



Vaccine rollout continues

Seniors in Stoneridge Creek take part
in COVID-19 immunization event

Page 5



- 5 | **NEWS** Man charged with killing his father
- 6 | **NEWS** Livermore to interview 21 council applicants
- 16 | **TRI-VALLEY LIFE** Delivering pleasant surprises



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TIM TALK



By TIM HUNT

Governor finally pushing to reopen schools

Gov. Gavin Newsom finally has awakened to the reality that young children desperately need to get back into the classroom.

That's true for all students, many of whom have not had in-person instruction since mid-March. It's also reflective of the pressure he's feeling from a variety of political fronts.

The governor made reopening schools the focus of administration this month, calling it out before releasing his record \$227 billion budget last week. On this one, the governor is right. He's facing pressure from fellow Democrats in the Legislature, parents and businesses to get kids back into the classroom.

The long-term negative impacts, particularly for children living in poverty, have been laid out by researchers who identified the years of life lost to poor educational outcomes. It dwarfs the total of deaths due to the virus. For kindergartners through third-graders — the key years for mastering reading and math fundamentals — Zoom cannot replace a teacher or an aide working hands-on with the student.

The governor ponied up a big chunk of change (\$2 billion) to encourage school districts and teachers' unions to reopen schools. Newsom's four children have been attending a private school in person since the fall. The unions, statewide, have balked at returning to the classroom. His initial proposal, that he's asked legislators pass this month, calls for younger students to be back in the classroom by the middle of February and reopening plans be submitted by Feb. 1.

CalMatters reported that California Federation of Teachers President Jeff Freitas issued this statement, "We are in the middle of a devastating COVID-19 surge and any discussion of returning to in-person instruction is premature."

That frames the discussion as Newsom strives to avoid a conflict with the teachers' unions that are major donors to his campaign and other Democratic campaigns. That's statewide, but, short of legislation, the state has little to say about school districts. The state controls the funding, but the decisions are made locally across the state.

Certainly, the governor can push from his bully pulpit, but it's school superintendents, school trustees and local teachers' unions that ultimately will make the decisions. And then

parents will decide what is best for their children.

CalMatters reported that large superintendents already have pushed back against Newsom's reopening proposal as has the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office, who called the timeline "unfeasible." Los Angeles Superintendent Austin Beutner said the governor's plan "falls well short of what's needed to help our schools" because it neither sets across-the-board safety standards nor sets a requirement for when schools should reopen.

"It leaves the definition of a safe school environment and the standard for reopening classrooms up to the individual discretion of 1,037 school districts across the state, creating a patchwork of safety standards in the face of a statewide health crisis," Beutner said.

Newsom faces other pressure points, most notably a recall drive that was going nowhere until news broke about his unmasked, indoor dinner at the \$350-plate French Laundry in the Napa Valley. That sparked life into the recall campaign that also received an influx of cash last month. How well the governor does with vaccinations and school reopenings will play directly into that campaign.

Here in the Tri-Valley, the regional shutdown has stopped local schools from the reopening process. Pleasanton trustees had voted unanimously in December to reopen the lower elementary grades (pre-kindergarten to second) this month and had received the county approval to do so. The stay-at-home order must be lifted before local schools can reopen beyond the small group instruction being offered currently to students who need more help.

The plan is for hybrid instruction with students attending school for four half-days weekly with Wednesday reserved for virtual instruction. It's similar in Livermore, while Dublin staff is still working on a final version of their plan.

The hybrid plans are a good first step, but should be just that — a step toward full-day, in-person instruction. ■

Editor's note: Columnist Tim Hunt has written opinion columns on the Tri-Valley community for more than 40 years. He grew up in the valley and lives in Pleasanton. His "Tim Talk" blog appears twice a week at PleasantonWeekly.com.

About the Cover

Pleasanton's Joanne Livingston receives her first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, administered by May Lazen, during a senior vaccination event at Stoneridge Creek on Tuesday. Photo by Ryan J. Degan. Cover design by Paul Llewellyn.

Vol. XXI, Number 41

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How do you react when you bump into someone you've met several times and they act as though you've never met before?



Kathleen O'Leary
Medicare agent

I look them right in the eye, hold their gaze for a moment and say, "Seriously? How could you forget this face?!"



Jenny Dawkins
Realtor

Well, I've never actually had that experience. I'm sure I would be seriously offended, but I'm not quite sure exactly how I would react.



Cindy Sandoval
Barber

I call them out on it, saying, "(Jerk), we've met before and have spoken at length. What gives?"



Pete Shomsky
Independent consultant

I have to admit that sometimes I actually am that person who does not remember having met someone in the past. As I age, my memory is just not what it used to be. I'd like to think that the person I'm not remembering will cut me some slack and not be too upset.

—Compiled by Nancy and Jeff Lewis



Susan Lerch and Joyce Kaplan
Dog walker; swimming instructor (and BFFs)

Susan: My reaction depends upon the context, in terms of where and how often we've met. Most often I just remind the person who I am and we laugh it off.

Joyce: Honestly, I don't really give a (darn). I have to admit I'm surprised though when people don't recall having met me.

Have a Streetwise question? Email editor@PleasantonWeekly.com

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DIGEST

King breakfast

The Pleasanton Community of Character Collaborative is set to hold the 21st annual Martin Luther King Jr. fellowship breakfast virtually later this month.

The morning event, which includes a keynote address and handing out the Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy Awards, is scheduled for Jan. 25 from 8-9:30 a.m. online.

King is etched into world history as one of the most influential American civil rights leaders. The Nobel Peace Prize recipient, who would have marked his 91st birthday today, was assassinated in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

The annual fellowship breakfast is among the ways the Pleasanton community commemorates King's contributions each winter. The event will come one week after the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday, which the nation will recognize this coming Monday.

Tickets to the Jan. 25 fellowship breakfast are \$40 per person, and include a continental breakfast delivered to attendees' homes, a book and other items. Register online by visiting www.pleasanton.org/events.

Park reno input

The city of Pleasanton is holding a series of input sessions via Zoom next weekend to gather feedback from residents about three upcoming park renovation projects.

"The city is planning to renovate the existing playgrounds at Vintage Hills Park, Tawny Park and two of the playgrounds (the eastern and central playgrounds) at Ken Mercer Sports Park in spring/summer 2021. Please join the public outreach meetings that will be held to discuss the proposed renovations to provide your input," city officials said.

All three Zoom sessions will be held next Saturday (Jan. 23): 9:30-10:30 a.m. Ken Mercer, 11 a.m. to noon Vintage Hills and 1-2 p.m. Tawny. Visit cityofpleasantonca.gov.

Haven training

Local nonprofit Tri-Valley Haven is recruiting volunteers who are interested in training to be advocates for domestic violence, sexual assault or legal clinic survivors.

The 70-hour training course, which will begin on Jan. 26, will be held every Tuesday and Thursday evening, 6:30-10 p.m. over Zoom for approximately 10 weeks.

People who successfully complete the training will be certified to volunteer and assist clients that need help and resources. Training topics will include active listening, domestic violence and sexual assault overview, cultural competency and legal advocacy. Contact Shadab at 925-667-2711 or shadab@trivalleyhaven.org. ■

Man charged with killing his father

Investigation into suspicious death in Livermore leads to son's arrest, murder count

By JEREMY WALSH

A Livermore man faces a murder charge after authorities allege he stabbed his father to death at home last week following several days in which both parents were concerned for their safety amid their son's erratic behavior.

Timothy Paul Young, 26, has also been charged with a special allegation for use of a deadly weapon in connection with the Jan. 4 death of his father, Edward Tsung Yung Young.

Timothy Young, who was booked into Santa Rita Jail last Friday, spent more than four days in the hospital for treatment on the wounds he

was suffering from when police first arrived at the family's Geneva Court house — injuries that officers intimate could have been self-inflicted.

It was not immediately clear whether Timothy Young was represented by an attorney, or whether he'd entered a plea to the charges against him.

Timothy Young did not explicitly deny or admit killing his father when interviewed by police, but said he blacked out and woke up injured next to his father's body, Officer Jennifer Bloom wrote in a probable cause statement. Elements of his story differed from

the statement his mother gave to police.

The investigation began as a suspicious death case on the afternoon of Jan. 4, when Livermore police received a report of a man down inside a residence in the 1200 block of Geneva Court.

The neighborhood is on the west side of town, near the Portola Avenue-Murrieta Boulevard intersection and not far from Al Caffodio Park.

Officers responded around 12:30 p.m. to the house after a caller — who identified himself as Timothy Young — told 9-1-1 dispatch that he had been raped, his father was

dead in the house, and he had been stabbed and could see his own intestines, Bloom wrote. Timothy Young came out of the house minutes later and was taken to Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley for medical treatment.

But a subsequent interview with his mother revealed Timothy Young, who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia and refused to take his medication, had experienced recent episodes of delusion and hallucination, according to Bloom.

The situation became so

See **MURDER** on Page 10



RYAN J. DEGAN

Joanne and Parley Joe Livingston were excited to receive their vaccinations at Stoneridge Creek in Pleasanton this Tuesday — and they're looking forward to seeing their grandchildren too.

Vaccine rollout continues

Seniors in Stoneridge Creek take part in COVID-19 immunization event

By RYAN J. DEGAN

Spirits are high among those who have received the COVID-19 vaccine or are on the top of the list to do so soon, with front-line health care workers, first responders and vulnerable individuals benefiting from the first phase of vaccinations being released in the Tri-Valley.

As Phase 1 of the vaccine distribution process continues throughout the state, counties' health officials are also preparing for more widespread availability and have outlined the priority list for when different groups of residents will be eligible to receive a

vaccine.

"We are at the beginning of the biggest public health immunization campaign in history and it's going to take time," said Anna Roth, director of the neighboring Contra Costa Health Services. "At some point, everyone who wants a COVID vaccine will be able to get one. While we aren't there yet, making vaccines available to everyone is our top priority."

With vaccines in limited supply, immunizations have only been available to priority groups in high-risk settings, such as front-line health care workers and nursing home residents and staff.

These groups have been targeted heavily in the first wave of vaccine distributions and have been designated as belonging in Group 1A — according to Alameda County's vaccine priority list.

"We've had a lot of fun with it. We know what this is. Normally people don't get excited about vaccines; flu vaccine doesn't have the same reaction," Stoneridge Creek Executive Director Zeke Griffin said during a vaccination event held Tuesday at the senior living community.

"It symbolizes more than just

See **VACCINE** on Page 9

Aramis solar project loses land in Livermore

Intersect Power hit with cease/desist after deal falls through

By JULIA BAUM

Lease negotiations for a piece of land related to the planned 410-acre Aramis solar power plant north of Livermore fell through after the energy company behind the renewable project was served a cease-and-desist order last week.

In a Jan. 7 letter, San Francisco-based attorney Jacqueline Phillips — who represents Leland and Mary Stanley, the owners of one parcel totaling 38 acres sought for development as part of the original plans — notified Intersect Power counsel that "any and all negotiations between any of the Stanleys and any Intersect Power entity ... are hereby terminated. This decision is final."

Intersect was further told "to immediately cease and desist from entering upon the property, contacting any of the Stanleys except through this office," and not to violate California's Rule of Professional Conduct 4.2 relating to attorney communications and consent, or the state's criminal elder abuse law, Penal Code Section 368.

In a statement to the Weekly, Intersect's principal Marisa Mitchell said the company was "disappointed" by the outcome of the negotiations but did not expect omission of the Stanleys' land to impact its Aramis

See **SOLAR** on Page 15

Livermore to interview all 21 applicants for council vacancy

Each contender will answer one question in special meeting Monday

By CIERRA BAILEY

The Livermore City Council decided this week to change the process of selecting a fifth member after receiving applications from nearly two dozen community members interested in joining the governing body.

The initial staff recommendation was for the council to review and select a smaller number of applicants to move forward to the interview phase this coming Monday (Jan. 19); however, Mayor Bob Woerner proposed — and the council unanimously agreed — to interview all of the applicants.

“I’m trying to come up with a way to do this that is inclusive, is efficient and is effective for the purpose of selecting a candidate,” Woerner said during the council’s regular meeting on Monday.

The list of applicants includes a variety of community members who have lived in Livermore for as brief as one year to as long as over 40 years. City commissioners, local business owners, military veterans, educators and college students are among the diverse group of contenders.

Past City Council election candidates are also vying for the open seat, including Realtor and former police officer Mony Nop, medical account manager Pete Patterson and former city planning commissioner Neal Pann.

As part of the new approach to the application process, Woerner also

suggested that instead of asking the applicants a series of questions that they each answer, the council will ask one two-part question and allow up to five minutes per person to respond.

“I agree with interviewing everyone,” Councilman Bob Carling said. “One of the things that I am reminded of is that when we were setting up the Equity and Inclusion Working Group, we had first talked about 18 members. But we got 50 applicants, and the mayor and vice mayor decided to include everybody. So I think in the spirit of equity and inclusion, interviewing all 21 is the right thing to do.”

The applicants are vying to finish out the unexpired City Council term vacated by Woerner after voters elevated him to mayor in the general election. Woerner ran for mayor this fall in the middle of the four-year regular council term he won at-large in 2018 — which was the city’s final election before switching to district-based voting.

By keeping the vacant position at-large, the city opened the application process to all city residents; although, the seat will be assigned to District 1 (northwest Livermore) starting in 2022, so the appointee would have to reside in District 1 (or District 2) to run for re-election.

The first part of the question that Woerner proposed will ask each applicant to identify what they think are the most important decisions

facing the council over the course of the term, which ends in December 2022. The second part asks them to explain why they should be selected for the role.

Woerner assigned Carling to write out the formal wording of the question and submit it to the city clerk.

During public comment Monday, Nop suggested that the council include a handful of members of the Equity and Inclusion Working Group to participate in the interview and selection process.

“Why not include maybe five members of the Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee to be part of the decision process so this way, you would have a vote of a total of nine instead of just the four of you,” Nop said. “It would make it an odd number so this way everybody has the opportunity to speak up and also to be part of a process.”

After some discussion, the council decided that selecting members of the working group to participate would add an extra step that would extend the overall process of filling the seat.

“If we were to add others to our deliberations, then we’d have an application process for that? I don’t know how you’d ever close that loop,” Woerner said.

Instead, the council agreed that since the process will be held publicly, community members can share their input with the council in public comment and participate in the discussion without holding a formal vote — as the final decision must come from the council, according to city attorney Jason Alcalá.

