

Pleasanton Weekly

More cuts for schools: District eyeing \$3.1 million more in cost-saving measures **PAGE 5**

Sangria special: Three women talk nonstop for eight days in Spain to teach English **PAGE 12**

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AROUND PLEASANTON



By JEB BING

Turning a troubled business around

The Taqueria El Balazo restaurant on Hopyard Road near the I-580 onramp has a new lease on life, thanks to a compassionate city Planning Commission but largely because Police Capt. Eric Finn thinks it's reformed. El Balazo has been in the news over the years it's been at the Pleasanton site not so much because of its Mexican cuisine (which is good) but more because of local police calls over parking lot fights and occasional federal immigration raids to round up employees who are here illegally. The Hopyard-580 interchange is known for its drug busts at nearby hotels by regulars who call the Pleasanton junction "easy off, fast and easy on" after making their purchases.

El Balazo was granted a conditional use permit in January 2005 to allow alcoholic beverages to be served between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. A mariachi band followed, first on holidays and special occasions and then more frequently. Testing the waters, the restaurant then added drink promotions with crowds, music, drinks and all spilling into the parking lot next to Burger King and other businesses that started complaining. By August 2005, police were being called regularly to curb the noise. The promotions were so successful that El Balazo owner Marino Sandoval offered special drink prices on football game night. Cover charges were added, tables and chairs were removed to create a dance area, and parties started changing the character and clientele of the once cozy small retail center. Along with patrons jamming the parking lot that served Burger King, the Best Western Pleasanton Inn and other smaller businesses, the site was becoming unsafe. Police activity increased with arrests for public drunkenness, traffic stops into and out of the El Balazo lot, and an increasing number of investigations of "suspicious vehicles" possibly carrying drugs.

By January 2007, Sandoval's business neighbors and Pleasanton police had had enough. The Planning Commission, which has authority to cancel conditional use permits as well as to issue them, called Sandoval on the carpet, ordering the restaurant to stop selling alcohol after mid-



night, fire its DJ and his overly amplified sound system, get rid of the live band, put the chairs and tables back to cover the dance floor, and cancel karaoke and other forms of entertainment. It worked. Sandoval, already shaken by the immigration raids, complied. Capt. Finn said that where annual patrol checks at El Balazo had been running as high as 150 a year, they've dropped to two or three. Police visits to the restaurant, once confrontational, have become conversational, with employees undergoing training to identify excessive drinkers and stop serving them and also to be aware of potential problems in the restaurant parking lot.

The turn-around in what was once one of Pleasanton's most troubling restaurants enabled Sandoval to go back to the Planning Commission to seek a modification of his conditional use permit to add live music and entertainment again. Abiding by the new restrictions and with Finn and the Police Department agreeing, Sandoval has now been allowed to extend his hours, has promised to seek prior approval from the Police Department in advance of special events, has brought back karaoke, trivia night and football game night, and made friends with the managers of Burger King, Conroy's Florist and the variety of other retail businesses and restaurants, including Super Frank's, a popular children's attraction. Even Sajit Khatri, co-owner of the Pleasanton Inn, is supporting the calmed-down El Balazo, saying the restaurant now is a great place to send guests for casual dining. Sandoval has shown that troubled businesses can gain a new lease on life by playing by the rules. ■

About the Cover

"Will you marry me?" This question is on the minds of many as Valentine's Day approaches. Cover design by Lili Cao.

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What are you doing for Valentine's Day?



Brooke Bishop
Student

My boyfriend, Anthony, is taking me to IHOP for dinner. I love it; they have really good burgers there.

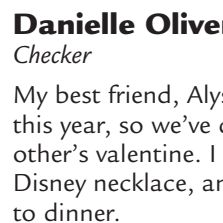
Jonathan Diviesti
Bagel baker extraordinaire

I don't believe in Valentine's Day. I think you should always do nice things for your significant other. When I had a girlfriend, I bought her roses and treated her well all the time. It's a day that's made just to get people to spend money.



Stacy Homes
Teacher

We're going to celebrate our love with our family. My husband and I try to balance out the day with fun things for our children and each other. The kids will wake up to chocolates, and Steve is always very good at surprising me with a really thoughtful gift.



Danielle Oliver
Checker

My best friend, Alyssa, and I are both single this year, so we've decided to be each other's valentine. I already bought her a Disney necklace, and we might even go out to dinner.



Don Person
Retired and having fun

We've been married 33 years and my wife, Judy, is still my Valentine. I haven't finalized our plans this year, but we usually get See's chocolates and go out for lunch. I think we'll go to Fontina; we love that restaurant.

—Compiled by Kerry Nally

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DIGEST

'It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing'

The 36th annual Campana Jazz Festival will be held from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. tomorrow at Amador Valley High School. It will feature 51 ensembles from 24 Bay Area schools, with four venues and six divisions, including High School Big Bands and Middle School Big Bands plus expanded high school combo and vocal divisions.

Two awards concerts, at 3:15 p.m. and 5 p.m., will feature the winning bands and choirs, and jazz bands from the Pleasanton Unified School District. Musicians will be awarded over \$15,000 in summer camp music scholarships, and two \$1,000 college scholarships will be presented to study music at Cal State East Bay.

The festival was named in honor of Jim Campana, Amador Valley music director from 1959-79. Admission is \$10; \$8 for seniors and students; and free for 5 and under.

Swimmers to flood city

The Pleasanton Seahawks Swim team will host the two-day Nor-Cal Superleague Championship meet this weekend at the Dolores Bengtson Aquatic Center on Black Avenue near Santa Rita Road. The meet is expected to draw about 200 swimmers, who will begin to arrive each morning by 7 a.m., with competition beginning at 9 a.m.

The city has been working closely with the Seahawks to reduce impact on the neighborhoods surrounding the Aquatic Center. Participants have been encouraged to carpool when possible.

Techno-purchases

The Pleasanton Middle School Parent Faculty Association reports that it has been able to approve important technological purchases, thanks to the parents who contributed to its fundraiser at the beginning of the school year. At a recent PFA meeting, approval was given to fund the purchase of 34 new Mac computers for its computer lab, 23 Elmo document readers for teacher presentations, and 12 flat screen TV monitors.

"This much needed technology support allows teachers to increase their effectiveness in helping students to achieve," said Principal John Whitney.

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

Pleasanton in great shape, mayor tells business leaders

'State of City' includes increasing tax revenues, new businesses

By JEB BING

With sales tax revenue inching up and new businesses opening here or expanding, the city of Pleasanton is in a strong financial position, having weathered last year's recession with municipal budget reserves to spare.

That was the message Mayor Jennifer Hosterman delivered Tuesday in her annual "State of the City" address to the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce.

"Unlike many other cities in the Bay Area and California, the sky is not falling in Pleasanton," Hosterman told the 200 business leaders and other Chamber members at a luncheon at the Pleasanton Hilton Hotel. "We are double-A-plus (AA+) rated financially."

Net assets of the city at the end of the last budget year totaled just over \$881.1 million with just over \$171 million in unrestricted net assets that are available to meet ongoing obligations, Hosterman said. The city's General Fund reserves total \$25.3 million, of which \$8.4 million is designated for "economic uncertainties" and another \$12.2 million designated for

"temporary recession" needs.

While local schools districts and state and local governments across the nation have felt the effects of the recession in a dramatic way, Pleasanton is emerging from the recession in a strong financial position with business and tax revenue growth under way, Hosterman said.

"In light of the uncertainty, 2010 was about doing the same with less in Pleasanton, maximizing our existing resources while still keeping an eye to the future," she continued. "I think we can all agree that much of the financial collapse statewide has resulted from the missing component of planning for whatever might be ahead."

"I can assure you that will not happen in Pleasanton," she added. "My goal and the goal of my peers on the Pleasanton City Council, and the goal of all city staff, is to sustain what

we have here in Pleasanton: a safe, clean and economically robust city.

"We will maintain fiscal stability and continue to support and promote the local economy. The continued strength and growth of our businesses that you all represent translates into direct job development. Trust me, that is on everyone's radar at City Hall."

Hosterman also pledged that the city will continue to tighten its belt even as the economy slowly starts to recover. The city government has frozen new hires for now, is engaged in concessions with labor unions representing firefighters, police and city employees and is conducting public meetings with regard to planning its two-year budgets for fiscal years 2011-12 and 2012-13, as well as in addressing pension reform issues.

With regard to new and expanding businesses and development, Hosterman thanked Safeway executives sitting at a table in front of her for adding a second and larger supermarket in Pleasanton. A groundbreaking was scheduled



Mayor Jennifer Hosterman

See PLEASANTON on Page 6

Wine stroll draws 100s downtown

Business owners want more events, stores to boost economy

Hundreds turned out last Thursday night for the annual wine stroll in downtown Pleasanton, enjoying treats and/or hors d'oeuvres to pair with a large selection of wines and champagne offered at 27 retail and service businesses on Main Street and many of the side streets.

Another two locations — the Museum On Main and State Farm Insurance on St. Mary Street — joined in the celebration, serving non-alcoholic beverages.

Called "Truffles, Tidbits & Wine Tasting," the twice-annual event is sponsored by the Pleasanton Downtown Association. Wine strollers received commemorative wine glasses and a map showing the participating downtown locations with the only stipulation that their glasses had to be empty when they moved from one wine-pouring location to the other.

"It was a rousing success," said Alisha Perdue, events and communications coordinator for the PDA. "The weather was perfect and we sold about 700 tickets."

The winter wine stroll, often affected by rain and cold weather, came at the end of a sunny, warm February day this year, adding to the en-

See WINE STROLL on Page 7



JEB BING

Robert F. Gray, M.D., joins wine strollers Deanne Perko and Sheila Jessup-Schwarz at his MD Laser Spa Cosmetic Surgery & Laser Skin Care Center at 531 Main St. during the Feb. 3 Wine Stroll sponsored by the Pleasanton Downtown Association.

City wins prelim ruling in housing suit

Oral arguments were to be heard yesterday in landowners case

Pleasanton has won a tentative favorable ruling in the its legal battle with landowners Jennifer and Fredric Lin, who have sued the city for the right to build 51 houses on 600 acres they own in the southeast hills.

The family is suing the city after its plan to build the homes was scuttled by voters in June, with 54.3% opposing the measure.

At issue is what's known as a "poison pill." The lawsuit claims that last year's referendum only concerned Ordinance No. 1961 adopted by the City Council, which called for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for the number of lots allowed and where they would be placed. The Lin family claims the vote did not affect the development agreement specifying

ing various aspects of the project, authorized by Ordinance No. 1962 and also approved by the City Council.

In simple terms, a poison pill is language inserted into each approval which says that if one of the two ordinances is invalid, the other ordinance is also invalid.

In a tentative ruling released Monday, Alameda County Superior Court Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers said "she is inclined to sustain the city's demurrer as to all causes of action."

A demurrer is a legal mechanism to have a complaint filed by an opposing party dismissed by the court, in this case, the city asking that the court dismiss the Lin family's lawsuit.

See LAWSUIT on Page 8

More cuts loom for PUSD

Board looks to slash more than \$3.1 million; CORE funding ends

By GLENN WOHLTMANN

A snafu with a posted date kept the Pleasanton school board from "sunshining" negotiations with its teacher's union, but the board did hear about yet another round of proposed cuts at its meeting Tuesday.

Sunshining is when each side states the part of the contract they want to discuss, according to Myla Grasso, Pleasanton school district public information officer.

While school funding has yet to be finalized by lawmakers in Sacramento, the Pleasanton board is eyeing \$3.1 million in cost-saving measures, including increasing class sizes in both kindergarten through third grade and ninth-grade English and math. Under the proposal, class sizes would go from 25 to 1 for the youngest students and to 32 to 1 for the high school freshmen.

That would save the district \$1.3 million in the elementary grades and another \$400,000 with the ninth-graders.

This change would mean sacrificing state funding for keeping class sizes low. Currently, the classes are staffed at 25 to 1 and the district would lose about \$800,000, according to Luz Cazares, assistant superintendent of business services.

Another \$400,000 in savings could come from cutting one specialist section each week for grades 1 through 5. The proposal would move a teacher preparation period to the end of the day, shortening the day by 45 minutes once a week for those students, with the net effect of losing five full-time employees.

The district is also considering cutting the number of elementary school reading specialists in half, dropping from nine fulltime employees to four and a half, at a savings of \$360,000.

Also being considered are:
■ Cutting the number of support staff at schools and the district office at a savings of \$180,000. The four positions that would be eliminated have not been determined;

See SCHOOL BOARD on Page 8

AVHS wins state 'We the People' competition

School will once again represent California at national finals

By JEB BING

Amador Valley High School captured first place in the "We the People" state finals last Friday afternoon in Sacramento.

Foothill High finished in fifth place behind Irvington High of Fremont, whose coach and teacher is Pleasanton City Councilwoman Cheryl Cook-Kallio. Finishing in second place was Centennial High School of Bakersfield followed by Arcadia (Calif.) High School.

The five schools were honored at a banquet that night in Sacramento by Congressman Tom McClintock (R-Rocklin), who was the keynote speaker.

More than 300 students from 11 high schools participated in the academic competition, which tested their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. Amador Valley High School now advances to the We the People national finals, April 30-May 2, in Washington, D.C.

Students demonstrated their understanding of the Constitution before a simulated congressional committee consisting of constitutional scholars, lawyers, civic educators and government leaders who judged the classes' performances. The judges tested the students' comprehension of the six units of the "We the People: The Citizen &



the Constitution" text.

Other classes also were recognized for their achievements during the awards banquet.

Officially called "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution," the program has reached more than 30 million students and 90,000 teachers since its inception in 1987. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act approved by Congress and directed by the Center for Civic Education.

"We the People classes scored 30 percent higher than matched comparison government classes on a comprehensive test that measured understanding of core values and principles of democracy, constitutional limits on governmental institutions, and the rights and

responsibilities of citizenship," said Karen Whitaker, program manager for the Center for Civic Education in Woodland Hills, which handles the California program.

The competing schools and their teachers/coaches that entered this year's competition were Arcadia High School, Arcadia; Arvin High School, Arvin; Centennial High School, Bakersfield; Liberty High School, Bakersfield; Monta Vista High School, Cupertino; Granite Hills High School, El Cajon; Irvington High School, Fremont; Amador Valley High School, Pleasanton, Teacher: Keldon Clegg; Foothill High School, Pleasanton, Teacher: Jeremy Detamore; Martin Luther King Jr. High School, Riverside; and Yerba Buena High School, San Jose.

PLEASANTON

Continued from Page 5

for yesterday for that new store, called "Lifestyle," at Valley and Bernal avenues next to I-680. The multi-million-dollar project will include adjacent retail shops and restaurants.

She noted that the 124-acre, county-owned Staples Ranch at the northeast corner of the city has just been annexed into Pleasanton, paving the way for more multi-million-dollar developments, including a retirement and senior care complex and a new auto mall. Part of that development also will include extending Stoneridge Drive east to El Charro Road, where it will connect to Livermore thoroughfares.

Signs of economic improvements also visible in Pleasanton, Hosterman said, included business expansions and relocations of businesses to the city.

Xradia Inc., an X-ray imaging products and systems company, moved into space vacated earlier by Robert Half. Callidus Software relocated its operations from San Jose to a 32,000-square-foot facility on Stoneridge Mall Road, joining software company Workday to create a growing list of technology companies in that business center. Credit union Patelco is wrapping up its headquarters move to Pleasanton, along with 150 employees.

In nearby Stoneridge Corporate Plaza, global telecommunications company Erickson expanded its space. Safeway Inc., which has its corporate headquarters in Pleasanton, also expanded its footprint here with the purchase and renovation of another 145,000-square-

foot building near the I-580 off-ramp onto Foothill Road.

Another major addition to the corporate sector cited by Hosterman is Clorox, which has acquired a business center at Johnson Drive and Hopyard Road for an estimated 1,100-employee workforce.

