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Volunteers needed to share the world of art > **page 16**

Tenant for Albertsons space

Diablo Road center signs papers to open Fresh & Easy Market

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Vol. III, Number 27 • November 2, 2007

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Danville

W E E K L Y

Mailed free to homes in Danville, Blackhawk, Diablo and Alamo

Affordable apartments

Fostoria complex waiting for final OK to start building

> **page 9**



Wheeling 'n' dealing

Danville Boulevard—city street or used car lot?

page 14

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Q: If the San Ramon Valley were being evacuated because of an approaching firestorm, where would you go?



I would not head to Sacramento because it's too dry. I'd head up to Benicia. It's not high density. I think that it helps when you are on the other side of the bridge.

Flip Moore
retired nurse



I don't think you would have a chance to go anywhere. It would be total gridlock. I don't think there's anywhere to drive during an emergency.

Caren Untiedt
retired secretary



I'd go to Castro Valley because I have family there. My parents and my sister live there. It's a safe haven. They can never say no.

Courtney Andrie
Peets Coffee & Tea assistant manager



I would go through the largest area which has the least fuel for fire. You have to search on Google and find what area has nothing to burn. You've got to find someplace that has nothing to burn. Around here it's going to be hard. It's full of bushes and valleys. Maybe head toward the reservoir. It's pretty scary. The firestorm in San Diego and L.A., I have some friends down there. My heart goes out to them. It could happen to us.

Jeffrey Fall
engineer



I would go to L.A. because my family is down there. Now, I wouldn't go down there. But generally I would.

Vicky Hentz
homemaker

COMPILED BY DANVILLE WEEKLY STAFF

ABOUT THE COVER

Cars for sale! Some like the impromptu car lot on Danville Boulevard, others hate it. Police can't stop it but they do control it. Photo by Geoff Gillette. Cover design by Lili Cao.

Vol. III, Number 27



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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ I know a couple of people who have lost everything. ”

—Mayor Mike Shimansky, who is working with the Red Cross in Southern California. See story, page 8.

Holiday Hugs for the troops

The Blue Star Moms will collect items in Danville tomorrow to prepare packages to send Holiday Hugs to U.S. troops overseas. The Moms will be in front of the Veterans Memorial Building on Hartz Avenue at Prospect from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, collecting individual-sized Tuna or Chicken Creations, beef jerky, fruit snacks and more. For ideas, visit www.bluestarmoms.org. Cash is always welcome to help with postage.

The Blue Star Moms also have “special projects” designed for groups to package snacks into plastic bags. Details are on the Web site, or telephone Debbie Burrow at 408-6763.

Outfit family for the snow

Get ready for ski season, at the San Ramon Valley High School Ski and Snow Board Swap. The popular annual event is taking place from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 3-4; admission is \$5, with children under 14 free with an adult.

The SRVHS Parent Teacher Student Association hosts the swap, which has evolved during 30 years from a garage sale concept to the largest ski and snowboard swap in Contra Costa County. It offers more than \$1 million in inventory brought by residents as well as large retailers offering goods at bargain prices to fill the new cafeteria and the gym. Resorts and ski clubs also will be represented.

Community members are invited to sell their own equipment on consignment and are asked to preregister to save time during check-in. Visit danville.com/skiwap or contact event chairwoman Jackie Lawrence at 876-1948.

John Muir naming opportunities

John Muir Health Foundation has a variety of naming opportunities available to major donors who wish to invest in the expansion and improvements under way at its Walnut Creek campus. The naming opportunities range from \$25,000 to more than \$7 million and include emergency department treatment rooms, surgical and rehabilitation areas, the relocated rooftop helipad and a roadway being built for the expansion.

The Thomas J. Long Foundation has pledged \$9.5 million, and the new patient tower will be named the Thomas J. and Muriel T. Long Patient Care Tower. The foundation also reports receiving generous anonymous gifts.

The cost of expansion and required seismic upgrade to the Walnut Creek and Concord campuses is expected to be \$800 million. The Health Foundation has a goal of \$40 million.

Houston bill helps in time of emergency

Gov. Schwarzenegger signed into law a bill authored by Assemblyman Guy Houston (R, District 15) that allows government agencies to directly reimburse nonprofit services during emergencies. The governor signed Assembly Bill 903 on Oct. 10, and the law will take effect in January. Under the current law, the state must negotiate individual contracts between government and nonprofit groups each time their help is needed, his staff said.

“People hit by a disaster urgently need food and other aid, and non-profits like food banks are often a critical part of the first response team,” said Kim McCoy Wade, executive director of the California Association of Food Banks. “This bill will cut through the red tape.”

Corrections The Weekly desires to correct all significant errors. To request a correction, call the editor at (925) 837-8300 or e-mail: editor@DanvilleWeekly.com

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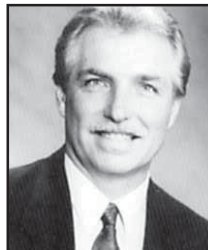
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Green Valley Center signs up Fresh and Easy

British-based store should open next summer

by Natalie O'Neill

Floating rumors about a new grocery store and anchor tenant in Green Valley Center—where the old Albertsons once stood on Diablo Road by the freeway—are now confirmed.

Owners of the property have signed a lease that could have the United Kingdom-based Fresh and Easy Neighborhood Market up and running by summer 2008.

“Officially today we signed the agreement,” Ted Peterson, co-owner of the property, said last Friday.

Representatives from Fresh and Easy said they could not yet confirm they had signed the lease agreement or comment on what the store will bring to Danville.

“What I can tell you is the company is looking at Northern California locations,” said company spokesman Brendan Wonnacott.

The market’s philosophy is: “People want fresh, healthy food. People want things to be easy.”

“It’s a local neighborhood store with fresh food and affordable prices,” Wonnacott said.

Fresh and Easy locations are generally smaller than the typical grocery store, at about 10,000 square feet, to give customers a faster shopping experience. The company is part of Tesco, the United Kingdom’s largest retailer.

“It’s pretty exciting,” Peterson said.

As for the ongoing buzz about Longs Drugs becoming the market’s neighbor, Peterson said that’s still up in the air.

Green Valley Center has been without an anchor store since summer 2006, and other tenants say their sales have gone down without

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CHRIS SCOTT/WWW.CALSPORTSHOTO.COM

The goal dance

Coach Mike Simpkins of the girls Mustang U8 Cream Puffs does the “Goal Dance” with his team after their game played recently at Alamo Elementary School. He promised the girls he would dance on the sideline each time the team scored—and score they did, beating the Cougars, 6-0. Dancing with the coach are (l-r) Taylor Simpkins, Sarina Diebenow, Kathleen Stein, Christina Buselli, Quincy Kaplan, Annie Raines, Julianne Millard, Olivia Rose and Makena Garrehy. Not pictured but on the team are Jordyn Cole and Natalie Ospeck.

Cops implore: Don’t leave valuables in plain sight

Danville property crimes up in 2007 as possessions are left on car seats and vehicles are left running

by Jordan M. Doronila

Watch your valuables. Thieves could steal from you, even in Danville, police said.

Thefts and burglaries have gone up this year in Danville, said police Sgt. Troy Craig. The surge was largely due to residents leaving their belongings in plain view or allowing them to be accessible. Police have urged residents to take

care of their property.

“It would help reduce the level of crime significantly,” Craig said.

People leaving their valuables in the open, their cars running unattended, and their garage doors unlocked gives thieves easy opportunities to steal. Police are strongly encouraging residents to not leave their possessions unattended.

Petty thefts (property stolen under \$400) have increased by 11 in 2007. Grand thefts (valued over

\$400) from unlocked cars have jumped from 27 to 43. Auto burglaries, which require some level of forced entry, increased from 66 to 105, and stolen vehicles increased from 21 to 44.

“We have been looking at our crime numbers this year and there has been an upward trend in thefts,” Craig said. “They (residents) need to protect their property a little more closely.”

He noted that out of the 105 auto

burglaries, 71 were from purses, bags and laptops sitting in plain view. These crimes have been prevalent in other towns and cities, too.

“This is not just a Danville issue, this is a community issue throughout the Valley,” Craig said. “We’ve really got to work together to help each other solve these problems.”

“It’s a continual thing that we have seen here in the Tri-Valley,” said Danville Police Chief Chris Wenzel.

Burglaries and thefts have fluctuated in the past three years at the Valley Station, which monitors unincorporated areas of Alamo, Danville, Round Hill and the south area of the county. Valley Station reported 255 auto burglaries in 2005; 173 in 2006; and 244 in 2007, said Jimmy Lee, spokesman for the Sheriff’s Office. It also

► Continued on page 9

SRV firefighters still battling blazes in Southern California

District sends help to Orange, Los Angeles, San Diego counties

by Jordan M. Doronila

Firefighters from the San Ramon Valley are still working to extinguish the wildfires that burned approximately 500,000 acres in Southern California last week.

Twenty-seven firefighters from the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District left the area Oct. 22-23 and drove down to Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego counties to fight the raging firestorms. They joined 15,000 other firefight-

ers, said Mike Brown, district battalion chief.

“All you can do is your best to protect the structure until the weather changes.”

—Mike Brown, district battalion chief

Eight firefighters, three managers and two fire engines from the district continue to be stationed in Southern California, Brown said Wednesday. The district will get its entire personnel back over the next few days. There were no injuries.

“It was tough down there,” Brown said. “It was relatively chaotic You go to a staging area and get assigned to a fire to work. You do the best you can and it could take several hours and more resources

► Continued on page 8



DAVID ATKINS/SRVFPD

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District sent engines and personnel to help fight the fires in Southern California.

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More electricity for little park

Alamo adding outlet to ensure successful tree lighting

by Natalie O'Neill

The Alamo Parks and Recreation Committee wants more power. Electrical power, that is.

Without proper electricity, you can't have a tree lighting. And that's why the committee is upping the ante when it comes to outlets and available amps at Andrew H. Young Park.

"The outlet at the base of the tree right now is not sufficient to light it," said Marie-Jeanne Parsons, chairwoman of the committee.

A second electrical box, expected to cost about \$2,000, will be put on the back cream-colored park wall, parallel to Danville Boulevard, in time for the lighting.

This helps secure the success of one of Alamo's biggest events and eliminate safety issues posed by existing electrical logistics.

"It hasn't always been adequate," said Hillary Heard, senior planner for Contra Costa County public works.

Since the tree is surrounded by a circular cement pathway, events that call for microphones, musical performances or lighting in other areas require electric chords to run across the walkway.

This is an accident waiting to happen, committee members say.

"It's a hazard," Parsons said. "Fixing it is long overdue to finalize the park."

When the park property was



NATALIE O'NEILL

The electrical box at Andrew H. Young Park in Alamo does not provide enough amps for the holiday tree lighting in December so a second box is being added.

given over to the county by a developer, originally there was no electrical meter in place. Public works added an electrical outlet with the tree lighting in mind.

"We need the improvement now ... it's something the county should have thought about," Parsons said.

Like the old outlet, the new box will have a lock on it and is only accessible by county staff.

The small park, located across from Alamo Plaza on Jackson Way, is a great place to eat lunch and take a break from shopping, Parsons said. It's named after a well-loved Alamo civic leader who died in 2002.

The most recent budget reports show that about \$17,900 was spent on maintenance of the park during

the last fiscal year.

Committee members said they could not yet estimate how much the entire project would cost.

Being proactive with the project may help prevent more expensive liability issues in the future, committee members said.

"I think it's a good idea," Committee Member Nancy Dommes said.

The Alamo Tree Lighting, presented by the Alamo Merchant and Professional Association, will take place 5:30-7:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 2. It will include music performed by Alamo school groups, refreshments, Santa Claus and a chance to meet friends and neighbors. The Sheriff's Valley Station will also be collecting for its toy drive. ■

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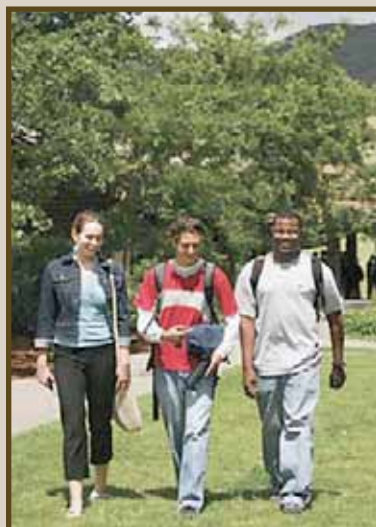
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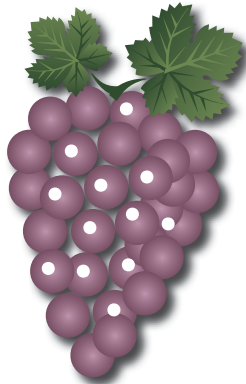


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San Ramon Valley firefighters battle to keep flames from reaching the homes in Topanga Canyon, where people and horses were evacuated.

Fire

► Continued from page 5

are needed."

"It's the worst fire that a fireman can go down to," he added. "It's as bad as it gets."

