

Pleasanton Weekly

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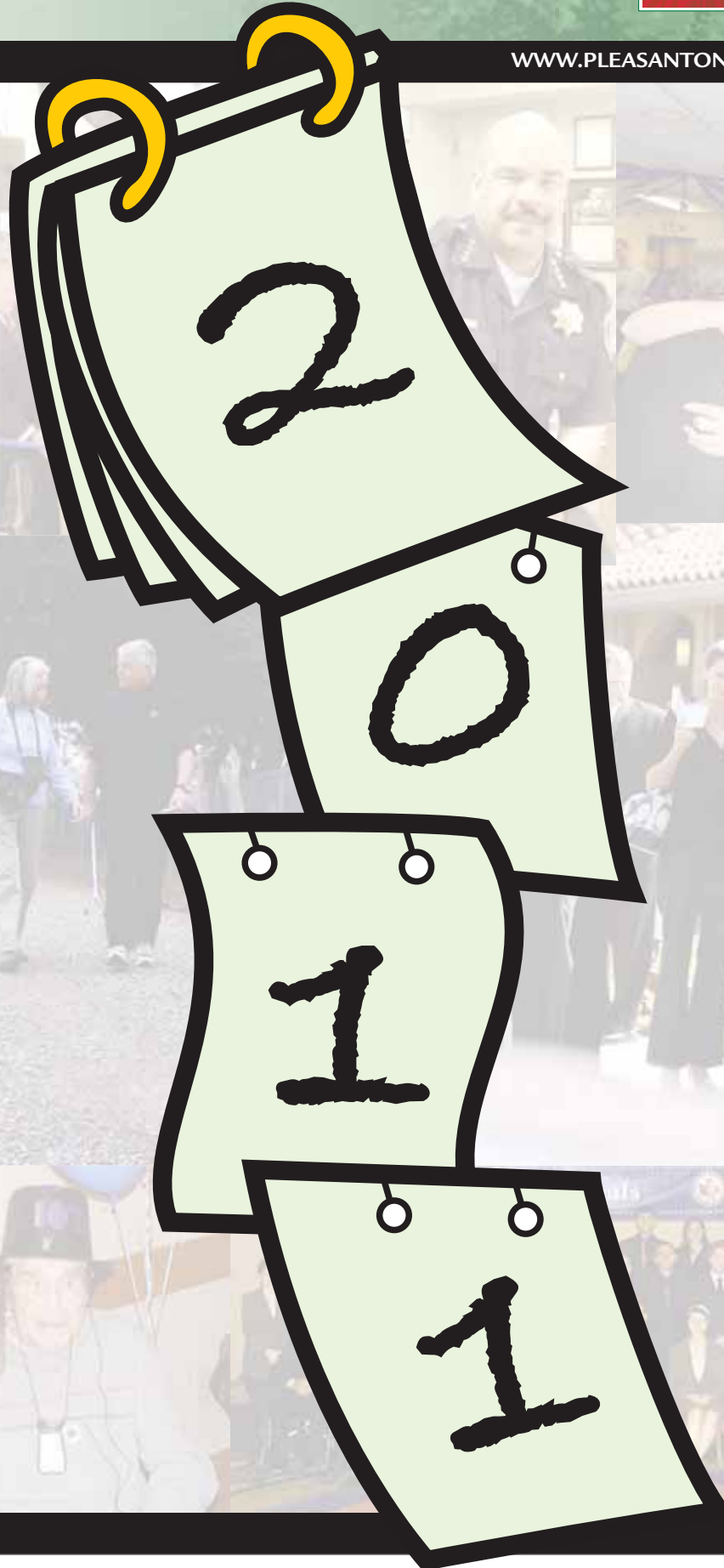


VOL. XII, NUMBER 51 • DECEMBER 30, 2011

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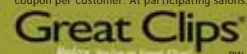
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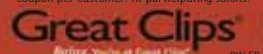
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AROUND PLEASANTON



By JEB BING



BRAD HAUPT

This 120-year-old one horse open sleigh shares the history of its rural Pleasanton owner.

One-horse open sleigh

When I first saw the red one-horse open sleigh on Brad Haupt's front porch, I thought Santa had left it behind. It's the perfect image of what the jolly old man might have used on Christmas Eve. But instead, the 120-year-old restored sleigh was used in a church pageant by Brad's wife Marilyn, which is why it was restored after all these years of neglect.

The Haupt's live on a 5-acre parcel on Johnston Road just off Camino Tassajara in unincorporated Contra Costa County. Although the site is 6 miles from the Pleasanton city limits and just across Tassajara from the Town of Danville, the Haupt's consider themselves part of Pleasanton. That's where they shop, where their children attended school and where the Pleasanton post office continues to deliver their mail. Pleasanton's has been the only post office handling rural deliveries for the last 100 years, which includes those living along much of Tassajara.

Brad Haupt hails from five generations of farmers. The family still owns farmland in Belmond, Iowa, where his great-great-grandfather settled after emigrating from Germany with his wife, six sons and a daughter in the mid-1800s. Brad's great-great-grandfather Ernest, his grandfather Earl, his father Ernest, now 87, and Brad, himself, were all born on the farm although no one in Brad's generation and those born since want to be Iowa farmers. So when Ernest, the father, decided to sell the 5 acres where the farmhouse, barn and various other buildings are located, Brad and Marilyn decided to drive there with a trailer to bring some of the family treasures back to California.

When Brad found the sleigh in the

barn's loft and loaded it into the trailer, he learned from his father that the sleigh was used by the Haupt's from 1890-1910, but then packed away when they started using automobiles. At the time, though, it was a fast-moving mode of transportation that, unlike other full-wagon sleighs, could clip along as fast as the driver was willing to push the horse. Brad says it was much like the sports cars of today — very fast but also small and more dangerous.

Back home, the old sleigh stayed in Haupt's barn off Tassajara until he refinished it for the Christmas pageant. Everything about the sleigh is authentic, which required searches of hardware stores and lumberyards to find extra thin-wood and fabric where new material was needed. Castro Valley Lumber had planking thin enough for a new floorboard; an auto body upholsterer in Walnut Creek provided new red leather, even with the buttons to match the original.

Haupt waxes nostalgic about the less hectic times when the sleigh was used. Even today, he remembers life on the farm as more enjoyable than it probably was, given Iowa's deep-freeze winters and terribly hot summers. But the farm was still a wonderful site to see again, with its rolling hills and fertile soil, much like the farmlands in Germany, which is why the Haupt's and many of their friends immigrated to Iowa.

With college degrees, including his father's in science, the Haupt's of today are enjoying Pleasanton, where Brad Haupt and three of his sons operate their own business, Allied Tax Planners, located near the Stoneridge Shopping Center and at an office next to the Tassajara home, within eyesight of the sleigh. Brad said he and Marilyn and their five sons and a daughter hope to show off their restored, 120-year-old sleigh next year in the 2012 Pleasanton Christmas parade. ■

About the Cover

We say farewell to 2011 with a review of the news and events covered by the Pleasanton Weekly during the last year. Design by Lili Cao.

Vol. XII, Number 51



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Streetwise

ASKED AROUND TOWN

What are you looking forward to in 2012?



Ava Holbrook
Student

I'm looking forward to going on more vacations. I'd like to go to Ohio again to visit my family. I'm going to turn 12, and I think I'll have more privileges. One of my goals is to play more tennis.

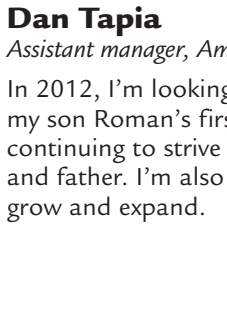
Mike Serrano
Marketing consultant

I'm really excited for next year, because I'm going to launch a company in 2012. It will be an online marketplace for educators. I'm also hoping to spend lots of time with my wife and children.



Christina Charuhas
Graduate student

I'm looking forward to completing my dissertation on Colonial American Art at Columbia University. I've never been to Hawaii, so I plan to celebrate there with friends.



Dan Tapia
Assistant manager, America's Tire

In 2012, I'm looking forward to watching my son Roman's first full year of life and continuing to strive to be a good husband and father. I'm also excited to help my store grow and expand.




Tammy Kygar
Mural artist

Both of my twins were hospitalized recently, so I have a renewed appreciation for good health and happiness. I am hopeful that all of my friends and family will stay healthy in 2012.

—Compiled by Kerry Nally

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

The Pleasanton Weekly is published every Friday by Embarcadero Media, 5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite 100, Pleasanton, CA 94566; (925) 600-0840. Mailed at Periodicals Postage Rate, USPS 020407. The Weekly is mailed upon request to homes and apartments in Pleasanton. Print subscriptions for businesses or residents of other communities are \$60 per year or \$100 for two years. Go to www.PleasantonWeekly.com to sign up and for more information. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Pleasanton Weekly, 5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite 100, Pleasanton, CA 94566. © 2011 by Embarcadero Media. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.




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DIGEST

Christmas tree pickup

O! Christmas tree, your time is over.

Boy Scout Troop 941 and Venture Crew 940 are holding their annual Christmas Tree Pickup fundraiser next Saturday for all Pleasanton addresses. Registration for the pickup ends Jan. 5. Go to <http://tree-pickup.troop941.org> or call 399-1377.

Although donations are not required, suggested amounts are \$5 for trees 6 feet and under; \$10 for larger trees; and an addition \$10 for flocked trees. Funds raised by the project are used to pay for camping equipment and scouting activities such as summer camp and weekend outings.

Stands should be removed from trees, which must be in the driveway or at the curb by 8 a.m. Jan. 7, although sometimes it takes all day to finish the job, reported chairman Joe Hartley, and sometimes also part of the next day.

Two thousand trees are picked up every year, with 60 boys doing the work along with 50 parents and adult volunteers.

Double fines on Vasco Road

Beginning Sunday, Vasco Road will be a double-fine zone along a 19-mile stretch between I-580 in Livermore and Walnut Boulevard in Brentwood. Traffic fines will be doubled, with the California Highway Patrol providing primary enforcement.

The designation of Vasco Road as a Safety Enhancement-Double Fine Zone is a result of the passage of Assembly Bill 348, sponsored by Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan (D-15th) and signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown.

The special double-fine zone designation will be effective from Jan. 1, 2012, through Jan. 1, 2017. Crews from Alameda County Public Works Agency have already installed the Double Fine Zone traffic signs along Vasco Road.

Corrections

The story last week, "Foothill teacher was busted in drug sale stakeout," was apparently in error when it said that Stephanie Deffner was dismissed from her position at Foothill High School, although the school board did place an unnamed teacher on an extended leave of absence, according to Bill Faraghan, the school district's Human Resources Director. That action, taken in a closed session of the board meeting, was believed to involve Deffner although Faraghan and board members were not allowed to discuss a personnel matter nor could they identify the individual.

Pleasanton works out vice mayor rotation

City clerk Karen Diaz single-handedly resolves political fuss

By JEB BING

The political fuss over who will serve as vice mayor of Pleasanton during next November's municipal election has been resolved by the single-handed action of City Clerk Karen Diaz.

