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Q: What are your family traditions for the holidays?



My kids make nametags for each of the reindeer and attach them to a carrot, which we leave out along with cookies and milk for Santa. On Christmas morning the first thing they do, even before checking out the presents, is go into the kitchen to see if the food has been eaten. Also, every Christmas Eve we go to our friends' house and, after the kids get into their pj's, the dads read them Christmas stories.

—Jennifer Miller
mom/teacher



My wife and I have had a lot of losses these past couple of years, so we decided rather than staying home like we always did and feeling blue we would go away for Christmas. So this year we are going to visit family and friends in Las Vegas.

—John Villano
CPA



During the week before Christmas, every night we get the kids into their pajamas and we drive over to see the house in Woodranch with the huge lights display. Another tradition is to make clam chowder each year for Christmas dinner. I'd like to start a new tradition this year. On Christmas Eve I want to give the kids a new pair of pajamas and a new Christmas book.

—Leslie Sprinkle
mom/attorney



We go to my aunt's house on Christmas Eve and she makes us her famous tamales. When my kids were little, I would get them into the car and then pretend I had forgotten something and go back into the house. I'd put their presents on their beds. At midnight we would open the gifts from the family and then go to grandma's house to spend the night. Christmas morning when we returned home, the kids would run into their bedrooms to see the gifts left by Santa.

—Beatrice Somoza
creative home design specialist/seamstress



My mother always loved Christmas and would go all out in decorating. She always made it special. When I got my own home, she would come over and help me decorate my tree. We had a lot of fun. I really miss her and those special times we had together. This time of year is kind of sad for me now.

—Janice Kanada
office manager

COMPILED BY JUDY STEINER

ABOUT THE COVER

Amanda Chaffey of Tribez salon straightens an ornament on its popular upside down Christmas tree. Photo by Jason Lind.

Vol. 1, Number 34

Discover Domus

Pep Art by William Bounds



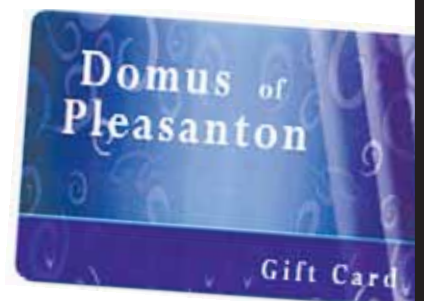
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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ For each song we had a prop. We had angel halos, Santa hats, clowns and stuff like that. ”

—Brianna Rose, 10, about her violin group called *Silly Strings* and their performance at Children's Hospital Oakland. See story, page 16.

Help with selling online

iSold It 680 is scheduled to open Jan. 3 in Alamo Plaza, between High Tech Burrito and Alamo Palace, in the site formerly occupied by an antique store. The franchise is an auction drop-off store for items to be sold online on eBay.

Customers will leave items to be sold, and the business will take care of advertising them online, finding the highest bidder, and doing the packaging and mailing. "It takes the effort out of the eBay experience," said co-owner Russ Emerson. "It's all done online, with the physical location in Alamo." He said he and his two partners, all from the East Bay, chose the Alamo location after being intrigued that there was no iSold It store in the area.

He explained that schools and other nonprofit organizations also can register so customers can opt to have the proceeds benefit them instead of collecting the profits themselves. Marketing materials explaining the program will be in the store.

Honored in memory of O'Neill

Four individuals will be honored at the Eugene O'Neill Foundation's annual dinner Jan. 18, at the Crow Canyon Country Club.

The four honorees are Stephen Black, author of "Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy"; Michael Uppendal, artistic director of the Namaste Theatre Company in Los Angeles; Wendy Cooper, former president of the foundation; and Glen Fuller, superintendent of the Tao House for 11 years.

Black will receive the Tao House Award for distinguished service to the American theater and for taking part in seminars previously arranged by the O'Neill Foundation. Uppendal, who has produced and directed plays in Oregon, San Francisco and New York, will be honored with the foundation's artistic award. He has produced and directed six O'Neill plays at Tao House.

Cooper will receive the Open Gate Award, which is given to individuals who preserve the Tao House, while Fuller will receive the Freeman award, which recognizes leadership qualities in restoring and preserving the Tao House.

The public is welcome to attend the dinner, which will begin at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$65 per person. Music will be provided by Keith and Bobbie Barlow of the Diablo Light Opera Company. To make reservations, call 820-1818, or mail checks to the foundation at P.O. Box 402, Danville 94526.

Early kindergarten registration

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District is beginning early kindergarten registration in January to deal with the expanding enrollment in Dougherty Valley. This will allow district administrators to plan staffing and school boundary lines more effectively.

The early registration will only be for new students in the Dougherty Valley elementary schools of Coyote Creek, Hidden Hills and Quail Run. The district is also considering expanding the capacity at schools and possibly changing attendance boundaries to deal with increasing enrollment.



JORDAN M. DORONILA

Time to be unveiled soon

Tony Canales applies finishing touches to the paint on the new green clock that the Rotary Club of Danville installed near Quiznos on Hartz Avenue to celebrate its 50th anniversary. "It's meant to be something to look at," said Victor Georgiou, club president. "The clock is meant to be part of an attraction in the town." The clock will be running soon after the electricity is hooked up.



Valero adding car wash and mini-mart

Gas station to reopen in February with new services

by Kevin Zhou

The Valero Gas Station at the intersection of San Ramon Valley Boulevard and Sycamore Valley Road, which has been under construction for the past month, will reopen in February, weather permitting.

Construction on the site began after the Town of Danville approved Valero's proposal to convert the gas station's auto repair garage into a convenience store and an automated drive-through carwash.

Under the proposal, the building is being expanded by 660 square feet. The newly constructed convenience store will be 1,775 square feet, and the car wash will be 1,300 square feet. The entire exterior will be improved architecturally with the addition of new windows, paint and overhangs to protect the fuel pumps.

The town's Design Review Board made several changes to the

original plan. The board wanted warmer colors to be used on the building, a darker roof, and the use of brick, among other things.

"The Design Review Board wanted the existing building to be enhanced externally to be brought up to more Danville design standards," said David Crompton, principal planner for Danville.

A set of guidelines was developed for the contractors to follow during construction, including restricting activity to 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. In an effort to reduce noise to residences, combustion engines were required to have mufflers, and noise-generating equipment is used minimally. Danville also mandated that the contractors install a security fence around the premises.

Initially, nearby merchants raised concerns over the construction. Owners of the Sycamore

Garage on fire

Ashes in plastic container lead to furious blaze

by Jordan M. Doronila

A smoldering fire became a furious blaze that destroyed a garage and two vehicles on a pitch-black foggy morning in Danville last week on Old Creek Road. The homeowner and her dog, cat and turtles escaped unhurt, said fire officials.

"I was scared," said Janet Honeychurch, the homeowner.

The Friday morning fire was caused by fireplace ashes placed inside a plastic garbage container, said Mike Menting, deputy fire marshal for the San Ramon Valley Fire District. He said the homeowner had placed old ashes from the fireplace inside a plastic container inside the garage.

The ashes were smoldering for nine hours when they finally unleashed an inferno that singed the garage and destroyed a Volkswagen Beetle and an old Dodge Rambler, fire officials said.

The garage was blazing a little after 5 a.m. Friday, neighbors said.

They recalled hoping that Honeychurch was safe when they saw the garage burning. They also said they were frightened looking at the fire.

"It was pretty scary," said one neighbor, who did not want her name published. "The fire was fully involved in the garage."

"Time was standing still when the garage was on fire," she said while her community waited for the fire trucks. "It seemed forever until the fire department arrived."

"It was kind of scary," said Jeff Francis, another neighbor on Old Creek Road. "You see all those flames. It's surreal."

"You hope that everyone is out of the house," he added. "You feel so terrible."

Neighbors said they saw Honeychurch leave the house with her dog, cats and turtles.

Menting said his department receives many calls about such incidents during the year when people put smoldering fireplace ashes into fragile areas.

"This is something that happens annually," he said. "This normally happens this time of year."

He said putting ashes into metal containers, soaking them in water, or spreading them on a garden as fertilizer are some ways to prevent them from growing into a fire.



JORDAN M. DORONILA

The Honeychurch home entrance tells the sad saga of its garage fire last Friday.

Seventy percent of the calls made to the San Ramon Fire Department are medical emergencies needing ambulance services and life support, Menting said.

He added that usually the depart-

ment puts out fires from November to middle December which are created when people put smoldering ashes into plastic containers.

"We hope this doesn't happen again," he said. ■

Safety tips for the holidays

Being safe and secure are prerequisites for having a pleasant and fun holiday. Below are tips to make sure you and your family enjoy a safe Christmas.

- Decorations must be made from non-flammable material or treated with a flame-retardant solution or process-approved by the State Fire Marshal. They should not even partly obstruct or conceal any emergency routes, signage or devices such as exits, exit lights, fire alarm pull boxes, fire hose cabinets, fire extinguishers, sprinklers heads, smoke detectors, etc.

- All holiday trees must be kept out of corridors and away from doorways and heat sources. Cut trees must have a tag showing that they have been treated with flame-retardant.

- Lights must bear the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) seal of approval. Be certain that there are no loose sockets or wires that are frayed or damaged. Do not run wiring through doorways, under carpeting or through holes in walls. Do not use zip cord extension cords. Use a multiple outlet power strip, with an internal circuit breaker. Never plug one extension cord into another. Always turn the holiday lights off when you leave the building.

—Stanford University Environmental Health & Safety

► Continued on page 7



Gingerbread fun

Chefs honor creations of Danville boy, 8

It's a gingerbread world for Ryan Cady, 8, a second-grader at Greenbrook Elementary. The Danville boy recently tied for third place and won \$50 in the amateur division of the fourth annual Gingerbread House Competition sponsored by the Pan Pacific Hotel in San Francisco.

"Ryan has been very interested in gingerbread houses since his pre-school teacher, Mrs. Sherrie

Fredrickson of Diablo Hills Country School, encouraged him to make one several years ago," said his mother, Connie Cady. "We came upon the gingerbread house competition at the Pan Pacific while window shopping in the Union Square area a couple of years ago and asked if we could participate."

In October, they received an invitation and set about devising a theme. Ryan hit upon "The Three

Little Pigs." He found gummy candies for the straw house, pretzels for the stick house and Frooties for the brick house, said his mom. "Cute little marzipan pigs topped the creation," she added.

Others in the competition were the more traditional gingerbread houses, she noted. There was also an entry based on the game Candyland.

The judges included chef Narsai David, TV critic Jan Wahl, pastry chef Otto Eckstein and representatives from Boudin Bakery and from Macy's.

—Dolores Fox Ciardelli

District raises salaries for non-certificated employees

5 percent increase effective immediately

by Jordan M. Dornila

Teachers' aides, clerical workers and bus drivers received a salary raise from the San Ramon Valley Unified School District last week. Board members approved a proposal to raise the salaries of classified, non-licensed and non-certificated employees by 5 percent.

"There is an excellent relationship with the bargaining units and the district."

—Roberta J. Silverstein,
assistant superintendent
of Human Resources

"We're very fortunate in the district," said Roberta J. Silverstein, assistant superintendent of Human Resources for the school district. "There is an excellent relationship with the bargaining units and the district."

To them, the raise means the district values them, she added.

Negotiations between district officials and the three employee groups started at the beginning of the school year. The two parties submitted a proposal for a salary raise to the Contra Costa County Board of Education in November. The county board approved the proposal, and then the local board members approved the measure Dec. 13.

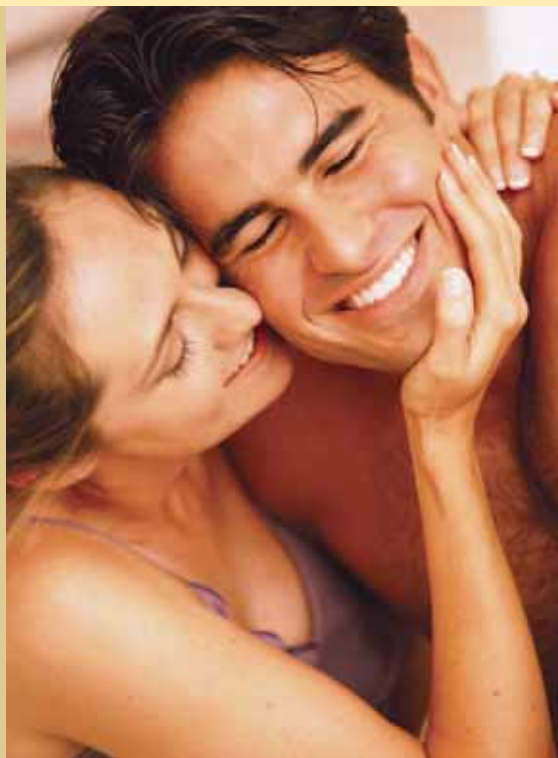
Silverstein said salary raises are discussed every year.

