

Pleasanton Weekly

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Santa Claus has come to town

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TIM TALK



By TIM HUNT

Livermore's Vericool gives second chances

Livermore-based Vericool brings two goals to the marketplace: disrupting the thermal packaging industry, while providing people who have been incarcerated with a second chance.

The company, which holds five patents for its groundbreaking compostable insulated packaging, with another 21 pending, operates from a nondescript manufacturing building in east Livermore off Greenville Road.

It's aimed squarely at making Styrofoam coolers and packaging obsolete with its product.

With local governments on both coasts, such as San Francisco, banning Styrofoam (extruded polystyrene) containers, Vericool should be in a sweet spot in the marketplace with its cold-chain packaging made out of renewable or recycled materials. The products are designed for use in the consumer market as well as the pharmaceuticals.

The second chance comes from president Darrell Jobe's commitment to giving people who have been incarcerated a job so they can get their lives back on track. He and Danny Dubuk, the CFO, estimated they have hired 75 men and women seeking a second chance — some succeeded and have moved on, while others didn't make it. They are working to improve the outcomes for men.

Jobe knows first-hand what former prisoners face from his tough childhood in Richmond that included time in juvenile hall. Raised by a single mom, he was kicked out of his house at 13 and joined a gang. Before that, he spent two years at Hanna Boys Center in Sonoma.

He was a gang member for 10 years until he came to know Jesus and turned his life around when he was 23. Darrell wants to do that with others — traveling internationally with Mike Silva International (he was just back from the Dominican Republic). Mike Silva does big crusades similar to what the Billy Graham or the Luis Palau organizations do. The Dominican Republic festival also included bringing clean water to a rural community of about 1,000 people.

To give back, Vericool has partnered with Soulfood Softball

Sunday for its first Christian philanthropic event on Sunday. The organizations will serve 150 single-mom families in Richmond. Each family will receive a turkey or ham Christmas dinner complete with the fixings and each child will receive a \$25 present.

To support the effort, they have launched a GoFundMe page that raised almost \$11,500 of its \$19,000 goal as of Monday. Visit the webpage at <https://bit.ly/2B5DVZB>.

Meanwhile, Danny and Darrell are preparing for their consumer product launch — a cardboard cooler made entirely of recycled cardboard that holds water for days. Like Styrofoam, it's reusable, and unlike the plastic product, it is compostable.

What's amazing is Darrell, who originates the ideas (he says he's following God's instructions) has no education beyond the eighth grade. He's worked in the packaging industry for about 15 years and saw his former business go bankrupt after the 2008-09 financial crisis when manufacturing — and thus packaging — suffered. The bright spot was pharmaceuticals, which turned down but did not bottom out. He learned, contrary to his prior belief, that packaging was not recession-proof.

After five years of research, the company launched its alternative to Styrofoam in 2017 and has grown steadily. It targets biomedical, pharmaceutical, life sciences, fish and food delivery industries.

It closed \$5 million in funding in September of 2017 — they had already raised that much from friends and family. They are readying for their next round of funding of \$12 million that will value the company at more than \$50 million. They currently employ 45 people and are interviewing to expand the executive team.

Danny summed up the mission, saying:

"We protect product (keeping it cool during shipping).

We protect the planet (renewable and post-consumer compostable products).

We protect people."

Darrell chimed in: "We want to let our actions speak (for us, not just our words)." ■



Wishing you a Merry Christmas, a prosperous 2019 and a wonderful holiday season!



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About the Cover

Lanoua Harang, 4, stops by Stoneridge Shopping Center to visit Santa Claus. The man in red has been stationed in the Grand Court at Stoneridge since Nov. 3, and will remain there through Dec. 24. Photo by Erika Alvero. Cover design by Paul Llewellyn.

Vol. XIX, Number 48

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Streetwise

ASKED AROUND TOWN

What are you looking forward to in the new year?



Melaine Gunter
Retired

I'm looking forward to doing a lot of volunteering with my therapy in the new year. I'm also looking forward to checking out the new Castleridge Trail on the west side of Pleasanton. I've heard such great things about it.



Kathryn Tomlin
Administrative assistant

I'm looking forward to spending my 40th anniversary with my husband, who is also my childhood sweetheart. I'm not sure yet how we will celebrate this milestone. But I know it will be special.



Jessica Traynor
Engineer

I'm looking forward to my wedding! We're getting married in Anaheim — close to, but not actually in, Disneyland. And no, I won't be wearing mouse ears instead of a veil.



Lillian Quackenbush
Technology manager

Well, my company has been in the process of merging for what seems like forever. There have been so many logistical things to deal with for many months. But the merger is now complete, so in the new year I am very much looking forward to doing actual work on new matters and projects, rather than just dealing all the time with details concerning the merger.



Alexander Alvarado
High school student

I'm mostly just looking forward to the new year, and to the rest of the school year that will start up right after the break.

—Compiled by Nancy Lewis and Jenny Lyness

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Our Neighborhoods showcases selected neighborhoods and captures the particular qualities that make it unique. Each Neighborhood profile includes local features — such as parks and shopping centers — and a fact box including the median home sale price, how many homes were sold and the nearby schools.

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Pleasanton Weekly

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DIGEST

Tree pickup

Pleasanton Boy Scouts Troop 941 is now accepting signups from residents who want the scouts to pick up their Christmas trees after the holidays.

Donations generated by the annual fundraiser are used by troop members to pay for camping equipment and scouting activities such as summer camp and weekend outings. Last year, the boys collected over 1,000 trees in partnership with the Pleasanton Garbage Service.

The scouts will provide the service only to Pleasanton residents who have registered at www.troop941.org. Registration will remain open as space allows through the holidays, and collection day is Jan. 5.

Fire victim support

Dublin is playing host to one of six mobile disaster recovery centers set up by government officials across Northern California to support displaced survivors of devastating wildfires throughout the state last month.

Officials have learned there are a number of victims displaced to Alameda County from the Camp Fire in Paradise, so they have set up the mobile support station to run today, tomorrow and Jan. 3-5 at the sheriff's station at 4985 Broder Blvd. in Dublin.

Representatives of FEMA's individual assistance and mitigation teams, the U.S. Small Business Administration and other state and federal agencies, as well as nongovernmental service organizations, will staff the mobile units to offer information concerning resources available to homeowners, renters and business owners who sustained damage as a result of the wildfires.

For more information, visit www.fema.gov or www.sba.gov.

New board president

Edralin "Ed" Maduli, who represents Livermore and parts of Pleasanton in Trustee Area 7, has been voted as the 2019 board president for the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District Board of Trustees.

Maduli, who is in the middle of his first term on the board, is serving as board president for the first time.

Trustee Genevieve Randolph, whose Area 3 includes Union City and south Hayward, was named board secretary for the year.

The seven-member elected board oversees the district that serves 29,000 students each year through its two community college campuses: Chabot College in Hayward and Las Positas College in Livermore. ■

PUSD board votes to move ahead with new school on Donlon site

\$61.25 million project will create two separate campuses on same parcel

By ERIKA ALVERO

The Pleasanton Unified school board voted unanimously to move forward with building a second campus on the Donlon Elementary School property Tuesday night at the end of a nearly three-hour-long facilities workshop.

The long-planned meeting on how to address increasing enrollment and capacity issues in northern Pleasanton was well-attended by the community. Trustees chose the staff recommendation out of three options presented, which all involved Donlon, located in the Val Vista neighborhood, and its eastern

neighbor Hart Middle School.

"I think we've come up with something," Board President Valerie Arkin said. "There is available land on Donlon. Donlon is our school that has that parcel of land large enough to build the two schools. I don't think it's ideal at all, but I think it really could work and it could work as two schools."

The new school on the Donlon property will be designated for fourth- and fifth-grade students, while the existing campus will be converted into a TK-3 school. Additionally, any capacity expansion planning work at Hart will be put on

hold until middle school science lab improvements have started.

The split-school Donlon option is expected to cost the district about \$61.25 million.

District staff looked into various possible solutions over the past few months, including adjusting school boundaries, building a new elementary school, implementing a K-8 school configuration and increasing school capacities. And while earlier possibilities considered involved other PUSD sites as well, the narrowed-down options presented Tuesday revolved around Donlon and Hart, the elementary and middle

schools with the greatest number of student overflows, respectively.

This year, as of Dec. 3, 124 Donlon students and 29 Hart students were overflowed — meaning that there were too many children in a given grade, leading to some students being sent to another campus, not their neighborhood school. Last year, Donlon saw an overflow of 99, up from only 14 in 2016-17.

Hart, in contrast, saw 29 students overflowed this year, the first time in several years that any district middle school has seen overflow.

See **SCHOOL** on Page 9

New EBRPD fire chief

Livermore native had led Fire Department in interim role

By JEREMY WALSH

East Bay Regional Park District officials have removed the interim tag off Aileen Theile's title, promoting her to become the district's permanent fire chief.

Theile, who served as acting fire chief since March, oversees all fire protection, fire prevention and fire-fighting activities for the district, which includes 73 regional parks on over 121,000 acres of open space in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

"I am honored to be appointed fire chief," Theile said last week. "I look forward to continuing the district's significant efforts in wildfire protection and wildfire response. Planning and protecting against wildfires is a major focus of the park districts."

EBRPD leaders lauded Theile for her extensive experience in wildland fire management, which they say will be vital for the district given conditions seen throughout the state.

"Chief Theile's extensive experience with wildfire hazard reduction will be a major asset for the park district," General Manager Robert Doyle said in a statement.

"Chief Theile is an experienced wildland firefighter and fuels management expert. Her on-the-ground experience in statewide fires provides a precise and powerful perspective on what is needed to protect the residents and environment of the East Bay," said Anthony Ciaburro, EBRPD police chief and assistant general manager of public safety.

"Above all, she is a strong leader in an era of unprecedented challenges," Ciaburro added.

A Livermore native who now lives in Martinez, Theile started working for EBRPD as a park ranger at Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area in Pleasanton in 1994. She went to to be stationed at several other East Bay parks, including Sunol Regional Wilderness, Garin Regional Park and Cull Canyon Regional Recreation Area.

In 2002, she was promoted to resource analyst for the district's Stewardship Department.

During her tenure, Theile also focused on fire-fighting by joining the EBRPD Fire Department on special assignment as an industrial firefighter in 1995, pulling double duty within the district for years including as an industrial lieutenant firefighter after 2005.

She earned her first permanent assignment in the



Aileen Theile, who grew up in Livermore, is now the fire chief for East Bay Parks.

Fire Department in 2012 as a fire captain, a position she held until being named acting fire chief earlier this year.

Theile, who is cited as an expert in fire fuels management and fire behavior, has been part of the district's prescribed fire program to prevent catastrophic damage from wildfire on its lands and surrounding communities. She has also led many cross-discipline teams — internal and external — where she has developed a reputation as a leader who fosters professionalism and collaboration.

