

Pleasanton Weekly

Homeless pets benefit from Holiday Fund » 17



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It's Santa time

Children share hopes, dreams and smiles with St. Nicholas

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AROUND PLEASANTON



By JEB BING

Patrolling the streets on Christmas Eve

If you're out walking the dog late tomorrow night and a police car passes by, wave a Merry Christmas to the officer patrolling our streets. Working the "graveyard" shift, as overnight duty is often called, can be a tough assignment in any profession. But usually those jobs don't require Christmas Eve and Christmas Day duty, except, of course, for those with the media, airlines, gas station attendants, and police.

Pleasanton police Sgt. Ted Young knows all about overnight assignments on Christmas Eve. With 27 years in law enforcement, he's worked the day shift, swing shift and, this weekend, graveyard. So as his 7-year-old Sara dreams of St. Nicholas coming her way, Young will be in place to actually see Santa sweeping into Pleasanton.

Police work 10-hour shifts so Young's will start at 9:30 p.m. tomorrow night, hitting the street by 10. He'll be off at 7:30 Christmas morning in time to join in the gift opening with his wife Maria and their other children: Trevor, 11; Clayton, 17, and Sierra, who is home from UC Santa Barbara. Maria also is a sergeant with the Pleasanton police force, using her maiden name Munayer so as not to confuse anyone. She has charge of the department's DARE program and also supervises the liaison officers at the city's high schools.

Young may be the only de-greed biologist on a police force in the area. With a bachelor's degree in biology from UC Davis and a master's from Cal State Hayward (now East Bay), he first served as a biologist with the California Fish & Game agency before joining the East Bay Regional Parks system in law enforcement. Although working outdoors most days and searching for poachers and illegal traps had its advantages, police work proved more exciting and productive.

His background also has given him a leg up when a frantic caller asks for help in killing deadly spiders and animals invading the home, which Young says usually turn out to be harmless. Once a caller said he had found a human



POLICE DEPARTMENT PHOTO
Police Sgt. Ted Young and his wife, Police Sgt. Maria Munayer, both with the Pleasanton Police Department

hand. Young quickly recognized it as a prank by someone who had found a dead bear's claw and skinned it into what had a hand-like appearance.

In addition to working every shift many times on the Pleasanton force, Young also has handled a variety of assignments, including five years as a narcotics officer. That often requires working the graveyard shift and many more, including missing a Super Bowl a few years ago to track down and make arrests in a big narcotics bust at the edge of town.

Still, even as a veteran with years of spotting and stopping criminal activity at all hours of the night, Young admits that working the Christmas Eve-Christmas Day shift can be mighty lonely. By 11 p.m. tomorrow, after the last of the candle-light church services and family gatherings are over, stillness comes over the city as in no other night. Usually the Seven-11 and Chevron gas station at Santa Rita Road and Valley Avenue are open, but little else. Even the "bad guys" go home for Christmas. By then, Young, too, will have had a Christmas Eve dinner with his family and said goodnight before heading down to the station.

Although he doubts there will be many dog walkers late on Christmas Eve, if he sees you he hopes to exchange Christmas greetings. That may be his most excitement on a long 10-hour shift tomorrow night. ■

About the Cover

Lucas McNamee, 5, his brother JJ, 3, are all smiles as they share their Christmas wish with Santa: that daddy, David McNamee, be home for Christmas from China where he's been on long business trips. Lucas is in kindergarten at Donlon Elementary; JJ attends Adventures in Learning Preschool. They spotted Santa while shopping with mom Heather at Stoneridge Shopping Center. See more Santa photos on page 15. Cover design by Lili Cao.

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Streetwise

ASKED AROUND TOWN

Do you send holiday cards?



Jen Cohn
Teacher

No, I don't. I feel like all the people I would send Christmas card to are Facebook friends, and they know what I've been doing all year already through pictures and posts.

Pia Murphy
Teacher

I do. We send cards with photos of the kids every year. I absolutely love getting pictures of my family and friends, and I display them during the season and then save them in a file.



Sylvia Desin
Realtor

I usually do. I started sending them once we had children, though we are debating whether or not to do it this year. If we do, they'll be New Year's cards. I like getting cards with photos, but I don't like the bragging letters that sometimes accompany holiday cards.

Katie Gordet
Blackhawk Network

I don't. I sent them once, but I think that my generation just isn't into sending holiday cards. Most of my friends don't do it anymore; I have a few family members that still send cards, but that's about it.



Rhonda Elliott
Professional organizer, Organized By Design

I do sometimes. It depends on how hectic the year is. I always write a personal message to each recipient, so it takes quite a while. I have noticed that we are getting fewer cards, so it seems like people aren't sending them like they used to.

—Compiled by Kerry Nally

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

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Newsfront

DIGEST

Celebrations airing Christmas Day

Tri-Valley Community TV will air the 2011 Holiday Parades and Tree Lightings from Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton and San Ramon on Christmas Day on Comcast TV Channel 30 as well as streaming them at www.trivalleytv.org.

The schedule is as follows:

- Pleasanton parade: noon-2 p.m.; 8:30-10:30 p.m.
- San Ramon tree lighting: 8-9:30 a.m.; 2-3:30 p.m.; 6-7:30 p.m.
- Livermore parade: 9:30-11 a.m.; 3:30-5 p.m.; 10:30 p.m.-midnight
- Dublin tree lighting: 11 a.m.-noon; 5-6 p.m.; 7:30-8:30 p.m.

BART plans New Year's Eve

BART is helping patrons ring in 2012 by staying open until 3 a.m., three hours later than normal, with trains running every hour based on a station's regular time.

Also, beginning at 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve, trains will stop at only Embarcadero or Montgomery Street station in downtown San Francisco, not both, to ease overcrowding at Embarcadero by better distributing people between the two stations. After the fireworks, BART will add more trains to enhance its normal 20-minute service to carry riders home.

Dublin/Pleasanton trains will stop at Embarcadero Station, and after the fireworks, riders will need to return to the Embarcadero Station to board a train bound for Dublin/Pleasanton.

What's on First Wednesday?

Since July 4 will land on the first Wednesday of the month in 2012, July's First Wednesday street party in downtown Pleasanton will take place the second Wednesday of that month, July 11, announced the Pleasanton Downtown Association, which sponsors the popular monthly evening events on Main Street from May through September.

"Our staff and board agreed that moving our First Wednesday to the second Wednesday in July was the best way to proceed," said Laura Olson, executive director of the association. "We didn't want to cancel an event that is so beloved by our community. We're trying to get the word out as early as possible so the residents are aware of this change."

Corrections

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

Making Christmas merry

Families enjoy Santa, camaraderie, pizza and toys

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

The warmth of caring and Christmas cheer filled the community room of the library Tuesday evening as dozens of people sat at festively decorated tables sharing a meal of pizza while children ran around with toys they'd just received from Santa.

It all started when Niosha Jamali and friends at her dance studio in Dublin began to gather gently used clothing for children. When they talked to firefighters about helping people in need, one suggested that they contact the families who live at the Fairgrounds near the stables where they work.

"My wife and I went to the Fairground stables to adopt three families but ended up adopting seven families," reported Jay Jamali, Niosha's husband. "The first family that we met was a blonde, blue-eyed mother of two whose wish list included a baseball glove for her 6-year-old boy and a skateboard for her 13-year-old son.

See **CHRISTMAS** on Page 6



Santa Claus welcomes children to a special celebration held Tuesday night to make sure everyone shares in the joy of the season. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Drug dogs may be headed to Pleasanton high schools

'The kids aren't going to know when it's happening,' say police

BY GLENN WOHLTMMANN

Teens, teachers and parents, leave your pot at home if you're headed to any of the city's three high schools after January. A measure is headed to the school board that would bring drug dogs to the schools on a regular basis.

