

Looking for a cure

Golf tournament to raise money and awareness of Rett syndrome > **page 16**

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Prudent pruning

Danville to trim big oak vertically on El Pintado

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Danville

W E E K L Y

Mail-in ballots

Bryan Ranch vote could halt mega-mansions

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Q: How has this long rainy season affected you?



I've been trying to build a second unit, a little cottage in the back of our house, but I haven't worked on anything in more than five months because it keeps raining.

Brian McGinnis
software engineer



It's miserable. I hate the rain. I was counting down the days to April but that didn't help. I was actually watching "Groundhog Day" the other night with my brother. We were saying Punxsutawney Phil must have predicted six more weeks of winter.

Grace Newman
barista



It's depressing. I lived in Seattle for eight years and this is reminding me why I left. I think it's going to benefit us if we can be patient and get through it. I've got two dogs and they want to be outside, so it's difficult. But you change your lifestyle and you get through it.

Rob Smith
sales manager



I like the differences in weather, personally. I like having seasons. I don't do well in the sun, so I can spend more time outdoors this way.

Roger Gray
self-employed



I clean cars for a living, so it puts a damper on a lot of things when you have to be outside. I've taken trips, too—to Napa and Tahoe—and it's stressful to drive in this weather.

Joel Norsworthy
car detailing business

COMPILED BY NATALIE O'NEILL

ABOUT THE COVER

The San Ramon Valley High School choir practices for its trip to New Orleans. Photo by Jordan M. Doronila. Cover design by Jason Lind.

Vol. 1, Number 51

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ The weather has been rotten and you can't ask people to stand around in the rain. ”

—Alicia Watson about postponing the dedication of Andrew H. Young Park in Alamo. See story, page 5.

EPA honors Danville ecological crusader Jeff Gustafson

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency honored 19-year-old Jeff Gustafson of Danville as an environmental hero. Gustafson was recognized for coordinating a host of environmental projects throughout the Easy Bay, including the maintenance of the Iron Horse Trail. Around 39 groups and individuals were recognized by the agency, and 13 of them, including Gustafson, are from the Bay Area.

At an early age, Gustafson delved into ways that would sustain ecologically healthy surroundings. While he was a student at San Ramon Valley High and even after he graduated, he and fellow members of an organization called Student Activists for a Viable Environment, or SAVE, conducted four waste audits of the school, with the help of the Waste Authority.

Nominate an outstanding teacher

The Warren W. Eukel Teacher Trust is accepting nominations for its 2006 Teacher Awards. The trust began giving annual awards in 1991 for outstanding teachers in Contra Costa County who have made extraordinary contributions to their students, both inside and outside the classroom. This year, the amount of each award will be \$10,000, and it may be used in any manner the recipient wishes.

Nominations will be accepted until June 30. For more information, call Marianne Fogle at 945-0200.

New buses for school routes

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District will lease eight new school buses for students with disabilities. Trustees approved a motion last month to allow the district to spend \$250,000 for the new vehicles.

"It's a good way for us to maintain our fleet of buses that is more cost effective," said Terry Koehne, district spokesman. The new buses will have air conditioning, seatbelts and wheelchair access, he said. Some of the routes will include stops at Monte Vista High, Sycamore Valley Elementary, Charlotte Wood Middle School, Diablo Vista Middle School, Ranch Romero Elementary, Stone Valley Middle School and Los Cerros Middle School.

Beasts nearing extinction

Today and tomorrow are the last chance to visit the exhibit, "Beasts in Your Back Yard," at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. The display on prehistoric creatures that roamed this area 9 million to 10 million years ago opened in January and is being presented in cooperation with the UC Berkeley Museum of Paleontology and the Blackhawk Museum. The exhibit was underwritten by the J.M. Long Foundation.

The Museum of the San Ramon Valley is located in the restored Southern Pacific Depot at 205 Railroad Ave. in Danville. Hours are 1-4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday; and 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays. Call 837-3750.

Corrections

The story on visiting French students needing homes on page 4 in the April 14 issue should have given the contact cell phone number for Danville organizer Terry Griffith as (415) 370-6133.

The story "Like to write? Join a Club" on page 16 in the April 14 issue should have said Tri-Valley Writers is based in Pleasanton.

Bank blast

Heated roof explodes onto Hartz and Diablo
by **Jordan M. Dornila**

Part of the roof of Heritage Bank of Commerce in Danville exploded into pieces all over the road last Thursday after a fire started in a pillar of the bank building, on the corner of Hartz Avenue and Diablo Road. The fire generated heat and smoke into the wooden mansard roof, which caused the blast.

Faulty wiring appears to be the culprit that caused the fire, said Danville Police Chief Chris Wenzel. No one was injured.

"I'm pretty confident that it was not a crime," Wenzel said. "It appears there was no gasoline involved." He said officials from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms unit in Dublin told him there did not appear to be any criminal act.

Early Thursday morning, April 13, employees from Primo's Pizza and Pasta restaurant saw flames coming from Heritage Bank and called the fire department at around 4:55 a.m. Fire officials arrived at the scene at 5:02 a.m.

Apparently, the fire started at one of the bank's wooden pillars and the smoke spread upward into the mansard roof. The fire did not enter inside the roof, said Darryl Jones, inspector for the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District.

He said smoke and heat collected at the roof, which caused pieces of it to explode. He added that most of the



Officials from the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District tend to the Heritage Bank of Commerce after it was damaged by a fire last week.

fire damage was done on the bank's pillar, and some areas connected with it were damaged by smoke.

There was not much fire damage inside the bank but there was water damage caused by the sprinkling system, which was activated by the heat, and ceiling tiles were displaced as a result of the fire, Jones said.

The street was closed while firefighters cleaned up.

"The building is well constructed," said Jones.

He added that the fire district is still investigating the causes of the fire. Original estimates by the Fire District placed the damages at \$300,000.

The bank is closed at this time. Customers are being directed to the Heritage Bank of Commerce branch in Fremont. ■

Park dedication now scheduled for May

Planners cite friend's wishes, weather for postponement

by **Natalie O'Neill**

The dedication for Andrew H. Young Park was extended this week after a longtime companion of Young's requested it be held in May, District 3 officials said.

District 3 chose to honor Jeannine Kibbert's request and reschedule the dedication for May 22, said Chief of Staff Ryan Klobas.

"She wanted to push it back to be closer to the date of his death," he said.

Alicia Watson of R-7A, the advisory committee that is planning the dedication, said persistent rain also played a role in the choice to push back the date. She expects the weather in May to be more appropriate for the outside ceremony, she said.

"The weather has been rotten and you can't ask people to stand around in the rain," she said.

The committee has encountered several recent delays for the dedication of the park because of renovations taking place and weather issues after R-7A decided at a meeting earlier this year to proceed with it as soon as possible. Klobas said postponing the dedication had nothing to do with unfinished renovations.

R-7A moved to push forward the dedication date because they felt they owed it to friends of Young.

Andrew H. Young was the former chairman of the Boulevard of Trees project and an advocate of beautifying Alamo.

The park is located in Alamo at the corner of Danville Boulevard and Jackson Way. ■

Bryan Ranch voting on house-size limit

Mail-in vote may decide fate of Duffield's proposed mansion

by **Natalie O'Neill**

An important piece of paper waits inside the homes and the outgoing mail of Bryan Ranch residents this week.

A mail-in ballot, which is due by April 27, may mark the end to an on-going battle between billionaire David Duffield, founder of PeopleSoft, and longtime members

of the community.

The amendment would limit homes in the quiet, secluded neighborhood of Bryan Ranch to 10,000 square feet—about the size of a typical grocery store.

"I'm afraid people won't take the time to send it in," said resident Mary Barron.

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Piepho gathering facts on MACs

Supervisor wants municipal advisory councils to be uniform

by **Natalie O'Neill**

Some say the best way to learn is to ask questions.

This is how Supervisor Mary N. Piepho said District 3 is learning about Alamo's Municipal Advisory Council—by sending out questionnaires to working MACs.

In a meeting with community group representatives earlier this month, she announced the county's plan to form a consistent structure for all MACs. Surveys are now being sent to other MACs in order to find the most effective way to set them up.

"We're getting an education on what's working and what's not," Piepho said.

District 3 representatives say establishing a uniform structure will benefit Alamo. But residents are concerned that a single structure countywide won't be individu-

alized enough for this area.

What works for one place may not work for another, said Karen McPherson, creator of the Alamo Area Council.

"Alamo is different from Diablo. Won't it take away our uniqueness?" she said.

In order to keep Alamo's voice strong, there must be consistency in structure, Piepho said.

"That's just good government," she said.

Relying on a MAC may allow the county to turn a blind eye to Alamo, warned Preston Taylor, president of the Alamo Improvement Association.

"Couldn't this let the supervisor off the hook ethically?" he asked.

A MAC does not take any pressure off District 3, Piepho said. MACs advise the county for Alamo, she said.

"It creates a unity, an umbrella

you don't have right now," she said.

The surveys include questions about the number of members, how MACs post their minutes, where they hold meetings, and how the county can better serve the council. District 3 has already received results from Diablo and Discovery Bay.

Having a MAC creates a pyramid of responsibility, with the supervisor at the top, Piepho said.

Other community group leaders said they worry a MAC may attempt to simplify complicated issues in the area.

"Often it's important to have disagreements that the supervisor hears," Taylor said.

When reporting to the county, a MAC advises according to the opinion of the majority of its

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Oak tree will live ... for now

Danville council directs staff to prune tree for vertical clearance

by **Geoff Gillette**

A public hearing to again determine the fate of an oak tree overhanging the roadway on El Pintado ended with a debate over semantics at Tuesday's Danville Town Council meeting. A motion was finally passed to direct staff to eliminate the liability in regards to vertical clearance.

The ongoing discussion centers on a large oak tree that encroaches on the right of way on El Pintado Road at the corner of Victorian Lane. Earlier this year, town staff determined the oak must come down due to liability issues involved with the tree's proximity to the road.

Area residents appealed the decision to the Planning Commission, which denied the appeal.

At their Feb. 21 meeting, members of the Town Council approved a resolution overturning the denial, sparing the tree. However, an arborist's report showed that for the tree to be pruned sufficiently to remove the liability, it would have to be reduced by 80 percent. This prompted the town to reconsider its decision and hold another public hearing at the Tuesday meeting.

Concerns were voiced by residents on both sides of the issue. Paul Clark said that while he appreciated the concerns about the oak, consideration for the residents should be the higher priority.

"You're talking about this tree like it's a person," he said. "The

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Science sleuthing

Middle school students learn from crime scene investigation

by Jordan M. Doronila

Investigating muddy footprints, bloody crimson pools and a dead body gave teens from Charlotte Wood Middle School the chance to elevate their powers of reasoning, teachers said, enabling them to make wiser life choices.

Seventh-grade science teachers Debbie Williams and Annie Vargas held a mock murder mystery project with their students earlier this month at Charlotte Wood. In the classroom, they had the fake body dressed in bloodstained clothing, and traces of muddy footprints were sticking on the floor.

The premise was that a body was found during a Renaissance Faire this month. The teenagers had to discover who the killer was by using their knowledge of cells, DNA and genetics, which have been taught all year.

The mock murder investigation would help them integrate what they had learned through a hands-on experience, Williams said.

A total of 380 students participated in the exercise, Williams said.

"It's a fun way to learn," said seventh-grader Kayla Auster.

"This whole thing was about teamwork," said Amanda Nguyen another seventh-grader. "We get a hands-on approach to what we learned." She added that without working together, students would have never found out who was the murderer.

"I want them to use all their powers of observation," Williams said.

The students were paired with partners to find the killer. First they were given a description of the suspects. Then, they had to look at a police report that described what happened to the victim. Afterward, they analyzed five things from the

"This whole thing was about teamwork. We get a hands-on approach to what we learned."

—Amanda Nguyen, seventh-grader

victim: blood type, soil analysis, pedigrees, fiber analysis and fingerprints.

When they discovered their findings matched with one suspect, they were then able to find who the murderer was. The pair that found the murderer first was given a quiz pass and a police sticker.

Charlotte Wood Middle School principal Sandy Budde said students who successfully completed each stage were given 10 points. There were a total of 50 points that counted toward their academic performance, Williams said.

Playing detective and figuring out crime scenes brought forensic skills together for the seventh-graders.

"The activity truly brings it all together in an interesting manner," said Budde. "Students need to demonstrate mastery of the material, not just familiarity."

