

# Pleasanton Weekly

**INDEPENDENCE DAY**  
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at Lions Wayside Park » 5*



VOL. XIII, NUMBER 24 · JUNE 29, 2012

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CHOICE  
2012**

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BY APPT



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MARK KOTCH

BY APPT



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SUN 1:30-4:30



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JOYCE JONES

BY APPT



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# AROUND PLEASANTON



By JEB BING

## Tom Richert: An entrepreneur who doesn't stop

It's quite a stretch from the tony venture capital investors' office along Page Mill Road in Palo Alto to a lumberyard in Pleasanton, but Tom Richert made that move in 1976 and is today one of Pleasanton's most successful entrepreneurs. Now, 36 years later, he has enlarged his prominent corner business at Sunol Boulevard and Valley Avenue to a 15,000-square-foot hardware store under the nationally known Ace Hardware brand name. A walk through the spacious store Wednesday where Tom and his son and partner Matt were working with the rest of the staff to sort some of the 50,000 pieces of inventory now being sold at Richert Lumber (yes, the name continues) shows what a daunting task running a modern-day hardware store can be.

Tom is a long-time lumber and landscape businessman who's comfortable talking house siding, cabinets, plywood quality and other materials with construction crews and do-it-yourself homeowners. Bird houses, coffee makers and some 60 or more power tools that are now part of his Ace-brand merchandise are moving the old lumber and landscape business in a new direction. Fortunately, in this age of computerization, the Ace franchises — actually it's a co-op — come with teams of specialists who bring in products based on geographical studies, apply the labels, arrange the shelves according to customer convenience and interests, and then leave the selling, service and promotion to Richert. From a \$1.99 U-bolt to top-of-the-line water-saving plumbing, Richert believes he can compete head-to-head with the big box stores such as Lowe's and Home Depot in terms of pricing and even better when it comes to serving the Pleasanton market.

Richert and his wife Anne aren't your typical local lumberyard couple. He holds master's degree in Business from Cal State Hayward (now Cal State East Bay) and found work in a local lumberyard at a time when jobs were hard to find. He then joined a major chemical firm's three-man financial team on Page Mill Road where real estate at the time was the most expensive in the world. Anne, meanwhile, used her degree from UC Berkeley to join the management team at Atari, one of the early computer game companies. They married in 1970, and it was just a few years



JEB BING

Tom Richert and his son Matt chat about how best to showcase some of the 50,000 items they now sell at their newly expanded 15,000-square-foot Richert Lumber hardware store, now part of the Ace Hardware co-op partnership.

later when Tom got the itch to go into business for himself and, with Anne's encouragement, Richert Lumber was born. They sold their Peninsula home, bought the empty lot where Richert Lumber now stands, and moved into a rental in the Val Vista neighborhood. Tom bought an 8-foot-by-10-foot building and moved it onto the site, which he proudly called his corporate headquarters for the next five years, selling landscape products at the start. The first day's sales totaled \$19.95, and he sold \$5 worth on the second day, he recalls, but business picked up after that.

Matt was the couple's first child with two more to follow: Amy, who handles an Arizona state tourism office in Scottsdale, and Dan, who is in the music business in Los Angeles. Matt, with his wife Amanda and their two young children, lives in Pleasanton, as do Tom and Anne. Anne's active in the Tulancingo sister city organization program. The Richerts through their store also sponsor boys and girls athletic teams with the Richert Lumber logo a familiar site on Pleasanton sports fields.

Besides pictures of Little League and other sports teams lining the walls at Richert Lumber, framed photos also offer a visual history of Pleasanton from 1976 forward. When the business opened, the city's sewer treatment center was just a few yards north on Sunol Boulevard; there were no homes or businesses across the street, where the Pleasanton Weekly office is now located; gravel trucks pounded the pavement on the two-lane street on the average of one a minute, Tom Richert recalls, and Vintage Hills and Mission Park homes were just being planned. Of course with the building boom just getting under way in Pleasanton, a landscape business and later a lumberyard proved a bonanza for the Richerts who once called Page Mill Road and the Peninsula their home. ■

## About the Cover

With cotton candy, Wikki Stix and corndogs, kids enjoy their lunches at Eddie Papa's. Voted Best Meal under \$20, Best Kid-friendly Restaurant and Best Non-Chain Restaurant, Eddie Papa's is popular with our readers. Photo by Nicole Doi. Design by Kristin Herman.

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# Streetwise

ASKED AROUND TOWN

## What are your plans for July 4?



### Rylie Palfalvi

*Third-grader*

My friend Brooke and I are going in our court with our families and some dogs. We're going to have dinner together. I have a new baby brother named Max and it will be his first Fourth of July, so I'm excited.

### Ailsa Smith

*College student/camp counselor*

I am a counselor at a summer camp, and we have a carnival with many activity booths for the campers. It's really fun. I'm Scottish, so growing up my family would get together with our Scottish and English friends to barbecue and play games. It wasn't really to celebrate the holiday as much as simply a day to enjoy each other and relax.



### Chloe Bowyer

*Sixth-grader*

We are having a party at my grandma's house in Oakley. My mom is very creative and crafty, so she is in charge of decorating. I'm going to help her plan and make everything. We'll watch the fireworks and have a fun time together.

### Kennedy Poplawski

*High school senior*

I'll celebrate the Fourth with my family and our neighbors. Every year, we have a big block party, and we barbecue, swim, play games and have small fireworks. It's really fun.



### Chase Barkdull

*Student*

My family and I are going on vacation to Newport Beach. We're going to relax, have fun and, hopefully, shoot off a few fireworks.

—Compiled by Kerry Nally

Have a Streetwise question? E-mail [editor@PleasantonWeekly.com](mailto:editor@PleasantonWeekly.com)

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## DIGEST

### Fair Parade on TV

Did you miss the Alameda County Fair Parade on Saturday? It will be aired on TV30 throughout the run of the Fair through July 8, with underwriting from the TV30 Foundation.

The parade will be shown on Channel 30 at 7 p.m. Saturday; 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday; 9 p.m. Monday; 2 p.m. Tuesday; 11 p.m. Wednesday; noon and 11 p.m. Thursday; and 7 p.m. Friday.

### Wikipedia features Amador

It didn't last long, but for Amador Valley High School it was a day in the national sun as the popular online encyclopedia featured the school on the homepage of its website Wikipedia.org on June 19.

"This is a random selection that changes every day," said Stewart Young, who sent word to the Weekly about the post. He also identified himself as the "proud parent of incoming AVHS Freshman Kieran Gates."

Wikipedia posted facts and figures about Amador Valley High and its location, information from its listing on the school. Read it at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amador\\_Valley\\_High\\_School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amador_Valley_High_School).

### Churches hosting blood drives

The American Red Cross is partnering with 12 faith-based groups in Northern California to put on the Interfaith Community Blood Drive, the largest in its history to be organized by churches.

"The commitment made by these faith groups is to help collect nearly 100 percent of the blood we need in July, and we are excited that we have readily taken on this need," said Jeff Meyer, chief executive officer of the Northern California American Red Cross.

Blood drives will be held in Pleasanton from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, July 7, at St. Elizabeth-Seton Church, 4005 Stoneridge Drive; and from 2-8 p.m., Wednesday, July 18, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6100 Paseo Santa Cruz.

To schedule an appointment, call 1-800 RED CROSS (733-2767).

### Corrections

■ The list of 2012 graduates from Amador Valley High School should have included Taylor Roush.

■ The story, "School district rehires workers, OKs budget," in the June 22 issue, should have said that School Board Member Jamie Hintzke was concerned about using one-time savings to pay for an ongoing expense. The quote was incorrectly attributed.

## Parents protest plan to bring back staggered reading

District will cut 45 minutes a day for grades 1-3

By GLENN WOHLTMANN

Parents upset with a change in schedules at elementary schools packed the Pleasanton school district's boardroom Tuesday night, telling staff members that the change was done too quickly and not given enough thought.

The district announced earlier this month that it would bring back staggered reading for first-, second- and third-graders, with half starting 45 minutes early and half staying 45 minutes late. While teachers' days would be the same length, those students would receive 45 minutes less instructional time four out of five days a week. All students will continue to start later on Wednesdays, which have been set aside for teacher collaboration and staff development.

Staggered start times were the norm in Pleasanton 16 years ago when class sizes were about 30-1, with time on either side of the day set aside to give students a block of time at 15-1 for

concentrated reading instruction.

Cindy Galbo, assistant superintendent of educational services, said the cut in class time would still keep the district 115 minutes above state requirements. The return of staggered reading would give students smaller class sizes for that block of time, as class sizes go back to where they were in the mid 1990s.

