

Save Mount Diablo challenges Duffield plans

Alamo house now scaled down to 17,000 square feet > **page 5**

Spring Home & Garden

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Vol. III, Number 46 • March 21, 2008

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Danville

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Are we
missing
the bus?



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Q: How much does a politician's personal life affect whether you vote for him/her?



I don't vote. But it shouldn't affect you at all. You should mind your own business.

Tommy Butters
entrepreneur



I really feel like if there wasn't a TV in every living room, no one would care. Nobody cared that Jefferson had sex with his slaves or that JFK had sex with Marilyn Monroe. It's a shame our country is addicted to gossip.

Randi Cappelletti
*recent graduate
of University of Southern California*



It doesn't affect the way they run the country. You gotta separate personal life from business life.

Darrin Delcarlo
account manager



It depends on what type of political position they are in. I may not have respect for the guy, but if he gets his job done right it doesn't matter if his wife thinks he's a bastard.

Ian Johnson
student



I liked Bill Clinton. And I don't think (New York Gov. Eliot) Spitzer should have resigned. You have to walk in someone's shoes. Maybe his wife wasn't affectionate.

Kelly Soto
construction worker

COMPILED BY DANVILLE WEEKLY STAFF

ABOUT THE COVER

Many say public transportation is both an economical and estimable way to travel or commute. But if it's forced to scale back service, fewer and fewer people are likely to ditch their cars and opt for the bus. Photo by Meghan Neal. Cover design by Lili Cao.

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Two of a kind

Send us your mother-daughter look-alikes

With Mother's Day coming up, the Danville Weekly is holding a mother-daughter look-alike contest. If you and your daughter have a strong resemblance, send a digital photo, no larger than 1 MB, to editor@DanvilleWeekly.com by Monday, April 21.

The staff at the Weekly will choose the finalists, and readers will be able to vote online for which mother and daughter in the Danville-Alamo area look most alike. Prizes will be awarded for the first- and second-place winners. Photos of the winners will be published in the May 9 edition of the Danville Weekly for a happy Mother's Day.



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*Host a Party—For birthdays, bridal showers
or friends who want to have a unique
and fun get together, arrange a private
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It's not too late to hit the slopes

Seniors and adults ages 19 and up are invited to join a ski trip sponsored by the Town of Danville on Saturday, March 29. The cost is \$89 and includes a lift ticket, bus transportation to Northstar at Tahoe and a continental breakfast.

The bus will leave at 4 a.m. from the Danville Park and Ride, I-680 and Sycamore Valley Road. Breakfast will be served on the bus and a classic ski movie will be shown.

The group will arrive at the slopes between 8:15 and 9 a.m. and can ski until 3:30 or 4 p.m. On the bus ride home, hot cocoa, cookies and another movie will be provided. The bus will stop for a dinner break and return to Danville around 9 p.m.

To register, call 314-3400. For more information about the trip, call Jenn Overmoe, 314-3491.

School district launches new Web site

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District has unveiled its newly designed Web site, at www.srvusd.net. The new site provides students, parents and visitors improved access to information about the district and its 33 schools.

"We know that parents and community members rely on the site for timely and accurate information about our schools, and this new format gives it to them in more interactive, user-friendly ways," Superintendent Rob Kessler said.

The site features a new, updated look with many photographs and a drop-down navigational tool bar that's easy to use. A Quick Links tab offers fast access to frequently requested information such as student registration, summer programs and district calendars.

The new site also offers streaming video and audio, forms that can be filled out and submitted online, photo slide shows and board policies with keyword search capability.

Downtown Danville clothing shop to open store for juniors

Twenty One Tango, a contemporary ladies' clothing and accessories store, is doubling in size and adding a new store, Twenty One Tango Too for juniors.

The juniors' store will open on or around March 25 at the shop's current location at 100 E. Prospect Ave. The current store will move around the corner to a bigger location at 391 Hartz Ave.

"Twenty One Tango Too will carry hip, young fashions that will appeal to the junior market," said owner Michele R. Stone. "We'll have lots of baby doll tops, dresses, jeans and other trendy, young merchandise offered at great prices."

The 7-year-old clothing store is known for personalized service, a liberal exchange program and affordable prices.

