills group is not some small group of disgruntled neighbors, but a grassroots organization from throughout Pleasanton concerned about pre-

serving our remaining hillsides. Please join us by signing both the initiative and referendum and let the voters be heard.

*Greg O'Connor
(Planning Commissioner)*

Put hillside initiatives to a vote

Dear Editor,

There is a lot of misinformation being written about the Save Pleasanton's Hills initiative and the Oak Grove referendum. For instance, a letter to the editor written by Becky Dennis states that reversing the Oak Grove development will "increase the number of units permitted from 51 to 98." This is not true; there is no vested entitlement to homes on this property. Any new development proposal would need to follow the normal process; and if the hillside initiative is passed by the voters, the developer would need to adhere to that ordinance and refrain from building within 100 feet of the ridgeline or grading any hillsides steeper than 25 percent slope. Period.

The Pleasanton 1996 General Plan also states "Preserve scenic hillside and ridge views of the Pleasanton, Main and southeast hills ridges" by developing a ridgeline and hillside preservation ordinance; such an ordinance has never been put in place during the last 11 years by our City Council. If such an ordinance had been enacted, the Oak Grove development would not have been approved as proposed. This is our opportunity to create such an ordinance before the remaining hillsides in Pleasanton are developed. The Save Pleasanton's Hills and Housing Cap group merely wants to put this ordinance and referendum in front of the voters for their input. Please sign both the hillside initiative and the Oak Grove referendum so the voters of Pleasanton can decide

Janet Winter, Pleasanton

To sign or not to sign?

Dear Editor,

To sign or not to sign; that is the question facing many Pleasanton residents as they encounter both proponents and opponents of the Oak Grove development planned for the southeast hills of Pleasanton. Those in support of the City Council's decision to allow the project to go forward cite the vast acreage that will be set aside for hiking, should the project proceed. Those who agree with the Planning Commission's decision to reject the project question the benefit to Pleasanton of homes up to 12,500 square feet on the ridgelines to the south of town, and rightfully point to the beauty of our protected Pleasanton Ridge to the west as the appropriate model for the remainder of our attractive surrounding hills.

As a Pleasanton resident, you may be justifiably confused by conflicting and incomplete information on the topic (including letters to the editor here) and may not yet have decided one way or the other.

The referendum petition will bring this project to a vote of the people, and the accompanying initiative will allow you to decide if you would like our ridges permanently protected from hilltop mansions overlooking town. Your signature will only allow the matter to be put to a vote, as it should be. You will then have the time to make an informed decision at the ballot box. Don't let the developer and their friends on the council decide for you; help us bring these issues to a vote.

Please empower your right to decide by signing the referendum and initiative petitions.

Bob Grove, Pleasanton

Don't trade ridgetops for dirt trail

Dear Editor,

Are you willing to trade Pleasanton's pristine ridgetops for

a 1 1/2-mile dirt trail? Four City Council members are. Help us put this to a vote of the people in 2008.

Oak Grove is not good growth. Through grading, our ridges will be reduced 32-, 38-, and in some places 43 vertical feet sliced off of the top, followed by mega-mansion construction on what is left. These ridges plus 1,000 trees will be gone forever.

All for 1 1/2 miles of dirt trails that go from one side of this land to the other, connecting to nothing to nothing yet.

The council plans to trade off ridgelines to gain dirt trails on the very edge of town. Not a "park." No playground, no soccer, no tennis, no lacrosse, nothing but a dirt trail.

What will the next link in their "chain of trails" ask us give away? I say "no more."

Sign the referendum and initiative to put these decisions in the hands of the voters of Pleasanton. Go to www.SavePleasantonHills.com and sign today. We need 3,500 signatures by Dec. 5 to put this on the ballot just so we can all vote. Help protect these hillsides for our children and the character of our charming town.

*Karla Brown
Co-author of the Save Pleasanton's Hills*

Elected officials should be silent, not residents

Dear Editor,

The elected members of the City Council that are telling residents "Don't Sign the Petition" are telling us to remain silent. They want us to ignore our rights to have a voice. To see the mayor and a former mayor out on the street corners holding up signs telling us that is pathetic. How sad that they want us to accept their view without knowing all the facts.

"Save our Parks" is their rally cry. How can you save something that we don't have? Is this so-called park already a Pleasanton park? No. Is it a park they are interested in or all the homes they want to build on the ridge? I noticed that on their fliers and maps they show how the land looks now: open land, trees, rolling hills. Why don't they show what the hills will look like with all the homes built on them? One bit of information they are leaving out is East Bay Regional Parks is against building on the ridge in the way the city council wants it. For me, the fact that elected and former elected officials are telling us to remain silent is far worse than the issue of building or not building.

If the voice of the people that put you in office is asked to be silent, I think it's time you reconsider what you are doing as elected officials. Pleasanton politics should be free of anyone telling the residents to remain silent. Maybe it's time that if any elected official that wants us to be silent, they themselves should be silent by stepping down.

*Brad Zetterlund,
Pleasanton*

Fr. Greene offers loving guidance, professionalism

Dear Editor,

During the hard times, you find out who you can truly count on. After losing my son in July 2003, I found myself so completely lost in despair. Father Padraig Greene was introduced by a young teenager who shared that Father Greene had been such a great comfort. Father Greene has been my single most inspirational healer. His guidance and wisdom taught me how to face a loss I could never have imagined, and his workshops gently and purposefully allowed me to find my path again. Father

(continued on page 21)

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Letters

(continued from page 20)

Greene continues to help heal the hole in my heart and his powerful guidance has been instrumental in the surrounding parishes in the Tri-Valley, Pleasant Hill, and Fremont.