Last year, Oracle Corp. constructed and now occupies a five-story building and a four-level parking structure on it Pleasanton campus "further solidifying its commitment to retain a strong presence in Pleasanton," Hosterman said.

At the same time, Roche Molecular Systems completed a new R&D expansion at its 33-acre Hacienda Business Park campus, with plans to add an administration building in the near future.

Plans for major expansions at Stoneridge Shopping Center are still on the table, although delayed because of the sluggish economy, Hosterman said. These plans include a 280,000-square-foot expansion and a \$20-million upgrade to its existing Nordstrom department store.

At the CarrAmerica corporate center in the Hacienda Business Park, the owners are proposing a 480,000-square-foot expansion to their seven-building campus, which already includes more than 1 million square feet of office space. Those plans call for three new office buildings along with a 130-room hotel and possibly some residential units also to be located on the site.

"I should also mention that residential real estate had a little boomlet last year," Hosterman said, "assisted by record low mortgage rates and all the amenities this city has to offer."

She cited figures showing that 557 homes were sold here last year, a 20% increase over 2008.

"We obviously have a ways to go from the record highs of years past, but this modest recovery will certainly help the local market," she added.


Retail businesses in Pleasanton also received the city government's support in 2010 which, through its Economic Vitality Committee, worked with the Chamber and the Pleasanton Downtown Association to extend shopping hours downtown and provide outdoor music and other entertainment.

"Speaking of supporting the local economy, this is very important and not something everyone realizes," Hosterman said. "For every dollar spent in Pleasanton, through the purchase of furniture, a car or even a pair of socks, 1 cent comes back to the community in the form of sales tax."

"It doesn't sound like a lot until you put it into perspective," she explained. "When you purchase a \$45,000 car in Pleasanton, \$450 goes to the city. So remember, the importance of shopping here in Pleasanton has a direct link to the services and amenities that provide for and improve our quality of life."

"The point here is that Pleasanton's success as a great place to live and work is not an accident, nor is it the result of serendipity or a stroke of very good luck," Hosterman concluded. "It is the very deliberate result of many hard-working city staff as well as a committed community of residents and business people who constantly work to meet a high standard." ■

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 CHRIS AYERS PHOTO

Nominate for 'character' awards

Forms are available to recognize compassionate residents

The Pleasanton Community of Character Collaborative is soliciting nominations for the 2011 Juanita Haugen Community of Character Award. It was established in 2008 to recognize Pleasanton residents chosen by their peers who consistently model high ethical and moral standards of behavior, including responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, honesty, respect and integrity.

The award is named in honor of longtime Pleasanton Unified School District Board Member and community volunteer, Juanita Haugen. Haugen, co-founder of the Pleasanton Community of Character program, believed that part of Pleasanton's success is due

to its compassionate citizens. She wished to remind people to model ethical standards of behavior.

This year's award recipients will be announced May 11 at the Community of Character Collaborative Celebration at the Pleasanton Senior Center.

Anyone wishing to nominate a person who has demonstrated a commitment to the Community of Character traits through their volunteer work may download a form at www.communityofcharacter.org. The deadline for nominees is April 15.

Nomination forms are also available at the Pleasanton School District office, 4665 Bernal Ave.; Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce

office, 777 Peters Ave.; Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal; and the Civic Center, 200 Old Bernal.

Nominees must be Pleasanton residents, demonstrate a commitment to quality volunteer work in the community, and exhibit volunteerism above and beyond their day-to-day job responsibilities.

Last year's award recipients were Dr. Pushpa Dalal, Chris Miller, Bob Athenour and the George A. Spiliotopoulos Invitational Tournament Volunteers. Recipients in 2009 were Jerri Pantages-Long, Sue Evans and Ken Mano. In 2008, awards were given to Lori Rice and Diana and Howard Mendenhall. ■

Bagpipes on Main Street tomorrow night

If you're in the vicinity of Veterans Memorial Building on Main Street tomorrow night, expect to hear the familiar strains of "Bonnie Dundee," "Amazing Grace" and a host of other Celtic tunes coming from the hall.

The Pleasanton posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion are co-hosting the 2010 awards dinner of the north-

ern branch of the Western United States Pipe Band Association.

The group will open the "ceilidh" (Scottish social gathering) at 7 p.m. after a \$10-a-plate spaghetti dinner and awards presentation to the top pipe bands from the region. Then the music — or piping — begins, with the hall expected to be filled with bagpipers from Sacramento to San Francisco, including some of the top

bagpipe bands in the country.

Donna Willy, who is a popular piper at Pleasanton events along with her fellow bagpiper husband John, encourages those who play a bagpipe to join in the fun.

For more information or to make a spaghetti dinner reservation, call the Willys at 461-7445 or email: donnawilly@gmail.com.

—Jeb Bing

Councilman wins third term on National League of Cities committee

Thorne to help shape federal policy positions

By JEB BING

National League of Cities President James Mitchell Jr. has announced the appointment of Pleasanton City Councilman Jerry Thorne to his third term on the organization's Community and Economic Development Policy and Advocacy steering committee, which helps to develop federal policy positions in the areas of community and economic development, financial institutions, international trade, housing, land use and recreation.

As a member of the commit-

tee, Thorne will play a key role in shaping the League's policy positions, while advocating on behalf of America's cities and towns on Capitol Hill, with the Administration and at home, according to a press release issued by the city of Pleasanton.

"Participation with the policy committee gives Pleasanton a voice

on Capitol Hill in matters of importance to our city's economic development," Thorne said. "It also allows me the opportunity to interact with elected leaders from all over the country and bring home to Pleasanton the best ideas for community and economic development."

Thorne also was reappointed to the League's Environmental Quality Policy Committee, which represents cities and towns across California with the state legislature in matters related to environmental quality. ■



Jerry Thorne

WINE STROLL

Continued from Page 5

thusiasm and the numbers of strollers who turned out. A similar event in the summer is often sold out well before the wine stroll takes place.

How do downtown business owners like the wine stroll?

"It's events like these that bring a lot of potential customers to downtown Pleasanton," said Randy Cazinha, owner of Cazinha Portrait Design at 551 Main St., whose studio was packed with strollers all evening. "They're not necessarily going to buy anything now, but they know we're here and when they want a portrait,

they come back."

"We've been here for 12 years and we've found it may be months or even a few years before we see them again, but they remember our studio and become our customers," he added. "Pleasanton needs more of these events and it also needs some big-draw stores, such as Crate & Barrel or a hardware store. When Kolln Hardware shut down, that had a big impact on the downtown. Everyone used to come down to the hardware store and we saw these people all over the downtown when they did."

Debbie Lopes, owner of Savvy Seconds at 560 Main St., agreed.

—Jeb Bing

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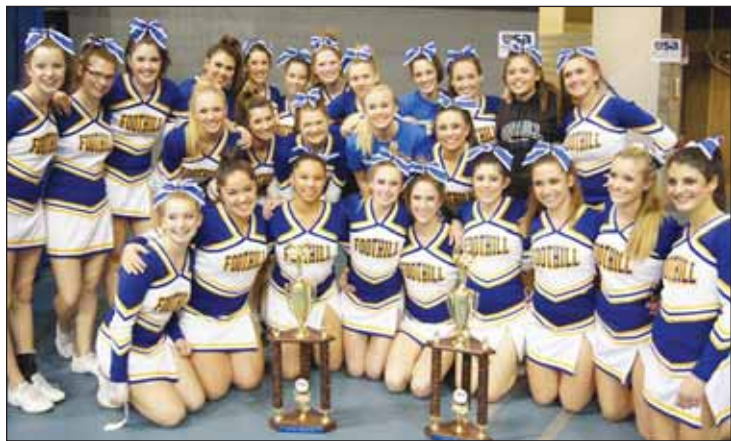
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Foothill High School cheer squads celebrate with a team photo after their championship victories Sunday.

Hooray! Cheer teams win

Move on to national competition in March

By JEB BING

The Foothill High School JV and Varsity cheer teams placed first in the United Spirit Association California State Championship competition Sunday at UC Davis.

The teams won the JV Show Cheer Intermediate and Varsity Show Cheer Advanced divisions, competing against three other teams from Northern California in each division. The teams will next compete in the national competition in Anaheim in March.

Coached by Megan Moore, the varsity team includes Jori Berman, Bailey Downum, Alyssa Dunlap, Sarah Hadley, Alex Holterhoff,

Keri Kodama, Danielle Kozel, Hayley Long, Addie Mantor, Gabby Scalise, Mackenzie Shields and Paige Tabler.

Coached by Kim DeJoy and Karen Maurice, the JV squad includes Amanda Arnold, Haley Bowers, Caressa Duarte, Michelle French, Diane Hadley, Camille Hamlin, Hayley Jefferies, 'Alakoka Kailahi, Emily Palange, Natalie Pearce, Taylor Sanchez, Summer Shelton, Natalie Wright and Haley Zavattero.

"It's been a tough year filled with injuries so this was a huge accomplishment for them," said Cheryl Palange, who handles publicity for the teams. ■

SCHOOL BOARD

Continued from Page 5

- Reducing the number of middle school counselors by one and a half overall, bringing the number of fulltime counselors at each middle school to two and saving \$120,000;
- Cutting the work year for management. Currently, management has agreed to eight furlough days over two years; this would bring the total of unpaid days to 11 over a three-year period at a savings of \$90,000;
- Eliminating the equivalent of one fulltime high school counselor. That would bring the student-to-counselor ratio at Foothill and Amador Valley high school to about 518 to 1, saving \$80,000; and
- Reducing the funding for the Barton Reading Program by \$53,000, cutting district funding for the program in half.

The district is also working to get an additional \$150,000 in one-time funds from the Regional Occupation Program.

Board members were adamant that these cuts were not necessarily the ones that would be implemented.

"These are just possible solutions," said board Chairwoman Val-

erie Arkin. "They are not necessarily the ones we are going to take."

However, gearing up for those cuts would clear the way for pink slips to be issued to the employees whose jobs are on the line. By law, the board must issue those to employees by a specific time, depending on whether the employee is a member of the Association of Pleasanton Teachers (APT) or of the California Service Employees Association (CSEA), and preparing for these cuts would provide the time needed.

In addition to funding cuts, the board also learned that jobs restored through the CORE (Community Outreach for Education) campaign will end this year. That means the loss of technology specialists in all grades and a cut in the number of library assistants in elementary and middle schools.

The budget plan also includes spending \$5.3 million in reserves, including \$2.7 million in one-time federal funding for jobs and \$700,000 in state fiscal stabilization funds, along with \$1.9 million from the district's undesignated reserves.

It does not include new money that could come in if the parcel tax is passed or from another fundraising campaign such as CORE. It also doesn't include savings that could

come from negotiations with employees. The board is expected to discuss the state of the negotiations at its next meeting

On a related note, the board members, Superintendent Parvin Ahmadi and APT President Trevor Knaggs all received emails asking that negotiations between the district and the APT be wrapped up by March 22.

"This will provide the parcel tax voters a clear understanding of whether PUSD will increase salaries or benefits for this employee group," said the email, from Pleasanton Parcel Tax, a group opposed to the parcel tax. That group's website calls for, among other things, 5% cuts in salaries for management and certificated employees like teachers.

Attendance at Tuesday night's meeting was low, possibly due to what Board Member Joan Laursen described as "budget fatigue."

However, Marilyn Palowitch, best known as an Amador Valley High School music booster, expressed her frustration about not being able to get a slot on the board's agenda. Palowitch told the board she has a plan that could save seventh-period music programs, but despite contacting the board more than two weeks ago, had not heard a response. ■

LAWSUIT

Continued from Page 5

Rogers cited a 2010 ruling in a comparable case, Mammoth Lakes

Land Acquisition LLC v. Town of Mammoth Lakes, in which the developer made a similar claim. Her tentative ruling stated, "the Court interprets Ordinance No. 1961, Ordinance No. 1962, and the development agreement to constitute an integrated contract designed to be read and interpreted together."

She said, "(b)asic principals of contract law can be applied to interpretation of the ordinances and the development agreement," and "the plain terms of Ordinance No. 1962 state that it shall be of no force and effect if Ordinance No. 1961 is set aside by referendum."

The case is not over, according to Pleasanton City Attorney Jonathan Lowell.

The judge has directed that the parties appear for further argument. Rogers says she "will wait until after oral argument to decide whether the demurrer is sustained with leave to amend or not."

That means the judge was to listen to oral arguments yesterday before deciding whether the Lins will be allowed to amend their complaint and fix the defects the city identified in its demurrer.

—Glenn Wohltmann

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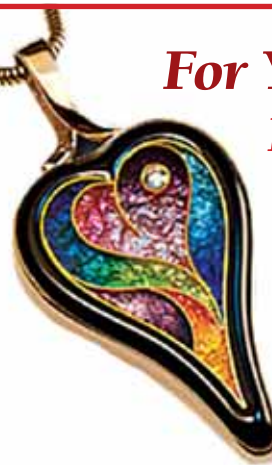
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GUEST OPINION

By DAVID HARMER

Campaign was a labor of love

Three weeks after the election, while the outcome remained unclear, the wife of a personal friend and generous campaign donor passed away. She had much to live for, but her two-and-a-half-year struggle with cancer had left her exhausted. Among the things she left behind was the new dress she had ordered to wear for her daughter's upcoming wedding.

Around the same time, the 26-year-old daughter of another friend and donor died of complications from a lifelong battle with hydrocephalus. Despite severe chronic pain resulting from multiple brain surgeries, she had remained kind and selfless and even grateful to the end.

Mindful of those losses, I tried to put ours in perspective. "It was just an election," I would tell disheartened supporters. "Not a life. Not a loved one or a friend."

For a few weeks following my concession, it seemed as if the campaign hadn't ended. More nights than not, Elayne and I found ourselves at central committee meetings, candidate appreciation nights or other political gatherings. At each, we encountered melancholy volunteers who had put heart and soul into the campaign, and we tried to console them.

Sometimes I wasn't very sympathetic. "You're the most morose group I've greeted yet," I told the Tri-Valley Republican Women Federated at their Christmas party. "Remember, we're happy warriors! Lighten up!"

In attempting to reinvigorate discouraged allies, I would recite the campaign's accomplishments. I'd remind them how close we'd come. Although we'd had a bad night in California, we'd had a great night in the rest of the nation. Outside money spent defeating me couldn't be spent on other

races, enabling good candidates elsewhere to win upset victories.

Still, the sadness lingered. On further reflection, I think I understand why.

Activists on the right are often mischaracterized as angry or hateful. My experience has been the opposite. What prompted the outpouring of support for our campaign was love: love of our families and neighbors, our homes and neighborhoods, our lands and livelihoods, our rights and freedoms. We treasure our liberties, so we want not only our families and friends to enjoy them, but all people. A patriot is one who loves his "patria," his country; and along with our country, we love our countrymen.

How felicitous that our Declaration of Independence recognizes, among the most fundamental of rights, the pursuit of happiness. Just as we want to be free to pursue our own happiness, we want others to be free to pursue theirs. Apprehensive that the political class was smothering the pursuit and implementing its antithesis — federally guaranteed minimum levels of happiness, with a blizzard of happiness regulations drafted by bureaucrats in the Department of Happiness and enforced by the happiness police, financed by happiness bonds and a happiness tax — Americans rose up to reclaim the rights, and the risks, of freedom.

That's what our campaign was about: the pursuit. It was a labor of love. All of us were engaged in a worthy cause much greater than ourselves. We were happy in our work, in our association with each other, and in our engagement with the undecided.

To those distraught by the outcome, or going through withdrawal from the camaraderie of the battlefield, please understand that the depth of your disappointment reflects the height of your commitment. Your effort wasn't wasted; good things resulted; and greater opportunities lie ahead.

David Harmer was the Republican nominee for the U.S. House of Representatives from California's 11th District in 2010.



