It’s back to school come Monday
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Info Danville
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Danville Weekly
Vol. III, Number 17 • August 24, 2007

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Running Man
Sparky George pursues his daily runs to help families of soldiers who gave their all ➤ page 16

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Q: What was the highlight of your summer?

I went to New York City to celebrate my grandparents’ 50th anniversary. They renewed their vows. We went to a Yankee game. Alex Rodriguez hit his 500th homerun. He was given a mural of himself. It was exciting. Yankee Stadium is dirty. It’s hot. The fans are crazy. They are diehard Yankee fans.

Grace Gitchell 6, and her sister, Giordan Gitchell, 3

Garette Gitchell consultant

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Makena Shilich student

Santa Cruz. My favorite ride was on the gondola and you’re above the ocean. It was really fun when you’re going on the ride. And I saw a caverman.

David Shilich outside sales

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Kiera Yetman employee at Yogurt Shack and San Ramon Valley High School senior

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NEWSFRONT

Gale Ranch Safeway opens today

The new Dougherty Valley Safeway store opens today, Aug. 24, as the anchor tenant in the Plaza at Gale Ranch, a new neighborhood shopping center that will serve approximately 10,000 residents in the surrounding new homes. The supermarket will be a “lifestyle” store of 60,000 square feet and will also have a Safeway Fuel Center, with discounts earned based on shopping dollars.

Other merchants that have leased space include Wells Fargo Bank, Union Bank, Ascona Pizza, a dental group, pediatrics/orthodontics, Peet’s Coffee & Tea, and Fat Cactus Bar & Grille, an upscale Mexican restaurant.

A dramatic fountain at the corner of Bollinger and Dougherty is in its finishing stages of construction, in keeping with the water theme throughout the neighborhood.

Students STAR in standardized testing

Students in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District continue to perform well in all subjects and grades, according to results of the 2007 Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program.

More than 75 percent of students at every grade level except one scored at the “proficient or advanced” level in English/language arts on the California Standards Tests (CST). At the elementary level, grades 2-5, which is before students take “course-specific” math, at least 81 percent of students at every grade level scored “proficient or advanced” in mathematics.

“With over 25,000 students to educate, this district continues to be a wonderful success story,” said Marianne Splenda, district Coordinator of Assessment.

This marks the 10th year in which San Ramon Valley students in grades 2-11 participated in California’s STAR testing program. In grades 2 through 8, students were tested in reading, language, spelling and mathematics. In grades 9 through 11, the test included reading, language, mathematics, history-social science, and science.

Results are posted on the California Department of Education Web site at star.cde.ca.gov. Parents received individual student test results earlier this month.

9/11 Remembrance being held in San Ramon

The Exchange Club of the San Ramon Valley and the city of San Ramon will have a 9/11 Remembrance Service on Tuesday, Sept. 11, at San Ramon Memorial Park, which is on Bollinger Canyon Road at San Ramon Valley Boulevard.

The event will begin at 5 p.m. and conclude at 5:45. It will be emceed by Mark Curtis of KTVU-2 and will feature San Ramon Mayor Abram Wilson, other prominent guest speakers and hundreds of Scouts with an array of American Flags.

Wilson will receive the Freedom Team Salute for service in the U.S. Army to promote the Army program, which recognizes the service of veterans, their families and their employees. Also at the service, cash prizes will be given for an essay contest entitled “How 9/11 Changed America” for students and Boy and Girl Scouts.

For more information, e-mail Exchange Club of the San Ramon Valley President Karen Stepper at coachstepper@yahoo.com or call 275-2412.

Corrections The Weekly desires to correct all significant errors. To request a correction, call the editor at (925) 837-8300 or e-mail: editor@DanvilleWeekly.com
Hundreds of students in the San Ramon Valley can start making their mark next week when they begin to attend Dougherty Valley High School, a brand new, state-of-the-art, $150 million facility.

“They just need to take ownership,” said Denise Hibbard, Dougherty Valley High School’s new principal. “They have a lot of opportunities to do a lot of firsts.”

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District will be opening its two new schools, Dougherty Valley and Live Oak Elementary, tomorrow, Saturday, Aug. 25. Dougherty Valley’s grand opening will be at 2:30 p.m. at 10550 Albion Road in San Ramon and the community is invited to take part.

All district schools, including Monte Vista and San Ramon Valley high schools, will start their new school year Monday, Aug. 27. Live Oak’s opening will begin at 11:30 a.m. on 5151 Sherwood Way, also in San Ramon. Both Dougherty Valley and Live Oak are in Windemere Ranch, San Ramon’s master-planned community comprising residential homes, parks, shopping and schools.

Dougherty Valley, which serves grades 9 through 12, is the first high school to open in the district in 34 years. Approximately 500-600 freshmen and sophomores will be attending this year. A total of 2,595 students are transferring into Dougherty Valley from other high schools in the district. Monte Vista had 51; San Ramon Valley, four; Cal High, 38; and Venture, two, said Tina Perault, senior planning and development manager for the district.

Most of the freshmen at Dougherty Valley are coming from Windemere Ranch Middle School.

“I’m very excited to open a new high school in the district,” said Denise Hibbard, Dougherty Valley High Principal.

“The Liquid Amber trees were encroaching into the sidewalk and will be removed. The two trees, which are on the corner of Diablo Road, and replace them with two autumn blaze trees. The measure also calls for rebuilding the sidewalk, brick pavers, curb and gutter and paving in that area.

“The sidewalk is heavily damaged,” said Ron Allen, town assistant civil engineer. “The tree roots have been pushing the sidewalk up.”

The repairs, part of the town’s Capital Improvement Program, will cost approximately $25,000.

The liquid amber roots have been causing damage since about 1993, Allen said.

“Always public safety is going to win over a tree,” Allen said. “They (could) encroach into the bank. Someone could potentially trip.”

“The Liquid Amber trees were not right for the bank,” she added. “They have been buckling the sidewalks.”

The two liquid amber trees on Hartz Avenue near the corner of Diablo Road are buckling through the sidewalk and will be replaced.

The brand new Dougherty Valley High School opens Monday and is having a grand opening tomorrow for the community.

Continued on page 7
Cost of aquatic center takes jump
Supporters say fundraising won’t be a problem

by Natalie O’Neil

The steering committee for a new pool at San Ramon Valley High School says it has good news and bad news.

The school district just declared it will pledge $750,000 to help pay for a new aquatic center at the high school—a positive step for advocates of a community water recreation facility. That’s the “good news.”

The “bad news,” however, is that the project estimate—formerly anticipated at $2.4 million—has been bumped up to $3.8 million, due to construction inflation costs.

“It’s a dramatic jump,” said Tom Dewar, spokesman for the Danville Aquatic Center Steering Committee.

Now, under existing conditions with both the town of Danville and the Alamo Parks and Recreation Committee, the aquatics committee must secure an additional $1.4 million by Dec. 31.

The committee has already raised $2.4 million, pulling $750,000 from Danville and $200,000 from Alamo to refurbish the existing pool and add a new one.

“As of Dec. 31, the offer’s off the table—beyond that, it’s up,” said Nancy Dommes, secretary for the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Dewar is welcome to propose the date be pushed back, she added.

Committee member Marianne Sasso said the committee has “already earmarked” its part of the contribution and noted adjusting the date was an option. Chairman Steve Mick, on the other hand, added it’s “too early to tell” if the committee has that authority.

At a February meeting, where the Alamo funds were approved, Dommes said she asked Dewar if the date should be extended to December 2008. At that meeting, his response was that it wouldn’t be necessary.

“It shocked the heck out of me. Why wouldn’t you want to extend it?” she recalled thinking.

But despite what appears to be a time crunch, steering committee members say they’re confident they will pull in the money by the cutoff date. The $1.4 million will come from individual contributors as a backup, members said.

“I feel fairly optimistic on the fundraising side,” Dewar said.

In the winter, a standing-room-only crowd piled into the Hap Magee Ranch Park’s Swain house to give individual reasons for wanting a community pool.

