

Pleasanton Weekly

Lost, found: Little dog lost in car accident finds his family after Weekly puts story online **PAGE 5**

Sending holiday cheer: Pleasanton Military Families pack up 260 boxes for troops overseas **PAGE 17**

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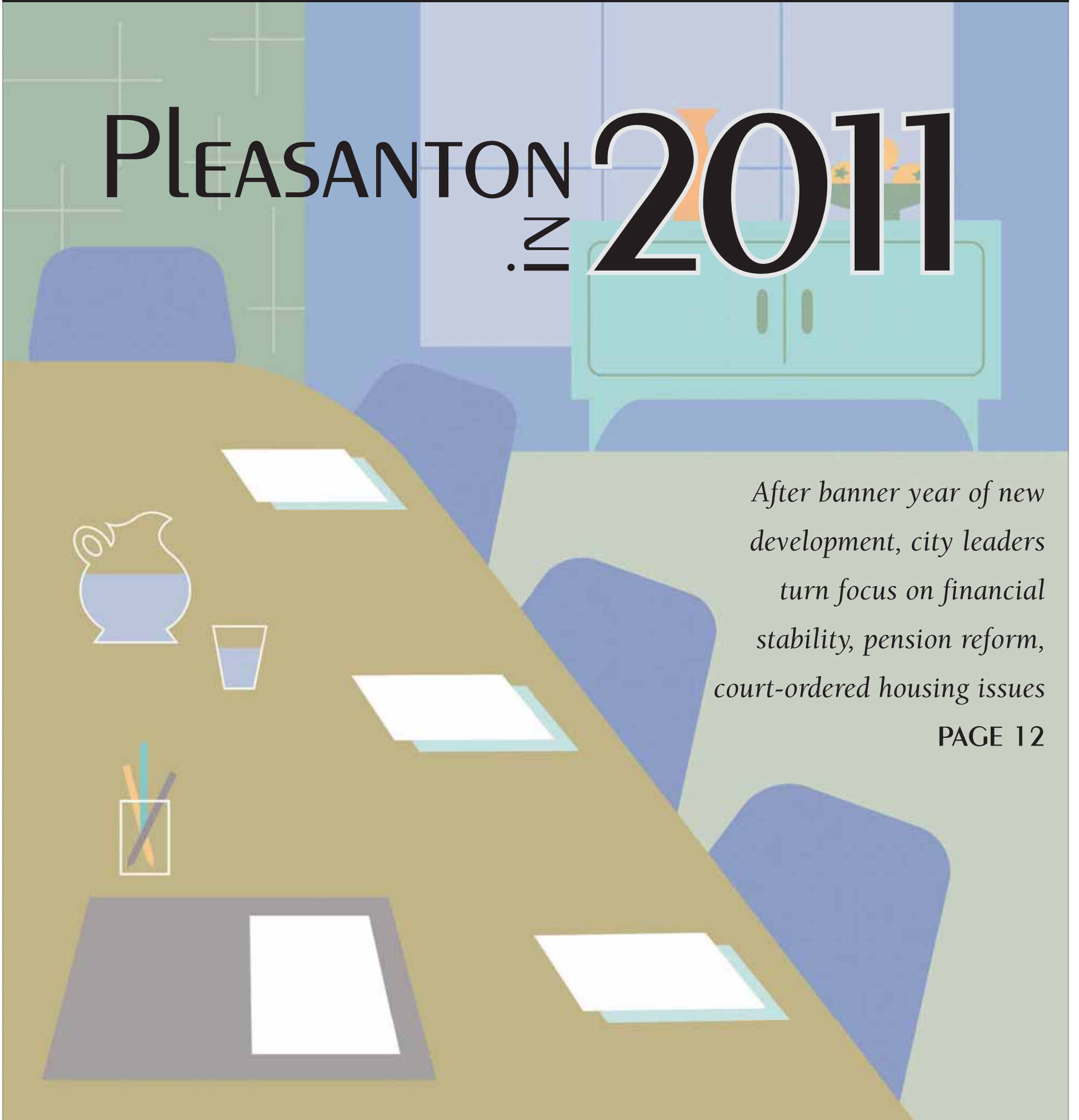
VOL. XI, NUMBER 48 • DECEMBER 10, 2010

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PLEASANTON in 2011

After banner year of new development, city leaders turn focus on financial stability, pension reform, court-ordered housing issues

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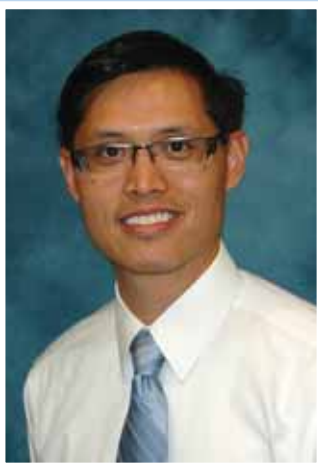
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Pediatrics



Geera Peters, M.D.
Pediatrics

AROUND PLEASANTON



By JEB BING

Around Pleasanton by Jeb Bing will return next week.

TAKE US ALONG



Capitol vacation: Tammy Eng-Gonzalez and her sons Sam, Gabe and Jake visit Congressman Jerry McNerney's office in Washington, D.C., along with the Weekly's edition about Chinese New Year.



Romantic reading: Dottie and Bill Berck prove that it's never too cold for a gondola ride in Venice, which was the final stop on their recent three-week cruise to the Greek Isles, Israel, Turkey, Croatia and Italy.

About the Cover

The City Council's agenda for the next year includes the 2011-13 budget, employee salary and pension schedules, and dealing with state-mandated housing requirements, green building and state takeaways. Cover design by Kristin Herman.

Vol. XI, Number 48

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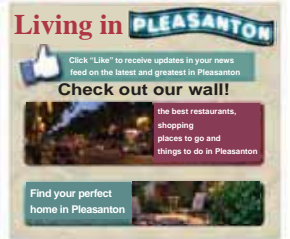
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Streetwise

ASKED AROUND TOWN

What are the first three things on your Christmas wish list?



Shelby Elgood

Sophomore

I really want an iPhone 4 this year. I'd also like a new curling iron and a pair of jeans. Spending time with my family will be a wonderful gift, too.

Tyler Bury

Kindergarten

I'd like a double lightsaber that lights up and real tools and real wood. I'm going to build something, maybe a playhouse. I want some Star Wars figures too, like Luke Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi and Clone Troopers. We already have a Darth Vader but his helmet doesn't stay on anymore so I want a new Darth Vader.



Luke Palfalvi

Fourth grade

I want an iPhone. I'm going to play on it and call people. I also want a WWE poster. It's a wrestling poster. I also want Super Mario Bros for my Nintendo DS.

Nikki Trucco

Fourth grade

I would like a Smiley phone, new Uggs in chestnut, and an iPod Touch.



Liam Fournier

Second grade

I want a frog Webkins, and a new Nintendo DS game called Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass, and I want the Harry Potter Dobby Lego set.

—Compiled by Kerry Nally

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

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DIGEST

Looking for lights?

LightsoftheValley.com is running its online guide to the best Christmas displays in the Bay Area and Northern California for the 12th year.

The site lists colorfully decorated houses by location so people can map out their route to drive around and enjoy decorations in their area.

Ninety-three cities are featured including Pleasanton, which has 11 homes listed, complete with addresses, ratings and maps.

Light displays are rated from one to five stars, but no Pleasanton listing has fewer than three-and-a-half stars, and five Pleasanton homes have five stars.

Alex Dourov said he started the site because it seemed like a fun thing to do. But after it got going, he said he was touched by the number of emails he received telling him about homebound people who could only enjoy seeing holiday lights on his website. This year, the site has had more than 20,000 visitors.

New senior exercise

Pleasanton is beginning a new roster of exercise classes in 2011, absorbed from the recent departure of the QUEST program at Las Positas College.

Specifically designed for participants ages 50 and up, the following classes will begin during the week of Jan. 4 at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd.:

Zumba Gold (Fast Fitness), Fit for 50 (Slower Paced Fitness), Yoga, Beginning Line Dancing, Intermediate Line Dancing and Gentle Exercise (Sittercise).