Father Greene has offered only loving guidance and professionalism within this close knit community. The innuendoes and gossip do not represent the man who stands before us today. His work in the grievance ministry has made a positive and profound impact to those fortunate to have been his pupils and parishioners. I speak from an outside vantage, as I am not a parishioner, but am so grateful Father Greene welcomed me into his fold without prejudice as his ministry is provided to all faiths. His strength and virtue have been ever-present in the four years that I am honored to have worked under his tutelage.

I strongly support his moral fortitude and am so saddened to see a group who seeks to disparage this wonderful man of God.

Valarie Gordon, Pleasanton

We are all sinners

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter in response to the negative responses of Father Greene and his remorseful act. I am 29 years old; I am a catechist to the second grade at St. Augustine and hold God as No. 1. Before any of you accuse Father Greene as a sinner, let's first look at our lives. Have we ever sinned before? Told a lie to our loved ones, thought inappropriate thoughts, masturbated, parked illegally, talked behind someone's back? Have we ever once thought about our lives being absolutely perfect the way God wanted us to be?

If the answer is yes, then let's get out of our dream world because that doesn't exist.

That's why God lets us repent for our sins. Father Greene is human just the way you and I are. He did an act that you and I would never do in public, but probably have done behind closed doors; maybe. Who cares? Father Dan has been my role model since I was a little girl. I put my complete faith in him, and all of you who grew up in Pleasanton and who was a parishioner of Father Dan, will know exactly what I mean.

Karissa Kernan, Pleasanton

Democracy works both ways

Dear Editor,

With other dedicated citizen environmentalists, I jumped into the planning of the Oak Grove Project to protect public interests and fulfill the vision of a mega-park on the southeast hills. We wanted the best for Pleasanton and were willing to give of our time and energy to help shape the project. We read EIRs, studied countless reports, attended stakeholder and public meetings and provided input to assure public needs were met and the valuable and fragile resource protected.

Now it appears that since we are

opposing the initiative to protect that hard work and the project we believe the best possible for the land, we are accused by the initiative promoters of being less than democratic. What could be more democratic than participating in a public process and working to protect the resulting project? The initiative promoters forget democracy works both ways—they are free to propose an initiative, others are free to oppose.

What was the result of that two year democratic community process? Mega-concessions were garnered from the developer: the number of homes reduced from 98 to 51; 496 acres of open space lands dedicated to the city and protected in perpetuity by a conservation easement; the developer agreed to construct and dedicate the trail system and public staging area.

For more information please visit www.keepourpark.org.

How can you join me and other open space advocates save our park? Easy, just don't sign the initiative petition.

Dolores Bengtson, Pleasanton

Brozosky doesn't understand democracy

Dear Editor,

Read the following and then decide for yourself how well this former councilman understands democracy.

Mr. Brozosky states:

"...aggressive actions by groups to stop people from signing initiatives..."

I thought democracy was symmetric. Is not each group just exercising its rights under our constitution? The use of the words "aggressive" and "stop" is nonsense.

"Why would they not want to have these items qualify for the ballot?" There can be many very valid reasons. In fact, if you read and listen to what 'they' say, you will learn them. They want the original council decision to go forward on a timely basis.

"Do they think that the community is not educated enough to make an informed decision? Putting information before potential signees of the initiative is enabling them to make an informed decision. What makes anyone think that 'they' don't trust the voter just because they want to put their information out?"

"... please respect the rights of others to practice democracy and collect signatures." Simply, this is an unfair accusation. It implies that if anyone publicly opposes the signing of an initiative, they are therefore disrespecting the rights of others and are opposed to democracy.

If there is going to be increasingly the use by small groups of the initiative or referendum process to try to upset elected government's decisions, then there are going to be counter-groups that arise in response. That's democracy. Mr. Brozosky needs to enlarge his understanding of democracy.

Frank Doljack, Pleasanton

Support keepourparks.org

Dear Editor,

I cannot be a citizen who would deny a 496-acre park to Pleasanton residents. Therefore, I urge all my

neighbors to support www.keepourpark.org and not sign any petition, which would negate the approved Oak Grove development agreement. Well done to city staff, four of five of our council, the Kottinger HOA and the property owner. This is a deeded gift to the city, monetary mitigations are in place from the owner, who will build trails and staging areas, and no homes will be constructed without planning approval.

Having read the ads and letters in the Weekly lately, this seems just like a normal election period. Pertinent information is there for all to consider and make an early decision. Not all issues or candidates make it to a ballot, or should. Those opposing the Oak Grove petitions are exercising grassroots democracy, not subverting a vote. I also sincerely trust that the facts of this issue will prevail over the emotional rhetoric.

What plan do the anti-Oak Grove petitioners have for the property? There seems to be no alternative outlined, except that the 496-acre urban park and trails would be denied to our citizens, as well as the permanent protection of our southern greenbelt.

Neighbors, the Oak Grove agreement is to benefit, the petitions are not, please don't sign.

Gerry Brunken, Pleasanton

Environmental, aesthetic impacts for Oak Grove

Dear Editor,

Are you a Pleasanton resident that loves the scenic beauty of the Pleasanton ridges? The western Pleasanton Ridge has been protected by a 1993 voter-approved ordinance, Measure F. The southeast hills are not protected.

