

## Merry birthday

Christmas birthdays can be a bummer

> **page 18**

Vol. II, Number 34 • December 22, 2006

www.DanvilleWeekly.com

## Super teen

Sam Finlayson  
receives national  
Heisman Award

> **page 9**

# Danville

W E E K L Y

## Ranchland changes

Elworthy property  
west of I-680  
being studied

> **page 5**

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# Keeping the **faith**

**The hunger for spiritual meaning still  
reverberates throughout the Valley**

**page 16**

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## Q: What are your New Year's resolutions?



To do a lot more snow-mobiling. Last year I didn't get out as much as I would have liked to and this year there should be more snow.

**Jerry Taylor**  
tow manager



I'd like to lose 10 pounds, like everyone else. I failed last year so this year I'm really going to try.

**Michael Allard**  
financial advisor



I hope to get straight A's. It's a new goal for this year, but I usually get pretty good grades.

**Amanda Miller**  
fifth-grader



I hope to keep making my bed. I'm pretty good at doing it now but I could be better.

**Abigail Miller**  
third-grader



Well, sometimes I play with my brother. We like to play Candyland.

**Ryan Hayden**  
3 years old

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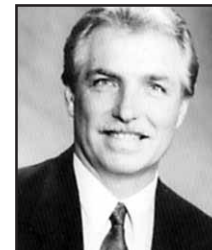
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### ABOUT THE COVER

Spiritual leaders talk about the impact of faith in the last few years. Design by Ben Ho.

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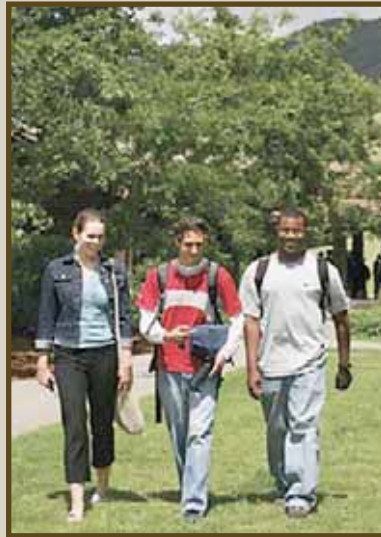
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### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ We’ve had people come in with truckloads of old electronics who say, ‘Do you have any idea how much money you saved us?’ ”

—Rhonda Chaikin of Electronic Waste Management about a free e-waste recycling event being held in early January. See story, page 7.

### Get ready for emergencies

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District is giving Community Emergency Response Training, or CERT, acting in conjunction with Danville, San Ramon and the school district. The course takes six weeks with classes usually held from 6-9:30 p.m. on Thursday nights at the fire district offices, 1500 Bollinger Canyon Road. The program teaches basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations.

The San Ramon Valley has 41 firefighters and approximately 15 sworn police officers on duty at any time, who would be the “first responders” for an emergency, according to the district Web site. If an emergency causes massive injuries to just 2 percent of the population that would mean 3,000 victims needing immediate help while telephones, roads and services may be out of commission. Trained volunteers would know how to help during the crucial first 24 hours. After a large disaster, it may take as long as five to seven days for help to arrive.

The next series of CERT classes begins Jan. 25 and continues through March 1. Anyone interested should visit [www.srvfire.ca.gov](http://www.srvfire.ca.gov); telephone 838-6697; or e-mail [dbell@srvfire.ca.gov](mailto:dbell@srvfire.ca.gov).

### All about the arts

The Town of Danville is looking for three new members for its Arts Commission to replace commissioners whose terms expire at the end of February. The Arts Commission, which has eight volunteer members including one youth commissioner, meets bi-monthly.

The Arts Commission promotes interest in and support for the arts in the community. Applicants, who must be Danville residents, do not need to have experience in the arts but they should have an interest. Successful candidates must also want to see the arts flourish in Danville and be willing to devote the time to make a difference.

To learn more, visit [www.ci.danville.ca.us](http://www.ci.danville.ca.us), telephone City Clerk Marie Sunseri at 314-3401, or e-mail [msunseri@ci.danville.ca.us](mailto:msunseri@ci.danville.ca.us).

### Town employees to take a break

The offices of the Town of Danville will close at 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 22, for one week, reopening Jan. 2. The Police Department will maintain its normal patrol during this time.

Building inspection services will continue to be provided Wednesday-Friday, Dec. 27-29. To schedule inspections, call 314-3333 before 4 p.m. for the following day.

Restroom facilities in town parks will remain open and will be maintained every day except Dec. 25. To report a maintenance emergency, call 820-2144.

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## Elworthy property under study for possible development

Plan calls for 84 homes, 12 multi-family apartments

by Geoff Gillette

Owners of a 459-acre parcel of land on Danville's west side are seeking approval of a development that could bring an additional hundred families into the town.

Members of the Town Council and Planning Commission met in joint session Dec. 12 to begin the review process for the proposed Elworthy West Development off San Ramon Valley Boulevard.

Town Planner David Crompton said that the proposed plan would develop 12 of the 459 acres, with 84 single family homes and 12 multi-family apartments. The plan also proposes a trailhead/picnic area and an equestrian facility. The biggest part of the land would remain as open space. Seventy-five percent of the project is within Danville town limits with the rest in unincorporated Contra Costa County.

Crompton said that during the initial investigation it was determined that an Environmental Impact Report should be prepared in order to study any significant

impacts that might be associated with the project.

The town has retained the services of RBF Consulting to conduct the environmental study. RBF project manager Kristie Wheeler presented the following areas that RBF plans to study for the report:

- Aesthetic; air quality
- Biologic and cultural resources
- Geology and soils
- Hazardous materials
- Hydrology and water use
- Noise
- Population and housing

Despite the fact that this was an informational meeting with no action to be taken, the groups allowed public comment. Nearly a dozen residents turned out and several spoke.

The first to speak was Danville resident Ralph Hoffmann. He pointed to the residents in attendance at the meeting and warned that this was only a small percentage of people who would express concern over the proposed development.

"We had a jam-packed audience at every hearing of the EIR for the Elworthy property last time," Hoffmann said.

He stated that the impact of the new residents on area schools was on the minds of those who had

attended the previous hearings.

"When this comes up this summer, I would anticipate the parents of children attending those two elementary schools will be very concerned about the overcrowding of those schools," he said.

According to the map provided by the school district, the schools most likely to be affected would be John Baldwin and Greenbrook elementary schools and Charlotte Wood Middle School.

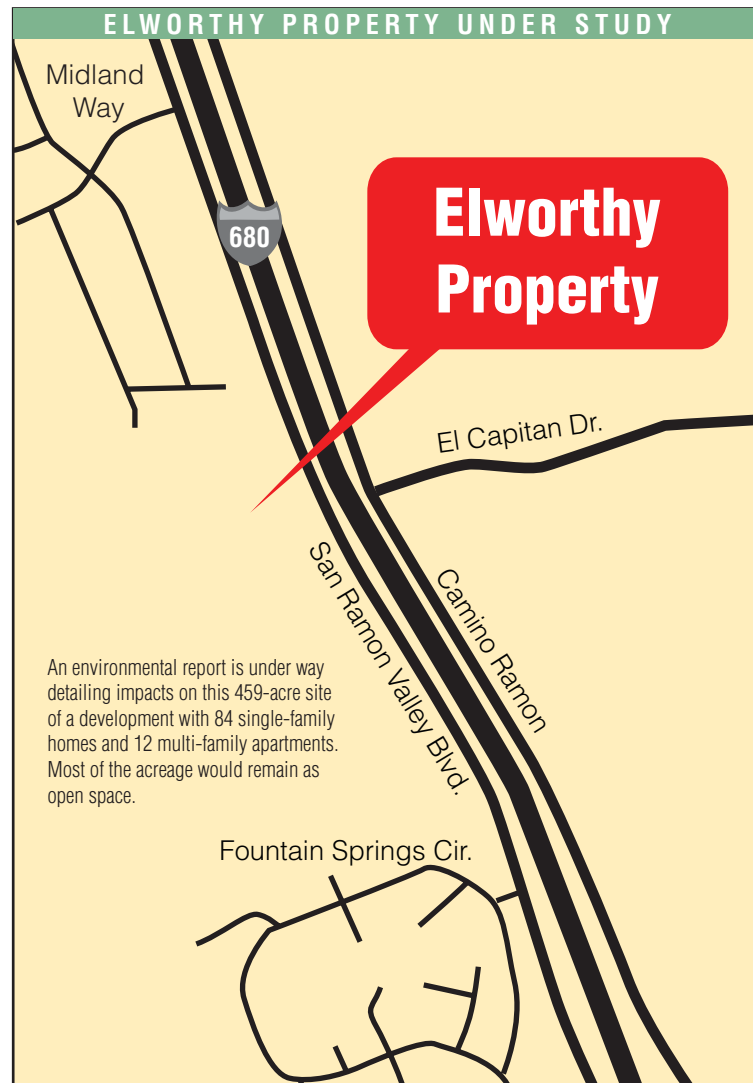
Another issue brought up was drainage.

"We want to make sure the EIR looks at the proposed retention basins that will be right in our back yard," said Daniel Kibbler, who lives adjacent to the property.

He added that the report should address any expected impact on wildlife.

Mayor Mike Shimansky directed Crompton to be certain that the issues of school overcrowding, wildlife, earthquakes and traffic be adequately addressed by the consultants in their study.

A draft of the environmental report should be ready by late spring or early summer. At that time, residents will have an opportunity to examine the report and offer comments at a public hearing. ■



## Danville man works to track narcotic prescriptions

System would target 'doctor shopping'

by Natalie O'Neill

pill poppers abusing narcotic prescription drugs may find OxyContin and Vicodin much harder to buy on the street in the months to come, thanks to recent funding for a California drug monitoring system.

Kaiser Permanente gave a verbal agreement to fund a "real time" computer system study that would closely regulate the distribution of prescription narcotics by granting doctors, pharmacists and some law enforcement officials access to medical records.

The system would pinpoint the frequency at which patients have been prescribed narcotic drugs and target those who have a record of "doctor shopping"—or having multiple doctors prescribe them their drugs.

These are the telltale signs of narcotics abusers and distributors, says Danville resident Bob Pack, an advocate of the drug monitor-

ing system; he lost his two children, Troy, 10, and Alana, 8, when they were struck by a driver who was high on Vicodin in 2003 and swerved onto the sidewalk.

Pack helped pass Senate Bill 734 to crack down on prescription narcotics in 2005 by working closely with state Sen. Tom Torlakson (D., District 7). Further drug monitoring was then approved last January by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and will now require private funding to put the system into place.

Jimena Barreto, a nanny who was found guilty of the second-degree murder of Pack's children, had six different Vicodin prescriptions written by six different doctors. She was denied an appeal last week.

"Doctors have been giving narcotics out too liberally," Pack said. "The (monitoring system) will save the lives of innocents like my children."

But privacy rights groups say the drug monitoring could infringe on a citizen's right to have protected health information.

► Continued on page 7



### Where's Santa?

Danville residents Stephanie and Kristen Glass, who are a freshman and sophomore at Bentley High School in Lafayette, pose for their dad Skip to take their photo for the family Christmas card. They were at the Blackhawk Plaza Santa station Sunday afternoon, along with their mom Brenda, and since Santa was on a break they decided to use his decorations as their backdrop.

# HOLIDAY SPARKLE

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An e-waste collection held by Electronic Waste Management at AT&T Park in San Francisco was successful despite heavy rains.

## Dispose of e-waste for free

Out with old technology—  
at Diablo Valley College

by **Natalie O'Neill**

As technology evolves at a rapid rate, consumers are lucky to keep a computer or a television half a decade before it becomes obsolete. Flat screens have replaced big, boxy TVs, and upgraded computers can sometimes render technology from five years ago useless.

For those who receive new electronics as holiday gifts, getting rid of old models can pose a problem.

California law states it is illegal to throw away certain electronics, as they contain toxic substances that pollute the water, ground and

air. And most disposal services in California charge, with the cost of throwing away just one TV as high as \$65.

Fortunately, Electronic Waste Management is holding a free electronic waste disposal and recycling event at Diablo Valley College on Jan 5-7.

"We've had people come in with truckloads of old electronics who say, 'Do you have any idea how much money you saved us?'" said marketing coordinator Rhonda Chaikin.