Theile's department includes 68 full- and part-time on-call firefighters and nine fire stations. It manages fire protection and fire hazard reduction, including thinning and reducing hazardous vegetation on over 1,000 acres per year. ■

Council endorses union contract

Firefighters to get new raises, pay more into pensions

By JEREMY WALSH

The Pleasanton City Council has voiced its support for a new contract with Livermore-Pleasanton firefighters highlighted by four salary increases over the next 3-1/2 years, along with some union members covering an extra 0.5% of their pension costs starting in mid-2020.

Pleasanton, which partners with Livermore for firefighting services under the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department, has a two-step consideration process for its union contracts. After the endorsement by the council Tuesday night, the new memorandum of understanding (MOU) is scheduled to return for final approval Jan. 15.

"I just want to congratulate staff and the fire union for coming together and doing a great job in getting this done," Councilman Jerry Pentin said during the 10-minute discussion in the council chambers. "We support our firefighters, who do a great job for us, and hopefully they're as happy with this as we are."

"I think we did a great job of negotiating and I appreciate all that came to the table in good faith," Councilwoman Karla Brown said, adding that the initial upcoming raises are "basically a cost-of-living raise."

The proposed MOU, which would

See **CONTRACT** on Page 8

Board OKs raises for PUSD classified staff, management

Also: Arkin appointed as board president, first interim budget, renegotiated contract for high school portables

By ERIKA ALVERO

The Pleasanton Unified school board unanimously approved a series of pay raises for classified staff and management last week.

In line with the recently approved agreement with the Association of Pleasanton Teachers, the approvals featured a 2.5% salary increase for members of the Classified School Employees Association, management/confidential employees, and for unrepresented classified employees.

All raises are retroactive to July 1, 2018.

"We did make budget reductions, in order to be able to afford the 2.5% raise ... We stayed away from the classroom, we stayed away from the schools, although some of the reductions will have an impact," deputy superintendent of business services Micaela Ochoa said during the meeting Dec. 11. "They were in district office budgets."

In total, the reductions to

accommodate the raises came out to about \$4 million over the course of three years, Ochoa said. For the collective bargaining agreements up for approval at last week's meeting, funds would come from state Local Control Funding Formula revenue and the ending fund balance, according to the public disclosure agreements.

After this latest round of pay raises, all district groups except for the executive leadership team have had salary adjustments during the 2018-19 negotiation cycle, according to staff.

According to a county analysis, if PUSD's average daily attendance numbers align with demographer projections, the district should be able to afford the pay increases.

"But if we do not have materialized the projected increases in our enrollment, there is a possibility of being led to another \$1.5 million in 2021 in reductions," said Julio Hernandez, assistant superintendent of human resources, summing up the county's assessment.

Although the board approved the bargaining agreements, Trustee Joan Laursen commented on staff's prior statements that the cuts would be outside of the classroom.

"I'm very, very happy that we're

able to offer this raise to our employees," she said. "I just want to make sure that we're all aware, the public is aware, that any time that we're cutting, it affects our students."

In other business

The board kicked off the meeting with their annual reorganization meeting, during which time they selected a new president and vice president and determined which trustees would represent the board on which committees.

Trustee Valerie Arkin, who sat as vice president this past year, was appointed as board president, while Trustee Steve Maher moved into the vice president post.

In the committee representation shuffle, much remained the same, though there were a few shifts: Laursen and Arkin will be representatives to the Tri-Valley Special Education Local Plan Area Board along with the Regional Occupational Program Joint Powers Board; all members will represent PUSD for the Alameda County School Board Association; and Maher, Arkin and Trustee Mark Miller will serve on the City of Pleasanton Liaison Committee.

In other assignments, Maher, Miller and Trustee Jamie Yee Hintzke

will be representatives for the Audit Committee; Yee Hintzke and Arkin will serve on the Economic Vitality Committee; all members will be representatives for the Tri-Valley Education Coalition; Yee Hintzke and Maher will serve on the Facility Subcommittee; and Laursen, Yee Hintzke, and Arkin will take on the Board Policy Subcommittee.

The board honored Sarah Banholzer, an Amador Valley High School student, for being named a Tri-Valley Hero by the Pleasanton Weekly this fall.

Board members approved the summer programs for 2019.

Programs will be held at Amador Valley High School and Walnut Grove Elementary School, and are set to begin on June 12. The projected cost of operating summer school is \$503,633.

The board unanimously approved a positive certification of the first interim budget.

According to staff, the general fund's ending balance for June 30, 2019 is expected to be \$17.4 million, of which \$15.8 million is unrestricted and \$1.6 million is restricted.

Trustees unanimously approved a request for allowance of attendance, due to the district's school closures on Nov. 16 because of poor air quality from the Camp Fire. The request will now go to the county and state for review, and if PUSD qualifies, it will not be penalized for the lost school hours in terms of funding or need to make up instructional time.

Two community members were appointed to the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee: Arne Olson and Louis Asbury.

Olson, who served one term on the Pleasanton City Council that ended that same day, was not present as he was at his last council meeting, receiving a commendation.

Asbury, though, a retired businessman who moved to Pleasanton 19 years ago "mainly because of the schools," offered a few words.

"In my years as a businessman, I've crunched a lot of numbers over the years, and I thought this was something I could do to help," Asbury said.

The board terminated existing contracts with HKIT Architects for portable replacements at Amador Valley and Foothill high schools, and then approved new, renegotiated design contracts with the same firm that include science lab upgrades along with the portable replacements.

The Amador contract comes out to \$677,000, while the Foothill contract is \$783,000, both from Measure 11 bond funds.

Board members unanimously approved a contract with CPS HR Consulting to conduct a classification and total compensation study, for a total cost of \$99,010. ■



ERIKA ALVERO

Senior Holiday Tea

Seniors enjoyed a festive Holiday Tea & Dessert at the Pleasanton Senior Center on Dec. 6, an event that featured musical performances, a holiday sing-along, and of course desserts and tea.

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Pleasanton again lauded as Bicycle Friendly Community

Bronze award recognizes city's efforts to improve conditions

By JEREMY WALSH

The city of Pleasanton has retained its designation as a bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community from the League of American Bicyclists.

The bronze award, announced last week, recognizes Pleasanton's dedication to improving conditions for cyclists through sustainable infrastructure, education programs, pro-cycling policies and promoting bicycling as a safe and healthy transportation method.

"The city is proud to have made significant progress in the last four years by updating its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, adding green bike lanes, constructing the city's first protected intersection, providing more bicycle safety instruction and encouragement and improving accessibility near the Dublin-Pleasanton BART station,"

City Manager Nelson Fialho said in a statement.

"We will continue to work on the goals established in the updated Master Plan as well as engage our community to maintain our BFC ranking," he added.

Pleasanton joined 60 other communities in receiving new or renewed rankings last week. Re-evaluated every four years, Pleasanton first earned a bronze award in 2014, improving upon its honorable mention designation from the previous cycle.

The program, which identifies Bicycle Friendly Communities across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, aims to revolutionize the way communities evaluate their quality of life, sustainability and accessibility, while allowing them to benchmark progress toward improving their

bicycle-friendliness, according to organizers.

"We applaud these communities for making bicycling a safe and convenient option for transportation and recreation," said Bill Nesper, executive director at the League of American Bicyclists. "We look forward to continuing to work with these communities as we move closer to our mission of creating a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone."

Communities like Pleasanton must apply to renew or improve their status every four years, meaning they must at least maintain their existing efforts while also keeping up with changing technology, national safety standards and community-driven best practices, city officials said.

No other Tri-Valley municipality is currently designated as a

Bicycle Friendly Community.

Pleasanton scored particularly well in metrics such as bicycle education in schools, Bike to Work events, active bicycle advocacy and advisory groups, few crashes and having a comprehensive bicycle plan, according to its report card from the league.

"Congratulations on adopting the 2017 Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan. This plan will be a blueprint for improvements and has many great recommendations for a more connected network of safe and comfortable bicycle facilities," the report card said.

Areas of improvement include commuter ridership at 1.06% (compared to 2.7% average for the silver level) and bicycle-friendly laws and ordinance (ranked Acceptable, compared to silver average of Good).

Overall, the city ranked as follows in the five main categories: engineering (4.8 out of 10), education (4.5), encouragement (4.3), enforcement (3.0) and education and planning (4.8).

The report card lists a handful of key steps for Pleasanton to rise to the silver level next time around, including appoint a bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, continue increasing high-quality and safe bike parking, consider launching a bike share system, expand bicycle education opportunities for adults and adopt a comprehensive road safety plan or "Vision Zero" policy.

To view Pleasanton's new report card, visit bikeleague.org/community. To learn more about the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, visit www.cityofpleasantonca.gov. ■

Watch for toxic mushrooms amid rainy weather

District: Collecting mushrooms at East Bay parks is illegal, dangerous

Given the rainy weather in the region the past couple of weeks, the East Bay Regional Park District is issuing its annual warning to avoid certain wild mushrooms that can be harmful or fatal to people and pets.

The death cap and western destroying angel can both be found in the area of the park district during rainy weather. The mushrooms contain amatoxins, molecules that can cause gastrointestinal distress and renal failure if not treated immediately.

The mushrooms typically grow near oak trees, with the death cap looking like a medium-to-large mushroom with a greenish-gray cap, white gills, a white ring around

the stem and a large white sac at the base of the stem, according to the park district.

The western destroying angel mushroom is medium-to-large and usually has a creamy white cap, white gills, a white ring around the stem and a thin white sac at the base, district officials said.

Collecting mushrooms within the park district is illegal, and the district advised people to also keep an eye on their pets and to contact a veterinarian if they suspect a pet ate a toxic mushroom.

More information about the mushrooms of the Bay Area can be found at www.bayareamushrooms.org. ■

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Pleasanton recognized as top-10 place for job hunters in California

Tri-Valley scores well, with nearby San Ramon at No. 1, Danville 3rd, Livermore 8th

By RYAN J. DEGAN

California's economy has had a successful year so far, most recently adding 339,000 jobs in September and having its unemployment rate drop to 4.1%. And in the center of that prosperity is the Tri-Valley, which continues to be recognized as a force for economic growth.

Pleasanton has been recognized as one of the biggest contributors to regional economic growth, having been declared the sixth best city in California for residents seeking a job, in a study conducted by financial management company WalletHub. Nearby San Ramon was ranked as the best city, Danville was the third best and Livermore was at No. 8.

The study compared more than

250 California cities across 16 key metrics that were divided into two categories, job market and socioeconomic environment.

Job market metrics ranged from job growth, monthly median starting salary, unemployment rates and share of workers in poverty. Socioeconomic environment focused more on quality of life for an employee, including commute times, employee benefit value and social engagement opportunities.

Cities were ranked on a 100-point scale — the closer to 100 a city places, the more suitable conditions exist for a resident seeking employment. While all factors are important to the life of a working resident, the study placed a higher importance on metrics comprising

a municipality's job market.