"They need to be critical thinkers and use everything they've learned in order to solve a mystery," she added. "Great teaching at its best."

Students in Williams' class said they enjoyed being challenged.

"She's not afraid to be out there," said seventh-grader Kirsten Hicks. "She makes us work. But we're never bored." ■



YVONNE GILCHRIST

Seventh-graders Michelle Anderson, Marissa Collins, Chelsea Corey and Casey Nelson work to solve a murder mystery, and learn science lessons in the process. Science teachers Debbie Williams and Annie Vargas created a mock murder mystery earlier this month—with a fake dead body oozing blood—to help students understand genetics and DNA. Students said they enjoyed the experience because the project made school lessons come to life.

'Loo' fully restored

Museum caboose exhibit reopens after November vandalizing

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

The newly restored exhibit in the caboose at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley reopened this week, thanks to a committee of volunteers that worked to repair the damages after a young man vandalized the train car and the exhibit in November.

The caboose holds public restrooms for both men and women, and an exhibit portraying life on the railroad, complete with passengers "Bob" and "Mike."

"The town immediately came in and redid the restrooms but the exhibit was unique," said museum spokeswoman Candace Andersen, who is also a Danville Town Council member. "The museum volunteers pulled it together using grant monies. Through their great efforts it's reopened, and they did a remarkable job."

The original exhibit in the Southern Pacific caboose, affectionately known as "Loo," was opened in May 2002. The two men in the caboose were designed to look like Bob Petrie and Mike Giorsetto, who originally helped restore the old depot.

After the November destruction, museum volunteers pulled together to salvage as much as possible and return the display to its original condition, said Andersen, and a committee was formed, including Jan Elliott, Sandy Varco, Kathy Fitzpatrick and Barbara Hubinger, who also headed up the first committee. Useable items that were

► Continued on page 7

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Latest treasure

Hospice Thrift Shoppe manager Cathie Terry displays one of the shop's latest acquisitions, an original oil painting by Louise Tennyson that is priced at \$250. It was donated to the shop along with other art by a couple that had furnished their home and a vacation cabin and still had an overflow. Terry said that despite their abundance of clothes, household items, books, toys, costume jewelry and other things that sell for low prices, she also gets antiques and some high ticket items; she has sold a couch for \$2,000 and three grand pianos. The shop is located at 444 Diablo Road, near Albertson's, and is one of five that benefit Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa.

Restored

► Continued from page 6

part of the original exhibit were cleaned, polished and repaired.

"Most of the members of the first committee were still around and they came back happily," said Hubinger. "We had \$2,000 left in the original grant from Long's." The total for repairs came to \$2,500, she said.

Bob's and Mike's heads and arms were sent to the original manufacturers who were able to clean and

restore them. New bodies were purchased with the last of the grant monies. Dale and Joanne Haukland managed to clean the jeans and overalls, and donations were accepted to replace the original clothing that was deemed beyond repair.

"They are dressed now in donated clothing and were put back into their rightful place yesterday," said Hubinger on Tuesday. Additional help was given by Stuart Eberhardt, Discovery Thrift Shop, Eloise McTigue, John Hubinger, Kate Elliott and Harry Hubinger. ■

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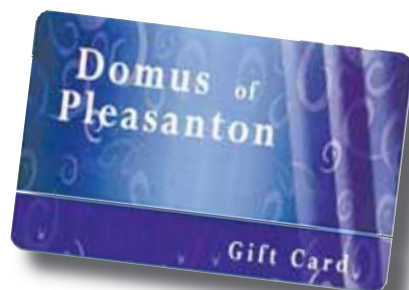


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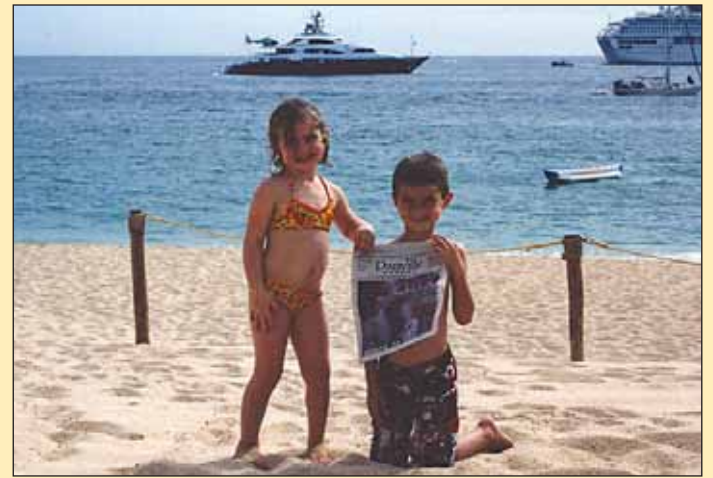
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MACs

► Continued from page 5

members.

"You're not always going to agree. I accept that. But with two-thirds, you've got a majority," Piepho said.

Establishing a MAC is one way to guarantee that local government is made up of checks and balances, she said.

Currently county service area R-7A for parks and recreation, and Zone 36 for landscape and lighting, are major voices in Alamo. Geographically, however, the committees do not represent all of Alamo. A MAC provides the entire area with accountability, Piepho said.

Other residents at the meeting said they see the potential for tension between previously existing

groups and the newly appointed MAC. If this is the case, there may be a breakdown in communication, residents said.

Without feedback from other groups, the council may not be an accurate representation of Alamo as a whole, they said.

Representatives from groups like the AIA, AAC, Zone 36 and R-7A will likely be appointed to the MAC, Piepho said.

Local organizations that do not support the county's initiative to form a MAC, advocate stronger local control and feel a MAC won't represent the opinion of Alamo residents accurately.

"Right now there is no community that has a MAC that wants it to go away," Piepho said.

Lea Castleberry, community liaison for District 3, said they expect to have results from the questionnaires late this month. ■

Alamo artist 'Best of Show'

The Alamo-Danville Artists' Society awarded Stephen Sanfilippo "Best of Show" in its 29th annual Gala Spring Art Show, for his oil painting titled, "Golden Marsh." The exhibit is open throughout April at the Danville Fine Arts Gallery, 233 Front St. in Danville.

"I had an emotional response to the composition and color in this scene," said judge Charles White, an internationally acclaimed painter. "This is a place I would want to go visit."

"There were so many outstanding pieces in this year's show that I awarded an unprecedented number of honorable mention ribbons," White said.

Sanfilippo has been painting for more than 25 years and moved to Alamo from San Francisco in October. Two of his pieces were among the 78 chosen from several hundred to be in the show.

"I really appreciate having my paintings so well-received among all the other very talented work on display here," said Sanfilippo.



Sanfilippo moved to Alamo from San Francisco in October. He left the graphic design field in 2004 and has made fine art his full-time career. He especially enjoys painting "en plein air."

"Painting outdoors is the only way I can emotionally connect with the light, shadows and color of a scene," he said. "If I don't have that direct connection, then it is very difficult to translate a scene honestly on the canvas." ■

Council

► Continued from page 5

first time someone gets hit on that road you'll do something."

Clark exhorted the council to act before an injury is caused. He also called for decisions to be made regarding the repair or upgrading of El Pintado to make the road safer to travel.

Original appellant John Eudy applauded the council's willingness to continue the discussion, but said he felt there needed to be an economy of scale to the decision-making.

"Let the tree figure out if it's going to make it. Do the pruning you need to do and remove the liability issues," he said. Eudy disagreed with the arborist's report, saying he felt the pruning could be done with the removal of only 50 percent of the tree.

Council members agreed the current state of the oak presented a danger to the public and that something needed to be done. Where the council split, however, was in the

wording to be used in their recommendation to staff.

Councilwoman Candace Andersen moved for a resolution calling for the "elimination" of the liability issues, with the caveat that if the tree did not survive, two new trees would be planted as mitigation.

"I don't want to see someone strike the tree or, more likely, swerve to avoid the tree and hit someone."

—Councilwoman Candace Andersen

"My concern is human life," Andersen said. "I don't want to see someone strike the tree or, more likely, swerve to avoid the tree and hit someone. We do have to do work on the road. And that is in the works for the capital budget. We want to do the work and yet keep the character of the neighborhood."

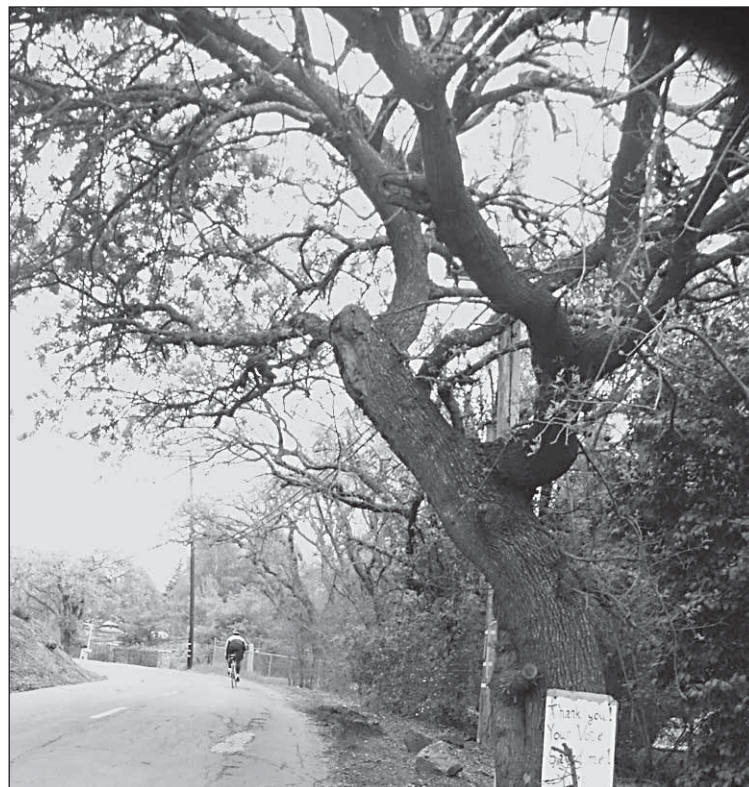
Councilman Newell Americh opposed the plan, saying by using the term "eliminate" it gives staff leeway to completely remove the tree if that is what is necessary to eliminate the liability. Americh supported the pruning, but wanted staff to have a clear mandate to keep the tree.

After discussion with the town attorney, the motion was amended to direct staff to eliminate the liability in regards to vertical clearance. Council members voted 3-2 in favor, with Americh and Vice Mayor Mike Shimansky opposed.

Shimansky said he voted against the motion because of the semantics used.

"I just wanted it trimmed for liability," he said. "I don't want it torn down and the motion leaves that possibility intact."

In regards to the road improvement issue, Shimansky said, "We could probably come up with enough money to make the road safe. But the neighborhood needs to get together with a unified voice. Then we can move ahead and get it done." ■



The old oak tree on El Pintado displayed its gratitude with a sign reading, "Thank you! Your vote saved me!" after Danville Town Council members spared it at their meeting in February. The issue was re-visited Tuesday night.

Bryan Ranch

► Continued from page 5

For the amendment to pass, at least 75 percent of Bryan Ranch residents must vote "yes" and send the ballot to Jean Bates & Associates by mail. A ballot that isn't returned is counted as a "no" vote.

The Duffield's original plans for a 72,000-square-foot mansion at 7 Country Oak Lane were downsized to 17,000 square feet in December, after 80 percent of Bryan Ranch neighbors signed a petition against it. An amendment to the Bryan Ranch Home Owners Association regulations was filed with Contra Costa County in November.

"It's still like having a Safeway or a Wal-Mart put in up here," said Elizabeth Pelletier, who lives next door on Country Oak Lane.

Many residents of Bryan Ranch say constructing a mansion this size destroys the ambiance of the quaint rural neighborhood, which overlooks the dramatic green hills of Alamo.

But Duffield and his spokesman say the house size is appropriate for the size of the lot, and insist it is needed to accommodate large family gatherings.

Duffield's attorney Andrew B. Sabey approached the Bryan Ranch board of directors early this year, citing flaws with the original amendment and threatening a lawsuit. A re-vote was then sent out in late March.

Sabey said the previous petition didn't give residents enough time to consider the issue. A proper homeowners association debate, along with a letter detailing the pros and cons, were needed to ensure the process was fair and accurate, he said.

"A mail-in ballot is confidential; there's no pressure to sign in front of your neighbors or your friends," Sabey said.