For information on class dates and fees, call 931-5365.

Winter nature camp

Alviso Adobe Community Park is holding an exciting winter camp that is all about nature, with some very cool history woven in. It's for ages 6-12 and includes crafts, skills and games.

The camp will run from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Wednesday through Friday, Dec. 29-31.

Cost is \$123 for residents; \$135 for nonresidents.

Call 931-5340 for more information.

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

City honors outgoing school board members Kernan, Ott

Kept budget cuts 'far from classroom' while also seeing gains in student achievements

By JEB BING

Outgoing Pleasanton school board members Pat Kernan and Jim Ott were honored for their community service Tuesday night by Mayor Jennifer Hosterman and the City Council.

The city presented the two with special commendations that addressed their role as school board members during a time of major gains in student achievement and also during severe and growing budget concerns.

Councilwoman Cheryl Cook-Kallio, in reading the proclamations, praised the two for giving their time and energy "to serve the community's most important assets — our children."

She said Kernan has spent "an astounding" 13 years on the school board, first being appointed in 1997 and then elected in twice after that.

"Your contributions on the Pleasanton school board of trustees have had a profound impact on education achievements in our community," she said.

She said Ott was appointed to serve on the school board in early 2006 and elected to a four-year term later that year.

"He came on the board at the start of the school district's challenging budget crisis, which continues today," Cook-Kallio said. "He worked with his peers during these years to keep any cuts as far from the classroom as possible. Yet, during that time, we continued to see increases in student achievement and balanced budgets even in this challenging economy."

Ott, a former poet laureate in Pleasanton and a night school teacher at Las Positas College, thanked the council for its helpful partnership with the school district.

"In the coming months, the school board and district will face tough decisions about the needed investment in our schools to keep the momentum going," Ott said. "As we look at resources available in our community, we have to think about the needs in our schools." ■



JEB BING

Pat Kernan and Jim Ott, Pleasanton school board members who will step down from their positions next week, accept certificates of commendation from the Pleasanton City Council on Tuesday night.



GLENN WOHLTMANN

Spencer West tells Foothill students that they can be a powerful force for change; at right, Sophomore Alexis Began (left) and Freshman Julia Feng wear tape over their mouths during a day of silence, part of Foothill Cares at the school.



Foothill Cares: changing the world one student at a time

Weeklong effort promotes compassion at the school

By GLENN WOHLTMANN

You can change the world.

That was the message from Spencer West, a man with a history of overcoming obstacles, a message some Foothill High School students took to eagerly.

West, who lost his legs when he was 5 and was told he'd never be a functioning member of society, went on to do just that, with all the trappings. He told the 2,200 students at Foothill that it took a trip to Kenya to help build a school for him to realize his calling — to help motivate others to be a power for good in the world.

He's now a speaker for the Me to We organization, a group that promotes social change and donates half its profits to "Free the Children."

In a speech that was by turns moving and funny, West gave simple advice to the students.

"Just be happy every day. We need to be thankful for the things we have," he said. "Just do one

thing. What's important is that you decide what's important and do something about it."

That's in keeping with the school's mission for the week, Foothill Cares, in which students will decide on a charity for the school to adopt.

Some of the students took part in a day of silence, which is part of Free the Children's campaign to support youths who are silenced by the denial of their basic rights.

While many of the students participated, some took it more seriously than others, wearing black tape across their mouths, and not only remaining silent but not using text messages or social media like Facebook either.

Tenth-grader Alexis Bagon, 15, was one of those who spent the day with her mouth taped shut, communicating by gestures and notes.

"It would be easier to talk like I normally do — like we all do — but the people we are representing don't even have that choice,"

Bagon explained in writing. "I can now identify how hard it is for them and I am not even experiencing it to the degree they do."

Julia Feng, a 14-year-old ninth-grader agreed, though not in spoken words.

"Throughout this day I learned that without a voice I had no say in anything and couldn't speak up and say my opinion in class or share what I thought and for other people who have their rights taken away from them, that impacts their life even more," Feng wrote.

Foothill Cares week is part of Pleasanton's commitment to building a community of character, and West's closing, a quote from Martin Luther King Jr., seemed to sum up the school's mission for the week:

"If you want to be important, wonderful. If you want to be recognized, wonderful. If you want to be great, wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant." ■

Chorkie, owner reunited after 2-day search

Small dog wandered off after traffic accident

The little 1-year-old Chorkie dog that wandered away from its owner after her car was in an accident on I-680 on Saturday, has been found.

Juliana Pribela, 11, found the 7-1/2-pound dog in her back yard off Foothill Road around 3 p.m. Sunday afternoon after she spotted it out the window.

The dog had been missing since the 7 p.m. Saturday traffic accident and its owner, medical student Melina Masihi who lives in Pleasanton, has been searching the freeway area near the Castlewood Drive/Sunol Boulevard exit for her cherished pet.

Juliana and her mom Terri bathed the little dog, a Chorkie, which is a mix of a Yorkie dog and a Chihuahua, and removed the many burrs from his fur.

"I thought probably someone has taken this kind of a dog to the darling little pet store downtown," said Terri Pribela, and she brought the dog into Murphy's Paw on Main Street on Monday.

She also wanted to buy him a coat, she added.

Meanwhile the Pleasanton Weekly had posted a news story about the missing dog on its daily Express edition Monday at www.pleasantonweekly.com.

"Monday, a lady brought the dog into our store and told me that she found him Sunday evening in a neighborhood off of Foothill," said Melanie Sadek, owner of Murphy's Paw. "I recommended that she go to a local vet and have his back scanned."

"When she left the store, I had kept her contact info," Sadek

See **CHORKIE** on Page 7

Village D.C. gets help from benefactors

Donations, pizza and a limo ride send them on their way

BY GLENN WOHLTMMANN

The school has been doing this trip for years, but the 12 students from Village High who spent last week in Washington, D.C., traveled in style, courtesy of some local businesses.

Ann Crawford, who teaches history and civics at Village, said she gave the kids who wanted to go the same kind of letter she's been sending out for years.

"The cost of the trip is \$1,788," Crawford said. "I send out a letter to the community. I tell them to give it out at their parents' place of work."

This year things started to snowball when Christian Ghera gave the letter to his mom, Jennifer, who works at the Pleasanton Hilton. General Manager Kevin Goble contributed \$300, then asked Crawford how the kids get to the airport.

"When you're dealing with students," she told him, "you have problems that take place."

Crawford explained that she's had a student with a flat tire, kids who went to the wrong airport or to arrivals instead of departures, and that one year recently, a student misplaced his shoes at the hotel in Washington and they missed their flight home.

"He's laughing and he says, 'How about if I call Bill at Black Tie Limo?'" she said. "I was flabbergasted."

Goble then took his offer a step further, offering to have the students arrive an hour early for pizza — a little extra incentive to get the kids there on time.

"It was an act of supreme generosity," Crawford said.

So Black Tie Limo brought them to the airport Friday morning and picked them up Saturday (without another misplaced shoe incident), so the class traveled with class.

"It was pretty fun," said 17-year-old Jordon Goodman, a senior at



Village High students surround statues of George and Martha Washington and Martha's daughters at Mount Vernon's Visitors Center. Front row, l-r: Ann Crawford, Danika Beard, Evan Eacret, Sabrina Soracco (kneeling), Chiara Sene; back row: Cody Zimmerman, Daniel Duret, Katelyn Merrill, Christian Ghera (smiling), Angel Irizarry, Jordon Davis and Jordan Goodman.

Village. "It was like a party bus. Everyone was pretty tired but was excited to go on the trip."

While at the nation's capital, they received a crash course in government.

The 12 students on the trip had a Capitol Hill tour arranged through Congressman Jerry McNerney's office and visited Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, the National Archives, the Library of Congress and the Holocaust Museum.

They also saw the Supreme Court, which was in session, although they missed an upcoming ruling in a California case that could affect them. In that case, video game manufacturers are taking on a law signed by Gov. Schwarzenegger that banned selling violent video games to minors.

The students also spent the night in Colonial Williamsburg, toured all the major monuments, and attended workshops.

