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Homework— How much is too much?

District evaluating
pros and cons, whys
and wherefores

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Danville

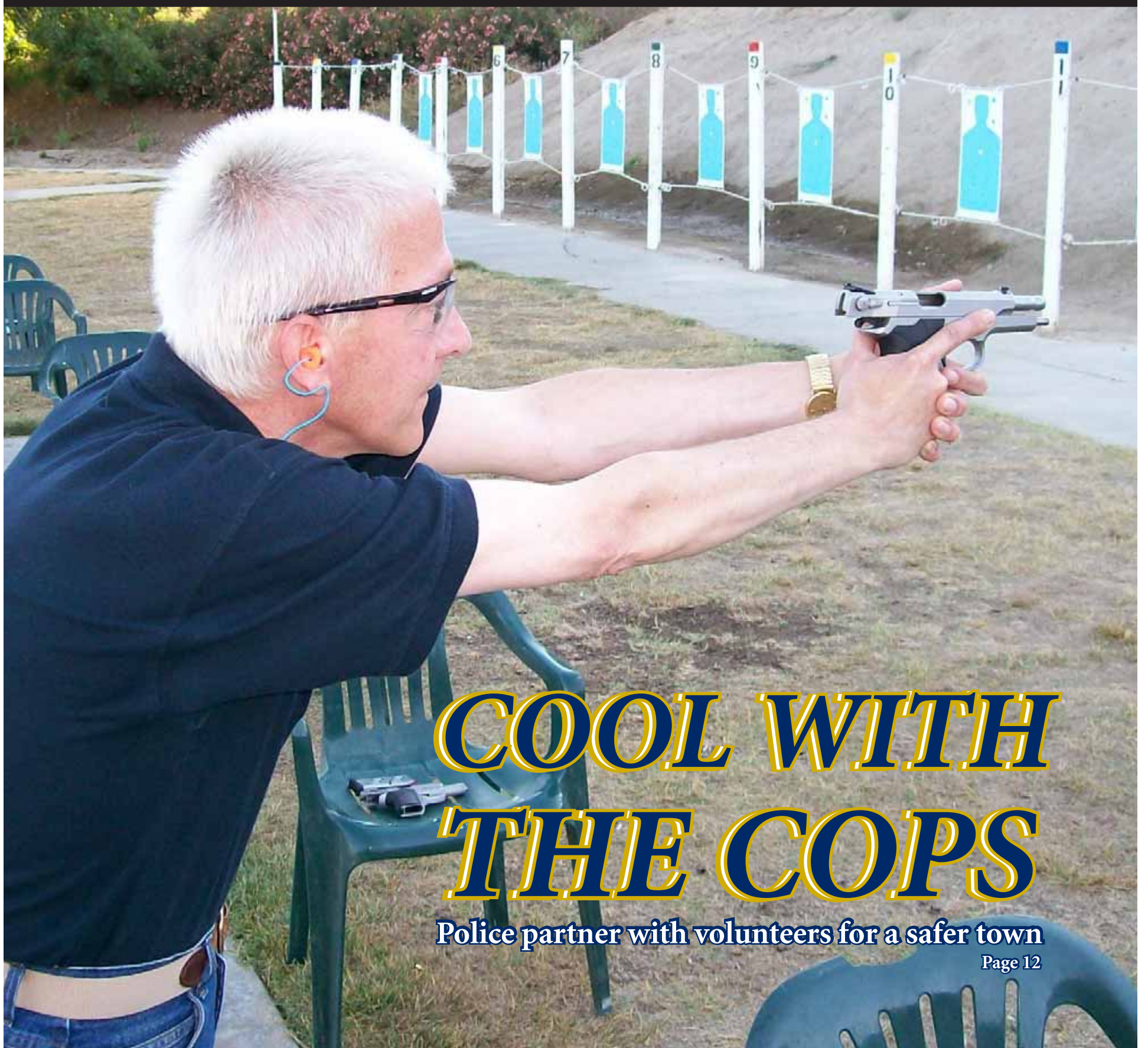
W E E K L Y

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One school, one lunch

MVHS students
question dividing
lunch period

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COOL WITH THE COPS

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Streetwise

ASKED AT THE DANVILLE LIBRARY AND AROUND TOWN

Q: The Berkeley City Council has asked Marine recruiters to leave the city. What do you think of its stand?



I'm against the Iraq war. But this is irresponsible. I hope they're taught a lesson. If people want to join the Marines they should be able to.

Don Vorous
retired manager



If I had business in Berkeley, I would never go there again. It's over the top. The place is just unreal. I admit we're more middle of the road here, more conservative. I have no problem with a stand on the war. But to pick on people who protect your way of life—it's insane. I'm conservative, but I'm the kind of guy who would look at the Obamas.

Jonathan Dirvianskis
retired



I really support what they are doing. Young people don't know much of the world. They are misusing their enthusiasm for the country. It's marketing. They come back with their lives shattered, some without hands. There are 200,000 homeless veterans in this country.

Deb Pal
retired



They have a right to be there just like everybody else. It's a noble thing to do. For all of the other things going on in the city, how can they get rid of that?

Leo Shubin
builder



I can see both sides. A lot of people say they are predatory on low income, less educated people. But at the same time, we need more troops to replace the ones that are over there. They can't do all the fighting themselves. There might be people who want to fight.

Whitney Kirkendall
recent college graduate

COMPILED BY DANVILLE WEEKLY STAFF

ABOUT THE COVER

Dan Hart takes aim on the shooting range, part of the Danville Police Department Citizen Police Academy. After the 12-week course, residents can continue on with training to be part of the Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS). Photo courtesy of Danville Police Department. Cover design by Manuel Valenzuela.

Vol. III, Number 41

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Danville
 WEEKLY

**Supervisors reduce
 Danville Boulevard speed
 limit in Alamo**

Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho announced Monday that the County Board of Supervisors authorized a reduction in the speed limit on Danville Boulevard through downtown Alamo from 30 mph to 25 mph. The new speed limit will be posted between Alamo Way and Apple Tree Lane.

"I have been working with the Alamo Community Council and other local groups to find ways to reduce congestion and improve safety," said Piepho.

Prior to requesting the change, she sought feedback within Alamo on the reduction of the speed limit, and the responses were unanimously in favor of the change.

Piepho also requested the County Public Works Department to reconfigure the intersection at the Stone Valley Road and encouraged the California Highway Patrol to increase enforcement in the area.

**Faulty heating pad
 sets duplex on fire**

An electric malfunction in a heating pad on a bed ignited a bedroom blaze that damaged clothing, draperies, lamps and other bedroom furnishings in a duplex in Danville last week.

The fire was reported at 8:40 p.m. Tuesday at 1991 Camino Ramon Place, said Mike Brown, battalion chief of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District.

"Electrical stuff is part of life," Brown said. "Sometimes malfunctions happen and start fires."

The couple and daughter living in the duplex heard the smoke detector go off and saw the smoke in the bedroom. They called 911, and evacuated. Some of the neighbors also vacated their homes. No one was injured.

Three fire engines, two trucks and a paramedic unit showed up at the scene. Firefighters doused the flames and had the fire under control at 8:55 p.m.

The fire caused \$20,000 worth of structural damage and \$10,000 worth of furnishing damages. Firefighters did not see any problems in the adjacent apartments.

"Smoke detectors are key to getting out of the building safely," said Brown.

**School District seeks
 community input
 on hiring superintendent**

The Board of Education of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District is in the process of selecting a new district superintendent and would like community input about the desired characteristics to be targeted in its recruitment.

"We know it will be very difficult to replace a superintendent with the qualities of Rob Kessler," said Board President Greg Marvel. "We want this process to be thorough and thoughtful, and providing opportunities for community input is critical to the process."

The community is invited to participate in

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ I have a radical view. I'd like to do away with all homework. ”

—Kerry Dickinson, mom who wants homework policy reevaluated. See story, page 7.

Open Forums scheduled for 7-8:15 p.m., Feb. 19 and 20, at the Greenbrook Elementary School Library, 1475 Harlan Drive.

Jake Abbott and Mike Caston of Leadership Associates have been selected to advise the board in the process, and will be collecting input and facilitating the two community forums.

Input may also be sent via fax to (949) 461-9119 or e-mail to leadershipassociates@cox.net. To provide input by phone, please contact Jake Abbott/Mike Caston at (949) 461-9119.

For more information, contact Ginny Haddad at the District Office at 552-2933.

**Students run mock trails
 all this month**

Contra Costa County's future lawyers, district attorneys, judges, court reporters and courtroom artists are getting their judicial feet wet at the 27th annual Mock Trial being held Tuesday and Thursday evenings throughout February at the Martinez Superior Court.

Mock Trial is an academic event for high school students, coordinated by the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCOE). The hands-on educational program was created to help students acquire a working knowledge of our judicial system, and to develop analytical abilities and communication skills.

Each year, the Constitutional Rights Foundation creates a trial case based on an important issue facing America's youth. This year's case is *People v. Palmer*, a murder trial. Teams of high school students work with teachers and attorney coaches to prepare their version of the criminal case, from both the prosecution and defense perspectives. Real life judges and attorneys score their performance and provide immediate feedback.

Teams from both Monte Vista and San Ramon Valley high schools are competing. The two highest-scoring teams will advance to the finals Feb. 26. The winning team will then represent Contra Costa County at the State Mock Trial competition in Riverside on March 28-30. The California state finalist will compete in the National Mock Trial Competition, held in Wilmington, Del., on May 8-10.

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

San Ramon eyes Tassajara Valley

City wants 4,900 rural acres under its sphere of influence

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

The Danville Town Council expressed concern at its study session Tuesday morning that San Ramon wants to include the Tassajara Valley in its sphere of influence.

"I'm bothered that they did not even let us know they're thinking of doing this," said Councilman Mike Shimansky.

The sphere of influence is usually determined by the most logical service area for unincorporated areas, said Danville Town Manager Joe Calabrigo. But since San Ramon is near buildout, it would be an opportunity to absorb projected growth. Tassajara Valley is currently under the county's sphere of influence.

Mayor Candace Andersen said she is concerned because San Ramon is ready to go with its Eastside Specific Plan.

"If there is development on our eastern boundary, we want a say in it," said Andersen.

San Ramon issued a study on the sphere of influence amendment to include the 4,900-acre Tassajara

Valley that stated a 20-day public review period was Feb. 4-25. Calabrigo said he heard about the proposal from a Danville resident Feb. 8.

Councilwoman Karen Stepper noted that the study said inclusion of the Tassajara Valley in the San Ramon planning area could improve the city's jobs/housing balance.

"I think we need to sit down and talk to them," she said.

The new sphere of influence would include the area where the 193-unit New Farm development is proposed. In July, county supervisors voted to allow a study of the New Farm plan even though it was outside the urban limit line just passed by voters the previous November to protect Tassajara Valley from development until 2026.

"This is major," said Councilman Newell Americh, adding that it has been the goal of some staff members in San Ramon for some time.

The Town Council members directed Calabrigo to set up a meeting between them and their counterparts in San Ramon to discuss the issue. ■



Wrapped up in quilting project

Grace Damaschino and Carson Sawchuk, second-graders in Nancy Rugani's class at Green Valley Elementary school, show off a quilt they helped make for an auction to raise money for computer labs, music and the library. The theme of the quilt is "Olivia the Piglet," after a children's book the class has enjoyed this year. "She's kind of our mascot," Rugani said. Each student drew or painted a square to add to the professional drawings of the cartoon pig, taken from the book illustrated by Ian Falconer, cover illustrator for the New Yorker magazine. "It really unified the kids," Rugani said. The 10th annual auction will be held at Diablo Country Club at 5 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 23. For more information, call Danielle Bennett at 838-4655.

Friends of stricken bartender start fundraising foundation

\$30,000 has been raised to help with medical and living expenses

by Meghan Neal

When Tyler Beal suffered a severe heart attack in November—leaving his four children with no income for rent, bills and medical insurance expenses—friends of the much-loved bartender decided to help.

Beal, the bar manager at Meenar on Hartz Avenue, is the sole provider for his children: Chad, 19; Eric, 17; Emma, 7; and Owen, 3. Beal's friends and co-workers organized a fund to raise money for the family during this difficult time.

"I don't think people understand how much it means to the family," said Beal's wife, Jennie Peterson. "There really are no words."

The Tyler Beal Foundation is set up through the First Republic Bank in Danville. About \$30,000 has been raised so far, through individual donations and a fundraiser benefit at Meenar.

"We have people coming in all the time," said Paresh Shah, the owner of Meenar. "Tyler's very well known. He's been in the area a long time. His personality—everyone likes him."

The heart attack occurred shortly before Thanksgiving. It resulted in major complications to the brain and sent Beal, 39, into intensive



care, where he was in a coma until recently.

But friends say Beal's condition is improving. He was recently moved from Kaiser Permanente Walnut Creek Medical Center to a rehabilitation clinic in San Leandro.

Beal is speaking now—slowly recounting memories, said Peterson. She said he still doesn't know who she is, but she tells him every day.

"It's hard," she said. "We're focusing on the little progressions."

Though Beal is insured through work, the medical expenses are considerable, coming to about \$300 a day.

Peterson said thanks to the fund, she's been able to spend as much time as possible at the hospital,

which has made a "huge difference."

In December a fundraiser was held at Meenar that started at noon and lasted until 2 a.m. The benefit included a silent auction, and many local businesses helped out by donating goods and services such as jewelry and dinners for two.

Meenar "regulars" chipped in, too, bringing in items from home to be auctioned off. Half of the bar's proceeds from the day went to the fund, Shah said.

"Until we had his benefit I never realized how many people one person can touch in so many ways," said Peterson.

Matthew Stalbird, a barista at Starbucks on Hartz Avenue, called Beal "one of the VIPs of the town."

The fund will continue to help support Beal's family while he is in rehabilitation; Shah said he doesn't know how long that will be.

"We have a long way to go," Peterson said, adding, "We have a lot of positive energy, a lot of positive outlooks."

To donate to the Tyler Beal Foundation, visit or call Meenar at 349 Hartz Ave., 838-1186; or First Republic Bank at 680 Hartz Ave., 820-1777. You can also donate via PayPal account, sent to tyandjen-skids@yahoo.com. ■

Fraud hits Alamo shop

Two men allegedly agreed on credit card use at first

by Natalie O'Neill

Robbing a bank. Stealing a car. Mugging a stranger.

There's not much gray area when it comes to these crimes—usually the suspects and the victims both know what role they play.

But what about the crimes where layers of bureaucracy remove the victim from the suspect? A case like this has Alamo Flower Co. owners both confused and scared.

A Danville man allegedly lent a friend his credit card to charge nearly \$12,000 in flowers for a wedding, then falsely reported credit card fraud after he received the bill. The credit card company investigators determined the owner-operated shop was then responsible for the absorbing the thousands of dollars.

"For a small business, that can be a fatal blow," said Alamo Valley Station Clp. Elmer Glasser, who worked on the mid-January case. It is still being investigated.

After Glasser interrogated the men, they both admitted the card was used with the owner's permission, according to police reports.

"He said, 'He never paid me back, so I filed a fraud case,'" Glasser said. "He lied to the credit card company."