David Harmer

LETTERS

City financial issue getting worse

Dear Editor,

I am concerned about the serious situation our city is facing with our growing unfunded pension liability and increasing employee medical costs. This was heightened when the Pleasanton Finance Director said she is starting to lose sleep

over the city's unfunded liability. The city needs to get much more aggressive in asking employees to begin sharing in their portion of pension and medical costs.

The pending contract was negotiated in good faith (although, unfortunately, without input from residents). However, material information from CalPERS came out after the preliminary negotiations, which changed a key rate assumption. This new data resulted in a significantly increased financial burden on Pleasanton (see www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/pdf/cc-workshop-110201.pdf, exhibit F). Assuming it is legal, we need to go back to the bargaining table to true up the draft contract based on this change.

We also need comparative data from other cities we historically benchmark against, to include employee contributions, to CalPERS, and the fiscal health of the cities. Otherwise how can the council ensure we have the strongest negotiating leverage and ensure a competitive outcome for both Pleasanton residents and employees?

Bottom line — we have a serious long-term issue that is getting worse. We need to be even more aggressive and creative in partnering with our employee bargaining units so we don't end up like other cities facing massive layoffs and reductions in services. I would like to see a five- to 10-year plan developed, and discussed with the public, prior to starting new bargaining negotiations. This plan needs to assume a worst-case scenario, as we can't risk doing otherwise.

Nancy Allen

EDITORIAL

THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

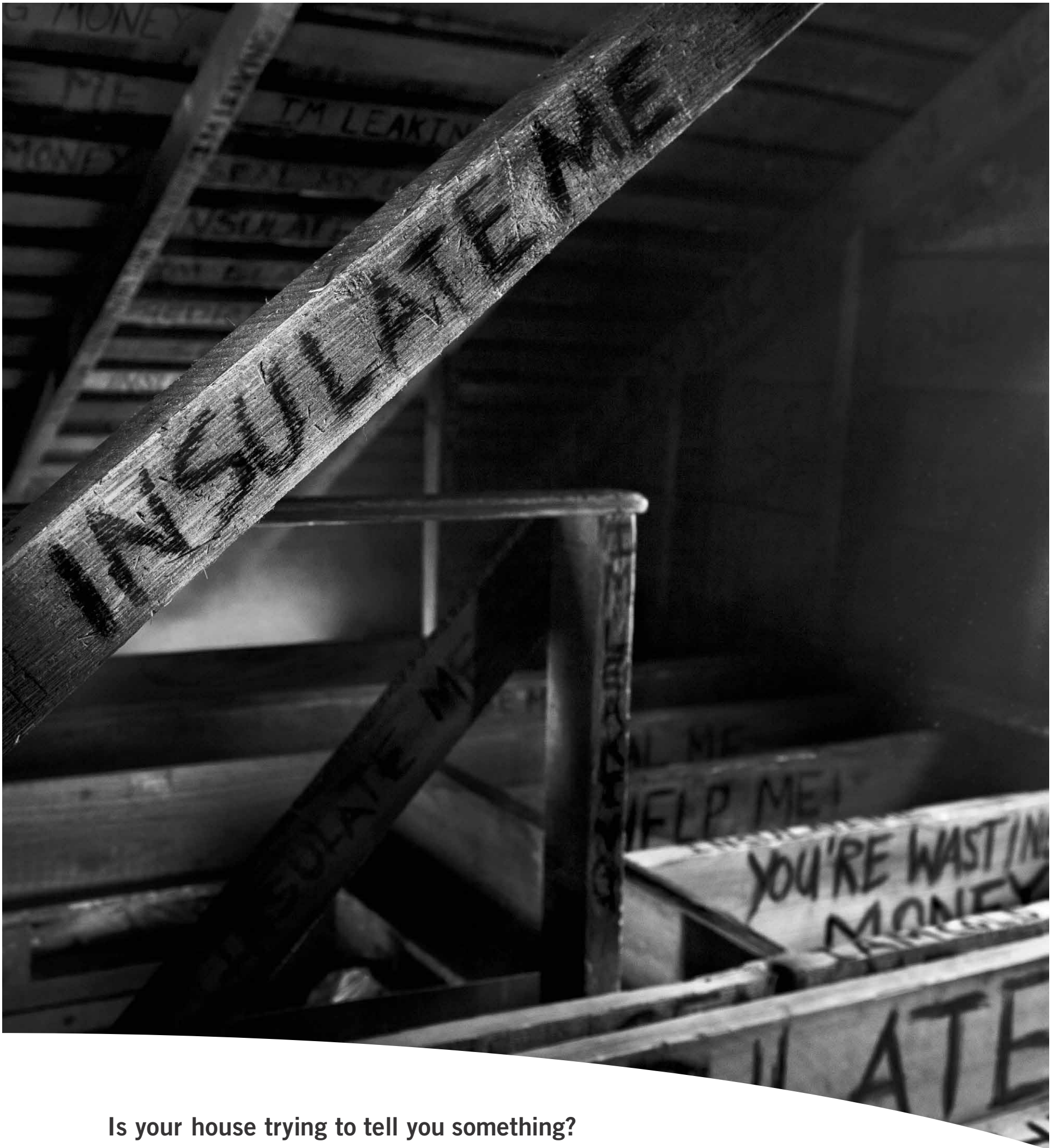
Employee union contract is fair; council should sign it Tuesday

Over the last several weeks and again Tuesday night, community activists who are concerned over Pleasanton's unfunded pension liability for its employees have been badgering the City Council to rein in the benefits. The city's unfunded liabilities now total between \$121 million and \$290 million, depending on whose accounting formulas are used. To start closing the gap, this citizens' group, led by businessman Bart Hughes and former City Councilwoman Kay Ayala, want a pending two-year labor contract with the union representing miscellaneous employees to be scuttled and rewritten to require more hefty retirement contributions. The contract, negotiated last fall by City Manager Nelson Fialho and the Pleasanton City Employees Association (PECA) that represents 227 employees, is scheduled to be voted on by the City Council next Tuesday night. The city has separate union contracts with its firefighters and police.

The PECA contract addresses pension reform by requiring unionized employees to contribute 2% of their salaries toward their pension fund, which is handled by CalPERS, the California Public Employees Retirement System. CalPERS market investments soured over the last few years in the recession and are continuing to lag in the weak recovery, placing a greater financial burden on public agencies such as the city of Pleasanton to increase their contributions to pay the pension commitments. To start closing the gap, the PECA contract would have its members contributing a total of \$722,000 annually. That's not enough given the financial perils facing CalPERS, which both Fialho and the community activists recognize.

Fialho's approach is to address the pension contribution shortfall as contracts are negotiated through the collective bargaining process, with three strategies: implement salary freezes for at least two years (if not more) as contracts expire and/or until the economy substantially improves; implement a two-tier retiree medical system for new hires that eliminates this entitlement after age 65, which essentially stabilizes the city's future long-term liability; and, implement contributions from existing employees starting with an immediate 2% contribution initially and growing to the maximum 8% or 9% employee contribution through future bargaining efforts.

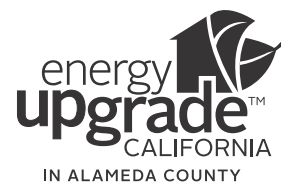
We think Fialho and the City Council are on the right track. The PECA contract represents a good faith effort by both management and the union and a 2% contribution at the start makes sense. PECA, unlike the firefighters and police unions, represents the lowest paid city employees who will now have two years with no increased income to handle the additional 2% deduction from the paychecks. Fialho, by the way, recently voluntarily agreed to an 8% contribution; his management teams followed by agreeing to contribute 4%. Within two to three years, everyone should be at the 8% contribution level, where they should be. The PECA contract as negotiated is a good one and we urge the council to approve it Tuesday night. ■



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POLICE BULLETIN

Yogurt shop burglarized

A burglary at Viva Yogurt in the 3000 block of Hopyard Road netted a \$600 computer, \$100 flat screen monitor, a \$200 espresso machine, \$300 in cash and a \$50 printer according to a police report, which said the break-in occurred between 9 p.m.

Feb. 3 and 9:40 a.m. Feb. 4. Access was gained through a smashed rear door; damage to the door and lock was valued at \$200.

Jewelry worth an estimated \$9,800 was stolen in a residential burglary in the 7100 block of Valley Trails Drive, according to a police report, which said the burglary took place between 8 a.m. Jan. 31 and 7:30 a.m. Feb. 3. Three women's gold rings worth \$2,500 apiece were stolen, along with a \$1,000 wedding band, \$600 earrings, and a women's gold watch worth \$200, the report said.

POLICE REPORT

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

Jan 31

Theft

- 1:01 p.m. in the 1600 block of Calle Santa Anna; petty theft
- 2:19 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall; shoplifting, paraphernalia possession
- 3:06 p.m. in the 400 block of Boulder Court; grand theft
- 8:06 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall; identity theft

Vandalism

- 11:45 a.m. in the 7400 block of Alder Court

Auto burglary

- 7:39 p.m. in the 5100 block of Case Avenue
- 8:13 p.m. in the 5100 block of Case Avenue

Drug/alcohol violations

- 1 p.m. at the intersection of Santa Rita Road and W. Las Positas Boulevard; Possession of a controlled substance, carrying a concealed weapon; minor in possession of a firearm, carrying a loaded firearm

Feb. 1

Theft

- 9:59 a.m. in the 5700 block of Owens Drive; identity theft
- 4:16 p.m. in the 1500 block of Calle Santa Anna; petty theft
- 4:42 p.m. in the 1700 block of Santa Rita Road; theft

Burglary

- 1:50 p.m. in the 6600 block of Owens Drive

Auto burglary

- 10:14 a.m. in the 4300 block of Railroad Avenue

Drug/alcohol violations

- 5:43 a.m. at the intersection of First and Neal streets; possession of a non-narcotic controlled substance, paraphernalia possession
- 4:11 p.m. at the intersection of Old Vineyard and Vineyard avenues; possession of marijuana for sale
- 9:30 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; paraphernalia possession

Feb. 2

Theft

- 8:26 a.m. in the 5800 block of Black Avenue; grand theft, identity theft, possession of a controlled substance
- 11:21 a.m. in the 3800 block of Hopyard Road; petty theft
- 2:57 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; theft
- 5:22 p.m. in the 4400 block of Hacienda Drive; auto theft
- 6:19 p.m. in the 5800 block of Owens Drive; auto theft
- 5:12 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; forgery
- 5:38 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; theft

Vandalism

- 12:31 p.m. in the 3700 block of Stanley Boulevard
- 3:59 p.m. in the 4500 block of El Dorado Court

Drug/alcohol violations

- 1:42 a.m. in the 6100 block of W. Las Positas Boulevard; DUI

Feb. 3

Theft

- 4:08 p.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; shoplifting
- 5:04 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; theft, under the influence of a controlled substance

Failure to register as a sex offender

- 3:32 p.m. in the 1800 block of Harvest Road

Battery

- 12:10 a.m. in the 8000 block of Canyon Creek Circle
- 9:56 p.m. in the 4400 block of Black Avenue

Drug/alcohol violations

- 2:15 a.m. in the 300 block of Main Street; public drunkenness
- 2:20 a.m. in the 4300 block of Valley Avenue; DUI
- 8:58 p.m. at the intersection of Hopyard Road and Valley Trails Drive; paraphernalia possession, public drunkenness
- 10:55 p.m. at the intersection of Sonoma Drive and San Luis Court; public drunkenness
- 10:57 p.m. in the 4300 block of Railroad Avenue; DUI, possession of someone else's prescription, possession of a controlled substance
- 11:14 p.m. in the 1800 block of Santa Rita Road; public drunkenness

- 11:18 p.m. in the 4400 block of Black Avenue; public drunkenness
- 11:33 p.m. in the 4300 block of Valley Avenue; public drunkenness

Feb. 4

Theft

- 8:44 a.m. in the 5600 block of Springhouse Drive; grand theft
- 3:59 p.m. in the 2200 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- 4:02 p.m. in the 2300 block of Redberry Court; identity theft
- 5:21 p.m. in the 1700 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft

Battery

- 9:07 p.m. in the 4300 block of Valley Avenue

Vandalism

- 9:16 a.m. in the 900 block of Main Street
- 3:26 p.m. in the 4100 block of Vineyard Avenue

Drug/alcohol violations

- 4:51 p.m. at the intersection of Greenwood Road and Valley Avenue; possession of a hypodermic needle
- 5:46 p.m. in the 4800 block of Bernal Avenue; possession of a controlled substance, paraphernalia possession

Feb. 5

Theft

- 2:55 p.m. in the 4500 block of Santa Rita Road; theft
- 3:46 p.m. in the 1100 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; grand theft
- 5:11 p.m. in the 1600 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft

Auto burglary

- 11:09 a.m. in the 2400 block of Santa Rita Road
- 2:45 p.m. in the 2500 block of Santa Rita Road

Drug/alcohol violations

- 12:26 a.m. at the intersection of Hopyard Road and Black Avenue; DUI
- 12:39 a.m. in the 5300 block of Hopyard Road; DUI, possession of a non-narcotic controlled substance, paraphernalia possession
- 12:55 a.m. in the 300 block of St. Mary Street; public drunkenness
- 1:12 a.m. at the intersection of Gibraltar Drive and Chabot Drive; DUI
- 7:55 p.m. in the 1800 block of Sannita Place; driving with marijuana

ENGAGEMENT

Karie Manning and Tom Chamberlain

Karie Manning and Tom Chamberlain have announced plans to marry on July 29 at Casa Real in Pleasanton.

Karie is the daughter of Steve and Mary Ann Manning of Pleasanton. After graduating from Amador Valley High School and Arizona State, she teaches social studies and coaches cheerleading at Dougherty Valley High School in San Ramon.

Tom is the son of Joan Chamberlain of Walnut Creek. He is a graduate of Las Lomas High School and UC Davis. Tom teaches biology and biotechnology and coaches track at Dougherty Valley.



WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES

City Council

Tuesday, February 15, 2011 @ 7:00 p.m.
Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Consider approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Pleasanton and the Pleasanton City Employees Association/AFSCME Local 955 for the term November 1, 2010 through March 31, 2013
- Consider adoption of a resolution amending the Management and Confidential Employee Compensation and Benefit Plan to require department heads, management and confidential employees to contribute 4% to CalPERS pension costs
- Public Hearing: PAP 149, David & Stephanie Persin (PADR-2090, Rodney & Trina Lopez), Appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of an application for Administrative Design Review to construct an approximately 80 sq. ft. single story addition and an approximately 1,038 sq. ft. second story addition to the existing residence located at 6114 Homer Court
- Public Hearing: PUD-81-30-48M/PUD-85-82-01; City of Pleasanton – Consider a Major Modification to the Planned Unit Development for Hacienda Business Park to adopt various standards and guidelines to guide development on three parcels close to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, and to provide design concepts for associated improvements including streets, landscaping, bike and pedestrian connections and open space (Hacienda TOD Standards and Design Guidelines) on three sites located at (1) Southeast corner of Willow Road and Owens Drive (APN 941-2778-013) (2) North of Gibraltar Drive and Hacienda Drive (APN 941-2778-011) and (3) Southeast corner of Gibraltar Drive and Willow Road (a portion of APN 941 2761 003)

Housing Commission

Thursday, February 17, 2011 @ 7:00 p.m.
Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Update Regarding the Housing and Human Services Grant (HHS) Review Process
- Update Regarding Current Housing Projects and Activities
- Appointment of New Officers (Chairperson and Vice Chairperson) for 2011

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

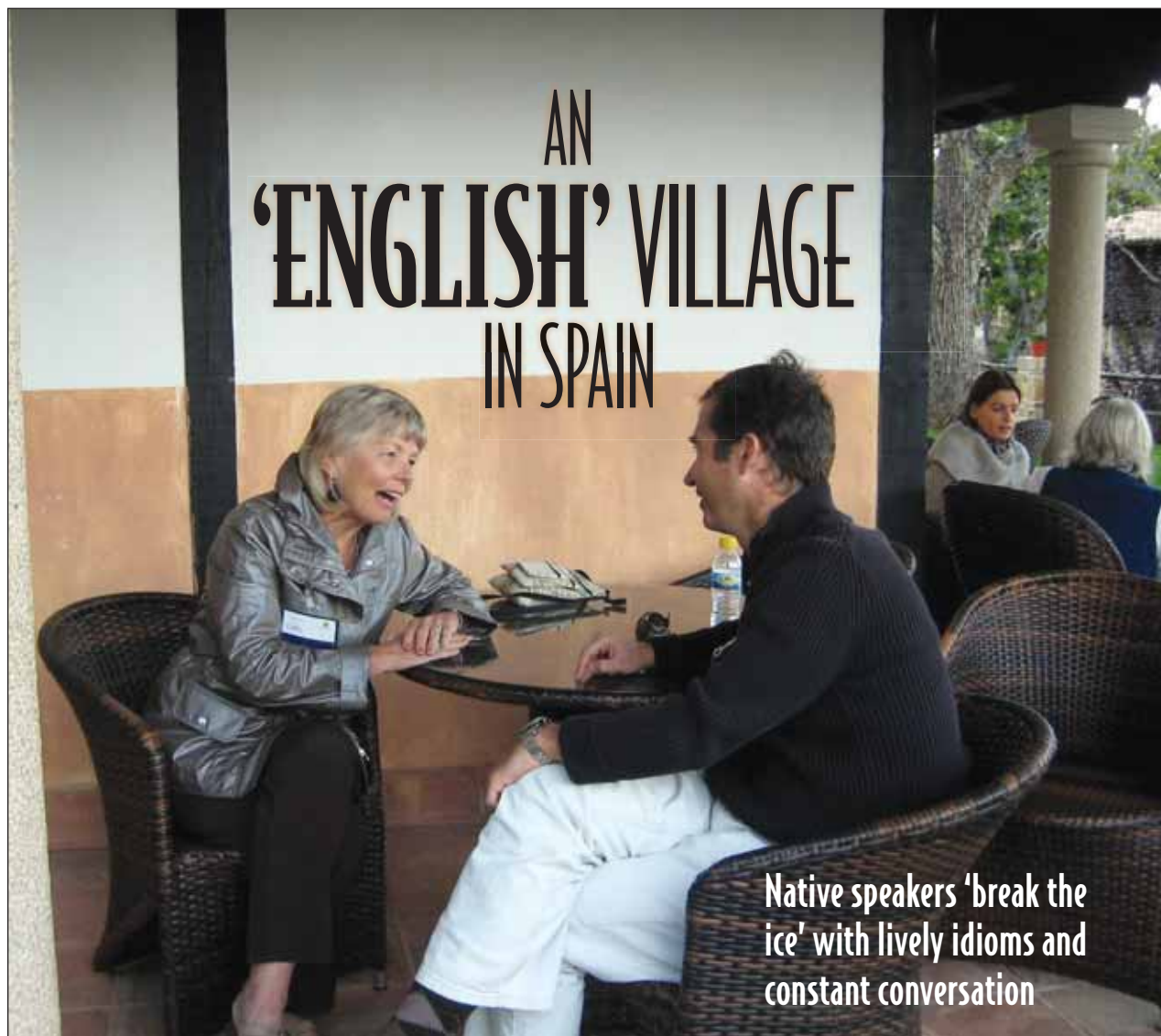
The above represents a sampling of upcoming meeting items. For complete information, please visit www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/community/calendar

BIRTHS

Alexandra Claire Danen

Robert and Ann Danen welcomed their daughter, Alexandra Claire, to their family on Jan. 18. Alexandra was 21 inches long and weighed 9 pounds 5 ounces at birth. She has a 6-year-old brother, Nathan, who is very excited to have a baby sister.





AN 'ENGLISH' VILLAGE IN SPAIN

Native speakers 'break the ice' with lively idioms and constant conversation

Clockwise from left: Cathy Lipman holds a one-on-one conversation with a Spanish executive during the English-immersion program, Pueblo Ingles, held at a Spanish resort near the Portuguese border; the nearby 14th century village of La Alberca, with its winding lanes, cobblestone streets and thatched roofs, was a popular destination for students and teachers; (l-r) Diana Mendenhall, Cathy Lipman and Vernie Laube tour Spain by train after eight days of intense English conversations.

COURTESY OF DIANA MENDENHALL



BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. That was the mission for three Pleasanton women who participated last fall in an eight-day English immersion course to help executives in Spain become fluent in the language.

"It was intense," agreed Vernie Laube, Cathy Lipman and Diana Mendenhall.

"You talk from 9 in the morning until 11 at night, with a 1-1/2 hour break," Lipman said. "I was thinking it was a free vacation. Well, it wasn't."

The program, called Pueblo Ingles or English village, was held at a resort near the Portuguese border. Room and board were provided although teachers had to pay their way to Madrid.

Before teachers and students boarded the bus in Madrid, they were told the rules.

"We could not talk about politics or religion — or Franco," noted Mendenhall.

If they didn't like the assigned subject, they could converse on another topic if everyone agreed. They recalled a good discussion with the Spaniards on California's Proposition 19 to legalize marijuana.

"The big thing was idioms, like 'break the ice' and 'blow it off.' There was an Idiom of the Hour," said Mendenhall, adding that she was fighting a cold at the time. "I had a 'frog in my throat' so I was the poster child for that."

They also gave talks on subjects of interest to them, and Mendenhall was asked to speak on her work with Habitat for Humanity. Although she wasn't feeling well, she said she agreed, in case she wants to return. But she was a bit chagrined when an attractive young woman named Angela, from Georgia, went before her and did a dynamic presentation.

"She gets her guitar and gets to singing the cutest Spanish love songs — and then she teaches us to yodel," Mendenhall recalled with a laugh.

The Pleasanton women, who are in their late 60s, said that as the everyday subjects were exhausted they often ended up in the role of mother confessor. Some of these "confessions" still caused the friends to laugh as they remembered a



handsome dad treading lightly among flirtatious moms when picking up his child at school, and the woman executive who was moved to share her piercings and the fact that her older boyfriend was possessive.

"You can talk to a stranger about personal things," Laube observed. "And after two days, you'd gone through the standard questions."

They also acted out fairytales and skits, choosing costumes from a big box of props.

"It was very well organized," Lipman said. "One day they brought in a big metal thing for us to talk about. It turned out to be a still. It was just to instigate conversation."

One assignment was for everyone to go to their chalets and talk to each other on the telephone.

"It was a whole different feeling on the phone," Laube said.

Another day they walked to the nearby 14th century village of La Alberca, which is so well preserved that it's a National Historical Monument.

"We walked to the village and did some wine tasting," remembered Lipman. "We passed the bota bag."

They also partook of the local specialty — cured ham carved paper-thin — which gave them another topic of conversation.

All the executives, about half of them women, had at least studied English in elementary school. At Pueblo Ingles they heard accents from New Zealand, Australia, Wales and Eng-

land in addition to the United States.

"They pay 2,200 Euros, almost \$3,000. Sometimes their company pays it in full or half," Lipman noted. "They all needed conversational English to move up in their careers."

Several of them worked for Telefonos, and there were three pilots. The students had to do homework, including presentations, one on their company and the other on something personal, often biographical.

"It was hard for them," Lipman said.

Many of the teachers were returnees to the program. One was on his 15th session. Mendenhall discovered the program on the Internet a few years ago and her daughter soon participated.

The application process required them to describe themselves, said Mendenhall, and she cited her background as a flight attendant and helping out after Hurricane Katrina. Laube and her husband owned the restaurant in the Pleasanton Hotel for 25 years, and she has done event planning. Lipman was a teacher and hiked Half Dome in Yosemite last year. They all included their work with Habitat for Humanity.

When they didn't hear back, Mendenhall wrote again, pointing out that she was the mother of a former Pueblo Ingles teacher and saying, "If you liked my daughter, you will love us."

They were accepted.

By the end of the week, the Spaniards' English had improved tremendously.

"They said they started thinking in English," Lipman said.

"We were told to correct them but after awhile they corrected themselves," Mendenhall added.

The pace never let up, they also noted.

"Even the last day was exhausting," Mendenhall said. "We were in groups again, singing and dancing."

On the bus trip back to Madrid, everyone slept, they recalled. The Pleasanton friends headed for the train station to begin a tour of Spain that included Granada, Seville, Cordova, Toledo and Barcelona. They'd taken advantage of their eight days of conversations to gather travel tips.

Intense as it was, Pueblo Ingles was a good experience, the Pleasanton women agreed. Mendenhall summed it up: "This was like an adult summer camp with a waterfall of Sangria." ■



Cher Wollard



David Alpaugh



Lee Rossi



Lynne Knight



Bob Eastwood



Connie Post

Let's get literary

Firehouse Arts Center to host its first Literary Evening

Heroes and anti-heroes. Where would literature be without them?

Pleasanton Poet Laureate Deborah Grossman and Livermore Poet Laureate Cher Wollard will co-host a Literary Evening at the Firehouse Arts Center on Friday, Feb. 18, at which poets and prose writers will weigh in on "The Myth & Reality of the Hero & the Anti-Hero from Mythology to Reality and Personal Story."

The evening will begin with a cheese and no-host wine reception from 7:30-8 p.m. following by the author readings. A book signing will follow the event. Admission is \$5, free to students.

The event will feature narrator Robert Eastwood, who will weave original and other writing into his perspective on the heroic and anti-heroic traditions in literature and myth in conjunction with more than a dozen highly acclaimed invited Bay Area writers including David Alpaugh, Lynne Knight, Connie Post and Lee Rossi.

Eastwood, a San Ramon resident, has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Award and has won the grand prize at the Berkeley Poets Dinner Contest. His work has appeared in Blue Unicorn,

Carquinez Review, The Dirty Napkin, Oxford Magazine, Ekphrasis, and many other journals, in print and online.

David Alpaugh of Pleasant Hill is a nationally known poet and performer. He is a graduate of Rutgers University and UC Berkeley, and has taught poetry writing and appreciation at the UC Extension. He is best known for his two-part essay, the "The Professionalization of Poetry," published in 2003 issues of Poets & Writers Magazine. He has authored several poetry books including "Heavy Lifting" and "Greatest Hits."

Lynne Knight, who lives in Berkeley, published her fourth poetry collection, "Again," in 2009. She is currently working on a memoir. Among her awards are the 2009 RATTLE Poetry Prize, the Lucille Medwick Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, and a National Education Association (NEA) grant.

Connie Post was Livermore Poet Laureate from 2005-09. Her work has appeared in many nationally recognized journals, and she was winner of the 2009 Caesura Poetry Awards from Poetry Center of San Jose. She hosts the Valona Deli

Second Sunday Poetry Series in Crockett.

Lee Rossi of San Carlos is the author of three books of poems, including "Ghost Diary" and "Wheelchair Samurai." His poetry, reviews, and interviews have appeared widely in such journals as The Sun, Poetry East, Chelsea, The Spoon River Poetry Review, and The Beloit Poetry Journal.

Other invited writers include Jannie Dresser, poetry columnist for the San Francisco Examiner; Fred Norman, founding member of the Tri-Valley California Writers Club; Kirk Ridgeway, Pleasanton's third Poet Laureate (2001-03); freelance journalist Aleta George, author of a book about California's first Poet Laureate, Ina Coolbrith; Liz Fortini, poet, prose author and publisher of www.languageandculture.net; Las Positas College student Samantha Kennedy, and the 2010-11 Pleasanton Teen Poets Laureate, Mitch Grimes, Nolle Malindzak and Vivian Tsai.

The Firehouse Arts Center is located at 4444 Railroad Ave. in downtown Pleasanton. For more information, contact Deborah Grossman at pleasantonpoetry@gmail.com. ■

OF NOTE



Newcomers present checks

Ruby Miller, president of the Pleasanton Newcomers Club, presents Christine Dillman from Tri-Valley Haven with a check at the annual Holiday Luncheon. Also at the luncheon, donation coordinator Barb Terry presented a certificate of appreciation to Cheri Funk of Cardinal Jewelers in recognition of its 33 years of support to the Newcomers.

The club's upcoming luncheon will feature a fashion show, "Goodwill Glamour," with models from the Goodwill Bags, an auxiliary group of Goodwill Industries of the Greater East Bay, modeling vintage fashions, on Wednesday, March 9, at the Farmer Restaurant in the Pleasanton Hotel. Cost of the tickets is \$24 for members, \$26 for non-members, to benefit the Goodwill. For more information, visit www.pleasantonnewcomers.com or call 215-8405.

OF NOTE

'Romeo et Juliette' student art poster contest

Livermore Valley Opera is holding a middle and high school art contest for its 20th Anniversary Season opening opera, Gounod's "Roméo et Juliette." The top entries will be displayed in an exhibit and at the opening night show, plus featured in opera promotions. The winner will receive two tickets to the opera and acknowledgement in the program.

The poster must measure 18 inches wide by 26 inches high; media must be two dimensional and may be created in paint, colored pencil, pastel, watercolor or mixed media. Entries will be accepted beginning in March. Email questions

to Executive Director Sara Nealy at saran@livermorevalleyopera.com. The opera will be presented in French with English supertitles at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore on Sept. 24-25 and Oct. 1-2.

DECA members going on to State

Foothill High's DECA, a career technical organization, competed in the Northern California District Career Development Conference last month in San Ramon. Approximately 850 high school students from all over Northern California competed in 36 different events and categories, ranging from Retail Merchandising to Business Law and Ethics.

The following students qualified in one or more categories to take part in the state conference being held in Santa Clara on March 3-6: Shreya Arora, Kyle Bettencourt,

Yehna Cho, Taylor Dragotta, Matthew Falcone, James Garcia, Josh Gubersky, Dylan Gubersky, Randall Hahn, Jeremiah Hong, Pete Huang, Megha Jain, Aditi Jhanwar, Connor Johnson, Catherine Jue, Gopi Karunamoorthy, Atra Kermani, Jordan Larson, Devony Lea, Patricia Lee, Wendy Li, Kavya Methukupally, Bridget Moran, Yash Nagda, Virginia Phan, Taryn Qi, Siyang Qiu, Joe Schneider, Jared Shohfi, Greig Spivey, Ryan Splain, Alex Tam, Jake Thorton, Shruti Thundiyl, Vivian Tsai, Max Wang, Brian Wu, Helen Wu, Iden Yekan, Christine Yi and Anna Zhang.

For information, contact Tami Raaker at Foothill High School at 461-0425 or visit the DECA website at deca.org. Business partners are needed throughout the year to assist with training, development and/or judging for competitive events, as well as contributions to help with competition expenses.



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WILL YOU MARRY ME?

'THE RING THING' CAN BE ROMANTIC, EXTRAVAGANT, FUN, HIGH-TECH OR NON-EXISTENT

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Elsie was only 17 when Neil Fannin, who was a few years older, moved next door to her in San Francisco. At first he had another girlfriend. When he was free and they did begin to date, Elsie knew he was "the one."

After a year a year and a half went by, she asked him pointblank: "When are we gonna get married?" He agreed it was a fine idea.

They were married in 1957 and this April, four children and eight grandchildren later, they will celebrate their 56th wedding anniversary. They moved to Pleasanton a few years ago to be near their family and have made friends at the Senior Center.

"He's very loving, very patient, very understanding, and let's me do what I want," Elsie said to explain the success of their marriage.

"I just keep quiet," Neil said. "When you start talking, that's when you get in trouble."

Also at the Senior Center was Irene Loos, who's been married for 68 years to her husband Harry. But she doesn't remember anyone proposing.

"I was 18 years old when we got married," she recalled. "It was right after Pearl Harbor and all the young couples were getting married so we got married."

"He was 20," she added. "We got married at our minister's home with our parents, in January 1943. We didn't have a lot of money."