"We're in a group of like 25 kids. We have discussions about our current government," Goodman said midway through the trip, "and learn as much as we can. It's more

specific, like what's going on in the news right now."

They also got a chance to see how the other half lives, rooming one Village student and two from another state. This year, students from Alaska, Michigan, Texas, Louisiana, Utah and Puerto Rico participated.

In the past, Crawford said that mix has made for interesting interactions as Village students — some with piercings, tattoos and unusual hair colors — met up with their more staid counterparts from other places in the country. She said that's one of the goals of Close Up, the organization that puts the trips together.

Crawford said she's accompanied students for the last few years and hopes they get as much out of it as she does.

"I just have a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for the trip, and if I can pass that along to the kids, that's great," she said.

She was excited about local businesses sending off the kids in style.

"I've been here since Day 1, and this is most generous gift ever received," Crawford said. ■

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Jury selection continues in Castlewood case

Trial for Ernest Scherer III could begin in January

By Glenn Wohltmann

Attorneys in the murder trial of accused Castlewood killer Ernest Scherer III continued their long process of selecting jurors for the case this week, with an eye to actually starting the trial in January.

Scherer was charged with the murders of his father, Ernie Scherer Jr., 60, and his wife, Charlene Abendroth, 57, in February 2009, nearly a year after the brutal killings occurred.

Sifting through a stack of jury questionnaires more than a foot high, the attorneys and Judge Jeffrey Horner by mid-week had pretty much wrapped up exclusions for people who either can't or shouldn't be allowed to serve on the jury.

Reasons for those exclusions ranged from medical excuses to

people who can't understand English well enough to participate to at least one person who admitted he wouldn't necessarily follow the law in the case.

Those potential jurors, 360 in all, were required to fill out a survey of more than 20 pages and be interviewed by the court.

Next comes the process of actually seating the 12-member panel to hear the trial. Each attorney will be allowed a number of challenges to specific individuals in an attempt to create a jury favorable to his side. The attorney doesn't need to explain his reason for asking a potential juror to be bumped.

The murder victims were apparently bludgeoned and stabbed repeatedly, but Alameda County Prosecutor David Stein said late last

year that prosecutors won't seek the death penalty.

Scherer Jr. was an active Republican fundraiser and former member of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District board.

Scherer III was linked to the scene by a red Chevy Camaro, similar to the one he owned, that was spotted in the neighborhood at the time of the killings.

Between motions on both sides and the work to select a jury, the pretrial phase on the case has lasted nearly two months. Provided a jury can be seated in time, the trial is set to begin Jan. 4. ■



CHORKIE

Continued from Page 5

said. "Chorkie also had a new fleece jacket to help keep him warm. Then this morning I read the Pleasanton Weekly Express edition and called everyone ASAP. Melina was so grateful, and Terri was happy to reunite Chorkie with his mommy."

No one was badly injured in the Saturday evening accident, including the Chorkie, who apparently walked down an embankment and disappeared. Masihi is bruised and received stitches on her forehead.

Terri Pribela said when Masihi called her, she asked if she would wait until 5 p.m. to pick up the dog, whose name is Cookie, because she knew Juliana would want to say goodbye to her new

little friend. When Masihi arrived, she'd brought several friends, a giant cake and a dozen roses, said Pribela.

"They said, 'Let me pay you,' but I said, 'Absolutely not, it's a gift,'" she recalled.

When they left, they gave Juliana an envelope, which turned out to contain the \$300 reward they'd been offering for Cookie's return.

That was wonderful for Juliana, noted her mother, but they were happy to take care of little Cookie and were glad for the happy ending since they already have a house full of pets.

"We have dogs and we would want someone to take care of our dog," Pribela said.

"It's a miracle," Masihi said Wednesday morning, that Cookie survived after her night alone wan-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cookie, a 1-year-old Chorkie, had a rough night after a car accident left him wandering on his own. A photo on www.PleasantonWeekly.com led to his owner finding the family that had rescued him.

dering through the city. "I'm crazy about this little guy."

Staff reports

TAKE US ALONG



Bike tour: Carol and Tom Pendery pause to enjoy their Weekly at White Bear Lake on their Valley Spokesmen Tour of Minnesota.

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EDITORIAL

THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Support the Holiday Fund

A banner will go up under the Arch in downtown Pleasanton on Monday reminding everyone of the opportunity to contribute to the 2010 Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund. More than ever, the Holiday Fund's beneficiaries need our help as more residents in the Tri-Valley find themselves with shrinking pay, shrinking health care benefits or no jobs or health care coverage at all. The larger lines at Axis Community Health and Open Heart Kitchen — two of the Fund's beneficiaries this year — show the needs here are increasing as a continued sluggish economy fails to provide employment opportunities.

This week's debate over extending unemployment benefits shows the concern nationally that millions of Americans, including many in the Tri-Valley, still need financial help for shelter, food and medicine. For many there's now the added concern over the pending loss of Cobra, the discounted health insurance available temporarily after an individual loses a job and employee health plan coverage. Often, these additional costs are more than families can afford, leading to deteriorating health care at home.

Besides Axis and Open Heart Kitchen, this year's beneficiaries of the Holiday Fund are Hope Hospice, the Ryan Comer Cancer Resource Center at ValleyCare, and the Valley Humane Society. Nationally, Americans are giving about 3% less this year compared to 2009, and this downward trend affects local charities, too, and at a time when their needs are growing. That makes contributions to the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund even more important and for at least two reasons. First, for every \$1 given to the Holiday Fund, the Tri-Valley Community Foundation will provide another \$1 in matching funds up to a total of \$100,000, this year's campaign goal. Second, all administrative costs are covered by the Pleasanton Weekly. Unlike contributions that may go to national organizations where administrative costs can skim 15-20% off the top, every dollar contributed here stays here. Also, funds contributed to national charities often don't make their way back here again. Pleasanton and the Tri-Valley are not on anyone's list as a demographic area in need of public aid, even though if you're poor in Pleasanton, you're just as poor as those in other parts of the country.

As of press time, contributions to the Holiday Fund with the matching dollars total \$48,764, including an anonymous donation of \$10,000 received this week. We hope you'll help us meet our goal of helping the local nonprofits that serve our community. ■

LETTERS

Spend money on Americans

Dear Editor,

It's obvious we, as a country and as citizens, are mired in financial difficulty. Unemployment is too high, home foreclosures are too high, our debts are too high, and excess amounts of labor are exported to other countries. We need to address this issue promptly.

One alternative may be to dramati-

cally reduce our foreign aid to other countries. We are in a jam and need to cut back our expenses — just as we have to do at our homes.

Let us help ourselves by reducing foreign aid by at least one half. We can't go on helping other countries when our own citizens are hurting so much. Put that foreign aid savings in domestic programs relieving our debt, unemployment, foreclosures, etc.

What is your response to reducing foreign aid using those dollars to relieve some of our financial mess? We request your answer.

Howard and Emilie Seebach

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POLICE BULLETIN

Drug buy goes awry

An observant Pleasanton police officer who watched what she suspected was a drug deal arrested three people and may have prevented a burglary at the same time.

Officer Kristie Fountain watched people from two suspicious vehicles conduct what appeared to be a drug sale in the parking lot at Raley's Supermarket on Sunol Boulevard, according to a police report. Fountain approached and got permission to search one of the suspects, Christian Morrison Jeffcoat, 36, who turned out to have a large sum of cash in a pocket and a number of small glassine bags with a powdery residue, according to the report.

A search of the Jeffcoat's SUV turned up scales, more bags and a lock-picking kit, police said. Jeffcoat was charged with possession of a non-narcotic substance with intent to sell, possession of burglary tools, possession of paraphernalia, possession of a hypodermic needle and being under the influence of a controlled substance.

Two others, the alleged buyers, were also arrested. Crystal Marie Brush, 26, was charged with possession

of a non-narcotic controlled substance with intent to sell, possession of a non-narcotic controlled substance, possession of hypodermic needle and being under the influence of a controlled substance.

The third person allegedly involved was inside Raley's while police were busy with Jeffcoat and Brush. The police report said Svend Trygve Melchior, 48, had what it described as an "internal debate," stopping and starting several times before deciding to act as a spectator, although Fountain had seen him involved in the alleged drug deal; he was arrested on charges of possession of a non-narcotic controlled substance and possession of a hypodermic needle.