A student swimmer detailed that he and his teammates sometimes had no time for the community to use it. Some senior citizens detailed they would love to use a pool for aquatic aerobics, but there’s nearly no time for the community to use it.

LPGA ramping up

Tickets will go on sale Tuesday, Sept. 4, for the 2007 Longs Drugs Challenge, which takes place the week of Oct. 4-7 at Blackhawk Country Club. Some 108 professional women golfers will vie for winnings of $1.1 million over the four-round event, including defending champion and LPGA Hall of Famer Karrie Webb.

Single-day passes for any of the four tournament rounds are $20 each, available at www.tickets.com. Plus a $5 discount coupon will be available at all Bay Area Long Drugs, redeemable when purchasing tickets at the tournament gate. Long Drugs outlets in Danville, Blackhawk and San Ramon will be selling single day tickets at a discounted price of $15 although the Alamo Longs will only have the $5 discount coupon.

All-Tournament Clubhouse badges are available for $50, and All-Tournament Grounds passes are available for $55. Badges are available at the tournament office only, at Blackhawk Country Club, 599 Blackhawk Drive.

The Longs Drugs Challenge is recruiting volunteers for scoring, marshalling, VIP hospitality and more. A complete list of positions, requirements and schedules can be found at longsdrugschallenge.com. Volunteers receive a Longs Drugs gift card, free tournament tickets, meals on days worked and a volunteer appreciation party. For more information, contact the tournament office at 725-0148 or visit the Web site.
Dougherty

Continued from page 5

high school,” said Hibbard, a former assistant principal at California High.

Dougherty Valley High is 300,315 square feet and is on approximately 54 acres. There are 11 major buildings, which include four two-story classroom buildings, a career tech facility, library and commons building, performing arts center, administration building, two gymnasiums and an aquatic center. The school can accommodate up to 2,200 students.

The aquatic center has a 50-meter Olympic pool and locker facilities. The school also has a 2,000-seat stadium and an all-weather track, two baseball fields, two softball fields and eight lighted tennis courts. The main gymnasium has 1,300 seats. And the performing arts center has a 600-seat theater, vocal and instrumental and rehearsal rooms. The school mascot is the “Wildcats.”

There are currently 160 staff members. This year, high school staff will include 30 teachers, 44 coaches, 18 support employees, one counselor and two administrators. The average class size ratio is 28 to 1.

Dougherty Valley High was designed and constructed in an agreement between the school district, the city of San Ramon and two Dougherty Valley developers, Windemere BLC and Shapell Industries.

The school was built in 2001. The school’s development began in 2000; and stage two was scheduled to be finished by August 2007.

Hibbard said she held orienta-
tions for freshmen and sophomores earlier this week. She noted that making the transition from their previous schools to a new one is going to be difficult for them. They had already developed strong friendships and a comfort level at their previous schools.

Parents and children have expressed discomfort in past school board meetings about leaving their current high schools to attend Dougherty Valley because of the bonds they had formed with friends.

“They are transitioning,” Hibbard said. “High school is a huge experience for them.”

Nonetheless, she said she has seen incoming students look in awe at the new Dougherty Valley. She said her incoming students have the opportunity to forge new cultures and activities. Dougherty Valley will have its first graduating class in June 2010.

“We have a rare opportunity,” she said.

Contact Jordan M. Doronila at jadoronila@DanvilleWeekly.com

Diversity

Continued from page 7

“It doesn’t matter what their racial makeup is,” she said. “An awful lot how a student will perform is dependent on what happens in early education at home.”

“It has to do with environment,” she added.

Although in Danville, the majority of residents are white, there is a significant Asian population that continues to grow in San Ramon, especially in Windemere Ranch in Dougherty Valley. At Windemere Ranch Middle School, 46.8 percent were Asians last school year and 34.7 percent were white out of 380 students. Windemere’s graduating class is going to Dougherty Valley High School.

Thom Martin, executive director of the Discovery Counseling Center in Danville, conjectured how the school district will respond to the changing demographics in the city.

“There is significant ethnic diversity,” Martin said. “I think it’s great.”

District officials said they know of the Valley’s population changes.

Carothers said teachers are certified in Cross Cultural Language and Academic Development (CCLAD), which helps them create workable and flexible curricula for students who don’t speak English.

She noted they help non-English speaking students make connections by planning classes around themes and questions, using interpreters, and asking assistance from students and parents who are multilingual.

“I don’t see any cultural challenges,” said Carothers, about Dougherty Valley. “It’s really going to be a dynamic experience for all of them. They got so much room for flexibility.”

Carothers said she has seen diversity increase in the past 30 years since she has been working in the district.

“I’ve seen it happening,” she said. “The workforce is diverse. It’s destined to happen.”

Contact Jordan M. Doronila at jadoronila@DanvilleWeekly.com
Houston settles lawsuit
S Suit claims scheme defrauded seniors

by Jordan M. Doronila

State Assemblyman Guy Houston (R, District 15) has settled a lawsuit that alleged he defrauded seniors in an investment scheme. Plaintiffs Gerald Stefanski of Dublin, Samuel and Joan Story of Concord, and Carol Tomasca filed a civil lawsuit in 2004 against Houston and his father Fred Houston. They claimed they were encouraged by the Harrisons to invest thousands of dollars from their retirement funds; however, they said they saw little profit and lost thousands of dollars. The lawsuit went to mediation in early August and was resolved, although terms of the settlement were not disclosed.

“The plaintiffs are happy with the settlement,” said Morgan King, the attorney representing the plaintiffs. “Our clients are quite happy with the settlement.”

Houston has denied many of the claims, and has said he never had any communications or discussions with the Harrisons or sold them any products. The Harrisons claimed the plaintiffs had invested money with Wind & Action Investments, which was operated by the Houston family and encompassed other businesses called the Investment Partnership and the Houston Napa Development. They said they have lost their money due to fraud and negligent representation, according to court documents.

The Harrisons were accused of diverting funds and other assets of the Investment Partnership to non-partnership uses; and diverting assets from the Investment Partnerships to themselves and to other business entities to the detriment of their creditors, including the plaintiffs, legal documents said.

King said he invited Houston to settle a year ago but received no response. He noted it is important for seniors to be wary of how they invest their money.

“People who have been with older people is that they tend to trust people who they meet in the community,” he said.

Contact Jordan M. Doronila at jdoronila@DanvilleWeekly.com

Bomb scare
Suspicous object at bank turns out to be glasses in bag

Shoppers watched in trepidation as police evacuated U.S. Bank on San Ramon Valley Road late Wednesday morning last week and roped off the area after an unknown male left a bomb threat on the branch’s voicemail that turned out to be false.

“Is it a bomb scare,” said Danville Police Sgt. Troy Francis, who was investigating at the scene. “The message was very vague. The bank still doesn’t have any idea why it was made.”

Police responded by setting a canine, trained to detect explosives, free inside the building. The dog found a suspicious object, and the Walnut Creek Police Department’s bomb squad was then called to determine whether the object was in fact a bomb.

At least 10 police vehicles arrived at the bank, and several shoppers watched the police activity from behind yellow caution tape.

On the east side of the bank, all of the businesses, which include Valero Gas Station, were ordered to shut down. Most of the other surrounding businesses remained open although police advised business owners to shut down and evacuate to be on the safe side.

“Nothing was mandated,” said Victor Casais, owner of Pasta Gondola, which remained open. “It was a judgment call. We informed our customers.”

“I’ve been involved with bomb threats,” he added. “I think it’s more precautionary than preemi- nent danger.”

“Hopefully, there is nothing to be concerned about,” added Willie Armstrong, assistant manager of Longs Drugs.

At 3 p.m., Sgt. Francis said the bomb squad did not find a bomb and that the suspicious package was a pair of eyeglasses in a brown paper bag, which was discovered in a basket on the bank floor.