The district also ratified a new teacher's agreement in November. For several months, school administrators and union representatives of teachers and other district employees negotiated new terms in their contracts, which expired in June.

For information on school employee salaries, visit www.srvusd.k12.ca.us/ ■

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Holiday reading

Alexis Cohn, 12, a seventh-grader at Charlotte Wood Middle School, and her sister Brianna, 7, a second-grader at Greenbrook Elementary share their Danville Weekly with Mickey Mouse while visiting Disneyland with their parents, Dana and Dan over Thanksgiving break. Take Us Along on your travels and send photos to Editor@DanvilleWeekly.com or 315 Diablo Road, Danville 94596.

The Valero gas station on San Ramon Valley Boulevard and Sycamore Valley Road is undergoing renovations to add a mini-mart and a carwash.



DOLORES FOX CARDELLI

Valero

► Continued from page 5

Square Shopping Center and the Danville Livery & Mercantile expressed strong opposition to the gas station's expansion.

"These uses will add to the transient nature of the traffic into the intersection and be of no value to the local residents," wrote William A. Tribolet, an agent for the storeowners, in a letter to Crompton. The letter was sent in November 2001.

"While the town takes into consideration their concerns, we felt that the proposal met the town's requirements," said Crompton.

The Planning Commissioners conducted a study to determine the potential traffic impacts of the gas station's expansion and concluded that the project would lead to approximately 14 additional vehicle trips during morning peak hours and two during the evening peak hours. The cause of traffic concerns

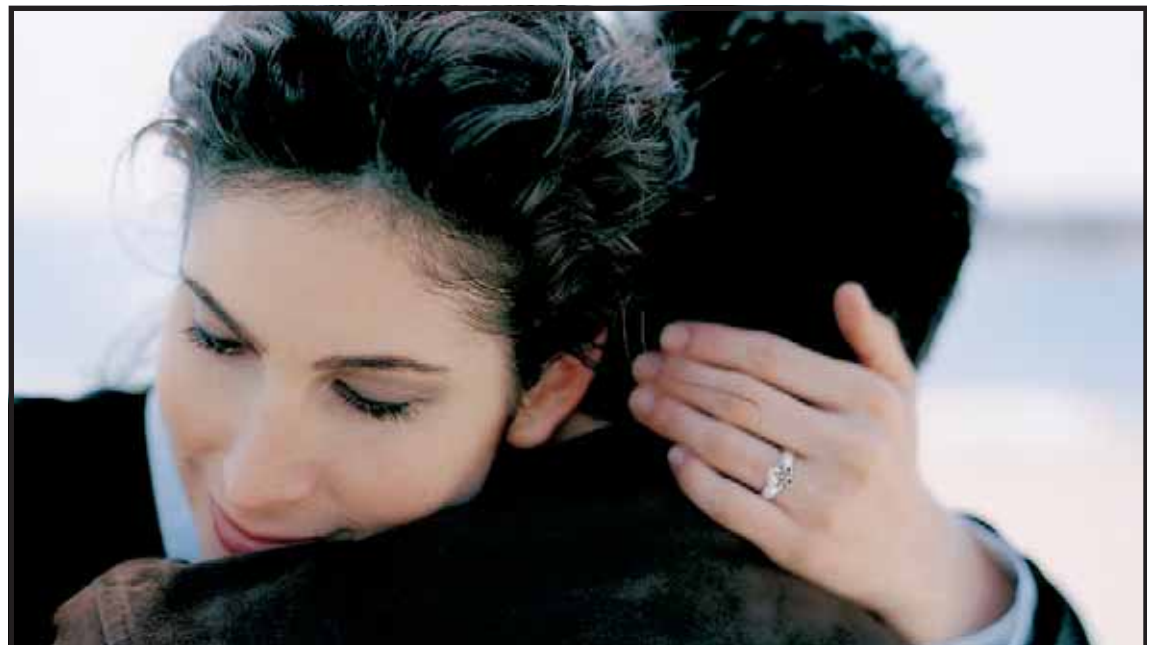
came from the proximity of the southern driveway to the intersection of San Ramon Valley Boulevard and Sycamore Valley Road. Transportation Services alleviated the problem by suggesting the establishment of a one-way exit on the gas station's southern driveway.

Another issue was the acoustical impact the carwash would have on surrounding stores, particularly the Kindercare daycare facility located behind it. The Planning Commission asked for a noise study, which concluded that the carwash would not have a significant negative impact. The noise generated would be the same as a vehicle traveling 65 miles per hour and was deemed "normally acceptable" for playground type areas by California state law. Also, the drying cycle is intermittent, plus it affects a seldom used portion of the play area.

Ryko Car Wash Systems, supplier of the carwash equipment, said approximately 20 to 30 vehicles would use the premium-service drying cycle during a weekday. ■

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Diablo Views

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI



Eight special ornaments

On my Christmas tree hang eight special ornaments. Some are lovely; others are sweet; and one is delightfully whimsical. I hang them with affection every year because each one brings the memory of an annual gathering of 12 women friends for our ornament exchange.

We meet on a Tuesday evening in December at Don Jose's in Alamo. Like our friendships, the venue has evolved. We started out at a Mexican restaurant in Walnut Creek where Tuesday night was

Margarita Night. But because of the special price on margaritas, the restaurant was too crowded and noisy, plus parking was a problem. So we switched to the more convenient Alamo location.

Our ornament exchange is not merely a friendly swap of presents. It can sometimes entail cutthroat scheming as we each try to maneuver to end up with the same attractive ornament. We choose a number from 1 to 12, with No. 1 getting first choice from the wrapped ornaments. Then No. 2 can either choose another wrapped package or, if she prefers, take the ornament from No. 1. And so on. The higher your number, the more choices you have from the unwrapped ornaments although there is always a chance that someone might take it from you in turn—and they do! It makes for a fun exchange. I'd like to say there are no hard feelings although every year we reminisce about the time we all lobbied hard for a beautiful crystal globe, only to have it accidentally smash to the floor as we gathered our belongings to leave.

At the beginning of the Christmas season, I begin to survey the stores for the perfect ornament to bring to the exchange. I prefer simple, colorful ornaments for my tree but most of the tastes seem to run toward crystal. I must admit that the ornament I purchase for the party is not what I would choose for my own tree; I want to have the "popular" ornament, the one that everyone steals from everyone else. As we each arrive at the restaurant we discreetly add our present to the growing pile because it's supposed to be a secret, who brought what. Of course at the end it all comes out as we demand to know who gave us the ornament we love.

The most appealing thing about the evening is the friendships with these other women. There was a time when we were swim moms together or in PTA or in other activities. But now I see some of them only at the annual ornament exchange. Others I see more often and several are in my book club. But at this yearly gathering, our lives seem to suddenly take a leap. When we began, we had kids in high school. Then it was college. Now our grown children have careers, many are married, and this year photos of darling little grandchildren were passed around. We ourselves change jobs, make moves, and are beginning to retire. It's a different kind of friendship, the "annual" friendship, but it's special nonetheless. There is a 1978 movie with Alan Alda and Ellen Burstyn called "Same Time

Next Year" where a couple meets up on the same date each year for a romantic reunion. Although we may catch up in annual leaps, there is still the caring and camaraderie kindled by old friendships, and perhaps the season. And that's why when I hang my Christmas ornaments each year, these eight are very special to me.

"Our ornament exchange is not merely a friendly swap of presents. It can sometimes entail cutthroat scheming as we each try to maneuver to end up with the same attractive ornament."

Gopher report

Two former gopher hosts have advised on how to keep the little pests from your garden. Ernest Schwarz, who has lived on Diablo Road for 45 years, said he solved the problem with vibrating stakes run by D batteries that he places into the ground when gophers start to trouble his garden. "They put out a buzz," he said, "and the darned things work." He mail-ordered them and recalled the price at about \$10 apiece. Online sources are mixed in their praise of vibrating devices but Schwarz said they work for him.

Hal Bailey of Alamo shared his successful methods:

1. Uncover the mounds to expose the tunnels; place rat bait over the top of the tunnel, then compact the dirt back on top. Repeat as new tunnels appear; it will take two to three months to eliminate the gophers. Do not use bait pellets in vegetable gardens, under planting areas or under the drip line of fruit trees.
2. Look for mounds along the fence line, especially near drainage ditches, which gophers use to enter a yard. Dig out these mounds 6-8 inches deep, spread ample rat bait pellets in the bottom and sides of the hole, and replace dirt.
3. For annuals or vegetables: Dig the dirt out about 6 inches, line the bottom and sides with chicken wire, and replace the dirt.

Hopefully one of these works for those of you who have gophers joining your holiday festivities. ■

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Waldron honored in Alamo

Business Person of the Year feted at tree lighting

The Alamo Merchant and Professional Association named Claudia Waldron as its Business Person of the Year, presenting the award at the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony it sponsored earlier this month.

"This special recognition has been awarded to Claudia for outstanding service to AMPA and the community of Alamo," said Joe Combs, AMPA president. "Claudia was selected from among a

number of highly qualified nominees as the best possible choice for this distinction."

Criteria for the award included membership and service to the association, service to the community of Alamo, and other achievements and accomplishments. The association received many nominations from its members, Combs said.

Each year the award is presented at the Alamo tree lighting, which is always the

first Sunday in December.

The Alamo Merchant and Professional Association is a not-for-profit business organization to improve the business environment and the community of Alamo. It holds a business luncheon the second Tuesday of each month and a social mixer the fourth Wednesday. For more information, visit www.alamobusiness.com or call Joe Combs at 989-6086.

—Dolores Fox Ciardelli



Claudia Waldron is presented the Business Person of the Year Award by Joe Combs, president of the Alamo Merchant and Professional Association, at the tree lighting earlier this month.

Worship with us this holiday season



Messiah Lutheran Church
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Join Us In Worship This Christmas Season

Saturday, December 24th

7:30 pm Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols
10:30 pm Christmas Eve Eucharist & Vigil

Sunday, December 25th, 9 am

Feast of the Nativity of our Lord

Thursday, December 29th, 7:30 pm

Thursday Evening Eucharist

Sunday, January 1st, 9 am

Feast of the Circumcision & Naming of Jesus

Friday, January 6th, 6:30 pm

Reception, Fireside Room

Feast of the Epiphany - Rev. Dr. T. Quill, Guest Preacher

Saturday, January 7th,

3:00 pm Epiphany Retreat - Part 1 "Ministry, Missions & the Divine Service." - Rev. Dr. T. Quill, Presenter

6:00 pm Potluck Dinner/Entertainment

Sunday, January 8th,

9:00 am Feast of the Baptism of our Lord

Rev. Dr. T. Quill, Guest Preacher

10:30 am Epiphany Retreat - Part 2 "Ministry, Missions & the Divine Service." - Rev. Dr. T. Quill, Presenter

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4:00 p.m. -Festal Holy
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Choir Come and See:
Children's Interactive Story

7:00 p.m. -Music of the Season

7:30 p.m. - Festal Holy Communion
with Contemporary Music

10:00 p.m. -Music of the Season

10:30 p.m. - Festal Holy Communion
with Traditional Music



Christmas Day - Sunday, December 25:

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6:00 PM Family Liturgy for Youth (Teen Choir)
7:30 PM Christmas Carols with Canticle Choir
8:00 PM Vigil Mass (Canticle Choir)
11:15 PM Christmas Carols with Choir & Orchestra
12:00 AM Midnight Mass (Chamber Choir and Orchestra)

Sunday, December 25th - Christmas Day

7:30 AM Christmas Music
9:00 AM Children's Choir
10:30 AM Chamber Choir
12:15 PM Teen Choir

(No evening Mass on Christmas Day)

Saturday/Sunday, December 31st/January 1st

New Years Eve 4:00 PM & 6:00 PM
New Years Day 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 10:30 AM \$ 12:15 PM

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions)

Saturday, December 24th 7:45-8:15 AM & 11:00 AM-12:00 PM

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Perspective

EDITORIALS • LETTERS • OPINIONS

EDITORIAL • THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Have a merry and a happy

Happy New Year. That should be a safe way to say we hope everyone enjoys the holidays we are celebrating during the next week or so.