Resident turns robber

A Pleasanton man was charged with robbery after an incident at his home in the 3800 block of Promenade Way at about 4 p.m. Nov. 30.

A 65-year-old female insurance adjuster was visiting the home of Jeffrey Robert Harlan, taking pictures, according to a police report. Harlan became upset when the woman was in the back yard near a trampoline.

Harlan allegedly knocked the woman down and took her camera. He was arrested on charges of robbery, battery and misappropriation of property.

POLICE REPORT

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

Nov. 28

Theft

- 10:27 a.m. in the 5500 block of Springhouse Drive; identity theft
- 1:22 p.m. in the first block of California Avenue; grand theft
- 5:46 p.m. in the 1600 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; theft

Burglary

- 2 p.m. in the 100 block of Mataro Court

Nov. 29

Theft

- 9:57 a.m. in the 7300 block of Hillsdale Drive; theft
- 11:39 p.m. in the first block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- 3:07 p.m. in the 1100 block of Blanc Court; identity theft

Vandalism

- 8:42 a.m. in the 6600 block of Owens Drive
- 8:49 a.m. at the intersection of Thiessen Street and Vineyard Avenue

Auto burglary

- 2:43 a.m. in the 11000 block of Dublin Canyon Road

Nov. 30

Theft

- 8:49 a.m. in the 4800 block of Bernal Avenue; grand theft
- 12:16 p.m. in the 4300 block of Foothill Road; misappropriation of found property, possession of stolen property
- 12:38 p.m. in the 6100 block of Homer Court; grand theft

5:33 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; theft

- 7:32 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft

Vandalism

- 3:25 p.m. in the 4200 block of Muirwood Drive

Auto burglary

- 1:52 p.m. in the 7500 block of Highland Oaks Drive

DUI

- 7:40 p.m. in the 4200 block of First Street

Dec. 1

Theft

- 7:18 a.m. in the 700 block of Main Street; petty theft
- 9:44 a.m. in the 4500 block of Hopyard Road; petty theft
- 10:44 a.m. in the 100 block of Monaco Court; identity theft
- 1:42 p.m. in the 400 block of Trebbiano Place; identity theft
- 4:25 p.m. in the 200 block of Kottinger Place; grand theft
- 5:30 p.m. in the 5900 block of Via Del Cielo; grand theft
- 7:32 p.m. in the 1800 block of Rose Avenue; auto theft

Drug/alcohol violations

- 4:49 p.m. in the 4800 block of Bernal Avenue; possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell

Dec. 2

Theft

- 11:21 a.m. in the 400 block of Page Court; identity theft
- 7:16 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; grand theft
- 10:36 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; theft

Vandalism

- 1:20 p.m. at the intersection of Main Street and Del Valle Parkway
- 3:26 p.m. at the intersection of First Street and Stanley Boulevard
- 4:27 p.m. at the intersection of Foothill Road and Moller Ranch Road

Drug/alcohol violations

- 10:21 a.m. at the intersection of Jensen Street and Santa Rita Road; driving with marijuana
- 7:36 p.m. at the intersection of Bernal Avenue and Valley Avenue; public drunkenness
- 10:04 p.m. at the intersection of Hansen Drive and Valley Avenue; marijuana possession

Dec. 3

Theft

- 1:08 p.m. in the 2100 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; grand theft
- 3:44 p.m. in the 3600 block of Fairlands Drive; grand theft
- 9:35 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; petty theft

Drug/alcohol violations

- 5:35 p.m. in the 5300 block of Case Avenue; paraphernalia possession
- 9:04 p.m. at the intersection of Owens Drive and Johnson Court; DUI
- 9:17 p.m. in the 4200 block of First Street; under the influence of a controlled substance

Dec. 4

Theft

- 12:45 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; shoplifting
- 1:04 p.m. in the 6000 block of Johnson Drive; theft

Vandalism

- 8:51 p.m. at the intersection of Augustine Street and Rose Avenue

OBITUARIES

Patricia Kay Mensing

Patricia Kay Mensing died Nov. 29 at the age of 59 in her Pleasanton home after a battle with ovarian cancer.



She was born Jan. 3, 1951, in Luverne, Iowa, the daughter of Kenneth and Olive (Boehmke) Kramer. She touched countless lives and was always positive. She loved gardening, quilting, cooking, dancing and spending time with her family and friends.

Ms. Mensing was predeceased by her parents and her brother Donn Kramer. She is survived by her daughters, Olivia Mensing of Pleasanton and Brooke Whiteside of San Diego, and husband Joel; brother James Bockholt of Palo

Alto and wife Mako; family in Iowa including sister Anne Brecht, and husband Ray, step-mother Verna Kramer, stepsister Linda McElroy, and husband Glen, step-brother Russell Johnson, and wife Bonnie, step-brother Kenneth Johnson, step-brother Glen Johnson, and wife Kathy, and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. tomorrow at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1225 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton. Donations can be sent to the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund at www.ocrf.org.

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THE CITY OF
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WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES

Joint Workshop
City Council, Planning Commission & Hacienda Task Force
Thursday, December 16, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m.
Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Discussion on Hacienda Transit Oriented Non-Core Development Standards and Design Guidelines

City Council Special Meeting
Thursday, December 16, 2010 @ 6:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter
Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Provide direction concerning options for the Hacienda Transit Oriented Non-Core Development Standards and Design Guidelines

Committee of Energy & Environment
Wednesday, December 15, 2010 @ 6:00 p.m.
Operations Services Center, 3333 Busch Road

- Presentation on wind energy generation for residential use – Dr. Robert Gray
- CAP Update
 - a. Review CAP input to-date and determine how the Committee will submit future feedback (as a Committee, or as individuals)
 - b. Obtain input on the CAP workshop format
- Report out (next steps) on 2011 focus areas
 - a. CAP – Mark Posson
 - b. Fleet Modernization – Mike McGinley
 - c. Natural Resource Protection – Thomas Kato
 - d. Outreach – Bill Carrick and Christina Jayson

Youth Master Plan Implementation Committee
Monday, December 13, 2010 @ 6:00 p.m.
Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Avenue

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

Housing Commission

- The December 16, 2010 Housing Commission meeting has been cancelled. The next regular Housing Commission meeting will be held on January 20, 2011

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



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Recently, the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, a member of the Sutter Health network, was recognized as one of the top performing physician organizations in California by the Integrated Healthcare Association, a leadership group that promotes quality in the health care industry. This award recognizes the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, as well as four other medical groups within the Sutter Medical Network, for excellence in clinical quality, patient experience, coordinated diabetes care and more.

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PLEASANTON IN 2011

After banner year of new development, city leaders turn focus on financial stability, pension reform, court-ordered housing issues

BY JEB BING

Peace activist Fred Norman, who regularly asks the City Council to “do something” about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, looked at the new council the other day and quipped:

“It sure looks a lot like the old council!”

And indeed it does, which won't help Norman's efforts in the next two years. He's been unsuccessful in gaining majority support for his efforts to have a community dialogue on the wars he opposes.

The same five are still in charge. Mayor Jennifer Hosterman and City Council members Cheryl Cook-Kallio and Jerry Thorne were sworn into office for their final terms as mayor and council members Tuesday night. All three were re-elected on Nov. 2, with council members Cindy McGovern and Matt Sullivan still on the council. Their terms expire in 2012, along with Hosterman's, whose eight years as mayor also ends that year.

It's been years since all five members of the council, including the mayor, have stayed in place for four consecutive years. Which could be good in this pivotal year as the work of the council shifts from development to strategic issues that include financial stability, employee salaries and pension reform, state-mandated housing requirements following a court order that tossed out a 29,000-unit housing cap, climate action measures in line with state requirements and a looming \$26 billion state budget deficit that could see Sacramento dipping into local coffers once again.