A push by principals for the drug-sniffing canines will go before the school board on Jan. 10 and could be approved before the end of next month. If the plan gets the go-ahead, dogs would be brought onto the three campuses three to five times a semester.

"We would get together with the administration before the year or before the semester. It's

not going to be just random," police Officer Ryan Dawson told a group of Amador Valley High School parents at a recent meeting. "The dogs will not interact with the students."

The parking lots and gym lockers — the only places where kids can lock their belongings — would be searched by the canines, but students would be out of those areas when the dogs are brought in, Dawson said.

"It's just going to go through those two areas," he said. "Very often students keep stolen property or drugs in their cars or in their gym lockers."

Most of the 22 parents who attended the informational meeting on Dec. 15 agreed with the plan.

Kevin Johnson, the school district's senior director of pupil services, said the goal is to keep the campuses drug free.

"We want them to be a place for kids to come where they can feel safe," he said. He pointed to a recent forum on drug and alcohol use in schools, where one student said a rumor that drug dogs were coming was enough to keep drugs off the Amador campus for a time.

"The kids aren't going to know when it's happening," said Officer Craig Hobizal.

The searches aren't going to be limited to student parking. Teacher parking areas would be See **DOGS** on Page 8



JAY FLACHSBARTH

Christmas Grinch leads protest

Hotel and restaurant union workers and supporters march along Main Street in downtown Pleasanton on Saturday to protest a lockout nearly two years ago of 60 union employees from Castlewood Country Club over a contract dispute that centered on who must pay for health care benefits. The group sang Christmas carols and heard Bible readings as participants walked along Main Street and through Farmers Market to seek public support for their battle against the club.

Festival forced to flee Fairgrounds

Residents resist rave

An event that had some residents worried about potential problems was booted from the Alameda County Fairgrounds after an investigation by Pleasanton police.

Countdown 2012, which some locals said was a rave, will now be held at in Tulare County instead of the fairgrounds here.

"The promoter applied to have an event at the Fairgrounds and typically, as we always do, we worked with the Fairgrounds to provide security at the event. In working up background and intelligence, preparing for the event, what we learned was inconsistent with what the promoter told the fairground," said Pleasanton police Chief Dave Spiller. "I strongly encouraged the fairgrounds not to hold the event."

Spiller said the promoter's initial application called Countdown 2012 a family friendly event.

"They said it was going to be a holiday family-oriented music festival. There's no indication there was any family involvement at all. The marketing is consistent with raves," he said. "I didn't think it was in the best inter-

See **RAVE** on Page 6

CHRISTMAS

Continued from Page 5

"When my wife Niosha asked her what she wanted for Christmas she firmly replied she had everything she needed and her only need was for her children."

The dance friends continued to gather clothes, toys, books, CDs and gift cards, then decided to hold a party for the families, too. Jay

donned a Santa suit to visit with the children and give them toys. Tables in the back of the room displayed stacks of clothing for the parents to choose what their family needed.

The week before the event, the Jamalis' Pleasanton home was filled with piles of donations collected by the women.

"We were able to give out \$2,000 in gift cards," Niosha said as she tended to guests at the party.

A single mom from Livermore was also a guest, along with her sons. The group had heard about her and invited the three to share in the fun and the gifts.

She shared her tale of financial woe, saying she hopes it will be temporary but meanwhile how wonderful that these folks had stepped up to give others a Christmas.

"What would the world do without people like that?" she asked. ■

RAVE

Continued from Page 5

est of the community."

Spiller added that it's not the Police Department's job "to be the morals police," but "to ensure the safety of the community for both the participants and the non participating community."

The event, billed as Northern California's largest New Year's Eve "massive music festival" will now be held at the Tulare County Fairgrounds in the Central Valley, about three hours away.

A statement on the event promoter's website makes no mention of being ousted by police, but said the organizers were unable to secure enough law enforcement to staff the event.

"Countdown 2012 has been forced to move locations due to local law enforcement's inability to staff the event and as a result, the Alameda County Fairgrounds management has decided to pull out. We have exhausted all options to make this event possible at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, including contacting other law

enforcement agencies. However none of the local agencies can commit due to time restraints," the statement reads.

"We have secured and confirmed the closest available location. Countdown 2012 will now take place at the Tulare County Fairgrounds. We understand that this creates a commute for many attendees so we have secured multiple tour buses to shuttle to and from the event for free, for those ticket holders that don't want to drive."

—Glenn Wohltmann

Dominos delivers — cash to holdup man

Second restaurant robbed at gunpoint this month

BY GLENN WOHLTMMAN

Pleasanton police are investigating the second armed robbery at restaurants this month, although descriptions indicate two separate suspects.

The latest came Sunday night at Domino's Pizza on Santa Rita Road, not far from the Gold Chopsticks restaurant, which was held up Dec. 3.

A lone suspect entered Domino's in the 3100 block of Santa Rita Road at around 6:25 p.m., displayed a handgun, and demanded cash, according to a police report.

"He had a gun, a short gun — a small pistol, like a revolver," said Baldev Singh, the Domino's manager on duty during the holdup. "He came inside the door and said, 'Give me the money, give me the money.'"

Singh said the man was wearing a black mask and gloves, so it was impossible to tell much about him. Police describe the man as an Asian or Hispanic man in his early 20s, 5 feet 5 inches tall and weighing about 120 pounds. He was last seen running toward the rear of

the business with an undisclosed amount of money.

Singh said he thinks the man was young, "maybe 18, 19, maybe less."

"He was scared, too," Singh said, adding that one of the five employees in the store walked into a cooler and called 911 and that another quit the next day.

At the time of the holdup, the man was wearing a black jacket and black running pants, the police report said.

Police set up a perimeter around the area and brought in a K-9 unit, but the suspect was not located.

The suspect in the Gold Chopsticks holdup was described as a thin black male, 18 to 25 years old. That suspect bypassed the register and took cash directly from the owner's wallet before aiming a gun at the owner's wife and fleeing the restaurant on foot.

Anyone with information about either robbery is asked to contact the Pleasanton Police Department at 931-5100. ■

TAKE US ALONG



Waiting for Rafa: Pleasanton residents Renee Mahdavi (left) and Susan Weiglein enjoy their Weekly at the BNP Paribas Tennis Open in Indian Wells in March, just before No. 1 ranked Rafael Nadal takes the court.

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DOGS

Continued from Page 5

part of the canine search as well. "Our campus has to be drug free, and that includes the adults," Johnson said.

Amador was the last of the district's three high schools to have an informational meeting with parents. That came the day after a major drug bust on school grounds, when three males, one 16 and two 17, were arrested on charges of possession of drugs for sale.

Lt. Jeff Bretzing said Hobizal received information about a student selling drugs.

"He investigated and contacted the student and ended up arresting three separate students, all for drug possession for sale charges on campus," Bretzing said. "They were arrested while on campus."

The drugs included 50 doses of LSD, 1.6 grams of ecstasy, five ounces of mushrooms and just under an ounce of marijuana, Bretzing said. In addition, he said one of the three had a folding knife in his pocket.

"Two were released to their parents, one was booked at Juvenile Hall," Bretzing said.

"Three arrests on campus on the same day is not normal," he added. "We are working hard to try to create a drug-free campus, which is one reason we have a school resource officer. We know there are drugs on campus and we are working with school administrators."

"An anonymous tip led to the arrest," Principal Jim Hansen said. "This particular person set up an anonymous email account."

In addition, a teacher from Foothill High School was arrested Oct. 26 on drug charges (see story at right).

The dogs will be able to smell 18 illegal substances, including cocaine, marijuana and opiates, including Oxycontin and heroin.

