

Pleasanton Weekly

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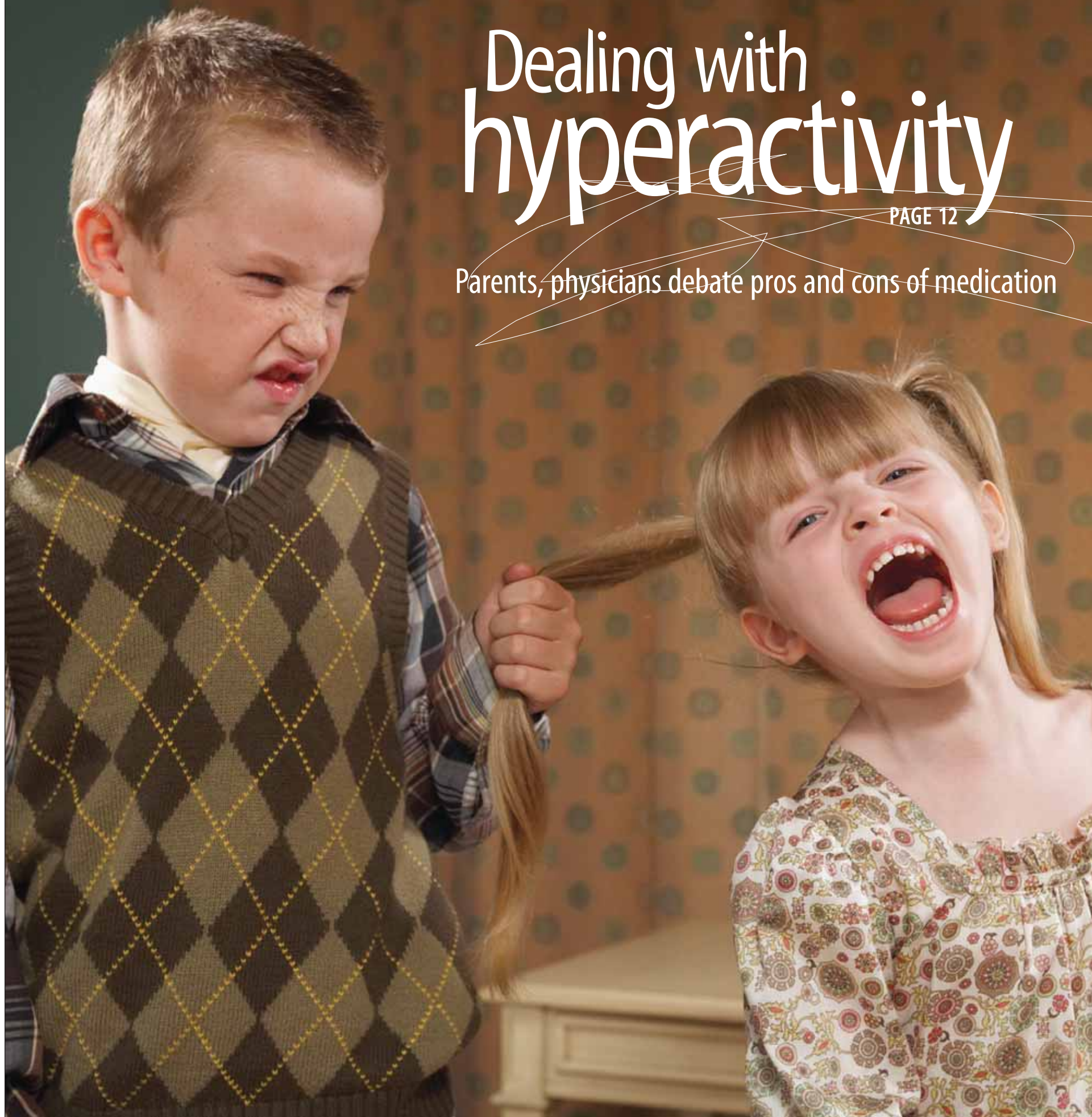
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Dealing with hyperactivity

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Parents, physicians debate pros and cons of medication



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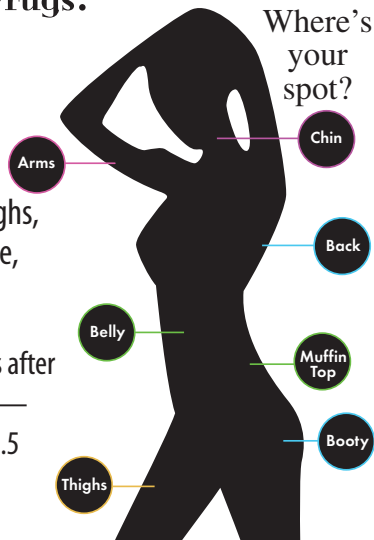
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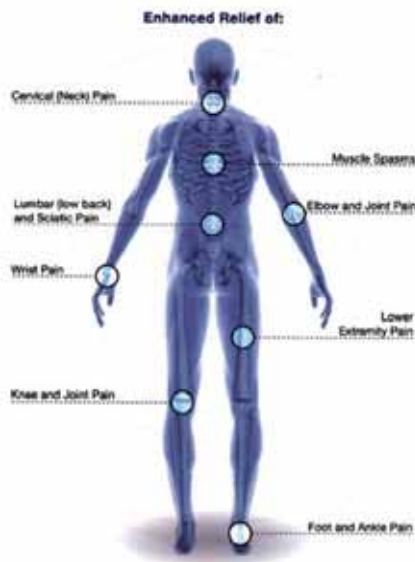


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AROUND PLEASANTON



By JEB BING

BART opens new station but not without its critics

Today's opening celebration for the new Pleasanton/Dublin BART station may be the most festive for the rapid transit system in 50 years. Honor guards, bagpipers, federal, state and city officials will be crowding onto the I-580 freeway station platform and the entry level ticket-taking area above to cut the ribbon or push the start button or whatever BART people do when a new station opens. It's especially good news for BART, which has had problems completing the \$100-million-plus station since it was first planned in the mid-1990s.

A key part of the project, pre-formed steel walkways to connect to Dublin and Pleasanton, were delivered with faulty welds. "Faulty" was what Caltrans, the state's highway authority, called them. A BART spokesperson said at the time that it didn't appear the weldings were unsafe, but the agency deferred to Caltrans' requirement that they be rebuilt, with an additional \$2.5 million added to the total cost due to welding problems. That has delayed the opening of the station by nearly two years.

Also, private funding for the pricey station has largely gone away. The project was developed as a public-private partnership, with \$57.5 million stemming from bonds BART sold, \$14 million in grants and \$15 million in land-generated revenues. The city of Pleasanton entered into a funding agreement in 2006 along with the city of Dublin and the Alameda County Surplus Property Authority that allowed BART to draw from a reserve fund at the time the transit agency was selling construction bonds.

That agreement called for each entity to provide reserve funds that BART can access should their operating revenues fall short of its expenses, including debt service. Out of a total commitment of \$8 million between all of those agencies, half has been set aside to BART. The remaining \$4 million will be allotted when the project is completed. Pleasanton's share is a total of \$1 million (\$500,000 of which has already been set aside) that comes from funds the city collects in transportation development fees to be used toward reducing traffic congestion. Since the station didn't open on time, BART drew down \$1.5 million from that reserve fund for debt service on its bonds.

As part of the station project, a

new transit village was planned on the Dublin side to include a 150-room hotel, 210-unit apartment complex and retail/office space. On the Pleasanton side, a 350-unit apartment complex described as a transit-oriented development to reduce freeway congestion was approved with its completion to coincide with the opening of the station. Part of that development also included 14,000 square feet of retail space, where developers had hoped to house a grocery store. But last year, the developer of those projects, San Diego-based Windstar Communities, said those projects would be pushed back due to the economic downturn. Windstar Vice President Eric Heffner said the hotel may not be a viable option anymore. Bob Russell, a principal for Oakland-based Ampelton Development Group, which acted as the master developer on the project, said a portion of land in Dublin that was slated for the apartments has now gone back to a lender, but the parcels status is unclear. Windstar still controls the other portions of the project, including the hotel and retail space in Dublin and the residential development in Pleasanton, but its financial status is unclear and none of the projects is actively being pursued.

BART says the new station, located in the median of I-580 between Golden Gate Road in Dublin and Stoneridge Mall Road in Pleasanton, will provide an additional stop in the current 10-mile gap between what's now called the East Dublin/Pleasanton and Castro Valley stations. Still, the new station has its critics. Although it will be BART's 44th, it's only 1.6 miles from the Pleasanton/Dublin station, which has become a major transit center for buses serving Hacienda and Bishop Ranch business parks and the Livermore and Sandia national labs. It adds no new track. And it comes at a time when BART and Livermore representatives, including Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton), who will be a key speaker at today's ceremony, have been clamoring for state and federal funds to extend BART to Livermore.

BART officials said they still plan to extend rail service to Livermore someday, but that project must wait until the train system can line up the money for it. At a Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce meeting last week, John McPartland, a BART director from Castro Valley, said BART still wants to go to Livermore, but that will take billions of dollars and many years. With West Pleasanton/Dublin, BART can open the station now.

Today's public ceremony started at 10 a.m. with regular train service to start tomorrow. ■

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About the Cover

Are we medicating kids today that were merely considered class clowns 20 or 30 years ago? Parents and physicians offer differing opinions and anecdotal experiences, which are often pitted against each other. Cover design by Lili Cao.

Vol. XII, Number 6

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Streetwise

ASKED AROUND TOWN

Who was your favorite president and why?



Noah Cole
Student

I like George Washington because he was the first president and the father of our country.

Sonny Soracco
Student

I like Abraham Lincoln because even though he failed once at running for office, he didn't give up. He eventually succeeded.



Kevin Yan
Student

I did a report on Ronald Reagan when I was in third grade, and he's been my favorite president ever since. He was a good role model, and I think his acting background makes him interesting. After he got shot, he recovered and kept going.



Emma Keller
Retail

My favorite president is Ronald Regan. He was such a sweetheart, and I'm enjoying all of the coverage of the 100th anniversary of his birth. He was a calm, collected president, and I have such good memories of growing up during his term.



Kim Niven
Sales

I like Abraham Lincoln because he abolished slavery and showed strong leadership during a difficult time for our country. He had a lot of integrity and was an honest, good man.



—Compiled by Kerry Nally

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DIGEST

Meeting to discuss changes coming to Shadow Cliffs

The water slides are coming down and shade structures are going up. These are two of the recommendations for Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreational Area, according to plans that will be reviewed at a public meeting Wednesday at the Veteran's Memorial Building, 301 Main St., Pleasanton. The recreational area is part of the East Bay Regional Park District.

The district began to reassess the facility after the California Splash Water Park project to expand the waterslides was abandoned by the concessionaire in 2008.

The goals of the Land Use Plan Amendment for Shadow Cliffs, according to the district, are to create a more natural landscape in areas that were once quarries and to expand wetlands and wildlife habitat as well as to expand interpretive opportunities in a natural park setting.

Some recommendations are:

- Improve overall trail system;
- Develop multi-use recreational trails to allow access into areas in western Shadow Cliffs;
- Phase out the existing Rapids Waterslide;
- Install picnic sites where appropriate on the former California Splash site; and
- Install shade shelters for family picnicking within the water-front area.

Wednesday's meeting is scheduled for 7-9 p.m. The Park District's new Mobile Visitor Center will be at the Vets Hall at 6:30 p.m., with activities led by park naturalists.

A final hearing by the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors is tentatively scheduled for March 19.

Zuffa free on bail

The woman charged with setting her Angela Street home afire more than two years ago has pleaded not guilty and is free on \$50,000 bail, according to William Denny, the senior assistant district attorney handling the case.