These events started a year-and-a-half ago and have given people in the San Ramon Valley the opportunity to get rid of their electronic equipment in an environmentally ethical way.

"We're keeping hundreds and

thousands of pounds of electronics out of our landfill and waterways," Chaikin said. "Technology is booming and expanding exponentially these days."

Electronics contain carcinogens like lead and mercury that can damage the nervous system and cause birth defects if ingested. Effects of mercury include an impaired sense of touch coordination, taste and sight.

This November, the United Nations held a conference in which Achim Steiner, executive director of the U.N. Environment Program, stated that 20-50 million tons of e-waste are generated around the world annually. He reported that most of the e-waste is shipped

► Continued on page 9

## Pack

► Continued from page 5

"It's important for the study to include protection from those who could access the information illegitimately," said Beth Givens, director of Privacy Rights Clearing House, a nonprofit consumer advocacy group.

Patients with legitimate pain also say it could affect their relationship with their doctor and single them out unfairly. Medical records are the most sensitive personal information and often people consider them even more private than financial records, Givens said.

"There are some medical records people wouldn't even want to share with their family," she said.

Taking on the role of local spokesman for the issue, Pack addressed organizations' concerns over privacy. Anyone accessing the information would have to do so by first surpassing layers of technological security, he said.

"Although it's valid to be concerned about the privacy issue, we feel privacy will be regulated closely," he said.

Last year the Department of Justice reported that 18 million narcotics prescriptions had been written in California and estimated that 2 million to 4 million of them were fraudulent, Pack pointed out. The more liberally narcotics are pre-

scribed, the more of a chance they will end up on the street, he said.

"It will stop young people in their teens from getting things like OxyContin and Vicodin and dying from an overdose," he said.

Danville Police Chief Chris Wenzel commented that when he was a detective five years ago, Vicodin was one of the biggest narcotics of choice.

"There is definitely a market for it," he said.

Under the bill, all narcotics will be monitored, from codeine cough syrup to methadone, but the priority will be on physically addictive pain killers. According to California law, medical marijuana is also considered a narcotic.

Cracking down on prescribing these drugs, however, could have some major repercussions, say patient's rights groups. And monitoring drug abuse by computer sets up room for error, Givens added.

"It should include recourse for individuals wrongfully determined to be drug abusers," she said.

She also noted she had seen

cases where innocent patients had been accused of abusing their medication. For people who are already suffering from chronic pain, false accusations can be devastating, she said.

Supporters of the bill expect to receive funding for the study from other health companies as well as Kaiser Permanente, since a tightly regulated system would save health companies money by preventing an excess of narcotic prescriptions.

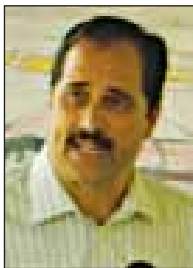
Pack said supporters are in the process of gathering about \$2 million in private funding for the bill. Gaining funding from pharmacies like Wal-Mart or Longs Drugs is also a possibility, Pack said.

Representatives from Abbot Laboratories and Knoll Pharmaceutical Co., which produce and distribute Vicodin, did not return calls to comment on the issue.

In the past, narcotics abusers were able to pay their \$10 co-pay and acquire \$200 worth of prescription drugs, advocates of the bill pointed out. Since the drugs are legal, abusers and distributors aren't often worried about getting caught with the drug, Pack said.

The social and economic impact on the state of California would be overwhelmingly positive, advocates say.

"It's basically heroin," Pack said. "It shouldn't be so easy to get." ■



Bob Pack

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# Super student wins Wendy's Heisman Award

Sam Finlayson beats out 15,000 nominees for national honor

by Jordan M. Doronila

Soaring on the wings of faith and family, 17-year-old Sam Finlayson overcame severe ailments and rose to become an athletic Adonis and a super student at San Ramon Valley High School.

Finlayson—a senior at San Ramon and a water polo player—was named the winner this month of the national Wendy's High School Heisman Award, which honors high school seniors who excel in academics, athletics and community service. He beat out 15,000 nominees and was presented a crystal trophy in New York City on Friday, Dec. 8.

He also received a \$2,800 donation to his high school. His award ceremony was televised on ESPN2 that Sunday.

The Danville Town Council honored Finlayson's achievements Tuesday evening.

"It's an incredible honor," said Finlayson, an Alamo resident. "It was really a humbling experience. My parents always have given me support."

"It was amazing," he said, about his trip to New York. "Everything is moving so quickly. The excitement is kind of contagious."

In addition to playing water polo, Finlayson has a 4.5 academic average, sings in Ken Abrams' acclaimed choir at San Ramon and is an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Alamo. He plans on joining his brother Peter at Stanford University and studying medicine after he graduates.

"I don't think we have ever had a winner," said San Ramon Valley

High School Principal Joseph Ianora. "Now we have an actual winner."

"This is huge," he added. "He's an incredible, amazing young man."

As an infant, Finlayson dealt with meningitis and seizures and had digestive problems. He was taken to the hospital often, he said. He also suffered from encephalitis, a brain inflammation caused by a virus, at an early age.

"I was on an oxygen tank 24 hours a day," he said, adding that he was on intravenous feeding.

With the proper medical help and physical therapy, Finlayson recovered from his encephalitis, so he could finally leave his home and participate in outside activities.

"I never realized these things existed," he said.

Also when he was young, he spent three years in Japan where his father was working as an international trade lawyer. He said that he got to see Tokyo and a mountain village community. He studied at an American school and returned to the United States when he was 9.

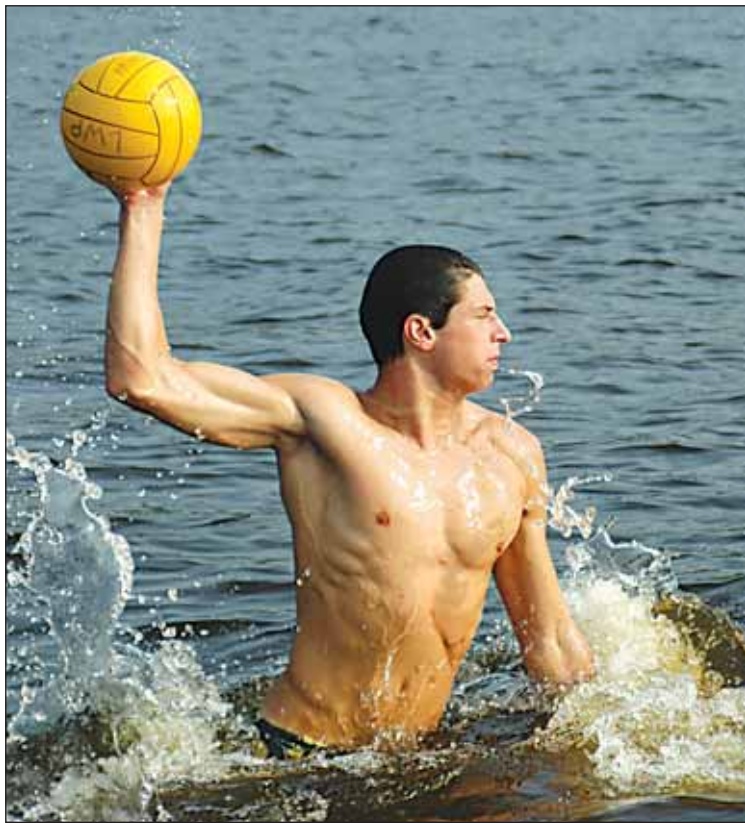
Growing up, he said his older siblings were role models. His brother Peter was a stellar student in school and brought him along to hang out with his friends. He played water polo, too.

"My brother was an excellent athlete," Finlayson said. "He's really intelligent. I looked up to him."

Similarly, his sister Kate was a source of inspiration to him. And, like her younger brother, she suffered from physical dysfunction. She had hydrocephalus, which caused a brain hemorrhage and gave her frequent headaches.

But despite her difficulties, she "is brilliant," he said, and remains upbeat.

"It's amazing she can be so opti-



San Ramon Valley High School senior Sam Finlayson, the 2006 winner of the prestigious Wendy's High School Heisman Award, plays water polo.

mistic," Finlayson said. "She makes me want to work even harder."

In middle school, Finlayson swam as part of his physical therapy. Then he began to play water polo, serving first as a ball boy on his brother Peter's team.

He enjoyed water polo because it combined the physical aspects of football and wrestling and the team play of basketball.

Since then, playing the sport has helped him become disciplined in his high school academics. He noted that he gained skills of thinking quickly and strength from physical trials that helped him get high marks.

"I give everything I have for every activity," he said.

He also went with Abrams' choir group to provide aid and songs to the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans this year.

But whatever the challenges he faced, he maintained that his strong faith helped him get through tough times.

"It's always been an inspiration to me," he said about his faith. "Church is important."

Coupling his faith with unwavering family support, he overcame his struggles.

"I'm grateful for the problems I have had," he said, explaining that he appreciates the life he has now after his early childhood sicknesses. ■

## E-waste

► Continued from page 7

from affluent countries to developing countries where they are used as landfill.

Electronic Waste Management, which is a division of Acquisitions Office in San Leandro, collected 4 million pounds of electronic waste in 2006 alone. Electronic Waste Management is a state approved e-waste collector.

The event will be held from noon-5p.m., Friday, Jan. 5; and from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 6-7, at Diablo Valley College, 321 Golf Club Road in Pleasant Hill, in the overflow parking lot across the street from the campus. People will stay in their vehicles, and staff members will unload the electronics after they fill out a state-required form that will be handed out; the form is also available on the Web site, [www.noewaste.com](http://www.noewaste.com), for those who want to fill it out in advance.

Those with unwanted working electronics who don't want to make the drive to Diablo Valley College can also post equipment in the "free" section of Craigslist.org and have an interested person pick it up.

In past months, turnout at e-waste events has been wonderful from Danville residents, Chaikin said.

"There's been a tremendous response from the community," she added.

The company will accept televisions, computers and monitors, telephones and cell phones, video game systems, power supplies, fax machines, stereo equipment and DVD players.

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**Buongiorno**

Nicolo and Maddalena Farinati brought along their Weekly to share with their grandparents last summer when they visited them in Venice, Italy.



**Remember the warmth?**

The Proctor family vacations with their Weekly at Boat Bay, Southampton Parish, Bermuda, in August—(l-r) Emily, Eliot (who is a senior at West Point), Sherry and Stewart Proctor.



**Puerto Rico reading**

Nicole, Mille and Brandon Narvaez pose with their Weekly for Wilson while visiting the fortress of Castillo San Felipe in Puerto Rico last summer.



**Let there be light**

The Dice family—Jody and John with daughters Rachel, 7 and Hannah, 4—visit the Outer Banks, Corolla, N.C., along with their Weekly last summer.



**Georgia queens**

Jeanne Reid and Kathy Carlson flash their Weekly as they take a day trip to historic Savannah, Ga., while visiting friends in Jacksonville, Fla.



**Love me tender**

A serenade by Elvis while reading the Danville Weekly—what could be better? say Kim and Lowell Crow who visited Graceland in Memphis, Tenn., last summer.



**Celebrating in paradise**




Linda and Bill Maddaus said they wouldn't leave home without their "trusted Danville Weekly" so they included it when they celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on the Island of Tahaa, French Polynesia.



**Ahoy, mates**

Rosemarie and Kristin Kleinberg of Danville along with friends Lynelle and Kandice Soto of San Ramon enjoy their Weekly at Disneyland in Anaheim. They were attending the red carpet premiere of "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" and met Johnny Depp, who, alas, was not available for the photograph.

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# Diablo Views

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI



## Be my guest

A press release from The Maids Home Services offering tips on “Creating an Inviting Guest Room” came to our office just in time. I was expecting two guests for Christmas and had two guest rooms to prepare.

The Maids advised giving guests the perfect home away from home. Since my guests were to be my son Pepé and my daughter Zoe it already was their home, so to speak, so I had to alter the tips a bit. But I still welcomed any suggestions. After all, Pepé’s flat in Berlin was spotless when I stayed with him in September, plus he let me use his king-sized bed while he slept on the couch. And I do like to encourage my kids to visit often.

The tips to a welcoming guest room are fairly obvious. Dust and vacuum; wash the bedding. They recommended leaving fresh towels in the guest room but I think my kids feel right at home using their former towel racks in the bathroom.