Overall, Pleasanton was recognized as the sixth-best place for residents seeking a job, achieving a rating of 65.89 out of 100.

Unemployment rates for residents who have sought higher education was where the city excels over all others. According to the survey, Pleasanton has the best unemployment rate for residents with a bachelor's degree or higher in the Golden State.

Pleasanton's low ranking on employment growth kept the city from a higher rating; the survey recognized this as a trouble area placing it at 226 out of 254 cities.

In the No. 1 spot on the list, San Ramon achieved a 70.4 out of 100 after containing the second best job market in the Golden State

and the eighth best socioeconomic environment.

The recently open City Center Bishop Ranch has no doubt helped San Ramon's status as the best place for job hunters, as developers estimate that the retail complex will employ approximately 1,000 people when all 70 of its available spaces are open.

San Ramon was followed closely by neighboring Danville, which achieved the third highest rating of 68.5. WalletHub found the town to be one of the best places for high school graduates seeking employment; in fact, Danville shared a tie with five other cities for the lowest unemployment rates for high school graduates.

Not to be left out Livermore also achieved a top-10 ranking. In

the No. 8 position, the city scored 65.39 out of 100.

WalletHub's findings confirm those made this summer by the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, citing the Tri-Valley as having the fastest-growing job market in the Bay Area.

Coachella was found to be the worst place in California for job hunters, achieving a lowly score of 27.17 out of 100. Not a place for college graduates, it has the highest rate of unemployment for residents with a bachelor's degree or higher.

According to WalletHub the top 10 cities for finding a job in California are:

1. San Ramon
2. Palo Alto
3. Danville
4. Los Gatos
5. Santa Clara
6. Pleasanton
7. Rancho Santa Margarita
8. Livermore
9. Los Altos
10. Morgan Hill. ■

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CONTRACT

Continued from Page 5

run through December 2021, was ratified by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), Local 1974 members last month and is set to be debated by the Livermore City Council in the coming weeks.

A successor agreement to the MOU that expired June 30, the new contract would include a series of raises for union members starting with a 3% increase next month, followed by another 3% increase in July, a 3.5% increase in July 2020 and a 1% increase in July 2021.

Another provision would see IAFF Local 1974 members classified as "classic members" for pension purposes (those already in the CalPERS system as of January 2013), contribute an additional 0.5% toward their pension costs for a total of 12.5% overall, starting in July 2020.

In other benefit changes, all active union employees would pay a minimum contribution of \$50 per month for family medical coverage starting in January 2020.

The agreement would also allow for extra compensation of \$100 per month for employees who voluntarily keep and maintain their paramedic licenses when promoted to the ranks of fire engineer or fire captain — higher positions for which paramedicine is not considered a core function.

There's new education incentives too, an extra \$25 (for \$75 total per month) for union members with an associate's degree and an extra \$50 (\$150 total per month) for those with a bachelor's degree.

Additionally, the MOU includes a variety of language changes considered operational in nature and without cost implications, according to Pleasanton city staff.

In all, the new agreement is estimated to cost an extra \$5.5 million

across the entire 3-1/2-year term, with Pleasanton's share estimated at \$2.8 million for the full term. Pleasanton's additional obligation for the current budget year is about \$411,000, to be paid from general fund contingencies.

The union represents 104 LPPD employees in all — 99 in fire suppression and five in fire prevention.

In other business

- Council members approved the roster of their assignments to 18 council subcommittees and 16 local and regional committees.

Leading the way was the appointment of Brown to serve as vice mayor for 2019. This will be the second turn in the position for Brown, a second-term councilwoman who also served as vice mayor in 2015.

The list featured various assignments for Brown, Pentin, Mayor Jerry Thorne, Councilwoman Kathy Narum and new Councilwoman Julie Testa.

Testa, a longtime advocate on schools issues, said she was disappointed at not being assigned to the Pleasanton Unified School District Liaison Committee and hoped to receive that opportunity in the future. Thorne and Narum were given that assignment, with Brown as alternate.

Council subcommittees include Alameda County Liaison (Brown, Narum), Audit (Narum, Testa), BART Liaison (Narum, Pentin), Bernal Property Financing (Narum, Testa), City Attorney Evaluation and City Manager Evaluation committees (Narum, Thorne), Downtown Specific Plan Update Task Force (Narum, Thorne; Pentin as alternate) and Dublin Liaison (Pentin, Testa).

Other subcommittees are DSRSD Liaison (Brown, Narum), East Bay Parks Liaison (Brown and Pentin, with Narum alternate), Economic Vitality (Testa; Narum alternate), Fair Liaison (Brown, Testa), Legislative

Advocacy (Pentin, Thorne), LPPD Joint Powers Authority (Narum, Thorne), Livermore Liaison (Brown, Testa), Waste and Recycling (Brown, Testa) and Zone 7 Liaison (Brown, Narum).

Local and regional assignments include Alameda County Mayors' Conference (Thorne; Brown alternate), Alameda County Transportation Commission (Thorne; Narum alternate), Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District (Narum), Alameda County Waste Management Authority (Pentin; Narum alternate), Altamont Landfill Community Monitor Committee (Testa), Altamont Landfill Open Space Committee (Pentin; Testa alternate) and Association of Bay Area Governments (Testa; Brown alternate).

The other committees are East Bay Economic Development Alliance (Thorne), iGate Board (Thorne), League of California Cities (Thorne; Pentin alternate), Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (Brown, Pentin; Narum alternate), Livermore Amador Valley Water Management Agency (Pentin, Testa; Brown alternate), Tri-Valley Affordable Housing Committee (Testa; Brown alternate); Regional Rail Authority (Thorne), Tri-Valley Transportation Council (Narum; Thorne alternate) and TV30 Board (Thorne).

- The council approved a \$108,000 contract with HMN Engineers for preliminary design work on the traffic-calming project to add a second left-turn lane from westbound Bernal Avenue to southbound Sunol Boulevard.

The preliminary design work will give city officials a more accurate sense of the right-of-way acquisition required to construct the project, and in turn give them a better sense of overall project costs, for which the city has earmarked \$2.75 million, according to City Manager Nelson Fialho. ■

Parent volunteer Natarajan appointed to Dublin school board

Newcomer to complete unexpired term for Area 4 seat after Giannini's resignation

By JEREMY WALSH

The Dublin Unified School District welcomed its newest board trustee last week as Niranjana "Nini" Natarajan, a finance professional and parent volunteer, was appointed to fill the school board's vacancy for Trustee Area 4.

Natarajan, who took her seat on the dais after the board voted 3-1 to select her over one other applicant Dec. 11, said her priorities will include helping the district focus on a balanced approach to educating Dublin students.

"While good grades are important, there is so much more to developing an intelligent, curious and emotionally well-balanced child," Natarajan said in a statement. "I want my children, well, all children, to learn in an environment that embraces a

sense of community and that strives to provide experiential, interactive learning experiences that foster skills like communication, collaboration and compromise."

Natarajan fills the unexpired term representing Area 4, a wide swath of land in the northeastern part of Dublin, left vacant when Trustee Joe Giannini resigned abruptly in October after just under two years on the board, citing the time commitment and fractious Dublin politics creating a hostile service environment.

The remaining board members opted to make a direct appointment to complete the remainder of Giannini's elected term, which ends December 2020, as opposed to calling for a special election.

Natarajan was one of two residents who live within Area 4 that applied

for the open trustee position.

The other applicant was Gabrielle Blackman, a mother of three school-age children and 2016 school board candidate who served on the Community Review Committee and as a school volunteer. She said her goals on the board would include improving the district's communication and strategic planning.

After reviewing the applications and interviewing the candidates, trustees Amy Miller, Dan Cunningham and Megan Rouse voted to approve Natarajan, while Trustee Dan Cherrier dissented in support of Blackman.

"I believe Nini will bring new perspectives and fresh ideas to our board," said Miller, the board's president. "Not only does she bring valuable professional expertise, she also

changes the complexion of our board to better represent the diverse and growing community in Dublin."

"As a parent in the community, facing the challenges of growth on the eastern side of town, her insight will be extremely valuable in shaping the direction of our district and the educational experience of our children," Miller added.

A resident of Dublin for over four years, Natarajan is a native of eastern India and graduate of Madras University with a degree in commerce and accounting.

She married and moved to the United States with her husband in 2004, and she became a U.S. citizen in 2013.

The family initially settled in the Silicon Valley. While her husband worked for a Bay Area semiconductor

company, Natarajan earned her public accountant certification. She now works as head of finance for a growth-stage startup in San Mateo.

Natarajan has two daughters who enrolled in Dublin schools after the family relocated to the city in 2014. They now attend Cottonwood Creek K-8 School.

As a volunteer, Natarajan became heavily involved with Destination Imagination as a parent mentor to teams for multiple years.

"Destination Imagination has been a wonderful experience for my children and myself. The program provides the type of hands-on learning I feel is essential to stimulating the minds of our future leaders," she said. "As a board member, I will push to expand programs of this nature for our children." ■

SCHOOL

Continued from Page 5

Students moved to another school, however, can vary by age — one elementary may have an excessive number of fourth-graders but a shortage of second-grade students, for example.

"When we think about the boundaries, the unfortunate thing is by grade level, it's not equal," said Ed Diolazo, assistant superintendent of student support services. "They're not equal buckets in our first-grade level, second-grade level, third-grade level, at the high school. We have bubbles ... for lack of a better word. Some of our grade levels are just bigger than others."

Class size reduction in recent years, he said, also has led to overflow.

Aside from the fact voters approved a new elementary school as part of the Measure II facilities bond in 2016, enrollment projections indicate that a new school or two may be necessary in coming years.

Demographers predict that by the time the city of Pleasanton reaches maturity (when all potential residential units are "built out") there will be 7,927 elementary students enrolled in PUSD. Based on the district's 700-student campus size limit, at that point in time, there would need to be a total of 11 elementary schools — two more than currently exist.

Besides the new fourth- and fifth-grade school option, staff also presented the possibilities of creating K-8 schools at Donlon and Hart, along with expanding the capacity of Donlon to forge a larger K-5 school.

The K-8 configuration would necessarily involve both campuses, due to the student population each would require, with a projected enrollment of 1,200 students at Donlon and 1,500 at Hart.

However, the price-tag of this option came out to an estimated \$97.45 million — not a feasible amount, according to

Superintendent David Haglund.

"Once we knew that the K-8 model was not a feasible solution, it broke the plan, so to speak, so we didn't have to do both (schools)," he said. "We could do one without the other."

The larger K-5 school, with an estimated enrollment of 1,200, would be the cheapest option at around \$45.39 million. But the large size of such a school would go against board direction to maintain 700-student capacity limits.

The third option that will now move forward currently has the new school situated along the Denker Drive edge of the campus, fronted by a 118-car parking lot. Additional proposed traffic mitigation would also place a new 64-car parking lot and additional drop-off zone at the northeast corner along Dorman Road.

