



A helping hand

Two deserving groups depend on
Holiday Fund dollars > **page 32**

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Fair or fowl?

Mayor appeals
decision against
housing her hawk
at home

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PLEASANTON WEEKLY

He's grrreat!

Gandalf II, an
unlikely police
K9, heads new
safety club

> **Section 2**



*Lighting
the night sky*

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High-tech winter wonderlands capture the Christmas spirit

Holiday shopping streamlined



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Around Pleasanton

by Jeb Bing

After 22 years, 'Father Dan' bids farewell

There were tears and cheers throughout the packed sanctuary at St. Augustine Catholic Church last Sunday as the Rev. Dan Danielson—known affectionately throughout the Tri-Valley as Father Dan—bid farewell to the parish he has headed for the last 22 years. Danielson, who just turned 70, is turning over the reins of the Catholic Community of Pleasanton, which also includes St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, to the Rev. Padraig Greene, who will hold the title of Parochial Administrator. At Sunday's service, which included "A Word of Farewell" and also farewell liturgy prepared expressly for the occasion, Danielson talked about the many developments that have made the two parishes the largest in Pleasanton.

When he first came to Pleasanton, St. Augustine was at the edge of town, with cattle and horses grazing just outside the church's parking lot. Bernal Avenue wasn't built and Angela Street ended at the church, just a few blocks uphill from the historic downtown. Throughout his 44 years as a priest, Danielson has amassed a host of titles which have included retreat master, popular lecturer, nationally published writer, newspaper columnist and spiritual director. Concerned about young adults who had drifted away from the church, Danielson started holding retreats and also worked with individuals recently divorced on how to keep their faith alive. As the two churches grew, he developed smaller Christian communities, which continue today, meeting regularly to put a face on the church and its leaders who meet with them. His goal has been to keep the parish personable so that they don't become too automatic and impersonal.

I'm not a Catholic but gained great respect for Father Dan during the years I have worked with him on community projects and covered his ministry and the Catholic community as a reporter. In 2000, as Pleasanton began talking about what it wanted to do on the 381-acres of land developers had given it as part of the Bernal purchase and housing development, Danielson was frequently at those meetings talking about Pleasanton's need for more diversity. One night he was there with a Muslim group in

support of their bid for a youth center to serve their children. After 9/11, he joined other religious leaders at a special tribute at the fairgrounds to those who died or suffered injuries as a result of the terrorist attacks. He was always active in the Pleasanton Ministerial Association and made St. Augustine available for ecumenical services on Good Friday before Easter.

Most recently, Danielson led the parish through a series of difficult public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council to finally gain approval for a multi-million-dollar expansion at St. Elizabeth Seton that will include facilities for youth sports and larger administrative offices. He supported other churches in their efforts to expand in Pleasanton despite a growing number of homeowners who object to once-small neighborhood churches becoming mega-churches with more traffic and nighttime events. But he wasn't always successful. Perhaps his biggest disappointment was the rejection by the city of plans to build a major independent and assisted living center and skilled nursing facility on five still-undeveloped acres next to St. Augustine. Danielson felt the project would provide places for an aging population to live in Pleasanton while also receiving the support of the church congregation. Neighbors disagreed and blocked the expansion.

Although well-known in Pleasanton, Danielson is also actively engaged in many Catholic projects and organizations throughout the country. Ordained in 1963 at Oakland's St. Jarlath Catholic Church, which was his home parish, he spent his first four years as a priest in Fremont. During the 1970s he served in a variety of roles in the Oakland diocese, was chairman of the diocesan Theological Commission and wrote a column for the Catholic Voice, a church newspaper, before taking the Pleasanton post in 1985. He plans to move to Corpus Christi Parish in Piedmont shortly, where he will "help out" but not be in charge. And also close enough to make an occasional trip to Pleasanton to keep in touch with the thousands of us here in Pleasanton who consider Father Dan our friend. ■

About the Cover

Gleaming lights and animated toys once again fill the yard of "Santa Bob" Stanley. This is about the 20th year for the Bob's World display, which has become even more famous after earning a "must-see" status on LightsoftheValley.com. Photo by Jay Flachsbarth.

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Streetwise

Q: How much do you usually spend on Christmas gifts?
Asked Downtown



Sharon Gallacher

Retired

I try to keep it under \$800 for the family of four. I start off the season thinking I won't spend as much but then it gets inflated as the season goes on. I shop throughout the year, keeping my eyes open for the perfect gifts, so in reality, I probably do spend more than \$800.

Jane Rosen

V.P. Marketing

It depends on whether or not someone needs an expensive gift. Last year, my daughter went off to college so that was a pricy Christmas. I would assume around \$2,000. In reality, I don't truly know until the credit card bills start coming in.



Millie Nylander

Retired

I set a predetermined amount for each person in each family and I stay within that budget. I shop sales, get lists and start shopping in August so that I curtail impulse buying.



Larry Brum

Real Estate Appraiser

This is an unusual year in that we have a daughter getting married. We will still probably spend around \$1,400. We get a list from the family and go shopping.



John Way

Sales

I spend around \$2,000 on the whole family. We have three grandchildren that know exactly what they'd like so we get the list, my wife goes out shopping and I pay the bill. In reality, she shops all year long so who knows how much she really spends.



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

Compiled by Cybele Ryan

Newsfront

News Digest

'Festivus for the rest of us'

Celebrate Festivus--the non-demonial holiday invented by Seinfeld characters during "The Strike" episode--at the Pleasanton Hotel from 7 to 10 p.m. Dec. 23. This free event is put on by Laugh-A-Lot Productions held at 855 Main St. To learn more, visit www.laughalotproductions.com/festivus.

A camera's view of global warming

The Ed Kinney Lecture Series at the Museum on Main Street presents "Aerial Photography, Global Warming and the Longest-Burning Light Bulb," a lecture by Dick Jones. The commercial pilot will talk about flying and global warming and show aerial photographs of the Bay Area, Yosemite and Pleasanton. The event will be held at 7 p.m. Jan. 17. Tickets are \$5 for museum members or \$10 for non-museum members. Reserve a spot by calling 462-2766.

PostalNet goes green

Craig Neidle, owner of the PostNet store on Hopyard Road, said he is heeding Mayor Jennifer Hosterman's call to make Pleasanton the "greenest" city in the United States by offering environmentally friendly office supply products and services. They have also created a Ten Commandments for Envioffice, detailing business commitments to running an environmentally sound business.

Charity Toy Drive

A Toys for Tots drive will be held from noon to 2 p.m. tomorrow at Taqueria El Balazo, 250 Market Place, San Ramon. Wassim and Co. Salon is sponsoring the event that features "Dancing with the Stars" professional dancers Mark Ballas (partner of Cheetah Girls' Sabrina Bryan) and Derek Hough (partner of 90210's Jennie Garth). The goal is to collect 500 new, unwrapped toys in two hours.

Corrections

A photo caption in the Dec. 14 cover story, ("Woman of the Year: Jill Buck—a purpose-driven life," page 17) contained incorrect information. The Rotary Club of Pleasanton (also known as the downtown Rotary) hosts the annual Father's Day Spirit Run.

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

Mayor Hosterman appealing hawk ruling

Planning Commission cries 'fowl' over allowing hawk permit under current code

by Janet Pelletier

Mayor Jennifer Hosterman is appealing the Planning Commission's decision to deny an application to house her hawk in a backyard enclosure.

She filed the appeal Tuesday, according to the city clerk's office, after the commission's action at its Dec. 12 meeting.

Hosterman applied for an animal use permit more than 14 months ago so she could continue housing her red-tail hawk Ariel in an enclosure in the back yard of her Vintage Hills home. The application had continually been delayed

due to the mayor's scheduling conflicts and while city planning staff researched falconry and the current municipal code. When the application was heard last Wednesday, Hosterman wasn't present because she had a mayoral obligation, but advised the planning department to go ahead with her request in her absence. Hosterman said she was at a meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Emeryville.

"I'm disappointed that the Planning Commission wasn't able to come up with a better end result," Hosterman said. "I'm disappointed

that it looks as though we're going to be spending a lot more staff time and taxpayer money on this issue when really we ought to be talking about other issues that are important to the people of Pleasanton."

Hosterman said she appealed the decision to the City Council because "I'm hoping we'll be able to expedite this, come to a conclusion and move on."

The commission discussed the permit at length but couldn't come to a unanimous decision. All of the commissioners were in agree-

ment that allowing Hosterman a permit for her hawk didn't fit under the current city code requirements, which specifies permits for "fowl."

Neither the commissioners nor Hosterman said they consider a hawk a "fowl"—a term used for birds such as chickens, quails and turkeys—but Hosterman said the code could be amended to allow hawks, and that the commission was "getting bogged down in the verbiage."

"What I think would be cleaner would be to follow suit of the same process that other cities have gone

Hawk licensing explained—page 9

(continued on page 8)



Sold for \$479K

Realtor Randal Helton reviews final sales agreement with Janine Johnson and her fiancé after they cast the winning bid of \$435,000 for a 57-year-old three bedroom, one-bath home on Jensen Street one of the first tract homes built in Pleasanton. Nearly 10 turned out for the live auction by Stacey Kennedy at Pacific Auction Exchange with 12 actually calling out bids. With the auctioneer's 10 percent fee, Johnson actually has to pay \$479,000, which will be the official sales price. Other homes in the neighborhood have been selling in the mid-\$500,000s. The house had one owner, Dora Mae Nairn, who has since moved to a retirement home.

Parcel tax on hold, for now

Tight budget may mean cuts as high school updates set in motion

by Emily Atwood

The school board decided last week to push pause on a parcel tax, saying they are unsure if they will go forward with including it on the November 2008 ballot.

Much of the decision depends on the state budget, which should be finalized late next month. Superintendent John Casey said the state budget forecast looks "very bleak" and could change the district's message to voters as to what a parcel tax would fund. Previously, parcel tax dollars would go towards prioritized projects recommended by the Excellence Committee, like class size reduction, technology and modern vocational training. A low budget could mean parcel tax dollars would instead

go towards keeping current programs to avoid cuts.

Trustees Steve Brozosky and Pat Kernan said they would not support a parcel tax--yet.

"We don't have the whole picture," Brozosky said about the budget situation and the messages being given to voters.

Kernan agreed, saying November 2008 wasn't the right time and realistically, the district is not ready.

Clerk Chris Grant didn't choose a side, but said he would like dialogue to continue and to have a clear focus to present to the voters.

As of September, the board estimated the tax would be about \$100 per parcel, but in order to fund the Excellence Committee's recommenda-

(continued on page 11)

Oak Grove developers sue Ayala, others

Charges signature gatherers with violating California laws

by Jeb Bing

Taiwan-based property owners Jennifer and Frederic Lin have filed a suit in Alameda County Superior Court against opponents of their plan to build 51 estate homes in the Kottinger Hills.

The suit asks the court to block the efforts of a group called Save Pleasanton's Hills and its chief organizer, former City Councilwoman Kay Ayala, from proceeding with plans to stop the development, called Oak Grove.

Ayala and her group obtained signatures from 5,225 residents over the past 30 days to force a referendum asking voters to overturn the City Council's decision last month that approved the Lins' project. The 51 homes would be built on 77 acres of the nearly 600 acres of wooded hilltop land the Lins own above Kottinger Ranch and Vintage Hills. Along with permits to develop the 51 homesites, the Lins also agreed to give 496 acres of their land at no charge to the city of Pleasanton as open space, trails and equestrian paths.

Ayala's group claims the homes and development agreement violate the 1996 General Plan and would be eyesores on the city's southeast hills.