A 51 housing unit project has been approved in these hills and they will be built on the ridgelines off of Hearst Drive. These houses have been approved at up to 12,500 square feet with an additional 800-square-foot garage. That is up to 13,300 square feet for the house and garage without counting pools, patios, and landscaping. Imagine what 51 houses of this size would look like on top of a ridge.

Some argue that landowners have the right to develop their privately-owned land. Yes, but the environmental impacts and aesthetics need to be considered. Why can't the developer build below the ridges? The trails could be on the ridge tops. Why won't the developer do this? It would cost the developer more money.

This area is the visual backdrop when looking south from our new Bernal Park. Let's preserve the beauty of Pleasanton for future

generations.

Please give Pleasanton residents the voice in what happens to our southeast hills by signing the Save our Hills Initiative and the Oak Grove Referendum.

Valerie Arkin, Pleasanton

Say no to Home Depot Dec. 4

Dear Editor,

There have been studies, meetings, workshops, and even a preliminary vote regarding the proposed Home Depot/Regency Center development at the corner of Stanley, Valley and Bernal. It seems that our City Council is in favor of this project. However, no final decision has yet been made by our city council.

A Home Depot will generate more traffic, more noise and more problems for the city than their small revenue stream can justify. A big box store, three miles away from the nearest freeway, makes no sense. Imagine the delivery trucks traveling between the current Home Depot store and the proposed location. Trucks are allowed to use the most direct route, which will give them several options to get from the northwest corner of the city to the southeast. Many other issues

(continued on page 22)

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Letters

(continued from page 21)

have been raised, so that one wonders how the council could support this project. This is the wrong project for this location.

Our council needs to hear from the people. On Dec. 4, at 7 p.m., our City Council will again meet to hear from the community on whether or not the Home Depot/Regency Center would be good for Pleasanton. This is our last chance to speak out. Please attend the meeting, prepared to state your reasons for opposing this proj-

ect. Write to the council. Talk to your neighbors. Let your voice be heard. Just say no to Home Depot.

Jennifer Rieble, Pleasanton

Oak Grove development is a fire risk

Dear Editor,

How many homes will have to be lost before we learn from our mistake? The fires in Southern California continue. More and more property is being burned in hillside developments with the steep terrain common to our southeast hills.

The City Council has just approved another hillside development on top of the ridge of these hills. A mile of roadway is to be constructed with several cul-de-sacs that will "cluster" the 51 mega-mansion residential units. The only ingress and egress out of this development for the "new" residents is Hearst Drive even though the development does not meet the standard five-minute response time of our fire department. There are two earthquake faults within three miles of the development. Does this make sense? Why develop in such risky areas? Is it just the multi-million dollar

views? Stop this type of development and sign the two petitions to keep development off the top of our steep ridgelines.

Leslie Coonan, Pleasanton

Former Mayor Pico behind Oak Grove

Dear Editor,

When will our local newspapers fully disclose that our slow growth former Mayor Tom Pico has been and is still working as a consultant for both the Oak Grove project (51 mega-mansions on the ridgetop) and the project recently approved by a 3-2 vote of the Planning

Commission which allows a 16,000-square-foot house and accessory buildings project in the southeast hills.

When you see former Mayor Pico on the street corner waving and asking you not to sign a referendum and the hillside preservation ordinance, he is at work. Pleasanton residents have a right to vote on these issues.

Betsy Everett, Pleasanton

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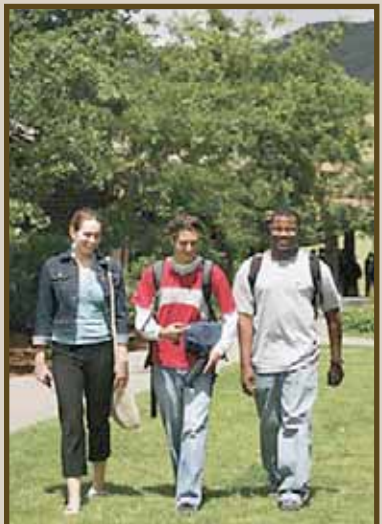
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Calendar

Auditions

Auditions for Iron Curtain Las Positas College will hold auditions for "Iron Curtain," a new musical comedy, from 7 to 10 p.m. Dec. 3-4. There are principal and ensemble roles for singers, actors and dancers. Performance dates are April 3-20 with rehearsals Monday through Thursday nights. Call 424-1166.

Book Clubs

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

Civic Meetings

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

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

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

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

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

School Board The Pleasanton Unified School District Board meets

at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday monthly in the district office board room, 4665 Bernal Ave.

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

Classes

Basic Yoga Class Every Monday at 6:30 p.m. Beth Fox, certified yoga instructor, will teach a yoga basics class in Lynnewood United Methodist Church's multipurpose room, 4444 Black Ave. The class is \$12, open to the public and is appropriate for all levels of experience. Call 846-0221 or visit www.lynnnewood.org.

Clubs

Boutique Textile Art Create home accessories, wearable art or soft sculpture. Learn how to piece, applique and embroider ideas into art from 10 a.m. to noon every Tuesday at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Class is free. Bring fabric scraps, a yard of unbleached muslin, sharp scissors and dressmaker pins.

Daughters of the British Empire Come for a friendly "cuppa" and a chat with your sister Brits in the local chapter of the Daughters of the British Empire. Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month in Pleasanton. Call 875-0828 or 494-1273. Visit www.dbenca.org or www.dbesociety.org.

eBig Startups/VC SIG Holiday Party Please join us at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 10 for this year end gathering and celebration at Randick O'Dea & Tooliatos, 5000 Hopyard Rd., Suite 400. It's free for eBig Members and \$11.50 for pre-registered non-members. Visit www.ebig.org.