Deonna Zuffa, 42, was arrested at in December by Pleasanton police on charges of arson, possession of flammable material with intent to set fire, and one charge of forgery.

"The district attorney did not oppose the reduction based on a new letter from a treating physician stating that Ms. Zuffa is scheduled for surgery and that she needs to attend ongoing treatment for burn injuries," Denny said in an email. "The defendant posted bail and is living with her parents as a condition of bail release."

Union pulls contract proposal off City Council table

Bows to public pressure to consider increased benefit contributions, 2-tier hiring plan

By JEB BING

The Pleasanton City Employees Association — the union that represents 227 city workers — withdrew its pending two-year contract agreement Tuesday night with the City Council, agreeing to go back to the bargaining table for new negotiations.

The union's move followed weeks of public discussions over whether the proposed contract, negotiated last fall by City Manager Nelson Fialho, provided enough reductions in benefits in a city where unfunded pension liabilities now total as much as \$290 million and are growing.

The contract called for a two-year wage freeze and would have required city employees to start contributing 2% of their pay toward their retirement plan, which is handled by the state's CalPERS retirement system.

The council said it would have Fialho and the union return to the bargaining table to develop a new contract.

The city has separate contracts with its police and firefighter units. The current contract with the police officers union expires in May and with the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department firefighters next November.

Speakers at Tuesday night's meeting, some with tears in their eyes, talked about their years of dedicated service as city employees working at the library, City Hall, the Police Department and other non-management jobs.

Several were openly critical of the City Council for what they called "reneging" on the contract that

had been negotiated over a five-month period.

"I've never been so disappointed in your leadership," one 15-year employee told the council. "As a union, we worked together, negotiated in fairness, worked with leaders and there was a handshake. We gave up money to go with CalPERS changes in health care. My boss is the City Council and I have respect for you, but I can't say that anymore."

Another criticized the effort by some to impose a two-tier employment agreement in the PCEA's contract, asking what's to be gained by a two-tier system that would provide different — presumably lesser — benefits to new-hires when the city has frozen hiring for the foreseeable future.

"Many employees who work for Pleasanton have been impacted by no pay raises," she said. "We're already living paycheck to paycheck, have no chance for a pay raise and now are being asked to contribute 2% of our salary in the proposed new contract. I have three small children and already am using my vacation days to work in a co-op because I can't afford preschool."

A PCEA member in the Pleasanton Police Department said that when he was hired, there were 19 employees in his group. Now it's down to 10 with the likelihood it will drop to six or eight by July 1. In the meantime, he and the others are doing all the work that 19 once did.

"We are angry at the mockery that has been made of this collective bargaining process," he said. "It's not us that made the mistake, it was those in charge at the time, who earn six-

figure salaries."

The "mistake" he referred to is a decision made by the City Council at the urging of then-Mayor Tom Pico in 2002 to ask all employees to forego a wage increase that year with the city agreeing to pick up their health and pension costs, which were nearly negligible at the time.

But over the years, as a citizens' coalition led by businessman Bart Hughes and former City Councilwoman Kay Ayala are now arguing, that benefit contribution has grown so that the city is faced with an unfunded pension liability of at least \$171 million. Unless reduced, the city would find itself with an unsustainable public employee benefit obligation in the years to come.

Hughes, who spoke at Tuesday night's meeting, acknowledged the difficulties employees face financially, but said it's important now "to solve this huge issue for our community."

While many city employees criticized the City Council for failing to back the contract agreement their union had negotiated, a number of them also talked about their disappointment in comments being made publicly against their work.

Most of those comments, they said, had been posted as anonymous blogs on sites such as the Pleasanton Weekly's Town Square Forum. They cited statements calling city workers "greedy," and "undeserving of the salaries they earn," and suggesting that they "go find another job if you don't like it." They told the council that these comments had affected the once-high morale of

See **COUNCIL** on Page 8



DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Art in motion

Jon Seeman's sculpture, "Spiral Motion III," was installed on the grounds of the Firehouse Arts Center recently, the latest piece of public art in Pleasanton. The rolled-steel sculpture is one more H.A.P.P.Y. (Harrington Art Partnership Piece for You), donated to Pleasanton by Nancy and Gary Harrington and the Loll Family. It is part of the first phase of the Harrington Public Art Acquisition Plan that was approved by the City Council on Dec. 7.

Accused Castlewood killer's ex-wife testifies

Jurors hear recorded telephone conversation

By GLENN WOHLTMANN

Suspicious of his activities in the days following the murder of a Castlewood couple, the ex-wife of accused killer Ernest Scherer III began keeping careful notes of what he said and did, according to testimony in court this week.

"I wanted to have a chronological of what was going on. I just wanted to make sure," Robyn Scherer testified. "I knew at some point, I would be sitting in this chair. I just wanted to keep my facts straight."

Robyn Scherer also began divorce proceedings around that time, a few weeks after the bodies of her ex-husband's parents, Ernest Scherer Jr. and Charlene Abendroth, were found in March 2008, bludgeoned and stabbed at their home on Castlewood Drive in Pleasanton.

Much of the court time Tuesday was taken up with a recorded cell phone conversation Robyn Scherer had with her then-husband. Robyn, who was cooperating with the police, talked with Scherer for well over an hour; during that time, he made two declarations of his innocence, saying, "I could not have done what was done to my parents," and "They're not going to convict an innocent man."

For most of the conversation, however, Scherer seemed more preoccupied with the case against

him, telling her that police only had a "circumstantial case" and asking her to postpone divorcing him, because "a wife can't be forced to testify against her husband."

In the tape, Robyn Scherer repeatedly asks Scherer to turn himself in, which he refuses to do.

"I'm a suspect and they're just setting up a case against me," he responds. Scherer tells her he's been camping in Northern California, not far from Sacramento, where Robyn was staying at the time with their son, Ernest Scherer IV.

Referring to the case against him, Scherer says, "When they get the DNA back, it won't be my DNA."

Robyn Scherer then questions him about a videotape taken at the Castlewood Country Club on March 7, 2008, which is the night police believe the couple was killed.

"It looks like you in your car," she tells him. "Were you in the Bay Area on Friday night? ... It clearly looks like your car."

After a long pause, in which Robyn asks, "Are you there?" Scherer replies, "I'm thinking," then asks where the video was taken.

"Can you see the face of the driver?" he asks. "Obviously the police are listening in on this conversation. I would love to talk to

See **CASTLEWOOD** on Page 8

Council OKs high-density Hacienda housing project

Meets court-ordered deadline to boost affordable units here

By JEB BING

The Pleasanton City Council on Tuesday approved land use changes in Hacienda Business Park that will allow for construction of a high-density, 840-unit housing project with half the units to serve those with low-to-moderate incomes.

The complex of two- and three-story buildings will be constructed on 32 acres of still-vacant land owned by W.P. Carey, Roche and BRE. The three sites are located along Hacienda, Gibraltar and Owens drives close to the Pleasanton BART station with nearby access to I-580.

The council's rezoning of the properties came in response to a ruling by Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch last August in favor of lawsuits brought by Urban Habitat and then state Attorney General Jerry Brown. Roesch declared the

city's 29,000-unit housing cap approved by voters in 1996 in violation of state mandates for affordable and market rate housing requirements imposed by the Bay Area Association of Governments. In addition to scuttling the cap, he ordered Pleasanton to come up with a plan to meet its current housing numbers requirements by March 1, and to add another 1,400 units by 2014.

Tuesday's action in approving the land use changes in Hacienda came in a 5-0 council vote on the first reading of the rezoning ordinance. A required second reading will go before the council at its next meeting on March 1, the deadline for meeting Roesch's court order.

At Tuesday's meeting, BRE, a national multi-family building organization, agreed with a 25-member task force's recommendations and the council to include ground floor retail

space in the residential buildings it will construct on Owens Drive and at the corners of Hacienda and Gibraltar drives. Those units will have higher ceilings and extend deeper into the buildings, and could be used as work-living units for professionals such as accountants and lawyers. Buildings will be set back from the streets to allow for extensive landscaping, and BRE will provide space for a public park, to be built and financed by the city.

With some of BRE's planned apartments and town homes offering two- and three-bedroom housing, the council will work with the Pleasanton school district to assess the need for an elementary school in Hacienda. Hart Middle School, now located in the business park, has ample land available on its site to allow for classroom expansion if needed.

The task force provided development standards and design guidelines for the Hacienda project. In its vision statement, the task force said the livability of the developments would be paramount.

"These future developments address the housing needs for families of all incomes and ages, and also provide a supply of workforce housing in the city of Pleasanton to accommodate mandated Regional Housing Need Allocations by the state of California," the task force vision statement reads.

It continues: "We desire to build a neighborhood with several amenities for future residents and the existing community to enjoy. Simply put, it must be a very nice place to live."

"The developments shall be situated in an attractively designed landscaped environment with ample open space, play areas, trail con-

nections, pedestrian amenities, pool area, fitness facility and community rooms for residents."

City Manager Nelson Fialho said the task force guidelines and council's action Tuesday created a mixed-use housing guideline that will serve as a model for similar developments in Pleasanton in the future and for the cities throughout the state as a whole.

"On our research on what other cities had done along these lines, we couldn't find any examples that were pertinent to what we wanted," Fialho said. "We found several examples of similar transit oriented developments on the East Coast, but not in the West."

"It's clear that this was uncharted territory and we now have established guidelines that developers throughout the state can follow," he added. ■

PUSD discusses potential \$7.7 million shortfall

District and teacher's union reopen negotiations about salaries, hours

By GLENN WOHLTMANN

Budget issues continued to dominate Pleasanton school board discussions at a special meeting Tuesday night, with board members acknowledging they face tough choices as they try to cobble together a budget with uncertain state revenues.

Much of the meeting was a rehash of \$3.1 million in cost-saving measures released last week, including increasing class sizes, cutting specialists, support staff and reducing the number of school counselors. The tentative plan also includes cutting the work year for management and reducing funding for the Barton Reading Program. The district is also working to get \$150,000 in one-time funds from the Regional Occupation Program.

"We're looking at a total of about \$7.7 million which we need to address this year," Luz Cazares, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, told the board. The remainder would come from using reserves and spending one-time federal and state money.

While the district may get additional money from both state and federal governments, Cazares said much uncertainty remains, including whether the parcel tax would pass, and whether a tax extension proposed by Gov. Jerry Brown will get through the state Legislature and survive a vote. None of that money has been included in the current budget estimate.

Because staff may have to be cut, the review was to prepare for layoff notices that would have to be approved by the board in early March in order to be in the hands of employees by March 22.

The board also "sunshined" negotiations between the district and the Association of Pleasanton Teachers (APT). Up for discussion under current contract negotiations are salaries, class sizes, employment hours and the calendar for the 2011-12 school year. The APT also wants to discuss solutions to the rising costs of medical benefits; currently, teachers get a higher-than-average salary but pay for their own health insurance. The teacher's union also wants modifications to current job sharing limits, in which teachers move to a part-time schedule by splitting the position with other part-timers.

Step and column raises — raises based on the length of time a teacher has been with the district and his or her continued education — also continue to be discussed. Some have suggested that those raises be frozen under the current budget squeeze, and while school officials agree that could free up some short-term money, they also worry about longer term impacts. Cazares noted, for instance, that the district would have to set aside money to pay for the raises when the freeze is lifted, which would include both the new raises and back pay for the time they were on hold.

There's also the concern about inequities among teachers who achieve a new pay level but get less money than their counterparts who made it into a new column or step before the freeze, according to Bill Faraghan, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.

Faraghan and Cazares both noted that step-and-column is the norm, not only for California but for most of the country as well. ■

New Safeway starts construction

As a massive assembly of earth-movers and bulldozers prepared to churn the dirt behind them, Safeway executives and civic leaders broke ground Feb. 10 for a new 58,000-square-foot "Lifestyle" supermarket at Bernal and Valley Avenues, next to the northbound I-680 Bernal Avenue off-ramp.