While we certainly don't want to offend anyone or leave anyone out, it gets a bit cumbersome to say Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year. Also there is Kwanzaa, from Dec. 26-Jan. 1. This holiday was begun in 1966 by African Americans to celebrate their heritage and to unite them culturally. Kwanzaa is a Swahili word that means "first fruits of the harvest" and honors seven basic principles, one on each day. Of course most people who celebrate Kwanzaa observe other holidays as well so their greetings could get even longer. Luckily Ramadan ended last month.

A sentiment used in many Christmas cards is "Peace." But today that might be interpreted not as wishing someone well but as a political statement. So some would encourage you to avoid expressing this sentiment, although we would hope everyone would see peace as a goal even if we do not agree on how best to attain it.

Political correctness can seem ridiculous at times as we go to great lengths not to offend anyone but we have to remember how it started. There was a time when some people's beliefs were ridiculed or ignored, even in our schools and other public institutions. Many adults tell tales of being forced in school to take part in a Christmas celebration even though they were not Christian and to them it was an alarmingly foreign experience.

Let's keep a sense of humor about holiday greetings. Let's assume if someone says, "Happy Holidays" they're wishing you well, not disrespecting Christmas or Christianity. And if someone says, "Merry Christmas," don't be offended; be confident they're not saying you should believe as they do.

Relax and enjoy all the holidays. And don't forget —Chinese New Year is coming Jan. 29. Kung hoy fat choy.

"If someone says, 'Merry Christmas,' don't be offended; be confident they're not saying you should believe as they do."

YOUR TURN

The Danville Weekly encourages comments on our coverage or on issues of local interest. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday for that week's edition; please limit letters to 250 words, and provide your name, street address and daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit contributions for length and style and for factual errors known to us.

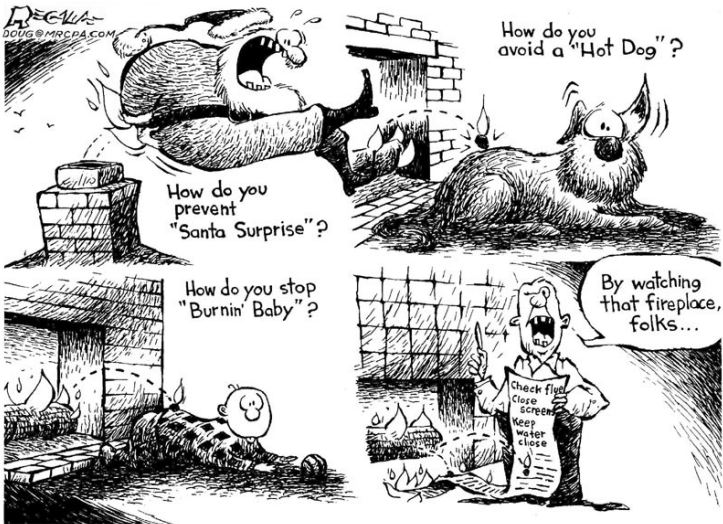
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THE POINT OF THE PEN



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Supervisor Piepho is 'doing a great job'

Dear Editor:

I find it both sad and inappropriate that your paper continually bashes Supervisor Mary N. Piepho. It is a shame that a woman who makes 200 decisions a day only gets recognized for a single one in your paper. Her decision to get rid of the R7A and Zone 36 committees was an excellent move. These people have been in violation of the Brown Act for some time and their meetings were not run according to Robert's rules nor in a professional manner.

The people who were removed from this committee need to keep in mind that they are merely volunteers, appointed to do what is best for their community. When they stop doing the right things, it is up to a supervisor with guts, professionalism and honesty to remove them and appoint people who will do a better job.

I suggest that your paper start printing facts regarding the supervisor. In addition, I suggest you don't give a voice to people with wounded pride and a battered ego. That's what being involved in public offices is all about. I think the former committee members need a thicker skin and, quite frankly, they need to move on.

The supervisor deserves a lot more than flowers for bringing about the wonderful changes she has made in the District 3 communities. I support Supervisor Piepho—I voted for her and she is doing a great job. Maybe your paper should try to interview her and get the facts instead of printing meaningless letters from a biased, terminated committee.

Leonard Blake, Danville

Still waiting for answers

Dear Editor:

What is truly unfortunate is that Supervisor Piepho would prefer to continue the dialogue in the media, obfuscating and giving no answers to repeated questions from the old R7A and Zone 36 members, rather than discussing these issues with us face to face. In her lack of response to our inquiries we can only assume that nothing warranted our dismissal or she simply doesn't know. We were not dismissed by the Board of Supervisors; the board simply followed District 3's recom-

mendation, an action that a number of them, we believe, now regret.

Supervisor Piepho promised to appoint committees that would provide broader representation for Alamo. She reduced R7A from seven to five members, tried to reduce meetings from monthly to quarterly, and even appointed the same married couple to both committees. Not to take anything away from them, but is this broader representation? Why does Supervisor Piepho not know that the old committee members have publicly offered the new committees all the help they need?

The dismissed committee members are no longer under the supervisor's control nor are we constrained by the Brown Act. We can demand from the county whatever documents we need to make sure Alamo Parks is run efficiently. The new committee members are Alamoians just like the old committee members; we will all focus on what is good for Alamo, not necessarily what is good for the supervisor or the county staff.

Randy Nahas, Alamo



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Community Pulse

POLICE BULLETIN & LOG • OBITUARIES • BIRTHS & WEDDINGS

POLICE BULLETIN

Attempted murder charge follows Danville attack

A series of vandalism incidents in Danville have now been tied to an alleged pipe bomb attack in San Joaquin County. A man identified as Juan Hurtado, 30, of Patterson was arrested by investigators from the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office in connection with a Dec. 8 attack in which the man reportedly threw a lit pipe bomb at a home in Tracy.

Several incidents occurred in Danville over the two weeks between Nov. 21 and Dec. 8. Danville police Sgt. Ron Bradley said a home on Tunbridge Road was shot at with a pellet or BB gun on the 21st. Then a few days later, the next door neighbor experienced a similar attack.

Bradley said police began looking at Hurtado after the victim of the first shooting incident reported receiving a letter of apology. Allegedly the letter said that the home had been shot at by mistake and that the second home was the intended target. When police interviewed the second homeowner he suggested that Hurtado, a disgruntled former employee of his business, may have been involved. Hurtado had made threatening phone calls to the business after being terminated last year, according to reports.

The situation turned serious Dec. 8

when, after shooting at the business owner's home on Tunbridge again, Hurtado allegedly drove up to the Tracy area, approached a home he mistakenly believed was the residence of the business owner's brother, and threw a lit pipe bomb toward the house.

Police reports say a female acquaintance of the Tracy homeowner watched Hurtado light and throw the bomb. The fuse went out and the bomb did not explode. When the incident was reported to Tracy police, investigators from that department as well as the San Joaquin Sheriff's Office began looking into the case.

Hurtado was arrested Dec. 14 and a search warrant was executed at his home. Police say evidence was found in the home linking Hurtado to both the pipe bomb and the shooting incidents. He was taken into custody by San Joaquin Sheriff's officers and charged with attempted murder. He is being held on a \$4 million bond, pending a Dec. 28 court appearance.

Bradley said Danville and Tracy police expect to file additional charges against Hurtado of felony vandalism and criminal threats.

—Geoff Gillette

POLICE LOG

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

Dec. 14

- Driving under the influence (DUI)-misdemeanor: Arrest on Fountain Spring and San Ramon Valley Blvd., at 2:10 a.m.
- Drunk in public: Arrest on Fountain Spring and San Ramon Valley Blvd., at 2:40 a.m.
- Accident-injury: Accident investigation on Bobbie Dr. and Diablo Rd., at 8:38 a.m.
- Disturbing the peace: on Love Ln., at 10:01 a.m.
- Receiving stolen property: on Love Ln., at 2:28 p.m.

Dec. 15

- Burglary-commercial: on Hartz Av., at 7:17 a.m.
- Accident-property damage: Accident investigation on Camino Tassajara and Hansen Ln., at 8:11 a.m.
- Suspicious circumstances: on Love Ln., at 10:49 a.m.
- Warrant arrest: Arrest on Stone Valley Rd., at 1:49 p.m.

- Accident-property damage: on Fostoria Wy., at 2:31 p.m.
- Hit & run-misdemeanor: Accident investigation on Lawrence Rd., at 5:57 p.m.
- Accident-injury: Accident investigation on McCauley Rd., and Novara Ct., at 9:23 p.m.

Dec. 16

- DUI-misdemeanor: Arrest on San Ramon Valley and Town and Country Dr., at 1:31 a.m.
- Burglary-auto: on Diablo Rd., at 10:03 a.m.
- Accident-property damage: Accident investigation on Greenbrook Dr., at 11:01 a.m.
- Suspicious circumstances: on Nerine Ct., at 8:40 p.m.
- Possession of dangerous drugs: Arrest on Diablo Rd. and W. El Pintado Rd., at 10:05 p.m.
- Suspicious circumstances: on W. Meadows Ln. at 11:32 p.m.
- DUI-misdemeanor: Arrest on Crow Canyon Rd. and St. George Rd., at 11:04 p.m.

Dec. 17

- Malicious mischief: on Ambience Wy., at 8:37 a.m.

Dec. 18

- Accident-property damage: on Diablo Rd. and El Cerro Blvd., at 12:19 p.m.

The Office of the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department's Valley Station in Alamo made the following information available.

ALAMO

Dec. 12

- Petty theft-from vehicle: on Bolla Ave.

Dec. 14

- Petty theft-from vehicle: on Los Alamos Ct.
- Vandalism-felony: on Limestone Rd.

BLACKHAWK

Dec. 12

- Burglary-commercial: on Blackhawk Dr. and Camino Tassajara

DANVILLE

Dec. 15

- Burglary-residential: on Shadow Creek Dr.

Dec. 17

- Disturbance-domestic: on Fleetwood Rd.

Decisions

Decisions

Decisions

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Parent photographers

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U-13 Comets headed to next cup

The under-13 Mustang Comets came in first in league play with an undefeated league season in their first year together and are now headed to the Association Cup. They attribute their success to their coach Garth Riopelle, who focused on the fact that through hard work they would achieve success and individuals do not win games—teams do. Team members are James Abers, Austin Anderson, Clay Correa, William Harrison, Keenan Kapulica, Ryan Low, Preston Lyon, Brandon Melara, Brandon Miller, Patrick Oswald, Alex Powers, Ky Rhoda, Dan Riopelle, Matti Ruetman, Alex Smith, Nick Yeh, coach Riopelle and assistant coach Mel Melara.

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Lady Wolves kick it up a notch

San Ramon girls soccer team wins sixth straight game

by Mike L. Mc Colgan

The Lady Wolves are kickin' it up a notch this season as they won their sixth straight game against Granada 6-0. They are now 6-0 overall and 4-0 in the East Bay Athletic League. Aubree Southwick had four saves for San Ramon in the Granada game.

Earlier in the week the Wolves defeated Foothill 1-0. The Falcons were also undefeated coming into this game against San Ramon. Danika O'Neill scored the winning goal for the Wolves.

Monte Vista tied Livermore 3-3 to go 2-1-1 overall and 1-0-1 in the EBAL. Rachel Jones had four saves for the Mustangs. Earlier in the week, the Lady Mustang soccer team beat California 3-0. Jones also had four saves in that game.

The San Ramon boys soccer team beat Foothill 2-0, to go 7-1 overall. They are in first place in the EBAL with a 2-0 record. Kyle Perry and Philip Tan scored the

winning goals for the Wolves.

The Monte Vista boys soccer team lost to California 3-1. Monte Vista is 7-2 overall and 1-1 in the EBAL and in second place. Jeff Penna scored the only goal for the Mustangs.

Basketball

The Monte Vista boys team beat Northgate 54-39, led by Ben Wilson who scored 17 points. On Dec. 17, Monte Vista beat Bellarmine 65-59 extending their record to 4-2. Cory Higgins led the Mustangs with 19 points.

San Ramon recently lost a heart-breaker 60-59, in the finals of the Northgate Classic against Las Lomas. San Ramon was the defending Champion of this tournament. Brandon Adams led the Wolves with 30 points.

In the opening game of the John May Classic hosted by San Ramon on Dec. 15, the Wolves beat Las Lomas 39-38. The Wolves let a 20-point lead slip away to win by 1 point. Brandon

Adams led the Wolves with 16 points. In the Championship game of the John May Classic on Dec. 16, the Wolves beat Ygnacio Valley 59-39 to go 6-3 overall. Scott O'Drobinak and Mike Kehrig led the Wolves to victory, scoring 18 points each.