Flower store owner and manager Connie Peterson said she was

thrown off because she trusts her customers, often knows them by name, and has never been taken advantage of financially.

"It scares the daylight out of you," she said. "That would be a tremendous loss."

She said it hasn't yet been determined if Alamo Flower Co. will need to absorb the cost. She said it's not unheard of for people in the area to spend that much money on flowers for weddings—and to use credit as payment.

Even in small towns, businesses should get as much information as they can from customers not using cash, Peterson said. Credit card companies are quick to take the side of their customer and it's vital you have as much information on the buyer as possible.

"It's not something you expect to happen," she said.

It's possible the men planned to split the reimbursed money, Glasser said.

White collar crime like fraud, computer scams and identity theft are increasing nationally, thanks in part to the Internet.

"This is a very fast growing crime," Glasser said.

These are difficult crimes to prosecute because of elite defense attorneys and the fact that jurors tend to see these offenses as less serious than ones that directly hurt people. ■

Monte Vista students fight to keep one lunch hour for all

Administrators say split lunch time better with 2,400 students

by Natalie O'Neill

Hundreds of Monte Vista High School students banded together this week—donning white hand-drawn T-shirts with the slogan “One School, One Lunch”—to demonstrate that the student body shouldn’t be split up during lunch period.

The free period is a prime time for clubs to meet and for kids with packed schedules to make up tests, projects and labs.

But that won’t be possible with club members divided up and teachers in session during lunch, students say. The change proposed by administration will rob them of those valuable 36 minutes, they say.

“We can’t have this. This just jumped out at us,” said junior Connor Donnelly, who organized the rally through his Facebook account, an online social networking site.

Students on campus last Friday afternoon met in front of the school, some chanted and others just stood with their arms around each other. More than 600 students have signed a petition to oppose the split lunch.

Principal Becky Smith said the school needs to look into dividing the lunch period because its projected enrollment exceeds capacity. It’s too hard to regulate the closed campus with over 2,400 kids out of class at once, she said.

“It almost becomes crowd control as far as safety,” she said.

But Donnelly and his throng of teenage demonstrators say breaking students apart could stir up a new set of problems.

“You’re gonna have kids cut-



COURTESY CONNOR DONNELLY

Monte Vista junior Connor Donnelly makes the statement that the school shouldn’t be divided up during lunch period. Students say two lunches make club meetings harder to organize.

ting class to hang out at lunch,” Donnelly said, explaining that most students are upset about the proposal for social reasons.

In coming weeks, the school will gather surveys from students and get parent and teacher input. That will include feedback from the site council and a survey given to students during class.

Donnelly, who has athletics after school, said without one lunch period for all, his global warming prevention club will likely have to

meet around 7 a.m.

Some of the club’s members have an early period. Others have sports or jobs after school. And getting up that much earlier is just not something a bunch of sleep-deprived teenagers are willing to do, he said.

“The clubs are going to fall out,” he said.

Even teachers are divided on the subject. The proposal makes for a less chaotic free period, they say. But it’s also another hurdle to jump when it comes to finding times to give students extra help, rehearsing and allowing make-up work.

Eighteen-year Monte Vista speech teacher David Matley said he supports the proposed double lunch even though it’s inconvenient for speech and debate meetings. The student population is “simply too big to supervise during a single period,” he wrote in an e-mail this week.

“It is a big change, but when you consider the size of the lunch lines and the crowded hallways, I think the students will be happy in the long run,” he said.

Smith said she expects students will be able to solve their scheduling conflicts, should the split lunch be adopted.

“Our kids are pretty creative about coming up with solutions to problems,” Smith said.

A decision will be made by the end of the year, using data from six other schools, along with the statewide Healthy Kid’s Survey.

For now, Donnelly hopes that “one thousand kids walking up in a sea of white” is feedback enough—at least on where students stand. ■



DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

The new Danville Area Chamber of Commerce logo depicts Mount Diablo, with colors representing the mountain in different seasons.

Chamber reaches out

Installation dinner launches new logo, new Web site

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

The Danville Area Chamber of Commerce plans to stress the “area” part of its name going forward.

“What a great ‘new beginning’ feeling,” said Marketing Committee Chairman Steve Wilcox last Thursday night at the 60th annual Installation of Officers and Directors held at Round Hill Country Club.

Wilcox urged everyone to check out the new Web site the next morning—danvilleareachamber.com—to see the use of the new logo, which was unveiled at the dinner.

The colors in the new logo represent Mount Diablo in the various seasons. The new Web site name reflects the new mission to cover the region rather than just the Town of Danville, although the word “area” has been in the Chamber’s name for a long time.

“Only about half of our 600 members come from within the town limits,” said Chamber CEO Melony Newman. “Alamo, Blackhawk, San Ramon and other surrounding com-

munities are well represented, and we wanted our new logo and Web site to reflect them as well as Danville.”

Also at the dinner, Danville Mayor Candace Andersen installed the 2008 directors and officers, including Elaine Cortez Schroth of Bay Building Maintenance as chairwoman of the board. The new chairwoman elect is Karen Kehr of Smith Barney.

Outgoing chairwoman Diane Slater of First Republic Bank named Richard Wood of E-Paynow.com for the special Chairman’s Award, saying his technical help has been invaluable to her, and it was always provided graciously.

Other awards presented were as follows:

- Business Person of the Year: Lori Sato, vice president and branch manager of Union Bank of California in Danville. She is currently a Chamber board member and is president of the Danville Rotary, and president-elect of Leadership San Ramon Valley. Also nominated were Joe Combs

➤ Continued on page 7



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Looking at homework

Task force is reevaluating school district policies

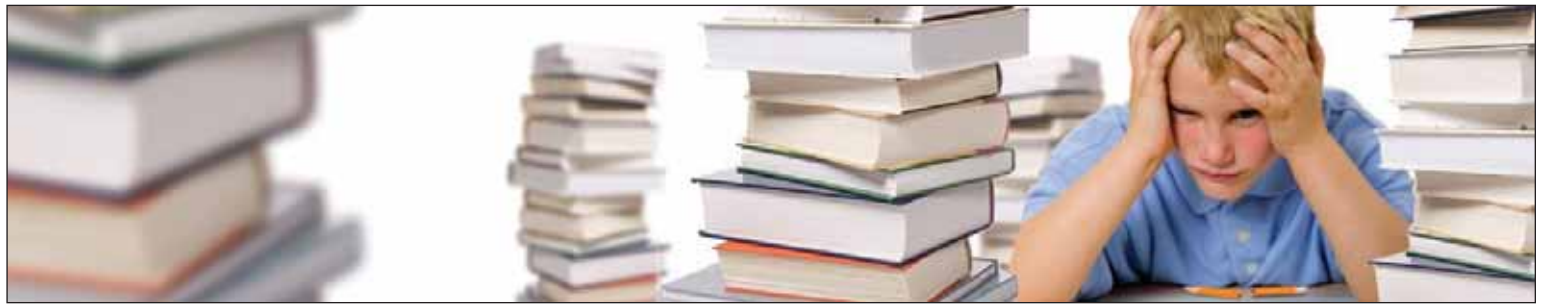
by Natalie O'Neill

Graham Dickinson's grandparents came into town from Arizona one weekend, itching to take him to a theme park.

But the then-fifth-grader never made it out of the house. He was swamped with homework and spent the day indoors, finishing a writing project with his mom—missing the rare chance to hang out with his grandparents.

Students in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District know this type of scenario all too well, says his mother Kerry Dickinson. She's among the many parents who are pushing for the district to reevaluate its 13-year-old policy on homework.

"I have a radical view. I'd like to do away with all homework,"



Danville parents are pushing for the district to reevaluate its policy on homework. They say there is too much "busy work" and that it intrudes on family time.

Dickinson said.

High quantity and low quality homework—or "busy work"—is forcing some students to give up extracurricular activities and is invading family time, advocates of the reevaluation say. They believe limits on the amount of homework assigned should be reviewed and even eliminated in the younger grades.

"It all relates to wishing the schools would let us decide how to spend our evenings," Dickinson said.

Dickinson is part of the district's newly formed Home Work Task

Force, made up of parents, teachers and staff with wide-ranging philosophies on after-school studies, from the traditional to the progressive.

The task force is now meeting to determine if and how the homework policy should be reevaluated.

"There are a lot of strong opinions about homework," said Kirby Hoy, district director of secondary education, who is facilitating the task force. "It's a good time to take a look at whether it should be revised."

The current policy states that homework should "extend learning

that has already begun" and "help acquaint parents/guardians with the curriculum." It states that homework should be clearly assigned and purposeful.

There is no approximate figure mentioned in terms of work load or time frame. And there are no specifics about how much of a role parents are expected to play in assisting homework for younger students.

Parents of middle-schoolers in the district report that their children spend anywhere from half an hour to six hours on homework per

night, with most falling around the two-hour mark, according to an informal survey taken from 60 parents in the district in November.

According to the survey, by parents' estimation, only about 52 percent of homework assigned is "of a high quality."

One recent study from the Third International Study of Mathematics and Sciences demonstrates that homework doesn't help with academic achievement. The study, which took data from 41 countries, shows that countries with the least

► Continued on page 8

TAKE US ALONG

Braving the wind

The Beres family included its Weekly on a trip to the Sphinx on the Omu Peak in the Bucegi Mountains in Romania; pictured are Cristi, Mihai, Valentin and Geanina, with Bianca hidden under her mom's jacket to escape the rain and wind.

Take Us Along on your travels and send photos to travel@DanvilleWeekly.com or 315 Diablo Road, Suite 100, Danville 94526. Be sure to include a daytime telephone number.



Chamber

► Continued from page 6

and Scott Heller.

- Citizen of the Year: Beverly Lane, who was instrumental in the incorporation of Danville, a former mayor and is currently a director of the East Bay Regional Park District. She is curator of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, and has produced the book "Vintage Danville, 150 Year of Memories" for this year's sesquicentennial celebration. Also nominated were Joe Buenavista and Mark Curtis.

- Educator of the Year: Barbara Williams, a well-loved and highly respected teacher at Charlotte Wood Middle Middle School who said her passion for teaching U.S. history to middle school students has her still



Danville Mayor Candace Andersen swears in new Chamber Chairwoman Elaine Cortez Schroth.

working at the age of 72. "They are a challenge and a joy," she said, and thanked everyone for sending their children to school eager to learn. Other nominees were Mike Marshall and Theresa Pierce.

The event was recorded by Comcast, Channel 26, and will be aired at 8 p.m., Friday, Feb. 29. ■

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Unveiling the good news

Suddenly I'm interested in weddings. My daughter Zoe and her wonderful boyfriend Jeff became engaged recently and now everywhere I look I see wedding venues.

Zoe pleased me to no end when she asked about my wedding veil. She did not ask about my dress, granted, but the fact that she was even considering my veil—or part of it?—made my eyes tear up with sentiment. So when I visited my mother in San Jose last week I went into the basement to excavate for the big box that held my wedding dress and veil and my sister Diane's veil, too. I brought it all home for good measure.

My dress still looked lovely to me—but, my goodness, was I ever really a size 5? My veil has a big white rose in the center with a lot of fluffy veiling; my sister's has a little crown. Considering they are both more than 40 years old, they look pretty good. Perhaps some part of one of them will work its way into Zoe's ensemble. And since Diane and I are both still married to our original husbands, perhaps it will be good luck.

I knew my straight dress with the chiffon sleeves and lacy floor-length train was probably dated, but I wondered: What is the latest in wedding wear? So I stopped in at Joanna's Bridal in Danville to talk to the experts and was filled in on the latest trends by owner Chris Potepa, Joanna's husband, as we wandered among the gowns.

Yes, strapless is in, Chris verified, and are about 80 percent of the dresses they sell; halter tops and spaghetti straps are also popular. But he noted this is for California weddings. Ivory, aka "diamond white," is in style, with some white dresses using the darker white as an accent. He showed me some dresses that were very fancy with beads and little pearls and crystals and Spanish lace. He also pointed out the "corset" look on a dress where it is laced up the back, which not only looks nice when viewed from behind but also helps the bride avoid extra alterations.

Chris said most brides these days have already done their homework before they come in, looking online and in magazines, so they may know what designer they want or even the exact dress. Of course, it may look different on them than on the size 2 model and that's when the experts work with the bride to find the perfect gown.

Moving on to the veil room, I saw that mine is outdated. The veils now are finished with pearls

or beads or satin or have something sparkly imbedded in the lace. In my girlhood, the supreme romantic moment was when the groom would tenderly lift the veil from the bride's face to seal their vows with a tender kiss, but Chris said many brides these days do not want to cover their faces. He mentioned that both long and short veils are in vogue, whatever looks good with the dress.

In my childhood, the supreme romantic moment was when the groom would tenderly lift the veil from the bride's face to seal their vows with a tender kiss, but Chris said many brides these days do not want to cover their faces.

We ended up at the mother-of-the-bride rack of dresses. Most of these were long and a surprising number were strapless. Chris remained diplomatically silent when I voiced surprise that mothers would compete with their daughters by going strapless. He pointed out that most of these dresses are for formal and evening weddings. While I was there, a mom from Greenbrook Elementary School came in to pick up a dress she'd bought from the mother-of-the-bride sale rack. Her name was Meg Esch and she said she'd bought the dress not for a wedding but to wear to the school's black-tie fundraiser that night. She knew the shop had fancy dresses and would be able to alter it for her quickly, and she was quite happy with her find.

I attended two weddings last summer, and both of the brides wore lovely gowns along classic lines that allowed their own beauty to shine through. As I look at my photos from those two weddings, I'm noticing not just the brides' dresses and veils but the flowers, the dinner settings, the chairs, etc., etc., etc. Yikes! So many details. At least we have a veil. Two. Maybe.

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



The old gymnasium at San Ramon Valley High School was suddenly ordered closed last week by the school board, due to earthquake concerns.

Gym suddenly closes at SRVHS

'One day it was open; one day it's closed'

by Jordan M. Doronila

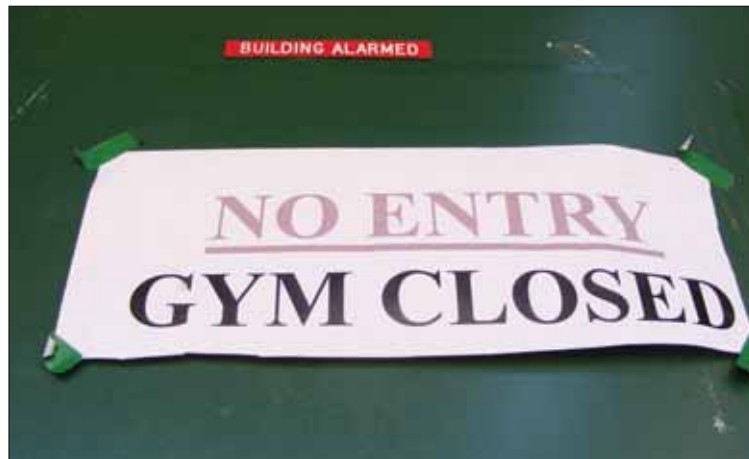
San Ramon Valley High School said goodbye to its old, large gym, where youths forged fond memories for 60 years.