At Tuesday's meeting, the Cultural Arts Foundation presented its final contribution of \$120,000 toward the \$870,000 this group has raised in support of the \$10 million Firehouse Arts Center that opened in September. The foundation will now fade away with the city's last major municipal building project now completed. Earlier, city funds built a \$5 million lighted baseball complex in Bernal Community Park, and millions more were spent to renovate the Veterans Memorial Building, rebuild and expand the historic Alviso Adobe and community park



Pleasanton City Clerk Karen Diaz administers the oath to Jerry Thorne and Cheryl Cook-Kallio at the start of a council meeting.

on Foothill Road, and to clean up and beautify Foothill Creek.

As the city tightens its financial belt in a time of uncertain sales and property tax receipts, there are several projects on the books, at least for now.

It's also a pivotal time in terms of controversial issues before the council. The 51-home Oak Grove development proposal was scuttled by voters last year in a referendum, although the developers have sought to restore the approval they once had. For that, when it comes to Oak Grove, the council has to defend the referendum with the case due to be heard in January.

Staples Ranch and the extension of Stoneridge Road, El Charro Road and Livermore, which also brought opposition from individuals and organizations opposed to those land use proposals, are moving forward despite opposition. Alameda County LAFCo (Local Agency Formation Commission) is scheduled to consider the extension of the 126-acre Staples site next month; Stoneridge could be extended in conjunction with a similar road extension in Livermore, which could be approved next month.

“Now comes the tough part,” said Mayor Hosterman Tuesday in looking toward the council's agenda for the next two years. “Our focus now will turn to financial stability, employee salaries and entitlements and housing requirements imposed by a court order and the state. The vote to keep this council in place for two more years will be a tough one for these assignments.”

Already, there are rallying cries for Pleasanton to protect employee benefits that have provided a free ride for the city also contributing toward employee pensions. Three speakers asked the council to add to the list of entitlements when the city negotiates new contracts with employee unions, including police and firefighters. City Manager Nelson Fialho said public work will be held this spring as consideration is given in the new two-year budget for fiscal 2011-12 and 2012-13. That effort is already under way, he said, and

THE 2011 AGENDA:

- 2011-13 BUDGET
- EMPLOYEE SALARY, PENSION SCHEDULES
- STATE-MANDATED HOUSING REQUIREMENTS
- COURT-ORDERED REZONING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- HACIENDA BUSINESS PARK
- GREEN BUILDING
- STATE TAKEAWAYS



JEB BING

...booth of office to (from left) Mayor Jennifer Hosterman and council members of Tuesday night's City Council meeting. The three were re-elected on Nov. 2.

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recent contract signed with firefighters that has them contributing 2% toward those benefits, up from zero.

But Bart Hughes, one of the speakers, said that's not enough. He wants employee contributions to be higher and also wants Pleasanton — and other cities — to look at pension eligibility that can provide employees with 90% of their final year's salary after 30 years on the job, no matter how old.

Hosterman agreed that these issues need to be addressed, vowing to make it a priority for 2011.

Although Pleasanton's municipal budget is balanced with more than \$25 million in reserves, that could change in 2011 as Gov.-elect Jerry Brown and a Democrat-controlled Legislature start wrestling with a \$6 billion budget shortfall in the current fiscal year.

"I just got a new projection for the state's budget Monday and it looks like over the course of the next year they're going to have to come up with \$28 billion in order to balance the state budget," Hosterman said. "That's on top of the \$6 billion Sacramento will have to scrape together this year."

"Regardless of voter-approved state measures that are supposed to prevent the state from seizing local funds to pay its bills, the reality is that the state and our legislators are going to use every means possible to take whatever money they can away from us to stay afloat," she added.

Still, Pleasanton's Finance Director Emily Wagner said Tuesday that the financial outlook for 2011 is reasonably good.

"We're seeing a slight improvement in sales tax revenue, which is a good sign," she said.

It's not as robust as Pleasanton has seen in recent years, but Wagner said the trend line is up for the first time in a while, indicating that the economy is improving. That could be a good sign not just for Pleasanton, but California as a whole where increased revenue could keep the state from "take-aways," which so far have cost Pleasanton more than \$11 million in lost revenue. ■

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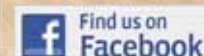
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How to give

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 five 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 five 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 462-1755 or visit www.axishealth.org.

■ **Ryan Comer Cancer Resource Center at ValleyCare:** The ValleyCare Health Library and Ryan Comer Cancer Resource Center, established in 1991, offers free access to easy to understand, up-to-date health and medical information. Open to the public, the library is located in the ValleyCare Medical Plaza, 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd., Suite 270, Pleasanton. The center is named for Ryan Comer, a star baseball player at Amador Valley High School who died of a rare form of pediatric cancer known as rhabdomyosarcoma in 1991 at age 17.

■ **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 area at Trinity Lutheran Church in Pleasanton, Holy Cross Lutheran and Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Livermore, and CrossWinds Church in Dublin. Visit www.openheartkitchen.org or call 580-1616.

■ **Valley Humane Society:** This nonprofit group's mission is to teach responsible pet ownership. It assists in rescuing and placing abandoned or injured animals and operates an adoption center on Nevada Street in Pleasanton. It does not euthanize unless health problems dictate. Call 426-8656.

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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, 2010, unless the donor checks the anonymous box. All donations will be acknowledged by mail.



Thank you to our Holiday Fund donors

At the launch of the 2010 Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund, 245 donors have contributed \$48,764 to the fund. Twenty seven anonymous donors have given \$12,860 of that total.

Individuals

Jonathan & Janet Allen.....	**	Mike & Kris Harnett.....	**
Ron & Kathy Anderson.....	250	Bob & Betsy Harris.....	400
Geoff Southworth & Jill Anderson.....	100	Ryan Brown & Julie Harryman.....	75
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Herbert & Stella Chang.....	**	Gary & Mary Lazarotti.....	**
Gina Channell-Allen.....	**	Mr. & Mrs. Blaise Lofland.....	250
Mr. Sean Chase.....	**	Chris & Debbie Look.....	**
Merlyn Chesnut.....	**	Cameron & Jill Lorentz.....	**
Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Ciccarello.....	**	Walt Lupeika, CPA.....	100
Mr. & Mrs. John & Gretchen Clatworthy.....	**	Karen Mannering.....	100
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Brian & Kate Damiani.....	**	Steve & Kathy McNichols.....	750
B. W. Daniels.....	**	Greg & Peg Meagher.....	**
The David Family.....	100	The Mellen Family.....	50
Randall & Elizabeth Davidson.....	500	Rodger, Laura & Stephanie Miller.....	50
Richard & Judy Del Tredici.....	100	Jeff & Kathy Narum.....	100
Linda Del Vecchio Cooper.....	**	John O'Neill.....	**
Alice Desrosiers.....	100	Mark & Kim Olson.....	**
Sean, Joy, Bryn & Paige Doyle.....	50	Norman & Joyce Pacheco.....	**
Mike & Suzanne Dutra.....	100	Mr. & Mrs. Bill & Peggy Paris.....	**
Paul & Lorraine Ebright.....	**	Bruce & Amy Pauly.....	200
Robert & Suzanne Emberton.....	**	Joe & Joann Pennisi.....	**
The Falls Family.....	**	The Pentin Family.....	100
Wes & Jean Felton.....	200	Jim Brice & Carole Peterson.....	100
Jim & Joanie Fields.....	**	Bob & Orley Philcox.....	500
Kay Fogarty.....	200	John & Roxanne Plotts.....	**
Richard & Gloria Fredette.....	**	Tom & Patty Powers.....	**
Frank & Sonia Geasa.....	200	Alan & Jean Purves.....	**
Kathleen Glancy.....	50	Marc & Becky Randall.....	250
John & Fran Glavin.....	**	Don & Ann Rathjen.....	**
Roy & D'Aun Goble.....	100	The Ristow Family.....	**
Frank & Connie Gouveia.....	25	Rita Rollar.....	200
Mrs. Bernice Hansen.....	1000	Mr. & Mrs. Bill Ruvalcaba.....	300
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Hansen.....	100	Swati & Manoj Samel.....	**
		John & Sheila Sanches.....	**

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 eighth 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 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.

