

Back from Iraq

Troops welcomed home from service > **page 5**

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Possible parole

Chowchilla kidnapper could go free

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PLEASANTON WEEKLY

Quality of life

Senior Support helps Tri-Valley elderly

> **page 18**



MARCH: Castlewood killings

Goodbye 2008

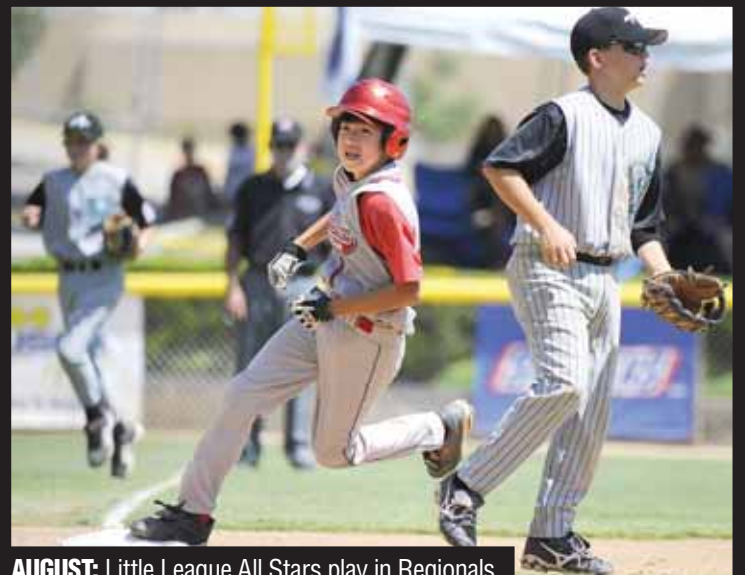
See our A to Z guide on all the big news stories during the past 12 months **PAGE 14**



OCTOBER: Alviso Adobe opens



NOVEMBER: Hosterman re-elected; Measures PP and QQ pass



AUGUST: Little League All Stars play in Regionals

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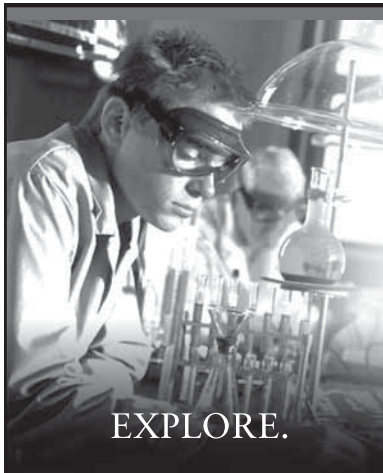
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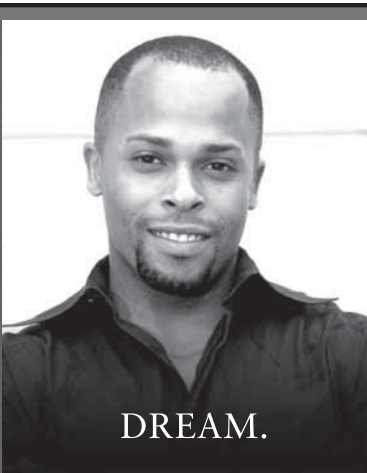
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Around Pleasanton

by Jeb Bing

No news is good news for TV30

No news is good news for TV30. By stripping the Tri-Valley's community broadcast station of its costly four-day-a-week live news show last June, the four mayors who now control TV30 trimmed \$250,000 from a runaway budget that had forced city councils (a.k.a. taxpayers) to contribute about \$70,000 from each of the cities for two years in a row just to keep the station on the air. The action came after surveys showed that about 70 percent of the 200,000 people who live in the coverage area never watch TV30 or its sister channels 28 and 29, or had only watched it once. The mayors replaced the once-appointed and independent board of directors and executive directors after two consecutive years of runaway budgets. Last June, after cutting payroll and programs, the mayors approved a budget for fiscal 2008-09 of \$587,000, down from the \$880,193 spent the year before and reasonably balanced with revenue that includes \$430,000 a year from Comcast and the rest from sponsors/advertisers who support the nonprofit system.

They also hired a new executive director, Melissa Tench-Stevens, who has extensive experience in financial management as well as 20 years as director of programming and station operations for independent station KICU, Channel 36 in San Jose. Already, with just a few months on the job, she successfully produced a series of candidate forums covering local city council and school board races in the Nov. 4 election, and has produced and started broadcasting "A Slice of Life" programs that feature each of the four cities. Other programs, including the "Mayor's Report," and council and school board meetings are continuing to be broadcast on one of TV30's three channels.

Still, with the mayors and city councils obsessed with restraining the cost of operating a nonprofit television broadcast system, station equipment and rapidly-changing technology in the industry is costing more than Comcast's contribution and sponsorships can cover. Simple repairs, such as grid breakers that were broken and burned out studio lights to more expensive new monitors and software are potential budget-breakers that Tench-Stevens has to deal with. When she started the job, it was not uncommon for TV30 to go "dark" during part of the day as its trimmed-down workforce tried to

fix the problem. Costs for high-tech HDTV digital equipment are in the tens of thousands of dollars.

There's also little back-up programming to fill time slots when there's nothing new to air. Some programs, including the few features that TV30 has produced, run multiple times, often months at a time.

Even with the budget in sync with incoming revenue, Tench-Stevens and the mayors face new concerns. The surveys of Tri-Valley residents showed that an increasing number of households, particularly in Pleasanton and the Dougherty Valley, rely on dishtop receivers for satellite TV, bypassing Comcast. These providers don't offer TV30 to their subscribers and also don't contribute to the community television system. In 2011, just two years from now, Comcast's agreement with the cities to provide free channel space and to collect 50 cents from each subscriber to support TV30, expires. New federal regulations give cable television providers such as Comcast and AT&T the right to serve their communities without local regulations. AT&T, when it installed its system in San Ramon, agreed to a stipulation by the city of San Ramon to offer TV30. But to access the station, viewers must punch several codes into their remotes, a process that most are finding too complicated and time consuming.

For now, through the creative talents and experience that Tench-Stevens brings to TV30, and the mayors' monthly board meetings to review the station's needs and costs, TV30 will continue with improved local programming but probably with steadily decreasing revenue. The economic downturn has also affected the number of sponsorships, with some of the largest accounts opting out, at least until they see their own profits back on track. The mayors, in their survey, found that other cities, such as Palo Alto and even Contra Costa County (Channel 27 in Pleasanton), own and operate their own community television stations. Of course, with these local governments as owners, their stations are hardly independent in terms of programming. But with the mayors of Pleasanton, Dublin, Livermore and San Ramon now in charge of TV30, there may be little difference. The question is will the four city councils agree to foot the bill which only last year they grumbled about? ■

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Streetwise

Q: Should smoking be banned in apartment buildings as the city of Dublin has just done?

Asked around town



Miles Minkler

It's taking away individual rights. Where do you draw the line? When you make decisions based on socio-economic status, it becomes unfair. Why does a person who owns a home have the right to smoke in their house and a person who rents can't smoke in their apartment? If they're going to put something like this on the ballot they should only allow those who live in apartments to vote.

Nichelle Baviera

Yes, because I think it's a nuisance. My son has asthma and secondhand smoke can affect his breathing. However, I live in an apartment complex and I never smell smoke coming from other units because I think that the tenants are more conscious of their neighbors and they tend to either smoke outside or on their balconies rather than in their apartments.



Morgan Watkins

I believe it should be up to the owners of each property to make the decision whether or not they ban smoking in their buildings. I think it would be superfluous and a total waste of money to take the effort to actually put this on a ballot and try to make it a law.



Evan McMasters

I do support a ban on smoking in apartments because I can't see how they can keep the smoke from getting into the adjacent units.



Seth Cole

Yes, because non-smokers have a right to breathe clean air. Period.



Have a Streetwise question? E-mail: editor@PleasantonWeekly.com
Compiled by Hillary Bessiere



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Newsfront

News Digest

Senior Center closed next week

The Pleasanton Senior Center, located at 5353 Sunol Blvd., will be closed Jan. 5 to 9 for routine maintenance. It will reopen on Jan. 12 for regularly scheduled programs. During the closure period, the Spectrum Community Services lunch program offered Monday through Friday will be available at the Veteran's Memorial Building, located at 301 Main St.

Republican women speaker series begins

The Tri-Valley Republican Women Federated welcome guest speaker Thomas G. Del Beccaro, vice chairman of the California Republican Party, at its first meeting of 2009. Starting at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 8 at La Vite Restaurant, 3037-G Hopyard Road, the speaker series begins with Del Beccaro, who they consider "one of the most strategic thinkers and charismatic personalities" of the state organization. There will also be lively discussion on a range of topics. To learn more, visit www.trivalleyrepublicanwomen.org. Reservations are required.

Heritage homes at the market

Learn about Pleasanton's architectural history at Discover Heritage Homes, held at the Pleasanton Farmer's Market from 9 a.m. to noon Jan. 10. Docents from the Museum On Main will provide information on heritage homes and buildings, specifically on one to two structures in the valley and provide pictures and facts sheets. Appointments can also be made at that time to conduct heritage home research in the museum's archives. For more information, call 462-2766 or visit www.museumonmain.org.

Input sought from trails users

Cyclists, hikers, walkers and others who use Pleasanton's 21-mile trail system are invited to take an online survey from the city Trails Ad Hoc Committee. It will gauge the use of the trails. Visit www.tinyurl.com/trailsurvey by Jan. 12.

Corrections

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

Natural gas leak ruled out as cause of 'suspicious' fire

Couple living in East Angela home filed for bankruptcy nearly four months before home was foreclosed on

by Janet Pelletier

Police are eliminating a natural gas leak as one of the possible causes of an explosion and resulting house fire on East Angela Street early last month, but remain tight-lipped as they continue their investigation.

Sgt. Jim Knox said, "it appears that there was no gas leak at this point," and added "I can't give a lot of detail because it's still pertinent

to the investigation."

Knox said police haven't been in touch with Deonna Zuffa, 40, who was seriously injured in the fire and is receiving care at the St. Francis Memorial Hospital burn center in San Francisco. Last week, she was listed in serious, but stable condition.

The blaze broke out in the 800 block Dec. 8 after a loud explosion shook the neighborhood. Zuffa, who was the only one home at

the time of the fire, received second- and third-degree burns. The flames, which at their peak reached the height of the power poles, also spread to two neighboring homes, displacing another family.

Last week, police for the first time classified the fire as having a "suspicious" nature, but said little more. The Zuffa family, which also includes Deonna Zuffa's husband Keith and their two sons, owned classic cars and go-karts, which

they stored in their three-car garage along with gasoline containers. Sgt. Knox declined to say whether the containers may have ignited the blaze.

Records show the single-story, four bedroom home, which was built in 1996, was sold for \$75,000 in a foreclosure sale on Sept. 30 to Marilyn and Richard Greenberg, or the Greenberg Trust. The 2,300-

(continued on page 8)



Sherry Wiggins gives a loving pat to her son Marine Corporal Alan Wiggins whose dad Al stands to his left at welcome home celebration held last Saturday at Amador Community Park. With the Wiggins are some of the 40 members of the Patriot Guard Riders organization, who provided a motorcycle escort for the young Marine as he drove into Pleasanton.

Hundreds join in celebrations for returning vets

Pleasanton group comes with flags, banners to say 'Welcome Home'

by Jeb Bing

Hundreds of well-wishers, military families and friends are turning out regularly to welcome home Pleasanton military men and women who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Alerted by Chris Miller, a local Realtor who is chairman of the Pleasanton Military Families Support Group, those who have signed up to join in welcome home celebrations bring flags, banners and home made signs to the festivities. There they wait, sometimes on dark and

cold evenings, as the returning vets, usually with their families, make their way from Bay Area airports or by car from nearby military bases to Pleasanton.

In December, three Pleasanton soldiers came home, each to large welcoming ceremonies. They included Marine Captain Tom Daggett, who was greeted by 150 in front of the Alisal Street home of his parents, Barbara and Tom Daggett. Joining in the celebration were the Marine captain's wife Stacey and their two children, Charlotte, 16 months old, and Thomas, 3 months old, who was born while his father

was overseas.

Earlier, another 200 joined in the nighttime homecoming in Birdland of Army Specialist Christopher De Pretis, son of Cindy and Matt De Pretis.

Last Saturday, it was Marine Corporal Alan Wiggins' turn to be honored. Miller kept those planning to join in the celebration alerted by email updates as Wiggins drove to Pleasanton from his Marine base in San Diego.

At 1:30 p.m., 40 motorcyclists who are members of the national Patriot Guard Riders

(continued on page 7)

Couple sentenced in loan fraud

Husband, wife submitted false loan applications

A Pleasanton husband and wife who ran a chain of convenience stores in Northern California have been sentenced in federal court in San Francisco for crimes uncovered in a loan fraud investigation.

U.S. Attorney Joseph Russoniello said the prosecution of Ashraf Ali, 55, and his wife, Yasmin Ali, 52, stemmed from a probe of false loan applications for loans guaranteed by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Russoniello said Ashraf Ali organized a scheme with other store owners and partners to submit \$4.4 million worth of false loan applications between 1998 and 2003. Ashraf Ali was convicted of conspiring to make false statements to influence banks and was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Marilyn Patel last week to 13 months in prison. Patel also ordered him to pay a fine of \$1.2 million.

In separate case, Yasmin Ali was convicted of harboring 24 undocumented foreign citizens who worked at the stores owned and controlled by the couple. She was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Phyllis Hamilton last week to six months of house arrest, three years of probation, 150 hours of community service and a \$100,000 fine.

Russoniello said 12 other people have been sentenced to probation and given fines for convictions for money laundering, making false statements to the Small Business Administration or to banks, or employing unauthorized individuals.