Everything Poetry This poetry work-group meets from 9 to 11 a.m.

the first Saturday of the month to critique poetry and the third Saturday for a workshop pertaining to an aspect of poetry business at Towne Center Books, 555 Main St. Bring 10 copies of a poem.

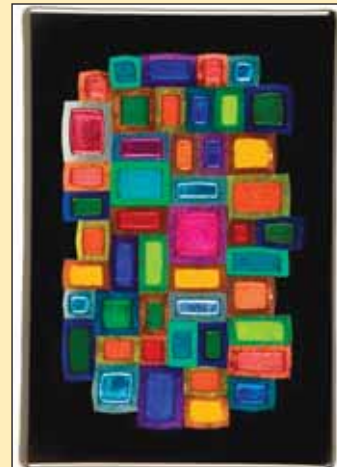
Livermore Amador Valley Garden Club The December Meeting of the Livermore Amador Valley Garden Club will take place at 7 p.m. Dec. 4 Alisal School's multipurpose room, 1454 Santa Rita Road. The speaker will be Rose Level from Morningstar Star Farms in Sacramento. Her topic will be Herbs and Gifts from the Garden. Call Sally, 417-8809.

Local Writers Meet for Support and Learning The California Writers Club Tri-Valley branch meets the at 11:30 a.m. the third Saturday of each month at Oasis Grill, 780 Main St., to support experienced and aspiring writers in learning about their craft and sharing their work. Anyone who is curious about the group is invited to attend with no obligation to join. Call Kathy Urban, 296-0447 or visit www.trivalleywriters.com.

MOPS—Mothers Of Pre Schoolers If you have a child/children from birth-6 years old, come join us and be refreshed, equipped and encouraged. MOPS meets from 9 to 11 a.m. the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month through May 2008 at 4 Circle E Ranch Place, San Ramon. Enjoy breakfast, crafts and speakers. The cost is \$20 for the remaining semester. Call Silvia, 560-1411.

NARFE The Livermore Chapter 0397 of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association meets at 12:30 p.m. the second Thursday monthly at

Weekend Preview



Colors!

Works by Judy Seidel and Jane Tivol are a part of Colors! the exhibit running through Dec. 29 at Worthington Gallery West, 739 Main St. Seidel works with acrylic paint on hot-pressed watercolor paper where the surfaces have worn away to reveal a colorful core. Tivol Studios presents shimmering glass pieces called diachronic glass. The multi-layer coating is created by melting quartz crystal and metal oxides.

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Calendar

Emil Villa's Restaurant at the corner of Pacific and S. Livermore avenues in Livermore. Call 484-0813 or 846-7167.

Porsche Club of America, Diablo Region This club is for owners and enthusiasts of all Porsches. It meets at 8 a.m. every Saturday for breakfast at Marie Calendar's 1101 S. California Blvd., Walnut Creek and at 6:30 p.m. the third Thursday of each month at Strizzi's 3456 Camino Tassajara, Danville. Visit www.pca.org/dia.

Retired Public Employees' Association Christmas Party The Retired Public Employees' Association, Tri-Valley Chapter 075, is having a Christmas Party at 10:45 a.m. Dec. 6 at Emil Villa's, 3054 Pacific Ave., Livermore. The cost is \$5 per person. There will also be a Christmas ornament exchange (no more than \$10). For more information or to reserve your spot, call Bob at 845-6563 or June at 461-0315.

Toastmasters Pleasanton Community Toastmasters holds meetings Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center, 4530 Sandalwood Drive. Learn the art of public speaking in a fun-filled supportive environment. Call Bobbi at 846-8654 or visit pleasantontoastmasters.com.

Tri-Valley Democratic Club Dinner Party The public is invited to the Tri Valley Democratic Club meeting and potluck seasonal party at 7 p.m. Dec. 10 at IBEW 595 Hall, 6250 Village Pkwy., Dublin. Meet local political figures and candidates. Please bring cans for the food bank. Bring main dishes, appetizers, drinks, desserts to share and a party attitude. Free admission, wheelchair accessible. Call Ellis, 831-8355, or visit www.trivalleydems.com.

Tri-Valley Holistic Moms Network The group will be discussing Conscious Cleaning Choices from 7 to 9 p.m. Sept. 17 at CrossWinds Church, 6444 Sierra Court, Dublin. Meetings are held on the third Monday of the month at the same time & location. Dads and children are welcome. See www.holisticmoms.org.

Tri-Valley Homebrewing Club Want to meet other brewers and advance your brewing techniques? Mad Zymurgists of the Tri-Valley meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. the second Thursday of each month. We welcome brewers of all levels of expertise, and have sponsorship from Hoptech in Dublin. See www.madzymurgists.org for more info and location of the next meeting.

Tri-Valley Wood Carvers Tri-Valley Wood Carvers meet each Tuesday at

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

TwinValley Mothers of Twins Meeting Join us for our monthly Twin Valley Mother of Twins meeting, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month at John Knox Presbyterian Church, 7421 Amarillo Road, Dublin. Membership is a mix of residents in and surrounding San Ramon/Dublin/Pleasanton. Our goal is to provide support, information and friendship to Mothers of Multiples. Roundtable question and answer time is at 6:30 p.m.; dads are encouraged to attend the roundtable. Call DeAnna at 948-0004 or visit www.tvmtoc.com.