Call for Art in the Park reservations

The deadline is April 1 for artists to reserve space for Art in the Park, which will take place Oct. 4-5 at Front Street Park in front of the Danville Library. Applications for booth space in this popular juried Fine Arts Festival are now available at www.ADAS4ART.org, on the Events page. Sponsored by Alamo Danville Artists' Society, the show is a benefit for art in the schools.

Art in the Park features paintings in all

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Don't feel like you're bothering us, 'cause you're not at all.”

—Danville police Sgt. Dan Hoffman, urging people to report suspicious activities.
See story, page 7.

media, sculpture, art photography, graphics, fine jewelry and other fine art. The event includes a judged Inside Art Show in the Community Center, food, wine, children's art activities and live entertainment.

Artist booth spaces are \$70 for ADAS members and \$85 for non-members, plus 10 percent commission for the Art in the Schools fund. For more information, call 828-9170.

Contra Costa County has board openings

The Contra Costa County Aviation Advisory Committee has two openings for at-large positions, representing all stakeholders interested in Buchanan Field and Byron Airport.

A position is also open on the County Retirement Board. Candidates should be county residents with experience in pension fund investment, equity investment or banking.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District's Fire Advisory Committee has an opening for a four-year term. The committee is responsible for reviewing operations and budget. Applicants must live or work within the boundaries of the Fire District.

Finally, a position is open on the county's Planning Commission, which is generally responsible for advising the legislative body on all planning-related matters.

Applications for all of the above positions can be obtained from the clerk of the Board of Supervisors. Call 335-1900 or visit www.co.contra-costa.ca.us; applications are due by 5 p.m., Friday, April 4.

School district names principal for Los Cerros

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District Board of Education announced the selection of Phyllis Roach as principal of Los Cerros Middle School in Danville. Roach, assistant principal at San Ramon Valley High School in Danville for the past two years, began her position March 3.

"I am very excited to be joining the dynamic community of Los Cerros," said Roach. "I can't wait to get started and to help build upon the already excellent reputation Los Cerros has in the community."

Roach came to the district in 2006, after 16 years as a science and math teacher and vice principal at Moreau Catholic High School in Hayward. Her first experience as an educator was with the Peace Corps teaching in middle schools in Kenya. She holds a masters degree in Educational Leadership and an Administrative Credential from Cal State East Bay.

Roach is replacing Lisa Ward, who was recently named the principal of Gale Ranch Middle School, the district's newest middle school in San Ramon, which is under construction and scheduled to open in August.

Castlewood deaths were a double homicide, say police

Former school board member Scherer was active in the San Ramon Valley

by Janet Pelletier

A former school board member and his wife who were discovered dead in their Castlewood home Friday afternoon were brutally beaten to death, said police at a press conference Monday afternoon.

Sgt. Scott Dudek of the Alameda County Sheriff's Department said police weren't releasing any possible motives to the murders, but said they could rule out a murder-suicide.

Ernest Scherer Jr., 60, and his wife, Charlene Abendroth, 57, were found toward the front portion of their 4,000-square-foot, two-story home at 18 Castlewood Drive. Dudek said the Sheriff's Office received a call that an employee of the Castlewood Country Club had seen Scherer's motionless body from a window of the home.

The employee checked on the home after the couple's daughter had asked them to do so. Dudek said the daughter became suspicious and concerned because she spoke with her parents every day and hadn't heard from them in a week.

Police believe the couple, who were married for 31 years, were murdered sometime between the



Sgt. Scott Dudek of the Alameda County Sheriff's Department speaks at an afternoon press conference Monday, saying he believes the couple was brutally beaten to death.

night of March 7 and into the morning hours of March 8.

"We believe they left the Castlewood Country Club for dinner at approximately 8 p.m. on March 7," Dudek said. "We believe they were killed sometime after leaving that dinner when they returned to their house at 8 o'clock. Mr. Scherer had missed a meeting that he had scheduled for Saturday morning, so it's very probable that the murder occurred sometime after 8 o'clock."

Dudek said he doesn't believe the murders were random, although police haven't ruled that out.

Police have canvassed the neighborhood of Castlewood, which is in unincorporated Pleasanton, handing out questionnaires in an attempt to see if residents had seen any people not known to the area or suspicious vehicles.

"There's one way in Castlewood and there's only one way out pretty much to get back to the main road," Dudek said. "That could be a huge



The bodies of Ernest Scherer, 60, and his wife, Charlene Abendroth, 57, were discovered Friday afternoon.

factor for us in detecting to solve this double homicide."