While most of those at the Amador meeting seemed in favor of the idea, one, the husband of school board member Jamie Hintzke brought up concerns, although Hintzke said she didn't necessarily agree.

"I just see this thing as fraught with potential problems," said Jeff Hintzke. "I envision kids with enemies hiding pot in a gym locker or a car. Maybe it's my joint that I was smoking in the car last night and my kid drove the car to school that day."

He also worried that others would know if a student's car was searched, potentially damaging his or her reputation.

Getting caught with drugs isn't the end of a student's high school career. A single possession bust would land her or him a five-day suspension, which would drop to three days if that student agrees to enter a drug diversion program. A second arrest would be a five-day suspension, with the recommendation for expulsion, as would an arrest for a large quantity or if a weapon were found as well. ■

Laursen elected PUSD president in 3-2 vote

Vote was 'pretty uncomfortable,' Laursen says as Hintzke loses out

BY GLENN WOHLTMANN

In a 3-2 vote, Joan Laursen was elected president of the Pleasanton school board last week.

She had the support of fellow board members Chris Grant and Jeff Bowser, with trustee Valerie Arkin voting for Jamie Hintzke, who also voted for herself.

Arkin, who has been the board's president for the last 12 months, nominated Hintzke to succeed her.

Bowser was elected clerk of the board, a position that normally leads to being chosen president the following year. Hintzke has been clerk for the last year with her term ending at the board's annual reorganization meeting Tuesday.

"It was pretty uncomfortable, but we got through," Laursen said.

Bowser said his reason for backing Laursen was to avoid having Hintzke serve as president while she runs for another term on the board in next November's municipal and school board elections if she chooses to seek to run again.

There are no term limits for those serving on the school board.

Hintzke has not held the presidency since she was elected be-

cause Grant opted to serve two consecutive terms as president, which he was eligible to do. He was reelected president for two terms, also in a 3-2 vote by board members.

"I'm really unhappy that I did not get the chance to be board president during my four-year term," Hintzke said.

Laursen said she had a lot of people encourage her to be named president for the coming year.

"We really have a lot of critical work to do this year," she said. "The board president has the chance to set the tone for the year. That's something I really think I can do." ■



Joan Laursen

Foothill teacher was busted in drug sale stakeout

Two women caught smoking narcotics in car

The Foothill High School teacher arrested on drug charges in October was caught smoking oxymorphone, a narcotic, in her car, court records show.

Stephanie Deffner, 32, was arrested at about 3:40 p.m. Oct. 26 — not long after school let out — during a police stakeout of the Springtown Motel in Livermore. The stakeout was for

another woman allegedly selling drugs out of a motel room; that woman joined Deffner in Deffner's car where the two were observed heating aluminum foil to smoke the drug, according to court records.

In a search, Deffner was found to be in possession of oxymorphone and a single methadone pill.

Deffner remains free on bond pending a court appearance Jan. 5. The prosecutor in the case noted that she is eligible for a drug diversion sentence, which could expunge her record.

It has been reported that the Pleasanton school board dismissed Deffner at its last meeting, Dec. 13.

—Glenn Wohltmann

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- December 21 Blue Christmas, 7 p.m.
December 24 Holy Eucharist with Children's Christmas pageant, 5 p.m.
Instrumental Prelude – the Amador HS Brass Quintet, Flute & Organ, 8:30 p.m.
Choral Eucharist with Brass Quintet and Timpani, 9 p.m.
December 25 Choral Eucharist, 11 a.m.
January 1 Christmas Lessons and Carols with Holy Eucharist single service at 10:15

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Christmas Eve Service 2011

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Quiet Christmas, Dec. 22, 7:30 pm

A "Quiet Christmas" is for those who want to listen, pray, and hear God's words of comfort. Allow the beauty of the season, with recorder, piano, and candlelight, to heal your wounds and fill your soul.

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24

Family Service: 5:00 pm
Candlelight Services: 7:30, 9:00, 11:30 pm

Christmas Day

Carol Singing: 10:30 am

Lynnwood
United Methodist Church
4444 Black Ave., Pleasanton

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Thoratec names healthcare veteran to its board

William A. Hawkins will raise board's total to 9 directors

William A. Hawkins, who has worked in the healthcare industry for that last 30 years, has been chosen to serve on the board of directors of Thoratec Corp., a Pleasanton-based medical device company.

Thoratec is a leader in device-based mechanical circulatory support therapies to save, support and restore failing hearts.

"Bill brings tremendous skills, leadership and experience to the Thoratec team, and we are delighted to add him to our board of directors," said Neil F. Dimick, chairman of Thoratec's board of directors.

Gary F. Burbach, the company's president and CEO, added: "Bill has been a leader in the healthcare industry for over three decades. We are confident that his industry knowledge, strategic insight and depth of experience, spanning from technology innovation to market development to broader healthcare policy, will be of great value to Thoratec."

Hawkins currently serves as president and chief executive officer of Immucor, Inc. and as a senior advisor to TPG Capital. Previously, he held a number of senior executive positions at Medtronic, Inc., including the role of chair-



JEB BING

Thoratec Corp. headquarters is at 6035 Stoneridge Drive. The company is a leader in the development of advanced therapy options for treatment of heart failure applications.

man and chief executive officer. Earlier, he was the CEO of Novoste Corporation and held leadership positions at American Home Products, Eli Lilly, Johnson & Johnson and Guidant. Additionally, he has served on a number of corporate and nonprofit boards of directors.

"I am excited to join the Thoratec board," Hawkins said. "Thoratec has a rich history of innovation and leadership in the mechanical

circulatory support industry, and I look forward to participating in the company's mission of driving greater adoption of its therapies in order to deliver meaningful benefits to patients worldwide."

Hawkins' appointment will be effective as of Jan. 1, bringing the number of the company's directors to nine. For more information, visit the company's web site at www.thoratec.com. ■

Analyst says recovery hinges on small businesses

Too many modern day entrepreneurs fearful of what future may hold

Small businesses are considered the backbone of the American economy and with national leaders saying the economic revival begins with small firms, a well-executed business strategy has never been more important.

This according to Richard B. Sanford, an entrepreneur and business coach who has launched 11 successful smaller companies himself.

In past recessions, independent smaller businesses helped fuel economic recoveries, Sanford said. But tightened credit, government regulatory impediments and a lack of federal support for community banks — the principal source of capital and financial support for small business — has many modern day entrepreneurs fearful of what the future may hold.

Proper planning and a well-executed business strategy, though, can clear the way for a smaller enterprise to expand and take reasonable risks that will lead to an improved bottom line, and which usually requires an increase in its work force, Sanford said.

Most people are not aware that the American small business suc-

cess rate of 20% is, and has been, unchanged, decade after decade, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. The challenge facing American entrepreneurs is to increase this success rate.

Sanford, also author of a strategy guide for smaller businesses called Success By Design, believes that the heart and soul of any small business is its strategic plan, and a formal strategic plan increases an entrepreneur's odds for success.

"The plan is the framework and foundation that outlines how to think, how to plan and how to take action to succeed," Sanford said. "The American small business sector creates more than 70% of all new jobs annually. Small business is the job-creating engine that expands employment and creates the majority of all new jobs in our country."

Sanford believes that every small business failure is a direct result of insufficient planning, but it doesn't have to be that way. His strategy tips for small businesses and entrepreneurs include:

■ You must have a strategy. An entrepreneur's dreams for a successful business venture require strategic

planning to turn them into reality. If you don't have a strategic plan, create one before you make another mission-critical decision.

■ You become what you think about all day long. If you can visualize success, chances are you'll achieve it. If all you do is fret about failure, it can become the self-fulfilling prophecy. Think success and encourage your team to do the same.