This was back in Scotts Bluff, Neb., which they left 39 years ago to come to Pleasanton when their first grandchild was born.

Julie Parkinson, who works at the Senior Center and has been married for 31 years, met her husband Rick playing co-ed softball. His proposal came as a complete surprise.

"After Christmas midnight Mass we were sitting in his car in front of the house. I was 19 and I lived at home," she remembered. "He said, 'I have a question. Will you marry me?' I was totally unprepared and shocked."

"He even had the ring," she continued. "I was so excited."

Her husband sold that car, a Camaro, to pay for their honeymoon to Hawaii.

Meanwhile downtown at Jaime Bridal, it's all about brides, weddings and romance. Consultant

Maureen Cindrick said she loves to hear stories about the proposals.

"Some are surprised, some are romantic. Sometimes the families are in on it," she said. "A bride yesterday was proposed to on the side of a mountain while they were snowboarding. They're getting married at Tahoe."

Bride Renee Swidler, 25, brought her groom Bobby Lee along with her to choose a dress last Friday.

"His opinion is the one that matters," she explained. She'd already been dress shopping with her mom and friends and said, "That experience was terrible."

Renee and Bobby have been a couple for two-and-a-half years, and she said they were prompted to become engaged and get married for a reason that is not particularly romantic: He has great health insurance.

"It helped us speed it up a little," Bobby acknowledged.

Now she is designing the ring, Renee said. "I know exactly what I want."

But it's up to Bobby to pick up the ring and figure out the best way to present it to her.

"I have a friend who got married in June. He got glow-in-the-dark stars and spelled out on the roof, 'Will you marry me?' and took her out to see it," Renee said.

The Internet is full of suggestions for ways to propose. There are hot air balloon proposals, ballgame proposals, treasure hunt proposals, poems, songs, trips and romantic dinners. One computer geek reprogrammed his girlfriend's favorite video game so that when she reached a certain score the screen went blank and a ring dropped down.

People have proposed via Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and iPhone apps. Yes, there is an iPhone app for proposing as well as apps for every aspect of the wedding planning.

There is also a website called Proposal Gone Wrong so perhaps it's best to keep it simple. Of course it includes public proposals where the answer is "no."

Ashley Trujillo, 25, who's been married for five months, is also a consultant at Jaime Bridal.

"I used to cheerlead for the San Francisco 49ers," she said, and she became best friends with

another cheerleader. At her friend's wedding, Ashley met and fell in love with the brother, Cion.

"Around Christmas I'd been saying, 'We need to get an ornament for our first Christmas together,'" she remembered.

One afternoon she came downstairs to find him standing by their tree, tears in his eyes. He reached for one of the ornaments and opened it to reveal an engagement ring.

"He said, 'I love you so much. I want to spend the rest of my life with you,'" she recalled.

Jerry Ridenour Leonardini also married the brother of her best friend, from back in the 1960s.

"He was the scary big brother a couple years older," she explained.

He was single again after 19 years of marriage and raising two boys while meanwhile she raised her daughter.

"In a comedy of errors I ended up seeing him in emergency when his mom had a stroke and I broke my leg," Jerry said. "We had a great time catching up while waiting for my leg to be cast."

They'd been a couple for four years and had even purchased a home together in Pleasanton by Valentine's Day 1998 when he presented her with a tiny box.

"I opened it and saw a wonderful diamond ring," she remembered, but he didn't say anything. "I asked him what it was for and he said, 'You know.'"

She's still waiting for him to pop the question, she noted with a laugh, although they went to Tahoe shortly after his non-verbal proposal and tied the knot.

Next time you see the bride walking down the aisle — or maybe across the beach or meadow or along a forest path — remember that it all started with a romantic moment when one of them popped the question. Or maybe they just decided that it was time. ■



Clockwise, from below: Elsie Fannin says she asked her husband Neil almost 60 years ago: "When are we gonna get married?" Although Mike Leonardini presented Jerry Ridenour with an engagement ring, he never verbally popped the question, she recalls. Ashley Trujillo, a consultant at J'Aime Bridal on Main Street, said her husband Cion hid an engagement ring for her inside a Christmas ornament. Renee Swidler and Bobby Lee are having a special ring created — she's anticipating how he will formally present it to her and propose.



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Auditions

'REBECCA OF SUNNYBROOK FARM' City of Pleasanton Civic Arts Stage Company will hold auditions for Kate Wiggins' "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" from noon-5 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 26, and Sunday, Feb. 27, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Auditions are open to ages 7 years to adult. Audition packets are available at www.firehousearts.org/programs. Rehearsals will begin March 13, and performances take place May 6-15. Call 865-4425.

'THE SOUND OF MUSIC' Auditions for Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre's "The Sound of Music" will be held at 11 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 19, and 7:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 21, at the Studio Theatre, 1048 Serpentine Lane #303. Callbacks, by invitation only, are at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 22 and Feb. 24. Prepare a brief song (16-32 bars); bring sheet music (accompanist provided); and a picture and resume, stapled together. No Tapes, no a capella. Be prepared to dance. Call 462-2121 or visit www.trivalleyrep.com.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Romantic Valentine Eve show: Wesla Whitfield, dubbed the "best cabaret singer in the world" by the New York Daily News, is serenading Pleasanton at a 2 p.m. matinee Sunday at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., as part of its Cabaret Series. She will sing her repertoire from the Great American Songbook, which include selections by Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Rodgers and Hart, and more. Wesla's pianist and arranger, Mike Greensill, is her husband and a celebrated performer in his own right. Ticket prices are adult, \$15-\$25; child, \$15; and senior, \$22. Purchase at www.firehousearts.org or call 931-4848.

Clubs

'FREE TRADE DOES NOT WORK' Ian Fletcher will discuss why free trade is bad for America, the topic of his new book - "Free Trade Doesn't Work." Discussion is from

7-9:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 21, at IBEW 595 Hall, 6250 Village Pkwy., Dublin. Call 831-83555 or visit the TriValley Democratic Club website, www.trivalleydems.com. Public invited.

AMADOR VALLEY QUILTERS GUILD The quilters will hold their monthly meeting from 1:30-3:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 12, at Pleasanton Middle School, 5001 Case Ave. Debbie Caffrey, author and quilt maker from New Mexico, will talk about finding and unleashing the creativity within you. Arrive early to celebrate AVQ's 30th anniversary with cookies and lemonade. Guests are free. Call (510) 292-5635.

WRITERS CLUB LUNCHEON The California Writers Club Tri-Valley Branch invites writers of all levels to a lunch program from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 19, at Oasis Grille, 780 Main St. Pleasanton Poet Laureate Deborah Grossman will present "Why We Write: Is Writing a Social or Solitary Experience?" In addition, the club will hold its annual Book Exchange, exchanging one gently read book for another. Cost \$21 for members and \$27 for non-members. Call 484-5924 or visit www.trivalleywriters.org.

Events

BIRTHDAY DINNER IN PLEASANTON The Widowed Men and Women of Northern California invite you to join them for a birthday dinner at 5 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 26, at Alberto's, 435 Main St. To RSVP and check menu choices call Anne by Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 846-3736.

CELEBRATE CUBA Las Positas College will present Cuban Week/La Semana Cubana, a celebration of the Cuban people, history, art, dance, music and religions, providing education, information and a chance to practice your Spanish. All events are free and open to the public and will take place from 7-9 p.m. Feb. 22-25 at Las Positas College, 3000 Campus Hill Dr., Livermore. For a complete schedule visit www.laspositascollege.edu.

LUNCHEON The Widowed Men and Women of Northern California invite you to join them for lunch at 11:30 a.m., Monday, Feb. 21, at Strizzis, 649 Main St. Cost beverage

and menu choice. RSVP to Roselyn by Saturday, Feb. 19, at 999-9936.

OPERALIVE Livermore Valley Opera's community outreach program will present a free program featuring principal singers and members of the opera orchestra performing excerpts from its upcoming production of "Madama Butterfly." The event is from 2-3 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 27, at the Dublin Library, 200 Civic Plaza., Dublin. Visit www.livermorevalley-opera.com.

PEACEFUL WAR PROTEST Pleasantonians 4 Peace will hold a peaceful war protest from 5-6 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 23, at the corners of First and Neal streets, and 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. Contact Cathe Norman at 462-7495.

PIPE BAND ASSOCIATION AWARDS DINNER Northern Branch of Western U.S. Pipe Band Association will have its Awards Spaghetti Dinner from 5:30-10 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 12, at the Veteran's Memorial Hall, 301 Main St. Dinner is \$10 or \$30 per family (limit 6 or less). Advanced dinner reservation required; contact Donna Willy at 461-7445 or email donnawilly@gmail.com. No-host cocktails at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., awards at 6:30 p.m., and Ceilidh from 7-10 p.m. Bring your instruments.

TRI-VALLEY COMMUNITIES AGAINST A RADIOACTIVE ENVIRONMENT Tri-Valley CAREs monitors nuclear weapons and environmental cleanup activities throughout the U.S. nuclear weapons complex, with a special focus on Livermore Lab. Its next monthly meeting will be held from 7:30-9 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 17, at Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore. Call 443-7148 or visit www.trivalley-cares.org.

YOUNG AMERICAN PATRIOTS FIFE & DRUM CORPS YAPs will kick off a musical celebration at the North Western U.S. Bagpipe Association Awards Banquet and spaghetti dinner at 6 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 12, at the Veterans Hall Building, 301 Main St. Contact Donna Willy at 461-7445. The group will be the first to perform at Pleasanton's

Youth Music Festival at the Firehouse Arts Center on Feb. 19.

Exhibits

AFGHAN COMMUNITY ART SHOW Afghan artist Abdul Shokoor Khusrawy, known as "Shokoor," will have his art on display from 1-5 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 20, at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Shokoor, who will be present, is a survivor of the Afghan war who tells what his eyes witnessed story through his works. Call (510)744-1830 or visit www.artafghan.com.

THE LOOK OF JAZZ Talented Bay Area artists are featured in an exhibit that celebrates the jazz music genre and how it inspires visual artists. The exhibit is from noon-5 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays and 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays, Jan. 29 through Feb. 22, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Suggested donation is \$2; free to theater ticket holders. Call 931-4848 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

Film

'KINGS OF PASTRY' Pleasanton Library is hosting a free documentary film viewing of "Kings of Pastry" at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:15 p.m.), Thursday, Feb. 17, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis and no reservations are required. Call Penny Johnson at 931-3405.

Fundraisers

COACHES VS. CANCER BASKETBALL GAMES The women and men's basketball team are playing fundraising games and events at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., respectively, Wednesday, Feb. 16, at Las Positas College, 3000 Campus Hill Dr., Livermore. Both games will be played against teams from City College of San Francisco. Tickets are \$5 for general admission; students (with ID), seniors and staff \$3; and children under 10, free.

DESTINATION IMAGINATION FOOD DRIVE Project Outreach Team is having a Food Drive for the Valley Bible Church Food Pantry from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 19, at Safeway, 1701 Santa Rita Rd. They will be collecting non-perishable food items. Call 462-9443.

Health

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND Tri-Valley Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind will be meeting from 1-3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 12, at Valley Memorial Hospital, 1111 East Stanley Blvd., Livermore. Any visually impaired or blind person is urged to attend. Call Carl at 449-9362.

Kids & Teens

REPTILES Meet some amazing creatures as guests from the East Bay Vivarium creep, crawl and slither into the library! They will be on display from 2-3 p.m., Saturday,



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Feb. 19, at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. For ages 5 and older. Call 931-3400 ext. 8 or visit www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/library/.

Lectures/ Workshops

MEET PRESIDENT AND MRS.

LINCOLN The Ed Kinney Lecture Series, sponsored by the Museum On Main, will present President Abraham and Mrs. Todd Lincoln, portrayed by Roger and Colleen Vincent, who will stop by on their way to the theater to talk politics and culture. The Vincent's will provide glimpses of what shaped the marriage of the Lincolns and the U.S. during the most challenging time in the history of the nation. The lecture is at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 16, Lincoln's birthday, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Tickets are \$10 for general admission, \$5 for members and seniors, and \$3 for students and teachers with ID. Call 462-2766 or visit www.museumonmain.org.

Live Music

9TH ANNUAL YOUTH MUSIC

FESTIVAL Youths between the ages of 6 and 18 will showcase their musical talents, including vocal and instrumental soloists and ensembles, at 2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 19, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Tickets are \$8. Call 931-4848 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

CLASSICAL GUITAR CONCERT Award-winning classical guitarist Peter Fletcher will perform at 3 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 20, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. The concert will feature selections from Fletcher's 2008 CD release on Tower Hill Records: Music of the Baroque. Tickets are \$12-\$24. Call 931-4848 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

Miscellaneous

PORT AND CHOCOLATE AFFAIR

Charles R Vineyards is holding its annual port and chocolate affair in honor of Valentine's Day from noon-4:30 p.m., Saturday, February 12, and Sunday, Feb. 13, at Charles R Vineyards, 8195 Crane Ridge Rd., Livermore. Bring your loved one and try two traditional Portuguese ports. Call 454-3040.

RECRUITMENT GRANT AVAILABLE

\$500 The local chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, an international honor society for women educators, is offering a \$500 grant to a woman student pursuing a career in education. To be eligible, she must be a graduate of a high school in Livermore, Pleasanton or Dublin; a full-time student of upper division or graduate standing as of fall 2011; and have a good GPA. Deadline for application is March 19. For more information and an application, form send a self addressed stamped envelope to Susan Canfield, 262 Trevarno Rd., Livermore 94551.

On Stage

'BAT BOY' Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre presents the musical performance of "Bat Boy" at 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 2 p.m. Sundays, Feb. 18-March 13 at its Studio Theatre, 1048 Serpentine Ln. #309. Tickets are \$20-\$25, with a discount for groups of 20 or more. Call 462-2121 or visit www.trivalleyrep.com.

'QUEEN OF BINGO' Theater A Go-Go presents "Queen of Bingo," an Off-Broadway hit comedy about a night in the lives of Sis and Babe, two sisters on the older side of 50 who want to add a little fun and excitement to their lives. Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24-27 at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Tickets are \$13-\$25 for adults, \$22 for seniors, and \$15 for children. Call 931-4848 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

Seniors

BRAIN MATTERS Enjoy a morning of fun while learning how to keep your brain active and your memory sharp. The class is held from 10-11:30 a.m. the first and third Fridays of every month at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Word games, puzzles, challenging activities, reminiscing and more, geared to help you age-proof your mind. Cost \$1.75 for resident and \$2.25 for non-resident. Call 931-5365 or visit www.pleasantonseniorcenter.org.

LUNCH PROGRAM The lunch program sponsored by Spectrum Community Services is from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday at the Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Lunch is served at noon. Suggested donation: \$3.25. Reservations required a day in advance by 1 p.m. Call 931-5385.

Sports

MORNING GROUP RIDE - CYCLING

The group ride starts at 8:30 a.m. every Saturday and Sunday from Cycle Pros Bike Shop, 728 Main St., meeting in the parking lot. The ride breaks into groups based on skill and distance. The regular ride usually covers 25-40 miles at speeds of 14-18 mph. The long ride covers 35-60 miles at a brisker pace. Routes vary each week. Call 400-4336 or visit www.thecyclepros.com.

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 sup-

port 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. at 5353 Sunol Blvd. Get the support you deserve at the Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley. Call 931-5389.

CLUTTERLESS SELF HELP GROUP

Overwhelmed by clutter? Learn how to deal with it by attending this support group, which meets from 7-8:30 p.m. every Monday at St. Mary & St. John Coptic Orthodox Church, 4300 Mirador Dr., Rm. 7. Call 200-1943 or visit www.clutterless.org.