Save Pleasanton's Hills submitted the petitions earlier this month to City Clerk Karen Diaz, who sent them to the Alameda County Registrar's office for counting and certification. If 3,672 of those signatures are determined to be from registered voters in Pleasanton—10 percent of those who voted in the last municipal election in November 2006—then the Registrar is expected to notify the City Council that the call for a referendum is valid.

The council could then rescind its approval or call for a vote on the referendum, which would likely take place at the time of the General Election next November.

The suit, filed by Atty. Clark Morrison, a land use attorney with the firm of Cox, Castle & Nicholson in San Francisco, asks the Alameda County Superior Court to act now to "to prevent the invalid referendum petition from being presented to the City Council or voters."

The suit follows a letter Morrison sent to Diaz Dec. 6 on behalf of Pleasanton businessman

(continued on page 10)

Arrest made in Village High threat

20-year-old Cy Jamerson of San Francisco also faces firearm, drug charges

by Emily Atwood

Pleasanton police arrested 20-year-old Cy Jamerson of San Francisco last Thursday on two felony charges involving a death threat at Village High School. Police identified the motives of the threat, but aren't releasing that information at this time.

Police said Jamerson called the high school around 9 a.m. Nov. 30 and threatened to shoot students and school officials if the facility wasn't evacuated by 9:30 a.m. This call prompted a lockdown of the school and a school resource officer immediately notified police, who then barricaded and investigated the campus that shares space with the school district offices and community cable channel TV30.



Cy Jamerson

Detectives were able to research cell phone data to identify him as the suspect and obtain a \$250,000 arrest warrant for one felony count of making death threats and one count of threatening a public institution.

Det. Eric Fredgren of the Pleasanton Police Department arrested Jamerson in San Pablo during a scheduled meeting at his probation officer's building. There, police said Jamerson admitted to making the threatening phone call and referred to it as a prank with no intention of following through.

He was searched during the arrest and police allegedly found a fully loaded magazine in his pocket. Police also searched his car where they reportedly found a stolen .45 caliber handgun and 78 ecstasy pills.

Jamerson now faces additional felony charges of possession of a stolen firearm and possession of narcotics in Contra Costa County's jurisdiction. He is already on probation in that county for felony possession of a firearm.

According to police, he may face a prison sentence for his actions if convicted. He was booked in Santa Rita Jail.

Myla Grasso, public information officer for the Pleasanton Unified School District, said that Jamerson was never a student at Village, but knew a student there. ■

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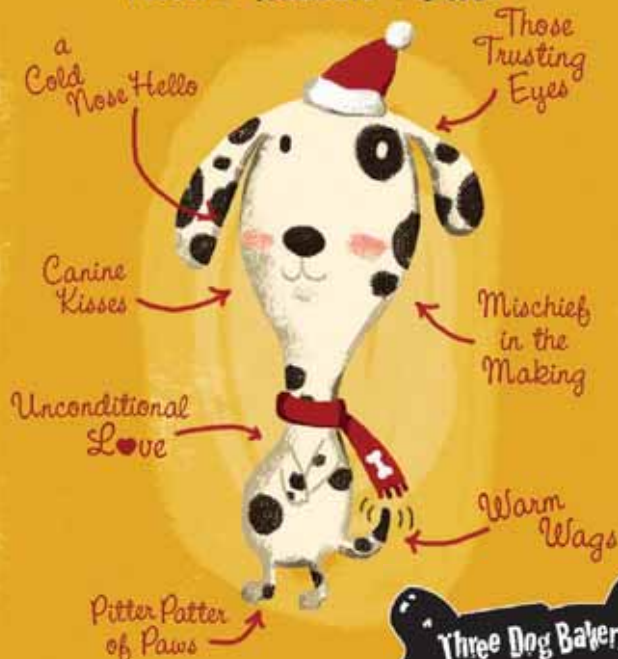
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Builder scuttles \$10-million waterpark

Costs doubled as illness, investors flight force delays

by Jeb Bing

Plans for a multi-million-dollar California Splash waterpark that could have attracted tens of thousands of water enthusiasts to Pleasanton each summer have been scuttled, the Pleasanton Weekly has learned.

Developer Glenn Kierstead, who has owned and operated the four waterslides at the western edge of Shadow Cliffs Regional Park since 1980, advised City Manager Nelson Fialho that the project will not proceed.

Kierstead won approval to expand the slides into a full-fledged regional waterpark similar to Raging Waters in San Jose and Waterworld USA in Concord, although smaller. It was to be modeled after Knott's Soak City U.S.A. in southern California.

The City Council granted Kierstead a conditional use permit to build the waterpark in 2003 after a series of heated debates that packed the council chambers. Then Mayor Tom Pico cast the tie-breaking vote in favor of Kierstead and the approval was structured so that it could not be referended by those opposed to the project.

Opponents cited increased traffic, particularly during the summer months when Kierstead estimated as many as 2,000 patrons a day would visit the slides, and noise for neighborhoods to the south from those using the four-story high slides much of the day and into the early evening hours.

The Planning Commission rejected the proposal.

The new, expanded park would have twice the number of its current four waterslides and would have included numerous ground level water

activities. These would have included a lazy river water ride, children's wading pool and large swimming pools, a more challenging wave pool and a corporate picnic area that would have had its own water-related amenities.

The project was also backed by the East Bay Regional Park District, which saw the waterpark as a revenue generator.

After several delays, Kierstead made some progress, with aluminum buildings slowly erected in 2005 and 2006. Those buildings, never finished, are still there and would have housed changing rooms, a snack facility, ticket sales offices and administrative offices.

A hiking trail that ran alongside the new buildings was graded, widened and largely destroyed.

Although Kierstead reportedly has put more than \$1 million of his own money into the project, illness forced him to step aside for more than two years, and he's yet to fully recover. In the meantime, investors he had lined up to finance the project went elsewhere. He turned to the Internet for funding, seeking \$5 million in the first funding stage on the premise that gross sales, once opened, would exceed \$1 million. But when he was unable to gain sufficient fund-



The owner/developer of Shadow Cliffs has told the city manager the project will not proceed.

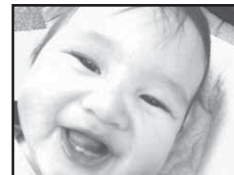
ing to move forward, other investors left.

Last March, the cost of the project had nearly doubled to \$10.7 million, putting its completion out of reach.

Kierstead has not said if he will continue to operate the four waterslides now in place, although officials from Pleasanton and East Bay Parks expect those to open again next summer.

It's also unclear if Kierstead can sell the property with the proposed expansion plans. The conditional use permit generally stays with the individual applicant. Given the controversy over the original application, there's also a question as to whether anyone would approve the project the second time around. ■

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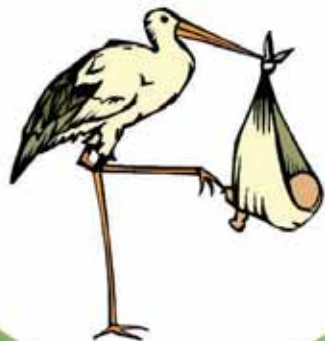
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Stockton man arrested in Safeway assault

18-year-old charged for hitting manager with skateboard on the way out

by Emily Atwood

Horacio Walls, an 18-year-old Stockton resident, was arrested Wednesday for allegedly striking a Pleasanton Safeway manager with a skateboard.

Walls and four other young men reportedly tried to videotape themselves skateboarding through the Safeway at 1701 Santa Rita Road around 9 p.m. Dec. 8. After being confronted by several employees and the manager, police said the young men refused to leave.

Later while attempting to leave the store, the manager stopped Walls, who then allegedly picked up his skateboard and hit the manager in the arm, hand and head. The manager suffered cuts and bruises.

According to police, Walls was charged with assault with a deadly weapon upon meeting with Det. Larry Cox to discuss the investigation in Tracy. Police said he admitted to the assault and was booked at Santa Rita Jail. ■

Hawk

(continued from page 5)

through and that is to simply amend the code language to include the word 'raptor' as an allowable use," she said. "The reason that I believe that is that the issue is not the discussion of the merits of falconry. The issue is whether or not having a raptor in my backyard is having any kind of a serious or negative impact on any of my neighbors."

While the city of Pleasanton doesn't have a code specifying the keeping of wild animals, the cities of Dublin, Livermore and San Ramon do.

Dublin has what's called an animal fancier's permit that allows exotic or wild animals, defined as "any animal not ordinarily and customarily domesticated, including, but not limited to, skunk, raccoon, opossum, squirrel, and fox." Residents must pay a permit fee of \$50, according to Anthony Owens, field service supervisor for the Alameda County Sheriff's Office. Dublin contracts with Alameda County Animal Control for services.

In Livermore, one can also obtain an animal fancier's permit allowing them to keep a wild or exotic animal. The applicant must already be in compliance with

state and federal regulations pertaining to that animal. The cost for Livermore's permit is also \$50. In San Ramon, the city has a wild animal section in its municipal code, stating that residents don't need a permit but need to register with Contra Costa Animal Control, which the city contracts with. There is no registration fee.

Hosterman said she doesn't understand why there's so much fuss over the issue. She said she's had her hawk house, called a mew, for at least two years, and it wasn't until a political adversary challenged her on it that the city went back on what it initially told her was allowed, prompting her to apply for a permit.

Dan Carl, the former campaign treasurer for Steve Brozosky, who lost to Hosterman in last year's mayoral election, went to the city attorney's office to bring up the issue of whether Hosterman needed a permit.

Carl spoke against the mayor's proposal at the Planning Commission meeting, saying he equated falconry with cockfighting or dog fighting.

"Residents wouldn't expect to live near a raptor," he said. "I think they should be living wild. It's a blood sport."

Carl also reiterated his concerns about safety against hawk attacks.

But commissioners refuted Carl's claims, saying they didn't believe

safety was an issue.

Hosterman said Carl's claim is ridiculous and added that there's a better chance of a hawk in the wild harming a human than her hawk Ariel.

Commissioners Arne Olson and Kathy Narum said they wanted to continue the discussion to another meeting so that city staff could return with more research on what codes other cities have instead of making a final decision that night. However, Commissioners Phil Blank, Anne Fox and Jennifer Pearce said they would rather vote down the application and treat the matter separately by asking staff to draft a wild animal ordinance.

City planners, which were recommending the permit's approval, cautioned against denying the permit.

It would be up to the discretion of the City Council, not the Planning Commission, on whether drafting a wild animal ordinance was a priority or not, said city Principal Planner Donna Decker.

With the appeal filed, the city has to schedule her request to be heard before the City Council within 40 days, unless due to scheduling conflicts, the applicant (Hosterman) requests that it be delayed, according to Maria Hoey, office manager for the city's planning department. Because the request involves Hosterman, she will have to recuse herself from voting on the matter. ■





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GREAT GIFTS

Hawk issue elicits questions

In the days after the Planning Commission delivered its decision, a number of posters have commented on the Pleasanton Weekly's Town Square forum, discussing anything from the merits of falconry to details about Hosterman's hawk and what she's fed.

Hosterman said she is a general falconer. She began as an apprentice falconer for two years and was promoted to general status by her master falconer Michael Pocięcha last spring. She said she is awaiting official papers any day now officiating that status.

Hosterman said she has both state and federal falconry licenses that she must renew every year.

Ariel was rescued near the Oakland Airport by her and after he Pocięcha, informed her that he had seen the hawk and another hawk circling the area. The pair trapped the two hawks and later released the second hawk, keeping Ariel.

"When she was first trapped, she was injured," Hosterman said. "She had been hunting squirrels and squirrels are notorious biters. In fact, they

can bit toes clean off of feet. Squirrels are very dirty animals and they're filled with vermin and disease.

Hosterman said this is just one of many times she's rehabilitated hawks.