■ There may be situations out of the control of the owner, but customer service isn't one of them. Every business controls how they serve their customers. The ones who can't get a handle on that simple fact will fail, plain and simple.

"The irony of small business is that, as a business sector, it should be considered 'too big to fail,'" Sanford added. "The problem is that small business does not have the luxury of a government bailout. It needs to heal itself from the inside, using only available resources and the wits in their leaders' heads. With all things being equal in the marketplace, no matter the economic conditions, strategic planning makes the difference between success and failure every time." ■

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Opinion

EDITORIAL

THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Celebrating their service in Iraq, Afghanistan

Thousands of troops are heading home from Iraq and many serving in Afghanistan are being furloughed in time to celebrate the holidays with their families. We join with the community organizations that have the welcome mats out and homecoming celebrations taking place throughout Pleasanton, the Tri-Valley and the East Bay.

For some of those back for Christmas, there will be continued service ahead and future deployments. Even with the long and unpopular war in Iraq now over, troop buildups are continuing in Afghanistan, with draw downs not expected there for another two years.

Operation Welcome Home, as the local celebrations are called, has been under way since the first soldiers started coming home last week. Wednesday night, the group welcomed home Lance Cpt. Tyler Heathorn when he returned from Afghanistan to his parents' home in Danville. He graduated from Del Amigo High School in June 2009 and left for Marine Corps boot camp 10 months later. After mine sweeping and bomb demolition training, he was deployed to Afghanistan last May 5.

Celebrations have been held for Army Sgt. Jeremie Wickman, who's home in Martinez after serving in Iraq in 2003 and most recently in Afghanistan. Last Saturday, a crowd turned out at Veterans Memorial Building in Brentwood to welcome home Army Pfc. Sullivan Martin of Oakley, who is back for a short break from service in Afghanistan.

On Monday, there was another homecoming party for Staff Sgt. Roger Estrada at the National Guard Armory in Walnut Creek. Estrada, 31, joined the Marines after graduating from Galileo High School in San Francisco and has had three deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. He took time off from the military to work for the Contra Costa Sheriff's department and later the Pittsburg Police Department, joining the Army National Guard and being deployed again.

At 6 p.m. tonight, Operation Welcome Home will salute Marine Lance Cpl. Michael Arbour of Concord for his service in Iraq. A 2007 Clayton Valley High School graduate, he patrolled the Iraq-Syrian border for seven months. He returns with special commendations for Water Survival training and service in the War on Terror, Iraqi campaign, National Defense and the Global War on Terrorism.

Next Wednesday, the Pleasanton Military Families Support Group and Operation Welcome Home will join in a homecoming celebration for Army 1st Lt. Thomas Murphy, who's also back from Afghanistan. Thomas graduated from Foothill High School in 2004, then went on to earn his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering in 2008 at UC Berkeley, where he also earned his officer's bars through the school's R.O.T.C. program. Joining the California National Guard, he was deployed to Afghanistan where he served as commanding officer for the 649th Engineer Company.

His mother Jenny Murphy manages the Merry Maids' Pleasanton office in the Raley's/Oak Hill shopping center and is inviting all of us to the welcome home party at the family home at 498 Los Rios Court. Lt. Murphy is due to arrive shortly after 6:15 p.m. These reunions are, as you'd expect, tearful and joyous. By turning out to thank Lt. Murphy, we'll also be showing our appreciation for the more than 200 men and women from Pleasanton who have served in Iraq, and now a growing number who are being sent to Afghanistan. Their names continue to show on the banners posted on Main Street in their honor. ■

What's your opinion?

Write a Letter to the Editor at Editor@PleasantonWeekly.com or put your opinion on Town Square at www.PleasantonWeekly.com. Letters must be 250 words or less.

LETTERS

Caring people

Dear Editor,
I don't live in your town but I visit it fairly often. I was there on Nov. 6 to meet a friend for lunch and shopping when I tripped on a curb and fell, cutting my face. A lovely couple witnessed this and went out of their way to help me. They were so kind, as was the waitress at Strizzi's who made me

an icepack. It is my favorite place for meals in your town.

After a trip to ValleyCare ER and having the good fortune to be stitched up by Dr. Steven Williams, an excellent plastic surgeon, I am healing very well. I just wanted to say thank you to all of these caring people. I am very fond of your town, now more than ever.

Carol Procter, Moraga



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POLICE BULLETIN

Two suspects injured in I-580 crash after chase from Stoneridge mall

Two auto burglary suspects sustained minor injuries after a car chase that led from the Stoneridge Shopping Center onto I-580 Monday afternoon. Speeds hit 100 mph before the suspects' car crashed into the concrete center median near Castro Valley.

Rafael Gamez, 22, of Oakland and Jose Ramos, 22, of Hayward were injured when the car Gamez was driving flipped and came to rest on its roof, ending the chase. The two were taken to Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley with non-life-threatening injuries, according to a police report.

The incident began at about 1:50 p.m. when police

looking into an auto burglary at the mall parking lot heard from a witness who described a vehicle and two occupants possibly involved. Within 10 minutes, a second officer located the vehicle, a 1987 light green Buick LeSabre, occupied by two Hispanic males, in the west mall parking lot.

The officer tried to stop the vehicle and ordered the driver to turn off his ignition. The driver refused and fled the mall onto northbound Foothill Road; the officer gave chase and was joined by a second officer as the men headed westbound on I-580.

Gamez was booked for possession of burglary tools and evading a police officer, as well as a felony warrant for possession of stolen property and vehicle theft. Ramos was charged with possession of burglary tools. The Police Department is working to identify property in the suspects' vehicle that may have been stolen in previous burglaries, as well as investigating their involvement in Monday's auto burglary.

POLICE REPORT

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

Dec. 14

Theft

- 11:23 a.m. in the 6600 block of Owens Drive; grand theft
- 7:41 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- 8:27 p.m. in the 600 block of Del Sol Avenue; petty theft

Assault with a deadly weapon

- 10:55 p.m. at the intersection of Hopyard Road and Inglewood Drive

Burglary

- 9:58 p.m. in the 4600 block of Chabot Drive

Auto burglary

- 6:46 a.m. in the 4400 block of Sutter Gate Avenue
- 8:09 a.m. in the 2400 block of Skylark Way

Auto break-in

- 7 a.m. in the 4100 block of Morganfield Court

Drug/alcohol violations

- 1:53 a.m. in the 6400 block of Owens Drive; public drunkenness
- 6:02 a.m. in the 4300 block of Hacienda Drive; marijuana possession

Dec. 15

Theft

- 9:52 a.m. in the 5000 block of Hopyard Road; petty theft
- 11:57 a.m. in the 2700 block of Laramie Gate Circle; petty theft
- 2:52 p.m. in the 1000 block of Harvest Circle; grand theft
- 3:09 p.m. in the 6700 block of Bernal Avenue; petty theft
- 4:57 p.m. in the 7500 block of Stonedale Drive; identity theft

Burglary

- 4:49 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Dr; burglary, auto burglary

Auto burglary

- 8:09 p.m. in the 300 block of Main St

Vandalism

- 1:08 a.m. in the 400 block of Division Street
- 1:03 p.m. in the 900 block of

Sycamore Road

- 1:05 p.m. in the 300 block of Happy Valley Road
- 1:39 p.m. in the 4400 block of Willow Road

Dec. 16

Theft

- 8:42 a.m. in the 1300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- 9:48 a.m. at the Pleasanton BART station; petty theft
- 9:55 a.m. in the 5900 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- 4:17 p.m. in the 4700 block of Hopyard Road; forgery
- 8:07 p.m. in the 200 block of Kottinger Road; identity theft