"There's fire all around you," he said. "All you can do is your best to protect the structure until the weather changes."

Gov. Schwarzenegger and President Bush declared the recent firestorms in Southern California as a state of emergency, according to reports. The fires forced more than 900,000 people to evacuate their homes.

Two fire engines and a strike team have returned, said Brown. There are around 130 firefighters in the district in total. Brown said most of the firefighters had to sleep on park grounds although some were able to sleep in motels and hotels.

"It's an intense scene. I'm sure they are tired," Brown said. "It's a long drive, especially with the



Rancho San Pasqual thanks firefighters after its 500 homes were saved from the fire that burned surrounding vegetation.

engines. They are not very fast."

Brown said the fire personnel who went down south found it gratifying on many levels.

"You're helping out communities," he said. "We have the potential for these fires in our area. We had the Oakland Hills Fire. All of those people would be coming to help us. We are doing something for somebody."

"It's a good experience for training," he added. ■

Mayor cancels coffee to help out Red Cross

Danville Mayor Mike Shimansky cancelled his November informal mayor's coffee because he is in Southern California helping out the American Red Cross.

"It's terrible down here," he said Monday afternoon. "I know a couple of people who have lost everything."

His family has been luckier, he noted. Both his son and his daughter and their families were evacuated from their homes but returned to find everything intact. His brother was evacuated out of Rancho Bernardo, then out of Escondido, he said.

Shimansky was heading up a group working out of the Red Cross Headquarters in San Diego.

"We have seven shelters still open and nine service centers," he said. "We're doing a lot of feeding."

Shimansky said he expects to return Sunday, in time for the Town Council meeting Nov. 6,

but could not make it back in time for his 7:30 a.m. coffee Friday, Nov. 2. He has held the informal coffees the first Friday of every month since January at Father Nature's on Prospect Avenue. Vice Mayor Candace Andersen said she will continue with the coffees next year when she is mayor, with the first one Dec. 7.

"What's down here has to be done; it's really important," Shimansky said. "I've been working 12-15 hours a day."

He also traveled to help out with the Red Cross after Hurricane Katrina two years ago.

—Dolores Fox Ciardelli



Mike Shimansky

Affordable apartments waiting for final OK

34 units for 'moderate income' planned on Fostoria Way next to Iron Horse Trail

by Jordan M. Doronila

Developer Thomas Baldacci is close to getting a green light from Danville to move forward and start building his 34-unit affordable apartment complex on Fostoria Way.

Baldacci, owner of Castle Companies in San Ramon, expects to hear a decision from the town in December or early next year.

"I'm proud of this project. We are pretty excited," Baldacci said.

The affordable housing project was approved by the Town Council in February. Now the town is considering the final "map" to

ensure the project complies with the standards that came with the approval.

The developer plans to build the apartments on the north side of Fostoria Way on 1.78 acres adjacent to the east side of the Iron Horse Trail.

"There are all kinds of shopping opportunities," Baldacci said.

The town may suggest minor changes, and once the final map is OK'd, Castle will start construction on sewer, water, storm drainage, roadside curbs and gutters.

The apartments will be affordable for moderate income earners, said Kevin Gailey, town planning

chief. The state designates "moderate income" as between 81 percent and 120 percent of area median income, which is \$58,700 for a one-person household; \$67,000 for two; \$75,400 for three; \$83,000 for four; and \$90,500 for five.

"Housing costs are pretty high here," Gailey said. "Our target is a pragmatic target."

There will be a cap on how much tenants can be charged.

"It does add to our total results for housing obligations," Gailey said. Those are set by the state.

Castle, which is also involved in building 55 residential units at the Rose Garden on Camino Ramon,

bought the land on Fostoria for an undisclosed amount two years ago.

Baldacci, who has been a developer in Danville for more than 30 years, said the Danville Design Review Board, Planning Commission and town staff have helped make the Fostoria project better.

"It's a very interactive process," he said. "They have observations that you sometimes can't see because you're too close to the project."

He noted that he also worked with neighboring residents to get feedback while he was going through the approval process. ■



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Vacancy

► Continued from page 5

a draw like Albertsons.

"It was hard on all the new businesses. It's been tough," said Connie Palomino, owner of Contemporary Hair Design, which has been in the center for 31 years.

She said she still has a solid customer base, but said that walk-ins and retail sales have gone down.

"We would like more traffic," she said.

She was looking forward to the new anchor tenant.

"I think it's gonna be great for Danville and great for the center," she said.

Shops in the center that rely on walk-ins, like Hospice Thrift Shoppe and Mt. Diablo Barber Shop, have been affected the most, store owners said.

As of May, owners of the center were involved in a lawsuit with Cerberus, a \$60 billion corpora-

"It's a local neighborhood store with fresh food and affordable prices,"

—Brendan Wonnacott,
Fresh and Easy spokesman

they then bought back the lease, Peterson said.

In late October, the Fresh and Easy announced six California stores will open. When stores have opened in the past, they generally hire 20-30 people and offer health care to employees who work more than 20 hours.

The center is also currently home to Taco Bell, Christy's Doughnuts, China Bistro, Diablo Printing and a photo shop.

"There's a lot of potential here," Peterson said. ■

tion, over terms of the lease. The dispute was settled out of court and

Crime

► Continued from page 5

had 74 grand thefts—with unforced entry—in 2005; 65 in 2006; and 63 in 2007.

"It's one of the biggest problems we have countywide," Lee said about items not being protected. "By far, it's some of the biggest we deal with daily."

In Blackhawk, the number of thefts has not increased, said police Lt. Alan Johnson of Blackhawk Police Services.

"It has not gone up. Ours is fairly consistent," Johnson said. "We don't see larger numbers increasing."

He noted he is still unsatisfied.

"I would like the number to go to zero," he said.

Linda Stolow, Danville resident and owner of the Small-Fry Shoppe on Railroad Avenue, said someone went through her car. Since then, she is conscious of locking her doors. She noted she has seen customers leaving the store to get their wallets out of their cars. Also her friend's car was stolen from her garage.

"They are feeling safe because they are in a private parking lot and feel they are not subject to something terrible coming," Stolow said. "I think we are all a little naive."

"I think it's tough to make people change their habits," she added.

"It's only when they are really impacted, they change."

Stolow said the holiday season is primetime for thieves. People are prone to carrying more items in their cars as result of the holidays. Police advice folks to store packages in the car's trunk where they cannot be seen.

"As we get toward the holidays, it's going to be worse," Stolow said. "They (thieves) know cars are ripe for the picking."

"We have a (large) amount of wealth and we become a target," she added. "As long as there are haves and have nots, it's going to be that way." ■

Contact Jordan M. Doronila at
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Chinese American health network looks for inspiring story

Two cultural groups from Alamo plan to award \$5,000 to the most inspiring story about a Chinese patient recovering from mental problems.

The Culture to Culture Foundation and the Chinese American Mental Health Network, located in Alamo, are soliciting applications for the Mental Health Warrior Award. Chinese patients with mental illnesses are encouraged to apply. Their friends, families and community volunteers are also invited to participate.

Mental health professionals

who wish to apply must speak from their experience of being psychiatric patients themselves or having family members in similar struggles. Applicants who are under 18 can apply with consent from their parents or legal guardians. Eligible individuals are allowed to nominate others with their consent.

Eligible applicants must have used their experiences to help others face life challenges, overcome stigma, instill hope and heal. The winning warrior will be awarded \$5,000. A number of qualified can-

didates, selected by a reviewing committee, will be awarded a prize for their participation.

Applications should include an essay in either Chinese or English of no more than 2,000 words. The essay must entail a true journey leading to recovery and community service. A separate page of names, phone/fax numbers, addresses and/or e-mails of two reference persons should be included.

The application deadline is Dec. 31 and should be sent to P.O. Box 665, Alamo 94507. For more information, call 938-9988. ■

Roosevelt speaks at library

Eleanor Roosevelt—aka Danville actress June Pass Russell—visits with the audience after appearing in “Remembering Eleanor” in the Diablo Room at the Danville Public Library. The J&L Center Stage production packed the house both nights it ran last week, showing Eleanor with President FDR and their advisor Louis Howe at the turning points of their lives. J&L also presented the play at Mt. Diablo High School in Concord, and the students were extremely receptive, said Pass Russell. The School Outreach Program is funded by Target and Wells Fargo. For more information about J&L Center Stage, call 820-7216.



DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

TAKE US ALONG



Assisi visiting

Paul and Susan Cowell take along their Danville Weekly while traveling to Assisi, Italy, in May.



Visiting paradise

Lauren and Nicholas Kurfirst enjoy the Atlantis Resort—and their Weekly—while vacationing in the Bahamas.

Diablo Views

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI



‘This can’t be happening’

Painful images have come to us of the fires and their damage in Southern California. And something my daughter told me made me sad.

Zoe has returned to San Diego State this year to earn her teaching credential. She attends classes at both the university campus and Hickman Elementary School, where she is doing her student teaching.

This semester she’s working in a kindergarten class and she was looking forward to accompanying the kiddies to a pumpkin patch. Then the fires started. Zoe lives near Mission Bay and that area has not been threatened, unless you count the smoke and ash in the air. And the unsettling experience of being surrounded by fires, and having evacuees fill the hotels and stadium.

The school was safe, she told me last week, but classes were canceled because some students, as well as a few of her professors, had been evacuated. Plus the freeways to the school had fires on either side.

What about the trip to the pumpkin patch? I asked. “It burned down,” she e-mailed. She added an unhappy face.

Imagine it. Bales of hay bursting into flames. Scarecrows burned at the stake. Pumpkins engulfed by the inferno while still on the vine rather than being gently heated by the candles they were meant to nurture as jack-o-lanterns.

And think of the children’s disappointment that they weren’t going to the pumpkin patch with their little friends—and their wonderful student teacher—to pick out a fat orange pumpkin for Halloween.

Of course those children may be experiencing other traumas right now. Disasters in the movies make great entertainment, but catastrophes in real life are mind-boggling. “This can’t be happening,” we think as we try to wrap our minds around a horrific event.

I first came face-to-face with threatening public tragedy when we were living in Saudi Arabia in the ’70s. No sooner had we moved to Jeddah and settled our 3-year-old son into Abracadabra Preschool than the beloved King Faisal was assassinated. The Saudis took their grief to the streets, wailing in sorrow, and we stayed in our apartment, praying the assassin was not American. We soon learned it was a young nephew who had shot him pointblank during a royal audience (he was beheaded in a public square three months later). Offices, shops and schools closed for a period of public mourning, and we kept a low

profile, aware that passionate feelings could turn against foreigners.

“Disasters in the movies make great entertainment, but catastrophes in real life are mind-boggling.”

Back in the States, our lives were only interrupted by the med fruit fly infestation as we moved from San Jose to Walnut Creek in 1985. Each trip out of Santa Clara County meant waiting in a long line of cars to assure the inspectors we had no fruit in the car. A drag, but hardly a tragedy. A few years later, my husband had some moments of suspense when he traveled to his company’s Johannesburg office, located across the street from the prison. This was during the struggles to end apartheid in South Africa, and a bomb in the street sent everyone scrambling under the desks. Riot-gear police soon entered to say that often after a bomb goes off, it is followed by “the real, larger bomb.” This led my husband to ponder, “Just how much is this job worth to me?”

Fast forward to 1990 and we are living in Bangkok. Iraq invades Kuwait, and the United States bombs Iraq. Terrorists decide to take revenge against American Embassy children at International School Bangkok. So ... the school closed. This was scary, and as time dragged on, some families left. After three weeks, the school reopened.

Then in 1991, the Thai military staged a coup, overthrowing the prime minister and declaring a state of emergency. A 9 p.m. curfew made the city eerie because normally it was bustling 24-7. Our company forbade travel to Thailand (although no one seemed to worry about us!). My daughter’s teacher’s aide, Mr. Ian, was killed in a burst of violence near the government buildings, as he left the temple where he was living to find food for the monks.

But none of these threatening situations developed into a personal tragedy for me or mine. I’ve been very lucky. I’ve never had my house burn down, knock on wood—or even my pumpkin. And, by the way, it turned out the kids had already visited the pumpkin patch.

—Dolores Fox Ciardelli
can be e-mailed at
editor@DanvilleWeekly.com.

Community Pulse

POLICE BULLETIN & LOG • OBITUARIES • BIRTHS & WEDDINGS

POLICE BULLETIN

Police arrest would-be burglar

Police arrested a man from Bay Point for allegedly carrying burglary tools in Danville last week, said police Sgt. Troy Craig.

Richard McKenzie was arrested on suspicion of possessing burglary tools and for violating his probation, which was for miscellaneous thefts, at Camino Ramon and El Capitan Drive around midnight, Friday, Oct. 26. Police made the arrest after patrolling the streets for burglaries, Craig said, adding that they have been concentrating on cracking down on thefts.

Police contacted McKenzie because it was unusual for a person to be walking in that area during that time, Craig said. Thieves have been targeting the area. Also, the police did not believe the suspect when he told them that he was hanging around Camino Ramon because of an argument with his girlfriend.