Trustees voted to close down the large gym at San Ramon Valley High last week on Tuesday because its concrete structure would not withstand an earthquake, said Terry Koehne, spokesman for the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.

"It's basically unsafe during a major earthquake," he said.

The district notified parents immediately through e-mail after the board decided to close the gym, starting Wednesday, Feb. 6. The board received an analysis last month from an engineer that the gym's structure would not resist an earthquake.

"It was sudden," said Principal Joseph Ianora. "This facility has been at the high school for 60 years. One day it was open; one day it's closed."



"It's sad," he added. "It's a piece of tradition."

The old gym is made of concrete, which makes it susceptible to crumbling when a serious earthquake transpires, said Richard Lowell, district director of facilities. The school currently has three gyms: an old small gym, a new auxiliary gym and the big old gymnasium. Lowell said the small and auxiliary gyms are earthquake-resistant.

The auxiliary gymnasium is made of wood, which is flexible. It has an aerobics and wrestling room and a dance hall. Additionally, it has a medical training room and a full girl's locker room.

The district plans to demolish the large gym and build a new one in its place. The project is part of the school's master plan, which includes adding other new facilities and renovations, and will

be funded by Measure A. The demolition will be in the summer, Koehne said. The new gym that will replace the large old one will cost from \$7 million-\$8 million, said Richard Lowell, district director of facilities.

"It's very exciting," Ianora said.

"In the long run, it's going to be amazing," said Carol MacPhail, school curriculum leader.

Since the big gym is now closed, the boys varsity and junior varsity basketball games are being played at Dougherty Valley High School. Girls basketball games and practices, as well as physical education classes and volleyball, will be at the small and auxiliary gyms.

Campus officials at San Ramon Valley High said the old gym contains a rich history.

"It's mixed emotions," Ianora said. ■

Homework

► Continued from page 7

amount of homework actually exhibited higher academic achievement.

The highest scoring countries—like Japan and Denmark—assigned little or no homework, while low-scoring countries—like Iran and Thailand—assigned a large amount.

Parents are pointing to these studies as they emphasize more value should be put on hands-on, creative or athletic activities after a long day of academia. This helps their kids be well-rounded, they say.

Fans of the more traditional method of assigning homework, on the other hand, say homework teaches responsibility and discipline and is a form of vocational training.

Denise Pope, Ph.D., author

of "Doing School: How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed-Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students," says the problem is that the way subjects are covered is "a mile long and an inch thick."

"We aspire to cover a lot of content in a not-so-deep way," she said.

Instead of wasting time on fact and date memorization, we should be teaching the skills to understand what it all means, she said. With the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, many teachers are also feeling "put upon because they have a coverage expectation," she said.

Pope is a Stanford University school of education lecturer and has also been involved in a recent survey of 4,000 students at high-achieving middle and high schools.

The survey shows that students

who report spending three-and-a-half or more hours on homework per night are more likely to experience poor mental and physical health.

"Some kinds of homework are hazardous," Pope said.

In 2006, the American Academy of Pediatrics reported similar findings. The study showed that federal programs like the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, along with parents who push children too hard academically, have resulted in too little unstructured playtime.

In the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, these are subjects some homework task force members have already been reviewing.

"I'm a big proponent of not overscheduling our kids," Dickinson said. ■

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EDITORIAL • THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Anti-Berkeley bandwagon

Berkeley made headlines nationwide when it voted recently to send a letter advising the Marines that its recruiters were unwelcome in the city; it also gave anti-war group Code Pink the use of a parking spot right in front of the recruiting office on Wednesday afternoons so its demonstration would not block the sidewalk.

In response, six U.S. senators introduced the Semper Fi Act of 2008 in Congress to take away \$2.3 million appropriated for Berkeley, for a lunch program and a project at the university, and to give the money to the Marines. Locally, Assemblyman Guy Houston (R., 15th) submitted a bill in the state capitol to strip Berkeley of \$3.3 million in transportation dollars "for recent actions against the U.S. Marine Corps in the city of Berkeley."

Other items on the agenda at that Berkeley meeting demanded Bridgestone take responsibility for it workers' standard of living in Liberia; called for the U.S. to terminate military assistance to the Colombian Army; and asked the governor to demand that Congress take steps to withdraw state National Guard troopers from Iraq. The council also handles the regular business of running a city, but these types of items earn Berkeley its reputation.

Houston said the special allowances for Code Pink to make it easier to harass and annoy the Marine recruiters were a violation of the public trust. "The city of Berkeley needs to be held accountable for that," he said.

But is there really a chance that these bills would pass? Or were the politicians merely grandstanding? Do these elected officials really want to interfere with food programs or the university? Or not maintain the roads in Berkeley that benefit all of us?

We can each speak with our pocketbooks by boycotting Berkeley businesses if we so desire or write to the council members to express our concern. Apparently the outcry from the public did cause the Berkeley council to reconsider its actions this week. We don't need leaders grabbing the mike to propose cuts in funding that has been allotted for sound reasons.

But is there really a chance that these bills would pass? Or were the politicians merely grandstanding?

YOUR TURN

The Danville Weekly encourages comments on our coverage or on issues of local interest. The deadline is 5 p.m. Monday for that Friday's edition.

Submit Letters to the Editor of up to 250 words to editor@DanvilleWeekly.com. Include your name, address and daytime phone number so we can reach you. We reserve the right to edit contributions for length, objectionable content, libel and factual errors known to us. Anonymous letters will generally not be accepted.

Submitting a letter to the editor or guest opinion constitutes a granting of permission to the Danville Weekly and Embarcadero Publishing Co. to also publish it online, including in our online archives and as a post on Town Square.

For more information, contact Dolores Ciardelli, editor, at 837-8300, ext. 29.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Alamo must take care of its own safety

Dear Editor:

Regarding the Feb. 3 article about Tonya York's accident: What a fortunate outcome for her and her family! We in Alamo must thank her for her effort to improve Alamo's traffic problems.

If LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission) had allowed Alamo to incorporate a few years ago, Alamo's traffic problems would have been dealt with in Alamo. Each time a new county supervisor represents Alamo, the new supervisor meets with the community to work out Alamo's Danville Boulevard traffic problems, the residents living east of Danville Boulevard plead for help to cross the street, and another study is ordered.

Alamo is a community of 16,000 people in a county of 1,025,000 people. Our current supervisor listens, but she has a hugely growing constituency in east Contra Costa with urgent demands on the county. Alamo needs to work out its own solution as an incorporated town. It is time for Alamo to recognize that it is a unique community that has to take care of itself.

Margaret Elliott, Alamo

Proposing a 'bypass'

Dear Editor:

Last week's editorial on "Accidents waiting to happen," said it is too late for the option of having "Danville Boulevard go around the shopping areas rather than smack dab through the middle." But is it really too late?

Most of us have driven up Broadway from Rudgear Road to Newell in Walnut Creek. But do we all know what is beneath that roadway? Well, it's the creek.

The Corps of Engineers designed a way to put the road over the creek. Why couldn't the same thing be done to bypass Alamo from Livorna to a location south of Alamo? Why not something to coincide with the new YMCA access? (It has very undesirable access from the Danville Boulevard.) Why not solve two problems with one solution?

Dave Christensen, 46-year Alamo resident

ONLINE READER POLL

Give your opinion at
www.DanvilleWeekly.com

Are you afraid to cross Danville Boulevard in Alamo?

Results from last week:

Which Republican presidential candidate do you favor?

- Fred Thompson:** 0%
- John McCain:** 12.12%
- Mike Huckabee:** 3.03%
- Mitt Romney:** 15.15%
- ✓ **None:** 66.67%
- Ron Paul:** 3.03%
- Rudy Giuliani:** 0%
- Total votes:** 33

Code of ethics The Danville Weekly seeks to adhere to the highest level of ethical standards in journalism, including the Code of Ethics adopted Sept. 21, 1996, by the Society of Professional Journalists. To review the text of the Code, please visit our web site at www.DanvilleWeekly.com

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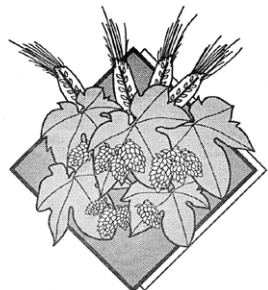
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POLICE BULLETIN & LOG • OBITUARIES • BIRTHS & WEDDINGS

POLICE BULLETIN

Woman arrested on bank card theft

A 19-year-old Florida woman was arrested last Friday for attempting to get \$5,000 in cash from Washington Mutual Bank at 661 San Ramon Valley Blvd., using a fraudulently obtained bank card.

"She somehow got her name added to a legitimate cardholder's account. How that occurred—we're still looking into it," said Lt. Mark Williams of the Danville police. "The people that are involved in this kind of criminal activity are always coming up with new ways."

The woman, Jerrica Marshall, of Tampa, Fla., was arrested for commercial burglary, theft of the access card and identity theft. She was booked at the Martinez Detention Facility.

After questioning Marshall, police learned this wasn't the first time she had committed the crime.

"She had done the same thing at other banks throughout the Bay Area, and was successful at obtaining cash from those other banks," said Williams.

Williams did not know which other banks were targeted, or how much money Marshall received from them.

To avoid identity theft, Williams recommended that people periodically check their credit card reports, refrain from giving out sensitive personal information over the phone, and shred any mail or paper records that contain such information.

—Meghan Neal

POLICE LOG

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

Sunday, Feb. 3

- Vehicle stop, arrest, on Diablo Rd. and Front St. at 12:31 a.m.

Monday, Feb. 4

- Accident, property damage, on Camino Ramon and Paraiso Dr. at 3:06 p.m.
- Battery on El Capitan Dr. at 4:17 p.m.
- Battery on 300 block of Hartz Ave. at 7:01 p.m.
- Vandalism on Mission Dr. at 7:31 p.m.
- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Camino Tassajara and Sherburne Hills at 11:24 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 5

- Auto burglary on Rubicon Cir. at 5:22 a.m. and 7:48 a.m.
- Petty theft from building on Love Lane at 9:30 a.m.
- Vandalism on Sycamore Valley Rd. W. at 12:01 p.m.
- Battery on Timberline Ct. at 12:11 p.m.
- Identity theft on Fulton Way at 2:46

- p.m.
- Accident, major injuries, on Diablo Rd. and southbound I-680 off ramp at 7:26 p.m.
- Identity theft on Dubost Ct. at 7:27 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 6

- Drug violation on Del Amigo Rd. at 8:12 a.m.
- Petty theft on 3100 block of Stone Valley Rd. at 9:11 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, on 3400 block of Camino Tassajara at 9:51 a.m.
- Forgery of fraudulent documents on Railroad Ave. at 1:47 p.m.
- Petty theft on Waterman Cir. at 4:04 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Camino Tassajara and Tassajara Lane at 7:02 p.m.
- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Linda Mesa Ave. and Railroad Ave. at 10:25 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 7

- Vandalism on Nugget Ct. at 7:48 a.m.
- Petty theft on St. George Rd. at 10:38 a.m.
- Terrorist threats on Montana Dr. at

- 11:35 a.m.
- Forgery of fraudulent documents on Maplewood Dr. at 1:23 p.m.
- Residential burglary on Zenith Ridge Dr. at 2:34 p.m.
- Credit card fraud on St. Norbert Dr. at 6:49 p.m.
- Drugs violation on Winfield Lane at 8:20 p.m.
- Battery on Blemer Rd. and Blemer Pl. at 11:09 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 8

- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, at the Clocktower Parking Lot at 12:18 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, on 3100 block of Stone Valley Rd. at 8:45 a.m.
- Battery on Dutch Mill Dr. at 12:25 p.m.
- Suspicious subject stop, arrest, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 12:46 p.m.
- Credit card fraud on La Gonda Ct. at 2:05 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Alamos and Diablo Rd. at 3:19 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Brookside Dr. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 3:21 p.m.

- Accident, property damage, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 3:35 p.m.
- Petty theft on Concha Ct. at 4:15 p.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on Church St. at 7:49 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 9

- Medical, police needed, arrest, on Camino Tassajara and Crow Canyon Rd. at 2:54 a.m.
- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Ackerman Dr. and Diablo Rd. at 9:41 a.m.
- Felony embezzlement, arrest, on La Gonda Way at 10:31 a.m.
- Petty theft on Fostoria Way at 3:14 p.m.
- Residential burglary on Arthur Ct. at 5:06 p.m.
- Residential burglary on Dana Highlands Ct. at 6:52 p.m.
- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Sycamore Valley Rd. W. at 10:03 p.m.
- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Diablo Rd. and southbound I-680 on ramp at 10:27 p.m.
- Verbal disturbance, arrest, on Plumeria Ct. at 11:19 p.m.

OBITUARIES

William Lowell Peck

Diablo resident William Lowell Peck passed away Jan. 13 at the age of 80.

"Wild Bill," as he was known to friends, was born Aug. 14, 1927, in Oakland. He graduated from San Leandro High School in 1945 and then attended San Jose State University, where he was an active member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. After graduating in 1951 with a degree in engineering, he married Mary Lynn Brandt and took a position with McGuire and Hester Construction Co. in Oakland. He left McGuire and Hester in the early '70s, and in 1975, became a founding partner of Mountain Cascade Inc., a pipeline engineering and construction company, where he worked until he retired in 1988.

He loved golf and, in 1960, joined Diablo Country Club. In 1962 he and his family moved to the community of Diablo, where he developed many wonderful friendships. As the unofficial "Mayor of Diablo," he was often seen picking up the mail at the Diablo Post

Office and socializing at the club.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Mary Lynn Peck; daughter Leslie Ditz of Boise, Idaho, and son-in-law Bill Ditz; son John Peck and daughter-in-law Julie of Alamo; four grandchildren; brother Eugene Peck of La Mesa; sister-in-law Elsie Peck of Paradise; and six nephews and two nieces. His brother, Kenneth Peck, preceded him in death. A celebration of his life was held Jan. 25 at Diablo Country Club.

While on their honeymoon in 1951, Bill and Mary Lynn attended a Las Vegas show featuring entertainer, Danny Thomas, and have supported his St. Jude Children's Hospital ever since. Contributions would be appreciated in Bill's memory to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

Ann F. Davis

Ann F. Davis, 82, of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, died Jan. 15 in Las Vegas, after a battle with Lymphoma.

Born Ann Freeman Rutherford in Long Beach on Aug. 3, 1925,

she attended Wilson High School and eventually met and married the love of her life, Nathaniel S. Davis Jr. They were wed in 1945, soon started a family, and moved to Danville to raise their children.

She spent most of her career as the heart and soul of Montair Elementary. After 25 years she moved with her husband to Hawaii for a retired life pursuing her passions of scuba diving, tennis and all-around fun. She was forever young at heart and carried a calling card with her name and title: Ann Davis, Playgirl.

She was an athlete all her life and made history in Hawaii as part of a group of women who formed the first 70s-age division in tennis. She enjoyed life, traveled the world and volunteered her time working at the local AARP office and as an ambassador of Kona.

She is survived by her children



Nancy Davis Arnold and husband Keith Arnold of Olympia, Wash., Kim Davis of Las Vegas, Julie Davis of Santa Rosa; three grandchildren; and her beloved companion, Spanky.

