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Vol. II, Number 48 • March 30, 2007

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One woman's journey from Vietnam to personal freedom

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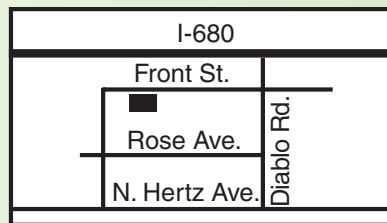
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All Things Financial.

Q: Have you ever been an April fool?



My baby fooled me; she was due on April 1, but she came on March 19. It was a total surprise. I wasn't even home at the time; I had to drive back home at 2 a.m. to go to the hospital.

Melissa Jacobs
stay-at-home mom



I can always sense people, but this one time my ex-girlfriend played an April Fools' joke on me. She was making all of these drastic decisions all of the sudden. She got a job transfer to North Carolina, was buying a mansion there and her boyfriend proposed to her. I kind of believed her. It went on for about 15-20 minutes and then she said, "April Fools!"

Ed Nikie
Realtor



My husband proposed to me on April Fools' Day. And I said yes. If I had said no, he would have said, "April Fools." We've been married five years. I don't know who the joke was on.

Patsy Mercado
president of Bay Area escrow



My dad gets my sister and I every year on April Fools' because he gets up really early every day due to his commute. So when he calls us in the morning, we are just waking up and don't remember that it is April Fools' Day.

Wendy Shaper
pharmaceutical sales rep



I have. My mom asked me to write down the winning lottery ticket numbers and I gave her the wrong winning lottery numbers making her think she won. I kept her going for about 15-20 minutes. But it was only a small jackpot.

Scott Nosrug
real estate sales

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ABOUT THE COVER

Phoenix Nguyen shares her incredible journey from Da Lat, Vietnam, at the age of 9, adjusting to life in St. Louis, becoming lawyer in California, and following her heart into the florist trade. Photo of Phoenix Nguyen by Christina Straw. Cover design by James Greenfield.

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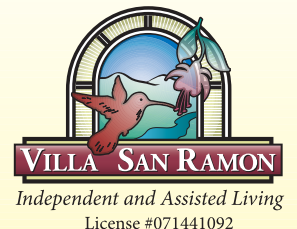
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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ Luckily, the pipe bomb didn't go off. ”

—Detective Paul Murphy, 2006 Officer of the Year, recalling a case he worked on. See story, page 7.

Trustees OK expanded parking lot at Tassajara Hills

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District Board of Education unanimously approved the conceptual design and funding for 22 additional parking spaces at Tassajara Hills Elementary School in Danville at its meeting earlier this month. The lot is located along the north side of the school's property.

Tassajara currently has 63 parking stalls for an enrollment of 720 students and 31 teaching stations. This is below the state guideline of 2.25 times the number of teaching stations, which would require 70 parking spaces. The school has no off-site parking, and the shortage of spaces is causing parking and traffic congestion, as well as impacting fire lanes.

The construction cost for the project is \$185,000, with additional costs bringing it to \$250,000, according to the district.

Egg hunts ready to roll

The Alamo Rotary is sponsoring its annual Egg Hunt at 10 a.m., Saturday, March 31, in Livorna Park. All children 12 and under are welcome, and this free event will be held rain or shine.

The Town of Danville is holding its Eggstravaganza with egg hunts, crafts, balloons and face painting from 9:30 a.m.-noon, Saturday, April 7, at the Danville Community Center and Town Green, 420 Front St. The fee is \$5 for Danville residents and \$6 for non-residents. Egg hunts are organized by age with the youngest going first. The Spring Bunny will also be there. To register, call 314-3400.

Business Promotion Funds available

The Danville Town Council has set aside Business Promotion Funds for the purpose of town-wide business recruitment or economic development. Examples of past funded projects are the Discover Danville Branding Campaign, the Eugene O'Neill Festival, and the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce Danville Life publication.

The Town Council will consider an appropriation of up to \$50,000 for 2007-08 for the business funds when it adopts the annual Financial Plan. Preference may be given to requests that provide for matching funds.

Organizations or individuals seeking Business Promotion Funds must submit proposals to the town that include the amount requested, the purpose for funding, and the anticipated benefit to the business community. Applications must be received in the Town Offices by 5 p.m., Friday, April 20. The Town Council will conduct a study session to review submitted project applications on Tuesday, May 29. To request an application or more information, contact Bonnie Guttman at 314-3395.

Danville Community Band presents 'An Evening in Italy'

"An Evening in Italy" at the Blackhawk Country Club Ballroom will include Italian food as well as the romantic music of "Italia" presented by the 85-member Danville Community Band. Its director, Larry Anderson, is a 20-year Blackhawk resident.

Guest vocalists soprano Elizabeth Hunter and tenor Jorge Gomez will sing Italian arias and love songs. The evening will have a no host bar at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. and concert at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, April 15. It is open to the public, \$45 per person, all inclusive. Call 736-6500 for reservations.

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Want to thank teacher? Better stick to apples

Teachers must report receiving gifts worth \$50 from one source per year

by **Jordan M. Doronila**

Trustees ruminated recently over the school district's policy regarding employees accepting gifts.

Superintendent Rob Kessler reviewed and discussed a policy draft, which delineates the rules and limitations of how employees in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District accept gifts, with the trustees at their meeting earlier this month.

"This applies to all district staff," said Kessler at the meeting.

The issue was routine, district spokesman Terry Koehne said later.

Kessler, in a written statement, said the district does not currently have a policy that clearly outlines guidelines for accepting gifts. Legal counsel recommended that

the district adopt such a policy.

The superintendent noted that the draft had been reviewed and appropriately revised by members of his cabinet, classified management and K-12 principals. School staff designed the policy to follow the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC).

The draft states that the acceptance of cash in any amount for personal use is prohibited. Cash may only be accepted for school or district purposes. Employees and board members cannot accept gifts that cumulatively exceed \$390 in a calendar year from a single source, according to the policy.

Gifts must be returned if the cumulative value of the gifts from a single source in a calendar year is greater than \$390 or if the conditions or timing under which the gifts are given is questionable.

The FPPC designates certain employees and board members to

► Continued on page 10



Greenbrook Elementary School third-graders (l-r) Akshay Manghirmalani, Katie Mitchell, Ryan Forester and Jake Alexander dress in 1800s clothing for the grand opening of the Tassajara One Room School House's revamped outhouse and stable last Wednesday, March 21.

School days, school days

Children say thank you for work on historic one room school

by **Jordan M. Doronila**

Children wearing bonnets and hats in the style of the late 1800s gathered last week on Wednesday at the Tassajara One Room School for a ribbon cutting for the newly built historic stable and outhouse.

Danville Town Council members and residents were also on hand to honor developer Shapell Homes and firefighters for their part in preserving the historic schoolhouse on Finley Road.

Shapell made significant improvements to the site, which is owned by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, rebuilding the stable after the original historic

one was torn down for safety reasons by the fire district in 2005.

The developer also restored the old outhouses with new roofs and paint and added a functional restroom.

"It shows a wonderful partnership," said Councilwoman Candace Andersen. "It shows what you can do without a lot of taxpayers' dollars."

Approximately 30 third-graders from Greenbrook Elementary School wore attire from the late 1800s at the ceremony. Joan Kurtz, who with her husband Don designed the One Room School program offered by the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, served as the mistress of ceremonies.

"It's a wonderful hands-on way to understand and appreciate the roots of this valley," Andersen said.

Each year, approximately 2,000

third-graders from the San Ramon Valley are brought into the classroom environment of the 1880s on a field trip to Tassajara School, which is an authentically preserved one room school.

The program, which has been sponsored by the museum since 1995, provides a unique day-long experience where each student dresses, studies and even eats lunch as the boys and girls of 100 years ago did. The parents also get involved as the children dress up for the occasion.

"It gets families out and doing things together," Andersen said.

"I considered myself a lucky person to go onto that field trip," said Gail Kamerer, a Greenbrook substitute teacher who attended the event. "It was a real fun day for me to substitute." ■

Contact **Jordan M. Doronila** at jdoronila@DanvilleWeekly.com

Reimers pleads guilty

Sentencing on mail fraud charges will be in August

by **Jordan M. Doronila**

Former Danville resident Francis William "Bill" Reimers, 62, pleaded guilty last Friday to six counts of mail fraud and one count of money laundering, which arose out of his multimillion dollar fraud scheme.

He admitted that he established an entity called the Advisory Services Group (ASG), purportedly to provide financial and investment management services to individual investors. He persuaded them to

invest their money with him by lying to them, said prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

For instance, he falsely stated that he had developed a "regression analysis" program that could predict whether mutual fund values would rise and fall. Additionally, he falsely said that he would invest his clients' money, prosecutors said.

Reimers has admitted that he did not invest their money; instead, he used it to pay his mortgage and buy luxury cars, vacations and hunting trips. He also used his investors' funds to fund two other busi-

► Continued on page 8



Shames Construction employees work alongside electricians from Foley Electric, despite unusually wet circumstances, to help prevent further delay of the Home Depot-Yardbirds opening.

Yardbirds opening set for May 3

Renovations continue through rain and shine

by **Natalie O'Neill**

The opening of Alamo's beloved hardware store and neighborhood meeting grounds will be postponed another two weeks due to construction delays involving the interior renovation.

Home Depot-Yardbirds' opening date has been pushed back from April 19 to May 3, Home Depot spokeswoman Kathryn Gallagher said this week.

"We've had unforeseen construction difficulties—some problems with the power in the back,"

spokesman Tim Seymour said on location at the site Monday.

Shames Construction crew and Foley Electric engineers worked at the site this week in the pouring rain. Many crew members said they had seen the problems they encountered before and that they were normal "bumps in the road."

"It's a tough job, but it's going smoothly enough. I ain't telling you more than that," Mark Bendixen, a project manager with Shames Construction, said with a smile.

Home Depot-Yardbirds is renovating the inside of the store, but the structure of the building will stay the same.

"We're basically putting a whole new store in there," said one structural engineer, who

asked not to be named.

As nice weather approaches, many Alamo residents are gearing up to start home improvement projects and have voiced that going to other home improvement stores often involves 18-mile round-trip drives, much less convenient than stopping at Las Trampas Center in downtown Alamo.

The community has been anticipating the new store since Yardbirds closed in summer 2006. Many residents have also said they hope the new store will continue to be a basic down-home, well stocked hardware store.

Gallagher said she would reveal the specific products the store will offer as the opening date approaches. ■

Alamo recreation programmer moving on

Committee considers enlarging position as program grows

by **Natalie O'Neill**

Alamo's recreation programmer Valerie Matlock says it's time to pass the torch.

Matlock, who was hired one year ago, got the area's recreation program off its feet, working part time for the R-7A Parks and Recreation Committee, but announced her resignation from the position last week.

"I think we've got some good momentum going and I want to make sure what's built so far is passed on smoothly to the next person," she said.

Along with coordinating events and classes and getting the word out about them, she spearheaded the construction of a Web site dedicated to Alamo recreation activities that will be launched in coming months.

Matlock is resigning because she's moving away to Lake Tahoe with her family for the summer. She will continue in the position until May.

In light of her resignation, committee members are considering enlarging the position and adding more staff members to the growing department in the future.

"If we are replacing Valerie, is this an opportunity to expand that role?" asked R-7A committee member Marianne Sasso.

Other recreation programs have several staff members, Matlock said, noting that in her opinion they need more staff.

"You're going to need more than one person. Maybe look at hiring one person to do administrative work and another to do the creative recreation planning," she suggested.

While this is an option worthy of consideration, it might be too soon to take those steps, other committee members said.

"That's a possibility but it's a little preliminary right now," said R-7A Chairman Steve Mick.

"If we are replacing Valerie, is this an opportunity to expand that role?"

—R-7A committee member *Marianne Sasso*

Taking the change into account, county staff said the hunt for Alamo's new recreation programmer should begin pronto. County Public Works Senior Civil Engineer Eric Whan said he expects the process will take at least six months—about the amount of time it took to find Matlock.