Concerts

Pianist Jon Nakamatsu Del Valle Fine Arts concert series presents pianist Jon Nakamatsu at 8 p.m. Dec. 8 at Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Tickets are \$29, \$24 and \$19. They can be purchased from the LVPAC box office (373-6800) from noon to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday or online at www.livermoreperformingarts.org. Visit www.delvallefinearts.org for concert information.

Valley Concert Choral Performs Annual Holiday Concert Holiday music and audience sing-a-long of traditional carols will be performed by the Valley Concert Choral at 8 p.m. Dec. 8 at First Presbyterian Church, 4th and L streets, Livermore. Tickets are \$18 in advance or \$20 at the door. Students age 18 and under are free. Visit www.valleyconcertchorale.org.

Valley Concert Choral Performs Annual Holiday Concerts Holiday music and audience sing-a-long of traditional carols will be performed by the Valley Concert Choral at 8 p.m. Dec. 8 at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1225 Hopyard Road. Tickets are \$18 in advance or \$20 at the door. Students age 18 and under are free. Visit www.valleyconcertchorale.org.

Events

Havdalah at Beth Emek
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Pet of the Week



Catherine Hansen Rush

Meet Santa!

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Has your pet met Santa yet? This loving, 3-year-old neutered male housecat named Darryl is dressed and ready for this weekend's Santa and Pet photo event at Alden Lane Nursery, 981 Alden Lane in Livermore. The photo event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 1-2. All pets are welcome (dogs on leash and cats in carriers please). Two holiday photos cost \$20 and the proceeds benefit Valley Humane Society. Darryl is available for adoption at the East County Animal Shelter, 4595 Gleason Drive in Dublin, open daily 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call 803-7040. Darryl is very friendly and loves everyone he meets. He is an indoor-only pet but we bet he's willing to venture out to meet with Santa!

p.m. Dec. 1. Hear Dr. Ra'anah Gissin, former senior advisor to Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, speak on "Israel and its Neighbors—Where Do We Go From Here?" Call 462-7279.

Monthly CGA Gymkhana Bring yourself and your horse to the CGA Gymkhana, a timed obstacle racing on horseback, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. the first Saturday of every month at Robertson Park, 3476 Robertson Park Road, Livermore. Family fun for all ages, riding abilities and riding disciplines. Ribbons and prizes are awarded. Everyone is welcome. There is a \$35 entry fee for all events. Email shasta1987@hotmail.com.

Exhibits

LPC Paints Pets Las Positas College art students will stage an exhibit—"LPC Paints Pets: A Holiday Show of Loved Ones"—from Nov. 3 to Dec. 7 at the Tri-Valley SPCA Galley, 4651 Gleason Dr., Dublin. Reception will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. Nov. 16. Email choffman@east-bayspca.org. Animal paintings by students of Bill Paskewitz.

Recent Works By Linda Ryan An exhibition of new works by Livermore abstract figurative artist Linda Ryan will be on display from Nov. 13 through Dec. 8 at artspace contemporary fine arts & crafts gallery, 133 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore. Ryan's work combines an exploration of energy, motion and the figure. Visit www.artspace-gallery.com.

Film

Romantico This documentary is a "beautifully realized, subtly-hued, and bittersweet portrait of family, fatherhood, identity, and survival" through the eyes of Mariachi musicians, Carmelo and Arturo. It will be shown at 7 p.m. Dec. 8 at IBEW Hall, 6250 Village Pkwy., Dublin. Meet & greet starts at 6:30 p.m., refreshments are served, and event is wheelchair accessible. All are welcome. A \$3 donation is suggested.

Fundraisers

16th Annual Valley Humane Society Santa & Pet Photo Begin

the holiday with great pictures of your pets, big and small, with Santa from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 1-2 at Alden Lane Nursery, 981 Alden Lane, Livermore. The event goes on even with light rain. All pets are welcome but must be on a leash or in a carrier. The cost is \$20 for two photos of one pet. Proceeds benefit the Valley Humane Society. Call 426-8656 or visit www.valleyhumane.org.

3rd Annual Holiday Tea and Fashion Show Enjoy this holiday event from noon to 3 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Museum On Main Street, 603 Main St. All ages are invited to this high tea party and elegant fashion show from downtown Pleasanton shops. Guests are encouraged to dress up in period clothing or hats, but it is not required. Tickets are \$25 for museum members and \$30 for non-members. Call 462-2766 or visit www.museumonmain.org.

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

Holiday Fundraiser for the Arts Special holiday card designs by Sue Evans have been created for Pleasanton and Livermore. Each box sold will raise \$2-4 for the Pleasanton Firehouse Arts Center or the Performing Arts Center in Livermore. Call 989-4113.

Shepherds Gate and TVAR Annual Holiday Fundraiser From 4 to 7 p.m. Nov. 30 at Tucker Associates Annual Fundraiser, 4185 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville, we will be collecting donations and donated items for Shepherd's Gate and Tri-Valley Animal Rescue. Animals will be available for adoption. Enjoy food, wine, live music, prize giveaways, and a holiday boutique with proceeds benefiting both charities. Call 580-2777.

Sole Mates BasicNecessities.org is accepting donations of gently used or new shoes in children's sizes K8-K12, or financial donations. This holiday season we will be providing shoes and socks to needy children in three K-5 Livermore schools. Call 858-5382 or visit www.BasicNecessities.org.