Starting first at the Phoenix Zoo, she said she's also worked at a Santa Rosa wild bird sanctuary and for county wildlife in San Jose.

"This has always been a passion of mine," she said.

Ariel's food source has also come into question.

"Primarily, her food source is quail and I order frozen quail and there are a bunch of us falconers in the area and so we order bulk and get a better price," she said. "I try to mimic what she would experience in the wild so I try to fast her one day a week."

"Then, I also supplement her quail with rabbit," Hosterman said, adding that they are both frozen and live. She gets the live rabbits when she takes the hawk hunting.

"I go hunting about every three days," she said. "I have permission of private properties in Livermore that are wide open spaces with lots

of game. I already have all the permits I need."

Hosterman added that she has a hunting license.

"The biggest thing is having a hunting license because even though you're not hunting with a gun or bow and arrow, you're still essentially hunting and there are some very strict rules about taking game out of the wild with a bird of prey," she said.

While Hosterman has had Ariel for more than two years, she plans to release the hawk back into the wild in March.

"The goal is to get her to the point where she is taking rabbits on a regular basis so that when I release her I will know that she will always be able to take rabbits and be able to take care of herself, take care of her mate, be able to take care of her offspring," she said.

Hosterman said she plans to trap another hawk after that, continuing her falconry, and when asked if she would ever have more than one at a time, she said "it's a possibility."

—Janet Pelletier

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Pleasanton Real Estate News



by Gerarda Stocking

HEY KIDS! MAKE MONEY IN YOUR SPARE TIME!

There were books that, years ago (and perhaps still today), suggested ways that children could earn money in their spare time. A lemonade stand, perhaps; or walking people's dogs once a day; or babysitting neighbors' rose bushes when they're away on vacation. That sort of thing. And the books almost always delightedly extolled the virtues of the garage sale.

A few suggestions to those who answer the call: Setting up a garage sale is probably about ten times more exhausting than you expected it to be. It's a bit like moving. You'll find things you've even forgotten you were looking for. Your life will pass before your eyes and wind up in a sprawling pile of used "stuff." It is therefore, emotional, potentially depressing and/or liberating, but also one of those midterm exams for all relationships in which two people reassess their time together and debate whether certain items should be saved, sold or sent to the junkyard.

To make all of this worthwhile, you need to market your garage sale. The more people know about it, the better—it's just like selling your home. And it follows, therefore, that you'll gain immensely by calling on your real estate professional for advice on how best to get the word out to the most possible people at the least expense. Call someone who knows how to market your home if you want to sell some of the "stuff" in it. Just call Gerarda Stocking at 846-4000 or visit her website at www.gerardastocking.com.

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Oak Grove

(continued from page 5)

James Tong and his investment firm, Charter Properties, asking her to refuse to forward the petitions. But in a reply later that day, City Attorney Michael Roush refused, saying the petitions met the requirements imposed for seeking a referendum and ordering Diaz to send them to the County Registrar.

Morrison said Ayala and her committee violated fundamental principles of the California Election Law by circulating their referendum petitions without attaching the full text of agreements that were part of the council's approval of the Oak Grove project. These would include:

The full text of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance including CEQA findings, conditions of approving the development agreement, development plan and the Tree Report of the Kottinger Hills subdivision.

The Lins' suit also accuses Ayala and her group with making false and misleading statements about their project.

"Among other false and misleading statements included were claims that the Development Plan would permit the construction of homes that are '3 stories tall for a height of 44 feet,' that development of the Oak Grove project would eliminate 'nearly a thousand trees,' and that a 'majority' of the Oak Grove project homes would be 'visible throughout our community.'"

Added the Lins: "(They) should have known these statements were false."

The 21-page complaint was filed Friday. A copy was obtained by the Pleasanton Weekly Monday.

"There were very significant problems with this referendum peti-

tion that was circulated," Morrison said. "It didn't do what the law requires at a very fundamental level. It did not include the PUD development plan that was approved by the City Council which is the very heart of what the Lins were asking. This was an absolutely fatal flaw."

He said the council approved two measures at the same time, the PUD plan and then the development agreement between the City of Pleasanton and the property owners. It's more than just the land grant turning the property over to the city. It includes a number of amenities, including \$1 million in cash for the city to use as traffic mitigation as deemed necessary and an agreement by the Lins to build and maintain all of the trails, pathways and rest areas in the open space area. The agreement also stipulates that the trails and other open space amenities must be built once the fifth of the 51 home sites is sold.

"So you put those basic things together with the fact that on their Web site and in materials circulated with the petition there were many misrepresentations about the nature of the project, about how high the buildings could be built, how many trees were going to be removed, and more," Morrison added.


But Kay Ayala disagreed—in fact she was outraged.

"This (the Oak Grove) project has been fast-tracked through the staff and City Council from Day One." She said. "Of all the projects, this is the worst I have ever seen. You have to ask why these people are so concerned about this council approval going to the ballot."

"If they insist that this is the right project for this town, why are they worried about the ballot?" she asked. "And why are they putting stumbling blocks in our way? This council is putting obstacles in the way of a citizens' group that is trying to do its job."

"These people went into a room and made a deal," she added. "That's not the public process. News stories after news stories, including those in the Pleasanton Weekly, talk about Kottinger Ranch approving this deal. It never happened."

Morrison said he has asked the Superior Court for an expedited hearing, which could take place early in 2008. ■



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School

(continued from page 5)

tions, it would require \$273 per parcel.

The Lew Edwards Group feasibility study results from June showed that residents were supportive of the schools, but there was not a "super majority" of people who thought the district needed more money.

With a consensus to wait on the parcel tax for the time being, Casey said they would hold off on the survey group and school site meetings, but continue to keep open discussion with the community. He added that the district's mind isn't made up on the issue and they hope to identify the district's challenges to the community.

In describing the state budget outlook, Casey compared it to the budget crisis of 2000-01.

"They are looking at possibility taking money back from this year and adding no new money for next year," he said. "Without the cost of living addressed, the cost of people goes up every year. With increases in fuel and utilities, when we roll the budget over, we may have to make some cuts."

Casey added that each department in the district is already cutting back as much as they can and looking to where to save for the next year.

With a possible budget crisis looming, the board also gave the go-ahead to the first phase of the high school master plan, with \$32.3 million available funds. The first phase of improvements would include artificial sports turf, fitness rooms and portable classrooms for Amador Valley and Foothill high schools, as well as a science classroom for Village High.

Three phases would cost \$37.7 million, or \$31 million without lobbies for the fitness facilities. Using capital facility funds through 2019, Measure B funds, state funds and joint use funding, the district has budgeted \$32.3 million for this project.

Trustees said to move ahead with the plans without the lobbies. Brozosky called these "luxuries" and the board agreed to discuss them at a later date.

Construction is scheduled to start this spring, and that's not a moment too soon for some parents that have rallied for improved and additional facilities to deal with overpopulation at Amador and Foothill.

Even with the controversy over additional school campuses like Neal Elementary and a possible third high school, board president Jim Ott said these updates are necessary.

"If you took out 500 students (to a new campus), these projects are overdue as it is," he said.

The next board meeting has been changed and will take place at 5 p.m., Monday, Jan. 7. ■

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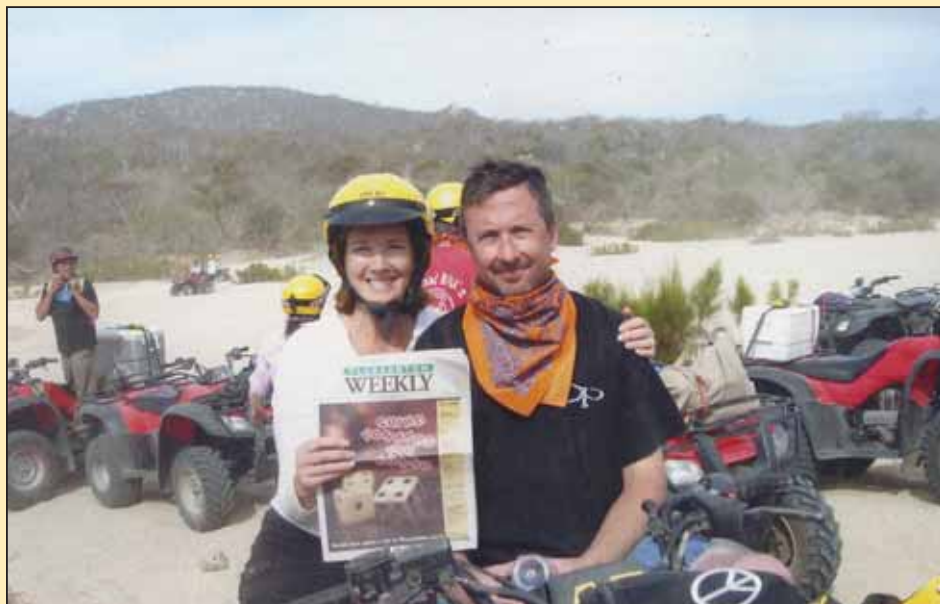
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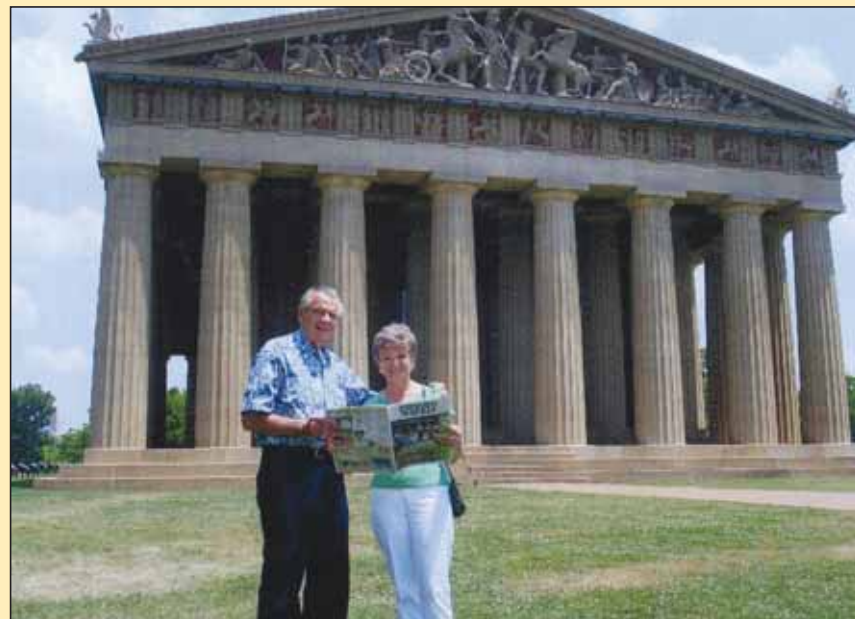
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Take Us Along



Four-wheelin' with the Weekly

John and Marianne Sensiba take a break from a 70-mile ATV ride in Mexico to read a little hometown news. Sure doesn't look like Pleasanton there!



A Midwest showdown

Dave and Roz Gamble toured the Midwest, stopping in Lexington, Ky., the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tenn. and Abraham Lincoln's home in Springfield, Ill. Here, they are in Nashville at a replica of the Parthenon in Greece. Pretty convincing, isn't it?



Sporting the Weekly

Brian and Jennifer Orr gave the Weekly a little exercise when they took it along with them on their run in the Bloomsday Race in Spokane, Wash., which had 40,000 participants.



Cruising in style, with the Weekly of course

Tom and Sue Johnson pose with the Weekly while overlooking Oia on the Greek island of Santorini. Their cruise included stops in Italy, Greece and Turkey.