Bomb threat

- 8:26 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive

Vandalism

- 10:15 a.m. in the 700 block of Bonita Avenue

Drug/alcohol violations

- 12:47 a.m. at the intersection of Foothill Road and Bernal Avenue; DUI
- 1:46 a.m. at the intersection of Sutter Gate Avenue and Santa Rita Road; public drunkenness
- 2:46 p.m. in the 5600 block of Owens Drive; marijuana possession
- 11:33 p.m. at the intersection of Hopyard Road and W. Las Positas Boulevard; DUI
- 11:49 p.m. at the intersection of First Street and Spring Street; DUI

Dec. 17

Theft

- 11:31 a.m. in the first block of Tehan Canyon Road; petty theft
- 4:28 p.m. in the 5500 block of Springdale Avenue; auto theft

Vandalism

- 5:05 p.m. in the 1000 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

Public drunkenness

- 9:49 p.m. in the 100 block of Neal St

Dec. 18

Robbery

- 6:21 p.m. in the 3100 block of Santa Rita Road

Alcohol violations

- 12:30 a.m. in the 200 block of

Kottinger Dr; underage drinking on private property, public drunkenness, battery

Dec. 19

Theft

- 4:05 p.m. in the 1000 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; theft
- 7:45 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft

Burglary

- 4:05 p.m. in the 3400 block of Boulder Street

Weapons possession

- 8:26 p.m. in the 3800 block of Vineyard Avenue

Drug/alcohol violations

- 3:28 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Dr; public intoxication, drugs
- 10:55 p.m. at the intersection of Hopyard Road and Valley Trails Drive; public drunkenness

The winter months are typically a challenging time for blood collection due to busy holiday schedules and inclement weather.

But the need for blood is constant.

The American Red Cross invites you to visit its Pleasanton Blood Donation Center. In addition to collecting whole blood, the center has recently expanded to collect double red cells and platelets—making it a convenient destination for local blood donors of all types.

Every two seconds, someone needs blood. You can do your part to help save a life by donating blood at your local Red Cross. Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org.



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BIRTHS

Kane Douglas Marshall

Kane Douglas Marshall was born Nov. 25, weighing 6 pounds 3 ounces, to parents David and Arica Marshall of Pismo Beach and grandparents Doug and Raeia Marshall of Pleasanton.



Some favorite h

Memories show this is o

Compiled by



Barrie Shaffer

Account executive

Though I was raised in a Jewish home, my parents wanted us to experience Santa. We had a Hanukkah bush instead of a Christmas tree, and he'd leave presents next to it. Now that I am in an interfaith marriage, we celebrate both Christmas and Hanukkah and have many traditions that I cherish. We use my mother's latke plate every year, and during Hanukkah, the kids select their nightly present by reaching into a big bag that holds all eight nights of gifts. I also give my children ornaments that represent their hobbies at the time, and my husband, who is a police officer, gets a police ornament every year.



Merv Cornelsen

Retired

In general, Christmas is a special time of year. It seems like everyone is on their best behavior, and it's just wonderful to come together. We forget about our grievances and simply enjoy each other. Now that I have nine grandchildren and a great-grandson, I've discovered that one of the benefits of getting old is that some things just get better. As a friend used to say, as long as you are on the right side of the grass, everything is pretty good. I am a woodcarver with the Tri-Valley Carvers, and last year my carved Santas were on display at the Firehouse Arts Center, so that was really neat.



Vitali Potapov

Retired engineer/crossing guard

I grew up in Russia, and we didn't have the religious freedom to go to church or celebrate Christmas. I knew about Christmas, of course, but we weren't allowed to observe the holiday on Dec. 25. Instead, we would have a big celebration for the New Year, with a tree, gifts and all of the things that are traditionally done on Christmas.



Jenny O'Neill

Student

My grandparents used to live in a big, old-fashioned house that was decorated beautifully with a huge tree. My brothers and sisters and I would wake up really early, walk down the stairs, and get our stockings first. We'd take them up to our rooms and play with the little toys and eat the candy until 7, and then we would go back downstairs to open the rest of the gifts with my whole family and eat cinnamon rolls. It was magical.



Cragen Retherford

Future police officer

I have so many wonderful holiday memories like cutting down a Christmas tree and then decorating it as a family, now that I'm married with a son, I get to follow my wife's family's traditions as well. One of my favorite things that they do on Christmas Eve is to read the story of Jesus' birth and then do a living Nativity of sorts. All of the grandchildren have a part. Last year my son was baby Jesus. Since then there are two new babies in the family, now, he'll probably be a sheep or something this year.

oliday memories

a special time of year

by Kerry Nally



Audrey Juarez

Age 5

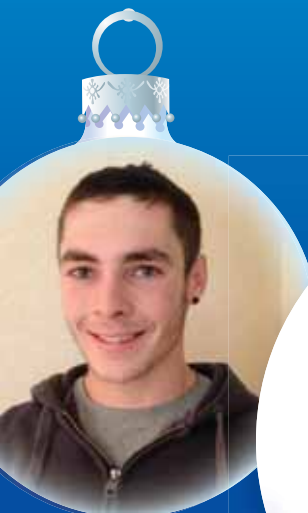
We like to celebrate. We go to houses and look at the lights. Santa brought me a camera last year and it's my favorite. I want a Barbie RV this year. When we're waiting for Santa we have a special plate and it says, "Cookies for Santa," and we're going to leave chocolate cookies and carrots for the reindeer.



Neil Sweeney

Retired school administrator

I remember when I was 10 years old in 1936, and my biggest wish was to get a bicycle. I knew my parents weren't able to do that, but my big brother, Tim, surprised me with a bike under our Christmas tree. He was 10 years older and was working as a newspaper deliveryman, and saved his earnings to make my wish come true. It was wonderful. I rode that bike all over San Francisco where I grew up, including taking it on a trip across the Golden Gate Bridge.



Shane Wanlass

Pizza maker/dad's assistant

During the holidays, my whole family goes to Apple Hill to cut down our Christmas tree. After we find the perfect tree, we always eat lunch in the same little restaurant nearby. I love piling in the car, listening to Christmas music and spending time together. It's always a really special day.



Keville Parker

Retired

At the end of the World War II, metal was very scarce, and I wanted a bicycle so very badly. I did get one; it was a blue-and-white used bicycle, but it didn't matter in the least. Its name was Lightning, and I had it from the time I was 7 years old until I graduated from high school. When I left home, I left the bike behind, but Lightning was my buddy.



Jennifer Amiel

Museum educator

As a child, we would have a big Hanukkah party, and my mother invited every friend in the book whether they celebrated Hanukkah or not. Potato latkes were always on the menu, and we would set up griddles outside and all of the girls would take turns cooking them. Now that I have children, I've discovered one of the benefits of eight nights of gifts is that it takes the pressure off. If they open a gift and say they were hoping for something else, I can run out and get that gift for the next night. And we discovered last Hanukkah that my husband is an excellent sufganiyot baker; I'm hoping he will make them again this year.



AMERICAN

Eddie Papa's American Hangout

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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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Entree
• Roasted Beef and Goat Cheese Agnolotti with a Cream Sauce (v) •
• Beef Rolls Stuffed with Pesto and served with Red Wine Sauce and Pappardelle Pasta •
• Pan Seared Sole with Celery Root Puree and Heirloom Cauliflower •

Dessert
A Mini Trio of
• Chocolate Tuxedo Mousse,
Almond Brown Butter Cake with Apple Compote,
Caramel Profiteroles •

• A Complimentary Glass of Champagne or Sparkling Cider •

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Classes

FRUIT TREE PRUNING Learn the best pruning techniques to maximize your fruit harvest. Care, feeding and pest control will also be covered. The free class is from 10-11:30 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 7, and at 1 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 8, at Western Garden Nursery, 2756 Vineyard Ave. No registration is necessary. Call 462-1760 or visit www.WesternGardenNursery.com.