"By the time we go through the interviewing process and training, it will be more than six months," he said.

Qualified candidates should have a background in recreation or event planning. It also helps to be organized, outdoorsy and good with people, Mick said.

"They should be really versatile because they'll be planning for everyone from youngsters to seniors," Mick said.

Matlock has done a noteworthy job of accommodating many different demographics, considering she has had to take on several roles at once, committee members said.

"I wear so many hats, some days I think: 'Which one am I going to put on first?'" Matlock said.

"You started from zero and you did an exemplary job," Mick told Matlock.

To aide the program in a smooth transition—from the time she leaves to the time the new position is filled—Whan suggested that a county staff member in special districts begin training with Matlock. He also said contract work is an option.

"That might be good to get us through the summer," he said.

The county will need to consider both what's best for the program and what's most cost-effective, county staff members said. The quicker they move, the better, Whan added.

"I want to get someone in now to get them up to speed on this," he said.

The position currently includes organizing family nights, classes, outdoor games and music. Finding volunteers, making sure there are Port-o-potties at concerts and collecting money are some examples of job tasks.

Additional costs will inevitably be associated with a larger staff, county staff members pointed out. With a Web site under construction, a new aquatic center and YMCA to be built in coming years, a larger staff may be just as inevitable. ■

Contact *Natalie O'Neill* at noneill@danvilleweekly.com



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Detective is a force to be reckoned with

Resilient cop solves wild crimes

by Jordan M. Doronila

Detective Paul Murphy enjoys catching criminals to keep the peace in the San Ramon Valley.

For his work, dedication and passion, the Danville Police Department recently named Murphy, 35, as the 2006 Officer of the Year. Police said his investigative work has helped reduce crime in Danville and close many cases.

"I don't work here to put plaques on the wall," Murphy said. "I don't like attention. I do what I do because I like doing it."

"I like the challenges of doing something different," he added. "No two days are alike."

Murphy has helped crack down on identity theft and credit card fraud, close a child molestation case, and nab a disgruntled worker who vandalized his employer's home in Danville.



Danville Police Detective Paul Murphy, 35, received the 2006 Officer of the Year Award.

"He's one of those individuals that enjoys his job," said Danville Police Chief Chris Wenzel. "Besides being a detective, he will work overtime and work on the streets."

Murphy said he caught an angry employee between the ages of 20 and 30 from San Joaquin County who shot a BB gun at his boss's home in Danville. However, he accidentally hit the home of his employer's neighbor. He then wrote a letter of apology to the neighbor, Murphy said.

In addition, the worker allegedly constructed a homemade pipe bomb and threw it at the home of his employer's brother in Tracy. But the brother had moved out of his house at the time. Instead, he threw it over the head of the brother's daughter.

"Luckily, the pipe bomb didn't go off," Murphy said.

Moreover, when his employer refused to give him his job back at the office, he induced himself to vomit on the carpet.

After receiving a call from the employer and conducting an investigation, police served a search

warrant at the worker's home and found he had maps of his employer's homes and bomb materials, Murphy said, adding that the worker wrote on his bathroom wall with a black marker. Police arrested and charged him for carrying bomb making materials and assault with a deadly weapon.

Murphy also helped follow up and close a child molestation case, which was reported by a 17-year-old male in Danville. An uncle and grandfather sexually molested the youth when he was from 12 to 14 years old. The police officers received the report last year from a medical professional, and they got confessions from the uncle and grandfather about committing the crimes.

Murphy said the victim, as much as he could be expected, was doing fine.

There is a rough total of five to six alleged sexual assault-related cases each year in Danville, he said.

Murphy also recalled an incident where a 22-year-old made fake calls to the police about a young woman being beaten with a flashlight near San Ramon Valley High School. Additionally, he told police that she may have been kidnapped.

Murphy said the suspect gave this same story to police departments in several cities, including Dublin, Concord and Oakland, as well as in Reno.

"He basically goes around the Bay Area and Reno, Nev., and calls about the same incident," Murphy said. "It's always about someone being attacked and some sort of kidnapping."

When the young man called the police to describe his prior made-up incidents, he gave them his license plate number and descriptions of himself, such as a white male wearing blue jeans and a red shirt.

One time in Dublin, after contacting the police, he came down from his apartment, met them as they were responding to his call, and denied ever calling them.

"It was very bizarre," said Murphy, adding that the suspect also went to auto body shops carrying books about drugs. When he was asked about why he had those books, he responded by lying that he was a parole agent who needed to understand substances.

Murphy said he collected all the dispatch tapes involving the 22-year-old, and he eventually was able to find him.

"He's fascinating," he said, noting that such off-the-wall incidents occur infrequently.

"It happens in a blue moon," he added.

Murphy speculated that he might have enjoyed the thrill of having the police show up as a result of his phony calls.

In another case, Murphy identified a Danville girl who was a delivery person for a daily newspaper for being involved in stealing property, auto burglaries and identity thefts.

Murphy said he saw her on a surveillance tape writing a check that was declined in a Safeway in Clayton. He discovered that she and her boyfriend and friends would go around and steal property in the community.

"He enjoys putting people in jail," said Wenzel, about Murphy.

Murphy grew up in Concord. In college, he took courses in criminal justice and found it interesting. He went to Diablo Valley College for two years and then transferred to Sacramento State University majoring in criminal justice. He started out working in insurance claims to get himself established, but he knew he wanted to work in law enforcement.

"It's something new," he said "I really enjoyed it."

He said honesty and being upfront is best way to communicate with people.

"I like calling it as I see it," he said. "Honesty goes far."

After leaving the insurance industry, Murphy trained at the police academy with his friend Danville Officer Mike Ireland.

Murphy worked at the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office before being assigned to Danville in 2000. He was promoted to detective in 2005. ■

Contact Jordan M. Doronila at jdoronila@DanvilleWeekly.com



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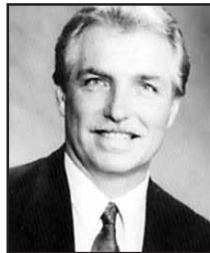
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Sign up for spring break fun

Spring break is almost here—this year it's from April 9-13 in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. The Town of Danville has activities planned for children and teens to make the week exciting.

Spring Break Camp, for ages 5-11, will take place at Hap Magee Ranch Park with games and arts and crafts each day. On Wednesday, there will be a field trip to Boomer's Family Fun Center in Livermore.

Camp hours are 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Cost is \$105 for Danville residents; \$125 for non-residents. Participants should bring their lunch each day.

For teens ages 10-14, the town is scheduling trips to fun destinations each day, in a program called "desTEENation." Participants will meet each day at 9:30 a.m. at Los Cerros Middle School Teen

Center, 968 Blemer Road, to head off to their daily adventure and return by 5:30 p.m.

So far the schedule is:

- Monday: Sony Metreon San Francisco and movie;
- Tuesday: Boomers entertainment center in Livermore (bumper boats, cars, mini golf course or laser tag);
- Wednesday: Rock climbing and gymnastics;
- Thursday: Putting Edge (glow-in-the-dark mini-golf); and
- Friday: Marine World with rides, animals and fun.

Fees are \$300 for Danville residents, \$360 for non-residents. Participants should bring their lunch everyday.

For more information or with questions, call 314-3400, or register online at www.ci.danville.ca.us.

Guilty

► Continued from page 5

nesses that he owned and operated, Plan Compliance Group (PCG) and Univest Capital Management (UCM).

PCG and UCM collected payroll distributions from thousands of employees and remitted them to institutional companies and to insurance providers, as directed by the employees. Reimers used the

PCG and UCM cash flow to pay off ASG investors, who requested monthly dividends or who asked to close their account.

On March 12, the U.S. Attorney's Office charged Reimers with six counts of mail fraud and one count of money laundering. The maximum penalty for each count is 20 years in imprisonment, plus substantial fines and restitution.

His sentencing is scheduled for 10 a.m. Aug. 3 in Oakland. ■

Contact Jordan M. Doronila at jdoronila@DanvilleWeekly.com

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Caltrans opens southbound auxiliary lane

Diablo Road onramp no longer 'short merge'

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

The auxiliary lane from Diablo Road south to Sycamore Valley Road on I-680 opened last week, ending the dangerous "short merge" that southbound drivers have had to contend with for almost a year. Auxiliary lanes connect onramps from one interchange with the offramps of the adjacent interchange, enabling drivers to travel from one exit to the next without merging with through-traffic.

The project, which included widening both sides of the freeway to add the 12-foot lanes and new shoulders, also added an auxiliary lane from Crow Canyon to Bollinger Canyon that is now open.

The construction work began in April 2006 and was expected to take one year; final landscaping is due in fall 2007. The third segment of the project, from Sycamore Valley Road to Crow Canyon, is not yet funded.

The auxiliary lanes should improve the overall operation of the freeway, noted a project report,

providing a longer merging distance for vehicles entering and exiting the freeway. "The new lanes will eliminate on-ramp delays by providing exclusive travel lanes for vehicles entering the freeway," according to the report. "This will result in much smoother weaving on and off the freeway."

"The new lanes ... will result in much smoother weaving on and off the freeway."

—Caltrans project report

The \$59.7 million project for all three segments is being funded by Measure C, the half-cent gas tax passed in 1998 for transportation improvement; the Surface Transportation Program; Southern Contra Costa Regional Development fees; Tri-Valley Transportation Development fees; and State Transportation Improvement fees. ■

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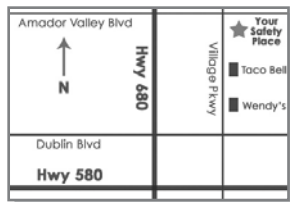
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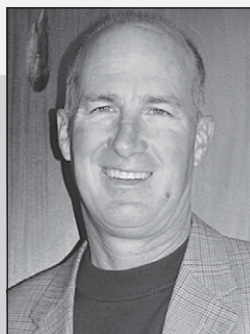


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Gifts

► Continued from page 5

report gifts received, in the draft policy. Trustees, management, the purchasing department and employees who buy supplies and equipment are subject to reporting.

Employees and trustees who receive gifts that exceed \$50 from a single source in one calendar year must be reported on the FPPC Form 700, which is the Statement of Economic Interests.

"I think the guidelines are pretty clear," said Trustee Joan Buchanan.

"I think it's well-written," added Paul Gardner.

However, Trustee Greg Marvel still had concerns about people currying favor by showering employees with gifts.

"I want to be above any appearance of impropriety," Marvel said.

The policy also covers gifts that teachers receive from parents.

Jill McKinnon-Endicott, fourth- and fifth-grade teacher at Green Valley Elementary School, said students and their parents give gifts because they appreciate the work that teachers do.

"It isn't to buy me off," she said. "I would never ever entertain a bribe. In 31 years working as teacher, I have never seen that, ever."

"It makes you feel appreciated," she added. "The generosity is

amazing. It's overwhelming just how generous they are."

McKinnon-Endicott said the gift giving varies between high and elementary schools. And from time immemorial, teachers have been receiving gifts, such as apples, she said. Some gifts teachers have received include mugs and gift certificates.

"We work so closely (with parents) in elementary school," McKinnon-Endicott said. "Sometimes, it's very uncomfortable. When you try to discourage them, they say, 'It's our way of saying thanks.'"

"They want to show you how much they appreciate your hard work," she added. "It's definitely not required."

At San Ramon Valley High School, drama instructor Chuck Perryman said gift giving is not frequent.

"It's not my experience that I receive these huge monetary gifts," he said. "Maybe in the lower grades. My kids are young adults."

"What the kids give to me is their time and their relationships," he said. "We build an appreciation for each other and ... we are a family. I don't think gifts are really part of that."

He noted that on holidays, he participates in a gift exchange his department conducts. Also, once in a while, he may receive a card.