Flyin' high

Jim and Yvonne Smith take the Weekly to new heights, literally, when they prepare to take off on a powered hanggliding flight over the island of Kauai. They soared over Waimea Canyon and over the Na Pali Coast Line, whose cliffs rise 4,000 feet above the ocean.



Keepin' the Weekly all in the family

How nice. When the Evans family went on a cruise to Alaska for a family reunion, they brought the Weekly along. We feel like a member of the family! Posing are Mary, Bill, Kristina and Linda Evans.

Community Pulse



WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES

Due to the upcoming holidays, City Hall offices will be closed on December 24, December 25 and January 1, 2008.

Planning Commission

- The regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission on December 26, 2007 has been cancelled.

Trails Ad Hoc Committee

- The regularly scheduled meeting of the Trails Ad Hoc Committee on December 24, 2007 has been cancelled.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- Civic Arts Commission – January 7, 2008
- Human Services Commission, Special Meeting – January 9, 2008
- Planning Commission – January 9, 2008
- Youth Commission – January 9, 2008
- Library Commission – January 10, 2008
- Parks & Recreation Commission – January 10, 2008
- City Council Meeting – January 15, 2008

GENERAL INFORMATION

Notice of Pleasanton City Grant Application Availability

Nonprofit, community-based organizations providing human services, youth programs and services, or promoting culture/arts.

Civic Arts, Human Services and Youth Commissions

Welcome Applications

Application Packets will be available to the public Beginning December 5, 2007.

- Pick-up packets - Department of Parks and Community Services Main Office 200 Old Bernal Avenue, Pleasanton
- Request packets to be mailed by calling (925) 931-5346
- Packets available through the City website: www.ci.Pleasanton.ca.us.

Application Deadline Wednesday, March 5, 2008

- Completed applications must be received by 5:00 p.m.
- No postmarks/Fax/emails.

If you have any questions regarding the City Grant process, please contact Kathleen Yurchak, Community Services Manager at (925) 931-5346

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PUBLIC COMMENT IS WELCOME

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

Police Bulletin

Seven arrested during DUI checkpoint

Pleasanton police may have surprised some unaware drivers last Friday when they conducted a DUI and drivers license checkpoint.

The checkpoint, located on northbound Santa Rita Road just south of Pimlico Road, took place from 8:20 p.m. to 2:20 a.m. The Pleasanton Police Department and officers from the California Highway Patrol and the Dublin Police Department stopped 1,283 of the 1,337 cars passing through the checkpoint.

Of the vehicles screened, 14 people were given field sobriety tests and seven of them were arrested and booked on charges of driving under the influence of alcohol, according to police.

“Drinking and driving is a crime that is 100 percent preventable,” said Sgt. Michael Collins.

Another 22 drivers were investigated for driving without a license or on a suspended license; 14 were given citations. The police also impounded 19 vehicles for DUI or drivers license violations.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) handed out educational information.

The California Office of Traffic Safety was able to provide a grant through the National Highway Safety Administration to fund the checkpoint.

Police Report

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

Dec. 9

- Theft:
 - 11:42 a.m. in the 4300 block of Valley Avenue; petty theft
 - 11:53 a.m. in the 1000 block of Bartlett Place; grand theft
 - 2:11 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
 - 3:03 p.m. in the 1100 block of Hopkins Way; grand theft
- Vandalism:
 - 8:00 a.m. in the 3000 block of Calle De La Mesa; worth less than \$400
- Burglary:
 - 11:11 a.m. in the 1100 block of Hopkins Way
 - 3:15 p.m. in the 1100 block of Hopkins Way
- Assault:
 - 2:04 a.m. in the 5100 block of Hopyard Road
- Domestic Violence:
 - 2:04 a.m. in the 5100 block of Hopyard Road
- Public Drunkenness:
 - 2:04 a.m. in the 5100 block of Hopyard Road
- Other:
 - 3:43 p.m. in the 1600 block of East Gate Way; vehicle break-in

Dec. 10

- Theft:
 - 8:00 a.m. in the 2100 block of Cascara Court; petty theft
 - 11:36 a.m. in the 2100 block of Arroyo Court; grand theft
 - 6:51 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
 - 9:47 p.m. in the 4900 block of Johnson Drive; identity theft
- Vandalism:
 - 8:16 a.m. in the 4300 block of Black Avenue; worth less than \$400
 - 8:36 a.m. in the 4000 block of Nevis Street; worth less than \$400
 - 8:41 p.m. in the 5600 block of West Las Positas Boulevard; worth more than \$400
- Public Drunkenness:
 - 7:31 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

- 11:35 p.m. in the 1800 block of Santa Rita Road
- Mental Health Danger:
 - 4:42 p.m. in the 4800 block of Bernal Avenue

Dec. 11

- Theft:
 - 10:05 a.m. in the 2200 block of Camino Brazos; identity theft
 - 4:52 p.m. at the intersection of Neal and First streets; grand theft auto
 - 5:34 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; petty theft
- Vandalism:
 - 9:01 a.m. in the 680 block of Abbie Street; worth less than \$400
 - 9:40 a.m. in the 640 block of Abbie Street; worth less than \$400
 - 12:34 p.m. in the 5900 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; worth more than \$400
 - 12:44 p.m. in the 7300 block of Johnson Drive; worth less than \$400
- Burglary:
 - 11:33 a.m. in the 4500 block of Hopyard Road
 - 6:45 p.m. in the 7100 block of Johnson Drive
 - 8:59 p.m. in the 3900 block of Santa Rita Road

- Domestic Violence:
 - 6:58 a.m. in the 9400 block of Blessing Drive
 - 10:54 a.m. in the 4800 block of Bernal Avenue
- Mental Health Danger:
 - 2:04 p.m. in the 5500 block of West Las Positas
 - 2:22 p.m. in the 5100 block of Blackbird Drive
- Other:
 - 10:54 p.m. in the 7000 block of Johnson Drive; under the influence of a controlled substance

Dec. 12

- Theft:
 - 10:52 a.m. in the 3900 block of Fairlands Drive; identity theft
 - 2:15 p.m. in the 3100 block of Camdon Court; identity theft
 - 4:27 p.m. in the 1100 block of Santa Rita Road
- Vandalism:
 - 8:48 a.m. in the 4300 block of Black Avenue; worth less than \$400

- Burglary:
 - 9:21 a.m. in the 4400 block of Willow Road
 - 8:04 p.m. in the 5400 block of Cameo Court

Dec. 13

- Theft:
 - 5:22 a.m. in the 5500 block of West Las Positas; identity theft
 - 6:11 a.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; identity theft
 - 8:15 a.m. in the 6000 block of Hansen Drive; petty theft
 - 8:27 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; receiving stolen property
- Vandalism:
 - 7:46 a.m. in the 4500 block of Augustine Street; worth more than \$400
- Burglary:
 - 2:14 a.m. in the 1200 block of Quarry Lane
- DUI:
 - 9:41 at the intersection of Santa Rita Road and Pickens Lane
- Other:
 - 5:17 a.m. in the 6800 block of Corte Nuevo; lost property
 - 1:23 p.m. in the 4300 block of Valley Avenue; prank phone calls

Dec. 14

- Theft:
 - 6:11 a.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; identity theft
 - 10:10 a.m. in the 2600 block of Minton Court; grand theft
 - 4:35 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; grand theft
 - 7:11 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
- DUI:
 - 7:37 p.m. in the 3400 block of Andrews Drive
 - 7:37 p.m. in the 6700 block of Santa Rita Road
 - 8:34 p.m. at the intersection of Valley Avenue and Koll Center Parkway
 - 10:32 p.m. at the intersection of West Las Positas Boulevard and Hopyard Road
 - 10:35 p.m. in the 4200 block of Rosewood Drive
 - 10:38 p.m. in the 4900 block of Hopyard Road

Lighting the night

High-tech winter wonderlands capture the

"Santa Bob" Stanley puts together Bob's World at his home on Calle Reynoso. The display has a synchronized light show and snow-blowing snowman all on his lawn.

by Emily Atwood

The Tri-Valley is illuminated once again this year as more and more residents "deck the halls." Instead of bows of holly, houses are trimmed with oversized, animated toys and rockin' lights shows.

One of Pleasanton's more famous Christmas displays is put together by "Santa Bob" Stanley at his home at 2612 Calle Reynoso. He has been decorating his house—and dazzling young and old alike—for about 20 years. For five weeks of the year, he embarks on a solo mission to outdo previous displays with the lighted, animated wonderland called Bob's World that sprawls across his corner lawn, garage and side yard.

Viewers can be seen gazing in awe as lighted Christmas trees, reindeer and even jumping frogs dance along to the sounds of Alvin and the Chipmunks. Most often they comment on the colors and the beauty of it all.

"They say, 'I never thought you could outdo last year, but you did!'" Stanley said.

Each year is different and he has found something unique and new. This year, Stanley added a snowman that blows real snowflakes out of a top hat. In the months leading up to Christmas, he scours the Internet looking for anything new and exciting. His collection also includes dozens of animated miniatures like skiers coming down mountains, trains and a complete circus theme park.

"It just keeps growing," he said. "Each year I try to make it different. With all the positive comments, the job is being done right."

While it's hard to judge the number of people that come to see Bob's World, he refers to weeknights as slow, with only about 75 to 100 people checking out the lights before they turn off at 9 p.m.

Stanley said traffic has increased since being featured on LightsoftheValley.com. The Web site, run out of Alex Dourov's Livermore home, started in 1999 as a go-to guide of the best decorated houses in the Tri-Valley. Since then, the site has expanded significantly to include other Bay Area cities

and beyond, from Alameda to Watsonville.

This year, Dourov and his team of programmers worked feverishly to give the site a fresh look and features that makes finding bedecked houses a piece of cake. The home page now shows a house of the day, a drop down list to the "must see" houses and links to houses by city. People are encouraged to list their house on the site and add pictures and even videos to entice local viewers.

While also working full time at his own Web design company, updating and maintaining LightsoftheValley.com is like a part time job for Dourov. He and the programmers volunteer their time and take in no profits. So far this season, he has spent more than 50 hours of work to put up the site.

The work has paid off as local radio stations have helped promote the site on the radio and on their home pages. This year, the site's popularity has skyrocketed, as the number of daily unique visitors is reaching 4,000 as of Dec. 14, compared to 2006's peak of about 2,300.

Visitors to the site are seeing more houses going all out with holiday decorations. Dourov said technology is really upping the ante in Christmas decorations. Like a popular video circulating on YouTube featuring a song by the Trans Siberian Orchestra, synching lights to the beats of music to create a Christmas light show is gaining popularity here.

Stanley utilized the technology this year for Bob's World with six Christmas tunes, choreographed to a light show on half of his lawn. Dourov said one house has 12 songs in rotation. For spectators not wanting to get out of their car, and decorators who may not want to bug their neighbors, the synched music is available through an FM transmitter. There will be a sign in the front telling drivers to tune to a certain FM station to hear the accompanying music—similar to going to a drive-in movie.

Another new trend gaining popularity is the use of LED strand lights as a replacement for incandescent lights. These use 90 percent less energy because they draw their energy from sunlight and have about 50,000 hours of bulb life. They are available in most colors and people find these to shine

just as bright and to be a significant savings on the electric bill.

Stanley used to have to run a generator to support all the lights. Since switching to mostly LED lights, he has been able to forego the generator.

The animations and large amount of lights is what Stanley believes keeps people interested and coming back year after year.

As for Dourov, decorating for Christmas has been a necessity for the holidays. He and his wife lived in a condo in San Jose before moving to Livermore in 1992. In the condo, he would hang five or six strands of lights.

But Dourov planned ahead for his Livermore house. As it was being built, and before the landscaping went in, he trenched underground piping and put in electrical boxes under the front yard.