The \$61.25 million project cost includes \$54.53 million from Measure II funds to construct the new school, \$380,000 to convert the existing Donlon building into a TK-3 and \$6.34 million for additional traffic mitigation. Ongoing expenditures for administrative and operational costs, said deputy superintendent of business services Micaela Ochoa, would have to come from the general fund as opposed to dollars from the Measure II facilities bond.

Considerations on increasing Hart's capacity will be placed on hold until middle school science lab improvements have begun.

After the presentation's conclusion, Board Vice President Steve Maher asked why enrollment boundary adjustments were not on the table any more, a question echoed later by community members as well.

"Because enrollment is a moving target ... it can change every year," Diolazo said. "And so when we look at boundary adjustments today, and into the future. It really will not address the projected long-term growth of the district."

Twelve community members spoke during the public comments

period of the meeting, largely to express traffic and safety concerns, discontent with outreach in advance of the workshop and a general sense that the Val Vista neighborhood was bearing the brunt of the enrollment influx.

"Our neighborhoods, all three of those neighborhoods — the high-density housing, Valley Trails, Val Vista — we are the most affordable neighborhoods across Pleasanton, and that's why families are flocking there, because they want the schools but it's what they can afford," Cynthia Sandhu said. "And it's not fair that now they're not getting the school that they deserve. That we're having to suffer the burden of adding more and more and more to us."

Several felt that the mailer sent out by the district last week on Friday wasn't adequate notice, and traffic safety featured as a prominent concern as well, with parents expounding upon the existing dangers, and inability of their children to walk to school.

"Our neighborhood is a small neighborhood, these roads are 50 years old," Andra Rogers said. "They are not huge roads. They are not meant to have as many kids as we have now, much less 400 more kids."

However, city of Pleasanton officials had conducted traffic and circulation studies beforehand, and cited circulation as the reason they also were supportive of the TK-3/4-5 recommendation, among PUSD's other options.

"From the standpoint of offering the best circulation option for student drop-off and pick-up, as well as most efficient circulation alternative for the surrounding neighborhood, the City is most supportive of the TK-3 and 4-5 option," City Manager Nelson Fialho wrote in a statement.

He added, "This configuration separates Donlon into two schools which disperses the traffic impact between Dorman Road and Payne Road/Denker Drive. The existing

south parking lots and loading and queuing lane will remain. Two new parking lots with loading/unloading lanes are proposed which will improve traffic circulation."

Before taking a final vote, trustees amended their motion to include some of the ideas put forward by community members during public comments, to ensure that conversations surrounding additional crossing guards, police presence and buses be discussed as work continues.

"A lot of the uncertainty and fear about the loss of the community that you currently enjoy at Donlon, I think can be addressed in the programmatic design phases," Trustee Joan Laursen said.

Now that the option has been settled upon, staff are expected to return to the board in January with a financing plan for the project. Construction is anticipated to begin during the 2020-21 school year and conclude in the 2022-23 year. ■

TAKE US ALONG



To grandfather's house we go: Aditya Kamath visited his grandfather's farmhouse in Karkala, India during his family summer vacation. In the backdrop is a popular historic black granite rock hill on top of which is a 500-year-old, 41-foot monolithic granite statue of Bahubali.

PLEASANTON
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given to the public that the Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) seeks up to three (3) volunteers to serve on the PUSD Audit Committee. Applications are due to the PUSD District Office by 5 p.m. on January 4, 2019. Interested parties can find membership requirements and complete instructions for applying on the PUSD website (www.pleasantonusd.net) or contact the PUSD Business Services Department (925) 462-5500.

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Community Pulse

POLICE BULLETIN

Pleasanton PD nabs pair in package theft

Pleasanton police officials are urging people to take necessary precautions when expecting holiday deliveries in the wake of two alleged package thieves being nabbed on the south side of the city over the weekend.

Police credited an attentive neighbor with providing key assistance during the investigation Sunday afternoon, which unfolded after the neighbor witnessed a woman take a package from the front porch of a residence on Junipero Street.

The woman then got into a black, four-door Mercedes Benz driven by a man, according to police.

Officers searched the area and found the vehicle parked on San Carlos Way. The two suspects were located nearby, and the Mercedes was found to be stolen from Hayward, according to police.

Officers arrested the 25-year-old woman and 26-year-old man, both from Hayward, on suspicion of vehicle theft, possession of stolen property and conspiracy to commit a crime, and both were booked into custody at the Santa Rita Jail in Dublin. The pair's names are being withheld in accordance with Embarcadero Media's policy on identifying arrestees before prosecutors file formal charges.

"This type of crime is common, especially during the holiday season. Make sure you are taking appropriate steps to keep your deliveries safe," police said in posting

Remembering Hector

SRPD K-9 succumbs to cancer after one last trip through city

By PLEASANTON WEEKLY STAFF

The Tri-Valley law enforcement community is mourning the loss of one of its own, as San Ramon Police Department K-9 officer Hector succumbed to cancer on Dec. 9 hours after an emotional final procession through the city.

A 7-year-old German shepherd who joined the department in 2012, Hector was born and raised in Germany before being purchased by SRPD. He worked alongside human handler Officer Allen Molien serving the community in numerous roles, including assisting in searches and other police tasks and participating in public engagement events for the city.

"I can truly say without a doubt that I was blessed to have had the opportunity to work with such a talented partner who never ceased to amaze me with his work ability and personality," Molien told the Weekly on Monday. "He will be missed not only by me, but to the community we served."

"Hector touched the hearts of everybody he met and left lasting memories," Molien added. "Hector is gone, but his memory will live on with all those lives he touched as a remarkable ambassador for San Ramon Police Department and its K-9 Unit."

Hector and Molien were among the Tri-Valley K-9 police units profiled in the Weekly's July 12 cover story, "Serving their community."

It was during that same week Hector underwent emergency surgery for internal bleeding after experiencing discomfort. A week later he was diagnosed with hemangiosarcoma cancer, a common form of canine cancer.

Hector had missed time in recent months undergoing chemotherapy but had been back on the job for about a month when, in the last few days before his death, the cancer "just came back with a vengeance," police Capt. Denton Carlson said. "We were told that might be the way it would happen."

With Hector increasingly in pain, plans were made quickly for a procession to honor him, Carlson said. Molien and Hector arrived at the south edge of the city at about 11 a.m. Dec. 9 and from there the procession went north up San Ramon Valley Boulevard to Bollinger Canyon Road, and then east to a veterinary clinic where Hector was put down.

"From day one all the way to the end we were inseparable," Molien said of Hector, who lived with the Molien family during his tenure. "I knew from that (final diagnosis) till



San Ramon PD Officer Allen Molien and his K-9 partner Hector. The 7-year-old dog died Dec. 9 after battling aggressive cancer.

his last breath we would not leave each other's side. That weekend Hector went everywhere with me including shopping at Costco. Till his final day, we spent every possible minute together." ■

Editor's note: Information from the Bay City News Service was used in this report.

about Sunday's incident on the department's social media accounts.

They offered the following tips for package safety:

- Track your package (many places allow you to sign up for alerts), note the anticipated delivery date and ask a trusted neighbor to pick it up.
- Consider using an Amazon Locker if you are an Amazon shopper. There are several locations in town.

• If possible, have packages delivered to work.

- Install security devices in your front porch area or wherever you accept deliveries. This can be theft deterrent boxes to place/lock deliveries in or cameras that capture activity.
- Finally, if you see something, say something. Sometimes being an attentive neighbor is the best gift you can give.

In other news

• A teenager who was fatally shot while he and another person were driving in Fremont earlier this month has been identified by the Alameda County Coroner's Bureau as 17-year-old Damani Chadly, who was a senior at California High School in San Ramon.

Officers who responded to a shooting in the 34000 block of Torrington Court at 11:18 p.m. on Dec. 4 found Chadly with multiple gunshot wounds in the passenger seat of the vehicle, which had crashed into a home at the corner of Chaucer Drive and Torrington Court, police said.

Chadly was pronounced dead at the scene at 11:35 p.m.

Police said witnesses reported a second male running away from the scene and officers located him nearby at about 11:50 p.m. suffering from gunshot wounds.

The second victim was transported to a hospital to be treated for his injuries but has since been released, according to Fremont police spokeswoman Geneva Bosques.

Police announced Wednesday that Fremont resident Christian Kelling, 21, was arrested Dec. 12

in Texas on charges of murder and attempted murder in connection with the shooting. Authorities allege Kelling was selling the teens marijuana when a dispute occurred that prompted him to fire several rounds into the vehicle that Chadly and his friend were traveling in.

"This has been a tragic loss for California High School and greater San Ramon Valley Unified community. Our hearts and thoughts are with the student's family and friends," school district spokeswoman Elizabeth Graswich said last week.

• One person was injured in a highway shooting last Friday evening in Pleasanton, California Highway Patrol officials said.

Around 5 p.m., some type of altercation may have occurred on Interstate 680 near Bernal Avenue when someone fired a gun from one vehicle to another.

The gunshot injured a passenger in the latter vehicle, CHP Officer Tyler Hahn said.

The victim stayed in the vehicle as it traveled from I-680 to Interstate 580 to Fallon Road where the CHP made contact with the victim.

The person was taken to a hospital for injuries not considered life-threatening, Hahn said.

Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to call the CHP office in Dublin at 828-0466.

• A suspicious object originally described as a potential pipe bomb near Stoneridge Shopping Center on Monday was determined not to be an explosive device, according to Pleasanton police.

The situation began unfolding just before noon Monday when a passerby reported seeing a possible pipe bomb in the parking lot near the Macy's Men's Store, according to police, who noted the call was not received as a bomb threat.

Officers arrived, found the object and immediately closed the area off to all traffic, police said.

The Alameda County Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) Squad was called to the scene, and the EOD personnel determined the pipe was not a bomb and posed no threat to public safety, according to police.

• A truck driver who was killed in a collision between two big-rigs on westbound I-580 in Dublin last week has been identified by the Alameda County coroner as 32-year-old Henry Louis Rodriguez-Carrerasquillo of Sacramento.

The California Highway Patrol said a 2000 Peterbilt driven by Rodriguez-Carrerasquillo and a 2016 Freightliner driven by a 26-year-old man from Miami, Fla., were both traveling west on I-580 at about 12:36 p.m. Dec. 11 when, for unknown reasons, Rodriguez-Carrerasquillo allowed the front right of his big-rig to collide into the left rear of the other big-rig, according to Hahn.

Rodriguez-Carrerasquillo then lost control of the Peterbilt and it swerved to the right and overturned, according to Hahn.

He was crushed and emergency crews pronounced him dead at the scene, Hahn said. ■

—Pleasanton Weekly staff and Bay City News Service

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EDITORIAL

THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Charities see funding shortfall, look for help from Holiday Fund

Fifteen local nonprofits will benefit from this year's Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund — up three from a year ago. Yet contributions are falling behind. As of Dec. 12, donations total \$38,446, lagging behind the more than \$50,000 given by this time in 2017.