It will be the newest of 270 Safeway stores in the company's Northern California division, which like its corporate parent, Safeway Inc., is headquartered in Pleasanton. As Safeway's new Lifestyle-designated supermarket, it will have expanded meats, seafood, bakery and wine departments, featuring a large section of organic products and a large sandwich bar and customer seating area. More than 200 employees will staff the new store.

Last week's ceremony came exactly 70 years after Safeway opened its first Pleasanton store on Main Street in February 1941. Safeway plans to have the new store open by Thanksgiving, along with an array of restaurants, small retail shops and



JEB BING

Safeway's Susan Houghton speaks at the groundbreaking Feb. 10.

other services that will be part of the Pleasanton Gateway Center.

"I have to tell you that to be able to have this type of economic stimulus on this end of town and then the Staples Ranch property breaking ground at the other end is evidence that Pleasanton is back," said Mayor Jennifer Hosterman,

who led off remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony.

Because of its larger size and product offerings, including organic foods and fresh vegetables sections, the Lifestyle store also is expected to attract shoppers from other cities who now go to Whole Foods in San Ramon.

"Whole Foods, step aside," Hosterman said to the laughter of more than 50 community and Safeway leaders. "Pleasanton is going to have a store that is just going to knock your socks off!"

The 12-1/2 acre complex is part of a 39-acre site owned by South Bay Construction since the entire 510-acre Bernal parcel was purchased by a coalition of developers in 2000 from the city of San Francisco, which acquired the land in the 1930s.

Pleasanton Finance Director Emily Wagner said the fiscal impact to Pleasanton will add \$123,000 to the city's general fund in the store's first year of operation and \$285,000 a year after that.

—Jeb Bing

State: PMS must improve Hispanic scores

Pleasanton Middle School has to do a better job of teaching math to Hispanic students, according to a state review of test scores.

The Pleasanton Unified School District learned this week that the poor scores put the school into program improvement status, meaning the district must improve those scores under the federal No Child Left Behind act.

Failing to improve those schools could trigger a series of increasingly serious interventions for schools that remain in "program improvement," according to the Education Data Partnership. These begin with revising a plan for the school and giving parents the option to transfer their students to schools that are not program im-

provement, with the district providing transportation. The PUSD has sent a letter to all parents at Pleasanton Middle, giving them that option, and the district also held an informational meeting for parents Thursday night to discuss the issue.

Pleasanton middle has an overall API (Academic Performance Index) of 932, putting it among the top middle schools in the state. The poor performance of the Hispanic students, however, was enough for the program improvement status to kick in, said school spokeswoman Myla Grasso.

"The state established a target this year of 58% proficient or above," Grasso said. "For math, they wound up at 44.2%."

Improving scores for subgroups like Hispanic students, students with disabilities and socio-economically disadvantaged students has been a district priority this year, Cindy Galbo, assistant superintendent of educational services, had told the board last year.

In October, Galbo told the board all three groups have been the focus of extra attention from the district and the problem with all three groups is statewide, not just in Pleasanton, where some gains have been made.

The second year of program improvement would require the school to add professional development and offer tutoring to low-income students.

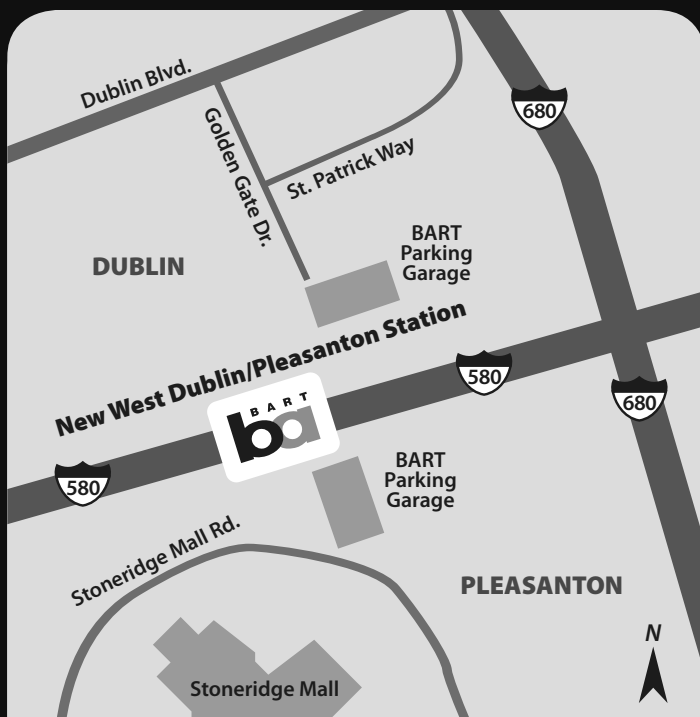
—Glenn Wohltmann

New West Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station

Opening this Saturday, February 19



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The new West Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station is located in the median of I-580, between Golden Gate Drive off Dublin Boulevard (in Dublin) and Stoneridge Mall Road (in Pleasanton).

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Judge continues to lean toward Pleasanton in Lin case

Ruling could dismiss case, but may be appealed

By **GLENN WOHLTMANN**

Pleasanton has won another round in its legal battle with the landowners who have sued the city for the right to build 51 houses on 600 acres they own in the southeast hills.

Last week after hearing arguments from both sides, Alameda County Superior Court Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers said she's inclined to stick with her tentative ruling, which could dismiss the lawsuit filed by Jennifer and Fredric Lin.

The family is suing the city after its plan to build the homes was defeated in a referendum on June 8, with 54.3% opposing the measure.

The original issue was what's known as "poison pill" language that says if one of the two ordinances is invalid, the other ordinance is voided as well. The Lin's lawsuit claims that Measure D, last year's referendum, only concerned Ordinance No. 1961, 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, which specified various aspects of the project, au-

thorized by Ordinance No. 1962.

Both ordinances were approved by the City Council, but a grassroots group spearheaded by former City Councilwoman Kay Ayala and resident Karla Brown successfully brought Ordinance No. 1961 to a referendum.

At last week's hearing on Feb. 10, the Lin's lawyer, Andrew Saley, argued that even if both ordinances are invalid, Pleasanton had a development agreement, which was a separate contract with the Lins. That contract, according to Saley, should take precedent over the ordinances, and the city failed in its obligation "to protect the contractual rights of the Lins."

"They can rescind the ordinances, but they didn't rescind the D.A. (development agreement)," Saley said "If we lose this D.A., the damages are massive."

Those damages could lead to a separate lawsuit against the city, with the Lin family asking to be paid what it would have earned through the sale of the lots on its property.

Saley said Rogers' ruling on the lawsuit could be overturned, implying that the family would appeal the ruling should the judge not back the claim.

That ruling came Feb. 7, when Rogers said she "is inclined to sustain the city's demurrer as to all causes of action."

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

In her original ruling, 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, "basic principles 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."

Both sides had until Feb. 15 to file briefs of no more than 10 pages to support their arguments; Rogers will issue her final ruling after reviewing those briefs. ■

COUNCIL

Continued from Page 5

city workers and were personally damaging when their children and others read them.

"I've been extremely disappointed to read these comments day after day, month after month, and to be criticized publicly for my work," one city workers told the council. "We're people who have been dedicated to working for the city and have made city employment our careers. The labor negotiating process has been part of this community for years and it's disappointing to see what's happening today."

A Police Department dispatcher said last year was the first time her salary broke the \$60,000 mark. She commutes 100,000 miles a year to

work here, not being able to afford a Pleasanton home.

"You in the council have made a mockery of the whole (negotiating) process we just completed," she said. "I've never been more disappointed with the way the process works than I am right now."

Mayor Jennifer Hosterman said the council has asked City Manager Fialho to schedule new negotiating sessions with the PCEA and to work with residents and the council in a "transparent" public process to develop new contract terms that will satisfy everyone.

The new contract, which the council was scheduled to vote on Tuesday night, would replace the one now set to expire and would cover the miscellaneous employees through 2013. ■

CASTLEWOOD

Continued from Page 5

you about a lot of things (but) not on the phone."

Robyn Scherer continues to question him about where he was at the time of the murders.

"Is there any reason you would be in the area?" she asks, and Scherer replies, "We're not going to talk about that on the phone. I have told the police that if you arrest me, I will beat this. I'm just going to trust the criminal justice system," adding, "This has changed me as a person."

"I know there's not going to be any physical evidence of me committing the crime," he tells Robyn.

He also says he was holding out hope that he'll receive his inheritance, which has been estimated at more than \$1.5 million.

"If they don't press charges against me in the next three or four weeks, I'm going to get the money," he tells Robyn.

Other parts of the conversation include a discussion about family finances. Robyn Scherer had closed out the family accounts to cover expenses and tells Scherer she's stressed because she has no way to cover bills, which include the debt owed on their home and a credit card bill, neither of which was ever paid. She once again asks him to work with police.

"Do you understand from my perspective it's not looking good that you're not cooperating with police and that they don't know where you are," she said.

Without telling her where he's staying, Scherer responds, "I've been doing some soul searching. It's been a very spiritual experience for me."

After telling her he's all alone, Scherer adds, "Whatever you decide, I hope you don't talk to the police."

He also mentions that, "My father had enemies," but worries that he'd have no money for a defense.

"If they arrest me, I'm at the mercy of a public defender," he says.

His aunt, Carolyn Oesterle, testified earlier that she'd volunteered to pay for an attorney but that his behavior — suggesting he hide out and providing her with a secret email account — led her to reconsider.

In the taped telephone conversation, Scherer returns to the videotape from Castlewood, saying, "That itself looks bad for me."

Asked again whether it was his car,

Scherer replies, "I'm not going to get into any of that," and says if the case should go to court, there will be testimony that "he doesn't fit the profile. He's not a violent person."

Robyn Scherer also brings up Scherer's repeated infidelities. He responds that he's changed, but also points out, "The police have talked to every woman I've ever known and told them I have a wife and son."

Robyn Scherer also testified that during the time leading up to the double murder, Scherer was gone often from the home they'd moved to in Southern California, where they'd moved to be closer to where he gambled for a living. She also said that his gambling increased to the point he was betting on sports games and "American Idol" contestants.

She teared up when she told the court he been gone the week leading up to the birth of their son in late December 2005, and that he left her with their newborn to attend a New Year's Eve party in Las Vegas that year.

In other recent testimony, Nike representative Herb Hedges told the court about Nike Impact Tomahawk sneakers, a baseball bat and a pair of junior soccer gloves that were purchased at an outlet store in Primm, Nev., near the time Scherer bought gas and a fast food meal in that town.

Hedges had the factory that made those now-discontinued shoes manufacture another to compare to bloody footprints found at the scene. Under cross examination, by defense attorney Richard Foxall, however, Hedges acknowledged that the store was not the only place those products could have been purchased, and that Nike had not checked the records of any other factory outlets.

In addition, Alameda County Sheriff's Technician Tina Kuwitzky testified about a letter sent by Scherer to some friends last year. In that letter, he complains about Foxall's work on his behalf, and that "someone needs to take size 10, 11, 12 and 13 Nike Impact shoes and compare them to the bloody shoeprints."

He also says he hopes that he won't be transferred from Santa Rita Jail, where he's "a big fish in a very small pond," and that he's the "center of commerce" at the jail, controlling books and magazines — and discusses current "American Idol" contestants. ■



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EDITORIAL

THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

For slow growth advocates, times are changing

With the City Council's approval Tuesday night of a land use plan that will allow 840 more housing units in a high-density complex in Hacienda Business Park, Pleasanton's days of slow-to-no growth are over. The council's action came just in time to meet a March 1 deadline imposed by the Alameda County Superior Court and the Urban Habitat affordable housing organization to require Pleasanton to meet its current state housing obligation to provide more workforce/affordable homes. Tuesday's ordinance was given its first reading; the required second reading will come at the council's next meeting on March 1. That should satisfy the order of the court, which also declared Pleasanton's 29,000-unit housing cap illegal for being out of compliance with state mandates to provide more housing. The next mandate will require Pleasanton to add another 1,400 affordable and market rate housing units by 2014, an objective that the city's new Housing Element Task Force is now pursuing.