At the last City Council meeting, Mayor Jennifer Hosterman suggested rotating the customary full-year appointment so that no single council member would have an advantage in the year when a new mayor will be elected. Hosterman will be termed out next year and two on the council — Cheryl Cook-Kallio and Jerry Thorne — have announced they will seek the mayor's

post in the Nov. 6 election.

The two others, council members Cindy McGovern and Matt Sullivan, while also being termed out after serving eight years on the council, could seek the mayor's post, although they have not indicated that they will.

But Hosterman's proposal was rejected by McGovern, who said she was appointed by Hosterman to the vice mayor's post only once in the seven years she's been on the council and she's not about to take a lame duck appointment in 2012.

So the duty was divided into three segments

of four months with Diaz holding a lottery for the three "candidates." But none came to the drawing. Thorne was in Switzerland, Cook-Kallio was recovering from surgery, and Sullivan couldn't break away from his job in San Francisco to come to the lottery drawing.

Diaz reached into a box containing the names and announced the results.

Cook-Kallio, who has been vice mayor this year, will continue through April 11; Sullivan takes over on April 12; with Thorne holding the vice mayor's post from Aug. 10 through Dec. 4, during the municipal election. ■



Collecting for others

The leadership students at Pleasanton Middle School survey the fruits of their food collection the week before Christmas. The students collected about 1,200 cans and dried food items, said leadership teacher Gabriele Klein, and received \$60 in money donations plus a check for \$1,000 from one of the parents. The goods went into the food pantry of Valley Bible Church in Pleasanton for distribution.

Tri-Valley veteran journalist Tim Hunt to start blog Jan. 3

Tim Hunt will begin blogging Jan. 3 at PleasantonWeekly.com.

A California native and valley resident since his childhood, Hunt is well-known throughout the Tri-Valley. He worked for 39 years at Tri-Valley Herald, including 10 years as senior on-site editor and 10 years as associate publisher. He also wrote a Sunday column for the Herald for more than 25 years and acted as the newspaper's ombudsman. He has earned four statewide awards for editorial writing.

He's also been active in the non-profit community including service on the following boards: Leadership San Ramon Valley, Shepherd's Gate, Hope Hospice, United Way of the Bay

Area and United Way of Alameda County. He co-chaired the Tri-Valley Business Council's Vision 2010 project, and was a founder and chairman, twice, of the Tri-Valley Community Foundation. He was the founding board chair for Heart for Africa and continues to serve on that board.

"Tim is respected for his professionalism, commitment to the truth and compassion for people," said Gina Channell-Allen, publisher of the Pleasanton Weekly. "He has been writing about the people, places, politics, events and issues in the Tri-Valley for decades. We are delighted that he will be bringing this knowledge and insight to PleasantonWeekly.com readers."

Hunt is currently the publisher of ACES, Northern California's Premier Golf Lifestyle Publication, and principal at Hunt Enterprises, a communications strategies and consulting firm. ■



Tim Hunt

City Council to vote Tuesday on high-density housing plan

New zoning changes would set aside 73 acres for affordable housing developers

The Pleasanton City Council will hold back-to-back Tuesday night meetings starting next week to consider and likely approve a detailed plan to rezone 73 acres of available properties in various parts of the city to allow the construction of more than 2,000 apartments in two- and three-story buildings.

Faced with court and state housing authorities' orders to provide more affordable and so-called workforce housing, the council will review the rezoning plan approved two weeks ago by the city's Planning Commission.

Both groups met earlier in an informal "workshop" setting to iron out any differences in the voluminous plan for rezoning nine sites for development. After some tweaking of that plan based on public comments, the city's planning staff made final changes to the plan, which the Planning Commission then approved.

Next Tuesday, the council is expected to approve a first reading of an ordinance that would officially rezone the sites for high-density housing. It has then scheduled a special meeting the following Tuesday, Jan. 10, to ratify the ordinance with a second reading. The public then has 30 days to file any legal objections before the final document becomes part of the city's General Plan and is filed with both the Alameda Superior Court and the state.

The city, itself, will not build any housing, but the rezoning enables developers to have an easier time obtaining permits for multi-family, two- and three-story developments on the properties.

The sites will be rezoned to accommodate 1,884 apartment units at a ratio of 30 units per acre, with 400 more at 400 units per acre. Most apartment structures in Pleasanton are in the range of 20-25 units per acre.

The actions by both the City Council and Planning Commission follow a court ruling that declared the city's 1996 housing cap of allowing no more than 29,000 homes and apartments here to be illegal.

After an Alameda County Superior Court judge ruled in favor of a suit by Urban Habitat, an affordable housing coalition, the City Council chose to accept the ruling rather than appeal it

See **HOUSING** on Page 8

Museum announces 2012 speakers

Famous folks to spend evenings in Pleasanton

Museum on Main has announced a new format for the annual Ed Kinney Lecture Series. In "An Evening with"... audiences come face to face with people making history today as well as actors who look and sound as if they have stepped out from the pages of history books.

The speakers series takes place monthly January through October at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., in downtown Pleasanton. Lectures are held at 7 p.m. once a month on Tuesdays.

The 2012 Ed Kinney Lecture Series schedule is as follows:

■ "An Evening With John Sutter," Jan. 10. Meet John Sutter, a California man both revered and ruined by the discovery of gold at his mill. Sutter is portrayed by David H. Fenimore, director of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. Event sponsor: Peter Bailey

■ "An Evening with President Roosevelt," Feb. 7. President Roosevelt's achievements as naturalist, explorer, author and soldier are as much a part of his legacy as any office he held as a politician. Visit with the 26th president of the United States, Teddy Roosevelt, as portrayed by Fred Rutledge. Event sponsor: Rebecca Bruner

■ "An Evening with Isadora Duncan," March 13. In honor of Women's History Month, Lois Ann Flood presents the legacy of early 1900s modern dancer Isadora Duncan in a stage performance with dance and narration. Event sponsor: Anonymous

■ "An Evening with California Secretary of Resources John Laird," April 10. Enjoy the evening with Secretary John Laird, Cali-

formia's current Secretary for the State's Resources Agency. Secretary Laird will discuss his role in the safeguarding and stewardship of California's precious natural resources.

■ "An Evening with Uncle Toisan," May 8. Renowned writer and historian William "Charlie" Chin



David Fenimore as John Sutter

portrays a Chinese-American character called Uncle Toisan, whose life spans the time from the Chinese Exclusion Act to the post-civil rights era and the emergence of Asian-American consciousness.

■ "An Evening with Mark Twain," June 12. Humorist and author Samuel Langhorne Clemens, known to many as "Mark Twain," visits Pleasanton to retell his adventures Out West, including mining on the Nevada Comstock, buying a wild horse, and big trouble in San Francisco. Twain is portrayed by Pat Kaunert. Event sponsor: Jim Gulseth

■ "An Evening with Bonnie and Clyde," July 10. Hide your pocketbooks for this event. Infamous outlaws Bonnie and Clyde roll into town to recruit some new members to their outlaw gang. Alyssa and Ethan Foster portray the 1930s lawless couple. Event sponsor: Chuck Deckert

■ "An Evening with Sourdough Steve," Aug. 14. Travel through the world of the 49ers with miner Sourdough Steve portrayed by Steve Johnson. Sourdough Steve

recalls many rarely heard stories of mining life in the mid-1800s. Event sponsor: Charles Huff

■ "An Evening with Author John Boessenecker," Sept. 11. From dusty court records and forgotten memoirs, acclaimed author of "Bandido: The Life and Times of Tirburcio Vasquez," John Boessenecker reveals the violence, banditry, and retribution of the early California frontier. Event sponsor: Julie Eckroat & Lynn Skarratt

■ "An Evening with TV Horror Host John Stanley," Oct. 9. Legendary San Francisco Bay Area TV horror host and "Creature Features" movie reviewer steps into the spotlight as he reveals the movie monster boom of the 1950s. Stanley's most recent publication, "The Gang That Shot Up Hollywood," includes recollections from the many movie and TV star interviews in his many years as an entertainment writer for the San Francisco Chronicle. Event sponsor: Jack Harrington

Tickets to the lectures may be purchased at the door or reserved in advance by calling the Museum on Main at 462-2766. Prices are \$10 general admission; \$5 members and seniors; \$3 students and teachers with ID. All tickets are paid at the door, and cash, check, Visa and MasterCard are accepted. All tickets are open seating and after 6:45 p.m. any unclaimed reserved tickets will be released for sale.

For more information on the Ed Kinney Lecture Series visit www.museumonmain.org or phone the Museum on Main at 462-2766.

The Museum on Main is located at 603 Main St. It is open to the public from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and from 1-4 p.m. Sunday. ■

100-plus bird watchers take annual Christmas count

Birds are more accessible in winter, says event co-founder

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush — at least when it comes to counting the wide range of bird species that spend their winters in San Francisco.

More than 100 seasoned bird-watchers scoured the San Francisco Bay and its environs Tuesday for the Golden Gate Audubon Society's 29th annual Christmas Bird Count, a census-like count assessing the state of the Bay's bird life, said Dan Murphy, who co-founded the local event.

Teams of bird watchers from dawn to dusk peered through binoculars to count birds in 17 different San Francisco locations including a boat that spanned the bay, according to Murphy.

Sponsored in part by the Presidio Trust, the Christmas count coincided with more than 2,000 bird compilations this month taken throughout North and South



TERRIE SCHWEITZER

At Christmastime, volunteers make more than 2,000 compilations of bird species throughout North and South America and in some Pacific islands.

America and in some Pacific islands, he said.

"Birds are a lot more accessible

in winter," Murphy said, making the holiday season an ideal time to catalog both native and far-flung winged creatures.

During last year's holiday event, observers in San Francisco counted 177 different bird species and more than 57,000 individual birds, ranging from pigeons to more exotic species such as the red phalarope, the Tennessee warbler or the black-legged kittiwake.

But participants last year also noticed a startling lack of other previously native bird species such as California Quail and different types of diving ducks.

Murphy said San Francisco's bird populations appear to dwindle due to air and water pollution and because of rising numbers of feral cats and off-leash dogs that prey on various birds.

—Bay City News Service



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Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation receives \$5,000 donation

Applications being accepted for 2012 grants for Tri-Valley cancer patients

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Tri-Valley cancer patients seeking pain relief during chemotherapy and/or radiation treatment will be the beneficiaries of a \$5,000 donation made to the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation by the Safeway Foundation, Safeway Corp. and its employees.

"We are ecstatic to receive the Safeway Foundation donation," said founder Sandra J. Wing, a dual cancer survivor. "We have admired their organization and are pleased to be able to help local cancer patients on their behalf."

This donation lets the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation, currently beginning its fourth year, provide immediate relief to cancer patients by helping them pay for complementary therapies — such as therapeutic massage, acupuncture, deep breathing techniques, guided meditation and/or visual imagery sessions — during their cancer treatments. These therapies are typically not covered by insurance and help alleviate the side effects caused by radiation and chemotherapy treatments, sometimes lessening pain and anxiety.

Christy Duncan-Anderson, executive director for the Safeway Foundation, presented the check to the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation board.

"The Safeway Foundation is proud to support organizations like the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation that work in our communities and provide support to those that need it most," Duncan-Anderson said. "This particular grant strikes a very personal chord for me. My mother-in-law passed away from lung cancer last year and I don't know if there was anything that could have made a difference in her ultimate outcome but I wish she had access to an organization like this."