GO WILD, GO BIRDING! Come bird watching at the Alviso Adobe Community Park and learn some birding basics from 1-2 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 15, at the park, 3465 Old Foothill Road. Make your own bird book and bird house and discover the fun sport of birding! Cost is \$3 for residents; \$5 for non-residents. Pre-registration is required; call 931-3479.

SUDOKU Sudoku is everywhere. It's in the newspapers, magazines, on-line, TV and cell phone games. Take a one time fun class to learn "how to" solve these brain teasers from 10-11 a.m., Wednesday, Jan. 11, at the Dublin Senior Center, 7600 Amador Valley Blvd. Get a free paperback Sudoku game book (while supplies last) after class. Cost is \$1.25. Call 556-4511.

Concerts

'EARLY ELVIS PRESLEY TRIBUTE'
Celebrate Elvis with Jim Anderson and the Rebels at their "Early Elvis Presley Tribute," at 8 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 7-8, at

the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Tickets are \$25, \$20 and \$15. Call 931-4848 or visit www.jimandersonmusic.net.

Events

CAL HOLIDAY BOWL VIEWING PARTY
Tri-Valley Cal Alumni Group and East Bay Chapter of the Haas Alumni Network will host a viewing party to watch the Cal football team take on the Texas Longhorns at 5 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 28, at Handles Gastropub, 855 Main St. No host bar. Call 730-3862.

ED KINNEY LECTURE SERIES "An Evening with John Sutter" will kick off the 2012 Museum on Main Ed Kinney Lecture Series, at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 10, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. John Sutter was a California man both revered and ruined by the discovery of gold at his mill. The new "An Evening with..." series lets audiences come face to face with people who made history. Ticket prices are \$10 for general admission, \$5 for members and seniors, and \$3 for students/teachers with ID. Call 462-2766.

PLEASANTONIANS 4 PEACE This group will host a Peaceful War Protest from 5-6 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 28 (the group hosts one on the fourth Wednesday of every month), at the corners of First and Neal streets. Visit www.Pleasantonians4Peace.org.

Holiday

VHS HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
Be sure to come down to Valley Humane Society's center until Dec. 30, to take home your new best friend before or after the holidays. The center is located at 3670 Nevada Street and is offering reduced adoption prices (cats (1 year and older) are \$25; kittens (11 months and younger) are \$50; dogs (1 year and older) are \$50; puppies (11 months and younger) are \$75. Call 426-8656.

Kids & Teens

SCRABBLE TOURNAMENT Pleasanton Public Library will host a children's winter vacation Scrabble tournament with check-in at 10 a.m., Tuesday, Jan. 3, at the library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Kids in grades 3-8 will have the opportunity to match wits and words with their peers in a series of games. Winners with the highest overall scores in each age group will be awarded prizes donated by local merchants. Preregistration is required in one of two groups: grades 3-5 and grades 6-8. There will be a maximum of 24 players per group. Additional rounds will be played before and after a lunch break with the tournament concluding no later than 4:30 p.m. Call 931-3400, ext. 8.

Spiritual

TRI-VALLEY CHANUKAH EVENTS
The Chanukah season is under way, and the entire community is welcome to share this special season at a variety of events, including menorah lighting, Chanukah gift sale, kids activities and more. Congregation Beth Emek is located at 3400 Nevada Court. Visit www.bethemek.org or call 931-1055.

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TriValley Life

PEOPLE AND LIFESTYLES
IN OUR COMMUNITY

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE VALLEY — MUSIC, THEATER, ART, MOVIES AND MORE



Makenzie Glenn, 5, enjoys Santa at the Gingerbread Preschool annual cookie and Santa party. She is the daughter of Rob and Carrie Glenn of Pleasanton.



Daniel, 5, and Ryan, 8, the sons of Robin and Eric Cruz, found Santa and Mrs. Claus on the Niles Canyon Train of Lights. The Cruz family lives on Candy Cane Lane in Pleasanton, and the boys attend Alisal Elementary. Their family has celebrated the Christmas season by riding the Train of Lights each year since 2004.



Joe, 9, Carly Rose, 11, and Natalie, 16, Recupero found Santa at the annual party and Toys for Tots drive given by Marti and Lonni Keeth.



Kimmy Martin dresses the part for Christmas. She adds holiday cheer to the Martin household.



Ava Gutierrez, 3, is wary when meeting Santa at Broadway Plaza in Walnut Creek, while Emma, 2, is downright unhappy. They are the daughters of Amory and Marty Gutierrez.



Lizzie, a first-grader at Alisal Elementary and the daughter of John and Lisa Loundagin, visits Santa in front of the Museum on Main.



TERRANCE TURNER
Tabitha, 6, and Taryn, 3, the daughters of Ty and Tami Turner meet Santa in 2007 at Gilroy Gardens. They live in Livermore, but grandparents Terrance (Papi) and Sylvia (Nana) live in Pleasanton, where Ty grew up and the girls stay while their parents work.



Peter Taggart, Olivia Grace Ritter, and Roger and Ryder Imbriani found Santa at Fashion Island in Newport Beach.



Taylor Potter, 10, visits with Santa at Disneyland in November. Taylor, the daughter of Lindsay and Craig Potter, attends Valley View Elementary school.



Avery Hilton enjoys a visit with Santa at Stoneridge Shopping Center while shopping in November. He was waving at her, and she pointed to him and she went right to him, reported her parents Zachary and Katie. Avery turned 1 on Dec. 17. Happy Birthday, Avery, and Merry Christmas!

It's Santa time

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Children share hopes, dreams and smiles with St. Nicholas

He's at shopping centers, musical performances and even neighborhood parties — it's Santa Claus, that merry visitor from the North Pole who magically circles the globe on Christmas Eve night to bring presents to

children. At Santa sightings, some children react with delight, others with worry, shock or fear. We asked readers to send in photos of children with Santa so we could share them with everyone to enjoy.

Feliz Navidad for Mexican orphans

Pleasanton Rotary North makes expedition to El Oasis

BY JIM BRICE

"Papa Grande," "Mucho Bill" and 14 others from Pleasanton North Rotary were greeted warmly by the orphans at El Oasis in Mexico earlier this month when they arrived bearing gifts for a merry Christmas and a secure New Year.

It was the seventh trip for the club, led by Don Routh of San Ramon and Bill Wheeler of Pleasanton, which raised more than \$6,000 for food, building materials, clothes and Christmas gifts. The children refer to Routh, 59, as "Papa Grande" and Wheeler, 51, as "Mucho Bill."

Several hundred pounds of bulk food now fill the pantries of the on-site group homes for the children and their support families. While there, Dec. 8-11, the Rotarians also helped lay a new tile floor in the living room of a currently vacant group house.

Over the years, club members have financed construction of a school building, a solar-powered well, a computer laboratory, and a library at the site.

The orphanage, which is in the Baja desert about 70 miles east of Ensenada, Mexico, is sponsored by the nonprofit International Children's Care, Vancouver, Wash., and is a refuge of last resort for abandoned Mexican children as young as 3. These children are not usually put up for adoption but are raised and educated in group family homes by the El Oasis staff through their teenage years, before attending an off-site religious boarding school for secondary education and college. The Seventh Day Adventist Church provides spiritual guidance.

During ceremonies at the mission church Friday night, Rotarian Tina Case of Livermore gave each child a colorful, hand-sewn scarf. Bags of shoes, school uniforms, casual clothing, soccer balls and toys await wrapping and distribution to the children on Christmas Eve night.

"It was an experience not soon to be forgotten," said Kevin Greenlee. "Our hearts and prayers go out to the children and amazing leaders who have molded those young souls into the sweetest group of well-behaved children you could ever meet."