He said all the defendants have lost their state liquor sales licenses and have agreed to repay the Small Business Administration loans. More than \$4 million has already been repaid, he said.

Russoniello said the case was the most extensive loan fraud scheme ever detected by the Small Business Administration in the western United States.

—Julia Cheever, Bay City News



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A bloomin' good time

Orchids take the spotlight at Alden Lane

While a string of orchids are often found around the necks of tropical travelers, the flower will take center stage during winter at Alden Lane Nursery.

The third annual event, Orchids Under the Oaks, takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jan. 10 and 11. The 5-acre garden facility, located at 981 Alden Lane in Livermore, will feature hundreds of blooming orchids amongst the 350-year-old heritage Valley Oak trees.

A docent-led garden tour will be conducted by Alden Lane's owner, Jacquie Williams Courtwright, host of "The Valley Gardener" on TV30, at 2 p.m. both days. As guests are ushered through the property, they will learn some Livermore history, as well as the heritage of the nursery. This tour is free, but secure a spot by calling 447-0280.

There will also be 10 California vendors in the heated indoor facili-

ties with hundreds of blooming orchids for sale in a vast variety of colors, shapes and sizes from around the world.

Orchid growers and lovers can even be included in the greenhouse display, "Pathways through Paradise." They allow growers to bring up to six on the Friday before the show. Contact Sue Fordyce for details.

For those who would like to learn more about orchids, an informal potting and question and answer session throughout the show. There will also be six experts addressing orchid-related topics in a form at 11 a.m., 1 and 3 p.m. both days.

Admission and parking are free, and guests will have the chance to win a greenhouse kit, which is currently on display at the nursery.

For more information, visit www.aldenlane.com or call 447-0280.

—Emily West

Boat, RV show moved

Fairgrounds event billed as better, cheaper

by Jeb Bing

The popular Northern California RV and boat shows, usually held on consecutive weeks in January at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, have been rescheduled for May 15-24.

Michael Nohr, founder and CEO of Good Times Promotions, said the Northern California Marine Association (NCMA) will join forces with the Manufactures RV Show to host the new California Sports, Boat & RV Show at the fairgrounds.

"This year's combined show will be the biggest event of its kind on the West Coast," he said.

Instead of driving from dealership to dealership comparing options and burning gas, Nohr said the new show will bring everything

under one roof in one of the longest tents in the world. The combined show had previously been scheduled from Jan. 9-19.

"Despite a slow economy and inconsistent gas prices, RVs still represent the cheapest vacation," Nohr said.

Added Shawn Nohr, show manager of GTP: "Recognizing the budget challenges our attendees face, we wanted to offer some relief as well, so we've combined shows. As a result, we will have more RV's and boats in one place than ever before. I am confident attendees will be pleased with the ability to experience and compare all of their options in one place at one time with one ticket price."

Visit www.rvshow.net. ■

Positions

LPC board welcomes member

The Chabot-Las Positas Community College District board of trustees welcomed newly elected member Dr. Marshall Mitzman, representing Hayward, as well as the following veteran members who ran unopposed: Carlo Vecchiarelli of Pleasanton, Dr. Barbara Mertes of Livermore and Dr. Arnulfo Cedillo of Union City.

Mitzman ran for the seat recently vacated by Dr. Alison Lewis of Hayward, who retired from the Board after 17 years of service.

The Chabot-Las Positas Community College District includes Chabot College in Hayward and Las Positas College in Livermore. The district offers higher education opportunities to the residents of Union City, Hayward, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Castro Valley,

Pleasanton, Dublin, Sunol and Livermore.

McNerney seated on energy, commerce committee

Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton) was named to a seat on the powerful Committee on Energy and Commerce of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Energy and Commerce Committee has a broad issue portfolio, including both energy policy and commerce issues, as well as health care and consumer affairs and protection. Energy and Commerce is the House's oldest standing committee and considered one of the most important. Throughout its history, it has produced many pieces of landmark legislation.

As a member of the committee, McNerney will be able to use his 20-plus years of professional experience with wind and other forms of sustainable energy.

Panel finds Chowchilla kidnapper suitable for parole

Richard Schoenfeld, 54, isn't expected to be released anytime soon, however

A two-person panel has found one of the three men who kidnapped a busload of Chowchilla schoolchildren in 1976 and buried them in a quarry in Livermore to be suitable for parole.

But Richard Schoenfeld, 54, won't be released from prison anytime soon because the panel's ruling at a hearing recently is only "the first step in a rather long process," state Board of Parole Hearings spokesman Bill Sessa said.

The hearing was held Nov. 5 at the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, where Schoenfeld is serving a life prison term for his crime.

Schoenfeld, his brother, James Schoenfeld, and Frederick Woods were in their early- to mid-20s when they ambushed a busload of school children July 15, 1976, from Dairyland Union School in Chowchilla, a small farm community about 35 miles south of Fresno. The men left the bus camouflaged in a creek bed and drove the children and bus driver, Ed Ray, to the California Rock and Gravel Quarry in Livermore. The kidnappers sealed their victims in a large van that had been buried in a cave at the quarry and fitted out to keep the children and driver hostage.

The kidnappers then demanded a \$5 million ransom for the return of the 26 children and driver. The

hostages escaped from the buried van more than 24 hours after they were first kidnapped when Ray and the two oldest children piled mattresses to the top of the van and forced their way out.

The Pleasanton Weekly had an extensive story on the kidnappings in August 2006, revisiting the case 30 years later. To see that story, visit www.pleasantonweekly.com/story.php?story_id=994.

The three men received life sentences after pleading guilty in 1977 to 27 counts of kidnapping for ransom. Richard Schoenfeld had been denied parole 20 times before the panel decided he was suitable for parole.

Alameda County Deputy District Attorney Jill Klinge and Madera County District Attorney Ernest LiCalsi told the panel at the Nov. 5 hearing that they still believe Schoenfeld is unsuitable for parole. But a ruling by the California Supreme Court in August made it more difficult for the panel to find Schoenfeld unsuitable for parole. Previously, even a model prisoner serving a life sentence could be denied parole based on the gravity of the crime.

But now the parole board must find an additional factor showing the inmate could be dangerous in order to deny parole repeatedly. On April 28, James Schoenfeld was

denied parole for two years. It was the 16th time he had been denied parole. Woods has a parole hearing scheduled for Jan. 5. He has been denied parole 11 times.

Sessa said the decision by the two-person panel will now be subjected to an administrative review by the Board of Parole Hearings that will determine if the decision is supported by all the evidence. The review can take up to four months. If the decision that Richard Schoenfeld is suitable for parole stands, the review also will calculate a date at which he could be released, according to Sessa.

The calculation will be complicated because Schoenfeld was convicted of 27 counts, which is many more counts than most inmates serving life terms, Sessa said.

If the administrative review upholds the decision that Schoenfeld is suitable for parole, the case then will go to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for his review. Schwarzenegger can then refer the decision to the full 12-person parole board for more review, Sessa said.

The full board can uphold the decision or reverse it, he said. Even if the decision that Schoenfeld is suitable for parole stands, it "probably will be sometime in the future" before he is released, Sessa said.

—Bay City News

PG&E offering credits for reducing gas usage

Refund will come on March or April gas bill

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. is offering customers an incentive to control heating costs and conserve natural gas this winter.

Customers who reduce their gas usage during January and February will receive a credit on their March or April gas bill, according to a statement prepared by the PG&E External Communications Department.

For every percent decrease in consumption up to 10 percent, customers will receive an equal percent credit on a future bill. Customers who reduce consumption by 10 percent or more will receive a 20 percent credit on a future bill.

Every PG&E customer is eligible and should begin conserving upon receiving a December energy bill. Credits will appear on March

and April bills.

PG&E is offering tips and tools to help conserving energy during winter months on their website www.pge.com/wintergassavings.

Last year, more than 1.7 million customers reduced their gas usage and earned a bill credit, according to PG&E.

—Bay City News

Homecoming

(continued from page 5)

organization spotted Wiggins car coming over the Altamont Pass and became escorts for him as he drove into Pleasanton. Other motorists, seeing the flags and window banners, honked and waved in salute as the motorcade passed by, turning onto Hopyard Road and on to Amador Park.

Welcomed by Miller in front of a huge American flag, Wiggins was greeted by Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton), Councilman Jerry Thorne, Bryan Welden of the Lafayette Flag Brigade, an American Legion

Colorguard, and many more.

Then it was his parents' turn, with Sherry and Al Wiggins of Happy Valley welcoming home their son. Home for Christmas and New Year's, Cpl. Wiggins leaves Jan. 11 for Miramar Marine Base in San Diego, where he will complete his Marine enlistment in 2010.

Wiggins served as a mechanic on CH 46 helicopters. His first tour took him to Iraq aboard the USS Boxer in September 2006 as part of the surge, returning home for a brief visit in June 2007. He started his second tour last November after a six-month "float" on the USS Peleliu.

Since then, he has been attached to the 15th Marine Expeditionary unit stationed at Miramar.

Wiggins grew up here, attended Alisal Elementary and Harvest Park Middle schools, graduating from Amador Valley high school in 2005.

"Since he was 7 years old, all he wanted to be was a Marine," Sherry Wiggins, who works for Prosoft Engineering on Ray Street, said. "He joined the Marines when he turned 17, even though he had to complete his senior year at Amador before going on active duty."

When he leaves the Marines in 2010, Wiggins plans to enter college to study engineering.

Anyone wanting to be on Chris Miller's list to be notified of homecomings for returning soldiers can send an email request to him at millercej3@gmail.com. ■

Of Note

Help for the hungry

As part of their community service hours for CSF (California Scholarship Federation), Foothill High School students Sarah Ng and Catherine Jue raised close to \$250 at a recent Chamber of Commerce holiday event. The students are donating the money to Open Heart Kitchen.

"This has been a very rewarding experience for me," Ng said. "I look forward to seeing the efforts we made go directly towards helping our community. We appreciate the Chamber of Commerce's support and those who contributed to Open Heart Kitchen at the Chamber of Commerce's Holiday event."



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Take Us Along



Temple o' the Weekly

Brian and Sarah Crawford took the Weekly with them on a visit to the Ikuta Temple, located in the Sannomiya district of Kobe, Japan.



Weekly Croc

From L-R: John, Jacqueline, Jessica, Joyce and Jarrod Senchal (we're seeing a theme here) enjoy some warm weather, water play and the Weekly in Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico. They even helped release baby sea turtles with AMAmexico. Jealous?



Sandy Weekly

Zach, Tyler and Casey Cavros, ages 11, 8 and 6, stopped to read the Weekly (sitting on a huge pile of sand!) while on a vacation in Hawaii.



Policing the Weekly

Susana Wan brought a copy of the Weekly with her on a visit to Hong Kong, stopping by a local police station in the Kowloon peninsula. Don't turn us in!

Fire

(continued from page 5)

square-foot home is valued at \$940,000.

The Zuffas filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy on June 2, according to records from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Oakland. The case was dismissed on Oct. 30, but it is still considered an open matter and a future court date of Feb. 9 of this year exists, a deputy court commissioner confirmed. A notice of trust-

ee sale was issued for the home on May 2.

A house will go into foreclosure if a homeowner misses three consecutive mortgage payments. California foreclosure law states that on the day that was established for sale of the property, and only after all publication period requirements have been met, the property is sold to the highest bidder for cash for the full amount of the debt plus foreclosure fee and expenses. If no one bids at the trustee's sale, the property automatically reverts back to the ben-

eficiary for the debt.

It's unclear what relationship the Greenbergs had with the Zuffas. The Greenbergs are mentioned in court records pertaining to the Zuffas as far back as 2003. Knox declined to comment on their relationship.

A Realtor experienced in working with foreclosures said it's not uncommon for a homeowner to remain in their home after filing for bankruptcy because a bank cannot foreclose on the property for another six to nine months after a declaration. ■

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Opinion

Editorial

Hunkering down while waiting for better times

If we named our years as the Chinese do, 2009 would be the year of "Planning." That's because, at least in Pleasanton, businesses, retailers, housing developers and even local government agencies are focusing their energies this year on planning the projects that might otherwise have proceeded in a stronger economy. Take groceries, for instance. Although Gene's Fine Foods and Raley's completed costly redesign and retrofitting programs last year, other stores are postponing their projects until 2010 at the earliest. But they'll keep preparing. Safeway has submitted detailed plans to city planners for its proposed 65,000-square-foot prototype store at Valley and Bernal Avenues next to I-680. Whole Foods already has all the approvals it needs for a similarly-sized store near Hacienda Crossings in Dublin, but, like Safeway, no construction this year. British-based Fresh & Easy also has postponed the opening of its first Pleasanton store in the Rose Pavilion, although Consignment Plus was booted out to make room for Express Fitness, whose space Fresh & Easy will occupy.

General Plan. After five years of public hearings, community meetings and planning by city staff and consultants, the revised General Plan is completed and ready for City Council approval within the next few months. It will include new guidelines for hillside development, housing, environmental, air and water quality standards. More discussions will be needed during the year to organize committees that will handle the new requirements.

Hacienda Business Park. With the new General Plan in place, a task force can be established to consider new apartments and condo complexes in Hacienda, with another proposal to expand the CarrAmerica Center with more office buildings and a hotel to move forward separately—in the planning stage this year with construction as early as 2010.

Stoneridge Mall. Major expansion plans at Stoneridge Shopping Center will also be under review this year, with the mall's owner, Indianapolis-based Simon Corp., holding off for better times before proceeding with a new anchor store, movie theater, parking garage and a new Nordstrom Department Store.