A guest room is a funny thing. Ours used to be our kids’ rooms, but they’ve both been gone awhile. A lot of parents have designs on their children’s rooms from the time they enter middle school. Some kids no sooner leave for college than their bedrooms are cleaned out, repainted and refurnished. But we already had an office, and had no need for an art studio, sewing room, study or exercise room. (OK, maybe we should have an exercise room.) So when we realized that our offspring were not coming back after college, we created guest rooms. Down

came the posters, the pennants and the bulletin boards with photos of friends and dried flowers and ticket stubs. Up went a fresh coat of paint, watercolors and framed diplomas. In some cases, the furniture was upgraded, or at least changed to the taste of the remaining residents.

**We already had an office, and had no need for an art studio, sewing room, study or exercise room. (OK, maybe we should have an exercise room.) So when we realized that our offspring were not coming back after college, we created guest rooms.**

Zoe’s former room also serves as an ironing room, a talk-on-the-phone-in-private room, and a sick room. And it is where the sun shines on a certain spot on the rug midday in the winter so then it becomes the cat’s room. We may not utilize the rooms to their fullest, but I don’t know how I managed without the use of their closets. I keep my schlepping clothes in Zoe’s closet so she can help herself when she’s in town.

Another tip was one we had already discovered by acci-

dent: Leave reading material on the nightstand. A few years ago when Pepé was due for a stay we perused a \$1 book table and purchased “Over the Edge: Tackling Quarterbacks, Drugs, and a World Beyond Football” by Lawrence Taylor and put it by his bed. We did it as a joke but the funny thing was we all ended up reading it. Now we are experts on staying out all night drinking and taking drugs and still playing football the next day. Since that book was such a success we try to always have some offbeat reading material on the nightstand. This year I’m putting out the quirky memoir “Naked” by David Sedaris, a writer whose humor Pepé appreciates.

Two of the tips from The Maids concern pets: Use a damp sponge to remove pet fur from the furniture, and keep the family pet out of the guest room once the cleaning is done. Our little dog was a big shedder but she died last February—the kids will wish she were still around to leave fur on the furniture. I did wash the extra comforter in Pepé’s closet since it has become another favorite spot for the cat to sleep.

The Maids also suggested topping the pillow with a piece of holiday candy to make your guest feel pampered. I went one stop further. I filled my refrigerator and cupboards with all their favorite foods to make them feel pampered. And to make them feel that they were truly home for the holidays.

—Dolores Fox Ciardelli  
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# Community Pulse

POLICE BULLETIN & LOG • OBITUARIES • BIRTHS & WEDDINGS

## POLICE LOG

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

### Monday, Dec. 11

- Identity theft on Monte Carlo Way at 9:16 a.m.
- Identity theft on Rancho Verde Cir. W. at 12:51 p.m.
- Auto burglary on Clipper Hill Rd. at 1:06 p.m.
- Residential burglary on Bordeaux Ct. at 2 p.m.
- Noise disturbance on Verde Mesa Dr. at 11:46 p.m.

### Tuesday, Dec. 12

- Auto burglary on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 8:37 a.m.
- Identity theft on Still Creek Pl. at 9:05 a.m.
- Petty theft from vehicle on Ocho Rios Dr. at 9:28 a.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on Podva Rd. and San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 9:56 a.m.
- Auto burglary on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 10:29 a.m.
- Auto burglary on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 10:42 a.m.
- Court order violation on La Gonda Way at 12:45 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Diablo Rd. and Green Valley Rd. at 4:09 p.m.
- Identity theft on Cypress Hills Ct. at 5:08 p.m. and at 5:45 p.m.
- Petty theft from vehicle on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 5:45 p.m.
- Grand theft on Quinteria Ln. at 5:47 p.m.
- Harass disturbance on Tunbridge Rd. at 7:56 p.m.

### Wednesday, Dec. 13

- Harass disturbance on Hartz Way at 6:20 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Camino Tassajara and Liverpool St. at 9:35 a.m.
- Felony hit-and-run on I-680 northbound and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 10:06 a.m.

## POLICE BULLETIN

### Black ice causes Jeep to turn over

A 45-year-old man lost control of his jeep when it hit "black ice" and tumbled upside down on the Stone Valley Road exit off I-680 in Alamo on Tuesday morning, said California Highway Patrolman Scott Yox.

Steve Abe of Walnut Creek was driving his 1989 Jeep Cherokee southbound around 7:20 a.m. and hit the black ice as he exited the freeway onto Stone Valley Road westbound. He swerved off the road and his car overturned.

Medical personnel arrived at the scene, Yox said, although Abe suffered no injuries. The ramp remained open during the incident. Officials from

the California Department of Transportation put sand on the road to dissolve the ice.

The term black ice refers to a thin coating of glazed ice on a surface, and Yox said it occurs when the road reaches freezing temperatures.

"When the temperatures get near or below freezing, you can get black ice forming," Yox said. "Folks should be wary of that."

If drivers slide on ice, they should slow down and turn into the skid to regain control, he said.

"You don't want to make frantic movements on the wheel," Yox said. "Let off the accelerator."

—Jordan M. Doronila

- Petty theft on E. Prospect Ave. at 11:25 a.m.
- Vandalism on Love Ln. at 3:26 p.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on Richard Ln. at 4:52 p.m.

### Thursday, Dec. 14

- Promiscuous shooting on Diablo Rd. and Green Valley Rd. at 3:50 a.m.
- Promiscuous shooting on Elizabeth Ln. at 3:50 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Camino Tassajara and Woodranch Dr. at 7:50 a.m.
- Petty theft on Ilo Ln. at 8:59 a.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on Love Ln. at 11:09 a.m.
- Harass disturbance on Mont Blanc Ct. at 1:23 p.m.
- Petty theft on N. Paradise Valley Ct. at 2:08 p.m.
- Forgery of fraudulent documents on W. Meadows Ln. at 4:32 p.m.
- Animal cruelty on Church St. and Hartz Ave. at 8:03 p.m.
- Threats disturbance on Green Valley Rd. at 9:26 p.m.

### Friday, Dec. 15

- Suspicious circumstances on

- Kimberly Pl. at 9:40 a.m.
- Identity theft on Still Creek Pl. at 10:02 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Diablo Rd. and Rose Ave. at 12:23 p.m.
- Credit card fraud on Fountain Springs Cir. at 12:43 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 2:09 p.m.
- Battery on Stone Valley Rd. at 3:34 p.m.
- Identity theft on El Pintado Rd. at 3:58 p.m.
- Petty theft from vehicle on Van Patten Dr. at 4:44 p.m.
- Trespassing on Sunshine Cir. at 9:57 p.m.

### Saturday, Dec. 16

- Auto burglary on Estates Dr. at 10:12 a.m.
- Misdemeanor driving under the influence (DUI), arrest, on La Gonda Way at 10:57 a.m.
- DUI, arrest, on Camino Tassajara and Woodranch Dr. at 2:11 p.m.
- Accident on Diablo Rd. and Green Valley Rd. at 6:45 p.m.

## OBITUARIES

### John 'Jack' Raymond Fragie

John "Jack" Raymond Fragie, 21, passed away at home in Alamo unexpectedly on Dec. 2.

He was born in San Diego on Nov. 19, 1985, to Kathy and Jack Fragie, and the family moved to Alamo when Jack was young. He attended Stone Valley Elementary and graduated from San Ramon Valley High School.

He competed in football and wrestling at San Ramon Valley High, and enjoyed snowboarding and sports trivia. He also loved music and played the guitar.

He was predeceased by his grandfather, Raymond Fragie. He is survived by his parents, Kathy and Jack; his sister and brother, Paige and Mike Fragie; and his grandparents, Verlaine Fragie and Margaret and Barney Daxon.

A memorial service was held Dec. 7 at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church in San Ramon. Memorial contributions may be made to the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94597.

### Charles A. Zorn

Danville resident Charles A. Zorn passed away Dec. 2 at the age of 82.

He was born Nov. 9, 1924, in Bronx, N.Y. He was a Navy and D-Day veteran and worked as a manager at Eastman Kodak for 33 years. He was an avid golfer, enjoyed his season tickets to the Oakland A's, loved being a member of San Ramon Valley Branch 128 of the SIRS, and was a proud member of the Knights of Columbus as

well as the U.S. LST Assn. He also loved family reunions.

He was preceded in death in 1996 by his wife of 44 years, Margaret. He is survived by his five children, Jane Taintor of Macungie, Penn.; Christopher Zorn (Marie) of Medfield, Mass.; Jim Zorn (Jane Gere) of San Francisco; Steven Zorn (Cynthia) of Carlsbad; and Carolyn Provencal (John) of Roseville; two sisters Mary Zorn of Bronx, N.Y., and Barbara Sweet (John) of North Carolina; eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild; and his dear friend and companion, Tammy Bickel.

A service to honor his memory was held Dec. 7. Donations in lieu of flowers can be made to the Alzheimer's research fund in his name.

### Deaths, Weddings and Births

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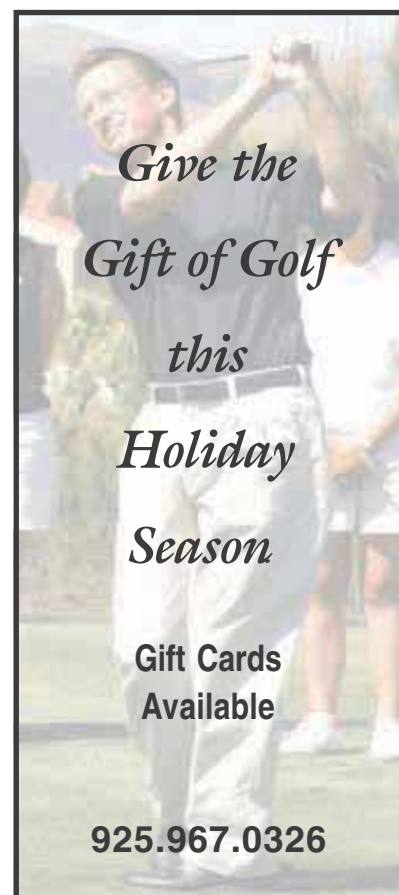
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**Perspective**

EDITORIALS • LETTERS • OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

**EDITORIAL • THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY**

**The quest for peace**

Peace on earth, good will toward men. Although these words are used a lot at this time of year, it is a wonderful sentiment not just at Christmas but year-round. Although this quote is from the Bible, too often religions are used to divide believers rather than unite them toward a peaceful goal.

This is why it is heartwarming to see interfaith groups in Danville, such as the assemblage that planned to gather last night at Blackhawk Plaza to light the Menorah. Rabbi Dan Goldblatt, who leads the event, said members of the interfaith group have been meeting for many years to learn about each other. He noted that although religion is often viewed as a source of divisiveness, they all share a spiritual understanding which can bring them together. The Rev. Laura Barnes of Danville Congregational Church also noted that the gathering is symbolic of hope for peace in the world.

Similarly, faith groups in the area join together once a year for an evening of inclusiveness. Last June, Lutherans, Methodists, Unitarians, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Jews and nearly 20 more

faiths joined in a celebration called Witness Our Welcome, or WOW, in the belief that God loves us all.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

—Luke 2:8-14

Unfortunately peace remains elusive in this world of ours. But people with different religious beliefs coming together in Danville is a small start toward understanding and working together. Hopefully such actions are taking place elsewhere, also, and we can learn to settle differences in a peaceful way.

**Guest Opinion**

BY HAL BAILEY

**Forming community councils and neighborhood groups**

More and more, neighbors are finding it important to have well-organized neighborhood groups and alliances with other community neighborhoods. Such groups allow neighbors to e-share information that impacts their neighborhoods, community and region, and act together in protection of neighborhoods' character and quality of life.

Many successful neighborhood groups are little more than e-chains and social groups that can, as necessary, use their communications resources to deal with actions that impact their neighborhood, community and region. Most are simply a confidential commitment to a neighborhood contact list that has e-mail addresses as their primary contact method. Some, under exceptional actions by governments and districts, have formalized their neighborhood groups under non-disclosure agreements and neighborhood committees with resident counsel directing their actions.