Amazing stats

The 2005 San Ramon freshmen football team won the EBAL the second year in a row, with a 9-1 record. In 2004 they were 10-0. They outscored their opponents 243-71. Quarterback Joe Southwick completed 60 percent of his passes with 100 completions in 168 attempts for 1,437 yards and 17 touchdowns. Bryce Petersen caught 41 of those passes for 548 yards and eight touchdowns. Cole Huntley ran for 333 yards averaging 6.8 yards per carry, and Joe Landers ran for 392 yards and averaged 4.36 yards per carry. ■

E-mail or fax your results to Sports@DanvilleWeekly.com or 837-8454.

PREP SCHEDULE

Today

Boys Soccer - Monte Vista at the Winter Soccer Classic Game

Monday

Boys Basketball - Monte Vista at the National Prep Tournament

Tuesday

Girls Soccer - Monte Vista and San Ramon at the Excalibur Tournament (Dec. 27-30)

Girls Basketball - San Ramon at Costa Mesa Tournament (Dec. 27-30)

Wednesday

Girls Basketball - Monte Vista at the Newark Memorial Tournament

Boys Basketball - San Ramon at the St. Francis Tournament (Dec. 28-30)

Thursday, Jan. 5

Girls Basketball - Monte Vista at Skyline, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 7

Boys Soccer - San Ramon vs. Livermore, 7:30 p.m.

Girls Soccer - Monte Vista vs. Washington, 12 p.m.

Girls Basketball - Monte Vista at Windsor, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 10

Girls Basketball - San Ramon vs. Foothill, 7 p.m.; Monte Vista vs. Cal High, 7 p.m.

Girls Soccer - Monte Vista vs. Foothill, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 11

Boys Basketball - San Ramon at Foothill, 7 p.m.; Monte Vista at Cal High, 7 p.m.

Boys Soccer - Monte Vista at Foothill, 5:30 p.m.

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Oh Christmas tree

Latest trend turns tree on its tail

story and photos by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

Christmas trees can be traditional or trendy, and the latest trend is to turn them on their tails. Upside-down Yule trees are all the rage this year, and Donna Bruner of Tribez salon was among the first to see their allure.

"I had a client years and years ago that told me she had an upside down Christmas tree and how much fun it was," said Bruner. "Then I was on a quest to do something unusual and I was in a San Francisco showroom and saw it."

Now her tree is the talk of the town. Clients come in to take photos, with or without an appointment.

Bruner said the upside-down arrangement makes sense. The narrow tip on the floor leaves more room for presents.

Some of these trees hang from the ceiling with a heavy bottom to stabilize them, but Bruner's rests on a base with a strong metal rod to keep it upright. She completed the upside-down vision by surrounding the tree's top—bottom?—with an upside-down choo choo train circling the tree and brightly wrapped presents to complete the package.

Putting the tree together was a special challenge, Bruner said. "It weighs 70 pounds!" Working from the base up she had to assemble a multitude of branches, then she decorated them while standing on a tall ladder.

"But people love it," she said. "Everyone wants to know where I got it."

Germany is credited with first bringing evergreens into homes to celebrate Christmas. The tradition immigrated to the United States, and by 1830 the trees were referred to as "Christmas trees."

Christmas trees have always been subject to trends. In the late 1950s, the craze was to have a spotlight on the tree with revolving colors instead of lights resting on the branches. At some point aluminum trees were the rage. Folks have long experimented with large and small lights, twinkling, colored or all white, and different ornament types and color themes. Hanging icicles lost their popularity once it was discovered how dangerous they were for animals and how long they would hang out in the living room corners.

The upside-down trees now making the scene are artificial and 7 feet or so in height. Hammacher Schlemmer, online purveyor of quality artificial trees, was sold out of its \$600 model weeks ago. Its description calls the upside-down tree a 12th-century European tradition. Target.com advertises its 7 foot 5 inch upside-down tree for \$399.99 plus \$111.99 for shipping and also notes it is in the European tradition. This tree has 460 mini-bulbs and weighs about 25 pounds.

Last week at Tribez, Kindsey Perez, 17, sat under a hair drier with a ringside view of the tree.

"It's really interesting," she said. "I love the train upside down, defying gravity."

"It's a great twist but I wouldn't want it in my home," she added.

Enthusiasts of the upside-down tree say it's easier to see the ornaments on the wide branches. But it begs the question: What happens to the star that traditionally crowns the top of the tree? ■

Fun tree facts

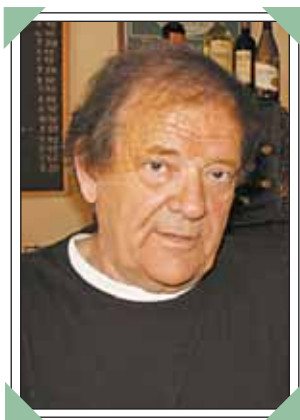
- Lights for Christmas trees were first mass produced in 1890.
- Department stores began to put up large Christmas trees inside as decorations in 1900.
- Oregon raises more Christmas trees than any other state.
- All the states, including Hawaii and Alaska, grow Christmas trees.
- A Christmas tree will reach maturity in seven to 10 years.



Christmas memories

Folks reminisce in a different kind of way

Christmas memories are often warm and fuzzy as people look back at their childhoods, whether they be yesterday or decades ago. Or memories might be sad and poignant as folks recall loved ones who are no longer with us. We took to the streets in search of memories that were different or funny or taught a lesson. Here is what we found.



Tom Lembo, owner of Lotsa Pasta, Danville

When Tom Lembo, owner of Lotsa Pasta on Hartz Avenue, was 13 years old, his mother gave him 13 presents for Christmas. He said he opened them under a Christmas tree with silver tinsel hanging from its branches at his childhood home in Oakland.

"I'd never had half that many," said Lembo, who used to own nine bakeries in San Francisco.

He said the 13 gifts included toys, a scooter, a pair of skates and some clothes. But after he opened the 13th gift, he found himself craving more presents to unwrap.

"I wanted more," he said.

He has since put things back into perspective and realized that less is often better than more. He said he learned an important lesson that Christmas.

"You could be happy with less presents, not more," he said. "You should enjoy what you get."



Chanda Jones, Alamo resident and patron of Ciao Bella Hair, Skin, & Body Salon

Christmas gifts come in different surprises during the holidays. Many young boys receive videogames. Some mothers get new silverware. And girlfriends may get diamond rings—like Chanda Jones of Alamo.

"It was absolutely magic," said Chanda Jones, when her boyfriend Steve proposed to her on a bended knee last December after they had been dating for two years.

She said they ate at a Pan Asian Restaurant in Walnut Creek and ordered shrimp, beef and chicken. After finishing their meal and ordering dessert, Steve bended down on one knee, pulled out a diamond ring, and offered a marriage proposal to her.

When the couple celebrated the Christmas holiday with their families, they all planned the wedding together.

"It was so full of love," Jones said about the wonderful Christmas occasion. "Everything just sort of came together." They are now anticipating their first Christmas as a married couple.



Chris Wenzel, Danville police chief

Spending many weeks preparing for one festive occasion, said Chris Wenzel, Danville police chief, is a great time of excitement but he'd like it to continue beyond the Christmas season.

Though Wenzel and his wife Karen enjoy seeing their 5-year-old daughter Sarah and 3-year-old son Ryan waking up and opening their Christmas presents, he wants more than one day for quality family time.

He said most people should spend more time with their loved ones during the year, instead of devoting their energies to work. He wishes Christmas came more than once a year.

"It can be a bit draining," Wenzel said about time spent at work. "The rest of the year is working."



Donna Bruner, owner of Tribez in Danville

Donna Bruner, owner of Tribez salon, said she always regaled the other stylists with tales about mischievous Kachina, her little Manchester terrier, but last year the pup really outdid herself.

Bruner had stopped at Sees Candies after work, bought several gifts for relatives and put the candy into her bedroom closet. When she arrived home after work the next day, a chocolate scent filled the air - chocolate mixed with something else unpleasant.

"She had eaten three boxes of candy," Donna said, tearing off the Christmas wrappings to get to it.

Kachina was violently ill and Bruner rushed the little dog to the emergency veterinary center in Dublin where they saved her life. She was lucky, Bruner noted, because just one-eighth ounce of chocolate can be lethal to a 16-pound dog.

"She especially liked the dark molasses chips," recalled Bruner. And she accused her fiancé of trying to do away with Kachina—most of the candy papers were on the floor on his side of the bed.



Connie Peterson, owner of the Alamo Flower Company

What better way to spread the holiday spirit than by playing pranks on family members and giggling gleefully, said Connie Peterson, owner of the Alamo Flower Company.

When Connie and her husband Jim, a former sports announcer for the Oakland Athletics and University of Minnesota, lived in New Brighton, Minn., one of Jim's family member's gave a purple Minnesota Vikings towel to a loved one.

"It was an ugly towel," Jim said.

The loved one who received the towel didn't like it and donated it to a charity organization. But another family member found the purple towel, bought it, and gave it to another relative. Jim's family kept giving the gift every season as a joke.

"It makes Christmas fun," Connie said about the prank.

Silly Strings

Young violinists form ensemble for the joy of playing together

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

The violin can be demanding, children learn as they go to lessons plus spend hours at home practicing. But there's a lighter side to it.

"My message is: Violin is fun," said violinist Brenda Rose, a Danville resident. She is also the mother of violin student Brianna, 10, and on her behalf has started up an ensemble group of like-minded pupils called Silly Strings.

"They get to this age and think the violin is boring," Rose explained. "This is the time typically when they have to decide whether to continue or not."

She gathered together nine violin students, with the help of Brianna's violin teacher, and formed Silly Strings. The girls enjoy playing together plus have fun with their music, for instance using props with different pieces.

Silly Strings performed at the Blackhawk Museum on Sunday and the week before, at Children's Hospital Oakland.

"When we went to Children's Hospital, we played Christmas music," said Brianna, who attends San Ramon Valley Christian Academy. "Normally it's a mix, like 'Turkey in the Straw.'"

She said they varied the program with some duets and solos, plus her siblings joined in as "guest singers."

"For each song, we had a prop," Brianna continued. "We had angel halos, Santa hats, clowns and stuff like that."

Teacher Nancy Mitchell, who instructs 34 students in her Danville home, wholeheartedly endorses the group.

"I think the most important thing is to share music with other people," she said, "and music should be fun. You go to a lesson every week and it can be really boring to just play with a teacher."

She noted that playing in a group is a different skill. "You learn to listen," she said. "They're learning how to play with and listen to each other.... For this age group, it's just fun to play with other people." She said otherwise it might be a few years before these students are ready to play in other ensembles or with orchestras.

Mitchell said she takes care to make the violin fun for her students so they will learn to love it and play with confidence. This was not the case when she herself learned to play many years ago in Michigan.

"I was trained so rigorously," she recalled. "It's not good for the self-esteem. I want them to enjoy what they're doing yet when they get older have discipline to know they can make it when they try. I don't think in the beginning that being hard on them works."

When considering a new student, Mitchell first asks the parents why the child wants to learn the violin. "It's such a different instrument that it has to be self-motivated," she said. "I don't want any child because the parent is telling them to do it."

"I am incredibly passionate about giving children the language of music," she added. "It's the universal language."

She recalled playing in a quartet in New York with three other people who did not speak a word of



LANI ALLEN

Members of Silly Strings look serious despite their Santa hats as they perform a holiday program at the Blackhawk Museum last Sunday. The ensemble of girls ages 8 to 11 have joined together as Silly Strings to learn to play together as a group—and to have fun with the violin.

English. "It was one of my most exciting experiences," she said. "Music is the universal language."

Mitchell said violin recitals are too much pressure for the children so she prefers workshops where they play for each other. "I give them music and they have 15 minutes to go learn it," she said. "It's very much fun."

She attended the Silly Strings performance at Blackhawk. "It's just wonderful working with kids, especially kids around here," she said. "They're really bright and motivated and wonderful to work with. Music is there for life."

Plus the violin can be your best friend, through good times and bad, she said. "If you're sad, you take it out on the violin," she said. "If you're happy, you take it out on the violin."

The members of Silly Strings are learning that music is fun, which is important, she said.

Brianna said she enjoyed entertaining at a nursing home earlier this year and at Children's Hospital, where they

played in the lobby.

"There were 15 actual kids, the staff, and people going in and out," she recalled. "Some were in wheelchairs, some were just sitting in chairs, in pajamas and stuff. The littlest one I saw was 5 or 6 years old. Mostly the staff clapped."