District legal counsel and its internal auditor drafted the gifts policy. For information about the

TAKE US ALONG



Weekly goes golfing

Danville resident Jack Zarfoss brought along his Weekly when he visited the World Golf Hall of Fame in St. Augustine, Fla.

policy and a complete list of gift reporting requirements, call the district human resources department at 552-2923. ■

Contact Jordan M. Doronila at jdoronila@DanvilleWeekly.com



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EDITORIAL • THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

High tech questions grow and grow

Technology. Gotta love it. But also gotta question it. When teens begin to text message each other to bring fight fans to a confrontation after school, we have to ask the question: Are we abusing technology?

Cell phones are a godsend for emergencies. Couples are comfortable leaving children with babysitters knowing they can be contacted immediately. People can go to work even out in the field during a family emergency knowing they can be instantly updated on

any changes. Cell phones have also made our lives much more convenient: Meeting up with someone in a crowded mall or an airport? Talk on the cell phone until you are face to face. Also many of us—especially the young—have fun with instant text messaging. A cell phone is a great medium to send an instant congrats on winning a game or to send a quick message of love or encouragement.

Society is coping with advances in science and tech-

nology one by one as their downsides become apparent. Some of the subjects are life or death issues, such as organ transplants from live donors or saving a life when Mother Nature apparently intended otherwise.

The questions raised by cell phones are less dramatic but can be jarring nonetheless. Text messaging can be used to send out word on a gathering taking place at that very moment, which has caused dismay for many a teenage host whose parents trustingly

left them home alone.

A recent case in Alamo opened the eyes of many adults as teens gathered at Alamo Plaza for an after-school fight after text messages spread throughout the Monte Vista High School student body. High schools always have had almost sixth-sense telegraphing among the students, with news quickly spreading about anything of interest. Now it's reached a new level and left many of us wondering: Do we need to be quite so in touch?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wave flag for diversity

Dear Editor:

Super patriot Nicholas Yakoubovsky (Letters, March 16) does not sound like the descendant of a Founding Father. They immediately divided into Federalists and States Righters and fought acrimonious battles over how to interpret the document they had written. Both sides paraded, carried the flag, and celebrated the Fourth of July with picnics and political stump speaking. The Democratic and Republican parties emerged from the political wrangling needing to be comfortable with the new concept of government ruled by "we the people." A Fourth of July parade without the two political parties marching together to celebrate their union as Americans would be a curious affair.

As for the social vermin Yakoubovsky abhors, does he refer to the rights of women in the workplace that the ACLU has defended? Is he referring to the ACLU defense of immigrant rights—something Mr. Yakoubovsky's name indicates his forebears welcomed? Is he referring to gays and lesbians? One of each seems to pop up in every family in some generation. Who are these "social vermin"? They are all children of some American, for sure. His acerbic attack on Communists is a generation late; he seems stuck in the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s.

Let Yakoubovsky attend his sterile parade devoid of the continuing struggle to keep this the home of the free and the brave. Americans, coming from all over the world, continue to defend the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. I say, wave the flag, beat the drum,

shout for the freedom to do, to be, and to love the diversity of this country. And we must continue to respect the organizations we have formed to keep this country civil and proud.

Peggy Radford Rubin and Barney Rubin, Danville; Jan and Richard Bergamini, Alamo; Marilyn Bocker, Walnut Creek; Judy Link, Diablo

'Fool' speaks out

Dear Editor:

April Fools' Day has its origin in France as the Christian churches came to that country and changed New Year's Day. Appropriately, before that result, April 1 was New Year's Day and the Christians labeled all that celebrated as FOOLS.

In Alamo, over my 22 years in residence, a select group of exceptional humorists have cel-

ebrated New Year's Day on April 1 in recognition of the foolishness that is our culture and our politics. Mostly, we "foreigners" from Silicon Valley and related technology areas throughout the Bay Area could not be part of Alamo's very unique culture so we formed a celebration of our global viewpoint and laughed heartedly at our contrasts to a local culture. We deserve to laugh at ourselves.

As the "foreigners" increase in Alamo, the former culture is declining into a handful that is less than 7 percent of Alamo. Our heritage of such a unique culture needs to be appreciated for its rural origins and very restrained conduct. But I would hope that it doesn't convert into a Tradition better described as the excuses we make for the silly things we do repeatedly.

The Alamo Towne Fool is grow-

ing, not by its foolishness, but by its more global reality. Let me be the first to wish all in Alamo, "Happy New Year," April 1, 2007.

Hal Bailey, As part of Halamo, The Alamo Towne Fool

Consider troops safety

Dear Editor:

I am enraged with the vote to cut funding and impose a deadline for troop withdrawal. The House and Senate are so consumed with getting President Bush that they have failed to consider the safety of our troops or the message they have sent terrorists—just wait a year and they will tuck their tails and run. Not only have they endangered our fine young men and women but they have also put every one of us in jeopardy. When will those who have been chosen to lead, lead?

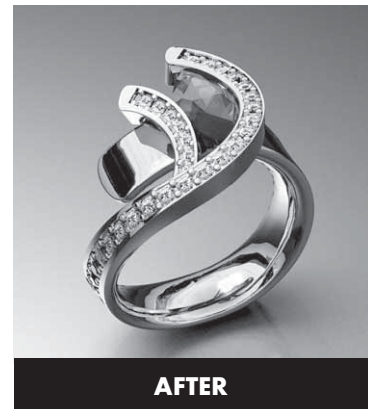
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POLICE BULLETIN

Where's my air compressor?

Someone recently broke into a U-Haul trailer on the 3400 block of Fostoria Way in Danville and allegedly took an air compressor, said Danville police.

The person went inside an unlocked trailer, said Sgt. Troy Craig, and allegedly took an air compressor worth \$100. The incident occurred sometime between Saturday evening, March 17, and Sunday morning, March 18, Craig said.

'Every 15 Minutes'

Students saw cars crashing, kids dying, an ambulance zooming and a helicopter flying at the San Ramon Valley High School football stadium earlier this week.

The simulated car accident caused by drunken driving was part of a program called "Every 15 Minutes," presented Tuesday, March 27. The event and simulation were orchestrated by the Danville Police Department, the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, the San Ramon Valley Fire

Protection District and other government agencies, said Sgt. Troy Craig.

"It's actually quite a dramatic impact on the kids," Craig said. "It brings the connection a little bit closer to them."

The event began 10 a.m. at the stadium and families were invited to attend, he said. Approximately six San Ramon students acted as drivers, with some of them simulating being drunk while driving. As a result, two cars crashed and students were injured.

During the presentation, two students were pronounced dead at the scene and others were taken to the hospital by ambulance and helicopter.

"It's all about drinking and driving and education," Craig said. "It encourages kids not to do that kind of behavior."

Pilots from the California Shock Trauma Air Rescue organization flew a helicopter to pick up one of the students.

"Everybody plays a big hand on this," Craig said, adding that real life accidents are similar to the presentation.

—Jordan M. Doronila

POLICE LOG

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

Monday, March 19

- Recovered stolen vehicle on the 6000 block of Condor St. at 9:05 a.m.
- Vandalism on the 400 block of Starmont Ct. at 11:26 a.m.
- Drunk in public on the 100 block of Love Ln. at 2:05 p.m.
- Auto burglary on the 800 block of Camino Ramon at 4:37 p.m.
- Petty theft on the 100 block of Railroad Ave. at 5:07 p.m.
- Music disturbance on the 2000 block of Camino Ramon Pl. at 10:13 p.m.

Tuesday, March 20

- Hit and run, misdemeanor, on the 400 block of Front St. at 7:45 a.m.
- Disturbance, threats, at Greenbrook Dr. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 10:27 a.m.
- Public nuisance on the 300 block of Hartz Ave. at 1:22 p.m.
- Vehicle accident with property damage at Camino Tassajara and Sherburne Hills at 4:18 p.m.
- Driving under the influence (DUI), misdemeanor, at San Ramon Valley Blvd. and Town and Country at 7:27 p.m.
- Noise disturbance on the 4000 block of Skylark Ln. at 11:18 p.m.

Wednesday, March 21

- Suspicious vehicle stop on the 400 block of Sycamore Cr. at 6:56 a.m.
- Hit and run, misdemeanor, at Camino Tassajara and Diablo Rd. at 7:19 a.m.
- Suspicious vehicle stop on the 200 block of Viewpoint Dr. at 8:12 a.m.
- Disturbance, unwanted guest, on 200 block of San Rey Pl. at 9:43 a.m.
- Public nuisance on 400 block of Diablo Rd. at 11:50 a.m.
- Identity theft on 100 block of Alta Vista Way at 12:01 p.m.
- Suspicious subject stop on 1000 block of Lehigh Valley Cr. at 1:17 p.m.
- Reckless driving at Love Ln. and Veda Dr. at 1:21 p.m.
- Public nuisance on the 400 block of Diablo Rd. at 3:13 p.m.
- Trespassing on the 100 block of Danville Oak Pl. at 3:17 p.m.
- Abandoned vehicle at Camino Ramon Pl. and Camino Ramon at 3:43 p.m.
- Disturbance by neighbor on the 100 block of Headland Ct. at 4:29 p.m.
- Accident with major injuries at Camino Tassajara and Woodranch Dr. at 8:01 p.m.
- Fight at Diablo Road and Hartz Ave. at 8:20 p.m.

Thursday, March 22

- Petty theft in the 2600 block of Camino Tassajara at 10:41 a.m.
- Checks, insufficient funds, on 200 block of Paraiso Dr. at 4:49 p.m.
- Reckless driving at Camino Tassajara and Diablo Rd. at 6:30 p.m.
- Hit and run, misdemeanor, on the 3400 block of Camino Tassajara at 6:56 p.m.
- Reckless driving at Camino Tassajara and Crow Canyon Rd. at 7:26 p.m.

Friday, March 23

- Public nuisance on the 3400 block of Claridge Dr. at 11:47 a.m.
- Hit and run, misdemeanor, on the 100 block of Cameo Dr. at 12:25 p.m.
- Abandoned vehicle on the 500 block of Morninghome Rd. at 12:34 p.m.
- Abandoned vehicle at Plaza Cr. and Valle Vista Dr. at 12:54 p.m.
- Vandalism on the 1700 block of Green Valley Rd. at 1:13 p.m.
- Hit and run, misdemeanor, on the 3100 block of Fostoria Way at 7:04 p.m.
- Suspicious vehicle at Camino Tassajara and Crow Canyon Rd. at 8:44 p.m.
- Reckless driving at Diablo View Ct. and Woodranch Cr. at 8:50 p.m.

Saturday, March 24

- Suspicious vehicle stop on 1000 block of Tassajara Ranch Rd. at 12:26 a.m.
- Suspicious vehicle stop at Camino Ramon and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 12:38 a.m.
- Disturbance, unwanted guest, on 3400 block of Camino Tassajara at 2:11 a.m.
- Reckless driving at Diablo Rd. and Green Valley Rd. at 12:49 p.m.
- Music disturbance on the 1000 block of Tassajara Ranch Rd. at 1:40 p.m.
- Trespassing at Camino Tassajara and Parkhaven Dr. at 4:35 p.m.
- Music disturbance on the 1000 block of Tassajara Ranch Rd. at 4:49 p.m.
- Music disturbance on the 1000 block of Tassajara Ranch Rd. at 4:59 p.m.
- Vandalism on the 3400 block of Claridge Dr. at 6:29 p.m.
- Fireworks disturbance at Alamo Springs Dr. and Corrie Pl. at 8:07 p.m.
- Noise disturbance on the 3000 block of Fostoria Cr. at 10:14 p.m.

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Calendar

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY • POST CALENDAR ITEMS AT WWW.DANVILLEWEEKLY.COM

Art

Alamo-Danville Artists' Society

This society will present a group showing of paintings from March 20-May 15, at the Danville Town Offices, 510 La Gonda Way. The offices are open on weekdays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 939-1278.

Pleasanton Art League in Poetry Festival

The Pleasanton Art League (PAL) will host a display of fine art as part of the sixth annual Poetry Prose & Arts Festival, from 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday, March 31, at CarrAmerica Corporate Center, 4420 Rosewood Dr., Pleasanton. This event is free.