As neighborhood groups communicate, more formal methods of meetings and communications are developed. Neighborhood representatives, in some communities, have created private community councils and meet regularly to discuss issues impacting individual neighborhoods, communities and regions. More formal councils have been created in communities that are pursuing formation as cities, consolidation of regions as new cities, or annexation to cities. Forming such councils and their committees is simply an extension of the neighborhood non-disclosure agreements, meetings in private homes or offices, and a commitment to

interactive exchange in preparation for actions.

Meeting privately, and confidentially, eliminates any public right of access by governments or any need to register such groups with governments. Using resident counsel as the resource for handling any moneys used in neighborhood group, community council or regional council actions eliminates further needs for government regulation and registration. Certainly, as we have become aware, neighborhoods and communities have formed community counsel committees that allow resident counsel throughout neighborhoods and communities to jointly advise their neighbors on appropriate actions in support and protection of their neighborhoods, communities and regions.

The future of Contra Costa County will depend on strong defense of community and neighborhood character. Our county has become a land and tax asset for development by subdivision and in-fill. Our neighborhoods and communities can be impacted along our borders and within our neighborhoods by government policies and projects that do not consider neighborhood and community advisory. Current county agencies and councils provide little resulting consideration of community and neighborhood advisory by county, city and district boards. Thus, important consideration should be given to neighborhood, community and regional groups that, by advice of counsel, can protect and preserve the character and quality of our neighborhoods and communities.

—Hal Bailey is a resident of Alamo.

## On Target: Local pentathlete third among state's shooters

Experience gives Monte Vista sophomore incentive to work harder

by Rachel McMurdie

Monte Vista sophomore Chris Hassoon took home the bronze medal in a statewide pistol shooting contest, hitting his mark, 471 out of a possible 600. But for Hassoon, a pentathlete with Olympic aspirations, the competition was just another way he keeps himself on target.

Hassoon, who runs, swims, shoots, fences and rides horses during pentathlon competitions was curious to see how his shooting would rank alongside competitors who specialize in shooting. He was, he said, pleasantly surprised with the win.

"I'm ecstatic," he said. "It's so exciting to place third among shooters. Typically, pentathletes are good at a broad range of all sports, but they're not detailed or great at any one sport. I was not expecting to place at all."

The Dec. 3 Junior Olympic competition in Chino, Calif., drew the state's best shooters ages 15-21. Along with first, second and third place recognition, the winners earned a chance to compete in Nationals in the fall.

Hassoon shot alongside defending champion Sean Regay and fellow pentathlete James His, who placed first and second.

Hassoon said his strategy was, as always, to stay calm.

"Each shot has to be independent," he said. "Shooting is all mental. You just have to stay relaxed."

Shooters earn points based on how close the pellet comes to the center of the target. Each shooter gets 60 shots and 1 hour 45 minutes to complete the effort.

Hassoon, a first-time competitor in the shooting-only event, said he took home more than just a medal. The experience, he said, gave him new perspective on his own game.

"Pentathlon is about being an athlete," he said. "It's about turning a sportsman that's good into one who's great ...If I just did swimming or just did shooting, I wouldn't be great, but by doing all five (events) I'm not stuck in a spectrum. ...If I can make each one of my events just as good as the other, if I do that, that's formula for making the Olympics."

Hassoon, who considers shooting is one of his "weaker" events, says now he's more determined than ever to put in the practice to make his natural talent shine.

"If I've gotten to a point where I'm not improving anymore, where I've hit my limit, then I feel like I'm strong yet in that event," he said.

He'll need scores of 1,000 points in each pentathlon event of swimming, running and



Monte Vista sophomore Chris Hassoon shows how he earned the bronze medal at the Junior Olympic competition in Chino, Calif., which drew the state's best shooters ages 15-21 earlier this month.

shooting to qualify for Olympic Training Center sponsorship. So far he's narrowed to within 10 points of his shooting goal.

Hassoon will have his next shot at improving his scores at an upcoming pentathlon

event at the Olympic Training Facility in Colorado. ■

E-mail results to [Sports@DanvilleWeekly.com](mailto:Sports@DanvilleWeekly.com); e-mail photos to [Editor@DanvilleWeekly.com](mailto:Editor@DanvilleWeekly.com).

### PREP SCHEDULE

Wednesday-Friday, Dec. 20-22

**Girls Soccer:** Tri-Valley Soccer Classic at Monte Vista

Wednesday, Dec. 20

**Boys Soccer:** Monte Vista at James Logan, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday-Saturday, Dec. 21-23

**Girls Soccer:** Tri-Valley Soccer Classic at San Ramon Valley

Thursday, Dec. 21

**Boys Basketball:** Monte Vista vs. Antioch, 7 p.m., San Ramon Valley vs. Dublin, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 23

**Boys Basketball:** San Ramon Valley vs. Mt. Diablo, 1 p.m.

Tuesday-Friday, Dec. 26-29

**Boys Basketball:** Torrey Pines Tournament



### 'Tude helps Attitude take tourney

The Mustang U9 Bronze Division 3 Girls team, the Attitude, were the underdogs entering the District Cup tournament Dec. 2-3 in Fremont but ended up champions, beating the Dublin Hot Shots, the Mustang Stampede, and the Mustang Shooting Stars. Players celebrating are (back row, l-r) Coach Mike Panconi, Jenny Sharpe, Sophia Friedler, Ali Panconi, Sophie Catalanello, Kiana Kenny, Morgan Burroughs, Coach Greg Weiss (front) Hanna Platter, Leila Gaemi, Hailey Schreiber, Brooke Starn, Keira Weiss and Madeline DeWalt. They allowed only one goal the whole weekend, so they sure do have Attitude now.

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# Keeping the faith

The hunger for spiritual meaning still reverberates throughout the Valley

photos and story by Jordan M. Doronila

**B**eyond the million dollar homes, luxurious cars and manicured lawns, the desire to connect with a “Higher Power” and with others as spiritual beings in an organized setting remains a vibrant force that lights the hearts of many living in the San Ramon Valley, said religious leaders from Danville and Alamo.

Even though religion has been a source of conflict and death, thousands of residents in the Valley believe spirituality is an important part of their lives and convene regularly with their faith groups.



A painting at St. Isidore's parish shows a shepherd seeking the light of divinity; at right, a white statue outside St. Isidore's depicts Mary holding her son Jesus in her arms. The Catholic church has a steady attendance at Mass and other services.

“Spiritual life is an invitation to engage in a journey or relationship with both one's true self and God,” said the Rev. Steve Harms, senior pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Danville. “Those two are intertwined.”

“A real spiritual connection makes life open,” Harms said. “It's an exploration of what is the meaning of our lives, what are our resources for wisdom, joy and compassion. These are the things that feed us.”

Harms said Peace Lutheran Church has found an increase of people gathering during its jazz concerts, which are held throughout the year.

“They love the music,” Harms said. “The word spreads.”

Despite the wellspring of churchgoers and attendees at faith gatherings in the Danville vicinity, the majority of organized religions have found attendance at their services remaining the same for the past two to four years.

“At the local level, it's sort of remained the same,” Harms said, noting that Peace Lutheran Church has 120 families. “Sunday morning remains the same. Statistically, there is an impression that there might be more people participating in congregational life in this valley than in some. That's still nowhere near the majority of people.”

“We have grown, and there has been some contraction,” said Rabbi Dan Goldblatt of Beth Chaim Congregation in Danville. “We haven't seen a significant increase.”

Goldblatt said the groundbreaking of a Jewish synagogue for Beth Chaim has also brought an increased membership.

“We have experienced growth,” Goldblatt said.

Members of St. Isidore's Catholic Church, which has 4,700 families, also said its population at Mass and other services had not changed much.

“Ours is the same,” said Kathy Dake, St. Isidore's parish office manager. “They come and go. It's pretty much the older people leaving and the younger coming in. It's kind of making a cycle.”

The Rev. Ron Dunn of San Ramon Valley Methodist Church, which has 1,150 members, echoed these sentiments.

“In our situation, there has not been a substantial increase,” he said. “It hasn't been a tremendous increase. I would say membership stayed pretty much even.”

But some religious leaders have said they have seen a slight growth in attendance.

The Rev. Laura Barnes of Danville Congregational Church said her faith group grew from 200 members in 2001 to 300 in 2006.

“We had a phenomenal growth rate,” said Barnes.

At St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Danville, Senior Pastor Steven Straine has also experienced growth in his spiritual community. He said Sunday attendance at his church this past year has been around 310.

**“We talk about living in a cons**

“We have noticed an increase in the past several years,” Straine said.

At Creekside Community Church in Alamo, which is non-denominational, the Rev. Nick Vleisides said in the past three to four years he has seen a 10 percent increase of people at services. His church has 300 families who attend every Sunday.



attendance has slowly increased,” Vleisides said. Members of the Baha’i Faith in Danville said they have seen a rise in participation in their activities, which include study circles to search for a deeper understanding of the Baha’i Writings, faith devotionals, and children and junior youth classes.

In 2003, the Baha’is conducted four study circles with approximately 40 participants. And in 2006, their circles increased to 26 with 226 people taking part.

Farzaneh Magzub, member of the Baha’i Local Spiritual Assembly, said the message of unity attracts people to the faith’s teachings.

“It’s the unity of humankind and the equality of all races, sexes and different classes of society,” Magzub said. “It’s about the love and care for humanity and God.”

Reverend Philip Andersen of the Danville First Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints said he has seen a 10 percent increase in members during the past two to four years. Danville, Virginia, and San Ramon make up this Danville Stake, which has approximately 2,200 members.

Andersen said on average his church, which is on Old Orchard Road in Danville, receives 10 to 20 new converts annually.

“The reason is people are looking for spiritual help in their lives and a closer connection to God and why they are here on earth and what they are working so hard in everything they do,” he said.

Church and faith group leaders speculated that there are a multitude of reasons why people are reluctant to engage in religious activities. “Most people are fearful about religion because it implies a certain view of the world, so that the highest priorities are compliance and obedience,” Harm said. “It very narrowly confines life, and the popular word is ‘spirituality.’”

“All great religions have been vehicles for that profound connection of what makes life ‘alive,’” he said. “We know the difference when we are numb or dead or alive.”

Harms said there is more to religion than compliance and obedience. “He noted if that were the case, people’s dogs would have a chance of getting to heaven than they do.”

“That’s not how human beings are,” he added. “We are destructured and beautiful, and an honest spirituality takes all those things into account.”

Harms said our society perceives its religious practice to be separate from personal lives. “I think that there is a disconnect between church practice and

## Consumer society; what’s being consumed is us.”

—The Rev. Steve Harms, senior pastor of Peace Lutheran Church

life,” Barnes said. “And you remember that (the Christian) church has excluded half of the population by not ordaining women.” “I believe we need to be more inclusive,” she added.

Reverend Straine said the change of demographics in the Valley and the high cost of living impacts attendance in religious activities.



The Rev. Steve Harms of Peace Lutheran Church sweeps its spiritual labyrinth, which people walk to meditate and clear their head.

“It’s hard to quantify,” he said. “I can’t point to any single (reason).”

Vleisides said there has been a decline in mainline denominational religions such as Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal, as well as the Catholic Church. Independent churches, such as Creekside, are easy to adapt and change with the times.

The mainline churches have a difficult time adjusting because they have been part of long traditions.

“It’s harder for them to experience change,” Vleisides said. “Some are trying and doing a pretty good job.”

“People are constantly looking for a better church,” he said. “A lot of people go to three different churches .... They take the best of all worlds.”

Vleisides said that independent, cutting edge churches are growing because of innovative programs, such as youth ministry.

“I think churches are striving to be relevant to people’s lives,” he said.

Additionally, he said certain ethnic groups, such as Hispanics, are more inclined to go to church than members of Anglo-Saxon faiths because religion has been ingrained in their cultural upbringing.