Sgt. Dan Hoffman and Officer Mike Ireland conducted a further investigation and found McKenzie had burglary tools hidden in bushes nearby, reports said. Police K-9 Donna located the items—a window punch tool, a flashlight and a shaved key.

Craig said McKenzie was meeting a Danville resident, who is suspected of being involved in thefts and drugs.

“We are monitoring his activity,” he said, about the Danville suspect.

Craig noted his department has made contact with numerous people who didn’t have a reasonable explanation of why they were in the neighbor-

hood. Some have come from Martinez, Pittsburg, Benicia, San Leandro and San Francisco.

“If Danville residents see someone not familiar in their neighborhood, they need to call us,” he said.

—Jordan M. Doronila

Motorcyclist takes to the bushes

An 18-year-old man hid in the bushes after he demolished his motorcycle in an accident at Camino Tassajara and Edinburgh Drive last week, according to police reports. He allegedly drove and crashed while intoxicated, said police Sgt. Troy Craig.

“It was a solo accident,” he said.

A resident heard the crash at 5 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 24, and called police. Officers arrived and saw the damaged motorcycle; the suspect emerged from the bushes 10 minutes later. The man said he was hiding in the bushes because he was making a call to his friend.

However, upon contact, police noticed he had symptoms of being intoxicated and found he had a blood alcohol level of .12. He suffered from minor abrasions and was treated at a hospital and released. The police then arrested him on suspicion of driving under the influence.

“It’s his first offense,” said Craig.

—Jordan M. Doronila

POLICE LOG

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

Monday, Oct. 22

- Promiscuous shooting on 3100 Stone Valley Rd. at 9:34 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 23

- Residential burglary on Estates Dr. at 8:03 a.m.
- Petty theft from vehicle on Sweetpea Ct. at 8:52 a.m.
- Forgery of fraudulent documents on La Gonda Way at 11:38 a.m.
- Petty theft from vehicle on Sweetpea Ct. at 3:07 p.m.
- DUI, arrest, on Green Valley Rd. at 9:29 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 24

- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Danville Blvd. at 1:47 a.m.
- Accident, major injuries, arrest, on Camino Tassajara and Edinburgh Dr. at 3:10 a.m.
- DUI, arrest, on El Cerro Blvd. and northbound I-680 off ramp at 12:14 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 3:07 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Center Way and Crow Canyon Rd. at 8:32 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 25

- Auto burglary on Dolphin Dr. at

10:37 a.m.

- Auto burglary on Diablo Rd. at 11:10 a.m.
- Auto burglary on Diablo Rd. at 6:01 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 26

- Credit card fraud on Brush Creek Pl. at 9:08 a.m.
- Vandalism on La Gonda Way at 12:33 p.m.
- Credit card fraud on Boone Ct. at 1:28 p.m.
- * Identity theft on Haven Hill Ct. at 2:18 p.m.
- * Credit card fraud on Santiago Ct. at 5:56 p.m.
- * Motorcycle disturbance on Alamos Dr. and Amigo Rd. at 6:05 p.m.
- * Vandalism on Greenbrook Dr. at 9:14 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 27

- * Suspicious subject stop, arrest, on Camino Ramon and El Capitan Dr. at 2:11 a.m.
- * Promiscuous shooting on Highbridge Ln. at 2:44 a.m.
- * Misdemeanor hit-and-run on Quinterra Ln. at 1:48 p.m.
- * Accident, major injuries, on Hartz Ave. and W. Prospect Ave. at 4:43 p.m.
- * Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Jewel Terrace and San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 5:48 p.m.

OBITUARIES

Marjorie Jane (McMahon) Brucker

Danville resident Marjorie Jane (McMahon) Brucker passed away Sept. 25 at the age of 84.

She was born Dec. 11, 1922, and raised in Toledo, Ohio. She met Richard Brucker in high school and they became engaged during World War II, and married June 8, 1946. Several years later they moved to Northern California and raised their eight children here, living in Hayward, Castro Valley and Danville. She loved to travel and once the children were raised, she and Richard traveled to Europe and Switzerland, plus enjoyed Lake Tahoe. She was proud of her Irish heritage and enjoyed visiting Ireland several years ago. She also loved music of every kind.

She is survived by her husband, Richard P. Brucker, and her eight children: Linda Pearl, Susan Rhodes, Nancy Brucker, Marcia Kelley, Richard Brucker Jr., Elizabeth Phillips, Christopher Brucker and Carol Coates, seven grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her brothers Edmund and Gordon McMahon, her sister Patricia Courts, and her granddaughter, Marjorie Bruckopoulos.

Those who wish may make a donation to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

August H. ‘Augie’ Gaspar

August H. “Augie” Gaspar, a resident of Danville, passed away Sept. 25 in Walnut Creek at the age of 90.

He was born in Oakland on March 30, 1917. He attended St. Mary’s College High School in Berkeley, and St. Mary’s College in Moraga. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a B-17 Bombardier in Europe during WWII. He was a P.O.W. for 19 months as a result of the raid on Munster. After the war, he remained as an officer in the Air Force reserves, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. He also worked as a baker for 35 years at the Langendorf Bakery in Oakland, retiring in 1977. He was a long time resident of San Lorenzo, most recently residing in Bethel Island and Danville.

He was preceded in death by Mary, his wife of 49 years. He is survived by seven nephews, one niece, and countless grandnieces, grandnephews and loving, life-long friends.

A Funeral Mass was celebrated Sept. 28 at St. Isidore Catholic Church in Danville with entombment at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Hayward. Donations may be made in his memory to St. Mary’s College High School, Memorial Scholarship Fund, 1294 Albina Ave., Berkeley 94706; or to the American Red Cross at www.bayarea-redcross.org.

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EDITORIAL • THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Farewell, walnuts; hello, hotel

The last orchard in Danville seems destined for development. Owner Armand Borel has sold options running through June 2009 to developer Sid Corrie on seven of his 16 acres wedged between Camino Ramon and I-680 on the southern edge of Danville, across from Costco.

Corrie is scheduled to appear before the Danville Town Council on Tuesday, Nov. 6, to outline his plans for the acreage, but he has said he hopes to include both residential and commercial use. Neighbors have received notices of the meeting outlining plans for a three-story self-storage facility and a four-story hotel as well as retail. Some have lamented the traffic these businesses would bring as everyone travels on two-lane Camino Ramon and the already-congested Crow Canyon Place.

In 1985 when Fostoria Way was being developed, residents hoped to preserve some of the extensive Borel orchards but only 17 acres were left intact. Until now Armand Borel, 78, has held onto his piece of pastoral paradise,

where he lives surrounded by his walnut orchards. But apparently Borel, too, is ready to concede that the San Ramon Valley is no longer a rural area, and that locations near freeways are convenient places to do business. In a few years we will no longer be able to enjoy glimpsing this last orchard in Danville through the fence as we bustle about on our errands.

Not everyone sees commercial development as inevitable. Residents have commented on our Web site that this land would be better used as a city park or a historic site honoring the Borel family's farm. But the fact is it would have to be purchased and developed privately, and what person or group will step forward to do this?

Danville Town Manager Joe Calabrigo poetically referred to the Borel property last spring as "a little island time forgot." Time has suddenly remembered the last remaining orchard in Danville.

"The San Ramon Valley is no longer a rural area, and locations near freeways are convenient places to do business."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We need a good working government

Dear Editor:

Alamo has been trying to have effective, protected crosswalks installed in Danville Boulevard in the commercial area for five years, or longer. County supervisors have met in Alamo and heard the request for better crossing safeguards. The result? There are flags in containers at the worst crossing. Sometimes, all the flags are on the wrong side of the boulevard. That is what county government provides for Alamo.

Compare this non-action to what was noted in the Oct. 26 Danville Weekly. The Danville Town Council discussed a crosswalk problem in Front Street and decided to go ahead and establish a crosswalk. They are considering flashing signs and other possible additions to establish a safe crosswalk. Those who are opposed to Alamo incorporation, do they consider this too much government? Danville, Lafayette, Orinda have good working town governments. Alamo needs the same.

Margaret Elliott, Alamo

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Guest Opinion

Why Alamo should NOT become a city

by Phil Erickson

I was taught that every issue has two sides, and that to listen and be influenced by only one of them often leads to mistakes and errors.

From my perspective, this is currently the case with the Alamo cityhood issue, as very little is being published or presented against incorporation.

First of all, it appears that the pro-cityhood movement is being driven by a few residents who were on the losing side of the YMCA and Monte Vista High School parking expansion issues. It should be noted that many Alamo residents believe a YMCA is an asset to the community and that the parking expansion was long overdue.

But, putting the motivation issue aside, cityhood for Alamo is a bad idea!

Alamo is too small a community to financially support the move, especially given that we have a very, very small commercial tax base. We are a landlocked community with no opportunity for commercial expansion. This means that as costs increase, the tax burden will fall disproportionately upon the homeowner.

To foster the idea that an additional level of government can be added without additional cost is either naive or misleading. Street and road maintenance, which becomes the city's responsibility, alone will eventually create the need for more funds.

One only has to look to some of the smaller cities around us (all larger than Alamo) like Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda to see the problems they are having funding their deteriorating roads and streets. Each has tried to float bond issues and they are repeatedly defeated. Meanwhile their roadways continue to decline.

As costs increase, the tax burden will fall disproportionately upon the homeowner.

So we must ask the question ... what is the value of cityhood?

When I asked this question at the first organizational meeting of the pro cityhood group, the answer I got was, "control." And when I asked, "control what?" there was no response.

We are community that is over 90 percent built out, so it certainly isn't growth, and control for control's sake is a very questionable benefit.

Watch what you wish for and consider the consequences!

Phil Erickson is a 27-year resident of Alamo and past president of the Bryan Ranch Homeowners Association.

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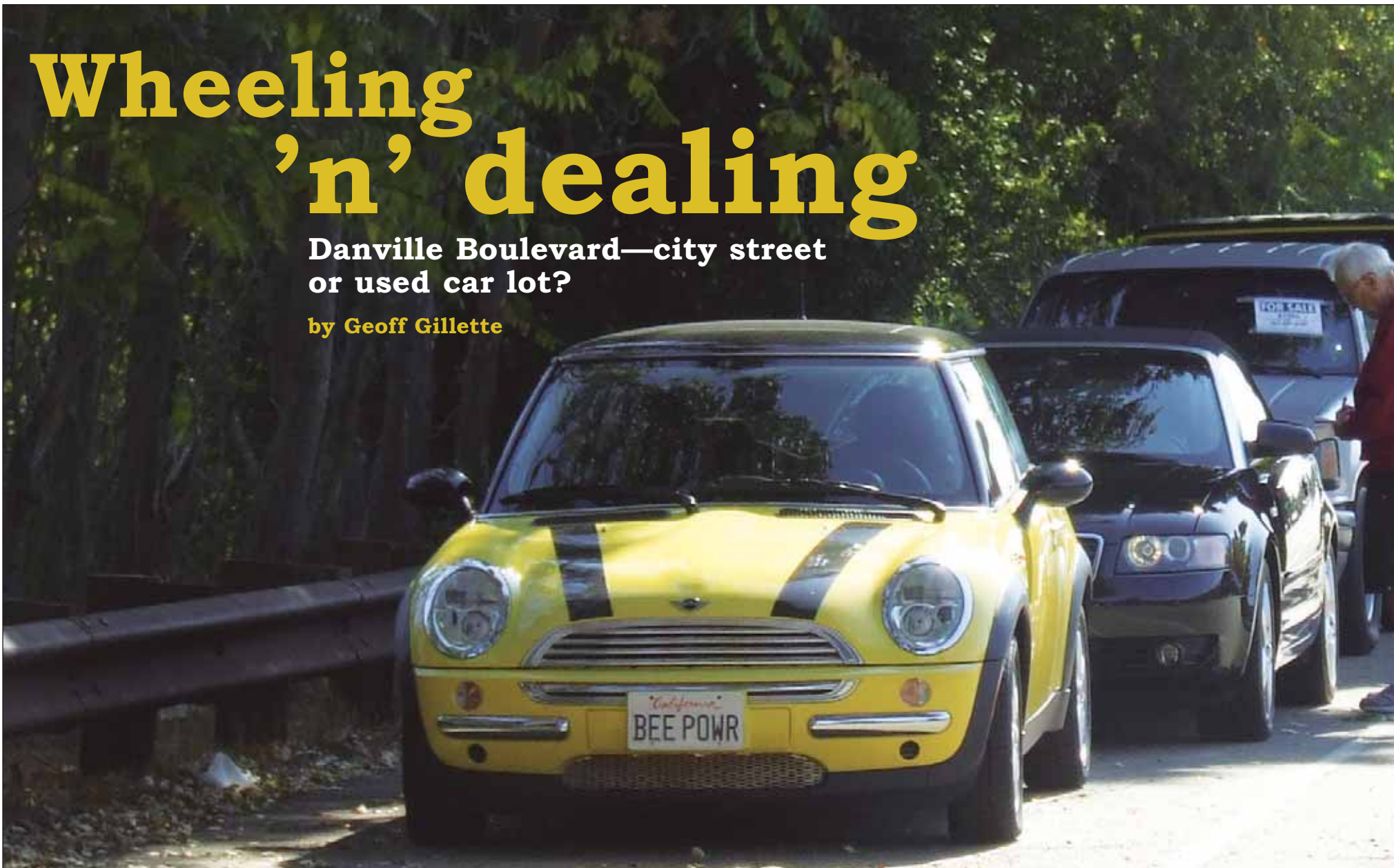
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Wheeling 'n' dealing

Danville Boulevard—city street or used car lot?

by Geoff Gillette



Folks in the market for a used car check out the offerings on Danville Boulevard near Railroad Avenue on a recent Sunday morning. Although the neighbors complain, the town says it's perfectly legal for sellers to park their cars for the who



The impromptu used car lot on Danville Boulevard gives prospective buyers a chance to check out the cars—and the tires—before contacting the seller.