Following the group interview, the four sitting council members will select their top three choices and submit them to the city clerk who will then collate the lists and look for any overlap between them. Once the lists are narrowed and have been consolidated, the council will deliberate and select an appointee who will officially be sworn in on Jan. 25.

The 21 applicants

Arthur Barinque: Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center education manager, Livermore Arts Commission member.

Regina Bonanno: Retired Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory scientist/program manager, City Asset Management Program Committee chair and Livermore Planning Commission member.

Evan Branning: Culinary arts instructor at Village High School in Pleasanton, Livermore Human Services Commission chair, Unify Livermore co-founder, Tri-Valley Transit Coalition co-founder and Alameda County Public Health Commission District 1 member.

Jeffrey Hateley: CFO of Livermore-based Baca Properties and U.S. Marines veteran.

Abigail Helfer: Life and business coach, business mentor and former veterinary clerk and office manager for Army Veterinary Treatment Facilities.

Greg Janssen: Vice president at Chef’s Warehouse.

Dennis Kai: Senior executive sales representative at GlaxoSmithKline and U.S. Army veteran.

Christine Lusty: Self-employed

seamstress and former Chamber of Commerce member and ambassador.

Melissa Lynch: FABS Group, Inc. property manager.

Darci Martin: Apple Inc. data engineer.

Nathaniel Moore: Medidata Solutions Inc. senior security analyst.

Mony Nop: CEO of Mony Nop Real Estate, Inc., former Livermore police officer, Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance co-founder and 2020 mayor candidate.

Faith Nordvik: Full-time student studying political science at the University of California, Merced.

Neal Pann: Togawa Smith Martin, Inc. project architect, Livermore Downtown Inc. board member, former Planning Commission member and 2018 council candidate.

Pete Patterson: Medical sales account manager at McKesson and 2020 council candidate.

Eric Payne: Sales representative at Henry Schein and former Mountain House Community Services District president.

Kyra Pervere: Teacher at William Mendenhall Middle School in Livermore.

Alex Shezifi: Owner and IT manager at Ace Computer Systems Inc. and former Livermore Airport Advisory Commission chair.

Jennifer Spriggs: Owner and agent at Jennifer Spriggs Insurance Agency.

Samantha Valdez: Tri-Valley Haven communications specialist and former intern to Congressman Eric Swalwell.

Jennifer Vierra: Musco Family Olive Company marketing brand manager. ■

TAKE US ALONG



Up in the tree: Young Camille Ryan catches up on some Pleasanton Weekly news in her favorite spot in the backyard.

To submit your “Take Us Along” entry (from at home, around town or on the road), email your photograph to editor@pleasantonweekly.com. Be sure to identify who is in the photo with names listed from left to right, the location, the date and any relevant details about where you’re reading your Weekly.

Page 6 • January 15, 2021 • Pleasanton Weekly

Opening outdoor dining downtown in defiance

‘Without any guidelines, we felt that we had the right to open’

By JULIA BAUM

After briefly reopening for outdoor dining last weekend, one downtown Pleasanton restaurant switched back to takeout only on Tuesday.

Todd Utikal told the Weekly he “received a very good tip” that “someone from the health department is coming (Wednesday),” and decided to cancel patio dining at his restaurant, SideTrack Bar + Grill, located just off Main Street on West Angela Street.

“At this point, I now know we’re in violation of the shelter-in-place order if we stay open,” Utikal said.

With the state’s stay-at-home order not officially extended at the time since going into effect Dec. 5, Utikal resumed outdoor dining at his establishment last Friday, the same day the Bay Area’s regional intensive care unit (ICU) capacity fell to 3% capacity. ICU capacity dropped below 1% this week.

SideTrack was one of “only about 10 (restaurants) that opened” in the Tri-Valley for outdoor dining last Friday, Utikal said, including McKay’s Taproom and Beer Garden just a couple blocks away.

Utikal said he notified city officials including the mayor about opening for outdoor service because “I wanted to be very upfront that we were doing this, out of respect for them.”

“Without any guidelines, we felt that we had the right to open,” he added.

Like many other restaurants, the takeout only model has hurt revenue at SideTrack, where profits are down 70% since a year ago, according to Utikal.

“All you can do is try to manage your food costs, your labor costs. It’s just not what we’ve built,” Utikal said.

A number of precautions were taken to reduce the risk of

COVID-19 transmission among staff and diners before switching back to takeout only, he said.

“It’s very open air,” Utikal added. “We have two patios. We even remove a couple more tables just to make sure everyone was distanced as well as they could be.”

Taking such measures and still being prohibited from serving food and drinks on site has compounded his frustration with the extension. Utikal claimed Alameda County Health Officer Dr. Nicholas Moss even told him recently that it was no longer sensible to keep patio dining closed, and “he’d hopefully help us advocate to the state for reopening.”

Though only briefly open, many SideTrack patrons found solace in the previously common act of going out to eat from Friday to Monday.

“We are social beings,” Utikal said. “We need to be out and as long as we can provide a safe environment. We should be able to do so.” ■

PUSD board approves temporary grading policy

Instead of failing letter grades, secondary students may receive Credit/No Credit

By JULIA BAUM

The Pleasanton school board unanimously adopted a temporary grading policy at a special online meeting last week, allowing secondary students to receive “Credit” or “No Credit” marks instead of low letter grades on their first-semester report card.

Pleasanton Unified School District staff said they “want to make it clear that this is not the hold-harmless policy from last spring,” but that the policy would allow students to avoid any immediate negative impact on their grade-point average (GPA) until they could remediate any courses.

With many students struggling with loneliness, isolation and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic and “disengaging from school entirely,” assistant superintendent Janelle Woodward called the policy “an opportunity to provide an additional layer of support for students who are struggling the most under these unprecedented circumstances.”

Middle and high school students who earn a grade of F during the first semester — which ended Dec. 18 — will instead receive no credit, while students with a grade

of D will receive a credit mark. In both instances, a CR or NC mark does not impact a student’s GPA as negatively as a failing letter grade.

Students with earned grades of A, B or C, and those who earn an extra grade weighting in Advanced Placement or Honors-level courses with a C grade or better, will have their grades upheld.

The district is working on a plan to help high school students with credit recovery for first-semester courses, as well as for students who received No Credit marks and/or to remediate courses with Credit marks.

Students will have the chance to replace CR/NC marks with letter grades, according to Woodward, with priority being given this spring to high school seniors who need to retake courses to meet graduation or college admission requirements.

Summer school will also be offered to help high school students earn letter grades for classes that are reflected as CR/NC for core classes.

If graduation requirements are not remediated over the summer, students in grades 9 to 11 will need to retake those courses the

following year. Middle school students who receive No Credit for higher level math may also need to retake courses later on.

‘What was most concerning to us was to look at the number of students who have 5 or more Ds or Fs.’

Pam VandeKamp,
District director

Last April, the California Department of Education and Board of Education issued grading guidance stating that both letter grades and Credit/No Credit would be accepted for spring of the 2019-20 school year while students and teachers adjusted to remote instruction.

PUSD has reverted back to its regular grading system since then and observed “a significant increase in the number of Ds and Fs for secondary students,” particularly for minority groups.

Though Black and American Indian/Alaska Native students

make up a small portion of PUSD’s overall racial demographics, of 162 Black students in secondary grades, 30% had a D or F during the first quarter of 2020-21. Of the 26 American Indian or Alaska Native students in secondary school, 73% also had at least one D or F during the first quarter.

Since last year, the number of secondary students with two to four D or F grades has increased from 39.1% to 43.3%.

“What was most concerning to us was to look at the number of students who have 5 or more Ds or Fs,” said Pam VandeKamp, district director of assessment and accountability.

That number went from 26 students overall who had 5 or more Ds or Fs, or 1.6% of all secondary students, to 342 students — or an increase to 18.5%.

In December, site administrators

collaborated with staff to develop and implement flexible grading options during the pandemic. These include reducing assignment workloads, accepting late work without penalty, allowing makeups for missed assignments, and allowing test corrections and retakes.

The deadline for semester one grade submission was also extended to Tuesday (Jan. 12), to allow teachers to make any changes. Final grades should be available today.

The district planned a virtual town hall meeting on secondary school reopening on Wednesday, with results pending as of press time. PUSD is seeking feedback from families on remote learning in order to provide an updated recommendation to the Board of Trustees soon on students returning to campus. ■

Zone 7 cleans up encampments in flood channels

Multi-jurisdictional effort also connects homeless with housing

By JULIA BAUM

Approximately 10 miles of local flood control channels were used for shelter by unhoused individuals last year, according to an annual summary report on homeless encampment activity from the Zone 7 Water Agency.

In 2020, encampments were found in nearly a third of the agency’s 37-mile flood channels, and 11 cleanup events were conducted at four primary sites. All of the cleanups were held in Livermore and Dublin.

General Manager Valerie Pryor told the Weekly, “A couple of these were citizen complaints but most of them were known encampment sites that Zone 7 and city staff had been coordinating with for a couple of months.”

Besides generating trash and debris that “impede flood flows and also have urban stream and water quality issues,” Pryor said at the Jan. 6 Board of Directors meeting that some encampments also “dig into channel sides and undermine the structural integrity of the channels.”

“We do have to balance the needs of our multiple stakeholders and we are very empathetic to our homeless population, but we do need to maintain water quality and flood



channel integrity,” Pryor said.

According to staff, Zone 7 flood channels are often used for encampments “due to associated recreational trail usage agreements, proximity to heavily populated areas, relatively easy access to shade and shelter and minimal visibility to the public at large.”

The agency’s biggest effort in 2020 was cleaning up an encampment in late August along the Arroyo Las Positas in Livermore behind the Autumn Springs Apartments, which took approximately 10 days, and was coordinated with the city of Livermore, Caltrans, and local nonprofit organizations like Open Heart Kitchen, Monthly Miracles and Block by Block.

The week-and-a-half job, which cost \$136,806, involved removing 42.1 tons of debris, a 55-gallon drum of potentially infectious

sharps, 26 abandoned propane cylinders, and a pallet of electronic waste.

“We coordinate with the local cities and law enforcement when posting eviction notices and providing social services to support the unhoused,” said Colter Andersen, production manager for Zone 7. “The majority of these clean up events are just cleaning up debris, they’re not actually displacing residents out of our channels.”

Eviction notice was given ten days in advance to people camping in the channels. Twelve individuals subsequently received permanent shelter during the course of the clean-up after being connected by CityServe of the Tri-Valley with Alameda County’s Safer Ground Hotel Voucher Program.

The area by Autumn Springs Apartments was also cleared by a herd of goats brought in to graze on grasses between 3 to 6 feet tall along the channel, in order to mitigate fire danger.

After the goats finished grazing, a hired contractor removed brush and tree branches in the area. Zone 7 said the work “eliminates ladder fire fuel and keeps the fire on the ground instead of into the tree canopy,” and allows for more visibility of the channel area. ■

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Tri-Valley's county supervisors take oath of office

Newcomer Haubert starts first term for D1; Miley's sixth term underway for D4

By JULIA BAUM

Former Dublin mayor David Haubert stepped into his new role as Alameda County District 1 supervisor while District 4 Supervisor Nate Miley was sworn in for a sixth term during separate socially distanced ceremonies last week.

The Jan. 3 event for Haubert was introduced by Tim Sbranti, current trustee for the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District and also a past mayor of Dublin, while Cornerstone Fellowship Church Senior Pastor Steve Madsen delivered the invocation during the ceremony, which was remote in nature due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Haubert, who defeated Fremont City Councilman Vinnie Bacon in a runoff election Nov. 3, succeeded outgoing Supervisor Scott Haggerty, who retired from public service this month after 24 years on the board. District 1 encompasses Dublin, Livermore, part of Sunol, and most of Fremont and unincorporated Livermore and Amador valleys.

Sbranti mentioned Haubert's commitment to serving his community and his family and faith as his foundation. He also highlighted



Alameda County District 4 Supervisor Nate Miley is sworn in for a sixth term at the Jan. 5 board meeting.

Haubert's decade on the Dublin school board before moving on to the Dublin City Council and serving three mayoral terms from 2014 through last month.

Haubert's wife Michele stood by his side while he took the oath of office, which was administered by Haggerty. Haubert's daughter Katelyn also made a virtual appearance earlier during the ceremony — which was broadcast via TV30 and held on a Sunday, two days before the regular Board of Supervisors meeting.

Haggerty recalled his time working with Haubert on multi-jurisdictional issues, and noted that Haubert's start in public service in the Tri-Valley "did start with a county issue," when plans were floated to build one of the nation's largest juvenile detention centers in Dublin.

Instead of a punitive approach, Haggerty said that Haubert advocated for alternative treatment and rehabilitation programs.

At one point, Haggerty admitted it was difficult deciding to not run

again and highlighted some projects and accomplishments he was proud of, including the Valley Link project. He also shared his desire to be involved in celebrating the purchase of the N3 Ranch property.

Later on, Haubert stepped up to the lectern, where he called the occasion that evening and what it represented, "special."

"That's a special thing in America, that ordinary everyday people step up to the plate, run for office and take an oath to serve our community," Haubert said.

"You deserve a leader who will listen to you ... and I promise to hear your needs and concerns," Haubert added. "I promise to have an open mind as I listen to you, and I promise to advocate for you. Our job, my job is to make your life better, and I promise to do that to the best of my ability."

On Jan. 5, Miley was sworn in at the first board meeting of 2021 for a sixth term representing District 4, which includes Pleasanton, Castro Valley, and parts of Oakland and unincorporated Alameda County. Miley was first elected to the board nearly 20 years ago and won re-election in the March

primary against lone challenger Esther Goolsby.

Miley took the oath of office, administered by county Auditor-Controller Melissa Wilk, inside the board chambers in Oakland. Everyone present at the socially distanced ceremony also wore face masks.

Reflecting on challenges over the past year that "have been unlike any others in my 30 years as an elected official," Miley said the COVID-19 crisis has "amplified the deep structural inequities in many of the communities that I represent," but there is still long-term investment needed to achieve social and economic equity long after the pandemic.

Touching on obstacles ahead, Miley added, "In this turmoil, there's hope for change and the truth that we have more power personally and collectively than we may believe right now."