Staples Ranch. Multi-million-dollar improvements on Staples Ranch, the 124-acre tract of open space at the southwest corner of the El Charro-I-580 interchange, will be mapped out and approved this year, but again no construction for at least another year. The plans include a new auto row, a 600-unit senior care complex, a new retail center and a Sharks ice hockey facility. As part of the 2009 planning process, it's expected that the City Council will approve an Environmental Impact Report for Staples and the extension of Stoneridge Drive to El Charro Road.

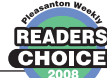
Oak Grove. It's expected that the state Court of Appeal will render a decision on Oak Grove, a 51-home development on the hills above Kottinger Ranch that includes a gift of nearly 500 acres of open space by the developers to the city of Pleasanton. If the court rejects the appeal by a group opposed to Oak Grove and accepts the decision by an Alameda County Superior Court judge to allow the development to proceed, the development agreement, which has already been signed with the city, and detailed plans for the homesites will proceed. No construction is expected before 2010 at the earliest.

BART West. Probably the only actual construction project this year that will be completed and opened is the \$86-million BART West station just east of the Foothill Road overpass on I-580. Even so, multi-million-dollar retail, hotel and apartment projects next to the station in both Pleasanton and Dublin are on hold until the economy improves, although planning on these developments will continue this year.

Besides BART, the only other major construction activity under way in 2009 is on the Firehouse Arts Center downtown and new baseball fields on the Bernal property. The arts center, related parking in the newly-acquired railroad corridor and a redesign of the Lions Wayside Community Park and bandstand, will be in the planning and completion stages this year, awaiting a 2010 dedication date. The baseball fields will also be completed by mid-year, but not ready for play until early 2010.

All of this makes for a great year for planning as we wait for an economic turnaround and what's looking like a strong year for construction and development throughout Pleasanton in 2010. ■

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Guest Opinion

For city, 2009 will be a challenge

by Jennifer Hosterman

As we embark on the New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to share my hopes for Pleasanton in 2009. In tough economic times, with fewer resources to tap into, we will strive to provide the exemplary level of service that you have come to expect from your city by continuing to employ the same conservative fiscal strategies that have allowed us to weather the current economic storms. Our parks will be groomed, our streets and byways maintained, and residents will continue to have many options in cultural, sports and recreation programs. Your City Council and I are ready to meet the challenges

ahead and promise to continue to work hard on your behalf. Backing us is a solid organization and the committed staff of the City of Pleasanton.

Protecting the environment is a major goal of the City Council and some practical sustainability programs were implemented last year. Others are planned for 2009 and beyond that will help us re-use materials and deter waste from the landfill. These include a



new residential battery recycling program, a green building ordinance, and plans for a construction and demolition debris diversion plan. The inaugural panel of the city's new Energy and Environment Committee will soon be announced, creating another avenue for citizen participation in this critical sustainability effort.

Together, we can look forward to continued progress and completion this year on several exciting community projects. We will complete our General Plan update and see continued progress to complete downtown's new Firehouse Arts Center. The retail and open space development of Staples Ranch continues to proceed. Next summer,

Phase I of Bernal Community Park will be opened to the public, representing the first 13 acres of a community park that will eventually encompass half the size of New York City's Central Park. Pleasanton children and adults will play ball on three new baseball diamonds, two of which are lit for evening games. In 2009 residents will also enjoy their first walk or jog along the Marilyn Kane Trail that will encircle this massive 350-acre park. Take a moment to think about Marilyn, who was a strong advocate for Pleasanton parks, and her generous family who have made the trail a reality for generations to come.

This coming year, please know

that your city government will continue to work hard to maintain our beautiful city, provide a safe environment for your children, offer a broad spectrum of recreation, sports and arts programs and keep your hometown a safe haven from the chaos of these current times.

This holiday season and throughout the coming year, let's all help our local economy by supporting our businesses both downtown and throughout our community.

Best wishes to all of you in the New Year!

Mayor Jennifer Hosterman was first elected in 2002 and was re-elected in November for another two-year term.

Letters

School board mismanaged Neal School issue

Dear Editor,

As longtime resident of the Vineyard road corridor, I would like to express my displeasure at the way the Neal School project has been mishandled by the Pleasanton school board.

The suit by the board was brought to make Signature Properties and Standard Pacific build the Neal school now at a much higher cost. Did anyone think that Signature would sign a contract that would have them on the hook to build Neal School at any time at any cost? In their infinite wisdom, the school board filed a costly suit that now has the city on the hook for \$4.5 million.

Instead of filing a suit that couldn't be won, they might have thought of a way to acquire the funds to build Neal School. Now they are filing another suit to recover the \$4.5 million. One can only imagine how much this new suit will cost and guess that they will lose this suit as well. Let's assume it will cost \$2.5 million. If they had used the \$4.5 million spent on the original suit plus the funds being used for the current suit and added this to the \$8 million Signature was willing to pay, they would have sufficient funds to build Neal School. In the meantime, hundreds of residents in Ruby Hill and the Vineyard corridor drive their elementary school age children every weekday to different elementary schools all over Pleasanton. Casey, who makes \$250,000 per year, and the entire school board, should resign, with a new one elected. It is clear they have mismanaged this situation and cost the taxpayers a lot of money without much to show for it.

Ralph Mele

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Transitions

Obituaries

John Patrick Burns

John Patrick Burns died Dec. 4 at the age of 43.

Mr. Burns was born Sept. 7, 1965 in Kailua, Hawaii and last lived in Oceanview, Hawaii.

Mr. Burns was a Catholic and worked in the construction industry.

He is survived by his parents, William Burns of Jamestown, Calif. and Patricia Burns of Pleasanton; brothers, Timothy Burns and William Burns of Pleasanton; sisters, Kelly Capilla of Pleasanton, Mary Burns of San Francisco and Erin Burns of Brighton, England; two nephews and two nieces.

A memorial service was held Dec. 27 at St. Augustine Catholic Church. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Tri-Valley Animal Rescue.

Mary J. Stuard

Mary J. Stuard died Dec. 14 at the age of 80.

Mrs. Stuard was born Feb. 26, 1928 and was a longtime resident of Castro Valley and Pleasanton.

She taught for more than 30 years in the Castro Valley Unified School District and did extensive charity work with Eden Youth Center, Emergency Shelter Program and the Bay Area United Way. She most recently served as the director of the North American Indian Department for the International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons, organizing numerous scholarships for needy youth.

She is survived by her daughter, Nancy Wentz; stepsons, Paul R. Mielke, Jr., Malcom Stuard, Douglas Stuard and Alan Stuard; and sisters, Margaret Berre of Seattle and Estelle Brown of Florida.

A service will take place at 2 p.m. Jan. 17 at Faith Lutheran Church, 20080 Redwood Road in Castro Valley. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations

be made to the Alameda County Community Food Bank, ATTN: Development Department, PO Box 2599, Oakland CA 94614.

John Arthur Skeets

John Arthur Skeets died peacefully Dec. 19 with his family by his side at the age of 70.

Mr. Skeets was born Jan. 2, 1938. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Navy for four years and was an avid supporter of various charities including The Yosemite Fund, Veterans of Foreign Wars and ASPCA.

He was easily inspired by nature and often spoke of his 54-year streak of visiting Yosemite. He was best known for his charisma, gregariousness, compassionate generosity, and for "going all out" at Christmas. He was a talented poker player and a natural skier. As store manager of a Lucky grocery store, he made and maintained many life-long friendships that truly enriched his life. He passionately stood for what he believed in, and his optimistic idealism could expose the underlying goodness of even the most difficult situations. He leaves those close to him a genuine appreciation of his life.

He is survived by his wife of 18 years, Gaelyn Skeets; his son, Dean Skeets; step children, Jason, Angelina and Eric Stewart; and siblings, Dorothy Vermillion (George Vermillion), Karen McCarter (Bob McCarter), Gerry Ronk and James Skeets.

A service was held Dec. 26. In lieu of flowers, the family wishes that memorial contributions be made to the following organizations: Hope Hospice, 6500 Dublin Blvd., Ste. 100, Dublin, CA 94568 or The Yosemite Fund at www.yosemitefund.org.

Dr. John Joseph O'Connor

Dr. John Joseph O'Connor died Dec. 25 at the age of 92.

He was born in San Francisco to

Timothy and Nellie O'Connor. He was a graduate of the University of San Francisco in 1938 and completed medical school at Saint Louis University in 1942. He returned to San Francisco for his medical residency and served in World War II. After the war, he started his private practice in Newark in 1947. He retired in 1982.

Mr. O'Connor met and married his beloved wife of 64 years, Elaine, in 1943. He lived in Newark and Fremont since 1947. He was an avid golfer for many years, but his greatest passion was love of his family.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Elaine O'Connor, who died in 2007. He is survived by four sons, Bruce (Joan) O'Connor of Fremont, Brian (Kathleen) O'Connor of Fremont, Gregory (Janet) O'Connor of Pleasanton and Bradley (Mary Ann) O'Connor of Fremont; grandchildren, Katy, Heather, Kerry, Amy, Seamus, Chelsea, Timothy, Molly, Ryan,

Kyle; and great-grandchildren, Hayley and Ian.

A funeral Mass was held Dec. 30 at Holy Spirit Church in Fremont. Burial will be private.

Deaths, Weddings and Births

are a free editorial service. Information should be submitted, typewritten or emailed no later than Monday at 5 p.m. Send to:

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The Weekly reserves the right to edit information for space and format considerations.

Births

Lucas John Olson

With much excitement, Erik and Laura Olson announce the arrival of their son, Lucas John Olson, born at 7:30 a.m. Oct. 12 at Kaiser Walnut Creek. Lucas weighed 7 pounds, 7 ounces and was 19 1/2 inches long. He is also welcomed by his loving grandparents John and Gail Gilpin of Pleasanton and Ed and Leslee Olson of Danville.



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Calendar

Auditions

'Livermore's Got Talent' 2009 Auditions

The auditions are open to all ages and Bay Area residents for all talents (singing, juggling, dancing, bands, piano, etc.). Applications will be accepted until Jan. 3. The finals will be performed on Feb. 28, at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore. Application fee is \$25 and are available at www.livermoresgottalent.com.

Auditions for WomenSing

WomenSing embarks on another journey of outstanding treble music. Audition for the East Bay premier women's ensemble WomenSing by appointment on Tuesday, Jan. 6. Altos are particularly encouraged to audition, but all voice parts are welcome. Call 974-9169 or visit www.womensing.org.

Youth Music Festival Auditions

Auditions will be held for solo vocalists, instrumentalists, and vocal and instrumental ensembles, ages 18 and under, from 6-9 p.m., Wednesday-Thursday,

Jan. 14-15, at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd. Appointments are required; call 931-3481.

Civic Meetings

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

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

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

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

Planning Commission The Planning

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

School Board The Pleasanton Unified School District Board meets at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday monthly during the school year 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

College Admissions 101 Learn how colleges evaluate applicants, discover how to find "best fit" colleges and find out how to prepare a strong application from 7-8:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 12, at the Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Parents and students welcome. This event is free. Call 963-2932.

Introduction to the Internet Learn how to use a mouse, keyboard and basic skills for using the internet and navigating websites using Microsoft Internet Explorer 7 from 6:15-8:15 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 7, at the Livermore Public Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave. This class is free. Call 373-5505.

Clubs

Amador Valley Quilters Meeting

This club will meet for its January meeting featuring Karen Boutte with a lecture about African American Quilters and their Quilts from 1:30-4:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 10, at Pleasanton Middle School, 5001 Case Ave.

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.

Dive Trippers Dive Club Meeting Come join us for the November meeting of the Dive Trippers Dive Club, the Tri-Valley's newest dive club. They meet at 7 p.m. the second Thursday monthly at Dive N Trips Dive Center, 1032 Serpentine Lane, Ste. 108. Call 462-7234 or visit www.diventrippers.com.

Livermore Amador Valley Garden Club The club will host guest speaker Kathy Echols, Horticulture Instructor at Diablo Valley College, at 7 p.m.,

Calendar Spotlight



Claflin is third in SaturYAY! series

Willy Claflin and his sidekick Maynard the Moose will entertain kids and parents with musical storytelling at 11 a.m. Jan. 10 at the Amador Theater. Part of the Civic Arts SaturYAY! Series, the matinee show is said to get audiences singing, clapping and laughing. Tickets are \$10-\$18 for adults and \$6-\$14 for children. For tickets and information, call 931-3444, go to www.civcartstickets.org or visit the theater's box office at 1155 Santa Rita Road.

Thursday, Jan. 8, at Alisal School, multipurpose room, 1454 Santa Rita Rd. She specializes in Australian plants, rare and unusual perennials and California natives. Plant specimens will be available for purchase after the presentation. Call 417-8809.

Livermore Lioness Club The Livermore Lioness Club welcomes new members at their regular monthly meeting at 6:30 p.m. the first Tuesday monthly. The Lioness Club is a service club, sponsored by the Livermore Lions Club, that helps many worthy causes in our community. Lioness main focus areas are women, children and family issues, in addition to helping the blind. Call 443-4543 for more information.

NARFE The Livermore Chapter 0397 of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association meets at 11:30 a.m. for lunch; 12:30 p.m. for its meeting, 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.

Tri-valley Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind This club will host a monthly meeting from 1-3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 3, at Valley Memorial Hospital, Cafeteria Room 2, 1111 East Stanley Blvd., Livermore. Any visually impaired or blind person is urged to attend. Call Carl at 449-9362.

Events

Open House Hacienda School is

having an Open House from 4:30-5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 14, at Hacienda School, 3800 Stoneridge Dr. The school has individualized curriculum and superior academic. This event is free, but reservations are required; call Jo Anne at 485-5750.