For a city that has long promoted itself as a model of orderly, carefully controlled growth, the turn-around in attitude by the City Council on Tuesday and its 25-member Hacienda Task Force is truly commendable. At first, the council and city staff fought the lawsuit brought by Urban Habitat and the state attorney general's office, then headed by now Gov. Jerry Brown. The task force already had been meeting to refine a proposal for a mixed-use development on three sites located within half a mile of the Pleasanton/Dublin BART station. They include 11 acres at the southeast corner of Owens Drive and Willow Road, owned by W. P. Carey; 8.2 acres at the north corner of Hacienda and Gibraltar drives, owned by BRE; and 12.4 acres south of Gibraltar Drive and between Hacienda Driver and Willow Road, owned by Roche Molecular Systems. A proposed land use change would allow residential development on the sites with a density of at least 30 units per acre with buildings up to six stories tall. The city's inclusionary zoning ordinance would require that at least 15% of the 950 housing units that could be built on the three sites be affordable to low and very-low households.

But that plan failed to convince Urban Habitat and Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch, who wanted the city to act faster and without the housing cap limits. So instead of leaving development decisions to the discretion of the court, the council chose to work with Urban Habitat and to spearhead the effort by the task force to prepare the plan approved Tuesday. The agreement cuts the number of units to be built to 840, increases the number of affordables to 50%, and includes a public park, retail and office units on the ground floors on some of the buildings and keeps the building heights to three but mostly two stories with extensive landscaping. BRE, now the primary developer, also agreed to include the Iron Horse Trail as part of its development plans. The development plan also will serve as a model for similar high-density housing projects Pleasanton will need to accommodate in the future, whether in Hacienda, the South Bay-owned acreage along I-680 or on quarry land in East Pleasanton that is yet to be developed.

It's clear, though, that with a projected 2.4 individuals per housing unit in BRE's complex, several thousand more people will soon be moving to Pleasanton. The city's slow-growth policies of the past are moving into the history books. ■



Visit Town Square at PleasantonWeekly.com to comment on the editorial.

LETTERS

Downtown workshop needed for residents

Dear Editor,

Thanks to a Letter to the Editor in the Jan. 28 edition, "Need reason to go downtown," I was once again reminded that we do need to put all of our thinking caps on to help fend off the slow but seemingly inevitable downturn of business and its implications for all of us.

The problem is the lack of activities during the day. Our Main Street is looking like a mouth with bad tooth decay, showing gaping holes in the row of businesses along Main Street. There is definitely an imbalance of business enterprises. Why is there such a monoculture of banks, beauty parlors and Italian eateries?

I am hoping that we residents create a lobby and make suggestions on what businesses to bring downtown. The downtown butcher is a great start. If we only had a grocery store, I would be able to leave my car in the garage. (Wasn't the world's first Safeway on Main Street?)

For those who would drive to frequent our lively downtown of the future, a parking garage is needed. At the busy Saturday market times we see how much traffic Pleasanton can get.

I would like to suggest that we form a workshop like I have seen done at other occasions and have all of us try and sort out this downtown problem. Not just the Chamber of Commerce and city officials, not just the downtown association, but all of us who want to have Pleasanton survive next to much more vibrant communities like Livermore and Dublin.

Martina Harrison

In defense of bottled water

Dear Editor,

As a Pleasanton resident and an employee of Nestle Waters North America, I was disappointed to receive Pleasanton Garbage Service's January newsletter urging residents to stop buying bottled water.

Fortunately, Pleasanton boasts both an excellent curbside recycling program and redemption center, both of which accept PET water bottles. While more can always be done to increase recycling rates, to single out bottled water among all PET plastic containers is simply unfounded.

YOUR TURN

The Pleasanton Weekly encourages comments on our coverage or issues of local interest.

Submit letters to the editor of up to 250 words and guest opinion pieces up to 500 words with a short bio to editor@PleasantonWeekly.com. Include your name, address and daytime phone number so we can reach you. We reserve the right to edit contributions for length, objectionable content, libel and factual errors known to us. Anonymous letters will generally not be accepted.

For more information contact Editor Jeb Bing at (925) 600-0840.

Pleasanton Garbage Service is incorrect to suggest reducing bottled water use will reduce the waste stream. In fact, research shows if bottled water went away tomorrow more than half of those who drink it would switch to soda or another sugary drink, which use more water, more packaging and more ingredients.

Furthermore, the bottled water industry is a small user of water, with annual production accounting for less than .02 percent of total groundwater withdrawal in the United States. At Nestle Waters, we use just 1.4 gallons of water to make a gallon of our bottled water, compared to 2.4 gallons for soda — and that doesn't include water used for growing and processing agricultural ingredients.

In closing, Pleasanton Garbage Service's call to stop purchasing the most healthful packaged beverage available, and the one with the lightest environmental impact, simply doesn't add up — for the health of our families or our community.

Kathy Davis

End the wars

Dear Editor,

Based on the lack of news coverage you might think the Iraq War/Occupation is over and the troops have come home. But no, 50,000 "Non-Combat" U.S. troops are still there along with many thousands of contractors/mercenaries. It is time to end the tragic and unnecessary Wars/Occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and bring the troops home now. Going on 10 years for the Afghan War and eight years for the Iraq War, almost 6,000 dead U.S. troops and many more thousands wounded, hundreds of thousands of dead Iraqis, millions of natives displaced from their homes, costs to U.S. taxpayers of \$1 trillion, serious damage done to U.S. foreign relations, creating more terrorists than eliminated, etc. Local politicians support the veterans but do nothing to de-fund the wars and bring those brave soldiers home.

Pleasantonians for Peace has a peace vigil the first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. below the arch on Main Street and a peaceful protest the fourth Wednesday of each month at First and Neal streets. Take time to attend and show you are tired of these wasteful winless wars (use that money for schools, roads, infrastructure). Tell your Congressional reps and Obama to end the wars.

George Reid

Pleasanton Weekly

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Community Pulse • Transitions

POLICE BULLETIN & LOG • OBITUARIES • BIRTHS & WEDDINGS

POLICE BULLETIN

Police pursue leads in Wal-Mart robbery

A woman gave a whole new meaning to customer service by holding up a cashier at the Pleasanton Wal-Mart's return counter last week, according to police.

"A gal came in and presented a demand note to one of the clerks, stating it was a robbery," said Pleasanton Sgt. Jim Knox. "No weapon was seen, and the woman fled, taking an undisclosed amount of cash with her."

The suspect is described as a black female of indeterminate age, approximately 5 foot, 3 inches tall and weighing about 130 pounds, with black shoulder-length hair. At the time of the holdup she was wearing a black jacket, black shirt and black sunglasses, along with what Knox described as a round fisherman's-style hat.

The robbery took place at about 9:56 p.m. Feb. 8 at the Wal-Mart store in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive. Knox said no other similar robberies

have been reported in the area and that police are pursuing leads.

Home burglary yields quarter million in jewelry

Jewelry worth nearly a quarter million dollars was stolen from a home in the first block of Puri Court, according to a police report, which said the robbery took place between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Feb. 11.

Among the items stolen in the theft, which totaled \$247,805, were a diamond bracelet worth \$25,000, four-carat sapphire and diamond earrings worth \$25,000, and two plastic bags containing gold, diamond and sapphire jewelry worth \$55,000, the report said. A rear window was smashed to provide access to the home, according to the report.

In another home theft, computer equipment worth \$1,000 and an autographed Oakland Raiders jersey valued at an estimated \$1,000 were stolen from a home in the 1500 block of Trimmingham Drive, according to a police report, which said the theft occurred between 7 p.m. Feb. 14 and 9:30 a.m. Feb. 15. A rear door was pried open to provide access, the report said.

OBITUARIES

Nancy Gail Reichmeider

Nancy Gail Reichmeider, who had family and many friends in Pleasanton, died Feb. 11 at the age of 70 in Silver Spring, Md.

She was born Dec. 16, 1940, in Charleston, W.Va., and spent most of her adult life in Silver Spring. She was a retired transportation supervisor for the Montgomery County Public Schools Depart-



ment of Transportation, and a longtime and decorated member of the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department. She also was the Associate Conductress of Silver Springs Chapter No. 66 Order of the Eastern Star. Post retirement, she took great pride in caring for the elderly via community service organizations.

Ms. Reichmeider was preceded in death by her daughter, Pamela Reichmeider. She is survived by her son Scott Reichmeider of Pleasanton, daughter-in-law Kelly Dalton-Reichmeider of Pleasanton; sister Dawn Fox (Tom) of Millstone, W.Va.; brothers David Fletcher of Belle, W.Va., and Clark Fletcher (Marty) of Miami Beach, Fla. Services were being held today and tomorrow.

POLICE REPORT

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

Feb. 6

Petty theft

■ 3:14 p.m. in the 1600 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

Vandalism

■ 8:50 a.m. in the 6000 block of Hansen Road

DUI

■ 1:31 a.m. at the intersection of Hopyard Road and Golden Road

Feb. 7

Theft

■ 9:12 a.m. in the 4100 block of First Street; petty theft

■ 10:51 a.m. in the 4900 block of Monaco Drive; grand theft

■ 8:09 p.m. in the 500 block of Gerard Court; identity theft, forgery

Burglary

■ 8:09 p.m. in the 4300 block of Clovewood Lane

Vandalism

■ 8:26 a.m. in the 410 block of W. Las Positas Boulevard

■ 9:10 a.m. in the 100 block of Spring Street

■ 9:41 a.m. in the 7300 block of Johnson Drive

■ 8:28 a.m. at the intersection of Bernal Avenue and Palomino Drive

Drug/alcohol violations

■ 1:21 a.m. in the 3000 block of Hopyard Road; public drunkenness

■ 11:07 a.m. in the 1000 block of Serpentine Lane; marijuana possession

■ 10:52 p.m. near the intersection of Bernal Avenue and I-680; marijuana possession, paraphernalia possession

■ 11:14 p.m. at the intersection of Stanley Boulevard and California Avenue; possession of a controlled substance, paraphernalia possession

Feb. 8

Theft

■ 4:58 p.m. in the 300 block of Neal Street; theft

■ 6:45 p.m. in the 1000 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; auto theft

■ 7:01 p.m. in the 1600 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; grand theft

Burglary

■ 2:08 p.m. in the 2500 block of Corte Bella

■ 2:52 p.m. in the 2500 block of Tapestry Lane

Feb. 9

Theft

■ 7:50 p.m. in the 2100 block of Eilene Drive; forgery

■ 11:45 a.m. in the 1700 block of Courtney Avenue; identity theft mail theft

■ 3:35 p.m. at the intersection of Calle Enrique and Golden Road; petty theft

■ 4:59 p.m. in the 7800 block of Flagstone Drive; grand theft

Battery

■ 3:08 p.m. in the 1800 block of Santa Rita Road

Auto burglary

■ 4:42 a.m. in the 7800 block of Creekside Drive

■ 8:12 a.m. in the 7600 block of Knollbrook Drive

Vandalism

■ 9:33 a.m. in the 430 block of Evelyn Court

Drug/alcohol violations

■ 3:28 a.m. at the intersection of Vineyard Avenue and Bernal Avenue; possession of a non-narcotic controlled substance, paraphernalia possession

■ 8:08 p.m. in the 5200 block of Hopyard Road; paraphernalia possession

Feb. 10

Theft

■ 8:39 a.m. in the 1600 block of Calle Santiago; petty theft

■ 4:37 p.m. in the 2900 block of Calle de la Mesa; grand theft

■ 8:25 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; petty theft

■ 11:12 p.m. in the 2300 block of Golden Court; forgery, elder abuse

Drug/alcohol violations

■ 1:16 a.m. at the intersection of Valley Avenue and Northway Road; possession; driving by a minor with blood alcohol content of .05 or more

Feb. 11

Theft

■ 4:28 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft

■ 7:25 p.m. in the 2100 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; grand theft

Burglary

■ 10:05 p.m. in the first block of Puri Court

Feb. 12

Theft

■ 10:28 a.m. in the 5700 block of Owens Drive

Vandalism

■ 3:16 p.m. in the 2100 block of Arroyo Court

Drug/alcohol charges

■ 1:04 a.m. at the intersection of St. Mary Street and Pleasanton Avenue; DUI

■ 1:34 a.m. at the intersection of Old Bernal Avenue and Peters Avenue; public drunkenness

Feb. 13

Theft

■ 1:42 p.m. in the 2300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; grand theft

■ 4:35 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; grand theft, theft

Drug/alcohol violations

■ 12:18 a.m. in the 300 block of St. Mary Street; public drunkenness

■ 5:54 p.m. at the intersection of Valley Avenue and Blackbird Drive; DUI

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WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES

Planning Commission

• The February 23, 2010 Planning Commission meeting has been cancelled. The next regular scheduled meeting is March 9, 2011.