EAST BAY ESSENTIAL TREMOR

SUPPORT GROUP If you have recently been diagnosed with ET or would like to learn more about this common movement disorder in a safe and supportive environment, please join us from 10 a.m.-noon on the third Saturday of each month, in the Blackhawk A and B conference rooms at San Ramon Regional Medical Center, 6001 Norris Canyon Rd. Call 487-5706 or e-mail galexplor@comcast.net.

PLEASANTON MILITARY FAMILIES

SUPPORT GROUP Formed in 2003 this support group's mission is to provide support and comfort to the families of Pleasanton residents whose loved ones are deployed in the combat zones of Afghanistan and Iraq. This group has monthly meetings and other events such as "pack outs" of comfort and care items for deployed members of the armed forces; the next pack out is for Easter and takes place March 26. The group also sponsors the Yellow Streamer program on Main Street where these personnel have streamers displayed with their name, rank and branch of service. Contact Chairwoman Pat Frizzell at PleasantonMilitaryFamilies@gmail.com.

com or Chris Miller at millercj3@gmail.com.

Volunteering

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD

DRIVES American Red Cross will host blood drives from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 16, at an American Red Cross Bus, 6055 Sunol Blvd. To make an appointment, call (800) 733-2767 or visit redcrossblood.org (Sponsor Code: LIFETECH925).

Check out *Community Calendar* at PleasantonWeekly.com for a complete listing of events.

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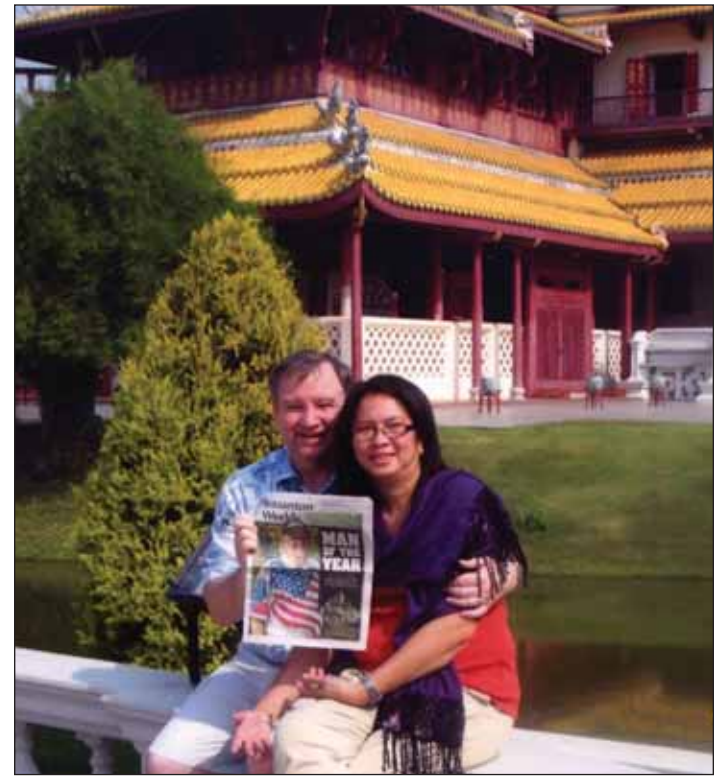
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Visiting royalty: Ed and Rita Fitzpatrick enjoy their Weekly at the Bang Pa-In Palace in Ayutthaya, Thailand.

Namaste: Practicing yoga with their Weekly at an Ashram blessed by B.K.S. Iyengar in India are Gina Piper, Jim and Kate Coughlin, Mai Vu and Anne Childs.

TAKE US ALONG



By the sea — horse: The Pearce family — mom Jennifer, dad Brian and sons Jonathan and Andrew pose with their Weekly by Puerto Vallarta's iconic seahorse statue.



Classy reunion: Amador Valley gals from the class of '56 — (l-r) Pat Castillo, Patsy Flores, Joyce Erdman, Gayle Lund, Joy Cameron, Margie Bupp and Noel Fort — share their hometown news at their reunion in Mazatlan. Some of them traveled from Florida, Virginia and Nevada.



Going wild in Panama: Barbara and Bob Richards check out the Weekly in front of one of the inhabitants of the Gamboa Rain Forest National Park in Panama while on a cruise that left from Fort Lauderdale.



Aloha: Matt, Nesa, Hannah and Griffin Myers along with David, Nicole, Megan and Kaitlyn Rae enjoy the beaches of Maui as well as their Weekly.

Marketplace Pleasanton Weekly

To advertise in the Marketplace call Karen at 925.600.0840 x122 or email kklein@pleasantonweekly.com

PET OF THE WEEK

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Grover, a 9-year-old Chihuahua mix, is such a lively little fellow you'd never imagine he's a mature dog. He's puppy-tiny, at barely over 9 pounds. This Club Second Chance dog deserves a chance to live many more years with a loving family because his little heart is just full of love. All you need to do is offer him a lap for a cuddle, and he'll settle right in. Get out the leash, and you'd swear you'd just brought a happy puppy home. He's handsome, lively, cute and affectionate. He's got everything going for him, except for a new family. Want to give him one? Come and meet genial little Grover at the East Bay SPCA, 4651 Gleason Drive in Dublin. Call 479-9670 or visit www.eastbayspca.org.



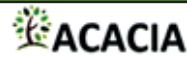
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140 Lost & Found

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For Juvenile Justice Facility, Churchill County (Fallon, NV). \$15.68/hr. Apply by 3:00 PM on 3/11/11. Hiring on 7/5/11. www.ChurchillCounty.org/hr (Cal-SCAN)

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\$.33/mile to \$.42/mile based on length of haul, PLUS \$.02/mile safety bonus paid quarterly. Van and Refrigerated. CDL-A w/3 months current OTR experience. 1-800-414-9569. www.DriveKnight.com (Cal-SCAN)

Drivers: 17 Openings

Top 5% Pay! Excellent Benefits. New Trucks Ordered! Need CDL-A and 3 months recent OTR. 1-877-258-8782. www.MeltonTruck.com (Cal-SCAN)

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Hiring Class-A CDL Flatbed Drivers for Regional and OTR Lanes. Solos, O/OP, AOs and Teams. Top Pay, Great Equipment. 1-888-801-5614. www.SystemTrans.com (Cal-SCAN)

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Sales: Guys and Gals

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624 Financial

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645 Office/Home Business Services

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Up to \$1000! Fast and Friendly Phone Approvals! No Credit Checks! Call Today and Have Your Advance in 24 hrs. Call Now 888-443-3217. (Cal-SCAN)

648 Horses-Boarding/Training

Horse Sale

Tulare Agri Center, February 23rd-27th. Stock Horse Show, Stallion Auction and Western Trade Show. Online Catalog and Information www.nationalstockhorse.com, info@nationalstockhorse.com or (800) 511-5157. (Cal-SCAN)



751 General Contracting

NOTICE TO READERS

>It is illegal for an unlicensed person to perform contracting work on any project valued at \$500.00 or more in labor and materials. State law also requires that contractors include their license numbers on all advertising. Check your contractor's status at www.cslb.ca.gov or 800-321-CSLB (2752). Unlicensed persons taking jobs that total less than \$500.00 must state in their advertisements that they are not licensed by the Contractors State License Board

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Pleasanton, 3 BR/2 BA - \$105,000

850 Acreage/Lots/Storage



Phoenix, AZ Area

Everything must go. \$1,000 an acre. Priced less than the developer paid. 90 minutes north of Phoenix. 36 acres with electric, reduced to \$36,000. Private, peaceful setting, breathtaking mountain views, abundant wildlife. Financing available. Saddle Creek Ranch by AZLR. 1-888-690-8271. (Cal-SCAN)

Ruidoso, NM Area

5 acres w/city water and city maintained roads near small fishing pond and golf course. Only \$19,900. Financing avail. Call NMRS 1-888-791-6136. (Cal-SCAN)

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5601 Dresslar Cir., Lindenwood, Livermore



5 bedrooms, 4 baths, 3,270 sq.ft. Pristine, spacious and light! Offered at \$775,000.
OPEN SUN 1-4.

1405 Elliott Cir., Danbury Park, Pleasanton



NEW LISTING! 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, 1,761 sq.ft. Beautiful townhome w/quaint patio area. Quiet location, walking distance to park, shopping & schools. Offered at \$565,000 **OPEN SUN 1-4.**

512 Bunker Lane, Castlewood, Pleasanton



4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, 4,000 sq.ft. Exquisite home w/high end finishes! Offered at \$1,449,000. **OPEN SUN 1-4.**

Now is the time to prepare for the Spring Market. Call us for a FREE market analysis of your home.



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Real Estate

OPEN HOME GUIDE AND REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

U.S. home sales continuing upward trend

Low interest rates, good affordability attract sellers, buyers

By JEB BING

Pending home sales improved further in December, marking the fifth gain in the past six months, according to the National Association of Realtors.

The Pending Home Sales Index increased 2.0% to 93.7 based on contracts signed in December from a downwardly revised 91.9 in November. The index is 4.2% below the 97.8 mark in December 2009. The data reflects contracts and not closings, which normally occur with a lag time of one or two months.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, credits good affordability conditions and economic improvement. "Modest gains in the

labor market and the improving economy are creating a more favorable backdrop for buyers, allowing them to take advantage of excellent housing affordability conditions. Mortgage rates should rise only modestly in the months ahead, so we'll continue to see a favorable environment for buyers with good credit," he said.

"In the past two years, home buyers have been very successful, with super-low loan default rates, partly because of stable home prices during that time. That trend is likely to continue in 2011 as long as there is sufficient

See **TREND** on Page 26

OPEN HOMES THIS WEEKEND

Castro Valley

3 BEDROOMS

19827 Zeno Street \$379,000
Sat 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 251-2536

4031 7 Hills Road \$432,000
Sat 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 251-2536

5 BEDROOMS

24977 Palomares Road \$2,499,000
Sun 12-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 251-2536

Danville

4 BEDROOMS

1711 Cottswald Street \$899,000
Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 200-4130

Dublin

2 BEDROOMS

7539 Oxford Cir #125 \$397,000
Sat 1-4 Alain Pinel Realtors 251-1111

4 BEDROOMS

3280 Ridgefield Way \$895,000
Sun 1-4 Coldwell Banker 847-2200

5 BEDROOMS

6107 Ledgewood Terr \$947,450
Sat 12-3/Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 251-2510

Livermore

3 BEDROOMS

307 Bernal Avenue \$299,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Connie Cox 766-3198

736 Sunset Drive \$385,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Coldwell Banker 847-2200

900 Wagoner Drive \$419,900
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel Realtors 251-1111

4 BEDROOMS

911 Curlew Road \$575,000
Sun 1-4 Coldwell Banker 847-2200

6390 Owl Way \$599,888
Sun 1:30-4 Alain Pinel Realtors 251-1111

1677 Cascina Court \$865,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 243-0900

5 BEDROOMS

5601 Dresslar Circle \$775,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams Tri-Valley Realty 202-6898

Pleasanton

2 BEDROOMS

4150 Rennellwood Way \$459,900
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams Tri-Valley 998-1798

175 Junipero Street \$479,000
Sun 1-4 yourpleasantonhome.com 400-8146

3 BEDROOMS

11 Lower Golf Road \$1,250,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 980-8844

1405 Elliott Circle \$565,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams Tri-Valley Realty 202-6898

4386 Krause Street \$565,000
Sun 1-4 Coldwell Banker 847-2200

4082 Nevis Street \$570,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel Realtors 251-1111

4050 Silver Street \$620,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel Realtors 895-9950

4 BEDROOMS

6605 Amber Lane \$1,348,000
4 Bedrooms
Open Sun 1-4
J. Rockcliff Realtors
Phyllis Weiner
872-1416

4355 Campinia Place \$1,479,000
Sun 12-5 Blaise Lofland 846-6500

317 Diamond Court \$1,189,000
Sun 1-4:30 Mark James 216-0454

512 Bunker Lane \$1,449,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams Tri-Valley Realty 202-6898

3650 Platt Court S \$619,000
Sun 1-4 Connie Cox 766-3198

6434 Paseo Santa Maria \$955,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 989-6844

5 BEDROOMS

1586 Loganberry Way \$889,000
5 Bedrooms
Open Sun 1-4
J. Rockcliff Realtors
Peter McDowell
209-0343

3116 Devereux Court \$1,349,000
Sun 1-4 Coldwell Banker 847-2200

6 BEDROOMS

838 Sunny Brook Way \$1,549,000
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel Realtors 251-1111

1976 Armondo Court \$3,649,000
Sun 1-4 Uwe Maercz 360-8758

San Ramon

2 BEDROOMS

235 Copper Ridge Road \$315,000
Sun 1-4 Coldwell Banker 847-2200

3 BEDROOMS

2532 Shadow Mountain Ct \$548,000
Sat/Sun 2-5 Coldwell Banker 847-2200

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LIVERMORE
 Open SUN 1 - 4
911 CURLEW ROAD
LIGHT, BRIGHT, BEAUTIFUL \$575,000
 4 BR 3 BA new carpet, large kit/family room combination with slab granite counters & newer appliances 925.847.2200



LIVERMORE
 Open SAT/SUN 1 - 4
736 SUNSET DR
LIGHT & OPEN \$385,000
 3 BR 2 BA extended master/liv rm, updated bath, dual pane windows, frplc in fam rm, tile flrs, huge pool 925.847.2200



PLEASANTON
 Open SUN 1 - 4
3116 DEVEREUX COURT
BEAUTIFUL EXPANDED \$1,349,000
 5 BR 3.5 BA 1 bdrm is bonus rm w/clset, kit w/ grnite/custom bcksplsh, hrdwd flrs, lrg yrd w/BBQ/hot tub 925.847.2200



SAN RAMON
 Open SAT/SUN 12 - 4
145 COPPER RIDGE RD.
CONDOS/TOWNHOUSES AVAIL PRICES START IN HIGH \$200'S
 1 & 2 bd condos/2 bd townhouses, vaulted ceilings avail, w/garages, gated, renovated/upgraded 925.847.2200

DANVILLE
6975 JOHNSTON ROAD
PRICE REDUCED! \$1,697,000
 4 BR 3 BA 19+ acres, living w/stone/travertine frplc, 9 stall barn covered indoor arena & MUCH more! 925.847.2200

711 SUNDIAL CIRCLE
SEE ITS QUALITY EXTRAS \$21,900
 2 BR 1 BA mobile hm, large eat in kitchen, central heat/AC, very good carpet/paint, friendly lifestyle! 925.847.2200

5043 HILLCREST WAY
ABSOLUTELY GORGEOUS \$719,500
 4 BR 2 BA spacious remodeled home w/many upgrds, kit w/granite, sep formal dining/living rm, hrdwd flrs 925.847.2200

counters, SS appli, hrdwd flrs, tile in bths, end unit near prk 925.847.2200

Open SAT/SUN 2 - 5
2532 SHADOW MOUNTAIN CT
BEAUTIFUL AND QUIET! \$548,000
 3 BR 2 BA whole house remodeled in last 6/7 years including kit, bth bths, wd flrs thruout, nice master 925.847.2200

DUBLIN
3280 RIDGEFIELD WAY
 Open OPEN SUN 1-4 \$895,000
 4 BR 4.5 BA 3360sq. ft., 5515 sq.ft. lot. Extensive upgrades! 925.847.2200

PLEASANTON
14 CASTLEDOWN ROAD
SPANISH HACIENDA HOME \$1,249,950
 4 BR 2.5 BA Large 1/2 acre parcel! Beautiful 40 ft pool! large remodeled kitchen & so much more! 925.847.2200

Open SUN 1 - 4
4386 KRAUSE STREET
BEAUTIFUL! \$565,000
 3 BR 2.5 BA many upgrades! Dual pane windows, private backyard with patio and fountain 925.847.2200

Open SUN 1-4
235 COPPER RIDGE RD
BEAUTIFULLY UPDATED \$315,000
 2 BR 2 BA lovely moldings, hrdwd flrs, beautiful stained cement counters, this is a one of a kind find! 925.847.2200