"We went up to 25-1 for two years and then we went up to 30-1 for this (coming) fall," Galbo told the crowd. "Teachers came to us and our principals and said, 'This isn't going to work.'"

She also explained that the late notice was because of the last-minute restoration of PE teachers. Without that, Galbo said, there wouldn't have been enough instructional hours to implement staggered reading.

Parents, however, said they should have been involved in the decision process, and that the district arbitrarily decided to resume

an old program.

"I didn't hear, 'We explored these different options and they didn't work,'" said one woman. "To a lot of us, it seems like you didn't even try."

Child care providers who'd have to step in to fill the gaps in the morning and afternoon also said at the meeting that they weren't told about the change in schedules.

"I was notified by my family, not by the school district," said one. "This is going to be an absolute nightmare."

She and the other child care provider who spoke said that scheduling would be next to impossible, since they generally have a limited number of drivers and a short amount of time to shuttle children to and from their facilities.

Galbo said she'd spoken to Kids Club, a before- and after-school program run by the dis-

See **PROTEST** on Page 6



GLENN WOHLTMANN

Anita Sanchez spends a make-believe day at the beach with her last group of first-grade students on the final day of the school year. Special events were one of the things that a parent said made every day a celebration.

## Forty years in the first grade

Teacher retires after instructing generations of youngsters

Not many teachers get their room number retired, but not every teacher is Anita Sanchez, who was teaching at Fairlands Elementary before there was even a Fairlands, back when the school was in temporary quarters.

"We were housed at the Catholic Church," Sanchez said. "I guess I was one of the originals."

That was right after Sanchez got her teaching credential, and she worked the entire rest of her career in the same room, room 106, teaching literally generations of kids.

She's a Pleasanton girl born and bred, and her family has some strong ties to city history as well. Her parents, Mary and Tony Sanchez, were lifelong Pleasanton residents, her mom a stay-at-home mother — as was nearly every woman in those days — and her father worked for a mill operator.

Her grandfather on her mother's side was Moses Campagna, who worked as a foreman on Phoebe Hearst's ranch, which is now

Castlewood Country Club. Her father is a descendant of a sibling of the Bernal family, prominent 19th-century landowners in and around what is now Pleasanton.

Sanchez has become a bit of local history, too: She was an Amador High cheerleader and homecoming queen in 1965, although Sanchez is hesitant to mention the year. Her brother Jerry is a dentist here, as well.

But beyond all that, Anita Sanchez is a teacher. She spent her entire 40-year career teaching first-graders. Some of her students are now parents with their own sons and daughters that have been through Sanchez's first-grade class.

"Everything was a celebration," said Sierra Stewart, a former student whose daughter was in Sanchez's final class at Fairlands. "It was exciting to come to school."

Back then Snoopy was the class mascot. That changed to Garfield in later years, but the idea

See **TEACHER** on Page 7

## Head to Fourth fun in red, white and blue

Festivities include concert and hotdogs

By JERRI LONG

Lions Wayside Park on First Street is the place to be on the Fourth of July as all ages gather for the 14th year of "Celebrating Freedom and its Evolution since the Revolution."

The event will take place from noon to 1:30 p.m. but people begin staking out their spots with lawn chairs and picnic blankets early in the morning. Most folks wear red, white and blue for the celebration, and the first 400 receive handheld American flags, a gift from the Lions Club. Lions also will be cooking up the "Dog & a Drink for a Dollar."

As volunteers hand out the printed programs, return guests eagerly scan the pages to see if they are among those featured in the photo collage assembled by volunteer photographer and graphic designer Lisa Lorentz.

It was Lorentz who came up with the idea of creating handheld fans out of colorful paper plates stapled to wooden handles. The fans are assembled by the Deboo family, provided as gifts from event sponsor Heritage Bank of Commerce.

Pleasanton Community Concert Band, under the direction of conductor Bob Williams, will perform rousing patriotic music, sponsored by ACCUSPLIT, whose president W. Ron Sutton started the Independence Day tradition in Pleasanton.

"Fourth of July should be about more than barbecues and fireworks," said Sutton. "We need to honor our heritage."

By producing the patriotic commemoration midday, Sutton makes it possible for residents to also participate in neighborhood barbecues or go to fireworks displays in the evening.

The program will begin with a medley of the anthems of each branch of the country's military, and members or veterans of each group are asked to stand and be applauded for their service. The local American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars will provide the color guard and fire a 21-gun salute.

This will be the second year commemorating the Civil War Sesquicentennial, with two guest

See **FOURTH** on Page 6

## PROTEST

Continued from Page 5

district to see if its capacity could be increased, and that a district liaison was to have spoken to other child care organizations.

One parent said even with child care available, it's impossible to arrange for it.

"Until you know where your child's slot is, you can't plan for daycare," she said. She also worried that kids who attend early sessions would spend a long time in cars waiting for their siblings who stay late.

"Our primary role is not providing child care," Galbo said.

However, she added that, "Back in the day, all sorts of things happened, like parents worked together doing runs."

Galbo also said that the district would take sibling schedules into consideration when deciding whether a child should attend early or late instruction.

She said she understood that parents would be upset getting late notification and having to make some arrangements for child care so late in the game.

"I completely hear the frustrations that you have," Galbo said. "We are doing this to provide the best quality education for your children."

Some teachers who attended the meeting said they'd worked with staggered reading before and that it would work now.

"This scenario ... is the most vi-

**"This scenario ... is the most viable given the parameters we have."**

—Linda Stanford, first-grade teacher

able given the parameters we have," said Linda Stanford, a first-grade teacher at Mohr Elementary.

And Galbo promised the district would consider adding enrichment

programs with "worthwhile activities that are school site based." The district may also consider a parent-run homework club in one of the classrooms that's empty at

the different schools as a result of the larger class sizes.

However, other parents said the students who attend early sessions wouldn't get a full 45 minutes of

instruction, since they have to get into class and get settled before teaching could begin. Parents also said those who attend the later sessions would be too worn out to accomplish anything significant.

They also questioned the time it would take to put the infrastructure in place. The district plans to have all students come early for the first few weeks of the school year to be assessed on their reading skills, and that assignments to early and late starts would come after that.

Parents pushed to send the district back to the drawing board to consider other possibilities before bringing back staggered reading. That, Galbo said, wasn't going to happen, and that the program will go into effect this fall.

One former teacher urged parents to be patient and do their best to cooperate.

"As a retired teacher after 35 years, I've taught staggered reading. It works. It really does," he said. ■

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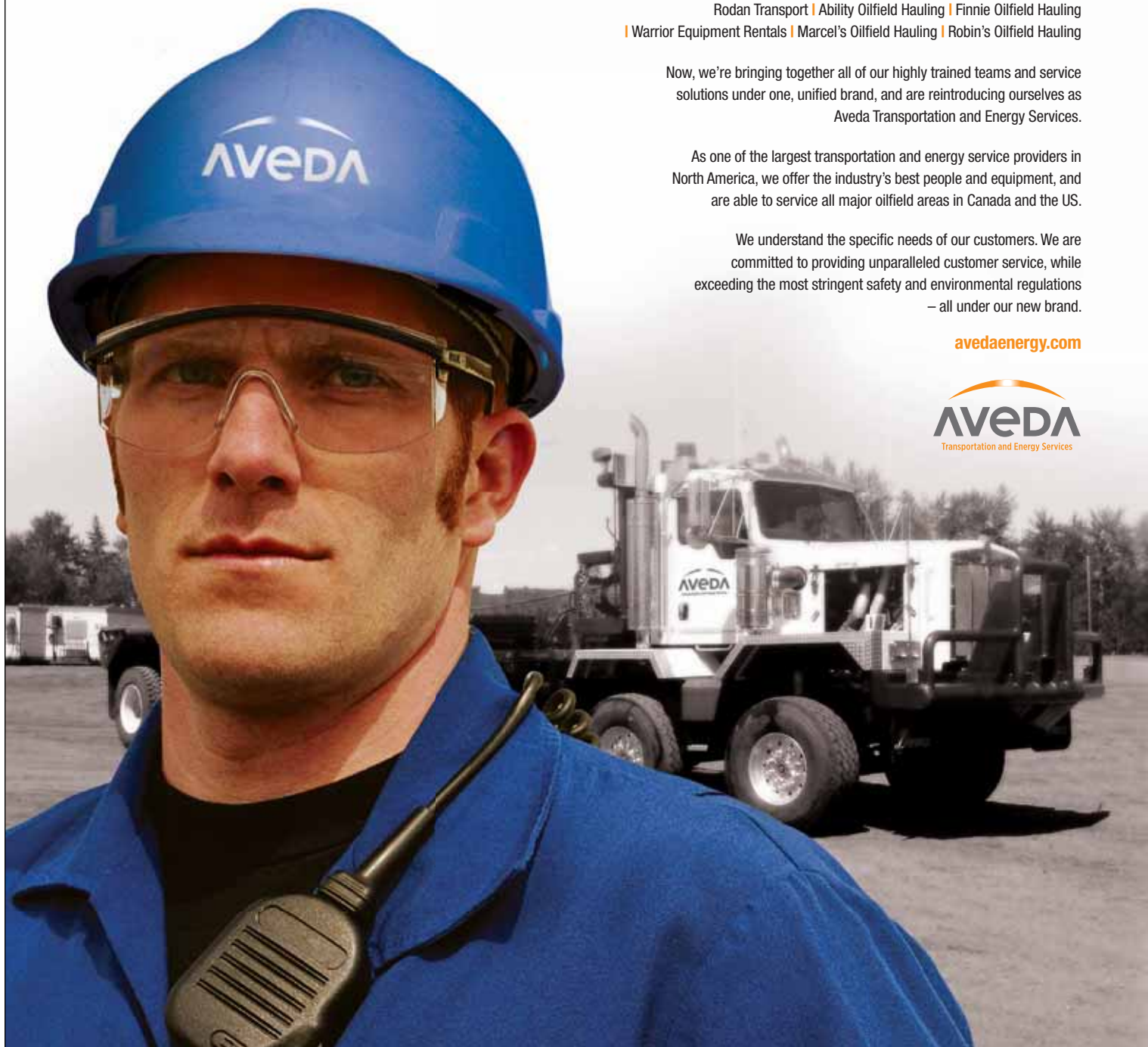
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## FOURTH