Energy & Environment Committee

Wednesday, February 23, 2010 @ 6:00 p.m.

Operations Services, 3333 Busch Road

• Review/approval of prior month's meeting minutes

• CAP Update

• Report out (next steps) on 2011 initiatives

The above represents a sampling of upcoming meeting items.

For complete information, please visit

www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/community/calendar

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Dealing with hyperactivity

Parents, physicians weight pros and cons of stimulant medication

BY JESSICA LIPSKY

Are we medicating kids today that were merely considered class clowns 20 or 30 years ago? Parents and physicians offer differing opinions and anecdotal experiences, which are often pitted against each other.

What is clear across the board is that assessment, diagnosis and the use of stimulant medication such as Ritalin for children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have become increasingly common.

The Weekly Morbidity and Mortality Report from Sept. 2, 2005, showed that approximately 4.4 million children ages 4-17 had a history of ADHD diagnosis; of those, 2.5 million (56 percent) were reported to be taking medication for the disorder. The same report showed 2.5 percent of California children as "diagnosed and currently taking medication."

Pleasanton Unified School District's Kevin Johnson, senior director of pupil services, said 183 of its 14,900 students have a "Section 504" plan, which provides for special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and most of those students have ADHD. Johnson said this represents an almost 50 percent decrease from four years prior; however, some area doctors say there has been a slight uptick in the number of ADHD cases.

This trend is also visible in special education, said Kent Rezwali, senior director of special education for PUSD.

"There has been an increase statewide as students in special education are categorized as 'other health impaired.' Most of those kids are attention deficient students," he said.

"People became a lot more aware of the diagnosis," said Dr. Peter Levine, a pediatrician at Kaiser Permanente in Walnut Creek who has worked with ADHD patients for more than 20 years. "Having attentional problems also got kids school support where it didn't before, and that put pressure on doctors."

Developmental Pediatrician Deborah Sedberry said the relatively low number of diagnoses pre-1980 could be due to a lack of awareness of the "quiet, inattentive bunch," those kids that lack the hyperactive portion of ADHD.

"People are more aware of that now just like they are more aware of milder versions of autism," she said, noting that in the 1960s, ADHD was called Minimal Brain Dysfunction.

The notion of increased awareness is part of a larger promotional campaign by drug companies, said Robert Whitaker, a medical journalist and author of "Anatomy of an Epidemic" and "Mad in America," which discuss the rapid increase of mentally disabled adults and children, and the treatment of the severely mentally ill, respectively.

"The average practicing doctor isn't dirty or malicious, but

the problem is there's some influencing by thought leaders, and those men and women are often on the payroll of the drug companies," he said. "There's no question that that corrupts the story that's being told. Next thing you know the doctor is in a context where the standard of care is to prescribe."

Sedberry estimates that three-fourths of her ADHD patients are currently taking medication, with a 70 to 80 percent positive response rate.

Whitaker takes issue with this treatment because studies have shown no long-term efficacy for children taking stimulants for ADHD.

The 1994 edition of the American Psychological Association's "Textbook of Psychiatry" echoed this notion and stated, "Stimulants do not produce lasting improvements in aggressivity, conduct disorder, criminality, education achievement, job functioning, marital relationships or long-term adjustment."

Additional studies cited in Whitaker's book showed that medicated children are often "less happy and ... more dysphonic"; have higher delinquency scores; and perhaps are more likely to develop bipolar disorder.

Donna Love, a member of the Northern California chapter of CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) has facilitated support groups for ADHD adults for 13 years. She called Whitaker's research "a crock" and "really irresponsible."

"Stimulant medication is amazing. For someone who is hyperactive, it tends to normalize their activity and normalize their inattention," she said.

Interestingly, in 1995 NPR reported that CHADD had received funding from Ciba-Geigy, the company that makes Ritalin, since 1988.

"Since then, CHADD has received close to \$1 million in grants and its membership has grown from 800 to over 35,000," the report read. "CHADD has used Ciba-Geigy's money to build its membership and promote awareness of ADD."

This information hasn't necessarily fazed Nancy Vandell, one of the co-founders of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District PTA Special Needs Committee. Her 20-year-old son has been on stimulant medication since fourth grade and has since excelled in school.

"There's a lot of harm that is done by these so-called studies that aren't peer reviewed that give parents the information that stimulant medication does harm," Vandell noted. "Sometimes parents go through months or years of delay because of the controversy that surrounds them, and it harms the child because they don't get the education they deserve."

Still, CHADD, local doctors and parents who have children



on stimulants advocate for a multimodal approach in which "multiple interventions work together as part of a comprehensive treatment plan." CHADD associates said stimulants are usually used as a last resort because parents are often wary of medicating their children.

Pediatrician Levine said 50 to 60 percent of people will try alternative treatments such as dance therapy, herbal treatments and neurofeedback.

"Finding something that the child is good at and getting them involved in it to be successful works best," he said. "Parents are probably the biggest factor."

Similarly, the bulk of Sedberry's medicated patients are those who came to her after "trying everything."

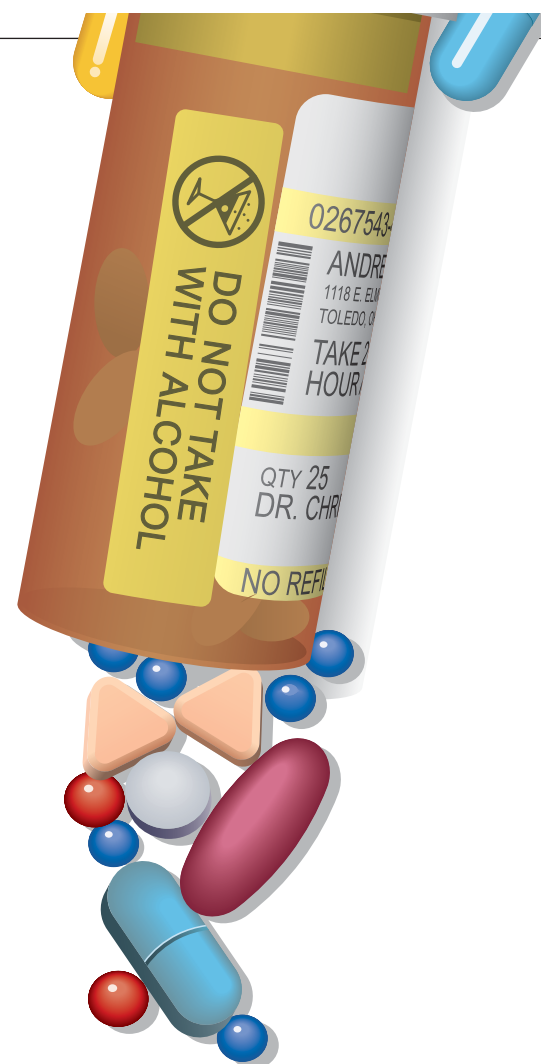
"Many are children that have other issues as well, and by controlling the ADHD, we're trying to get the child in the position where they can take better advantage of the social and educational opportunities regarding their disease," she said.

The education system certainly plays a role in the number of children being assessed and diagnosed. Both Levine and Whitaker said most requests for assessment come from parents who have been referred by teachers.

"Often parents come in after the school suggests. There's a lot of pressure on the schools because of the cutbacks, and schools don't want to give extra services," Levine said.

But PUSD officials said schools aren't advocating for assessment as much as addressing performance-based issues.

"The reality is teachers are not saying your kid should be



tested for ADHD, they're raising a concern for a student's performance with the family," said Johnson. "There are students who can benefit from extended time on tests, testing in a quiet environment, or preferred seating in class."

"Society has changed and what they now teach in kindergarten, they taught in third grade," said Judy Marshall, who teaches an ADHD parenting class and sits on the board of directors at CHADD. "(Children are) not developmentally ready to learn, and that's what creates the anger and concern and more people having their kids diagnosed."

PBS reports that schools often prefer that a child be served under Section 504 because it allows "more latitude in determining what services must be offered, and the necessary administrative procedures aren't as extensive."

Sedberry also said that parents come to her as their teens prepare to take their SATs, hoping she will diagnose them with ADHD so they will be given more time for college entrance exams. She no longer accepts high school seniors as first-time patients.

Celeste Winders, whose 7-year-old son Nasir has a 504 plan for his ADHD, said she still feels pressured by her school district in Sonoma to medicate her son.

"(Medication) gets brought up at every single (individualized education plan) meeting. They always make a point of saying, 'Mom's chosen not to medicate,'" she said. "There's a lot of pressure to medicate and when you choose not to medicate it's almost like you're not cooperating."

Winders said she's had great success controlling Nasir's ADHD with a carbohydrate- and dye-free diet as well as activities such as Tae Kwon Do.

"School is cut out for kids to sit quietly at their desk and fill out bubbles; tests are very high pressure for kids with ADHD. Then the tests tell (Nasir) that he can't do things that I know he can do at home," said Winders, who has had to advocate for her son not to be "ostracized" in class. Winders said she would put her son in private school if she could afford it.

Winders said Nasir keeps her on her toes and she likes him just the way he is — hyperactive as heck.

"To me there's something endearing about him hanging from a tree — and it gives me a few heart attacks — but I like him like this. If I took that away from him, would I be taking away from him being great?"

While Winders and Nasir are exemplary of a family who chose not to medicate, others said they'd be lost without stimulant medication. Debbie Wayne-Daniels, 39, and her father, John Wayne, said Ritalin has changed Daniels' life, comparing the drug to insulin for diabetes.

Daniels has been on methylphenidate (Ritalin) extended release for about 15 years, which "was a blessing that allowed all of us to keep our sanity — a wonder drug — there was peace in the house again," Wayne said.

Daniels was put on Ritalin as a 3- or 4-year-old but was taken off shortly because it made her zombie-like. She was unable to concentrate in high school, making poor grades and graduating

with a 1.17 GPA. She also acted impulsively, self-medicating with alcohol and drinking at least one six-pack of soda a day.

After starting Ritalin again in 1995, Daniels said she noticed "almost an instant difference." She graduated from a Firefighter 1 Academy in 1996 with a 4.0.

"My life is so much more controlled, normal and happy now. I think about the consequences of actions whereas before Ritalin, I thought about — and knew — the consequences of my activities, behavior and actions and didn't care," Daniels said. "The Ritalin is not a cure-all or the answer to all the problems, it just allows and/or helps me to have more control over my life."