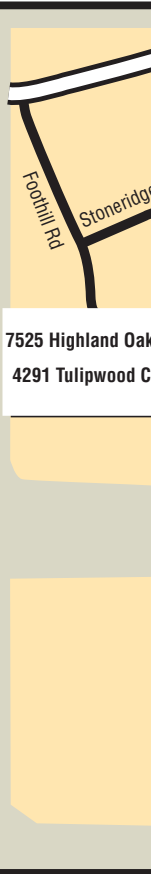
While inflatable decorations have become more popular, Dourov said he likes to stick to the "old school" Blowmold plastic displays of yesteryear. Yet, with the cost of creating a illuminated winter wonderland, he too appreciates the energy-saving LED lights.

Next year marks the 10th anniversary for LightsoftheValley.com and Dourov said visitors can expect an even better site. He said he's looking into possibly using Google maps to create routes. It's a simple site and he wants it to be enhanced, but remain easy to use.

"I make nothing from this site," he said. "I spend money in order to make this happen. The more people that visit it, the better I feel. My payment is the feedback. Go and read some of the letters I've gotten. Those letters truly make me feel great."

He recalls one letter from someone unable to leave their home, who said LightsoftheValley.com allowed them to see Christmas lights for the first time in a long time.

Stanley has the same motives for creating an enchanting



Here is a route through the Tri-Valley area by Livermore. For more information, visit LightsoftheValley.com.

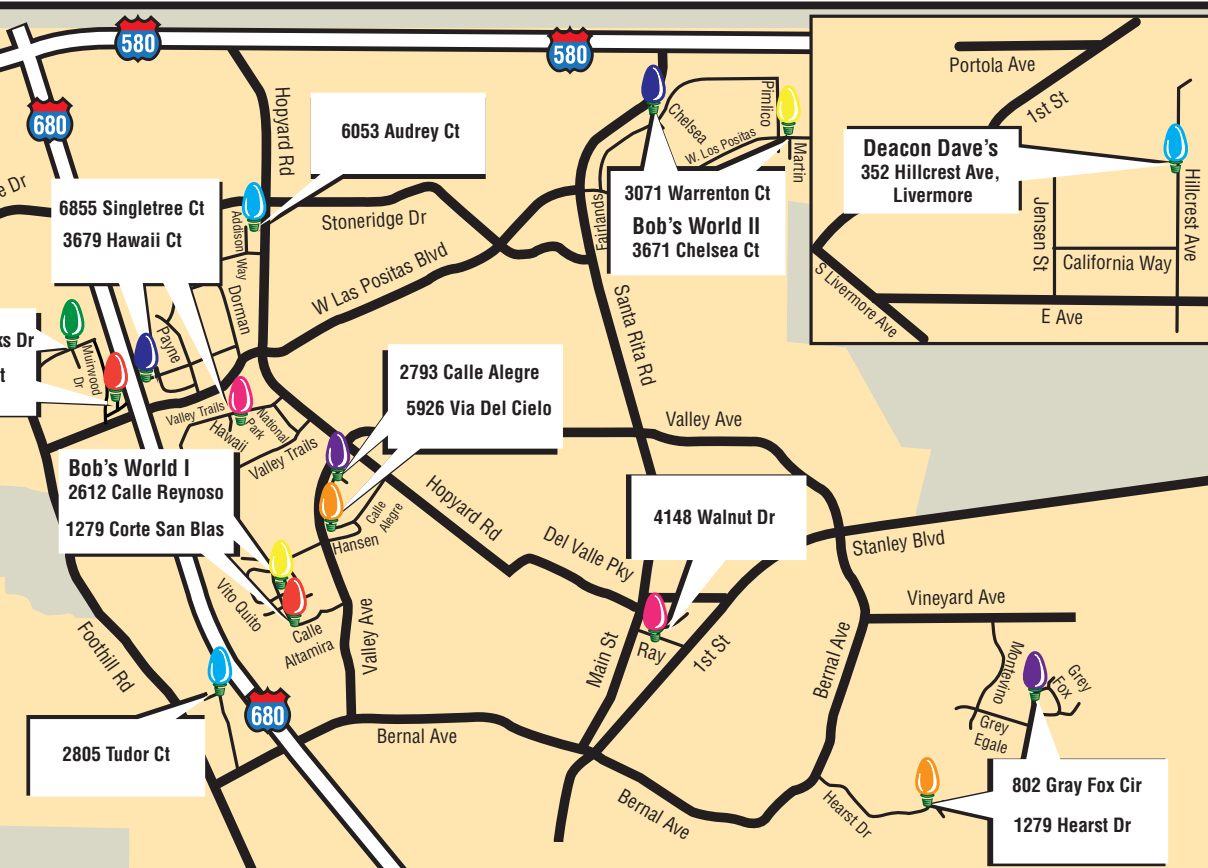
Bob's World is a popular Christmas display in Pleasanton. The display features a synchronized light show and a snow-blowing snowman. The display is located at 2612 Calle Reynoso.

Light up the night sky



Christmas spirit

Jay Fleischbarth



Highlighting just some of the Christmas light displays in town--including Bob's World I, Bob's World II and Deacon Dave's in near-neighborhoods. For more nearby listings, visit LightsoftheValley.com.

Bob's World year after year. When asked his favorite part of the whole ordeal, he said it's making people happy. "It's about making people smile," he said. "Not only the children, but also the adults." On Dec. 29, Stanley will turn off the lights until next year. He methodically packs up the lights, trees and over-

sized toys, checking light bulbs before they go away into a storage facility. Since he starts decorating right before Halloween, he is ready to take some time for himself. Where does "Santa Bob" and his wife go to take a break? They skip the snow and head to the beautiful beaches of Cabo San Lucas, naturally. ■

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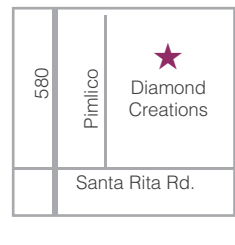
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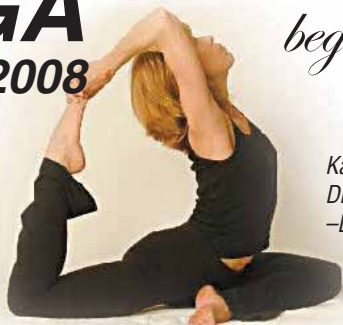
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Opinion

Editorial

Local charities need our help—and money

Christmas may be fast approaching but Nancy Richardson isn't interested in receiving any presents—unless they would help feed growling stomachs in the Tri-Valley. Richardson is chairwoman of the board of Open Heart Kitchen, one of the major relief organizations in the Tri-Valley that serves nutritious meals to those with minimum wage jobs or no jobs at all. The organization is one of eight beneficiaries of this season's Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund, whose contributions last year fed hundreds of needy individuals, including seniors and school children.

Although the local economy appears to be booming, Richardson's organization is finding more hungry mouths to feed at its Open Heart food centers in Pleasanton, Dublin and Livermore. Some just can't find jobs to match their skills; others have been laid off or find that their higher gasoline bills and mortgage and rental payments are leaving too little left for regular meals.

It's a story we hear from other relief organizations in the Valley. Axis Community Health, another Weekly Holiday Fund recipient, has seen a 20 percent increase in those seeking medical assistance, with more than 20,000 patients this year who are either underinsured or uninsured. Charities count on donations to fill their pantry, provide medicines or, in the case of Tri-Valley Haven, more beds and rooms to serve troubled families that come to its door.

Last year, the Holiday Fund raised \$112,419 in direct contributions and matching funds, with each targeted nonprofit organization receiving \$18,737 to help them continue their work this year. Even though we are seeing a stronger economy this year, the needs of these organizations are measurably greater than ever. Although Pleasanton is ranked as one of the wealthiest cities its size in the nation, there are thousands who rely on these organizations for individual and family assistance, emergency aid when they're suddenly without jobs and health care. Not everyone is wealthy here, not everyone has a job, not everyone has health insurance. These are the people who need our help.

For that reason, we have raised our sights again with a goal for this year's Holiday Fund of \$150,000, and we have expanded our list of beneficiaries to eight. Besides Axis, Open Heart Kitchen and Tri-Valley Haven, they include Hope Hospice, Pleasanton Partnerships in Education (PPIE) Foundation, the Senior Support Services of the Tri-Valley, the Valley Humane Society and the Emergency Room Expansion program at ValleyCare Medical Center

But time's running out. The charities that will benefit need your help. As of today, we have received nearly \$90,000 in total contributions, a generous amount but still \$60,000 short of our goal. Since every dollar contributed is matched by the Tri-Valley Community Foundation, giving to the Weekly's Holiday Fund offers donors a chance to double their contributions. Because of the campaign's affiliation with the community foundation, these are also tax deductible gifts as allowed by law. We donate all administrative and marketing fees, so 100 percent of your donation goes to benefit the nonprofits.

We hope you'll help and send a check today. For more information about the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund see the story on page 33.

Code of ethics

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

Guest Opinion

Christmas for everyone

By Greg Dunn

I very much sympathize with Jeb Bing ("Whatever happened to Christmas?", Around Pleasanton, Dec. 7, page 3) in his frustration at the neutering of Christmas and its transformation into a virtually secular holiday. It is all very unsatisfying for anyone who feels that the center and point of the holiday is a celebration of the all-embracing and all-forgiving love of the Christ.

And yet, in our very heterogeneous culture, where people from all over the world and from so many different religious traditions have come together, it will never work to go back to a time when Christianity, as the overwhelmingly dominant faith, could be fused with the secular culture and represented exclusively in public holidays and institutions. Millions believe in Mohammed, Gautama the Buddha, Krishna, Moses, and other spiritual personages with the same sense of conviction that Christians believe in Jesus as the Savior of mankind; and all such factions are abun-

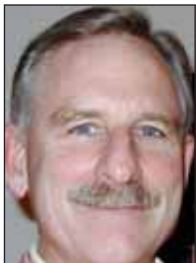
dantly represented in our diverse Bay Area culture. Who is right? Who is wrong? How shall it be decided?

We've tried two ways to deal with diversity. The first approach was to pick one dominant paradigm and simply bowl over those who didn't subscribe to it.

That may work, if quite imperfectly, in an enclosed culture where a decisive majority believe in and value the same things. But we no longer have that option here.

The second approach, which we are currently pursuing, consists of diluting all beliefs (at least for the purpose of public culture) so that no one feels decisively excluded or disrespected. This has its egalitarian virtues, but also has the down side expressed with conviction by Mr. Bing.

But what if there were a third



way? What if it were possible for people to be diverse, and to hold their diverse beliefs with full fervency and conviction, yet without excluding others or the potential validity of their beliefs? But how can this be done? Did not Jesus say, "None comes to the Father but through Me?" Do not many Muslims and others believe with equal conviction in the exclusivity of their path? It seems impossible to be a devout believer without, at least somewhere in the subconscious, demoting those who believe otherwise to an inferior status.

But what if all of these diverse belief systems have become separate not through the teachings, example, and wish of God, but instead through the working of the human ego, which always seeks to define itself in relation to others, and oscillates constantly between feelings of inferiority and feelings of superiority? What if, in fact, it was all along the same one God expressing His divine nature through the different forms of these revered teachers, and we simply mis-

understood, identifying mighty Allah with a human form He took on to express His infinite nature in a finite form suited to the temperament and understanding of the people of a particular time and place? What if even the atheist, who places the responsibility for the fate of mankind squarely on the shoulders of man himself, also expresses a vital part of God's truth?

Of course, wishing all of this were true does not make it so. But neither does the longing to believe in something make it untrue. It may be the heart—in its profound wisdom—speaking to us.