Owen & Rebecca Saupe..... **	Tony & Jenny Paradiso from	
Kyle, Jennifer, Sophia, Tyler & Colin Schmiegel..... **	Dorene Paradiso-Carroll.....	50
Tim & Belinda Schultz..... 100	Jack Emmons.....	99
Chris & Cecile Seams..... **	Dick Waldron from Virginia Waldron..... **	
Howard & Emilie Seebach..... 100	Karl K. Witze.....	500
Jerry & Charlotte Severin..... 100	Gam & Papa Abbott from The Casey Family..... **	
Lonnie Shaw..... 100	Gene Riga from Edward W. McCauley.....	25
Tien & Sheng Shen..... 100	Rob Meierding from Suzanne Meierding..... **	
Bob Silva..... 100	Allan Hillman, Randy & Margie Warner from Sharon Hillman.....	150
Richard & Corrie Simon..... **	Dan Gabor from Ann Gabor.....	150
Dennis & Pat Smith..... 100	Rick Aguiar from Nancy Aguiar Fargis..... **	
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Spangler..... 100	John A. Mavridis from Ted Mavridis..... **	
Mike & Kerry Jo Stephan..... 100	Doris T. Walberg from Todd & Brenda Walberg.....	100
Mr. & Mrs. D. L. Stevens..... 250	Mary L. Erickson from Al Copher..... **	
Mr. & Mrs. John & Kay Stewart..... **	Betty Patrick from Charles & Joan Brown..... **	
Mr. & Mrs. Robert & Carole Sygiel..... 200	Nicholas Daniel Lesser from Bruce & Kathleen Lesser..... **	
Ms. Deborah Tomlin..... **	Gilbert Wran from John & Barbara Severini.....	500
Jim & Debbie Tracy..... **	Tom & Karen Elsnaab..... **	
Mike & Christie Underwood..... 100	Ruth DeFreece from Mr. & Mrs. Joe Biggs..... **	
Mr. & Mrs. Carlo Vecchiarelli..... 100	Ron Silva from Nancy Silva..... **	
Tom & Mary Walker..... **	Robert Kilpatrick.....	50
Judy Wang, Megan Yu & Justin Yu..... 100	David DeBernardi from Connie DeBernardi.....	250
Glenn & Janet Wenig..... **	John Davis.....	100
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph & Pat Williams..... **	Roselle Grimes, Evelyn Schrick & Verna Plummer from Steve, Pam & Mitch Grimes..... **	
Barbara Wilmore..... 100	Damon E. Schorno..... **	
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Yeggy..... 100	Zelinsky from Mark & Bernice Thurman..... **	
Jeff & Debi Zentner..... **	Tom & Mary Hart & Everett J. Mohatt from Dennis & Leslee Hart.....	200
	Jim Snodgrass from Virginia Snodgrass..... **	
	Joan Hinkle from The Richwood Family.....	100
	Norm Bottorff from Dory Bottorff.....	100
	Kenneth & Althea McGill from RJ & Marsha Grimes... **	
	Gene Strom, Keith Strom & William Kolb from Carol G. (Kolb) Strom.....	300
	Donald Foreman from Mrs. Marilyn Foreman.....	100
	Mary Ann Butler, Gil & Juanita Haugen & Brent Lovell from The Bob Group..... **	
	Jack Garibaldi from Sharron Morrison.....	25
	Mary May from Michael May.....	300
	Yvonne Lohman from Phillip & Kathi Vermont..... **	
	Anthony Freccero from Matt, Susie & Jack Anthony Weiss.....	100
	Sarah Lees from Don & Judy Person..... **	
	Roger Dabney from Marty Zarcone..... **	
	May, Harold & Mike Consedine from The Hamm Family..... **	
	Bill Haraughty from Anita Haraughty..... **	
	Michael & June Carboni from Richard & Nancy Shockley.....	100
	John A. Silva.....	100
	Elaine from Shel & Vivian Thorson.....	100
	Edward Schiess..... **	
	Jim Carlson from Lee & Clare Carlson..... **	
	John Ainsworth from The Ainsworth Family.....	100
	Helene Castro.....	100

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Sycamore Heights Bunco Neighborhood.....	140
The Tuesday Bridge Ladies.....	135
Tim McGuire Team at Alain Pinel Realtors.....	250
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In Honor of

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Grandmas Adeline & Eva.....	100
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Judy Perko from Ronda Hruby.....	100
Ralph Romero, Ed Kinney, Hank Gomez & George Spiliotopolous from Ken Mercer.....	300

In Memory of

Marge Schaefer & Skip Mohatt from Tom & Barbara Treto..... **	
Cory & Gene Paradiso from Dorene Paradiso-Carroll.....	50

As a Gift for

Al & Sherrie Rager from Rodger & Christel Rager....	200
All Animals from The Marx Family.....	**
Kris & Dave Snyder and Ross & Sheri Kapp from Jim & Diane Brittain.....	**

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



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2008, and 2010. 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.

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470 Market Place, San Ramon, 277-9600. Featuring a giant 8-foot

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Concerts

'A FESTIVAL OF CAROLS'

Centerpointe choir and the handbell choir will presents "A Festival of Carols" at 5 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 12, at Centerpointe Presbyterian Church, 3140 Cornerstone Ct. The concert will feature traditional Christmas music as well as some unusual arrangements. A reception will follow the concert in the church's worship center. This concert is free. Call 846-4436.

THE LIGHT WITHIN ADVENT

CHRISTMAS Experience the voices of more than 150 choir members of children, teen and adults at a popular holiday program from chants to jazz to gospel from 7:30-9:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 17, at St. Elizabeth Seton, 4001 Stoneridge Dr. Bring friends and family. Come early for good seats. Concert is free; free will offering gladly accepted. Call 639-7832 or visit www.ccopmusic.org.

Events

'THE NUTCRACKER' For 30 years, Valley Dance Theatre has thrilled audiences with its full-length performances of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" featuring costumes crafted by professional, award-winning designers and accompanied by the Livermore-Amador Symphony. Performances are at 2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday and at 7 p.m., Friday-Sunday, Dec. 11-19 (except Dec. 12), at the Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Tickets are \$18-\$33. Call 997-5674 or visit www.bankheadtheater.org.

MERCHANTS ART WALK The third Merchants Art Walk will take place from 6-9 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 16, in downtown Pleasanton, and a number of downtown stores will stay open that evening. To download a walking map for this free event, visit www.merchantarts.com.

Exhibits

BELIEVE/ACHIEVE ART EXHIBIT

The Diablo/Alameda Branch of the National League of American Pen Women is holding a "Believe/Achieve Art Exhibit," with local artists Natica Angrilly, Kazumi Cranney, Evelyn Glaubman, Elizabeth Hack, Leona Nichandros, Dori Pendergrass, Charlotte Severin, Pallavi Sharma and Barbara Spanskie, at the John O'Lague Galleria at Hayward City Hall, 777 B St., Hayward. A reception will be held from 5:30-7:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 17. The exhibit runs through Feb. 8.

OCTAVIA BLOOM TRUNK SHOW Get a personalized display of the Octavia Bloom collection from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 11, at Studio Seven Arts Gallery, 400 Main St. Jenny Christiansen will be there in person to discuss and demonstrate her exclusive designs. Call 846-4322 or visit www.studiosevenarts.com.

Film

AFGHAN STAR The Pleasanton Library is hosting a series of free documentary films at the new Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Each film will start at 7 p.m., doors open at 6:15 p.m. "Afghan Star" will be shown Dec. 16, a documentary that

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Fundraisers

DONLON ELEMENTARY HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE This Donlon Elementary PFC fundraiser features over 30 local handcraft vendors with a huge array of handmade wares - perfect for holiday shopping! Prize drawing and

holiday sweet treats for sale, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 11, at Donlon Elementary, 4150 Dorman Rd. Admission is free. Email donlon-boutique2010@gmail.com.

POLAR EXPRESS MOVIE Give to the Toys for Tots drive and enjoy "The Polar Express" movie from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 11, at the Vine Theater, 1722 First St., Livermore. Enjoy the movie, courtesy of Landmark Mortgage Group, and bring in one unwrapped toy per family.