It is the best, most cost-effective

way to vote, short of setting up a poll, he said.

Advocates of the amendment feel a mail-in vote puts them at an unfair disadvantage.

"The nature of a mail-in ballot is that the odds are already stacked against us. It's very smart of them," Pelletier said.

If the amendment is not passed, it sets a precedent, allowing similar large structures to be built in Bryan Ranch in the future. This is likely to positively affect property values, Duffield's spokesmen said.

A "no" vote potentially means years of construction traffic around 7 Country Oak Lane. It also supports having no legal limit on the size of houses that can be built in Bryan Ranch.

"His lawyers cast a lot of doubt by sending letters out to the homeowners," Pelletier said.

In a letter to the Bryan Ranch Home Owners Association, Mary-Jo Bedayn, who organized the petition, refuted claims that signatures were gathered in an unprofessional way.

"I am very disappointed to hear that we who visited the neighbors on this issue are also being painted as coercive," wrote Bedayn. "Everyone had to agree to sign their name and those that declined did so without any malice from us."

Members of Save Bryan Ranch, a group formed to protect the area's character, say now the burden of proof should rest on Duffield.

Sabey said, from a legal point of view, that way of thinking doesn't make sense.

"Proponents of change bear the weight," he said.

While the vote may mark the end to a battle over house size, some residents say they can't help hard feelings about the way the Duffields approached the conflict.

"If the Duffields care so much about the community at large, why

don't they listen to what 80 percent of their neighbors are saying?" Pelletier said.

The Duffields have said they chose to downsize their house to respect the wishes of the Bryan Ranch Community.

It is difficult to go against a billionaire who has his own public relations spokesperson and an attorney, Pelletier said.

"People are afraid they are going to get sued," said neighbor Alicia Nance.

Earlier this month, the Duffields donated money to the Devil Mountain Run, a long-time community event that nearly ceased from lack of funding. They also contribute to other philanthropic causes, oftentimes to help children and animals.

Neighbors say they would like to see a similar sensitivity and concern for the community shown to Bryan Ranch residents.

"When donations are made, it's hard to counter that," Pelletier said.

Duffield said his choice to fund the Devil Mountain Run is unrelated to the controversy over his home.

Results of the vote are expected promptly after April 28. ■

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| 3rd Year Max Monthly Payment | \$1,959 | \$1,594 |
| 4th Year Max Monthly Payment | \$2,106 | \$1,713 |
| 5th Year Max Monthly Payment | \$2,264 | \$1,842 |

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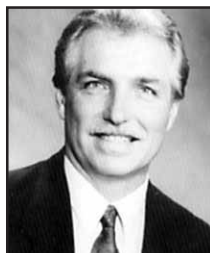
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Diablo Views

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI



The eyes have it

It had been a few years since I'd had my eyes checked. Somehow it was always easy to put it off. When I lost the fitted sunshades for my glasses, I had the incentive to call Kaiser for an appointment. I do expect the sun to shine at some point and then I will really miss my sunglasses.

The optometrist turned out to be from Danville—Dr. Lynn Smith. He grew up in Oakland and went to college at UC Berkeley. "When in my first year of college, I went to my family optometrist and he queried me about my career plans," recalled Dr. Smith. "I worked with him for many years." Dr. Smith set me straight on the need for frequent eye exams, saying they should be every two years. My father lost his eyesight to macular degeneration when he was in his 80s so I should know better. This disease is the leading cause of legal blindness in the United States.

First Dr. Smith checked out my glasses then turned to test my eyes. Which is clearer—number one or number two? Number two or number one? When you get down to the fine gradations you wonder if you always had so much trouble making decisions. Next, I stared at a red light in the distance, while he examined my eyes with his ophthalmoscope, looking through the eye to the back of the eye, the retina. The macula is part of the retina, he explained. He was examining the retina's texture and color, looking for tears, discoloration and atypical blood vessel formation, he said. He was also comparing my eyes to each other, and evaluating everything with the medical history I'd given.

We went into another room for the glaucoma test. I positioned my head on a chinrest, opened each eye in turn, and received a startling shot of air onto the eyeball. Each time I jumped a foot although it didn't hurt. Dr. Smith explained that he was using a "noncontact tonometer" to measure pressure. The pre-measured amount of air bounces off the eye back to the computer, which processes the atmospheric pressure to see if it indicates glaucoma. "Simply put, glaucoma is high pressure in the eye," Dr. Smith explained.

The problem with glaucoma, he

said, is that by the time you feel it, your eyes have been damaged beyond repair. That's why we need to have our eyes examined every two years. He also recommends children's eyes be examined this often, starting at age 2, although he said there is debate on this. "I say that if you take them to a pediatrician and a dentist, you should take them to an eye doctor," he said.

The problem with glaucoma, he said, is that by the time you feel it, your eyes have been damaged beyond repair.

The three main health issues optometrists check for are glaucoma, cataracts and macular degeneration, said Dr. Smith, although they are also on the alert for other troubles, such as changes associated with diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol, and the ability to see clearly. With healthy people, he is mainly monitoring vision changes, but as people age he does a broadbased exam. He saw no reason at this visit to dilate my eyes, which is done to look at the extreme periphery, but recommends it once every five years. "If you had told me your parents or older brother has retinal detachment, I would have dilated your eyes," he said. Or if I'd had a bad fall or bumped my head. He noted that eye checkups also reveal hemorrhaging, and undiagnosed diabetes. The good news was I didn't have to suffer for my procrastination this time—my eyes are fine.

Dr. Smith said that 11 years ago, he and his wife were living in Hercules and celebrated their anniversary at the Blackhawk Grille. Afterwards, they drove out and turned left and his wife said, "There are houses!" He told her they already had a house, but she got to work investigating the area—which was right between their two places of work—and soon they had moved with their two children to Vista Tassajara. "It was the most expensive dinner I ever had in my life," he added, with a laugh. ■



PUBLISHER

Deborah Acosta McKeenan

EDITORIAL

Editor

Dolores Fox Ciardelli

Staff Reporter

Jordan M. Doronila

Natalie O'Neill

Editorial Intern

Kevin Zhou

Sports Writer

Mike L. Mc Colgan

Contributors

Kathy Cordova

Geoff Gillette

B. Lynn Goodwin

Cathy Jetter

Jacqui Love Marshall

Julie Nostrand

ART & PRODUCTION

Art Director/

Operations Manager

Shannon Corey

Assistant Design Director

Ben Ho

Designers

Steve Bruzenak

Trina Cannon

James Greenfield

Jason Lind

ADVERTISING

Advertising Manager

Laure Reynolds

Advertising

Account Executives

Amy McKelligan

Susan Sterling

Real Estate

Account Executive

Owen McAleer

Classified Advertising

Susan Thomas

BUSINESS

Office Manager

Amory Foreman

Ad Services

Veneta Roberts, Manager

Alicia Broadway

Business Associate

Lisa Oefelein

Circulation Manager

Bob Lampkin, ext. 32

How to reach the Weekly

315 Diablo Road, Suite 100

Danville, CA 94526

Phone: (925) 837-8300

Fax: (925) 837-2278

Editorial e-mail:

Editor@DanvilleWeekly.com

Calendar@DanvilleWeekly.com

Display Sales e-mail:

sales@PleasantonWeekly.com

Classifieds Sales e-mail:

Ads@DanvilleWeekly.com

Circulation e-mail:

circulation@DanvilleWeekly.com

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EDITORIAL • LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

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We look forward to hearing from you and continuing to be your hometown community newspaper. In the next few weeks you will see reminders about this process in our newspaper. We encourage you to respond now while you are thinking about it. Don't miss the opportunity to continue receiving us.

Sincerely,
Deborah McKeenan

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Regarding Pombo article

Dear Editor:

I have a few comments regarding the Danville Weekly article about Congressman Richard Pombo.

On the immigration issue, Pombo was quoted as saying, "We just can't go out and evict the 15-20 million people who are already here and working." The article never mentions Pombo was the only Bay Area member of Congress who voted for HR.4437 which would realize precisely what Pombo claims he is against. Passage of HR.4437 was the primary trigger for the outcry we've seen around the country because it would criminalize and evict the same people Pombo "favors" for a guest worker program.

Pombo also asserted that the congressional watchdog group, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, is working for Pete McCloskey and Democrats. In fact, CREW is a non-partisan organization, completely unaffiliated with Democrats or Republicans. CREW just filed an ethics complaint against U.S. Rep. William Jefferson (D., La.) last week.

The article implied some uncertainty around Pombo's actions scru-

tinized by CREW. It's a matter of public record that Pombo took all such actions, like paying his wife a total of \$120,225 from his campaign as a "fund raising consultant." The "charges" and "claims" by CREW cited in the article are not that Pombo took these actions but rather that his actions are unethical.

I hope these comments serve to fairly and accurately represent Pombo's voting record, and the ethics complaints from non-partisan organizations.

Brian Mundy, Danville

Sycamore chicanery

Dear Editor:

This past April 13, I spent four hours at the Sycamore Homeowners board meeting, watching as our leaders used half-truths, deceit and chicanery, all in an effort to deny the children of Sycamore and their friends the opportunity to participate on the Sycamore Swim Team, which has been in existence since the 1970s.

The meeting began at 7 p.m. and around 7:30, in front of a full house of swim team supporters, the board reiterated its support for the team's 2006 season, but only after president Mark Raitz made sure we appreciated his hard work

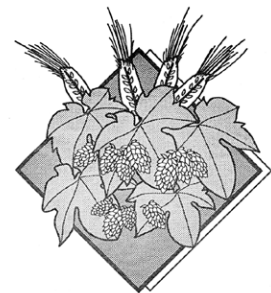
in hammering out a further clarification of the contract. The motion to reaffirm the 2006 swim season passed by a vote of 6-1, with Earl Lubell voting against it.

The board moved on to other, more pressing issues ... until 11:10 p.m. At that time, with the room nearly empty, Lubell re-submitted a motion to rescind the 2006 Swim Team contract. It was seconded by Ron Barrios. Raitz, after earlier quoting from a letter by the board's attorney advising them to honor the 2006 Swim Team Contract, voted to rescind the contract. At 7:30 he had voted to support the swim team but at 11:30 he voted against the very addendum that he negotiated. Ron Barrios also changed his vote. The other four voted against it, although Doug Allen has also voted against the swim team continuing after this year. Lubell's "Resolution to Rescind" was defeated 4-3.

This deceitful move compelled me to write this letter. Instead of Leadership, the board members displayed Cowardice. Instead of Community, they embodied Selfishness. What is their true agenda?

Thomas K. Bradley, Sycamore Homeowner

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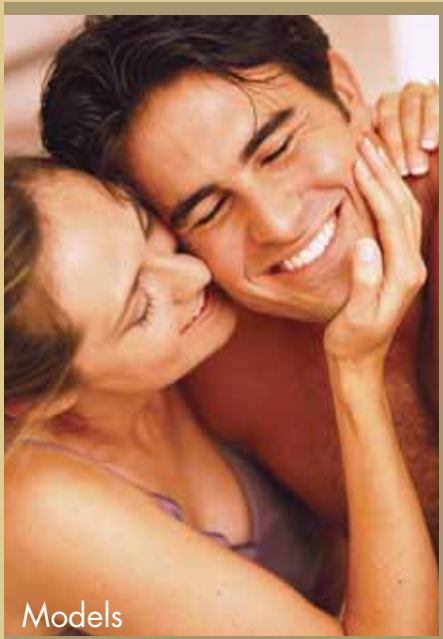
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POLICE BULLETIN

Burglary gets difficult on Easy Street

A burglar robbing an Alamo home on Easy Street last Saturday dropped a drawer full of jewels after a resident confronted him as he carried stolen items to a white cargo van.

After being spotted, the man, a white male in his late 20s to early 30s, ran to the van and sped away from the scene.

"He was spooked," said Angela Urrutia, crime prevention specialist at the Sheriff's Valley Station.

Around 7:15 p.m., the culprit ransacked the homeowner's drawers in the master bedroom and other rooms of the Alamo home, said Urrutia. The owner was away for the weekend and was having construction done to his house.

While the burglar was going through the drawers, a neighbor heard his dogs barking and went to the house. The resident saw the man and confronted him but there was no physical contact, said Urrutia.

The suspect zipped to his car and sped away. Urrutia said residents should call the Sheriff's Office if they plan to go on vacation so deputies can check their homes to make sure things are in order.