That's in step with a trend we see nationally as charities find it's a tough time to attract donors because of the sweeping tax code changes Congress passed last year.

That tax reform law doubled the standard deduction that taxpayers could take on their taxes, raising it to \$12,000 for individuals, \$18,000 for heads of household and \$24,000 for married couples filing jointly and surviving spouses.

According to the Tax Policy Center, the law will slash the number of people who itemize their charitable contributions by more than half to 16 million. These are expected to include many in the income

groups found in Pleasanton and the Tri-Valley who formerly found tax relief by itemizing their charitable contributions.

A report by Michael Nilsen of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, broadcast on the CBS network program "Moneywatch," stated that research shows giving this year dropping anywhere from \$13 billion to \$20 billion.

"That's a very significant impact," Nilsen said, "and a lot of charities are redoubling their efforts on ensuring that their current donors continue their traditional levels of giving, reaching out and keeping those relationships strong."

So are we.

Community campaigns such as the Holiday Fund are expected to play a major role in the contributions that these nonprofits need in the year ahead. In talks before the Pleasanton City Council, on TV30 public television, at local service organizations, in the media and

in letters to former donors, we are urging everyone to help the 15 charitable organizations recognized for the service in our community.

The ValleyCare Charitable Foundation is one of those 15. It provides ongoing funding of our local hospital and its innovative medical programs. In 2015, the hospital affiliated with Stanford to become Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare, adding globally renowned expertise to its local offerings. The hospital's foundation remains an independent nonprofit, reliant on donations, including the \$9,899 from last year's Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund.

"Our goal is to foster and protect the lifeline between the people of the Tri-Valley and the compassionate, personalized, and quality medical services that enhance the greater community," said the foundation's executive director, Shaké Sulikyan. "Donations make a significant and life-changing difference in the lives

of our patients."

Patients like "Dave," a 30-year-old who was rushed to Stanford-ValleyCare with an infection inside his heart. Using a new, state-of-the-art 3D ultrasound machine used for echocardiology (echo) that was funded through donations, doctors determined that there was no heart damage. The patient was treated medically with no need for invasive open-heart surgery.

Other nonprofits that will benefit from 2018 Holiday Fund donations are: Agape Villages Foster Family Agency, Axis Community Health, CityServe of the Tri-Valley, Hope Hospice, Museum on Main, Open Heart Kitchen, Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council, Pleasanton Military Families, Pleasanton Partnerships in Education (PPIE) Foundation, Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation, Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley, Sunflower Hill, Tri-Valley REACH and Valley Humane Society.

For information on how to contribute, check out our donation form inside on Page 14. All donations will be acknowledged shortly after being received. ■

LETTERS

Thank you, Scott Gregerson

Dear Editor,

On behalf of Axis Community Health, we would like to thank Scott Gregerson, president of Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare, for his immense contributions to the health of our community. Scott recently announced that he will be departing from ValleyCare, and this will be a huge loss to our community.

Throughout his six years of service at Stanford-ValleyCare, Scott made a point of reaching out to our organization, as well as to other human service providers, to build bridges and engage in collaborations that contribute to the health of all members of our community.

We were especially grateful for his recognition of Axis Community Health as an essential partner in the fabric of health care services in the community. Scott has a passion for ensuring that health care is available to all members of our community, and his enthusiasm on this point has been felt throughout the community.

Scott's unwavering commitment to the Tri-Valley and to providing care of the highest quality has made our community a better and healthier place. He has also built a foundation for the hospital that will ensure that Stanford-ValleyCare

will be here for our community for many years to come.

Scott has worked tirelessly, and we're pretty sure that he has had no time for sleep since he arrived at ValleyCare. He is due a well-earned rest, and we wish him the very best in his next chapter.

And, we thank him for everything he has done to make our community a healthier place. It's been a good ride!

—James Paxson, board chair

—Sue Compton, CEO

Support the library

Your gently used books, CDs and DVDs are needed. The Friends of the Pleasanton Library have three primary fundraising activities: a "book store" within the library, our biannual book sales and online book sales.

Your donations are always welcome and greatly appreciated. However, now is a great time to drop off your gently used items at the Pleasanton Public Library, whenever it is open. We are in special need of books for babies, toddlers, and young children (0-7 years).

You will be provided with a receipt for tax purposes.

The next book sale is scheduled for March 22, 23, and 24.

—Sharon Murphy

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Christmas Magic

Santa Claus has come to town

Good St. Nick reflects on favorite moments at Stoneridge Shopping Center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ERIKA ALVERO



There are many ways of marking the start of the holiday season — from Christmas jingles on the radio, to star-studded displays in store-front windows.

But at Stoneridge Shopping Center, it's when a towering faux pine tree sprouts up alongside knick-knack and jewelry kiosks in their Grand Court, atop red carpet that almost looks like a tree skirt from a second-floor mall perch.

And at the foot of the pine is a well-known, crimson-clad figure. He goes by a wide variety of names: Santa Claus, Kris Kringle, Sinterklaas in the Netherlands, Viejo Pascuero (Old Man Christmas) in Chile. At Stoneridge, though, he sticks with St. Nick.

After arriving at the shopping center

Nov. 3, escorted in by the Pleasanton Police Department and Mercedes-Benz of Pleasanton, St. Nick will be at Stoneridge through Christmas Eve, one of hundreds of malls across the country to host the fellow.

Visiting a mall Santa is an annual tradition for many, a rite of passage for parents of young children.

"When I see their smiling faces, that's when I get so excited, ho-ho-ho," Stoneridge Santa says, adding, "Every visit is dramatic, ho-ho-ho."

Stoneridge Shopping Center has only been around for 38 years, but the legend of St. Nick stretches centuries back before then — as Stoneridge Santa says, he is 1,700 years old.

According to the St. Nicholas Center,

a site and traveling exhibit dedicated to educating the public on the original man, Nicholas was born in the third century in Patara, on the southern coast of what is now Turkey, to wealthy, devoutly Christian parents. They died in an epidemic while he was young, and Nicholas then decided to use his sizeable inheritance to aid the needy, sick and suffering.

Nicholas became the bishop of Myra as a young man, and would later go on to endure persecution, imprisonment and exile by the Roman Emperor Diocletian, according to the center. After his death in the year 343, he was elevated to sainthood, and Dec. 6, the anniversary of his death, is now celebrated as St. Nicholas Day.

He's the patron saint of a motley crew

From left, Nicco and Gianni Flores (5 and 3, respectively) stop by Stoneridge with their mother and grandmother for their annual Santa photo.

of characters, ranging from newlyweds and linen merchants to spinsters and pawnbrokers. A more unseemly crowd has crept onto the list as well, including robbers, thieves and murderers — though notably he also protects those falsely accused or unjustly condemned.

But the story of Santa Claus stems from a few legends in respect to his role as protector of children, according to the St. Nicholas Center.

In one such tale, Nicholas came to the aid of a poor man and his three daughters:



Lanoua Harang, 4, takes a break from shopping with her mom to snap a picture with Santa.



From left, 9-year-old Brendan Chen with his twin brothers Logan and Jordan, age 4, squeeze together for a family portrait.

Christmas Magic

as the man was unable to afford a dowry, the daughters would likely not find husbands and so be forced into slavery. According to legend, Nicholas tossed bags of gold through an open window, which landed in stockings or shoes in front of the fire to dry. The girls were saved — and thus was born the tradition of leaving stockings or shoes in front of the fire, ready to be filled with gifts.

Good St. Nick has taken many forms over the years and throughout the world. And while his commercialized rendition at Stoneridge may seem a far cry from the persecuted saint, the idea of a kindly figure protecting all children nevertheless remains alive and well through the bearded fellow sitting in the middle of a food court or atrium.

Santa's mall stint can be grueling. As Christmas Day approaches, Stoneridge Santa sees more and more children on any given day, hoisting them onto his lap, listening to their requests, and offering plentiful "Ho-ho-ho's."

However, it comes with its rewarding moments. Last year, he helped a young man propose.

"He came up before," Santa recalled, "and he says, 'I'm going to have my girlfriend sit beside you, and she doesn't want to do it, because she's embarrassed, and I'm going to sit on the other side. Ask her what she wants for Christmas,

and then ask me. And then I'm going to say a wife.' And then I passed him the engagement ring, he got down on one knee and he proposed."

Sometimes, Santa says, it takes a few visits for children to warm up to him.

"Some of them don't know who I am yet, they're a little too young to understand," he said. "But I can usually warm them up after two or three visits, ho-ho-ho."

And sometimes, it's just a natural affinity for the man — or not. On a chilly morning earlier this month, 11-month-old twins Kali and Reina Parmar made their Santa mall debut, with very distinct reactions.

"Kali was mesmerized," said the twins' godmother, Renee Boccasili. Reina, however, was less thrilled, and photos will recall her bawling unhappily.

Good St. Nick's favorite moments of the season?

"My favorite stories are what I call a 'Santa moment,'" he said. "That's when the children come and they realize 'holy mackerel, it's Santa' and they light up. Of all my moments, that is my favorite story."

Santa will be available for photos from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. through Sunday, and from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve. For more information or to purchase a "Santa Fast Pass," visit shop-stoneridge.com. ■



Left: Twins Kali and Reina Parmar had very different takes on their first Santa experience. Right: A look down at Santa's spot in the Grand Court at Stoneridge Shopping Center.



Visiting a mall Santa has become almost a rite of passage for many young families.



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Holiday Fund

Your generous donations will help those in need

Each year, the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund raises money to support programs and services that care for local families and children in our community. The Holiday Fund partners with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, which handles all finances, so every dollar of your tax-deductible donation goes directly to the 15 local nonprofits with no administrative expenses.

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The Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund is a donor advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. A contribution to this fund allows your donation to be tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

All donors and their gift amounts will be published in the Pleasanton Weekly unless the boxes below are checked.

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siliconvalleycf.org/pleasantonweeklyholidayfund

The following agencies will benefit from the 2018 Holiday Fund:

Agape Villages Foster Family Agency finds stable homes and a loving environment for abused and neglected children throughout 14 counties in Northern California, including here in Alameda County.

Axis Community Health is the Tri-Valley's sole provider of medical and mental health services for individuals and families who have a low income or who are uninsured. It serves more than 14,000 members of our community.

CityServe supports the community by caring for people in crisis, coordinating resources between the faith-based community, nonprofits, schools, businesses, and government agencies and connecting volunteers in the community to nonprofits.

Hope Hospice provides ethical hospice care, transition services for those not eligible for hospice, bereavement support for adults and children and end-of-life education to Tri-Valley families, regardless of insurance or income status.

Museum on Main is dedicated to preserving, clarifying and disseminating information about history specific to the Tri-Valley region and encourages participation in the arts and humanities through its public programs.