SECRET SANTA TOY DRIVE In an effort to make sure every child enjoys a bright holiday season, Sleep Train is collecting new, unwrapped gifts for California's 80,000 foster children. Become a "Secret Santa" and make a donation from Nov. 1 through Dec. 12 at Sleep Train, 6050 Johnson Drive, Suite C. Call 1-800-378-2337 or visit www.sleeptrain.com.

Holiday

A GERMAN WINTERWALD Enjoy children from the German school performing German Christmas Songs, homemade German food and cookies from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 18, at Thomas Hart Middle School, 4433 Willow Rd. Small donation suggested. Call 273-4100 or visit www.sanramonvalleygerman-school.com.

Kids & Teens

CELEBRATION OF LIGHT Hacienda School, grades 1-8, invites everyone

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Live Music

AMADOR VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL WINTER CONCERT The AVHS Winter Concert features its four award-winning concert bands and the Jazz B Ensemble. The Marching Dons recently made school history earning its highest scores ever in the WBA 5A Championships. Concert is from 7-9 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 14, at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd. Call 461-6100 or visit www.amadormusic.org.

BIG BAND SOUNDS The Cool Tunes Big Band will perform from 2-3 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 12, at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Swinging holiday music for all to enjoy. Free. Call 931-3405.

Miscellaneous

PEDDLER SHOPPE SPECIAL SUNDAY The Peddler Shoppe will be open from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 12, at The Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. You'll find many one-of-a-kind items, lovingly handcrafted by Tri-Valley seniors.

On Stage

'PRINCESS AND THE PEA' Conniving henchman, Ratatouille, and Princess Victoria, dressed as a boy, have their own plans to take the throne from the vain, deceptive Queen Grossioso in "Princess and the Pea." See it at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 10-11 and 17-18; and at 2 p.m., Dec 12, 18-19, at the Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd. A special Firehouse Kids performance will be held at 11 a.m., Dec. 11. Tickets are \$10-\$18 for adults and \$6-12 for seniors and children. Purchase online at www.firehouse-arts.org or call 931-4848.

Spiritual

ASL WORSHIP TRANSLATION First Presbyterian Church is providing American Sign Language translation at its 10:30 a.m. worship service every Sunday in December, and invites the deaf community to join them. The church is located on the corner of Fourth and L streets, Livermore. Call 484-1319 or email bcosterus@sbcglobal.net.

Sports

AMADOR VALLEY GIRLS BASKETBALL 2ND ANNUAL ALUMNI GAME Support the Amador Valley Girls Basketball Program and watch some of the best players Amador has seen at the second annual Alumni Game, from 5:30-8:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 22, at 1155 Santa Rita Rd. Cost \$4.

Support Groups

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP The American Cancer Society

Breast Cancer Support group meets from 7:30-9 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month at LifeStyleRx, 1111 East Stanley Blvd., Livermore. Call 833-2784 or visit www.valleycare.com. 7:30-9 p.m. Free

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP Caring for a loved one is challenging physically and emotionally.

Join this support group to explore resources and generate problem-solving ideas from 1-3 p.m., on the second Monday of every month, and from 7-9 p.m., on the second Wednesday of every month, at 5353 Sunol Blvd. Get the support you deserve at the Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley. Call 931-5389.

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4386 Krause Street \$588,000
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Christmas Day Brunch

Saturday, December 25, 2010
 11:30am- 4:00pm

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 DECEMBER 19, 2010

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Sending holiday cheer



DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Women from the Pleasanton Military Families Support Group (l-r) Dorothy Pearson, Jan Miller, Pat Frizzell and Azadeh Aryana gather in advance of the pack out to fill out address labels and customs forms. The mothers say they keep their cell phones on "morning, noon and night" in case their sons telephone from where they are stationed in war zones.

Pleasanton Military Families mobilize to get packages to troops in war zones

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Have you ever put together a care package for a son or daughter at college? Multiply that by 260 and you can begin to comprehend the undertaking of the Pleasanton Military Families Support Group for the holiday "pack out" for troops deployed in war zones.

"I can tell you that these boxes and the items contained within each box will help make their day during this holiday season as these men and women serve our country several thousands of miles away from the USA," said Chris Miller, founder of the support group.

"We're mailing more than one box to each and they'll share them," explained chairwoman Pat Frizzell. "Sadly some are not getting things from home."

Collecting thousands of items, loading them into 12-inch by 12-inch by 5-1/2-inch boxes, and mailing the packages is a huge project, even for a group with dedicated members. Donations come from everywhere — Realtors, schools, Rotary clubs, to name a few.

"My phone was ringing off the hook all last week, people wanting to drop stuff off," co-chair Tracey Buescher said Monday morning.



Shauna Winters, who has a son in the Army, sorts out donations to be packed. The recipients write heartfelt letters about how much the packages mean to them.

"Probably a lot more work went into the organization than the actual packing," she noted.

Two weeks ago women gathered at the home of Azadeh Aryana, whose son is in the Army. Their mission that day was to fill out mailing labels and customs forms to accompany 150 boxes.

Then Friday was the "prepack." Volunteers gathered in the late afternoon to organize donations at the contributed office space at Hopyard and Valley. Tables were labeled by categories, and truckloads of items were separated accordingly.

Finally, Saturday about 60 people showed up to pack the boxes.

"We had a great turnout," Buescher said. "People came who'd heard what was going on — and some people strolled in off the street."

The mission took place with military precision. Afterward Frizzell sent out a timeline:

- 2:20 p.m. The first empty box was handed out.
- 3:05 p.m. The last of the 260 empty boxes was handed out.
- 4:15 p.m. Cars were loaded with boxes for the post office.

Buescher remembers the first pack out in 2003 when her husband Marine Col. Chris Buescher, who was in the Reserves, was activated and sent to Iraq.

"The first one in 2003 was out of my house," recalled Tracey Buescher. "We would send out 50 boxes and think, 'Wow! That's amazing.' It grew to 75, 90 and 135, until this year it was 260."

They had 50 names on the list this year, she explained, and were planning to send a few boxes to each so they could be shared with those who return from mail call each day empty-handed.

"When we saw how many donations and how much money were rolling in, we said, 'Let's kick it up another 50,'" she said. "Somebody ran home and got more boxes, and moms quickly filled out more customs forms."

Although Col. Buescher is near retirement from the Marine Reserves, he and Tracey continue working with the military families.

"We've been there and know what it's like," Tracey Buescher said. "We know that feeling in the pit of your stomach 24/7, not knowing if they're safe."

This year the group also sent out a dozen 3-foot-tall Christmas trees with decorations, and 12 boxes of lighted garlands, complete with candy canes and Santa hats.

They also send packages for Easter and the Fourth of July. In October they did an emergency pack out to Afghanistan.

"A group of Marines was involved in heavy fighting every

day," Buescher said, "and there were quite a few casualties."

Parents from Pleasanton relayed their circumstances and the fact that they'd said it would help to receive socks and chocolate.

"We launched into overdrive on that one," Buescher said. "We bought Halloween candy and socks and turned it into a Halloween thing. They did receive them and were thrilled with them."

The Pleasanton Military Families Support Group also sponsors the Yellow Streamer program on Main Street where each resident in the military has a yellow streamer with his or her name, rank and branch of service. For further information, contact Frizzell at PleasantonMilitaryFamilies@gmail.com.

Every package sent to the troops this week included about 20 letters, Buescher said, most of them from students. She recently heard a soldier talk to a group of children, explaining that in the evenings deployed troops don't have TV to watch or video games to play.



SHERRY WIGGINS

Tracey Buescher and Pat Frizzell in the midst of the record pack out for the troops Saturday



Col. Chris Buescher (center) delivers a truckload of donated items to the wrapping center Friday evening to be organized for packaging the next day

"For entertainment we sit in a circle and read letters from you kids," Buescher recalled him saying. "That's our entertainment."

"The letters are huge," Buescher said, "especially from their hometown."

After the 260 boxes were packed, some leftover items were reboxed to be saved for the Easter pack out. Tables were returned to the organizations that had loaned them. The office space was vacuumed, bathrooms were cleaned, the lights were turned out and the doors were locked.