"It's a very valuable service the Sheriff's Office offers," she said. For a vacation check by the Sheriff's Office, call 837-2902. Danville residents should call 314-3410.

—Jordan M. Doronila

POLICE LOG

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

Monday, April 10

- Receiving stolen property, arrest, on El Cerro Blvd. and La Gonda Way at 12:18 a.m.
- Identity theft on San Thomas Way at 5:06 p.m.

Tuesday, April 11

- Misdemeanor driving under the influence (DUI), arrest, on Camino Tassajara and Crow Canyon Rd. at 1:07 a.m.
- Vandalism on Rock Island Cir. at 5:36 a.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on Remington Dr. at 7:03 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Diablo Rd. and Front St. at 8:20 a.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on San Ramon Valley Blvd. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 12:22 p.m.
- Suspicious circumstances on Brush Creek Pl. at 2:39 p.m.
- DUI, arrest, on W. Prospect Ave. at 9:05 p.m.
- Vandalism on Hartz Way and Railroad Ave. at 9:36 a.m.
- Vandalism on Nerine Ct. at 10:33 p.m.

Thursday, April 13

- Vandalism on Brookside Dr. at 7:18 a.m.
- Grand theft from building on Diablo Rd. at 10:08 a.m.
- Suspicious circumstances on Winfield Ln. at 10:38 a.m.
- Warrant arrest on La Gonda Way at 4:44 p.m.
- Strong-arm robbery, arrest, on Hartz Ave. and Railroad Ave. at 5:09 p.m.
- Vandalism on San Ramon Valley Blvd. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 10:23 p.m.
- Residential burglary on La Questa Dr. at 10:26 p.m.

Friday, April 14

- DUI, arrest, on El Cerro Blvd and northbound I-680 at 4:20 a.m.
- Auto burglary on Sky Terrace at 8:04 a.m.
- Suspicious person stop at Buckeye Ln. and Willowmere Rd. at 5:14 p.m.

Saturday, April 15

- Suspicious circumstances on La Gonda Way at 9:06 a.m.
- Grand theft from vehicle on Canfield Ct. at 10:37 a.m.
- Battery on Camino Tassajara and Glasgow Dr. at 1:43 p.m.
- Trespassing on Bobbie Ct. at 6:08 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on

- Greenbrook Dr. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 6:30 p.m.
- DUI, arrest, on Camino Tassajara and Shady Creek Dr. at 9:18 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Camino Tassajara and Diablo Rd. at 9:17 p.m.

Sunday, April 16

- DUI, arrest, on Jewel Terrace and San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 12:37 a.m.
- DUI, arrest, on Green Valley Rd. at 2:38 a.m.
- Commercial burglary on Camino Tassajara at 9:36 a.m.

Monday, April 17

- Drunk in public on Hartz Ave. at 12:10 a.m.

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

ALAMO

Saturday, April 15

- Residential burglary on Easy St.

DANVILLE

Monday, April 10

- Misdemeanor battery on Buckingham Dr. and Mansfield Dr.

Wednesday, April 12

- Residential burglary on Creekpoint Ct.



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Victory on ice

Tri-Valley Pee Wee B's take state amateur hockey championship

The Tri-Valley Blue Devils Pee Wee B's amateur hockey team for ages 11-13 capped a triumphant season by winning the state championship over the weekend of March 31-April 2.

During the season, which runs from August to April, the Blue Devils were undefeated, beating teams from across California and the Western United States.

The co-ed team, which practices at Dublin Iceland, then went on to compete in the state championships in Los Angeles against the three other top teams. The Blue Devils won their first three games, under the leadership of team captain Tom Heppner, which left one to go, on Sunday against Stockton.

Stockton took an early lead, 1-0, then built to a 2-0 lead about eight minutes later. Tri-Valley answered the bell with a goal by Tyler Theobald assisted by Andreas Dereschuk with just over a minute left in the first period. Theobald put in another goal, assisted by Dereschuk and Alec Christoff, tying the game late in the second period.



Andreas Dereschuk shoots from the post as his Tri-Valley Blue Devils take the state amateur hockey championship.

The teams continue the 2-2 tie throughout the scoreless third period, with excellent goal tending between the pipes by Colby Paxton. The first intense 10-minute overtimes also proved scoreless, then at 1:56 into double overtime, Dereschuk out-skated a Stockton player to the puck, took it in and buried it in the

back of the net for a thrilling 3-2 win of the state championship.

The team included Danville residents Tom Heppner, Chase Piombo, Alec Christoff, Maddie Christoff, Nicole Schwartz and Ryan Vonderach; and Alamo residents Andreas Dereschuk and Colby Paxton. ■

Golf dream comes true

Danville father and son walk the course with Tiger

by Mike L. Mc Colgan

Danville resident and 2002 San Ramon Valley High graduate MJ Mc Colgan has played many great golf courses. The three-time National Special Olympics Golf Champion and five-time California state champion has played at the Old Course at St. Andrews, Pebble Beach and Ireland's K Club (site of the 2006 Ryder Cup) to name a few.

As a result of his success, the CEO of Textron, who also owns E-Z-Go, invited MJ to attend the 2006 Masters last week in Augusta, Ga. Like Casey Martin, MJ plays with the use of a golf cart due to being born with a walking disability. When he travels he uses a portable scooter to help him get around. He was allowed to park his scooter on the first tee to watch the best golfers in the world tee off.

At the famed Augusta National each hole is a "signature hole," named after a flower or tree. Number one is officially named "Tea Olive," but MJ renamed it "Dreams do come true." The feeling was electrifying as each golfer began the round trying to win the coveted "Green Jacket" prize.

MJ waited patiently for his hero Tiger Woods to tee off. He was in the second to last group as he was the defending champion and also trying to win his fifth Green Jacket. We know Tiger and it is a pleasure to watch him play. He has a fighting spirit and never gives up. He also seems to be able to handle pressure better than anyone else on the tour. If we had to pick any pro golfer to make a 10-foot putt for a million dollars, we



MJ Mc Colgan treasures the golf ball given him by his hero Tiger Woods at the 2006 Masters at Augusta and his Masters Badge.

would choose Tiger every time.

When Tiger approached the tee the respectful crowd quietly applauded the No. 1 player in the world. Before he hit, he came over to MJ and gave him one of his Nike golf balls. MJ was all smiles and told Tiger "to win another one for his ailing dad," who is battling cancer. The crisp crackling sound when Tiger hits a ball is penetrating to one's ears. Tiger hit a towering drive nearly 300 yards and to the left of the bunker on the uphill dog leg right hole. After the shot, MJ smiled at Tiger and gave him a thumbs-up signal.

Tiger came up a little short of defending his title and finished 3 strokes behind winner Phil Mickelson. However, the "special" ball will have a cherished spot among MJ's many gold medals, reminding him that "Dreams do come true."

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

PREP SCHEDULE

Friday

Baseball: Monte Vista vs. Cal High, 3:45 p.m.
Swimming: Monte Vista vs. Cal High San Ramon vs. Castro Valley
Girls lacrosse: San Ramon at Cal High, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday

Boys Golf: Monte Vista at Foothill, 3 p.m., San Ramon vs. Livermore, 3:30 p.m.
Boys Tennis: EBAL Tournament, Apr. 25-29
Girls lacrosse: San Ramon at Piedmont, 7 p.m.
Softball: San Ramon vs. Monte Vista, 4 p.m.

Wednesday

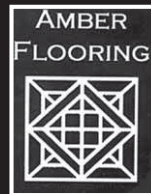
Baseball: Monte Vista at San Ramon Valley, 3:45 p.m.
Boys Golf: Manteca Tournament, 7:30 a.m.
Girls Lacrosse: Monte Vista vs. Santa Catalina, 4 p.m.

Thursday

Boys Golf: Monte Vista vs. San Ramon Valley, 3 p.m.
Boys Volleyball: Monte Vista vs. Amador Valley, 6 p.m., San Ramon at Foothill, 6 p.m.
Track and Field: Monte Vista vs. San Ramon, 4 p.m.
Softball: San Ramon at Foothill, 4 p.m.



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MR. ABRAMS' C

A symphony of students reaches out to residents of New Orleans

by Jordan M. D.

An elderly man waiting at the Atlanta airport for a flight to New Orleans cried as he listened to the choir raise its voice in song.

It was San Ramon Valley High School students, directed by the much acclaimed choir director Ken Abrams, singing "Ain'-a That Good News!" for an alumnus, while waiting for their flight to help out victims of Hurricane Katrina. Afterward, the teary-eyed man said, "I am going home."

While many high school students in the San Ramon Valley spent their spring break at the breezy beaches of San Diego and Santa Cruz, choir singers from San Ramon Valley High spent their vacation looking at fallen homes in a city flooded with ruin, rubble and remorse.

In New Orleans, the young singers sang sumptuous spiritual songs at churches to cheer the sad and inspire the hopeful. Plus, they worked, adding mulch and plants to a damaged school. And they helped out at a food bank.

The group of 53 students performed in eight different schools and two churches in New Orleans and Baton Rouge during their spring break, leaving California on April 6 and returning on the 12th.

"We had an awesome time," said Abrams, a Walnut Creek resident, who was named Educator of the Year by the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce.

The teens raised money for their trip at a cost of \$795 per person and raised an additional \$4,000 for the food banks and landscaping projects.

The choir members said they wanted to see beyond Danville. And they wanted to help out others who are less fortunate than themselves, they said.

"You see the devastation in the news, you want to help out," said Jenna Tooley, choir member and senior. "We live in Danville. It's a bubble."

"I want to give back to the community that gave so much to me," said Elliot Nicks, a junior.

"We are connecting through our music," said Melanie McKay about singing for the victims of New Orleans. "I think it really helps."

The choir did a similar tour to New York City six months after the Sept. 11 attacks.

The San Ramon Valley High School Concert Choir has twice won the Northern California Golden State Choral Competition, making it one of the best choral programs in the state.

"When you have music to share, it's good to share music and hear music from others," Abrams said.

His choirs have traveled all over the world—in addition to New Orleans. His

students have traveled to Australia, New Zealand, the British Isles and the Czech Republic. His group also performed in New York, Seattle and Colorado Springs.

Abrams said it's important for students to see different cultures and ethnicities.

"I've got 50 percent blonde," he said about his choir. "We're very waspy. We're very isolated in Danville."

"It's good for them to know that the world is not necessarily waspy," he added.

Abrams, a native Californian, went to Pinole Valley High School and studied music at California State University at Hayward. He said he chose to stay home because he had strong family roots and the Bay Area is one of the prettiest places to live.

"The Bay Area is one of the beautiful places on earth," he said.

Originally, Abrams wanted to study business. However, the thrill of music and teaching caught his attention.

"I grew up with music," he said. He spent his childhood singing and performing but thought he would work in business and make money while doing music in his spare time.

Then a friend of his said he should try teaching after he helped assist a music teacher.

"You have a gift," his friend told him. "You should use it."

Since then, Abrams has spent his life in musical education. He received his master's degree in choral conducting from the University of Illinois in 1990.

He has been the choral director at San Ramon Valley High School for the past 22 years. Currently, his stepson sings in the choir.

He is also the artistic director of the Danville Girls Chorus.

Abrams' choral groups have received numerous recognitions and awards. His singers won first prize at the KBLX Winter Choral Competition with a \$5,000 prize last school year. In the spring of 2001, they took first place at the Golden State Choral Festival. They also placed first at the same competition the following year.

In addition, Abrams was selected as Teacher of the Year for the San Ramon Valley Unified School District in 1996 and for San Ramon Valley High School in 2002.

By putting students on the spot—making them do solos, pushing them to do auditions, testing their knowledge and having them practice—he helps them become stronger.

"He likes trying new things," said McKay. "He is really a strong believer in the power of music. He built his program to find self-confidence and develop music to affect the community." ■



Ken Abrams, San Ramon Valley High School choir director, gives direction to his young singers (below). Abrams and his choral groups have received numerous accolades for their outstanding performances, and last week spent their spring break in New Orleans.



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Choir members from San Ramon Valley High help out at a food bank in New Orleans as part of their trip to raise people's spirits by their singing performances and volunteering where needed.

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Looking for a cure

Little girl inspires others to help sufferers of Rett syndrome

by Julie Nostrand

When John and Kathy Corpus of Alamo welcomed their daughter Samantha into the world, they were grateful to have a second healthy baby.

At 16 months Samantha hadn't walked, so her worried parents had asked their pediatrician for advice. "She's just a late bloomer," the doctor said and the family was reassured.