— Jordan M. Doronila and Natalie O’Neill

Dentist gets two years in prison

by Jordan M. Doronila

A judge sentenced LeRoy Albert Lewis, 73, an oral surgeon from Danville, earlier this week to two years in prison for defrauding the U.S. Justice Department officials said.

LeRoy Lewis joined an organization based in Denver called Tower Executive Resources Ltd. in 1985. The group assisted its members to evade federal income taxes, in part by providing a false invoicing scheme to offset income the mem-

bers’ businesses earned.

“Alamo has 5.8 percent of the vote in the county. We have essentially no leverage,” he said.

At last week’s meeting, time was spent debunking myths surrounding incorporation, he said. Many people believed Alamo has already tried to incorporate and failed. But the Alamo area has never tried on its own—only with Danville, he said. That vote failed but Danville residents voted to incorporate by themselves in 1982. Many Alamo residents believe the seven-member Homeowners Association, wrote in an e-mail. He added he believes substantial investments in bonds may be necessary.

Other outspoken Alamo residents believe the seven-member committee is rife with their own interests—namely related to develop- ment and politics.

“It’s a facade of special interests,” said Hall Bailey, president of the Roundhill Homeowners Association, wrote in an e-mail. He believes there’s no way to raise taxes after a city council is formed without two-thirds of Alamo voting for it, he said. That’s a very difficult—and unnecessary—thing to do, he noted.

When petitioning begins, the committee must collect signatures from more than 25 percent of the voting population in Alamo. Then an incorporation feasibility study by the Local Agency Formation Commission can be conducted, which would take about 12 months. After that, voting can happen.

Signing the petition just moves the study forward, it doesn’t mean you are necessarily for incorporation, Kenber explained. It just gives the area an opportunity to find out if city- hood works, he said. “Why wouldn’t you want to find out?” he asked.

A vote on incorporation would likely take place in March 2009. Over 50 percent of Alamo voters would have to support the legisla- tion in order for it to pass.
Killing off the competition

Realtor Rob Rittenhouse had a lot of free time when he hosted open houses during last winter’s real estate slump. So he pulled out his laptop as he waited for perspective homebuyers and let his imagination run wild. What if a Realtor were found dead after an open house? What procedures would the police follow? How would the unfortunate homeowners react? How would it affect other Realtors at subsequent open houses?

He had a plot for a murder mystery in his head, and he began to write, and rewrite, and call upon experts to help him get the facts right. He did historical research on the San Ramon Valley plus explored the field of self-publishing. And now his murder mystery—“Slain in San Ramon”—is in its second printing.

Rob, 60, said he’s read a lot of mysteries, especially during his frequent traveling days when he did technical writing and sales training. He knows that good dialogue and strong characters are important. He centered the book on the homicide detective, calling it “A Chip Wellington Mystery.” Chip is based on his son, Rob Jr., 33, a sergeant with the Berkeley Police Department, who just finished a stint as a homicide detective.

“He’s a Type B person in a Type A role,” Rob explained. All of which gives Wellington an engaging personality. And, lo and behold, Chip calls upon his father Mac, a Realtor, to help him go through the records of the murdered woman. This results in a bit of trouble for Mac, which I won’t give away. Let’s just say the two policemen assigned to protect him let their guard down for a minute, and it ain’t good for ol’ Mac.

Rob dedicated the book to his wife, Cal, and when he told me about their high school romance it all sounded a bit familiar. Rob is Mac! Or rather, Mac is Rob. Except in the book, Mac’s loving wife has just died of cancer. But! he is beginning a romance with a woman named Annie, which happens to be Cal’s middle name. The names used throughout the book will have meaning for Rob’s friends and associates, just one more way he had fun with the twists and turns of writing a mystery. I found his descriptions of Blackhawk particularly interesting, as were his other Realtor insights.

Rob said he now spends many hours at home in the evenings working on his next mystery, “Dead in Danville,” which will be out in the fall. The body of someone from another area will be found in a vacant house in the west side of the town. This time, he has outlined the story, and he said the new book will be more narrative and rely less on descriptive phrasing. He added that his mystery writing has become more than a hobby; he wants to pursue it as a vocation and hopes to get better and better.

“I feel a responsibility to my readers to improve,” he said, “but I think my characters were good.” He plans to minimize Mac’s role, although I hope he keeps us informed about his romance with Annie. He said the buyers and sellers in the real estate market provide him with an unlimited source of characters. And he has fun thinking of other titles to pursue: “Accident in Alamo”? “Wiped out in Walnut Creek”? Rob will be selling and signing “Slain in San Ramon” tonight from 5-8 p.m. at a reception at the Danville Interior Design Gallery, 9000 Crow Canyon Road. Call 648-0100. Otherwise it’s available for $14.95 at Amazon.com or by calling Rob at J. Rockcliff Realtors, 648-5377.

—Dolores Fox Ciardelli can be e-mailed at editor@DanvilleWeekly.com.
Copper caper ends in arrest

Police arrested a 34-year-old man from Los Gatos for allegedly burglarizing copper wire from Green Valley Elementary School in Danville last week.

Daniel Todd, 34, of Los Gatos, went through a construction area in Green Valley on Sunday night, Aug. 12, and was taking copper wiring around 10:30 p.m., said police Sgt. Troy Craig. A security guard confronted Todd and asked what he was doing.

The suspect pretended to be a contractor working on the job site; however, the guard did not believe him and told Todd that he was going to call the police, Craig said. Upon hearing this, Tod ran and drove away from Green Valley in his green four-door 1996 Toyota Camry.

“The security guard was sharp enough to realize (the implausibility) of people doing construction on a Sunday,” Craig said.

Police caught Todd on Blackhawk Road and Silver Maple Drive. He was arrested on charges of commercial burglary.

Because of the rising demand, Craig said, the price of metals has been going up. Thieves have been looking to steal metal such as copper and sell it to a recycling company. Additionally, they may sell copper wire to unsavory contractors, who may sell it to their clients, police said.

“It’s up to the contractors and site foremen to protect their sites,” Craig said. “We can’t keep an eye on all of them at the same time.”

—Jordan M. Donald

POLICE BULLETIN

The Danville Police Department made the following information available from its incident summary report:

Sunday, Aug. 12
• Accident, major injuries, arrest, on Danville Blvd. and Del Amigo Rd. at 1:15 a.m.
• Vandalism on Cavalry Ct. at 1:33 p.m.
• Drugs violation on Podva Rd. and Podva Ln. at 7:18 p.m.
• Commercial burglary, arrest, on Diablo Rd. at 8:08 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 13
• Vandalism on Indian Home Rd. at 7:11 a.m.
• Petty theft, shoplift, arrest, on Railroad Ave. at 8:59 a.m.
• Drugs violation, arrest, on Starrmont Ct. at 7:27 p.m. and 8:08 p.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 14
• Credit card fraud on Sky Ternace at 8:18 a.m.
• Accident, property damage, on Camino Ramon and El Capitan Dr. at 9:12 a.m.
• Commercial burglary on Diablo Rd. at 12:53 p.m.
• Petty theft on Indian Home Rd. at 1:40 p.m.
• Drugs violation on Del Amigo Rd. at 1:52 p.m.
• Petty theft, shoplift, on Fostoria Way at 2:25 p.m.
• Miscellaneous driving under the influence (DUI), arrest, on Railroad Ave. at 6:11 p.m.
• Robbery on Blackhawk Rd. and Camino Tassajara at 7:17 p.m.
• Petty theft, shoplift, arrest, on Fostoria Way at 7:31 a.m.
• Fireworks disturbance on Montair Dr. at 8:44 p.m.
• Accident, property damage, on southbound I-680 off-ramp and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 10:23 p.m.
• Petty theft, shoplift, arrest, on 100 block of Hartz Ave. at 11:13 a.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 15
• Bomb threat on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 9:46 a.m.
• Auto burglary on St. Francis Dr. at 10:08 a.m.
• Accident, property damage, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 2:24 p.m.
• Petty theft, shoplift, on Town and Country Dr. at 6:32 p.m.
• Suspicious subject, arrest, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 7:45 p.m.
• Fireworks disturbance on Belterere Dr. and Triomphe Ct. at 8:14 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 16
• Petty theft on Greenbrook Dr. at 10:07 a.m.
• Vandalism on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 10:23 a.m.
• Grand theft on Love Ln. at 12:25 p.m.
• Accident, property damage, on Gil Bias Rd. at 1:59 p.m.
• Petty theft on El Dorado Ave. at 2:09 p.m.
• Burglary, miscellaneous, on Brookside Dr. at 2:11 p.m.
• Accident, major injuries, on Danville Blvd. and El Cerro Blvd. at 2:32 p.m.
• Misdemeanor hit-and-run on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 4:03 p.m.
• Battery on Camino Tassajara and Crow Canyon Rd. at 7:21 a.m.
• Verbal disturbance, arrest, on Greenbrook Dr. and Hafan Dr. at 9:39 p.m.
• Battery on Hardlester Ct. at 10:48 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 17
• Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Camino Ramon at 12:42 a.m.
• Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on northbound I-680 off-ramp and Stone Valley Rd. at 2:17 a.m.
• Auto burglary on Clydesdale Dr. at 3:11 a.m.
• Commercial burglary on Diablo Rd. at 7:02 a.m.
• Accident, property damage, on Diablo Dr. and Hartz Ave. at 12:24 p.m.
• Battery on Railroad Ave. at 2:06 p.m.
• Accident, property damage, on Green Valley Rd. at 7:56 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 18
• Battery on 400 block of Hartz Ave. at 2:07 a.m.
• Petty theft on Diablo Rd. at 5:43 a.m.
• Grand theft, all other, on Holbrook Dr. at 6:27 a.m.
• Auto burglary on W. Prospect Ave. and Railroad Ave. at 11:27 a.m.
• Battery on Sycamore Valley Rd. W. at 11:49 a.m. and 12:05 p.m.

OBITUARIES

Joe A. Callaway

Joe A. Callaway, 85, a resident of San Ramon, passed away Aug. 3.

He was born June 1, 1922. He moved to the San Ramon Valley three years ago from Belmont where he lived and raised his family for more than 40 years. He was a retired aircraft maintenance manager for United Airlines where he worked for more than 35 years. He was a decorated war hero receiving a Bronze Star Medal and three Bronze Battle Stars as he served in the U.S. Army during World War II from 1940-45.

He was predeceased by his wife of 53 years, Dorothy, in 1999, and by a son, Wayne. He is survived by two sons and their wives, Joe and Jeanne Callaway of Danville, and Terry and Donna Callaway of Las Vegas, and a daughter-in-law, Laverne of Hemet, Calif. He also leaves behind 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Aug. 18 at Wilson & Kratzer Chapel of San Ramon Valley in Danville.

Lorne ‘Mac’ McDonald

Lorne “Mac” McDonald, 85, passed away at home on Aug. 8.

He was born Feb. 14, 1922, in Alberta, Canada. He moved to San Carlos as a young child and remained in the area throughout his life. He proudly served in the U.S. Army during World War II between 1942 and 1946. In 1983, he retired from AT&T after 35 years of service.

He leaves behind his beloved wife of 59 years, Jeanne; son and daughter-in-law, Lee and Lori McDonald of Danville; daughter, Lori McDonald of San Ramon; and five grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 25, at the Community United Church of Christ in San Carlos, open to all.

The family suggests donations to the American Cancer Society.

Frank E. Stanko

Frank E. Stanko, a former resident of Placentia, died on Aug. 8. He was born on Aug. 2, 1943.

He will be remembered for his love of running, sports, geography, history, music and especially his wit and sense of humor.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Yvonne. He is survived by his sons, Scott and Daniella and their spouses, Jennifer and Kevin; and six grandchildren. A Memorial Mass was held Aug. 16 at St. Isidore’s Catholic Church in Danville.

Flor Lisa B. Pena

Danville resident Flor Lisa B. Pena passed away Aug. 10.

Visitation was held Aug. 16, with a blessing service, at Jess C. Spencer Mortuary in Castro Valley.

Patricia E. Griffiths

Danville resident Patricia E. Griffiths, 83, passed away peacefully at her home Aug. 13. She was born July 25, 1924.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Darwin Griffiths. She is survived by her sons Gary (Gloria) Griffiths of Sierra Madre, Calif., and Patrick (Peggy) Griffiths of Denver; daughter Gayle Jones of San Antonio; and her brother, Bill Jessen of Utah. She was the loving grandmother of nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Aug. 17 at Wilson & Kratzer Chapel of San Ramon Valley.

Barbara L. Thomas

Danville resident Barbara L. Thomas, 47, died suddenly Aug. 14 from respiratory complications. She was born Nov. 30, 1959. She worked at Crosslink Capital for seven years and recently had started a new job at Saints VC. She enjoyed life to the fullest with her golf “outings,” especially getting an eagle before her; her swim team “buddies” at Pacific Masters; her refereee “calls” with Mustang soccer; and her “extra” time with the East Bay Astronomical Society.

She is survived by her husband William; her son Will; her brother Russ; her mother Polly; and her sister Marie, who all will miss her comical phone calls during her daily BART rides. A memorial service was held Aug. 21 at Wilson & Kratzer Chapel of San Ramon Valley. Donations may be made to your favorite charity in the name of Patricia Griffiths. A private interment will be held at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Lafayette.
Round Hill swimmers good all around

The Round Hill Country Club 7-8 Girls Freestyle Relay Team (l-r) Rachel Hendricks, Isabella Barattolo, Alexa Fusari and Allyson Satterfield are thrilled with their upset victory in the finals of the Contra Costa County Swim Championships on Sunday, Aug. 19. The team was seeded fifth going into the preliminary race in the morning and came out seeded second. Then the Round Hill girls won the finals race in the afternoon with a time of 1:01.72. The Round Hill Country Club Boys 6 and under Medley Relay Team came in second at the weekend's County Swim Championships. The team was seeded fifth going into the preliminary race and placed fifth overall. Celebrating with ice cream are (l-r) Nicholas Fusari, Tristan Sinclair, Scott Glueck and Scott Burkland.

What a Rush

The Mustang Rush U13 girls dominated the Santa Clara Rotary Club Cup, shutting out its first three opponents 10-0. The championship game was no different, when the Rush faced the San Francisco Valkyries. The Rush was down 1-0 but came out in the second half with a vengeance to win 5-1. Top offensive players: Erin Jeffries, Brooklyn Graditi and Alyse Cronin. Top defensive players: Amy Ingram, Devon Gasparini, Veronica Robinson and goalie Olivia Romero. Scoring goals were Erin Jeffries—5; Brooklyn Graditi—4; Alyse Cronin—2; Molly Zieger—1; Nicki Pryt—1; and Veronica Robinson—1.

Eagles fly in Santa Clara

The Mustang U12 Eagles hit the soccer fields and placed fourth at the Santa Clara Rotary Cup over the Aug. 17th weekend. This annual tournament, sponsored by the Santa Clara Rotary Club and the Santa Clara Youth Soccer League, hosted 96 teams and 1,700 participants. The Eagles played the Windsor Extreme Heat, Folsom Extreme, D Force Black 95, and Almaden Wildcats. The girls worked together to be successful and bring home the hardware.

U14 Rampage still No. 1

The U14 Mustang Rampage girls won the Mustang Stampede Tournament over the Aug. 10 weekend. This second summer tournament win bolsters the Rampage’s No. 1 position on the Gotsoccer.com national ranking. The Mustang Stampede Tournament drew more than 200 teams, ranging from 9 to 19 years old from all over the country, including other 14-year-old teams from Texas, Washington and Utah.

To defend their Mustang Stampede Title, Coach Joe Owen and the Rampage girls defeated Santa Clara, two teams from Southern California, the Utah Avalanche, and San Juan, allowing no goals and scoring 12 total goals for the weekend tournament.