The Mother Bear Project Knit This, Purl That owner Beth Spisak has a goal of sending 100 teddy bears to needy children by December. She seeks knitters and crocheters who want to participate by purchasing an inexpensive pattern from The Mother Bear Project and completing a bear by December. Call 249-9276 or visit www.yourknittingplace.com.

Toys 4 Tots Drive Dinner My Way has started collecting toys for the Toys 4 Tots drive. Anyone can drop off new and unwrapped toys at 1989 Santa Rita Road in Mission Plaza. Call 485-4286.

Health

Free Classes in Holistic Health In December the World School of Massage, 699 Peters Ave., will offer three free seminars for the public: Lymphatic Breast Health from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Dec. 5; Body Intelligence: Talking to Your Body to Reduce Stress from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Dec. 6, and Health and Foot Freedom from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Dec. 13. Visit www.world-schoolmassage.com.

Holiday

Artisan Affaire The Artisan Affaire and Holiday Boutique will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 2 at Veterans Memorial Hall, 301 Main St. Fabulous Artisans from all over California feature beautiful, exotic gifts for friends and family alike. Visit www.artisanaffaire.com.

Breakfast with Santa Santa is coming to the Dublin Senior Center, 7600 Amador Valley Blvd., Dec. 8. The first sitting is at 8:30 a.m. (activity no. 16702) and the second at 10 a.m. (activity no. 16703). The cost is \$5 for residents or \$6 for non-residents. Proceeds benefit the Dublin High School Irish Guard Band. Register online at www.dublinrecguide.com.

Cantabella Children's Chorus Winter Concert Cantabella Children's Chorus presents it's annual winter concert "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," at 2 p.m. Dec. 8 at Valley Community Church, 4455 Del Valle Pkwy. Ring in the season with the beautiful sounds of children voices singing holiday songs. Tickets are \$10. Call 292-2663 or visit www.cantabella.org.

Donlon Elementary School Holiday Boutique Come with your holiday shopping list and visit representatives from various direct sales companies as well as hand crafters at the Donlon Elementary School Holiday Boutique. It will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 1 at the school, 4150 Dorman Ave. Raffle tickets and food available for purchase.

Family Chanukah Party Tri-Valley Cultural Jews, a Secular Humanistic Jewish Community, is sponsoring a family Chanukah party at 10:30 a.m. Dec. 9 at the Bothwell Center, 2466 Eighth St., Livermore. We'll cook and eat latkes, play games, and light candles. Free to members, \$10 per household for non-members. Call Judith, 485-1049.

Holiday Art & Craft Sale An art and craft sale benefiting Building Futures with Women and Children and Interfaith Homeless Network will be held from noon to 7 p.m. Nov. 30 and 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dec. 1 at Creekside Church, 951 MacArthur Blvd., San Leandro. Call 510-430-0607. Free admission; Free admission. Full-size bottle of shampoo or conditioner donation suggested.

Holiday Boutique Artisan Affaire and Holiday Boutique will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Veteran's Memorial Hall, 301 Main St. Partial raffle proceeds will be donated to UCSF Comprehensive Cancer Center. Visit www.artisanaffaire.com.

Holiday Food Drive Pleasanton CPA firm JL Consulting is coordinating a holiday food drive benefiting people in

need served by the Alameda County Community Food Bank. Donations of nutritious and non-perishable foods can be dropped off at 1021 Serpentine Lane, Ste. 105 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday until Dec. 17. Call 846-1859.

Holiday Food Drive Pleasanton CPA firm JL Consulting is coordinating a holiday food drive benefiting people in need served by the Alameda County Community Food Bank. Donations of nutritious and non-perishable foods can be dropped off at 1021 Serpentine Lane, Ste. 105 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday until Dec. 17. Call 846-1859.

Holiday Open House The public is invited to the Livermore Art Association Gallery's annual holiday reception from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Dec. 1

at Carnegie Bldg., 2155 Third Street, Livermore. This year the Livermore Heritage Guild will have their Open House simultaneously. Meet the LAA Gallery members and shop for holiday gifts. Refreshments will be served at this free event. Call 449-9927.

Holiday Workshop The city of Dublin hosts a holiday workshop from 2 to 4 p.m. Dec. 1 at the Dublin Heritage Center, 6600 Donlon Way. It will feature music, crafts and foods for a \$3 admission.

Holidays in the Vineyards The Annual Livermore Valley Wine Country tradition, Holidays in the Vineyards, celebrates the season from noon to 5 p.m. Dec. 1-2. Thirty-nine wineries present special wines, music, arts and crafts, gifts, prize raffles, and warm holiday expe-

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periences for family and friends. Visit www.LivermoreWine.com.

Toys For Tots The 2007 Toys-for-Tots Campaign runs through Dec. 24. Delivery of new, unwrapped toys can be made to Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Stations and the Livermore and Pleasanton Police Departments. Firefighters have pledged to collect 15,000 toys to benefit the Tri-Valley. Call 454-2302 or visit www.lpfire.org.

Kids & Teens

Abbie 4-H Meeting 4-H is a nationwide youth organization for ages 5 to 19 that helps young people gain citizenship, leadership and life skills, and participate in community service. The Abbie 4-H club has numerous animal, non-animal and leader-

ship projects. It meets at 7 p.m. the second Wednesday of the month at Mohr Elementary School, 3300 Dennis Drive. Visit www.abbie4h.org.