Pleasantonians 4 Peace

Pleasantonians 4 Peace sponsors a candlelight vigil in front of the Museum on Main, 603 Main St., the second Wednesday of the month. They will reflect on the human and monetary costs of the war, honor veterans who have sacrificed and visualize ways of moving beyond this conflict to a more peaceful world. Following the vigil is a peaceful march to City Hall. Contact Cathie Norman, 462-7495; Matt Sullivan, mjs7882@gmail.com; or kdowding@pacbell.net.

Polynesian Dance at the Pleasanton Library The award-winning Ka Ua Tuahine Polynesian Dance Company will perform at 2 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 10, at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. This ensemble is made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds dedicated to the perpetuation of Polynesian performing arts. Call 931-3400, ext. 8.

Exhibits

Come Home for the Holidays The exhibit at Museum On Main, 603 Main St., runs through Jan. 11 and will showcase winter holiday traditions in Pleasanton and Pleasanton's sister cities Tulancingo, Mexico, and Blairgowrie, Scotland. The cost is a \$2 donation. Call 462-2766 or visit www.museumonmain.org.

Fundraisers

Claws for Paws Crab Feast Join Tri-Valley Animal Rescue from 6 to 10 p.m. Feb. 7 for all-you-can-eat crab dinner with a no host bar. The event includes a live and silent auction as well as a cash drawing raffle. Tickets are \$45 by Jan. 17 or \$50. Call 323-8517 or visit www.tv-ar.org.

Health

Immunization Clinic An immunization clinic for children will be from 9 to 11 a.m. Jan. 10 at Axis Community Health, 4361 Railroad Ave. Open to all Tri-Valley families who are low income or uninsured, including those enrolled in Medi-Cal and Medi-Cal Managed Care. Parents should bring child's

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January

9 Gleusteen-Ordroneau Duo, Violin-Piano

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11 Masked Marvels and Wondertales

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17 Stanford Woodwind Quintet

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29 The Best of Doo Wop

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Learn at Lunch Program Free Learn at Lunch program featuring Prevention and Treatment of Lymphedema from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 14, at ValleyCare Medical Plaza, 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd., 2nd Floor Conference Room. This event is free. Call 734-3319.

Kids & Teens

'Music and Movement' Andrea Gaspari kicks off the new year with rollicking movement and music fun for pre-schoolers (18 months-4 years old) from 3:30-4:15 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 14, Feb. 11 and March 11, at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. These events are free, but registration is required by calling 931-3400, ext. 8.

Fairytale Comes To Life Enjoy a magical morning of winter fun as the Pleasanton Russian Children's Theater presents Hans Christian Andersen fairytale "The Snow Queen" at 11 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Features children acting and singing in Russian, with a storyteller providing English narration. This event is free. Call 931-3400, ext. 8.

Masked Marvels & Wondertales Michael Cooper's one-man extravaganza features stories of courage and wonder, handcrafted masks, stilt dancing, and more. He performs at 2 p.m. Jan. 11 at the Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Tickets are \$12-\$30. Call 373-6800 or visit www.livermoreperformingarts.org.

Lectures/ Workshops

Best Time to Buy Apartments and Learn Financial Strategies Come and learn "Why Now is the Best Time to Buy Apartments" and "Learn Wealth Building Financial Strategies" at 6 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 21, at Radisson Hotel, 6680 Regional St., Dublin. This event is free, but registration is required by calling 272-4667.

Health, Healing and Happiness: A Guide to Optimal Health & Weight Loss Pamela McDonald will host a workshop on "Health, Healing and Happiness: Optimal health and Weight Loss" at 7 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 22, at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave.; and at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 27, at Girasole Restaurant, 3180 Santa Rita Rd.; cost is \$20, including dinner. Call 931-3405 or visit www.apoegenediet.com.

Political Notes

Bay Area Inaugural Celebration and Festival An inaugural celebration festival honoring President Elect Barack Obama will be from 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Ave. Admission is \$10. Visit www.oaklandinauguralball.myevent.com.

Tri-Valley Republican Women Meeting Tri-Valley Republican Women Federated hosts Tom Del Beccaro, California Republican Party Vice-Chairman and popular political commentator and author, as guest speaker on the "The Resurgence of the Republican Brand" from 6:30-9 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 8, at La Vite Restaurant, 3037 Hopyard Rd. Reservations are required; call 846-5944.

Recreation

2nd Annual Mitzvah Day Join this group for a day of community service with rewarding projects for every age and interest from 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday, Jan. 19. Register at www.paloaltojcc.org/mitzvah.

Seniors

Senior Decorating 101 Want to create a space in your home or apartment that is more comfortable and updated? Learn to apply simple design principles to enhance the quality of your life and home at 10 a.m. Jan. 13 at the senior center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Bring your decorating dilemmas, and get a professional opinion from Toni Berry. Fee is \$1.50 for residents and \$2 for non-residents. Call 931-5365.

Spiritual

'The Twelve Days of Christmas Revealed' Rev. Steve Maynard will talk about "The Twelve Days of Christmas Revealed" at 10 a.m., Sunday, Jan. 4, at Tri-Valley Unity Church, meeting at the Radisson Hotel, 6680 Regional St., Dublin. Ongoing classes and groups as well; all are welcome. Call 829-2733 or visit www.trivalleyunity.com.

Artist Way Group Start out your year on the path to higher creativity at an Artist Way Group meeting from 7-8:30 p.m., Wednesdays, starting Jan. 14, at UCC Livermore, 1886 College Ave. For a complete schedule, call Jen at 449-6820.

Faith Chapel Assembly of God Faith Chapel Assembly of God, 6656 Alisal St., has Sunday school for all ages at 9:30 a.m. and worship at 10:30 a.m., with nursery for both services. Children's church, ages 3-12,

meets at 11:15 a.m. Women's Bible study meets at 10 a.m. Wednesdays. A prayer at 6 p.m. is held the first and third Monday of the month. Call 846-8650 for more programs.

Women's Christian 12 Step Discover how much comfort there is in the journey of recovery walking with the Good Shepherd every STEP of the way. This group meets at noon every Friday and Saturday at Shepherd's Gate, 1660 Portola Ave., Livermore. Call 443-4283.

Sports

Sunday Morning Intermediate Ride Join intermediate cyclists every Sunday for this no-drop road ride. Routes vary weekly and last between two and three hours. Riders warm up together and split into smaller groups based on skill level(A: 60 miles, B: 35 to 40 miles). Bring water and a snack. Rides depart from Cyclepath Pleasanton, 337-B Main St.

Support Groups

ClutterLess (CL) Self Help Group ClutterLess (CL) is a nonprofit, peer-based, self-help, support group for people with difficulty discarding

unwanted possessions. Cluttering is a psychological issue, not an organizing issue. They meet at 7 p.m. every Monday at the St. Mary and St. John Coptic Orthodox Church, room 7, 4300 Mirador Drive. Call 200-1943 (woman) or 297-9246 (man) or visit www.clutterless.org.

Domestic Violence Support Group On-going support for women dealing with conflictual issues is available at Tri-Valley Haven, Livermore, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Thursdays. A fee of \$40 for every eight weeks or based on a sliding scale. Call Elizabeth, 667-2799.

Family Members of Frail Elders This group is to support family members as they experience the many emotions involved in supporting, caring for and loving the frail elders in their family. It meets at 7 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month at Eden Villa Assisted Living, 4115 Mohr Ave. Call 872-8721.

Overeaters Anonymous Do you worry about the way you eat? You are not alone. Overeaters Anonymous may have the answer for you. This is not a diet club. OA is a fellowship of people recovering from compulsive overeating, starving and/or purging. OA offers mutual support and a helpful plan of action. They meet at 7 p.m. every Tuesday at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 678 Enos Way, Livermore. Visit www.diabollallyyoya.org.

Volunteering

New Docent Training at Forest Home Farms Forest Home Farms is looking for volunteers to help with the 3rd grade fieldtrip program and will schedule docent training on Thursday, Jan. 15, at Forest Home Farms, 19953 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. Call 973-3282 or visit www.srhf.org.

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.tvlar.org.

ADVERTISEMENT

Pleasanton Real Estate News



by Gerarda Stocking

TIME TO REFINANCE?

Though this column often suggests that (1) you take matters into your own hands when buying a home, using your real estate professional as an invaluable coach, not as the person making your decisions for you and (2) that you will thank yourself for the rest of your life if you buy the home that is right for you when you find it, not when television economists say it's the right time to buy—we must suggest that you truly give yourself all the time and advice you can get when it comes to refinancing your home mortgage.

Consider the case of the homeowner with a mortgage that is performing very poorly for her. Perhaps it's an adjustable rate mortgage and its terms allowed the rate and monthly payment to climb sky high at the first adjustment. She will want to find a mortgage professional whom she can relate to and trust, someone who will walk through all her options with her and suggest all possible ways of improving her situation—someone, too, who will keep her in mind as market rates and available mortgage programs go through their changes, calling her when a genuinely appropriate opportunity arises.

Now consider the case of the homeowner who knows far too little about the workings of mortgages and is continuously refinancing in an effort to get the lowest possible rate. This person needs a deeper understanding of when it will—and when it will not—serve him to refinance. Sometimes, you see, the loan with which you refinance may provide a lower monthly payment...but the piper will eventually have to be paid, as interest rates force his overall obligation higher over the life of the loan.

Your real estate and mortgage professionals should, above all, help you make informed decisions that benefit you throughout your life. They are not order-takers; they are advisors. Find advisors you can relate to and trust and tell them what you need. You'll be glad you did! For more information call Gerarda Stocking at 846-4000 or visit her website at www.gerardastocking.com.

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Two Locations

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A wrecking crew dug into portions of the old fire stations No. 1 and 4 on Railroad Avenue in the fall, in preparation for the Firehouse Arts Center, which will open early 2010.



Alameda County Sheriff's Department Sgt. Scott Dudek holds a press conference in March after the double murder, which was officially named a suspect, but suspicion has clouded around the couple's son, Ernie Scherer III.

The year 2008 was not insignificant by any means. It was a time dominated by politics on the national scale with the election of America's first black president. But politics also made news in Pleasanton, where voters re-elected Mayor Jennifer Hosterman to a third term and passed two highly contentious and competing hillside measures, PP and QQ. Incumbent councilmembers Cindy McGovern and Matt Sullivan were also re-elected to four-year terms.

It was also a year plagued by the worsening economy and the official use of the "R" word. The credit crisis, job layoffs and declining housing market all had a ripple effect here and promise to be stories in the coming year.

We've officially ushered the New Year in, but it's high time we look back on where Pleasanton has been the past 12 months, 366 days, 8,784 hours or 31,536,000 seconds. But who's counting?

A

The long-awaited Alviso Adobe, a community park that shows visitors Pleasanton's Ohlone Indians, early California settlers, and dairy history opened to much fanfare in September. Nestled along Foothill Road, the interpretive park sits on 7 acres and details the history of the Meadowlark Dairy and the Indians who lived here as long ago as 3240 B.C.

B

Work began on the first phase of the Bernal Community Park in February. The first phase includes three baseball fields, two of them lighted, benches, barbecues, storage facilities, restrooms, 100 parking spaces and an analemmatic sundial. The fields and lights can be seen from I-680 and Bernal and Valley avenues and are expected to be completed in mid-2009.

C

The Castlewood double murders made national news in March. Charlene Abendroth, 58, and her husband Ernest Scherer Jr., 60, were found dead

in their home near the first hole of the Castlewood Golf Course, believed to be a week after they were brutally beaten to death. Many months have passed, with suspicion clouding around the couple's son, who gambled, as did his father, but the Alameda County Sheriff's Department has yet to officially name him as a suspect.

D

Dave Duffield, the founder of PeopleSoft, announced in December that he was returning to Pleasanton with a new business venture, Workday, which has taken over much of the bankrupt E-Loan space in the five-story buildings along I-680. PeopleSoft began in 1987 and became the city's biggest employer with more than 5,000 workers at the time it was sold to Oracle.

E

Education leaders also made the news. In addition to the re-election of the city's mayor and two councilmembers, there were also races for three school board seats, with voters choosing Chris Grant, Valerie Arkin and Jamie Yee Hintzke. They've now been sworn in and are rolling up their sleeves to face challenging decisions on expected budget constraints in 2009.

In the 11th Congressional District, incumbent Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton) won an overwhelming 65 percent of the vote compared to his challenger Dean Andal of Stockton's 35 percent.

F

The Firehouse Arts Center project got under way in the fall, a plan that will restore the historic fire stations No. 1 and No. 4 on Railroad Avenue, offering a theater, art classrooms and gallery space.

Also in 2008, the Alameda County Fairgrounds celebrated a landmark 150 years of horse racing in June. The oldest, one-mile racetrack in the nation will be the site of an additional three days of racing next summer in light of the recent Bay Meadows closure.

Good 20

See our A to Z guide on all the big news



Katie McKewon, who was sentenced in May to four years in prison in the death of her friends at her sentencing she's sorry for her actions.



Shannon Corey



Emily West

...ble murders of Charlene Abendroth and Ernest Scherer Jr. in their Castlewood home. No one has been

Students and parents encouraged drivers on Santa Rita Road in April to honk their horns in support of education at a rally held by the Pleasanton PTA Council. Budget cuts continue to be an issue going forward.

Goodbye 2008

news stories over the past 12 months



Janet Pelletier

...er friend Laurel Alice Williams in a drunk driving crash, tells Williams' family and

G

Henry John Germain, the tennis pro at Castlewood Country Club, was arraigned in September on charges that he allegedly molested girls he taught. Germain's case continues with his next court hearing scheduled for Jan. 9, when he's expected to enter a plea.