Hotspurs stay hot to win invitational

The Mustang U12 Hotspurs won the Santa Clara Sporting Invitational over the Aug. 10 weekend, a tournament that ranks No. 2 in Northern California at Gotsoccer.com.

In the quarter-final game against the State Champion Placer team, defensive efforts by George Waidelich and skilled play by midfielder Ryan Ringelstein helped the boys turn on the heat to win 2-1. The team kept up the pressure through the semi-final game against El Dorado, and then defeated De Anza in the final game, winning 3-0. Defender Andrew Evans helped keep the opponents at bay and also stepped up to score one goal for the weekend. Forward Nico Ginocchio battled through defenders and scored three goals for the tournament.

Parent photographers

Send a jpeg to Editor@DanvilleWeekly.com of the best action shot from your child’s game for consideration for our Sports page. Remember to include caption information: who, what, when, where—and the score.
Opposition to the planning commission's mission is still valid: It is the only body with all of its members residing in the San Ramon Valley.

The San Ramon Valley Regional Planning Commission should not only be kept in existence, its decisions should be given respect and backed up. This planning commission was established in 1977 along with the East County Regional Planning Commission. The idea was for the seven members in each body to deal with planning issues in the area where they live. They review everything from subdivision maps to rezoning to general plan amendments. The members also handle basic concerns such as home occupation permits and rule the list of splits and minor rezone requests.

The Contra Costa County Planning Commission, on the other hand, is responsible for projects that are viewed as having regional significance, as well as dealing with issues in unincorporated Central County.

Now the County Planning Commission is recommending to the Board of Supervisors that the San Ramon Valley Regional Planning Commission be allowed to dissolve after its Oct. 7 renewal date, saying that much of its jurisdiction has been incorporated or developed. Supervisors said at their July 24 meeting that the wanted community input plus more research before making a decision on whether to allow the group to dissolve.

True, the San Ramon Valley Regional Planning Commission had more land to deal with before Danville and San Ramon were incorporated, in 1972 and 1983, respectively. But the reason for a local planning commission is still valid: It is the only body with all of its members residing in the San Ramon Valley. The County Planning Commission has seven members, one appointed by each of the five supervisors and the other two chosen by the group as a whole.

Important decisions will be made in the San Ramon Valley in the years to come. This region also covers Alamo, Diablo, Blackhawk and the unincorporated area just east of Danville. While consolidation may seem to could handle the additional workload, this is not the case. As a matter of fact, it has and will backfire.

Furthermore, it is unethical to seek the endorsements of prominent members of our community who already support Pfepho—the gall of you to seek their support to endorse you and to go against her! This decision of yours is unbelievable and beyond most of our community’s comprehension of morality and professional ethics.

So, Assemblyman Houston, the planning voice is still valid: It is the only body with all of its members residing in the San Ramon Valley. If you choose to not reverse your announcement, I assure you Piepho will certainly be re-elected, and the friendships you once earned will never be regained.

David Miller, Danville

House on hill an asset to Alamo

Dear Editor:

This home (Aug. 17, “What’s with the house on the hill?”) is an asset to Alamo. Those who have visited Europe and appreciated the ancient architecture can appreciate what is being replicated historically. There are so many homes being built that will look dated in a few years. So many homes being built that will look dated in a few years. So many homes being built that will look dated in a few years. So many homes being built that will look dated in a few years.

This home, in fact, is authentic to Tuscan architecture. This home is, in fact, authentic to Tuscan architecture. This home is, in fact, authentic to Tuscan architecture. This home is, in fact, authentic to Tuscan architecture. This home is, in fact, authentic to Tuscan architecture.

But the reason for a local planning commission is still valid: It is the only body with all of its members residing in the San Ramon Valley.
The reason the Alamo Incorporation Movement (AIM) has focused on incorporating Alamo is the same as it was for other successful local cities: They incorporated to provide better planning and control of their own land use, roadways and other infrastructure and better levels of municipal services than provided under county governance.

The record shows clearly that incorporation works. Ask your friends in Danville, San Ramon, Moraga, Lafayette, Orinda, Clayton or any other nearby city that was smaller when it incorporated than Alamo is now, whether their roads or parks were better provided and maintained by the County than they are now. Ask any who live in a town that was incorporated after Propositions 13 and 218 whether their local taxes or assessments have been increased without a vote, or at all, since incorporation. Ask them if they liked the County’s planning, building or roadway decisions better than those that their city or town has made or if they preferred their decision makers having little or no electoral accountability to them. Ask them if they wish their town had never been incorporated. Overwhelmingly they will say no.

Recent letter writers to the Danville Weekly raised concerns about how incorporation would affect Alamo that conflict with the easily available facts. Some claim that Alamo couldn’t afford to provide service levels equal to or better than the County and that these services can be provided more cost effectively by county government than town government. Some claim Alamo would need staff or facilities that it couldn’t afford and that residents would see tax increases and increased bureaucracy.

Fortunately there’s an easy way to answer these claims — by reading the Initial Fiscal Analysis of the Proposed Incorporation of Alamo (IFA), The Initial Fiscal Analysis shows that Alamo would generate an operating surplus over the next 10 years while providing better service levels than currently available.

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Fortunately there’s an easy way to answer these claims — by reading the Initial Fiscal Analysis of the Proposed Incorporation of Alamo (IFA), The Initial Fiscal Analysis shows that Alamo would generate an operating surplus over the next 10 years while providing better service levels than currently available from the county. Together with other benefits of incorporation, including Alamo’s ability to determine its own future, elect its own council and implement its own vision, this makes a compelling case for incorporation.

The incorporation process must be initiated by a petition of 25 percent of Alamo’s registered voters, due to kick off momentarily. It’s important to note that a successful petition does not authorize incorporation. It does authorize the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), an independent State agency, to conduct a legally required feasibility study and determine, with detailed public input, the boundary, revenues, staffing, costs, etc., for Alamo. With a few options, the initial structure of new city/town government is prescribed by State law. These structural determinations are also part of the public LAFCO process.

The information already available from the IFA is sufficient to justify your decision to support beginning the LAFCO process. So, when asked by one of your fellow residents to sign the petition, I hope you will sign it so that you can get further facts on Alamo incorporation, and give yourself and your neighbors the final say.

We are convinced this is the right path for Alamo and that a full examination of the facts will convince a broad majority of our fellow Alamo citizens.

Michael Gibson, a member of the Alamo Incorporation Movement, has lived in Alamo for 22 years. He has served on the Board of the Alamo Improvement Association for 21 years and the San Ramon Valley Regional Planning Commission for 13 years.
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Best Photographer
Best Place for Dance Lessons
Best Place to Get a Traffic Ticket
Best Place to Have a First Date

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**Around Town**

Best Auto Dealership
Best Auto Detail
Best Car Repair
Best Car Wash
Best Golf Course
Best Pet Groomer
Best Pet Sitter
Best Photographer
Best Place for Dance Lessons
Best Place to Get a Traffic Ticket
Best Place to Have a First Date
Danville Weekly’s Best of 2007 contest

We’ll get them in, they won’t want to get out!