The other members of Silly Strings, who range in ages from 8 to 11, are Acacia Chan, Angelica Chan, Louise Judd, Brittney Irving, Waverly Runion and Mackensie Cless. The guest singers are Adelle Rose, 11; Olivia Rose, 5; and David Rose, 4.

"I try to keep a smaller, more manageable group so that we can do more and so that we can rehearse in my home," said Brenda Rose. "I had a couple of other girls last summer, but they dropped out due to scheduling conflicts."

The girls have become friends with each other plus they are becoming friends with their violins as they learn to have fun with them.

"The violin is a gift for life," said Rose.



BY JACQUI LOVE MARSHALL

Sipping the bubbly

"You go to my head and you linger like a haunting refrain; and I find you spinning 'round in my brain, like the bubbles in a glass of champagne."

—"You Go To My Head" lyrics by Haven Gillespie & J. Fred Coots

Champagne ... it goes to my head. Not really, but it certainly makes me feel light-hearted and happy. It's not the alcohol content as much as the sheer magic of champagne. You know—the ceremony of opening the bottle, the care with which we pour, the bubbles slowly rising to the top of a delicate flute, the occasions at which we imbibe it and the celebratory air—of love or friendship or good times—that accompanies our toasting with it.

Why, champagne is practically synonymous with the good life. In fact, champagne has a sensuous quality that defies description. It helps us share joy at a more daring and luxurious stratosphere than our on-the-ground worlds. With the New Year closing in on us, I thought it was apropos to talk about the "bubbly."

Among French things, champagne ranks at the top of my list. (Well, maybe behind their macaroons.) Since the 18th century, the French have had a well-known monopoly on champagne; only sparkling wines made in the Champagne region of France are allowed to be called "champagne." U.S. versions, for example, must be labeled "sparkling wine." Among champagnes, my favorite is Veuve Cliquot, popular among women for its dry taste and soft edges (and not because its CEO is a woman). Twice yearly—at the winter and spring holiday seasons—you can find good bargains on Veuve at many locations. Stock up now.

Most sparkling wines and champagnes are Brut, non-vintage or NV Brut. Brut refers to the level of dryness although there is a wide range of sweetness among Bruts; non-vintage means it includes grapes from different years to attain the best quality. Among domestic sparkling wines, I favor Moët & Chandon and its fruity and nutty flavors but its price runs above average. I like Frixenet (fresh-a-nay) for the price value. Among domestic sparkling wines, two wines highly recommended are BilleCart-Salmon's NV Brut and Pacific Echo's NV Brut. Both run about half the price of Moët. The Gloria Ferrer line of sparkling wines are consistently good for those who like a dry taste.

Champagnes are special but there are other pleasing sparkling wines. One delightful option is Prosecco, an Italian sparkling wine. In recent years, I've chosen Prosecco for casual occasions without the cost and perception of extravagance that comes with champagne. A bottle can be had for about \$12 at Andronico's or your local wine dealer. Another option is Cava, a Spanish-style sparkling wine that is crisp and light. The Crystalino label runs for \$5-\$8 per bottle. A growing trend is single-serve bottles of sparklers, good for one full glass. Try them when you've got a craving for the bubbly all by yourself.

But, remember, sipping the bubbly is a total experience. Once you select your sparkler, there are other factors to consider:

Handling & Serving

Champagne and sparkling wines are best served chilled, between 42-48 degrees. Sitting a bottle in a cham-

pagne bucket of ice water for one-half hour will chill it to perfection. Opening a bottle of sparkling wine takes a bit of forethought because of the carbonated pressure. Dry the bottle off with a towel and wrap the towel

around the body of the bottle. Carefully remove the foil and wire muzzle. Tip the bottle and cover the cork with your thumb. Gently twist the bottle (not the cork) and ease the cork out with a thud. No champagne drama, please!

Foods

Because they are light and bubbly, and range in taste from very dry to dry/sweet, sparkling wines are easy to pair with foods. Serve them with nuts, fresh fruit and cheeses of varying flavors and textures, warm dips and spicy appetizers, ethnic foods (sushi, tacos, samosas, etc.), lean meats (turkey, ham, prime rib, etc.) served on mini-buns ... and chocolate, always chocolate. If serving champagne with an entrée, then seafood, chicken and veal are ideal. Keep your meal simple so it doesn't upstage the sparkler.

Toasts

Don't sip a glass of bubbly without a toast to celebrate, honor or beckon the best things in life. Focus on aspirations and inspirations but keep it short and light. A few examples:
 "May your troubles in 2006 last no longer than your resolutions!"
 "Here's to the three Wise Men and all the women who helped them along."
 "Here's to peace, prosperity and parking spaces."

Planning for a Crowd

Sparkling wines can turn the most informal gathering into a festive celebration so have enough on hand. It is poor form to serve champagne and then skimp on it or serve it only to a select few.

You can generally expect to get five servings of sparkling wine from each 750 ml bottle. Count on each guest consuming 1-1/2 glasses for a reception; 1/2 bottle for a three to four hour affair. Buy a few extra bottles for the volunteer dishwashers and you, the host!

So, as Jan. 1 approaches, let's toast the end of a memorable year and the possibilities inherent in a new one. From me to epicureans everywhere: "Here's to health and a year of good food and drink!"

Actually, my best champagne memories are over wedding toasts (especially my own daughter's this July), with a small gathering of girlfriends celebrating someone's latest achievement, and at our once-in-a-lifetime honeymoon dinner in Paris. But I'm still collecting champagne memories, so ask me again next year. Heck, I've never sipped champagne from a high heel but, given the right opportunity and a really good bottle of it, who knows, I just might. If 2006 brings the opportunity, I'll bring the champagne!

Jacqui Love Marshall lives in Danville with her vintage-car-loving husband, two pugs and binders of recipes. E-mail her at Epicure@DanvilleWeekly.com.

Champagne cocktails

A festive way to add additional flavor (and stretch your bottles) is to offer champagne cocktails. Try one of these:

- Poinsettia: Mix 3 oz. sparkling wine, 2 oz. cranberry or cran-raspberry juice, 1/2 oz. Triple Sec in a flute.
- Jingle Bell Twist: Fill flute with sparkling wine; add a splash of Grand Marnier and an orange slice.
- Sparkle Punch: For a larger group, combine 1/2 cup pineapple juice, 1/2 cup lemon juice, 1/3 cup Triple Sec, 1 cup brandy and 1/3 cup Grenadine. Mix well, then add 1- 750 ml bottle of white wine and 2- 750 ml bottles of sparkling wine. Makes about 16 - 4 oz. servings.

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Check out these 'Dames'

Stars 2000 presenting fun spoof at Village Theatre

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

Looking for entertainment in the post-holiday lull? Let "Dames at Sea" bring some songs and laughter into your life, suggests producer Ellen B. Smith, which is being performed at Danville's Village Theatre.

"It's a family show, for children, parents and grandparents if people are looking for someplace to go after Christmas," said Smith.

The Off-Broadway musical is being presented by the Stars 2000 Teen Theatre, which is sponsored by the Diablo Light Opera Company. It's full of comedy, tap dancing and torch songs, a parody of the old 1930s musicals.

"It's a really polished performance," Smith said. "Even though the performers are young, they are very experienced. A lot of our cast members have huge resumes even at a young age."

Stars 2000 was formed by the Diablo Light Opera company to give talented teens the opportunity to work with a professional staff to hone their theatrical and musical skills in Broadway musicals. The teens give a summer show every year and this year decided to produce a winter show, too. The summer productions feature a cast of 50, said Smith, while this show has a cast of 16, but nonetheless the try-outs were very competitive.

The show opens Thursday, Dec. 19, and runs through Saturday, Jan. 7. It's been a challenge preparing, said Smith, and taking a week off for Christmas but the cast is well rehearsed.

Smith is also excited about performing in Danville's Village Theatre for the first time.

"We chose the Village Theatre because it has the perfect size stage for this show," she said. "It requires a more intimate space than you'd find at Diablo Valley College, for example." That is where Stars 2000 presents its summer musicals.

Four Danville teens are in "Dames at Sea." Megan McDermott, a student at San Ramon Valley High, plans Mona, the diva. Others are Kaitlyn Daubenmire, Madi Kay and Lindsey Scanlon.

"Bernadette Peters premiered in it when she was 17," said Smith, in 1968. The New York Post called it "a loving spoof ... every gesture is witty; every cliché—and there are a thousand—is fine honed, and exactly chosen."

This production has a live orchestra, the two pianos and drums it was originally scripted for. It has the same prop designer and costumer as the Diablo Light



Danville's Megan McDermott plays Mona and Dan Ray portrays the captain in the Stars 2000 production of "Dames at Sea" at the Village Theatre.

Opera Company. The girls have nine costume changes, including three wig changes, said Smith.

The director and choreographer is Diane Kamrin; musical director is Kerry Leyden; and set design and technical director is Daren A.C. Carollo.

Start the new year off right, says Smith. Take in a performance of "Dames at Sea." ■

Fun spoof

What: Musical comedy "Dames at Sea"

Who: Diablo Light Opera Company's Stars 2000

When: 8 p.m., Thursday-Friday, Dec. 29-30 and Thursday-Saturday, Jan. 5-7; 2 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 7

Where: Danville Village Theatre, 233 Front St.

Cost: \$14 regular; \$12 seniors and students; \$10 groups of 15 or more

Tickets: Call 314-3463 or visit www.villagetheatreshows.com

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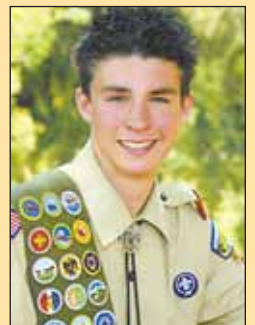
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Eagle Scout



Brian M. Walker of Troop 36 in Danville recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout. For his project, he led members of his troop to host a Memorial Day Blood Drive to help the American Red Cross to maintain its local blood supply. Walker, 18, is a senior at San Ramon Valley High School. He is the son of Nate and Joy Walker of Alamo.

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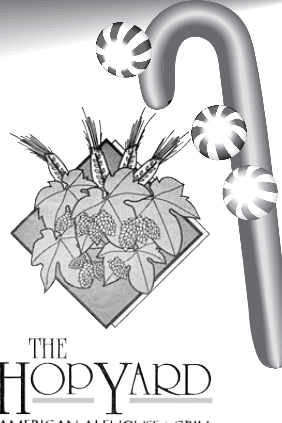
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AT THE MOVIES