H

Hijacking a California Highway Patrol vehicle had to be one of the strangest crimes Pleasanton's seen in a while. It happened in December. A woman who was the passenger in a car being pulled over decided she wasn't ready to go to jail and somehow got her handcuffed arms in front of her, moved into the driver's seat of the patrol car and took off. She was apprehended after she flipped the vehicle near the Stoneridge Drive exit on I-680.

The housing market took a huge slide in 2008 across the nation and that impacted Pleasanton, although on a much smaller scale. While the real estate market here dipped, it wasn't as significant. In fact, it could be an opportunity for potential homebuyers to get the home of their dreams for \$100,000 less than last year and financing with historically low interest rates.

I

Income level landed Pleasanton on the Census Bureau's list of highest household incomes for mid-sized cities in August. It's the second time the city has had that distinction. This year, Pleasanton's median household income was \$113,345.

J

Jobs, jobs, jobs. Need we say any more? The employment crisis was certainly felt this year, coming to a head in October. That's when companies such as Washington Mutual, Mervyn's, Circuit City, DHL—we could go on—announced store closings and layoffs. The Tri-Valley One Stop Career Center has been stepping in, helping workers who've lost their jobs to search for new ones.

K

Open Heart Kitchen, the area's only soup kitchen providing hot, healthy meals to the needy, was in danger of shuttering its doors in November, a victim of the economic meltdown, but residents really stepped up with their donations. It was a trend experienced by all the local nonprofits, many of whom are beneficiaries of the Pleasanton Weekly's Holiday Fund.

The residency of school board trustee Pat Kernan was scrutinized in May. A few residents claimed that he actually resides in Camino, Calif., where he owns a home, but ultimately, the school district ruled he is in compliance with the law.

L

Our local Little League made headlines this year when the Pleasanton American Little League 12-year-old All Stars made it to the Little League West Regionals in Southern California in August. It was the furthest a team from Pleasanton has gone. The team lost to Hawaii, just missing an opportunity to go to the Little League World Series, but they returned home as local heroes.

M

Foothill High School reluctantly accepted the retirement announcement of longtime band director Bob Moorefield, or "Moorf," as he is lovingly called by his students. Moorefield will hang it up at the end of the school year in June. He was the Weekly's "Man of the Year" in this newspaper's Dec. 5 issue.

It was four years in prison for Katie McKewon, 20, who was convicted of drunk driving and gross vehicular manslaughter charges in May in the death of Laurel Alice Williams, 19, who was McKewon's passenger. Later in the year, Laurel's parents, Kathy Pace Williams and Ken Williams, started the Laurel Alice Foundation to give scholarships to students moving from a two-year school to a four-year school.

(continued on page 16)



Alameda County Fairgrounds

A vintage photo shows horses and jockeys racing at the Alameda County Fairgrounds track, the oldest one-mile race track in the nation. This year, three more days of racing will be added as a result of Bay Meadows' closure.

Year in review

(continued from page 15)

N

The Neal School feud dragged on all year long. The Signature v. Pleasanton Unified School District court case played out over many months, but really the case started back in 2001 before Superintendent John Casey was hired. The dispute over a developer financing agreement to build Neal Elementary School on Vineyard Avenue was decided against the district and in favor of Signature Properties in the fall. In December, the school district agreed to pay \$2.6 million, but said its fight isn't over. It's using Signature's attorneys to seek \$4.5 million-plus from the lawyers the district hired to draft the original developer agreement.

O

Open space got a big boost from two sources this year: the passage of Measure WW in November and the opening of 1,100 acres of land on the north end of the Pleasanton Ridge in December. WW, a \$500-million bond issue, will allow the East Bay Regional Parks District to continue working on and funding projects to add trails and land to its collection.

P

The Pleasanton Police Department brought back the black-and-white patrol cars, a move that was made to make police more visible around town.

Pleasanton Presbyterian Church made its big move in March to a brand new campus on Busch Road and Valley Avenue, and was renamed Centerpointe Presbyterian Church.

No parcel tax was put before Pleasanton voters this election season, although several other Bay Area school districts did, and



Janet Pelletier

Construction crews operated heavy machinery to make way for the new Bernal Community Park this past summer. The second phase of the project has already gotten under way.

Pleasanton's education leaders are talking about one here again.

Q

It's usually challenging to find a newsmaker with the letter "Q" in it, but not this year. We even have two. The City Council-backed hillside protection Measure QQ went head-to-head against the citizen-sponsored Measure PP. Ultimately, both measures passed and the council is working to combine the best elements of both for an ordinance that will become part of the city's new General Plan in early 2009.

R

Calling themselves a "rebel merchant group," downtown business owners, a group of about 20, banded together in December to attract more shoppers and profits in a stumbling economy, which has been seen in the form of a number of downtown shops closing. Some of the things they implemented included later store hours and cross-promotion

with downtown restaurants.

S

Staples Ranch, the 124-acre vacant parcel at the southwest corner of I-680 and El Charro Road, was subdivided into commercial, residential, retail and recreational areas, with a new auto row planned at the freeway-El Charro intersection. A privately-owned senior care complex, a retail shopping center and an ice hockey rink to be built by a subsidiary of the San Jose Sharks will occupy the rest. The full development plan should be approved by the City Council in 2009 along with an agreement to extend Stoneridge Drive to El Charro.

T

Tulancingo, Mexico and Pleasanton jointly celebrated the 25th anniversary of the two as sister cities. Thirty-eight Pleasanton residents traveled in April to Tulancingo and later in the year, delegates from Tulancingo came here to share festivities and goodwill.

U

United for 40 years, the Ballistic United Soccer Club celebrated the anniversary and how far it's come since 1968. The program made a name for soccer in the Tri-Valley and this year alone, 1,600 players were registered.

V

Vandalism reared its ugly head around election time this year. The day after the election, the Patrick family awoke to find their car's tires slashed, their home egged and spray-painted and their Obama signs destroyed. After initially saying they would treat it as vandalism, Pleasanton police recanted and said they'd investigate it as a possible hate crime against the Patricks, who are black. Vandalism was also experienced by a Happy Valley resident, whose 12-foot cross was chopped down the day after the election.

The Vintage Hills shopping center lost the "vintage" part of its name in April, when it underwent a major

facelift. The once-blighted center still includes the popular Vintage Hills Cleaners and Cutt Co. hair salon and also the new Kokoro Sushi Japanese restaurant, Spark Dance Studio and a new spa.

W

Washington Mutual closed its customer call center at Franklin and Johnson drives, eliminating 450 jobs. A development firm that owns the building complex is searching for a new corporate tenant.

At the same time, Workday, the Dave Duffield firm mentioned earlier, moved its 300-person workforce to Pleasanton with expansion plans likely to open more job opportunities, company officials said.

X

Two-time ex-running mates, former City Councilman and school board trustee Steve Brozosky and Mayor Jennifer Hosterman, faced off in November, but this race was less close than their 2006 challenge. Hosterman won a third term, beating Brozosky by nearly 2,000 votes.

Y

The Tri-Valley YMCA, based in Pleasanton, added new staff during the year, including Jeff Atwood, program director; Tim Stier, program support, and Marilyn Casper, administrative assistant. The organization plans to expand its programming efforts and will conduct its tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a breakfast Jan. 26 in Dublin.

Z

An explosion and an ensuing blaze destroyed a home on East Angela Street in December, where the Zuffa family lives. Deonna Zuffa has been receiving care for second- and third-degree burns. Police and fire officials continue to investigate the cause.

Community Pulse

Police Bulletin

DUI checkpoint numbers 'unusually low'

Just four vehicles were impounded and one driver was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol during the Dec. 19 sobriety checkpoint conducted by Pleasanton police.

"Though arrest and citation numbers were unusually low, this checkpoint was absolutely successful because of the sheer volume of drivers who passed through

and were educated about the hazards of driving under the influence," Traffic Unit Supervisor Sgt. Michael Collin said.

The checkpoint was held between 8 p.m. and 1:45 a.m. on northbound Hopyard Road between Coronado Lane and Inglewood Drive. Officers screened 1,158 vehicles, giving 15 drivers field sobriety tests.

As for DUI arrests between Christmas Eve and Dec. 26, the California Highway Patrol reported fewer arrests, with 409 drivers being charged with DUI, down from 977 last year. In the Bay Area, 48 arrests were made, compared to 164 last year. CHP also said there were no fatalities during the enforcement period.

Police Report

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

Dec. 21

- Grand theft:
 - 2:48 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
 - 4:42 p.m. in the 6200 block of Roslin Court
 - 4:47 p.m. in the 600 block of Palomino Drive
 - 7:21 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
- Battery:
 - 1:40 a.m. in the 4800 block of Hopyard Road
 - 11:17 p.m. in the 5400 block of Black Avenue
- DUI:
 - 1:12 a.m. in the 5300 block of Hopyard Road
 - 1:18 a.m. at the intersection of Johnson and Franklin drives
 - 1:22 a.m. at the intersection of Hopyard Road and Stoneridge Drive
- Lost property:
 - 12:17 a.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

Dec. 22

- Theft:
 - 10:16 a.m. in the 900 block of Pamela Place; petty theft
 - 11:18 a.m. in the 7200 block of Johnson Drive; grand theft
 - 12:32 a.m. in the 5700 block of West Las Positas Boulevard; forgery
 - 1:30 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; grand theft
 - 6:19 p.m. in the 1200 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
 - 7:37 p.m. in the 4300 block of Clovewood Lane; grand theft
 - 9:20 p.m. in the 5400 block of Corte Paloma; petty theft
 - 11:57 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; grand theft
- Vehicular burglary:
 - 7:38 a.m. in the 6600 block of Owens Drive
- Drug/alcohol violations:
 - 9:47 p.m. in the 1 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; non-narcotic controlled substance possession
 - 10:47 p.m. in the 900 block of Montevino Drive; underage drinking on private property

Dec. 23

- Theft:
 - 10:32 a.m. in the 4500 block of

- Hopyard Road; forgery
 - 12:00 p.m. in the 300 block of Main Street; forgery
 - 3:26 p.m. in the 4400 block of Mohr Avenue; stolen vehicle
 - 11:06 p.m. in the 1700 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- Vandalism:
 - 10:07 a.m. in the 6600 block of Riddell Street; worth over \$400
 - 11:04 a.m. in the 6600 block of Riddell Street; worth over \$400
 - 12:50 p.m. at the intersection of I-680 and Bernal Avenue
- Public drunkenness:
 - 1:16 a.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive
- Battery:
 - 5:19 p.m. in the 4400 block of Black Avenue
- Animal bite:
 - 3:59 a.m. in the 2600 block of Calle Reynoso
- Dec. 24
 - Theft:
 - 7:01 a.m. in the 1500 block of Kolln Street; stolen vehicle
 - 2:25 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
 - 6:58 p.m. in the 3600 block of Andrews Drive; stolen vehicle
 - Burglary:
 - 11:08 a.m. in the 5100 block of Hopyard Road
 - Vandalism:
 - 6:36 p.m. in the 3500 block of Bernal Avenue
 - DUI:
 - 11:52 a.m. at Foothill Road

Dec. 25

- Vehicular burglary:
 - 9:25 a.m. in the 3800 block of Fairlands Drive
 - 1:54 p.m. in the 11900 block of Dublin Canyon Road
- Vandalism:
 - 1:54 p.m. at the intersection of I-680 and Sunol Boulevard
- Public drunkenness:
 - 9:02 a.m. at the intersection of Stanley Boulevard and Rachael Place
- Lost property:
 - 9:41 a.m. in the 3300 block of Smoketree Commons Drive
- Recovered vehicle:
 - 11:59 p.m. in the 5800 block of Owens Drive

Dec. 26

- Theft:
 - 11:06 a.m. at the intersection of Santa Rita Road and Rosewood Drive; petty theft
 - 8:13 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; forgery
- Burglary:
 - 7:33 p.m. in the 6100 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
 - 8:13 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
- Alcohol violations:
 - 4:43 p.m. in the 1900 block of Santa Rita Road; public drunkenness
 - 9:08 p.m. at the intersection of Hansen Drive and Camino Segura; DUI



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WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES

City Council

Tuesday, January 6, 2008 @ 7:00 p.m.

Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Continued from December 16, 2008 - Public Hearing: PAP-129, City Council - Consider an appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of a conditional use permit to allow the operation of the following at 1262 Quarry Lane, Suite A, in the Valley Business Park: (1) a martial arts/childcare facility, Monday through Friday, from 11:30 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.; (2) full time childcare program camps during school breaks and holidays; and (3) evening martial arts classes, Monday through Friday, from 6:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Public Hearing: PUD-74, Ponderosa Homes - Consider an application for Planned Unit Development (PUD) development plan approval to construct 110 detached single-family homes for residents aged 55 and older at the previously reserved school facility option site located at 1 Reimers Drive in the Ironwood Development; and consider the Negative Declaration

Civic Arts Commission

Monday, January 5, 2009 @ 7:00 p.m.

Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Please visit our website at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us to view the agenda for this meeting.

Parks & Recreation Commission

Thursday, January 8, 2009 @ 7:00 p.m.

Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Please visit our website at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us to view the agenda for this meeting.

Human Services Commission

- The Human Services Commission meeting on January 7, 2009 has been cancelled.

Library Commission

- The Library Commission meeting on January 8, 2009 has been cancelled. A special Library Commission meeting will be held on January 15, 2009.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The City of Pleasanton invites you to apply for a position on the following standing commissions and committees:

City of Pleasanton Commissions

- Civic Arts Commission
- Housing Commission

Economic Vitality Committee Representatives

- Business At-Large
- Commercial Real Estate Development
- Commercial Service Firm
- Community Based Organization
- Environmental Industry
- Financial Services
- Infrastructure
- Medical Services
- Medical Technology
- Residential Real Estate Broker

Energy and Environment Committee (7 members including one Youth member)

Alameda County Paratransit Advisory Committee (1 member)

The City of Pleasanton and the Pleasanton Unified School District Liaison Committee invite you to apply for a position on the **Youth Master Plan Implementation Committee (YMPIC)**.