When at 2, her vocabulary consisted of only a few words simple words—"up," "Momma," "Dad," "hi" and "bye," her parents took her to speech therapy and were again reassured.

But before long, the signs grew more troubling. Samantha began regressing. She began losing fine motor skills in her hands, speaking less and walking with a gait despite the efforts of an army of therapists.

Then at a family reunion, a distant relative who is a neurologist pulled the Corpuses aside and told them that something was seriously wrong with their daughter. The neurologist didn't know what, but he thought medical intervention was urgent.

The next week found the family at Stanford's Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. After a battery of tests, they learned the cruel truth: Samantha had Rett syndrome (RS), a rare genetic disorder that affects the neurological development of little girls, leaving its sufferers severely disabled.

The Corpus family's experience with RS is a common one. The disease strikes without warning at families of any race. Girls afflicted with this disease start off life normally and often show no signs of the condition until they are between 12 and 18 months old. As was the Corpuses' experience, doctors rarely recognize the earliest symptoms.

"I have a clear memory of Samantha crawling across the floor, feeding herself. She had opened a piece of chocolate and put it in her mouth," recalls her father, John, a co-founder and vice president of Product Development for the technology startup, Agistics. His reality today is a long way from that past vision of his daughter.

Since her diagnosis more than three years ago, Samantha lost the fine motor skills in her hands that allowed her to unwrap candy and feed herself. RS has robbed her of her ability to speak, too. And while Samantha retained her ability to walk, with a gait, many victims of RS aren't so lucky and suffer from problems with their legs that leave them in wheelchairs.

Other complications of the disease include breathing and swallowing problems, seizures and scoliosis that occur and recede at any time without warning. With RS, parents and medical professionals are left to react to the problems rather than anticipate them.

"Parents with normal kids worry about SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) for the first year of life," said Corpus. "We have to worry about this forever."

Now 7, Samantha is considered high functioning. She is severely developmentally disabled but tests to assess the level of disability are difficult to administer. With no ability to communicate or use her hands, Samantha is unable to convey her intelligence level.

While the Corpuses remain optimistic about her future, her gains are hard earned, the results of many hours of therapy and lots of driving by her mom, Kathy.

Golf tourney benefit

The Corpus family along with a dedicated group of volunteers is planning their first golf tournament to benefit the Samantha Corpus Foundation, on Tuesday, May 23, at Blackhawk Country Club. The goal is to raise \$100,000 for their cause. The family hopes the tournament will not only raise money but also awareness of Rett syndrome. All the proceeds from the tournament will be channeled into research and therapies for the young sufferers.

To learn about sponsorship and opportunities to play in the Samantha Corpus Inaugural Golf Tournament, visit www.samanthacorpus.org.



The Corpus family—Julian, 9, in back; (l-r) mom Kathy; Samantha, 7; dad John; and Jacob, 4—founded a nonprofit corporation to find a cure for Rett syndrome, a rare disease that strikes without warning, leaving its victims developmentally disabled.

In a typical week, Samantha and Kathy attend hippotherapy, which is physical therapy on horseback, in Castro Valley; speech therapy in Oakland; music therapy in Lafayette; dance therapy in San Ramon; and eSoccer in Pleasanton. This is in addition to the physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy Samantha receives in her special education program at Montair Elementary School.

"I'm the chauffeur and the checkbook," quips Kathy.

Until Samantha began showing symptoms, the Corpus family had never heard of the syndrome. But their odyssey with the disease inspired them to do something to help girls like Samantha.

Last year, John and Kathy founded their own nonprofit organization, the Samantha Corpus Foundation, which is dedicated to finding a cure for Rett syndrome. Additionally, John is on the board of the International Rett Syndrome Association (IRSA), a worldwide nonprofit organization dedicated to research, therapy, care and support of the victims of Rett syndrome.

Despite the complication of RS, home life for the Corpus family remains refreshingly normal. Between Samantha's therapy appointments, charity work and the athletic endeavors of sons Julian, 9, and Jacob, 4, the family often isn't together until dinnertime. Both boys play baseball and Julian, who attends St. Isidore's School, is also on a basketball team.

While Kathy feeds Samantha her meal, John reflects on his daughter's life. "All you've got is the gaze in their eyes and the smiles on their faces," said Corpus.

And that is enough to fuel this family to make a difference.

For information on Rett syndrome, visit www.rettsyndrome.org. ■

Samantha Corpus attends hippotherapy, which is physical therapy on horseback, in Castro Valley. She also attends speech therapy in Oakland, music therapy in Lafayette, dance therapy in San Ramon, and goes to Pleasanton for e-Soccer for exceptional children.



AT THE MOVIES

CinéArts @ Pleasant Hill: 2314 Monument Blvd., Pleasant Hill (687-1100)
Century 14 Walnut Creek: 1201 Locust St., Walnut Creek (937-7025)
Blackhawk Movie 7: 4175 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville (736-0368)
Crow Canyon 6: 2525 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon (820-4831)
Hacienda Crossings 20/ Regal Imax Theater: 5000 Dublin Boulevard, Dublin (560-9600)
Vine Cinema: Corner of First and South O streets, Livermore (447-2545)
Internet address: For show times, visit the Danville Weekly Online Edition at <http://www.DanvilleWeekly.com/>

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Akeelah and the Bee (PG) | Century 14: Sat 7:05 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Sat 7:15 p.m. |
| American Dreamz (PG-13) | Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 11:10 a.m., 1:55, 4:40, 7:30, 10:15 p.m. |
| Benchwarmers (PG-13) | Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 2:45, 4:55, 7:15, 9:25 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:25 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 12:15, 2:35, 4:45, 7:15, 9:35 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 11:50 a.m., 2:05, 4:35, 6:55, 9:25, 10 p.m. |
| Brick (R) | CinéArts: Fri-Tues noon, 2:30, 5, 7:30, 10 p.m. |
| Deep Sea (NR) | Regal Imax: Fri-Tues 10:30, 11:35 a.m., 12:40 p.m. |
| Failure to Launch (PG-13) | Century 14: Fri-Tues noon, 2:55, 5:15, 7:35, 9:55 p.m. Hacienda 20: Fri-Tues 10:55 a.m., 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:30 p.m. |
| Friends With Money (R) | Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:20 a.m., 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8, 10:10 p.m. CinéArts: Fri-Tues 11:40 a.m., 2, 4:25, 6:45, 9 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 10:30 a.m., 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10 p.m. |
| Ice Age 2 (G) | Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 2:40, 4:50, 7, 9:10 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:10 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:35 a.m., 1:55, 4:25, 6:50, 9:15 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Tues 1:40, 4:30, 6:40, 9 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 11:15 a.m., noon, 1:45, 2:30, 4:10, 5:05, 6:45, 7:25, 9:10, 9:50 p.m. |
| Inside Man (R) | Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 3, 6:50, 9:40 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:40 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:55 a.m., 4, 7:10, 10:05 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Tues 1:10, 4, 6:50, 9:40 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:40 p.m. Hacienda 20: Fri-Tues 12:20, 3:25, 6:40, 9:40 p.m. |
| Lucky Number Slevin (R) | Century 14: Fri-Tue 11:25 a.m., 2:15, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Tues 1:20, 3:40, 7:15, 9:45 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:45 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 11:30 a.m., 2:15, 4:50, 7:35, 10:30 p.m. |
| Marilyn Hotchkiss' Ballroom Dancing and Charm School (PG-13) | CinéArts: Fri - Tues 11:50 a.m., 2:15, 4:45, 7:20, 9:50 p.m. |
| Scary Movie 4 (PG-13) | Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 2:50, 5:05, 7:20, 9:35 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:35 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:45 a.m., 2, 4:10, 6:15, 8:20, 9:25, 10:30 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Tues 1:50, 4:20, 7:10, 7:20 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 7:20 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 10:35, 10:40, 11:10, 12:40, 1, 1:30, 2:50, 3:20, 3:50, 5:10, 5:40, 6:10, 7:25, 8:05, 8:30, 9:50, 10:25, 10:50 p.m. |
| Silent Hill (R) | Century 14: Fri-Tues 12:05, 3:05, 7, 10 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Tues 1, 3:50, 7, 9:40 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:40 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 10:30, 11 a.m., 1:20, 2, 4:20, 5, 7:20, 8, 10:20, 10:55 p.m. |
| Take the Lead (PG-13) | Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 2, 4:40, 7:25, 10:05 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 10:05 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:40 a.m., 2:25, 5:10, 7:45, 10:15 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 10:25 a.m., 1:15, 4:05, 7:05, 9:55 p.m. |
| Thank You for Smoking (R) | Century 14: Fri-Tues 12:10, 2:30, 5, 7:30, 9:45 p.m. CinéArts: Fri-Tues 12:15, 2:35, 4:55, 7:10, 9:55 p.m. Hacienda 20: Fri-Tues 12:25, 2:55, 5:30, 8:10, 10:35 p.m. |
| The Notorious Bettie Page (R) | CinéArts: Fri-Tues 12:05, 2:20, 4:40, 7, 9:45 p.m. |
| The Sentinel (PG-13) | Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 2:30, 5, 7:30, 10 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 10 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:50 a.m., 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50 p.m. Crow Canyon 6: Fri-Tues 1:30, 4:10, 7:30, 9:50 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:50 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 10:55, 11:25 a.m., 1:40, 2:10, 4:25, 4:55, 7:10, 7:40, 9:55, 10:25 p.m. |
| The Wild (G) | Blackhawk Movies 7: Fri-Tues 2:35, 4:45, 7:05, 9:15 p.m.; No show Sun-Tues 9:15 p.m. Century 14: Fri-Tues 11:30 a.m., 12:20, 1:40, 2:50, 3:50, 4:55, 6, 7:05, 8:10, 10:20 p.m. Hacienda Crossing 20: Fri-Tues 11:45 a.m., 12:30, 2:20, 2:55, 4:45, 5:15, 7:15, 7:45, 10:05 p.m. |
| V for Vendetta (R) | Century 14: Fri-Tues 1:35, 4:30, 7:25, 10:25 p.m. Hacienda 20: Fri-Tues 11:40 a.m., 2:40, 6:20, 9:25 p.m. Regal Imax Theaters: Fri-Tues 2, 4:45, 7:30, 10:15 p.m. |

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Epicure

BY JACQUI LOVE MARSHALL

Attention, Epicure readers

In coming weeks, Epicure plans to run a series of columns on ethnic cuisines—Chinese, Mexican, Soul Food, etc. If you have expertise in a particular ethnic cuisine or have personal ethnic recipes to share, we'd like to hear from you. Please e-mail us at Epicure@DanvilleWeekly.com.

To sushi or not to sushi: Is that a question???

Few of us are neutral on sushi—we love it or hate it. Some consider it a raw deal, even unsavory, but count me among the sushi lovers. In fact, I'd put sushi among my top 10 foods. Why? It's a no-stress, light meal that, with safe preparation, is loaded with healthy, low-calorie protein. It's the perfect meal to share with family and friends, usually generating lots of interaction and light-hearted fun. And the tasty accompaniments of Japanese side dishes, sodas, beer and sakes only add to the fun.

My favorite way to have sushi is sitting at a sushi bar as you watch it being made in the moment. There, you get an appreciation for the true art of sushi and get to ask questions as you eat. On a good day, striking up a conversation with a friendly sushi-maker, you may even get a few samples to try.

Given its increasing availability in grocery stores, sushi is becoming a simple, on-the-run lunch or take-home dinner. However, I'm more cautious about buying pre-packaged sushi in a supermarket unless I have purchased it there on other occasions. If you're a novice sushi-eater, here are a couple important tips: First, dipping sushi into soy sauce is supposed to enhance the flavor but it's your choice. If you'd like a spicier flavor, blend small amounts of wasabi into the sauce before dipping. Either way, don't drown the fish in the sauce. For nigiri sushi (sushi served on a platform of rice), dip only the fish into the soy sauce mixture and place the fish un-dipped side down on your tongue. Finally, if you've not mastered sushi with chopsticks, it's perfectly acceptable to eat sushi with your fingers.

An especially nice way to enjoy sushi is by creating a party at home with friends and family. With a combination of homemade and brought-home dishes, you can roll out an entertaining Sushi Party in short order.