Open Heart Kitchen is the largest hot meal program of its kind in the Tri-Valley feeding the hungry every weekday at multiple locations.

Pleasanton Partnerships in Education (PPIE) Foundation is an organization that has a collaborative relationship with the Pleasanton Unified School District and contributes to the needs of Pleasanton students and educators.

Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council supports a wide variety of artistic programs in Pleasanton schools and the community at large.

Pleasanton Military Families serves families in the Tri-Valley with sons, daughters, husbands and wives serving in America's armed forces and provides support and mentoring for younger veterans as they transition back to civilian life.

Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation provides local cancer patients with complementary therapies to help alleviate the side effects caused by radiation and chemotherapy.

Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley serves seniors over 60 in the communities of Pleasanton, Livermore, Dublin and Sunol to promote independence, safety and well-being, preserve dignity and improve quality of life.

Sunflower Hill is working to create a sustainable residential community for individuals with special needs, similar to senior living facilities.

Tri-Valley REACH (Resources Education Activities Community and Housing for special adults of the Tri-Valley) offers education programs, activities, resources and housing opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities.

ValleyCare Charitable Foundation plans to use its contribution from the annual campaign to help fund state-of-the-art health care technology, facilities, various clinical programs and services at Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare.

Valley Humane Society rescues and rehabilitates companion animals, champions responsible caretaking, shares pets' soothing affections with people in need of comfort, and supports and preserves existing pet-guardian relationships.

2018-2019 Holiday Fund Donors

As of December 12, 139 donors have contributed \$38,446 to the Pleasanton Weekly Holiday Fund.

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Santa 'Friended' Me

BY DEB TEOFILO CILK

It was hectic at the office — the day was long
and I was tired.
I had more work to do but I was beat and uninspired.
So I sat in the recliner and put my feet up in the air,
It was time to sit before the fire and relax without a care.

I pulled out my computer and then set it on my knees.
Our faithful pup was curled up right before
the Christmas tree.
I plugged my Mac in, turned it on and waited to boot up,
with Christmas music playing and hot cider in my cup.

But first — the guilty pleasure —
to check in on what is new ...
It would only be a minute —
then back to work till I was through.
So I opened up my Facebook, just to see what I would see,
And there it was — a 'Friend Request' —
was staring back at me.

It said it was from Santa —
surely someone had been hacked,
So I hit 'delete' but it popped back up —
Had my computer been attacked?
Curiosity got the best of me so I gave in and hit 'Accept'.
I held my breath and watched the screen
for what would happen next.

I could see that he was typing on
the Instant Messenger app ...
Well this is good, I thought ...
what would I hear from the old chap?
And sure enough the screen popped up,
from Santa Claus to me ...
"My friend, what would you like to find,
under the Christmas tree?"

"Well, not so fast, dear Santa ...
How do I know that this is you?"
It's been some years since we last spoke" ...
Santa knew this to be true.
He chuckled with his 'LOL' and kindly then explained,
"Ah, friend, although it's been a while,
some things will never change."

"We're busy at the North Pole
reading letters and making toys —
But I admit, it's harder to keep up with
all the girls and boys.
These kids — they are still innocent,
but they're running a new race —
Technology is the new 'norm', not so much the 'face to face'.

Which is why I'm reaching out on this
newfangled 'Facebook app',
How I miss the days of old when the kids sat on my lap.
Today, they Instagram, they Snapchat, they will text,
and some still write
About the gifts they'd like to see under the tree
on Christmas night."

He was typing fast & furious ...he seemed to be in a hurry ...
"Every year about this time, I try to fend off all the worry.
For Christmas is far more than all the gifts under the tree ...
It's about the *spirit* of the season and the *time* with family."

"It's the *innocence* of children as they gaze into my eyes ...
It's their sheer *anticipation* as they look for
reindeer in the skies.
It's the *sound* of Christmas carols sung
throughout the human race.
It's the *kindness* shared, the *gestures*, the *forgiveness*
and the *grace*."

"It's the packages to strangers serving in our troops
across the seas,
It's the *sharing* with the homeless or
the *visits* with the elderly.
It's the parades, the snow, the merriment ...
the *magic* in the air.
It's the holiday cards of greetings between friends
that you all share."

"But my time, it is a-fleeting, Christmas Eve is drawing nigh
The elves are texting left and right,
it's now time to say goodbye.
Before I go, remember that the *spirit* is the reason.
So *savor* every moment and *enjoy* your Christmas season!"

He shared his 'meme', then gave a wink,
and with a nod, Santa was gone.
But the experience of that moment will forever carry on.
By golly, that old elf came through,
just like he's known to do ...
Reminding us to savor *every* moment, through & through.

May your blessings be abundant and
may you know true happiness.
May your holidays have magic and your season be the best.
And if you see dear Santa, tell that dear elf he got it right ...
A **Merry Christmas** to you all ...
and to all a wondrous night!

Editor's note: An original poem by Pleasanton resident
Deb Teofilo Cilk.



Christmas Magic

Live entertainment adds to fun of season

TV30 showing holiday parades and tree lightings

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

The holiday continues with stage offerings at Pleasanton's Firehouse Arts Center and Amador Theater.

■ "Mary Poppins Jr.," presented by Pleasanton's Civic Arts Stage Company, continues through this weekend at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Road, with performances at 7:30 p.m. tonight; 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Saturday; and 2 p.m. Sunday. The ensemble members range in age from 10 through high school.

The production promises "an uplifting show that's perfect for the holidays," director Amber Dyson said, with "an enchanting mixture of irresistible story, unforgettable songs, and breathtaking dance numbers."

Tickets are \$12, \$15 and \$18, with discounts for children and seniors.



Jeff Bordes

■ Pleasanton's own trumpeter Jeff Bordes returns to the Firehouse Arts Center for his annual holiday show at 8 p.m. Saturday. This year it is a "Jazzy New Orleans Christmas," including the holiday original "The Santa Claus Second Line" along with



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Will Durst & Friends, stars of the Big Fat Year-End Kiss-Off Comedy Show on Thursday night.

other original tunes and holiday favorites.

Tickets are \$18-\$28.

■ The 26th annual Big Fat Year-End Kiss-Off Comedy Show is returning to the Firehouse Arts Center with Will Durst & Friends performing stand-up, improvisation and loosely written sketches guaranteed to mock, scoff and taunt with taste. The show begins at 8 p.m. Thursday (Dec. 27) and is rated PG-13. Price ranges from \$17-\$30.

For tickets to these three productions, go to www.firehousearts.org, call 931-4848, or purchase at the theater box office, 4444 Railroad Ave.

■ If you missed the Pleasanton Hometown Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting, it is being aired on TV30 as are the celebrations from Dublin and Livermore. They may be viewed on Comcast TV Channel 30 and AT&T U-verse via Channel 99 as well as online.

"The holiday celebrations that we record and broadcast represent hours of planning by those in charge of organizing them and the participants," TV30 executive director Melissa Tench-Stevens said. "We consider these events one of the main things we cover all year that highlight community spirit."

Dublin's 35th annual Tree Lighting Ceremony was Nov. 29, with entertainment and Santa Claus. The annual Downtown Livermore Holiday Sights & Sounds Parade was Dec. 1, the same date as Pleasanton's parade and tree lighting. They can be viewed anytime at www.tri-valleytv.org.

Broadcast times are as follows:

Pleasanton: 11 a.m. Tuesday; 9 p.m. Friday; 8 p.m. Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday.

Dublin celebration: noon Monday; 1 p.m. Thursday; 9:30 a.m. Saturday; 4:30 p.m. Sunday.

Livermore: 9 p.m. Monday; 9 p.m. Wednesday; 5 p.m. Saturday; 10 p.m. Sunday.

Also, TV30 will play holiday music from 5 p.m. to midnight on Christmas Eve, and all Christmas Day it will air a marathon of holiday programming to include all the parades plus local choirs.

Greet 2019 with Johnny

Fans of Pleasanton's own Johnny Orenberg might consider a drive to Castro Valley on New Year's Eve where he is hosting "Duettos," an evening of Broadway favorites and Billboard hits at the Center for the Arts.

The party starts at 6 p.m. with small bites and a no-host bar, and the show goes on at 7:30 p.m. with tenors Matthew Liebowitz and Nikita Burshteyn, four other singers and a band.

Orenberg went to Pleasanton Middle School and Foothill High, and he always wanted to be onstage.

"We knew something special was up when our 5-year-old memorized every line of the popular movie 'Ghostbusters' and would perform it for anyone," mom Laura Orenberg said.

That was in 1988. Johnny went on to attend Baldwin Wallace University in Ohio, graduating in musical theater, then headed to New York City. He said his most memorable NYC experience was working with Tony Award winners Sutton Foster and Kathleen Marshall on a workshop on "The Unsinkable Molly Brown" at Juilliard.

Orenberg next entertained on



Johnny Orenberg

Disney Cruise Lines cruises to the Caribbean Islands as well as at Florida's Disney World, where he performed in "High School Musical" and acted as host at corporate events in the Magic Kingdom. But now he is back in California.

Local audiences might know Orenberg for playing Nicely in Tri-Valley Rep's production of "Guys and Dolls" last month. He has also performed at Woodminster in Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland and 42nd Street Moon in San Francisco.

He said his favorite roles are "the second bananas — the character roles with all the personality."

His day job is at Fremont Bank in Castro Valley.

"Really, the skills set is transferable — you must be engaging and well rounded," Orenberg noted.

Tickets for the New Year's Eve cabaret are \$49-\$55. Go to www.cvartsfoundation.org or call 510-889-8961. The Castro Valley Center for the Arts is located at 19501 Redwood Road. ■

Christmas magic

Bring joy to the world by going caroling

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Are you sitting around this weekend with extended family, shopping done, and wondering what to do next — something besides eating and drinking? Consider Christmas caroling.

All ages can enjoy this outing to bring joy to the world, or at least your Pleasanton neighborhood. It is fun for the singers as well as for those who open their doors to the unexpected, delightful experience.

Here are a few tips:

■ Dress for the occasion. Santa hats? Rudolph noses for the kids? Knit hats, gloves and scarves conjure up holiday season images — and keep you comfortable. Pockets are nice because some folks may reward you with candy or cookies that you don't want to eat

immediately.

■ Vary the carols. Perhaps start with something fun, such as "Jingle Bells" or "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus," then perform a beautiful carol to end on an emotional note. Two carols per house is probably long enough for folks to stand in their doorways and admire your efforts.

■ Be sure of the words. Print out copies of the carols, because few people know more than the first verses. Put them into red folders (can just be construction paper) to add to your festive appearance.

■ Everyone should have a flashlight, both to safely light the way and to read the words of the carols.

■ Bells, drums and cymbals add to the occasion. Younger children

may prefer to contribute this way.

■ Time it right — after dinner but before children's bedtime.

■ Practice before you head out. Remember, your repertoire doesn't have to be large because you will keep moving from one house to the next. But you should look like you know what you are doing — at least beginning and ending in unison.