Miley finished, "I find myself encouraged by the words of Barack Obama when he said, 'Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time — we are the ones we've been waiting for, we are the change we seek.'" ■

Alameda County's COVID-19 situation may be stabilizing

'We're doing better than the state overall and better than the region'

COVID-19 case rates rose after the holidays but may be stabilizing, Alameda County's health officer said Tuesday.

Speaking at the Board of Supervisors regular meeting, Health Officer Dr. Nicholas Moss said the unadjusted case rate in the county was 35.5 per 100,000.

The number of new cases in the county has dropped in recent days from a high 1,296 on Thursday to 413 on Monday, according to the county's dashboard.

"We might be through the worst," Moss said.

Still, stay-at-home orders remain in place for the county, region and state and it's unclear when they will be lifted.

Regionally, that's because the capacity of beds in intensive care units is below the 15% required to lift the order.

In the Bay Area region, ICU bed capacity was just 4.7% on Tuesday. Moss said the adult ICU bed capacity in the county is 20% while statewide capacity is 0%.

"We're doing better than the state overall and better than the region," Moss said.

The number of people with COVID-19 in ICU beds in the county was 115 on Monday and overall, 428 were hospitalized with the coronavirus.

Meanwhile, vaccination in the county is moving forward with more than 4,000 expected to be vaccinated this week, Colleen Chawla, director of the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency told supervisors.

County leaders are following the state's guidance when it comes to vaccinating residents. About 145,000 people in the county are eligible to be

vaccinated in Phase 1A of the state's protocol and about 53,000 first doses of the vaccine have been received in the county.

The Coliseum in Oakland may be used as a site for mass vaccinations, but the county has not received enough doses to do a mass vaccination, at least not yet, Chawla said.

That may change, she said.

Supervisor Wilma Chan said she heard that California has received the most doses of the vaccine of any U.S. state and given the fewest number of shots.

"I think it's just unacceptable," she

said without commenting about the work in the county.

Chawla said the phased system for administering the vaccine makes it difficult to vaccinate lots of people quickly.

But she said the system is designed to vaccinate the people most at risk for contracting the virus and to distribute the vaccine equitably.

The problem with a more open system for vaccinating would mean people who face barriers to vaccination would get vaccinated more slowly, Moss said. ■

—Keith Burbank, Bay City News

LPC offers low-cost business certificate program

By JULIA BAUM

Tri-Valley residents can boost their business skills in several months by earning tuition-free, noncredit business certificates at little cost from Las Positas College.

"These new certificate programs offer practical, real-world skills that help people gain confidence, build their professionalism and advance their careers," said Drew Patterson, business studies professor. "Students learn valuable soft skills which have been identified by our advisory board, local employers and the Bureau of Labor

Statistics as skills that all employers look for in job candidates."

Students will learn the basics of operating, managing and growing a small business, develop business and technical expertise, and build skills in team management.

Courses in customer service and small business management are available to anyone over 18. A total of seven courses are offered and are completed in 15 weeks. All courses are online.

The programs also help with preparing for college-level business courses.

Patterson said the courses are "great stand-alone courses for freelancers, small business owners and entrepreneurs," in addition to fulfilling certification requirements.

Classes started this week and a registration fee of \$41 per semester includes all classes.

To learn more about noncredit classes, visit the LPC website's Noncredit FAQ page. Certificate classes are listed under Noncredit Business LPC on the CLASS-Web Schedule of Classes. ■



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pub show canceled

The Choir of Man, which has sold every seat in the Bankhead Theater for its high-energy renditions of traditional ballads and current rock hits performed in their onstage pub, was planning to perform live from a London pub tonight (Jan. 15) to be livestreamed locally but the show has been canceled due to pandemic restrictions. Due to the increasing rate of COVID-19 infection, London has shut down pubs for all of January at least. For more information, visit livermorearts.org or call 373-6800.

Nominate for Dublin awards

Citizen of the Year among top prizes

Nominations are now being accepted for the city of Dublin's 2020 Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year and Organization of the Year.

The awards are given to "outstanding individuals and groups who have contributed to the quality of life in Dublin in 2020," including "the volunteer service of a Dublin youth currently in the first through 12th grade.

Five criteria are used to determine the winners: the Dublin Integrity in

Action's 10 characteristics ("Responsibility, Respectfulness, Caring, Giving, Positive Attitude, Trustworthiness, Cooperation, Doing One's Best, Honesty and Self-Discipline"); the activity or project's originality and uniqueness; its overall relevance and importance to the Dublin community; the amount of time and effort spent; and any challenges faced completing it.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, nominees and winners will be

recognized during a virtual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony on April 28. A \$500 cash prize will be given to the Organization of the Year, and a \$300 donation will be made to both the Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year's favorite nonprofit organization.

Nominations are due Feb. 5 at 5 p.m., and can be completed online at dublin.ca.gov/vre. ■

—Julia Baum

VACCINE

Continued from Page 5

getting a vaccine, it's hopefully getting back to normal. We know that doesn't happen three weeks from now but it's getting closer and this is a legitimate effort to get closer. So people are thrilled," Griffin said, adding:

"Yesterday it was almost like the Beatles were playing; people were acting like 'I'm going to get into the concert.' There's a lot of excitement."

Stoneridge Creek in Pleasanton hosted COVID-19 vaccination events on Monday and Tuesday, where between 1,000 and 1,100 residents and employees received their first dosage of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Griffin said that turnout was exceptionally high, with around 95% of residents opting to take the vaccine.

Typical of vaccination events held throughout the state, participants are lined up — at least six feet apart of course — to receive their vaccine and then are held for at least 15 minutes afterward for observation.

Griffin described the coronavirus vaccination as being similar to the flu shot, with the only side effect being a slightly sore arm. In a small number of cases, recipients can have adverse reactions to the vaccine — those who have had adverse reactions to flu shots may be susceptible to adverse reactions to the COVID-19 shot.

After the majority of residents in Group 1A who want to receive a vaccine do, county officials will commence with those in Group 1B, which is further divided into two distinct priority groups, Tier 1 and Tier 2.

As of Tuesday, Tier 1 includes adults over the age of 75, education and child care workers, police officers and food and agricultural workers. After they receive their vaccinations it will open up to Tier 2, which includes adults over the age of 65, transportation workers, critical manufacturing workers and those who live in congregate settings such as incarcerated individuals and people experiencing homelessness.

Next up, Group 1C will cover adults over the age of 50, people aged 16-49 with high-risk medical conditions, pregnant residents,

waste and water management officials, defense workers, energy workers, communications and IT staff, financial services workers, government operations officials and community service employees.

Health conditions covered in 1C include: cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), heart conditions, organ transplants, obesity (BMI>40 kg/m²), Type 1 and 2 diabetes, smoking, asthma (moderate to severe), cerebrovascular disease, cystic fibrosis, hypertension/high blood pressure, immunocompromised; blood/bone marrow transplant, neurologic conditions (e.g. dementia, liver disease), pulmonary fibrosis and thalassemia.

Phase 2 of vaccinations will cover residents with moderate underlying health conditions not previously covered in 1C.

Young adults and children thought by some to not be as high of risk to COVID-19 will receive their vaccinations during Phase 3 of the rollout, with all other residents and workers not previously vaccinated set to receive theirs during Phase 4.

The vaccines priority list has primarily been set through guidance issued from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and California Department of Public Health.

"The vaccine is an important step forward to get back to normalcy. Obviously the highest risk and most vulnerable should be vaccinated first. However, eventually when the young and healthy are offered the vaccine, this will be a crucial step in combating this virus," Dr. Renzo Cardena, an emergency medicine physician at San Ramon Regional

Medical Center, told the Weekly.

"When the young and healthy get vaccinated, this is more to protect their loved ones, and can be viewed as a selfless act of humanity," Dr. Cardena added.

According to the Alameda County Public Health Department and Contra Costa Health Services, as of Tuesday a total of 62,046 cases and 763 deaths have been reported in Alameda County due to COVID-19 while 48,449 cases and 392 deaths have been documented in Contra Costa County.

Livermore leads the Tri-Valley, accounting for 3,200 of cases, followed by Pleasanton with 1,639, San Ramon with 1,468, Dublin with 1,185 and Danville with 1,164.

While the vaccine's rollout could help residents return to the sense of normalcy, as mentioned by Griffin, public and health officials have maintained that it is vitally important that residents continue to wear masks and enforce social distancing.

That's equally true for residents who have only received their first of two vaccinations — both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines require two doses in order to reach their maximum effectiveness.

"We're excited, but we're also emphasizing to people that they need to continue to do all of the right things to be safe because there is no magic pill for anything," Griffin told the Weekly. "You still need to do the right things to be safe, with all the facial coverings and social distancing, until we're told that things are back to a normal state. So we'll continue to stay safe together."

Learn more about the vaccine rollout online at covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines. ■



RYAN J. DEGAN

Stoneridge Creek staff said that more than 1,000 residents and employees received vaccinations over two days.

THE CITY OF PLEASANTON



HIGHLIGHTS

On March 3, 2020 Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency due to COVID-19 and subsequently issued Executive Order N-25-20 suspending provisions of the Brown Act allowing meetings via teleconferencing and members of the public to observe and offer comments telephonically or electronically. The virtual meeting will be broadcast live on Channel 29 and streamed at <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheCityofPleasanton> and <https://www.tri-valleytv.org>

City Council

Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

- Consider adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to purchase Renewable 100 as the default electricity product for Pleasanton's municipal accounts and designating Brilliant 100 as the default product for residential, commercial, industrial accounts
- Public Hearing: Consider introduction and waive first reading of an ordinance approving amendments to Chapters 18.08, 18.28, 18.32, 18.36, 18.44, 18.46, 18.84, 18.88 and 18.106 of the Pleasanton Municipal Code to comply with state legislation for accessory dwelling units; and adoption of a resolution amending the Master Fee Schedule for accessory dwelling units

COMMISSION RECRUITMENTS

The City Council recruits and appoints residents of Pleasanton to a variety of boards and commissions, allowing them to contribute to and influence decisions affecting the city, providing advice and feedback on important community issues.

Applicants must reside within the Pleasanton city limits.

Apply online on the City of Pleasanton website at <http://www.cityofpleasantonca.gov/depts/clerk/boards/default.asp>

For additional information contact the Office of the City Clerk at 925-931-5027

Application period has been extended for upcoming vacancies on the

PLANNING COMMISSION

Applications are due by Tuesday, January 19, 2021

Applications are now being accepted for an unscheduled vacancy on the

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA (HACA) HOUSING COMMISSION

Applications are due by Monday, February 1, 2021

The Commission is composed of 12 members: one from each of the nine cities that HACA serves, one representing the unincorporated areas and two HACA tenants. The HACA's Governing Board, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, ratifies nomination to the HACA Housing Commission as recommended by the respective city council.

HACA operates a number of programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development with the HACA's mission to deliver housing, housing assistance and related services to low-, very low-, and extremely low-income persons; elderly persons and persons with verifiable disabilities, to enable them to live as independently as possible within their economic resources; and to persons who are not elderly or do not have verifiable disabilities, for the time necessary to enable them to become self-sufficient and economically independent.

To explore more about Pleasanton, visit us at www.cityofpleasantonca.gov

Hike to health with EBRPD's annual Trails Challenge

Also: Fee collection for parking, activities at regional parks resumes

By JULIA BAUM

Hike or bike to a healthier new year with the East Bay Regional Park District's popular annual Trails Challenge, starting this month.

Now in its 28th year, the free program encourages residents to connect with the great outdoors, offering 20 trails for all levels of experience, and is part of the worldwide Healthy Parks Healthy

People (HPPH) movement which promotes "the connection between a healthy green environment and community health."

"While we continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19, one thing has become very clear, parks are essential," officials said. "They play a vital role in sustaining our physical, mental, and spiritual health. We appreciate your support

in loving and protecting this beautiful system of parklands and shorelines in Alameda and Contra Costa counties."

Guidebooks can be found on EBRPD's Trails Challenge webpage, and will be available (along with t-shirts) outside visitor centers on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. while supplies last (one shirt per person and one

guidebook per family).

Park visitors are asked to wear face masks and observe social distancing, and may also notice some recent changes.

Last week, the district reimplemented fees for parking, camping, fishing, and boat launching at regional parks "to support funding of the many programs, services and amenities slated to

reopen next year."

In order to provide free and easy public access during the COVID-19 pandemic, the district waived all fee collections in 2020.

Fees for seasonal and recreational activities, services and amenities that may reopen later this year include swimming, reservable picnic areas and recreational programs. ■

Recall effort targets three SRVUSD board members

Notices of intent sent to initiate petition process against Hurd, Mintz, Ordway

By JEREMY WALSH

A group of San Ramon Valley parents has initiated the process to start collecting signatures for a recall petition to oust three members of the local school board over their decision to reverse course on in-person learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notices of intent to recall have been sent to San Ramon Valley Unified School District Board President Susanna Ordway, Board Member Rachel Hurd and Board Member Ken Mintz, petition organizers said on Tuesday morning.

The recall backers said they stand for the many parents in the Valley outraged by the district remaining with remote learning only for the general student population, contrary to what they believe is best for their children's education, mental health and emotional well-being.

"We do not believe science supports a continued forced remote learning environment," said Rachel Bailey, a parent of three SRVUSD students and organizer of the recall effort.

"A majority of our country is back to in-person learning in some form, including parts of California and even private schools within San Ramon Valley with no major outbreaks," Bailey said. "Our children are suffering in an isolated remote environment. There has to be a more balanced approach to education during this time."

Mintz, who has served more than

15 years on the board combined over two stints, confirmed he was served with the notice Tuesday evening.

"It's unfortunate that a group of parents felt it necessary to take this action because they disagreed with a decision of the school board related to how and when SRVUSD would implement our hybrid in-school option, an issue that just about every school district in the state is dealing with," Mintz told the Weekly.

"As you may imagine it has been a difficult decision process at the local level with a number of constraints and considerations including vaccination and testing and the surging pandemic issues locally as well as comments and directives from county health and the state," he added. "I personally want to get our students and staff back in school as soon as it is safe to do so."

Hurd, who has the longest consecutive tenure on the current board, said she was served with an envelope containing the notice at her home on Jan. 7, and was "surprised" by the action.

"I do stand by my decision on Dec. 15 to support the superintendent's recommendation to pause our planned Jan. 5 opening of hybrid in-person instruction," Hurd told the Weekly, noting that Superintendent John Malloy would provide an update on the reopening process at this week's board meeting. Coverage of that was pending as of press time.