Memorial services were conducted in Kona.

Gladys Ruth Morgan

Danville resident Gladys Ruth Morgan passed away on Jan. 19 at the age of 98.

Born March 18, 1909, she was predeceased by her husband, Murphy Morgan, in 1978. The couple started Morgan's Masonry Supply, now run by their grandchildren, Steven and Mark Staats.

Gladys is survived by her three children, Sandra Morgan of Washington, Joan Staats of Washington, and Audrey Anderson of Danville; nine grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Services were held Jan. 23 at Wilson & Kratzer in Danville. Private interment was at Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland. Contributions to your favorite charity preferred.

A LOOK AT THE LOCAL SPORTS SCENE



Wolves defeat Mustangs to clinch EBAL

The San Ramon Valley High School boys varsity soccer team beat cross-town rivals Monte Vista, 1-0, to clinch the East Bay Athletic League title last Friday. Left, San Ramon Valley's Zack Corral dribbles the ball away from Jordan Esposito. See more photos at www.DanvilleWeekly.com.



On the mat

Dustin Harris, a Monte Vista High wrestler, pins his Foothill High School opponent on Feb. 7. Foothill outscored the Mustangs, 49-25.

PREP SCHEDULE

Friday, Feb. 15

Men's Basketball
San Ramon Valley vs. Monte Vista, 7 p.m.
Women's Basketball
San Ramon Valley at Monte Vista, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 16

Wrestling
EBAL Varsity Championships at Livermore High, 9 a.m.

Feb. 19-March 1

Women's Basketball
NCS Championships

Feb. 19-March 6

Men's Basketball
NCS Championships

Friday-Saturday, Feb. 22-23

Wrestling
NCS Varsity Championships at Newark, 9 a.m.



Fury teammates sign with colleges

Total Sports hosted a recognition event Wednesday, Feb. 6, for Mustang Fury members who have signed letters of intent to play at colleges and universities throughout the country. Girls recognized were Jillian Armstrong, UC Santa Barbara (San Ramon Valley High School); Lauren Anderson, Brigham Young (Monte Vista); Summer Williams, UCLA (Miramonte); Kristy Adcock, UC Riverside (Acalanes); Hannah Marsala,

Colorado (Monte Vista); Erin Fleischli, Dartmouth (St. Francis High); Marissa Zamora, Loyola Marymount (Monte Vista); Alexa Stringer, UC Santa Barbara (Monte Vista); Amanda Owens, Loyola Marymount (Monte Vista); Rachel Shelby Wong, UC San Diego (Monte Vista); Kathleen Matthew, Santa Clara (Las Lomas); Rachel Kahn, UC Davis (Monte Vista); Laura Burton, Kentucky (Amador); Alyse Ledford, Washington (San Ramon Valley High); Leah Payne, Texas (Carondelet); Colleen Garrehy, Bucknell (Carondelet); and Courtney Jones, University of North Carolina (Monte Vista).

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COOL WITH THE CO

Police partner with volunteers for a safer town

by Geoff Gillette

Barbara Hubinger's reason for volunteering with the Danville Police Department is simple.

"When you've been an accountant all your life and suddenly get to drive a police car—that's huge!" she said with a laugh.

"I wanted to give something back," she added more seriously. "I know that sounds kind of cliché but it's true."

With the popularity of police procedural shows like *CSI, America* is becoming fascinated with law enforcement. How do police do their jobs? What it's like to be an officer? And what happens behind the scenes at the police department?



The 2007 Danville Volunteers in Police Services included (l-r) Dan White, Paul Cowell, Steve Stamates, Susan Clare, Ed Fisher, Kay Bauer, Harry Hubinger, Barbara Hubinger, Bob Gross and Renee Morgan, shown with McGinnis.

Danville residents have a chance to see what it's all about, at the Danville Citizen Police Academy. Concerned residents have been going to the academy for the past nine years to learn more about what it means to be a cop, and some have even taken it to the next level by stepping up to provide volunteer assistance to the department, said Community Services Officer Shawn Desmond.

The Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) program started in 1999 with the first Citizen Police Academy.

"It's a 12-week class that meets on Wednesdays. They basically 'meet' the Police Department and see how the organization runs, from Community Policing to other services," Desmond said.

Attendees start off meeting with Police Chief Chris Wenzel, who gives an overview of the various services provided by the department. Then they move on to get demonstrations of those services.

"They talk to our officers and get to know them," Desmond said. "They get to go on ride-alongs, where they go with the officer on their patrol. There's a K-9 demonstration put on by our K-9 officer, Mike Ireland."

Other classes focus on traffic stops, even giving the residents a look at a simulated pullover. They are shown demos of crime scenes in order to gain a better understanding of how investigators approach a crime and what procedures are followed in securing evidence and determining the course of an investigation.

The class tours both the Danville Police Department and the county jail in Martinez. Desmond said there is a great deal of back-and-forth between the residents and the officers, which gives the participants many opportunities to ask questions and gain a better understanding of the life of a police officer and how they work in the community.

The involvement doesn't necessarily end after the last class.

"After they complete the academy they can apply for the Volunteers in Police Services program," said Desmond.

VIPS is a visible addition to the regular staff at the Police Department.

"We use them in a lot of ways," Desmond explained.

"Each person has to sign on for a minimum of 16 hours per month of volunteer time. They work at the counter, answer phones or help with vehicle maintenance.

"You will see them out on the streets during the 4th of July Parade or Hot August Nights. They help us tremendously with our special events."

Two police officers oversee the program, and Desmond and other Community Service Officers act as a liaison with the volunteers.

"Once they've gone through the application process and been accepted as a volunteer we like to see what they can bring to the program," Desmond said. "The skills they bring determine how we are going to use them. Two of our current volunteers are chaplains."

Currently there are 15 VIPS, doing a variety of jobs for the department.

"These are people who have learned about what we do and want to be a part of it," said Desmond. "They wear uniforms, they take pride in the fact that they work here."

Long time Danville residents Harry and Barbara Hubinger have been part of the VIPS program almost since its beginning and are in their seventh year of service.

"Living in Danville for 40 years, you want to give back to the community," said Barbara Hubinger.

Now retired, both Hubingers have a history of involvement, from PTA to volunteering at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley to refereeing soccer matches. Barbara said the VIP program was something that just seemed to fit.

Susan Cowell and her husband Paul have been helping out for six years. The Cowells are both still working but also put a lot of their time into volunteerism, through church and the VIPS program.

Cowell said their desire to help led them to the Citizen Police Academy—as well as simple curiosity.

"Paul and I wanted to find out how the police work," she said. "And Paul was always curious about being in a police department. He likes the discipline and responsibility of the police and the Marine Corps."

Both the Hubingers and Susan Cowell said attending the citizens' academy was an eye opening experience.

"They showed us everything here at the Police

Department," said Cowell. "They showed us weapons, they showed us how to fingerprint."

"We visited the jail," added Harry Hubinger. "It was very comprehensive."

Hubinger said that while they learned a lot going through the academy, they've really built on that knowledge since joining VIPS.

"The continuing education that they've offered us has been marvelous," he noted. "Auto training, driving training, weapons training, first aid. The follow-on training is almost more intensive than the academy."

Training and knowledge are only part of what these VIPS have experienced.

"The training is great, but for me it's being associated with a fine group of people and seeing them differently," said Cowell. "You can't help but view (police officers) more humanly than otherwise and certainly with no fear."

"You just have so much more respect for them," added Barbara Hubinger. "You think about how much they put on the line every day."

While they have many duties inside the confines of the Police Department, the VIPS do a lot out in the community as well.

"You'll see us out and about," said Harry Hubinger. "Not just at the parades. We do a dining patrol, where we go through the downtown area."

"It started because there were a lot of car burglaries in the restaurant area," he added. "So we patrol down there in the car and on foot."

Barbara agreed.

"It's been helping since we started doing the patrol," she said. "The thing I've been surprised at is what people leave in their cars. You walk down the rows of cars parked at the Clock Tower lot and you'd be amazed at what people leave in their cars. It's a treasure trove."

She said the VIPS often leave notices on cars to remind owners to lock up their valuables. And they will ticket those cars who park illegally in spots designated for the disabled.

The VIPS have also undertaken a program called "If I were a thief."

"A large percentage of thefts are crimes of opportunity," Harry Hubinger explained. "So we drive around

and if we see a garage, we'll leave them a notice saying selected your house by about 3,500 notices."

Not only do the VIPS help the public, they are also officers they work along with in the community," said he has been really helpful and the VIPS program.

"This is a great way out in the community, helping with crime prevention of how they can be safe."

"The VIPS augment the level of service that we provide."

Wenzel said the service is matched by what they do.

"They are ambassadors. They're right here in the community with our special events. That's what we do here."

Officer Desmond said the program grows steadily to see this level of community involvement continue as more people join.

"We had 10 people in the program," Desmond said. "We'd like to see more come in and take part."

Meet your police

WHAT: Danville Citizen Police Academy

WHEN: 12 weeks, beginning in February

WHERE: Danville Police Department, Gonda V

COST: Free

INFORMATION: 708-388-1234

DPS



COURTESY DANVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Susan Cowell, Gary Engstrom, Joanne ...
Sgt. Troy Craig and Officer Trevor

door open with no cars we'll send
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because...'. So far we've sent out

PS meet with good reactions from
so greatly appreciated by the offi-
side day after day. Chief Wenzel
y pleased with the police academy

for us to get volunteers to help us
" he said. "They do a great job of
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get involved.

in our last citizens' academy,"
I like to see that many people or
e the class." ■

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FILE PHOTO/DOLORES FOX CARDELLI

Volunteer Harry Hubinger takes fingerprints of children at the 2006 Emergency Preparedness Fair.



DOLORES FOX CARDELLI

VIPS member Kay Bauer helps the police by answering calls on a recent Friday afternoon.



DOLORES FOX CARDELLI

Steve Stamates volunteers to help at special events, and also takes the police cars for servicing.

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by Jordan M. Doronila

And so the Prophet Isaiah said: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder."

In a new novel written by Danville resident Richard Friar, the main character believes he is the chosen one who will deliver men from bondage. He fervently follows his beliefs and becomes a charismatic dictator, waging war and ruling most of the world—in 2039.

"It has history patterns and technology," said Friar, 26, about his novel "The Keepers: Part I—World War III."

Friar—with the help of his dad Mike—is currently writing the second part of the Keepers trilogy, developing a screenplay and working on a short animation feature based on "The Keepers." Friar has already held book readings and signings at Barnes and Noble and will continue to showcase his works at comic conventions, a Dungeons & Dragons event in San Ramon and other venues.

The novel, a self-published book, chronicles the lives of more than a 100 people hiding in a small island in the South Pacific; the refugees are protecting themselves from World War III, which was instigated by the main character, Geiseric, the leader of the new Germany—Germania. For the past five years, adults have kept their children from hearing any outside news.

"It's actually an analytical pentagon of strategic possible scenarios," Friar said. "It's not silly."

Logan and his family, who live on the island, are captured by Geiseric's forces, and he learns about the tyrant's background and how World War III transpired from other prisoners. Geiseric used rhetoric that appealed to other countries' needs. His diplomatic skills enabled him to form strong political alliances with them.

"His greatest ally is Israel," said Friar.

"He's a multi-dimensional character," he added. "He's a combination of George W. Bush and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He's what Bush would want to be."

The concept of "Manifest Destiny" influenced his empire's expansion. Geiseric created a society where everyone received an education, which included mind,

body and spirit. Youths learned physics, algebra and the classics so they would become loyal servants and super soldiers in Geiseric's army.

His forces are in the form of animals, such as cheetahs, hummingbirds and seahorses. He noted animals are best suited in warfare due to their natural instincts.

Friar's ultimate goal is to turn his story into a film. The Friars have already have met with a studio executive from New Line Cinemas and received positive feedback.

"This will be a movie at some time. We are trying to get this into people's hands," said Mike Friar. "We are trying to build a fan base."

He expressed his enthusiasm over the story's complexities and said he is tired of seeing the same things in entertainment.

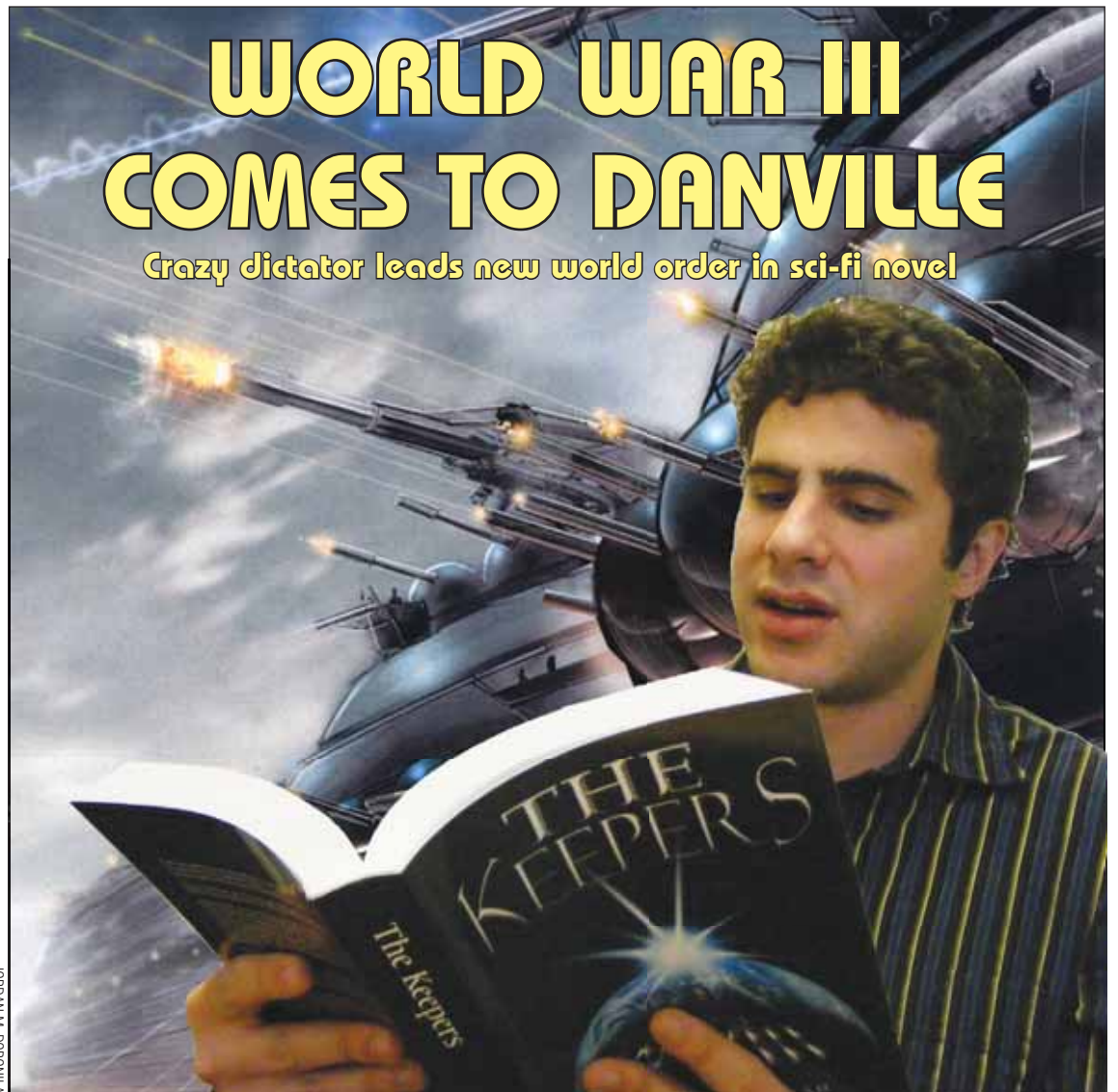
"We see so many things that are repetitive," he said.