Greg Dunn has lived in Pleasanton since 1995 with his wife Gay and daughters Leela and Aminta. He is a member of the board of directors of the P-Town Bike Advocates, who hope to encourage safer conditions for use of the bicycle as serious transportation in Pleasanton, and previously served for three years on the city's Ad Hoc Trails Committee.

Letters

Don't censor Christmas

Dear Editor,

Thank you for chronicling the insidious elimination of references to Christmas in our local community ("Whatever happened to Christmas?" Around Pleasanton, Dec. 7, page 3). My late, foreign-born, non-Christian father used to say that our family could participate in the festive activities of Christmas while respecting others to celebrate it religiously. The governments, organizations, and businesses who censor the public messages of Christmas do so without any public consent. In effect, they create a social pressure that makes it not OK to express certain ideas. After this, what other expression will they disallow?

Please keep shining the lights on these dark acts.

Henry Luis
Pleasanton

Christmas is alive on Web site

Dear Editor,

Whatever happened to Christmas? Well, it's alive and well at the Lights of the Valley Web site where we start the site off by saying:

Merry Christmas and welcome to the 2007 edition of the Lights of

(continued on page 19)

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Talking Points

by Gina Channell-Allen



In the spirit of the season: Gift ideas for journalists

The spirit of the season may get journalists in a bit of an awkward situation.

Christmas means many things to many people, but the one common denominator is gift-giving and, of course, receiving. Journalists, however, have to be careful about accepting gifts.

Most media companies have policies detailing what is and isn't acceptable, even to the point of who should pay for the coffee at a meeting. Here is a sampling of some of the policies:

The New York Times: "Routine refreshments at an event like a news conference are acceptable, but a staff member should not attend recurring breakfast or lunch meetings unless our company pays for the journalist's meals. Whether the setting is an exclusive club or a service lodge's weekly luncheon, we should pay our way."

Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch: "News employees may not accept gifts or services of more than

nominal value from news sources and contacts, public relations and advertising firms, or event sponsors."

The Chicago Tribune: "Staff should not accept free tickets to an event for personal enjoyment, nor 'special offers' aimed at members of the news media. No merchandise, cash, services or anything else of value should be solicited. Unsolicited merchandise whose value exceeds that of a key chain will be donated to charity by the newspaper."

Whether it be concert tickets, sample products, or complimentary services, some gifts may give the perception that coverage can be or is being influenced. While gifts are standard procedure in just about every other industry, they can be construed as bribes when given to a journalist.

Most news organizations permit gifts of small monetary value, say under \$15, as a thank you. But the journalist must be comfort-

able with the intent of the gift. For example, if the gift is a box of candy or a tin of cookies from a reader excited about a great story on her grandson's baseball team, that is usually accepted, appreciated and shared among the staff. However, if the gift is four concert tickets to a sold-out show, given to the reviewer, these should be returned immediately.

And there are times that gifts or samples are given and politely refusing and returning is not an option. Over the years I have received hundreds of sample products, particularly during my tenure as a features editor at a daily newspaper. I received just about everything imaginable, from samples of new food products and books to review, to Victoria's Secret lingerie, a crate of Vidalia onions and a fifth of Jack Daniels.

When it's unrealistic to refuse or return items, journalists go above and beyond to avoid the appearance of inpropriety. I

used to donate the food items to the food pantry, clothing to the Salvation Army, and books to the local library for them to sell at the annual book fair. As for the other items, such as the bottle of Jack, wine, toys, CDs, videos and electronic gadgets, I would collect them for a period of time and we would raffle or auction the items to the newspaper staff, with the cash donated to charity.

So what is the best gift you can give to a journalist who writes a great story or takes a fabulous photo? A thank you note or email, phone call or voicemail are very much appreciated. As a matter of fact, I have known journalists to keep those indefinitely and reference them when they need a lift.

Journalists also believe in the emotional uplifting power of chocolate and cookies. Just like Santa on Christmas Eve, journalists rarely leave a cookie or candy untouched.

Merry Christmas!

If I were the publisher:

Have you ever thought to yourself, "If I ran the Pleasanton Weekly, I would do things differently?" I would like to hear your ideas.

And, as always, I love to get questions and comments.

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@pleasanton-weekly.com.

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Letters

(continued from page 17)

the Valley Web site where we feature the best and brightest Christmas light displays from the San Francisco Bay Area, Silicon Valley, San Joaquin and Sacramento Valley areas. Now with 341 houses (131 confirmed for 2007) in 85 cities in 17 counties across Northern California.

So, there is a Merry Christmas and a heavy promotion of Christmas lights—not holiday or season lights.

Alex Dourov
Livermore

Christmas transformed into 'holiday'

Dear Editor,

Being a Wheels coach operator, I am happy that the public does see the destination headboards on the transit vehicles, as stated by Mr. Bing.

Not only did he see the Route 12 but also, "Merry Christmas." Sadly, operators were instructed that it is no longer permitted to have "Merry Christmas" on the coaches. For those interested, call the Transit Authority at 455-7500 or drop a comment at wheelsbus.com.

I drive Monday and Tuesday afternoons on the Route 8 in Pleasanton, and would be thrilled to tell passengers "Merry Christmas."

Harold Heiser
Pleasanton

Thank you for speaking up

Dear Editor,

Thank you, Jeb Bing. My family and I want to wish you also, and your family, a very Merry Christmas. We agree that the reason that we have a holiday that is named Christmas is for the celebration of the birth of Christ, no matter who else lives in this town or country. My family and I also wish anyone that does not "celebrate" Christmas, a joyous holiday by whatever name they wish to call it.

And thank you, Jeb, for stepping up and speaking about an issue that is doing nothing positive for our country, our town, or us.

Ken L. Smith
Pleasanton

Don't give up long-standing tradition

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your courage to offer the column this week entitled "Whatever Happened to Christmas?" (I wonder why I feel it necessary to mention "courage.")

It certainly reflects my feelings, and I would suspect, the feelings of most of the people in Pleasanton.

You don't celebrate our diverse population by giving up our long-standing traditions, for goodness sake. The only appropriate celebration would include recognition of the many traditions and holidays of the people of our community; this would involve honoring those who differ from me and their own observances. As far as I know, our country has recognized the Christmas holiday for

hundreds of years, and that is what Dec. 25 is all about. I'm puzzled and offended by the whole-scale rush to erase all mention of this important observance for so many of us.

Thank you for mentioning the commercial establishments who are forbidding their employees from saying "Merry Christmas." I'll not be spending my money in their places of business

Alice King
Pleasanton

Have a merry, um, whatever

Dear Editor,

As a Jewish person in the Tri-Valley, I felt the collision of emotions: 1) Jeb Bing's right; and 2) are we responsible for this? Many harbor the belief that the Jewish community has appointed itself the watchdog over December protocol. I reviewed the causes we have adopted as a minority religion, in the hopes of answering the implicit question: Are we December scrooges?

I do not speak for an entire community, but most Jews I know have no interest in watering down the language of Christmas; we just want to be part of the conversation. Some awareness of Jewish holidays benefits us all and eases the potential loneliness for a non-Christmas observer.

I understand a store clerk not wanting to presumptuously wish Merry Christmas to every customer, and I think Bing goes too far in bemoaning our reference to Winter Break, which our family has used for four decades. Eliminating Christmas from our lexicon, however, pushes the city toward a generic observance serving no purpose except depriving us of things we hold dear this time of year. If the city is required to decorate the "holiday tree" downtown, it's only fair that I light the candles each night on our "holiday candelabra." No thanks.

My Jewish friends and our family harbor no resentment toward Christmas; we enjoy the lights and look forward to driving down Candy Cane Lane. Our celebration of Hanukkah is not diminished by Christmas—ask the 75 neighbors who attend our often-riotous annual latke party. Showing sensitivity toward another's faith can be as simple as the sincere question, "Tell me about Hanukkah?" To which my reply would invariably be, "I'm glad you asked..."

Rick Altman
Pleasanton

Buck deserves Woman of the Year

Dear Editor,

Great choice ("Woman of the Year: Jill Buck—a purpose-driven life," Cover Story, Dec. 14, page 16). Jill's accomplishments are well documented.

She is a wonderful asset to everyone—particularly her family. Her positive attitude and "can-do" leadership is very positive for our city, state and country.

Brad Hirst
Pleasanton

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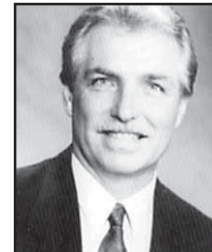
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20937 (09/07)



Transitions

Obituaries

Emily Delores Lopez

Emily Delores Lopez died Nov. 30 at the age of 86.

Mrs. Lopez was born in Lemoore, Calif. and attended Lemoore High School. During World War II, she worked as a laboratory technician in the processing of dairy products for shipment overseas.

She moved to Pleasanton in 1946 and was a businesswoman until her retirement in 1992. She owned A&D Laundromat at 722 Main St. and in 1965, opened Payless Cleaners at Amador Center. In the mid-1970s, she moved her businesses, Purity Cleaners and Sounds of Sherry, to Pleasanton Plaza.

Active in the Chamber of Commerce, she was also a member of the Druids and supported annually all of the activities at Amador Valley High School, including the renovation of the high school auditorium and the purchasing of seats.

She was a longtime member of St. Augustine Catholic Church, which she attended when it was located downtown on Rose Avenue. She supported the building campaign of the new church on Angela Street.

She was very active in Portuguese Prateral organizations. She founded the Livermore Council, Star of the Valley. She was elected to statewide office and served as grand president of the Brotherhood of St. Anthony, 1966-1967.

She is survived by her children,

Delores Oxsen and son-in-law George Oxsen of Pleasanton; her son, George Michael Lopez of Pleasanton; daughter, Sherry Ann Lopez of Hayward; sisters, Mary Lang of San Jose, Olivia Lage of Sacramento and Cecilia Hughes of Pleasanton; six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband George Lopez and her brother Joe Andrada of Fresno.

Peter C. A. Newcomb

Peter Newcomb, beloved husband and father, died Dec. 6 at the age of 78.

Mr. Newcomb was born Nov. 28, 1929 in Detroit, Mich. He moved at a young age to Montreal,

Canada, where he later met and married Estelle Allaire. He earned his Bachelor's degree in physics in Montreal. The couple moved to California when Mr. Newcomb was accepted by UC Berkeley. There, he earned his Doctorate in physics.

Mr. Newcomb's 30-year career in physics began at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in

Livermore. His work there included the design and fielding of energetic experiments and work at the Nevada Test Site. His more recent endeavors at LLNL concerned problems in international security. Although he retired in 1993, he continued to consult in these fields of his expertise.

Retirement brought Mr. Newcomb the opportunity to spend more time with his Estelle. The couple enjoyed taking many trailer trips throughout California. Also, he was a member of Sons in Retirement Branch 121 and met regularly with fellow retirees over coffee.

Ever the providing father, Mr. Newcomb, in concert with Estelle, lovingly cared for his dear son, Steve, throughout the ravages of brain cancer. Sadly, they lost their son in April 2005.

In June 2007, the Newcombs sold their longtime Pleasanton home and moved to the cooler climate of Los Altos. Their lovely new home brought many challenges and subsequent victories to him. He looked forward to settling in to this new community.

Mr. Newcomb's parish of St. Augustine Catholic Church in Pleasanton was of particular solace to him. After relocating to Los Altos, he was pleasantly surprised to find a welcoming parish, St. Nicholas Church, headed by Father Larry Percell. He eagerly anticipated the Sunday services conducted by Father Larry both in the celebration of the mass and the Father's thoughtful insights given in his homilies.

Survived by his loving wife, Estelle; two adoring daughters, Lucie and Caroline; and many family members and friends, Mr. Newcomb will be missed by many, forgotten by none.