Author Visit

'Walking 18 Holes With Tiger' book-signing

Danville residents MJ and ML McColgan will be signing their book, "Walking 18 Holes With Tiger" from 2-4 p.m., Saturday, April 7, at Barnes and Noble, in Jack London Square. MJ is a 3-time National Special Olympics Golf Champion, a 6-time Northern Californian State Champion and San Francisco Hall of Famer. Call (510) 914-0646 or email lmcocol3525@aol.com.

Fine Art of Pinstriping and Rockin' Down the Highway

Blackhawk Museum will present "Fine Art of Pinstriping" with Herb Martinez and "Rockin' Down the Highway" with Paul Grushkin from 10:15 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Saturday, April 7, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$5 for students and seniors and children under 6 and active military personnel are free. Call 736-2280.

Clubs

Danville-Alamo Garden Club

Danville-Alamo Garden Club will host its monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, April 12, at the Alamo Women's Club, 1401 Danville Blvd. Guest speaker will be local landscape

designer, Yanker-Hansen, who will talk about "Landscaping for Floral Arranging." Call 837-4904.

Concerts

Benefit Concert for Vietnamese Children

Come to the Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd. in Pleasanton, for an afternoon of jazz and classical music from 2-4 p.m., Sunday, April 1. Cost is \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door with proceeds benefiting VNHHELP to benefit street children in Vietnam. The concert series was started in 2000 by Chi Nguyen, a sophomore at Stanford, and her sister Truc, a Stanford graduate. Call 275-9250.

Events

25th Annual Bonsai Exhibition

Diablo Bonsai Club will host the 25th annual Bonsai Exhibition from 10

a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, March 31 and from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday, April 1, at the Assembly Hall, Walnut Creek Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. This event is free. There will be booth demonstrations, door prizes, planet sales and more! Call 736-7600.

Spring Luau Carnival

The Montevideo Elementary School Spring Luau Carnival will take place from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, April 28, on campus at 13000 Broadmoor Drive. Come enjoy a family-filled, fun day featuring carnival game booths, fun prizes, and delicious food cooked to order by Fuddruckers. For information, call 803-7450.

Spring Indulgence

Bring the family for a great day of fun at Spring Indulgence from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, April 7, at the Danville Livery, at Sycamore Valley Road West and San Ramon Valley Blvd. Call 838-7070.

► Continued on page 14

WEEKEND PREVIEW

Alamo-Danville Artists hosting a show

Alamo-Danville Artists' Society will host its 30th annual show from March 31-April 20 at the Danville Fine Art Gallery, 233 Front St., Danville. An opening reception and award ceremony will be held from 4-6 p.m., Saturday, March 31. Weekly hours are noon-5 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday. Proceeds will benefit grants for art teachers in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Call (510) 245-7543 or 838-1959 or visit www.adas4art.org.



ALAMO-DANVILLE ARTISTS' SOCIETY

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Exhibits

Lindsay Wildlife Art Exhibits
Lindsay Wildlife Museum will host a collection of art exhibits including: Origami Animals by Alamo resident Robert Lang will be displayed until April 29; Birds in Art until May 5, all at Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 First Ave., Walnut Creek. Call 935-1978 or visit www.wildlife-museum.org.

'The Sword and the Cross' The Museum of the San Ramon Valley presents "The Sword and the Cross" exhibit running until May 5, at the museum, 205 Railroad Ave., Danville. Admission is free to the museum, but donations are appreciated. Hours are 1-4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday and 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday. Call 837-3750 or visit www.museumsv.org.

Fundraisers

Blood Drive A blood drive will be from 11:45 a.m.-5:45 p.m., Friday, April 6, at Grange Hall, 745 Diablo Rd., Danville. For an appointment, call (800) 448-5433 or visit www.beadonor.com.

Nia Dance Earth Day Celebrate Earth Day by learning about Save Mt. Diablo and enjoying a fun afternoon of Nia, a "fusion" fitness class based on dance and the martial arts from 2-4 p.m., Sunday, April 22, at Renaissance Club Sport, 2805 Jones Rd., Walnut Creek. Suggested donation is \$20 (tax-deductible). Proceeds will benefit Save Mt. Diablo. Call 947-3535 or visit www.savemountdiablo.org.

Private Shopping at Pottery Barn Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. will host a private shopping event from 6:30-9 p.m., Sunday, April 22, at Pottery Barn, 1480 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$25 each, or \$100 for a package of five tickets. Proceeds will benefit Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. Call 284-3740

or visit www.jloeb.org.

Health

Advanced Digestive Diseases Workshops Medical Center at Blackhawk will host different workshops on Advanced Digestive Diseases including: Colon Cancer at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Gastroesophageal at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and Capsule Endoscopy at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., Saturday, March 31, at Blackhawk Country Club, 599 Blackhawk Club Dr., Danville. The workshops are free, but reservations are required by calling 736-8228.

Ask the Doctor Call-In Show San Ramon Regional Medical Center will host the next "Ask the Doctor" call-in show which will feature diabetes as the topic from 7-8 p.m., Wednesday, April 4. The show will air at 7 p.m., every Wednesday until the end of the month. Call 462-3030.

Open Gym Town of Danville is offering Adult Open Gym from 7:30-9:15 a.m., Saturdays, and High School Open Gym, 6-8 p.m., Sundays, both at Los Cerros Middle School Community Gym, 968 Blemer Road, Danville. Discounted pass cards are \$4 for residents, \$5 for non-residents. Call 314-3386.

The Wellness Community The Wellness Community will host Cultivating Forgiveness from 2-5 p.m., Saturday, March 31, at The Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. This workshop is for cancer patients, their families and friends. Call 933-0107.

Kids and Teens

Teen SAT Strategy Sessions Danville Library will host a Teen SAT

Strategy Session from 6-7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 5, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. Registration begins Feb. 26 and seating is limited, call 837-4889.

**Lectures/
Workshops**

Radical Collaboration in Adversarial Environments Learn radical collaboration skills to resolve conflict and build better business relationships in adversarial situations from 9 a.m.-noon, Wednesday, April 4, at Scott's Seafood, 1333 N. California Blvd., Walnut Creek. Cost is \$105 NCHRA members, \$135 for nonmembers. Call (415) 291-1992.

Seven Deadly Sins of Compensation A presentation will focus on companies' seven problem areas of compensation, from 7:30-9 a.m., Wednesday, April 11, at the Radisson Hotel, 6680 Regional St. in Dublin. Cost is \$30 members/\$50 non-members. Call (415) 291-1992 or e-mail nchra@nchra.org

Literary Events

Walking in John Muir's Footsteps Friends of the Danville Library and Kiwanis of San Ramon Valley will host Peter and Donna Thomas from 1-2 p.m., Wednesday, April 4, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. They will present their experience of re-tracing John Muir's first walking trip across California. This event is free. Call 837-4455.

Miscellaneous

Free Electronic Waste Event The Town of Danville and Universal Waste Management, Inc. will host a

Come Celebrate Easter with us

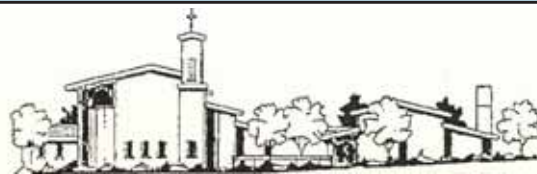
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April 1st, 9:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion

April 4th, 7:00 p.m.

Movie: The Passion of the Christ

April 5th, 7:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday

April 6th

12-3 p.m. Good Friday Tre Ore Liturgy

7:30 p.m. Good Friday Vespers

April 8th

Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ

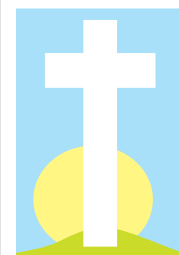
8:00 a.m. Easter Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Easter Divine Worship

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Easter at CPC



April 7 Saturday Evening
5:00 & 6:30 PM

April 8 Sunday Morning
8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 AM

Diablo Vista Middle School 9:30 AM

Community Presbyterian Church
cpcdanville.org
(925) 837-5525 222 W. El Pintado Rd. Danville

Free Public Collection Event for E-Waste Recycling from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, March 31-April 1, at the Danville Park & Ride Parking Lot, at the northwest corner of Sycamore Valley Rd. and Camino Ramon. Call (888) 832-9839.

On Stage

'Wigged Out!' Victoria's Hair on Stage has opened its doors for "Wigged Out!" which runs until June, at Victoria's Hair on Stage, 520 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville. Tickets are \$38. Call 855-SHOW (855-7469).

Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Theater Performances Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Theater at Tao House presents "This Is Not My Life" at 3 p.m., starting May 6 and "Now I Ask You" at 3 p.m., Sunday, May 20, at the Old Barn at Tao House. Call 820-1818.

High School Musical Danville Children's Musical Theatre presents Disney's "High School Musical," at 7:30 p.m., Fridays-Saturdays, March 23-31 and at 2 p.m., Saturdays and at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 29, at Village Theater, 233 Front St. Tickets are \$7.50-\$9.50. Call 314-3463.

Sondheim's 'Putting It Together' Role Players Ensemble Theatre presents "Putting It Together" at 8 p.m., Thursdays-Saturdays and 2 p.m., Sundays, April 20/May 12, at Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Tickets are \$18-24, \$15 for groups more than 10; purchase tickets at www.villagetheatreshows.com, call 314-3400, or visit the Danville Community Center, 420 Front St.

Political Notes

Blackhawk Republican Women Luncheon Barbara Simpson, KSFO 560 Talk Radio host, will speak about "Losing America" from 11:15 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Monday, April 2, at Blackhawk Country Club, 599 Blackhawk Club Dr., Danville. Cost is \$20, reservations are due by noon, March 30. Call 648-1030 or email tracnanc@sbcglobal.net.

Spiritual

Peace Meditation Diablo Yoga Center will host a nondenominational, nonpolitical meditation for world peace

at 1:30 p.m., Friday, April 6, at Diablo Yoga Center, 125B Town and Country Dr., Danville. This event is free and is open to the public. Call 837-8698.

Sports

Danville Bocce Ball Deadline Extended The deadline for submitting rosters for Adult Bocce on Monday and Friday nights has been extended to 5 p.m., Friday, March 30. There is a minimum of four players; maximum of 10. Monday night league begins April 9; Friday night league begins April 20. Both run 7 weeks, plus playoffs. \$145 per resident team; \$175 nonresidents. Call 314-3400.

Mustang Soccer Registration Mustang Soccer will begin on-line registration for the 2007 season for Alamo, Danville and Diablo residents until March 31, at www.mustangsoccer.com.

Registration is \$100 for under 6 Ponies, \$225 for under 7-under 19. Call 831-1323.


Support Groups

Blue Star Moms California Blue Star Moms is a support group for families of members of the U.S. Armed Forces. It meets at 7 p.m., the second Wednesday of the month, at the Danville Veterans Hall, 400 Hartz Ave. Call Peggy at 866-7035 or Patty at 838-9096 or visit www.bluestarmoms.org.

Cancer Support Groups Free support, education and stress management for cancer patients and their loved ones, including general support groups for all types of cancer

patients as well as cancer specific groups for breast cancer, colorectal cancer, ovarian cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer, brain tumor, support groups for caregivers and life after cancer. Groups meet at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. For times and days, call 933-0107.

Clutterers Anonymous 12-Step Meeting This group is for people who are suffering from hoarding and cluttering who want beauty and serenity in their homes and lives. They meet from 7:15-8:45 p.m., every Thursday, at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 2491 San Miguel Dr., Walnut Creek. Cost is \$2-3 after the first meeting. Call 285-7165 or visit www.clutterersanonymous.net.



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Leap of faith

One woman's journey from Vietnam to personal freedom

"I remember a man catching me when I jumped off the boat. Forever I will associate that with my life being saved"

by **Christina Straw**



CHRISTINA STRAW

The little Vietnamese girl's heart pounded as she leapt from the boat sinking in the South China Sea.