LIVERMORE
1866 CORTE CAVA
OPEN AND BRIGHT! \$375,000
 3 BR 3 BA 1 bedroom and 1 bath downstairs and much more! 925.847.2200

1541 WHISPERING OAK WAY
WALNUT HILLS HOME \$989,888
 4 BR 3.5 BA Tile Flrs, Slab Granite, Lg Bdrms/Mast w/Retreat, 750+ sf Carriage House/Studio w/Kit/Full Ba 925.847.2200

3263 VINEYARD AVE., UNIT 54
SELLER WILL FINANCE! \$5,000
 1 BR 1 BA covered driveway, great loc in prk, comm center has pool, spa, library/Mo space rent, \$875 925.847.2200

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SAN RAMON
2452 MILLSTREAM LN
APPEALING STYLING! \$571,200
 4 BR 3 BA 1 bd dwn, kit w/maple cabs, grnite

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5835 SIGNAL HILL DRIVE, DUBLIN
 • "Dublin Ranch" Golf Course Home
 • Beautiful 6 Bedrooms, 4.5 Baths, 4800+ sq ft Home
 • Highly Upgraded w/ Cherry Cabinets, Granite, SS Appliances
 • Large Lot and Backing to the Golf Course
Offered at \$1,060,800



530 DOLORES PLACE, PLEASANTON
 • Fabulously Remodeled "Pleasanton Hills" Home
 • 3 Bedrooms, 3 Full Baths, Over 3000 sq ft
 • Sparkling Pool and Spa w/ Waterfalls, Private Rear Yard
 • Ultimate Gourmet Kitchen featured in California Home & Design and Haute Living
Offered at \$1,099,000

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JUST LISTED
1541 WHISPERING OAK WAY, PLEASANTON
 • Elegant "Walnut Hills" Home
 • Main House and Separate Carriage House
 • Main House: 4 Bedrooms and 2.5 Baths, Oversized Tile Flooring, Slab Granite
 • Carriage House Has Full Bath, Kitchenette and Huge Open Room
 • Over 3500 sq ft Total (approx.)
 • Great Commute Location, Close to Downtown, Schools and Shopping
Offered at \$989,888

COLDWELL BANKER

For additional information, photos and virtual tours for any of these properties, visit www.TomIvarson.com or call 925-200-3600

DRE Lic. #01242205

HOME SALES

This week's data represents homes sold during January 2011

Dublin

- 5888 Annandale Way** S. & S. Kumar to R. & K. Walia for \$1,126,000
- 5896 Annandale Way** Medhurst Trust to G. Khan for \$1,190,000
- 4442 Bangor Court** A. Radpour to H. Luo for \$692,000
- 5002 Branford Court** Deutsche Bank to M. & G. Lunsford for \$803,000
- 7551 Brigadoon Way** J. Young to D. Davoudzadeh for \$325,000
- 4742 Central Parkway #65** K. Jackson to Prudential Relocation for \$369,000
- 3465 Dublin Boulevard #104** Toll Dublin Limited to S. Ko for \$250,500
- 3275 Dublin Boulevard #114** R. & E. Pangilan to C. Galvez for \$298,000
- 3245 Dublin Boulevard #229** Federal National Mortgage to T. Kathalia for \$310,000
- 7090 Dublin Meadows Street #H** OWB Reo Limited to S. & S. Alberts for \$229,000
- 7144 East Dublin Meadows Street** S. Christiansen to S. & J. Haddad for \$300,000
- 4376 Fitzwilliam Street** M. Hugo to A. Su for \$352,000
- 11874 Flanagan Court** Federal Home Loan Mortgage to Kerr Trust for \$260,000
- 10850 Inspiration Circle** J. & Y. Wilsey to S. Hansen for \$845,000
- 7283 Kolb Place** Gray Trust to G. Sondh for \$490,000
- 3605 Rocking Horse Court** S. Gutti to M. & H. Bourouha for \$510,000
- 4532 Sandford Court** Federal National Mortgage to N. Quintero for \$425,000
- 7064 York Court** E. Farnholtz to Farnholtz Trust for \$530,000

Livermore

- 2933 1st Street #1001** W. & P. Smith to R. & B. Lewczyk for \$316,000
- 1868 Baywood Common** Deutsche Bank to M. & T. Veneman for \$365,000
- 1472 Chapparral Way** J. & S. Gallagher to J. Kreckling for \$400,000
- 754 Chippewa Way** HSBC Bank to K. & M. Cheng for \$300,000
- 6056 Climbing Rose Common** M. & D. Strand to H. Chong for \$420,000
- 844 Dakota Court** D. Verdeck to K. Langford for \$355,000
- 5506 Firestone Road** I. Cadena to S. Mulvany for \$320,000
- 6622 Forget Me Not** S. & J. Taylor to W. Murray for \$235,000
- 2259 French Street** D. & L. McDonald to J. Quinlan for \$825,000
- 813 Mayview Way** L. & K. Hooker to D. Boyle for \$385,000
- 2005 Mezzamonte Court** M. & S. Rosenberg to T. & A. Seburn for \$775,000
- 6957 Mines Road** Long Beach Mortgage to E. Mello for \$303,000
- 1085 Murrieta Boulevard #125** JP Morgan Chase Bank to A. Kafi for \$88,500
- 1085 Murrieta Boulevard #203** Federal National Mortgage to R. Macias for \$90,500
- 1202 North P Street** Hallmark Community Solutions to J. & E. Gondkoff for \$312,500
- 2014 Park Street** Federal National Mortgage to L. Reynolds for \$188,000
- 1730 Rhododendron Drive** Federal National Mortgage to M. & A. Lacivita for \$365,000
- 366 Scott Street** Ames Trust to R. Koppula for \$295,000
- 764 Sunset Drive** Asset Backed Securities to D. & K. Bell for \$260,000
- 2074 Walnut Street** J. Garcia to T. Trinh for \$300,000

266 Wood Street #401 Polce Trust to T. Huston for \$320,000

Pleasanton

- 8008 Canyon Creek Circle** US Bank to A. & A. Sareshwala for \$623,000
- 4117 Cortina Court** Funes-Pfeffer Trust to G. Vpula for \$471,000
- 4150 Creekwood Court** K. & G. Kenitzer to R. Sherman for \$1,120,000
- 3545 Dickens Court** Wells Fargo Bank to P. Taylor for \$689,000
- 835 Genevieve Place** Ciardelli Trust to S. Mabry for \$720,000
- 1357 Kolln Street** J. & K. Apodaca to W. Gorman for \$610,000
- 5063 Monaco Drive** J. & S. Slupeksky to W. & A. Taylor for \$850,000
- 2108 Raven Road** B. & A. Staker to S. Buser for \$705,000
- 8155 Regency Drive** W. Karcich to M. & M. Dhar for \$1,330,000
- 1819 Sinclair Drive** R. Fewster to R. Ding for \$450,000
- 2709 Spinosa Court** E. & M. Malapo to C. Wang for \$569,000

7016 Emerson Lane Brookfield Santorini to S. & N. Ferguson for \$1,200,000

- 706 Hawthorn Court** Clark Trust to R. & S. Evans for \$1,090,000
- 7417 Hillsboro Avenue** B. Tisa to E. Warr for \$540,000
- 2724 Morgan Drive** R. Pike to C. & J. Oquias for \$650,000
- 2808 Morgan Drive** G. Garcia to T. & J. Baker for \$700,000
- 437 South Clovercrest Lane** P. Modjeski to C. Cruz for \$560,000

Source: California REsource

SALES AT A GLANCE

Dublin

Total sales reported: 18
Lowest sale reported: \$229,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,190,000
Average sales reported: \$516,917

Livermore

Total sales reported: 21
Lowest sale reported: \$88,500
Highest sale reported: \$825,000
Average sales reported: \$

Pleasanton

Total sales reported: 11
Lowest sale reported: \$450,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,330,000
Average sales reported: \$739,727

San Ramon

Total sales reported: 13
Lowest sale reported: \$185,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,200,000
Average sales reported: \$667,308

Source: California REsource



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OPEN SUN 1-4 1586 LOGANBERRY WAY
PLEASANTON VALLEY, PLEASANTON



2,587+/- SQ.FT., 5 BED PLUS RETREAT/OFFICE \$889,000

LIVE IN ONE OF PLEASANTON'S MOST CHARMING NEIGHBORHOODS... PLEASANTON VALLEY! THIS WONDERFUL FLOOR PLAN FEATURES 5 SPACIOUS BEDROOMS PLUS RETREAT/OFFICE WITH 2587 SQUARE FEET OF LIVING SPACE. REMODELED KITCHEN, HARDWOOD FLOORS, NEW CARPET, PAINT, ROOF, WINDOWS. SPACIOUS FLOORPLAN WITH 4 LARGE BEDROOMS PLUS HUGE BONUS ROOM WITH FIREPLACE.

OPEN SUN 1-4 6605 AMBER LANE
CARRIAGE GARDENS, PLEASANTON



4,000+/- SQ.FT., 0.50+/- FLAT ACRES • POOL \$1,348,000

FABULOUS, SOUGHT AFTER SINGLE STORY CUSTOM HOME, 3675 SQUARE FEET ON A PARK LIKE 1/2 ACRE LOT WITH POOL, SPA, CABANA, IN ONE OF PLEASANTON'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS AND WELL LOCATED NEIGHBORHOODS!

6645 AMBER LN, PLEASANTON
CARRIAGE GARDENS \$1,398,000



5 Bd 3 Ba • 3,475+/- SQ.FT., 0.49+/- ACRES
BEAUTIFULLY UPDATED CARRIAGE GARDENS HOME. FULL BED & BATH DOWNSTAIRS. UPDATED KITCHEN, MEDIA ROOM, HUGE BONUS ROOM IMPROVED LOT W/ GORGEOUS POOL AND FULL SPORTS COURT.

DOWNTOWN, PLEASANTON
TUDOR STYLE \$1,099,000

9663 CROSBY DR, PLEASANTON
PENDING AT \$1,898,000



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<p>1867 SANNITA CT RUBY HILL, PLEASANTON ITALIAN VILLA \$2,749,000</p> <p>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</p>	<p>1225 LOZANO CT RUBY HILL, PLEASANTON ITALIAN VILLA \$4,299,000</p> <p>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</p>	<p>11 LOWER GOLF RD CASTLEWOOD, PLEASANTON OPEN SAT & SUN 1-4 \$1,250,000</p> <p>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</p>	<p>6645 AMBER LN CARRIAGE GARDENS, PLEASANTON 1/2 ACRE LOT & POOL \$1,398,000</p> <p>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</p>	<p>3008 CALLE DE LA MESA PANDEROSA, PLEASANTON NEW PRICE \$629,000</p> <p>3 Bd 2.5 Ba • 1,650+/- sq.ft., 0.14+/- Acres Open flr plan. Hardwood flrs (living rm, frml dining rm, kit & fam rm). Breakfast nook, plantation shutters, Central A/C, large yard & close to schools. Michael Delehanty 925.251.2516</p>				
<p>3422 TORLANO PL RUBY HILL, PLEASANTON FORMAL FRENCH \$1,749,950</p> <p>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</p>	<p>219 E. ANGELA DOWNTOWN, PLEASANTON TUDOR STYLE CALL FOR PRICE</p> <p>4 Bd 3 Ba • 2,278+/- sq.ft., 0.10+/- Acres Classic Tudor architecture w/ incredible charm & character, 3 bd, 2 ba plus a full bed & bath in separate upstairs apartment. Weiner & McDowell Group 925.251.2585</p>	<p>1976 ARMONDO COURT RUBY HILL, PLEASANTON OPEN SUN 1-4 \$3,649,000</p> <p>6 Bd 6.5 Ba • 9,821+/- sq.ft., 0.55+/- Acres Located on a quiet cul-de-sac w/ tremendous views, private patios and balconies. This home is all about architectural details and refined craftsmanship. Uwe Maercz 925.360.8758</p>	<p>6605 AMBER LANE CARRIAGE GARDEN, PLEASANTON OPEN SUN 1-4 \$1,348,000</p> <p>4,000+/- sq.ft., 0.50+/- Flat Acres • Pool Fabulous single level custom home, 4,000 sq.ft. on flat 1/2 acre private, wooded lot. Pool, spa, cabana. Call us for private showing. Weiner & McDowell Group 925.251.2585</p>	<p>5656 SONOMA DR #13 PLEASANTON END UNIT \$465,000</p> <p>2 Bd 2.5 Ba • 1,400+/- sq.ft., End Unit Updated w/ granite counters in kitchen & bath, new S/S appliances including frige, plantation shutters new flooring, too many amenities to list. Denise Ivaldi 925.251.2532</p>				
<p>1819 MADDALENA CT RUBY HILL, PLEASANTON NEW PRICE \$1,298,000</p> <p>Land and Lot • Acres Apx: 1.27 Located on the West side featuring an over-sized flat building pad w/ Mt. Diablo, vineyard, & golf course views. Cul-de-sac, private neighbors. Uwe Maercz 925.360.8758</p>	<p>4195 PRECIADO DR TASSAJARA MEADOWS, DUBLIN SPACIOUS PROPERTY \$599,000</p> <p>3 Bd 2.5 Ba • 1,655+/- sq.ft., 0.08+/- Acres Dark laminate wood floors on 1st level & carpet on the stairs & second floor. The kitchen is a cooks dream. The family room has been updated Susette Clark-Walker 925.251.2547</p>	<p>760 WALL ST LIVERMORE MOVE IN READY \$415,000</p> <p>3 Bd 2 Ba • 1,136+/- sq.ft., 0.14+/- Acres Features Open Spacious Kitchen with Maple Cabinets, Master Suite w/ Walk-In Closet, Carpet & Wood Laminate Flooring and much more! Sara Lovett 925.583.2177</p>	<p>1586 LOGANBERRY WAY PLEASANTON VALLEY, PLEASANTON OPEN SUNDAY 1-4 \$889,000</p> <p>5 Bd + Bonus Room • 2587+/- sq.ft. Pleasanton Valley! Remodeled Kitchen, hardwood floors, New carpet, paint, roof, windows. Weiner & McDowell Group 925.251.2585</p>	<p>6125 VIA DE LOS CERROS PLEASANTON WALK TO PARK \$727,000</p> <p>4 Bd 2.5 Ba • 2,300+/- sq.ft., 0.09+/- 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! Lisa Doyle 925.855.4000</p>				
<p>6107 LEDGEWOOD TER SHEA BUILT DUBLIN OPEN SAT 12-3 SUN 1-4 \$947,450</p> <p>5 Bd 4 Ba • 3,843+/- sq.ft., 0.14+/- Acres Panoramic views of Mt Diablo, Dublin hills and the Tri Valley. Walk to top rated schools, the golf course and the neighborhood swim club The Engels 925.251.2510</p>	<p>7123 CEDAR MOUNTAIN LIVERMORE TUSCAN ESTATE \$4,188,000</p> <p>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</p>	<p>24977 PALOMARES RD 38+/- ACRES, CASTRO VALLEY OPEN SUN 12-4 \$2,499,000</p> <p>5 Bd 4.5 Ba • 6,696+/- sq.ft., 38+/- Acres Unique & Fabulous Home, Reception Area, Gallery, Large sitting-workout room, Bar, Octagon Living-room, Gated, Private equine-horse facility & more! Kristy and Company 925.251.2536</p>	<p>1711 COTTSWALD ST MONTEROSSO, DANVILLE OPEN SUN 1-4 \$899,000</p> <p>4 Bd 3.5 Ba • 2,8100+/- sq.ft., 0.14+/- Acres Beautiful Interior Loaded w/ Upgrades. Backs to open space. 3 car garage w/ work bench & storage cabinets. Community Jr. Olympic Pool & more! Cathy Dean 925.200.4130</p>	<p>1007 MOCHO ST LIVERMORE CLOSE TO DOWNTOWN \$390,000</p> <p>3 Bd 2 Ba • 1,484+/- sq.ft., 0.16+/- Acres Huge price reduction! Nicely remodeled home close to downtown! Extensive tile work thruout, slab granite in remodeled kitchen & much more! Diane Sass 925.699.9508</p>				
<p>Blackhawk East 4105 Blackhawk Plaza Cir. Danville, CA 94506 925.648.5300</p>	<p>Blackhawk West 3880 Blackhawk Rd. Danville, CA 94506 925.736.6000</p>	<p>Danville 15 Railroad Ave. Danville, CA 94526 925.855.4000</p>	<p>Lafayette 3799 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette, CA 94549 925.385.2330</p>	<p>Livermore 1983 Second St. Livermore, CA 94550 925.667.2100</p>	<p>Montclair/Piedmont 6116 La Salle Ave., Ste. 200 Oakland, CA 94611 510.339.4800</p>	<p>Pleasanton 5075 Hopyard Rd Ste. 110 Pleasanton, CA 94588 925.251.2500</p>	<p>Orinda 89 Davis Rd., Orinda, CA 94563 925.253.7000</p>	<p>Walnut Creek 1700 N. Main St. Walnut Creek, CA 94596 925.280.8500</p>



Open Sunday 1-4:30



Custom home

317 Diamond Court, Pleasanton

4 bedrooms, 3 full bathrooms, 3 car garage. 3544 sq. ft. Stunning interior. Real pride of ownership. Low maintenance yard.