It was a return trip for many of the club members, including



JIM BRICE

El Oasis children discover the pleasure of blowing bubbles during the Pleasanton North Rotary visit Dec. 11, while Don Routh observes. Below, Bill Wheeler inspects bulk food before distribution to group homes at El Oasis.

Jim Brice, Mike Gallarado, Audrey Glafkides and her daughter Elise Pritchard, Kevin and Yvonne Greenlee and their daughters Sasha and Mira, club president Ronda Henstorf and Jerry Pentin, as well as those mentioned above. Case brought along a young companion, Briyana Oellrich.

The children entertained the group with choral singing, an original skit in the style of Uncle Tom's Cabin spoken in Spanish, many hugs, smiles and laughter that night and again on Saturday — the Sabbath day for children.

Yo-yos and hand-operated bubble makers were distributed outside the church on a sunny morning after services. The older boys and girls got to skirt their church's strict rules against playing sports on Sabbath day by kicking a soccer ball around with the Rotarians.

Before leaving, Papa Grande and Mucho Bill promised that the club would return again next Christmas with another load of essential supplies, gifts and plans for construction projects to complete.

Pleasanton North Rotary is always looking for new members



who share their chapter's informal style and zeal for fulfilling Rotary International's commitment to putting community service before self. Potential candidates are invited to attend a weekly Rotary lunch meeting at 12:15 p.m. Fridays at the Hilton Hotel at the Club in Pleasanton. Visit the website at www.pnr-rotary.org. ■

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Holiday Fund 2011



PURRRFECT FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Holiday Fund helps nonprofit that matches pets and people



Austin, Karen, Neal, & Suhas Bhandarkar with Wall-E



Midnight Starr

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI
When Valley Humane Society takes in an animal, its life is guaranteed.

Best case, someone adopts the dog or cat to become a well-loved family member. But occasionally an animal turns out to be edgier than first noticed; Kirby the kitty, for instance, has been hanging around Valley Humane Society offices a long time, sunning herself in the windows, and seeking attention on her own terms.

At other times, a medical condition can make adoption difficult; then the animal stays in a foster home and Valley Humane Society pays for treatment.

"Once they're in the system, they're our responsibility," Executive Director Melanie Sadek said.

For this reason, the organization chooses its animals with care, she explained, going to shelters to look for those with good pet potential.

"We pull a lot from Alameda and Contra Costa counties, sometimes San Joaquin," Sadek said.

"Right now we're getting lots of surrenders," she added. "We get phone calls, someone's home is in foreclosure, they can't take their pet with them. We want to make sure it can be placed. We do a personality profile and make an appointment to see what we're dealing with."

Valley Humane Society is a true community organization, located in its new facility at 3670 Nevada St. in Pleasanton, which was funded entirely by donations, as is the annual budget of \$500,000.

The volunteers can be seen everywhere — at outside adoption events, offering Paws to Read in six libraries for children to practice their reading skills with friendly pooches, and Pet Therapy with volunteers bringing their dogs into retirement homes. The AniMeals program provides pet food for qualified families using donations from Pet Food Express, Wal-Mart and Murphy's Paw, which partners with its distributor.

"We work closely with Meals on

Wheels," Sadek said.

Valley Humane Society also works with Hope Hospice; volunteers walk the pets that keep patients company during their last days.

The facility on Nevada Street can house about 60 animals, but those that don't do well in shelters stay in foster homes. Sadek said she especially appreciates the volunteers who foster motherless newborns that need to be bottle-fed every two hours.

"We have quite a few foster volunteers but need more," Sadek said.

A large airy classroom is used to host birthday parties. For \$250, the volunteers decorate the room and make a presentation about Valley Humane Society. Each child receives a carrying case with a stuffed animal. The parties provide education and add funds to the operating budget, Sadek said. Plus it's a fun and different party for children, beginning at about age 9.

"Giving back is very, very important to us," Sadek said.

She is planning monthly community classes on subjects such as general animal maintenance, why vaccinations are important, and dog training.

"A private nonprofit relies so heavily on donations, that's why we diversify our services," she said.

The most immediate needs are a large examining table for the medical treatment room and a dog scale, Sadek said.

Its largest fundraiser has been the Hidden Gardens of the Valley Tour each spring. This fall it started two new events: Paws in the Park, with a pledge-driven dog walk, agility demonstrations, music and dogs for adoption, at Lion's Wayside Park downtown; and in late October, Howl-o-ween, a costume party with prizes for best-dressed pets and their people.

Sadek hopes to do more external adoption events for dogs.

"The cats get so stressed out," she said, but the dogs love to get out and enjoy the events.

"I'm hoping to find volunteers



Harvey



Ryan Baker with Piper and Phoebe



Honey



Gloria Luevano with Champ



Raspberry



Tracy Hurst with Hammy



Rocky



Ginger

to do the external adoption events — the only barriers are money and people," Sadek added.

Valley Humane Society currently has 400 active volunteers. In 2012, Sadek plans a new volunteer training program, both to have stronger volunteers and for their own personal growth and development.

Among the current volunteers are those who offer their professional services. Sadek noted thankfully, including a human resources specialist, legal counsel who works pro bono, and a techie who keeps the computers functioning. Of the six paid staff, four are part time.

With its Home for the Holidays promotion, adoption fees have been lowered at Valley Humane Society as it makes a push to find families for all its pets during this season.

"We see our biggest peak during the holidays," Sadek said. "Over

time we've learned that the majority of adopted animals are given as gifts, which increases at this time of year."

On Black Cat Friday, which was held Black Friday, Valley Humane Society placed 19 cats.

In 2012 Valley Humane Society

is tweaking its hours to accommodate potential adopters, adding two evenings until 7 p.m. plus Sunday because it's a family day.

"Our goal is to save as many animals as we can so we have to be open when the community needs us to be open," Sadek said. ■

Holiday Fund donors

Since the launch of the 2011 Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund, 392 donors have contributed \$128,785.40 to the fund, which includes \$50,000 that was matched by the Tri-Valley Community Foundation. 54 anonymous donors have given \$8,904 of that total. The donation form is available online at pleasantonweekly.com/holiday_fund/

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Jonathan & Janet Allen	**
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Steve & Cris Annen	100
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Bryan & Kim Baptist	250
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Jan & Jeb Bing	200
Doug & Beverly Boff	**
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Bert & Dee Brook	200
Ryan Brown & Julie Harryman	75

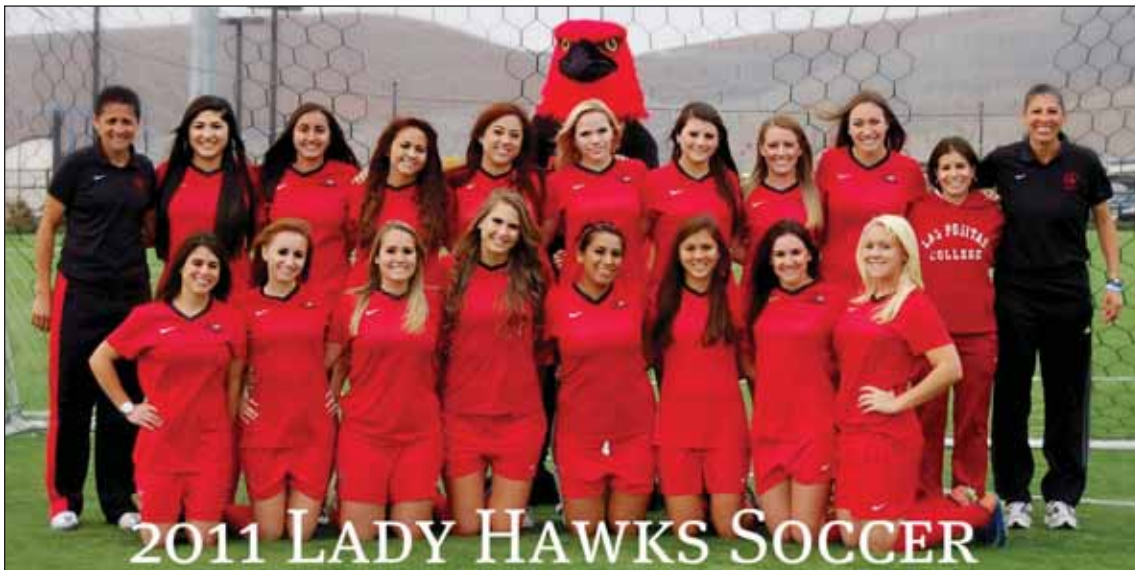
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Ms. Jourdin Hermann	**	Mr. & Mrs. Joe Silva	100	Reichlin	500	Michael Gable from The Michelotti	
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Fred & Joan Hottinger.....	**	Robert & Carole Sygiel.....	100	David & Marian Hillman from Sharon		Smochko	**
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Sports