Geoff Gillette

Parking in Danville has improved since the town has opened and enlarged public lots. But there is one place where parking is still at a premium every single weekend. Each Saturday and Sunday, the stretch of Danville Boulevard from Railroad Avenue north to Del Amigo is lined with cars.

Why, you may ask? Is something taking place at San Ramon Valley High School across the street or downtown? A track and field event? A crafts show?

It's none of the above. Over the past several years, this section of Danville Boulevard has become the site of an impromptu used car lot. On the weekends you can see nearly a hundred autos and trucks on the street. All different makes and models of automobiles from a 2006 Hummer H3 to a 1998 Honda.

For Sale signs adorn windshields and side windows. Some sellers have fliers under the wiper blades giving all the particulars of their auto.

People will stroll along on the sidewalk or in the bike lane, looking at the vehicles, reading up on the stats, or just kicking the tires. It's an oddity of sorts to see something like this at a time when nearly everyone has access to the Internet and can look for what they need on eBay or Craigslist. And yet, the scene continues to thrive and even grow as each weekend, throughout the day, some cars leave and others find spaces along the street.

The used car strip has no formal advertising. Much of its publicity is through word of mouth, or people just notice it while driving through town.

Still, word has spread and not just in the San Ramon Valley.

John Fischer of San Francisco had his car out on the

Danville street in early October.

"My in-laws live in Danville and they sold their car recently by the high school, so I put it out there for a couple of days," he said.

Fischer said his in-laws had great responses with their car and were able to sell it fairly quickly.

In addition to keeping his car on Danville Boulevard over the weekend, Fischer took out an ad on Craigslist, the popular online service that allows goods and services to be sold. While his in-laws had great luck with their on-the-street offering, Fischer didn't, and he ended up selling his car to a fellow city dweller. He said he thinks that to sell a car in Danville you need to live nearby.

"You need to get it out there every weekend," he said. "To really make it work you have to live close by so you can come and show the car if someone is interested. My in-laws live right by there so they could do that."

Auto buyer Tom Pana of San Jose agrees the seller has to be close at hand. Pana was biking in the area with friends and stopped for lunch in the downtown. While riding north toward Alamo he passed several used cars on Danville Boulevard until a 2003 silver Camry caught his attention.

"I pulled over to look at it, and it was in great shape," he



ole day and put "For Sale" signs in the window.

recalled. "I used my friend's cell phone to call the owner and arranged a test drive for the next day. A week later after another test drive and some negotiation, I took it home."

While some find the cars on public exhibit to be a useful way to purchase a used vehicle without wading through showrooms and fending off salesmen, others find the display a nuisance.

"Have you ever tried to go to the high school on the weekend?" asked Danville resident Kerry Smith. "It's ridiculous."

Smith said she has spoken with the police about having the cars out there and was told the display was legal.

"They told me that for the cars to park in that area was less intrusive," she said.

Over the years, complaints from people like Smith have been filed with both the Police Department and the town government. Danville Parking Officer Mike Ahern said that while there is nothing to prevent people from parking their cars there as a means of selling them, the town is able to control how it is done.

"We were getting complaints of people leaving cars there for days and days at a time. That went away once we put up signs that said, 'No Parking between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.,'" he explained.

Ahern said if a car stays overnight or if it is there during the week while school is in session, it will be ticketed. After 72 hours, it will be towed away.

"You can legally leave a car on the street for 72 hours before we'd tow it," he added. "After 72 hours, it's considered 'abandoned' under the law."

Police Chief Chris Wenzel said the situation has been going on for some time and there is nothing illegal in what the car sellers are doing.

"Under the right of freedom of speech people are allowed to place For Sale signs on their cars and park their vehicles legally as prescribed, based on the signage and property ownership," Wenzel said. "It actually makes it easier in some ways, as this stops people from parking vehicles all over town with the For Sale signs."

All of those cars parked along a busy thoroughway with a bike lane running alongside does give officials some concern for pedestrian and cyclist safety.

"The only real issue we see is traffic safety where people will slow down in their cars to look at one of the sale cars," Wenzel said. "Or they'll pull over in the bike lanes to take a look instead of just going down the street a little ways and parking."

Town officials also have looked at the issue but have not found reason to take action.

Town Manager Joe Calabrigo said they, like the police, have received complaints over the years, from homeowners groups and residents of the area who feel the sale of the cars goes against the character of their neighborhood.

"The town has regulated the location by posting signs that prohibit parking vehicles overnight," said Calabrigo. "This ensures that the parking there is available for high school students to use come Monday."

He added that the town police force works diligently to enforce other vehicle code violations which might occur in that area such as double-parking or blocking traffic by stopping to look at a sale vehicle.

Calabrigo said that is the limit of what the town can do because there is nothing illegal in parking a vehicle in a legal space. The City of Los Angeles was sued for trying to restrict vehicles with For Sale signs that were parked in legal spots, and the city lost. The courts have upheld that cities cannot enforce parking restrictions on that basis.

Nearby residents may complain—but those who walk and ride along Danville Boulevard to look at the cars don't see any problem.

"When I was riding that way, all of the people were on the sidewalk," said bicyclist Pana. "There were bikes in the bike lanes and cars in the road. There didn't seem to be any conflict. When I saw the car I was interested in, my friends and I got off the road and parked. No problems at all."

"I wasn't really even looking for a car," Pana added. "So it was just luck that I happened to be there at that time." ■

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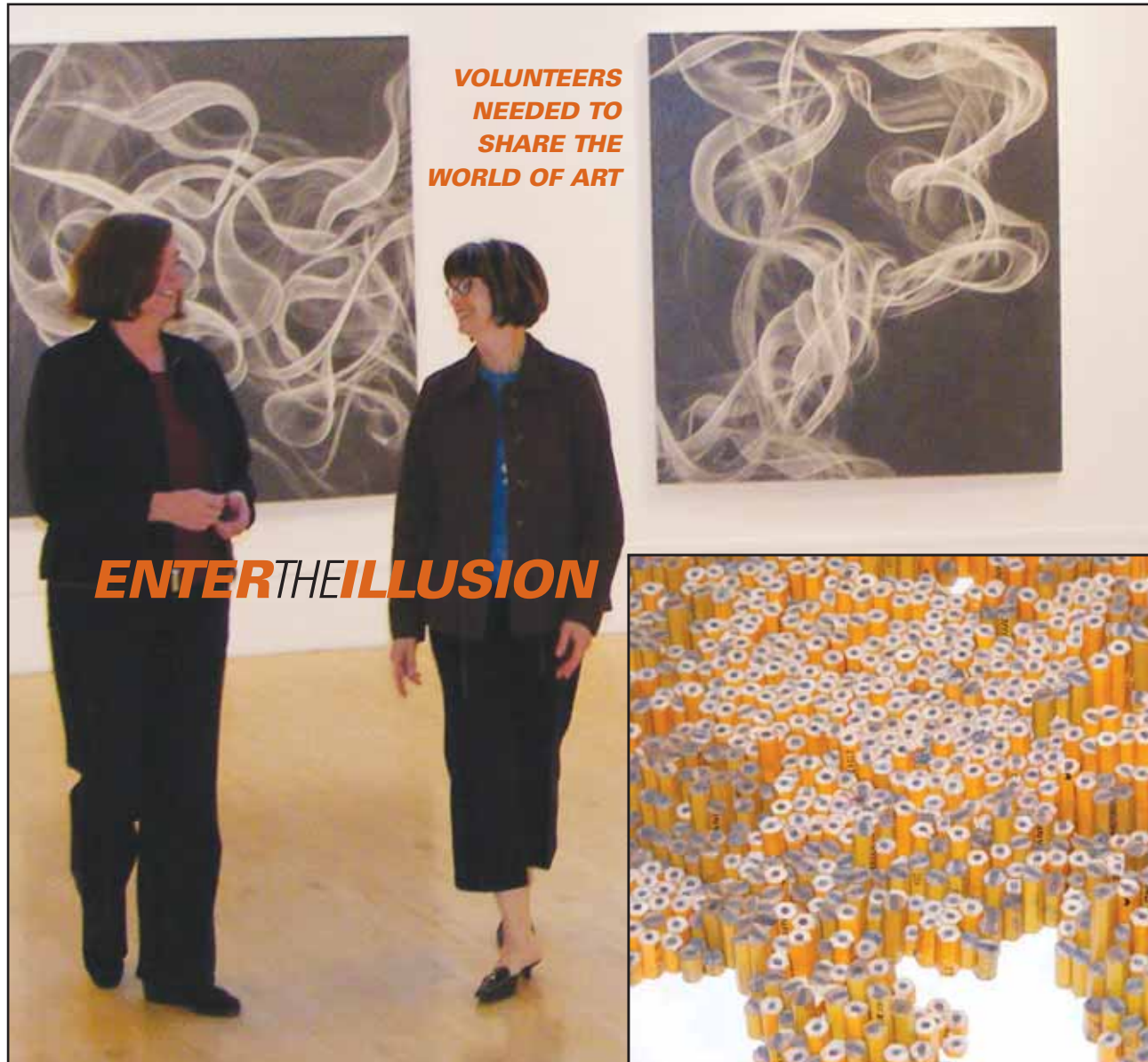
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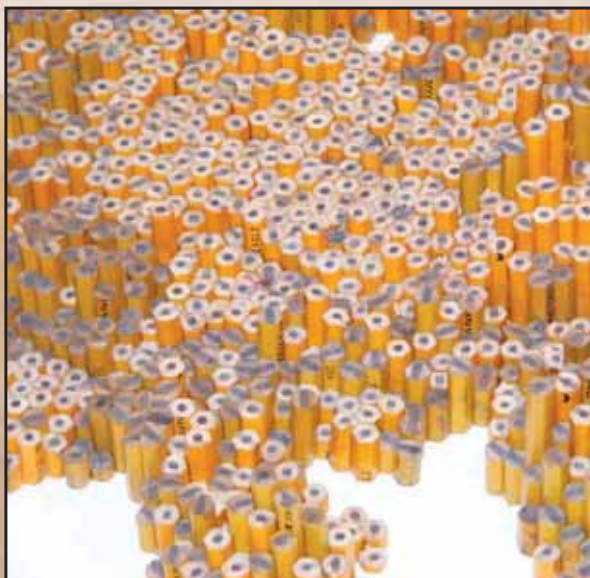
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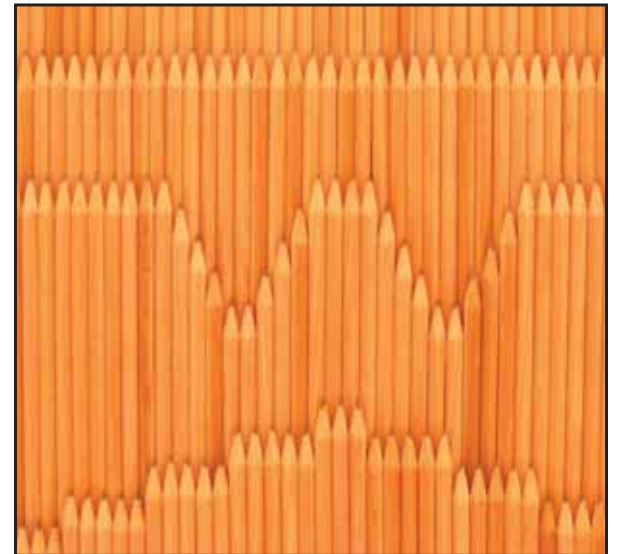
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Danville's Susan Helms and Bedford Gallery Curator Carrie Lederer chat about innovative ways to use graphite at "Leaded: The Materiality and Metamorphosis of Graphite."



The piece "Colony" by a New York artist works with pencils to mimic the way things grow in nature. She uses everyday items like straws, Styrofoam cups and tape to create large scale abstract art.



This close up of a castle-like skyscraper shows it was built with pencils and glue.



Artist Meghan Gerety draws with pencils to create black silhouettes of trees on white watercolor paper.