"Dr. Malloy will review the

decision-making process to clarify some members of the public's misconceptions about that process," Hurd said. "In addition, Dr. Malloy is going to provide us with staff's further thinking and plans for meeting the needs of our students, especially the ones who are most challenged by the remote-only delivery, and the board will discuss and consider staff's recommendations."

Ordway had not responded to requests for comment as of press time.

The notices of intent represent the start of the process for Contra Costa County Elections Division officials to review the proposed recall petitions for approval, after which the proponents could begin collecting signatures from registered voters in the hopes of spurring recall elections.

A copy of the proposed petition has not been released publicly to date.

Hurd said the notice she received alleges three grounds for recall: "unwillingness to meet, to discuss and to vote in alignment with her community members in Zone 5; serious matter of violating the Brown Act; and (she) has not demonstrated financial governance and oversight required by a board member and has failed her primary responsibility to ensure accountability."

In a press release Tuesday, the recall backers cited the school board's decision on Dec. 15 to postpone indefinitely SRVUSD returning to more in-person learning via a

hybrid model that was scheduled to take effect Jan. 5. Board members supported staff's recommendation to pause any reopenings due to new surge in the number of coronavirus cases.

The board voted unanimously that night to remain with remote learning until Contra Costa County is removed from the state's most-restrictive purple tier and into the less restrictive red tier, halting SRVUSD's progress toward more phases of reopening after winter break on Jan. 5 as had been planned.

"Parents and students were blindsided by this sudden reversal," the recall proponents said. "The phased reopening was in compliance with health guidelines set forth by both the state and county last fall."

The backers also allege the board's decision was in part driven by a letter from the California Teachers Association, on behalf of the San Ramon Valley Education Association (SRVEA), advocating the district pause its plans amid worsening COVID-19 cases in the community.

They further point to the allegation filed with the district by resident Kathleen DeLaney that the school board violated state public meeting laws with its Dec. 15 agenda verbiage, claiming the board failed to adequately provide notice, as required by the Brown Act, about its plans to cancel the return of in-person learning.

Malloy stands by the Dec. 15

meeting agenda and denies any Brown Act violations occurred.

But Malloy has recommended the board approve an "unconditional commitment response" to the allegation that agrees not to use the same agenda verbiage in question, while not admitting any wrongdoing, in the interest of avoiding potential litigation. The board was scheduled to discuss that matter this week.

Hurd and Mintz are longtime school board members, while Ordway is in the middle of her first full term. All three earned their current four-year term in fall 2018; they were appointed after no election was held because they were the only candidates to file for the three open seats at that time.

Hurd is in her fourth consecutive term, having sat on the board since 2006.

Mintz has had two stints on the school board, with his most recent tenure beginning with an appointment in 2009. He previously served a single term from 1992-96.

Ordway has served on the school board since June 2018, when she was appointed to fill a vacancy.

The recall backers said they could not include new board members Laura Bratt and Shelley Clark in their petition effort because state law prevents recalling officials within 90 days of taking office. Bratt and Clark won election on the Nov. 3 ballot and took their seats last month. ■

MURDER

Continued from Page 5

concerning, according to the mother, that she left their house on Jan. 2 to stay with a friend for safety reasons after her son attacked her and her husband while crying and acting erratically that morning, Bloom wrote. Edward Young stayed at home.

The mother told police that Edward and Timothy brought her dinner the next night, but around 11:45 p.m. Jan. 3, her husband called to say that their son was hearing voices that were telling him to kill his father, according to

Bloom. Edward Young reportedly told his wife he would stay in his bedroom and lock the door that night.

The mother said Timothy Young ignored her calls the next morning, but answered a call just after noon from his brother, who asked to speak to their father but was told the father wasn't home. Six minutes later, Timothy Young called 9-1-1 and told the dispatcher his father was dead, according to Bloom.

Upon arrival, officers observed Timothy Young with apparent stab wounds in the front part of his body. Inside the home, they found a man — later identified as Edward

Young — who appeared to have been dead for some hours, according to Bloom.

There were no signs of forced entry into the house; neighbors reported hearing loud banging noises between 1-3 a.m. Jan. 4, according to Bloom.

At the hospital, a treating doctor told police that Timothy Young's wounds could have been self-inflicted based on their depth and location on the body, according to Bloom.

Timothy Young, who was placed under arrest at the hospital on Jan. 4, was taken to the Livermore Police Department for questioning

last Friday, agreeing to waive his Miranda rights and speak to police, according to Bloom.

Denying that he is schizophrenic, Timothy Young told police he went to sleep in his bed at 9 p.m. Jan. 3 but awoke some time later kneeling in his father's bedroom and was being "orally raped" by his former landlord and his brother, according to Bloom. The man said he didn't see his attackers but recognized their voices.

Timothy Young said he then heard his father screaming and "blacked out," according to Bloom. He told police he woke up in a pool of blood next to his father,

screamed in pain and then blacked out again.

Saying he awoke during daylight on Jan. 4, Timothy Young told police he answered a call from his brother who was asking if their father was dead. It was then, he said, he realized he was severely injured and called 9-1-1, according to Bloom.

After the interview, Timothy Young was transported to Santa Rita Jail in Dublin and booked into custody. The Alameda County District Attorney's Office later charged him with first-degree murder and special allegation of using a knife during the crime. ■

Armstrong joins San Ramon council

Retired FEMA official/Army colonel fills vacant District 2 seat

By RYAN J. DEGAN

The San Ramon City Council has appointed retired U.S. Army colonel and former Federal Emergency Management Agency manager Mark Armstrong to fill the vacant council seat and represent District 2 on the dais.

Selected unanimously by the council — albeit with initial push-back from Mayor Dave Hudson, who preferred former councilman Harry Sachs for the post — during a special online meeting Jan. 6, Armstrong beat out four other candidates who interviewed for the position, with council members saying they were impressed by his leadership experience, public service record and priorities for the city.

“I’ve dedicated my entire adult life to serving others, and I feel that those years that I’ve had in public service have led me to this point now where I’m able to give back to my local community, which has done so much for me and my family,” Armstrong said last week prior to his selection.

“I think we all agree San Ramon is a great place to work, to live, to play, to run a business and raise a family. We’re fortunate that we don’t have a lot of big problems to fix like some of the other cities, but we do have opportunities to make San Ramon an even better place to live,” he added.

Armstrong was sworn in during a ceremony before this Tuesday’s regular City Council meeting.

He will finish the remainder of the term vacated upon Hudson’s ascension to mayor after the Nov. 3 election. Hudson was in the middle of an at-large term running through 2022 when he was elected mayor last fall, and the resulting council vacancy was subsequently assigned to District 2, which covers southwestern San Ramon.

A 16-year resident of San Ramon, Armstrong served a 30-year career as an infantry officer in the Army working in a variety of multi-service, interagency, command and staff assignments throughout the world, before retiring after reaching the rank of colonel.

He is also a retired certified emergency manager who, according to his application submitted for the council’s review, served in senior leadership positions with FEMA in support of numerous states, territories and tribes. In that capacity he worked extensively on wildfire, flood, mud flow, earthquake and tsunami responses throughout the country.

A 1981 graduate of U.S. Military Academy at West Point with a degree in civil engineering, Armstrong cited leadership experience through his time in the Army



Mark Armstrong

and FEMA. He has not previously served on a city commission or advisory board in San Ramon.

He previously completed the San Ramon Government 101 course and has roots in the community as a volunteer at Forest Home Farms. He has also received training from the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District as a community emergency response team search volunteer.

“Now that I am retired, I have the bandwidth to dedicate my time to City Council commitments, to study the important issues facing the city, to develop the important relationships to build consensus and to listen to our citizens and ask the right questions and to make informed decisions consistent with the vision of the city,” Armstrong said.

Listing a set of priorities geared toward maintaining and increasing where possible San Ramon’s high quality of life, Armstrong said as a council member he will seek to enforce public safety, maintain financial stability and to protect the city’s vibrant open space and neighborhoods.

In winning the seat, Armstrong beat out four other finalists, each with their own backgrounds in civic governance.

In addition to Sachs, a teacher and former City Council member from 2013-18, the other finalists were parks and community services volunteer Sarah Lashanlo, Economic Development Advisory Committee member Dwight Pratt and Santa Clara County prosecutor Patrick Vanier.

“We are very fortunate to have such great candidates within our community, thanks to everyone and thanks for our staff. This is amazing; within 30 days we wanted to get all of this wrapped up ... this definitely shows the spirit of our community as well as our staff and the city council,” Councilman Sridhar Verose said at the Jan. 6 meeting.

“I really appreciate the lifetime of service that Mark Armstrong has demonstrated through West Point,” Councilman Scott Perkins said of the appointment. “30 years in the Army as a colonel and then a dozen or so with FEMA and the community work he has done here in the city ... he’ll get my top vote.”

Perkins and Verose both

nominated Armstrong for the position and selected him as their top choice to serve out the remainder of Hudson’s term.

Hudson expressed misgivings about the appointment, saying that while he was sure Armstrong would be a quality council member, he preferred Sachs due to his extensive experience in city governance.

To enforce his point, Hudson called a vote to appoint Sachs over Armstrong after Perkins and Verose had already made a motion to select the retired Army colonel and FEMA official.

Hudson’s call was not seconded by any other council member and died on the floor, leading all four council members to unanimously approve Armstrong’s selection on Jan. 6. His appointment was confirmed on Tuesday. ■

Darlene Rickard

December 16, 1945 – December 24, 2020

Darlene Ann Rickard passed away at 75 years of age on Thursday, December 24, 2020 in Pleasanton, CA. She was born in Corning, CA, grew up in Sacramento, and graduated from Hiram Johnson Senior High in 1963 and Sacramento City College in 1965.



Darlene was a beloved wife, mother, sister, niece, aunt, and grandmother. She was preceded in death by her father, Donald and her mother, Joy. Darlene is survived by her husband Donald, sons Michael (Maribel) and David (Amy), grandchildren Ryan, Kathryn, Jacob, and Jared, sisters Linda and Barbara, and brothers Danny and James.

Darlene and Donald were married 55 years, moved to the Bay Area in 1967, and have lived in Pleasanton for 43 years. Darlene retired from working at AT&T in 2002.

A celebration of Darlene’s life will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 2pm at East Lawn Cemetery, 5757 Greenback Lane, Sacramento, CA 95841.

PAID OBITUARY

Stephen Salvatore Cusenza

June 3, 1954 – January 2, 2021

Stephen Salvatore Cusenza passed away on January 2, 2021 in Walnut Creek, CA, surrounded by his loving family.

Steve was born in Visalia, California on June 3, 1954 to Jasper and Evelyn Cusenza.

He attended George McCann Elementary and Mt. Whitney High School. As a young man growing up in Visalia, Steve spent endless hours working in his father’s hardware store while enjoying his free time with friends hiking in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Steve lived in Visalia until his college years where he attended Santa Clara University and studied Civil Engineering. At Santa Clara, Steve met LeeLee Daschbach, his wife of 42 years.

Following Santa Clara, Steve’s career in Civil Engineering focused on the planning and design of public utilities for the cities of Santa Cruz, Taft, and ultimately Pleasanton where he spent 21 years with the City of Pleasanton Public Works Department.

Throughout his life, Steve found joy and freedom traveling the world with his family and many friends. He often played the role of tour guide, where he created countless memories for those traveling along with him. His recently acquired dual Italian citizenship often brought him and LeeLee to Sicily where he reunited with his Italian roots.

Along with travel, a constant throughout Steve’s life were his friends. His kind smile, genuine approach, and jovial demeanor warmed the hearts of those he met. From Visalia to Pleasanton and everywhere in between, he treated his friends as his own family.

In every role he played within his family, he was beloved. As a husband, father,

father-in-law, grandfather, brother, uncle, cousin, son-in-law, and brother-in-law, his family often leaned on him for guidance, friendship and love. In expressing love, Steve was known to communicate through his service to others. For friends and family, he could often be found helping them solve their problems, checking in at times of need, and even playing the role of “Mr. Fix-It” for various house projects.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Jasper and Evelyn, and is survived by his wife LeeLee and their three children, Siena, Michael, and Marisa along with his daughter and son in-law, Shane Salvata and Tyler

Johnston. Steve’s grandchildren, Hailey, Jasper, Sebastian, Cleo and Ayla will forever remember Steve as their “Popo”, especially Hailey who Steve was helping raise in his own home with Siena and LeeLee. Steve is also survived by his brother Joe Cusenza, and sisters Jane Creech and Mary Ann Cusenza, along with brother-in-law Randy Creech and many admiring Cusenza, Creech, and Daschbach in-laws, nieces and nephews.

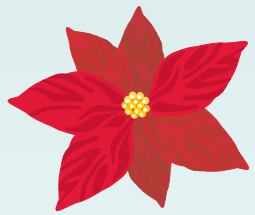
To know Steve, was to love Steve, and he will be remembered by his glowing smile, humble nature, giving heart, quick wit, and easy laughter. He was a favorite of many and loved by all. Although he left us too soon, the impact of his love and friendship will live on through his family and friends forever.

A funeral will be held to honor Steve on January 16th at 10:30 at The Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, California. Due to capacity restrictions of the pandemic, the funeral will be viewable virtually. Please contact his family for details.

We love you, Popo.

PAID OBITUARY

Donate to the Pleasanton Weekly



Holiday Fund



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 local nonprofits with no administrative expenses.

This year's Holiday Fund recipients that will share in fund contributions are:

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 15,000 members of our community.

CityServe of the Tri-Valley 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.

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

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.

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.

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Holiday Fund

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

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Newsom unveils \$227 billion state budget proposal

Includes record education investment, billions for COVID-19 recovery

Gov. Gavin Newsom unveiled his proposed budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year last Friday, touting record investments in education and a \$15 billion budget surplus in spite of the economic uncertainty wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.

The \$227 billion proposed budget, with a \$164.5 billion general fund, represents a stark difference in the state's financial outlook from last year, when plummeting sales, personal income and corporate tax revenue during the pandemic's early days resulted in a \$54 billion budget deficit.

According to Keely Bosler, the state's director of finance, the state received more revenue than expected over the last year after misjudging the depth of the pandemic-induced recession and that the stock market would maintain its strength. "Not an easy journey," Newsom said Friday about the process of developing the proposal. "A challenge the likes of which we've never experienced in such a contracted period of time. Numbers changed but our values did not."