To be eligible for foundation grants, which range from \$500 to \$1,000, applicants must be diagnosed with cancer; under the care of a physician; undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment; reside in Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin, San Ramon or Danville; and not have medical insurance that covers the complementary services they desire.

Applications are now being accepted for 2012 grants. Interested applicants can apply online at www.healingtherapiesfoundation.org or call (866) 862-7270 for an application.

The Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation raises funds throughout the year with a variety of events and activities. The group's primary fundraiser is the Ragin' Cajun, a dinner/dance/auction event that is held every winter. The fourth annual Ragin' Cajun will be held at the Palm Event Center in Pleasanton on Friday, March 2.

Each year, the attendance has increased, with last year's event selling out with over 300 attendees. The foundation is seeking corporate and



Safeway employee representative Jack Barry and Executive Director Christy Duncan-Anderson present a check for \$5,000 to the board members of the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation at their November meeting.



individual sponsors, as well as volunteers, for the 2012 dinner, dance and silent and live auction fundraiser, which will be hosted by Jessica Aguirre and Mike Inouye, television hosts of NBC Bay Area news.

In a recent Mayo Clinic newsletter and website, healing therapies were acknowledged as a means to complement traditional medical therapies, reported Yolanda Weaver, publicist for this year's Ragin' Cajun.

Weaver forwarded a recent thank you note from a beneficiary, which read: "I have been blessed to have massage therapy. It helped reduce a lot of pain and gave me a piece of

heaven. Thank you so much." "These notes of thanks encourage and energize the Foundation's volunteers and supporters," Weaver said. To learn more about the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation, go to www.healingtherapiesfoundation.org.

Healing therapies

As of August 2011, 83 cancer patients have received grants from the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation. Beneficiary statistics are:

- Average age — 52
- Youngest patient — 4 years
- Oldest — 75
- 84% are female; 16% are male
- 38% are breast cancer patients
- 76% are unemployed

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TAKE US ALONG



Devil of a read: Erik Jensen remembered his hometown reading while visiting Devil's Tower in Wyoming on a father-son trip with dad Bjorn Jensen last summer.



Hometown news at bat: 25 members of Team Express Baseball Academy, sponsored by Pleasanton's Total Player Center, traveled to Los Angeles for a weekend clinic at the Reggie Smith Baseball Center. The group, pictured here with Reggie Smith (centered to the right), gathered at the end of the second day to look over the Weekly.

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LLNS awards emergency services contract to Alameda County Fire Department

Lawrence Livermore National Security will continue to contract with the Alameda County Fire Department to provide emergency services to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the Lab announced this week.

Alameda County Fire was selected following completion of a competitive Request For Proposal. The resulting five-year contract will provide fire, medical and hazardous material emergency services to the Laboratory main site; its experimental test site, Site 300, located on the Alameda County-Tracy border; and Sandia National Laboratories, which is located on property adjacent to the Laboratory main site.

"This contract allows the Laboratory and the county to continue to provide the high level of public service not only to LLNL but to surrounding communities," said Alameda County Fire Chief Sheldon Gilbert.

The new contract will begin in July. Alameda County has provided services to Lawrence Livermore

"This contract allows the Laboratory and the county to continue to provide the high level of public service not only to LLNL but to surrounding communities."

Sheldon Gilbert,
Alameda County Fire Chief

since 2007, when Laboratory management transitioned from the University of California to Lawrence Livermore National Security, a private entity.

LLNS manages Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for the Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration. LLNS is comprised of Bechtel National; the University of California; Babcock & Wilcox and URS, the top two DOE nuclear facilities contractors; and Battelle, a global leader in science and technology and technology commercialization. The team also includes Texas A&M University, which provides programs in homeland security and national security.

The Alameda County Fire Department is a full service fire department providing all risk response to the largest fire service response area in the county, covering more than 506 square miles of urban, suburban, San Francisco Bay and rural areas. The department has 33 fire companies and 28 stations that serve the unincorporated areas of Alameda County, the cities of San Leandro, Dublin, Newark and Union City and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. ■

HOUSING

Continued from Page 5

after its legal counsel said it was unlikely the city would prevail in taking the ruling to the state Court of Appeal.

The state attorney general's office, then headed by now-Governor Jerry Brown, sided with Urban Habitat in demanding that Pleasanton provide more housing for those in the lower income brackets.

The city's early recommendation to rezone more sites to allow more than 100 acres for affordable housing was acknowledged by the state's

Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) without change. That plan exceeded the court-ordered requirements, so the planning staff and the Planning Commission reduced the actual rezoned acreage to 73 acres.

Even that is at least 200 units more than HCD and Urban Habitat want, but city staff and the commission agreed to keep the extra units in the plan in case one or more of the building sites proves unsuitable for the large apartment complexes.

Although the commission voted 5-0 to approve the Environmental

Impact Report that endorses the rezonings, Commissioner Chairwoman Kathy Narum cast the lone dissenting vote on the total number of units, arguing that there was no reason to add 200.

By court order, the sites must be rezoned and ready for consideration by interested developers by the end of January.

In a separate action, BRE, a national affordable housing developer, recently gained the city's preliminary approval of a plan it submitted to build more than 800 units in the Hacienda Business Park.

—Jeb Bing

Pleasanton Weekly

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The Pleasanton Weekly is published every Friday by Embarcadero Media, 5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite 100, Pleasanton, CA 94566; (925) 600-0840.

Mailed at Periodicals Postage Rate, USPS 020407.

The Pleasanton Weekly is mailed upon request to homes and apartments in Pleasanton. Community support of the Pleasanton Weekly is welcomed and encouraged through memberships at levels of \$5, \$8 or \$10 per month through automatic credit card charges. Print subscriptions for businesses or residents of other communities are \$60 per year or \$100 for two years. Go to www.PleasantonWeekly.com to sign up and for more information.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Pleasanton Weekly, 5506 Sunol Blvd., Suite 100, Pleasanton, CA 94566.

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GUEST OPINION

By ERIC SWALWELL

I've been listening'

In September, I announced I am running for the U.S. Congress for California's new 15th Congressional District, which includes all of Pleasanton. As a prosecutor, Dublin City Councilman and former Tri-Valley soccer player and coach, I feel a connection to each city in the district and can offer new energy and ideas. But I don't know it all.

To fully understand the issues facing the voters in the district, I spent the past eight weeks on a "Listening to You" tour of many of the district's downtown areas. I talked to hundreds of business owners and patrons about what they expect from their next Congressman. I have listened carefully. And I hear you.

Voters have "partisan-bickering" fatigue. You often asked, "Why can't they just get along and work for me?" You expressed disgust at a "Super-Committee" that failed to reach an agreement on debt-reduction, a Jobs bill that won't pass, and endless gridlock. Sadly, today's Congress has too many finger-pointers and not enough problem-solvers. I will lead by example, as an independent congressman who is willing to work with anyone who is willing to work with me. The unemployment line is single-file only and draws no distinction between parties.

Voters want policies that spur job creation. I will advocate for policies that enable entrepreneurship, entice small businesses to hire, and inspire individuals to go out on their own and start something big. For our workforce, I will seek to provide a meaningful payroll tax holiday (not the measly two months currently proposed in Congress) and fund job re-training for the unemployed in emerging fields like green technology and high-skilled manufacturing.

For small businesses, I will strive to have government work for you rather than stand in the way, so you may hire more work-

ers, be more profitable, and bring foot traffic for surrounding businesses. I will introduce a one-year tax deferral for any new small business that opens its doors and hires three or more employees. We need businesses focused on getting off the runway and into the air, not grounded on the tarmac in government bureaucracy.

Finally, voters want an end to Congressional double standards and corporate greed. Regardless of political party, you have told me it is unacceptable for members of Congress to engage in insider stock-trading. You conveyed outrage that bailed out banks are rewarding their executives with fat bonuses, freezing small business loans and increasing fees on the backs of working families. No one can believe that Congressman Pete



Stark can physically live and claim a primary residence tax exemption in Maryland, and yet "represent" a district in California. This is unacceptable conduct and we can do better.

As a prosecutor, I have worked to enforce the law, deliver justice to victims of crime, and punish bullies. I will take that same spirit to Congress and fight to reform government and hold banks and lawmakers accountable for their actions.

The people I have heard from are not asking for a lot. They want Congress to work for them within a budget, policies that will stimulate the job-market, and for Congress and big banks to be held to the same standards as the rest of us.

This tour has reinforced the idea that you can learn a lot from hard-working folks, if you just listen.

—Eric Swalwell is a city councilman for the city of Dublin and a candidate for the Democratic Party nomination to the new 15th Congressional District. ■

LETTERS

Keep route scenic

Dear Editor,

A court recently called a halt to Caltrans' reconstruction of the Niles Canyon highway. I am glad for that and I'll tell you why. That section of Highway 84 is a designated scenic corridor and should not be decimated by a Caltrans-inflated vision of what a highway should be. It says its justification for spending a large sum of money on the road is that there are an inordinate number of accidents, including some that involve deaths. I can believe that and the problem should be dealt with. But it can be dealt with simply,

inexpensively and effectively while preserving the scenic corridor flavor.

The 45 mph speed limit should be reduced to 35 or even 30 and through-trucks be limited to those under 15,000 pounds gross. These measures would calm traffic and reduce accidents, particularly the most violent ones and their resulting deaths. Caltrans' justification for reconstruction would be met, only simply and inexpensively.

If Caltrans has several tens of millions of extra dollars to spend in this geographic area, I would suggest spending it on the bone-jarring I-680 between Pleasanton and Sunol.

Paul L. Anderson

EDITORIAL

THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

What a year it's been

As cities go in this financially-pressed state of California, Pleasanton had a very good year. The office vacancy rate that stood at 28.2% just a year ago has gradually come down to 9.8% today. Downtown Pleasanton is even better with a less than 5% vacancy rate. Jobs are back, too, with several hundred new jobs added at the new, multi-million-dollar Safeway Lifestyle store complex on Bernal at Valley, with more to come as two new restaurants and more retailers open for business. Union Bank already has opened and Wells Fargo Bank's new two story center is framed out at the Bernal Avenue entrance with its opening scheduled for early spring.

Over on Staples Ranch at the city's eastern edge, large construction projects also in the multi-million-dollar range are under way. Ground was broken a few months ago on the Stoneridge Creek retirement community, and work now is also under way on new community parks nearby. Crews just paved part of the new extension of Stoneridge Drive which, when completed, will connect to El Charro Road and Jack London Boulevard in Livermore.

Work is continuing, too, on the new Clorox research and office center off Hopyard Road and Johnson Drive, which 1,100 employees will call home in the coming months. That will add much needed zest to neighboring restaurants and retail shops along Hopyard. A bit of financial relief has also come to Hacienda Business Park, where Robert Half recently moved most of its operations to San Ramon. Pacific Office Automation has announced that it will lease nearly 20,000 square feet of office space in the Britannia Business Center on Stoneridge Drive.