Story and photos by Natalie O'Neill

Art at the Bedford Gallery will lie to you. Like a magician, it will trick you with illusion.

Take a quick glance at the current exhibit and you'll leave believing the venue is adorned with black and white photography, wooden sculpture and stone carvings.

Look a little closer, though, and you'll see everything is made with graphite—the same simple medium, found in a pencil, that kids use to scribble math homework and doodle on desks.

"This gallery, more than others, seems to be taking us to the future," said Susan Helms, a Danville volunteer and gallery guild member.

Gone are the days when pencil art was limited to paper—just have a look at "Leaded: The Materiality and Metamorphosis of Graphite." Here, artists have used chopped up pencils for sculptures, four-foot lead disks for carving, and erasers to create a sense of visual trickery.

"There's a warmth to it," said gallery curator Carrie Lederer. "We as humans have a long history with pencils and memories tied to our first experiences with writing or drawing."

The 3,500-square-foot gallery, which serves 50,000 visitors annually, stimulates and challenges its audience and also showcases community art.

"It's sophisticated for suburbia," said

Helms, who got involved four years ago, after retiring from her job as an attorney.

Despite the gallery's reputation for thought-provoking conceptual, cutting edge, cultural and historical art, guild members are having trouble rounding up volunteers.

And that's where Danville and Alamo folks come in, Helms says.

Volunteers don't have to know much about art. They should just want to know about it, she says.

Those interested can sign up to be docents, who lead exhibit tours. Or they can become guild members, who staff the front desk, greet visitors, and host receptions.

"Friendships are forged. It's so apparent how close you become and how rapidly that happens," Lederer says of the guild members.

Volunteers learn about the exhibits, hear artists speak, and see in-studio works. Most volunteers tend to be women who are seeking a life or a passion outside their kids, or have recently retired, or are new in town or empty-nested.



"There's something about being around intelligent people who want to learn," says Guild President Frances Wallace.

At a recent visit to "Leaded," Helms, who's somewhat new to the art world, explained the

works she likes best were more traditional. While much of the art uses mixed media like oil, powder and wax, she likes the solely graphite pieces.

"Since I've been taking drawing classes, I'm fascinated to see what people can do with just graphite," she said.

To that, Lederer chimed in with a smile

"She's what you call a purist."

Moving on to have a look at a heavy four-foot dish of graphite, Lederer explained the medium in

simple terms.

"You could pick the dish up and sketch with it—if you were Superman," she said.

For Helms, being part of the guild provides a social niche, a shared interest and the opportunity to gain knowledge.

"It enables me to experience my creative side," she said, adding that she gets to see all the behind-the-scenes work that goes into

the gallery. And that includes getting to know the thought process behind why the gallery chooses certain themes.

Past exhibits have used shoes, woven Indian American baskets and motorcycles to explore perspectives on culture. On a more traditional level, they have featured 19th century Dutch artists in an exhibit called "Waiting for Van Gough." They have also showcased exhibits with only 18-year-old and under artists from Contra Costa County.

"We aim to reflect and mirror our audience, but also to engage them in new ideas," Lederer said.

The current exhibit features 16 artists, including the nationally renowned artist Tara Donovan, who uses everyday objects like buttons, tape, paper plates and—in this case—pencils to create art that emulates nature.

The Bedford Gallery was established in 1968 as the Civic Arts Gallery and moved to the new Leshar Center for the Arts in October 1990. It is named after Peter and Kristen Bedford, who were generous contributors.

"Leaded" will run through Dec. 22 with a \$3 admittance fee. Tuesdays are free, and guests of Leshar Center theater productions may view the gallery for free as well.

To volunteer, prior knowledge is not required. Contact Susan Helms at 837-0716, call the gallery at 295-1417, or visit it at 1601 Civic Drive in downtown Walnut Creek. ■



Breakfasts for holiday crowds

Halloween scared us into reality—Thanksgiving is just around the corner, Santa is making flight plans and some are already polishing the family menorah. Rev up your culinary engines ... we're racing into the holidays!

The onset of the holiday season means you'll probably be entertaining a relative or two before the year is out. Maybe you'll even be hosting the main holiday meal at your home, complete with family or friends as overnight "guests." With all the focus on the holiday festivities (and the decorating and cooking prep involved), we sometimes neglect to plan for pre- and post-holiday breakfasts. Unless you can talk Aunt Susie into making her special blueberry muffins or convince your visiting relatives to go out for a nice family breakfast while they are here, most guests are up bright and early in search of that wake-me-up cup of coffee and something to nibble on between sips. What better way to leisurely catch up with family news, right?

Resident cooks, however, are often up late and rising early to slice, marinate, defrost and ice... who has time to make breakfast? So, work smart...plan ahead for those minor meals that also make the holidays merry and bright. Epicure offers some helpful tips:

Wherever possible, prep ahead:

- Purchase holiday paper plates, bowls, napkins, utensils, etc. to brighten breakfast meals. (It's the one meal where you can gracefully get away with it!)
- Prepare large batches of homemade granola (see recipe at DanvilleWeekly.com) and store

weeks ahead of your guests' arrival.

- Breakfast meats (bacon, sausages) can be pre-cooked and frozen. Re-heat in the microwave just before serving. Don't overcook before freezing.

- Measure out carafes of premium coffee grinds, put in freezer-safe baggies, label and freeze. Type up instructions for making coffee in your specific coffeemaker and enclose in a plastic binder sheet for protection.

- Before you turn in each night (or assign your kitchen helper to do it):

— Set up the coffeemaker to be ready to go with the instruction sheet nearby or put coffeemaker on auto-timer.

— Leave out fruit, cereals, non-refrigerated condiments, etc. on countertops for parents of young kids and early risers to help themselves.

Provide a range of choices:

- Consider that individual guests may be on diets, have dietary restrictions, etc. Ask about special dietary needs ahead of time to avoid last-minute scurries to the grocer. As guests arrive, ask about their preferred morning regimes.
- Offer cold, on-the-run choices (e.g. fruit, yogurt, bagels, muffins) and hot, sit-down options (e.g. eggs, toast, breakfast meats) daily. If you can, provide choices for young kids, teens, adults, elderly guests. Agree on one breakfast during the visit where everyone will join in and make that the most elaborate breakfast meal.

Elegant eggs, perfect pancakes & wonderful waffles:

- Eggs: Whether "over easy" or

"sunny side up," fried eggs are great for a breakfast crowd. They can be served with breakfast meats and other dishes or alone. Stack several small fry pans on back of stove for easy access. If frying a lot, slightly undercook and transfer them to a baking sheet oiled with cook spray in a 200-degree oven. Divide sections for different eggs or use separated sheets. Also, consider omelets if you have pre-cut stuffing ingredients.

- **Pancakes:** Use a simple batter recipe (i.e. Bisquick), then add 1 or more tasty ingredients for variety, e.g. mashed banana, blueberries, strawberries, chocolate chips, etc. Leave adequate space between pancakes for flipping. Try to flip only once, after bubbles appear on top side and bottom side is brown. Place on oven rack on towel-lined sheet in 200-degree oven to keep warm until served.

- **Waffles:** Use a pastry brush or cooking spray to grease waffle iron for the first few times to get the iron well oiled. Use the first waffle as your throwaway sample to test for batter, evenness, timing, etc. Use a kitchen helper to flip waffles between two hands: "airing" them with give crisper edges and prevent sogginess. Place on oven rack on towel-lined sheet in 200-degree oven to keep warm until served.

Some anonymous cook probably said: "Offer a satisfying breakfast in the morning, and you'll have willing kitchen helpers all day long!" So, rev up your engines for the holidays and rev up your holiday breakfasts as well.

Jacqui lives in Danville with her pug, Nina Simone, and volumes of cookbooks and recipes. Her column runs every other week. E-mail her at jlovemarshall@yahoo.com.



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RECIPES

Sweet Potato & Chile Hash with Fried Eggs (serves 6):

The Chile Mayonnaise:

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 3 Tbsp. adobo sauce or your favorite salsa
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1. In a bowl, combine mayonnaise, adobo sauce (or salsa) and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper and whisk smooth. Adjust seasoning to taste; set aside.

The Hash:

- 1 lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 3-1/2 to 4-1/2 cups)
- 6 Tbsp. olive oil, more as needed
- 1 small onion, diced (about 1 cup)

- 2 small fresh poblano or 3-4 Anaheim chiles, diced for about 1/2 cup (or use other medium-hot peppers)
- 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped garlic
- 1-2 jalapenos, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 2 tsp chopped fresh oregano
- 2 tsp. salt, more to taste
- Freshly ground pepper
- 6 eggs
- Fresh cilantro sprigs for garnish
- 1. Cook the diced sweet potatoes in boiling salted water until tender-firm, about 3 min. Drain well and set aside.
- 2. In large nonstick skillet, heat 3 Tbsp. of oil over medium heat. Cook the onion, chiles, bell pepper, stirring frequently until well-softened and

- browned, about 20 min. Stir in garlic and jalapeno and cook for 1 minute more. Transfer to a plate.
- 3. Return skillet to stove and heat remaining oil over medium-high heat. Add the sweet potatoes and cook, tossing, until the edges begin to brown, about 10 min. Return onion/pepper mixture to the pan and cook until warmed through. Stir in the cilantro, lime juice, oregano and salt; season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to plate or bowl; cover and keep warm.
- 4. If needed, add more oil to pan and, when the oil is hot, fry the eggs. Divide hash between plates, top each with an egg, a dollop of the chile mayonnaise and a cilantro sprig. Serve immediately.



College—a time to indulge in learning

by Katharine O'Hara

Amid the mounds of college mail I receive every day (most of which gets recycled or sits in an ever-expanding pile on my desk), I happened to pick up and read one of the more interesting pieces of college propaganda I've sifted through lately. The pamphlet, entitled "The Usefulness of Uselessness," was from Swarthmore College and was written by T. Kaori Kitao, an art history professor who once taught there. The piece offers an interesting perspective that I think sheds some light, especially for those students about to enter college (and their parents), on the real purpose of a college education in this day and age.

The perceived purpose of a college education in this country is to train students in a specialized area in order to prepare them well enough to eventually have a career most likely in the field they studied. Parents who send their kids to school, some for as much as \$50,000 a year, understandably want to see their children fulfill this path and become "successful." However, as with most contentious issues, it is how you define your terms that makes all the difference. Most might define "success" as attaining fame or financial fortune, or being an expert in a particular field. Less often the first thought that comes to mind when one thinks of success—but as Kitao argues, the most important—is mere personal fulfillment and contentment with what you do, regardless of how much money or fame comes with it.

"Fulfillment counts the most in the long run because it rewards our life rather than just providing us with a career and a status," Kitao says.

Instead of simply sticking to the subjects (notably math and science) that are perceived to bring them the superficial definition of what the majority calls "success" (especially if these subjects are of disinterest), students should pursue and even major in the subjects they are already passionate about, or even those they are curious about but have had no prior experience with.

But, when students decide they want to major, say, in the humanities—philosophy, classical language, art history, music, etc.—they are often met with distaste and anxiety by their parents, because these fields don't seem like subjects that have practical application or promise financial stability in today's world. However, Kitao goes on to point out that it is not the specific content of the courses a student takes in college that matters, so much as the process by which a student learns that content: by critically thinking and constantly inquiring. After all, there are only so many cold facts and rote details a person can retain. The student can then apply the skills acquired during the process of learning and understanding, to anything they do in any aspect of their life. Learning, as Kitao puts it, becomes a habit.

Instead of preparing students for a specific job, the purpose of a college education is simply to teach them how to learn, how to think critically and creativity—assets that will last a lifetime. These assets are the true abilities that will eventually lead them to land a career and be successful at it.

Statistics show that a large portion of college graduates don't actually end up even going into a career in the field they majored in. After all, eight courses in a particular subject (the number of courses required to fulfill most major requirements) is certainly not

enough to provide one with enough in-depth knowledge to be fit for a job in that field. Additionally, in our ever-changing world wrought with innovation and progress, it is becoming increasingly more relevant that the coming generations not be specialized. Rather, tomorrow's workers need to be creative and able to think on their feet so as to quickly apply their insight to up-and-coming industries inconceivable a decade ago. To use an example described in Christopher Caldwell's New York Times article, "What a College Education Buys," the inventors of Google for instance "could never have been trained to (build up the company), because neither the company nor the idea of it existed when they were getting their educations."

It is important to remember that the subject students choose to major in during college really is not all that relevant. When it comes time to choose, whether at the beginning or halfway through their college education, both students and their parents should approach the decision with the knowledge that their choice most likely will not affect the career they eventually go in to, or determine how much money or fame they will eventually acquire. College is the most selfish time in a person's life, so why not indulge in learning and experiencing anything and everything you desire? In the end, it is by a wide range of experiences, and learning how to learn, that we attain relevant knowledge and find true, long-lasting fulfillment.

The 411 offers information and insight on the teen scene by Katharine O'Hara, a senior 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.