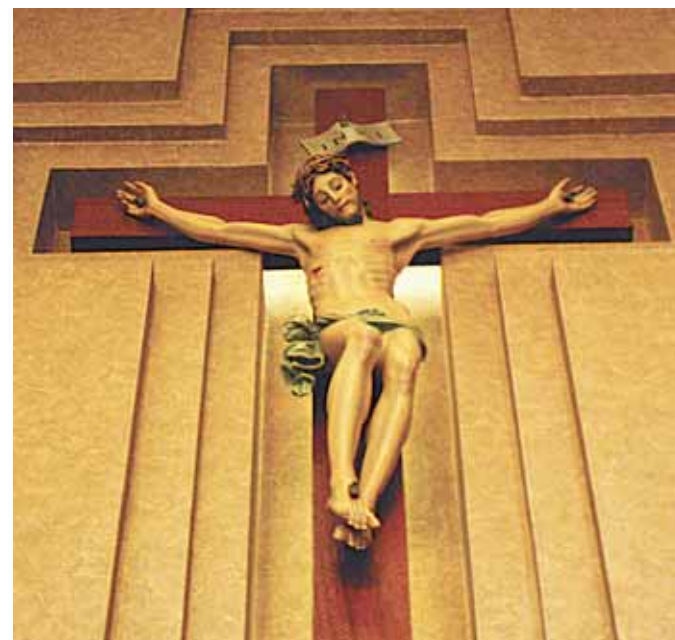
Depending on material wealth is often not enough for people, Harms noted.

“We talk about living in a consumer society; what’s being consumed is us,” he said. “We are stealing people’s lives, time, identity, relationships.”

“It’s terrible living here in paradise,” he added. “There’s only one rule in paradise, you can’t criticize paradise.”

He added that spirituality helps people with their self-discovery, which means taking abstract concepts about the soul and its relation to a “Higher Being” and understanding what they mean as a human on earth.

“Spiritual life incorporates now and self,” he said. ■



A crucifix hangs inside St. Isidore’s Catholic Church in Danville.

Nonetheless, even though religion has been scrutinized for its validity, people still see meaning through faith.

“People reach a level of financial success and ask: Is this it?” said Goldblatt. “It’s not uncommon that people seek more.”

“There’s a hunger for meaning,” said Goldblatt. “Faith can address that.”

## Being born on Christmas Eve—a bummer with benefits

by Natalie O'Neill

Before about 330 A.D. Jesus Christ's birth wasn't celebrated until January. Since then, there's been some pretty convincing speculation that he was in fact born in May.

As the argument goes, early Christians chose Dec. 25 as a date to celebrate his birth because it aligned with the pagan winter solstice celebration—not because they had any specific recorded date.

That being said, does anyone mind if we move Christmas to spring this year?

I know, I know. It might take a little getting used to.

We'll have to comfort impatient kids, notify the North Pole and give Macy's a heads up on postponing its after-Christmas sale. But I figure if we all work together, we can pull it off. Who's with me?

See, my birthday is Christmas Eve and in my 24 years of life I haven't ever had what one might call a "normal" birthday. That's why I'm advocating this small holiday date adjustment.

I have heard of strange gatherings—parties of sorts—at which people arrive, gift-in-hand, to celebrate the day of someone's birth. Apparently, the festivities include the distribution of cake, the lighting of candles and the singing of a tune called "The Happy Birthday Song."

I wouldn't really know, though. I've never actually experienced one of my own, as throwing a real birthday party on the evening of Dec. 24 isn't an option. Turnout would be as good as an afternoon church congregation on Super Bowl Sunday.

On Christmas Eve, friends have an obligation to spend time with their families and engage in holiday traditions. And no hard feelings, here. Family is what Christmas is about and there's really no sense vying for the spotlight with someone of Jesus' stature.

True, the unfortunates who were born during the cursed birthday week of Dec. 22-29 can throw a birthday party before or after Christmas week. But people are usually either broke or burnt out from the Christmas chaos by that time. So, most of us with these birth dates have come to accept that "birthday" just kind of means "Christmas."

Just ask my sister, who was born Dec. 27, and is mostly good natured and only slightly bitter about the whole thing.

"My birthday has always just been an extension of Christmas. It gets absorbed into the Christmas frenzy," she says, remembering that as a kid she was happy the gift-giving went on even after the holiday was over.

As you get older you learn birthdays aren't just about the gifts. As a kid, though, that's

exactly what they are about.

At the risk of sounding like a whiner, I can't believe how many "Merry Birthday" presents I got when I was young. This is the kill-two-birds-with-one-stone gift that's traditionally wrapped neatly in Christmas tree or Santa Claus paper and meant to serve as a birthday-holiday gift combo.

Not cool.

If any of you non-December birthday folks are thinking of treating your Capricorn or Sagittarius friends to a joint birthday-Christmas gift, think again. And definitely think again if your friend happens to be under the age of 12. I think I speak for most of us when I say: Keep the occasions separate!

But even though Christmas birthdays can be a downer, party and present wise, there are some advantages. For one, family is already plan-

ning to be together. In my family, we had to be—there was no other place we could be on Christmas Eve.

In the small Oregon town where I grew up, the outside world was almost completely shut down on Christmas Eve. This gave us the opportunity to hole up by the fire and laze around in our comfy clothes together.

On my 21st birthday—a day that in American culture is "supposed" to be a wild night with drinks—I was snowed in with my family. As a teenager, this would have been torture. In my 20s, though, it wasn't so bad.

While I couldn't go out for an extravagant night on the town or throw a big birthday bash, it turned out to be one of those unexpectedly pleasant family moments. No one was rushing to get dressed or stressing over reservations. Instead of going out on the town, I ended up celebrating with my parents' whiskey, dancing to cheesy Christmas oldies with my sisters and then falling asleep at an embarrassingly early hour.

Other curse-week birthday victims might agree that having your big day near Christmas means you and your old friends are more likely to be home around the time of your birthday.

After I grew up and moved away, friends

scattered to colleges across the country and I started to delight in knowing they would all be in town around the 25th. At that point, my birthday became a good excuse for grade school buddies to get together for a belated birthday dinner.

In the end, I guess it isn't all bad to share a birthday with the most important figure in western religion. From what I've heard, normal birthdays are overrated anyway. All of that attention. After-party cleanup. Hangovers the next day.

On second thought, never mind about moving Christmas. I suppose the whole idea is a teensy bit self centered, anyway. Macy's can keep its regularly scheduled sale date, the North Pole can continue business as planned, and maybe I'll throw myself my first real birthday bash in the spring. ■



Mom, Uncle Robert, me, Dad and my sister Molly celebrate both Christmas and my birthday on Christmas Eve 1986.



Who needs birthday presents when there are Christmas tree lights to play with?





## Selecting holiday wines and spirits

During the holidays, we get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of shopping, decorating, baking and cooking that we may give little or no thought to holiday wines and spirits. Yet, so much of the season is about sharing good cheer with friends and family via our favorite cocktails, punches, beers and wines. This year, reserve a little time to select the best of beverages to accompany the best of everything else you are giving and getting.

In fact, the pre-holiday season is a perfect time to take inventory of your home bar and re-stock it as needed. Make a list of the items that have been exhausted or are close to depletion and look for weekly liquor sales from Labor Day through year-end to replenish your list as the price is right. Purchase extra bottles of wine or spirits as host/hostess holiday gifts, for your golfing buddy or as extra stock for your home holiday party. (Even if you over-buy by a bottle or two, not to worry. It's an essential party ingredient and a back-up "emergency" gift that will not spoil or go un-used indefinitely.)

For holiday dining or entertaining, consider what your menus will be and who's likely to be dropping by during the holiday season. Favor variety over traditional wine-food pairings and favor quality over quantity. One exceptional glass of wine will be twice as memorable as three glasses of just any kind. Be sure to have Uncle Bill's favorite Irish whiskey on hand. If you're typically a red wine lover, include some white wines for others. If you like dry wine, get a sweet wine for Cousin Ruth. And don't forget the often-overlooked items—olives, lime juice, vermouth, etc.

And, what if you're asked or volunteer to bring wine to a social gathering? How do you choose

a good bottle? First, choose a wine that you'd be excited about drinking yourself, perhaps a recommended wine from a trusted source. Or, determine how much you're willing to pay and ask for assistance from a local wine clerk. A good measure of price is to spend on one bottle what you would spend on a nice bouquet of flowers or a plant. To treat a very special host, splurge on a wine that you know is the person's favorite or is an indulgence that would be much appreciated. When in doubt, four wines are always welcomed choices:

- The safest selection is a medium-weight Pinot Noir from any country. It will nicely accompany a turkey or a variety of holiday dishes.
- If fish or seafood is the main menu offering, a Chardonnay (or dry Riesling) is always in order.
- A hearty menu like prime rib or steak would be well complemented by a rich Cabernet Sauvignon.
- If you are really unsure, opt for Champagne or a sparkling wine, which can be served with appetizers, dessert or as a holiday toast.

A gift of wine, like any present, will be even more attractive in a decorative bag or tied with a colorful ribbon. If the wine was requested as part of the meal, be sure to chill it in advance (if needed) or arrive early enough for it to breathe before the meal. Lastly, if it's a gift, don't expect the hostess to break open the cork that night just because you might be anticipating a taste of it. It's the host prerogative to decide whether to open a gift bottle and it's impolite for the giver to ask.

Cheers!

—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](mailto:Epicure@DanvilleWeekly.com).

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### OF NOTE

#### Sharing with shoeboxes

The seventh-graders of Girl Scout Cadette Troop 1964 filled, wrapped and paid for 26 shoeboxes to be shipped to children overseas through Operation Christmas Child. The girls, who attend Los Cerritos and Stone Valley middle schools, earned the money by selling nuts and candies in the fall. Troop members are (back row, l-r) Janine Elya, Haley Nelson, Sammie Hugo, Alanna Leong, Mary Kate Rupley; (front) Sawako Konishi, Jillian Tom, Elizabeth Wolske. Not pictured, Katrina Henderson.

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## Presenting the Past

BY BEVERLY LANE

"SAN RAMON VALLEY, ALAMO, DANVILLE, AND SAN RAMON"  
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### Mark Elliot: Pioneer via the Gold Rush

Mark Elliot was an early pioneer in the Valley who arrived in 1852, built a house in 1858, and ranched in the Tassajara Valley. A cabinet-maker by trade, Elliot came to California from Ohio during the Gold Rush and manufactured rockers for miners, an occupation that was far steadier and less back-breaking than panning for gold.

## The 411



BY KATHARINE O'HARA

### The struggle to find one's own beliefs

For most kids, their religious preference—whether it be organized, personal or non-existent—is chosen by their parents at birth. My own entrance into the Catholic faith ensued with my parents' decision to baptize me and enroll me in religious education.

Weekly church attendance has always characterized Sunday mornings for my family, and as children, my brothers and I have never had a choice in the matter. But my skeptical outlook on life has led me to struggle with the question, how can one be inherently born into a belief system based simply on what their parents believe? The idea for this article was prompted by my own struggles with my current journey through the sacrament of confirmation at St. Joan of Arc parish.

At the beginning, confirmation was simply another step in my religious pursuit that my parents told me I was going to complete. But as I began going through the process, attending Sunday night classes, it was repeatedly engrained into my head that confirmation of my faith was no longer my parents' decision, but rather my personal commitment to the church and verification that I believe everything I have been taught. No longer is church simply something I am supposed to attend for an hour each Sunday, but rather it becomes a part of my personal identity, my own personal choice—a confirmation of my beliefs.

As the confirmation date approaches next month, I am becoming gradually more hesitant. I have come to realize that Catholicism is the only belief system I am accustomed to, and that the choice to complete this step into the next chapter of my faith is deeper than I initially thought. I am curious to discover what other religions might have to offer, and often struggle with the thought that maybe there is nothing at all; not to say that, after much research, I might not decide Catholicism is the

right fit.

My perception is that many teens are also naturally skeptical and curious when it comes to their consideration of religion. For teens that have been raised within an organized religious sect, some spend their teenage years growing and embracing their accepted beliefs. Others like myself remain still curious and eager to learn about the prospects of other belief systems. Those who have not been raised in any specific religion might also take this time to investigate the whole religion scene.

"I have explored many spiritual beliefs and landed on my own, which is sort of an amalgamation of many parts of different religions," said San Ramon Valley High School junior Melanie Bowman. "I think that all religions contain elements of truth, but those elements seem to be buried underneath too much dogma."

I find that many groups of friends at school are based around personal belief and religious preference, which is understandable as this is a significant point of commonality between people. However this can sometimes get in the way of building new friendships.

"As a teenager, I am struck by how devoted, even at this young age, a lot of teens are to their religion," said Bowman.

From personal experience, I feel that not belonging to a certain church or attending weekly youth groups has prevented my chance at being friends with certain people. It seems people's judgments of others based on religious belief prevents them from having relationships with people who have their own different, but valuable, opinions and other fine qualities to offer.