As the recession winds down, there's also good news for the city government. Because of judicious financial planning when times were good, the city built its "rainy day" reserves to handle fiscal emergencies. It instituted a job and wage freeze, now two years old, and trimmed expenditures that could wait, such as vehicle replacement and capital improvements. The result is that Pleasanton ends the year with no layoffs or reduction in services, and no need to draw down its reserves. Other cities in the state, including neighboring Dublin and Livermore, had much rougher going, with Livermore forced to close a library and fire station, although both have since re-opened.

Stability on the political scene helped, too, with the same members of the City Council and the mayor in place for the past four years. They're now the "elders" of the Tri-Valley with Dublin having more recently-elected council members and Livermore changing mayors just last month. That will change next November when both Mayor Jennifer Hosterman and council members Cindy McGovern and Matt Sullivan are termed out after eight years at their posts.

This stability helped the council move through the year in lock-step where it mattered. They worked together to resolve onerous legal issues imposed by the state and Alameda Superior Court after the city's 1996 housing cap was declared illegal. After hundreds of hours of community meetings and public hearings, the city has finalized a rezoning plan to satisfy its critics. The five on the council also agreed to defend the city from legal suits by developers who wanted to build homes on Pleasanton's eastern hills, even though four had initially favored the Oak Grove development, and they came together to put the rules in place for a Climate Action Plan, also ordered by state authorities.

This was also the year for pension reform, or at least the first efforts to reduce the city's unfunded pension obligations. In addition to cutting \$20 million in city expenses since 2008, the council voted to reduce its pension liabilities by 10% and trim personnel expenses as a percentage of the operating budget to 70% from its current 78%. City Manager Nelson Fialho set the pace for individual commitments to pension reform by voluntarily deducting 8% from his paychecks to go for pension and health care benefits. Other managers followed, agreeing to have 4% of their salaries deducted for pension/health care, with their contribution rising to 8% next July. Members of the city employees' union also agreed to start contributing 2%, effective last September, which will go to 3% next month and then to 4% July 1. Contracts now being negotiated with the police union and firefighters' union may include much of the same pension contribution reforms.

With sales tax revenue inching up ever so slightly as 2011 comes to an end and property tax revenue holding, the year earns a qualified thumbs up. Nowhere near the robust years of 2007 and before, the year is ending on an upward trend that should make 2012 even better. ■



Visit [Town Square at PleasantonWeekly.com](http://TownSquareatPleasantonWeekly.com) to comment on the editorial.

POLICE BULLETIN

Robbery at J.C. Penny

Pleasanton police are investigating a Dec. 23 holdup at the J.C. Penny store in Stoneridge Shopping Center.

Cash was taken in the robbery, which occurred at about 6:47 p.m., according to a police report; little additional information is being released because the case is under active investigation.

In other police reports:

An attempt to steal a catalytic converter from a vehi-

cle in the 4600 block of Sandalwood drive led to multiple charges against the would-be thief. Thomas Tong Vang, 32, was arrested at about 2:01 a.m. Dec. 26 and charged with possession of stolen property, possession of burglary tools, auto parts theft and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Caffino, a coffee kiosk in the 6700 block of Santa Rita Road, was burgled twice in a week. The first occurred at about 4:24 a.m. Dec. 23 and the second took place near the same time, 4:52 a.m., on Dec. 26. Cash was stolen in both break-ins.

A burglar targeted washing machines at Royal Garden Apartments on Dec. 22. Police received call at about 11:23 a.m.; no money was taken.

POLICE REPORT

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

Dec. 20

Theft

- 10:06 a.m. in the 1100 block of Santa Rita Road; theft, possession of stolen property
- 5:01 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; identity theft, shoplifting, possession of stolen property, three counts of possession of drugs with intent to sell

Auto burglary

- 9:51 p.m. in the 2400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

Drug/alcohol violations

- 10:06 a.m. in the 1100 block of Santa Rita Road; marijuana possession, under the influence of a controlled substance
- 4:08 p.m. in the 2300 block of Greenberry Court; possession of a controlled substance, hypodermic needle possession
- 10:06 p.m. in the 4300 block of Bristolwood Road; marijuana possession

Dec. 21

Theft

- 4:19 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- 5:04 p.m. in the 1200 block of Hearst Drive; theft
- 9:48 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft

Drug/alcohol violations

- 9:54 p.m. at the intersection of Bernal Avenue and Windmill Way; DUI
- 12:39 p.m. in the 5500 block of W. Las Positas Boulevard; public drunkenness

Dec. 22

Petty theft

- 10:04 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

Burglary

- 11:23 a.m. in the 3700 block of Vineyard Avenue

Vandalism

- 2:04 p.m. in the 5800 block of Owens Drive

Drug/alcohol violations

- 2:07 a.m. in the 5800 block of W. Las Positas Boulevard; DUI
- 12:17 p.m. in the 6000 block of Stoneridge Drive; public drunkenness
- 11:27 p.m. in the 700 block of Main Street; public drunkenness

Dec. 23

Robbery

- 6:47 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

Theft

- 9:13 a.m. in the 300 block of Neal Street; identity theft
- 5:17 p.m. in the 6900 block of Bernal Avenue; theft
- 5:26 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft

Burglary

- 4:24 a.m. in the 6700 block of Santa Rita Road

Public drunkenness

- 2:12 p.m. in the 6900 block of Bernal Avenue

Dec. 24

Theft

- 1:12 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- 2:33 p.m. in the 5700 block of W. Las Positas Boulevard; grand theft
- 4:18 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; petty theft
- 5:08 p.m. at the intersection of Siena Street and Lucca Court; auto theft
- 6:13 p.m. in the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive; petty theft, paraphernalia possession

Vandalism

- 2:20 a.m. in the 3900 block of Pimlico Drive

Drug/alcohol violations

- 1:35 a.m. at the intersection of Valley Avenue and Paseo Santa Cruz; public drunkenness
- 3:21 p.m. in the 4500 block of First Street; public drunkenness
- 11:52 p.m. in the 600 block of Rose Avenue; possession of a non-narcotic

controlled substance, paraphernalia possession, under the influence of a controlled substance

Dec. 25

Assault with a deadly weapon

- 3:37 p.m. in the 7000 block of Johnson Drive

Vandalism

- 8:54 p.m. in the 4700 block of McHenry Gate Way

Dec. 26

Theft

- 2:01 a.m. in the 4600 block of Sandalwood Way; possession of stolen property, possession of lock-picking tools, auto parts theft, contributing to the delinquency of a minor
- 6:42 p.m. in the 1500 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft, vandalism

Battery

- 4:21 a.m. in the 2100 block of Foxswallow Road
- 1:49 p.m. in the 1800 block of Santa Rita Road

Vandalism

- 11:06 p.m. in the 3800 block of Vineyard Avenue

Underage alcohol possession

- 11:09 p.m. in the 200 block of Kottinger Drive

Dec. 27

Theft

- 8:47 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; theft
- 9:37 p.m. in the 6300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; grand theft
- 9:56 p.m. in the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft
- 10:15 p.m. in the 2700 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; petty theft

Burglary

- 4:52 a.m. in the 6700 block of Santa Rita Road

Public drunkenness

- 1:49 a.m. in the 1800 block of Santa Rita Road
- 11:16 p.m. in the 4200 block of Dundalk Court

OBITUARIES

Paul Joseph Nappo

May 7, 1950 – Dec. 13, 2011

Paul was born and raised in Oakland, CA and was a longtime resident of Pleasanton, Ca. He passed away peacefully December 13, 2011 surrounded by his family. He was preceded in death by his father, Joseph Angelo Nappo and in-laws Rudolph and Evalyn Peters. Paul was a devoted, lov-

ing husband, father and Nonno to wife Debra, daughter Stephanie (Josh), son Nicholas and granddaughter Hayden. Loving son to Frances Nappo, brother Thomas (Faye), Marilyn and Marlene (Ted) brother in law to David (Laurie), Denise and Ron (Christina). Favorite and adored uncle to many nieces and nephews



as well as communal father to countless others. He also leaves behind many loyal, devoted lifelong friends. Paul was a proud member of Fratellanza Men's Italian Club and a devoted machinist at Koffler Electrical. His greatest joys were outdoor activities, music, playing with the kids, time with family and friends and being with the love of his life, Debra!

Private services will be held. Donations may be made to Hope Hospice, 6377 Clark Ave. #100 Dublin, CA 94568.

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THE CITY OF
PLEASANTON

WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES

City Council
Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Public Hearing: Adopt a resolution approving the Citizen's Options for Public Safety Program (COPS) Year 14 appropriation
- Public Hearing: PGPA 17; and P11 0904 through P11 0925 and P11 0927 through P11 0934, City of Pleasanton Housing Element Update – Consideration and certification of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report documents for the General Plan Housing Element and Climate Action Plan; the Housing Element; and General Plan Amendments (GPA) and Specific Plan Amendments (SPA); and/or Rezoning of 15 sites to allow multi family or single family residential development or mixed use (including multi family residential) development

Human Services Commission - Cancelled
Wednesday, January 4, 2012

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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LOOKING BACK AT

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

At this time of year we are all wondering: Where has the year gone? Take a look at some of the news covered by the Pleasanton Weekly in 2011 and you will see that the last 12 months were full of newsworthy events.

From little Brandon Lin born 7 minutes after midnight on Jan. 1 to the revelries and nostalgic get-togethers tomorrow night, 2011 has been a full year, with events that were fun, interesting and significant to our city.

JANUARY

■ Brandon Lin, son of Su-Lyn and Peter Lin of San Ramon, is the first baby born in 2011 at ValleyCare Medical Center Saturday morning, arriving at 7 minutes after midnight Jan. 1.

■ World Walk to Wellness holds festival to encourage people to stay healthy by taking daily walks to boost their New Year's resolutions to get more exercise. The group aims to hold monthly walks with leaders.

■ Mayor Jennifer Hosterman attends 79th winter meeting of U.S. Conference of Mayors, meeting with President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden.

■ Mothers with a Purpose, a newly formed support group, organizes in Pleasanton for parents dealing with drug-addicted children.

■ Trial begins for Ernie Scherer III in the double slayings of his parents, Ernie Scherer Jr., 60, and Charlene Abendroth, 57.

■ The Pleasanton Weekly is named the winner of this year's "Business Philanthropy Award" by the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce.

■ Rapid starts a \$14 million bus service from the new West Pleasanton/Dublin BART station to Sandia and Livermore national laboratories in East Livermore with stops along the way.

■ The founder of Tri-Valley University, Susan Xiao-Ping Su, who owns two homes in Pleasanton, is charged with money laundering, mail fraud and wire fraud.

FEBRUARY

■ Mayor Jennifer Hosterman says at the annual State of the City address that with sales tax revenue inching up and new businesses opening or expanding, Pleasanton is in a strong financial position.

■ Judge dismisses Jennifer and Fredric Lin lawsuit against Pleasanton to build 51 houses on 600 acres in the southeast hills.

■ Amador Valley High School captures first place in the statewide "We the People" competition. It goes on to Washington, D.C., to place second in the nation.

■ West Pleasanton/Dublin BART sta-

tion opens with great fanfare on a rainy Saturday.

■ East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) holds informational meeting in Pleasanton about changes recommended for Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreational Area, including eliminating the waterslides.

■ City Council OKs 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.