Continued from Page 5

speakers. Ernie Manzo, attired in a uniform of the era, will talk about the battles of 1862. Ann Collins will offer "a grandmother's perspective" on the legislative actions of 1861: the Homestead and Land Grant acts, plus the Emancipation Proclamation.

Ward Belding, as Uncle Sam, will explain the history of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," which the band will perform. Belding also will lead a sing-along of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Returning as Master of Ceremonies is Ken McDonald.

The 2012 Ed Kinney Community Patriots will be introduced — Jan Batcheller and Tony Macchiano. The award is named in memory of the former mayor who was the original master of ceremonies for this Fourth of July celebration.

The community event will also have volunteers applying free temporary patriotic tattoos. Boy Scout Troop No. 908 assists with setup and teardown. It takes nearly 100 volunteers to produce the event for the community, a true hometown holiday celebration. ■



LISA LORENTZ

Andrew Dito, 1, waves his American flags at Pleasanton's Fourth of July event last year.

**TEACHER**

Continued from Page 5

was the same, picking a mascot with a special outfit to celebrate a season or holiday.

Sanchez was hard pressed to pick a single event in her career as her favorite, but pointed out an annual occurrence instead.

"I like being in school, when I open the door and see all those faces, and wondering, 'What's my class going to be like?'"

At a party to honor her years in school, Sanchez was challenged to pick out the adults she'd taught and name them, but she passed.

"She knew all the kids that came to visit her," Stewart said.

In addition to being a teacher to hundreds of children, Sanchez was a role model to a generation, according to Fairlands Principal Kim Michel.

"There are teachers all over our district who had Ms. Sanchez as a teacher. What better compliment than to say, 'I want to be like you,'" Michel said. "Ms. Sanchez brings warmth and compassion and ignites a love of learning that lasts a lifetime."

In addition to the parties and recognitions, Fairlands is doing something permanent to mark Sanchez's retirement: It's retiring her room number and making that room into a computer lab.

Sanchez didn't want to make any firm commitments, but said she'd start by sleeping a little later, and looked forward to traveling too.

While Sanchez leaves a legacy, she's not alone. Social studies teach-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Exchange teens on parade**

Students visiting Pleasanton from Tulancingo in the teen exchange program of the Pleasanton-Tulancingo Sister City Association and the six Pleasanton students in the program who are going to Tulancingo on July 8 take part in the Fair Parade on Saturday in a truck donated by Pleasanton's Richert Lumber/Ace Hardware. The teens decorated the truck, rode in the parade, and afterward enjoyed a full day at the Fair.

er Ann Crawford — who worked for 34 years at Village — retired with her husband Randy Crawford, an independent study teacher, and they were joined by math teacher Shelley Cox.

- Other teachers retiring this year are:
- Karyn Barwick, kindergarten teacher at Alisal Elementary;
  - Beverly Gill, resource specialist at Pleasanton Middle School;
  - Dolores Griffith, third-grade teacher at Fairlands Elementary;
  - Mark Hailey, math teacher at

- Foothill High;
- Pat Hallahan, PE teacher at Hart Middle School;
- Teresa Hardy, a third-grade teacher at Alisal;
- Serena Heller, language arts and history teacher at Pleasanton Middle;
- Elaine Hilbelink, reading specialist at Fairlands;
- Maria Houck, a second-grade teacher at Valley View Elementary;
- Margo Johnson, English teacher at Amador;
- Jill Kirkwood, third-grade teach-

- er at Walnut Grove Elementary;
- Susan Kleespies, a chemistry and physics teacher at Foothill;
- Carlye Mecozzi, fifth-grade teacher at Fairlands;
- Phyllis Mendoza, third-grade teacher at Valley View;
- Maria Primeau, a Spanish teacher at Foothill;
- Barbara Reber, a math teacher at Foothill; and
- Cindy York, third-grade teacher at Vintage Hills Elementary.

—Glenn Wohltmann

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## Woman cops plea for child endangerment

Left infant twins in car while shopping

By Glenn Wohltmann

The Danville woman who left her infant twins in her car to go shopping at the mall has taken a plea deal that would allow a misdemeanor charge to be dropped in two years.

Amanda Nejat was 46 in when she was taken into custody in February after a witness spotted the children alone and crying in Nejat's Cadillac Escalade. Mall security held her until police arrived.

Surveillance video showed she'd been shopping for about 45 minutes at Nordstrom while the 11-week-old babies were in the car unattended at about 4 p.m. on Feb. 8, police said.

Nejat was charged with two felony

counts of child endangerment — one for each of the twins — and was released on bond. In court June 21, she entered a plea of no contest to one misdemeanor count of child endangerment, and was ordered to be on good behavior for two years, when the charges would be dropped, according to Teresa Drennick, a spokeswoman for the Alameda County District Attorneys office.

Nejat is also subject to a search clause so officials can check on the welfare of the children.

In addition, Drennick said, Nejat must complete 52 counseling sessions and 26 parenting classes.

She must also pay a \$1,000 fine and stay away from Nordstrom. ■

## TAKE US ALONG



**Italian holiday:** Lokesh and Charandeep Krishnamoorthy visit Florence and pose with their Weekly near the Duomo — the Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore — which dominates the skyline.

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# Business News

Edited by Jeb Bing, jbing@pleasantonweekly.com

## Pans on Fire opens larger store in Hopyard Village Shopping Center

Popular business, cooking classes outgrew downtown space

Linda Wyner has moved her popular Pans on Fire store on Main Street to more spacious quarters in the Hopyard Village Shopping Center at Valley Avenue and Hopyard Road.

In opening day ceremonies Tuesday sponsored by the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce, Wyner said the new store at 3059-JK Hopyard Road has an expanded food studio for public and private classes as well as considerably more display space for products that range from a 79-cent citrus peeler to a Swiss Diamond skillet with the coating of manocomposite that holds its non-stick properties even at the hottest temperatures.

Other features include drop-in knife sharpening and knife repair on Saturdays, "Dad and Me" cooking classes for families that want to expand their cooking capabilities together, and specialized tutoring classes in what Wyner calls her summer camps.

Wyner is not your typical pots, pans and kitchen tutoring entrepreneur. A college degreed food anthropologist (UCLA), she was a business entrepreneur long before coming to Pleasanton where she opened Pans on Fire five years ago. After graduating from the University of San Francisco with a law degree, she became a nationally known litigation lawyer and a malpractice specialist.

So how did an anthropologist skilled at finding "cuisine" artifacts in the desert move to a store at 310-B Main St., and now to a larger establishment in the Hopyard Village Shopping Center, where her cuisine recipes and desserts have won top honors from hundreds who are her customers and cooking class students?