Best florist
Best children’s clothing store
Best bookstore
Best bicycle shop
Best art gallery
Specialty retail
Best mortgage broker/brokerage
Best financial planner
Best veterinarian
Best tutoring school
Best tire store/service center
Best Danville area real estate office
Best place to people watch
Best place to eat, drink, shop
Best Danville, Alamo, Danville Weekly’s Best of 2007 readers are asked to vote online at www.danvilleweekly.com with Aug. 31 winners will be the Sept. 28 edition of Danville Weekly Best place to people watch Best Danville area real estate office Best tire store/service center Best best tutoring school Best veterinarian Best financial planner Best mortgage broker/brokerage Specialty retail Best art gallery Best bicycle shop Best bookstore Best children’s clothing store Best florist Best framing store Best grocery store Best hobby/craft store Best health food store Best jewelry Best lingerie store Best shoe store Best maternity store Best man’s clothing store Best pet store Best women’s clothing store Personal care and pampering Best acupuncture Best dry cleaner Best hair salon for women Best hair salon for men Best manicure/pedicure Best massage Best medical spa Best day spa Best steakhouse Best takeout Best Thai restaurant Best vegetarian cuisine Let’s Get Physical Best bike or walking trail Best fitness club Best martial arts studio Best place to jog Best place to walk a dog Best yoga/pilates studio Best personal trainer At home Best antiques store Best carpet cleaners Best antiques store Best clothing store Best home furnishing store Best kitchen/bath remodeler Best kitchen/bath designer Best landscaper/designer Best interior designer Best remodeling/contractor Best nursery Stepping Out Best place for a picnic Best place for an after-work drink Best place for dancing Best place for live music Best place to get together with friends Best place to meet new people Best theater company

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Celebrating 20 Years of Serving You...
Sparky George pursues his daily runs to help families of soldiers who gave their all.

“Sparky” George Cave runs for his nonprofit group, Hats Off America, which is having its eighth Hats Off America Red T-Shirt 10K Run and 5K Walk to raise money for families of soldiers who died in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“Sparky” George Cave and his siblings in a trailer 44 miles north of Danville some 50-plus years ago.

In spite of his hard childhood, Sparky, 58, now a Danville resident, managed to rise above the garbage through sweat, grit and a fierce determination. And he continues to sweat, running through town every day, shirtless with his hairy chest bulging outward and his carved biceps swinging, while carrying a five-pound weight with an American flag that covers his buttocks.

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“The American flag is for my brothers and sisters who are protecting my ass,” he said.

His daily runs are for families of soldiers who have died in Afghanistan and Iraq. They are part of Hats Off America, which is Sparky’s nonprofit foundation dedicated to raising money and awareness for these families. He believes they may feel alienated.

“I know what it feels like to be disenfranchised. These families didn’t sign up. Americans should be taking care of Americans,” Sparky said. “We could do more jointly.”

“They pay the ultimate price,” he added, about the soldiers. “They will not be forgotten.”

Sparky’s nonprofit group will host its eighth Hats Off America Red T-Shirt 10K Run and 5K Walk, rain or shine, on Saturday, Sept. 8, at Sycamore Valley Park on Camino Tassajara beginning at 10 a.m. The run is one of several fundraisers Hats Off conducts during the year. Casino nights, blood drives, comedy nights and car shows are other events held by his group. They will help provide financial support to families of soldiers who died.

The September event will have runners and walkers heading out in opposite directions on Camino Tassajara but ending back at the starting point. There will be a barbecue at the conclusion.

Hats Off has raised $15,000. The money goes into annuities, and families will be contacted when enough dollars have been made to contribute to them.

“It is a far cry from what we need,” Sparky said. “It’s stepping stones. One thing at a time.”

Diane Layfield, mother of Travis Layfield, who was killed in action on April 6, 2004, will be present at the September run, and San Ramon Mayor Abram Wilson will start it off. Sparky said. He noted he has asked several politicians in Northern California to run. A representative from Contra Costa County Supervisor District 3 Mary N. Piepho’s office will also participate.

Entry fee is $35 per person. All runners and volunteers will receive a red T-shirt and a barbecue lunch after the run. There is no entry fee for volunteers.

Sparky said his parents abandoned him and his brother and sister when they were little in a trailer in Vacaville. After police found them in three days, Sparky and his siblings went to foster parents and ended up living in Oakland.

Indeed, he did. He lived during the race riots in the 1960s when he attended Fremont High School. He recalled a blonde girl being thrown out of a building and the principal being hit by a brick. He also remembered police cars getting overturned. He had to fight his way to get into school.

“I fought,” he said. “I was lucky. I wouldn’t back down.”

Upon graduating high school, he went to Laney...
College in Oakland. But he soon enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps when his draft notice arrived during the Vietnam War.

“I wasn’t going to run away,” he said. “It was my duty to serve my country.”

He enlisted in 1970 and was stationed at Camp Pendleton near San Diego and then in Japan. When he returned, he went back to college to get his associate’s degree in auto shop and business. Soon he started his own auto business. He married and had two daughters, but then he and his wife divorced.

He got the name of “Sparky” because two girls who he dated—separately—said his eyes sparkled when he got excited.

He had an auto shop in Castro Valley while being a single dad.

“I was called a full-time single mommy,” he said, recalling how he used to check his daughters’ homework, fix them dinner and cook them breakfast. “It had to be done.”

“It was the hardest thing when they left,” he added. When he married for the third time, he moved to Italy with his wife. But he felt the U.S. was his home and decided to move back.

“He got the name of “Sparky” because two girls who he dated—separately—said his eyes sparkled when he got excited.

He had an auto shop in Castro Valley while being a single dad.

“I was called a full-time single mommy,” he said, recalling how he used to check his daughters’ homework, fix them dinner and cook them breakfast. “It had to be done.”

“People are honking when they see me,” Sparky said. He appreciates the encouragement.

“Honk loud and proud. Let me know that I’m not running alone.”

Sparky’s sign that says “Sparky International Classic Auto Restoration and Repairs” hangs proudly above the American Flag, known as the Bear Flag Runner, because of the silver bear necklace he wears given to him by a shaman in Arizona, and due to his running “bare” regardless of weather.

In honor of service personnel being deployed in Iraq, he has been running six miles a night, five days a week with a five-pound weight, regardless of weather, since Sept. 15, 2002.

“People are honking when they see me,” Sparky said. He appreciates the encouragement.

“Honk loud and proud. Let me know that I’m not running alone.”

Running for a cause

Hats Off America will host its eighth Hats Off America Red T-Shirt 10K Run and 5K Walk, rain or shine, at 10 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 8, at Sycamore Valley Park on Camino Tassajara.

Other fundraising events held each year include Casino Night, the Muscle Car, Hot Rod & Art Fair; and Red T-Shirt 10K Run/5K Walks in November, February and June.

Contact Sparky George at 855-1950 or e-mail the-bearflagrunner@yahoo.com The site www.hatsoffamerica.us includes links to other organizations that support our troops. Hats Off America is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.
Forever tired
by Natalie O'Neill

Effects of sleep disorder range from fatigue to heart failure

Until he was diagnosed with sleep apnea, Fire Chief Tom Gallinatti wasn’t getting enough oxygen to his brain during sleep, leaving him exhausted all the time.

Tom Gallinatti woke up gasping for air.

The 48-year-old fire chief was dreaming he was underwater—kicking violently to the surface for a breath. But the harder he paddled, the deeper he sank.

“My heart rate was racing—I was suffocating,” he remembers.

Thinking back, the Danville man says the dream was one of the first signs that he had developed sleep apnea, a disorder that affects one in five American adults. It occurs when breathing stops in intervals during sleep, as a result of a collapsed airway in the throat.

In his case, the drowning dream was his body’s way of telling him something was wrong.

“It made me realize how many people die in their sleep. I could have easily had a heart attack,” he said.

Like Gallinatti, most sufferers of sleep apnea don’t know they have it. In fact, it is estimated that as many as 90 percent of all cases remain undiagnosed.

Since the struggle for air occurs in a subconscious state, many people with the condition just know they feel tired all the time—and can’t figure out why.

Because the brain, lungs and heart are not getting enough air, the body is kept in a state of alert, making a deep, satisfying sleep unattainable.

In Gallinatti’s case, he was waking up every two minutes, not to the point he could sense it, but to the degree that he was unable to rest effectively.

“My body was kick-starting itself to breathe and I didn’t know it,” he explained.

Eight months ago, before he was diagnosed, he had no idea why he was so tired all the time. The second he would sit down, he’d pass out. He would drift off watching a movie with his wife, chatting with his sons—even driving in the car.

“I’d wake up literally one lane over in traffic,” he cringes to remember.