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

Aeon Flux (PG-13)	Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:50 a.m., 4:50 p.m.
Breakfast on Pluto (R)	CinéArts: Fri-Tues noon, 3:30, 6:55, 9:50 p.m.
Brokeback Mountain (R)	Century 14: Fri-Tues 12:20, 4, 7, 10:05 p.m. CinéArts: Fri-Tues 11:40 a.m., 1:10, 2:40, 4:10, 5:40, 7:10, 8:40, 10:10 p.m. Hacienda: Fr-Tu 10:05 a.m., 1, 4:05, 7:15, 10:30 p.m.
Casanova (R)	Century 14: Su-Tue 11:20 a.m., 2, 4:45, 7:20, 9:55 pm
Cheaper by the Dozen 2 (PG)	Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 12:15, 2:35, 4:55, 7:15, 9:40 p.m., Sat no show 9:40 p.m., Sun no show 12:15, 2:35 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues noon, 2:30, 5, 7:30, 10 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 10:40, 11:10 a.m., 1:30, 2, 4:20, 4:50, 7:10, 7:45, 9:50, 10:20 p.m., Sun-Tues no show 10:20 p.m.
Chicken Little (G)	Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Sat 10:50 a.m., 1:15 p.m., Sun-Tues 3:45 p.m.
Chronicles of Narnia (PG)	Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 1, 4:05, 7:10, 10:15 p.m., Sat no show 10:15 p.m., Sun no show 1 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:15 a.m., 12:15, 2:25, 3:20, 6:45, 9:40 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Sat 10 a.m., 12:50, 3:40, 6:50, 9:50 p.m., Sat no show 6:50, 9:50 p.m., Sun-Tues 12:10, 3:20, 6:40, 9:40 p.m.
Fun With Dick and Jane (PG-13)	Blackhawk: Fr-Tu 12:25, 2:50, 5:05, 7:20, 9:35 p.m. Sat no show 9:35 p.m., Sun no show 12:25, 2:50 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11 a.m., 1:15, 3:30, 5:45, 8, 10:20 p.m. Hacienda: Fri-Tues 10:05 a.m., noon, 12:40, 2:30, 3:15, 5, 5:50, 7:30, 8:25, 10, 10:50 p.m., Sun-Tues no show noon, 2:30, 5, 10 p.m., Sun-Tues 2:20 p.m.
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (PG-13)	Blackhawk: Fri-Sat noon, 3:30, 7:05, 10:30 p.m., Sat no show 10:30 p.m., Sun 7:35 p.m., M-Tu 2, 7:35 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:30 a.m., 3, 6:30, 9:55 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 12:15, 6:05 p.m. Regal Imax Theaters: Fri-Tues 7:30, 10:45 p.m.
Just Friends (PG-13)	Century 14: Fri-Tues 2:15, 7:05, 9:35 p.m.
King Kong (PG-13)	Blackhawk: Fri-Tues 11:30 a.m., 3:15, 7, 10:45 p.m., Sat no show 10:45 p.m., Sun no show 11:30 a.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:40 a.m., 12:40, 1:50, 3:35, 4:35, 5:50, 7:30, 8:30, 9:45 p.m., Sun-Tues no show 12:40, 4:35, 8:30 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fr-Tu 10:30, 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 3:30, 6:30, 7:30, 10:20 p.m., Sat no show 6:30, 7:30, 10:20 p.m., Sun-Tu no show 11:30 a.m., 2:30, 6:30, 10:20 p.m. Hacienda: Fri-Tues 10, 11:10, 11:30 a.m., 2, 2:30, 3:05, 3:30, 4, 6, 7, 7:30, 8, 9:55, 10:20, 10:55 p.m., Sun-Tues no show 10:20 p.m., Sun-Tues 10:30 p.m.
Memoirs of a Geisha (PG-13)	Century 14: Fri-Tues 12:30, 3:50, 7:10, 10:25 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Tues 11:45 a.m., 3, 7, 10:10 p.m., Sat-Tues no show 7, 10:10 p.m., Sun-Tues 6:50, 10 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 11:55 a.m., 12:30, 3:55, 6:50, 7:20, 10:40 p.m.
Munich (R)	CinéArts: Fri-Tue 12:45, 2:30, 4:15, 6, 7:45, 9:30 pm Hacienda: Fr-Tu 11:20 a.m., 3:20, 7:10, 10:50 p.m.
Pride & Prejudice (PG)	Century 14: Fri-Tues 7:40, 10:30 p.m.
Rumor Has It (PG-13)	Blackhawk Movies 7: Sun-Tues noon, 2:25, 4:45, 7:05, 9:30 p.m., Sun no show noon Crow Canyon 6: Sun-Tues 11:50 a.m., 2:10, 4:30, 7, 9:30 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Sun-Tues 11, 11:40 a.m., 1:35, 4:15, 4:45, 7, 9:40, 10:15, 11 p.m., Sun, Tues no show 11 p.m., Mon no show 11 a.m.
Syriana (R)	Century 14: Fri-Tues 1:35, 4:25, 7:15, 10:10 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Sat 10:10 a.m., 1, 3:50, 6:40, 9:30 p.m., Sat no show 6:40, 9:30 p.m. Hacienda: Fri-Tues 11:40 a.m., 3:35, 7:20, 10:40 p.m.
The Chronicles of Narnia (PG)	Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tue 10, 10:30, 11 a.m., 12:35, 1:15, 1:45, 3:50, 4:30, 5, 6:40, 7:05, 7:40, 9, 10:15, 10:45 pm, Sun-Tue no show 11 a.m., 5, 6:40 pm
The Family Stone (PG-13)	Century 14: Fri-Tue 11:55 a.m., 2:45, 5:15, 7:50, 10:15 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Sat 11 a.m., 1:30, 4, 7:10, 9:45 p.m., Sat no show 7:10, 9:45 p.m., Sun-Tues 11:40 a.m., 2, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 10:50 a.m., 1:40, 4:25, 7:15, 9:55 p.m.
The Polar Express (G)	Regal Imax Theaters: Fri-Tues 10:30 a.m., 12:45, 3, 5:15 p.m.
The Producers (PG-13)	Hacienda Crossing 20: Sun-Tues 10:15 a.m., 1:20, 4:30, 7:45, 10:55 p.m.
The Ringer (PG-13)	Blackhawk: Fr-Tu 12:20, 2:40, 5, 7:25, 9:50 p.m., Sat no show 9:50 p.m., Sun no show 12:20, 2:40 p.m. Hacienda: Fr-Tu 11:50 am, 2:25, 5:05, 7:50, 10:35 pm
Walk the Line (PG-13)	Century 14: Fri-Tues 12:10, 3:40, 6:55, 9:50 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 3:25, 10:10 p.m.
Yours, Mine and Ours (PG)	Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Sat 12:45, 3, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45 p.m., Sat no show 9:45 p.m., Sun 5:25, 10:50 p.m., Mon-Tues 11:45 a.m., 5:25, 10:50 p.m. Hacienda: Fri-Tues 10:05 a.m., 3:45, 9:35 p.m., Sun-Tues no show 3:45 p.m.



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Calendar

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Art

2006 Arts Walk and Festival at Windemere

The San Ramon Arts Foundation will begin planning for the 2006 Arts Walk and Festival at Windemere. There will be an information meeting at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 11, at the Front Row Theater, Dougherty Station Community Center, San Ramon. Come hear about the new plans and find out about volunteering at this event. For information, call 336-0267 or visit sanramonarts.org.

Plein Air Style Paintings from Photos

The Alamo-Danville Artists' Society will host an artist's demonstration and lecture presented by Monterey peninsula artist Christine Crozier. Christine will demonstrate techniques for keeping your work fresh and exciting even when painting in the studio and from photos. Join Christine at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 10, at the Danville Congregational Church, 989 San Ramon Valley Blvd. The session is free. For information, call Ginger at 837-6414. The A.D.A.S. Web site is www.adas4art.org.

Author Visits

History Book Signing

Beverly Lane, curator of the Museum of San Ramon Valley, and Ralph Cozine, docent, have written a book, "San Ramon Valley: Alamo, Danville and San Ramon." There will be an author's discussion and book signing from 2-4 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 14, at Bay Books in San Ramon.

Clubs

Alamo Rotary

The Alamo Rotary meets at noon every Wednesday at Roundhill Country Club, 3169 Roundhill Road. Call Mark Kahn at 837-3262.

Blackhawk Republican Women

The Blackhawk Republican Women will host speaker Lynn Leach, former State Legislator, at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 19, at the Blackhawk Country Club. The cost is \$12 and reservations are required for this no host bar event. Make your reservations by Jan. 13 by calling Barbara at 837-7679 or e-mail baduffy@juno.com.

California Writers Club, Mt. Diablo Branch

The California Writers Club, Mt. Diablo Branch invites you to lunch with plot specialist Martha Alderson, at 11:30

a.m., Saturday, Jan. 14, at the Hungry Hunter, 3201 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Martha will discuss plotting techniques that work. The cost is \$17 CWC members and \$20 non-members. Contact Camille for required reservations no later than Wednesday, Jan. 11, at (510) 881-8929 r e-mail camille@minichino.com.

Danville Rotary

The Danville Rotary meets at noon every Monday at the Brass Door, 2154 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. For information, visit www.danvillerotary.org.

Diablo Valley Quilters' Guild Guest Speaker

The Diablo Valley Quilters' Guild presents award winning applique artist Linda Schmidt, who will be showing her beautiful quilts and talking about "Quilting for Those with Short Attention Spans," at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 18, at the Danville Congregational Church, 989 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Guests are welcome. For information, call Dianne at 837-1863.

Model RC Boaters Association

The Danville Model RC Boaters Association seeks new members. To learn more, call president Rich Mahan at 785-0421.

Mt. Diablo Genealogical Society

The society meets from 1:15-3 p.m., the third Thursday of every month except August, at the California Savings Building, Rossmoor Shopping Center, Tice Valley Blvd. and Rossmoor Parkway, Walnut Creek. Guest speakers are at each meeting.

Mt. Diablo Macintosh Users Group

Get questions answered, solutions for problems, share experiences and explore new Mac developments. Club meets at 7:30 p.m., the third Monday of every month, at the Alamo Safeway Community Room. For information, call 837-1111 or 829-5501.

Porsche Club of America, Diablo Region

This club is for owners and enthusiasts of all Porsches. It meets at 8 a.m., every Saturday for breakfast at Denny's, 803 Camino Ramon, Danville. For information, visit www.pca.org/dia.

San Ramon Valley Exchange Club

The San Ramon Valley Exchange Club invites you to join them at noon, the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, at Faz, 600 Hartz Ave., (sign in at 11:45 a.m.). Lunch is \$16. RSVP 275-2412.

San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society

The society meets at 10 a.m., every third Tuesday of the month, except August and December, at the LDS Church, 2449 Stone Valley Road. Guest speaker at every meeting. All welcome. For information, call Ed at 299-0881.

San Ramon Valley Newcomers Club Hikes

The San Ramon Valley Newcomers Club Hiking Group invites prospective members to join as they explore East Bay Regional Parks. The group meets at 8:30 a.m., every Friday. Hikes are usually two hours and within 30 minutes of San Ramon. For information, call Sharon at 735-8960.

San Ramon Valley Rotary Club

This club meets for dinner at 7 p.m., each Wednesday, at the Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Drive, Danville. Guests are welcome. The club offers a great way to make new friends while making a difference in your community. Call Bill at 838-9110.

Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 75

The organization meets at 7 p.m., the second Thursday of each month, at the Danville Veterans Hall, 400 Hartz Ave. For information, call Post Commander Mac McCuskey at 837-2740.

Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley

Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley will meet at 6 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 5, at the Outpost Casino, 2251 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. The cost is \$25, (includes dinner) and is open to all. For information, call Bob Franco at 736-5272 or visit the Web site at www.vnvdv.com.

Events

Annual Hats Off America Casino Night

The second annual Hats Off America Casino Night will be from 6-midnight, Saturday, Jan. 21, at Club Sport, 350 Bollinger Canyon Road, San Ramon. Proceeds from the Casino Night benefits Hats off America, a nonprofit organization created to provide financial support to the families of military personnel killed in the line of duty while serving the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan. Tickets are \$75 per person. For reservations, sponsorship and volunteer opportunities, contact Sparky George at 855-1950 or e-mail thebearflagrunner@yahoo.com. For additional information, visit www.hatsoffamerica.us.

Annual Shellie Awards

The 27th annual Shellie Awards, sponsored by a generous donation from the Diablo Regional Arts Association, will be at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 14, at the Dean Lesh Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Tickets are available at the Center Ticket Office for \$25, which includes a post ceremony reception. For information, call Scott at 295-1400 or e-mail dlrca@dlrca.org.

WEEKEND PREVIEW



Chanukah Menorah Lightings

Chabad of Contra Costa invites the Tri-Valley community to its Chanukah Menorah Lighting, from 4-6 p.m., Monday, Dec. 26, at the Broadway Plaza Promenade Fountain in Walnut Creek. The Beth Chaim congregation also invites the Tri-Valley to its annual Chanukah Menorah Lighting, at 7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 26-Sunday, Jan. 1, at the Blackhawk Plaza, Danville.

Danville Rotary Crab Feed

The Danville Rotary International is sponsoring a Crab Feed at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 4, at St. Isidore Church, Small Gym, 440 LaGonda Way. Proceeds will benefit the proposed SRVHS Aquatic Center and other community activities. The cost is \$40 which includes salad, crab, pasta and a prize drawing ticket. For tickets, call Mike at 837-2027 or Victor at 838-8721.

Farmers Market

The Danville Farmers Market is open from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., every Saturday, at the Railroad Avenue Municipal Parking Lot, at the corner of Railroad and Prospect avenues. Call 825-9090 or visit www.pcfma.com.

Jazz at Peace Series

Dave Rocha Quartet comes to Peace Lutheran Church continuing its Jazz at Peace series, at 5 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 8, at 3201 Camino Tassajara. Jazz at Peace is based on the Jazz Vespers series founded in New York City in 1961 at St. Peters Lutheran Church. The event is free and parking is also free.

New Year's Eve Casino Classic Celebration 2005

Blackhawk Museum and BHEI Inc. invite you to the New Year's Eve Casino Classic Celebration 2005, from 7:30 p.m.-1 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 31, at the Blackhawk Museum. Enjoy an evening of champagne, hors d'oeuvres, casino gaming and prizes, San Francisco quintet, gourmet dinner stations (Scott's catering), dancing, etc. Cost is \$135 per person inclusive, black tie optional. Reserve early - deadline Dec. 24. Must be 21 years old and no refunds after Dec. 24. Telephone reservations only at 736-2277, ext. 653.