"I remember a man catching me when I jumped off the boat. Forever I will associate that with my life being saved," says Phoenix Nguyen.

Phoenix sits on a stool in her floral shop in downtown Danville and tells the story of her family's personal and difficult decision to leave Vietnam in the mid-1970s.

Speaking in a steady soft tone, Phoenix talks of how she went from being a young peasant girl working on her family's farm to leaving everything behind for a chance at freedom, both political and religious because

her family is Catholic.

"Most of my memories of Vietnam center around wartime because my father was a village chief. We were always concerned for his safety," Phoenix says. "That preoccupied a lot of our thoughts and how to protect the family. We had the Viet Cong come to the house often looking for him. One of my earliest memories is learning how to say, 'I don't know where my dad is,' when they'd come."

She and her parents, grandparents and five siblings packed up and left the highlands of Da Lat and slowly made their way down to a fishing village where her uncles lived.

"We left the day the announcement was made that the communists were coming to

Saigon," Phoenix says.

It was 1975 and Phoenix was 9 years old.

Terror on the high seas

In Vung Tao, crowds and chaos split up the family as they made their way to the waterfront and onto small boats in hopes of getting picked up by an American ship. Before their treacherous journey began, the Nguyens made a pledge to stick together, but this proved difficult when trying to make their way through masses of people following the same path.

"By that time, my family was all divided up," Phoenix says. "I was on a tiny boat with my grandmother, baby sister and uncle-in-law."

In order to get on board the large vessel, the refugees would crowd their tiny boats around the ship anchored in the harbor. One by one, each boat would be deliberately sunk to make way for the other boats and people to get aboard.

"For whatever reason, my uncle said, 'I'm not leaving,' and they had already put a hole in the boat," recalls Phoenix. "So we're sinking and I'm thinking, 'I'm going to die,' because I didn't know how to swim and was just terrified of water."

"That's probably my strongest memory," she adds. "There were so many other scary times but that by far was the scariest because my family had been divided up and I didn't know I was ever going to see them again."

Navigating a new life in a new land

Amazingly, Phoenix and her entire family made it onto the same American ship—one of the few families who made it out intact. The ship took the Nguyen family to Guam where they stayed for two weeks before departing on a plane to Ft. Chaffee, Ark.

"My parents didn't know anyone in the

United States," Phoenix says. "They came here mainly for their religion and freedom and everything else was on faith."

Their prayers were answered when the Daughters of Charity from St. Louis agreed to sponsor them, and her parents worked at their convent.

"This was great for us because my family is Catholic," Phoenix says with a smile. "My parents felt that being in the hands of the nuns was a blessing."

And what was this new land like for a 9-year-old refugee from Vietnam?

"I thought it was very surreal, magical," Phoenix says. "Being on an airplane was so strange. Before, I didn't have the concept that what's up there is this huge thing. It looked small because it's not in your existence. You hear about it but you can't imagine it."

"Back in Vietnam, we had radios but we didn't listen to them," she also notes. "We didn't have TV. We rarely had newspapers. It was typical third-country peasant life."

Not only did Phoenix's family members have to face learning a language and how to navigate the busy city life of St. Louis, they had to face everyday challenges like how to work appliances and help their daughter get over her fears and misunderstandings.

"I was very embarrassed about my appearance mainly because we were the only Asian family in the entire school," Phoenix says. "Everyone was interested and they would gather around and I had absolutely no idea what anyone was saying."

It was the strength of her family that kept her grounded and moving forward.

"We're here because of our family and our faith and ... what we might have faced if we stayed behind," Phoenix says, her dark eyes getting misty. "When you're dealing with your own reality, you're not worried

atching
f the boat.
that with

—Phoenix Nguyen



Below: Phoenix Nguyen arranges white orchids and tulips in her shop, Mi Piaci—All Things Beautiful, as she recalls leaving her life as a peasant in Vietnam, her adjustment to the United States, becoming a lawyer, then deciding to pursue her creative side.

about what you might be missing. You're too focused on learning how to read and learning how to make your way through everything."

This determination and focus helped Phoenix succeed throughout school. She studied business and psychology at Washington University in St. Louis and, although talented in drawing and painting, decided to pursue law at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

"I didn't want to disappoint my parents and mainly I was looking for something respectable," Phoenix says with a chuckle. "I started reading about civil rights cases and that interested me and challenged me intellectually. In hindsight, my strength is geared toward the creative side but it's hard to leave something you do well."

A beautiful baby girl changes everything

While Phoenix's parents wanted her to return to their protective world in St. Louis, the self-proclaimed "black sheep" of the family had other ideas. Such as San Francisco.

"I wanted something new, and I wanted to step out a little further than my parents were comfortable with," Phoenix says matter-of-factly about her move to the Bay Area in 1990. "I read about San Francisco and the history of Asians in San Francisco during the Gold Rush and that interested me. Something about the landscape was beautiful and interesting."

While studying for the bar exam at UC Berkeley, Phoenix's world would again be turned upside-down.

It was there she met Martin, a gentle and reserved young man getting his doctorate at Cal, who was introduced to Phoenix through a mutual friend. After dating for a few years and as Phoenix practiced law in San Francisco

and then Palo Alto, the couple married and later welcomed daughter Camille.

The three moved to Danville a few years ago.

"My daughter is God's gift to me," Phoenix says, smiling with pride.

Her eyes brim with tears she won't let fall. "She's wonderful. A true delight."

Phoenix was very driven and would not allow herself to be anything less than exceptional, but the arrival of Camille led her to rethink her career path.

"I just didn't feel like the law was my true calling. There was always this yearning to do something on the creative side. I won art contests and scholarships but abandoned it," Phoenix recalls.

After a lot of soul searching and debating different ideas, one day a then 10-year-old Camille suggested the flower business, something personal and dear to Phoenix's heart.

"I've always loved flowers," says Phoenix. "When you're Vietnamese, you romanticize flowers. It's a part of our culture. I really enjoy them."

For the second time in her life, Phoenix would be taking a personal leap of faith.

Starting out of her house, she did her first flower arrangement for a fundraiser at her daughter's school. People raved and a client called for an arrangement for her home.

Before long, Phoenix branched out and did a few weddings. The feedback was really encouraging and people were thrilled.

"I wanted something more," Phoenix says, her eyes lighting up. "The store was a scary jump. I said I wanted to make this a new career. I wanted to bring in other elements like glass art, jewelry; special things that make your home and yourself beautiful."

While brainstorming ideas for the name of the boutique with family, Phoenix knew she



CHRISTINA STRAW

wanted "All Things Beautiful" included in the name. Martin had taken a business trip to Italy and heard a song on the radio called Mi Piaci, which translated to "it delights me/I love that." It worked perfectly. The store opened in Prospector Square in November, just in time for the Christmas rush.

Following your heart

Her store, Mi Piaci—All Things Beautiful, is a peaceful refuge filled with delicate flowers and unique gifts. Today, Phoenix is finishing up an arrangement for a client. The flowers are white phalaenopsis orchids and crème tulips artfully and lovingly placed in a glass vase.

Phoenix wants every arrangement that goes out the door to be the most beautiful, and something that makes a person feel special.

"To be excellent in what you do, you have to have that creative part. You can learn from someone but you need to be able to take that next step," Phoenix says.

"Phoenix" in Greek mythology was a beautiful, immortal bird. After living for several centuries in the Arabian desert, it was consumed by fire and rose again from its own ashes.

Phoenix Nguyen herself has faced many challenges on her personal journey but has proved, like that beautiful bird, that with hope and faith, it is possible to soar. ■

LANDING A LEAD

Danville boy one of stars in Diablo Light Opera Company's 'The Music Man' *by Natalie O'Neill*

Eleven-year-old David Kahawai can sum up what he's learned about acting in three words.

"Don't overdo it," he said, after school at his Danville Oaks home.

David, who goes by Kelii, will fake a lisp for the part of Winthrop in the Diablo Light Opera Company production of "The Music Man," a dialect challenge in which he says subtlety is key. Along with 45 professional actors and an 18-piece orchestra, Kelii will

he had no idea he would be reading for such a big part.

"Being onstage is sometimes the best and the worst part of acting," he said.

He prepared for the auditions by running through lines and practicing singing with his friend, using their family piano. Downloading some songs from "The Music Man" on i-tunes was also a good way to hear them beforehand, he said.

Now, months into rehearsals, he has the lines and the speech impediment nailed. It's second nature.

"'Music Man' is kind of part of me now," he said.

His mother Anne Kahawai, who has admittedly peeked into some of his rehearsals, says both the actors and the venue are fabulous.

"Some of the leads have the most amazing voices," she said.

At rehearsals, which have been for three hours four times a week, Kelii said he's learned that acting takes dedication.

"It's not always fun and games; sometimes it's hard work," he said.

But even with all the practice time he's put in, he still gets some downtime with other children at the rehearsals. In the green room at the theater, he often plays cards with actors his age, that is, when he's not in the scene.

Directors of the show have advised the cast to avoid watching the film during the time of the rehearsal, as it adds dialogue and nuances that don't exist in the original script. They also point out that forcing humor onto some of the characters can distract from the earnestness of lines and the overall message of the play.

"(Playwright) Meredith Wilson wrote that you can't make some of the characters too funny," Kelii said.

In some scenes, however, humor is the focus. Kelii said his favorite part of the play is a scene in which the town gossips sing "Pick-a-little, Talk-a-little," a tune that satirizes nosy ladies by making them look like chickens.

If Kelii's enthusiasm and charmingly well-honed stutter isn't enough to get you to the show, the quality of the production should be, actors say.

"This is the 50th show I have done and this is one of the most talented casts I have ever seen," Barlow said.

Tickets are \$27 for adults, \$22 for seniors and \$15 for children and the musical will run weekends March 30-May 6. The first weekend will kick off at El Campanil Theater in Antioch and all other shows will be held at the Walnut Creek theater. To purchase tickets call 757-9500 or visit www.dloc.org for more information. ■

Contact Natalie O'Neill at noneill@danvilleweekly.com



Amaryllis (Daphne Ford) is fond of Winthrop (David Kahawai) and invites the shy boy to her party. At left: David Kahawai finishes a practice run-through of the song "Gary, Indiana."



NATALIE O'NEILL

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perform a month-long run of the show at the 850-seat Hoffman Theatre in the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek.

His character covers a range of emotions in the show, as the younger brother of Marian Paroo, the Music Man's love interest.

"He's a sad kid whose father just died. Ever since his dad died, he's been depressed—he doesn't talk a lot," Kelii said.

But then the Music Man arrives in town and everything changes.

Winthrop sees him as a father figure and things begin to look bright—at least for the moment, Kelii said.

"His role represents an exaggeration of the ups and downs of the town," said lead actor Keith Barlow, who plays the role of Professor Harold Hill.

"David's doing great, he's very mature for his age," Barlow added.

With no previous professional acting experience, Kelii was an unlikely choice for the role. While he had gone to an acting camp through the Town of Danville, he hadn't ever auditioned for a play on this scale.

"There were plenty of boys there, which got me a little nervous," he said.

But the directors and producers saw that he shined during callbacks, even though he wasn't originally asked back to read for the part of Winthrop.

"It made me think all the other Winthrops were better," he said.

During the auditions he read lines and sang in front of a group of seven, including the musical director and the executive producer. Having experience in a chorus and performing in a school play at Montair Elementary, where he attends fifth grade, helped him learn the basics—to speak up and sing on key.

It was tricky reading for the part considering that, walking into callbacks,



An Easter brunch to remember

Spring is sprung and Easter is hop-pin' on down the bunny trail! Easter usually takes me by surprise but it comes extra early this year so I'm sure I won't be ready for a large Easter dinner. So I'm thinking a light yet filling Easter brunch is the perfect meal for this Easter's celebration.