On a typical weekday, he’d begin his morning with exercise that would keep him going through the workday, but right after his job slowed, his body would force sleep upon him.

“I felt like I was hung over every morning, even after six or seven hours of sleep. I just accepted that’s how life was,” he said.

Then his brother, who had been recently diagnosed with sleep apnea, suggested he take an online test to see if he had symptoms. Gallinatti had heard of the disorder, but associated it with overweight and elderly people, not active middle-aged men.

In reality, each year about 4 percent of men and 2 percent of women over the age of 35 are diagnosed with sleep apnea, according to the National Institutes of Health. Of these, many are in otherwise good health.

Along with fatigue, moderate effects include irritability, sexual dysfunction, learning and memory difficulties. More serious consequences include congestive heart failure, stroke, irregular heart rhythms, cardiovascular disease and fatal car accidents.

Gallinatti had heard of the disorder, but associated it with overweight and elderly people. He didn’t even realize his condition.

“Some encouragement from his brother, Gallinatti took a quiz online and tested very high. He then spent the night at a “bed and breakfast” for sleep apnea testing, where sleep specialists kept track of how many times pauses in his breathing occurred in the night.

During the testing, doctors determined he needed to begin treatment while sleeping, using continuous positive airflow pressure in the form of a face mask. The mask helps air get to his lungs during sleep by applying air pressure to his nasal airway.

Since beginning the treatment, he has noticed his energy level increase dramatically.

“My productivity level has gotten so much better,” he says, and he’s no longer dozing off in traffic.

Loud snoring, being 20 to 30 pounds overweight, high blood pressure, a short, thick neck, or a family history of sleep apnea makes a person more susceptible. Some studies show those who have stressful, irregular work hours are more prone to the condition.

Sufferers are also three times more likely to get into car accidents, according to a study conducted by the UC San Diego school of medicine. In fact, 980 car accident fatalities every year could be prevented, the study says.

For treatment is not too loud, Gallinatti said, especially compared to the snoring that accompanies untreated sleep apnea. The machine starts off slowly and picks up in the middle of sleep.

“My wife says it’s a lot quieter than my snoring,” he said.

And the treatment doesn’t obstruct sleeping with a partner.

“You can still hold and embrace each other, it doesn’t get in the way of intimacy,” he explained.

Now, Gallinatti says he’s noticed little things about his life are getting better. He gets more awake time with his family, for one.

“The other day, I sat down and watched an entire movie with my son without falling asleep. I haven’t done that in years,” he says.

Do YOU have sleep apnea?
To learn more about sleep apnea or to take a sleep apnea assessment test online, visit sleepapneainfo.com.
Make outings with dog enjoyable by using the right type of collar

Q. My dog pulls constantly when we try to walk him. The choke chain we bought doesn’t help at all. Do you recommend getting a pinch collar? He weighs almost 90 pounds, but we want to be able to walk him.

A. The problem with choke chains and pinch collars is that they are very difficult to use correctly. The idea behind a choke chain is to have the collar loose, and leave slack in the leash while walking. When the dog starts to pull, the chain collar becomes smaller and smaller, if you have put it on correctly. Eventually, it tightens to the point of hurting and the dog is forced to stop. A dog who is going to respond to a chain collar will quickly learn to stop as soon as he hears the links running through the ring. If the collar has to be pulled constantly, then it’s not working for that dog. One possibility is that you have put it on incorrectly. Another possibility is that it is either too small or too large for your dog. And then there are the dogs that just don’t get it, who will pull and pull until the point of choking and gagging, causing people to stop and stare at you!

Propr or pinch collars operate on the same principle of negative reinforcement. Pulling by the dog causes the collar to tighten, which is uncomfortable due to the prongs, so the dog stops. These come in many sizes and weights and will not work unless the correct size is used. While many dogs respond to these collars, dogs with thick coats may not. They can cause injury if used improperly. Most people don’t like the look of prong collars.

AAUW awards scholarships

Diana Reyes and Nicole Olvares, two of the AAUW scholarship winners.

Five local women are pursuing higher education with help from the Danville/Alamo Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). The organization recently awarded $1,000 scholarships to Jennifer Lemberger, Nicole Olvares, Diana Reyes and Katherine Taylor. The Jane Trittipo Memorial Scholarship, for $5,750, was awarded to Jennifer Casey. The scholarship monies were generated from the AAUW holiday home tour held in December plus donations from individuals who supported this effort. The scholarship winners were chosen for their academic achievements and community service.

Katherine Taylor, a 2001 Monte Vista graduate, is currently attending UC Irvine School of Medicine. She graduated from UC Davis with honors and a B.S. in Genetics. She has a strong interest in women’s health and plans to enter a residency program in obstetrics and gynecology.

Jennifer Lemberger is currently attending Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health. She is seeking a Master of Public Health Degree (MPH), in Epidemiology. She graduated from UC Santa Barbara with a double major; a B.S. in Biological Sciences and B.A. in Art Studio. She is a graduate of Carondelet High School, and she grew up in Danville.

Diana Reyes was to matriculate into the UCLA Pediatric Dentistry Residency Program in July 2007. She received her B.A. in Integrative Biology from UC Berkeley. She graduated from Morean Catholic in 1995. Her family resides in San Ramon.

Nicole Olvares graduated with honors from UC Santa Barbara in 2005 with a degree in biopsychology (neuroscience). She will start in the UCLA School of Dentistry program in September and has been a dental assistant to Dr. Mary Johnson in Danville for two years. She graduated from San Ramon Valley High School in 2001.

Jennifer Casey is currently at Touro University School of Medicine in Henderson, Nev. She will start a residency/internship in internal medicine and, then, a fellowship in endocrinology, and has worked with AmeriCorps’ National Capitol Community Corps. She is a 2000 graduate of California High.

Diablo woman top in advisers

Taryn Sievers

Diablo resident Taryn Sievers was named this month in the San Francisco Business Times Bay Area Top 25 Women Wealth Adviser list.

Taryn has worked at Morgan Stanley in the Oakland branch since May 1984. Prior to this honor, she was recognized in the Times Bay Area Top 50 Wealth Advisers and in the Barron’s Top 100 Women Financial Advisers list.

She has lived in Diablo since 2000 with her husband, Vince Chow, and two children.
You’ve got good taste

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Death at a Funeral

Rating: R for language and drug content
Run Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

“This is bloody grim, isn’t it?” one brother remarks to his sibling, as they stand before their father’s coffin. Because one expects sadness and a particular degree of decorum at a funeral service, the outrageous chain of events that unspools in director Frank Oz’s wickedly funny comedy provokes more laughter than if this upper-crust British family and their friends were gathering at a birthday celebration. The remarkable ensemble cast plays its parts with a seriousness befitting the solemn occasion. The inappropriate and uncontrolable laughter that you hear will be your own.

Screenwriter Dean Craig (“Caffeine”) has crafted a sitcom of social embarrassment. The structural idea is simple: Gather a group for the funeral of a beloved man. Toss in a bottle of hallucinogenic pills mislabeled as Valium and a mysterious stranger. When Martha (Daisy Donovan of “Millions”), the niece of the deceased, unknowingly gives her nervous boyfriend Simon (the scene-stealing Alan Tudyk of “Knocked Up”) a tablet of acid, he starts to behave in the most peculiar ways. Simon’s social gaffes draw stares and gasps from the others in attendance. But before his trip can become a tiresome one-note joke, the small-stature stranger (Peter Dinklage of “The Station Agent”) complicates matters by revealing a big secret to a select few.

The Brits with their stiff upper lips and sense of propriety provide the perfect foil for all the silliness. Matthew Macfayden (“Pride & Prejudice”) sets the tone when the wrong coffin is delivered to the family’s country estate. Although concerned about the whereabouts of his father’s body, dutiful-son Daniel also mutters in disdain that he might have provided “a service for some random member of the public.” Much humor emerges from the naughtiness of a social class about to get its comeuppance.