Newsom said his focus when drafting the budget centered on getting state residents vaccinated against the virus as quickly as possible while spurring the state's economic recovery and reopening schools across the state.

The budget includes \$85.8 billion for the state's schools, the largest investment in education in the state's history, according to Newsom.

The proposed funding would allow the state to avoid making permanent education cuts or layoffs while recruiting and training new teachers, keeping college and university tuition and fees at current levels and ensuring all school staff and students have access to

coronavirus testing and vaccination in the coming months.

At the end of December, Newsom announced that the state would invest some \$2 billion in reopening schools in February for students in transitional kindergarten through second grade and progressing into higher grades later into the spring.

While schools in 41 counties across the state were holding in-person classes to some extent, as of November, Newsom said state officials aim to use the \$2 billion and incentives for additional resource allocation to resume in-person classes statewide.

Newsom added that officials wouldn't shy away from taking a more heavy-handed approach with school districts that have been more hesitant to reopen in the coming months.

Superintendents from seven of the state's largest school districts, including those in San Francisco and Oakland, expressed such hesitation earlier this week in a letter to Newsom, suggesting that the \$2 billion plan would be implemented inequitably and included vague markers for reopening such as what constitutes a "safe school environment."

"I think this budget reflects the vast majority of their concerns," Newsom said Friday about the letter, adding "we share the same goal for safe reopening of in-person education."

The proposed education budget also includes funding for mental health services for students, extending when schools are in session to make up for the learning lost as result of the pandemic and the development of open-sourced textbooks as a way of disrupting "the racket that is textbooks in this country," Newsom said.

The budget would utilize \$6.7 billion in federal education funding as part of its allocation to the state's schools.

California State University Chancellor Joseph Castro said the budget "provides a welcome reinvestment in the California State University and demonstrates his continued belief in the power of public higher education in developing future leaders of our state and improving the lives of the residents of California."

The California Faculty Association, which represents staff at all 23 CSU campuses, described its reaction to the proposal as "encouraged."

"This proposal is the opening move in the budget process that includes a May revise and final approval in June," the CFA said in a statement. "CFA looks forward to working with the California state legislature and Gov. Newsom over the next several months to secure necessary funding to enable us to best serve CSU students."

Outside of education, the proposed budget includes \$4.4 billion to continue the state's expansion of coronavirus testing, contact tracing and vaccination efforts.

Newsom lamented that California has lagged behind many other states in its coronavirus vaccination efforts, arguing that it is somewhat out of his control and that the state itself has not received any vaccine doses, which are being distributed directly to local health jurisdictions and health care systems.

State officials have set a goal of administering 100 million vaccines by the end of next week, according to Newsom, who noted roughly 2 million vaccine doses have been received in the state as of last week.

"The predicate in terms of our focus on a budget is the reality of getting out of the freezers, and administering into peoples' arms, these vaccines," Newsom said. "We must do that in order to safely reopen, for in-person instruction, our schools; to reopen our small businesses as well as businesses large and small all across the state of California."

Newsom said he has asked the state legislature to pass an immediate funding package by the end of the month to allocate funding for reopening schools, issuing grants and fee waivers to small businesses and extending the state's moratorium on evictions, which expires Jan. 31.

Assemblyman David Chiu (D-San Francisco), who authored the eviction moratorium bill last year, lauded Newsom for his proposal, including the \$1.75 billion allocated to sheltering the state's unhoused residents long-term.

"Despite an ongoing pandemic and difficult economic circumstances, Governor Newsom has used this budget to make wise investments and safeguard our social safety net," Chiu said, adding "while no budget is perfect, this proposal is good news for California."

The immediate funding package would also include \$600 stimulus payments to 2019 taxpayers who received an earned income tax credit from the state and 2020 taxpayers who have Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers.

Residents with an annual income of \$30,000 or less are eligible for the tax credit, while ITIN taxpayers include people like undocumented residents who were not eligible for federal stimulus payments.

California Republican Party Chair Jessica Millan Patterson suggested

Newsom should have also used the state's one-time surplus to support residents who have been hit hard in their wallet by the pandemic.

"His shutdowns and lack of leadership in handling COVID-19 has put many Californians in dire situations — foreclosures, evictions, isolation from family and friends and a lost academic year for millions of school children," Millan Patterson said in a statement.

Bay Area leaders praised Newsom's budget for investing in the state rather than making dramatic cuts amid the pandemic.

"In addition to all the challenges we have been facing for years, right now in this moment, our workers, families, and young people are in desperate need of immediate relief," San Francisco Mayor London Breed said. "By proposing direct investments to working people, small businesses, and our schools, the governor is doing just that."

"Even amid this pandemic, homelessness will persist as the lasting crisis of our generation," San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo said. "Mayors throughout the state urged Governor Newsom to remain steadfast in his commitment to housing solutions, and he stepped up."

"This budget wisely commits to assistance for small businesses, greater support for public health programs, a good working plan to reopen schools, as well as addressing non-COVID related threats like climate change impacts," said State Sen. John Laird (D-Santa Cruz).

The full budget proposal — which also includes billions in funding for wildfire preparedness, tax credits and loans for businesses and early childhood care — can be found at www.ebudget.ca.gov. ■

—Eli Walsh, BCN Foundation

Governor's school reopening plan puts tight deadlines on districts, legislature

'Those kids are falling through the cracks, and we have all the support in the world'

BY RICARDO CANO/CALMATTERS

The record \$89.5 billion education budget Gov. Gavin Newsom unveiled last Friday includes \$2 billion in grants aimed at nudging schools to reopen classrooms for its youngest students by mid-February and \$4.6 billion for summer school to address students' learning.

The governor's push to reopen schools, though, comes as many of the state's large, urban districts have delayed or scaled back plans for in-person learning amid the state's worst surge in coronavirus cases since the pandemic initially closed schools almost a year ago.

School districts will also be under tight deadlines if they wish to receive the full \$450 to \$750 per student in grant funding. In order

to get the full amounts, districts will have to submit to the state by Feb. 1 plans outlining the safety and testing measures for in-person learning with approval by their local employee unions, according to trailer bill language describing the program.

Schools then must offer in-person instruction to students in transitional kindergarten through second, as well as students most at risk of disengaging from school, by Feb. 16, followed by third- through sixth-graders by March 15.

Schools — and the governor — are under intense pressure from parents and communities to reopen campuses as they near the anniversary of their initial March 13 closures. In California, reopening

schools has been left to local superintendents, schools boards and employee unions, resulting in a patchwork of school reopenings that's created a divide between private and public schools.

Newsom also is putting the State Legislature under a time crunch by asking lawmakers to push through his proposed school-reopening grants in the next two weeks and the \$4.6 billion learning loss plan by end of March, ahead of the traditional summer deadlines.

Aided by better-than-projected state revenues, Newsom's budget plan pays down two-thirds of the schools' \$11 billion in deferrals. It also marks the most significant involvement by the governor in the state's charged school reopening

debate since he introduced reopening guidelines in July that effectively kept most schools closed to start the year.

During his budget presentation Friday, Newsom affirmed his position that schools should be open for in-person instruction if done safely and spoke of his youngest children's struggle learning remotely.

"Those kids are falling through the cracks, and we have all the support in the world," Newsom said. "I can't imagine what's happening for millions of other children. This is why this is so important."

But the governor's reopening plan has come under criticism both from local school leaders who say it would do little to help districts

most impacted by the virus, as well as teachers unions pushing against reopening schools as cases climb.

Los Angeles Unified superintendent Austin Beutner said Monday that the governor's plan "falls well short of what's needed to help our schools" because it neither sets across-the-board safety standards nor sets a requirement for when schools should reopen.

"It leaves the definition of a safe school environment and the standard for reopening classrooms up to the individual discretion of 1,037 school districts across the state, creating a patchwork of safety standards in the face of a statewide health crisis," Beutner said. "And it reverses a statewide commitment to

See **REOPENING** on Page 15

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

'The Secret History of San Ramon'

Former mayor teaming up with museum for virtual event

By RYAN J. DEGAN

The Museum of the San Ramon Valley is offering residents the opportunity to take a look at "The Secret History of San Ramon," during a special virtual program led by local historian Bill Clarkson, city's former mayor.

Participants can join Clarkson

in learning about the many curious and little-known historical locals throughout the city, such as the city's lone graveyard — which dates



Bill Clarkson

back to 1858 — and the location of San Ramon's famed boundary oak that marks the city's visible fault line.

"The Secret History of San Ramon" with Clarkson will be held at 11:30 a.m. on next Thursday (Jan. 21).

To attend this free online presentation residents can visit the

museum's website at museumsrv.org and go to the "Events" section or call 837-3750.

The Museum of the San Ramon Valley is located at 205 Railroad Ave., in downtown Danville, and is currently closed due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and subsequent county restrictions. ■

Deadline extended

The city of Pleasanton recently extended the application period through next Tuesday (Jan. 19) for people interested in trying to become the next member of the city's Planning Commission.

The four-year appointment will fill the position formerly held by new City Councilman Jack Balch.

Interviewing the Planning Commission applicants and making a recommendation to the full council will be one of the first major tasks as mayor for Karla Brown.

Applications can be accessed on the city website, by selecting the Planning Commission information page via www.cityofpleasantonca.gov.

The commission term will run until January 2025. To learn more, contact the City Clerk's Office at 925-931-5027.

MTC survey

Livermore Amador Valley Transit Agency riders can play a part in shaping Bay Area public transportation by taking a survey recently issued by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

MTC and other Bay Area transit agencies "are investigating ways to make the region's transit network better coordinated, more affordable and more attractive through the Fare Coordination and Integration Study," officials said.

The survey was released last month to "invite you to share stories about your transit journey to help us better understand the diverse experiences of transit in the Bay Area." To take the survey, visit <https://tinyurl.com/MTCFareSurvey>.

New board chair

Pleasanton animal support nonprofit Valley Humane Society has announced that Sandra "Sandy" Gardiner has been named the new chair of the organization's Board of Directors, succeeding Gina Piper.

A longtime Pleasanton resident and lifelong animal lover, Gardiner has served as executive committee officer on the Valley Humane board since January 2019. She works as executive vice president and chief financial officer of Pulse Biosciences Inc., a bioelectric medicine company located in Hayward. Her career experience includes work in the fields of medical devices, biotechnology, diagnostics and specialty pharmaceuticals.

Scholarship app

The Tri-Valley Retired Educators' Scholarship Fund is offering up to five \$2,500 scholarships for students planning a career in education.

The application period is now underway and continues until March 19. For more information or to access application documents, visit <https://div85.calrta.org>. ■

SOLAR

Continued from Page 5

project "or jeopardize it in any way."

"In fact, the parties have always contemplated the exclusion of this parcel," Mitchell said. "The inclusion of the property, which was authorized at the outset by the property owner, gave optionality for both parties to possibly include it in the final project footprint, and offered the opportunity for the county to assess the largest possible project under CEQA."

Mitchell added, "We respect the Stanley family's decision to withdraw this property from the project," and maintain the company "never represented that it has a lease agreement in place for the Stanley property."

Phillips also told Alameda County Counsel Donna Ziegler and deputy counsel Heather Littlejohn on Jan. 11 that "our clients neither made a conditional use permit application nor provided valid consent to the application."

The notice comes just several weeks before a scheduled appeal hearing for the Aramis project before the Alameda County Board of

Supervisors that had been postponed from its original Jan. 12 date.

Both proponents and opponents of the project had requested the delay, in part to give newly sworn District 1 Supervisor David Haubert more time to familiarize himself with plans after taking the oath of office on Jan. 4.

According to Phillips, the standard application form submitted to the county was not prepared by her clients, who did not have legal counsel at that time. Instead, Phillips said "it was presented to the Stanleys completely filled out by Aramis/Intersect."

Phillips also contended that Intersect "made representations and promises to our clients to induce them to sign," and said the Stanleys' signature was needed "to investigate the feasibility of a solar project on the property" and negotiate the terms of solar lease option, but "there would be no binding agreement between Aramis/Intersect and them, unless and until such time as the parties completed negotiations and signed a final solar lease option agreement, which has never occurred."

REOPENING

Continued from Page 14

equity based funding of schools."

Beutner, leader of the state's largest school district, and six other superintendents from large, urban districts raised concerns about Newsom's reopening plan ahead of its release. The superintendents pushed back against the proposed \$2 billion coming out of the state fund earmarked for K-12 schools and community colleges. In a Jan. 6 letter, they said the proposal shuts many of their schools and students out of grant funding because they reside in communities with some of the state's highest case rates.

The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office also raised concerns about the reopening plan, writing that the "proposal sets unfeasible time lines" in an analysis of the governor's budget.

Suzanne Kitchens, president of the California School Boards Association, praised Newsom's budget plan for easing the financial strain on schools by paying down most of the deferrals, as well proposing a 3.84% cost-of-living adjustment

for schools, but added that "we have work to do on both the school reopening and summer school plans."

"While some schools will undoubtedly take advantage of the incentives to reopen schools this spring, others are not in a position to do so given community health concerns, local standards, funding, resource staffing, and capacity limitations," Kitchens said.

Newsom's budget does not propose extending the school funding protections that held attendance-based funding flat this school year. The proposal assumes in-person learning as the "default mode of instruction" during the 2021-22 school year for funding purposes.

As California schools begin the new semester, most will remain learning remotely, many indefinitely. Some of the state's districts, such as San Francisco, have yet to come to agreement with their local teachers union on how to reopen schools. Others, such as Oakland, have said they planned to reopen campuses once their counties reach the orange tier at the request of their unions — a requirement more

stringent than what state public health officials allow for in-person learning. Los Angeles also resumes the year remotely indefinitely as cases there have surged.

A key distinction between Newsom's reopening plan and legislation Democratic lawmakers introduced last month is that the governor's effort does not establish a requirement for when schools have to reopen.

Assembly Bill 10, which legislators plan to advance this month, would require that schools offer in-person instruction starting in March once their county moves out of the state's purple tier. The bill is in response to the fact that many school districts, primarily those in Bay Area counties, stayed closed after they had clearance from public-health authorities to reopen.

Teachers unions have pushed back against Newsom's plan and AB 10, saying schools should not reopen without extensive health and safety measures and until after the state's current surge.

"We are in the middle of a devastating COVID-19 surge, and any discussion of returning to in-person

on a reverse sliding scale."