OF NOTE

Rotary collects soccer jerseys

Sarah Foreman and Christina Chace from Montair Elementary School, and Dominic Williams of Charlotte Wood Middle School sort soccer jerseys, shorts and balls for shipping to underprivileged kids in a village in Zambezi, Africa, which is in the Northwest Province near Angola.

The Danville Rotary Club collected the used uniforms from players in the Mustang Soccer League in September and distributed over 200 jerseys and soccer balls in Africa this month through Rotary International, a worldwide service club with 1.2 million members in 168 countries.



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The Pioneering Lawrence Family

The Lawrences were the first Portuguese people to immigrate to the Valley. Here the family is pictured in front of their home in Tassajara Valley, in 1889: (l-r) Mariana, Will, Manuel, Joe, George, Nellie, Annie, Josie, Rose and Belle. Today's Lawrence Road marks the location of their ranch.

OF NOTE

Red ribbons

The red ribbons that suddenly appeared around every tree and pole in the San Ramon Valley were placed there by members of 28 Girl Scout troops and Cub Scout dens, service clubs, high school leadership classes and Community Against Substance Abuse (CASA).

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District joined with thousands of communities throughout the United States from Oct. 23-31 in a unified movement of youths

and adults to promote healthy alcohol- and drug-free lives. The red ribbons hanging everywhere empower people to take action in their neighborhoods and schools and develop an attitude of intolerance to substance abuse.

The week was inspired by Drug Enforcement Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena who was kidnapped and murdered by drug traffickers while working undercover in Mexico. Friends began to wear Red Badges of satin and in 1988 Congress officially proclaimed the last week of October as Red Ribbon Week.



Cub Pack 53 tied the ribbons at Alamo Elementary: (front, l-r) Miguel Inserni, Matthew Fraysse, Cameron Meek, Ben Wendlandt, Nolan Watson, Dylan Nakahara; (back) Joan Remmert, Giuliano DeMartini, Nick Martin, Kyle Pedretti, Jordan Weil, Nathan Aepli, Jack Sweetland, Nick Campigli.



Junior Girl Scout Troop 286 members (l-r) Alexandra Stanhope, Maggie Phillips, Marissa Martinez, Mia Fowler, Elise Steingraber, Elise Dumont, Megan Bruntz and Julia Espino tied ribbons throughout John Baldwin Elementary School.

A movie review of what's

NOW SHOWING

by Jeanne Aufmuth

Lars and the Real Girl

★★★★

Rating: PG-13 for sexual content.
Run Time: 1 hour, 46 minutes

Supremely gifted Ryan Gosling inherits a uniquely quirky protagonist in this thoroughly refreshing dramedy.

Titular "hero" Lars Lindstrom (Gosling) is a socially awkward stiff living in a detached garage apartment across from older brother Gus (Paul Schneider) and Gus' perkily pregnant wife Karin (Emily Mortimer).

Karin is anxious to welcome her bachelor brother-in-law into the fold, perpetually throwing out breakfast invites and the like. It's a banner day for all when Lars announces he's dating and bringing his new gal pal to dinner.

No one sees this one coming: Lars' squeeze is an anatomically correct silicone sex doll named Bianca who, according to Lars, is a crippled half-Brazilian missionary from the tropics who was raised by nuns.

Gus and Karin go with the flow and at first opportunity nip Lars off to the local MD (who doubles as a shrink in this snowy Midwestern burg). Dr. Dagmar (Patricia Clarkson) informs them that Lars is working something out and asks them to play along with his delusion.

And play along they do, together with the whole blessed town, which takes Bianca into their homes and their hearts by dragging her to socials, treating her to spa days, and electing her to the local school board.

As Lars, the community, and we learn to love and respect Bianca, humor turns to sorrow. Lars contin-

ues to meet the good doctor, who subtly peels back layers of psychological wounds to get to the root of Lars' neuroses (he recoils from touch) and tinker with his issues. Lars' measured reconciliation with his own emotional baggage is perfectly and profoundly poignant.

Dramedy is a tricky business; it's not easy striking the right balance of laughter and tears, especially when your heroine is a life-sized synthetic siren. Director Craig Gillespie gets it right, guiding his actors with a deft touch and choosing plausible pathos over lewd laughs or cloying comedy. Nancy Oliver's scripting is smart and snappy.

Gosling and Schneider are spot on as brothers coming to terms with their own roles in a shared past. Mortimer is a dream: sweet, sensitive and charmingly astute. Clarkson plays it smart as the voice of reason, and Kelli Garner is marvelously daft as Lars' desperately flirtatious co-worker who yearns for more than standard water-cooler stuff. Kudos to costumer Gerri Gillan for going all out with an unsightly parade of Midwestern woolery in the form of fashionably unfortunate argyle and Fair Isle sweaters.

Tender, thoughtful and distinctive.



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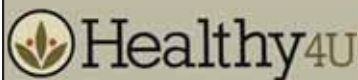


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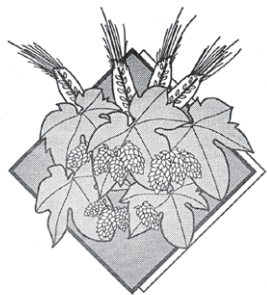
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Sports

A LOOK AT THE LOCAL SPORTS SCENE

Sharks clinch league title

Mikhail 'Tree' Torru kicks the ball with Spencer Weberski in the background as the Mustang Sharks (Division III) coached by Ziad Tleimat and Steven Hoffman clinch the U-15 Boys Al Caffodio League title with a 6-1 win over the Mustang United. The Sharks defense led by Jacob Clark, Derek Morefield, Stephen Armstrong and Kevin Trisko didn't allow a shot on goal until the Sharks were leading with a score of 3-0 early in the second half.

Six different Sharks' offensive players shared in the scoring. Casey Sbrana started it off with a goal shot outside the 18-yard line, and Patrick Oswald gave the Sharks their second point right before the half, with a great set up pass from Zuheir Tleimat.

Tleimat's third goal for the team was headed into the net with an assist from Weberski. Torru scored midway through the second half with an assist from forward Jordon Giusti who scored their fifth point. Rhys Tong-Jones brought the final goal score to 6 with an assist from forward Tleimat. Goalkeeper Austin Anderson's defensive leadership and great saves gave the Sharks what they needed to keep the United at bay.



Eagles win Kick or Treat

The Mustang U12 Eagles brought home their second first-place trophy of the season from the annual Kick or Treat Invitational held in Fremont over the Oct. 27-28 weekend. The Eagles beat teams from Fremont, Elk Grove, Palo Alto, Mountain View and Los Altos.

Sunday's championship game had an exciting finish after double overtime and several successful penalty kicks with awesome Mustang goal protection provided by Taylor Partin.

The Eagles also brought home first-place trophies from the 21st annual Golden Gate Invitational Soccer Tournament held Sept. 29-30 at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, beating teams from Lamorinda, San Francisco, and Mill Valley. Sarah Luther had three goals in Saturday's first game. Sunday's championship game had an exciting finish after double overtime and several successful penalty kicks.



Celebrating the Golden Gate win are: (row 1) Phoebe Ritter, (row 2) Melissa Freemon, Jessica Schwartz, (row 3) Gabby Franklin, Kate Berry, Mariah Kitchin, (row 4) Greg Schwartz, Taylor Partin, Olivia Schikora, Stephanie Aurelius, Bethany Ritter, (row 5) Phil Ritter, Madison Laird, Amanda Saunders, Sarah Luther, Alina Kitchin, Britt Geary, Emma Sol and John Schikora. Missing is head coach Lee Geary

PREP SCHEDULE

Friday, Nov. 2

Football: San Ramon Valley at Livermore, 7 p.m.
Monte Vista vs. Foothill, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 3

Cross Country: EBAL Championships at Shadow Cliffs Park
Water Polo: NCS Second Round

Tuesday, Nov. 6

Women's Volleyball: San Ramon Valley vs. Livermore, 6 p.m.
Monte Vista at Foothill, 6 p.m.
Water Polo: NCS Quarterfinals

Thursday, Nov. 8

Women's Volleyball: San Ramon Valley at Monte Vista, 6 p.m.
Water Polo: NCS Semifinals

Friday, Nov. 9

Football: San Ramon Valley vs. Monte Vista, 7 p.m.

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Outlaws win Harvest Cup

The girls U10 Mustang Outlaws were the U10 Division 1 Harvest Cup Champions for the second year in a row. The Harvest Cup tournament was played at Sonoma State University. The Outlaws played five games for the weekend, scoring 19 goals and only allowing two goals.

Calendar

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

Art

Art Show The Contra Costa Academy of Fine Art is holding an art show in Bank of America in Alamo from Nov. 10-24. Paintings will be accepted and judged on Friday, Nov. 9, and prizes awarded.

Porcelain Art by Eugenia Zobel Wente Vineyards Estate Winery will host a Porcelain Art exhibit by Eugenia W. Zobel from until Nov. 29, at Wente Vineyards Estate Winery, 5565 Tesla Rd., Livermore. The gallery is open during normal business hours. An artist reception will be held from 1-3 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 4. Call 443-7266 or visit www.eugeniastudio.8m.com.

Author Visit

Rakestraw Books Authors Rakestraw Books will host numerous authors: Rowan Jacobsen, author of "Geography of Oysters" at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 6; Judith Jones, author of "Tenth Muse: My Life in Food" at 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 9; Rudolph Chelminski, author of "I'll Drink to That" 7 p.m., Monday, Nov. 12; Dave Isay, author of "Listening Is an Act of Love" at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 14 and Penny Warner, author of "Official Nancy Drew Handbook: Skills, Tips and Life Lessons" at 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 30, all at Rakestraw Books, 409 Railroad Ave., Danville. Most events required reservations, call 837-7337.

Clubs

Alamo Cribbage Club The club plays cribbage for fun. It meets at 6:15 p.m. every Wednesday at the Safeway conference room, 200 Alamo Plaza, Alamo. Call 284-7044 or e-mail almoy1@prodigy.net.

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

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

Alamo-Danville Newcomers' Club This club is open to new and long-time women residents of Alamo and Danville interested in making new friends in the area. Their Prospective Member Coffee is held the fourth Thursday of the month, and a monthly luncheon on the second Tuesday. Call 775-3233 or visit www.alamodanville-newcomers.com.

Danville Lions Club The Danville Lions Club meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m., at the Brass Door Restaurant, 2154 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. Join as their guest to learn the contribution you can make as a Lion. For information, call 984-1541.

Danville Mid-day Referral Group, BNI Danville Mid-day Referral Group, a chapter of Business Network International, meets from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., every Wednesday, at Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Dr., Danville. Call Eric Samuels at 946-1400.

Danville-Alamo Garden Club Danville-Alamo Garden Club will host their monthly meeting from 9:30 a.m.-noon, Thursday, Nov. 8, at the Alamo Women's Club, 1401 Danville Blvd., Alamo. Speaker Rosalind Creasy will speak to the group. This event is free. Call 837-4904.

Exchange Club San Ramon Valley Scott Perkins, flight engineer at Lawrence Livermore Lab, is the featured speaker at the Exchange Club of San Ramon Valley's luncheon

from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 14, at Faz Restaurant, 600 Hartz Ave., Danville. He will be talking about the Lab's projects, as well as his own experiences as a flight engineer. Cost is \$16. Call 275-2412 or e-mail coachstepper@yahoo.com.

Homeowner/Homebuyer Book Club The Homeowner/Homebuyer Book Club is a place to learn, share and discuss. It meets at 6 p.m. the first Monday of each month, at 3223 Crow Canyon Road, second floor Conference room, San Ramon. Call 397-2093.

Kiwanis San Ramon Valley The San Ramon Valley Kiwanis meets from noon-1:30 p.m. every Thursday, at Round Hill Country Club, 3169 Roundhill Road, Alamo. Meeting includes a guest speaker and lunch. For information, visit its Web site at www.kiwanis-srv.org.

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

SIR Monthly Luncheon Sons in Retirement will host a luncheon at 10:45 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 21, at San Ramon Golf Club, 9450 Firest Lane. The day will include a social hour, buffet lunch and a speaker of local interest. Cost is \$20. Call 828-5688 or visit www.128.sirbranch.com.

Valley Stitchers Guild This club will host Jean Cacicedo, a nationally known textile artist, at 10 a.m., Monday, Nov. 5, at Faith Luthern Church, 50 Woodworth Lane, Pleasant Hill. Cost is \$5 for this meeting; annual memberships are \$25. Call 947-5817.

Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 75 The organization meets at 7:30 p.m., every second Thursday of the month, at Danville Veteran's Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. For information, call Post Commander Tony Carnemolla at 932-4042 or visit www.vfw.org.

Concerts

'American Landscape' Contra Costa Wind Symphony presents "American Landscape" at 8 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 4, at the Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. General admission is \$18, \$15 for seniors and \$12 for students. Call 943-7469 or visit www.dlrca.org.

'Songs of the Season' Danville Girls Chorus and the San Ramon Valley High School Chamber Singers present "Songs of the Season" at 10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 29, at Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$10; \$7 for children 14 and under. Call 943-7469.