Although the movie is the goal, Richard Friar said his novel is equally as important as the film.

"I think the book is vastly more in depth," he said. "People can't put it down. It's (a unique) experience in itself."

The novel idea came to him 10 years ago when he was a student at Monte Vista High School. He said he always enjoyed reading and films. Among his favorites are "Silence of the Lambs," "Saving Private Ryan," "Pulp Fiction," the first "Star Wars" and the "Die Hard" films. The movies had action and interesting characters who had a myriad of qualities, said Mike Friar.

Richard Friar originally put his idea into a script and called it "The Leader." It was about a dictator who wanted to destroy the world so everyone would unite against him. The character's aim was to have all people united. Then the story evolved into a tyrant obsessed with ruling the



JORDAN M. DORONILA

Richard Friar reads from the first part of his proposed trilogy, "The Keepers." He is appearing at DundraCon this weekend to discuss the battle machines in his book, which were designed by him with the final renderings provided by Lee Souder.

world to appease his vision.

Friar spent 10 years developing his story. He got ideas about using animals as models for Geiseric's army six to seven years ago from the Discovery Channel.

He noted there are several parallel themes between his novel and reality. Like with the Iraq War, a leader has caused war to further his ideological vision. Also, the novel has elements of the Cold War, which Friar believes may be re-emerging with Russian President Vladimir Putin's rhetoric against the U.S.

"The world is heated up," Friar said. "That's what lays the groundwork."

"We are going to explode as a society if somebody doesn't do something about (the turmoil)," added his dad.

After graduating from Monte Vista, Richard Friar attended Grossmont College in Southern California and studied astronomy and humanities. He worked at various odd jobs when he finished college. At one point, he wanted to be a professional grape picker in France.

However, he went to work for United Parcel Service and he said his job was the dumbest experience he had had. He learned that many of his co-workers were tied down with families and their jobs and didn't have the ability to pursue their

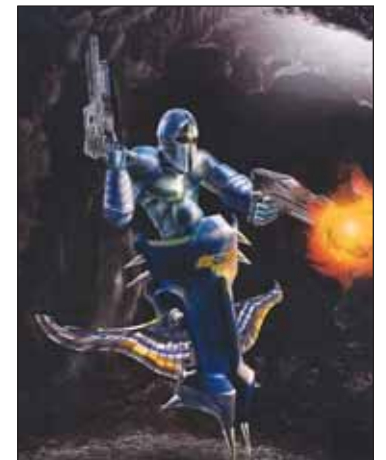
dreams. When he heard their stories, he decided to pursue his novel. He also wanted to make money doing something he enjoyed.

"As your life goes, you lose a lot of options," said Mike Friar.

In addition to writing his second

book, Friar said he plans on running for Danville Town Council in November. He said he loves politics and wants to keep Danville's small-town feeling.

"Why not?" he asked. "My friends told me: 'Go for it.'" ■



Learn more about 'Keepers'

What: Richard Friar appearance to discuss the battle machines in his book, "The Keepers: Part One: WWIII," at DundraCon (Dungeons & Dragons Convention)

When: 2-3:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 17 (convention runs Feb. 15-18)

Where: Room 165 San Ramon Marriott

Information: www.thekeepersww3.com

The Wine Guy

BY GREGORY PEEBLES

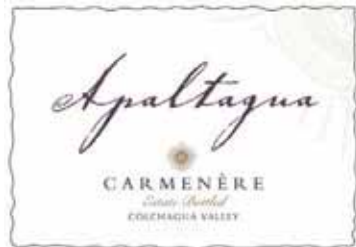


A sexy, mysterious experience

2004 Apaltagua Carmenère

(Estate Bottled, Colchagua Valley, Chile)

(Lunardi's Market—Danville, \$9.99)



Once widely planted in the early 1700s, Carmenère has been almost totally ostracized from its regal birthplace of Bordeaux due to its propensity to fall well short of full ripeness in the unpredictable climate. Today, finding a block of this low yielding red variety anywhere in the Mèdoc is a true rarity.

If it were not for the pre-phylloxera cuttings introduced 7,000 miles away in Chile during the 1850s, Carmenère may have become commercially extinct. Thankfully, the "lost Bordeaux" grape is alive and thriving in the Colchagua Valley, less than 100 miles southwest of Santiago. In addition to Chile, small plantings are also found in northeastern Italy.

The Apaltagua estate, established in the prestigious Apalta region of Colchagua Valley and owned by the Tutunjian family, is a

Carmenère specialist. Combine the correct growing region, a family's single-minded zeal for the varietal, 50-60-year-old vines along with the artistry of a leading Chilean winemaker (Alvaro Espinoza) and there's potential for something remarkable. This wine is indeed unique and special.

Bask in the high-tone colors of ruby and red. A slight orange tint is also noticeable around the rim.

Its aroma and bouquet seem limitless and ever changing: cherry, blackberry, African violet, geranium, freshly cracked black peppercorn, poblano chili, leather, Italian herbs, Caribbean jerk spices and chocolate. Just a hint of stewed tomato peeks through as well, but nothing near overwhelming or too flawed.

There's plenty here for everyone to enjoy.

As for the palate, the hits just keep on comin'. Plum, cranberry, cherry, raspberry, blackberry and bittersweet chocolate flavors are both succulent and racy.

But wait, there's more! Medium bodied in intensity, Apaltagua's Carmenère has an ethereal, intoxicating, smoky, seductive textural component I found totally captivating.

The finish is deliciously lengthy and silky smooth. Savor the cherry, tart plum and sweet berry tones.

What food would pair best with this little gem? No doubt, a few slabs of your favorite ribs.

Lastly, drinking this Carmenère compares to watching a sultry flamenco dancer in a dive bar on the outskirts of a sleepy Spanish border town: It's a very sexy, mysterious experience requiring a strong spirit of adventure. Highly recommended.

Let your palate be the judge...

Have comments or questions about wine? Gregory Peebles, wine industry professional and East Bay resident, can be contacted at caledoniawine@sbcglobal.net.

The Pet Vet says...

BY DR. HEIDI STRAND



Dealing with 'litter box avoidance'

Q. Sometimes my cat goes poop on my bed, or in my closet. I keep the litter box clean and in the bathroom. There doesn't seem to be any pattern to this messy behavior. Can you explain why he might be doing this?

Q. My 8-year-old male cat has started spraying and peeing on the carpet. He is an indoor kitty and at first I thought it was because he smelled another cat through the front door (My neighbor's cat is constantly at my front door). But then I started noticing that he has been spraying in the bedroom and in the living room and in the dining room. This morning when I was getting ready for work he calmly walked out and squatted on the carpet right in front of me and peed on the carpet looking at me the entire time! His litter box is clean and he doesn't seem to be in any pain. I am renting and my landlady is going to kill me if I don't get this under control.

A. House soiling is the bane of cat owners everywhere. Not to mention veterinarians. And landlords. Sometimes a medical reason can be found, sometimes it cannot. But the first place to start is with your veterinarian. Particularly with inap-

propriate urination, as in the second question above. Cats are more prone to urinary tract disorders than dogs, ranging from infections to bladder stones to urethral obstructions. Behaviorists theorize that when a cat has a urinary tract disorder and experiences pain or discomfort on urination, he then associates that discomfort with his litter box, leading him to urinate elsewhere. Problems with inappropriate defecation can sometimes indicate a problem with the gastrointestinal system or with your cat's diet. Giving your veterinarian a full history, including when the problem started, where it occurs, and how frequently, is very helpful.

If a medical cause cannot be found, then we usually look at the litter box. "Litter box avoidance" can occur because the cat does not like the box or its contents. Be sure to keep it clean, scooping once or twice daily and emptying to clean once a week. If you have more than one cat, you need at least one litter box per cat, as cats are territorial animals. If you have a covered box, you may need to switch to an open one. Or try changing litter—some cats do not like the clumping varieties or scented brands. Also, any areas in the house that have

been urinated or defecated on need to be cleaned thoroughly with an enzymatic product like Nature's Miracle. If the odor has penetrated the carpet pad, your cat can still smell it, even if you can't.

Cats can have litter box issues due to stress as well. Conflict with other pets, changes in the household, even new pets in the neighborhood can all be stressors. If you cannot control outside situations (such as talking to your neighbor about not letting their cat visit your front door), then you may need to confine your cat to a smaller area with his litter box, food, water and toys. We call this "kitty jail." After a couple days, allow him out—if he soils the house, back he goes. Sometimes tough love is needed to save your relationship, and your sheets.

—Dr. Heidi Strand is a veterinarian for the East Bay SPCA in Dublin. She has lived in the Tri-Valley for 10 years with her family and an assortment of four-legged friends. Questions can be mailed to 315 Diablo Road, Suite 100, Danville 94526; or e-mailed to hstrand@eastbayspca.org. Her column runs every other week.

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OF NOTE



Community leaders (l-r) San Ramon Valley YMCA Executive Director Kathy Chiverton, Danville Mayor Candace Andersen, San Ramon Mayor H. Abram Wilson, San Ramon Valley YMCA Board Member Maryann Cella and Assemblyman Guy Houston give feedback to Youth and Government students.

Preparing youths for Sacramento

More than 2,000 teenagers, including 183 from the San Ramon Valley YMCA, were switching from school clothes to business suits and dresses to take over California state government beginning Feb. 14. The young men and women are participating in the 60th annual Youth and Government Model Legislature and Court.

The San Ramon Valley YMCA delegations are led by Rachel Horn, a senior at Monte Vista High School; Taylor Denhart, a San Ramon Valley High School senior; Sarah Hilty, a California High School junior; Stephanie Swide from Benicia High School; and Courtney Fong, a senior from Campolindo High School.

Each participating YMCA submitted an article of legislation or joint resolution. The bills proposed by the San Ramon Valley YMCA were reviewed by local leaders and, prior to their trip to Sacramento, the students were given feedback on their presentations by Assemblyman Guy Houston, San Ramon Valley YMCA Board Member Maryann Cella, San Ramon Mayor H. Abram Wilson, Danville Mayor Candace Andersen and San Ramon Valley YMCA Executive Director Kathy Chiverton. The students' resolutions concerned education, criminal justice and health issues.

The YMCA experiment of democracy in action began in California in 1948 during the administration of Gov. Earl Warren. Concurrently with the legislative process, youth judges will arbitrate an Appellate Court case and two Supreme Court cases in the Model Court program.

Monte Vista grad gets \$10,000 law scholarship

The Minority Corporate Counsel Association has selected David Zhou of Danville as a Lloyd M. Johnson Jr. Vault Inc. Fellow. Zhou has been awarded \$10,000 to fund his tuition at Harvard Law School for the next three years.

All fellows gain access to career

guidance, mentoring, professional opportunities and paid summer internships in top legal departments. The goal of the scholarship program is to promote academic excellence and diversity in law schools by awarding scholarships to newly accepted law students from disadvantaged backgrounds to help defray their education expenses.

The scholarship program is open to students who have been accepted into law school in a full-time, three-year program. Once the fellowships are awarded, the program requires each recipient to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or its equivalent each year.

Zhou graduated from Monte Vista High School and attended Harvard University.

Alamo students nominated to top military schools

U.S. Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D., District 10) has announced 22 students from California's congressional district whom she has nominated to attend the nations' top military service academies.

Jordan Blancarte of Alamo has been nominated to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado, and Jonathan Londynsky of Alamo has been recommended to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in New York.

"I'm always proud to nominate some of the district's best and brightest to attend one of the nation's prestigious military service academies," said Tauscher. "I wish all the students the best of luck throughout the remainder of the selection process and I look forward to seeing them serve the country as leaders in the United States Armed Forces."

Other military academies include the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York; and the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Applicants who are interested in being nominated to these academies must have a strong academic record, leadership skills, involvement in extracurricular activities, and a desire to serve the U.S.

For more information about applying, call Tauscher's offices at 932-8899 or visit www.house.gov/Tauscher.

Presenting the Past

BY BEVERLY LANE

Village Theatre History (Part 1)

Some old buildings are chock full of stories. The Village Theatre on Front Street has to be one of the most storied buildings in the San Ramon Valley. The theater as we know it was built in 1913, but the second floor dates to 1874.

The second floor was the original Danville Grange Hall, a one-story building that was constructed by Nathaniel Howard shortly after Danville Grange No. 85 was organized in 1873. For decades this hall was the social center for the entire San Ramon Valley. Grange harvest feasts took place in "Grange Park" near the hall and the grammar school on Front Street. In 1887 such a feast was fully reported in the Pacific Rural Press and brought nearly 1,500 people to Danville.

By 1912 there were several fraternal orders in town and the need for a larger hall was discussed. Three of the groups, the Grange, the International Order of Odd Fellows No. 378 and the Rebekahs decided to construct a large building with the old Grange Hall as the second floor. This new Social and Fraternal Hall at 233 Front St. was completed in 1913. The following spring it hosted graduation ceremonies for the first graduates who had attended the new San Ramon Union High School for four full years. After some renovations, in August 1914, high school classes (which had been meeting in a house) moved to the vacant Odd Fellows rooms upstairs on Front Street.

Parties, meetings, plays and musicals took place in the new hall. After the new high school building was constructed in 1917, the hall provided space for graduations and high school basketball games. There were regular dances one Saturday night a month. George Wood recalled that the kitchen was downstairs and the IOOF met upstairs. He also said that the young men who came to the dances would drop beer bottles around, next to the Presbyterian Church, which was located next door. Wood remembered the minister patrolling the grounds to pick up empty bottles before church services.

Movies were shown in the hall during the 1920s under the guidance of Granger Will Stewart. Folding chairs would be set up for patrons to view the silent film. The Daily Gazette in Oct. 16, 1924: "The moving picture venture seems to be so far a very profitable one for those interested, judging from the attendance. The pictures shown are good, clean pictures so far...The management appears to be very anxious to please the public in every way possible."

Wood said that "they were pretty primitive movies, and there was only one projector, so there was always a long delay every time one of the reels ran out."

Duane Elliott recalled going to the hall with others and



listening on the radio to championship boxing matches. Perhaps one was a Max Baer match, since Baer had lived in Livermore and used to come to the Saturday dances. Baer's nickname was the Livermore Larupper. He was the World Heavyweight Champion in 1934.

In 1925 the new Veterans' Memorial Hall was built to honor war veterans. The Contra Costa Courier on Jan. 23, 1925, stated, "It is the purpose of the post not to have the memorial hall compete in any manner with Danville community hall." With the construction of this hall, the valley had three venues for events: the San Ramon Hall (1911), the Social and Fraternal Hall (1913), and the Veterans' Memorial Hall (1925).