Next year you might want to plan ahead and have a caroling party. The opportunities for cute invitations are endless! You can have caroling booklets ready and a route mapped out of receptive neighbors. Caroling parties are also fun for children and teens.

After caroling, be sure to have a big fire burning and refreshments. "Tis the season to be jolly." ■



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Alice, Queen of Hearts and more

DLUX Puppets are returning to the Bankhead Theater with their innovative musical adaptation of "Alice in Wonderland" at 2 p.m. next Sunday (Dec. 30), a joyful theatrical experience for all ages. The seven remarkable puppets range in size from just 2 feet to more than 7 feet, with interactive digital scenery and clever dialogue. At 11 a.m., a new sensory-friendly performance will be offered, with lower house lights and no abrupt changes or startling loud sounds, for those on the autism spectrum or who have other special needs. Tickets for the shows are \$10 for students; \$20 regular. Visit lvpac.org, call 272-6800, or go to the box office at 2400 First St., Livermore.

Sports

PLEASANTON PREPS

By DENNIS MILLER

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Piscotty recognized for overcoming adversity in trying 2018 season

Amador alum continues to stand out for Oakland A's

Stephen Piscotty is a rock star. The Amador Valley High School product and current right-fielder for the Oakland Athletics seems to be everywhere this offseason.

Before last season, Piscotty was a member of the St. Louis Cardinals when his mother Gretchen was diagnosed with ALS. The Cardinals have long been considered one of the greatest organizations in all professional sports, and they again showed why when they traded Piscotty to the A's so he could be close to his mother.

After Gretchen passed in May, Stephen returned to the team a few days

later in Boston and promptly homered in his first at-bat. From there, he went on and produced a career-best number with 27 home runs, a key contributor to the A's during their surprise run to the playoffs last season.

Recently he was awarded the Tony Conigliaro Award, named in memory for the former Boston Red Sox outfielder. Presented every year since 1990, the award honors a major leaguer who has overcome adversity through the attributes of spirit, determination and courage.

At the end of the season, Piscotty was also awarded the Bill Rigney

Good Guy Award from the local Baseball Writers' Association of America chapter because of his patience and accommodation of the media.

And earlier this month, Piscotty was one of the featured speakers at a Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce luncheon, along with A's chief operating officer Chris Giles and David Rinetti, the VP of stadium operations for the A's. All three are Pleasanton residents.

When asked about last season, Piscotty became emotional when talking with the packed room.

"There were so many memories," he said of the season. "It was difficult to start. To be able to play in front of my Mom was special, although I wasn't playing very good at the time. It was a very challenging year and the support of the A's organization was incredible."

He was like a magnet to the fans, both before and after the program. Fans were lining up to have their picture taken with Piscotty — and he was happy to oblige.

I also had a chance to visit with Piscotty at Pebble Beach recently when we were down at the course for a USGA media preview for the 2019 U.S. Open. Piscotty was a celebrity guest along with former San Jose Sharks Owen Nolan, Douglas Murray and Dan Boyle.

The reaction was the same — people were drawn to Piscotty.

You can make a strong case that he is the face of the A's franchise at this point. He's battled through the

tragedy of losing his mother, well before he should have been faced with the tragedy.

In a time of pampered pro athletes who often don't do much to interact with fans, Piscotty is a breath of fresh air — and a rock star.

Amador girls soccer

The Dons opened their home season with a 3-0 win over Dublin last week.

Kennedy Mayo, Allison Jones and Leah Allari scored the goals for Amador Valley. Baille Alvarez Walls got the shutout in the goal.

In their second game of the week, the Dons went to Brentwood and beat Liberty 4-2.

Liberty scored first in the game, but the Dons rallied with goals from Mayo and Maille Smith for a 2-1 halftime lead. Liberty tied it 2-2, but Amador turned it back on again, getting goals from Sofia Griffen and Smith for the final margin.

Foothill girls basketball

Foothill dropped a pair of games last week.

In their first game, Falcons fell 53-20 to James Logan. Reese Lombardi had 6 points, with Mariah Gragg adding 4.

Later in the week, the Falcons lost 53-43 to Freedom. Lombardi had 12 points to lead the way with Abby Miller adding 10.

BUSC's 2006 Select Gold

The Ballistic United Soccer Club's



OAKLAND A'S

Stephen Piscotty has been honored with the Tony Conigliaro Award.

2006 Select Gold Team defeated the Prospector Soccer Club Tsunami in penalty kicks to secure the State Cup for the Bronze Division.

Aarnav Kannu saved two shots in the shootout and then turned around and scored the winning penalty kick.

The BUSC champion players were Jalen Alami, Ethan Zheng, Brady McMillin, Vicente Valdez, Owen Heck, Braden O'Donnell, Mason Lyons, Henry Wanis, Aarnav Kannu, Tyler Varela, Corman Herbert, Coleson Franklin, Adam Castro, Matteo Gerasoni and Dhruv Bisla. ■

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Theatre

'MARY POPPINS JR.' At 7:30 and 2 p.m. on Dec. 14 through 23, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. with matinees at 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays only, "Mary Poppins Jr." will be performed at the Amador Theater, at 1155 Santa Rita Road. Tickets are \$12, \$15, \$18; discounted tickets for children age 12 and under, or Seniors 62 and up are \$7, \$10, \$13. Tickets are available at firehousearts.org, by calling 931-4848, or at the Firehouse Arts Center Box Office. Free parking is available.

Music

'CHRISTMAS AT HOME' — A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL From 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Dec. 21, at the Grand Old Church, 118 Neal St., the Lighthouse Baptist Church Adult Choir and Drama Team presents "Christmas at Home" a Christmas Musical. Admission is free and the public is invited. Refreshments will follow each performance.

WINTER HOLIDAY FESTIVAL The San Ramon Symphonic Band presents a Winter Holiday Festival at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 23, in The Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center, 10550 Albion Road, San Ramon. Go to SanRamonPerformingArts.com for tickets and more information or call 973-3343.

Talks & Lectures

CAMINO SANTIAGO, A JOURNEY ACROSS NORTHERN SPAIN At 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 10, Armchair Travelers, a monthly program, will take place at the Livermore Public Library Civic Center, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore. Matt Berry will share photos and stories of his adventures hiking the Camino Francés route of the Camino de Santiago. Adults are invited to this free program on the second Thursday of each month in the Civic Center Library. For more information please call 373-5500.

Family

FOOD PANTRY AT VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH From 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Thursday evenings, The Food Pantry at Valley Bible Church, 7106 Johnson Drive, is open to serve anyone who needs food. No proof of residency is required, just come and get a couple of bags or more.

CHARACTERZ KIDZ FAMILY GAME NIGHT This Family Fun Night is free for all ages at 6 p.m., on the first Friday of every month at Characters Cafe, 5424 Sunol Blvd. KIDZ get a free hot cocoa or chocolate milk. Bring a game to share or play one of ours

Lessons & Classes

SENIOR SCAMS AND IDENTIFY THEFT AWARENESS PROGRAMS The Livermore Public Library Civic Center, at 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore, will host two presentations by the Better Business Bureau: Senior Scam Workshop at 2 p.m., on Jan. 17, and a program on Identity Theft at 2 p.m., on Jan. 24. The programs are free and open to all seniors and adults. No sign-up is required. The Senior Scam Workshop is designed to educate seniors about the scams that target them most. The Identity Theft program discusses the methods used by criminals to steal a person's identity, and

PET OF THE WEEK

Full Monty

Don't be fooled by Monty's size ... He's just a big ol' pudgy tat! At 13 pounds, there's a lot of Monty to go around. He'd love to join you and your family this holiday season ... and perhaps share a few bites of turkey. Monty has been neutered, microchipped and given age-appropriate vaccinations. Meet Monty at Valley Humane Society, 3670 Nevada St. in Pleasanton. Visit valleyhumane.org or call 426-8656 for more information.



VALLEY HUMANE SOCIETY/S. LYONS

provides tips for protecting one's self. For more information, visit livermorelibrary.net.

FREE COMPUTER CLASS: INTRODUCING THE DIGITAL LIBRARY From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 8, the Livermore Public Library at 1188 S. Livermore Ave., will offer a class entitled "Introducing the Digital Library". A Livermore Public Library card gives people access to Consumer Reports, Gale Courses, Discover & Go Museum Passes, Testing & Education Reference Center, and other free resources from any computer or mobile device with Web access. Registration is not required, and laptops will be provided for attendees to use during the class. For more information, please call 373-5505.

Seniors

FRIENDS OF THE PLEASANTON SENIOR CENTER 'NEWCOMER'S WELCOME' At 10:30 a.m., on the second Wednesday of each month at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., discover all the programs, classes, and services available to you. At the end of the tour you will receive a coupon for a free lunch at the Sage Café. For more information, call 931-5365.

PHOTO CLUB From 2 to 4 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., the photo club is open to any senior who enjoys the hobby of photography at any level. It is suggested that you have some form of a digital camera. Meetings include occasional speakers and field trips. Cost is \$2 for residents, \$2.50 for non-residents. Call 931-5365.

Business

FREE JOBS AND RESUMES COUNSELING From 6 to 8 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month, at the Pleasanton Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave., have a free consultation with an experienced Employment Recruiter. Learn how to search for a job on the web, find employment web sites, get help with online applications and resume writing. Call 931-3400, ext. 4 or come to the library to make an appointment.

Religion & Spirituality

GRACEWAY CHURCH CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE At 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 24, GraceWay Church will celebrate the birth of the Christ Child with Christmas Eve services at its new home, 1183 Quarry Lane. The service is designed for children to join their parents in worship. Childcare will be provided for infants and young children. For more information, visit gracewaylife.org or call 846-436.

Community Groups

WIDOWS/WIDOWERS GRIEF RECOVERY From 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., on Saturdays, starting Jan. 12 through March 16, and July 13 through Sept. 14, the group meets at Valley Community Church, 4455 Del Valle Parkway. Contact Linda Husted at 833-9013 or lihusted@sbcglobal.net. Pre-registration is required. The workbook cost is \$15. Please call if you would like to attend or learn more about the group.

Employment

Technology

EntIT Software LLC is accepting resumes for the position of Software Designer in Pleasanton, CA (Ref. # ENTCPGINB1). Analyzes, designs, programs, debugs, and modifies software enhancements and/or new products used in local, networked, or Internet-related computer programs, primarily for end users. Analyze design and determine coding, programming, and integration activities required based on specific objectives and established project guidelines. Mail resume to EntIT Software LLC, 5400 Legacy Drive, MS H4-1A-01, Plano, TX 75024. Resume must include Ref. #, full name, email address & mailing address. No phone calls. Must be legally authorized to work in U.S. without sponsorship. EOE.

Seeking passionate, experienced journalist

The Pleasanton Weekly is seeking an enthusiastic and talented staff reporter with previous journalism experience working in print and digital news environments. The reporter will cover and edit stories ranging from meetings to breaking news to features for our award-winning print and digital publications.