Sedberry said she's seen similarly positive results in patients, though not as long-term. She described a bright young man who came to her as a high school sophomore with dismal grades. After taking medication for his ADHD, he became an A student and was given early acceptance to Lehigh University.

But Whitaker stands strong behind the notion that, while stimulant medication can help children and adolescents, "If you want to do evidence-based medicine, you can't prescribe by anecdotes."

"Are there kids that fidget and can't concentrate? Yes. Do I think there's an identifiable pathology behind that? No. There's a spectrum of brain functioning out there and kids operate in different manners," Whitaker said. "ADHD-identifying behaviors are clearly annoying to some people but the biological causes are unknown."

Whitaker said that society should be more tolerant of diverse behaviors, noting that when he was in grade school, a normal day felt like six years.

"Societies have raised kids for centuries without putting them on stimulants, why can't we raise kids today without medicating them? A certain percentage of kids don't adjust to the school environment well, so maybe it's the environment and not the kids," he said.

One thing everyone can agree on, however, is that parents need to do serious research before putting their child on stimulant medication for ADHD.

"In my opinion, as a journalist, all the information needs to be known," Whitaker said. "Given all the risks and lack of long-term benefit, you'd want to be quite cautious of starting children on this medication and using it for a short period of time and in a small group of children."

Levine said that while there are certainly side effects, many studies show that medication is helpful.

"But it's still unclear how helpful it is long-term and that's why you need to jump in and have interventions. It's very important for parents to learn and get support for ADHD," he said. ■



Armani Prive Spring 2011 Couture Collection

ON THE RUNWAY

Hair stylist helps put finishing touches on Armani show in Paris

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

From his Main Street salon to Fashion Week in Paris — it all comes naturally to hairstylist Gary Gemma and gives Pleasanton stylistas a jump on that latest.

The designers create the clothes that eventually trickle down to everyone, Gemma noted, and he was able to get a first look in Paris.

"I'm bringing that to Pleasanton and the people here, they get a head start," he said. "They don't have to go to New York or L.A. for that. To get that feel here is unique."

Gemma opened his first Gary Patrick Salon at Koll Center, now Bernal Plaza, 22 years ago at the age of 24, after discovering Pleasanton when on the road north from Los Gatos. He knew the spot was ideal, he said, "when I found out the demographics about what was happening in Pleasanton at the time."

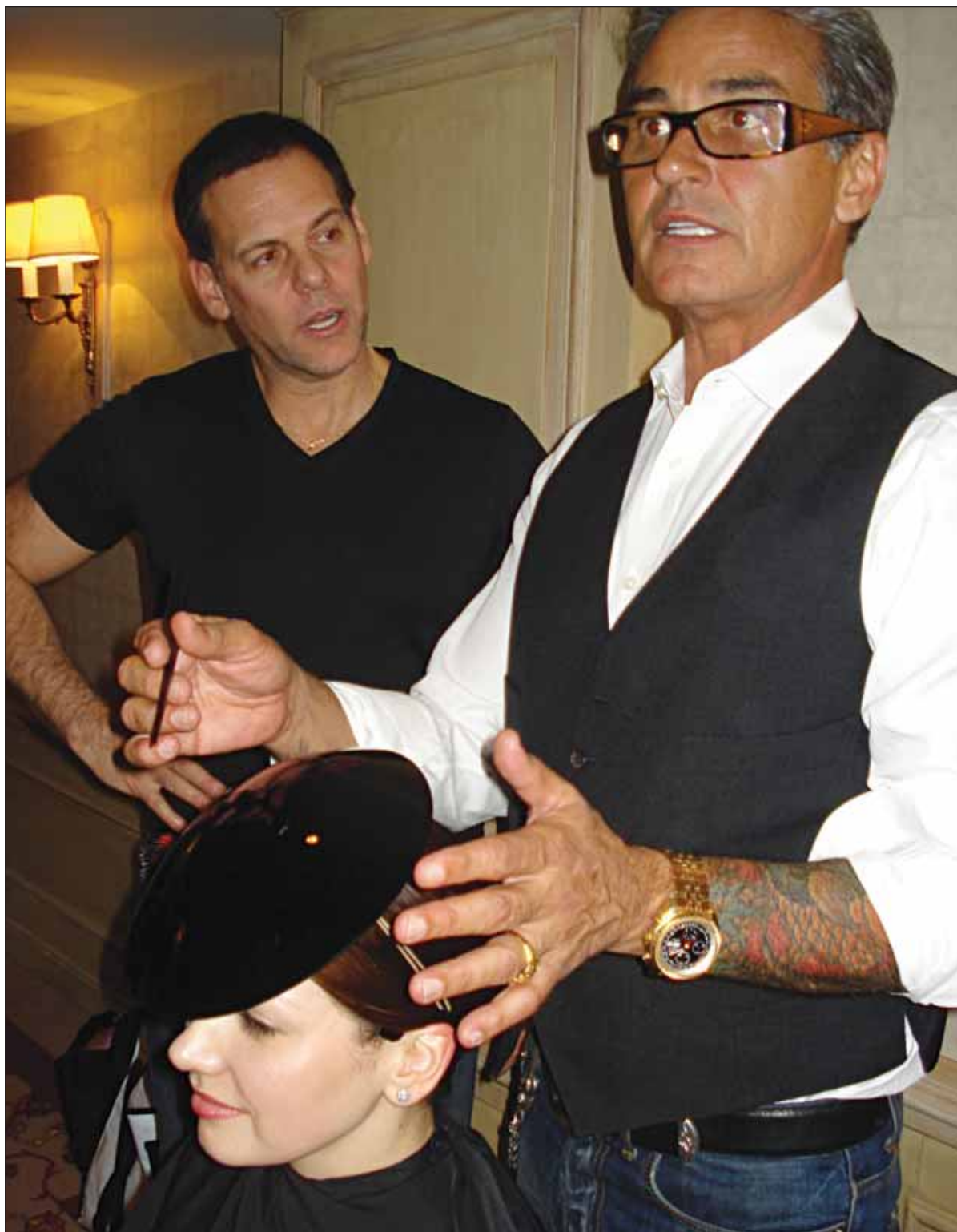
"Years ago I hired most of my stylists out of San Francisco," he recalled. "That was our original business model."

He moved his salon downtown 14 years ago when the second story was added to 350 Main, and last week it was named one of the top 200 salons in the country by Salon Today magazine.

Through the years, Gemma has stayed involved with the fashion world, working with celebrity hairstylist Oribe (pronounced OR-bay), whose hairstyles have graced the covers of magazines such as Vogue and Vanity Fair, and who has done hair for Jennifer Lopes, Penelope Cruz and other stars.

Giorgio Armani hired Oribe to style the hair for his Armani Prive Show at Fashion Week in Paris last month, and he asked Gemma to join the team.

"From my salon there were four of us, about 17 stylists altogether," Gemma said. "It's about four days. We fly in and take one day to recoup when we first get there. Then we work three days. We usually spend two days developing looks and practicing. It's a whirlwind."



COURTESY OF GARY GEMMA

Gary Gemma (left) of Gary Patrick Salon in Pleasanton watches as celebrity hair stylist Oribe does hair for Gary's wife Anna, while in Paris for Fashion Week. Four stylists went from the salon to work on models for the Armani Prive collection.

"Paris is such a romantic place," he added.

His wife Anna, who is in the fashion industry with Neiman Marcus, accompanied him, and they celebrated their one-year anniversary. She was able to attend the shows, which are invitation-only, for a select group of a couple hundred.

The shows go from 1-6 p.m., Gemma said, but individual designers are on the runway about 20 minutes, with 25 to 100 models.

"It's very organized and very hectic — it has to be organized," Gemma said. "You're working with everyone, not just one model. A lot of times you do a number of models, then go back over them, helping out. It's very much teamwork."

Fashion Weeks are held in Paris each January, in Milan in February, and in New York in March. In September, Fashion Weeks are held again in Milan and New York.

Paris is the scene for the couture lines, while Milan fashions are designed to be sold at department stores, explained Gemma. Prive is Armani's couture line,

"what you see at the Oscars and the Golden Globes."

"Paris is exciting, it really is glamour," Gemma said. "I ran into Sophia Loren — she looks great — and Jody Foster; she's a Giorgio Armani fan."

"They're there for fun. It's more flash. Milan is more business," he added. "There's always something going on. A lot of the time we're working, we have to be on call. We stay close to where the shows are, in the fashion district."

The Prive collection show featured shiny fabrics, Gemma said, that almost looked like liquid. Most of them were shown with models wearing hats, with their hair swept up or to the side.

The best part of Fashion Week, for Gemma, was working with Armani himself who kept an eye on everything as his Prive collection prepared to walk the runway.

"He's had such an influence on designing clothes, he's just basically somebody who's going to be a part of history," Gemma said. "He's a very gracious man. It was sort of an honor." ■

OF NOTE



JEB BING

Safeway gives \$25,000 for breast cancer programs

Kevin Lovell (left), Safeway district manager, and Rick Pickering, vice president of operations for Safeway Inc., present a mock-up of a check for \$25,000 to ValleyCare Health System for its breast cancer treatment and survival programs. Accepting the check, made during the groundbreaking ceremony for a new Safeway store in Pleasanton, are Shelly Despotakis (second from right), manager, Valley Care Foundation, and ValleyCare CEO Marcy Feit.

"This grant is a direct result of the funds that we raised in our stores during our October Breast Cancer Awareness Month," said Lovell. "Safeway is a good corporate citizen. Last year, we contributed \$300,000 to the schools, nonprofits and activities in Pleasanton. We also began a wonderful partnership with ValleyCare, and

today we are pleased to extend that relationship with a special grant of \$25,000 to their breast cancer survivorship wellness program and its caring support program."

Feit accepted the check, thanking Safeway "for this generous gift."

"There are three breast cancer components at ValleyCare that this money will support," she said. "One is the Navigator Support program. The moment someone is diagnosed with breast cancer, our navigator takes them by the hand and walks them through the whole process of treatment and survival. That is so important if you are a breast cancer patient because you are stuck with a terrible disease and a diagnosis and our navigator helps them and guides them."

Safeway's contribution also will provide financial support for ValleyCare's two other components: a support system for patients and a "healing touch" program for those affected by breast cancer.



Chubb golf tourney scores \$6,000 for REACH

Tanner Insurance Services representative Ron Hernbroth and Chubb Group representative Kurt Stemmler present a \$6,000 check to REACH representatives Norm Guest, Judy Butterly and Pat O'Brien. BB&T Tanner Insurance Services of California chose REACH for Special Adults of the Tri-Valley in Pleasanton to be the beneficiary of the award after its team competed in the championship tournament

of the Chubb Charity Challenge in Kiawah Island, S.C. REACH provides resources, education, activities, community participation and housing opportunities to adults with developmental challenges.

The team, consisting of Hernbroth, Deborah and James McKeenan of Signature Properties, and Pat O'Brien of Leisure Sports Inc., also took first place at the regional Chubb Charity Challenge tournament at Blackhawk Country Club and won \$500 each for the Amador Athletic Boosters Club, Pleasanton Cultural Arts and REACH.



RENE SIEGEL

Perfect (on the) pitch

The Amador Valley High School Freshmen Boys Soccer Team finished its season with a perfect 22-0-0 (EBAL 10-0-0) record, scoring a total of 102 goals (only 9 goals against), with 15 shutouts. The team's season of 22 straight wins is an AVHS record for freshmen boys soccer.