\$1,189,000

www.317DiamondCt.com to view the virtual tour

Mark James

925.216.0454 • markjames@apr.com • DRE# 00697341

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Realtors praise FHFA rules to prohibit private transfer fees

By JEB BING

The National Association of Realtors has applauded the Federal Housing Finance Agency for moving ahead with a proposed rule to restrict government-sponsored enterprises Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and the 12 Federal Home Loan Banks from investing in mortgages encumbered by private transfer fee covenants.

NAR has long been vocal in its opposition to private transfer fees, which are often attached to a property by developers and require payment of fees back to the developer each time the property is resold; the covenants can be difficult to reverse and may be attached to a deed for up to 99 years.

“As the leading advocate for home ownership, we commend FHFA for the proposed rule to ban private transfer fees, which we believe often decrease affordability, negatively impact equity and provide little benefit to property purchasers,” said NAR President Ron Phipps, broker-president of Phipps Realty in Warwick, R.I. “FHFA is taking the necessary steps to ensure that these fees are no longer used to simply generate revenue for investors and private developers.”

The proposed rule would allow for private transfer fees paid to some homeowner, condominium, and cooperative associations.

“We understand that FHFA believes that some private transfer fees have a legitimate place in real estate markets,” said Phipps. “We support their decision to exempt certain organizations from the proposed ruling where there may be a direct benefit to the homeowner. However, FHFA must ensure that the fees paid are reasonable and fully disclosed to home buyers well in advance of closing.”

According to FHFA the proposed rule would only apply to private transfer fee covenants created on or after the date of publication of the rule.

Since there is virtually no oversight on where or how private transfer fee proceeds can be spent, on how long a private transfer fee may be imposed, or on how the fees should be disclosed to home buyers, as many as 19 states have banned or restricted private transfer fees.

The Federal Housing Administration has also restricted private transfer fees through its home loan programs. ■

TREND

Continued from Page 22

demand to absorb inventory,” Yun said. “The latest pending sales gain suggests activity is very close to a sustainable, healthy volume of a mid-5 million total annual home sales. However, sales above 6 million, as occurred during the bubble years, are highly unlikely this year.”

The PHSI in the Northeast increased 1.8% to 73.9 in December but is 5.3% below December 2009. In the Midwest the index rose 8.0% in December to 84.6 but is 5.1% below a year ago. Pending home sales in the South jumped 11.5% to an index of 101.9 and are 1.7 % above December 2009. In the West the index fell 13.2% to 105.8 and is 10.7% below a year ago. ■



DRE#01349446



Tim McGuire

925-462-SOLD

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COMING SOON – Jensen Tract, Pleasanton

Cute and contemporary 3bd/2ba home, 1,422+/- sq. ft. Hardwood floors, updated kitchen, newer windows, roof, HVAC system, stunning backyard with fruit trees, hot tub and gazebo. Walk to downtown Pleasanton and K-12 schools. Please call for details.

BUYERS NEEDS

Young Pleasanton family seeks 2,800+ sq. ft. home with a large yard, preferably no pool, up to \$1.4M

Single mother seeks 3+bd house or townhome, preferably upgraded, up to \$550,000

Family of four seeks 2,000+ sq. ft., 4bd house, with large yard, preferably one story, up to \$975,000

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The latest from The 680 Blog

Pleasanton Market Update – New Year Starts Strong

It was a good start to the New Year in Pleasanton as pending sales bounced back from a sluggish December to post nice gains in January. Inventory increased as well after a three month slide, and pending sales after two months of declines. Homes priced under \$1 million lead the way in pending sales, while \$1 million - \$2 million homes saw the biggest gains in inventory.

Overall, inventory increased by only six units to 136 at the end of January, a 5% increase over the inventory at the end of December. Pending sales jumped, from the 2010 low of 33 in December, to 48 in January, a 42% increase. Inventory relative to pending sales fell from 3.2 months at the end of December to 2.8 months at the end of January.

Homes priced under \$1 million made up 59% of Pleasanton's inventory at the end of January and 85% of pending sales, compared to December's mix of 64% and 79%, respectively. Inventory in this segment actually fell three units to 80 homes, a 4% decline from December's 83. Pending sales, on the other hand, rose sharply to 41 homes in January, a 15 unit and 58% increase over December. Inventory relative to pending sales fell from

3.2 months at the end of December to 2.0 months at the end of January.

The inventory of homes priced between \$1 million and \$2 million increased by 15%, or six units, to 46 at the end of January and accounted for 15% of all inventory in Pleasanton. Pending sales increased by one unit, to seven in January and accounted for 15% of all pending sales. Inventory relative to pending sales was unchanged in this segment at 6.7 months.

Inventory was unchanged at seven homes in the market for homes priced >>Go to www.680homes.com to read the rest of this article.



Doug Buenz

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925.463.2000
680Homes.com

CA DRE# 00843458

High Performance Real Estate



Go to 680Homes.com for more information on these homes and other properties.



JUST LISTED

Fabulous single story 4 BR, 3 BTH home on an incredible private .90 acre wooded flat lot with gate. Gourmet kit with island, huge master suite & more!
\$1,299,000



PENDING SALE!

Better than New! Fabulous remodeled 4 BR, 2 1/2 BTH charmer with hardwood floors, gourmet granite & stainless kitchen, new roof, sparkling pool, and large private 10k lot!
5266 Muirwood Drive
\$799,000



PENDING SALE!

Fabulous upgraded South Livermore home with 4 BR plus office, 3 1/2 BTHS, granite kitchen, hardwood floors, new designer carpeting, and quite cul-de-sac location with spa!
273 Abalone Place, Livermore
\$789,000



PENDING SALE!

Prime Laguna Oaks luxury home with 5 BR plus office, 3 1/2 BTHS, 4 car garage, granite kitchen, 3 fireplaces, and .30 Acre flat cul-de-sac lot with sparkling pool, spa, and outdoor kitchen!
2818 Tudor Court
\$1,439,000



GOLDEN EAGLE!

Elegant Golden Eagle custom home with 4 BR plus office, 3 1/2 BTH, new cherry & granite kit, plantation shutters, and incredible .42 acre flat lot!
\$1,450,000



JUST SOLD!

Pristine single story 4 BR, 2 1/2 BTH, home with upgraded kitchen, designer carpeting, remodeled master bath with extensive stone, new windows, and 1/3 Acre lot with pool!
\$822,500



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RUBY HILL

JUST LISTED — OPEN SUN 12-5



4355 CAMPINIA PLACE, PLEASANTON

Gorgeous upgraded single level home on .60 acre premium lot. Located in the desirable Ruby Hill private gated community. Four bedrooms, plus private office, three bathrooms, custom gourmet kitchen with granite countertops. Extensive crown molding & built-ins. Brazilian cherry flooring, expansive master suite. Professional landscaping includes: built-in BBQ, viewing/sitting area, views of surrounding hills & vineyards, covered patio and extensive lawn area. 3-car garage. Ruby Hill community amenities: *clubhouse, golf course, swimming pool, *tennis courts, large park and greenbelts (*discounted memberships now available). Close to several wineries. **OFFERED AT \$1,479,000**

PLEASANTON SEMI-CUSTOM

SOLD



4150 CREEKWOOD COURT, PLEASANTON

Don't miss this private, Pleasanton home on premium 1/2 acre lot. Large multimedia/game room, upgraded kitchen and bathrooms with granite. Five bedrooms, three full bathrooms, hardwood floors, two fireplaces, three car garage, 4,002 square feet. Large secluded park-like rear yard includes expansive Trex deck, in-ground pool, Hot Springs grande covered spa, waterfall/pond, playhouse, zip line, large lawn area, mature redwood trees and large cemented side yard area. Walk to great schools & neighborhood parks. **SOLD FOR \$1,120,000**

GOLDEN EAGLE ESTATES LOT



8019 GOLDEN EAGLE WAY, PLEASANTON

Beautiful large premium 1.08 acre lot in desirable Golden Eagle Estates gated community. Panoramic views! One of a couple of remaining lots. Build your own dream home or plans are approved and ready to start for a 6300 sq ft. 5 bedroom, 6 bathroom home with 4 car garage, plans available for custom rock sculpted pool with waterslide and waterfall, pool cabana and custom outdoor kitchen with pizza oven, outdoor shower. Community amenities include: pool, tennis courts and access to Augustin Bernal Park. Located adjacent to Castlewood Country Club. Five minutes from charming downtown Pleasanton. **OFFERED AT \$1,000,000**

NEW CUSTOM SINGLE LEVEL

SOLD



1588 FOOTHILL ROAD, PLEASANTON

New custom single level home on private country lane off of Foothill Road. This private half acre lot is located adjacent to Golden Eagle with ridge views. Four bedrooms, bonus room/guest quarters, home theater room, private office, lockable 400 bottle wine cellar, 4.5 bathrooms, 4762 sq. ft. Gourmet kitchen with granite slab countertops, top of the line appliances. Oversized three car garage (4th car option). In-ground pool, detached permitted room (office/workout room) seller to credit buyer for brand new landscaping. Near Castlewood Country Club. **SOLD FOR \$1,625,000**

KOTTINGER RANCH

SOLD



1327 HEARST DRIVE, PLEASANTON

Great location! Beautiful semi-custom home on .40 acre lot. Expansive deck with panoramic views! Private rear grounds. Five bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms, 4,026 square feet. Upgraded gourmet kitchen with granite countertops, newer paint & carpeting, extensive hardwood floors. Expansive master suite. Community pool, park, tennis courts and open space. Walk to Main Street and award winning schools! **SOLD FOR \$1,163,500**

LOS OLIVOS

SOLD



2951 PICHOLINE COURT, LIVERMORE

Beautiful, highly upgraded Los Olivos home on professionally landscaped private .25 acre lot. Don't miss it! Five bedrooms (bonus room 5th), 3.5 bathrooms, plus detached studio/guest quarters (1 bed/1 bath). Approximately 3889 sq. ft. Gourmet kitchen with custom cabinets, granite slab countertops and stainless steel appliances. Highly upgraded spacious master suite with granite. Beautiful grounds include large private patio, spacious lawn area, garden/play set area, and atrium/side patio. Views of surrounding hills. Minutes to quality golf courses and Livermore Valley wineries. **SOLD FOR \$950,000**

GREY EAGLE ESTATES

SOLD REPRESENTED BUYER



27 GREY EAGLE ESTATE, PLEASANTON

Secluded 5904 sq ft. custom home on premium 5.3 acre estate in desirable, gated Grey Eagle Estates. Panoramic Views of the valley and Mt. Diablo. Five bedrooms, plus bonus room, office, 2nd office/hobby room, 3.5 bathrooms. Four car garage. Beautiful grounds include private vineyard, In-ground pool and spa. **SOLD FOR \$1,900,000**

VINSANTO

SOLD



2845 VINE COURT, LIVERMORE

Beautiful highly upgraded home in excellent condition. Panoramic views of vineyards and surrounding hills. Five bedrooms (4th is private office, 5th in guest house/casita), four bathrooms (4th in casita). Approximate total square footage 3,553. Upgraded kitchen with granite countertop & backsplash, two fireplaces, plantation shutters throughout, three car garage. Private gate & rear grounds include separate guest house/casita, expansive exposed aggregate patio, lawn area, fruit trees and vineyards. No backyard neighbors. Close to wineries & golf courses. **SOLD FOR \$809,000**

PLEASANTON 900 Main Street



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REALTORS

PRESENTING THE PROPERTIES OF OUR *Pleasanton & Livermore* OFFICES...

MOXLEY TEAM BY APPT



PLEASANTON **\$1,649,000**
6bd/6ba 5,096sf. on a 15,712sf. lot. 3 car garage. Award winning landscaped backyard. Gourmet kitchen with granite counter tops. 1226 Shady Pond Lane

LINDA TRAURIG SUN 1:30-4:30



PLEASANTON **\$1,549,000**
Premium 6bd/5ba oversized lot, resort like backyard, pool, spa, custom built-ins, private guest suite, gourmet kitchen with wine refrigerator! 838 Sunny Brook Way

EMILY BARRACLOUGH BY APPT



DANVILLE **\$1,250,000**
Don't miss this 7bd/5ba opportunity for an amazing home on large lot, great for entertaining or just relaxing. Stunning grounds, pool, spa & pond. 10Turrini Pl

ANNI HAGFELDT BY APPT



PLEASANTON **\$854,000**
This 5bd/3ba home offers hardwood floors, granite counter tops in Kitchen, new carpet, close to sports park, award winning schools, etc! 5023 Blackbird Way

STEVE ELDRIDGE BY APPT



CASTRO VALLEY **\$699,000**
Great 4bd/3ba home with lots of space, vaulted ceilings, formal living room and dining room, separate family room. 20963 Elbridge Ct

LANCE AND KELLY KING SUN 1:30-4:00



LIVERMORE **\$599,888**
Beautiful home offers, 4bd/3ba plus office, over 2550+/-sf of spacious living. Boasts updated kitchen with granite slab counters, 3 car garage. 6390 Owl Way

MOXLEY TEAM SAT & SUN 1:00-4:00



PLEASANTON **\$570,000**
3bd/2ba, 1460 sf. HUGE 10,537sf. lot one of the largest in Jensen neighborhood. Hardwood flooring, new carpet, crown molding, new doors. 4082 Nevis Street

STEVE ELDRIDGE BY APPT



SAN RAMON **\$499,900**
Charming 4bd/2ba, single story home with nice yard, Formal Living room and separate Family room. New interior paint and carpet. 122 Adams Pl

ROBIN YOUNG SUN 1:30-4:30



LIVERMORE **\$419,900**
Remodeled 3bd/2ba home offering cherry glazed cabinets, granite counter tops, oak wood floors, crown molding, new windows & furnace. 900 Wagoner Dr.

JUDY TURNER SAT 1:00-4:00



DUBLIN **\$397,000**
Gorgeous 2bd/2(1)ba! Slab granite kitchen & bathroom, new custom paint & carpet. Crown molding, gas FP w/marble surround! 7539 Oxford Cir #125



That Old Tree

Has seen kids swing from it. Heard lovers whisper beneath it. Sheltered horses during a storm. When it comes to choosing a real estate company, choose one that has stood the test of time. One that demonstrates financial strength – it proves they care about your investment. One that is flexible – it knows how to meet your specific needs. And one that has experience – because it can keep you from pitfalls.

After 20 years, Alain Pinel Realtors is an exceptionally strong private company that repeatedly leads the Bay Area in home sales.

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