The transition actually started in the hot desert temperatures when Wyner said she'd had enough and moved to friendlier, more comfortable and less back-breaking duties. As a jobs program coordinator for the U.S. Department of Labor, and with a master's degree in Manpower Administration, she started a business "incubator" where those she had been helping to start their careers could have offices and the tools and consultation they needed



DAWN WILSON

Linda Wyner welcomes customers to her new store in the Hopyard Village Shopping Center where she moved her popular cooking merchandise and classrooms from Main Street to meet increased customer demand.

to succeed. Based in Denver and with three business centers and 130 "suites" as her clients, she accepted an offer she just couldn't refuse and, still in her 30s, opted for an early retirement.

That's when law school and Wyner's interest in serving the legal needs of those in business came together. Besides cooking and always trying new recipes at home with her husband Larry, a college professor, she majored in the legal aspects of preparing wills, trusts and estate planning while also serving as editor in chief of the law journal at USF. It was her writing skills that brought another career change when she was asked to write a food column for a local newspaper. Her inner self as an excited, inquisitive food specialist got the best of her, leading to her purchase of the old Ruma's store in Pleasanton in November 2006, where her Pleasanton accomplishments began.

Besides her cooking camps and "Dad and Me" classes, Wyner and her staff also offer "Knife's Skills" and Italian regional cooking classes, with "Thanksgiving 101" one of her most popular classes where "graduates" leave with the skills to prepare a full-course Thanksgiving dinner — turkey, dressing, sides and all — in just three hours.

Sign-ups for those classes, which are always filled, will start after all of the summer camps have ended, Wyner said. ■



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## LETTERS

### Measuring student progress

Dear Editor,

The article on the June 19 school board meeting omitted a key fact about the new strategic plan for PUSD — it is an unfinished draft. Still to come is the most important part, a scorecard with measurable indicators of progress toward strategic goals.

Standardized tests cannot be the only indicators that students are learning what they will need to make the world a better place. None exist to measure students' abilities to frame a problem creatively and solve it effectively, nor to assess how teachers and staff are cultivating students' passions and commitments to self-directed learning. District leaders should push themselves to focus on mea-

suring what matters, and not just on what is easy to test.

What are the indicators of fiscal health? School-based and district-level budgets should be easy for taxpayers to access and understand. School site councils should have more input into ways that principals propose spending site-specific funds, and should review the impact of previous expenditures on campus safety, student opportunities and teaching quality. The board should develop a policy to replenish depleted financial reserves so that local budget decisions can be made with more lead time and less stress.

Now is the time for taxpayers to weigh in on the scorecard being developed. What indicators do you want district leaders and board members to monitor? Should average class sizes be a part of the scorecard, or is it more important that students be offered high-quality online learning opportunities? Now is the time to speak up.

**Sandy Piderit**

## EDITORIAL

THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY



City, civic and Fairgrounds representatives join in a rousing version of "Happy Birthday" with cake and all to celebrate the County Fair's 100th year at last Saturday's dedication of the Alameda Country Historical monument.

## Picnics, fireworks, County Fair make for stay-at-home fun next week

The American Automobile Association is predicting crowded roadways over the July 4th holiday with many taking vacation days Thursday and Friday for a five-day-long weekend. Fortunately for those in the Tri-Valley, there's enough fun and excitement here at home to make for a safe and less costly holiday. In Pleasanton, families can enjoy some old-fashioned Independence Day fun at the 14th annual community picnic in Lions Wayside Park, at First and Neal streets. Called "Celebrating Freedom and its Evolution since the Revolution," the event starts at noon Wednesday and includes patriotic music by the Pleasanton Community Concert Band, a hot dog and drink for a dollar and even free American flags.

In Livermore, that city's Fireworks Community Committee, working with the city of Livermore and the Livermore Area Recreation and Park district, is sponsoring an afternoon of fun and entertainment followed by a fireworks display on the Las Positas College campus. Gates will open at 4 p.m. with family games, food trucks and live music. Entrance fee is \$20 per carload in advance or \$25 at the gate. Walk-in entry is \$5 per person. Pets and outside alcohol are not allowed but beer and wine will be for sale.

The Alameda County Fair continues today through Sunday, July 8, with Pleasanton Day today, fireworks tonight and again next Friday night, and special activities for veterans and all age groups through the coming week. The Fair is closed Monday but reopens Tuesday with \$2 admission for all that day and then free admission for those 62 and over next Thursday. Admission for kids 12 and under is free today and next Friday. Except for Monday, horse racing continues on the Fairgrounds' oldest one-mile track in America.

While at the Fair, be sure to visit the Alameda County Historical Monument that was dedicated last Saturday. The monument was created to celebrate the 100th year since the first "modern Fair" was held in Pleasanton in 1912. Fifteen businessmen and ranchers met and formed the Alameda County Fair Association, and the Fair Association continues today as one of the country's top regional fairs under the direction of Chief Executive Officer Rick Pickering, who is nationally recognized for his County Fair achievements and is a past president of the Western Fairs Association.

The five-sided monument was designed to represent the five distinct eras of Alameda County, starting when the county was founded in 1855 with six districts: Washington, Murray, Eden, Clinton, Oakland and Alameda. A year later the county was redefined into five districts and from October 1873 through December 1884, with Oakland achieving sufficient size to warrant three districts of its own, the county's numbering system was established. Pleasanton is now in the Fourth District, represented by Supervisor Nate Miley.

As you walk toward the monument, note the bricks and granite benches, engraved with the names of individuals, families and businesses which contributed to create this Fairgrounds edifice that commemorates the vibrant history of Alameda County and the County Fair. ■



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

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# Community Pulse

By Glenn Wohltmann, gwohltmann@pleasantonweekly.com

## POLICE BULLETIN

### Cops zero in on forgery suspects

Police have suspects in two of three forgery cases that took place last weekend, according to reports.

In one, on June 22, a woman left her \$150 wallet and her cell phone at Nordstrom in the Stoneridge Shopping Center at about 1 p.m. By the time she realized they were missing, at around 4 p.m., the woman's bank confirmed that her credit cards had already been used three times, twice at Nordstrom, for a total of \$164, and once at Champs Sporting Goods, also in the mall. Police have surveillance

video from those purchases.

Police also have a suspect in a June 23 incident in which counterfeit \$100 bills were passed at the mall. A clerk at Victoria's Secret suspected she'd received a fake bill and watched the person who gave it to her enter Abercrombie and Fitch — where a second bill was passed — and called police at about 7:47 p.m. At both stores, merchandise purchased with the \$100 bills was returned for smaller bills.

A third forgery reported at about 5:13 on June 23 involved the theft of mail from a home in the 4900 block of Muirwood Drive. In that case, a resident left a bill with a check in the mailbox but later found the check had been stolen and altered from \$52 to \$352.

In other police reports:

- Police are conducting an accident investigation after a Ford Aerostar minivan crashed into Cole's Market in the 4200 block of First Street on June 24. Police received a call to the crash at about 6:38 p.m., where a similar incident took place in January 2011. In that case, a customer at Cosmo's Barber Shop put his minivan into drive instead of reverse and drove through the shop's plate glass front door, running over two empty barber chairs and finally stopping after crashing through a side wall.

- Notwen James Currycardoza, 19, of Pleasanton was arrested around 4:03 p.m. June 22 for felony possession of metal knuckles and misdemeanor marijuana possession after an anonymous call that said a group of juveniles had gathered at the end of Prairie Drive. Police

received the call at about 3:44 p.m. and took Currycardoza into custody at the intersection of Prairie Drive and Foothill Knolls Drive.

- Delvino Antonio Villanueva, 31, of Lathrop was arrested at 8:09 p.m. June 23 for felony possession of methamphetamines and paraphernalia possession. Villanueva was taken into custody at the intersection of Mohr Avenue and Greenwood Road following a report of suspicious people.

- Two potential burglars were arrested late June 25 after a traffic stop for an expired registration.

Michael Joseph Artates, 37, of Hayward was arrested for misdemeanor possession of burglary tools, and Genia Kay Cherry, 31, also of Hayward, was charged with three misdemeanors: possession of

burglary tools, possession of a prescription in another's name, and paraphernalia possession. Police seized a pry bar, vice grips, a slide ram and shaved keys. The pair was stopped at about 11:39 p.m. at the intersection of Laurel Creek Drive and Blessing Drive.

- Four drivers worth \$1,599 were stolen in a June 20 snatch-and-run burglary at Golfsmith in the 4200 block of Rosewood Drive, which was reported at about 5:08 p.m.