Brunch is a great family holiday meal because it can be served early morning, mid-morning or even early afternoon depending on church services and other activities. It can be an alternative to Easter breakfast or dinner or can be juxtaposed with a lighter and later Easter supper. Brunch recipes generally include multiple ingredients (meats, vegetables, carbs) and are usually more popular with kids and teens than heavier dinner



menus. And lastly, the dishes are usually flexible enough to make ahead and re-heat before serving or can be served to later-comers without disaster.

These recipes will make for a delightfully light brunch menu, easing the transition into the spring season. Serve with bread, a green salad, and Prosecco, an Italian sparkling wine. Finally, set your Easter table with bunches of tulips and daffodils to usher in the colors of Spring. Add jelly beans and dyed eggs for more color. Voila—a festive Easter brunch that's sure to please all Easter egg hunters!

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

RECIPES

Poached Eggs with Prosciutto, Asparagus and Chive Oil (serves 6)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil | 6 to 12 large eggs (for hungry guests, poach 12 eggs and serve each person 2 instead of 1) |
| 1/4 cup chopped fresh chives | 2 lbs medium asparagus spears, trimmed |
| 1 tsp fresh lemon juice | 3 Tbsp olive oil |
| 1/4 tsp finely grated lemon peel | 3 oz thinly-sliced prosciutto |
| 6 Tbsp white wine vinegar | |

- Blend the extra-virgin olive oil, chives and lemon juice in blender or processor until smooth. Stir in grated lemon peel; season to taste with salt and pepper. (Note: Chive oil can be made three hours ahead. Cover and chill. Return to room temperature before using.)
- Fill two large bowls with ice water and ice; set aside. Pour enough water into each of two large skillet to reach depth of 1 inch. Bring water to slow simmer over medium heat. Add 3 tablespoons vinegar to each skillet. Carefully crack each egg into individual ramekins. Gently slide 1 egg at a time into simmering water, working in batches of 3 eggs for each skillet. Cook until whites are just set, about 3 minutes. Using slotted spoon, very gently transfer eggs to bowls with ice water, being careful not to break eggs. (Note: Can be made one day ahead. Cover and refrigerate eggs in bowls of ice water.)
- Preheat broiler. Spread asparagus in single layer on rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with 3 tablespoons olive oil; turn asparagus to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Broil asparagus 6 minutes. Turn asparagus over and continue to broil until crisp-tender and beginning to brown, about 6 minutes longer. Divide asparagus among six plates and drape the prosciutto slices over.
- Pour enough water into each of two large skillets to reach depth of 1 inch; bring to simmer. Using slotted spoon, transfer eggs to skillets; cook 1 minute for soft yolks. Using slotted spoon, place 1-2 eggs atop each serving of asparagus and prosciutto. Drizzle chive oil over and around each serving. Pass remaining chive oil separately.

Lemon-Raspberry French Toast Strata (serves 8-10)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup pure maple syrup, plus additional for serving | 1 pint fresh raspberries |
| 6 cups 1-inch cubes day-old country-style white bread with crusts (12 oz. or 3/4 loaf) | 6 large eggs |
| | 4 cups whole milk |
| | 1 tsp finely grated lemon zest |
| | 1/4 tsp salt |

- Place rack in center of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees. Lightly butter a 9 by 13-inch glass baking dish or 14-inch oval gratin dish. Pour in maple syrup; scatter bread cubes and raspberries in dish.
- In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, lemon zest and salt; pour over bread cubes.
- Bake strata until puffed and golden brown, about 45 minutes. Transfer to rack to cool 5 minutes, then serve warm with additional maple syrup. (Note: Leftover strata maybe frozen and re-heated for another day.)

Sunshine Cake

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1—18.25-package yellow cake mix | Frosting: |
| 4 eggs, beaten | 13 oz. crushed pineapple with juice |
| 11 oz. Mandarin oranges with juice | 1—5.1-box instant vanilla pudding |
| 1/2 cup vegetable oil | 1—12 oz. container Cool Whip |

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix all of the cake ingredients together. Beat for two minutes on medium speed of a mixer. Drop into buttered and floured pans (two 9-inch cake pans, one 9 by 13-inch pan or into 18 cupcake papers).
- Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. While cake is baking, prepare the frosting. In a large bowl, mix together the pineapple, vanilla pudding and Cool Whip.
- Remove the cake (or cupcakes) from the oven and allow to cool to room temperature before frosting. (Optional: Add flaked coconut to the frosting for extra pizzazz.)

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Presenting the Past

BY BEVERLY LANE



Leo Norris, early American pioneer

Leo Norris was the earliest known American pioneer to buy land and settle in the San Ramon Valley. In 1850, he and his wife Jane moved to San Ramon. In 1851, they purchased a square league, about 4,500 acres, from Jose Maria Amador. Maps show the Norris Rancho in the northwest corner of Amador's original San Ramon Rancho. They and their five children, William, Mary, Annie, Jane and Emily, came to California from Missouri in 1846, traveling part of the way with the ill-fated Donner Party.

"SAN RAMON VALLEY: ALAMO, DANVILLE, AND SAN RAMON"
BY BEVERLY LANE AND RALPH COZINE

OF NOTE

Danville students excel in Odyssey of the Mind

Sycamore Valley Elementary School sent seven teams of students in grades 3-5 to the Odyssey of the Mind competitions held at College Park High School in Pleasant Hill earlier this month. Altogether 147 teams participated in this regional meet, and those chosen will continue on to state competition in Visalia on March 31.

Sycamore teams came back with four medals and two Ranatra Fusca Creativity Awards, which are considered just as prestigious. Ranatra Fusca is the term for a classification of water insects since one of the first Odyssey of the Mind assignments made by founder Sam Micklus was a flotation device and although the first idea didn't work it was extremely creative.



First place winning team in their division was Evan Jaffe, Sara Kelkar, Katie Klass, Sean Jaffe, Grace Reckers and Seddon Macholz. Their problem required teams to create and present an original performance that integrated team-created Small Pages and Large Versions that change appearance.



Winning third place and a Ranatra Fusca award were (top row, l-r) Jessica Tallerico, Chandra Allen, Hannah Fulks, Lauren Smith; (front) Isabel Gervis, Taylor Whittemore and Melina Gross. In this "classics" problem, the teams created a performance that included a "Traveler" character on a trip around the world, stopping at three required locations that had different geographic characteristics. The team won the Ranatra Fusca award due to its choice to make pollution the traveler and create the character "Polly Pollution" was highly original and creative.



This team placed second, with (front row, l-r) Ethan Brouwer, Jake Carlier, and Florentin von Haugwitz; (back row) Ryan Mullins, Grant Rivas, Alex Anzoategui and Conor Mullins. Their challenge was to build a structure out of balsa and glue that weighs no more than 18 grams and can hold something heavy. The Sycamore team built a structure that held 142.5 lbs.—the most in the competition in their division.



This team won the Ranatra Fusca award for exceptional creativity: (top row, l-r) Ashley Page, Vishnu Peri, Jiwan Karunatilake, Rex Lueth; (bottom) Ed Kudey, Erin Leeds. In the Tag-em section, the problem was to build a vehicle with specific requirements that would leave the release area and should be tagged before it reaches the home area. Their creative method of tagging was using a curtain rod and rope to drop marbles into the moving vehicle made with drills.

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The 411



BY KATHARINE O'HARA

Turn inward before starting college search

As a college-bound junior, I find that I am bombarded with the same repeated interrogation wherever I turn—family get-togethers, neighborhood parties, and even the grocery store. I cannot step outside without being asked: Where are you looking to go to college? Close? Far? Big? Small? Public? Private? Religious? Secular? And the list goes on.

With over 2,000 options, the decision of where I will attend college is daunting. As the time draws nearer, it appears imperative that I identify what I truly want out of my college experience and develop some sort of rubric on which to base my choice.

Loren Pope remarks in his book, "Going Beyond the Ivy League," that nearly 70 percent of college students transfer, drop out or flunk out of college, bored, unlearned and thoroughly frustrated with their choice of school. Pope points out the oftentimes fatal mistakes families make when choosing a school, namely, getting caught up in what he refers to as "designer-label college" syndrome.

It seems many college-searching students get caught up in prestigious names and gravitate toward the opinions of friends, family and the media. But to Pope, this simply demonstrates the need of the weak adolescent for approval from peers. "Every year I get clients who went to unsuitable schools because they were the fashion and have flunked out or dropped out after a year or two and have to do the job all over again," he says.

He addresses the example of one school that immediately gained acceptance due to outstanding athletic performance. "When Jacksonville University's basketball team broke into the big time a decade ago, admissions applications soared, but for the student, it was not a whit better than the years before."

Pope explains many students go wrong in their unrelenting desires to attend Ivy League or other big name schools. Though Ivy Leagues provide a strong education, Pope assures that their prestigious names do not work to the advantage of a job applicant five years after graduation. "A person's own qualities will be deciding whether he gets a raise, a promotion, or is courted for another job ... Even if the name on a diploma helped get the first job because it was taken as evidence of intelligence, that would be about the limit of its leverage because most people change jobs at least once in the first five years."

Aside from the Ivies, many are under the impression that large universities offer a more expan-

sive, richer undergraduate experience than a small college, but Pope explains this is often a fallacy.

"The (large) university by its very nature cheats most undergraduates out of essential parts of their educational birthright," he says. "The university is primarily interested in research, publishing, consulting, and graduate teaching. Even some of the greatest universities leave over 70 percent of freshman and sophomore instruction to graduate assistants, or worse, to foreigners who can barely speak English."

Pope recommends that college-searching students first turn inward. They should explore what they hope to gain from their college experience, and instead of asking, "Am I good enough for a college?" they should be asking "Is it good enough for me?" Then Pope recommends students explore smaller, less selective schools that may be better fitted to their learning style, personality and hopes for a college experience. Pope claims there are hundreds of viable options just short of Ivy League status for students with learning disabilities, who are underachievers, or who are simply not in the top bracket of their high school class.

Small college environments allow for greater communication between students and professors, and the ability to spot and resolve problems a student may be having. Students are also able to complete required courses in a four-year span, which often is not possible at a large university. Pope encourages those who go to a big school to enroll in an honors program, residential college, or other small group program within the university, in order to establish a sense of community in a place where anonymity is common ground.

He also remarks that a school's selectivity and quality of experience have no correlation, noting

that two of the most intellectually demanding American schools—Reed College in Oregon and St. John's College, with two campuses in Maryland and New Mexico—typically accept 95 percent and at least 85 percent, respectively, of their yearly applicants. Pope quotes members of the Reed faculty who also taught at Ivy League institutions saying at Ivy League schools, students were learning for the sake of grades, while at Reed "they are learning for the sake of learning."

For those embarking on college visits, Pope recommends talking to students and faculty members, attending classes, faculty offices and the campus bookstore, eating lunch in the cafeteria and having an interview with an admissions officer in order to get a feeling for the school. Students should ask questions about classes (lecture or discussion based?), the nature of the students (do they stay after class to discuss or ask questions?) and the student-faculty relationship, class size and campus environment.

In making a decision as life-sculpting as this, it is important students and parents consider all factors for a beneficial college experience, considering schools based on their encouragement of students to think critically, make intellectual connections and espouse a personal system of values. "A college should be judged by the kind of people it turns out rather than by the kind it takes in," says Pope. "The magic is in the moral and intellectual torque the college exerts, not in the name, however hallowed it may be."

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. E-mail her at ohara5@comcast.net.

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Sports

A LOOK AT THE LOCAL SPORTS SCENE



San Ramon Valley's Bryan Cox (left) bashes Monte Vista's Chris Myers 6-4, 6-1 in the No. 1 singles match last week, while Myers (above) connects with a backhand. Both boys tennis teams were undefeated going in, but the Mustangs swept the doubles matches to defeat the Wolves.

Monte Vista boys lacrosse team still undefeated

Team aims for fourth North Coast Section title

by Rachel McMurdie

Tyler Troup and Matt Hartman made three goals each for the Mustangs when the boys lacrosse team defeated California, 10-6, on Friday, March 23.