Millie Freitas said that Christmas celebrations during the 1930s were held around a large tree in the hall. The kids would go up on the stage one at a time "and Santa would give us an orange and an apple and a bag of candy. We were poor then and it was the only apples and oranges I ever had." She recalls a raised platform four to five feet wide lined with chairs where people would sit waiting to dance.

Dr. Wilson Close, who grew up downtown, remembered performing in a school play in the hall and having lots of good times there. "People would rent the hall and show movies, hold dances and even have roller skating parties." Today oldtimers still have fond memories of the hall before World War II.

Sources: John Mustard, "101 years old, the theater is full of history and legends," *Tri-Valley News*, Jan. 10, 1975; Virgie V. Jones, *Be It Ever So Humble ...*; Elizabeth Mason, "Village Theatre has a long, diverse history," *Tri-Valley Herald*, Feb. 10, 1992; Wikipedia; museum archives

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

A movie review of what's **NOW SHOWING**
by Jeanne Aufmuth

Vince Vaughn's Wild West Comedy Show



Rating: R for language and adult themes
Run Time: 1 hours, 45 minutes

Thirty cities in 30 nights and 6,000 miles across the country's heartland is the price you pay to bring a top live-comedy show into America's back yards.

Vince Vaughn mounts a fun-filled, Old West variety show and kicks it off, natch, in Hollywood. Here Vaughn and his hearty ensemble of hand-plucked funny-men (John Caparulo, Bret Ernst, Sebastian Maniscalco and Ahmed Ahmed) riff rhapsodic about wine, women and song.

Local celebs pick up the trail along the way—Mac poster boy Justin Long, country crooner Dwight Yoakam and Vaughn BFF Jon Favreau. Venues reflect their own inimitable culture: the San Diego crowd bristling over jokey barbs on apple martinis and flip-flops, while Katrina-battered Louisianans bask in the warmth and distraction of bawdy laughs.

The terrain is diverse: the bright lights of Vegas, the scrubby plains of El Paso and the manic student frenzy of Madison, Wisc., putting a faceted lens on America's ebb and flow.

"West" could use some trimming. The road-show aspect is repetitive but thankfully broken up with radio interviews, hometown reunions and escalating tensions arising from peripatetic, and claustrophobic, touring.

The humor is mostly fresh and often dirty—absolutely nothing is sacred. Racial-profiling and smutty-sex jokes jockey with true confessions about the heart of humor stemming from a deep place of insecurity and need.

Vaughn's mischievous imprint hangs over all: slick, irreverent and begging for more—of what, I'm not sure.

For more movie reviews or local show times, go to www.DanvilleWeekly.com



WEEKEND PREVIEW



MARILYNN GRAY-RAINE

Romantic paintings on exhibit

Pioneer Art Gallery will feature vibrant and romantic paintings by Marilynn Gray-Raine from 4-8 p.m., Feb. 14-24, at the Pioneer Art Gallery, 524 Hartz Ave., Danville. The artist donates 10 percent of profits to the Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer Foundation. A reception is planned featuring Marilynn Gray-Raine and Walter Krane from 4-8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 16. E-mail marilynn@marilynngray-raine.com or visit www.adas4art.org.

Art

'The Other' Pioneer Art Gallery will host "The Other" exhibit with pieces on display that represent modern interpretations of abstraction, and reflective of Pollock, Klein and others from Feb. 20-March 22, at the gallery, 524 Hartz Ave., Danville. A reception will be held from 3-7 p.m., Saturday, March 8, at the gallery. Call Noel at 831-1069 or 528-9000.

Walt Krane Art Reception Everyone is invited to attend the featured artists' reception highlighting the talented work of Walt Krane and Marilynn Gray-Raine from 4-7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 16, at the Pioneer Art Gallery, 524 Hartz Ave., Danville. The exhibit runs from Feb. 15-24. Call 552-9799 or visit www.adas4art.org.

Author Visit

Jean Haner Bay Books will host Jean Haner author of "The Wisdom of Your Face" at 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 28, at Bay Books, 2415 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. This event is free and open to the public. Call 855-1524.

Laurie Todd Laurie Todd, author of "Fight Your Health Insurer and Win," will host a workshop on how to deal with health insurance issues from 1-3 p.m., Saturday, March 15, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Learn how to advocate for yourself. This event is free for cancer patients and their families and caregivers. Call 933-0107.

Pari Noskin Taichert Bay Books will host Pari Noskin Taichert, author of "The Socorro Blast" at 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 29, at Bay Books, 2415 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. This event is free and is open to the public. Call 855-1524.

Richard Schwartz Bay Books will host Richard Schwartz, author of "Eccentrics, Heroes and Cutthroats of Old Berkeley" at 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 22, at Bay Books, 2415 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. This event is free and open to the public. Call 855-1524.

Russell Banks Rakestraw Books will host a luncheon with prize-winning novelist Russell Banks, author of "The

Reserve," at noon, Friday, Feb. 15, at Rakestraw Books, 409 Railroad Ave., Danville. Tickets are \$15. Advance reservations are essential, call 837-7337.

Terry Healy Danville Library will host Terry Healy, author of "At Face Value: My Triumph Over a Disfiguring Cancer" at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 4, at the Danville Library, Mt. Diablo Room, 400 Front St. The publication is a memoir of his experience with cancer. This event is free. Call 837-4889.

Civic Meetings

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

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

State of the Town Luncheon Town of Danville and Mayor Candance Anderson will host the State of the Town Luncheon at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 5, at Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Dr., Danville. Tickets are \$35, pre-registration is required after Feb. 20. Call 314-3400.

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

Classes

Financial Planning for Special Needs Children Town of Danville will host a class on Financial Planning for Special Needs Children from 6-8 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 20, at the Danville Library, Mt. Diablo Room, 400 Front St. This class is free, but registration is required by calling 314-3392 or visiting www.ci.danville.ca.us.

Oil Painting Class Stephen Sanfilippo will teach an oil painting class weekly from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Sundays or from 6:30-9:30 p.m., Mondays, until April 30, at the Pioneer Art Gallery, 524 Hartz Ave., Danville.

Includes demo and critique; open to all skill levels in oil medium. Each class is \$25. For registration and supplies information, visit www.stephansanfilippo.com/workshops.

Summer Bulbs and Summer Veggies Navlet's Garden Center hosts free gardening classes to the public. February classes include Summer Bulbs at 11:30 a.m., Sunday, Feb. 17 and Summer Veggies at 11:30 a.m., Sunday, Feb. 24, at Navlet's Garden Center, 800 Camino Ramon, Danville. Call 837-9144.

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 almo1@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 This club will host Betty Marvin who will speak as if she is Julia Morgan, who was a renowned architect, during the luncheon at noon, Wednesday, Feb. 27, at Alamo Women's Club, 1401 Danville Blvd. Cost is \$20. Reservations are required by calling 837-6548 by Feb. 21.

Boost Writing with Critique Session Tri-Valley Writers Club hosts feature speakers, published writers or industry professionals, who talk about their experiences, the writing process, and tips on getting published. The next meeting offers a critique session from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 16, at Oasis Grille, 780 Main St., Pleasanton. Cost is \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members. Call 462-7495 or visit www.trivalleywriters.com.

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

Danville Job's Daughters Job's Daughters is an international organization for girls between the ages of 10-20 with Masonic heritage who like to have fun and make friends. The group meets at 7 p.m., the second and fourth Tuesday of every month, at the Danville Grange Hall, 743 Diablo Rd. Call 829-8505.

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 Women's Club This club will meet for a luncheon at noon, Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Clubhouse, 242 Linda Mesa, Danville. Guest speaker Harry Hubing will speak on "Stamps in my Passport." Guests are welcome. For reservations, call 837-7528.

Danville-Sycamore Valley Rotary The Danville-Sycamore Valley Rotary Club meets for breakfast at 7 a.m., every Tuesday at Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Drive, Danville. Join them for great fellowship and make a difference in your community and the world. Call Scott at 743-8449.

Delta Nu Psi Delta Nu Psi provides packages to troops in the War Zone. The group collects donations before the third Friday of every month in front of Longs Drug Store in Alamo and before the third Saturday at Lunardi's in Danville. It puts together the packages on the third Wednesday of every

month. For information, e-mail Alicia at deltanupsi@comcast.net.

Diablo Black Men's Group This group will host a bus trip to the historic African-American town of Allensworth, California, on Saturday, Feb. 23. Bus will pick up participants at 6:30 a.m., at the Park & Ride, Sycamore Valley Road parking lot, Danville. Cost is \$40 for adults, \$20 for students 16 and under; including lunch. Call Spencer at (510) 714-7387 or Phillip at 939-5531.

Diablo Bonsai Club This club will host a workshop on "Formal Upright Style" from 7:30-9:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 20, at Heather Farm Garden Center, Upper Room, 1540 Marchbanks Dr., Walnut Creek. Individual attention will be given to those interested in the art of bonsai. Call 937-4216.

Grandmother's Club Grandmothers of all ages meet for lunch at 11 a.m., on the second Friday of every month, at the Brass Door, 2154 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. If interested, contact Fran Britt at 743-4026.

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. Meetings include networking, lunch and a guest speaker. For information, visit its Web site at www.kiwanis-srv.org or call 244-1227.

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

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

Guest speakers are at each meeting.

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

Porsche Club of American, Diablo Region This club is for owners and enthusiasts of all Porsches. It meets at 8 a.m., every Saturday for breakfast at Marie Callendar's, 1101 S. Calif. Blvd., Walnut Creek and at 6:30 p.m. at Strizzi's, 3456 Camino Tassajara, Danville. Visit www.pca.org/dia.

San Ramon Valley Genealogical This group meets at 10 a.m., on the third Tuesday of every month (except August and December), at the Danville Family History Center, 2949 Stone Valley Rd., Alamo. The public is welcome. Call Ed at 299-0881 or visit http://arvgensoc/org\$ndex.

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

Tri-Valley Holistic Moms Network With the hustle of daily life, it's sometimes hard to find time to connect with your partner. Tri-Valley Holistic Moms Network will host a meeting at 7 p.m., Monday, Feb. 18, at Cross Winds Church, 6444 Sierra Court, Dublin. This event is free. Visit www.holistic-moms.org.

Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 75 The organization meets at 7:30 p.m., every second Thursday of the month (except December), 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

'One Planet, One Heart, One Song' Danville Girls Chorus presents "One

2008

Bezers, France — Danville, California



Be A Host Family For 2 Weeks April 11-23

It is the group's sixth stay in the Danville area.

The students are aged between 14 to 18 for those who study in senior high school. Host families with only younger children have worked out nicely in past years also.

They are coming along with their teachers who are responsible for the group and have planned activities during the weekdays.

THE AIM OF SUCH A STAY IS TO HAVE AMERICAN TEENAGERS AND/OR PARENTS COME TO VISIT IN FRANCE.

We are properly insured in matters of personal liability, health insurance and can provide the insurance contract in English on request.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

Mr. Kevin Dimler k.dimler@sbcglobal.net Phone 925.820.4309

Planet, One Heart, One Song" at 11 a.m., Saturday, March 15, at Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church, 9015 S. Gale Ridge Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children under 14 years old. Call 837-2624.

'Ragtime Stew' Diablo Symphony Orchestra presents "Ragtime Stew," based on the works of Scott Joplin, at 2 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 17, at the Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$12-18. Call 943-7469 or visit www.dlrca.org.

Peppino D'Agostino Community Concerts presents Peppino D'Agostino in concert at 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 23, at the Wesley Center, 902 Danville Blvd., Alamo. Tickets are \$35 for gold tickets, \$20 for adults or \$18 for seniors and children. Call 229-2710 or visit www.communityconcerts.com.

Sounds of the Sixties Danville Community Band will host "Sounds of the Sixties" at 2 p.m., Sunday, March 2, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Concert is free with paid museum admission which is \$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students. Visit www.blackhawkmuseum.org.

Events

2008 O'Neill International Conference Scholars and devotees of Eugene O'Neill will come together at the 2008 O'Neill International Conference held from June 11-15, at the Tao House, Danville. Registration is now open; contact Diane Schinnerer at 828-0659 or dmdds@aol.com.

Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour Come and enjoy a free garden tour during the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday, May 4. Registration is required in order to receive a guidebook, which contains garden addresses, maps and directions. To register, visit www.bringingbackthenatives.net.

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

Parenting 2008 and Beyond San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs will host its annual Parenting and Community and Special Needs Conference from 8:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 23, at Dougherty Valley High School, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon. Cost is \$32. Madeline Levine, author of

"The Price of Privilege", is the keynote speaker. Visit www.srvcouncilpta.org.

Exhibits

'Oh Pleasanton!' Worthington Gallery West will host an exhibit entitled "Oh Pleasanton" that will showcase Pleasanton writers, multi-media artists and musicians, until March 29, at Worthington Gallery West, 739 Main St., Pleasanton. This event is free. Call 485-1183.

Agriculture for a Century, the Business of the Valley Museum of the San Ramon Valley is hosting the "Agriculture for a Century, the Business of the Valley" exhibit until May 10, at the museum at the corner of Railroad and Prospect avenues. Museum hours are from 1-4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday and 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday. A farmer or business person will be available to talk to visitors from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays. Admission is free, but donations are welcome. Call 837-3750.

Contemporary Warrior: Modern Day Tomb Soldiers Bedford Gallery will host "Contemporary Warrior: Modern Day Tomb Soldiers," an exhibit of ceramic figures by Chinese artist, Wanxin Zhang, until March 9, at the Bedford Gallery, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Call 295-1416 or visit www.bedfordgallery.org.

The Original Rat Fink Blackhawk Museum will host the "Original Rat Fink" exhibit from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., until June 15, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. The exhibit will feature original artwork, hot rods and toys all built by Ed "Big Daddy" Roth. Admission to the museum is \$8 for adults, \$5 for students and seniors. Visit www.blackhawkmuseum.org.

Film

'Graduation Day' Troy and Alana Pack Foundation will host a screening of "Graduation Day" at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 13, at the East Bay Fellowship Auditorium, 2615 Camino Tassajara, Danville. This event is free. Call 648-2940 or visit www.troyandalana.org.

Screening of 'In the Valley of Elah' Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center will host a screening of "In the Valley of Elah" from 7-9:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 27, at Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek. This event is free,

but donations are accepted. Call 933-7850 or visit www.mtdpc.org.

Fundraisers

Mary's House Crab Feed and Silent Auction Come and give to a good cause at Mary's House Crab Feed and Silent Auction from 5:15 p.m.-midnight, Saturday, March 1, at St. Isidore's Ministry Building, 440 La Gonda Way, Danville. The night will include a silent auction, no host cocktails, dinner, live auction and dancing. Tickets are \$38; reservations are due by Feb. 23 and should be sent to Mary's House, 1850 Church Lane, San Pablo, CA 94806. Proceeds will benefit Mary's House.

Oscar Party Town of Danville will host an Oscar Party at 5 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 24, at the Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Proceeds will benefit the Danville International Children's Film Festival. Call 314-3400, visit the Danville Community Center, 420 Front St. or www.villagetheatreshows.com.