- Senior Citizen Representative
- Village High School Representative (2 Positions)
- Hart Middle School
- Pleasanton Middle School
- Parent at Large (Pre-School Student)

Applications for commissions and committees are available at the City Clerk's office, 123 Main Street, Pleasanton or on the City's Website at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us. For additional information, call the office of the City Clerk at (925) 931-5027.

Applications must be received no later than **5:00 P.M., FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2009**. Postmarks are not accepted.

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

Restoring a quality of life

Senior Support of the Tri-Valley lifts burdens plaguing area seniors

by Emily West

Area seniors are living on the edge. With a fixed income that's tighter than ever, many independent, elderly men and women have to give up what most of us consider basic essentials in order to make ends meet.

"With the financial crisis going on, we're seeing them having to make the choice: Do I buy the medication or the food?" said Marlene Peterson, executive director of Senior Support of the Tri-Valley. "They're asking us for paper napkins, toilet paper and denture cream."

Senior Support, a beneficiary of the Pleasanton Weekly's Holiday Fund, helps elderly people in Pleasanton, Livermore and Dublin with moderate to low incomes enjoy life. Whether it's a friendly home visit, a ride to a doctor's appointment, connecting to legal counseling, the fall prevention program or putting together paperwork to qualify for medical and financial help, the staff and volunteers are there to alleviate burdens.

"We try to bring everything to the table that we have," said Toni Coplan, a Senior Support case manager. "I see [the economy] particularly affects our seniors who are alone. Some are widowed and have no adult children to assist them."

Job layoffs and increased expenses are also plaguing the children who have helped their parents in the past.

When asked what would happen to the seniors without Senior Support, Coplan said they would likely be out on the street or end up in shelters and potentially die of malnutrition.

Prior to help from Coplan and Senior Support, a man in Livermore was on track to lose his apartment because he was over-



The Rotary Club of Pleasanton volunteered to help local seniors in the Senior Support Program with yard work.

Holiday Fund donors

Since the launch of the 2008 Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund, 418 donors have contributed \$111,477 with the match. Seventy-four anonymous contributors have given \$10,194.

Individuals

Bill & Lyn Adams.....	50
Jon & Janet Allen.....	**
Ron & Kathy Anderson.....	100
Jill Anderson & Geoff Southworth.....	100
Andrew Bailey & Lauren Purcell.....	1000
Rick & Dawn Barraza.....	250
Verla Becker.....	**
Chris & Glenda Berattis.....	500
The Bickley Family.....	140
Robert & Paula Bielby.....	**
Jan & Jeb Bing.....	200
Diane Birchell.....	100
Doug & Beverly Boff.....	100
Marie Boss.....	25
James Brice & Carole Peterson.....	**
Bert & Dee Brook.....	200
Gerry & Barbara Brunken.....	100
Clay & Jane Cameron.....	**
Richard & Sue Carson.....	**
Mike & Diana Champlin.....	500
Herbert & Stella Chang.....	**
Bunny & Teddy Chang.....	100
Gina Channell-Allen.....	**
Sean Chase.....	**
Dr. & Mrs. Leonard Cheney.....	200

The Christensen Family.....	**
Vincent Ciccarello.....	1000
John & Gretchen Clatworthy.....	**
Pauline Coe.....	**
Chris & Linda Coleman.....	100
Joe & Sue Compton.....	100
Cheryl Cook-Kallio.....	100
Pete & Diana Cornish.....	100
Patrick & Wendy Costanzo.....	200
The Craig Family.....	100
Dave Cryer.....	40
Roseann Csencsits & Mike Kundman.....	100
The David Family.....	100
Susan Davis.....	300
Richard & Judy DelTredici.....	25
Alice Desrosiers.....	100
Mike & Suzanne Dutra.....	100
John & Helen Eberle.....	100
Paul & Lorraine Ebright.....	**
Suzanne Emberton.....	**
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Emery.....	100
George & Jeanne Emmett.....	**
Greg & Sue Evans.....	**
Joan Evans.....	40
Scott Fetherston.....	100
Mitch & Patti Fidziura.....	**

Nicole, Ana & Michael Fong.....	150
Marilyn Foreman.....	100
Alan & Cleo Foster.....	100
Mr. & Mrs. Rich Fredette.....	**
Julie Furukawa.....	500
Frank & Sonia Geasa.....	200
Judith D. Geiselman.....	**
John & Fran Glavin.....	**
Roy & D'Aun Goble.....	100
R.J. & Marsha Grimes.....	**
Ms. Carol Guarnaccia.....	50
Greg Gum & Laura Keller.....	100
Delia Haag.....	**
Shaun & Jennifer Haggmark.....	**
Bernice Hansen.....	**
Hank & Corrine Hansen.....	100
Bob & Betsy Harris.....	400
Roger & Brenda Harris.....	**
Ryan Brown & Julie Harryman.....	100
Bill & Ellie Haynes.....	**
Tim & Sharyn Henshaw.....	**
William Herlihy.....	200
Janice Hermann.....	100
Jourdin Hermann.....	100
Greg & Charla Hilderbrand.....	100
Paul & Ann Hill.....	**
Sharon Hoggatt.....	**
Sarah Hollister.....	**
The Huangs.....	107
Charles & Kay Huff.....	**
Paige & Austin Hughes.....	200
Barbara A. Jackson.....	50
Bill & Cathy James.....	**
Bill & Dodge Jamieson.....	100
The Jeffrey Family.....	50

Steve & Bobby Jensen.....	500
Rudy & Marge Johnson.....	100
The Jolley Family.....	**
Jean P. Jones.....	100
Don & Jean Kallenberg.....	**
Jim & Elaine Keysor.....	250
Mrs. Betty Kirvan.....	100
David & Carol Kratky.....	100
Brad & Jessica LaLuzerne.....	500
Mr. & Mrs. Gary A. Lazarotti.....	**
Jennifer & Nathaniel Lee.....	**
Mrs. Tricia Poulos Leonard.....	250
Ronald Lingl.....	50
Mr. & Mrs. Blaise Lofland.....	250
John & Jane Loll.....	**
Al & Mary Lombardo.....	50
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Marc Louderback.....	100
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Doug & Raelia Marshall.....	100
Violet Masini.....	50
Pete & Julie Mason.....	**
Ken & Barbara McDonald.....	**
Cathy Medich & Robert Horton.....	100
Howard & Diana Mendenhall.....	**
Carl & Sharrell Michelotti.....	100
Evan & Debra Miller.....	**
Rodger, Laura & Stephanie Miller.....	50
Tom & Ellie Miller.....	**
The Min & Luo Family.....	**

The Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund

The Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund was created to provide financial support from our readers for a select group of local nonprofit organizations to help alleviate the needs that exist, despite our community's prosperity. This marks the sixth year of the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund. It provides an opportunity to aid local groups at a time when the numbers of those without jobs or with low-paying jobs and few if any health benefits have increased.

The Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund drive could not exist without the help of the Tri-Valley Community Foundation and its generous donors. This will enable us to double your donation for the first \$50,000 in contributions and allow your gift of \$1 to total \$2 to the nonprofits. An added benefit: Neither the Pleasanton Weekly nor the Tri-Valley Community Foundation will take any fees or expenses for administering the fund. One hundred percent of donations go to the intended grantees.

We appreciate your support of the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund and these worthy nonprofits.

whelmed in debt stemming from medical bills. Coplan helped the World War II veteran qualify for VA medical coverage, lower his credit card debt and several bills, link with dial-a-ride transportation and sign up for Meals on Wheels.

"Just by assisting him in navigating community resources he had no idea existed, we increased his quality of life," she said.

Senior Support has also recently faced cut-backs as they are mostly funded through federal, state and county grants, as well as private donations. With the help from the Holiday Fund, they can continue the programming and assist in emergencies.

"We have had them coming in for \$20 to get them through the month," Peterson said. "That never really happened before. Without the support of our generous community, we wouldn't be able to do that."

The program began in 1981, serving people. This year, a crew of 100 volunteers helps 1,500 seniors, which is up from 1,000 seniors last year.

"We have an unbelievable group of vol-

unteers and dedicated staff who are going to be there for the seniors no matter what," Peterson said. "And we're always looking for more."

A new program is especially in need of volunteers to drive seniors to and from doctor visits. Within the first several weeks, they have already given 44 rides.

Annette Mulder, a resident of Pleasanton, said she doesn't have enough words to describe how grateful she is for the help of Senior Support.

"I've lived a long time, through the second World War, and I have never been treated like this until I moved to Pleasanton," she said. "All the things they do, they help you in any way they can."

Having lived in another senior facility outside of the area, she said her questions were typically answered with "I don't know." Now, all her questions are answered.

"And I do ask a lot of questions," Mulder said with a laugh.

To learn more about Senior Support of the Tri-Valley or for anyone interested in volunteering, call Peterson at 931-5378. ■



Marlene Peterson serves as executive director of the Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley.

Jobe Bing

Mr. & Mrs. John Moffat	**	Maria Robertson.....	**
Frank & Teresa Morgan.....	**	Mrs. Rita Rollar	**
Ruth Morlock	100	Jerry & Carol Rosenblatt.....	50
Jeff & Kathy Narum	100	Ron & Carol Russo	**
Tim & Robin Neal	100	Bill & Pat Ruvalcaba.....	300
Cathy Needham & Carl Peters.....	50	Douglas & Mary Safreno	100
The Nepil Family.....	**	Kevin Salsberry	175
Cathe & Fred Norman	100	Swati & Manaj Samel	100
Greg & Janet O'Connor.....	**	John & Sheila Sanches	**
The O'Farrell Family	**	Ron & Marlene Sandberg	**
Mr. & Mrs. John O'Neill	**	Owen & Rebecca Saupe	**
Jim & Pam Ott	100	The Sborov Family.....	500
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Anne Pearson.....	50	John & Jackie Shurtleff	100
Janet Pelletier.....	30	Bob Silva	100
Dr. & Mrs. Joseph F. Pennisi	**	Richard & Corrie Simon.....	**
Jerry & Josine Pentin	100	Ted & Dee Slosek	**
Scott & Chris Peters	**	Debi, Mike & Alison Smith.....	**
Bob & Orley Philcox.....	500	Pat & Sue Spangler.....	100
Tom & Patty Powers	**	The Spencer Family	**
Felice Price.....	250	Al & Laverne Spotorno & Grandchildren	**
Alan & Jean Purves.....	**	Tom & Sandra St. Dennis	200
Garrett & Angela Ramirez-Holmes.....	50	Bill & Pam Stamatis	**
Marc & Becky Randall.....	250	Duane & Donna Stevens.....	300
Thomas Rasmus.....	30	John & Kay Stewart.....	**
Don & Ann Rathjen.....	**	Nancy Storch.....	**
Maxine Regalia.....	50	George & Hilary Strain	**
Mike & Lori Rice	**		
The Ristow Family	**		

(continued on page 20)

** The asterisk designates that the donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.



How to give

Your gift helps seniors, children and others in need

Contributions to the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund will be increased by the Tri-Valley Community Foundation. For every \$1 contributed, \$2 will be donated to these local organizations. All contributions will go directly to programs that benefit Pleasanton and Tri-Valley residents. Contributions will be distributed by the Tri-Valley Community Foundation to the seven agencies listed below. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

This year, due to the tremendous need of all nonprofits, donations will be shared equally among the seven recipient agencies.

For more information call us at 600-0840 or e-mail editor@pleasantonweekly.com.

The following agencies will be supported by the Holiday Fund:

- **Axis Community Health:** Provides medical, mental health, addiction counseling and health education services to more than 20,000 patients and clients each year, regardless of their ability to pay. An estimated 70 percent have no medical insurance or are underinsured, including some that have recently lost their jobs and health benefits. Call 201-6017 or visit www.axishealth.org.
- **Emergency Room Expansion at ValleyCare Medical Center:** ValleyCare, a nonprofit health system, needs funds to expand its emergency room, built in 1991 to accommodate 13,000 patients a year and now handles more than 26,000. It will cost \$6.7 million to replace the facility and upgrade equipment, and the Holiday Fund will help get that started. For more information, contact Ken Mercer at 373-4566.
- **Hope Hospice:** Hospice care is unique because it works to not only meet the needs of those at the end of life but also supports the emotional and spiritual needs of the family as well. Hope hospice care is provided regardless of the ability to pay and relies on contributions such as those raised by the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund.
- **Open Heart Kitchen:** As the only nonprofit free soup kitchen in the Tri-Valley area, this service provides nutritious meals for low-income people in the Pleasanton-Livermore area at Trinity Lutheran Church in Pleasanton and Asbury United Methodist Church in Livermore. Visit www.openheartkitchen.org or call 580-1616.
- **Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley:** An independent, nonprofit organization, this group offers a variety of services at no cost to seniors or to their families. Programs include health maintenance, nutrition, fitness, disease prevention, partner-in-safety, in-home counseling, friendly visiting programs and nurses on staff who regularly visit clients.
- **Tri-Valley Haven:** Runs a domestic violence shelter as well as a homeless shelter for families and a rape crisis center. Its mission is to aid those who have experienced abuse and offers counseling, a legal clinic and other practical advice. Call 449-5845; 24-hour hotline: (800) 884-8119 or visit www.trivalleyhaven.org.
- **Valley Humane Society:** This nonprofit group is all volunteers, with the mission to educate on responsible pet ownership. It assists in rescuing and placing abandoned or injured animals and operates an adoption center in downtown Pleasanton. It does not euthanize unless health problems dictate. Call 426-8656.