Depending on when they signed the paperwork, the Stanleys were offered \$5,000 up to \$75,000, according to Phillips. If the couple signed by Christmas, they would have received \$75,000, \$25,000 between Dec. 26 and Jan. 4, and \$5,000 for signing from Jan. 5 to 12.

"After consultation, our clients elected to terminate all negotiations and approved our January 7, 2021, letter so notifying Aramis/Intersect, et. al. and the Planning Commission," Phillips said.

Chris O'Brien, chair of Save North Livermore Valley, one of three opponent groups who appealed the solar farm approval, called it "remarkable that Intersect would indicate it had secured all the property to develop its Aramis project when that clearly was not the case."

The group's attorney Robert Selna said, "The loss of the Stanley property also means the Aramis project is no longer economically viable," arguing that Mitchell "has stated publicly on numerous occasions that the Aramis project needs all of its planned acreage for the project to work." ■

instruction is premature," Jeff Freitas, president of the California Federation of Teachers, said Friday.

Other highlights from Newsom's education budget include:

- \$315 million to support teacher professional development, such as social-emotional learning and implicit bias training.
- \$300 million in special education funding, with an emphasis on services for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, adding to the \$100 million for special-needs students passed last year.
- \$400 million in one-time funds toward preventative and early intervention behavioral health services for students.
- \$15 million to continue developing the state's cradle-to-career longitudinal data system, an effort Newsom championed since his first year in office.
- A requirement that high school seniors complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, known as FAFSA. ■

Editor's note: CalMatters.org is a nonprofit, nonpartisan media venture explaining California's policies and politics. Read more state news from CalMatters online.

Planting Love Project delivers pleasant surprises

Founder hopes idea to spread joy anonymously will take root



COURTESY OF PLANTING LOVE PROJECT

The Planting Love Project is spreading as evidenced by this plant waiting to surprise a resident of London.

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Fresh young plants are appearing on porches around town, bringing joy to people's lives and making them feel connected.

The Planting Love Project was launched a couple of weeks ago by some Pleasanton residents to let others know they are not alone. Each plant has an explanatory note, but it is not signed.

"The guessing game begins and the receiver is left wondering

who the kind person was that took the time to make them feel special," said organizer Christina Gray, photographer, author and Realtor. "It changes the thought pattern even if briefly, away from the struggles in this pandemic, to who could have done this."

Gray said she and her family — husband Lonnie and teenagers Ethan and Lauren — came up with the idea.

"My uncle, Romano, died

unexpectedly of a brain aneurysm, and it was really hard for our family to process," she explained. "We tried to figure out how we were going to handle our grief and came up with the Planting Love Project.

"2020 has been a hard year for many people so a project like this seemed like a good idea," she continued.

"The excitement we get from brightening someone else's day

will hopefully be a bright spot in our own day, too. From death comes life. Always interesting how that works out."

The tag also encourages the recipient to pay it forward, stating, "As a community we are a source of collective strength. Together, let's see how far love can grow."

The Planting Love Project received seed money from the Make A Difference Foundation and purchased 50 bright pink cyclamen plants from Western Garden Nursery. The Gray family repotted them and added the tags, and the first delivery day — the launch of the project — was Dec. 29.

"We recruited 10 families who picked them up and are helping us plant love," Gray said. "This way our kindness network reaches as many people as possible."

Her mother-in-law, Jan Gray, delivered a plant to friends Heidi and Mike Haas in Livermore because they are coping with dire health challenges.

"I knew someone had come to my porch so I went outside and there it was," Heidi Haas recalled. "I read the little tag about the project, then went online to try to figure out who left it."

She said it was especially wonderful to receive right now.

"We are in the process of trying to find a living liver donor for my husband," she said.

His liver was already compromised, she explained, then rapid weight loss "finished it off." Neither she nor other loved ones are a match, so his brother Greg put up a website to help the search: www.aliverformike.com.

She explained that all expenses will be paid by Mike's insurance, but still she knows it is "not an easy ask."

"He's not able to work and right now doesn't have concentration or stamina," she said, so at this difficult time the plant means a lot to them. "It will have a special spot in my garden."

Nadia Salomon, who met Gray in a writing critique group, thought the Plant Love Project was "a brilliant idea" and was happy to help with deliveries.

"I had to literally find five people to deliver the plants to," Salomon said. "I chose two I knew were going through stuff with the pandemic and I thought they could use a lift."

"The other three were just totally random homes," she added. "I chose homes that made me feel comfortable — I looked for plants and kids' bikes. I let my gut guide me."

"It's such a cool thing," she said, noting that the project inspired her to mail seed packets to another friend in Sacramento.

Gray encourages anyone to join the Planting Love Project by buying plants and distributing them on their own. Tags to be printed are available at christinagray.com/planting-love-project, which also has a video of the launch.

"Hopefully this idea will take root (pun intended) not just locally but nationally — and dare I say internationally," Gray said.

Her sister, Lisa Shukov, is getting the Planting Love Project started in London.

Meanwhile Gray is confident the local endeavor is helping others feel loved.

"The plant sitting on their counter will be a reminder of that thoughtfulness, helping reduce that feeling of isolation we all feel," Gray said. "My Uncle Romano would be so happy." ■



COURTESY OF PLANTING LOVE PROJECT

The first 50 cyclamen plants are ready to be delivered anonymously to let people know they are not alone.



COURTESY OF PLANTING LOVE PROJECT

Yay! Christina Gray has the first batch of plants ready to be labeled and delivered in late December.

Livermore Arts presenting National Geographic events

Virtual live presentations to combine storytelling, stunning imagery

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center is presenting a series of National Geographic Live virtual speaker events exploring subjects from life on other planets to new information on dinosaurs to the impact of women's migration around the globe.

Two local groups, Quest Science Center and the Rae Dorrough Speaker Series, are joining Livermore Arts to offer the six live presentations.

"We see the fascinating 'Nat Geo Live' series as the perfect opportunity to draw on the strengths of all three organizations and deliver events that are both entertaining and educational for our community," said Chris Carter, executive director for Livermore Arts.

The presentations combine storytelling and stunning imagery in the tradition of the legendary magazine, with first-hand accounts of science and adventure by world-class explorers. Each 60-minute event includes a moderated discussion between two speakers with pre-recorded content as well as question and answer periods.

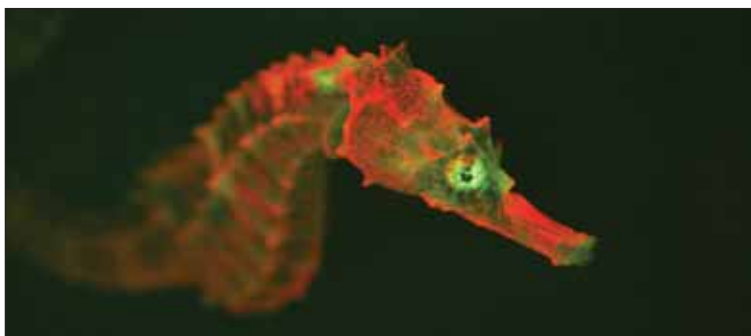
The following events with a specific focus on science and nature will be co-presented by Quest Science Center:

- Jan. 20, "Life on Other Worlds" — Planetary scientist and astrobiologist Kevin Peter Hand and NASA engineer Kobie Boykins will give the latest intriguing updates.
- Feb. 24, "Reimagining Dinosaurs" — Groundbreaking new science is changing what we thought we knew about how dinosaurs looked, moved and lived. Paleontologists Nizar Ibrahim and Sebastián Rozadilla will share stories about the evolving science of dinosaurs.
- March 31, "Mysterious Seas" — Get a glimpse into the ocean's greatest depths and its fascinating creatures with leading marine biologists David Gruber and Diva Amon.



ANAND VARMA

This green violet ear hummingbird was photographed by Anand Varma using his innovative techniques to capture images usually invisible to the naked eye.



DAVID GRUBER

Fluorescent seahorse *Hippocampus erectus* is one of the bioluminescent and biofluorescent marine species seen by marine biologist David Gruber.

Three other events with a wider focus and a connection to the arts through photography and filmmaking will be co-presented by the Rae Dorrough Speaker Series:

- Feb. 10, "Scientific Exposure" — Molecular biologist-turned-photographer Prasenjeet Yadav combines his experience in research with his photography skills; and Anand Varma has developed techniques to create stunning images of creatures whose details are otherwise invisible to the naked eye.
- March 17, "Feats of Filmmaking" — Bryan Smith brings stories of adventure to the screen from the South Pacific's deepest canyons to the frozen waters of Niagara Falls, and Keith Ladzinski documents the world's most elite adventurers as

they chase tornadoes, hang from massive natural arches, and swim with alligators.

- April 14, "Women and Migration" — Photographers Danielle Villasana, Miora Rajaonary, and Saiyna Bashir join photo editor Jennifer Samuel in conversation on their project documenting the impact of migration on women around the globe, who increasingly have traveled to wealthier countries taking jobs in child- and elder-care and domestic work, as well as manufacturing and agriculture.

All six "Nat Geo Live" online events take place at 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Tickets are \$20, available through the Bankhead Theater box office at LivermoreArts.org or by calling 373-6800. ■

NASA retiree shares life lessons

Be aware of how you 'show up' in the world, he advises

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Donald G. James, a longtime Pleasanton resident who retired from NASA after more than three decades, says manners are more than being polite — they are "a way to walk in the world with integrity, respect, mindfulness, and compassion."

He elaborates on this in his new book, "Manners Will Take You Where Brains and Money Won't: Wisdom from Momma and 35 Years at NASA," sharing his accumulated life lessons, illustrated by personal anecdotes.

James retired from Ames Research Center in 2017 as the associate administrator for education, and soon afterward he spoke to a group of students.

"A young man raised his hand and asked, 'If you could go back to when you were 25, what would you tell young Donald?'" James recalled. "I said a few things, including, 'I would tell Donald that you're going to need to work on your manner skills because that is going to take you where your brains aren't.'"

"This book is a long version of my answer to that young man's question."

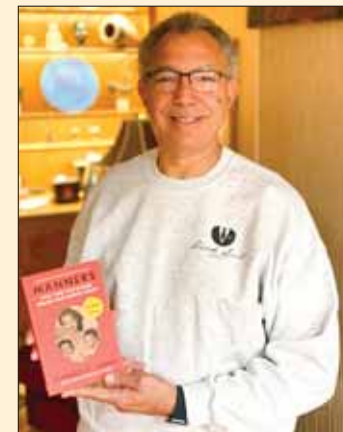
The book will be valuable for recent high school and college graduates as well as early career professionals, James explained.

"The goal is for them to consider the things I talk about as they pursue their other skills," he said.

"Always be aware of how your behavior is, how you are 'showing up,'" he advised. "Always be 'interviewing.' People are watching you and seeing how you treat other people."

His brother Dennis, a pilot with American Airlines, collaborated on the book.

"We learned a lot from my



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Donald G. James holds his new book, "Manners Will Take You Where Brains and Money Won't: Wisdom from Momma and 35 Years at NASA," published by his Pink Suit Press, with a logo based on his mother's handwriting.

mother (Muriel Yvonne Gasset James), a school teacher who taught in the inner-city schools in Sacramento," Donald James said. "A lot of her students were immigrants from Southeast Asia and they would Americanize their names. But my mother insisted on calling them by their birth names and practicing until she got them right."

"She said the greatest respect you can give a person is to know their name," he added. "That is the type of thing my brother and I learned."

When she died, they found a box of sayings she'd saved as well as her "Eight Cardinal Rules of Life," starting with "Make peace with your past, so it won't screw up the present." The list is included in the book.

"Manners," being released Feb. 2, will be available at Towne Center Books as well as at Amazon. The paperback sells for \$15.95; the Kindle edition is \$7.99. ■

Connect with volunteer opportunities

Make a Difference for Pleasanton Festival online this year

By DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

The annual Make A Difference for Pleasanton Festival, like so many other events during the pandemic, will be online this year. Instead of gathering in person to explore dozens of booths hosted by nonprofit organizations, those seeking ways to "Get Connected and Stay Connected" through community service are encouraged to visit www.mad4p.org.

The festival traditionally falls on the weekend of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday, which has become the international focus of

helping others, so the website will offer a variety of ways to provide community service, starting this Saturday (Jan. 16).

Click on "Festival" to see participating nonprofit groups, or click on the name or logo of an organization to find its mission statement and need for volunteers or donations. The site will remain active until Sept. 1.

In addition, a Zoom invitation on the site will enable visitors to tune in at 11 a.m. to hear live commentary from festival chairman W. Ron Sutton. Representatives from various organizations are then scheduled to

speaking as follows:

- 11 a.m. — Welcome
- 11:03 a.m. — Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation
- 11:06 a.m. — Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council
- 11:09 a.m. — Pleasanton Partnerships in Education
- 11:12 a.m. — United Methodist Church
- 11:15 a.m. — Sunflower Hill
- 11:18 a.m. — Assistance League of Amador Valley
- 11:21 a.m. — Livermore/Amador Valley Garden Club
- 11:24 a.m. — The Go Green

Initiative

- 11:27 a.m. — AGAPE Villages
- 11:30 a.m. — American Association of University Women
- 11:33 a.m. — Stanford-ValleyCare Hospital Volunteer Services
- 11:36 a.m. — Girls' Soccer
- 11:39 a.m. — The Planting Love Project.

More may be added by the day of the event.

"We invite you to find out about organizations that make our community a better place," Sutton said. "There are opportunities for adults, for families and for

teenagers to volunteer."

"COVID-19 has limited some in-person volunteer activities, but there still are ways in which you can help, including many new projects from Make A Difference for Pleasanton," he added.

Those wishing to drop off requested items for donations, such as used baby clothing for Loved Twice, can do so in front of the ACCUSPLIT office, 1262 Quarry Lane, Suite B (off Valley Avenue) in Pleasanton between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. this Saturday, the launch date of the volunteer festival. ■



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POLICE BULLETIN

Two die in fiery crash on I-680 near Alcosta Boulevard

The Contra Costa County Coroner's Office has identified the two young men killed in a fiery collision on Interstate 680 near the Dublin-San Ramon border early Sunday morning.

Andree Jamerson III, of Gilroy, and Joseph Legrande, of San Jose — both 20 years old — were pronounced dead at the scene.