- A \$500 bracelet, a \$200 camera, prescription medicines and \$32 cash was stolen from a home in the 2100 block of Alexander Way, reported at about 11:16 a.m. June 20. No forced entry was reported.

Under the law, those arrested are considered innocent until convicted.

## POLICE REPORT

The Pleasanton Police Department made the following information available.

### June 19

#### Theft

- 11:46 a.m. in the 1900 block of Nicosia Court; identity theft
- 8:13 p.m. in the 4200 block of Diavila Avenue; grand theft

#### Burglary

- 7:47 p.m. in the 1400 block of Valley Avenue

### June 20

#### Theft

- 2:58 p.m. in the 4800 block of Bernal Avenue; identity theft
- 5:32 p.m. in the 5900 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; auto theft
- 6:35 p.m. in the 5900 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; auto theft

#### Burglary

- 11:16 a.m. in the 2100 block of Alexander Way
- 5:08 p.m. in the 4200 block of Rosewood Drive

#### Vandalism

- 7:04 a.m. in the 1300 block of Bordeaux Street
- 8:46 a.m. in the 5800 block of Northway Road

### June 21

#### Theft

- 12:19 a.m. in the 2600 block of Gapwall Court; theft, battery
- 6:38 p.m. in the 4200 block of Rosewood Drive; grand theft, identity theft

#### Vandalism

- 4:12 p.m. in the 4500 block of Pleasanton Avenue

#### Drug/alcohol violations

- 11:48 p.m. in the 9000 block of Longview Drive; marijuana possession, possession of false identification
- 11:57 p.m. in the 1800 block of Santa Rita Road; public drunkenness

### June 22

#### Theft

- 5:10 p.m. in the 1600 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; forgery, grand theft, petty theft, possession of stolen property

#### Vandalism

- 9:23 a.m. in the 4500 block of First Street

- 3:46 p.m. in the 4500 block of First Street

#### Drug/alcohol violations

- 12:42 a.m. at the intersection of Ray Street and Main Street; DUI
- 11:33 a.m. in the 4100 block of First Street; selling tobacco to a minor
- 11:59 a.m. in the 100 block of Spring Street; selling tobacco to a minor

### June 23

#### Theft

- 3:20 p.m. in the 300 block of Oaks Bridge Place; mail theft
- 5:13 p.m. in the 4900 block of Muirwood Drive; forgery
- 7:47 p.m. in the 2300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; forgery
- 9:21 p.m. in the 1000 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; auto theft

#### Battery

- 9:41 p.m. in the 4800 block of Hopyard Road

#### Drug/alcohol violations

- 1:35 a.m. in the 5000 block of Hopyard Road; DUI
- 7:21 p.m. at the intersection of Mohr Avenue and Greenwood Road; possession of a non-narcotic controlled substance, paraphernalia possession

### June 24

#### Theft

- 2:54 p.m. in the 2800 block of Cupflower Court; identity theft

- 4:16 p.m. in the 2200 block of Greenwood Road; identity theft

#### Auto burglary

- 7:07 a.m. in the 7500 block of Canyon Meadows Circle
- 9:27 a.m. in the 7800 block of Canyon Meadows Circle
- 8:48 p.m. in the 1000 block of Stoneridge Mall Road

#### Vandalism

- 11:08 a.m. in the 4300 block of Black Avenue
- 11:43 a.m. at the intersection of Stanley Boulevard and Reflections Drive

#### Driving with marijuana

- 9:54 p.m. in the 3900 block of Stoneridge Drive

### June 25

#### Theft

- 11:39 p.m. at the intersection of Laurel Creek Drive and Blessing Drive; possession of burglary tools, possession of a prescription in another's name, paraphernalia possession

#### Vandalism

- 8:08 a.m. in the 3400 block of W. Ruby Hill Drive
- 10:53 a.m. in the 4700 block of Willow Road
- 1:28 p.m. in the 5700 block of Owens Drive
- 4:15 p.m. in the 4300 block of Black Avenue

#### DUI

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**WEEKLY MEETING NOTICES**

- In observance of Independence Day, City Hall offices will be closed on Wednesday, July 4, 2012

**Civic Arts Commission**  
Monday, July 2, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.  
Council Chamber, 200 Old Bernal Avenue

- Please visit our website at [www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us](http://www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us) to view the agenda for this meeting

**Human Services Commission - Cancelled**  
Wednesday, July 4, 2012

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

- 7:29 p.m. in the 6700 block of Bernal Avenue

### June 26

#### Identity theft

- 11:29 a.m. in the 4400 block of Rosewood Drive

#### Auto burglary

- 7:39 a.m. in the 5500 block of W. Las Positas Boulevard
- 8:52 p.m. in the 4800 block of Hopyard Road

#### Auto tampering

- 12:51 p.m. in the 4000 block of Stanley Boulevard

#### Vandalism

- 6:26 p.m. at the intersection of Valley Avenue and Stanley Boulevard
- 6:27 a.m. at the intersection of Main Street and Del Valle Parkway
- 10:15 a.m. in the 4000 block of Stanley Boulevard

#### DUI

- 2:13 a.m. in the 1700 block of Santa Rita Road

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# READERS CHOICE 2012

*Pleasanton favorites, from bakeries to bouquets to bookstores*



The tallies are in for the Pleasanton Weekly Readers Choice 2012 contest with a total of 26,365 confirmed votes. Thanks for letting us know where you like to go for goods and services and what you like to do for rest and recreation.

This annual contest makes us realize how fortunate we are to be surrounded by so many great choices. As always, Main Street shops and restaurants are popular but folks are happy to patronize other parts of town, too, when they find something they like.

## SERVICES

**Best Computer Repair — QES.** Friendly and knowledgeable, QES started in 1998, the same year Google hired its first employee. To be around that long, you know they must be doing something right.

**Best Dry Cleaner — VIP Cleaners.** For seven years in a row, VIP has been named Readers Choice for best dry cleaners. Great service, great prices and they even remember their customers' names.

**Best Financial Institution — Wells Fargo.** Customers say the Wells Fargo in town goes above and beyond expectations and that they're friendly and polite.

**Best Financial Planner — Charles Schwab.** Offering personal relationships,

fact-based guidance, value and free workshops at its Pleasanton branch, there's a reason people talk to Chuck. Wealth Management Associates was a close second.

**Best Mortgage Company — Landmark Mortgage Group.** With dozens of testimonials over the years, many from repeat customers and even second generations of happy clients, our readers know they can bank on Landmark.

**Best Mortgage Professional — Scott Eaton, Landmark Mortgage Group.** Scott joined Landmark just two years ago and has already made a name for himself for his experience, his attention to detail and his knowledge.

**Best Real Estate Agent — Gina Piper.** A Realtor who goes above and beyond for her clients is sure to get noticed, and our readers love Gina. Did you know she also teaches yoga?

**Best Photographer — Bella Luna Studios.** Christina Gray takes photos that are so beautiful they literally make people cry. This marks the fifth straight Readers Choice win for Bella Luna, and it's obvious Christina is passionate about what she does.

**Best Real Estate Office — Keller Williams.** It's hard to fault a Realtor that includes integrity and honesty in its motto



Studio 7 offers unique paintings, unusual sculptures and beautiful around-the-home items; it was named Best Art Gallery by the Pleasanton Weekly readers.

JAMIE ALTMAN

## READERS CHOICE 2012



NICOLE DOI  
Eric Linberg helps Pleasanton resident Leah Faith find a new pair of walking shoes at Fleet Feet, chosen as our readers' favorite Place to Buy Fitness Equipment & Apparel.

they bring a new focus to a business, and Debbie and Ethan Falls made that jump in 2007. Run in to their new, larger store at 234 Main St.

**Best Place to Walk, Jog or Bike — Pleasanton Ridge.** Lots of parking and trail options that include different lengths. It's nearly all out in the open so remember your hat and sunscreen. And keep your eye out for the mountain unicyclist.

**Best Yoga/Pilates — Zen Pilates & Fitness.** Personal training and, small group classes, each incorporating yoga, Pilates, flexibility, strength, balance, cardiovascular and core stability. It's Zen Pilates & Fitness' second Readers Choice win.

### BEAUTY AND STYLE

**Best Consignment Store — Savvy Seconds.** Consignment shops work out great for the buyer — who gets a bargain — and the seller — who can cash out of a purchase that didn't pan out. Check back often to see what's new and find the perfect fit.

**Best Day Spa — A Touch of Health.** Spend an hour or five at this St. Mary Street establishment being massaged and pampered and come out feeling — and looking — years younger. Couples can enjoy a one-hour Swedish message side

by side for \$165, with a bottle of champagne for \$25 more.