Services were held Dec. 14 at St. Augustine Catholic Church.



Engagement



Alicia Greco & Michael Endean

Michael Endean and Alicia Greco have announced their engagement.

Michael proposed to Alicia on their seven-year anniversary in front of the Sleeping Beauty Castle in Disneyland, right before the fireworks show.

Alicia is the daughter of Louie and Laurie Greco of Dublin. She is a 2000 graduate of Dublin High School and earned a degree in communications studies from Sacramento State University in

2005. She is currently employed by Kelly Services, Inc. as a partnered staffing supervisor.

Michael's parents are Richard and Gerri Endean of Pleasanton. Michael graduated from Foothill High School in 2000 and will graduate from Sacramento State tomorrow (Dec. 22) with a degree in communications studies. He currently works for Hoppy Brewing Company and Restaurant in Sacramento.

Their wedding is planned for April 2009. The couple lives in Sacramento.

Births

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

- Nov. 15**
Xiaohong Yvan & Mingho Su, a boy
- Nov. 16**
Kristen & Ross Yu, a girl
- Nov. 19**
Jessica & James Brooks, a boy
- Nov. 20**
Jennifer Koch & Miguel Montague, a boy
- Nov. 26**
Lantrice Johnson & Otho White, a girl
- Nov. 27**
Andra & Stephen Rogers, a boy

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Cathy Johnson

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Calendar

Book Clubs

New Non-fiction Book Club

Kathryn Tournat leads a new non-fiction book club at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 2 at Towne Center Books, 555 Main St. Discuss "Carved in Sand: When Attention Fails and Memory Fades in Midlife" by Cathryn Jakobson Ramin. Refreshments are served. Call 846-8826.

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. on 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.

Everything Poetry This poetry workgroup 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.

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

Calendar Spotlight



Honk! if you love musicals

Honk!, the musical that features bright wordplay and hilarious insights into parenting, is coming to the StarStruck Theater in Fremont from Jan. 11 to 27 at Ohlone College, Smith Center in the Jackson Theatre, 43600 Mission Blvd. The theater's founder, Lori A. Stokes will direct will musical direction by Nancy Godfrey and choreography by Jeanne Batacan-Harper. Over 52 talented, local youth make up the cast, including Jordan Aragon (Ugly), Natalie Hawkins (Ida), James Jones (Cat), and Benjy Hall (Drake). Ticket are \$18 to \$22. Call 510-659-1319 or visit www.starstrucktheatre.org.

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 children from birth to 6 years

old, come join us and be refreshed, equipped and encouraged. MOPS meets from 9-11 a.m. the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month through May 2008 at 7106 Johnson Drive. Enjoy breakfast, crafts and speakers. The cost is \$60 per semester. Call Silvia, 560-1411.

NARFE The Livermore Chapter 0397 of the National Active and Retired



Cozy Winter Oatmeal

- 1 1/2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups water
- 1 1/2 cups quick cooking oatmeal (not instant)
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 banana, sliced
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup raisins
- maple syrup or brown sugar for topping

Heat the milk and water in a stainless steel saucepan until simmering. Add oatmeal and salt, bring to boil, lower heat and simmer 4 to 5 minutes, stirring until thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in the banana, cranberries and raisins. Cover the pan and let sit 2 minutes. Serve hot, topped with maple syrup or brown sugar and extra milk.

NOTE: If this yummy, cute, non-threatening, basic recipe is a challenge for you, boost your cooking confidence by attending **COOKING 101** classes beginning January 15 at Pans on Fire.



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Federal Employees Association meets at 12:30 p.m. the second Thursday monthly at 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.

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 pleasanton.toastmasters.com.

Tri-Valley Holistic Moms Network The group meets from 7 to 9 p.m. the third Monday of the month at CrossWinds Church, 6444 Sierra Court, Dublin. 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. 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.

Events

It's a "Festivus" Party Come celebrate the greatest "holiday" ever invented from 7 to 10 p.m. Dec. 23 at the Pleasanton Hotel, 855 Main St. This is Laugh-A-Lot Productions event is free and celebrates the non-denominational holiday that was made popular on an episode of Seinfeld called "The Strike." Visit www.laughalotproductions.com/festivus.

Vella's Locker Room Raider Legends Signings Raider players will be holding signings from 1 to 3 p.m. on the following dates at Vella's Locker Room, 3052 Castro Valley Blvd., Castro Valley: Dec. 22 Jeff Barnes, Dec. 29 Hall Of Fame Raider Legend. A free raffle held each session. Call 510-727-0750. 1-3 p.m.

Exhibits

Colors! Judy Seidel and Tivol Studios Art Show Worthington Gallery West, 739 Main St., will have an art show featuring artists Judy Seidel and Jane Tivol. The exhibit runs from Nov. 17 to Dec. 29. Call 485-1183.

Fundraisers

GourMade Cook for a Cause In December, GourMade Cookery will be donating proceeds of its sales to support Open Heart Kitchen. Five percent of sales of every December menu item sold will be donated. To register for a session or place an order visit www.gourmade-cookery.com or call 846-4774.

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.

Holiday

Dueling Bands The Livermore and Granada high school bands are each decorating model homes for Christmas at The Grove, 4188 Sonia St., Livermore. Northbrook Homes has given each band money to decorate a model home for the holidays to win money. Come see and vote for your favorite from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 3-23. Call 245-1782.

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

Live Music


Pride of the Pacific Chorus - Come Sing! Drop by the chorus rehearsal Dec. 5 and make a joyful noise. We are a new women's a cappella chorus and we would love to have you join us. We rehearse at 7:30 p.m. at Lynnewood United Methodist Church, 4444 Black Avenue, Pleasanton. Call 209-830-7444 or visit prideofthepacific.org.

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.

On Stage

Twas The Night Before Christmas A realistic dramatic and musical story based upon the inspiration for Clement Moore's famous poem, "Twas the Night Before Christmas," will be held at Front Row Theater, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Road, San Ramon. It runs Dec. 14-23; Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30, Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets range from \$10-15. Call 973-3372 or visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com.



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Recreation

World Walk to Wellness 2008 The World Walk to Wellness will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 31 at the Pleasanton Sports Park, 5800 Parkside Drive. Open to all ages, the self-guided walk around the park is about 5,000 steps (2.15 miles). A 20-minute, 2,000-step walk led by Mr. Pedometer at noon. Call 226-0888 or visit <http://walking10000.org>.

Seniors

Computer Tutoring One-on-one computer tutoring is available every day at the Pleasanton Senior Center. The tutor works with you on topics where you need help. No formal program to follow, just help where you need it. Internet, Office applications, picture editing, etc. Call 931-5365 to set up an appointment. The cost is \$1.50 for residents and \$2 for non-residents.

Gujarati Dinner Tri Valley Gujarati Seniors holds monthly meetings with varied themes. Interested Gujarati Seniors are welcome to attend as guests. For additional information, call 846-3521. 6:30-9:30 p.m. None

PC Users Group The PC User Group meets monthly at 10 a.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Pleasanton

Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. You don't need to be an expert to attend, we have all skills levels in our meetings. The usual Senior Center charges apply. The cost is \$1.50 or \$2.00.

Spiritual

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Faith Chapel Assembly of God, 6656 Alisal St., will hold a Christmas Eve candlelight service at 5 p.m. Regular worship is at 10:30 a.m. Sundays and Sunday school for all ages at 9:30 a.m. Children's church (ages 3-12) begins at 11:15 a.m. and Women's Bible study is at 10 a.m. Call 846-8650.

Peace Meditation A one-hour silent meditation on peace will take place on the second Saturday of the month at Downtown Yoga, 220B Division St. No talking--just sitting. No political affiliation or religious denomination. Free to all. Call 819-9983.

Tri-Valley Unity Church Tri-Valley Unity Church meets at the Radisson Hotel, 6680 Regional St., Dublin. Sunday service and children's school at 10 a.m. Ongoing classes and groups. All are welcome. Rev. Mary Anne Harris, minister. Call 829-2733 or visit www.trivalleyunity.com.

Worship Service The Fountain Community Church, 4455 Stoneridge Drive, holds a worship service at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday. It's a place

to connect with God and people. Upbeat contemporary worship and challenging messages. Call 600-8182 or visit www.fountaincc.org.

Sports

Holiday Tennis Camps Lifetime Tennis and the City of Pleasanton are offering youth tennis camps during the winter break. Camps are available for all levels ages 4 through 18. Sign up at the Tennis Park, 5801 Valley Ave. Call 931-3449.

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.

Ryan Gordon Foothill-Amador Alumni Soccer Game The fifth annual Ryan Gordon Foothill-Amador Alumni Soccer Game will be held Dec. 29 at Foothill High School. Men and women who graduated from the '70s to 2000s are invited to play. The public is invited to watch the women's match at 4 p.m. and the men's match at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$4 for students. Contact Curt at 426-1540 or curtgordon@comcast.net

for details.

Saturday Morning Beginner Road Ride This weekly no-drop ride 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 at 9 a.m. from Cyclepath, 337-B Main St., and will generally be 10 to 15 mph, 20 miles and no more than 2 hours. E-mail rides@cyclepath.com if you plan to attend. free

Sunday Morning Group Ride Join cyclists of all levels for this friendly, no-drop ride. Routes vary weekly (25-55 miles) and last approximately two hours. We meet at 8:30 a.m. at Cyclepath, 337-B Main St., to determine our route and fill tires for a 9:00 a.m. departure. Riders warm up together and split into smaller groups based on skill level. Call 485-3218.

Support Groups

Cancer Support Group A free support group for people with cancer and their loved ones. Facilitated by The Wellness Community. The group meets from 2 to 4 p.m. every Tuesday at the Valley Care Health Library, 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd. Call 933-0107 or visit www.twc-bayarea.org.

ClutterLess (CL) Self Help Group Is clutter stressing you out? We are a self help support group for those with difficulty disposing of stuff. Cluttering

is a psychological issue, not just an organizing issue. If you are ready to change your life, just come to the meeting from 7 to 8:30 p.m. every Monday at Pleasanton Presbyterian Church Rm. 7, 4300 Mirador Drive. Call 297-9246 or 846-5060 Box 2. Visit www.clutterless.org or email clutterlesspleasanton@hotmail.com. The group is free, however \$2 to \$5 donation appreciated.

Crohns and Ulcerative Colitis Support Group This support group meets the third Thursday of every month at the ValleyCare Health Library, 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd., Ste. 270. Walk-ins are welcome. Feel free to bring a guest. No meeting in December. Call 462-6764 or 846-4653.

East Bay Cancer Support Group The East Bay Cancer Support group is an independent, non-profit, non-sectarian organization serving cancer patients,

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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 ralaye@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.

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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.tv30.org.

TV30

An Evening at Bankhead Theater TV30 will air "An Evening at the Bankhead Theater" on Channel 30 through Jan. 1. The program features highlights of the gala opening night at the Bankhead Theater at the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center. Airing every day at 8 p.m., weekdays at 1 p.m. and 8 p.m. Also webcast at www.tv30.org.

Ask the Doctor Depression and Mood Disorders are the topics for Ask the Doctor TV30's LIVE call-in show at 7 p.m. Dec. 5. Episode will rerun Wednesdays in December at 7 p.m. on Channel 30. Guests Michael Levin, M.D. & Michael Schierman, M.D. Host, Bela Kenessey, M.D. Also view on www.tv30.org.

Cindy Russell's Fairy Tale Wedding TV30's "Cindy Russell's Fairy Tale Wedding" airing on Channel 30 through December. It's an inspirational story about Livermore resident who makes her dreams come true in spite of terminal cancer. It airs everyday at 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.; and Fri., Sat. and Sun. at 9:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m., 9 p.m.