So do parents have the right to raise their children within a religion and inculcate them with a certain system of beliefs?

"I think parents have the right to introduce their religion to their kids and make them attend religious ser-

vices until around the age of 16," said Michael Gibbons, a junior at SRVHS. "By then the kid can kind of figure out whether or not they buy into it and if they're actually getting something out of it; then the parents can back away."

For Bowman, "If people are given religion as children, they never learn to question the world around them because their religion has supposedly already answered all of their questions. If the children of today never learn to question what is in front of them, the next generation will be filled with passive adults who are content with things as they are with no regard to progress."

Matt Napoli, a senior at SRVHS, says he wasn't brought up in any particular religion.

"As a teen, I'm very thankful my parents let me choose what to believe and don't impose their beliefs on me. I feel that it lets me demonstrate my own maturity and fuels my individualism," he said.

If children are simply given a chance and a choice in the matter, their innately human questioning will most likely result in their conquest of religious thought and discovery of personal beliefs.

As my confirmation date nears and I ponder my spirituality, I don't in any way resent my parents for submerging me in the Catholic faith. It is a parent's duty to instill some level of moral value and belief into their children, as any child needs guidance to a certain extent. But when it comes down to it, parents need also to understand and accept the wishes of their able-minded kids who are entitled to such a personal decision as their religious future.

*The 411 offers information and insight on the teen scene by Katharine O'Hara, a junior at San Ramon Valley High School who spends her free time going to concerts, enjoying her friends, and playing the piano.*



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NOW SHOWING



**Fast Food Nation** ★★1/2

**Rated: R for disturbing images, strong sexuality, language and drug content. 1 hour, 46 minutes.**

This unflinching expose into the dark underbelly of the All-American burger is a thought-provoking cinematic meal. Akin to the pro-environment documentary "An Inconvenient Truth," "Fast Food Nation" aims to inspire change and raise awareness via the big screen. It does so with aplomb.

Director Richard Linklater ("A Scanner Darkly") masterfully opens the film with a happy-go-lucky family enjoying a bite at the local fast-food eatery, Mickey's (a fictional chain that resembles McDonald's or Wendy's). The father lifts the bun of his burger and the camera pans down into the patty. It's time to learn what else we bring to the table with that circular hunk of meat.

Cut to Mexican couple Raul (Wilmer Valderrama of TV's "That 70s Show") and Sylvia (Catalina Sandino Moreno of "Maria Full of Grace") as they illegally cross into the United States. Once across, Raul is ushered to work at the nearby meat-processing plant by a despicable supervisor (Bobby Cannavale).

Across the country, executive Don Henderson (Greg Kinnear) is reveling in the success of "The Big One," Mickey's latest marketing masterpiece. But there's a problem with the popular burger

a college study has discovered that fecal matter is turning up in the frozen patties (which, frighteningly, is not uncommon). Don is sent to the processing plant to uncover the source of the problem. Discussions with an earnest rancher (Kris Kristofferson) and a brusque Mickey's contact (Bruce Willis) lead to some unsettling discoveries for Don.

Linklater ties together seemingly disconnected lives, thanks to meaningful dialogue and responsible direction. Co-written by Eric Schlosser, whose book the film is based upon, the screenplay is packed with insight. Secondary characters played by charismatic actors such as Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette spout words of wisdom about awareness and modern America.

The performances are stellar across the board, but especially by Cannavale, Kinnear and Moreno. Moreno's role in particular leaves a lasting impression — her Sylvia is a sincere protagonist with whom you truly empathize. But the wide array of characters gives the film a slightly disjointed feel.

Linklater saves the body-blow for the film's climax, which takes place in an actual slaughterhouse. Cows are graphically dismembered, skinned and disemboweled — most while still breathing. It's a scary reflection of society to realize that for many of us, a burger is more valuable than a life.

The disturbing climax may make the picture hard to swallow, but the importance is undeniable. You'll never look at a hamburger the same way again.

— Tyler Hanley

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# HOLIDAY SPARKLE 'tis the season



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# Calendar

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

## Art

### Alamo-Danville Artists' Society

This society will present a group showing of art work until Jan. 16, at the Danville Town offices, 510 La Gonda Way. The offices are open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

### Ann McMillan

Alamo-Danville Artists Society will host a demo with oil and pastel painter, Ann McMillan, at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 9, at Danville Congregational Church, Social Hall, 989 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville. This event is free. Dessert and refreshments will be served. Call 691-5030 or visit [www.adas4art.org](http://www.adas4art.org).

### Winter Exhibit

The California Watercolor Association will host its annual Members' Winter Exhibit from now until March 9, at Blackhawk Plaza, 3480 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Call 648-9113.

## Auditions

### High School Musical

Danville Children's Musical Theatre will hold open auditions for Disney's "High School Musical" from 4-6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 10, at Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Applicants should be ages 10-16 years old. Cost to participate is \$350. Call 355-8605.

### Ruthless! the Musical, Bus Stop and School for Scandal

Role Players Ensemble Theatre will hold auditions for "Ruthless!," "Bus Stop" and "School Scandal" by appointment only, at Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Actors should prepare a two-minute monologue, and singers should bring 16 bars of an up tempo number. Call (510) 865-4740.

## Author Visits

### Rakestraw Hosting Authors

Rakestraw Books will host numerous authors throughout the beginning of the new year including: John Schinnerer, author of "A Guide to Self," at 7 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 18; Eoin McNamee, author of "The Navigator," at 10 a.m., Monday, Feb. 12; Peggy Orenstein, author of "Waiting for Daisy: A Tale of Two Continents," at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 20; Alison Weir, author of "Innocent Traitor," at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 17, all at the bookstore, 409 Railroad Ave., Danville. For reservations, call 837-7337.

## Civic Meetings

### Danville Parks and Leisure Services Commission

The Commission meets regularly on the second Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Town Meeting Hall, 201 Front St.

### Danville Planning Commission

The Commission meets regularly on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Meeting Hall, 201 Front St.

### Town Council Meeting

The Danville Town Council normally meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Meeting Hall, 201 Front St.

## Clubs

### Alamo Cribbage Club

The club plays cribbage for fun. It meets at 6:15 p.m. every Wednesday at the Safeway conference room, 200 Alamo Plaza, Alamo. Call 935-3325.

### Alamo Rotary

The Alamo Rotary meets at noon every

## WEEKEND PREVIEW



## Have you been good this year?

It's your last chance to tell Santa Claus what you would like for Christmas this year, from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Friday-Saturday, Dec. 22-23, and from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 24, at the Blackhawk Plaza, 3480 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Each child will receive a special gift from Santa, and parents will be able to take photos. Call 736-2751 or visit [www.theshopsatblackhawk.com](http://www.theshopsatblackhawk.com).

Wednesday at Roundhill Country Club, 3169 Roundhill Road. Call Mark Kahn at 837-3262.

### Alamo Women's Club Federated

The club meets on most Wednesdays at its clubhouse, 1401 Danville Blvd. It holds a business meeting and tea the second Wednesday at noon; meets for Mah Jong at 10:30 a.m. the third Wednesday; and holds a luncheon with program at noon the fourth Wednesday. For information, call Jean Stringfellow at 552-9733.

### Alamo-Danville Newcomers' Club

This club is open to new and long-time residents of Alamo and Danville interested in making new friends in the area. Their Prospective Member Coffee is held the fourth Thursday of the month, and a monthly luncheon on the second Tuesday. Call 775-3233 or visit [www.alamodanvillenewcomers.com](http://www.alamodanvillenewcomers.com).

### Bay Area Single Christians

BASC club is a free, large, online group with event listings for Christian single adults around the S.F. Bay Area. See information at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bascingles/>.

### Blackhawk Republican Women

This club will host a cocktail party with guest speaker Dr. Bill Wattenburg, host of "The Open Line to the West Coast" on KGO, from 5:30-8 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 18, at the Blackhawk Country Club, in The Grill, 599 Blackhawk Club Drive, Danville. Cost is \$16; reservations are due by Jan. 15 by calling 820-6452.

### Business Development Network

BDN is a group of professionals that share resources and develops business through relationships. It meets 7:45-9 a.m., the second and fourth Thursday of each month at Denny's, 807 Camino Ramon, Danville. Call Bonnie at 648-0222.

### Business Network International

The Danville Chapter of Business Network International, a world-wide networking organization that focuses on helping local businesses grow through building strong networking relationships, meets at 7 a.m. every Friday at Denny's Restaurant on Camino Ramon. For information, call Glenn Polanco at 831-3372.

(continued on page 24)

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Effective Jan. 1, 2007, The Pleasanton Weekly and The Danville Weekly will charge a \$20 fee for Open Home Guide listings from individuals and organizations not under a current 52- or 26-week contract with the publications. The fee will be incurred for each listing and must be prepaid.

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## We need a graphic designer

The Pleasanton Weekly and the Danville Weekly is currently seeking a **Full-Time Graphic Designer** to help produce our Tri-Valley community newspapers.

Responsibilities will include both editorial and advertising design. Must have Mac experience, basic production skills and a good design portfolio. InDesign, Photoshop knowledge is required, Web/Flash experience a bonus. Candidate should be able to work under tight deadlines in a busy environment with attention to detail. Guaranteed to work hard—but also have fun in a small office with a dedicated staff.

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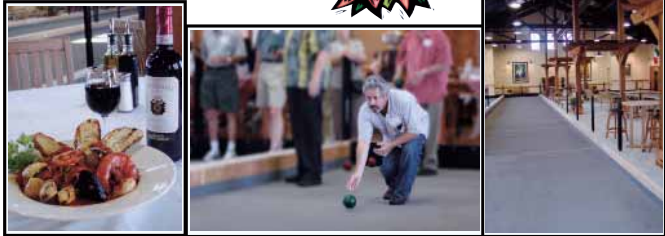
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**Danville AM Toastmasters Club**  
The club meets from 7-8:30 a.m., every Tuesday, at Father Nature's, 178 E. Prospect Ave. Guests are welcome. For more information, contact Dave Miklasevich at 899-1543 or dmik210@yahoo.com or www.danvilleamtoastmasters.org.

**Danville Lions Club**  
The Danville Lions Club meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Brass Door Restaurant, 2154 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. Join us as our guest to learn the contribution you can make as a Lion. For information, call President Ted Fichter at 227-6617.

**Danville Mid-day Referral Group, BNI**  
Danville Mid-day Referral Group, a chapter of Business Network International, meets from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., every Wednesday, at Louka's, 267 Hartz Avenue, Danville. Call Fran Bates at 363-4327 or e-mail franbates@marykay.com.

**Danville PM Toastmaster Club #1785**  
The club meets from 7:30-9 p.m., every Wednesday, at DVC, San Ramon Campus, Room 217, 3150 Crow Canyon Place, San Ramon. Guests are welcome. For information call Debra Elmore at 934-3113 or visit [www.danvilletoastmasters1785.com](http://www.danvilletoastmasters1785.com)

**Julie's Book Clubs**  
Julie's morning and evening book clubs will not meet during the month of December. The morning book club will meet to discuss Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar" at 10:30 a.m., Friday, Jan. 26, and the evening book club will meet to discuss Alison Lurie's "Truth and Consequences" at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 17, at Rakestraw Books, 409 Railroad Ave., Danville. call 837-7337.

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

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

**Pleasanton DeMolay**  
This Pleasanton chapter of DeMolay is an organization for young men between

(continued on page 26)

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## Join Us In Worship This Christmas Season

**Saturday, December 23rd, 5:00 pm**  
Children's Christmas Program

**Sunday, December 24th**  
9:00 am Fourth Sunday in Advent  
7:30 pm Christmas Eve Service  
of Lessons & Carols  
10:30 pm Christmas Eve Eucharist  
& Candle Light Vigil

**Monday, December 25th, 9:00 am**  
Feast of the Nativity

**Sunday, December 31st, 9:00 am**  
Eve of the Name of Jesus

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# Worship with us this holiday season

Community Presbyterian Church  
[www.cpcdanville.org](http://www.cpcdanville.org)

## Christmas Eve

**Evening Services**  
6:30, 8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 pm  
Downtown Campus

**Child-Friendly Services**  
3:30 and 5:00 pm Downtown Campus  
7:00 pm Tassajara Campus

Downtown Danville: 222 W. El Pintado Road 925-837-5525  
Tassajara Campus: Diablo Vista Middle School, Danville

## SAN RAMON VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**4:00\* & 5:30\* p.m.**  
• Family Friendly • Informal Traditional Service

**8:00\* & 9:30 p.m.**  
• Organ Prelude begins 7:45 & 9:15 p.m.  
• Traditional Christmas Eve Service

**11:00 p.m.**  
• Traditional Candlelight Service  
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# HOLIDAY SPARKLE 'tis the season

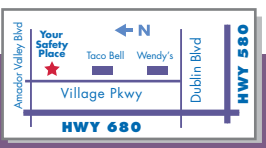
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the ages of 12-21. They meet at 7:30 p.m., the first and third Tuesdays of every month at the Pleasanton Masonic Center, 3370 Hopyard Road. For information, contact Ken Varallo at 455-8586 or raptors2@comcast.net.