Name of Donor _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I wish to designate my contribution as follows:

- In my name as shown above OR:
- In honor of: In memory of: As a gift for: _____
(Name of person)
- Business or organization: _____
- I wish to contribute anonymously. Don't publish the amount of my contribution.

Please make checks payable to **The Holiday Fund**

Enclose this coupon and send to: **The Holiday Fund, Pleasanton Weekly**
5506 Sunol Blvd, Suite 100, Pleasanton, CA 94566



The Tri-Valley Community Foundation is located at 5674 Stoneridge Dr., Ste. 112, Pleasanton, CA 94588. More information about the Foundation can be obtained by contacting the organization at the above address, by calling its President David Rice at (925) 734-9965 or through its website: www.tvcfoundation.org. The Pleasanton Weekly will make every effort to publish donor names for donations received before Dec. 31, 2008, unless the donor checks the anonymous box. All donations will be acknowledged by mail.

Holiday Fund

Donor list

(continued from page 19)

Beverley R. Struthers.....**
 Jack & Carol Sum..... 100
 Harold & Marilyn Swanson.....**
 Brian & Karen Swift.....**
 Robert & Carole Sygiel..... 100
 David & Kathleen Thayer 250
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 Mark Worrell 20
 Ms. Kathleen Wright 25
 The Yamamoto Family**
 Steve & Becky Yeffa 200
 Julie Yuan-Miu..... 200
 Jim & Donna Zarrillo 100
 The Zong Family 100

As A Gift For

Open Heart Kitchen from Hacienda
 Bunco Group..... 100
 The teachers and staff
 at Hearst Elementary
 from Kim Hereld..... 100
 Axis Health Center
 from Lee & Clare Carlson.....**
 Open Heart Kitchen from Barbara
 Daniels.....**
 Amanda Strickhouser 45
 John, Leisa, Jeff & Mike Giguere—
 Merry Christmas.....**
 Axis Community Health
 from Jeff Ulatoski 150
 Hope Hospice
 from Annie & Kevin Sjodahl .. 150
 Nick & Chris from Gary & Sue
 Bartolotti..... 100

In Honor of

Grandma Adeline**
 Pleasanton Community Band from
 Jerri & Rob Long.....**
 Dashell, Desmond, Sarah, Chelsea
 & Karissa**
 Our Mom Lora.....**
 Teddy & Arthur Adams..... 50
 Alisal Elementary School
 from Chris & Debbie Scott.... 100
 Daggett Children
 & Grandchildren 500
 Our Military
 from The Gualandri Family.... 100
 The Oxe Family 250
 John A. Silva from Manny & Cathy
 Silva..... 100
 My Grandchildren
 from Doris A. Slater..... 25
 The Kassler & Pickert Families... **
 The Kearns Family from Randy &
 Stacey Shurson.....**
 Open Heart Kitchen from The Frost
 Holiday Party 200

Businesses

Accusplit Pedometer Wellness
 Team 160
 Allegra Print & Imaging **
 Applied Security Connections.. **
 B & C Enterprises..... 100
 Bay Valley Medical Group

at Civic Center Station..... 150
 California Self-Defense
 Consultants..... 300
 Chicago Title at Civic Center
 Station 150
 Construction Innovations, Inc.
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 DeBernardi Development
 Construction & Remodeling.. **
 E Squared Automotive **
 Extensions Physical Therapy
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 Friends of Joan..... 100
 Hometown GMAC Real Estate
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 Isberg Nott Company
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 Karen E. Morliengo, MFT..... 75
 Landmark Lending
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 Livermore - Amador Valley Legal
 Professionals Association .. 250
 Mathnasium at Civic Center
 Station 150
 Mission Pipe & Cigar Shop ... 150
 Pleasanton Kiwanis Club..... 1000
 Pleasanton Pet Sitting **
 Ponderosa Homes..... **
 Randick, O'Dea & Tooliatos, LLP
 Attorneys at Law.....**
 Tahara Detox Weightloss Center
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 The Fabulous Properties Team . 750
 The Home Works Group..... 200
 Tri-Valley YMCA
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 Understanding Behavior, Inc.
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 UNITS Mobile Storage..... **
 Walt Lupeika, CPA..... 100
 Walters Financial
 at Civic Center Station..... 150
 Wholesale Autos "R" Us..... **

In Memory of

Bonnie Zentner
 from Jeff & Debi Zentner 100
 Jack Harnett from Michael & Kris
 Harnett.....**
 Mary L. Erickson from Al Copher ..**
 Grandma Eva **
 Tony Paradiso from Dorene
 Paradiso-Carroll **
 Dick Waldron from Virginia
 Waldron.....**
 George Spiliotopolous, Hank
 Gomez, Ed Kinney & Roger
 Dabney from Ken Mercer .. 300
 Richard Marshall from Jason &
 Sandy Holliday..... 100
 Bob Williams from Mavis
 Williams..... **
 Rick Aguiar from Nancy Aguiar-
 Fargis..... **
 John A. Bell from Phoebe Bell
 250
 Virginia Finegan from John &
 Julie Finegan 350
 Nicholas Daniel Lesser from
 Bruce & Kathleen Lesser..... 25
 Gam & Papa Abbott from
 The Casey Family **
 Dan Gabor from Ann Gabor.. 100
 Beverly Ann Howe-Merrill
 from Howard Merrill 100
 Roger Dabney, George Jacobsen,
 Skip Mohatt & Chuck Volante
 from Don & Carol Bush **
 Gene Strom, Keith Strom
 & William Kolb
 from Carol (Kolb) Strom..... 300
 John D. Steiner..... 50
 Rich Gluck..... 100
 Kyle J. O'Connor 200
 Brian Melin
 from Patricia Melin **
 Carolyn L. Juniper
 from Robert Juniper..... **
 Leo Scully..... **
 Our Parents
 from Harold & Gena Gatlin ... **
 Eleanor M. Powers
 from Tom & Shirley Myers.... 50
 Doris Walberg 100
 Kyle O'Connor
 from The Dadrass Family..... **
 Harry & Toshiko Stewart from Rod,
 Christina, Alyssa & Danielle
 Browning..... 100
 Marilyn Bowe
 from Jim Bowe 100
 Irene & Theresa Baeta from Mr.
 & Mrs. Jim Teghtmeyer..... **
 Marv & David DeBernardi
 from Connie DeBernardi.... 200
 Juanita Haugen
 from The Bob Group..... **
 Michael & June Carboni
 from Richard & Nancy
 Shockley 200
 John A. Mavridis
 from Mom & Dad **
 Hank Gomez from Dorothy, Frank
 & Debra Gomez..... 150
 Ruth DeFreece
 from Joe & Janice Biggs..... **
 Sandy Hiles, Mary Jancoski &
 Thom Jancoski
 from John, Cathy & Lauren... **
 Brenda Lathlean Faggiano
 from Bill & Ellen Lathlean... 100
 James Reynolds
 from The Riggins Family 50
 Philip Crumpler II from
 Phil & Shirley Crumpler..... **
 Our Papa from Jenny, Tommy,
 Valerie & Danny 100
 Tom & Karen Elsnab..... **
 Fred Elling from Mark & Cindy
 Priscaro 50
 Etsuyo Marshall from John H.
 Marshall..... 100
 Rob Meierding from Sue, Dave &
 Mika..... 200
 Snooky from Terry & Judy
 Scavone 40
 George Callahan 50
 Roselle Grimes, Joe & Evelyn
 Schrick from Steve & Pam
 Grimes **
 Denise Zarcone & Roger Dabney
 from Paul & Marty Zarcone... **
 Donald D. Reid
 from The Reid Family 100
 Carl & Lottie Arndt..... 200
 Ernie Bridges from The Bridges
 Family..... **
 Charles Sebahar Sr.
 & Charles Sebahar Jr..... 100
 Ron McInnis from The McInnis
 Family 250
 Nan & Pop
 from The Rutledge Family 225
 Betty Patrick & Karen Oldemeyer
 from Chuck & Joan Brown.... **
 Our Parents 50
 Doris Cink & Charles Glass
 from Vernon & Tracy Cink.... 50
 Margaret Duke & Victoria
 Polvorosa Perry from Mike &
 Katherine Ferreira 100
 Joe Hatfield **
 Our Parents
 from Hans & Gisela Telm 100
 Dan & Daniel Chen 75
 Sol MacDonald from Robert
 & Marti Gastineau 100
 Stan Kallo from Blake
 & Suzanne Heitzman 150
 Will Forney **
 Kerry Caprista 50
 Maurice I. Smith from Carol,
 Joan, John, Donelle, Josh &
 Eric Smith..... **
 Gene Riga 25
 Mo Ching Chang & Elizabeth
 Stewart from Elite & Gordon
 Stewart..... **

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Thursday, January 15th	7pm	Grades 1-3
Tuesday, January 20th	7pm	Grades 4-5
Thursday, January 22nd	7pm	Grades 6-8
Tuesday, January 27th	7pm	18 months- 3 years
Thursday, January 29th	5pm	Kindergarten

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Sports

Parent photographers

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

Alumni Games raise most money since inaugural event

Mother and daughter, siblings, couples all join in the fun

Foothill High School and Amador High School soccer alumni met for the sixth year this past Sunday at Amador Valley High School for the Ryan Gordon Alumni Games and raised the most money since the games began in 2003.

The games raised \$6,100, bringing the total amount since 2003 to over \$36,000. Funds are donated to the men's and women's soccer programs at the two high schools.

Featuring male and female players from the '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s, the games were formed in honor of avid soccer player Ryan Gordon, a 2003 Foothill graduate who was killed in a jet ski accident shortly after graduating.

This year featured many family members playing together, according to organizer Curt Gordon, Ryan's father, including siblings, couples and even a mother/daughter combination for the first time Tessie Wagner-Pease (1981) played

with her daughter Melissa (2008) for Amador. Siblings who played together included: Valerie (2002) and Beverly Mayer (2004), Scott (1981) and Lenny McMillan (1991), Chuck (1978) and Rob Gilliam (1987), Dylan (2004) and Tyler Curtis (2003), and Scott (2008) and Jill Sweetnam (2006). Their cousin, Dan Sweetnam (2003) was also on the field in goal for Foothill. Couples included Dave Morris (1984) and Ann Peterson (1981), and Sean (1988) and Alicia Lemoine (1988).

In the first game, the Foothill women extended their win streak to two games by winning 4-0. Kim Patrick (1999) had a hat trick for Foothill. Jill Sweetnam (2003) added a goal for the winners.

The men's side saw Amador edging Foothill 2-1. After trailing most of the game, Amador came back with two late goals by Dylan Curtis (2004). Earlier Craig Caponigro (2008) had scored for Foothill.

The halftime intermissions featured youth players from both the Pleasanton Rage and Ballistic United Soccer Club. Alumni captains Tessie Wagner-Pease (Amador 1981) and Sean Lemoine (Foothill 1988), also both youth club coaches, provided the teams. Parents and friends of the kids and alumni crowded the stands. Many friends of Ryan Gordon were also in attendance.

Additionally there were 10 former teammates of Ryan Gordon's playing in the games. Volunteers manned the snack bar, collected tickets, controlled the scoreboard and refereed the games. The Hop Yard Alehouse and All Star Sports both contributed to the cause. Each winning team was provided with a trophy that travels back and forth to each year's winning high school. Next year's games will be at Foothill as the venue changes between schools every year.

—Janet Pelletier

High School Sports Schedule

Saturday, Jan. 3

Men's Soccer

Amador Valley vs. Acalanes, 2 p.m.

Men's Basketball

Foothill at Tracy, 7 p.m.

Wrestling

Granada Mat Classic, 9 a.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 6

Men's Soccer

Amador Valley at Livermore, 6 p.m.

Foothill at De La Salle, 6 p.m.

Men's Basketball

Amador Valley vs. San Ramon Valley, 7 p.m.

Foothill at Cal High, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 7

Women's Soccer

Amador Valley vs. Livermore, 6 p.m.

Foothill vs. Carondelet, 6 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Amador Valley at San Ramon, 7 p.m.

Foothill vs. Cal High, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 8

Women's Soccer

Amador Valley at Carondelet, 6 p.m.

Men's Soccer

Amador Valley vs. De La Salle, 6 p.m.

Foothill at Granada, 6 p.m.

Wrestling

Foothill vs. Monte Vista, 7 p.m.

Amador at Cal High, 6 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 9

Women's Basketball

Amador Valley vs. Cal, 7 p.m.

Foothill at Monte Vista, 7 p.m.

Men's Basketball

Amador Valley at Cal High, 7 p.m.

Foothill vs. Monte Vista, 7 p.m.

Women's Soccer

Foothill vs. Granada, 6 p.m.

Friday-Saturday, Jan. 9-10

Wrestling

Lloyd C. Engel at Escalon High, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 10

Men's Soccer

Foothill vs. Richmond, 5 p.m.

Wrestling

San Ramon Invitational Tournament, 9 a.m.

Monday, Jan. 12

Women's Soccer

Amador Valley at San Ramon Valley, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 13

Men's Soccer

Amador Valley vs. Granada, 6 p.m.

Foothill vs. San Ramon Valley, 6 p.m.

Men's Basketball

Amador Valley at Livermore, 7 p.m.

Foothill vs. De La Salle, 7 p.m.

Wrestling

Foothill vs. Cal High, 7 p.m.

Amador vs. San Ramon Valley, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 14

Women's Soccer

Amador Valley at Granada, 6 p.m.

Foothill at San Ramon Valley, 6 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Amador Valley vs. Livermore, 7 p.m.

Foothill at Carondelet, 7 p.m.