Here's a suggested menu:

Menu: Sushi Party
Miso soup or chilled edamame soup
California rolls
Assorted sushi
Cantaloupe & orange slices
Japanese sodas, beer or sake

So, is sushi for everyone? No. The squeamish and faint-of-heart should take a pass. There are potential health risks associated with raw seafood—namely, the presence of parasites. And there are ongoing questions about PCB and other contaminants in seafood, raw or cooked. Pregnant women may want to limit themselves to California rolls and cooked eel but avoid raw seafood like tuna. Those in high-risk groups, especial-

Is sushi safe?

All sushi fish brought into the United States is typically flash-frozen to kill illness-causing parasites. But after entry, seafood regulations will vary depending on where it's sold. Fresh raw fish will be bright in color, with no odor or dark patches and practically translucent. Don't be hesitant to ask about the source, storage and handling of any sushi you are eating.

Supermarket sushi may be even safer than what you get served at your favorite Japanese eatery. Grocery stores generally adhere to rigorous state and internal safety standards and are subject to inspections by local and state regulatory authorities. And, large supermarkets often have refrigeration systems superior to small restaurants. Always use your own powers of observation and good judgment before you buy.

Sushi safety tips

- A nose knows
- If the sushi smells fishy, leave it there. Also, a lemony smell could indicate that the pieces were spritzed with lemon juice to masque a fishy odor. It's got to pass your nose test to be worth taking home.

How fresh is fresh?

Always check the date stamp for freshness. The thermometer should read colder than 41 degrees. If packages are stacked beyond one layer, purchase the one closest to the source of cool air. Many packages are not a good sign as this indicates they are not turning over quickly. Ask the chef to make you some on the spot.

ly with liver problems or weakened immune systems, should get a doctor's advice first.

If you have worries about the safety of raw fish, do your own data-gathering to establish your level of comfort. If you have concerns about the safe preparation of sushi, check out the information above. And to those who just don't like it? Well, I don't advise eating anything you've tried and just don't enjoy. Life's too short to eat and drink things that don't satisfy your personal palate. Besides, there are too many other good foods to savor!

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.

Chilled Edamame Soup (Serves 8)

1 1/2 Tbs. unsalted butter
2 shallots, chopped
1/2 cup dry sherry
2 quarts water
3/4 lb. shelled edamame, fresh or frozen (about 2 cups)
3 Tbs. heavy cream, warmed
2 cups chicken stock, warmed, plus more as needed
Salt, to taste

In a saucepan over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the shallots and sauté until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the sherry and cook until reduced by half, 3-5 minutes. Remove from the heat.

In another saucepan over high heat, bring the water to a boil. Add the edamame and cook until tender, about 8 minutes. Drain and add the edamame to the saucepan with the shallots. Whisk in the cream and the 2 cups stock.

Using an immersion blender, puree the soup in the saucepan until smooth. Pass the soup through a chinois into a cream saucepan; discard the solids. Add more stock if needed to

reach the desired consistency. Season with salt. Refrigerate for 2 hours before serving.

Miso Soup (Serves 8)

6 cups of water
4 Tbs. miso*
4 green onions, finely minced
1 cake tofu, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
4-6 fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced (optional)
1 tsp. sesame oil

1. Heat oil in bottom of small pot, add green onions and cook for about a minute, stirring frequently.

2. Add 5 cups water. Dissolve miso in 1 cup water and add to pot. Bring to a boil.

3. Lower heat, add tofu (and mushrooms if desired). Serve hot.

*Miso may be purchased at most Asian or health-food stores.

See recipe for California Rolls at www.DanvilleWeekly.com.

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Presenting the Past

BY BEVERLY LANE

Ramona Park puts the Valley on the map

In April, 1906, William Meese had plans for a new group picnic grounds on his property. Called Ramona Park, it was located near today's intersection of Greenbrook Drive and Camino Ramon. Picnic grounds like this were popular with fraternal and church orders throughout California and were often reachable by train.

The Martinez Daily Gazette on April 18, 1906, wrote: "Residents of this county are looking forward to Thursday, April 26, when Ramona Park, located at the foot of Mt. Diablo in the beautiful SRV and said to be one of the prettiest parks in this State, will open."

Picnickers were invited to the 10-acre park, which was "covered with wild maple, buckeye, elder and other California trees, and with a picturesque little lake ... ideal for swimming." There was a fine dancing pavilion "whose floor no means have been spared to make perfect." An article in the Danville Grange Herald indicated a ball ground, tennis court, cinder track for athletic events and a shooting range were planned.

A brochure showing a sweet girl was produced for the April 26 opening.

Notice the date on the Gazette article. That very day the Great Earthquake jolted San Francisco and the entire Bay Area. All thoughts of opening Ramona Park were put aside as residents cleaned up broken glass and checked the damage done to their chimneys. Soon the city's fire sent refugees to the East Bay and illuminated the western sky. Support for the refugees was organized by the Grange, Rebekahs and Ramona Club.

On July 4, 1906, Ramona Park opened with 25 percent of the receipts for the day sent to the earthquake relief committee. The Gazette reported that Ramona Park "will undoubtedly be recognized in a short while, as the first of California's many parks for pleasure seekers." Because "temperance principles" (no liquor) were to be followed in the park and within two miles of the premises, women and children were assured "perfect freedom from the insults of drunken bums."

That day admission to the grounds was free and a special train left San Francisco at 8 a.m., stopping at all intervening stations, and returning from the park at 5 p.m. The Ramona Park committee, which included B.W. Stone, B.W. Bennett, A.J. Abbott, J.S. Patton and Ralph Dobson, asked the Odd Fellows to run the program. Danville Lodge No. 378, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, received a special dispensation from the lodge's grandmaster to allow all members to wear their regalia in public. Theodore A. Bill, a former congressman from Napa and Grand Master of the I.O.O.F.,

made the traditional Independence Day address titled, "Odd Fellowship."

Not only was the park a source of income for the Meeses, it also introduced the beautiful San Ramon Valley to people from all over the Bay Area and was another project made possible by the presence of the railroad in the San Ramon Valley.

Sources: Ramona Park brochure, Martinez Daily Gazette, Danville Grange Herald

—Beverly Lane, a longtime Danville resident, is curator of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley and co-author of "San Ramon Valley: Alamo, Danville, and San Ramon."

Coming up: On May 5, look for accounts on how the 1868 earthquake touched the Valley.

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Calendar

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Author Visits

Book Signing

Tri-Valley Writers Association will be hosting a membership drive and book signing with MJ Ryan, author of "The Happiness Makeover," and Jessica Inclan, author of "The Instant When Everything is Perfect," from noon-6 p.m., Saturday, April 22, at Barnes and Noble, 4972 Dublin Blvd., Dublin. Contact Steve Workman at skworkman@aol.com or visit www.trivalley-writers.com.

Clubs

Diablo Bonsai Club

The Diablo Bonsai Club will present its 23rd annual Bonsai Exhibit from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, April 29, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday, April 30, at the Danville Community Center, 420 Front St. There will be door prizes, drawings, plants for sale and a demonstration at 1 p.m. by Sensei Kunitoshi Akabane at 1 p.m. both days. This event is free.

Diablo Diggers Dance Club

The Diablo Diggers Dance Club meets five times a year for dinner and dancing with a live band in the Danville or Walnut Creek area. The club is looking for a few new members, couples only. The next dance will be scheduled for May. For information, call 938-0316.

Diablo Singles Dance Club

Diablo Singles Dance Club dances regularly the last Wednesday of the month from 7:30-10:30 p.m., at the Arts Education Building, corner of Ygnacio Valley Road and Wiget Lane, Walnut Creek. The cost is \$7 for members and \$9 for non-members. All are welcome. The club will also host the 5th Saturday Big Band Dance from 7:30-10:30 p.m., Saturday, April 29, at Walnut Creek Elks Lodge, 1475 Creekside Drive, Walnut Creek. The cost is \$10 for members and \$12 for non-members. Call 837-2851.

Friends of the Danville Library

Friends of the Danville Library are currently renewing annual memberships and recruiting new members to

help support, raise funds and sponsor programs for the Danville library. There are many benefits of being a Friend including merchant discounts, volunteer opportunities and preview of book sales. Dues and donations are tax deductible. Application forms are at the library, 400 Front St. Call 837-4455.

Concerts

Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks

Community Concerts at the Wesley Center, 902 Danville Blvd., will present Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks, a west coast jive 'n' jazz icon, at 8 p.m., Saturday, April 22. Tickets are \$25 in advance, and \$30 at the door; "Gold Circle" seating is \$35 and seniors and children get a 10 percent discount. For information, call 229-2710 or visit www.communityconcerts.com.

San Francisco Girl's Chorus

The San Francisco Girl's Chorus, Level IV, will be giving a choral music performance at 5 p.m., Sunday, April 23, at St. Timothy's Church, 1550 Diablo Road, Danville. General admission is \$18, \$12 for students/seniors. Call 837-4993, ext. 15, or visit www.saint-timothysdanville.org/Header.html.

Spring Jazz Concert

Monte Vista High School's Jazz A and B will be having their spring jazz concert at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 27, in the Al Genile Theater, 3131 Stone Valley Road, Danville. The concert will feature guest artist Mic Gillette. Tickets are \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door.

Events

Bringing Back Natives Garden Tour

A free garden tour will visit 65 pesticide-free, water-conserving gardens that provide habitat for wildlife and have more than 30 percent native plants, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday, May 7. This event is free, registration is required and closes Thursday, April 20. Call (510) 236-9558, e-mail kathy@kathykramerconsulting.net, or visit www.bringingbackthenatives.net.

Flag Retirement Ceremony

Ian Wogan, a senior at San Ramon Valley High School and a Boy Scout from Troup 815, will be completing his Eagle Scout Service Project by hosting a flag retirement ceremony Saturday, April 22, at Camp Parks, Dublin. Call 984-9111.

Giant Spring Book Sale

Friends of the Danville Library will be holding a giant spring book sale from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday, April 21; 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, April 22; and 12-4 p.m., Sunday, April 23. All proceeds benefit the Danville Library.

Grizzly Peak Cyclists Ride

Bart Borland from Grizzly Peak Cyclists will lead a ride starting at the Park-N-Ride lot at Rudgear Road and I-680 and then riding over to Athenian School, continuing to ascend up Mount Diablo. The descent will take you into Danville for coffee at Peet's. This ride takes place from 8:45 a.m.-noon every Tuesday until June 13. Contact Bart Borland at (510) 601-5062 or gbborland@yahoo.com.

Home Garden Tour

Danville Alamo Branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) will be hosting a Home Garden Tour from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday, May 12, and Saturday, May 13. Tickets are \$25. For information contact Tena Gallagher at 837-0826 or gardentour@auw-da.org.

John Muir's Birthday Celebration and Earth Day Festival

John Muir Association and the National Park Service will be hosting a day of free activities to celebrate Earth Day and John Muir's 168th birthday, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, April 22, at John Muir National Historic Site, 4202 Alhambra Ave., Martinez. Call 228-8860 or visit www.johnmuir.org. Heavy rain will cancel this event.

Las Trampas Wilderness Walk

Join Naturalists on a 2.5-mile short but steep hike up to Rocky Ridge, to view the gorgeous scenery and beautiful wildflowers along the ridge, starting at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 27. For information, call 862-2601.

Livermore Valley Wine Auction

Come and celebrate the spirit of the children in your community at the 12th annual Livermore Valley Wine Auction on Saturday, May 20, at the Wine Vineyards, 5565 Tesla Road, Livermore. Call 447-WINE (447-9463) or visit www.livermorewine.com.

Red Cross Blood Drives

Kevin Valla, a junior at Monte Vista High School and member of Boy Scout Troup 36, will be hosting a Red Cross Blood Drive for his Eagle Scout Project, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, April 29, at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 1550 Diablo Road, Danville. Call 837-2975 to set up an appointment or visit www.beadonor.com and use sponsor code: Kevin. Eagle Scout

WEEKEND PREVIEW



LANCIE WENSEN/CHRONICLE/COURTESY OF THE BLACKHAWK BLOOMERS

Spring Floral Extravaganza

The Blackhawk Bloomers will be hosting Jun Pinon, a nationally acclaimed floral artist, at their Spring Floral Extravaganza starting at 11 a.m., Wednesday, April 26, at the Blackhawk Country Club's Lakeside Ballroom, 599 Blackhawk Club Drive. Tickets are \$50, lunch included. For information or reservations, call Lotty Graham at 736-3665.

candidate Viraj Raygor is coordinating a blood drive Saturday, April 22, at the Greenbrook Clubhouse, 300 Greenbrook Drive. Call 736-1188 to schedule an appointment.