**Porsche Club of America, Diablo Region**

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

**San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society**

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

**San Ramon Valley Rotary Club**

This club meets for dinner at 7 p.m., each Wednesday, at the Crow Canyon

Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Drive, Danville. Guests are welcome. The club offers a great way to make new friends while making a difference in your community. Call Bill at 838-9110.

**Tri-Valley Republican Women Federated**

This club will host a dinner meeting with guest speaker Ward Connerly at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 11, at Pleasanton Hotel (formerly Wyndham Garden Hotel), 5990 Stoneridge Mall Road. New members and visitors are welcome. For reservations, call Marilyn at 485-9869.

**Tri-Valley Writers Association**

This club exists to inform, educate, and have fun and is open to anyone interested in the craft of writing. The club meets at 11:30 a.m. the first Saturday of every month at Girasole Restaurant, 3180 Santa Rita Road, Pleasanton. Contact Steve Workman at 485-1011 or [skworkman@aol.com](mailto:skworkman@aol.com).

**Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 75**

The organization meets every second Thursday of the month and will start up the new year with their first meeting, Thursday, Jan. 11, at Danville Veteran's Hall, 400 Hartz Avenue, Danville. For information, call Post Commander Mac McCuskey at 837-2740 or visit [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org).

**Concerts**

**Contemporary Music Concert**

Civic Arts Education presents "Contemporary Music Concert" at 2 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 14, at Shadelands Art Center, 111 N. Wiget Lane, Walnut Creek. Advance tickets are \$10; \$12 at the door. Proceeds will benefit CAE. Call 943-5846.

**Exhibits**

**Anatomy of a Hot Rod**

Bedford Gallery presents Anatomy of a Hot Rod, which will run until Feb. 11, at the gallery, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Gallery hours are noon-5 p.m., Tuesday-Sunday. Call 295-1417.

**Christmas Memories at the Museum**

The Museum of the San Ramon Valley will host "Christmas Memories" until Jan. 6, at the museum, corner of Railroad and Prospect avenues, Danville. Donations are encouraged for admission. The museum is open 1-4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday and 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday. Call 837-3750.

**European Train Enthusiasts**

Blackhawk Museum presents the European Train Enthusiasts exhibit from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday-Saturday, running until Jan. 7, at the

museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. The exhibit will include 360' of track, 57 turn-outs, 35 working signals and more! Call 736-2277.

**Lindsay Wildlife Museum**

The museum will feature two new special exhibits: "Broken Wings: Portraits of Non-Releaseable Raptors" and "One Man's Window" from now until Dec. 31, at the museum, 1931 First Ave., Walnut Creek. Call 935-1978 or visit [www.wildlife-museum.org](http://www.wildlife-museum.org).

**'Treadmill' Mural**

Bedford Gallery and Walnut Creek Arts Commission present "Treadmill" by Josh Keys, which is a mural painting dedicated to Susan Booth, on the Locust Street Parking Garage, adjacent to the Dean Leshar Center for the Arts. Visit [www.bedfordgallery.org](http://www.bedfordgallery.org).

**Health**

**'My Own Marathon'**

Town of Danville will host "My Own Marathon" with participants completing 26.2 miles at their own pace from Jan. 1-May 5. The final mile will be walked May 5 during "A Safety and Wellness Community Event." Call 314-3400 or visit [www.ci.danville.ca.us](http://www.ci.danville.ca.us).

**Holidays**

**Christmas in Danville**

Community Presbyterian Church will host "Christmas in Danville" at 9 and 10:30 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 24, at the church, 222 W. El Pintado Road, Danville and at 9:30 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 24, at the Tassajara campus, Diablo Vista Middle School, 41 Camino Tassajara, Danville. Call 837-5525 or email [info@cpcdanville.org](mailto:info@cpcdanville.org).

**Here Comes Santa Claus!**

Here Comes Santa Claus...Right Down Sycamore Valley Lane! Santa will visit with children on selected dates until Christmas for parents to take their own photos. Call 838-7070 or visit [www.danvillelivery.com](http://www.danvillelivery.com).

**Holiday Performances, Santa and Pet Photos**

Blackhawk Plaza will host holiday performances by local area school choirs and jazz bands, and Santa Claus will be at the plaza to pose for pictures through Dec. 24. The plaza is located at 3480 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. For information, call 736-2751 or visit [www.theshopsat-blackhawk.com](http://www.theshopsat-blackhawk.com).

**New Year's Eve Casino Classic Celebration**

Blackhawk Museum and BHEI Inc. will host their New Year's Eve Casino Classic Celebration from 7:30 p.m.-1 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 31, at the museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Tickets are \$135; deadline to reserve your seat is Sunday, Dec. 24. Black tie optional. Call 736-2277, ext. 653, or visit [www.blackhawkmuseum.org](http://www.blackhawkmuseum.org).

**New Year's Eve Party**

USS Hornet invites you to its ultimate New Year's Eve party from 8 p.m.-1 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 31, aboard the ship, Pier 3, Alameda Point, Alameda. Tickets are \$48 for general admission, \$65 for reserved seating and \$95 for premium reserved. Call (510) 521-8448, ext. 282, or visit [www.hornetevent.com](http://www.hornetevent.com).

**The Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show**

Pleasanton Civic Arts will host Will Durst and friends in "The Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show" starting at 8 p.m., Friday, Dec. 29, at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Road, Pleasanton. Advance tickets are \$15, \$20 and \$25; call 931-3444.

**Toys for the Troops' Kids**

The 2006 Christmas Toy Drive "Toys for the Troops' Kids" is taking place from now until Saturday, Dec. 23. The drop off locations are open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, at Placer Title Co., 101 Sycamore Valley Road West and 4000 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Visit [www.toysforthetroopskids.org](http://www.toysforthetroopskids.org).

**Kids & Teens**

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ing free homework help from expert online tutors to students grade 4-12 and beginning college from 1-10 p.m., Monday-Friday, at <http://ccclib.org>.

**Spanish for Preschoolers**

Town of Danville will host a new class, "Spanish for Preschoolers," for children ages 3-5 years old meeting from 9-11 a.m. on Tuesdays, Jan. 9-March 6, at Veteran's Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. The cost for Danville residents is \$222, \$266 for non-residents. An additional \$20 materials fee will be due on the first day of class. Call 314-3400 or visit [www.ci.danville.ca.us](http://www.ci.danville.ca.us).

**'The Little Race Car That Could'**

Blackhawk Museum will host "The Little Race Car That Could" from 1-4 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 28, at the museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. This event is free with admission. Call 736-2277.

**VIP Volleyball Clinics**

Town of Danville will host VIP Volleyball Clinics for children ages 8-14 at 5:30 p.m., Saturdays, beginning Jan. 13, at Los Cerros Middle School Community Gym, 968 Blemer Road, Danville. Cost is \$55 for residents, \$66 for non-residents. Call 314-3481 or visit [www.ci.danville.ca.us](http://www.ci.danville.ca.us).

**YMCA Activities**

The San Ramon Valley YMCA hosts a number of activities including Adventure Guides/Princesses, Adventure Trailblazers, Youth Basketball, Youth Lacrosse and Youth Soccer for children of all ages. For information, call 831-1100 or visit [www.mdrymca.org](http://www.mdrymca.org).

**Literary Events**

**Library Book Discussions**

The Book Discussion Group has chosen books for 2006. The discussion group meets at 11 a.m. the second Thursday of every month from September through May at the Mt. Diablo room of the Danville Library, 400 Front St. Everyone is welcome.

**Miscellaneous**

**Adopt a New Best Friend**

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue (TVAR) offers wonderful animals for adoption every Saturday and Sunday, excluding most holidays. On Saturdays, from 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., dogs and cats are available. For dates and times and other information, call TVAR at 803-7043 or visit its Web site at [www.tvlar.org](http://www.tvlar.org).

**Climb for Breast Cancer Prevention**

The Breast Cancer Fund is looking for applicants for "Climb for Breast Cancer Prevention" from July 8-14, at Mt. Shasta. Team members will start training in the winter and start raising funds. Call 760-8223 or visit [www.breastcancerfund.org/events](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/events).

**Free Computer Instruction**

The Danville Library is offering free computer instruction on Word, Excel, Powerpoint or the Internet by appointment only. To make an appointment, visit the Danville Library Information Desk or call 837-4889.

**Free E-Waste Disposal and Recycling**

Electronic Waste Management and Diablo Valley College will host a free E-Waste Disposal and Recycling event from noon-5 p.m., Friday, Jan. 5 and from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 6-7, at DVC, 321 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill. A list of accepted items can be found by visiting [www.nowaste.com](http://www.nowaste.com).

**On Stage**

**'Incorruptible'**

Role Players Ensemble will host the production of "Incorruptible" from Jan. 19-Feb. 10, at the Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Call 314-3463.

**Support Groups**

**Hospice Offers Support**

Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra

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

**Man to Man Prostate Cancer**

San Ramon Regional Medical Center offers "Man to Man Prostate Cancer Support Group" from 7:30-9 p.m., the second Tuesday of every month, at San Ramon Regional Medical Center, South Building, West Day Room, 7777 Norris Canyon Road. Call 933-0107.

**Overeaters Anonymous**

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

**Parkinson's Support Group**

The Tri-Valley Parkinson's Network of Mount Diablo provides peer support from 10a.m.-noon, the second Saturday of every month, at Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd., Pleasanton. Call Norman at 831-9940 or Jackie at 244-1231.

**PFLAG**

The Danville/San Ramon Valley Chapter of Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is a support group that meets at 7:30 p.m., every third Monday at the Danville Congregational Church, 989 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Call 838-8632.

**San Ramon Valley Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue and Chronic Pain Support**

A new and proactive group for FIBRO, CFS, CFIDS and Chronic Pain meets from 7-9 p.m. every other Monday in Danville. This group is positive, informative that meets to help each other to be better advocates. Call for location and information at 234-5621.

**SRV Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous**

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA) is a free 12-step recovery program for anyone suffering from food obsession, overeating, undereating and bulimia. This group meets from 7-8:30 p.m. every Tuesday at the Dougherty Station Community Center, West Meeting Room #202, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Road, San Ramon. Call Gordon at 899-3117 or visit [www.foodaddicts.org](http://www.foodaddicts.org).

**Volunteering**

**Sheriff Seeks Senior Volunteers**

The Sheriff's Valley Station Office in Alamo is seeking people interested in assisting law enforcement in the community. Citizens should have a clean criminal history and would be responsible for one shift a week for four-and-a-half hours. Interested applicants should call James Hogan or Elmer Glasser at 837-2902.

**Trails Maintenance**

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

**Tri-Valley Animal Rescue**

TVAR is offering volunteer orientations from 1-2:30 p.m., the second Saturday and fourth Saturday of every month, at the East County Animal Shelter, 4595 Gleason Drive, Dublin. For information, contact Cathy at 426-2472 or [calico-cathy@yahoo.com](mailto:calico-cathy@yahoo.com).

**Valley Children's Museum Needs Volunteers**

If you are interested in working with kids, Valley Children's Museum is looking for you! For information about volunteer opportunities, call 461-6574, 3 # or e-mail [Linda@valleychildrensmuseum.org](mailto:Linda@valleychildrensmuseum.org).