"It was the Super Bowl of pack outs for sure," chairwoman Frizzell emailed supporters. "Remember, a little joy goes a long way when you are so far from home at Christmas." ■

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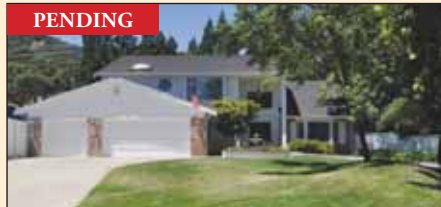


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Italian Villa

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IMAGINE COMING HOME TO A SETTING THAT IS BOTH PRIVATE AND INVITING WITH RESORT-LIKE FEATURES. STUNNING, CLASSIC ITALIAN VILLA IN ONE OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA'S MOST DESIRABLE LOCATIONS.



Uwe Maercz
 Luxury Home Specialist
 REALTOR®, QSC, CRS

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Pleasanton
5075 Hopyard Road Ste. 110
Pleasanton, CA 94588
925.251.2500
Livermore
1983 Second Street
Livermore, CA 94550
925.667.2100

3422 TORLANO PL, RUBY HILL
Formal French \$1,749,950



5 Bd 3.5 Ba • 4,500+/- sq.ft., 0.56+/- Acres
Formidable, elegant Formal French custom home w/ private location, backing up to open space. Custom built by Jerry Soba Construction.
Uwe Maercz 925.360.8758

1225 LOZANO CT, RUBY HILL
Classic Italian Villa CALL FOR PRICE.



6 Bd 7(2) Ba • 8,877+/- sq.ft., 0.65+/- Acres
Stunning Ruby Hill Estate. Nestled in an unrivaled setting among olive trees and lush landscaping w/ mile long views of vineyards.
Uwe Maercz 925.360.8758

11 LOWER GOLF RD, PLEASANTON
OPEN SAT & SUN 1-4 \$1,385,000



3 Bd 3 Ba • 2,392+/- sq.ft., 0.33+/- Acres
On the 8th fairway of the Castwood Country Club. Single story w/ separate family room, formal dining. Beautiful plank hardwood floors.
Steve & Lorraine Mattos 925.980.8844

5063 MONACO DR, PLEASANTON
Pleasanton Hills \$899,000



5 Bd 3.5 Ba • 3,079+/- sq.ft., 0.18+/- Acres
Semi-custom Pleasanton Hills home w/Mt Diablo View! 5 bedrooms plus theatre room w/fireplace plus den! Theatre, remodeled kit w/pine cabinets.
Diane Sass 925.583.2168

3524 MILLEFORD, PLEASANTON
Laguna Oaks \$1,295,000



4 Bd 3 Ba • 3,182+/- sq.ft., 0.34+/- Acres
Laguna Oaks single story! New paint outside, beautiful floorplan, ktchn re-done, high ceilings, new frnt Indscpng, perfect for entertaining!
M. Lucin & J. Bundy 925.487.5157

6645 AMBER LN, PLEASANTON
Carriage Gardens \$1,398,000



5 Bd 3 Ba • 3,475+/- sq.ft., 0.50+/- Acres
Beautifully upgraded custom home features 5 spacious bd, improved 1/2 acre lot. Pool, spa, waterfall, slide, sport court and more.
Weiner & McDowell Group 925.251.2585

9663 CROSBY DR, PLEASANTON
The Preserve \$1,898,000



5 Bd 4(2) Ba • 5,200+/- sq.ft., 0.62+/- Acres
This stunningly beautiful home is located in the desirable West side. The finest materials & workmanship thruout, views of the hills & vistas.
Weiner & McDowell Group 925.251.2585

2818 GARDEN CREEK, PLEASANTON
REO/ Bank Owned \$622,800



4 Bd 2.5 Ba • 2,292+/- sq.ft., 0.09+/- Acres
Stoneridge Place - Brand NEW appliances in kitchen. Open floor plan w/ formal living, dining & family rooms. Plenty of natural sunlight.
Joe Frazzano 925.735.7653

3905 FAIRLANDS DR, PLEASANTON
New Price! \$599,000



4 Bd 3 Ba • 2,140+/- sq.ft., 0.19+/- Acres
Very nice home in lovely neighborhood. Hardwood floors, bonus room, large yard perfect for entertaining, great schools & much more!
Lisa Doyle 925.855.4046

CAMINO SEGURA, PLEASANTON
New Price! \$699,000



3 Bd 3 Ba • 2,801+/- sq.ft., 0.16+/- Acres
Originally designed as 5-bedroom home. Formal dining can be converted to office or extra bedroom. Full bath on first floor. Great opportunity.
Albert Bernardo 925.997.0123

CEDAR MOUNTAIN, LIVERMORE
Tuscan Estate CALL FOR PRICE.



4 Bd 5.5 Ba • 8,950+/- sq.ft., 16.86+/- Acres
Walls of glass, salt water aquarium, wine tasting room. Incredible setting. apartment perfect for in-law or au-pair. 9 car garage. Views and more!
Peggy Cortez 925.648.5454

636 SYCAMORE CT, LIVERMORE
Amber Ridge \$650,000



4 Bd 2.5 Ba • 2,553+/- sq.ft., 0.21+/- Acres
Popular Sagewood Flr Plan. Extremely well kept home, hrdwood flrs, granite counters, beautiful landscaping, huge sideyard access & much more!
Corey Green 925.899.6011

000 HANSEN RD, LIVERMORE
Wine Country \$790,000



Lot Acres Apx: 3.23
Wine country unique opportunity for retail. Commercial site designated as "Wine Country Retail" in the South Livermore Valley Specific Plan.
Tom Bramell 925.583.2180

553 HELIGAN LN, LIVERMORE
New Price! \$399,950



2 Bd 2 Ba • 1,718+/- sq.ft.
Upgraded cabinets, granite countertops. Huge master with walk in closet. Living room with gas fireplace. Great location! Attached 2 car garage.
Bill and Vickie Keller 925.200.6764

2670 TREVOR, PLEASANTON
Fabulous Opportunity \$625,000



3 Bd 2.5 Ba • 0.07 +/- Acres
Featuring open floorplan. 1,614 sq.ft w/ attached 2 car garage. Laundry room upstairs with a corner lot location. Light and airy feel throughout!!
Julia Kim 925.648.5405

4966 CERRETO ST, DUBLIN
Location/ Views! \$859,900



5 Bd 4 Ba • 3,707+/- sq.ft., 0.13+/- Acres
Newer home w/ no side neighbor & open space behind home. Designer selected finishes, plus loft & hardwood floors. Full Bd & Ba on first floor.
Joe Frazzano 925.735.7653

5146 S FORESTDALE CIR, DUBLIN
No Rear Neighbors \$789,900



5 Bd 3 Ba • 2,661+/- sq.ft., 0.10+/- Acres
Upgrades throughout, 5th room currently used as office, plus it has an open loft/bonus room, over \$120k in upgrades, mountain views.
Lisa Doyle 925.855.4000

1578 BUENA VISTA, LIVERMORE
Alameda Co. \$449,900



3 Bd 2 Ba • 1,705+/- sq.ft., 0.50+/- Acres
minutes from Downtown Livermore. This house has no immediate rear neighbors & backs to Open Space & Vineyards. Unlimited potential here!
Tom E. Chance 925.487.6360

303 MIRAMONTE LN, LIVERMORE
Amber Ridge \$648,000



4 Bd 3 Ba • 2,861+/- sq.ft., 0.19+/- Acres
Beautiful Home, flowing floor plan includes; vaulted ceilings, w/ huge master. Beautiful backyard perfect for entertaining. Walk to park.
Corey Green 925.899.6011

9877 FOOTHILL RD, SUNOL
16+/- Acres \$1,890,000



4 Bd 3 Ba • 3,027+/- sq.ft., 16+/- Acres
Exceptional Pleasanton Ridge Access. Newly Built "2009" Custom Home. Pleasanton Ridge Water. Panoramic Views. Single Story Dream Home.
Kristy and Company 925.251.2536

Blackhawk East
4105 Blackhawk Plaza Cir.
Danville, CA 94506
925.648.5300

Blackhawk West
3880 Blackhawk Rd.
Danville, CA 94506
925.736.6000

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15 Railroad Ave.
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