Saving Strokes Golf Event

American Stroke Association and Pleasanton Golf Center will be hosting the second annual Saving Strokes Event from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Sunday, April 23, at the Pleasanton Golf Center, 4501 Pleasanton Ave. Physical therapists and trained PGA professionals will be on hand to introduce stroke "victors" to the benefits of golf. For information, call the American Stroke Association at (510) 904-4000.

Spring Cleaning

Terry McDaniel Team and 1-800-Got-Junk? will be sponsoring a spring cleaning event, "Give to Shepherd's Gate... and Dump Your Junk in our Dumpsters Free!" to benefit Shepherd's Gate Battered Women's Shelter, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, April 29, at San Ramon Valley High School's Main Parking Lot, 140 Love Lane, Danville. Junk and e-waste may be discarded for free, and good items such as clothing, food, personal hygiene products and cleaning supplies will be collected for Shepherd's Gate. Call 838-4300.

Exhibits

1906 Great Earthquake Exhibit

The Museum of the San Ramon Valley will be displaying newspapers, books, post cards and stereoptical slides on the 1906 earthquake's impacts on Danville during the month of April. The museum is open 1-4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday; 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays. There is no charge for admission but donations are encouraged. Call 837-3750 or visit www.museumsv.org.

Car Illustrations

Blackhawk Museum presents Art Fitzpatrick, a fine artist who created a series of car illustrations for Pontiac Division in 1959 and also created the popular "Sporty Cars" series for the U.S. Post Office, from 10:30 a.m.-noon, Saturday, April 22, at the Blackhawk Museum. For information, call Jon Hart at 736-2277, ext. 248, or visit www.blackhawkmuseum.org.

Quilting Through the Years Exhibit

The Museum of the San Ramon Valley in partnership with The Quilter's Inn will be showing a collection of historic and contemporary quilts created by talented local quilters, from

April 29-May 27. The museum is open Tuesday-Friday, 1-4 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., in the old Depot, 205 Railroad Ave., Danville. Admission is free, but donations are encouraged. Call 837-3750 or visit www.museumsv.org.

Fundraisers

'Blossom Into Spring' Fashion Show

GFWC/Danville Women's Club is hosting a fashion show, "Blossom Into Spring," to benefit Friends of Hospice San Ramon Valley, at 11:30 a.m., Saturday, April 29, Crow Canyon Country Club. Tickets are a donation of \$35 and must be purchased before April 20 by calling Barbara Chavez at 828-0347 or 837-1165.

Neighborhood Kitchen & Garden Tour

Greenbrook and Baldwin elementary schools are hosting a Neighborhood Kitchen & Garden Tour, from 1-5 p.m. (check-in begins at 12:45 p.m.), Sunday, May 21, starting at Greenbrook School, 1475 Harlan Drive, Danville. Also included with the tour will be wine, catered delights, a vendor boutique and a silent auction, hosted by WineStyles and the Peasant & the Pear. Tickets bought in advance are \$30; \$35 on the day of the event. Visit www.ges.srvusd.k12.ca.us/kitchengardentour.html.

Simayof Monte Carlo Carnavale

Simayof will be proudly sponsoring the Monte Carlo Carnavale benefiting the Special Olympics with a night of good food and cocktails, silent and live auctions and dancing starting at 6 p.m., Saturday, April 29, at Round Hill Country Club in Alamo. Tickets are \$175 per person; \$1,750 for a table of 10; \$2,500 for table sponsors including a celebrity guest seated at your table. For information, call Heather Jones at 944-8801, ext. 232.

SRVHS Fastpitch Girls Softball Crab Feed

SRVHS Fastpitch Girls Softball Team will be hosting a Crab Feed to help raise money for improvements to the fields and equipment, starting at 6 p.m., Saturday, April 22, Danville Veterans Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. Tickets are \$35 and are available from any SRVHS player or by calling 837-8639.

Sycamore Valley Elementary School Auction and Fundraiser

Sycamore Valley Elementary will be holding its annual parent-teacher social fundraiser from 6:30-11 p.m.,

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Friday, April 28, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. The night will consist of hors d'oeuvres, dinner, silent and live auctions and dancing. Tickets are \$75. Contact Pam Clemmons at P2Clemmons@aol.com or visit www.ses.srvusd.k12.ca.us/paris2006.

The Sky Baron Ball

The Sky Baron Ball benefiting the American Cancer Society will include dining, dancing, casino games, auctions and other special attractions, from 7 p.m.-midnight, Saturday, April 29, Attitude Aviation Flight School, 299 W. Jack London Blvd., Livermore. Comfortable cocktail attire. Tickets are \$150 each. Call 831-3911.

Third Annual UCP Golf Classic

With a day of golf, including lunch, exciting contests, prizes and special celebrity appearances, the third annual UCP Golf Classic will be starting at 10 a.m., Monday, April 24, Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Drive, Danville. This event will conclude with a gourmet dinner and a silent auction to benefit United Cerebral Palsy of the Golden Gate. Tickets for the whole day are \$175; \$40 for dinner only. Call (510) 832-7430, ext. 4, or visit www.ucpgg.org.

Way Side Inn Thrift Shop Sale

The Way Side Inn Thrift Shop and Costume Rental in Lafayette is hosting its principal fundraiser to benefit Assistance League of Diablo Valley with tons of sales! Vintage hats, gloves and purses will be on sale Tuesday, May 2. Bathing suits for the family will be the super buy Tuesday, May 9. Bridal wear will be flying off the racks Tuesday, May 16. Store hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday. Call 934-0901.

Holidays

Mother's Day Hike

Jennifer House of Save Mount Diablo will lead a Mother's Day hike at 8

a.m., Sunday, May 14, meeting at the Macedo Ranch Staging Area, north end of Green Valley Road, Alamo. The hike will take you to one of the few places where you can see three rare endemic plants within a few feet of each other and beautiful views of the Bay Area. Rain cancels. Call 947-3535.

Kids & Teens

A Trio of Events for Young Readers

Rakestraw Books will be hosting a trio of events for young readers during the final week of April and the first week in May. Sarah Dessen, author of "Just Listen," will be at Rakestraw Books at 10 a.m., Wednesday, April 26. Ashley Wolff will be presenting "Miss Bindergarten Celebrates the Last Day of Kindergarten," at 10 a.m., Thursday, April 27. Anthony Horowitz will be presenting his new novel, "Ark Angel: An Alex Rider Adventure," at 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 2. Reservations are required; call 837-7337.

Lectures/ Workshops

Internet Safety Workshop for Parents

San Ramon Valley High School and SRVHS PTSA will be providing a informative workshop for parents of middle and high school teens about Internet safety from 7-9 p.m., Tuesday, April 25, SRVHS Performing Arts Center, 140 Love Lane, Danville. Registration is not required, but requested. For information, contact Jill Schratz at 837-3578 or ptsamail@earthlink.net.

'Spirit of Adoption'

Debbie Thomas and America World Adoption Association will be sponsoring a workshop, "Spirit of Adoption," from 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday, April 22, Valley Vineyard Christian Fellowship,

2252 Camino Ramon, San Ramon. This event is free, but registration is required by visiting www.awaa.org or registering at the door.

Straight Talk: 'In God We Trust'

Brad Dacus, President of Pacific Justice Institute, will be speaking at the next Straight Talk meeting to discuss the controversy over the rights of religious expression, from 7-8:15 a.m., Friday, April 28, at the Danville Community Center, 420 Front St., Danville. Cost is \$20, including breakfast. Sign up at www.acteva.com/go/valleystraighttalk.

Teen SAT Strategy Session

For high school students taking the SATs, there will be a free session with professionals from the Princeton Review, from 6-7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 27, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. There will be an overview of the college admissions process, tips on the new changes to the SAT exam and effective test-taking tips. This event is free, but registration is required. Reserve your spot by calling 837-4889 or visiting the Danville Library Information Desk.

Will Proposition 82-Universal Preschool be good for California?

The San Ramon Valley Republican Women will present Brandon Castillo, a partner at Bicker, Castillo & Fairbanks, speaking on the proposed November ballot Proposition 82, starting at 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, April 25, at the Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Drive, Danville. Castillo specializes in ballot proposition campaign strategies. Tickets are \$22, including lunch. RSVP to Roxanne Lindsay at 837-6253 or rrlindz@aol.com.

Literary Events

Sebastian Junger

Sebastian Junger, author of "A Death in Belmont" and "The Perfect Storm," is returning to Rakestraw Books for a special reading and signing at 11 a.m.,

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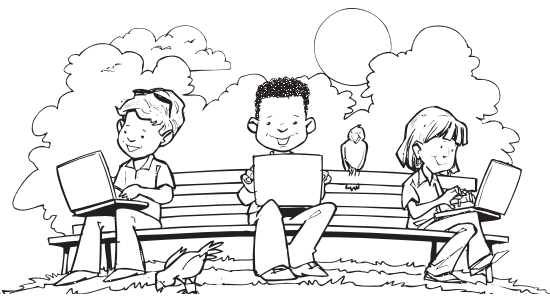
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Saturday, April 29. For this special event, brunch will be served. Reservations are required. Call 837-7337.

On Stage

'Footloose'

St. Joan of Arc LIGHT Youth Ministry will open the Broadway musical "Footloose," at 8 p.m., Thursday-Saturday, May 4-6; Friday-Saturday, May 12-13 and at 6 p.m., Sunday, May 7 and 14, at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, 2601 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased at the church or online at www.sjas.org.

'Noises Off'

San Ramon Valley High School will present a funny comedy, "Noises Off," at 2:30 and 8 p.m., Thursday-Saturday, April 27-29, and at 2:30 p.m., Sunday, April 30, in the schools' Performing Arts Center. Advance tickets are \$7; tickets sold at the door are \$8. Call 552-3089 or email cperryman@srvhs.org.

O'Neill Playwrights' Theatre

The Eugene O'Neill Foundation is celebrating its 11th season of Playwrights' Theatre at 3 p.m., Sundays, May 7 and May 21, with nine new plays by Bay Area writers, at the Old Barn theater at Tao House. Tickets are \$20 for each event or \$35 for both; transportation costs are included in the ticket price via park service van since private vehicles are not allowed. Call 820-1818.

Role Players present 'Gun Shy'

The Role Players Ensemble Theatre is presenting "Gun Shy," a funny story about marriage, divorce, infidelity, infertility, eternal love and diets no one should try. "Gun Shy" will be starting at 8 p.m., Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings; and at 2 p.m. for Sunday matinees, from April 21-May 13, at the Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Tickets are \$13-\$22. For tickets call 314-3463 or visit www.villagetheatreshows.com.

Seniors

Laugh Club

Medical research has proven what people have known for ages. Laughter is good for you. Join us for a half-hour laugh session at 10 a.m. every Tuesday at the San Ramon Senior Center, 9300 Alcosta Blvd. This event is free. Call Fred Turner at 216-4590.

Lend-a-Hand Day

The Town of Danville will be helping Danville seniors with their spring yard clean-up, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, April 29. Seniors or volunteers should call 314-3476 for an information packet if they would like help with their yard clean-up.

Valley Oak Respite Center Activities for Seniors

Valley Oak Respite provides an interactive program for frail seniors and those afflicted with Alzheimer's or related dementias and physical disabilities, from 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 1936 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. The cost is \$25 per session, which includes a morning snack and beverage; participants should bring a bag lunch. For information or an application, call Carmen McCarthy at 945-8040.

Support Groups

Journaling Through Cancer

Beverly Kirkhart, a breast cancer survivor, inspirational speaker and co-author of "Chicken Soup for the Surviving Soul," will be holding a journaling workshop for cancer patients, their families and friends from 6-8 p.m., Tuesday, May 2, at The Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. This event is free, but reservations are required. Call 933-0107.

Managing Cancer Treatment Symptoms and Side Effects

Chris Raymond, RN, OCN, will host an informal workshop to answer questions about cancer treatment side effects and discuss methods of managing nausea, fatigue and other symptoms, from 6-8 p.m., Monday, May 22, at Valley Care Health Library & Ryan Comer Cancer Resource Center, 5725 Las Positas Blvd., second floor, Pleasanton. This event is free, but reservations are required. Call 933-0107.

San Ramon Valley Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue and Chronic Pain Support

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

Volunteering

Bringing Back the Natives Tour

Volunteers are needed for the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, from

10 a.m. -5 p.m., Sunday, May 7. This tour will include 64 pesticide-free, water conserving gardens that provide habitat for wildlife and native plants. Registration is required to volunteer. Contact Kathy Kramer at (510) 236-9558. Visit www.bringingbackthenatives.com.