Events

Dance Performance Blackhawk Museum will host "Reminiscence: American Art Dance of Isadora Duncan" at 2 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 4, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. This event is free with museum admission. Call 736-2277.

Healing the Children of Abraham Beth Chaim Congregation will host Eliyahu McLean and Ghassan Manasra for a special gathering on "Healing the Children of Abraham" at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 6, at Beth Chaim Congregation, 1800 Holbrook Dr., Danville. Donations will benefit the work of Jerusalem Peacemakers. Visit www.jerusalempeacemakers.org.

Ski and Snow Board Swap Update your ski and snowboard equipment at the SRVHS Ski and Snow Board Swap from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 3-4, at San Ramon

Valley High School, 501 Danville Blvd., Danville. New and used equipment at great prices. Cost is \$5 (children 14 years and under are free with an adult). To sell your equipment, visit www.danville.com/skiswap.

Veterans Day Communities of San Ramon Valley are invited to honor all of our military service veterans at 10:45 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 11, at the Performing Art Center, San Ramon Valley High School, 501 Danville Blvd., Danville. Individuals wishing to display their Memorabilia should contact Tony at 932-4042 or 820-5747.

Exhibits

'Leaded' "Leaded" curator, Elizabeth Schlatter, will discuss different approaches in making art at 10 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 14, at the Bedford Gallery. The exhibit will remain on view until Dec. 22. Call 295-1418 or visit www.bedfordgallery.org.

COLORS! Judy Seidel and Tivol Studios Art Show Worthington Gallery West will host an art show featuring Judy Seidel and Jane Tivol from 6-8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 17, at Worthington Gallery West, 739 Main St., Pleasanton. The exhibit runs from Nov. 17-Dec. 29. Call 485-1183.

Fundraisers

2nd Annual Antique Appraisal Show San Ramon Senior Center

Foundation will host the second annual Antique Appraisal Show from noon-4 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 3, at the San Ramon Senior Center, 9300 Alcosta Blvd. Professional appraisers will verbally appraise such objects as coins, toys, jewelry, stamp historical documents and letters and more. Appraisals are \$10 per antique. Call 973-3250.

8th Annual Biletnikoff Foundation Celebrity Crab Fest and Sports Auction Come and enjoy Crab Fest 2007 from 6 p.m.-midnight, Friday, Nov. 9, at the Marriott, 2600 Bishop Dr., San Ramon. The night will include great food and entertainment, a performance by the Raiderettes, a demonstration by artist David Garibaldi, the awarding of \$1,000 education grants to deserving high school seniors, and live and silent auctions. Cost is \$95. Proceeds benefit the Biletnikoff Foundation. Call 556-2525 or visit www.biletnikoff.net.

9th Hats Off America Run and Walk Come meet the Gold Star Arroyave family and Congressman Jerry McNerney at the 9th annual Hats Off America Run and Walk from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, at Sycamore Valley Park, 2101 Holbrook Dr., Danville. Runners and volunteers will receive a red t-shirt and lunch donated by El Balazo Restaurant. Cost is \$35 per person, but no fee for volunteers. Call 855-1950 or visit www.hatsoffamerica.us.

Artful Living Home Tour Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. will host the 2007 Artful Living Home Tour from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday-Saturday, Nov. 9-10, at four residences in Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door. Proceeds benefit the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay. Call 284-3740 or visit www.jloeb.org.

Bally Cares Bally Total Fitness is teaming up with the Food Bank of Contra Costa County during "Bally Cares" until Nov. 21. Members and guests can help donate at any Bally Total Fitness. Each donation participant will receive a free Bally Cares coupon book valued at over \$75. Call 838-4960, ext. 28 or visit www.ballyfitness.com.

Candy Cane Christmas Boutique Macedonian Outreach will host the Candy Cane Christmas Boutique from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, at Creekside Community Church, 1350 Danville Blvd., Alamo (across from

WEEKEND PREVIEW



MUSEUM OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY

The First Families of our Valley

School children listen to docent Carmen Curtis tell about the Museum of the San Ramon Valley's "An Indian Life Exhibit: The First Families of Our Valley" which runs until Nov. 13, at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, 205 Railroad Ave., Danville. Museum hours are 1-4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday and 1-4 p.m., Saturday. Call 837-3750 or visit www.museumsrv.org.

the Alamo Women's Club). Items will include hundreds of Christmas gift items, plus baked goods, gift baskets, jewelry, toys, linens, prizes, quilts, silent auction and a Greek luncheon. Lunch is \$10. Proceeds will benefit the Children in the Balkans. Call Vula at 837-7279 or Dee at 820-1432.

Guatemalan Handcraft and Antique Sale Pan En La Boca will host a Guatemalan Handcraft and Antique Sale from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, at 955 Blemer Rd., Danville. Proceeds will benefit an orphanage, Safe Homes for Children, in Guatemala. Items that will be sold can be viewed at www.pan-en-la-boca.org. For information, call Evelyn Candland at 855-9604.

One Warm Coat Golden Hills Brokers are collecting clean, reusable coats and jackets to give to those in need in Oakland until Nov. 15. Coats may be dropped off at Golden Hills Brokers, 3223 Crow Canyon Rd., Suite 110, San Ramon. The offices are open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Saturday. Call 216-4590.

Holiday

8th Annual Animal Lover's Boutique Feline Medical Center will turn its lobby into the 8th Animal Lover's Boutique, from 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, at Feline Medical Center, 3160 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. Proceeds will benefit the Valley Humane Society's Just Like New Fund. Call 846-2512.

Operation Christmas Child Bay Area residents will be able to drop off shoe boxes filled with toys, school supplies and personal items for Operation Christmas Child from Nov. 12-19, at Creekside Community Church, 1350 Danville Blvd., Alamo. Call (800) 383-1459 or visit www.samaritanspurse.org.

Kids and Teens

Children's Storytimes Danville Library hosts storytimes for children of all ages until Nov. 14. Mother Goose Time for children ages from birth to 24 months is at 10:15 a.m., Mondays and Tuesdays; Toddler Storytime is for children ages 25 months to 3 years old at 11:15 a.m., Mondays and Tuesdays and



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Dana Smith and His Performing Dog Lacey Danville Library will host Dana Smith and his Performing Dog Lacey at 4 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 13, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. Come and hear Lacey "sing." This event is free and suitable for all ages. Call 837-4889.

Henna Art for Teens Friends of the Danville Library will host Darci Vasudev for a night of henna art including its history and culture at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 13, at Danville Library, Mt. Diablo Room, 400 Front St. This event is free, but registration is required. Call 837-4889.

Lectures/ Workshops

Creative Expressions This workshop is for cancer patients, their families and friends and allows the opportunity to

express yourself including use of collage, foil tooling and watercolor from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 3, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Call 933-0107.

Genetics and Cancer Michael Manuel, M.D., M.P.H., with Bay Area Gynecology Oncology will discuss the role of genetics in gynecologic cancers, BRCA/Breast and HNPCC/ hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer syndromes from 2-4 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 8, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. This event is free. Call 933-0107.

Rebel with a Cause Town of Danville and Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley present an "Introduction to San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art" by Marsha Holm from 1-2 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 7, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. This event is free, but reservations are required by calling 820-3125.

Literary Events

Contra Costa Jewish Book Festival Renowned peace negotiator, Dennis Ross, will give a tutorial on the nuts and bolts of epic negotiating at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 7, at Contra Costa JCC, 2071 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. Cost is \$20. Visit www.jfed.org.

Poetry Weekend Enjoy a weekend of poetry while discussing "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," by Coleridge, and poetry by Robert Hass, D. H. Lawrence, Shakespeare, Billy Collins, Robinson Jeffers and others from 8:30 a.m.-noon, Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 10-11, at Westminster House, 512 Hemme Ave., Alamo. Cost is \$150, including lodging, meals, books, and a party. Call (408) 353-6340.

Live Music

Jazz at Peace Peace Lutheran Church will host their Jazz at Peace series featuring the Dave Rocha Quintet at 5 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 11, at Peace Lutheran Church, 3201 Camino Tassajara, Danville. This event is free. Call 648-7000 or visit www.peacejourney.org.

Miscellaneous

American Art Dance Lois Flood will perform "Reminiscence: American Art Dance of Isadora Duncan" from 2-3:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 4, at Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Cost is \$8 for adults, \$5 for students and seniors. Call 736-2277.

On Stage

'A Little Help From Our Friends' Diablo Actors' Ensemble presents "A Little Help From our Friends" which will feature American Musical Theatre classics from 7:30-10 p.m., Friday-Saturday, Nov. 9-10 and Nov. 16-17, at Cue Productions, 1835 Colfax St., Concord. Tickets are \$25. Call 482-5110 or visit www.diabloactors.com.

'Bye, Bye Birdie' Local youth are presenting "Bye, Bye Birdie" at 7:30 p.m., Friday-Saturday, Nov. 2-3, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 655 Old Orchard Dr., Danville. Admission is free, but donations are suggested and will be donated to the Wheelchair Foundation. Call 831-3027 or e-mail byebyebirdiedanville@yahoo.com.

'Ruthless!' the Musical Role Players Ensemble Theatre presents "Ruthless!" the Musical at 8 p.m., Thursdays-Saturdays, and at 2 p.m., Sundays, until Nov. 3, at Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Tickets are \$20-25; \$15 for students and groups of 10 or more. Call 820-1278.

Carnival of Chaos A wild, unpredictable, magical show of farce and lunacy including juggling and acrobatics "Carnival of Chaos" will be held from 7-8:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 3, at Front Row Theater, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$14 for adults, \$9 for youth under 12 years old and seniors. Call 973-3372 or visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com.

The Mousetrap Center REPeritory Company presents "The Mousetrap" with different showtimes until Nov. 17, at Center REPeritory Company, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$15-40. Call 943-7469 or visit www.dlrca.org.

Political Notes

Obama '08 Volunteer Meeting Please join other volunteers to discuss campaign strategy and volunteer opportunities for presidential candidate Barack Obama from 6:45-8:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 5, at a private residence in Danville. Call 837-7096.

Seniors

Free Flu Shots for Older Adults San Ramon Regional Medical Center is offering free flu shots to adults ages 65 and older from 9-10 a.m., and for adults 50 years and older from 10 a.m.-noon, Friday, Nov. 9, at San Ramon Regional Medical Center, South Conference Room, 7777 Norris Canyon Rd. No reservations will be taken and will be offered as supply lasts. Call 275-8230.

Spiritual

Living a Jewish Life in the Tri-Valley Hadassah Shalom Chapter presents an evening with special guest Fruma Resnick who talk about "Living a Jewish Life in the Tri-Valley" from 7-9 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 15, at Beth Chaim Congregation, 1800 Holbrook Dr., Danville. Call 968-9240.

Support Groups

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

Bipolar Support Group The Tri-Valley Support Group provides free peer support for people with mood disorders. It meets from 7:15-8:45 p.m., every Wednesday, at St. Clare's Episcopal Church, 3350 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton. Call 560-0842

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.

Win Great Seats to Watch the Raiders Whomp the Bears



Win Tickets at the Heritage Estates Tailgate Party! November 11th • 10am-Noon

Free hot dogs, pretzels and beverages, and KKIQ Radio will be on hand for a live remote as we watch the Raiders send the Bears to an early hibernation. We're also giving away two sets of tickets to the game. And the best part? A private limousine will whisk the winners away to the game and bring them back, too. Stop by and whoop it up!



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Writers Wanted

The Academy for Alternative Journalism, established by papers like this one to promote diversity in the alternative press, seeks talented journalists and students (college seniors and up) for a paid summer writing program at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. The eight-week program (June 22 - August 17, 2008) aims to recruit talented candidates from diverse backgrounds and train them in alt-weekly style feature writing. Ten participants will be chosen and paid \$3,000 plus housing and travel allowances. For information and an application visit <http://aaj.aan.org>. You may also email us at altacademy@northwestern.edu. Applications must be postmarked by February 8, 2008. Northwestern University is an equal opportunity educator and employer. (AAN CAN)

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210 Garage/Estate Sales

Pleasanton, 1005 Laguna Creek Lane, Nov. 3, 8-3

Pleasanton, 1382 Royal Creek Ct., Nov. 3, 8-2

Multi-Family Garage Sale, Sat. Nov.3, 8-2. Like new twm cherry sleigh bed(hdbd and ftbd), sofabad, wrought iron kitchen tble w/4 chrs, white headboard, floral bedding, wt. bench,lawn mower,books,skis.

Pleasanton, 3835 Vineyard Avenue, Saturday, Nov. 10, 8-5
Antiques, ect., everything must go.

Pleasanton, 4142 Francisco St, Nov 3rd 9 - 2:00p.m.

Pleasanton, 4370 Second Street, november 3, 2007, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Girls size 8 and 10 party dresses, women's ann taylor suits, household goods.