■ New Safeway Lifestyle store at Valley and Bernal near I-680 breaks ground, pledging to be open by Thanksgiving.

■ Due to grim financial prognosis, school district staff suggests cutting summer school remedial programs, teacher training and adult education, as well as a health services liaison position.

■ Borders announces bankruptcy and the closure of its Pleasanton and San Ramon stores.

■ Union marks one-year anniversary of Castlewood Country Club locked-out workers with a protest march that halts cars for half a mile.

MARCH

■ City Council ratifies EBRPD Master Plan to run the Iron Horse Trail through Hacienda Business Park, closing the missing gap in the 28-mile trail that mainly follows the old Southern Pacific Railway right of way.

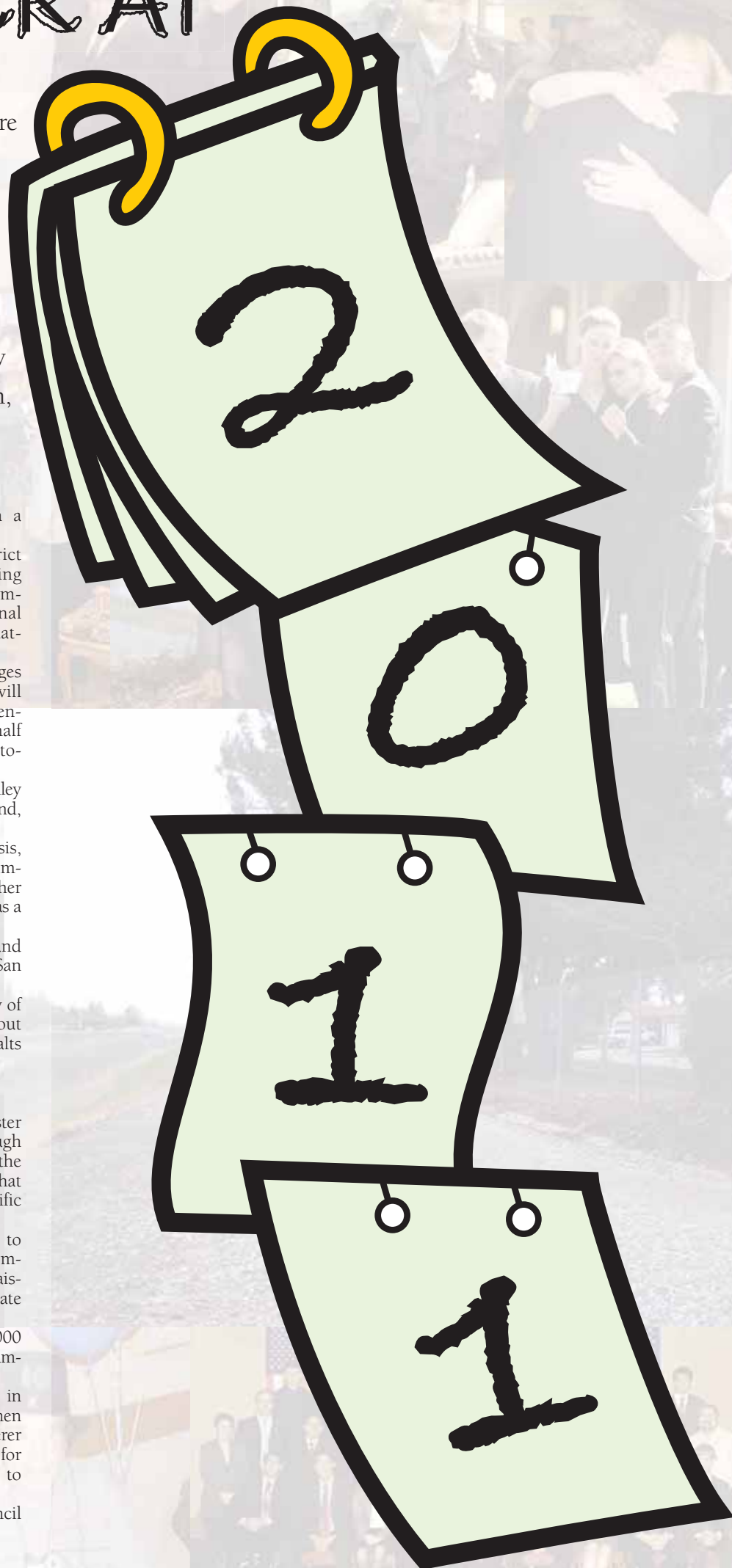
■ Pleasanton school board votes to send layoff notices to more than 62 employees, while hoping private fundraising, the passage of a parcel tax or a state tax extension may save them.

■ Pleasanton Weekly disburses \$147,000 raised in its 2010 Holiday Fund campaign to five nonprofit organizations.

■ Jury receives its final instructions in the murder trial of Ernie Scherer III, then takes less than 11 hours to find Scherer guilty on two charges of murder for financial gain. He is later sentenced to serve two consecutive life sentences.

■ Bob Cordtz, a regular at City Council

See 2011 REVIEW on Page 12



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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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Donate Platelets

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2011 REVIEW

Continued from Page 11

meetings, producer of OpinionPleasanton.com, a 2000 mayoral candidate, and owner of a downtown B&B, dies at age 85.

■ Jennifer and Fredric Lin offer new plan for the land in the southeast hills: subdividing the 526 acres into 10 residential, ranch-type lots.

■ Army Specialist Jameson Lindskog, 23, of Pleasanton is killed in an apparent roadside bomb explosion near Kabul, Afghanistan.

APRIL

■ Measure E ballots are mailed to homes in the Pleasanton Unified School District, proposing a \$98 a year parcel tax. The district is faced with a budget deficit of \$7.7



million for the 2011-12 school year.

■ The U.S. Army Reserve and SunCal sign a property exchange agreement to allow new military facilities at Camp Parks Reserve Forces Training Area in exchange for 180 acres to be developed into a Dublin master-planned community.

■ Valley Humane Society in Pleasanton offers lodgings for some of 10 mixed breed dogs removed from a home of animal hoarders in the Sacramento area and helps with their removal.

■ Christopher Michael Carroll, 36, the Manteca man who sped up to 100 mph on the freeway with his wife on the hood and finally stopped in Pleasanton, is found mentally competent to stand trial.

■ Alex Chin, a sixth-grader at Pleasanton Middle School, hits his second hole-in-one at Las Positas Golf Course.

■ Pleasanton Weekly is recognized by the California Newspaper Publishers Association (CNPA), winning second place in the Public Service category among all state weekly newspapers in its circulation category for its 2010 Holiday Fund campaign and the series of stories that supported it.

MAY

■ Pleasanton teen improv troupe, Creatures of Impulse, is invited to perform in Teen

Comedy Festival in Chicago

■ Parcel tax Measure E is defeated, 65.16% of the 20,620 votes, just missing the two-thirds needed.

■ David Spiller, 43, is sworn in as Pleasanton police chief.

■ Christopher Michael Carroll, 36, will spend the next five years in state prison after pleading guilty in a negotiated plea deal to a crime of violence Feb. 25 that led to his wife's death on the freeway with his wife on the hood.

■ Pleasanton Unified School District endorses legislation to eliminate parcel tax measures requiring a two-thirds majority.



■ Pleasanton passes two-year budget plan, the line on hiring, wages and major projects.

JUNE

■ France honors Pleasanton's Robert R. Natter, 90, for his part in its liberation during World War II.

■ Las Positas College names Kevin V. West as its new president after a year-long search.

■ Alameda County Fair, a Pleasanton tradition since 1912, opens June 22 through July 10 with plans to grill a 100-pound hamburger, the largest ever.

■ Pleasanton Unified School District passes budget without final state figures, with \$10 million in cuts to programs and services.

■ Twenty-three people protesting the lockout of Castlewood Country are arrested for blocking Castlewood Country.

■ What organizers describe as an act of disobedience.

■ Alameda County Supervisors proceed with boundary changes that

place Pleasanton in District 4, which is represented by Supervisor Nate Miley, rather than Scott Haggerty's District 1.

JULY

- Alameda County Fair breaks attendance records with a total of 452,746 fairgoers, up 8% over last year, and well above the previous record of 434,919 in 2009.
- I-GATE opens its business hub in Livermore as part of a regional effort to help entrepreneurs and businesses develop clean

AUGUST

- Valley Humane Society receives \$175,000 in donations after announcing it needs \$125,000 by the month's end. Community businesses launch fundraisers to keep open the nonprofit no-kill shelter.
- First Fast and Furious Fest is held on Main Street with bicycle races that include well-known pros cycling for an hour on a 1-mile route in a circle around town, a fundraiser for ALS.

long vacant Vintage Hills shopping center. Congregation Beth Emek names David Katz to serve as interim rabbi for two years as the board searches for a permanent rabbi.

SEPTEMBER

- Ten-year anniversary memorials of Sept. 11 attacks are held at Fairgrounds and at Livermore-Pleasanton Fire District headquarters.
- Two teens are stabbed in altercation on First Street near Village High School; 16-year-old is arrested and to be tried as an adult.
- Bibiane Bakery closes on Main Street, ending a five-year run as a main attraction in Tully's Plaza.
- Mayor Jennifer Hosterman presents May-

true to the historic character of the downtown district. After 10 years of moving from place to place, School of Imagination moves into its new 12,000-square-foot permanent facility in Dublin, which was custom-built by Discovery Homes. Councilman Jerry Thorne launches campaign to run for Pleasanton mayor in the 2012 election, with a breakfast at the Fairgrounds. Cynthia L. Bryant, Pleasanton Poet Laureate from 2005-07, is appointed to the position again, succeeding Deborah Grossman, whose two-year term has ended. Cheryl Cook-Kallio throws her hat in the ring to run for mayor in 2012.

NOVEMBER

- Assemblywoman Mary Hayashi (D-18th) is charged with grand theft for allegedly leaving Union Square's Neimann Marcus with \$2,445 worth of merchandise.
- Safeway opens new Lifestyle supermarket



Clockwise from upper left: Parcel tax organizer Tanya Ludden gets a hug after its defeat; Brandon Lin, first ValleyCare baby born in 2011, with brother Kenshin; Dolores Bengtson and W. Ron Sutton of World Walk to Wellness; Alex Chin hit second hole in one; new Police Chief David Spiller; Ernest Scherer III at parents' funeral — he was convicted three years later for their murder; BART board vice president John McPartland, director Pete Snyder cut ribbon at West Dublin/Pleasanton BART station; French Consul General awards Robert L. Vannatter with French Legion of Honor medal; Army Specialist Jameson Lindskog.

- energy and efficient transportation systems.
- After spending \$2 million to fight a decade-long lawsuit by Signature Properties over the construction of the proposed Neal Elementary School, Pleasanton Unified School District ends up with \$350,000.
- City OKs provisional plan to rezone 17 separate sites totaling 105 acres for more than 3,000 "affordable" high-density housing units.
- East Bay Regional Park District police recover about \$1 million worth of marijuana plants growing in Las Trampas Regional Wilderness with an elaborate irrigation system tapping the park's water supply.
- Valley Humane Society, after just moving into new \$1.3 million facility, announces it is out of money and may close within the next 30 days, due to a confluence of declining contributions and increased demand.
- Axis Community Health adds two pediatric examination rooms and more staff to increase its patient capacity.