**Best Hair Salon for Men — and for Women — Hairlights.** This salon at the corner of Hopyard and Valley wants each haircut to



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and a culture of caring. That may be why Keller Williams is our Readers Choice for the third straight year.

### HEALTH & FITNESS

**Best Acupuncture — Eastern Medical.** Acupuncture has been proven to help chronic pain and can even ease stress, and our readers have proven Eastern Medical is the place in town to go.

**Best Health Club — ClubSport.** It's clean and modern and people rave about ClubSport's equipment and personal trainers. No wonder it's a consistent Readers Choice winner.

**Best Hearing Services Provider — Hearing Services.** Serving the Tri-Valley since 1986, Hearing Services offers digital hearing instruments, on-site repairs, hearing evaluations and even Saturday hours.

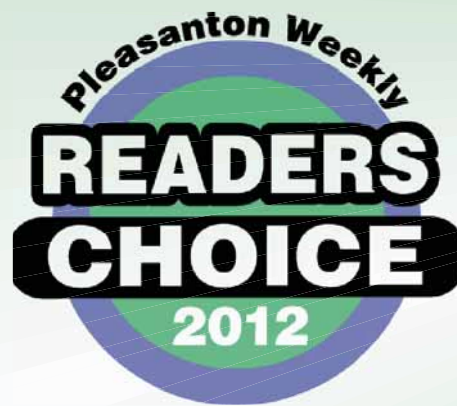
**Best Massage — Healthy Necessity Massage.** Michelle Pena is a holistic health specialist as well as massage therapist and people can't say enough good stuff about her. Healthy Necessity puts the ahh back into massage.

**Best Martial Arts Studio — Crispim BJJ Barra Brothers.** Offering muay Thai, boxing, wrestling, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu for all ages, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) for adults and kids and fitness and conditioning, Crispim BJJ Barra Brothers has a little something for everyone.

**Best Optometrist — Foothill Optometric Group.** If the eyes are the window to the soul, squinting is like looking through dirty windows. Foothill Optometric Group has been offering individualized vision solutions and outstanding customer service since 1983.

**Best Place to Buy Fitness Equipment & Apparel — Fleet Feet.** When customers become owners,

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In the  
Spotlight!



## Gina Piper

*“2012 Reader's Choice for Best Realtor in Pleasanton”*



Congratulations to Gina Piper, voted Best Realtor in Pleasanton in the Reader's Choice Awards for 2012!

If you have lived in Pleasanton for any period of time, you probably recognize this face. Gina has been a trusted advocate and advisor to her clients for the last 17 years, earning her a stellar reputation in the real estate business as well as the local community. A life long Pleasanton resident, Gina strongly believes in giving back to the community that has given so much to her. She was recently sworn in as a member of the Pleasanton Economic Vitality Committee.

Through this service and other avenues such as the popular “Living in Pleasanton” Facebook page, Gina is committed to helping Pleasanton and its local businesses thrive. Thank you Gina for your time and contributions. Keep up the great work!

*Gina can be reached at [Gina@GinaPiper.com](mailto:Gina@GinaPiper.com) or (925) 200-0202*

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## READERS CHOICE 2012



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students are tutored at Steps Community Prep School, which our readers voted Best Tutoring School for its unique programs in math, science, world language and English composition.

be a special experience and starts everyone in the Lather Lounge for a massaging shampoo and treatment. Prices vary according to the stylist's experience, from new talent to master. It caters to men and women of all ages, from kids to seniors.

**Best Nail Care — Bollinger Nail Salon.** It opened in 1998 at the Bollinger Crossing Plaza in San Ramon and now has eight salons from Livermore to Pleasant Hill, including one in Pleasanton to keep your fingers and toes looking their best.

**Best Jewelry Store — Cardinal Jewelers.** This store is itself a jewel, say our readers. Located on Hopyard Road, it specializes in custom designs with gemstones of all qualities, or using your own. Inspections and cleanings are free so go get your rings cleaned and check it out.

**Best New Retail Business 2011 — Therapy.** Cute clothing and knickknacks make this Main Street store the best place for shopping therapy, say our readers, with merchandise that is "random and fun." Prim was a close second.

**Best Place to Buy a Gift — Berry Patch.** The winner for the last four



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## READERS CHOICE 2012



NICOLE DOI

On a warm summer afternoon, customers line up in front of the Meadowlark Dairy, ready to enjoy classic frozen treats. Meadowlark Dairy was chosen Best Ice Cream/Yogurt Shop.

### EPICURE

years, the Berry Patch has been a place for artisans to sell their work since 1994, which makes the ever-changing merchandise unique — perfect for a gift.

**Best Clothing Store for Women — Savy Seconds.** This place is a downtown favorite for sure. Customers like this shop for its variety and point out that it has fabulous firsts as well as savvy seconds.

**Best American Food Restaurant — Eddie Papa's American Hang-out.** The word "American" is in its name so you know where to head for traditional fare, including specialties from regions including Florida Popcorn Shrimp, South Texas Nachos, Memphis Pulled Pork and Hawaiian Poke. Other dishes are classics from certain periods, like meatloaf from the 1950s.

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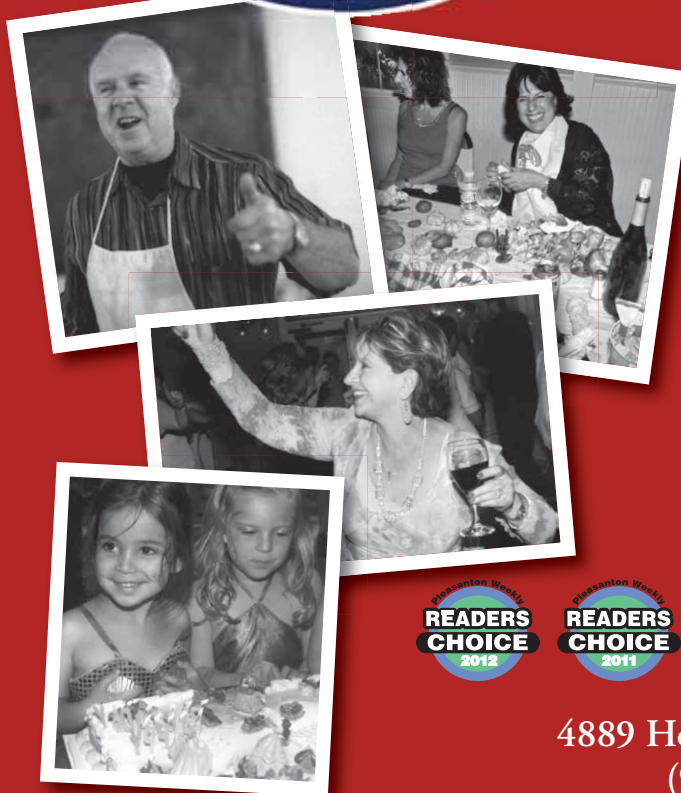
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## READERS CHOICE 2012



Cases of mouthwatering cakes, cookies and pastries greet patrons at Primrose Bakery off Main Street.

**Best Atmosphere — Blue Agave Club.** Right near the Pleasanton Arch, the eclectic front gardens welcome diners to enjoy gourmet Mexican cuisine made from family recipes of owner Alejandro Garcia. Inside dining can be enjoyed in the 140-year-old Victorian on colorful hand-carved chairs.

**Best Bakery — Primrose Bakery.** Stop in for a cookie or treat, or order a special cake at this shop on Angela right off Main Street. Its pastries and tarts are created in the European style.

**Best Barbecue — Dickey's Barbecue Pit.** Pulled pork, brisket, ribs and links — when our readers are in the mood for barbecue and all that goes with it they head for Dickey's in Bernal Corporate Plaza.

**Best Breakfast — Jim's Country Style Restaurant.** This restaurant on Sunol Boulevard across from the Senior Center does a bustling business for breakfast and lunch, and its morning menu features a wide selection of omelets.

**Best Brew Pub/Sports Bar — The HopYard Alehouse.** The original HopYard Alehouse, at Hopyard and Valley in Pleasanton, is located on what was once the largest hop farm in the world until the prohibition movement and other factors took their toll. The Alehouse is a tribute to the renaissance of brewpubs and microbreweries, and a great place for friends to gather.

NICOLE DOI

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**READERS CHOICE 2012**



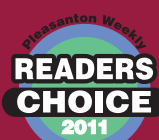
NICOLE DOI

Just one of the many intricate wedding cake toppers on display at Primrose Bakery, which was named Best Bakery by our readers.