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.

Diablo Valley Literacy Council

The Diablo Valley Literacy Council (DVLC) is looking for volunteers to help non-English speaking adults learn how to read, write and speak English. There will be three tutoring workshops held: Saturday, May 6; Tuesday, May 9; and Saturday, May 13, at DVLC, 4000 Clayton Road, Concord. There is a non-refundable \$15 registration fee. For information or to register, call Jane at 938-0139.

Help Your Senior Neighbors

A lot of Danville seniors need rides to their appointments, stores or to special events. The Seniors' Club at Veterans Memorial Hall is looking for volunteers to provide rides on an "as-needed basis" on one or more Mondays a month. Call Jenn Overmore at 314-3476 for more information.

Outdoor Adventure Faire Needs You

Remember the thrill of that bite, hook up, the fight and the landing? Help Christ's Kids Sports Ministry bring that excitement to a child by volunteering at the fishing program of its Outdoor Adventure Faire from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, May 13, at Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area, 2500 Stanley Blvd., Pleasanton. Call Jim at 820-3874.

Project Second Chance

Help an adult to read, write or spell better with Project Second Chance (PSC) and the Contra Costa County Library adult literacy program. Training will begin from 6:30-8:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 3 and will continue from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., May 6 and 13, at the PSC office, 75 Santa Barbara Rd., Pleasant Hill. For information, call 927-3250 or e-mail psc@cclib.org.

Rides for Seniors in Lafayette

Rides for Seniors, based in Lafayette, is looking for volunteers (25 years and older) to allow seniors "to age in place" in their homes and be safe when transported to a doctor appointment or grocery shopping. If you are available for a couple of hours periodically, call 284-6699. Fingerprinting and DMV background check required.

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue (TVAR) will be offering volunteer orientations from 1-2:30 p.m., Saturday, April 8 and Sunday, April 23, at East County Animal Shelter (ECAS), 4595 Gleason Dr., Dublin. Contact Cathy Bergren at 426-2472 or e-mail calicocathy@yahoo.com.

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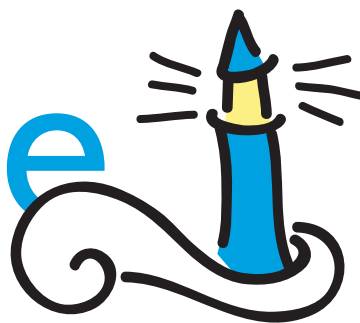
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SALES AT A GLANCE

This week's data represents homes sold during March 2006

| Alamo | Danville | Walnut Creek |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Total sales reported: 6 | Total sales reported: 13 | Total sales reported: 23 |
| Lowest sale reported: \$800,000 | Lowest sale reported: \$620,000 | Lowest sale reported: \$268,500 |
| Highest sale reported: \$2,250,000 | Highest sale reported: \$1,935,000 | Highest sale reported: \$1,180,000 |
| Average sales reported: \$1,523,333 | Average sales reported: \$1,099,808 | Average sales reported: \$596,848 |

HOME SALES

Source: California REsource

| Danville | Alamo | Walnut Creek |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5114 Blackhawk Drive Stange Trust to S. & N. Grossman for \$1,935,000 | 2478 Alamo Country Circle Frei Trust to D. & K. Bergen for \$2,040,000 | 310 North Civic Drive #507 R. Ludlow to D. Rosdahl for \$268,500 |
| 1184 Blue Spur Circle Shapell Industries to Ccigtong Trust for \$1,247,000 | 910 Danville Boulevard S. & S. Stamates to J. Rodriguez for \$1,070,000 | 310 North Villa Way T. Hudson to F. Olvera for \$440,000 |
| 106 Carole Meadows Court Edwards Trust to L. & N. Dicks for \$1,379,000 | 93 Post Road R. Nichols to C. & J. White for \$800,000 | 2681 Oak Road #220 C. Gilbert to Scandia Realty for \$770,000 |
| 15 Cross Bridge Court Kolonay Trust to J. & A. Gillespie for \$1,025,000 | 15 Royal Oaks Court R. Gibson to T. Whittington for \$1,675,000 | 2550 Oak Road #315 Bridgeport Commons to M. Canlas for \$430,000 |
| 627 Crystal Springs Court Roshal Trust to M. & K. Morgan for \$1,185,000 | 1537 Serafix Road Marx Trust to E. & D. Limones for \$2,250,000 | 2560 Oak Road #320 Bridgeport Commons to A. & H. Hodges for \$532,000 |
| 2365 Holly Oak Drive R. & A. Peterson to E. Smith for \$1,884,000 | 1010 Stone Valley Road L. Jaime to Marx Trust for \$1,305,000 | 2857 Ptarmigan Drive #7 M. & C. Glantz to C. Stoney for \$539,000 |
| 1552 Mission Drive F. Kuan to K. Ericson for \$620,000 | Walnut Creek | 2637 San Benito Drive K. & M. Goodrich to M. & N. Reed for \$780,000 |
| 1807 Mockingbird Place Kouyoumdjian Trust to B. Beitsch-Highland for \$710,000 | 1315 Alma Avenue #141 Alma Development to R. Costiniano for \$365,000 | 1602 San Miguel Drive E. Tong to P. & J. Tong for \$460,000 |
| 1833 North Forest Hill Place T. Davis to C. Waters for \$670,000 | 1315 Alma Avenue Alma Development to A. Sproul for \$454,000 | 150 Sharene Lane #109 W. & C. Walking to J. & D. Biddle for \$334,000 |
| 411 Skylark Court T. Vanderhorst to G. Odiye for \$630,000 | 148 Arlene Drive J. & H. Taboada to A. Coronel for \$965,000 | 2141 Stewart Avenue F. Cristancho to T. & M. Mathis for \$960,000 |
| 1647 St. Helena Drive R. Farinha to A. & J. Pena for \$960,000 | 1798 Candelero Court Gary Trust to Avery Trust for \$529,000 | 3874 Terra Granada Drive #3C Rosenblatt Trust to Peratis Trust for \$665,000 |
| 35 Sugar Pine Lane J. & J. Ramos to R. Pascal-Buhaescu for \$1,070,000 | 725 Cree Court Chetcuti & Associates to E. Zemach for \$1,180,000 | 4033 Terra Granada Drive #4B J. Bechtel to D. & M. Lin for \$399,000 |
| 447 Woodbine Lane E. & T. Dopkins to M. & J. Vonderahe for \$982,500 | 399 El Divisadero Avenue Scott Trust to R. & L. Oest for \$935,000 | 3173 Wayside Plaza #204 P. Ranuio to L. Spivak for \$339,000 |
| | 20 Gary Lee Lane K. Short to G. & M. Wesner for \$700,000 | 3183 Wayside Plaza #205 Beutel Trust to Attaran Trust for \$437,000 |
| | 1241 Homestead Avenue #204 J. Bennhoff to K. Brice for \$322,000 | |
| | 1997 Honey Locust Court Mosnuic Trust to D. Hill for \$924,000 | |

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Danville

2 Bedrooms

604 Hartley Dr. **\$574,990**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 457-6960

3 Bedrooms

812 Luz Ct. **\$779,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 p.m. Pacific Union 314-4803

1061 River Rock Ln. **\$789,000**
Sat/Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 250-4599

208 Promenade **\$853,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 699-3527

42 Casablanca St. **\$859,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4072

16 Narcissus Ct. **\$910,000**
Sat/Sun 1:30-4:30 p.m. Intero (408) 981-6012

248 Abigail Cir. **\$925,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Prudential CA 314-2428

4 Bedrooms

263 Greenbrook Dr. **\$1,059,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Big Oak 743-8500 ext. 1

269 Jasmine Wy. **\$1,125,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Empire 217-5017

3862 Sheffield Cir. **\$1,130,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4176

591 Bridgewater Rd. **\$1,135,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4123

199 Mont Blanc Ct. **\$1,175,000**
Sat/Sun Sa 12-3; Su 1-4
Empire 351-5859

13 Meadowlark Ct. **\$1,249,950**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4022

1107 Trowbridge Wy. **\$1,329,000**
Sun 2-4 p.m. Intero 200-1737

705 Mistral Ct. **\$1,425,000**
Sat/Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 997-1001

119 Gerald Dr. **\$1,499,000**
Sat 1-4 p.m. Coldwell Banker 362-2058

310 Amelia Ln. **\$1,585,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Empire 217-5048

6 Maplewood Ct. **\$1,699,000**
Sun 2-5 p.m. Intero 855-4072

189 Montair Dr. **\$2,249,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Empire 217-5048

14 Woodranch Cir. **\$959,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 p.m. Empire 217-3112

605 Glasgow Cir. **\$960,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 519-6838

5 Bedrooms

45 Vicenza Ct. **\$1,249,999**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4046

1085 Yorkshire Pl. **\$1,329,000**
Sat 1-5 p.m. Intero 286-7087

1085 Yorkshire Pl. **\$1,329,000**
Sun 2-5 p.m. Intero 286-7087

1124 Blue Spur Cir. **\$1,485,000**
Sat/Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 716-1666

35 Barrons Pl. **\$1,574,500**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 683-7709

15 Discovery Ct. **\$1,625,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Re/Max Accord 510-366-6616

6 Maplewood Ct. **\$1,699,000**
Sun 2-5 p.m. Intero 855-4072

6 Bedrooms

265 Montego Dr. **\$4,600,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Coldwell Banker 831-3329

Alamo

3 Bedrooms

2263 Granite Ct. **\$1,298,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Empire 788-8699

4 Bedrooms

504 Oakshire Pl. **\$3,699,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 785-6219

5 Bedrooms

94 Park Meadow Ct. **\$1,395,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4155

31 Shandelin Ln. **\$2,795,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4159

1427 Vine Ln. **\$3,195,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Empire 998-3098

Blackhawk

3 Bedrooms

887 Redwood Dr. **\$1,357,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 672-2499

4 Bedrooms

3894 Cottonwood Dr. **\$1,299,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 648-5359

3551 Deer Crest Dr. **\$1,569,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 612-8008

5 Bedrooms

4339 Quail Run Ln. **\$1,459,000**
Sun 1:30-4 p.m. Blackhawk R E 683-6058

Diablo

4 Bedrooms

21 Calle Del Casarillo **\$1,895,000**
Sat/Sun 1-4 p.m. Coldwell Banker 984-3060

Walnut Creek

2 Bedrooms

1919 Ygnacio Valley Rd., #36 **\$379,950**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 648-5354

3 Bedrooms

1877 Holland Dr. **\$525,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4115

72 Iron Horse Ln. **\$769,900**
Sat/Sun 1:30-4:30 p.m. Intero 487-2629

1940 San Luis Rd. **\$824,800**
Sat/Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 457-4551

475 Le Jean Wy. **\$869,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4105

San Ramon

3 Bedrooms

3917 Crow Canyon Rd. **\$579,950**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4075

1312 Nancy Ln. **\$669,950**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4072

1111 Nancy Ln. **\$685,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Alain Pinel 791-2621

313 Bellflower Dr. **\$719,950**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4072

9974 Foxboro Wy. **\$740,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Re/Max Accord 7735-SOL

3019 Sombrero Cir. **\$767,500**
Sun 1:30-4 p.m. Blackhawk 736-4155

45 Canyon Green Ct. **\$770,000**
Sat/Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 216-7092

2481 Milford Dr. **\$788,888**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Empire 217-5069

4 Elmwood Dr. **\$789,950**
Sat/Sun 1-4 p.m. Hometown GMAC 417-8611

389 Catalan **\$799,900**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Better Homes 791-4214

2053 Echo Pl. **\$875,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 648-5314

34 Ascot Ct. **\$899,990**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Re/Max Accord 735-SOLD

4 Bedrooms

23 Gait Ct. **\$1,149,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Prudential CA 314-2428

524 Tylerton Ct. **\$1,424,500**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Alain Pinel 968-1452

773 Winterside Cir. **\$779,000**
Sun 1-4 p.m. Intero 855-4110

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Just What You've Been Waiting For \$1,249,999
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Lisa and Greg Doyle 925.855.4046



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Fabulous Location \$1,249,950
Beautiful pool with waterfall and separate spa on almost one-third acre. Private yard with huge side-yard access. Newer roof, carpet and so much more.
Ju Dee, Ju Dee Ju Dee 925.855.4022



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