Beyond excellent reporting and writing skills, a bachelor's degree in journalism or a related field, previous experience covering government agencies, demonstrated news judgment and the ability to prioritize tasks and handle stress of daily deadlines and multiple priorities are required. The ability to deliver clean, vibrant copy while working to very tight deadlines is crucial. Photography skills, social media and copy editing experience are a plus. The candidate must also be able to work the required hours, which include some night assignments and occasional weekend hours. Bay Area candidates only; preference given to those with knowledge of the Tri-Valley.

This is a full-time position based at our Pleasanton office with benefits including medical/dental, a 401(k) plan, vacation and holiday pay. This is the East Bay Division of Embarcadero Media Group and includes the Pleasanton Weekly, PleasantonWeekly.com and DanvilleSanRamon.com.

Send resume and clips that show a variety of work to Gina Channell, publisher, gchannell@embarcaderomediagroup.com, by 8 a.m. Jan. 11. No calls please. EOE.

To place an ad or get a quote, call **650.223.6582** or email digitalads@pawebly.com.

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

TRI-VALLEY FOOD & WINE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 552302
The following person(s) doing business as: Tri-Valley Food & Wine, 3577 Carlsbad Court, Pleasanton, CA 94588, County of Alameda, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Sangeeta Myers, 3577 Carlsbad Court, Pleasanton, CA 94588 This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed herein. Signature of Registrant Sangeeta Myers, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 19, 2018. (Pleasanton Weekly, November 30, December 7, 14, 21.)

Confidential Counseling
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 552212
The following person doing business as: Confidential Counseling, 3300 Stoneridge Creek Way, T326, Pleasanton, CA 94588, County of Alameda, is hereby registered by the following owner: Marcia M. Robbins, Psy. D., MFT, 3300 Stoneridge Creek Way, T326, Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by Marcia M. Robbins, Psy. D., MFT, an individual. Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name listed herein Jan. 1, 1988. Signature of Registrant: Marcia M. Robbins, Doctor. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on Nov. 15, 2018. (Pleasanton Weekly, Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28, 2018).

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Real Estate

OPEN HOME GUIDE AND REAL ESTATE LISTINGS



GETTY IMAGES

A well-decorated gingerbread house is a perfect holiday touch sitting on a table or counter.

Building your own house

Tips for creating a gingerbread house that looks beautiful, won't collapse

BY GINA CHANNELL

Building a house can be a frustrating endeavor, particularly if the house is made of gingerbread. But a well-decorated gingerbread house is a perfect holiday touch sitting on a table or counter. And it can be fun.

No, really.

Here are a few tips:

Use royal icing

There is no shame in using a kit, but the icing that comes with most kits doesn't cut it for building a gingerbread house that doesn't collapse. The first key to a house that won't fall down is having royal icing because it dries quickly and hard.

Royal icing recipe

- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons meringue powder
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 1/2 teaspoon clear vanilla or almond extract.

In the bowl of an electric mixer combine powdered sugar and meringue powder.

Add the water and extract slowly. Beat at medium-high speed until stiff peaks form, which is roughly 6 minutes.

This makes about 4 cups of icing. Adding

the vanilla or almond extract might thin it a bit, so mix in some powdered sugar. Keep it covered when not in use.

You can replace the meringue with 3 large egg whites and skip the water, but eating raw eggs is not a good practice.

Or skip everything, type in "royal icing" on Amazon and hit "buy now."

Decorate the pieces first

Decorate the separate pieces of the house and let them dry before putting the house together. This is easier than doing it while on the house. (Picture gumdrops dropping off the slanted roof, for example.)

Be patient

The second, and most important, key to creating a beautiful, stable gingerbread house is patience. Each wall and roof piece needs at least a couple of hours to dry before being handled. After the individual pieces dry, put the walls together and let them dry for a couple of hours. If you really want to be careful, build an "L" and let it dry a bit and add the other two walls.

Finally add the roof pieces and don't move, touch or breathe on the masterpiece for a few more hours. ■

SALES AT A GLANCE

Pleasanton (Nov. 12-19)

Total sales reported: 19
Lowest sale reported: \$585,000
Highest sale reported: \$2,290,000
Average sales reported: \$1,173,000

Dublin (Nov. 12-19)

Total sales reported: 10
Lowest sale reported: \$540,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,215,000
Average sales reported: \$740,000

Livermore (Nov. 12-19)

Total sales reported: 25
Lowest sale reported: \$500,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,495,000
Average sales reported: \$735,000

San Ramon (Nov. 12-19)

Total sales reported: 8
Lowest sale reported: \$479,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,615,000
Average sales reported: \$1,079,000

Source: California REsource

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OPEN HOMES THIS WEEKEND

Discovery Bay 3 BEDROOMS 2523 Cherry Hills Drive \$549,500 Sat 11:30-1:30 Dee Teigland 285.2459	Livermore 2 BEDROOMS 185 Heligan Lane \$615,000 Sun 1-4 Tyler Moxley 518.1083
Dublin 3 BEDROOMS 4172 Clarinbridge Circle \$765,000 Sun 1-4 Tyler Moxley 518.1083	3 BEDROOMS 2841 Hoya Commons \$750,000 Sat/Sun 1-5 John Ledahl 989.4994

HOME SALES

This week's data represents homes sold during Nov. 12-19.

Pleasanton

1416 Calle Enrique Freitas Living Trust to Battershell V V & M J Trust for \$700,000

2171 Camino Brazos W. Vinson to B. & D. Hodgins for \$1,100,000

6305 Corte Esperanza Ker 1998 Family Trust to C. & J. Cho for \$1,350,000

4314 Denker Drive B. & S. Williams to Shukla Shanker Family Trust for \$999,000

4376 Fairlands Drive J. & W. Drobick to S. & A. Gangadharan for \$1,095,000

6273 Garner Court Schwartz 2014 Family Trust to Wong Tito & Betty Trust for \$1,035,000

39 Golf Road Sea Palm LLC to Chandran Family Trust for \$1,869,000

3403 Gulfstream Street V. Daughtry to T. & S. Khenkin for \$1,173,000

7447 Laurel Court Kohne Karen L Trust to B. & S. Reddy for \$1,250,000

7949 Limewood Court Y. Yang to N. & L. Orona for \$1,210,000

1749 Lynn Court Y. & K. Sauer to N. & B. Nair for \$2,070,000

3126 Montpelier Court Giovanetti Family Trust to Y. & H. Koo for \$1,030,000

1121 Navalle Court Collins-Ehrenberg Trust to J. & H. Cao for \$1,310,000

691 Palomino Drive #A E. Hulley to S. Adimulam for \$585,000

4137 Peregrine Way A. Pisheni to S. & A. Das for \$873,000

4037 Rennellwood Way Pickerell P & D 2001 Family Trust to P. Pickerell for \$650,000

4598 Shearwater Road Romero R Jr & S Trust to Y. & M. Bian for \$1,200,000

570 Sycamore Creek Way M. & B. Long to L. & M. Rinehart for \$2,050,000

1059 Sycamore Creek Way Howard S K & S M Family Trust to Mannos Living Trust for \$2,290,000

Dublin

7317 Amanda Street Martinez A G & R H Trust to M. & A. Woo for \$780,000

4120 Clarinbridge Circle S. Chandramohan to A. & S. Narasimha for \$705,000

5601 Creekview Drive A. & S. Bhaid to Y. & M. Gonzalez for \$1,129,000

11369 Dillon Way R. Pena to L. & Y. Mai for \$1,200,000

7063 Dublin Meadows Street #B Robinson I N & R H Living Trust to N. & M. Seetharaman for \$595,000

7144 Dublin Meadows Street #F Fitch J & A Trust to L. & S. Krishnamoorthy for \$540,000

8341 Locust Place A. Cheng to K. & R. Aswani for \$775,000

Source: California REsource

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As I enter my 26th year in the mortgage business it has been a privilege to work with incredible clients and Realtors. I have seen some dramatic changes in interest rates and mortgage trends and strategies. If you need guidance in purchasing a home, or refinancing for a lower monthly payment, contact me today. It is my job to assist you and help you plan a road map for your mortgage needs.

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7492 Alder Ct	Seller	2838 Creekside Dr	Buyer	411 Old Ranch Ct	Buyer
333 Beale St, C3B	Buyer	628 East Angela St	Seller	1501 Purisima Ter	Seller
1327 Benedict Ct	Seller	2331 Fairway Dr	Buyer	2126 Raven Rd	Seller & Buyer
4953 Black Ave	Seller	169 Gillette Pl, Unit 102	Seller	2579 Raven Rd	Seller
4953 Black Ave	Buyer	4871 Golden Rd	Buyer	4026 Rennellwood Wy	Seller
5382 Black Ave	Seller	2377 Greenberry Ct	Seller	511 Rolling Hills Ln	Buyer
5136 Blackbird Ave	Seller	20078 Jessee Ct	Buyer	1898 Rosetree Ct	Seller
6848 Brighton Dr	Seller	7342 Joshua Cir	Seller	510 San Gabriel Ct	Buyer
1370 Briones Court	Seller	1290 Lakehurst Rd	Seller	166 Selby Ln, #6	Buyer
1689 Calle Santiago	Seller	2504 Larrikeet Ct	Seller & Buyer	1208 Shady Pond Ln	Seller & Buyer
2654 Calle Alegre	Seller & Buyer	2581 Larrikeet Ct	Seller	3681 Shenandoah Ct	Seller
2789 Calle Alegre	Seller & Buyer	1668 Loganberry Wy	Seller	31 Silver Oaks Ct	Buyer
1492 Chatham Pl	Buyer	1 Macias Ct	Buyer	39 Silver Oaks Ct	Seller
342 Chris Common, #101	Buyer	7886 Marigold Ct	Seller	47 Silver Oaks Ct	Seller
4117 Cid Wy	Seller	3868 Mesa Verde Ct	Seller	2590 Skylark Wy	Buyer
2211 Corte Melina	Seller	1131 Mills Ct	Seller	1811 Tanglewood Wy	Buyer
4624 Corte Vida	Seller & Buyer	8227 Moller Ranch Dr	Seller	1548 Trimingham Dr	Buyer
5721 Corte Libre	Seller	583 Montori Ct	Buyer	4249 Trolan Ln	Buyer
5904 Corte Espada	Buyer	6031 Northcrest Cir	Seller	2785 Turnstone Dr	Seller
6061 Corte Calera	Buyer	7702 Oak Creek Ct	Seller	4036 W. Las Positas Blvd	Seller & Buyer



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Active



7287 Royal Oaks Court, Pleasanton
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Active



701 Hollyview Court, San Ramon
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New Price



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Sold



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2018 has been a memorable year in many ways. I appreciate my clients' faith & trust in me, and I wish everyone a happy and fulfilling holiday season.

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