**Best Burger — In-n-Out Burger.** The price is right and the food is consistent. The menu is short but sweet and focused on burgers. Its location on Johnson near I-580 makes it convenient when hopping on or off the freeway.

**Best Burrito — High Tech Burrito.** In addition to classic burritos, the high tech part perhaps is the trendy Spicy Cajun, Thai Chicken and Curry Chicken. Its healthy section includes Braised Tofu. It's all yummy with fresh ingredients and sauces.

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## READERS CHOICE 2012



NICOLE DOI

Shear Magic owner Michael Freitas gets dog Lefty ready for a haircut at the salon, which was voted Best Pet Groomer.

**Best Chinese Restaurant — Chinese Szechuan.** Located on Valley near Hopyard, this place is sizzling. Folks love the food as well as the decor and the friendly service with owners who remember their customers even after years.

**Best Coffee House — Peet's.** This is a real honor because Pleasanton has some great coffee shops. But people love its brew and also like the atmosphere of this shop on Hopyard near Valley and its energetic staff.



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## READERS CHOICE 2012



NICOLE DOI

An antique clawfoot bathtub is used to store a collection of treasures at the Old Towne Antiques Mall, which was voted Best Antiques/Collectibles Store. At right, this case at the Old Towne Antiques Mall is filled with unique antique figurines.

# Daily Wear...or Extended Wear?



**This is what our patients are saying:**

Aloha Ken,

Please know that the **daily wear PHONAK nano instrument** fitting is a huge success. I am now able to listen with selectivity that until now was not possible. **Not only is it an efficient instrument, it is invisible in my ear.**

I can't fully express how meaningful the results are with this new instrument. The patience that both you and Jacque had with my visit to achieve the outcome I'm now experiencing reiterates why I'm always excited to see what you have in store when it's time for a new instrument.

Although the visit from Honolulu was too short, it was great to reconnect and see everyone is doing so well. I'm already looking forward to my next visit when I can get a backup instrument as we continue our quest with the emerging technologies.

Mahalo,  
Bruce Bilodeau  
June 1, 2012

**Kenneth D. Billheimer, Au.D.**  
Audiologist, Hearing Aid Specialist

**Sierra Brower, Au.D.**  
Audiologist, Hearing Aid Specialist

**Jacque Pedraza**  
Hearing Aid Specialist

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**Best French Fries — In-n-Out Burger.** Afficionados like nothing better than to argue the pros and cons of fresh fries found throughout town. But our readers have spoken: Go to In-n-Out. They are made on the spot from fresh potatoes.

**Best Grocery Store — Trader Joe's.** Trader Joe's keeps its prices low by carrying a limited inventory but it has almost everything one needs and specializes in healthy foods. Samples help shoppers make new discoveries.

**Best Health Food Store — Tic: Valley Health Mill, Trader Joe's.** Valley Health Mill is a complete health food store with degreed nutritionists who are happy to help. It also carries hard-to-find natural foods such as raw milk from 100% grass-fed cows and the largest selection of gluten-free food products in Pleasanton. TJs emphasizes the natural and the healthy with items that are gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, fat-free and kosher.

**Best Ice Cream/Yogurt Shop — Meadowlark Dairy.** Although the dairy is no longer on the west hills of Pleasanton, its quality products live on at this drive-through where enthusiastic teens serve up generous portions of soft ice cream and yogurt in cones or cups. It also conveniently carries staples.

**Best Italian Restaurant — Strizzi's.** Pasta, anyone? Fettuccine, ravioli, lasagna, penne and don't forget risotto. All this and minestrone soup. Chicken and fish dishes are favorites, too, cooked on a wood-fired grill. Buon appetito!

**Best Kid-Friendly, Non-Chain Restaurant — Eddie Papa's American Hangout.** Eddie Papa's is a family friendly, fun-filled American style bar and grill, created by Pleasanton resident Edward Westmoreland, and celebrates the food and beverage cultures of America.

## READERS CHOICE 2012



JAMIE ALTMAN  
Valley Plumbing, chosen Best Plumber, sells kitchen and bathroom items that have colorful designs painted on them. Wheelchair-accessible tubs can also be found here.



**Best Main Street Restaurant — Barone's.** Maybe it's the innovative cuisine, the service or the ambiance people like, or maybe it's the combination of all three, just off Main on St. John Street. People also enjoy the outdoor patio from May to late October. Strizzi's was a close second.

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# READERS CHOICE 2012



JAMIE ALTMAN

Towne Center Books, voted Best Book Store, contains every genre, from children's and young adult books, to how-to books and biographies.

**Best Meal Under \$20 — Eddie Papa's American Hangout.** The owner prides himself on achieving quality without being expensive. The food is always made from scratch, and the menu changes with the seasons to use local organic produce.

Our readers find this Main Street location an oasis to visit when in the mood for kabobs, hummus, flatbreads or other Mideastern fare. Its Rose Garden is especially pleasant in the summertime.

**Best Mediterranean/Middle Eastern Restaurant — Oasis Grille.**

**Best Mexican Restaurant — Casa Orozco.** This restaurant was a dream of La Familia Orozco, papa Luis Sr. and mama Herlinda and their five offspring; their homemade dishes,

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Pleasanton Weekly **READERS CHOICE 2012**

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 (at the corner of Stoneridge & Franklin, between Hopyard & I-680)

## READERS CHOICE 2012

salsas and sauces are a hit with our readers. The location in Dublin opened in 1984 and now there's a second place in Livermore.

**Best New Restaurant 2011 — Handles Gastro Pub.** Maybe it's the comfort food, maybe because the food is seasonal with a farm-to-table approach — or maybe it's the 30 craft beers and 16 wines on tap. This latest occupant of the Pleasanton Hotel has a growing number of fans.

**Best Pizza — Gay 90's Pizza & Pasta.** From plain cheese pizza to its Frank's Special, Gay 90's on Main Street at Abbie can tell pizza from pizza. Order one of its specials or choose your own combinations, then sit back and wait for your pizza pie to be hand-tossed and cooked with the freshest ingredients.

**Best Romantic Restaurant — Barone's.** It's been No. 1 in the romance department with our readers for many years. If you don't already have a special someone, check out the singles who enjoy its Music Under the Stars, every Thursday from May 31-Oct. 31.

**Best Seafood Restaurant — Strizzi's.** Shrimps and scallops come in scampi at this Main Street favorite, and its salmon is wood-grilled and served over fresh spinach or with roasted garlic mashed potatoes. Strizzi's also makes a mean seafood fettuccine with garlic cream sauce.

**Best Sushi/Japanese Restaurant — Sozo Sushi.** A Dragon Roll to die for — and so much more. Our readers say there is lots of variety and note that the prices are reasonable. They obviously have fun naming their rolls, which include a Bernal Roll, a Marilyn Monroll and a Raiders Roll.

**Best Take-out Restaurant — Dickey's BBQ.** Dickey's, on Bernal near I-680, is dine-in or take-out but sometimes it's more fun to eat at home when the food is so wonderfully finger-lickin' good.

**Best Thai Restaurant — Pleasanton House Thai Cuisine.** On Santa Rita at Valley, this place serves traditional Thai dishes plus vegan and gluten-free dishes and sauces. It's a small, friendly place so ask for advice if you don't already have favorite Thai dishes.

**Best Vegetarian Cuisine — Sweet Tomatoes.** The quick turnover keeps all those fruits and veggies fresh as can be. Folks rave about the salad bar and the fresh baked goods.

### KIDS & PETS

**Best Tutoring School — Steps Community Prep School.** Steps' unique program is our readers' choice for tutoring programs in math, science, world language and English composition. Pleasanton Unified School District teachers on staff offer students an in-depth

review of concepts, provide test preparation with analysis of test results, and plan and adjust teaching strategies according to individual needs. Kumon Math & Reading was a close second.

**Best Party Place for Kids — Rockin' Jump.** There's nothing like somersaulting and jumping off the walls to make kids happy and please parents because these activities aren't at home but instead at Dublin's Trampoline Park, which is this year's Readers Choice for the best party place for young ones.

**Best Pet Groomer — Shear Magic.** This beauty salon has been in business for 13 years and wins readers' praise for its groomers' patience and compassion for animals that is so vital to keeping our furry friends safe and happy.

**Best Pet Store — Pet Food Express.** In addition to offering just about any kind of merchandise a pet would want, this new Santa Rita Road store also funds pet rescue and care programs as well as education on responsible pet ownership, making it a winner for our readers.

**Best Place for Dance Lessons — Jazz N Taps.** This makes the sixth year for Jazz N Taps to receive this honor. The studio on Quarry Lane also offers ballet, hip-hop and modern dance.