Special Two-Hour Yoga Class

The public is invited to kick off the New Year by participating in a special Yoga class (all levels welcome), from 10 a.m.-noon, Sunday, Jan. 1, at World Yoga, 1530 South Main St, Walnut Creek. Cost is whatever you want to donate, to benefit STAND! Against Domestic Violence. For information, call 274-9642 or visit www.world-yoga.com.

tion of model trains, exotic layout of track, and a wealth of knowledge on European railroading. Silly Strings, a group of young violinists, will perform in conjunction with the train exhibit. All Aboard 2005! runs through Jan. 8.

Fundraisers

Make Our Garden Grow

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church presents a cabaret-style concert, "Make Our Garden Grow," at 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, Dec. 30-31, at St. Timothy's Church, Parish Hall, 1550 Diablo Road. Directed by Pat Parr, the show features six talented singers performing Broadway and other contemporary tunes. Tickets are \$25 (includes refreshments) and proceeds will support the Meditation Garden and the St. Timothy's concert series. To reserve table seating, call Pat at 837-4993, ext. 15.

Health

American Red Cross Blood Services

The American Red Cross will be conducting a Community Blood Drive, from 11:45 a.m.-5:45 p.m., Friday, Jan. 13, at Grange Hall, 743 Diablo Road. All donors will be entered into a drawing for a Hawaiian trip for two. To schedule an appointment, call Patty at 837-4399 or visit www.beadonor.com (code: DANVILLE).

Magic by Alex

Award winning magician Alex Gonzalez will delight children of all ages with his magic skills, at 4 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 24, in the Children's Reading Room at the Danville Library, 400 Front Street.

Vaccination Season

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has added a new group to those who need flu shots - people with respiratory problems, any condition that makes it hard to breathe or swallow, such as brain injury or disease, spinal cord injuries, seizure or muscle disorders. Flu shots are \$25 and pneumonia shots are \$35 at flu shot clinics, with no charge for those covered by Medicare Part B. To find a nearby clinic, call (800) 500-2400 or visit www.suttervna.org.

Exhibits

All Aboard 2005!

The European Train Enthusiasts has returned to the Blackhawk Museum for the holiday season with its collec-

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Yoga Classes

The Diablo Yoga Center offers community classes (taught by student teachers), from 4-5 p.m., Mondays and Thursdays, at the Diablo Yoga Center, 125A Town and Country Drive, for \$8 per class. For information, call Lauren at 838-7878 or visit www.diabloyogacenter.com.

Holidays

Annual Chanukah Menorah Lighting

Beth Chaim congregation invites the Tri-Valley community to its eighth annual Chanukah Menorah Lighting, at 7 p.m. nightly from Monday, Dec. 26-Sunday, Jan. 1, at the Blackhawk Plaza. The first public lighting, on Dec. 26, will be a special celebration with music, dancing and treats. There will be a special interfaith lighting ceremony and celebration Friday, Dec. 30. The public is invited.

Chanukah Menorah Lighting

Chabad of Contra Costa presents Chanukah Menorah Lighting, from 4-6 p.m., Monday, Dec. 26, at the Broadway Plaza Promenade Fountain, Walnut Creek. There will be live music, Chanukah gelt, Contra Costa's largest menorah, and the event is free for the whole family. For information, call 937-4101.

Chanukah on Ice

Chanukah on Ice is a Jewish celebration for the first night of Chanukah, from 6-8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 25, at the downtown Walnut Creek Ice Rink, at the corner of Civic and Broadway. There will be Jewish music, food concessions and more. Advance tickets (including skate rental) are \$10 for an individual and \$32 for a family pack of four. Tickets at the event are \$12. For information, call 937-4101.

Christmas Memories at the Museum

Christmas Memories at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, 205 Railroad Ave., will continue through Jan. 7. The Museum is open from 1-4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday and 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays. The exhibit includes Christmas trees, toys and cards from eras past. Gingerbread houses replicating historic buildings from the area will also be on display. Admission is free but donations are encouraged. For information, call 837-3750 or visit www.museumsvr.org.

Kids & Teens

Adventure Guides

The San Ramon Valley YMCA offers three programs for fathers and their children. Formerly Indian Princesses and Guides, the Adventure Guides are Junior Explorers (pre-school to kindergarten), Guides and Princesses (kindergarten-3rd grade), and Trail Blazers (4th-8th grade). Fathers spend special times with their sons and daughters, camping, rafting, at sports events, bowling and much more. For more information, call 831-1100.

Working on the Railroad!

This hands-on family funshop is from 1-4 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 8, at the Blackhawk Museum. This program features imaginative and interactive activities such as building track and blasting tunnels, all while listening to your favorite train stories and enjoying refreshments. For more information, call 736-2277 or visit www.blackhawkmuseum.org.

Literary Events

Great Books Weekend at Asilomar

All book lovers are welcome to the San Francisco Great Books Council's spring event weekend, April 7-9, at the Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove. "Madame Bovary," "Democracy in America," "The Price" and selected poetry are on the agenda. The event includes six meals, reading materials, and two parties. Rates are \$227-\$368 per person. To sign up,

visit www.greatbooks-sf.com or call Jimmie Harvey at (415) 383-1319.

Library Book Discussions

The Book Discussion Group has chosen books for December and 2006. The discussion group meets at 11 a.m. the second Thursday of every month from September through May at the Mt. Diablo room of the library. Everyone is welcome.

Miscellaneous

Concerto Competition

The Prometheus Symphony Orchestra is sponsoring a concerto competition for East Bay string, wind and percussion players, ages 18 years or younger. The competition will be at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 17, at Zion Lutheran Church, Piedmont. The winner will perform with the orchestra on Sunday, March 26, and will receive a \$200 award. Application deadline is Jan. 6; applications are available by calling 447-3659 or visit www.prometheussymphony.org.

Mt. Diablo Macintosh Users Group

Get questions answered, solutions to problems, share experiences and explore new Mac developments. Meets at 7:30 p.m., third Monday of every month at Alamo Safeway community room. Call 837-1111 or 829-5501, for information.

Walnut Creek Christian Academy Open House

Walnut Creek Christian Academy, a biblically based private school educating preschoolers through eighth grade, will hold its annual open house for prospective families from 9-11 a.m., and 6-7:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 26. This will be a casual come-and-go forum where parents may tour the campus, visit classrooms, meet teachers and administrative staff, preview curriculum, learn about before and after-school programs, etc. Refreshments will be served.

On Stage

'Dames at Sea'

Stars 2000 Teen Theatre, sponsored by Diablo Light Opera Company, presents "Dames at Sea," a musical gem full of comedy, tap dancing, and torch songs. This full-scale Broadway musical will open Thursday, Dec. 29, and close Saturday, Jan. 7. Evening performances are at 8 p.m. and matinee performances are at 2 p.m., at the Danville Village Theatre, 233 Front St. Tickets range from \$12-\$14 and can be purchased by calling 314-3463.

Role Players Ensemble Theatre

Season tickets are now available for "Wrong Turn at Lungfish" (story of a blind and bitter college professor and his encounter with a saucy, street-wise young woman who volunteers to read to him in the hospital), Jan. 20-Feb. 11; and "Gun-Shy" (no-holds-barred comedy about marriage, divorce, infidelity, incompatibility, eternal love, etc.), April 21-May 13. Performances are at the Village Theatre, 233 Front St. For information and ticket purchases, call 820-1278.

Wigged Out

Victoria's Hair on Stage in downtown Danville presents the outrageous musical comedy "Wigged Out!" most Saturday nights at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. through June 2006, at Victoria's Hair on Stage, 520 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Wigged Out, voted "Best of the Best" in the Tri-Valley for two years running, is produced by Shelly Award winner, Jeff Seaberg. Tickets are \$38 and can be purchased at Victoria's Hair on Stage Box Office, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Saturday or by calling 855-7469.

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. Cost is \$1. Reservations are required. Call Jerri Kaldem at 837-6283.

Danville Senior Citizens Club

The club meets from 9:45 a.m.-2 p.m., every Monday at the Danville Veterans' Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., for line dancing exercise, bingo, mah jong and more. Membership is just \$9 a year. Call Fran Britt at 743-4026.

Prime Time

Prime Time, a non-denominational gathering of "seasoned citizens," meets from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. every Tuesday at the Community Presbyterian Church, 222 W. El Pintado. Various activities are offered in addition to educational speakers and day trips. A home-cooked meal is served at noon for \$3. Feel free to drop in or call Ruth Ann at 820-6387 for information or to be added to the mailing list. Need transportation? Call Gloria at 837-5229. "There are no strangers, just friends you've yet to meet."

Spiritual

Menorah-Lighting Celebration

Beth Chaim Congregation's annual menorah-lighting celebration will be at 7 p.m. each evening from Monday, Dec. 26, to Sunday, Jan. 1, at the Blackhawk Plaza. The first public lighting on Dec. 26 will be a special celebration with music, dancing and treats. There will be a special interfaith lighting ceremony and celebration on Friday, Dec. 30. The public is invited.

Sports

Adult Open Gym Basketball

Danville Parks and Recreation Department holds drop-in basketball year-round at the Los Cerros Middle School, 968 Blemer Road, for ages 18 and over. Drop-in times are 7:30-9 a.m., Saturdays. Bring your own ball. Cost is \$3 for residents, \$5 for non-residents. Call 314-3400.

Adult Softball

Adult Softball plays pickup softball at 9:30 a.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays year-round. New members welcome. Call Bob Randall at 855-4646 for more information.

Danville Tennis Club

The Danville Tennis Club meets 6:30-9 p.m., Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays; and 9-11 a.m., Saturdays for drop-in tennis at San Ramon Valley High School. This free co-ed club provides play for 4.0 to 5.0 and very strong 3.5 level players. See information at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/danvilletennisclub>.

Indoor Soccer for Boys and Girls

The Town of Danville is bringing soccer indoors this winter for youths ages 3-7. "Mix It Up" is an introduction to soccer, with footwork and proper skill development emphasized in a fun and supportive atmosphere. Classes are on Sundays from Feb. 5-Mar. 26 at Los Cerros Community Gymnasium, 968 Blemer Road. There are several classes for ages 3-5 and 6-7. The cost is \$65 for Danville residents and \$73 for non-residents. For class times and to register, go online to www.ci.danville.ca.us, visit the Danville Community Center, 420 Front St., or call 314-3400.


Learn Tennis, Get Free Racquet

Learn to play tennis in six hours and receive a free Dunlop Tennis Racquet. Sponsored by the United States Tennis Association, new classes start the first Monday of each month, from 6:30-8 p.m., at San Ramon Valley High School. The cost of six hours of group lessons is \$100 per player. Lessons taught by former world ranked tennis professional/30-year coach. To register, call Brett, USPTA P-1 at 683-2460.

Roller Hockey Teams

The Golden Skate Roller Hockey League is forming its Winter Season teams now. The season is from Jan. 9-Mar. 21. The leagues include the

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San Ramon Valley Tennis Club
San Ramon Valley Tennis Club is looking for new members. We offer league play for women throughout the year for both A and B players. Games are played on weekdays, during the day, in the East Bay. Membership fee is \$30 per year. For information, call Laurie at 820-0695.

Walnut Creek Tennis Club
WCTC is a free, co-ed tennis group for single adults of all ages and levels (primarily 2.5-3.5). It plays drop-in tennis from 9 a.m.-noon, Saturdays and Sundays at Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek (S. Main). See information at <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/wctc/>.

Support Groups

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 Road.

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 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton. Call 560-0842.

Breast Cancer Support Group

This is a staff-facilitated support group for women with breast cancer. It meets at 6:30 p.m., the first

Wednesday of each month at the San Ramon Regional Medical Center, 7777 Norris Canyon Road, in the West Day Room of the South Building. Call Lisa Peguese at 275-8414.

Cancer Support Groups

Free support, education and stress management for cancer patients and their loved ones, including general support groups for all types of cancer patients as well as cancer specific groups for breast cancer, colorectal cancer, ovarian cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer, brain tumor, support groups for caregivers and life after cancer. Groups meet at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. For times and days, call 933-0107.

ClutterLess (CL) Self Help Group

Is clutter stressing you out? Cluttering is a psychological issue, not just an organizing issue. Meetings are from 7-8:30 p.m., Mondays (except holidays), at the

Pleasanton Presbyterian Church, Room 7, 4300 Mirador Drive, Pleasanton. For information, call 426-5311.

Danville TOPS

The Danville chapter of Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) meets at 9 a.m., every Tuesday at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 1550 Diablo Road. Call Bob Blendow at 935-9344 or Rosemarie at 838-7870

Fibromyalgia/Pain

The San Ramon Valley Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain Support Group meets from 7-9 p.m., every other Monday in Danville. Call Denise for location and information at 837-0510.