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Meet Serena, a friendly adult female German Shepherd who loves cookies. Serena's previous owner moved to an apartment so Serena is looking for a new home with a nice yard to play in and an attentive family. Serena is said to get along well with everyone except cats. If you would like more information about Serena (pet # 75481), visit her at the East County Animal Shelter, 4595 Gleason Drive in Dublin, open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call 803-7040. She would love it if you brought her a cookie!

Listing & Selling Diablo



1675 A EL NIDO

END UNIT DIABLO CHALET

This home is filled with light and character. It boasts beautiful views of the first fairway, two patios and a large wrap around deck. Built in 1918 the home offers @ 2750 sq ft of spacious living. Enjoy the convenience of living at the Club.

\$1,175,000



2059 CASA NUESTRA

FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY

.77 acre lot with 2 homes, located close to Diablo Country Club. Serene setting. The homes, 1880 sq ft and 1000 sq ft, are rented. Remodel existing structures or build your dream home.

\$1,799,000



1904 LA CADENA

Historic home on @ 1 level acre. Lower Diablo, surrounded by oak trees, this property features a classic old home, apartment, guest house, horse coral, and a beautiful creek side setting. Call for more details.

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City		
# of Bedrooms	Street Address	\$ Price of property
Day, Date & Time Open	Agent Name Real Estate Agency	Phone Number

DEADLINE IS TUESDAY 10 A.M.

FAX TO: (925) 837-2278

**OR E-MAIL TO :
OpenHomes@DanvilleWeekly.com**

Name: _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Space available
only basis

Danville
WEEKLY

Real Estate

OPEN HOME GUIDE AND REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

SALES AT A GLANCE

This week's data represents homes sold during October 2007

Alamo	Lowest sale reported: \$465,500	Average sales reported: \$1,800,500
Total sales reported: 3	Highest sale reported: \$1,329,000	Walnut Creek
Lowest sale reported: \$1,260,000	Average sales reported: \$829,200	Total sales reported: 21
Highest sale reported: \$1,450,000	Diablo	Lowest sale reported: \$150,000
Average sales reported: \$1,360,000	Total sales reported: 1	Highest sale reported: \$1,382,000
Danville	Lowest sale reported: \$1,800,500	Average sales reported: \$574,524
Total sales reported: 30	Highest sale reported: \$1,800,500	

Homes Today



BY JOE COMBS

Diablo real estate year in review

Nancy and I have been asked a number of times by Diablo residents to feature their community in one of our articles. Analyzing sales in the Diablo Community is challenging because there are very few home sales on an annual basis, they frequently change hands off market, and the quality and condition of the homes within this small community vary tremendously. Just the same we thought we would give it a try and prepare our first annual Diablo Year in Review using the data we have available.

For the year ended Dec. 31, 2006, unit sales of single family Diablo Homes were down about 40 percent from the 15 reported sales in 2005 to nine in 2006. Average unit sales during the past five years have been 13 homes, so on a unit basis Diablo Home sales are down 31 percent from their five-year average. This parallels what we are seeing in Danville and Alamo.

Price decline in this same reporting period was not so drastic. Average reported price paid for a single family home in Diablo during 2005 was \$2,319,000 (Note: two home sales in 2005 were reported at \$0 dollars and are excluded from all calculations) while the average price paid in 2006 was \$2,177,500 representing a 6.2 percent decline in average selling price. For the statistics fans among you, median price declined nearly 9 percent from \$1,950,000 to \$1,775,000 during the same time period. Interestingly, both Danville and Alamo show price appreciation during this same time period. The reader is again reminded that there were very few home sales in Diablo and these values could be dramatically different had more homes sold during this time period.

During 2006 the highest reported price paid for a Diablo home was \$4,000,000 while in 2005 the highest sales price was \$4,919,000. The lowest price reported for a single family home during 2006 was \$1,235,000, significantly more than the \$950,000 low price for 2005. In direct opposition to the significant decline in average reported selling price,

average price paid per square foot rocketed upward from \$558 to \$653 or about 17 percent from '05 to '06. Noteworthy to this dramatic jump per square foot price is the sale of one property during 2005 that sold for the mind-boggling low price of \$330 per square foot, or \$228 per square foot less than the 2005 average. The highest reported price paid per square foot in Diablo during 2005 was \$827 and the highest reported in 2006 was \$935. In stark contrast to the lowest reported price paid of \$330 per square foot in 2005, a \$521 per square foot was the lowest price recorded in 2006.

Looking back to the good old days of 2002 (Note: three homes sales in 2002 were reported at \$0 and are excluded from all calculations), the average reported Diablo home commanded a price of \$1,913,076. The lowest price paid for a home then was \$840,000 and the highest was \$4,545,000. Simply put, the average reported selling price for a Diablo home is up about 13.8 percent from 2002. This number is interesting in that the average increase in reported price over the past five years for Danville is 73.6 percent, and Alamo is up 57.5 percent in the same time period. If averages have any meaning at all, another way to look at this situation based solely upon the reported numbers is that \$1 invested in Alamo in 2002 is now worth \$1.58. A dollar invested in Danville is now worth \$1.74 and a dollar invested in Diablo is worth \$1.14. Go figure!

To receive a copy of our annual Diablo Market Review including the complete detail, please send an e-mail to joecombs@thecombssteam.com and place Diablo Market Review in the subject line. You will not be spammed. No e-mail, no worries; call me at 989-6086 to arrange delivery. We will be posting this article and updates to our newest Web site, diabloneighbors.com

Data presented in this column is based in whole or in part on data supplied by the Contra Costa and Alameda MLS service and other quoted sources. Joe and Nancy Combs, Remax and the MLS service do not guarantee the accuracy of this information.

DANVILLE WEEKLY

OPEN HOMES THIS WEEKEND

For an online version with mapping or to list your open home go to: www.DanvilleWeekly.com/real_estate

BLACKHAWK

4 Bedrooms			
29 Chestnut Pl.	\$1,975,000		
Sat/Sun 1-4	Coldwell Banker	831-3353	
5 Bedrooms			
3401 Deer Ridge Dr.	\$2,549,000		
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel	998-1818	

DANVILLE

3 Bedrooms			
31 Mountain Valley Pl.	\$695,000		
Sat/Sun 1-4	Prudential CA	519-1455	
4 Bedrooms			
1143 Cheshire Cir.	\$1,149,000		
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel	998-1818	

5353 Old School Rd.	\$1,975,000		
Sat/Sun 1-4	Coldwell Banker	831-3353	
2651 Finley Rd.	\$3,700,000		
Sun 1-5	Keller Williams	260-8883	

5 Bedrooms			
405 Skycrest Dr.	\$990,000		
Sun 1-4	Keller Williams	260-8883	

SAN RAMON

2 Bedrooms			
108A Norris Canyon Pl.	\$405,888		
Sun 1-4	Keller Williams	260-2508	

3 Bedrooms			
3821 Crow Canyon Rd.	\$499,500		
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel	968-1452	
421 Pinenut Ct.	\$649,500		
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel	968-1452	

4 Bedrooms			
2212 Maidenhair Wy.	\$819,950		
Sat 1-4	Prudential CA	734-5061	
8075 Briar Oaks Dr.	\$859,500		
Sat 1-4	Alain Pinel	968-1452	

DUBLIN

3 Bedrooms			
7566 Ironwood Dr.	\$560,000		
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel	583-1131	

PLEASANTON

3 Bedrooms			
3193 Montpelier Ct.	\$719,000		
Sun 1-4	Re/Max Accord	922-1575	

4 Bedrooms			
307 Brianne Ct.	\$1,249,000		
Sat 1-4			
Century 21 Mission - Bishop Real Estate 699-9508			

6828 Corte Salcedo	\$819,000		
Sun 1-4	Prudential CA	734-5061	

LIVERMORE

4 Bedrooms			
575 Brookfield Dr.	\$645,000		
Sun 1-4	Hometown GMAC	455-7020	

5 Bedrooms			
5679 Dresslar Cir.	\$879,000		
Sun 2-4	Alain Pinel	398-6706	

HOME SALES

Source: California REsource

This week's data represents homes sold during October 2007

Alamo

- 141 Bolla Avenue Solomon Trust to G. & C. Kerr for \$1,370,000
- 35 Oak Trail Court Masles Trust to P. & A. Rodrik for \$1,260,000
- 205 St. Paul Drive J. & S. Garrett to T. Huang for \$1,450,000

Danville

- 305 Camaritas Way Shah Trust to J. & N. Anderson for \$1,025,000
- 1512 Colchester Street GMAC Model Home Finance to J. & J. Robinson for \$1,179,000
- 1518 Colchester Street GMAC Model Home Finance to R. & E. Trencheny for \$1,160,000
- 428 Corte Dorado Fust Trust to R. & M. Velasco for \$1,080,000
- 575 El Capitan Drive J. Vanbackle to H. Alaoui for \$870,000

- 160 Emerald Drive Majors Trust to M. & M. Materazo for \$1,329,000

- 816 Griffon Court Shapell Industries to S. Singh for \$1,029,500

- 833 Griffon Court Shapell Industries to S. & J. Reid for \$1,040,500

- 845 Griffon Court Shapell Industries to K. & R. Taylor for \$1,080,500

- 709 Mastino Court Shapell Industries to E. & M. Zhao for \$904,500

- 124 Menton Court KB Homes to V. Patel for \$872,500

- 196 Mont Blanc Court R. & M. Velasco to G. & M. Lambert for \$980,000

- 1323 Monterosso Street Lennar Homes to B. Low for \$1,279,000

- 640 Morninghome Road Meritage Mortgage to J. Sylwanowicz for \$590,000

- 130 Nanterre Street KB Homes to T. Yeh for \$849,500

- 581 Old Farm Road Einstoss Trust to L. & J. Cobain for \$549,000

- 261 Pembroke Street Shapell Industries to S. Azimi for \$502,000

- 276 Pembroke Street Shapell Industries to J. An for \$502,000

- 278 Pembroke Street Shapell Industries to K. Sanford for \$465,500

- 282 Pembroke Street Shapell Industries to K. Zhu for \$502,000

- 289 Pembroke Street Shapell Industries to M. Sattar for \$502,000

- 293 Pembroke Street Shapell Industries to S. Muthusamy for \$465,500

- 297 Pembroke Street Shapell Industries to Q. Zhang for \$502,000

- 296 Ramona Road R. Dyer to G. & N. Ruh for \$915,000

- 1179 River Rock Lane Asset Backed Securities to Fast Land Partners for \$650,000

- 3850 Sheffield Circle N. Hughes to P. Nowak for \$915,000

- 551 Silver Oak Lane J. & J. Blick to J. Facca for \$735,000

- 548 Sycamore Circle Sundberg Trust to Morgan Trust for \$627,000

- 407 Triomphe Court R. & V. Dutto to J. & R. Knight for \$960,000

- 307 Valle Vista Drive Wells Fargo Bank to M. & S. Jacobs for \$815,000

Diablo

- 39 Bella Vista Avenue R. Oldenburg to R. Elvidge for \$1,800,500

Walnut Creek

- 2640 Buena Vista Avenue S. & L. Salazar to M. Simon for \$675,000

- 1703 Candelero Court H. Kramer to K. & A. Rai for \$535,000

- 1706 Comstock Drive Gallagher Properties to Adams Ventures for \$1,382,000

- 1481 Marchbanks Drive #4 J. Scharnikow to S. Gavigan for \$275,000

- 215 Miramonte Road G. Levine to D. Friedman for \$795,000

- 1024 Mt. View Boulevard Long Beach Mortgage to M. & M. Phan for \$750,000

- 1655 North California Boulevard #134 Trinity Avenue Limited to M. Miramontes for \$489,000

- 1655 North California Boulevard #239 Trinity Avenue Limited to R. & R. Berninzoni for \$776,000

- 1655 North California Boulevard #339 Trinity Avenue Limited to J. & H. Gentile for \$766,000

- 1655 North California Boulevard #439 Trinity Avenue Limited to F. & M. Granzotto for \$789,000

- 420 North Civic Drive #307 K. Ridings to Derrick Trust for \$361,000

- 410 North Civic Drive M. Silva to N. Hansen for \$295,000

- 1940 Pomar Way S. Rosenstrauch to L. & L. Chen for \$438,000

- 2520 Ptarmigan Drive #2 Hall Trust to J. Howard for \$330,000

- 1109 Skycrest Drive #9 Frank Trust to B. & E. Kobierski for \$150,000

- 1850 Stratton Circle J. Carolo to G. Hink for \$755,000

- 628 Tarrytown Court R. & V. Russell to D. & V. Tugwell for \$720,000

- 5349 Terra Granada Drive #1B E. Erickson to G. & J. Goodshaw for \$559,000

- 5301 Terra Granada Drive #2A Hatcher Trust to Geyer Trust for \$500,000

- 5357 Terra Granada Drive #2B Smith Trust to Mckern Trust for \$410,000

- 3183 Wayside Plaza #303 J. Short to K. Yung for \$315,000

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Construction Preview Tour Event Saturday, Nov. 3rd

Presentation and tour starts at 12 Noon



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