**Volunteer Interpreters**

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



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## INDEX

- **BULLETIN BOARD**  
100-155
- **FOR SALE**  
200-270
- **KIDS STUFF**  
330-355
- **JOBS**  
510-585
- **BUSINESS SERVICES**  
600-690
- **HOME SERVICES**  
700-799
- **FOR RENT/  
FOR SALE  
REAL ESTATE**  
801-860

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## Bulletin Board

### 115 Announcements

Bay Area Restaurant Reviews

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Cadillac 2005 CTS-V - 38,000 OBO

Chrysler 2003 PT Cruiser Limited - \$12,500

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Honda 1998 Civic EX - \$5100

**Jaguar 2004 X-Type**  
15k, AWD, Navi \$23200 925-858-3538

### 215 Collectibles & Antiques

Antique Drop leaf table - \$599  
Hand Stitched Pillow - \$3  
Royal Doulton Bunnykins Mug and - \$10

### 220 Computers/ Electronics

Computer Desk Krister - \$25  
Rolling Briefcase - \$45.00 obo

### 230 Freebies

**Free used brick redwood decking**  
Free used brick and redwood decking. You pick up in Pleasanton and haul.

Call Pete 925-580-7588 FREE

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Diverse sounds for open minds: The Internet radio station for musical adventurers presents its freeform, eclectic mix of rock, reggae, jamband, blues, americana, folk, country, roots music, worldbeat, ska & more... plus progressive news, talk, comedy and tons of peace & love. We're bringing groovy back... yeah! Tune in and turn on... GRATEFUL DREAD RADIO lives at http://gdreadradio.net FREE

### 240 Furnishings/ Household items

**1 Pair Solid Brass Fireplace end irons \$150 925-648-9812**

moving sale, all less a year old - \$from \$1

Oak Dining Set - \$160.00

Sofa and loveseat - \$250

**Whirlpool 30' white StoveTop \$95**  
7/2006 was brand new. Upgrading kitchen. Pick up only. \$95. Fotos

### 245 Miscellaneous

6' joiner - \$150 or BO

#### Arizona's - Best Bargain

36AC - \$59,900. Perfect for private retreat. Endless views, beautiful setting w/fresh mountain air. Abundant wildlife. Secluded with good access. Financing available. Call AZLR 1-877-301-5263. (Cal-SCAN)

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### 260 Sports & Exercise Equipment

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**Couch**  
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Dublin, 3 BR/2.5 BA - 589,888

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Livermore, 4 BR/2 BA - \$578900

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Pleasanton, 4 BR/3 BA - \$1,224,999

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**Gulf Front Lots**  
\$595k. Homes starting mid-\$300k. New master planned ocean front community on beautiful Mustang Island, near Corpus Christi, TX. www.CinnamonShore.com 1-866-554-5758. (Cal-SCAN)

**Wyoming Ranch Dispersal**  
35 acres - \$49,900; 70 acres - \$89,900; 110 acres - \$132,900. Snow-capped mountain views. Surrounded by gov't land. Abundant wildlife. Recreational paradise. Low taxes. EZ Terms. Call Utah Ranches, LLC. 1-888-703-5263. (Cal-SCAN)

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**1st Time Offered**  
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**Pet of the Week**



**Action Jackson**  
Meet Jackson, a 10-month-old, neutered male redbone coonhound/labrador mix with energy to burn. Nicknamed "Action Jackson," he loves to romp and play. He weighs about 58 pounds and gets along well with other dogs of similar size. Jackson is sociable and loves to play with toys. Visit Jackson at the Tri-Valley SPCA, 4651 Gleason Dr., Dublin, open Wednesday and Thursday, 1 to 8 p.m., Friday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 479-9670. The Tri-Valley SPCA also has some beautiful housecats that are looking for loving homes. See [www.eastbayspca.org](http://www.eastbayspca.org) for more information.

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# Real Estate

OPEN HOME GUIDE AND REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

## SALES AT A GLANCE

This week's data represents homes sold during November 2006

Danville	Alamo	Walnut Creek
Total sales reported: 24	Total sales reported: 3	Total sales reported: 31
Lowest sale reported: \$360,000	Lowest sale reported: \$1,180,000	Lowest sale reported: \$220,000
Highest sale reported: \$2,250,000	Highest sale reported: \$1,900,000	Highest sale reported: \$1,254,000
Average sales reported: \$1,022,021	Average sales reported: \$1,591,667	Average sales reported: \$581,016

## HOME SALES

Source: California REsource

Danville	Alamo	Walnut Creek
<b>108 Birchbark Place</b> G. & P. McGrath to A. & A. Beilke for \$1,450,000	<b>1958 East Rancho Verde Circle</b> Kautzmann Trust to J. Fenske for \$682,500	<b>379 South Eagle Nest Lane</b> M. Wesenhagen to J. & P. Brickey for \$839,000
<b>1650 Colchester Street</b> Lennar Homes to S. Soe for \$1,184,500	<b>200 El Dorado Avenue #1</b> H. Joseph to L. Nava for \$360,000	<b>54 St. Luke Court</b> Sirva Relocation to J. & C. Anvari for \$971,000
<b>1680 Colchester Street</b> Lennar Homes to J. & A. Casipit for \$1,167,500	<b>2052 Fostoria Circle</b> S. Connelly to P. & A. Kroshner for \$489,000	<b>25 Stirling Drive</b> Subramanian Trust to A. & M. Bordalo for \$850,000
<b>1686 Colchester Street</b> Lennar Homes to A. Shorno for \$1,159,000	<b>2208 Genoa Street</b> Lennar Homes to M. Randolph for \$1,000,000	<b>729 Sweet Water Drive</b> J. Allen to D. Kayl for \$956,000
<b>65 Crestridge Court</b> F. Nafei to D. & A. Wong for \$1,085,000	<b>50 Laurel Court</b> D. & J. Jensen to C. Holt for \$860,000	<b>45 Tennis Club Drive</b> Nelson Trust to Barney Trust for \$975,000
<b>708 Danville Boulevard</b> Rose Trust to G. Lindsey for \$2,250,000	<b>520 Mantova Court</b> KB Homes to Burke Trust for \$1,158,500	<b>120 Mountain Canyon Place</b> R. & P. Mitchell to B. & T. Pappalardo for \$1,180,000
<b>3155 Deer Meadow Drive</b> S. & S. McPherson to M. & M. Jones for \$1,120,000	<b>528 Mantova Court</b> KB Homes to D. Khanna for \$1,075,000	<b>109 Regent Place</b> Egeck Trust to J. & T. Buttles for \$1,695,000
<b>676 Dolphin Drive</b> M. & D. Herrerias to L. Livingston for \$980,000	<b>536 Mantova Court</b> KB Homes to Hughes Trust for \$1,199,000	<b>3105 Stonegate Drive</b> J. & S. Tibbles to A. Cone for \$1,900,000
<b>677 Doral Drive</b> S. Wells to J. & L. Roberts for \$680,000	<b>426 Rioja Court</b> KB Homes to M. & C. McDaniel for \$1,287,500	<b>1823 3rd Avenue</b> Toussaint Trust to J. & M. Weir for \$680,000
	<b>1148 River Rock Lane</b> M. & A. Pavich to G. Felix for \$750,000	

## OPEN HOMES THIS WEEKEND

To list your home in the Danville Weekly Open Home Guide, please email: [OpenHomes@DanvilleWeekly.com](mailto:OpenHomes@DanvilleWeekly.com)

Danville	Pleasanton
<b>4 Bedrooms</b>	<b>3 Bedrooms</b>
<b>403 Laurel Dr.</b> Sat 1-4 By Owner <b>\$1,299,000</b> 518-5618	<b>3856 Promenade Wy.</b> Sat 1-4 Re/Max <b>\$675,000</b> 577-2600
<b>55 Paraiso Ct.</b> Sat 1-4 Coldwell Banker <b>\$995,000</b> 831-3326	<b>684 Grapevine Dr.</b> Sat 1-4 Keller Williams <b>\$699,888</b> 260-2508
<b>2135 Cactus Court #1</b> Thor Trust to L. Winston for \$725,000	<b>235 Masters Court #2</b> Fairways 340 Limited to J. & K. Wattenberger for \$425,000
<b>1841 Cannon Drive</b> Chang Trust to J. Vinogradsky for \$480,000	<b>331 Masters Court #2</b> Fairways 340 Limited to C. Jarboe for \$325,000
<b>1761 Carmel Drive #201</b> S. & B. Coffin to R. Pike for \$430,000	<b>331 Masters Court #3</b> Fairways 340 Limited to J. Lucchese for \$441,500
<b>1917 Dora Avenue</b> Aswad Properties to M. Hardy for \$970,000	<b>311 Masters Court #4</b> Fairways 340 Limited to M. Pallas for \$335,000
<b>1619 Geary Road</b> J. Carzoli to M. Hastings for \$739,000	<b>331 Masters Court #4</b> Fairways 340 Limited to A. Abad for \$335,000
<b>444 Kit Fox Court</b> Maskell Trust to E. & T. Masamori for \$1,140,000	<b>2560 Oak Road #123</b> Bridgeport Commons to Heggelund Trust for \$440,500
<b>61 Margaret Drive</b> R. & J. Ligon to A. Clare for \$752,000	<b>2550 Oak Road #215</b> Bridgeport Commons to K. Henzel for \$405,000
<b>203 Masters Court #1</b> Fairways 340 Limited to D. Gruen for \$220,000	<b>2530 Oak Road #300</b> Bridgeport Commons to K. Sandbach for \$457,500
	<b>2550 Oak Road #319</b> Bridgeport Commons to D. & S. Fischer for \$460,000
	<b>2734 Oak Road #91 R.</b> Daswani to E. Encerti for \$275,000
	<b>3418 Perada Drive</b> S. & B. Tusan to W. & T. Ortmann for \$840,000
	<b>3217 Ravenglass Court</b> Parness Trust to D. & L. Whaley for \$1,205,000
	<b>2657 Saklan Indian Drive #4</b> R. & J. Nugent to Cordes Trust for \$732,000
	<b>1932 Skycrest Drive #4</b> Collins Trust to Landgraf Trust for \$380,000
	<b>930 Sousa Drive</b> Nelson Trust to A. Hensley for \$789,000

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## ALAMO

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Spectacular new Tuscan Villa w/distressed hardwood floors, imported tile & stone, Main-6bd, 5-full/2-half baths. Cabana-2rooms, full bath, kitchen.  
**Sharon Dare & Pamela Schmidt 925.855.4018**



## DANVILLE

**Two Homes on 5+Acres \$3,200,000**  
3200+/-sf main residence w/4bd, 3ba, remodeled to perfection & amenities galore. Second residence is 1200+/-sf w/2bd, 1ba. Top equestrian set-up.  
**Ralph Sessa 925.858.5233**



## DANVILLE

**New Construction-Amenities Galore \$2,450,000**  
Beautiful 6bd, 6.5ba, 4900+/-sf, 4-car garage. Private location, nearly 1.2 acres. Center atrium, game room kids bonus room area. This is a must see property!!  
**Dale Schroeder 925.785.6219**



## DANVILLE

**Resort-Like Living! \$2,199,000**  
Elegant estate home w/casita(452+/-sf). Only 7 years old! 5bd, 3.5ba, 3-car garage, putting green, swim pool/spa, sport court, vineyard and more.  
**Bill & Mimi 925.785.1386**



## DANVILLE

**Entertain, Relax, Enjoy!! \$1,699,900**  
Make me an offer on this incredible home in desirable Diablo Wood! 4bd, 3.5ba, 3-car garage, beautiful pool, gorgeous tile roof and more.  
**Elias Mouawad 925.818.4078**



## DANVILLE

**Estate Home in Diablo Highlands \$1,675,000**  
5bd, 4.5ba on a large, private lot near town. 4351+/-sf, fantastic floor plan including bonus room. End of cul-de-sac, backing to open space w/views.  
**Joyce Papas & Glen Landrum 925.855.4075**



## DANVILLE

**Reduced \$144K-Bring Offers \$1,250,000**  
5bd, 3.5ba in Hidden Valley, one of Danville's most desirable areas. Italian design, gourmet kitchen, 20' ceilings, light & bright.  
**Peggy Kissinger 925.984.1945**



## DANVILLE

**Bettencourt Ranch Executive Home \$1,099,950**  
Like new inside and out! 4bd, one downstairs, 3ba, family room w/used brick fireplace, bar, morning sun breakfast area, huge master suite.  
**Chuck and Renee Lamb 925.899.9651**



## DANVILLE

**SIX Bedrooms w/Huge Loft \$1,049,000**  
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**Loraine Ward 925.855.4123**

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