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Dining Out

American

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Bridges

44 Church St., Danville, 820-7200. Executive Chef Kevin Gin interprets California-American cuisine with European and Asian influences with expansive lunch and dinner menus. Add dessert, wine and cocktails and you have Bridges' casual fine dining experience. Visit www.bridgesdanville.com for event and private party details.

Pleasanton Hotel Restaurant

855 Main St., Pleasanton, 846-8106. Executive Chef Neil Marquis offers exciting contemporary American cooking at lunch and dinner, featuring a wide selection of fresh fish entrees. Also offering our famous Sunday Champagne Buffet Brunch full bar and patio service. Visit us at www.pleasantonhotel.com for menus and private party and catering details.

Zorn's Restaurant

3015 Hopyard Road, 462-0994. Located in the Hopyard Village Shopping Center, Zorn's serves breakfast all day. Open seven days a week from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. with

breakfast and lunch specials. Dine in or take out. Catering also available.

Asian-Pacific

Mahalo Grille

425 Main St., Pleasanton, 462-2800. Treat yourself to a taste sensation at Mahalo Grille featuring a variety of Pacific seafood, Hawaiian fresh fish and shell fish, and "Mahalo" signature selections. Also try our various vegetarian-friendly offerings, California wines and island cocktails. Visit www.mahalogrille.com.

Barbecue

Red Smoke Grill

4501 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 734-0307. Home of the Tri Tip and Blue, Red Smoke Grill was voted best take out food by Pleasanton Weekly readers in 2006. Dine in or take out rotisserie chicken, ribs, prawns, salads and tri tip, or pulled pork sandwiches. Relax with a beer or a bottle of wine. Visit www.redsmokegrill.com.

Brewpub/Alehouse

Main Street Brewery

830 Main St., Pleasanton, 462-8218. Pleasanton's only BrewPub, some ales (Attaboy IPA) are brewed with locally grown hops. We also have a rotating

selection of guest brews and seasonal ales. To-go orders welcome and we're available for parties up to 100. Live music every Friday and Saturday, visit www.mainstreetbrewery.com for activities and specials.

The Hop Yard American Alehouse and Grill

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

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

California Cuisine

Stacey's at Waterford

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



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Christmas Eve Hours 5:00pm - 8:00pm

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Dining Out

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Catering

Fontina's Catering

349 Main St., Downtown Pleasanton, 462-9299. Fontina Ristorante's award-winning menu can now be delivered to your home or office. Our lunch and dinner specialties feature homemade soups and pastas, premium seafood and meats, and a vegetarian menu. For parties of 10

or more, we'll include free dessert or 10 percent off your total bill (excluding tax).

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

Panda Mandarin Cuisine

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

Willow Tree Chinese Cuisine

6512 Regional St, Dublin, 828-9111. Since 1978 Willow Tree has offered authentic Dim-Sum and banquet buffet cuisine. We prepare each dish with the freshest ingredients and are dedicated to hospitality. View our complete menu at www.willowtreerestaurant.com

Continental

Barone's

475 St. John St., Pleasanton, 426-0987. Pleasanton's most romantic continental cuisine restaurant features innovative pasta, seafood and meat

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

Fusion

Oasis Grille

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

Greek

Simply Greek

4220-C Rosewood Drive, 463-8801. From the neighborhoods of Greece to you. Menu features gyros, souvlaki and more. Located in the Rose Pavilion Shopping Center, they're open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mon. through Thurs., 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Fri. and Sat. Catering services available. Visit www.simply-greek.com

Italian

Fontina Ristorante

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

Frankie, Johnnie & Luigi Too!

11891 Dublin Blvd., Dublin, 828-9380. Lively chatter and the aroma of garlic fill this warm and friendly, classically "Italian" restaurant. Watch cooks hand toss dough at this Tri-Valley pizza Mecca. It's perfect for romantic couples and the entire family. Authentic Southern Italian cooking includes traditional dishes such as Veal Scaloppini, Lamb Osso Bucco and Scampi.

La Vite Ristorante

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

Girasole Grill

3180 Santa Rita Road at West Las Positas Boulevard, Pleasanton, 484-1001. Girasole, a locally owned family business, is an award winning California style Italian restaurant. It was voted Best Italian Restaurant by Pleasanton Weekly readers for 2007. We feature signature cuisine such as Scoozzi, Absolut! prawns, chicken gorgi, ppinach for Veronica, Tuscan pork and signature fresh seafood... just to name a few. We are upscale, but California casual with friendly prices. **Pastas Trattoria** 405 Main St., Pleasanton, 417-2222. Pastas Trattoria has an elegant atmosphere and a one-of-a-kind menu. We feature steaks, seafood and our famous pasta, plus a superb selection of spirits and fine wines. Live music will jazz up your Friday and Saturday evenings. The banquet facilities have wireless Internet for large parties, up to 70 guests.

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Butternut Squash Bisque
Crab Cakes with chipotle avocado aioli

Baked Monk Fish in a shellfish crust with carrot sauce

New Zealand Rack of Lamb topped with a coconut curry sauce, accompanied by roasted banana fingerling potatoes and baby carrots

Roasted Sonoma Duck drizzled with lemon honey mustard sauce served with blackberry polenta

Homemade Caramel Basket with vanilla ice cream and port marinated berries

New Year's Eve Specials

Lobster Bisque

Oysters on the half shell, Patron cocktail sauce

Pan Seared Pistachio Encrusted Sea Bass with tarragon lobster beurre blanc, chive mashed potatoes and zucchini

Top Sirloin Tornadoes and a Lobster Tail topped with a chanterelle mushroom and cognac sauce accompanied by an asparagus bouquet

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Sato Japanese Cuisine

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

Mexican

Blue Agave Club <0x000A>625 Main St., Pleasanton, 417-1224. Come downtown for fine dining and casual lunches in our outdoor patio. Our menu includes a variety of selections from classic tortilla soup and mole poblano to grilled salmon (a house specialty) and filet mignon with a spicy Chipotle Chile sauce. We also specialize in premium "sipping" tequilas and carry over 200 different varieties. Visit www.blueagaveclub.com.

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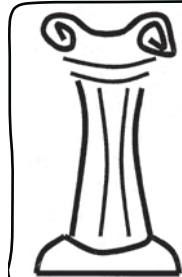
288 Main St., Pleasanton, 846-2520. Gay Nineties is family-oriented with an extensive menu, including our renowned pizza, Italian dishes, salads and sandwiches. We also have wine, beer, patio dining and games for kids. Come for groups, take out and call-ahead lunch orders. We're open seven days a week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

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Bighorn Grill

2410 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon, 838-5678. Relax in our luxurious mountain lodge with a quintessential martini. Experience the aroma and flavors of our wood-fired grill. Enjoy a savory steak, traditional prime rib, smoked ribs, fresh seafood, and a variety of signature dishes. Fabulous wine list and two private banquet rooms. Visit www.bighorngrill.com.

To have your restaurant listed in this dining directory, please call the Pleasanton Weekly Advertising Department at (925) 600-0840



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Friday & Saturday 5:00-10:00
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THE PANDA

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• Seasonal Menu

BEST OF PLEASANTON 2007

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*One free child meal (under 12 yrs) with one paying adult

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25% OFF
Boxed Christmas Cards
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Your Home Kitchen
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New Holiday Hours: Sun-Wed 10-7 PM,
Thurs-Fri 10-9 PM, Sat 9-9 PM

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Lic. #865261

Worship with us

this holiday season

Pleasanton Presbyterian Church



Come worship with us during Advent. All are welcome!

Sundays:

- 9:00AM Blended Service With Choir
- 10:30AM Contemporary Service (Sunday School)

Monday, Dec 24:

- 6:00PM, Christmas Eve Service



Carr America Conference Center
4400 Rosewood Drive
Pleasanton (across from Wal-Mart®)

For more details, visit www.pleasantonpres.org
or call the Church Office at 846.4436.

Trinity Lutheran Church of Pleasanton

At our Christmas Eve Services, Everyone is Welcome!

4:30pm Family Worship

A special service that celebrates our Savior's birth through the eyes of a child.

8:00pm & 10:00pm Festival Candle Light Worship

The service of Candlelighting will highlight these Communion Services.



1225 Hopyard Road (Del Valle & Golden)
925.846.6363 • www.trinitypleasanton.org

Join Us In Celebration

December 23rd
9:00 & 10:30 Festival of Lessons & Carols
Celebration of Christmas in Word & Song

December 24th
5:30 Family Service
8:00 Candle Light Service
11:00 Communion Service



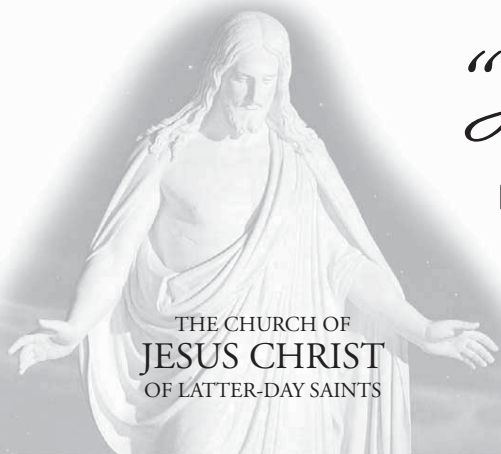
Lynnwood United Methodist Church
4444 Black Ave, Pleasanton
www.lynnwood.org
846-0221



"Joy to the World"

Friday, December 21, 7:30 pm sharp!
LIVE NATIVITY PRODUCTION
Dress Warmly!

6100 Paseo Santa Cruz, Pleasanton
Sunday Services 9:30am and 1pm



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Worship with us this Christmas Eve



Monday December 24

5pm - Family Candlelight Service
10pm - Candlelight & Carols Service
(9:30pm - Music Prelude)

Resurrection Lutheran Church

7557 Amador Valley Blvd.
(at 680 Overpass) Dublin 925-828-1580

The Catholic Community of Pleasanton



Invites you...
To join us in celebrating the birth of our Lord and to find the true joy of the season!

Christmas Eve Masses

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24

St. Augustine Church

6:00 p.m., 12:00 Midnight

(11:30 p.m. - Musical Prelude by Adult Choir)

St. Elizabeth Seton Church

6:00 p.m., 12:00 Midnight

(11:30 p.m. - Musical Prelude by Teen Choir)

Christmas Day Masses

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25

St. Augustine Church

8:00 a.m. (no incense), 10:00 a.m. & 12:00 PM

St. Elizabeth Seton

9:00 a.m. (no incense) & 11:00 AM

St. Augustine
3999 Bernal Avenue
846-4489

St. Elizabeth Seton Church
4001 Stoneridge Drive
484-5020

<http://www.CatholicofPleasanton.org>



Shouldn't the first gift you open this Christmas be from God?



You are invited to our celebration and the miracle of God's gift - the birth of Jesus Christ.

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Christmas at St. Clare's

Christmas Eve - December 24

5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist and Children's Christmas Pageant

8:00 p.m. Christmas Lessons and Carols

11:00 p.m. Candlelight Eucharist with chamber music

Christmas Day - December 25

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

St. Clare's Episcopal Church

3350 Hopyard Road • Pleasanton • 925.462.4802
www.stclarespleasanton.org

Christmas Season at Valley Community Church

Monday, December 24th

Christmas Eve Celebration

3:00, 4:30 & 6:00 pm

featuring Christmas Carols, Nativity Play & Candle Lighting

Sunday Worship Services, 9:00 & 10:45 am



Valley Community Church • 4455 Del Valle Pkwy (between Hopyard & Main) Pleasanton
925-846-6622 • www.valleycommunitychurch.org