Monte Vista came into the week as the No. 12 team in the state and No. 2 in Northern California behind St. Ignatius. With the win, they're one game closer to what they hope will be their fourth straight North Coast Section title.

Friday's showdown paired two undefeated teams, but it was the Mustangs who stayed unbeaten.

Adding to goals from Troup and Hartman, Monte Vista's Zakk Souza scored twice, with Victor Chang and Cameron McGrew getting one each. Dylan Westfall made 17 saves for the Mustangs.

Andrew O'Neil had three goals and Jordan Ambler two for the Grizzlies, who dropped to 6-1 overall and 1-1 in league.

Also during the week, the Wolves pulled off a big non-league win over the Acalanes Spartans.

The Wolves got three goals from Kai Cummings and Pat Sornsins. Brett Trimble and Mike Yeakle each also scored as San Ramon moved to 5-3 overall.

The 14-8 win should move the Wolves up in the state rankings. San Ramon came into the game as the No. 33 team in the state and

No. 5 in Northern California, while the Spartans came in ranked No. 15 in the state and No. 3 in Northern California.

Earlier in the week, the team defeated De La Salle (5-2) in a 9-8 clincher. SRV's Cameron Giroux was the high scorer for the wolves with three goals. SRV goalie Patrick Lancaster recorded 10 saves.

Girls lacrosse

Monte Vista's girls took an opening night win over Foothill scoring five times in the first 10 minutes.

Christina Corsa, who led all players with four goals, scored the first one for the Mustangs, who made it 2-0 when Lauren Goerz scored a short time later. Bridget Eldred scored the next three goals, and Monte Vista led 5-0 with 14:45 to play in the half.

Allie Simpson and Corsa made it 7-0 before Lyssia Porter scored the Falcons' goal with 5:30 to play. But the Mustangs were able to answer, with Megan Robinson scoring off an assist from Aimee Dewan for an 8-1 lead at the break.

Both teams rank in the Top 10 in Northern California and will vie for the top spot this season in the East Bay Athletic League.

Across town, Allie Van Dorn put away eight goals in San Ramon's 14-8 non-league win over Acalanes last Friday. Two goals from Casey Bowles and single goals from Cheryl Roullier, Addison Virta, Kyun Saiidnia and Brittany Lafferty rounded out Wolves scoring.

Boys golf

San Ramon Valley's Mike Perchak had the round of the day, but it wasn't enough to stop last year's NCS champions. Foothill came back from two losses Thursday in a 188-195 East Bay Athletic League victory over the Wolves at Crow Canyon Country Club in Danville.

The Falcons (3-2 EBAL) Anthony Machi and Eric Pitcaithley both shot a 2-over 36 for Foothill, which avoided falling below .500 in the EBAL. Chris Crownover, normally the Falcons' No. 6 player, moved into the first group and posted a 37.

Mike Perchak had the round of the day, a 1-over 35 for the Wolves (3-2).

Boys tennis

In a battle between two undefeated teams, the host Mustangs (6-0 EBAL) swept the doubles to defeat the Wolves (5-1).

Besides winning all three doubles matches in straight sets, the Mustangs were victorious in the No. 3 through No. 5 singles matches in straight sets and narrowly lost the No. 6 singles, Charley Ma edging Andrew Jones, 6-2, 4-6, 6-4.

But the Wolves No. 1 and No. 2 singles battled it out. San Ramon Valley's Bryan Cox took the No. 1 singles, beating Chris Myers 6-4, 6-1. And Chris Parent battled Mustang's Alex Starr to three games for the victory. ■

E-mail photos to Editor@DanvilleWeekly.com.

PREP SCHEDULE

Friday, March 30

Boy's Lacrosse: Monte Vista vs. Granada, 7 p.m.; San Ramon Valley at Amador, 7 p.m.

Girl's Lacrosse: Monte Vista at Granada, 5 p.m.; San Ramon Valley vs. Amador, 7 p.m.

Baseball: San Ramon Valley vs. Foothill, 3:45 p.m.

Friday-Saturday, March 30-31

Track and Field: Stanford Invitational and Stanford University

Swimming and Diving: San Ramon Valley at Livermore, 3:45 p.m.

Saturday, March 31

Boy's Lacrosse: Monte Vista vs. Foothill, 4 p.m.

Boy's Volleyball: San Ramon Valley at Leland

Monday, April 2

Girl's Golf: Freedom TournaBoy, 8:30 a.m.

Boy's Golf: Freedom TournaBoy, 8:30 a.m.



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135 Group Activities

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Finding The Deep River Within
Taming the "To-Do" List: A Woman's Guide to Recovering Balance and Meaning in Everyday Life
Two 7-week workshops to be offered in April. For more information, visit www.nowville.com/barbarakelley

Learn How To Play Bocce!

140 Lost & Found

Lost Dog

150 Volunteers

Host Families needed

Meals on Wheels Drivers

For Sale

201 Autos/Trucks/ Parts

\$500 Police Impounds
Cars from \$500! Tax Repos, US Marshal and IRS Sales! Cars, Trucks, SUVs, Toyotas, Hondas, Chevys, more! For Listings Call 1-800-298-4150 ext. C107. (AAN CAN)

BMW 2002 530i - \$29,000

BMW 2003 X5 3.0i - \$29,888

Chevrolet 2005 Corvette - \$39,999

Honda 2001 Accord EX V6 - \$11800 obo

Mercedes-Benz 2003 E Class E500 - \$28,888

Pace Arrow 1989 Motor Home - \$15,000.

Toyota 1994 4RUNNER- 4 X 4 - \$3300

Toyota 1994 4RUNNER- 4 X 4 - \$3300

210 Garage/Estate Sales

Livermore, 356 Edythe St, Mar 24 & 25 9:30-30

Livermore, 366 Anna Maria Street, March 24 & 25, 1-4pm

Pleasanton, 1308 Vailwood Ct., Mar. 31, 7am-12pm

We are selling furniture and other household items as well as some baby clothes and toys.

Pleasanton, 7936 Kemper Ct, Sun 8-11

Lots of furniture in great condition. new bombay china cabinet; glass top table; brand new toys. Sun 8-11.

215 Collectibles & Antiques

Blue Delft pitcher - \$59

Coffee Mill, Pepper Mill & Spice - \$89

Garantied Forged Grinder - \$39

220 Computers/ Electronics

Misc. Computer Accessories - \$8

Stereo Color Zenith TV 21Inches, - 15

WINDOWS VISTA Home Basic - \$140

240 Furnishings/ Household items

2 White patio chairs, 5 baskets - \$1 - \$5

Candles - \$15

Computer Unit - \$900

Dining Room Set. - \$500.00

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Furnishings

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KitchenAid Refrigerator - \$ 200

round dinner table - 20

Salton Toastermaster SandwichMaker - \$6

sectional sofa \$ 400.925-461-9085

TV/Stereo Armoire - \$500.00

245 Miscellaneous

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355 Items for Sale

A box of boys clothes only - \$15

booster &step, potty, potty seat - \$5-\$10

Huffy Seastar 12.5 inches bike, - 20

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Jobs

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Part Time- starts at \$10.95 per hour. Flexible shifts, afternoon, evenings and weekends. Must be 18 years of age. Set up rooms for recreation activities, monitor building, light clean-up and securing facilities. Please call 925.973.3218 for a full job description and interview.

Cardio Fitness Trainer

Sound of the Wind is a unique, fun personal training facility located in San Ramon. Our cardio fitness trainer position is an entry-level part-time position. The hours are Monday-Thursday evenings or Monday-Friday mornings. Job Description: The cardio fitness trainer follows and implements cardio fitness programs written specifically for the clients of Sound of the Wind. Prior experience is not necessary. Will train for the position. Must work well with a variety of ages, both genders, and a multitude of personalities. Need to be open-minded to learning. If you are interested, please contact Michelle at soundofthewind@yahoo.com.

Educator

The Dublin San Ramon Services District is looking for a temporary, part-time science teacher to make classroom presentations about conserving water, keeping it clean, and recycling it. If you're interested, please call the DSRSD jobline at (925) 551-7230 or go to www.djrsd.com for more information. EOE

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Part Time- \$15.45-\$20.34 per hour. In a supervisory role to Building Attendants, provide leadership and functional supervision for facility rentals. This position ensures that all policies are executed during all events. This position is available weekday evenings and weekends. Primary tasks include enforcement of facility policies, setup for events, assisting with staff needs, monitoring events and securing the facilities. Moderate physical labor is required. Must be at least 18 years of age. Please call 925.973.3218 if interested.

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Meet a golden girl named Nickie. At 10 years old, Nickie is a member of the East Bay SPCA's Silver Muzzle Club. Nickie is a spayed female Shepherd/Hound mix who says, "Experience counts!" The great thing about senior animals is that they are often well-trained, housebroken, calm and have established personalities. Nickie is one of these special animals. Visit her at the SPCA and you'll notice she is so loyal she keeps her eyes on you at all times. Nickie will chase small animals so she needs a family who will keep her safe and warm inside the home. Nickie weighs 60 pounds and she loves to go for walks. Visit Nickie at the Tri-Valley Adoption Center of the East Bay SPCA, 4651 Gleason Drive, Dublin, open Wednesday and Thursday from 1 to 8 p.m. and Friday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 479-9670. See Nickie and more pets in the Silver Muzzle Club at www.eastbay-sPCA.org.

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Figure out your needs and research neighborhoods as well as lending options

by Geoff Gillette

Finding that home sweet home

One of the first milestones to be encountered for any married couple is the purchase of their first home.

Throughout much of the country that means coming up with \$150,000-\$300,000 to get into that first residence. Here in Danville, though, where housing costs are much higher, getting into a house can be a bit trickier.

It's not impossible, it's just more difficult, says Ginny Mees, a Realtor with Keller-Williams.

Mees said she has sold homes to young couples in a first time home-buying experience. One such couple was Scott Ware and his wife Megan Bly.

Ware, 31, is employed by Yahoo and Bly, 32, is a school teacher. The pair has spent the last few years living in San Jose on a property Ware purchased prior to being married. Now, though, they've decided to buy their first home together.

He said they looked at a lot of possible locations in and around the city before settling on the Danville/Alamo area.



COURTESY SCOTT WARE

Megan Bly and Scott Ware just bought their first home together in Alamo.

"Well, I'm from Danville so I've wanted to live there for a while," he said. "We looked all over and found that this one let us be close to family with a good commute to the South Bay. It was all those aspects that drew us in."

Ware said once they began to

zero in on a location they did a lot of research online prior to meeting with a Realtor.

"We looked online to see what was available and what we could get in our price range," he said.

This led them to Mees, who took them out and showed them various houses that fit within their budget. As they viewed homes, their initial plan for buying a house changed.

"When we started we were thinking about getting something that we could get into and then either update or add on as time passed," Ware said. "We looked at a lot that we could build on, another where we'd tear down the existing house and rebuild and others where we'd add on."

At the time they were looking in a range just over \$1 million. Ware said Mees suggested they looked at things just above their price range, in the area of \$1.7 million and they found that they were able to get more house.

"We were surprised by how much of a difference it made," Ware said.

► Continued on page 29



COURTESY SCOTT WARE

The kitchen was a big draw for the couple, who added the funds they first intended for renovations into their purchase price.