Seventh Annual Academy Awards Party STAND! Against Domestic Violence and Brenden Theatres presents the seventh annual Academy Awards Party at 4:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 24, at Brenden Theatres, 1985 Willow Pass Rd., Concord. Advance tickets are \$45; \$50 at the door. Proceeds benefit STAND! Call 603-0138.

Spring 2008 Fashion Show Amador Valley High School Fashion Club presents the 2008 Spring Fashion Show at 4 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 23, the Amador Valley High School Library, 1155 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. The show includes student models and designers as well as professional designers. Proceeds will benefit the Hurricane Katrina and Southern California fire victims. Tickets are \$8 in advance; \$12 at the door; front row seats are \$15 in advance. Call 931-0628.

Health

Meditation for Healthy Living Danville Library will host Dr. Marshall Zaslove, who will offer simple and effective techniques to achieve inner peace at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 6, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. This event is free. Call 837-4889.

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

Yoga and the Immune System This workshop will discuss how the immune system functions and how to support it through cancer treatment and after from 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday, Feb. 23, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Participate in yoga practices using gentle stretches and restorative poses to enhance your body's ability to heal. Call 933-0107.

Kids and Teens

Free Online Tutoring Available Contra Costa County Library is offering free homework help from expert online tutors to students grade 4-12 and beginning college from 1-10 p.m., Monday-Friday, at <http://ccclib.org>

Winter Story Time Sessions Danville Library will offer story times until March 5, in the Danville Library, Children's Reading Room, 400 Front St. Mother Goose Time is for children ages birth-24 months, at 10:15 a.m., Mondays and Tuesdays; Toddler Time is for children ages 25 months-36 months, at 11:15 a.m., Mondays and Tuesdays and Preschool Time is for children 3-5 years old, at 10:15 a.m., Wednesdays. Caregivers must attend with children. Call 837-4889.

Youth to Youth Middle School Conference Community Against Substance Abuse (CASA) will host the 14th annual Youth to Youth Middle

School Conference from 8 a.m.-10 p.m., Saturday, March 8, at Dougherty Valley High School, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$35 with pre-registration, \$45 at the door. 6th-8th grade students will enjoy keynote speakers, workshops, teenbuilding activities, lunch, dinner and dance. Call 743-3059, ext. 328 or visit www.srvcasa.org

Lectures/ Workshops

911 Earth Seminar Gayler Construction is looking for 250 homeowners who are interested in buying bulk solar energy systems. The company will host "911 Earth" seminars are on Feb. 20 and March 13. For information, call Wendy at 820-0185 or visit www.gaylerconstruction.com.

African Drumming Circle Drumming has been shown to boost immune system functions and metabolism. Experience this fun way to get "good vibrations" from 4:30-5:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Call 933-0107.

Bringing Your Product to Market Randall Shores, Marketing Consultant with the Contra Costa SBDC, will host a workshop on "Bringing Your Product to Market" at 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. This event is free, but registration is required by calling 646-5377 or e-mail zaziz@contracostasbdc.com.

Couples and Cancer Come with your partner for a group discussion on the impact of cancer on relationships from 6-8 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 26, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Share struggles, solutions, issues and insights to support your relationship during and after cancer treatment. Call 933-0107.

How to Discuss Concerns About an Aging Parent with an Aging Parent Friends of the Danville Library will host a workshop on "How to Discuss Concerns About an Aging Parent with an Aging Parent" at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 26, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. Discussion will include looking at concerns, options and choices regarding adult care and offer suggestions on communicating. Call 837-4889.

Introduction to Orchid Growing Friends of the Danville Library will host an introduction to the care, growing and maintenance of orchids at 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 28, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. This event is free. Call 837-4889.

Power of Dreams Dreams can be messages from our subconscious. They can help to heal and teach us about past, current, and future situations so they can be integrated. Cancer patients, their families and caregivers may attend a workshop from 1-4 p.m., Saturday, March 1, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Includes video segments, discussion and dream sharing. Call 933-0107.

The Therapeutic Power of Journaling Learn techniques to guide you on an inward journey of self-discovery, self healing and creativity at this workshop from 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday, March 15, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Journaling will be combined with scrapbooking to help you create your own healing tale; bring photos and other materials to help you get started. Call 933-0107.

Web Wizard Database Workshop Danville Library will host the "Web Wizard Database" workshop at 6:45 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 16, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. This workshop will help you learn how to use the library's online databases for kids; you will be able to find information for school assignments from home. Space is limited and registration is required by calling 837-4889.

When a Parent Shows Signs of Memory Loss Eldercare Services will host a workshop on "When a Parent Shows Signs of Memory Loss" at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 11, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. The

workshop will look at memory loss in the elderly and ways that adult children can cope, help and seek assistance. This event is free. Call 837-4889.

Literary Events

Applications Available for Student Days High school students in Contra Costa County are invited to apply to participate in the 2008 Student Days, a program that offers professional training in drama, art, photography and writing, at the Eugene O'Neill's Tao House in Danville. The program begins on March 5 with workshops on art; March 6 will focus on drama; March 12 with workshops on photography, and March 13 with workshops on writing. Applications are available by calling 820-1818 or visiting www.myspace.com/eugeneoneill; applications are due by Feb. 15.

Evening Book Group Rakestraw Books host the Evening Book Group at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 19, at Rakestraw Books, 409 Railroad Ave., Danville. The book selection is "Lady Chatterley's Lover" by D.H. Lawrence. Call 837-7337.

First Wednesday Program Friends of the Danville Library, Town of Danville and the Kiwanis of the San Ramon Valley present "Paris and her Painters" from 1-2 p.m., Wednesday, March 5, at the Danville Community Center, Valley Oak Room, 420 Front St. Kay Payne, chief docent with the SF Fine Arts Museums, will present a visual journey to Paris, seen through the eyes of impressionist and academic painters. This event is free. Call 837-4455.

Live Music

Mark Anderson and Tamriko Siprashvili Amador Theater will host Anderson and Siprashvili in concert performing two piano, four hand classical selections at 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 16, at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. Tickets are \$15, \$20, and \$25. Call 931-3444 or visit www.civcartstickets.org.

Youth Music Festival Come and hear solo vocalists, instrumentalists, and vocal and instrumental ensembles, ages 18 and under, at the Youth Music Festival from 8-10 p.m., Friday, Feb. 15, at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. Tickets are \$7 in advance, \$10 at the door. Call 931-3444 or visit www.civcartstickets.org.

Miscellaneous

Host Families Needed Host families in Danville are needed for exchange students that are coming from France April 11-23. Students are ages 14-18 and are coming with their teachers who are responsible for the group. The group is properly insured in personal liability and health insurance. To volunteer, e-mail Martine Casusse at caussefly@wanadoo.fr.

New Adoption Event Tri-Valley Animal Rescue has a new adoption event from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., on the second, third and fourth Saturdays of every month, at Pet Food Express, 609 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville. Call 803-7043 or visit www.tvr.org.

Recycle for Breast Cancer Recycle for Breast Cancer is open seven days a week accepting free dropoffs for computers, monitors, cell phones, laptops, servers and TVs, at 31 Beta Ct., Suite C, San Ramon. Call 735-7203 or visit www.recycleforbreastcancer.org.

Speaker Series for the Scholarship Essay Competition Exchange Club of San Ramon Valley will host a speaker series for the Scholarship Essay Competition from 6-6:45 p.m., Feb. 25, March 3, 10, 31 and April 7, at the Veteran's Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. Students need to attend at least three sessions and will be able to interact with speakers as they discuss their specialty in the relation to the 10th Amendment.

The Energy Primer for Kids The Energy Primer for Kids is a 25-page

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3120-D Crow Canyon Road
HealthandFitnessPlus.net



booklet of simple facts pertaining to current energy issues and is useful for adults that are evaluating energy related claims of politicians. For a free copy, write to Synergy Institute, P.O. Box 561, San Ramon, CA 94583. A speaker is available for groups wishing to hear about the global warming propaganda. Call 837-7612.

On Stage

'Beauty and the Beast' Monte Vista Drama Department presents "Beauty and the Beast" at 7 p.m., Wednesday-Friday, Feb. 27-29, at Monte Vista High School, 3131 Stone Valley Rd., Danville. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for children. Call 552-2878.

'Betrayal' Role Players Ensemble Theatre presents "Betrayal" as part of their Black Box productions at 8 p.m., Friday-Saturday, March 7-8 and 14-15, at the Town Meeting Hall, 210 Front St., Danville. Tickets are \$10. Visit www.danvilletheatre.com.

'Godspell' Light Youth Musical Productions presents "Godspell" at 8 p.m., Friday-Saturday, March 8-9; 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., Sunday, March 9; 8 p.m., Friday, March 14; 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Saturday, March 15 and at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., Sunday, March 16, at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, 2601 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$15. Call 830-0600 or visit www.sjasr.org.

'Jake's Women' Act Now Theatre presents "Jake's Women" at 8:15 p.m., Friday-Sunday, Feb. 22-March 9, at the Leshher Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$28, \$23 for seniors and \$12.50 for children 17 and under. Call 513-1596 or visit www.actnowtheatre.org.

'Man of La Mancha' Diablo Light Opera Company presents "Man of La Mancha" from Feb. 15-March 16, at the Leshher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$28-40. As an extension of Valentine's Day, a reception with chocolates and champagne will follow the Feb. 15-16 performances. Call 943-7469 or visit www.dlra.org.

'Mulan' Danville Children's Musical Theater presents "Mulan" at 7:30 p.m., Fridays-Saturdays and 2 p.m., Sundays, March 7-15, at the Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Come see the ancient Chinese legend spring to life in this musical adventure! Tickets are \$7.50-\$9.50. Call 314-3463 or visit www.danvillechildrensmusicaltheater.com.

'Nixon's Nixon' Center REPeritory Company presents "Nixon's Nixon" at various times, until March 1, at Center REPeritory Company, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$15-40. Call 943-7469 or visit www.dlra.org.

'Wigged Out!' Hair on Stage presents "Wigged Out!" playing until June 21, at Hair on Stage, 520 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville. The box office is open from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Saturday. Call 855-SHOW (855-7469) or visit www.wiggedout.org.

Night at the Improv Join San Ramon Improv U for a fun and interactive evening of improvisational comedy from 8-10 p.m., Saturday, March 15, at Front Row Theater, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon. The show is unrehearsed, unscripted, and created on the spot with the help of audience participation. Tickets are \$8. Visit www.sanramonimprov.com.

Political Notes

Assembly District 15 Candidate Forum Democratic candidates for California's Assembly District 15 will debate critical state issues at a forum from 7-8 p.m., Tuesday, March 11, at the San Ramon Community Center, 12501 Alcosta Blvd. Cost is a suggested donation of \$10; \$5 students and seniors. Call 335-2647 or visit www.ad15.org.

Seniors

Bridge Seniors meet to play bridge from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. every Friday at the Danville Veteran's Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave. Experienced players only. Cost is \$1. Reservations are required. Call Jerri Kaldem at 837-6283.

Buzz Sessions Town of Danville presents Buzz Sessions for seniors from 1-2:30 p.m., each fourth Tuesday of the month, at Danville Library, Mt. Diablo Room, 400 Front St. These events are free, but register to reserve your place by calling 314-3400.

Danville Senior Citizens Club The club meets from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m., every Monday at the Danville Veterans' Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., for line dancing exercise, bingo, mah jong and more. New members are welcome. Membership is \$12 a year. Call Fran Britt at 743-4026.

Golden Crane Senior Center The Golden Crane Senior Center is open for all seniors from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., every Monday, at the Alamo Women's Club, 1401 Danville Blvd. The offerings include classes in exercise, yoga stretch, Luk-Tung Kuen, dancing, karaoke, Chinese brush painting, calligraphy, English as a second language and jewelry. Visit www.goldencrane.org.

Prime Time Prime Time for seasoned citizens meets from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., every Tuesday, at Community Presbyterian Church, 222 W. El Pintado, Danville. Activities include line dancing, English handbells, ceramics, wood carving and more. A home-cooked meal is served at noon for \$4. Rides are provided by County Connection Link for \$3.50 round trip; call Gloria at 837-5229. For information, call 820-6387.

Senior Sneaker Trips Town of Danville hosts Senior Sneaker Trips to different attractions throughout the area. For a list of dates, go to the Danville Community Center at 420 Front St., call 314-3400 or visit www.ci.danville.ca.us.

Seniors Program Danville Veterans' Memorial Hall Lounge hosts a senior drop-in program from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday-Friday, at Veterans' Memorial Hall, 400 Front St., Danville. Activities include playing cards and board games, visit with friends and meet new people. Call 314-3400.

St. Isidore's 'Young at Heart' Join this group for a meeting from 11:15 a.m.-2 p.m., the third Tuesday of every month at St. Isidore's Ministries Center, 440 La Gonda Way, Danville. Optional Mass starts at 11:15 a.m.; lunch starts at 11:45 a.m.; bring brown bag lunch from until August, beverage, fruit and dessert are provided. Nonprofit bingo follows. This event is free, but reservations are appreciated by calling 820-4447.

Spiritual

Love, Anger, Power - and Food Learn to make food your friend! Discover your strength, spirituality, and your personal power as a unique individual with immense potential from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday, April 11, at San Damiano, 710 Highland Dr., Danville. Cost is \$95 for CEU's. \$70 without CEU's; lunch is included. Call 837-9141, ext. 315.

Using the Labyrinth to Walk into the Heart of God San Damiano will host a workshop on the history of the Chartres labyrinth, its symbols, how to walk it as we set our intentions and how it can be used to draw closer to God from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Friday, April 18, at San Damiano, 710 Highland Dr., Danville. Cost is \$75, including lunch and a walk on the labyrinth in the beautiful Canticle Garden. Call 837-9141, ext. 315.

Walk Thru the Old Testament Learn the stories of the Old Testament in a fun, interactive and memorable way from 5:45 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday, Feb. 29 and from 8:30 a.m.-noon, Saturday, March 1, at John Knox Presbyterian Church, 7421 Amarillo Rd., Dublin. Cost is \$35 for adults, \$105 for a family; dinner and breakfast are included. Registration is required; call 828-1846 or visit www.jkpcdublin.com. Free childcare for preschool and younger

will be provided.

Sports

'Give Ice Hockey a Try' Day Women ages 18 and older can learn to play ice hockey in a fun, safe and encouraging environment from 6:30-8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 16, at Belmont Iceland, 815 Old County Rd., Belmont. Gear and on-ice instruction will be provided; the day will finish with a scrimmage. Cost is \$20. Register by e-mail at ncwhl.ghatd@gmail.com or visit www.ncwhl.com.

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

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

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

Support Groups

Addiction Counseling Narconon offers free counseling, assessments and referrals to centers nationwide to families in need of drug or alcohol addiction help. Call (800) 468-6933 or visit www.stopaddiction.com.

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

Celebrate Recovery Celebrate Recovery is a forward-looking and balanced Christ-centered recovery program for people with hurts, habits and hang-ups. The group meets at 6:30 p.m. for dinner and the program starts at 7 p.m., every Friday, at East Bay Fellowship, 2615 Camino Tassajara, Danville. Childcare available for ages 5-11. Call 736-5100, e-mail celebraterecovery@eastbayfellowship.org or visit www.eastbayfellowship.org.