- Steve Carlson, 43, is arrested in Santa Cruz, charged with the murder of 14-year-old Foothill High freshman Tina Faelz in 1984, when he was also a freshman.
- After three years of planning, City Council OKs a broad-based Climate Action Plan that could make Pleasanton "one of the greenest cities in California."
- Students in the Pleasanton school district score above both the state and county averages in STAR test scores released for the 2010-11 school year.
- Domus reopens its kitchen and home accessories store at 652 Main St., which had remained vacant since Domus left in July 2008.
- District Attorney Nancy O'Malley honors Mothers with a Purpose for its work in fighting prescription drug abuse.
- New Leaf Community Market from Santa Cruz announces plans to open a store with an emphasis on organics and sustainability in the

- or's Award to Bob and Joyce Shapiro for their longtime commitment to Pleasanton and its organizations.
- Pleasanton Unified School District Superintendent Parvin Ahmadi joins her counterparts in Alameda County to take a stand against the federal No Child Left Behind Act because of its one-size-fits-all approach.
- Pleasanton is named a top city in California in a ranking by the online review site, AreaVibes.
- Protestors wearing yellow badges ask City Council to keep Wal-Mart from opening one of its Neighborhood Market stores in the former Nob Hill supermarket, citing its low wages and lack of health care for employees.
- Mt. Diablo State Park police and Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office deputies raid marijuana growing operation on Mount Diablo, netting from \$3 million-\$5 million in plants.

OCTOBER

- Pleasanton's oldest resident, Orville Nightingale, turns 107 and celebrates at Ridge View Commons.
- Ground is broken for Stoneridge Creek retirement community on the Staples Ranch property.
- Pleasanton Heritage Association gives its first Architectural Heritage Award for New Construction to Emil and Marjorie Oxsen for their home on Peters Avenue for being

- on Bernal and Valley Avenue, the second Safeway in Pleasanton.
- Crystal Bell is installed at Firehouse Arts Center on Railroad Avenue to represent the historic fire bell that once served at the old Fire Station No. 1.
- City Council OKs 21,000-square-foot Alzheimer care facility on a 1.7-acre site on Sunol Boulevard.
- Tri-Valley YMCA moves from Pleasanton office on First Street to spacious new facilities in Dublin and plans to offer classes and services at both places.
- Pleasanton Weekly launches 2011 Holiday Fund to benefit nonprofit groups in the community.

DECEMBER

- Hometown Holiday Celebration on Dec. 3 draws a record number of 2,500 entries and 25,000 fans.
- Pleasanton Public Library completes installation of new lighting program that saves 46% in energy usage.
- Tri-Valley Community Foundation presents Pleasanton Weekly with its "Community Champion" award for its annual Holiday Fund program that raises money for local nonprofit organizations.
- Mayor Jennifer Hosterman sidesteps concern over appointing a possible mayoral candidate to the post of vice mayor for 2012 by agreeing with Councilman Jerry Thorne's suggestion to rotate the post on a quarterly basis. Councilwoman Cindy McGovern opts out of the rotation.
- School Board Member Joan Laursen is named president of the board for 2012, in a 3-2 vote by the trustees. Jeff Bowser is voted clerk of the board, a position that usually leads to the presidency.



AMERICAN

Eddie Papa's American Hangout

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

BARBECUE

Red Smoke Grill

4501 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 734-0307. Home of the Tri Tip and Blue, Red Smoke Grill was Voted Reader's Choice Best 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011. Dine in or take out rotisserie chicken, ribs, prawns, salads and tri tip, or pulled pork sandwiches. Relax with a beer or a bottle of wine. Visit www.redsmokegrill.com.

BREW PUB/ALEHOUSE

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3015H Hopyard Road, Pleasanton, 426-9600. Voted Best Watering Hole in Pleasanton, The Hop Yard offers 30 craft beers on tap as well as great food. The full-service menu includes appetizers, salads and grilled fare that will bring you back time and again. Banquet facilities available. On the web at www.hopyard.com.

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

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Entree
• Roasted Beet 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 Purée and Heirloom Cauliflower •

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

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Author Visits

GUJARATI KITCHEN (INDIAN) COOKBOOK LAUNCH Meet Bhanu Hajratwala, author of "Gujarati Kitchen," at 1 p.m., Jan. 15, at 847 E. Angela St. The book has treasured family recipes starting from basic spices. This event is free, but reservations are required; call 846-3521.

Classes

BEGINNERS INTERNET CLASSES Pleasanton Public Library will host a beginners internet class that will meet for a monthly four-class series at 9 a.m., with a choice of Tuesday

or Thursday, at the library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. This program is free, but registration is required; call 931-3400.

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.

HIDDEN WORLDS Travel into little seen worlds; the macroscopic and microscopic universes where you'll be in for some big surprises, from 11 a.m.-noon, Saturday, Jan. 21, at Alviso Adobe Community Park, 3465 Old Foothill Road. Cost is \$3 for residents; \$5 for non-residents. Pre-registration is required; call 931-3479.

JAPANESE MAPLE PRUNING Learn the best pruning techniques to make your Japanese Maple look its best. Care, feeding and pest control will also be covered. The class is from 10-11:30 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 28, and at 1 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 29, at Western Garden Nursery, 2756 Vineyard Ave. Call 462-1760 or visit www.WesternGardenNursery.com.

PIGMENT-MAKING AND CAVE-PAINTING Learn to make pigments from some of the materials nature provides from 11 a.m.-noon, Saturday, Jan. 14, at Alviso Adobe Community Park, 3465 Old Foothill Road. Use the pigments to make cave paintings like those who lived on this land before us. Cost is \$5 for residents; \$7 for non-residents. Pre-registration is required; call 931-3479.

ROSE PRUNING Learn the basics of pruning bush, tree and climbing roses. Care, feeding and pest control will also be covered. This is a free class taught by Lita Gates of Western Garden Nursery. The class is from 10-11:30 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 14, and 1 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 15, at the nursery, 2756 Vineyard Ave. Call 462-1760 or visit www.WesternGardenNursery.com.

SODOKU 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.

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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.

Clubs

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/.

RING IN 2012 WITH YOUR GNON SISTERS! Celebrate 2012 at a special GNON "New Years" event hosted by Comerica Bank from 5:30-8 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 12, at the bank, 600 Main St. Enjoy great food, drinks and networking. Cost is \$10 for members; \$15 for non-members. Reservations are due by Jan. 10 to gnoners@gmail.com.

Exhibits

'ELOQUENCE IN PRINTMAKING' Firehouse Arts Center's Harrington Gallery will host the Blue Bay Press exhibit, "Eloquence in Printmaking," from Jan. 19-Feb. 18, at the gallery, 4444 Railroad Ave. exhibit will include several styles of printmaking, etching, monotype, and woodblock on such surfaces as handmade paper, canvas, and more. There will be an artists' reception from 6:30-8:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 19. Admission to both the reception and exhibit is free, but donations are appreciated. The gallery is open from noon-5 p.m., Wednesday-Friday; and 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday; and for one hour prior to each Firehouse Arts Center performance and during intermission. Call 931-4849 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

Fundraisers

BOY SCOUT CHRISTMAS TREE PICKUP The Pleasanton Boy Scout Troop 941 and Crew 940 Boy Scout Troop 941 and Crew 940 will conduct their annual Christmas Tree Pickup fundraiser from 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 7, from addresses in Pleasanton only. Register by Jan. 5 at <http://tree-pickup.troop941.org>; or call 399-1377. Trees must be in driveways by 8 a.m. with stands removed. Donations are not required but suggested at \$5 for trees 6 feet or under; \$10 for larger trees; add \$10 for flocked trees. Pleasanton.

CRAB FEED Pleasanton Knights of Columbus is having its 43rd annual Crab Feed from 5-11:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 21, at St. Augustine Church Hall, 3999 Bernal Ave. The proceeds are used to benefit the church and community through the activities of the Knights of Columbus. Tickets are \$40. Steak tickets available for non-crab eaters. There will be a silent auction. Call Brad Schieferstein at 846-7181 or e-mail crabfeed@comcast.net.

WORK OUT FOR CANCER VICTIMS Tri Valley Trainer will host an Open House benefit from noon-5 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 7, at Tri Valley Trainer, 3724 E. Stanley Blvd. Cost is \$25. Proceeds benefit the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation. Attend any or all of our group exercise classes, including yoga, boxing, zumba, cardio/strength/pilates). Call 413-2268 or visit <http://trivalleytrainer.com>.

Health

DEVIL MOUNTAIN OCD SUPPORT AND INFORMATION Beginning after the first of the year, this group will meet monthly for parents and adults who have or have a family member dealing with OCD from 7-8:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 19. Discussion will center on proper diagnosis, finding help and the use of CBT, ERP and medications. Similar issues such as BDD, skin picking, will be discussed. For information, call 648-4800 or visit www.behaviorquest.com.

Kids & Teens

M.O.M.'S READING TIME Preschoolers and their parents are invited to meet from 10-11 a.m. the second Wednesday of the month at Museum On Main, 603 Main St. Museum On Main introduces your preschooler to books and activities about the unique people, places, and events in our community. Call 462-2766 or visit www.museumonmain.org.

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.

Political Notes

TRI-VALLEY REPUBLICAN WOMEN FEDERATED This club will meet for dinner at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 12, at Cattlemen's, 2882 Kitty Hawk Road, Livermore. Guest speaker will be Roseanne from the Northern Division of Republican Women Federated. Cost is \$26 for members; \$30 for non-members. E-mail coupclan1962@pacbell.net.

Spiritual

REIKI GROUP The Japanese systems of Reiki is a spiritual practice which uses meditation, chanting, visualizations, and hands-on energy group work so that you can connect to their true nature. No prior Reiki experience is necessary. Classes are from 10-11:45 a.m. on the first and third Saturdays of

every month at Tri Valley Unity's Gathering Place, 7567 Amador Valley Blvd., #120, Dublin. Contact Gayle at gstaehle@comcast.net.

ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH Liturgy worship service is from 10-11:30 a.m. every Sunday at St. Innocent Orthodox Church, 1040 Florence Rd., Livermore.

SUNDAY SCHOOL Faith Chapel Assembly of God, 6656 Alisal St., offers Sunday School for all ages at 9:15 a.m.; Worship at 10:30 a.m.; and Children's Church at 11:15 a.m. Women's Bible study takes place 10-11:30 a.m. Wednesdays. Call 846-8650 for weekly programs.

WEEKLY LDS BIBLE STUDY Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hosts a weekly bible study from 7:30-8:30 p.m. every Wednesday at the church, 6100 Paseo Santa Cruz. Refreshments served. For information, call 305-9468.

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.

TEAM IN TRAINING INFO MEETING Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team In Training (TNT), the largest and most successful endurance sports training and fundraising program, will inspire and support you to achieve your goal of an endurance event. Attend a meeting from 6:30-8 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 19, at Pleasanton Middle School, 5001 Case Ave. Call 800-78-TRAIN or visit www.teamintraining.org/sf.