**Best Toy Store — Golden Apple Learning Center.** This unique



NICOLE DOI

Linda Liu, Meg Goetsch, and Joanne Lee look for a fun summer hat at the Berry Patch, voted Best Place to Buy a Gift. Handcrafted jewelry and unique trinkets are just some of the gifts available at the Berry Patch on Main Street.

### HOME & VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

store for parents and teachers offers fun games and toys for every age. It offers frequent events so drop in to get acquainted.

**Best Veterinarian — Pleasanton Veterinary Hospital.** Readers like its professional care, service and its mission to help companion animals live longer, healthier and happier lives.

**Best Antiques/Collectibles Store — Olde Towne Antiques Mall** at 3440 Stanley Blvd. is an emporium that boasts 10,000 square feet and nearly 100 dealer spaces. With its vast inventory, readers say they can always find something to satisfy their most particular tastes.



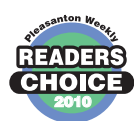
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## READERS CHOICE 2012



JAMIE ALTMAN

Chosen Best Consignment Store, Savvy Seconds sells quality clothes, shoes and jewelry that all appear to be as good as new.

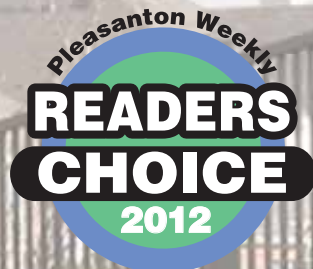
**Best Art Gallery — Studio 7.** Put this gallery on your list of stop-in places every time you are strolling down Main Street, or make it a special destination. Its imaginative art — including glass sculptures — will help you redefine spaces in your home.

**Best Auto Detail — California Shine Co.** With the price of cars, our readers love this place that keeps their investment bright and shiny on the outside as well as maintained under the hood.

**Best Auto Dealership — Lexus of Pleasanton.** Just a walk through the showroom shows customers this dealer's passion for providing a world-class ownership experience.

**Best Car Wash — Pleasanton Hand Car Wash.** A gentle but effective car wash by hands that aren't yours, plus workers use soft lamb's wool mitts instead of brushes or cloths that could damage your car's finish. And it usually only takes about 20 minutes.

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## READERS CHOICE 2012



NICOLE DOI

A beautiful Jade pendant is just one piece belonging to a greater collection found at Cardinal Jewelers, voted Best Jewelry Store. Jim Kuhn and Cheri Funk of Cardinal Jewelers stand by the display cases ready to expertly assist you with all of your fine jewelry needs.

**Best Carpet Cleaning Service — Glover's.** Most home carpets take a beating, especially in the main walkways, and to get their carpets looking new and inviting, our readers chose Glover's.

on Rosewood Drive as tops in terms of flooring options and inventory, professional customer service and installation.

ornamental gates, decks and arbors to improve their home.

**Best Domestic Car Repair — Scott's Automotive.** Readers driving Fords, Chevys and other American cars rate Scott's the best for taking care of the cars they own and love.

**Best Deck and Fencing — Borg Fence.** Our readers love working with Borg Fence in planning, designing and installing new fences,

**Best Carpet/Flooring Store — Carpetland.** Readers rate this store



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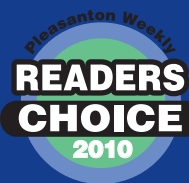
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**READERS CHOICE 2012**



JAMIE ALTMAN

All domestic items can be found at Domus, voted Best Home Furnishings, including kitchen items, loungers, flower pots, hats and scarves, and more.

**Best Foreign Car Repair — Precision Auto Repair.** Its mechanics are trained to maintain and repair all makes and models of Acura, Honda, Lexus, Toyota and Hybrids, using factory parts and fluids.

**Best Florist — Alexandria's.** This family-owned flower shop prides itself on friendly, creative service as well as fine floral arrangements and is also our readers' choice for unique home accents for special occasions.

**Best Hardware Store — Workbench TrueValue Hardware.** From tools to garden accessories, this place has it all — plus a few "old-timers" to help you find that little gizmo. Check out its website for the bargains of the month.

**Best Home Contractor — The Door Doctor.** Family owned and operated since 1978, the Door Doctor is our readers' choice for custom installations and quality for entry and interior doors, garage doors for the home and commercial garage doors.

**Best Home Furnishings — Domus.** This popular kitchen and home accessories retailer reopened on Main Street last summer and has won our readers' votes for its selection of kitchenware, home accessories, toys, books, stationery and much more. Its late night operating hours are also a favorite with readers.

**Best Nursery/Garden Center — Alden Lane.** Just its location within a grove of centuries-old oak trees makes this a unique destination garden center. The setting, combined with a vast selection of plants and friendly customer service, had our readers giving a thumbs up to Alden Lane.

**Best Outdoor Furniture Store — Patioworld.** We look for beauty and comfort but don't forget durability since in California we leave our patio furniture outside year round. Patioworld has classic and stylish contemporary outdoor furniture and accessories to enhance your life outdoors.

**Best Place to Buy a Spa or Hot tub — Dublin Spa Center.** Whether a luxury or necessity for those weary bones, readers tell us that hot tubs are sometimes the only way they

**Thank you for voting Bella Luna Studios "Best of Pleasanton" for photography five years in a row.**



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## READERS CHOICE 2012

can rejuvenate themselves on a cool summer night, or even during colder winter months.

**Best Plumber — Valley Plumbing.** This downtown store that's known for its service and designer's guidance is a winner again for its bath remodels and plumbing services. Visit its showroom in a historic building on Rose Street to get ideas.

**Best Pre-Owned Car Dealership — Acura of Pleasanton.** This dealership, long known for its customer service, is also our readers' choice for used (now called "pre-owned") cars, with some 5,000 available on most days. Readers tell us they like the sales staff's enthusiasm as well as the always large choice of vehicles.

**Best Roofer — Tie: Tri-City Roofing, Wicks Roofing Co.** Roofs are usually the last things on a homeowner's mind until there's a leak. That's when repairs and replacements are urgently needed, and our readers rate these two roofers as equally the best. Tri-City Roofing specializes in roof inspections, repairs and maintenance, even gutter replacement and cleaning. Wicks Roofing and its owner Jon Morrison have rave reviews for their roofing materials and "price-friendly" options.

**Best Senior Living Facility — Heritage Estates.** Our readers this year chose Heritage Estates in Livermore as their favorite place for independent and assisted living for those 62 and older. Whether they or their loved ones need a little help or a lot, the privately developed facility offers a professional and friendly staff and, located on Stanley Boulevard, it's close to Pleasanton.

### REST & RECREATION

**Best Bookstore — Towne Center Books.** Love the feel of a book in your hands, the smell of fresh paper and ink, and the sound of a new book's spine cracking for the first time? Our readers know Towne Center is the place to go, with personal service, great selections, book groups and events with authors.

**Best Golf Course — Callippe Preserve.** Fore! OK, for us it's more like five or six, but Callippe is such a good place to play that some golf writers are hesitant to describe it because they want to keep it to themselves. Plus, recently a rare callippe butterfly was found right on the course.

**Best Hobby/Craft Store — Michael's Arts & Crafts.** If you're feeling crafty, Michaels in Dublin has everything from art supplies to scrapbooking to yarn and needle crafts. Looking for a hobby? Check it out.

**Best Kept Secret Treasure of Pleasanton — Tie: Pleasanton Ridge, Firehouse Arts Center.** Pleasanton's tie for secret treasure shows two different views.

For the outdoorsy, there's Pleasanton Ridge, with opportunities for hiking, biking and walking. Then there's the Firehouse Arts Center, bringing in name acts for more than a year plus offering lectures and community and professional theater. Its Harrington Gallery features exhibits that change monthly, with opening receptions. Hike in the morning, then enjoy a performance at the Firehouse.

**Best Place for Dancing — Barone's.** Grab your date or your friends and head out to Barone's, where there's live music on the patio Thursday nights to shake your groove thing, with free admission before 6 p.m.

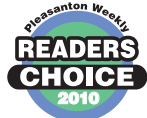
**Best Place for Live Music — Concerts in the Park.** Whether you settle on a simple blanket or bring a repast as elaborate as a mini wine bar, Concerts in the Park are a great way to kick off the weekend — and they end early enough to head out to a movie or more dancing. ■



JAY FLACHSBARTH

People continue to discover the Firehouse Arts Center, at 4444 Railroad Ave. in downtown Pleasanton, and all it has to offer so our readers voted it Best Kept Secret Treasure of Pleasanton, along with the Ridge.

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