The couple had lived in the home for two years. They purchased it from the parents of professional golf player Paula Creamer. They previously had lived in San Ramon.

Scherer Jr. was a board member of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District from 1988 to 1990,

► Continued on page 7

School district offers home study option

100 students are in homeschooling program

by Natalie O'Neill

California courts are cracking down on parents who homeschool without teaching credentials—but San Ramon Valley's Venture School families need not worry.

Venture students who are in the Home Independent Study Program work with a certificated teacher every other week, must use state curriculum and textbooks, and take statewide exams like STAR.

"That legitimizes it," said Joan Diamond, principal at Venture. She said the ruling won't affect Venture students.

By and large, the ruling is more likely to impact parents who teach from home and aren't registered with a district or private charter schools.

The ruling requires parents to have the same teacher training and certification as K-12 public educators in the state.

That includes a bachelor's degree, a passing mark on a California Basic Education Skills Test, and completion of educational training, which tends to focus on teaching methods and classroom organization.

"We're talking at least five years of college," said Terry Koehne, spokesman for the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.

Parents who homeschool are outraged. They say nobody's more in touch with a child's learning style than a parent.

The court case was an appeal, based originally on a child welfare conflict in Los Angeles. Defendant Mary Long, who taught her eight

children without certification, was challenged by the Department of Child and Family Services.

In Alamo, Caroline Rover homeschools her seven children and has no official teaching credential either. When she heard about the court decision, she was worried.

"My ears perked up," she said.

But she teaches through a private county-approved charter school and said the ruling won't apply to her family either. Still, she said, it bothers her that the state makes a negative association with family homeschooling.

"It's a shame," she said. "Just because you homeschool doesn't mean you abuse your kids."

At first, Rover planned to just teach her children for kindergarten, but as the years went by, she moved on to teaching the primary grades and then to the middle school level.

She had heard stories about bullying and preteens with knives at public schools and decided that for her kids, it was too much of a risk.

"It was nerve-racking to me," she said.

She feels her home environment is the best place for her children to learn.

"I know where they are. I know who they are associating with," she said.

At Venture, parents homeschool for a lot of other reasons, Diamond said. Some kids have health problems. Others are gifted. Some have

► Continued on page 8

Save Mount Diablo still fighting Duffield over mansion

Group says home would impact environment; builder says neighbors are now behind the project

by Meghan Neal

Three years and a boat load of controversy have passed since David Duffield announced he would build a gigantic mansion in Alamo on the cusp of Mount Diablo.

The billionaire's original proposal for a 72,000-square-foot home—bigger than Hearst Castle and double the size of the Taj Mahal—spawned an outcry of opposition when it was first introduced in 2005.

Now most opposing voices have been quelled, though the reasons why are controversial themselves. But the environmental group Save Mount Diablo is still fighting the project and hopes to have a hearing before the San Ramon Valley Regional Planning Commission in

a few weeks.

Duffield is the founder of the Pleasanton-based software company PeopleSoft, which Oracle bought for \$10 billion. He and his wife have purchased 21 acres of land in the quaint and quiet Bryan Ranch.

The location—an endangered species habitat that borders Mt. Diablo State Park and is surrounded by public trails—set off concerns that building the house would set a dangerous precedent for development in delicate environments.

"Those are important issues to us and that's why we're fighting these things," said Seth Adams, the group's director of land programs.

The Bryan Ranch Home Owners Association and a group of distressed would-be neighbors, who dubbed their effort Save Bryan

"Many of the people who are opposed have been bullied into silence. We're not willing to be intimidated by a bully."

—Seth Adams,
Save Mount Diablo

Ranch, also roared that the huge structure would disrupt their quiet community.

Upon hearing concerns, Duffield scaled back the mansion by 75 percent, to 17,000 square feet. Adams suggested the actual number would be closer to 21,000.

Since then the future Duffield home has gone through the hoops of bureaucratic review, the first of which was getting approval from the homeowners association's Architectural Review Commission.

Realizing it had no cap on house size, the commission added an amendment limiting homes to 10,000 square feet. It denied Duffield's proposal based on the new limit.

Duffield claimed the amendment targeted him specifically, was unfair, and had not even been properly adopted. He sued the association's board members and the amendment was eventually overturned.