Review of New Children's Books Walter Mayes and Valerie Lewis, authors of "Valerie and Walter's Best Books for Children: a Lively, Opinionated Guide," will share the newest and best children's books in an entertaining one hour review at 7 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Light refreshments and door prizes included.

Winter Holidays Fun—Strings Attached! The Fratello Marionettes present the "North Pole Review" at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Dec. 8. Featuring a juggling penguin, a Brazilian ice skating snowman, and the sensational

Hawaiian Hi-Fi Sisters! Free tickets distributed 30 min. ahead of each show. For all ages.

Lectures/ Workshops

Coffee & Conversation Beating the Holiday Blues: Feelings of sadness and depression are common during the holidays, but not inevitable. Help yourself or a loved one identify these feelings and address them. Discover a variety of practical tips to help keep the blues away during the holidays. Held at 10 a.m. Dec. 11 at the Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., the cost is \$1.50 for residents and \$2 for non-residents.

Meet the Author At 7 p.m. Dec. 5 at the Dublin Senior Center, 7600

Amador Valley Blvd., Dublin, meet Chuck Acquisto, author of "Wisdom to Grow On," an inspirational collection of letters from actors, attorneys, sports legends and politicians. To celebrate his firstborn son's birthday, Acquisto wrote to people with requests for advice on achieving success in life to pass on to his son.

Live Music

Wish Inflicted at Dublin Sports Pub Wish Inflicted and Dan Taylor perform live at the Dublin Sports Pub, 7294 San Ramon Road, Dublin, at 9 p.m. Nov. 30. This free event is open to those ages 21 and over. Visit www.wishinflicted.net.

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Pleasanton Real Estate News



by
Gerarda
Stocking

LEARN SOME MORE ABOUT YOUR CREDIT SCORE

One of the last things you want to have when applying for a new mortgage loan is a recent history of missing the monthly payments on your existing mortgage. At the same time, though, the creators of the credit scoring computer programs know that most people, when faced with a shortage of money, will make a greater effort to keep their mortgage payment current than to make the minimum payment required by their credit cards. Therefore, credit scoring uses credit card payments as a primary indicator of how well a person will handle loans.

Credit scores, as a result, are crunched in ways that may surprise most of us. Your score will be better if you do carry a small balance on a few credit cards and if you make your monthly payments promptly and fully. If you have no credit cards, your score reflects a lack of evidence that you handle money well; if you carry no balance, there is little evidence of any borrowing activity.

Taking this one step further, if you pay off your large credit card balances in one lump sum, red flags are raised. You will need to establish a good payment record after paying off credit card balances in order to firm your repayment record and raise your credit score.

You can and—in many cases should—get help from your real estate and mortgage advisors on this. It means a lot of money to you potentially. Just call Gerarda Stocking at 846-4000 or visit her website at www.gerardastocking.com.

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Luminaria Celebration: TexMex Cuisine

Couples Night: Food & Wine Pairing

British Holiday Table

Edible Gifts Workshop

Registration is required in advance for all classes.



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Miscellaneous

Free The Cat Campaign For a limited time, Tri-Valley Animal Rescue will offer no-fee adoptions of all adult cats. Strict adoption criteria will still apply. Adoptions are held at Pleasanton Farmers Market (9:30 to 1 p.m. Saturdays), Dublin Pet Food Express (2 to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays) and Dublin PetSmart (weekdays during regular business hours and noon to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays). Call 803-7043 or visit www.tvvar.org.

Kittens Seek Foster Homes The East Bay SPCA's Foster Care Program seeks foster homes for the upcoming kitten season. For more information, contact the East Bay SPCA at (510) 563-4632 or visit www.eastbayspca.org/foster.

On Stage

Century House Reading: Mega Open Mic From 2 to 4 p.m. Dec. 9 at the Century House, 2401 Santa Rita Road, Mega Open Mic hosts aspiring and accomplished poets reading a favorite or original poem of 40 lines or less. Light refreshments served. Admission is a new children's book or small stuffed animal to be donated. Call 931-5350.

Seniors

A Holly-day Affair to Remember At 6:30 p.m. Dec. 12 at 7600 Amador Valley Blvd., the Dublin Senior Center hosts a Holly-day Affair. Enjoy pastries, dessert and coffee while listening to big band tunes of Manny Gutierrez and his quartet. Prizes will be raffled. RSVP by Dec. 3. Tickets are \$20 for Dublin residents or \$23 for non-residents. Call 556-4511.

Holiday Lights Tour The lights tour will be held at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 13 at the Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. The evening begins with hot cider and holiday cookies. Then we meander through festively decorated neighborhoods riding in Paratransit vans. Ride along, sing holiday carols and have a great time! The cost is \$10 for residents or \$13 for non residents. Call 931-5365.

Lunch Downtown Meet at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., at 11:30 a.m. Dec. 12 and paratransit will take seniors to Amelia's Deli-Bistro on W. Angela St. in downtown Pleasanton for lunch and back. This is a great way to make new friends and to dine downtown. The cost is \$15 for residents or \$18 for non-residents. Call 931-5365.

Pleasanton Hometown Holiday Parade Participate in the Hometown Holiday Parade by riding in a Paratransit van and waving to the cheerful crowd as you are driven down Main Street. Light refreshments will be served. Please reserve your seat by registering at the Senior Center by 3:30 p.m. Nov. 30. Event date is Sat. Dec. 1. Call 931-5365.