Wrestling

Foothill at De La Salle, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 15

Men's Soccer

Amador Valley at Monte Vista, 6 p.m.

Foothill at Livermore, 6 p.m.

Wrestling

Amador at Livermore, 6 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 16

Women's Soccer

Amador Valley vs. Monte Vista, 6 p.m.

Foothill vs. Livermore, 6 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Amador Valley at Carondelet, 7 p.m.

Foothill vs. Granada, 7 p.m.

Men's Basketball

Amador Valley vs. De La Salle, 7 p.m.

Foothill at Granada, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 17

Men's Soccer

Amador Valley at Richmond, 4:30 p.m.

Wrestling

Clayton Valley Invitational Tournament, 9 a.m.

Amador at Overfelt High, 7 a.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 20

Men's Soccer

Amador Valley vs. Foothill, 6 p.m.

Men's Basketball

Amador Valley vs. Granada, 7 p.m.

Foothill vs. San Ramon Valley, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 21

Women's Soccer

Amador Valley vs. Foothill, 6 p.m.

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ON THE TOWN



AMERICAN

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Eddie Papa's American Hangout

4889 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 469-6266. Winner of The Pleasanton Weekly's Reader Choice Awards for "Best American Food Restaurant" and "Best Meal under \$20", Eddie Papa's American Hangout celebrates the regional food and beverage cultures of America. Bring the whole family to enjoy iconic dishes from across the United States, Old World Hospitality, and hand crafted artisan cocktails.

www.eddiepapas.com

Vic's All Star Kitchen

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

BARBECUE

Red Smoke Grill

4501 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 734-0307. Home of the Tri Tip and Blue, Red Smoke Grill was Voted Reader's Choice Best 2006, 2007, 2008. 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.

BREW PUB/ALEHOUSE

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.

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. Now accepting reservations for holiday parties.

CHINESE

Chinese Szechuan

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

Panda Mandarin Cuisine

30 W. Angela St., Pleasanton, 484-4880. Panda offers several delicious specials using fresh ingredients and spices that make traditional northern

Chinese cuisine such a delight. Open for lunch Monday through Friday, dinner Monday through Saturday, closed Sunday. A private banquet room is available. Visit www.pandapleasanton.com.

CONTINENTAL

Barone's

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ON THE TOWN



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Fontina Ristorante

349 Main St., Pleasanton, 462-9299.

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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.

JAPANESE

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3105-K Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 462-3131. Makoto Sato, Owner

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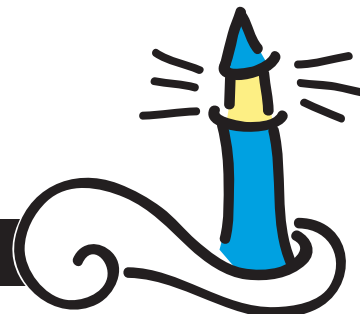
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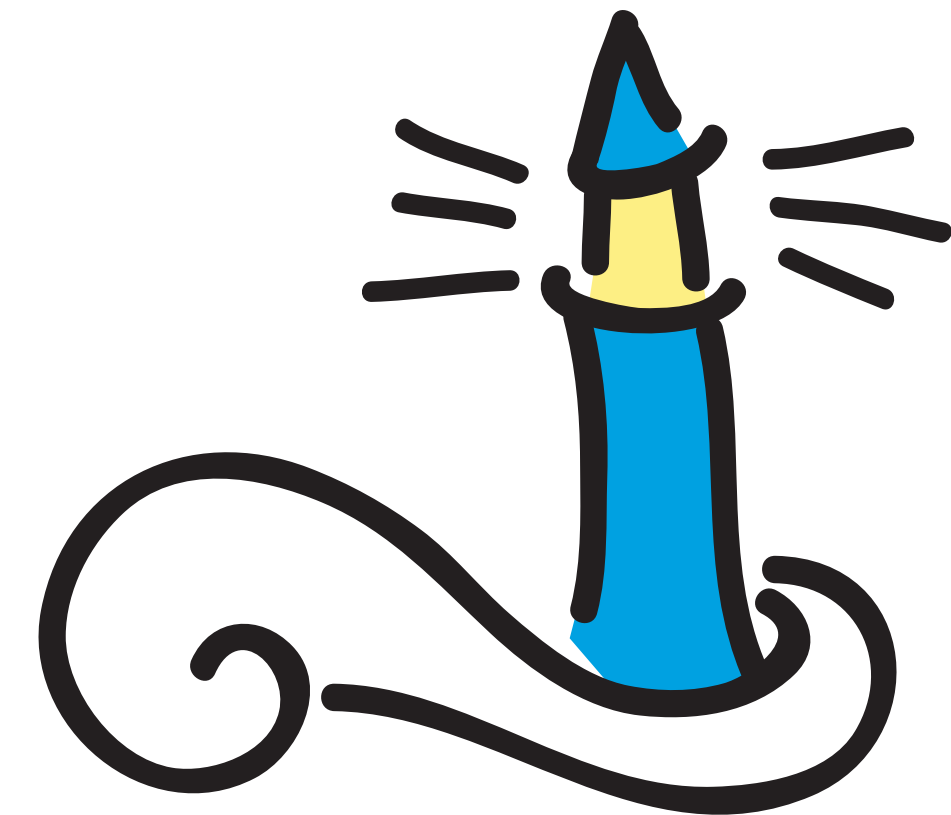
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Real Estate

Home sale of the week



3122 Conti Court Pleasanton – \$2,675,000

This custom residence is situated on nearly 3/4 of an acre and backs to the golf course with Mt. Diablo seen in the distance. The inspired design of this 6 bedroom, 6½ bath floor plan creates the perfect comfort zone amid luxurious interior finishes and sophisticated style. Sold by Donna Garrison of The Fabulous Properties Team at Keller Williams. (925) 397-4165

Happy New Year?

Could be it won't be so bad after all

by Dave Walden

For those worried about the economy and their investments, it may not seem like a very happy New Year. However, it is times like these that we should stop and reflect upon our long-term blessings.

Worried about home prices going down? Yes, median prices were down to around \$180,000 last month. This drop was over 13 percent in one year and represented the largest one-year plunge since the Depression.

Would you like some perspective? Median home prices were approximately \$80,000 in 1990. In other words, prices are up 125 percent over the past 20 years even factoring in the recent decline. And with lower home prices and record low rates, homes are now as affordable as they have been for the past decade.

The stock market? Down 40 percent in a year. Obviously stocks are much more volatile than real estate. A drop in a portfolio of 40 percent in one year has to be unnerving. Here we have another historical perspective. In 1990, the Dow Jones average hovered around 3,000 as opposed to the 8,500 during the final month of this year. This also represents an increase of over 100 percent.

There are many who see tremendous buying opportunities in stocks right now, just as many are crowding auction houses to get a chance to bid on real estate bargains.

The message? In every down market opportunities are created. Those who benefit are the ones who step in and take the opportunity of today. The markets will turn around. Those who wait to act are more likely to miss the opportunity. And that is the reason it is a happy New Year. Because we live in a country that gives us the ability to take advantage of opportunities and take the risks that go with these opportunities.

The Markets

Mortgages continued their assault on record lows as they dropped for the eighth week in a row. Freddie Mac announced that for the week ending Dec. 24, 30-year fixed rates averaged 5.14 percent, down from 5.19 percent the week before. The average for 15-year fixed

fell slightly to 4.91 percent. Adjustables were mixed with the average for one-year adjustables increasing slightly to 4.95 percent and five-year adjustables falling to 5.49 percent. A year ago 30-year fixed rates were at 6.17 percent.

"Rates on 30-year fixed-rate mortgages eased for the eighth straight week and set another record low since Freddie Mac's survey began in 1971," said Frank Nothaft, Freddie Mac vice president and chief economist.

"Real GDP growth fell 0.5 percent in the third quarter of the year, pulled down by the largest drop in consumer spending since the second quarter of 1980," he added. "The market consensus calls for an even larger decline in the last three months of the year."

"The housing market, meanwhile, continues to contract," Nothaft continued. "Existing home sales (excluding condominiums and co-ops) fell 8.6 percent in November to 4.0 million houses (annualized) in November, representing the slowest pace since July 1997."

Financial mogul Sam Zell, owner of the Tribune Co. which recently declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy, told an Israeli business conference a few weeks ago that the U.S. real estate market will be in recovery by spring 2009.

Zell pointed out that the U.S. population is growing and with fewer than 600,000 building starts in 2008, a million fewer than any of the last 10 years, demand for housing will rise. Zell blamed the current crisis—at least in part—on ill-considered decisions.

Sales are picking up in markets where prices are deflated, but the business is different than it was before the bubble burst, observers say.

Analysts say that prices have fallen to the point that those with average salaries can afford to buy once again.

"The buyers are returning," said Lawrence Yun, National Association of Realtors chief economist. "And in such a strong way that now we are hearing in some cases there is multiple bidding, which hints that maybe pricing is reaching a bottom point. But inventory remains high."

David Walden is a Certified Mortgage Planning Specialist and Certified Divorce Planning Professional associated with Diversified Capital Funding of Pleasanton.

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Featured Properties



Livermore – New price on this adorable three bedroom two and a half bathroom condo. You won't want to miss this one; it is clean and ready for you to move in. Located in the gated Community of Copper Hill. Features include Crown molding, custom paint, a gas fireplace and a two car garage. The Gated community features a pool, spa, tennis courts, and playground.

276 Wildrose Common, Unit 4 \$340,000



Livermore – Lovely 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom home with approximately 1372 square feet. Located in a quiet area in Sunset Meadows, it's been updated and well maintained. You'll appreciate the Corian counters, Mission Style kitchen cabinets, newer appliances, dual pane windows and the nice floor plan. The large lot offers a pool, spa and possible side yard access.

2658 Wellingham Drive \$485,000



Livermore – Seller relocating and has reduced the price to sell! Lowest priced listing in the Portola Glen neighborhood. Former model home with a hillside location offering awesome views. Beautiful two story home featuring 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, with 1 bedroom and bathroom downstairs. The Gourmet kitchen has Viking stainless steel appliances and the manicured yard has a spa.

3653 Glasgow Circle \$679,000



Livermore – Pride of ownership makes all the difference with this beautiful, original owner property with high end finishes inside and outside. Four bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, over 3500 square feet and a huge lot. The "open" floor plan, fabulous yard with built-in pool with waterfall, court location, great neighborhood and highly desirable schools are a must see.

2168 Grape Leaf Lane \$1,290,000



Pleasanton – Beautiful French Country Chateau with a court location. With 4 bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms and almost 3400 square feet, this beauty has plenty of room for entertaining and family living. First floor Master Suite with retreat and a spacious loft/media room on the second floor. Downstairs office/den with cherry built-in, two person workstation and bookcases.

2560 Grappa Place \$1,599,000



Pleasanton – Absolutely gorgeous, single story, custom estate located in Ruby Hill. The 4 bedroom, 5.5 bathroom floor plan is set against a resort style rear yard with an azure pool and spa with waterfall. A kitchen that can be called the true heart of this home features abundant custom cabinetry, slab granite counter tops, top of the line appliances and so much more.

3906 Vierra Street \$2,385,000



Pleasanton – A touch of New England elegance sets this distinctive custom residence apart and combines exquisite décor, superior construction and all of the heart warming comforts of home. Stunning interior appointments, including a beautiful gourmet kitchen, a downstairs Master Suite and a light filled great room. An incredible court location that backs to the golf course.

1642 Orvieto Court \$2,595,000



Pleasanton – A "New" custom-built Mediterranean Villa in one of Ruby Hill's most desirable locations. With "Timeless" architectural design, a fantastic floor plan, a huge lot (over 35,000 sq ft), breathtaking views and an unbeatable location, this property is simply spectacular. 5 bedrooms, 5 full baths, 3 half baths, approx. 8,600 sq ft and an oversized 5 car garage!

1916 Ticino Court \$3,750,000



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The latest from The 680 Blog

Happy New Year! Recovery in 2009?



Some good news from Wells Fargo, where their chief economist, Dr. Scott Anderson, predicts an economic turnaround in the second half of 2009. The impact of a staggering \$2 Trillion in economic stimulus actions by the government will finally take hold, and Dr. Anderson predicts the 3rd quarter of next year will be better than expected. Anderson predicts that the housing sector will lead the way. "One bright note is that the sector that led the economy into this morass is about to turn the corner, perhaps as soon as this summer, and will start to lead us out," Anderson said. Dr. Jim Paulsen, chief investment strategist of Wells Capital Management adds "It's like you're at a cookout and you're trying and trying to get your charcoal going and you keep squirting on lighter fluid and all of a sudden it goes 'poof!'" (courtesy of Yahoo News)

This is certainly welcome news for a very battered economy, both locally and nationally. Indeed, we are starting to hear more talk of a recovery in 2009, and with a new administration taking over in January, expect that thinking to gain momentum, especially since it appears all but certain that Obama's first priority will be to pass another huge economic stimulus package as soon as possible.

With the Fed lowering rates to historically low levels, along with government stimulus packages, it seems likely that things should begin to improve next year.

In the housing sector, while we have seen sharp drops in the Median home prices both statewide and nationally, sales activity is up, especially in the hardest hit areas of the central valley. Yes prices are down, but buyers are taking advantage of the bargains that are available, and that is a good start. And refinance applications are up sharply as well, thanks to the Fed. And the stock market seems to have found a stabilization point after a year of devastating losses.

But unemployment will continue to rise until we start to see a recovery, and corporate earnings and retail sales numbers will be brutal in January, so there is still some pain ahead early in the year. But it certainly appears that better days are ahead later next year. So as long as we are uncorking the champagne on New Year's Eve, we will have one more reason to toast the arrival of 2009.

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