The crash unfolded on southbound I-680 just north of Alcosta Boulevard in San Ramon around 3:30 a.m. Sunday when a Volkswagen Jetta heading south on the freeway went off the roadway to the right, swerved back to the left and hit the center median, before coming to rest sideways and blocking the left lane, according to the California Highway Patrol.

The Volkswagen was then hit by

a Ford Fiesta, causing major damage and starting a fire that engulfed the Volkswagen, killing Jamerson and LeGrande, who were trapped inside, according to the CHP.

A third person in the Jetta suffered major injuries and the Ford driver had moderate injuries. Both were taken to John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek, CHP officials said.

The crash closed the freeway for more than an hour, the CHP said.

Anyone who witnessed the collision is asked to call the Dublin office of the CHP at 925-828-0466.

In other news

- Livermore police have located the gravel truck driver who fatally struck a bicyclist on Stanley Boulevard late last month and left the scene without stopping, according to a department spokesperson.

The driver, whose name has not been released publicly, is cooperating with the investigation into the collision that killed Livermore resident Christine Boyle on Dec. 21, according to Officer Taylor Burruss.

"This collision is still under preliminary investigation so we are unable to release further details as to the driver's identity, their statement, who is at fault, or whether criminal charges will be sought at this point," Burruss told the Weekly this week.

Boyle, 63, was riding off the sidewalk on eastbound Stanley Boulevard just after 8 a.m. Dec. 21 to cross straight at the intersection within the crosswalk, when at the same time a gravel truck with trailer was making a right turn from Stanley toward the Isabel Avenue/Highway 84 connector, police said at the time.

A witness told Boyle's family that the avid cyclist attempted to avoid a serious collision by pushing off the truck but she fell and was run over by the tires. Boyle was treated at the scene and transported to Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley, where she died that afternoon.

The trucker drove away from the scene without stopping, and police previously said they were looking into whether the trucker was aware they had hit somebody.

Boyle's death on Dec. 21 marked the beginning of a difficult stretch for the Livermore community, the first of three fatal crashes that killed five people in less than 34 hours on the week of Christmas.

- Contra Costa County District Attorney Diana Becton was appointed last week by Gov. Gavin Newsom to a position on the California Victim Compensation Board, which provides compensation for victims of violent crime who are injured or threatened with injury.

Crime victims (and relatives of crime victims) who have suffered physical injury or threat of physical injury can apply to the victim compensation program for compensation for crime-related losses, including medical expenses, funeral expenses and relocation costs. Among the crimes covered are domestic violence, child abuse, sexual and physical assault, homicide, robbery, drunk driving and vehicular manslaughter.

Becton, 69, is now one of three members of the California Victim Compensation Board. The others are board Chairwoman Yolanda Richardson, secretary of the Government Operations Agency; and State Controller Betty Yee.

Becton served as a Contra Costa County Superior Court judge from 1995 until 2017, and has been Contra Costa district attorney since 2017. She is a member of several professional associations, including Fair and Just Prosecution and the State Bar of California Council on Access and Fairness.

- Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley announced Monday that her office will not file any charges against former BART Police Officer Anthony Pirone for the killing of Oscar Grant III in 2009 after reopening its investigation into the case in October.

The shooting of Grant by former Officer Johannes Mehserle at the Fruitvale BART station in Oakland in the early morning hours of New Year's Day in 2009 eventually led to the conviction of Mehserle on an involuntary manslaughter charge.

Grant's family had called for a murder charge against Pirone, who was kneeling on Grant prior to the shooting by Mehserle, who said he had meant to reach for his Taser stun gun instead of his firearm.

Pirone used a racial epithet multiple times while pinning Grant on the ground, but has said he was only repeating what Grant said to him.

The DA's office, in a report released Monday on the decision not to charge Pirone, said "while Pirone's overly aggressive conduct contributed to the chaotic nature of what transpired on the BART platform," he cannot be charged with aiding and abetting in the killing since "there was no evidence that Pirone knew in advance that Mehserle was going to shoot Mr. Grant."

A group of elected officials and civil rights activists lambasted O'Malley on Tuesday for her decision not to seek charges against Pirone.

BART Board directors Lateefah Simon and Bevan Dufty and Oakland City Councilman Loren Taylor called on the DA to file felony murder charges against the former officer.

"I want to be clear that Nancy O'Malley has failed, yet again, to do her job," Simon said at a Tuesday morning news conference. "And that job was to ensure equal justice under the law."

A 2009 report by former Oakland City Attorney Jayne Williams and then-attorney Kimberly Colwell of the law firm Meyers Nave that was released publicly a decade later argued "Officer Pirone's overly aggressive and unreasonable actions and conduct in violation of policy and acceptable standards contributed substantially to the escalation of the hostile and volatile atmosphere during the course of the incident."

A spokesperson for O'Malley said her office did not have any additional response to Tuesday's news conference beyond its statement Monday.

Taylor said he and fellow council members Carroll Fife, Treva Reid and Nikki Fortunato Bas planned to introduce a resolution at this week's City Council meeting imploring O'Malley to charge Pirone for his role in the shooting.

"We will never reimagine public safety if bad actors are never held to account for their crimes," Taylor said.

The Rev. Wanda Johnson, Grant's mother, argued that O'Malley's job is not to be impartial toward issues like police brutality that disproportionately affect people of color.

"You have an obligation and a duty to do what is right," Johnson said in reference to O'Malley. "And because you are failing to do what is right, Oscar's blood is on your hands, Nancy O'Malley." ■

—Jeremy Walsh and Bay City News Service

POLICE REPORT

The Pleasanton Police Department made the following information available.

Jan. 10

- Theft**
- 9:53 a.m. on the 4200 block of Vervais Avenue
 - 8:32 p.m., 5700 block of Gibraltar Drive; theft from structure
- Warrant arrest**
- 1:24 p.m. on the 5100 block of Hopyard Road
 - 8:06 p.m. on the 2000 block of Santa Rita Road
- Drug violation**
- 6:31 p.m. on the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive

Jan. 9

- Assault/battery**
- 9:10 a.m. on the 2100 block of Alexander Way
- Auto Theft**
- 5:42 p.m. on the 7000 block of Commerce Circle
- Graffiti offense**
- 11:00 p.m. at St. John Circle and Pleasanton Avenue

Jan. 8

- Drug violation**
- 8:10 a.m. on the 5200 block of Hopyard Road
 - 12:05 p.m. on the 5100 block of Hopyard Road
 - 7:02 p.m. on the 7200 block of Johnson Drive
 - 8:32 p.m. on the 1700 block of Santa Rita Road
- Arson**
- 3:49 p.m. on the 3200 block of West Lagoon Road
- Warrant arrest**
- 4:51 p.m. on the 3500 block of Churchill Court
 - 9:57 p.m. on the 1900 block of Santa Rita Road

Jan. 7

- Theft**
- 8:41 a.m. on the 4200 block of Vervais Avenue
 - 11:23 a.m., 6000 block of Inglewood Drive; auto theft
 - 12:15 p.m., 5100 block of Hopyard Road; theft from auto

- 4:04 p.m., 5700 block of West Las Positas Boulevard; theft from auto
 - 4:57 p.m. on the 1600 block of Ramblewood Way
 - 5:31 p.m. on the 1600 block of Ramblewood Way
 - 7:19 p.m. on the 1700 block of Santa Rita Road
- Graffiti offense**
- 4:10 p.m. at Lin Gate Street and Sutter Gate Avenue
- Vandalism**
- 8:36 p.m. on the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive

Jan. 6

- Sex offenses**
- 2:07 a.m. on Hopyard Road
- Theft**
- 3:52 a.m., 5100 block of Hopyard Road; theft from auto
 - 11:54 a.m. on the 6300 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
 - 12:28 p.m., 4500 block of Chabot Drive; theft from auto
 - 12:49 p.m. on the 4500 block of Lin Gate Street
 - 4:04 p.m., 6000 block of Sterling Greens Circle; auto theft
 - 5:36 p.m., 5900 block of Bryce Canyon Court; theft from auto
 - 7:17 p.m. on Johnson Drive
- Assault/battery**
- 4:31 p.m. at Santa Rita Road and Interstate 580
 - 6:10 p.m. on the 2900 block of Hopyard Road
- Robbery**
- 5:16 p.m. on the 5400 block of Sunol Boulevard

Jan. 5

- Assault/battery**
- 8:42 a.m. on the 3800 block of Vineyard Avenue
- Burglary**
- 8:43 a.m. on the 5900 block of Stoneridge Drive
 - 11:04 p.m. on the 5900 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
- Theft**
- 1:02 p.m. on the 3900 block of Valley Avenue
 - 4:17 p.m., 4300 block of Valley Avenue; theft of bicycle

- 9:49 p.m., 4800 block of Bernal Avenue; theft from auto
- Embezzlement**
- 1:11 p.m. on the 000 block of California Avenue
- Warrant arrest**
- 1:19 p.m. on the 5800 block of Owens Drive
- Weapons violation**
- 8:55 p.m. on the 1800 block of Valley Avenue

Jan. 4

- Vandalism**
- 7:06 a.m. on the 400 block of Boulder Court
- Burglary**
- 8:41 a.m. on the 400 block of Boulder Court
 - 3:33 p.m. on the 4300 block of Foothill Road
- Robbery**
- 1:37 p.m. on the 2200 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
- Theft**
- 3:26 p.m. on the 5900 block of Gibraltar Drive
 - 3:43 p.m. on the 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road
 - 5:45 p.m., 5800 block of Laurel Creek Drive; theft from auto
 - 6:52 p.m., 1400 block of Stoneridge Mall Road; shoplifting
 - 9:40 p.m. on the 4400 block of Hacienda Drive

Jan. 3

- Vandalism**
- 5:23 a.m. on the 6600 block of Owens Drive
 - 12:51 p.m. on the 6600 block of Owens Drive
- Theft**
- 9:06 a.m. on the 000 block of Vintage Circle
 - 4:33 p.m., 3700 block of Oak Brook Court; auto theft
 - 5:34 p.m. on the 5100 block of Merano Court
- Drug violation**
- 3:41 p.m. on the 4500 block of Rosewood Drive

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An online directory of obituaries and remembrances. Search obituaries, submit a memorial, share a photo.

Go to: PleasantonWeekly.com/obituaries

Final weekend to donate to the Holiday Fund

Even with many people facing strained financial circumstances because of the pandemic, our readers stepped up their giving to the Pleasanton Weekly's annual Holiday Fund.

As of Jan. 5, 316 donors had contributed \$74,957 — almost \$7,000 more than last year's final total — with two more weeks still left to report.

The six local safety-net service providers that will equally split the Holiday Fund donations will, in turn, help local families and individuals now and long after the pandemic subsides.

The 2020-21 campaign beneficiaries are: Axis Community Health, CityServe of the Tri-Valley, Hope Hospice, Open Heart Kitchen, Valley Humane Society and ValleyCare Charitable Foundation.

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 15,000 members of our community.

CityServe of the Tri-Valley 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.

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

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.

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

The Weekly and its fiscal sponsor, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, are handling all costs of the campaign. That means that every dollar will go directly to the nonprofits with no administrative expenses.

The Holiday Fund is winding down, but there is still time to make a donation. This is the final weekend, though, so please don't hesitate.

You can access the donation website at SiliconValleyCF.org/PleasantonWeeklyHolidayFund. There is also a coupon on Page 13 of this week's paper. ■

LETTERS

We want a voice that speaks for us

Dear Editor,

Like most Pleasanton readers, I agree with a recent letter from Debbie Wallace about the "negative and very one-sided" writings of the out-of-touch Tim Hunt of "Tim Talk."

In his recent column, Hunt gives praise to Trump on the development of the COVID-19 vaccine, despite Trump's many failures to act responsibly to fight the pandemic (currently 379,000 deaths in the U.S. on Trump's watch).

Hunt moves on to local politics and casts doubt on the abilities of our newly elected slow-growth leaders. The conservative PW has consistently endorsed pro-growth and conservative-backed candidates, as in November 2020. The voters want better representation and real change.

Our top choices were Mayor Karla Brown (winning with over 18,000 votes), and Councilmember Valerie Arkin (winning with over 15,400 votes). These voters are your readers and customers.

It is time these popular grassroots candidates were better represented by your paper. Both Brown and Arkin will work with Councilmember Testa, who is doing a fine job representing the majority of Pleasanton.

January 2021 is an opportunity to push the reset button after

the disastrous 2020. It is time to retire the Tim Talk column and replace Hunt with a writer that is more positive, less biased and less divisive.

Your paper is looking for customers and our family supports local journalism through a monthly contribution to the PW. If you want to keep your readers, provide us with a voice that speaks for us, the majority of Pleasanton residents.

—George Reid

Democracy reforms

On Jan. 10, Livermore Indivisible held a meeting with Congressman Eric Swalwell, in which he expressed his commitment for additional pandemic relief as well as democracy reforms and his support for progressive legislation.

The meeting was part of Indivisible's "The People Lead" national week of action. After four years of speaking out against President Trump's policies, and ultimately helping to defeat him in the November election and building nationwide grassroots power to help take back the House in 2018 and key Senate seats in 2020, Indivisible groups are asking their members of Congress to enact democracy reform including "For the People Act" and "John Lewis Voting Rights Act, D.C." statehood and court reform, and to champion bold progressive bills to address serious issues our nation faces.

In his remarks, Congressman Swalwell stated his commitment to

prioritize the democracy reforms. When we asked, he affirmed that he is absolutely willing to join the Congressional Progressive Caucus as he ages out of Future Forum, the caucus he founded in 2015.

He stated that the new Biden administration's immediate top priority is addressing COVID-19 and especially vaccination, while the congressman's own policy priority is to end gun violence to keep kids safe in their schools.

Congressman Swalwell spoke to us as he returned to Washington, D.C. to address impeachment of Trump after the deadly events at the Capitol on Jan. 6. The congressman spoke about the need to unite to hold accountable those responsible for this attack and ongoing security concerns with the inauguration.

—Marla Kirby

Developments increase fire risk at Yosemite

It is said each person is six people away from someone they need to reach. Are you that person? Large developments are threatening many national parks.

Right now, it's happening on the Highway 120 corridor near Yosemite, unless two developments can be stopped immediately. Years ago, John Muir enlisted Theodore Roosevelt's help to preserve pristine areas for future generations. There are already commercial developments around most national parks.