Support Groups

BEYOND TREATMENT BREAST CANCER This group provides a safe place to express and share thoughts, concerns and experiences of living with the uncertainty after treatment for breast cancer, the physical effects and problems related to intimacy, marriage, reproduction and employment. The group meets from 6-8 p.m. the fourth Thursday of the month at ValleyCare Health Library and Ryan Comer Cancer Resource Center, 5725 W. Las Positas Blvd., Suite #270. The group is facilitated by Mary Prishtina, RN, and Estee Goren, MFT. Call 399-1177.

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 E. 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.

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

DEPRESSION & BIPOLAR Depression Bipolar Support Alliance, DBSA, is a support group for people who live with depression, bipolar and other disabilities. They can help each other navigate the ups and downs of life! A place where you can be yourself and feel safe. The group meets from 7:15-8:45 p.m. every Wednesday, at St. Claire's Episcopal Church, Classroom 1, 3350 Hopyard Rd., although it is not affiliated with the church. No charge for meetings. Call 462-6415 or visit www.dbsalliance.org/pleasanton.

EAST BAY ESSENTIAL TREMOR SUPPORT GROUP If you have recently been diagnosed with ET or would like to learn more about this common movement disorder in a safe and supportive environment, please join us from 10 a.m.-noon on the third Saturday of each month, in the Blackhawk A and B conference rooms at San Ramon Regional Medical Center, 6001 Norris Canyon Rd. For more information, view their blog at www.eastbayet.com or call 487-5706 or email eastbayet@comcast.net.

HOPE HOSPICE GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS Hope Hospice offers ongoing grief support services for adults, teens and children including a Transitions Support Group; Tragic Loss Support Group; individualized grief support; caregiver support; on-site support for schools; youth organizations and the workplace; community support services; a resource library; and more. For more information or to register, call 829-8770.

INTEGRATED MIND AND BODY GRIEF SUPPORT This comprehensive set of grief support services is offered at the Hope Hospice Grief Support Center from 5-7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month at Hope Hospice, 6377 Clark Ave., Ste. 100., Dublin. Services include various forms of gentle touch as well as guided imagery, meditation and stress management. Restore the energy depleted by grief. No charge. Call 829-8770 or visit www.hopehospice.com.

PLEASANTON MILITARY FAMILIES SUPPORT GROUP Formed in 2003 this group provides support and comfort to the Pleasanton families whose loved ones are deployed in the combat zones of Afghanistan and Iraq. The group has monthly meetings and other events such as "pack outs" of comfort and care

items for deployed members of the armed forces. The group also sponsors the Yellow Streamer program on Main Street where streamers are displayed with the name, rank and branch of service of Pleasanton military personnel. Learn more at www.pleasantonmilitaryfamilies.org.

STEPPING STONES ON YOUR GRIEF JOURNEY The death of a loved one is unlike any other loss. Join a bi-monthly support group "Stepping Stones on Your Grief Journey" at 7:30 p.m., Thursdays, Dec. 8 and 22, Jan. 12 and 26, Feb. 9 and 23, and March 8 and 22, at St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 4001 Stoneridge Dr. No pre-registration is necessary. These sessions are open to all, regardless of religious affiliation. Call Mary Hagerty at 846-5377.

TRI VALLEY SUPPORT GROUP FOR FIBROMYALGIA, LUPUS AND ALL FORMS OF ARTHRITIS This group meets from 6:30-8 p.m., on the fourth Monday of every month, at the Groves at Dublin Ranch in the Clubhouse, 3115 Finnian Way, Dublin. It hosts special speakers like doctors or specialists. For more information, call JoAnne at 875-0960.

Volunteering

AMERICAN RED CROSS The American Red Cross will be holding volunteer orientations at 5 p.m., Friday, Jan. 20, at the Pleasanton Blood Donation Center, 5556-B Springdale Ave. Call Tami at 408-577-2006 or email wethernt@usa.redcross.org

BLOOD DRIVE The American Red Cross is holding a public blood drive from noon-6 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 17 at Emma C. Smith Elementary School, School Library, 391 Ontario Dr., Livermore. Use sponsor code TeamKC when scheduling an appointment. Call 800-733-2767 or visit www.redcross-blood.org.

BLOOD DRIVE The American Red Cross is holding a public blood drive from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday, Jan. 20, at Uncle Credit Union, 2100 Las Positas Ct., Livermore. Look for the American Red Cross Bus. Use sponsor code Uncle925 when scheduling an appointment. Call 800-733-2767 or visit www.redcrossblood.org.

LIONESSE SEEK NEW MEMBERS The Livermore Lioness Club welcomes new members at its regular monthly meeting on the first Tuesday of each month, at 6:30 p.m. A \$2 to \$5 donation is requested. Participating in the many activities of the group is a great way to meet local people. The Lioness are a service club which helps many worthy causes in our community. Call 443-4543.

SHARE THE GIFT OF READING Change a Life! Become a tutor. Pleasanton Library's Project Read needs volunteer tutors to help adults with English skills. New volunteer tutor training from 1-4 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 14, at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave. Tutors need to be at least 18 years old, fluent in American English, but not necessarily a native speaker. Call 931-3405.

Holiday Fund 2011 donors

Since the launch of the 2011 Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund, 418 donors have contributed \$132,930.40 to the fund, which includes \$50,000 that was matched by the Tri-Valley Community Foundation. 60 anonymous donors have given \$9,815 of that total. The donation form is available online at pleasantonweekly.com/holiday_fund/

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

by DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

More than *sparkly* crowns

*Miss Pleasanton heads for state
pageant in Miss USA contest*

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Miss Pleasanton Danielle Alvares is headed for Palm Springs next week to compete for Miss California, USA 2012. "I've done cheerleading and dance, and I'm primed to do this type of thing," she said.



Foothill High 2010 grad Danielle Alvares, aka Miss Pleasanton, will represent her city and the Bay Area next week in a pageant being held in Palm Springs to choose Miss California, USA 2012. The winner will go on to compete in Donald Trump's Miss USA pageant in April.

"I participated in my very first pageant this past year and I have quickly developed a competitive spirit for them," said Alvares, 19. "I have discovered that pageants are, as I had hoped, more than glamorous dresses and sparkly crowns.

"They celebrate incredibly talented young women — real girls, real role models — who are truly assets to their families, friends and their communities."

After coming in 12th out of 160 contestants in the Miss Teenage California pageant

last year, based on a 30-second speech, Alvares wanted to give it another go. She'd aged out of that contest so decided to enter Miss California, USA. She was chosen Miss Pleasanton after an application process that included a series of interviews.

"The interviews get addicting," she said, noting that many young women continue to enter one pageant after another.

"Although I don't know if you'd consider me an addict yet," she added with a laugh.

The Miss California, USA contest includes interviews, and swimsuit and evening gown judging, all judged on character, poise, confidence and personality. In the swimsuit portion, the judges will look for physical fitness. Miss USA goes on to compete for Miss Universe.

"When people hear about this they think I'm this crazy pageant girl," Alvares said, "but there's something to be said for having this experience.

I've done cheerleading and dance, and I'm primed to do this type of thing."

Alvares, a sophomore at Las Positas College, believes in giving back to her community. She volunteers for the Livermore READ Project, tutoring non-native English speakers one on one. She's an ardent supporter of the American Red Cross and has donated blood every 60 days since she turned 16.

"My platform, should I win Miss California, USA, is one that is of vital importance: obesity. It's becoming an epidemic," Alvares said.

She is especially concerned about overweight trends in children.

"Girls in the contest said they used to be overweight but I never had that problem," she said, explaining that her concern stems from her mother being a dietician and her father being athletic.

"After the Miss California USA pageant, I

intend to address this issue by speaking at some of the elementary schools in Pleasanton, encouraging kids to get active," she said.

Alvares was a member of the Foothill Cheer Squad that went to national championships in 2008. She also earned varsity letters in swimming, track and field, and wrestling.

"As I am a highly competitive person by nature, without question I want to compete with the best. So here I am, competing for the title of Miss California, USA 2012," she said.

Alvares has lived here all her life and attended Fairlands Elementary and Hart Middle School. She plans to transfer to a four-year university in September, possibly UCLA or the University of Texas, to major in communications. She's considering a minor in political science.

"It's an honor for me to represent my hometown of Pleasanton," she added. ■

Livermore Valley Opera celebrates 20th anniversary

Festivities to include dinner, performance by divas and divos

Livermore Valley Opera will host its grandest celebration ever in honor of its 20th anniversary season with an evening of dinner, and a one-of-a-kind performance by leading divas and divos of favorite arias. The event will be held at 5 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 28, at Ruby Hill Golf Club.

"This exclusive event promises to be a unique experience, especially for those who take the opportunity to dine with a diva or divo at special celebrity tables," said Elizabeth Wells, Livermore Valley Opera's executive director. "One of the celebrity tables is already sold out."

The nonprofit Livermore Valley Opera was founded in 1992, and presents fully staged operas in the spring and fall at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore. The opera company combines the talents of professional musicians, stage directors, principal singers and designers with the dedication and practical abilities of volunteers filling such critical roles as board members, chorus, stage crew and set builders.

The celebration Jan. 28 will begin with champagne and a concert of music performed by three leading divas singing arias from the world's most well-known operas. Special guest artists are mezzo-soprano Zheng Cao, soprano Marie Plette, and coloratura soprano Erie Mills.



Zheng Cao



Marie Plette



Erie Mills

Cao is a regular guest of leading companies here and abroad including the San Francisco Opera. Plette is a Metropolitan Opera artist acclaimed in the major international opera houses for her portrayals of Cio-Cio San in "Madama Butterfly" and the Countess in "Le nozze di Figaro." Mills is an internationally recognized Metropolitan Opera artist and Livermore Valley Opera Advisory Council member.

Divos will include baritone Eugene Brancoveanu, the lead in the opera company's "Don Giovanni," and tenor David Gustafson, who will sing the lead in the March production of "Tosca."

All five performers will be part of the Dine with a Diva or Dine with a Divo option.

After the concert, guests will enjoy a three-course dinner and Livermore wines in the elegant Ruby Hill Ballroom. The evening culminates with a brief live auction hosted by KKIQ's Faith Alpher fea-

turing valuable luxury items such as a private airplane tour around the Bay and a one-week condominium stay in Santa Fe with tickets to the Santa Fe Opera.

"We have a wonderful evening planned," Wells said. "Ruby Hill has been great to work with in planning the event, and thanks to our 'Donor Divas' Susan Dupree, Pamela Philbert and Henrietta Fankhauser, we can offer our guests an elegant evening." ■

Tickets and unique dining experiences

- Dine with a Diva or Divo: \$175 per person (limited availability)
- Reserved priority table seating with signage for eight, 10 or 12 guests at \$140 per person
- Open seating for \$130 per person

To order tickets (by 5 p.m. Jan. 27)

- Visit www.livermorevalley-opera.com
- Contact Stephanie Petermeier at stephaniep@livermorevalley-opera.com or call 462-6964

Out & About —Concerts, Film & Live Music

'THE LAST FIVE YEARS' Pacific Coast Repertory Theatre (PCRT) will present Jason Robert Brown's "The Last Five Years" at 8 p.m., Jan. 20-21 and 27-28; and at 2 p.m., Jan. 22 and 29, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Tickets are \$18, \$29 and \$33 for adults; \$17, \$24 and \$29 for seniors and children. Call 931-4848 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

DAVID LANZ Firehouse Arts Center will host the return of Grammy-nominated composer David Lanz at 8 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 14, at the center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Tickets are \$18, \$20 and \$22 for adults; \$22 for seniors; and \$12 for children. Call 931-4848 or visit www.davidlanz.com or www.firehousearts.org.