ClutterLess Self Help Group Is clutter stressing you out? Cluttering is a psychological issue, not just an organizing issue. Join the group at their meeting from 7-8:30 p.m., Mondays, at Pleasanton Presbyterian Church, 4300 Mirador Dr. Optional \$2-5 donation. Call 297-9246 or visit www.clutterless.org.

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

Find Help For Addiction Problems with drug or alcohol addiction in a loved one? Don't know whom to turn to for help? Contact Drug Rehab Resource for a free confidential consultation to find the help you need. Call (866) 649-1594 or visit www.drugrehabresource.net.

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous Are you having trouble

controlling the way you eat? There is a solution to weight and diet obsession. This effective 12-step program has proven results. There are no dues, fees or weigh-ins. This group meets from 7-8:30 p.m., every Wednesday, at Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. For a complete listing of East Bay meetings, call 838-1837 or visit www.foodaddicts.org.

Heart Support Group Heart support group for heart disease patients, their families and caregivers meets from 1:30-3:30 p.m., on the fourth Saturday of every month (except November and December), at Kaiser Walnut Creek Medical Center, 3rd Floor Conference Center, Walnut Creek. Its mission is to "inspire hope in heart disease patients and their families." Call 708-4151 or visit www.mendedhearts254.org.

Hospice Offers Support Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa offers a variety of support groups and workshops for people experiencing grief and loss after the death of a loved one. Individual grief counseling for Hospice families is also available. Groups are

offered from 7-9 p.m., Friday evenings at the San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church in Alamo. All groups and workshops are offered without fee and require preregistration. For a schedule of groups in the Pleasant Hill area, for additional information and/or to register, call 837-5678.

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

Newly Formed Proactive Group for Women Support Group for FIBRO, CFF and Chronic Pain meets from 12:30-2:30 p.m., every other Wednesday. Call 234-5621 or e-mail dsashby@msn.com.

PET OF THE WEEK



CATHERINE HANSEN RUSH

Brownie, Blackie spread the word

Brownie and Blackie are here to tell you it's Adopt a Rescued Bunny Month." From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 17, the East Bay SPCA will host a rabbit adoption event at the Oakland facility. House Rabbit Society International Headquarters, Sacramento House Rabbit Society, Hayward Animal Shelter, Save A Bunny, North Star Rescue, Harvest Home Animal Sanctuary, and Contra Costa Animal Services will all be onsite with adoptable bunnies.

In addition, the East Bay SPCA will be hosting a bunny adoption event the first Saturday of every month from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at their Dublin facility, 4651 Gleason Drive in Dublin. To learn more, call 479-9670 or visit www.eastbayspca.org/events.

Brownie and Blackie, and eight of their siblings (you know how bunnies can be!) are available for adoption at the East County Animal Shelter, 4595 Gleason Drive in Dublin, open daily 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call 803-7040.

House Rabbit Society's Web site, www.rabbit.org, also has information about all things bunny.



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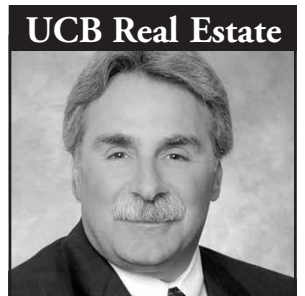
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SALES AT A GLANCE

This week's data represents homes sold during January 2008

Danville	Walnut Creek	Lowest sale reported:
Total sales reported: 13	Average sales reported: \$744,808	\$235,000
Lowest sale reported: \$459,000	Total sales reported: 13	Highest sale reported: \$1,550,000
Highest sale reported:	Average sales reported: \$604,423	

HOME SALES

Source: California REsource

This week's data represents homes sold during January 2008

Danville

124 Benjamin Lane Smoot Trust to D. & L. Katona for \$1,160,000

1618 Brush Creek Place D. Hayden to L. & K. Spring for \$750,000

30 Channi Court Shapell Industries to M. Yan for \$465,500

38 Channi Court Shapell Industries to S. & P. Gill for \$492,000

110 El Dorado Avenue Heritage Capital to Slattery Trust for \$1,020,000

2208 Genoa Street M. Randolph to Walters Trust for \$910,000

256 Jasmine Way K. & P. Kim to N. Chan for \$839,500

404 Karelian Street Shapell Industries to W. Chen for \$466,000

1432 Menton Street Lennar Homes to H. & A. Lee for \$968,500

410 Old Orchard Court M. & S. Lickiss to C. Jensen for \$459,000

253 Pembroke Street Shapell Industries to F. Galvez for \$466,000

914 Saddlehorn Court Shapell Homes to J. & C. Barbuzano for \$1,186,500

2003 Swan Street J. Fitzpatrick to Fitzpatrick Trust for \$500,000

Walnut Creek

1315 Alma Avenue #221 Alpine of Alma Development to R. Farr for \$235,000

2185 Cactus Court #3 Phillips Trust to Gonzales Trust for \$450,000

1451 Marchbanks Drive #1 Odne Trust to D. Yu for \$270,000

16 Oak Treat Court McCormick Trust to A. Fallat for \$590,000

2912 Putnam Boulevard Deutsche Bank to B. Saemian for \$535,000

1473 Quail View Circle Stumbo Trust to Warner Trust for \$730,000

1458 Stanley Dollar Drive #4A Saunders Trust to F. Nelson for \$515,000

2020 Strand Road R. & W. Libby to R. & E. Tomlin for \$1,550,000

1923 Stratton Circle Friedman Trust to Plinius Stratton Inc. for \$600,000

809 Tampico Autry Trust to B. Aaron for \$498,500

955 Terra California Drive #6 Wright Trust to Donnell Trust for \$650,000

1422 Via Loma Blakeman Trust to G. Bisabri for \$535,000

10 Vista Hermosa E. Savio to J. & K. Darrow for \$699,000

2009 budget plan adds 9 percent hike in HUD funds

New programs seek to preserve home ownership society

by Jeb Bing

The Bush Administration's fiscal year 2009 budget seeks \$38.5 billion for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which represents a \$3.2 billion or 9 percent increase over the president's proposed budget for the current fiscal year and \$1 billion more than HUD's current budget authority.

In reporting on details of next year's proposed spending blueprint, HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson noted the 2009 Budget includes significant increases for housing counseling, homeless assistance and affordable housing programs.

"This budget demonstrates (our) commitment to protecting homeownership by helping families facing foreclosure, while recognizing the need for more affordable rental housing," said Jackson. "The president is also making certain that HUD's budget once again includes record funding to support homeless individuals and families."

The 2009 Budget seeks a record \$1.636 billion to support thousands of local homeless programs; \$2 billion to promote local affordable housing development; and \$29.4 billion for rental assistance for low-income families.

While homeownership rates continue at near historic levels, many lower income families are facing the prospect of foreclosure as their subprime adjustable-rate mortgages reset. To combat this challenge, HUD plans to spend \$65 million for housing counseling, a \$15 million increase over 2008.

Jackson said that in June 2002, Bush challenged the nation to close the minority homeownership gap by increasing the number of minority homeowners by 5.5 million by the end of this decade.

"Since the president issued his challenge, 3.74 million minority families have joined the ranks of homeowners, putting the nation on schedule to reach that goal," Jackson said. "The new budget proposal also increases funding for several programs that advance the goal of creating and preserving an ownership society."

These programs include:

1. The Federal Housing Administration: FHA is undergoing a transformation to give homebuyers who do not qualify for prime financing a better alternative to high-cost, high-risk loan products. Many of these types of non-traditional mortgages triggered high

► Continued on page 23

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

ALAMO

3 Bedrooms

101 Easy St. \$899,000
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 989-2989

4 Bedrooms

35 Summer Meadows Ct. \$2,390,000
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 791-2600

6 Bedrooms

73 Pleasant Knoll Ct. \$3,095,000
Sun 1-4 Empire 217-3116

DANVILLE

3 Bedrooms

421 Garden Creek Pl. \$519,950
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 260-8883

1948 St. George Rd. \$759,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 260-8883

4 Bedrooms

74 Milano Ct. \$1,095,000
Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 855-4103

471 Francis Dr. \$1,149,000
Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 855-4149

842 Matadera Cir. \$1,149,888
Sat/Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 260-2508

410 Bridgeside Cir. \$699,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 260-8883

441 Scout Pl. \$950,000
Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 457-4551

20 Cannes Ct. \$998,500
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 791-2600

5 Bedrooms

104 Parkhaven Dr. \$1,200,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 260-8883

308 Sunset Dr. \$1,249,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 260-8883

272 Montego Dr. \$5,489,000
Sun 1:30-4:30 Alain Pinel 791-2600

SAN RAMON

3 Bedrooms

113 Arianna Ln. \$519,000
Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 977-8965

4 Bedrooms

112 Lawnview Cir. \$575,000
Sun 2-5 J. Rockcliff Realtors 837-7110

8024 Briar Oaks Dr. \$839,000
Sun 1-4 Prudential CA 734-5061

533 Adriatic Ct. \$845,000
Sun 1:30-4:30J. Rockcliff Realtors 648-5341

5 Bedrooms

3882 Mandy Wy. \$1,499,950
Sun 1-4 Realty World 918-3543

813 Spring Brook \$775,000
Sat 1-4 Investment Real Estate Co. 846-0506

DUBLIN

3 Bedrooms

8246 Rhoda Ave. \$949,000
Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 876-7089

4 Bedrooms

8333 Creekside Dr. \$1,100,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 463-0436

5 Bedrooms

4939 Sequoia Ave. \$824,900
Sun 1-4 Hometown GMAC 417-8603

PLEASANTON

2 Bedrooms

2233 Goldcrest Cir. \$499,000
Sun 1-4 ReMax/accord Jeff Clyma 918-3395

7425 Stonedale Dr. \$525,000
Sun 1-4 Hometown GMAC 455-7000

4382 First St. \$699,850
Sat 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 251-2556

3 Bedrooms

6322 Alisal St. \$1,155,000
Sun 1-4 ReMax / Accord 997-8001

7229 Valley View Ct. \$575,000
Sun 1:30-4:30 ReMax Accord 209-7644

4427 Downing Ct. \$599,950
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 463-0436

2516 Raven Rd. \$859,000
Sun 2-5 Alain Pinel-Kris Moxley 519-9080

4484 Funston Gate Ct. \$875,000
Sun 1-4 Keller Williams 260-8883

4639 Third St. \$989,000
Sat/Sun 1-4Investment Real Estate Co.846-0506

4 Bedrooms

844 Division St. \$1,195,000
Sat/Sun 1-3Investment Real Estate Co.846-0506

72 Castlewood Dr. \$2,350,000
Sun 1-4:30 Sotheby's 484-2045

3548 West Las Positas Blvd. \$777,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Re/Max 580-8011

946 Madeira Rd. \$819,950
Sun 1-4 Allied Brokers 846-3755

3645 Dunsmuir Cir. \$929,000
Sun 1:30-4 Alain Pinel 998-9747

5 Bedrooms

1258 Hearst Dr. \$1,595,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel 846-6500

8330 Moller Ranch Dr. \$1,598,888
Sun 1-4 Re/Max 580-8011

7914 Paragon Cir. \$1,899,000
Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel 846-6500

3623 Cameron \$1,925,000
Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel-Kris Moxley 519-9080

LIVERMORE

2 Bedrooms

3120 Arcadia Cmn., # 404 \$374,900
Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 998-3078

3 Bedrooms

5525 Haggin Oaks Ave. \$465,000
Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 525-0116

562 Caliente Ave. \$599,900
Sun 1-4 Hometown GMAC - Louise Davis 426-3834

4 Bedrooms

6608 Tiffany Cmn. \$549,000
Sun 1-4 Hometown GMAC 963-8322

1119 Madison Ave. \$599,000
Sat/Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 525-0116

254 Nadine St. \$669,950
Sat/Sun 1-4 J. Rockcliff Realtors 251-2502

1836 Heidelberg Dr. \$749,000
Sat/Sun 1:30-4:30J. Rockcliff Realtors 583-2181

1579 Frankfurt Wy. \$769,000
Sat/Sun 12:30-3:30J. Rockcliff 251-2523

4293 Bellmawr Dr. \$799,900
Sun 1-4 Alain Pinel 583-1121

1642 Feldspar Ct. \$939,000
Sat 1-4 Alain Pinel 583-1121

HUD funds

► Continued from page 22

foreclosure rates that the nation is currently experiencing. Jackson said the House and Senate agree with the administration's proposal to modernize the FHA and are currently working on a reconciled bill for the president's signature.

2. HOME Investment Partnerships Program: HOME is the largest federal block grant program dedicated to creating affordable housing for low-income families. The administration is proposing \$2 billion for the HOME program in FY 2009, an increase of \$263 million from FY 2008 enacted. Each HOME dollar allocated to a local jurisdiction traditionally leverages more than three dollars from other public and private sources.

3. Housing Counseling: The proposed budget requests \$65 million, a \$15 million increase over current levels, to support 2,300 housing counseling agencies across the country. This will increase funding for housing counseling by 150 percent since the program was

launched in 2001. These programs offer a wide array of counseling services to prepare families to buy their first home, to avoid predatory lending practices, and assist current homeowners facing default. Jackson said housing counseling is considered the most cost-effective way to educate renters and homeowners to make informed financial decisions and avoid high-risk, high-cost loans that place them at greater risk of foreclosure.

Another HUD effort is the Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program, called SHOP. By supporting self-help homeownership programs like Habitat for Humanity and others, Jackson said HUD can help families "to realize the American Dream of homeownership through so-called sweat equity grants."

He said the term "sweat" is used because those who benefit from SHOP funds must contribute at least 100 hours of their own labor to help construct or rehabilitate their new home.

The 2009 budget seeks \$39 million for SHOP, an increase of \$12.5 million over the current appropriation. ■

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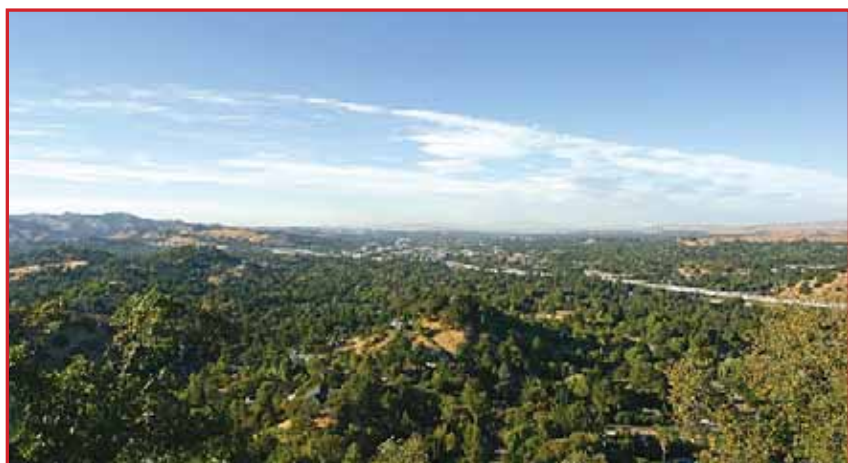
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