Remove the British accents and references to cups of tea and you need to look again! Family dynamics, money problems and blackmail are universal. Because his successful-novelist brother (Rupert Graves of “V for Vendetta”) has just flown in from the Big Apple—and is clearly their mother’s (Jane Asher) favorite—sibling rivalry surfaces with arguments over who should pay for the funeral.

Whether directing “The Muppets Take Manhattan” or “Bowfinger,” Oz can deliver fast-paced comedy with an abundance of visual and verbal gags. The actors have perfect comic timing, and their deadpan reactions to shocking developments are exercises in understatement. One of the best scenes occurs in the study. Stunned over the stranger’s allegations, Daniel’s gaze ricochets from one of his father’s curious objects to another and another. Suddenly, he sees the objects d’art in an entirely new way. As he leaves the room, an older relative relates a seemingly innocent childhood memory that confirms the son’s worst fears and ends the scene with a verbal punch line. Instead of hammer-on-the-head humor, this farce is a small-statured comedy that confirms the son’s worst fears and ends the scene with a ver.

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**Calendar**

**Events**

9-11 Remembrance Service
- Remember those that were lost on 9-11 at 9-11 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 11, at San Ramon Memorial Park, at Danville Veteran’s Hall, 400 Hertz Ave., Danville. For information, call Post Commander Tony Camenotti at 992-4024 or visit www.vfw.org.

Alamo Block Party
- Alamo Block Party and Alamo Music and Wine Festival from 2-11 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 8, at Alamo Plaza. For information, call 343-2412.

Exhibits
- America’s Love of the Automobile. Worthington Community Museum, 1601 Civic Dr., Danville. Cost is $35, including a red t-shirt and a bar-b-cue lunch after the run. Call 855-387-4889.

Health
- Low Vision Workshop. Low Vision workshop will provide information to those that are affected by macular degeneration or other low vision conditions from 9 a.m.-noon, Saturday, Sept. 8, at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacombe Ave. This event is free. Call 408-739-1846.

Holiday
- Rosh Hashanah. Tri-Valley Cultural Jews holds a Secular Humanistic New Year celebration of music and readings, followed by the traditional apples and honey; honeycake and champagne. Tuesday, Sept. 11, at Bothwell Center, 2466 8th St., Livermore. Cost is $10 for non-members and $13 over. For information, call 933-0107.

Lectures/Workshops
- Horseless Carriages Blackhawk Museum will host a family funshop. Cost is $30. For information, call 668-1101 or visit www.sanramonvalleymuseum.org.

KIDS and TEENS

Miscellaneous
- Adopt a New Best Friend. Tri-Valley Animal Rescue (TVAR) offers wonderful adoptable dogs every Saturday and Sunday, excluding most holidays. On Saturdays, from 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., dogs and cats are available. See web site at www.tvar.org.

Mouse Museum will host a seminar on the latest breast cancer research including advances in treatment from 6-8 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 23, at Valley Care Health Library, 5752 W. Las Positas Blvd., Suite A and B, Pleasanton. This event is free.

**Weekend Preview**

Museum of the San Ramon Valley at the corner of Railroad and Prospect avenues in Danville is hosting an exhibit of Ethel Seberg’s scrap quilts until Sept. 23. Quilt demonstrations are from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays, Aug. 25 and Sept. 8. Call 837-3759.

**Quilts**

See quilter’s in action

Museum of the San Ramon Valley at the corner of Railroad and Prospect avenues in Danville is hosting an exhibit of Ethel Seberg’s scrap quilts until Sept. 23. Quilt demonstrations are from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays, Aug. 25 and Sept. 8. Call 837-3759.

**Concerts in the park**

- **Aug 24**
  - **Magic Moments ’50s rock ’n’ roll**
    - Sponsored by UNCLE Credit Union
- **Aug 31**
  - **The Tom Rose Band**
    - Rhythm & Blues
    - Sponsored by Tabor Club of Pleasanton

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Support Groups

Alamo Women's CODA Meeting
Co-Dependants Anonymous (CDA) is a fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships. The group meets the first Wednesday of each month at United Methodist Church, 902 Danville Blvd., Alamo. Visit sfbaycoda.org or www.coda.org.

American Chronic Pain Association
The ACPA group meets from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. every second and fourth Monday at the Community Presbyterian Church Library at 222 W. El Pintado Rd., Danville.

Bipolar Support Group
The Tri-Valley Support Group provides free peer support for people with mood disorders. It meets from 7-15-8:45 p.m., every Wednesday at St. Clare's Episcopal Church, 3350 Hoppyard Road, Pleasanton. Call 960-5642.

Blue Star Moms California Blue Star Moms is a support group for families of members of the U.S. Armed Forces. It meets at 7 p.m., the second Wednesday of the month, at the Danville Veteran's Hall, 400 Hartz Ave. Call Peggy at 867-7035 or Patty at 938-6906 or visit www.bluestarmoms.org.

Celebrate Recovery
Celebrate Recovery offers a 12-step approach to issues surrounding family, friends and the community. The group meets at 6:30 p.m. for dinner and the program starts at 7 p.m., every Friday, at East Bay Fellowship, 2615 Camino Tassapara, Danville. Children are available for ages 5-11. Call 736-5100 or visit www.eastbayfellowship.org.

Newly Formed Proactive Group for Women
Support Group for FIBRO, CF and Chronic Pain meets 12:30-2:30 p.m., every other Wednesday. Call 254-6621 or e-mail darahby@msn.com.

Overeaters Anonymous
The group offers a 12-step approach to issues around food, overeating, anorexia and bulimia. There are many different groups that meet at different times and places, visit www.dvig.org.

PFLAG
The Danville/San Ramon Valley Chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. PFLAG is a support group that meets at 7:30 p.m., every third Monday at the Danville Congregational Church, 889 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Call 983-8632.

SRV Food Addicts in Recovery
Anonymous Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA) is a free 12-step recovery program for anyone suffering from food obsession, overeating, undereating and bulimia. This group meets from 7:80-9:30 p.m. every Tuesday at the San Ramon Library, 100 Montgomery St. Call Gordon at 899-3171 or visit www.foodaddicts.org.

Political Notes

76th Anniversary Barbeque
Democratic Party of Contra Costa and Contra Costa County Central Labor Council will host the 76th Anniversary Barbeque from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 25, at Hop Magoo Ranch Park, 1020 La Gonda Way, Danville. Cost is $35, $20 for seniors/students, $70 for families. Call 295-2107.

Imagine Peace Candlelight Vigil
Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center and MoveOn.org will co-sponsor a Peace Vigil to commemorate the national “Take a Stand” Day from 7-8:30 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 28, at Veterans’ Plaza, at Civic & Broadway, Walnut Creek. Call 933-7850 or visit www.mtdpc.org.

Seniors

Bridge
Seniors meet to play bridge from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. every Friday at the Danville Veteran’s Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave. Experienced players only. Cost is $1. Reservations are required. Call Jeri Kalden at 837-6283.

Buzz Sessions
Town of Danville presents Buzz Sessions for seniors from 1-2:30 p.m., each fourth Tuesday of the month, at Danville Library, Mt. Diablo Room, 400 Front St. These events are free, but register to reserve your place by calling 314-3400.

Prime Time
Prime Time for seniors meets from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., every Tuesday, at Community Presbyterian Church, 222 W. El Pintado, Danville. Activities include line dancing, English handbells, ceramics, wood carving and more. A home-cooked meal is served at noon for $4. Rides are provided by County Connection Link for $5.00 round trip; call Gloria at 837-5229. For information, call 829-6367.

St. Isidore’s ‘Young at Heart’
Join this group for a meeting from 11-15 a.m.-2 p.m., the third Tuesday of every month at St. Isidore’s Ministries Center, 440 La Gonda Way, Danville. Optional Mass starts at 11:15 a.m.; lunch starts at 11:45 a.m.; bring brown bag lunch from until August, beverage, fruit and dessert are provided. Nonprofit bingo follows. This event is free, but reservations are appreciated by calling 820-4447.

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