Without a moratorium

established and a "10-mile safety zone," these parks will experience continuing intrusion by developers. As these parks are grappling with increasing crowds, developers and adjoining counties seek to expand their bottom line at great risk to public and the environment.

Gateways near national parks should see no further development. Development without adequate fire protection will cost lives and destroy the environment. Go to www.SaveSawmillMountain.com and learn more, donate, get involved and pass the word.

—Margene Rivara

Tim Hunt article

After reading Tim Hunt's article a few weeks ago, I was ready to never read the Pleasanton Weekly again. I was disturbed that the Weekly would place an article of this nature inside the front page. Several readers have responded much more articulately than I can muster. I am thankful and encouraged by the response of my fellow Pleasantonians.

The article was full of half-truths and illogical inferences. His assumptions that young children would be forever damaged by the policies of our governor to reduce COVID spread. I have a high regard for our children and their ability to overcome adversity. These are difficult times for everyone. We don't benefit from hate-filled rhetoric or fear-mongering.

—Emelie Rogers

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Theater

BAY AREA ARTISTS The Artist in Residence Program at Tao House in Danville, in which Eugene O'Neill produced his masterpieces, provides a working retreat for developing or established playwrights, scholars, or critics of the performing arts. Fellowships are given to persons focused on the performing arts for whom a space of time to work without distraction would be beneficial. Apply for next year's session by Jan. 31. Visit www.eugeneoneill.org.

SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE The San Francisco Mime Troupe presents "Red Carol" a radio play offering a working class take on Dickens' classic play. Now through Jan 17. Visit www.sfmt.org.

Concerts

DRIVE-IN CONCERT World-renowned DJ, producer and songwriter Gareth Emery will play back-to-back shows at the Alameda Fairgrounds. 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., Jan. 16. Visit alamedacountyfair.com.

Sports

UFC 257 DRIVE-IN LIVE STREAM The Alameda County Fairgrounds will be hosting a Drive-In live stream of UFC 257 which will feature Poirier vs McGregor. The event will take place live at 7:30 p.m., Jan. 23. For more information visit alamedacountyfair.com.

Drive-in

DRIVE-IN MOVIE Watch classic movies from the car at the Alameda County Fairgrounds. "The Karate Kid," 6 p.m., Jan. 15, "Frozen II," 6 p.m., Jan 16. Visit alamedacountyfair.com.

Family

GARDEN OF D'LIGHTS 2020 The public is invited to experience this unique East Bay tradition, using thousands of LED lights and specially programmed lasers. Now through Jan. 17. Visit ruthbancroftgarden.org.

Talks & Lectures

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LIVE Join planetary scientist and astrobiologist Kevin Peter Hand and NASA engineer Kobie Boykins for "Life on Other Worlds" the latest intriguing updates on this vast frontier of exploration. Visit livermorearts.org or call 373-6800. 7 p.m., Jan. 20.

ELECTRIFY YOUR RIDE Join Sustainable Contra Costa and Drive Clean Bay Area (DCBA) for an EV and e-bike webinar. DCBA will review available EV and e-bike models, incentives, and how to charge at home and on the road. You'll also have the chance to chat with EV and e-bike owners and ask questions. 7-8:30 p.m., Jan. 20. Visit drivecleanbayarea.org/events.

EATING GREEN; WASTE LESS IN 2021 Sustainable Contra Costa will share new actions through the Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge, a free platform to work with others and reduce household greenhouse gas emissions. 6:30-8:00 p.m., Jan. 21. Visit sustainablecoco.org.

Seniors

PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY USERS GROUP The Personal Technology User Group (PTUG) is for all computer enthusiasts. The monthly virtual session takes place on the fourth Thursday of each month and includes discussions, lectures, demonstrations and a question/answer period. 10 a.m., Jan. 28. E-mail pleaseniorg@gmail.com.

SENIORS 60+ LUNCH PROGRAM Served curbside at the Pleasanton Senior Center, M-F, 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. Call Open Heart Kitchen at 500-8241 for more information.

NEW YEAR'S SWAG DRIVE-THRU FOR SENIORS Welcome in the New Year with hope and good will. Pick up a swag bag for seniors, at the Dublin Senior Center, filled with a useful list of local resources and goodies. Enter from Donohue Drive and drive toward the Senior Center front entrance. Stay in the car, roll down the window of an unoccupied passenger seat, or pop open the trunk and Senior Center staff will bring a swag bag to you. 12:30-1:15 p.m., Jan. 28. For more information call 556-4511.

Fundraisers

ROTARY CLUB OF PLEASANTON ACCEPTING GRANT APPLICATIONS Rotary International is an organization of business and community leaders who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations and help build goodwill and peace in the world. To achieve that end, Pleasanton Rotary seeks to support the human service needs of our community and is currently accepting Grant applications until 5 p.m., Jan 31. For more information visit pleasantonrotary.org.

Government

PLEASANTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING The next regular meeting of the Pleasanton City Council is 7 p.m. Jan. 19, currently held virtually. Visit cityofpleasantonca.gov.

LIVERMORE PLANNING COMMISSION The next regular Livermore Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Jan.19, held virtually using zoom. For questions contact The City of Livermore Planning Division 960-4450.

PET OF THE WEEK



TVAR

Sweet treats

From left: Marshmallow, Grahamy and S'mores are adorable, 2- to 3-month-old, domestic short-hair mix kittens. These playful and snuggly girls are ready for their forever homes. Available via Tri-Valley Animal Rescue, they are spayed, microchipped and current on vaccines. Visit www.tv-ar.org.

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

Damon Millar Insurance Agency
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 575654

The following person doing business as:
Damon Millar Insurance Agency, 5321 Hopyard Road, Suite I, Pleasanton, CA 94588, County of Alameda, is hereby registered by the following owner: Mahmoud Elwishahy, 3728 W. Las Positas Blvd., Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by Mahmoud Elwishahy, an Individual. Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name listed herein. Signature of Registrant: Mahmoud Elwishahy, Business Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 5, 2021. (Pleasanton Weekly, January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 2021.)

Casa Blanca
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. 575623

The following person doing business as: Casa Blanca, 1620 Stoneridge Mall Road, Pleasanton, CA 94588, County of Alameda, is hereby registered by the following owner: Mahmoud Elwishahy, 3728 W. Las Positas Blvd., Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by Mahmoud Elwishahy, an Individual. Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name listed herein. Signature of Registrant: Mahmoud Elwishahy, Business Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 5, 2021. (Pleasanton Weekly, January 15, 22, 29, Feb. 5, 2021.)

Call (925) 600-0840 for assistance with your legal advertising needs.

Employment

Sr. Sftwr Developer

Workday, Inc., Pleasanton, CA. Dev. full-stack sftwr solutions incl. architecture & design. To apply, please mail resume to ATTN: Jessica Thurston, 6110 Stoneridge Mall Road, Pleasanton, CA 94588. Please refer to Job #20637.705



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The Pleasanton Weekly offers advertising for Home Services, Business Services and Employment.

If you wish to learn more about these advertising options, please call 650.223.6582 or email digitalads@pawekly.com.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Turtles and more

Martha Cerda, naturalist at Alviso Adobe Community Park, introduces Frankie the Turtle in the online series, "Meet the Animals," one of the Pleasanton Library and Recreation Department's many offerings, which range from storytelling to book reviews to sports fun to gardening to cooking and sewing and emergency responses. Check it out at www.cityofpleasantonca.gov.

Tri-Valley developer buys medical building in Arizona

Meridian plans key renovations to El Dorado Medical Plaza in Tucson

By JEREMY WALSH

San Ramon-based property developer firm Meridian, which focuses on medical industry real estate, announced this month that it recently closed escrow to acquire an 188,000-square-foot medical complex in Arizona.

The Tri-Valley company plans to invest in property improvements and renovations at the newly acquired El Dorado Medical Plaza, an 11.55-acre parcel with a three-story combined "Class B" medical office building, surgery center and hospital in Tucson.

"El Dorado Medical Plaza was attractive to us for a variety of reasons," Sheila Schmidt-Turkington, Meridian's vice president of real estate development, said in a statement last week.

"In addition to being in a location that we were eager to gain a footprint in, existing relationships with Tucson Medical Center and the behavioral health provider made the property very appealing," she said. "Also, the

building was at a 'fork in the road,' as major systems had to be refurbished or replaced, and the anchor tenant was deciding whether to stay or go. It was a classic value-add opportunity."

The acquisition price was not revealed. Meridian did note that the property was purchased in partnership with an unnamed "large institutional investor."

The El Dorado Medical Plaza will be the second building acquired and renovated by Meridian in Arizona, according to CEO John Pollock.

"This facility is unique in that it includes both a medical office building and a surgery center, plus it has inpatient hospital floors," Schmidt-Turkington added. "The property is currently 82% leased to three tenants, Tucson Medical Center (TMC), Southern Arizona's regional non-profit hospital, a 36-bed inpatient behavioral health hospital, and a prominent surgery center."

Planned renovations include better usage of the mostly unused surface parking lot on the east side

of the building, creating dedicated entryways and updated internal corridors within the buildings for tenants, improved signage to guide patients, separating the suites of different tenants and activating a secondary main entry on the east side of the building, officials said.

"This project gives Meridian the opportunity to do what Meridian does best, solve real estate challenges for our healthcare clients," Schmidt-Turkington said. "Meridian will have touched every major building system when this renovation is complete — giving our tenants a highly functioning building, so they can focus on what they do best — providing excellent patient care to the Tucson community."

Meridian officials expect the building renovations to begin this month and be finished by the end of the year.

"The El Dorado health campus is an aged campus and is at a point and time when it requires significant capital investment to improve



MERIDIAN

Meridian, a medical real estate developer and owner firm based in San Ramon, recently acquired this 188,000-square-foot complex in Tucson, Ariz.

and modernize its infrastructure and aesthetics," said Richard Prevallet, vice president of facilities and construction for TMC HealthCare. "The planned renovations to this campus will make a significant difference for our staff and patients and we are thrilled to work side by side with Meridian."

Founded in 1999, the San Ramon company now has approximately 750,000 square feet of medical real estate in development or redevelopment across the western United States. ■

No Alameda County sales

Note: The Weekly has been unable to obtain fresh Home Sales data for Pleasanton, Livermore and Dublin in recent weeks. California REsource, who compiles this information for Embarcadero Media papers, said the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office has changed the process (or canceled it altogether) for publicly reporting grantor-grantee data. Other counties' data remains available.

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2021!

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Michelle L.
Nov. 20

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with our

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I have served the Tri-Valley community for over 20 years and would love the opportunity to help you take advantage of these historically low rates. See what Teri's clients are saying | www.socialsurvey.me/pages/teri-banholzer

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2021 Market is HOT!

We currently have the following homes pending:

PENDING - 9 Offers all way above ask



3128 Paseo Granada, Pleasanton
Offered at \$1,625,000

PENDING - 7 Offers all way above ask



7275 Brighton Drive, Dublin
Offered at \$925,000

PENDING - 3 Offers all way above ask



6640 Amber Lane, Livermore
Offered at \$2,200,000

PENDING - Off Market Listing



746 Barleta Court, Livermore
Offered at \$1,650,000

Don't delay, this market might not hold, so as a seller the time is NOW. Please call me and let's get started.

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PLEASANTON – NOW AVAILABLE

1428 White Stable Drive

5 BD – 4.5 BA – 4,157 SqFt
10,022 SqFt Lot

The home you've been waiting for is now available. Located in the heart of Pleasanton within walking distance to the downtown area and the Fairgrounds. Gorgeous updated kitchen with Quartz island and countertops and upgraded cabinetry. Updated Master Bath, and plenty of room to expand the downstairs bedroom to create an expanded bedroom/living area. Offering an interior open-air courtyard with a fireplace.

Presented at \$2,210,000



WALNUT GROVE on the WATERFRONT

3 BD – 2 BA – 1,728 Sq Ft – 11,039 Sq Ft Lot with 50 feet of Waterfront Property

Paradise Found just outside the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento areas. As you cross the small bridge, you are welcomed onto a private island where the busy-ness of life seems to melt away. As you work from home, take a break and fish right off of one of your private docks, where salmon, sturgeon, striped and bass are plentiful. Spectacular sunset views, boating, fishing and peaceful living are all part of the normal as you settle into this serene location. This custom home is raised and overlooks the Sacramento River with 50 feet of private waterfront property, complete with owned-solar, private well and septic. This home will become your shelter, your oasis, your home-office and your favorite place to be.



Time to change your home office location and enjoy these views...Paradise Found!

Offered for \$1,140,000

PLEASANTON – COMING SOON

Gates Neighborhood

4 BD – 3.5 BA – 2,487 Sq Ft – 7,766 SqFt lot

Beautifully remodeled and expanded in the heart of Pleasanton. The kitchen has been beautifully updated and opens to an added family room. The open floor plan provides a spacious feeling and perfect gathering place for family and friends. An office, a bedroom and family room on the main level are additional features of the home. Close to Pleasanton's own Sports Park.



Will be presented in the mid \$1,400,000 range.

LIVERMORE – COMING SOON

Sunset West Neighborhood

3 BD – 2 BA – 1,404 Sq Ft

Remodeled kitchen, a spacious dining area, remodeled living room opening to the family room, dual pane windows, new engineered wood floors, recessed lighting, crown molding and an additional sunroom for office space, a home gym or kids playroom. A private backyard, and more.



This home will be presented in the mid \$800,000 range.

JUST CLOSED in PLEASANTON

1362 Orloff Drive

4 BD – 3 BA – 2,042 Sq Ft

From the Sellers: "This is the second time we had Kris help us in the selling of our house(s). What we love about Kris is that she has so much experience and knowledge from all of her years of experience she has in selling houses. She makes everything so easy from the beginning to the end. She's very encouraging and honest and caring. If we ever had a question on something or were a little stressed out, Kris was always there to answer our questions and calm our concerns. I highly recommend Kris Moxley for all of your real estate needs." – Mark and Karen



Listed at \$1,290,000 SOLD at \$1,400,000



"Thank you for helping us get our dream home..."
– Matthew and Ashley

"Kris far exceeded our expectations..."
– Bob and Patty

"Kris always helps us achieve our goals..."
– Mike and Lindsay

"Words are so very small to thank Kris for all she's done..."
– Heath and Marla

"Kris Moxley doesn't just sell homes, she changes lives!"
– Brett and Sarah

Kris Moxley

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