EARLY ELVIS PRESLEY TRIBUTE Jim Anderson will perform early hits from Elvis Presley such as 'Heartbreak Hotel', 'Hound Dog', 'Don't Be Cruel', 'Jailhouse Rock' and more at 8 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 7, at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave. Tickets are \$15, \$20 and \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors, and \$12 for children. Call 931-4848 or visit www.firehousearts.org.

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.



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Christmas for all

"Every child deserves a little Christmas," said the volunteers at the Fountain Christian Fellowship Church on Stoneridge Drive. To make this happen, they served as the official Pleasanton Toys for Tots distribution location for families in need in Pleasanton for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program. The Fountain distributed over 700 toys this year to approximately 170 families. The Tri-Valley Haven, Livermore Gardens, Celebration Center and Cornerstone Fellowship distributed toys in the Livermore and Dublin area.

Capt. Peter Richert of the Pleasanton-Livermore Firefighters IAFF Local 1974 served as the Toys for Tots coordinator. Kimberly Buen and Laura Melchionne co-chaired the toy distribution at the Fountain working with Richert as well as Joseleen Katigbak, Terri Harris, Paul and Sheri Cleary (pastors of the Fountain) and others.

January is pruning month at Western Garden Nursery

Freshen up on your pruning skills by attending one of our free pruning classes in January. Care, feeding and pest control will also be covered.

All Classes are free.

Saturday classes start at 10 am.
Sunday classes start at 1 pm.

Door prizes and special discounts.

Bring a friend!

January 7 & 8 Fruit tree pruning
January 14 & 15 Roses
January 28 & 29 Japanese Maples

Honey tasting after each class.



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Gamers win Winter Madness Tournament

The 13U Headfirst Gamers took First Place at the All World Winter Madness Baseball Tournament at Twin Creek the weekend of Dec. 17-18. The team's 5-0 record was impressive as was its ability to outscore the talented Bay Area competition, 47 to 11.

Team members are (front, l-r) Cole Torquemada, Blake Staniford, (second row) Lucas Botto, Russell Stevenson, Chase Godi, Andrew Cabral, (third row) Matthew Barazza, James Cowick, Coach George Athan, Justin Seever, Michael Koidal. Not pictures: Tanner Wright.

PREP LINE-UP

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

■ Boys Soccer: 1 p.m., AVHS vs. Newark, away



Cinderella season — and finish

The Ballistic U12 boys finished a Cinderella season by winning the Nor Cal State Cup Bronze 4 division by overpowering a strong Walnut Creek side at Fallon Sports Park in Dublin, 2-0. Following a scoreless first half, things opened up in the second with both teams creating chances to score. Ballistic was rewarded when Ben Thompson sent a great pass into the right flank where Cole Heinbaugh beat a defender then angled his run toward goal and struck a powerful and accurate shot that rocked the net.

Ballistic defended superbly the next 15 minutes denying Walnut Creek any chance to tie the score by playing the ball safely out of harms way. The second and final goal came on a counterattack with two minutes left in the game to seal the championship. Ziaan Rajabali combined with Heinbaugh who repeated the exact same maneuver and scored with a thunder shot that came from the same side and same difficult angle.

Other top offensive players were Andrew Benoit, Connor Dubiel, Ryan Klein, Augustine Lucero, Trent McGill, Joseph Merkadeau, Omar Qureshi and Tommy Storey. Other top defensive players were Eric Shields, Sam Chase, Drew Helmers, Ryan Klein and Staton Rosenblum.



State cup win in penalty kicks

The Pleasanton Ballistic U9 Premier Boys soccer team won its state cup division in penalty kicks in a fight to the finish against the Roseville Blues when regular time ended with a 2-2 tie. Two five-minute overtime periods were scoreless resulting in penalty kicks to determine the winner. After standout play throughout the match, goalkeeper Brendan O'Sullivan saved three penalty shots to lead the team and shut out the Blues in penalty shots resulting in a Ballistic victory.

Team members are (front, l-r) Carson Allen, Dylan Noval, Toran Wallace, Austin Noval, Thato Meko, Cole Eastman, (back) Noah White, Brendan O'Sullivan, Colin Wallace, Michael Kachkouche, Zac Nicholas, Coach Randy James.

Guess who's joining the Pleasanton Weekly team!

Tim Hunt

will bring decades of knowledge and insight to PleasantonWeekly.com beginning January 3



- Native of Alameda County
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- Journalist at the Tri-Valley Herald for 39 years
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Missing Orange Tabby Cat
Hellion has been missing since April. Lost near Sutter Gate and Stoneridge Drive near the Arroyo. He is short haired with a long skinny tail. He is a large cat with a white chin and dark orange short hair. He has green eyes is neutered and microchipped. REWARD OFFERED. Any info call Melissa 510-381-3261.



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PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Charlotte

Charlotte is one of the very favorite girls at Tri-Valley Animal Rescue. This black and white beauty is about 4-1/2 years old and would love to find her new forever family in time for the holidays. She's laid-back and even-tempered; this is a cat who believes in taking life one day at a time and has a "no muss, no fuss" philosophy. When Charlotte finds herself in unfamiliar surroundings, she settles into a comfortable spot and observes for a while. When she's confident that all is well, she stretches, yawns and ventures forth to investigate. In no time at all, her contented purr can be heard rumbling through the room. Charlotte's TVAR fans have provided her with a "going home" package that includes everything her new family will need to make her right at home. To meet Charlotte, contact Alayna at (832) 928-7831.



LAURA FULDA



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Real Estate

OPEN HOME GUIDE AND REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

SALES AT A GLANCE

Dublin (Nov. 17 - Nov. 30)

Total sales reported: 11
Lowest sale reported: \$206,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,050,000
Average sales reported: \$506,227

Pleasanton (Nov. 17 - Nov. 30)

Total sales reported: 8
Lowest sale reported: \$250,000
Highest sale reported: \$2,500,000
Average sales reported: \$923,375

Livermore (Nov. 17 - Nov. 30)

Total sales reported: 20
Lowest sale reported: \$215,000
Highest sale reported: \$970,000
Average sales reported: \$460,775

San Ramon (Dec. 5 - Dec. 14)

Total sales reported: 23
Lowest sale reported: \$139,000
Highest sale reported: \$925,000
Average sales reported: \$510,804

Source: California REsource

Happy New Year!

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Orinda

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925.253.7000

Walnut Creek

1700 N. Main St.
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
925.280.8500

HOME SALES

This week's data represents homes sold during November 2011

Pleasanton

4266 Chapman Way Goldstein Trust to G. Gholston for \$572,000

2650 Chocolate Street S. & J. Koidal to V. Duraisamy for \$625,000

1249 Creek Trail Drive R. Bunten to P. & A. Klinger for \$1,100,000

1528 Honey Suckle Court Machi Trust to H. Wang for \$2,500,000

749 Palomino Drive Polyzos Trust to Hodnefield Trust for \$850,000

2416 Via De Los Milagros G. & I. Kinst to P. & J. Wyatt for \$975,000

3713 Vine Street Prime Growth Holdings to R. Ramdas for \$515,000

3690 Woodbine Way Federal National Mortgage to R. Mendoza for \$250,000

Source: California REsource

Visit PleasantonWeekly.com/real_estate for sales information, current listings and virtual tours.

For marketing opportunities contact Andrea Heggelund at 600-0840 x110.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Happy New Year! Thank you to my Clients, Friends and Family for a Successful 2012!

*The 2012 Spring market is right around the corner. If you are thinking
of selling your home in 2012, see what Julia's clients are saying...*

December, 2011

"We highly recommend Julia Murtagh as a partner in any real estate transaction. Julia recently represented us as our Listing agent. We were quite impressed with the level of knowledge she brought and her detailed follow up and commitment to our success with the sale of our home. We do believe that her personal touch and hands on approach assisted in a prompt and painless process. We will definitely look to Julia to handle any future real estate needs."

—Jennifer Koidal

July, 2011

"Julia was very professional through the whole transaction. She gave great advice and was able to hold the deal together in a stressful situation. She is not only a great real estate agent but she has become a great friend to me. I highly recommend Julia for any of your real estate needs no matter the situation. Thanks!"

—Karna Ferrey

March, 2011

"Julia Murtagh recently performed an excellent job of selling my home in Pleasanton. Her knowledge of the real estate market and experience in selling were key for our transaction.

Julia had numerous recommendations to enhance the attractiveness of the property, such as upgrading the appliances and kitchen counter tops, which consequently became an important factor in selling my house. Staging the house properly was crucial. Julia has a key top notch professional team which works along with her to help facilitate this process. I would not hesitate to have Julia as my agent again."

—The Doan Family

FEATURING



6023 STERLING GREEN CIRCLE

Beautiful home in the "Canyon Oaks" neighborhood of South Pleasanton. This 4 bed/2.5 bath home, is just under 2900 sq ft. Built by KB homes in 2003, on a secluded and premium lot, this home

has many wonderful upgrades. Enjoy the oversized backyard, with professional landscaping, custom arbor and views of the Pleasanton Ridge. Walking distance to Hearst Elementary & Pleasanton Middle School, close to downtown, shops, the Bernal sports fields and freeway, vaulted ceilings with formal dining and living room, built with energy conservation features, plantation shutters, upgraded lighting throughout home. Upgraded kitchen with Zodiac counter tops and high end stainless steel appliances. **OFFERED AT \$849,000**

JUST SOLD



**4397 Muirwood
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charming 2 story
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Sold for \$590k



**4615 Rimini
Court, Dublin**
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Luserna Model,
with beautiful
upgrades. This
was a Short Sale.
Sold for \$520k

New Year Offers New Opportunity for Financially Strapped Homeowners To Reach Out and Redirect Their Lives

Pleasanton, CA, 12.28.2011 — "Millions and millions of homeowners in the United States spent 2011 under a cloud of uncertainty caused by missed payments on an unmanageable mortgage," said Julia Murtagh of Alain Pinel Realtors.

Murtagh's message to financially strapped homeowners in the Pleasanton / Tri-Valley market: "the expertise and resources to ensure that 2012 gets off to a far more positive start is close at hand."

A Certified Distressed Property Expert (CDPE), Murtagh is knowledgeable foreclosure avoidance alternatives and is adept at negotiating with major banks and helping financially strapped homeowners to regain peace of mind and a sense of stability for the future.

Julia's free report entitled, "Tipping the Scales Toward Foreclosure: Resolve to Shed the Weight of an Unmanageable Mortgage in 2012," is accessible from her website, www.JuliaHelpsDistressedSellers.com

"As the report points out," Julia says, the recovery of U.S. housing market, hinges on huge reductions to the current glut of foreclosed homes, and as such, all major players have taken foreclosure-prevention efforts up several notches."

"The most important fact for financially distressed homeowners to keep in mind: the sooner help is sought, the better," Murtagh emphasized.

Please visit www.JuliaHelpsDistressedSellers.com



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