Team members are (front row, l-r) Michael Lamos, Andrew Kang, Brian Kinnee, Alejandro Martinez, Scott Simpson, Sam Musbach, Danny O'Lenic, Chris Ford, Justin Taylor, Kaave Bahadori, Alex Krause, (back) Coach Joe Giovacchini, Willie Stafford, Connor Tait-Mole, Kamron Crow, Collin Blaney, Thomas Lee, Spencer Petty, Wesley Rager, Sam Olson, Jared Siegel, Nathan Howald, Kevin Vigallon, Coach John Vieira. Not Pictured: Jackson Adams.



N.E.A.T Award



Neighborhood Environment Attractiveness Team

A Division of Mane Hair Studio, located at 220-A Division Street, is the Q4 recipient of the Pleasanton Downtown Association "NEAT" Award. This "Neighborhood Environment Attractiveness Team" award is given quarterly to the downtown business or property that has improved or is considered unique in design, architecture, or style. This hair studio has made a number of enhancements to beautify the property, creating a relaxing and inviting setting along Division Street.

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

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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.

Author Visits

HISTORIAN JAMES R. SMITH Livermore Library will host historian and author, James R. Smith, at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 22, at the Civic Center Branch library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore. He is the author of "San Francisco's Lost Landmarks." This event is free. Call 373-5500.

READ IT AND EAT Elena Shapiro, author of "13, Rue Therese," will be at Towne Center books, 555 Main St., for lunch Monday, Feb. 28. Cost \$15 for book only or \$30 for book and lunch. Reservations required. Call 846-8826 or visit www.townecenterbooks.com. Towne Center Books, 555 Main St.

Book Clubs

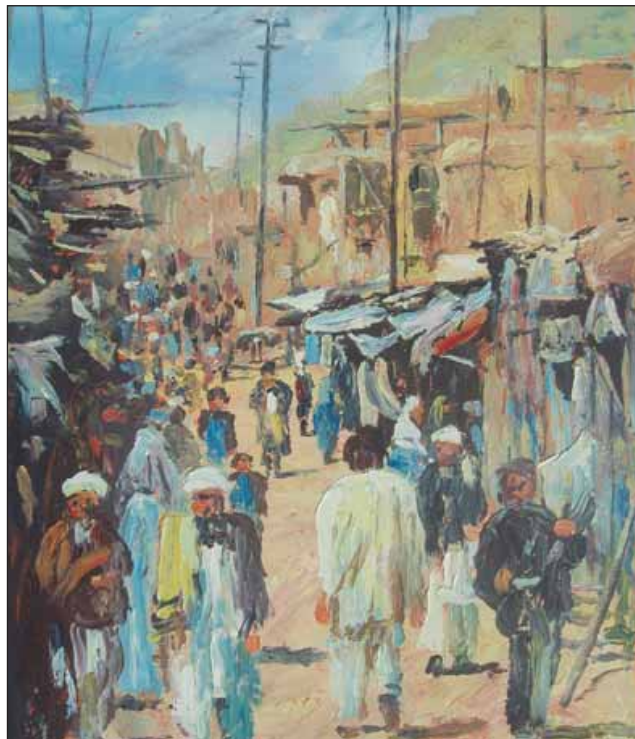
GREAT BOOKS OF PLEASANTON This club will meet at 7:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 28, at Towne Center Books, 555 Main St. February's selection is "The Unknown Masterpiece" by HonorÉ de Balzac. This club meets on the fourth Monday of every month. For information, call Sadie at 846-1658.

Classes

LAUGH WITH ANNA Laughter yoga is the easiest and gentlest form of aerobic exercise. It reduces stress and helps lower blood pressure. Laughter promotes deep breathing, filling your lungs with fresh oxygen. The class is from 2-3 p.m. Fridays from now through March 11 at the Dublin Senior Center, 7600 Amador Valley Blvd., Dublin. Wheelchairs welcome. Cost \$2. Instructor Anna Wakefield. Call 556-4511 or visit www.dublinseiorcenter.com.

PLANTING BY THE MOON See how various groups planted crops at night by the light of the moon at this class from 8:30-10 p.m., Saturday, March 19, at Alviso Adobe Community Park, 3465

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Afghan art show

The bazaar in Kabul is one subject of the Afghan art that will be on display at the Pleasanton Public Library on Sunday and again Feb. 23, highlighting the talent of artist Abdul Shokoor Khusrawy, who is newly arrived from Afghanistan.

Shokoor, known for his technique of using a pallet knife on oils to change the textures of his painting, said: "My immediate goal is to draw attention to the forgotten Afghan Art and history in order to bring the benefits and pleasure of art to more people, specially the children who might never otherwise experience the beauty of the Afghan art. Afghanistan became known as a 'War Zone.' My art is a reflection of the people of Afghanistan."

The free exhibit will be from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, and from 1-9 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 23. The library is located at 400 Old Bernal Ave. in Pleasanton. The artist will also be there for the exhibit.

Foothill Rd. Cost is \$9 for residents; \$12 for non-residents. Call 931-3483.

SIMPLY CHAIR YOGA Increase your flexibility, oxygen flow and body awareness with simple yoga poses suitable for all levels. The class is from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Saturdays, now through Feb. 26 at the Dublin Senior Center, 7600 Amador Valley Blvd., Dublin. Cost \$1.25. Register the Monday before class. Instructor Emily Bareiss. Call 556-4511 or visit www.DublinSeniorCenter.com.

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.

BOOST YOUR CAREER AT TOASTMASTERS Grow professionally at Chamber Chatters, a Toastmasters club that meets from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesdays at the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce, 777 Peters Ave. Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills. Visit www.chamberchatters.wordpress.com/.

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION DAR, Daughters of the American Revolution, Jose Maria Amador Chapter meets the first Saturday of the month. It is a social gathering and time to explore the history of our American roots. For meeting time and location, call Susan at 699-4147.

JUNIOR FARMERS The naturalist could use a helping hand so get your farm clothes on and pull up your boots cause you are gonna do some work. The group will meet

from 11 a.m.-noon every Saturday, March 5 through May 28 at Alviso Adobe Community Park, 3465 Foothill Rd. Learn what life was like on the farm as you help with the chores. Call 931-3483.

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

10TH ANNUAL POETRY PROSE & ARTS FESTIVAL Here's a chance to mingle with published authors, screen writers and poets, and learn from the best, beginning at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, March 26, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. There are workshops for all ages and \$1,200 in prizes for contests in poetry and prose. The festival is sponsored by the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council and the city of Pleasanton. Cost, depending on how many events are attended, ranges from \$15-\$185. Visit www.pleasantonarts.org.

AAUW HOSTS AS ANTE FOUNDATION Livermore-Pleasanton-Dublin Branch AAUW will host As ante Africa Foundation speakers, Erma Grass, Founder; and Dennis Lamia, Partner; at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 1, at Lynnewood Methodist Church, 4444 Black Ave. They will present a video of East African cultures and classroom experiences of children benefited by the As ante Foundation. This event is free and is open to the public. Call Dot at 455-8246.

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.

GIRLS NIGHT OUT NETWORKING (GNON) Pull out your beads, wear your mask, its Mardi Gras time at GNON at 5 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 24, at Zen Pilates and Fitness, 3059 Hopyard Road. GNON is an informal yet productive women's networking group. E-mail Frances Hewitt at fmhewitt@yahoo.com or visit www.facebook.com/gnontrivalley.

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 pro-

gram 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.

Exhibits

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.

Fundraisers

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.

ITALIAN CATHOLIC FEDERATION BINGO BASH The local branch of the Italian Catholic Federation is sponsoring its Bingo Bash fundraiser from 7-11 p.m., Friday, March 4, at St. Michael's Parish Hall, 372 Maple St., Livermore. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets for \$10 entitle you to 10 games of bingo with prizes, dancing to the music of DJ Joe Buonsante, and prize drawing. Refreshments available for purchase. Call 454-9565 or 846-0897.

PAR 4 KIDS' SAKE COMEDY NIGHT A third annual comedy night to benefit the fight against autism will be held at 7 p.m., Thursday,

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March 3, at Tommy T's, 5104 Hopyard Rd. Tommy T's will give 100% of the ticket sales to PAR 4 Kids' Sake. Tickets are \$20 or two for \$35, or a table of 10 for \$150. The show will start at 7 p.m. with the doors opening at 5:30 p.m. Call 461-0501 or visit www.par4kidsake.org.

Health

ART FOR THE HEART ValleyCare is sponsoring a free art therapy program for cancer patients and their loved ones. A local artist from Lilly Oncology will lead participants in an art lesson from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, March 5, at ValleyCare Health System, 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd., Suite 240. Supplies and lunch will be provided. Call to register, 734-3319.

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, 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

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SERIES GNON (Girls Night Out Networking) and Pleasanton Unified School District will host its Speaker Series Program from 7-9 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 22, at Pleasanton Middle School, 5001 Case Ave. This month's topic is Self Worth-Self Esteem For Women. Registration is required; visit www.pleasanton.k12.ca.us/adulted.

MAKING MONEY IN REAL ESTATE Investor, Author & Educator Dr. Dolf de Roos, will be lecturing from 6:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23 at Hyatt Place, 4950 Hacienda Dr., Dublin. Get an overview of the market, wealth building tips and Real Estate investment strategies for 2011. cost \$10. Call 272-4142 or visit www.23feb2011.eventbrite.com/.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS Las Positas College Student Health and Wellness Center will present "Sex Signals," award-winning sexual assault awareness and prevention program, at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 9, at the Barbara Fracisco Mertes Center for the Arts, Las Positas College, 3000 Campus Hill Dr., Livermore. The event is free and open to the public; parking is \$2. "Sex Signals" is a 90-minute touring performance that incorporates improvisational comedy, education and audience interaction to provide a provocative look at dating, sex and the core issue of consent, as well as bystander intervention strategies. Call 424-1830 or visit www.laspositascollege.edu/healthcenter.

TEMPLE GRANDIN TO SPEAK Temple Grandin, portrayed in an award winning HBO movie and regarded as the world's most accomplished and best-known adult with autism, will speak at 7 p.m., Monday, March 7, at Barbara Fracisco Mertes Center for the Arts at Las Positas College, 3000 Campus Hill Dr., Livermore. Tickets are \$5, available at the campus bookstore; parking is \$2. Call 424-1554 or visit www.laspositascollege.edu.

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.

JAZZ DUO TUCK & PATTI Guitarist Tuck Andress and vocalist Patti Cathcart met at an audition in 1980 and have been making "music magic" ever since. The duo's friendship and collaboration grew into marriage in 1981. Their recording career took off when Windham Hill Jazz signed them for "Tears of Joy." They will perform at 8 p.m., Saturday, March 5, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Tickets are \$25-\$35 for adults, \$12 for children and \$27 for seniors. Call 931-4848 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

THE TUBES The Tubes will be performing at 8 p.m., Friday, March 4, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Its debut album in 1975 included the hit single "White Punks on Dope," a tribute to rich fans in San Francisco. The Tubes most recent album, "Mondo Birthmark," was released in 2009 and contains previously unreleased rare photos and interviews of the group. Tickets are \$30-\$40. Call 931-4848 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

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.

Recreation

SPAIN TRIP INFORMATION MEETING Travel to breathtaking Costa del Sol, Spain with the Pleasanton Chamber Nov. 2-10, 2011 for only \$2,149 pp double occupancy. For more information and itinerary visit www.pleasanton.org. Informational meeting from 7-8 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 24 at the Chamber office, 777 Peters Ave. No RSVP required. Call 846-5858 ext 203 or visit www.pleasanton.org.

TAKE US ALONG



Aloha birthday: Greg, Julie, David and Nikki White stand on the lanai of their Kaanapali Shores resort suite with beautiful breezy views while in Maui to kick off 2010 with Julie's father, Richard Davis, who turned 71 while they were there Jan. 9.