SIERRA FOOTHILLS

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OPEN HOMES THIS WEEKEND

Alamo

3 Bedrooms

20 Kemline Ct. **\$1,499,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 997-5120
10 Camille Pl. **\$1,618,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 209-3451

4 Bedrooms

46 Vista Lane **\$1,495,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 Intero Real Estate 672-2499

5 Bedrooms

101 Vagabond Way **\$2,295,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 577-0525

Antioch

4 Bedrooms

5009 Deerspring Ct. **\$629,999**
Sat 1-4 Intero Real Estate 251-2526

Blackhawk

3 Bedrooms

293 Live Oak Dr. **\$1,250,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 209-3451
133 Kingswood Cr. **\$905,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 577-4004

4 Bedrooms

34 Magnolia Pl. **\$1,895,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 648-5346

5 Bedrooms

4065 Eagle Nest Ln. **\$1,325,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 736-1666

Concord

4 Bedrooms

5563 Playa Nogal **\$774-950**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 285-0716

Danville

2 Bedrooms

394 Unit 703 Ilo Ln. **\$455,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 577-4004

3 Bedrooms

1954 S. Forest Hill Pl. **\$699,000**
1-4 Intero Real Estate 830-3999
56 Summer Hill Ct. **\$729,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 736-8411
35 Mountain Valley Pl. **\$754,950**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 736-8411
2107 Myrtle Beach Ln. **\$774,900**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 855-4161
35 Saint Tropez Ct. **\$849,950**
Sun 2-5 Intero Real Estate 998-5969

4 Bedrooms

4372 Mansfield Dr. **\$1,019,950**
Sat/Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 980-4816
585 Glasgow Cr. **\$1,029,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 518-1001
944 La Gonda Way **\$1,050,000**
Sun 1-4 Coldwell 831-3337
820 Feather River **\$1,159,900**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 216-7092
718 St. George Rd. **\$1,375,000**
Sun 1-5 Intero Real Estate 451-7287
520 Edinburgh Cr. **\$1,479,500**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 323-6311
11 Jillian Way **\$1,599,000**
Sat/Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 648-5342
5950 Bruce Dr. **\$3,998,000**
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 209-3451
112 Lawnview Cr. **\$619,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 855-4075
18 Haskins Ranch Cr. **\$835,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 736-1666
315 Gil Blas Rd. **\$875,000**
Sun 1-4 Clarke Stone - Intero 855-4108
654 Adobe Dr. **\$984,900**
Sun 1:30-4 Prudential 200-0426

5 Bedrooms

26 Old Town Ln. **\$1,175,000**
Sun 1:30-4 Empire Realty 217-5078

Diablo

3 Bedrooms

130 El Nido Ct. **\$1,995,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 648-5346

Lafayette

4 Bedrooms

35 Sunrise Ln. **\$924,950**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 899-9651

Martinez

5 Bedrooms

146 Blue Canyon Dr. **\$749,900**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 683-6339

Moraga

2 Bedrooms

1982-D Ascot Dr. **\$479,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 202-5508

Pleasant Hill

3 Bedrooms

33 Santa Lucia Ct. **\$634,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 855-4164

San Ramon

3 Bedrooms

1504 Dawn Ct. **\$589,000**
Sun 1:30-4 Intero Real Estate 586-5456
1103 Radiant Ln. **\$599,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 830-3999
140 Shadow Cr. **\$715,000**
Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel 876-4459
929 Vista Pointe Dr. **\$789,000**
Sun 1-4 Larry Williams - Intero 855-4128

4 Bedrooms

310 Andros Dr. **\$1,095,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 855-4118
9367 Mediar Dr. **\$1,099,000**
Sun 2-5 Intero Real Estate 251-2555
4108 Lilac Ridge Rd. **\$1,449,950**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 855-4075
5577 Satin Leaf Way **\$2,289,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 736-8411
88 Shaw Pl. **\$759,000**
Sun 1-5 Intero Real Estate 736-8411
856 Springbrook Dr. **\$854,900**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 855-4046

5 Bedrooms

3125 Tewksbury Way **\$1,359,000**
Sun 1-4 Larry Williams - Intero 855-4128
2826 Bethany Rd. **\$1,499,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 785-1386

6 Bedrooms

251 Royal Palm Pl. **\$1,059,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 855-4096

Walnut Creek

2 Bedrooms

1315 Alma Ave. **\$739,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 855-4018

Dublin

3 Bedrooms

7896 Gate Way **\$599,000**
Sun 1:30-5 Intero Real Estate 855-4134

Livermore

3 Bedrooms

298 Windward Cm n #2 **\$549,000**
Sun 1-4 Intero Real Estate 785-4546
4740 Kimberley Common **\$639,000**
Sun 1-4 Joe Frazzano - ReMax 735-7653

4 Bedrooms

5348 Hillflower Dr. **\$640,000**
Sun 1-4 Remax Accord 516-6321

SALES AT A GLANCE

This week's data represents homes sold during February 2007

Danville

Total sales reported: 23
Lowest sale reported: \$620,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,875,000
Average sales reported: \$1,075,500

Diablo

Total sales reported: 1
Lowest sale reported: \$2,020,000
Highest sale reported: \$2,020,000
Average sales reported: \$2,020,000

Walnut Creek

Total sales reported: 29
Lowest sale reported: \$277,000
Highest sale reported: \$2,850,000
Average sales reported: \$744,741

HOME SALES

Source: California REsource

Danville

5211 Blackhawk Drive T. & D. Burke to E. Marshall for \$1,875,000
340 Bridgeside Circle J. & C. Erickson to R. & D. O'Neil for \$650,000
1700 Cottswald Street KB Homes to D. Rose for \$1,082,500
1703 Cottswald Street KB Homes to R. & S. Padovani for \$892,500
1708 Cottswald Street KB Homes to K. & G. Freitas for \$895,000
922 El Rincon Road A. Simpelo to C. & R. Brazeel for \$1,130,000
267 Fairway Drive A. Harford to T. & M. Loukos for \$1,175,000
3139 Fox Creek Drive P. & B. Bize to D. & S. Shin for \$1,400,000
2232 Genoa Street Lennar Homes to T. Tom for \$1,032,000
2240 Genoa Street Lennar Homes to S. Saw for \$939,000
2360 Holly Oak Drive Noon Trust to A. & D. Kalliaras for \$1,550,000
63 Joya Lane Anderson Trust to M. & M. Felardo for \$620,000
2442 Marsanne Street Lennar Homes to I. & J. Vasquez for \$1,346,000
558 Morninghome Road S. & J. Reuveni to K. & C. Kawamura for \$1,102,500
112 Quinterra Lane S. Grenn to C. & K. Gregory for \$1,079,000
132 Rimini Court Lennar Homes to M. Khan for \$1,063,500
1001 River Rock Lane J. & C. Marsala to R. & L. Larocca for \$785,000
1205 Robyn Drive Teixeira-Torres Trust to K. & B. Telle for \$900,000

264 San Rey Place

Haas Trust to R. & P. Branchini for \$900,000

55 Sierra Ridge Court B. & M. Hess to C. O'Connor for \$911,500

820 St. George Road S. & K. Thompson to S. & M. Gouig for \$1,139,000

250 Tim Court Sherwood Trust to J. & M. King for \$1,550,000

338 West El Pintado Road E. & D. Langthorn to M. & T. Fitzpatrick for \$719,000

Diablo

2315 Caballo Ranchero Drive Millich Trust to C. Ohaver for \$2,020,000

Walnut Creek

382 Beacon Ridge Lane Doner Trust to C. Berge for \$775,000

1002 Burlington Court Lausten Trust to R. & L. Harness for \$810,000

2055 Cactus Court #4 D. & J. Marcellini to Harford Trust for \$450,000

348 Clarkin Court T. & S. Darcy to Schuman Trust for \$1,490,000

725 Cree Court E. Zemach to T. Dorsey for \$1,141,000

1470 Creekside Drive #24 J. & C. Caskie to M. West for \$405,000

3553 Eris Court T. & A. Weibert to D. & M. Enos for \$1,200,000

173 Glen Court Ozorio Trust to H. Mirmotalebisohi for \$756,000

782 Hilton Road R. Douglass to M. & S. Henson for \$959,000

1819 Holland Drive Deroeck Trust to G. He for \$498,000

2600 Jones Road #26 G. Jevons to C. Richison for \$438,000

1352 Las Juntas Way #B L. Xue to M. Nawaz for \$389,000

415 Las Lomas Way M. & S.

Tiffany-Brown to J. McNerthey for \$867,500

1949 Meadow Road D. & A. Cartwright to Avelar Trust for \$925,000

440 North Civic Drive #208 Johnson Trust to V. Sabiev for \$277,000

2677 Oak Road #104 Scott Trust to S. Chavanne for \$435,000

2723 Oak Road #B M. Messina to T. & S. Carroll for \$429,000

2169 Ptarmigan Drive #2 Vanwesterborg Trust to Dejager Trust for \$473,000

2100 Skycrest Drive #12 Prince Trust to C. & L. Brown for \$420,000

1833 Skycrest Drive #4 V. Gronert to E. Kapust for \$285,000

1434 Stanley Dollar Drive #4A Finney Trust to E. & D. Langthorn for \$525,000

4024 Terra Granada Drive #1 Finn Trust to C. Villaluz for \$450,000

3288 Terra Granada Drive #3A Carrick Trust to L. Roszkos for \$490,000

1256 Terrebonne Drive Rodriguez Trust to R. Cantu for \$745,000

1860 Tice Creek Drive #1317 Komito Trust to M. Matteson for \$655,000

155 Via Del Sol E. Beresford-Wood to M. Dallara for \$1,200,000

1246 Walker Avenue #112 J. Fong to Y. Cruz for \$310,000

1938 Whitecliff Court Z. & R. Herscu to L. Freels for \$950,000

30 Wild Oak Court Valley View Development to Wheaton Trust for \$2,850,000

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3 bedrooms 3 baths 3100 sft

SOLD



PLEASANTON MEADOWS

4282 Fairlands Dr. Pleasanton
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SOLD



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SOLD



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Sweet home

► Continued from page 26

"The second time we went out with Ginny we found the house in Alamo we are going to buy."

He knew even before they started looking for a house that it was an expensive place to live, but going from looking for a fixer-upper to the Alamo property they're buying took long deliberation.

"I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted the total cost to be. The only difference is that I shifted that money from what I expected to sink into the house once I owned it, to the actual acquisition of the house," Ware explained. "It wasn't that hard of a decision until it was time to pull the trigger. That was hard."

Unlike many first time homebuyers, Ware and Bly had funds to use in their purchase from a previous business investment. Mees said that's rarely the case with people new to homebuying.

"That doesn't mean it can't be done," she added.

The advice she gives people new to the area and looking for their first home is to determine their needs.

"Is it a young working couple with no children just looking to get a foothold in the area? Then maybe they want to be buy a condo or a townhouse," Mees said. "Do they have children and they need a yard and access to good schools? Then they may want to go with a single family home."

Mees said the market is beginning to heat up again partly because there are more buyers than sellers out there. As of March 8, Mees said there were around 130 single family homes on the market and only 40 condos.

She added that the downturn in the market has caused prices to dip, which can be a boon



The Alamo home features this wooded back yard, and is in a neighborhood the couple researched as they narrowed their search.

COURTESY SCOTT WARE

for a first time homebuyer.

"Getting a single family home for under \$660,000 in Danville is unheard of," she noted. Condos can range from \$410,000 up to nearly \$900,000.

New homebuyers are advised to first find a reputable lender, in order to determine just how much they can afford. Next, get in touch with a Realtor who knows the area.

"There are neighborhoods in Danville that are great entry level homes for new homebuyers," said Mees. "A local Realtor will know where they are and can steer you toward them."

Another tip from Mees is to buy down

your mortgage.

"One of the things we recommend to a first time homebuyer when you're buying in a higher valued area is rather than focus on the price, work on the seller to provide a credit to the buyer to help them buy down their interest rate. So instead of getting the seller to drop \$50,000 from the price you buy down the mortgage by \$50,000," she said. "Dropping the price won't do much for your mortgage payment, but paying down the mortgage will. You get more bang for your buck."

Ware offered these suggestions for those who want to buy a home:

- Take your time and narrow down where you want to live;
- Research neighborhoods to find ones that will serve your needs;
- Drive the neighborhoods once you've identified them;
- Talk to a lender to see what you can afford; and then
- Contact a reputable local Realtor to get you into the houses or neighborhoods you've identified.

Ware said he was pleased with the way the process unfolded for them and recommended having a solid game plan before jumping into the housing market. ■

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-Rebecca and Dave, San Ramon

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-Mark and Linda, Lafayette



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