Hospice Offers Support

Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa offers a variety of support groups and workshops for people experiencing grief and loss after the death of a loved one. Individual grief counseling for Hospice families is also available. Groups are offered from 7-9 p.m., Friday evenings at the San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church in Alamo. All groups and workshops are offered without fee and require preregistration. For a schedule of groups in the Pleasant Hill area, for additional information and/or to register, call 887-5678

Overeaters Anonymous

The group offers a 12-step approach to issues around food, overeating, anorexia and bulimia. It meets from 7-8 p.m., every Tuesday at the Danville Congregational Church, 989 San Ramon Valley Blvd. No fees. Call Susie at 275-1391.

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, 989 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Call 831-8172.

Child Abuse Prevention Council
The Contra Costa County Child Abuse Prevention Council needs volunteer speakers for the community education program. Volunteers must complete a mandatory 24-hour speaker's training course. For information, call 946-9961.

Contra Costa Academy of Fine Art
The academy seeks new volunteers and members to help with tasks ranging from bookkeeping to recruiting instructors. The group meets noon-1 p.m., the second Friday of the month at Richard's Art & Craft Store, 225 Alamo Plaza, Alamo. Call Beth Batchelor at 837-5654.

Help Hospice Patients

Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa (HPCCC) has three volunteer opportunities available in East Contra Costa County: certified massage therapists, patient support volunteers, and bereavement volunteers. Annual training is provided and begins Jan. 25. For information or to schedule an interview, call 887-5678 or e-mail volunteers@hospicecc.org.

Lindsay Wildlife Museum

Docents are needed to lead class tours, teaching children and others about our important connection with wildlife and the world we share. Call 935-1978 or visit www.wildlife-museum.org.

Literacy Tutor Training

Project Second Chance (PSC), the Contra Costa County Library adult literacy program will train volunteers to become literacy tutors. Training is from 6:30-8:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 18, and continues from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 21 and 28, at the PSC office, 75 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill. Volunteers needed in East and Central Contra Costa County. For more information, call 927-3250 or e-mail pcs@cclib.org.

Make a Difference

Reutlinger Community for Jewish Living (RCJL) in Danville provides assisted living, Alzheimer's and skilled nursing care in a community our residents call home. Volunteers play a key role at RCJL and opportunities are available for students and adults. For information, call Volunteer Coordinator Irma at 964-2098.

Regional Medical Center

The Contra Costa Regional Medical Center needs volunteers to work in patient services, gift shop or at the information desk. For an application or information, call Julie Kelley, Volunteer Coordinator, at 370-5441.

Search and Rescue

The Contra Costa County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team needs volunteer members to respond to missing person incidents, disasters and other critical incidents. Team members are on call 24/7 year round. The program provides required training including wilderness traveling, first aid, map and compass, tracking disaster response and search skills, and may additionally include special training for canine, equestrian, technical, mountain bike or other rescue skills. For information and applications, visit www.contra-costasar.org or call 646-4461.

Trails Maintenance

East Bay Trail Dogs is an all-volunteer group that has built, repaired and helped maintain single-track trails in the East Bay Regional Park District, the Mt. Diablo State Park, and Walnut Creek open space. Volunteers meet the fourth Saturday and one weekday each month. To participate, call Harry at 443-3925.

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue (TVAR) offers volunteer orientations from 1-2:30 p.m., the second Saturday of each month at East County Animal Shelter (ECAS) in Dublin. Contact Noella Hartshorn at 846-0745 or e-mail noellehartshorn@comcast.net for information.

Volunteer Interpreters

The California Medical Association seeks community volunteer interpreters for Contra Costa County to assist physicians when other interpretation resources are not an option. If you possess a proficiency in any foreign language and experience interpreting in a health care setting, you are encouraged to apply. Contact CMA at (866) 241-4262, or e-mail communityvip@cmanet.org.





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For one day only, save 20% on all in-store inventory and receive tax benefits while extending help to those in need.

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---	---

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Volunteering

Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association of Northern California, East Bay branch, seeks volunteers to facilitate support groups, staff the help line, and perform a variety of office support at its office in Lafayette. Call (800) 660-1993.

American Red Cross Blood Services

The American Red Cross Blood Services is holding a volunteer orientation from 10 a.m.-noon, on Wednesday, Jan. 4 and 6-8 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 6230 Claremont Ave., Oakland. For information, call (510) 594-5165.

Assistance League of Diablo Valley

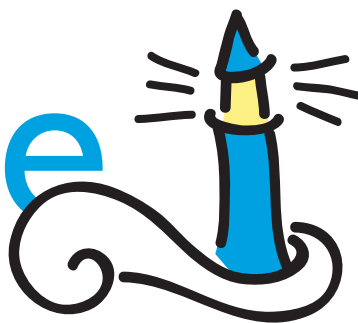
This chapter of the National Assistance League seeks new volunteer members to help with a wide range of philanthropic service projects in many Contra Costa communities. These include vision screening in elementary schools, distributing clothing to school children in need, daily reassurance phone calls to homebound elderly and handicapped clients, and staffing the chapter's Lafayette thrift shop. Call 934-0901 or visit <http://diablovalley.assistanceleague.org>.

Blackhawk Museum Docent Training

If you are interested in becoming a much appreciated part of the Blackhawk Museum family while contributing to your community, making new friends, learning new things, and having fun, become a docent! Training is from 10 a.m.-noon, Mondays, Nov. 7- mid-June 2006, at the Blackhawk Museum. For information, contact Norma at 736-2277 ext. 238.

Care for Wildlife and the Earth

The Lindsay Wildlife Museum offers classes providing information on the work of the museum and how you can help wildlife. The orientation is free, but preregistration is suggested. You must be at least 18 years old. Classes are from 6:30-8 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 8, and Wednesday, Jan. 11, and from 3-4:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 10. For more information, call 935-1978 or visit www.wildlife-museum.org.



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Bulletin Board

115 Announcements

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Classified
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925-600-0840

Tuesday 11:59 PM
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215 Collectibles & Antiques

Chinese antiques

Miscellaneous Furniture

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230 Freebies

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Pleasanton, 3 BR/2 BA - \$2100/mont

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Real Estate

OPEN HOME GUIDE AND REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

SALES AT A GLANCE

This week's data represents homes sold during November 2005

Danville	Alamo	Walnut Creek
Total sales reported: 14	Total sales reported: 4	Total sales reported: 18
Lowest sale reported: \$725,000	Lowest sale reported: \$835,000	Lowest sale reported: \$220,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,450,000	Highest sale reported: \$2,450,000	Highest sale reported: \$1,462,000
Average sales reported: \$1,141,928	Average sales reported: \$1,858,750	Average sales reported: \$832,194

HOME SALES

Source: California REsource

Danville	Alamo	Walnut Creek
Alamatos Drive C. & M. Vashel to J. Baker for \$725,000	185 Chanticleer Lane B. Christensen to O. Mujacidi for \$2,450,000	748 Lisboa Court Wilson Trust to M. & L. Light for \$950,000
430 Alisal Court Diva Trust to W. Hall for \$1,299,000	910 Danville Boulevard E. & M. Frisa to S. & S. Stamates for \$835,000	44 Loma Vista M. & U. Foley to E. & C. Donaldson for \$1,170,000
64 Blackhills Place T. & L. Duross to T. McDaniel for \$1,400,000	263 Livorna Heights Road J. & M. Porter to M. & R. Berry for \$2,000,000	450 North Civic Drive #207 Maderos Trust to A. Hoover for \$299,000
380 Edinburgh Circle J. & J. Pettus to C. & A. Scurtu for \$1,250,000	58 Medlyn Lane Miles Construction to T. Calise for \$2,150,000	900 Savannah Court T. Morrill to Lundstrom Trust for \$920,000
315 Elati Court Silverman Trust to F. & W. Kettenstock for \$1,191,500	Walnut Creek	150 Sharene Lane #305 J. Young to V. Moss for \$360,000
110 Gardner Place Passey Trust to Cumpston Trust for \$769,000	2825 Acacia Road R. & M. Setterbo to S. & S. Bauer for \$1,462,000	2010 Strand Road Wiley Trust to R. Libby for \$900,000
40 Grandview Court Tokarz Trust to J. & M. Nuzum for \$1,450,000	2835 Acacia Road T. Hordos to R. & M. Setterbo for \$625,000	1860 Tice Creek Drive #1250 Moore Trust to Nufeld Trust for \$220,000
34 Haskins Ranch Circle J. Madrid to R. & K. Cahn for \$840,000	1877 Chaparro Court Justmann Trust to D. Haren for \$1,362,500	1840 Tice Creek Drive #2206 A. Gardner to Armstrong Trust for \$575,000
240 Madeline Lane Shapell Industries to M. Heacock for \$1,130,500	3051 Citrus Circle Citrus Walk Limited to G. Lee for \$833,000	1769 Tice Valley Boulevard #26 J. Schmidt-Blackman to R. Booth for \$560,000
253 Madeline Lane Shapell Industries to G. & K. Baumgartner for \$1,370,000	3053 Citrus Circle Citrus Walk Limited to F. Davis for \$820,000	
550 Mikado Place Weichert Relocation Resources to T. & S. Sullivan for \$1,010,000	21 El Paseo J. Mullins to Walden Park Associates for \$1,075,000	
16 Montecito Drive M. & A. Fanning to M. Dunn for \$1,072,000	2180 Hadden Road W. & K. Kastigar to A. & R. Coppersmith for \$1,038,000	
154 Parkhaven Drive R. Morefield to Hill Trust for \$1,280,000	3164 Hudson Avenue Watkins Trust to B. Ratto for \$760,000	
2430 White Oak Place K. Gray to P. & C. Bakarich for \$1,200,000	1931 Lakeshire Drive Cronk Trust to Crist Trust for \$1,050,000	



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WEEKLY

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5 Bedrooms	10 lots Bedrooms
35 Hidden Hills Pl. \$2,500,000 Sat 1-4 p.m. Prudential CA Realty 314-2414	Kolb Ranch Dr. \$Starting \$1,250,000 Sat/Sun 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Empire Realty 217-5040

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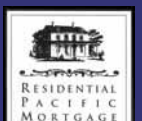
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Stunning Contemporary Estate **\$3,950,000**
Spectacular home in Jones Ranch on nearly 2 acres with breathtaking views of Mt. Diablo. 6bd, 5-full/2-half baths with nearly 6700sf, cabana with bd/ba.
Dave Bauer **925.855.4040**



BLACKHAWK

Phenomenal Pepperwood Estate **\$2,799,000**
Private end of court, surrounded by open space. Large granite and stainless kitchen, downstairs master and office, pool, spa, outdoor kitchen and much more.
Bonnie King **925.855.4072**



ALAMO

Spectacular Custom with Privacy **\$2,099,000**
Westside, backing to Las Trampas Wildlife Refuge on private road. Martin Perri interior designed home. Black bottom pool and more.
Dennis Harvey **925.855.4059** **JuDee Bell** **925.855.4022**



BLACKHAWK

Completely Renovated! **\$1,996,000**
8 years old and just completely renovated with new carpets, interior designer paint finishes, exterior paint, new granite kitchen, new baths, new wine room and bar.
Mike Conklin **925.648.5319**



DANVILLE

Garden Home Retreat **\$1,750,000**
Lends itself to Old World charm nestled among shady redwoods and park-like setting in much sought after neighborhood in Westside Danville.
Jim Kolins and Tammy Bergstad **925.855.4172**



DANVILLE

Gorgeous Magee Ranch **\$1,585,000**
Lovely lot, backing to open space. 4 bedrooms plus library, 3.5 baths, loaded with upgrades, granite kitchen, and sparkling pool.
Carol Erbert **925.736.1666**



BLACKHAWK

Wow! Don't Miss This One! **\$1,359,950**
Updated kitchen/stainless steel appliances. Pool and spa. 4bd, 3ba, master suite porch overlooking the hills.
Mary Cleland **925.998.3808**



DANVILLE

Desirable Shadow Creek **\$1,179,000**
This El Grande model offers the best in amenities, 4bd, 3ba, 3237+/-sf. Enjoy a family oriented neighborhood in a convenient location.
Todd Weinberg **925.855.4125**



DANVILLE

Big Bang For Your Buck! **\$1,125,000**
This showcase home features 4bd, 2.5ba, large open kitchen and family room. Spacious downstairs master suite. New dual-paned windows throughout.
Dale Schroeder **925.855.4159**

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