PET OF THE WEEK

Cheerful little Sparky

Sparky, a pint-sized Chihuahua mix, has those big round eyes that just draw you in. His enthusiasm for life is contagious and he can't wait to get out and moving. He's perfecting his leash manners because he loves a good stroll. Sparky is a cheerful and uncomplicated little guy who would love to entertain you with his cute antics. If those big teddy bear eyes of his call to you, please let us know so he can start his life as soon as possible. To learn more about Sparky, visit www.tvr.org or better yet, come and meet him in person at East County Animal Shelter, 4595 Gleason Dr., Dublin, open daily, 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; call 803-7040.



TERRI DUNCAN

Seniors

SENSORY GARDEN TOUR The Sensory Garden is adjacent to the Senior Center and contains plants selected for fragrance, tactile and auditory features and or attractive to butterflies and humming birds. The garden consists of raised and ground level beds well designed for the enjoyment by all. Learn more on the tour from 10:30-11:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 8, at the Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Cost \$1.75 for residents and \$2.25 for non-residents. Call 931-5365 or visit www.pleasantonseniorcenter.org.

Sports

MORNING GROUP RIDE - CYCLING A group ride starts at 8:30 a.m. every Saturday 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. On Sundays mornings there is a group ride for everyone,

same time, same place, broken down into levels based on ability and distance. 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 support group to explore resources and generate problem-solving ideas from 1-3 p.m., on the second Monday of every month, and from 7-9 p.m. at 5353 Sunol Blvd. Get the support you deserve at the Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley. Call 931-5389.

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

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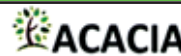
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Real Estate

OPEN HOME GUIDE AND REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

This may be best time to refinance or buy, Realtor says

Median prices also rising, making purchase decisions more timely

By JEB BING

Single-family homeowners here are faring much better than their counterparts in other Tri-Valley cities as the market continues to correct.

Todd Brebner, manager of the Pleasanton office of Mason-McDuffie Mortgage Corp., sees that evidence in the type of loans processed by his team. In contrast to many places where the vast majority of loans are federally guaranteed, about three-quarters of the loans originated from transactions involving Pleasanton properties are conventional.

It's also reflected in the relatively low percentage (one-quarter) of transactions involving short sales (where the home is worth less than the owner owes) and bank-owned foreclosed properties. This is based on data from the BayEast Realtors Association.

Looking ahead, Brebner expects mortgage rates to continue to edge up as the economy improves. That trend should be a call to action for people considering whether to buy now or wait to see if home prices continue to slip. BayEast statistics over the past three years show the median price falling to \$654,000 in 2009 from \$798,500 in 2008. For 2010, it climbed to nearly \$700,000.

"Particularly if a couple is looking to buy and stay in a home for a number of years, paying one-half or a full point of interest is going to be significantly costlier than wait-

ing and hoping a price may drop another \$20,000 or \$30,000," said Brebner.

For the refinance market, he encouraged homeowners with adjustable rates that will reset in the next one or two years to visit with a mortgage professional to determine what option would best serve their needs.

"It may be a no-cost refinance into a five-year fixed or even a 30-year fixed or another adjustable," said Brebner. "Each situation is different and homeowners should carefully consider what choice will serve them best. It's the largest investment most of us will ever make. They deserve to know what they are signing and to understand it."

The Pleasanton manager, a veteran of 24 years in the mortgage banking business, has worked for both large national lenders and for privately-held firms such as Mason-McDuffie Mortgage. The challenges of the lending market and the greatly stiffened documentation requirements remind Brebner of the situation when he entered the business in the 1980s. Lenders now are requiring thorough documentation and explanations for bank deposits that aren't directly tied to employment or other forms of income not reported on tax returns.

Mason-McDuffie Mortgage is headquartered in San Ramon and the Pleasanton office is at 4301 Hacienda Drive, suite 100. The brand dates to its founding in 1887 in Oakland. ■

Is 2011 The Year You Want to

- ✓ Refinance Into a Lower Rate or a Fixed Rate Mortgage?
- ✓ Stop Paying Your Landlord?
- ✓ Buy A Second Home?

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Sun/Mon 1-4 Natalie Kruger 847-7355

Danville

4 BEDROOMS
328 Fontaine Drive \$739,950
Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel Realtors 251-1111

Fremont

3 BEDROOMS
5815 Commerce \$615,000
Sat/Sun 11-5 Coldwell Banker 847-2200

Livermore

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

4 BEDROOMS
1714 Verdite Street \$660,000
Sun 1-3 Keller Williams 463-0436

273 Abalone Place \$789,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel Realtors 251-1111

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

Pleasanton

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

3 BEDROOMS

3803 Newton Place \$558,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 577-5787

4 BEDROOMS

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

3377 Sandstone Court \$1,449,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Better Homes Gardens 413-1208

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

2474 Tapestry Way \$699,000
Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel Realtors 251-1111

5 BEDROOMS

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

3104 Devereux Court \$1,349,000
Sun 9-12 Cindy Gee 963-1984

3116 Devereux Court \$1,349,000
Sun 1-4 Coldwell Banker 510-421-2836

6 BEDROOMS

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If you are thinking of selling or buying a home, call me for information on current market conditions and options available to you.

Delores Gragg



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CASTRO VALLEY
5167 CHESNEY GLEN DRIVE
A PREMIER DESIGN \$479,000
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4386 KRAUSE STREET
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3 BR 2.5 BA many upgrades! Dual pane windows, private backyard with patio and fountain 925.847.2200

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6975 JOHNSTON RD.
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4 BR 3 BA No other Home & Location compares! 20 "View Acres Tassajara Vly" w/Barn, Pond+

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OPEN AND BRIGHT! \$375,000
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5711 BELLEZA DR
BACKDROP FOR HARMONY \$359,000
2 BR 2 BA Cheerfully welcoming 2BR/2BA stucco Contempo. Tile roof. Anticipate the best! 925.847.2200

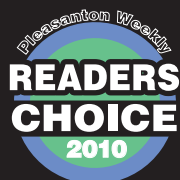
235 COPPER RIDGE RD
BEAUTIFULLY UPDATED \$310,000
2 BR 2 BA lovely moldings,hrdwd flrs,beautiful stained cement counters,this is a one of a kind find! 925.847.2200

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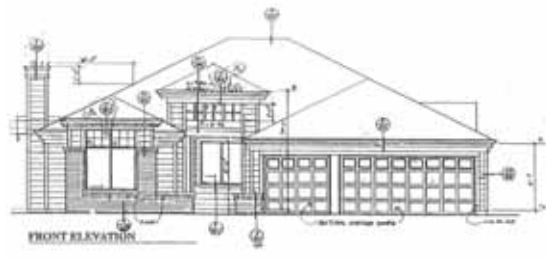


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 3 bed, 2.5 bath. Open Sun 1-4. **\$620,000**



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375 Summertree Drive, Livermore
 4 BR, 3 BA, 2239 sq. ft., 2 car garage. Lovely Signature home in desirable Murietta Meadows. Great floor plan with bedroom and full bath downstairs. Vaulted ceilings. Enjoy the abundance of natural light spilling into this home. **Offered at \$575,000**



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7717 Cottonwood Lane, Pleasanton
 This is a beautiful move-in condition, single level home in Highland Oaks! With tons of curb appeal on a large lot, it has 3 bedrooms and 2 baths, and is close to shopping and freeways. A must see!
Offered at \$615,000

5994 W. Las Positas, Suite 101, Pleasanton | 459 Main Street, Pleasanton | 2300 First Street, Suite 216, Livermore



1226 SHADY POND LN. PLEASANTON
LOCATED IN PHEASANT RIDGE



6 BD 6 BA 5,096sf. on a 15,712sf. lot. Amazing private backyard! Huge gourmet kitchen, hardwood throughout. Guest suite w/ full bath on main level.
\$1,649,000

3265 NORTHAMPTON CT. PLEASANTON
LOCATED IN PLEASANTON MEADOWS



5 BD 3 BA 2,441sf. on a 6,937sf. lot. Great location with side yard access. Bedroom and full bath on main level. Open floor plan.
\$690,000

FOREVER MOHR ESTATES



4 BD 2.5 BA single story. Pool/spa, side yard access and a detached casita with full bath AND a full wine cellar under the casita. Pool and spa and three car garage. Call for more information.

4082 NEVIS ST. PLEASANTON
LOCATED IN JENSEN/AMADOR NEIGHBORHOOD



3 BD 2 BA 1,460sf. on a HUGE 10,537sf. lot. Largest lot in the neighborhood! Refinished hardwood flooring throughout, dual pane windows. Living room, family room and dining room.
\$570,000

COMING SOON

PLEASANTON MEADOWS

4 BD 2 BA 1,701sf. single level home. Near greenbelt. Dual panel windows. Living room, family room and dining room. Mid \$600,000's

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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

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

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

DANVILLE RANCHER

SOLD REPRESENTED BUYER



752 TURRINI DRIVE, DANVILLE
Large beautifully updated ranch style home on over 1/3 acre premium lot in Danville! Three Bedrooms, Private Office (4th), Three Bathrooms. Gourmet Kitchen with granite slab countertops and stainless appliances. Large Master Suite and Bath, Professionally landscaped with Outdoor Kitchen, In-ground pool, Boat/RV parking, and Side Yard Access. SOLD FOR \$900,600

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

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

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



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LINDA TRAURIG BY APPT



PLEASANTON \$1,549,000
Premium oversized lot, resort like backyard, pool, spa, custom built-ins, private guest suite, and gourmet kitchen w/ large wine refrigerator. 838 Sunny Brook Way

BLAISE LOFLAND BY APPT



PLEASANTON \$1,479,000
Upgraded single level .60+/- acre premium lot. Ruby Hill gated community, gourmet kitchen w/ granite, 4bd/3ba, office (5th). Professional landscaping. 4355 Campinia Pl

DOUG BUENZ BY APPT



PLEASANTON \$1,450,000
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ANNI HAGFELDT BY APPT



PLEASANTON \$854,000
This 5bd/3ba home offers hardwood floors, granite countertops in kitchen, new carpet, close to sports park and award winning schools. 5023 Blackbird Way

MARK KOTCH BY APPT



LIVERMORE \$770,000
Beautiful Vinsanto South Livermore home. Probate sale. 4bd/3ba 2906+/-sf on 9450+/-sf lot. Upgraded home, stainless steel appliances. Built in 2002. 2767 Vernazza Dr

DOUG BUENZ SAT&SUN 1:00-4:00



LIVERMORE \$789,000
Upgraded South Livermore home on premium .22+/- acre cul-de-sac lot. Close to everything! 273 Abalone Pl

MARK LAFFERTY SUN 1:00-4:00



DANVILLE \$739,950
Features include 4 spacious bedrooms, 3 updated baths, granite counter tops, stainless steel appliances, hardwood flooring, new carpet. 328 Fontaine Dr

JULIA MURTAGH SUN 1:00-4:00



PLEASANTON \$699,000
Largest model in "Windsor" neighborhood! 4 bd/3ba, hardwood floors, upgraded kitchen, built in 1995. Fantastic location in south Pleasanton! 2474 Tapestry Wy

TIMOTHY MCGUIRE BY APPT



PLEASANTON \$620,000
3bd/2ba, 1,442+/-sf, 6,382+/-sf lot, oak hardwood floors, updated kitchen with built-in appliances, updated baths, newer AC and furnace. 4050 Silver Street

STEVE ELDRIDGE BY APPT



LIVERMORE \$430,000
Pristine sun-filled home in desirable location! Move-in condition. High ceilings, spacious granite kitchen w/island and breakfast nook. 6421 Almaden Wy



A View From The Top

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Alain Pinel Realtors began 20 years ago with vision of changing the way real estate business is conducted. Today, our financial strength, focus and experience enable us to lead the Bay Area real estate industry in home sales. And to plan on being here for a long time to come.

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