Spiritual

Beth Chaim Chanukah Lighting On the First Night of Chanukah, Dec. 4, Beth Chaim Congregation will gather the community to light their wonderful Chanukah Menorah at their new temple, 1800 Holbrook Drive, Danville. On each night of Chanukah the community will light the Menorah and lead the 10th annual celebration.

Sports

14's Fastpitch Travel Team Tryouts Lady Hustle will be holding tryouts for their travel team Dec. 1 and 9. Visit www.ladyhustlefastpitch.com to register. Call coach Teresa Borchard, 785-0846

Athenian Athletics Track Club

Athenian Athletics Track Club invites athletes ages 7-18 to participate in our winter practice sessions to prepare for the 2008 track and field season. Practices will be held on a voluntary/drop-in basis Monday through Friday. Adults of all ages and ability are also encouraged to join the club to participate in our health and wellness nights program. For practice times and location, visit www.athenianathletics.com or call Coach Rik Richardson, 518-9356.

Fastpitch Softball Tryouts Young Guns 18A girl's fastpitch softball team will be holding tryouts for the upcoming 2008 summer travel season. Tryouts will be held at noon Dec. 2 and Dec. 9 at Creekside Middle School, Castro Valley. Call Rocky, 510-886-0243 or Jeff, 510-828-3812.

Pleasanton Rage Winter Academy Come have fun and continue to work on your soccer skills through the winter months from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Mondays at Val Vista Soccer Complex. Pleasanton Girls Soccer will be hosting an academy for U8-U10 girls soccer players. Details can be found at http://www.pleasantonrage.org/docs/Youth_Academy07.pdf. The cost is \$100.

Saturday Morning Beginner Road Ride This weekly no-drop ride at 8 a.m. every Saturday is for those new to cycling, who haven't been on their bike for a while or just want to ride at a slower pace. Rides depart from Cyclepath Pleasanton, 337-B Main St., and will generally be 10-12 mph, 20 miles and no more than 2 hours. E-mail rides@cyclepath.com if you plan to attend.

Support Groups

East Bay Cancer Support Group The East Bay Cancer Support group is an independent, non-profit, non-sectarian organization serving cancer patients, caregivers and the bereaved at Faith Lutheran Church, 20080 Redwood Road, Castro Valley. All services are provided free of charge. For scheduled meeting times, please call (510) 889-8766 or visit www.ebcancersupport.org.

Grief Share Are you looking for community, understanding and support? If you have lost a spouse, child, family member or friend, you've probably found that there are not many people who understand the deep hurt you feel. The grief support group meets from 7 to 8:30 p.m. every Wednesday at Valley Christian Center, 7500 Inspiration Drive, Dublin. It is \$35.00, with scholarships available. Call 560-6202 or register at www.dublinvcc.org.

Livermore Peripheral Neuropathy Support Group The Livermore Peripheral Neuropathy Support Group meets at 10 a.m. the fourth Tuesdays of the month at Heritage Estates Retirement Community, 900 E. Stanley Blvd., Livermore. All are welcome. Call 443-4098 or 447-6158 or email ral-aye@comcast.net.

Manspeak This weekly men's group meets 8 to 9:30 p.m. Monday nights at Kiva Counseling Group, 11740 Dublin Blvd., Suite 202 in Dublin, and is designed to create a community between men to resolve problems, form friendships, and understand and improve relationships. It provides a source of support for personal growth and change in a safe environment so we can become aware of our own emotional habits and attitudes. The cost is \$30 per session or \$100 per month. Call 485-9370 or visit www.kivaspirit.org for details.

Pleasanton Military Families Pleasanton Military Families, a support group for families of service members, meets at 7 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month. The group includes families who have loved ones serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and in the Global War on Terrorism. Meetings are held at a different group member's home each month. Call Chris Miller for information on the placement of a yellow

streamer for the military person on Main Street and for information on the group, 730-1604.

Stress and Pain Management Strategies and Support Learn how to use visualization, relaxation techniques and new ways of thinking (cognitive restructuring) to help reduce stress levels and down-regulate pain. Share experiences and ideas in a supportive, caring environment. Free classes are held from 11 a.m. to noon the first Wednesday of each month at ValleyCare Health Library, 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd., Suite 270. Facilitated by Betty Runnels, M.A., Counseling Psychology, Marriage and Family Therapy. Call 734-3315 or email bettyrunnels@earthlink.net.

Tri-Valley Parkinson's Support Group This group provides peer support for those affected by Parkinson's disease and for their caregivers, families and friends. The group meets from 10 a.m.-noon, the second Saturday of the month at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Call 831-9940 or email jackiebard@pacbell.net.

Vision Support Group Individuals with low vision, and their loved ones, are invited to join us on the third Tuesday of each month from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Join us for low vision information, speakers, resources, discussions, and day trips. No reservations are required. Nominal fees may apply. Call 931-5369.

Volunteering

Blankets for Kids Blankets For Kids, founded by Pleasanton resident Jo Molz, makes and distributes soft fleece blankets to at-risk, abused and neglected children in the Tri-Valley, Alameda County and even Los Angeles. The easy-to-make blankets

are constructed of a soft fleece material with pleasant designs. Volunteers have made more than 10,000 blankets for distribution since the organization began. Those interested in volunteering, or donating money or fleece to the nonprofit organization call Jo, 846-6155.

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

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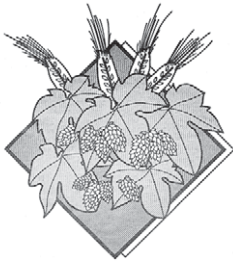
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