Las Positas soccer players win state awards

Nine Las Positas College Women's Soccer Team players won awards at the recent California Community College Athletic Association Coast Conference.

"This year was a year of rebuilding, learning and development," said Las Positas College Women's Soccer Head Coach Sissi doAmor. "The student athletes had a great time and worked hard."

Following are the student athletes who were recognized with Conference Players Awards:

■ **First Team All Coast Conference:** Ashley Stevens, goal keeper, Gran-

ada High School graduate; Rebecca Woll, left back, of Livermore

■ **Second Team All Coast Conference:** Nicole Estorga, center defender, Foothill High School graduate; Sarah Felicitas, center midfielder, of San Ramon

■ **Honorable Mention:** Sarah Fishman, center back, Dougherty Valley High School graduate; Phoebe Santos, multiple positions, Amador Valley High School graduate; Maira Orozco, outside back, Dublin High School graduate; Devin San Jose, multiple positions, of San Ramon; Alyssa Ritmann, outside midfielder,

Livermore High School graduate.

Las Positas College offers eight intercollegiate team sports: men's and women's soccer, cross country, basketball, and swimming and diving. Its state-of-the-art facilities include a gymnasium, an all-weather turf soccer field, an all-weather track and multi-use field and an aquatic center. The college offers an extensive selection of classes in Physical Education, Athletics, Health and Wellness. For more information about the athletic program and sports events, call 424-1290 or visit www.laspositascollege.edu/athletics. ■

PREP LINE-UP

Dec. 23

- Boys Basketball: 7 p.m., AVHS vs. Alhambra, home
- Girls Basketball: 6 p.m., AVHS vs. Lehigh, home

Dec. 28

- Boys Soccer: 5 p.m., AVHS vs. Pittsburg, away

Dec. 29

- Girls Soccer: 5 p.m., Foothill vs. Washington, home

Dec. 31

- Boys Soccer: 1 p.m., AVHS vs. San Lorenzo, home

Jan. 3

- Boys Basketball: 7 p.m., AVHS vs. De La Salle, away
- Boys Basketball: 7 p.m., Foothill vs. Granada, home
- Girls Basketball: 7 p.m., AVHS vs. Carondelet, home
- Boys Soccer: 6 p.m., Foothill vs. Livermore, home
- Boys Soccer: 6 p.m., AVHS vs. Monte Vista, home
- Girls Soccer: 6 p.m., Foothill vs. Livermore, away
- Girls Soccer: 6 p.m., AVHS vs. Monte Vista, away

Jan. 4

- Wrestling: 7 p.m., Foothill vs. Granada, home

Jan. 5

- Girls Soccer: 6 p.m., Foothill vs. Monte Vista, home
- Girls Soccer: 6 p.m., AVHS vs. California, away

- Boys Soccer: 6 p.m., Foothill vs. Monte Vista, away

- Boys Soccer: 6 p.m., AVHS vs. California, home

Jan. 6

- Boys Basketball: 7 p.m., AVHS vs. Granada, away

- Boys Basketball: 7 p.m., Foothill vs. San Ramon, away

- Girls Basketball: 7 p.m., AVHS vs. Granada, home

Jan. 7

- Wrestling: 9 a.m., Foothill at Granada Tournament, away



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Real Estate

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Poll finds voters driven by jobs, housing in 2012 election

Realtors say employment, housing inextricably linked

By JEB BING

A recent survey by HouseLogic.com, the consumer website from the National Association of Realtors, finds that jobs and the housing market will be two of the most important issues for voters in the 2012 election.

Nearly one-third of respondents said housing will be the top issue on their mind when they head to the polls next November.

"We need to keep housing first on the nation's public policy agenda because housing and home ownership issues affect all Americans," said NAR President Moe Veissi, Veissi, a broker-owner of Veissi & Associates, Inc., in Miami. "The results of this survey show that many Americans understand that."

Respondents were asked: "What issue area will have the greatest impact on your vote in 2012?" National security, healthcare, and energy/environment trailed housing and unemployment by wide margins:

- Jobs/unemployment, 54%
- Housing, 27%
- National security, 8%
- Healthcare, 4%
- Energy/Environment, 2%
- Other, 4%

With unemployment still high, it is easy to see why so many Americans are concerned about the job market, Veissi said. However, employment and the housing market are inextricably linked because economic growth and job creation cannot occur without a housing recovery.

Housing accounts for more than 15% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product, Veissi added. It's a key driver of the national economy. Home sales generate jobs.

NAR estimates that for every two homes sold, one job is created. New spending on homebuilding products, furniture, and other residential investments also have a significant economic impact.

Some recent indicators show that the economy might be starting to rebound, with pending home sales rising strongly in October, according to NAR's Pending Home Sales Index. However, any changes to current programs or incentives must not jeopardize a housing and economic recovery. Unemployment, consumer confidence and consumer spending will not rebound until a number of issues are addressed.

"NAR actively advocates public policies that promote responsible, sustainable homeownership, which will in turn support overall economic recovery," said Veissi. "We want to ensure affordable, accessible financing; support tax policies that encourage homeownership; and help more people stay in their homes or avoid foreclosure through streamlined short sales."

The HouseLogic survey shows Americans understand that a housing recovery is essential to the nation's economic recovery, and many of those housing-related issues will be on the minds of voters in 2012, according to the NAR. ■

HOME SALES

This week's data represents homes sold during November 2011

Livermore

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5464 Bianca Way Padgett Trust to McGraw-Barrett Trust for \$360,000

776 Camelia Drive K. Brooks to K. Flores for \$350,000

777 Daisyfield Drive Carey Trust to M. Sanders for \$636,000

4016 Drake Way Leri Trust to Ward Trust for \$350,000

2181 Gabriella Lane L. Menges to N. Singh for \$829,000

601 Hemlock Court E. Klein to S. Almy for \$370,000

553 James Street Soriano Trust to T. & M. Nordskog for \$294,500

1957 Mars Road Linney Trust to S. & J. Denson for \$590,000

4967 Scenic Avenue R. Leadingham to J. Searcy for \$250,000

5676 Shorehaven Circle Citibank to M. & D. Piazza for \$289,000

292 South R Street Hnatow Trust to D. & K. Lewis for \$350,000

226 Vista Street Davis Trust to M. & L. Lenchanko for \$310,000

187 Wildrose Common #1203 F. Guido to C. Lee for \$236,000

5373 Wisteria Way Community Rebuild Asset Holdings to B. & R. Domondon for \$278,000

Pleasanton

3138 Delicado Court L. Liddy to S. Gajjela for \$450,000

7287 Valley Trails Drive Guderyon Trust to S. Sarkar for \$456,000

Source: California REsource



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