From there the project went before the county, and the opposition's concerns followed.

But Adams said Duffield's law-

suit had taken its toll, intimidating Bryan Ranch residents into shutting their mouths.

"Many of the people who are opposed have been bullied into silence," he said. "We're not willing to be intimidated by a bully."

Steve Hill, a project manager for the Duffield home, had a different take, saying the association, Save Bryan Ranch, most neighbors, and the Alamo Improvement Association are now fully behind the project.

"We have worked very hard to win their support," he said.

The president of the homeowners association declined to comment.

Duffield spokesman Jim Dugdale said there's no controversy left; the issue at hand now is simply a Tree

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DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Easter's in the air

Friends (l-r) Maria Cranston, 2; Juliana Cranston, 6; Olivia Lane, 5; Ainsley Lane, 6; and Anastasia Uhland, 6, sit down to compare their goodies at the Alamo Rotary Egg Hunt, held at Livorna Park on Saturday. At right, Lucy and Savannah Light, ages 3 and 5, search in the tall grass for eggs. About 200 children attended, and they found more than 1,500 eggs in just under four minutes.



DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

Pack Foundation film draws a crowd

Reality-style drama roars: Don't drink and drive

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

Teens, parents and supporters poured into the East Bay Fellowship auditorium in Danville last Thursday night for the premiere of "Graduation Day." The reality-style film produced by the Troy and Alana Pack Foundation walloped the audience hard with the message: Don't drink and drive.

Showing the film at the high schools could definitely make a difference, agreed Steve Roberts and Hannah Zidaritz, students at San Ramon Valley High, after the presentation.

"When you're a teenager, you think you're invincible," said Zidaritz.

But she said she wasn't feeling that way after viewing the movie, which shows the impact of a car crash when a drunken teen runs a red light. Audience members jumped when the collision suddenly occurred. It's followed by several minutes of screaming as the girl sees her boyfriend's dead body covered by emergency crews.

"At first, I thought it was a real story," Roberts said. "I think it's better than Every 15 Minutes."

They agreed the party scenes and the teen portrayals were realistic.

Every 15 Minutes is a two-day

presentation given every few years at high schools who can afford the \$50,000 to re-enact a fatal accident and its aftermath. After being guest speakers at such an event, Bob and Carmen Pack talked about a less expensive way to get the message to teens, and "Graduation Day" was the result. The Packs founded the Troy and Alana Pack Foundation after their children were killed in 2003 by a driver who was under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

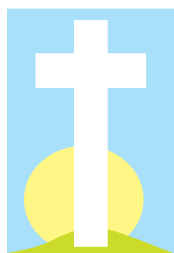
"Graduation Day" is hosted by Dan Rather, who volunteered a day of his time to film in New York. It uses four teenage actors, one of whom was introduced after the viewing, along with producer Rebecca Brown and director Andrew Gallery.

Before "Graduation Day" was shown, Bob Pack gave a tribute to U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos (D., San Mateo), who died Feb. 11. When Bob and Carmen Pack wanted to bring her niece Pamela to the United States from Peru for an egg donation for them to have another child, her request for a visa was denied by the U.S. Embassy. Local lawmakers sympathized and sent

► Continued on page 8

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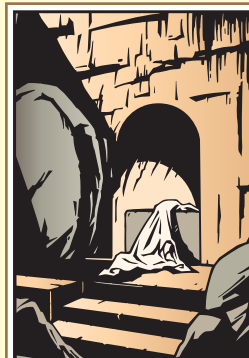
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Cops talk to Greenbrook neighbors

South Danville area has been targeted for break-ins

by Meghan Neal

Around 150 concerned homeowners filed in to Greenbrook Elementary's multipurpose room last Wednesday evening, buzzing about burglaries and geared up to hear what police had to say.

The Neighborhood Watch meeting was held in response to the relatively high number of residential break-ins in the southern portion of town this year.

Police came to educate residents of Greenbrook, Danville South, Danville Station, Shadow Hills, Silverwood and other neighborhoods about how to prevent burglaries. Police also wanted to dispel false rumors that had been circulating.

"Danville's biggest problem is property crimes," Chief Chris Wenzel told residents. "It's a double-edged sword. Because we're a safe community we do things like leave our cars in the driveway with the keys in it. We make it easy for these criminals."

"The chief hit the nail on the head," added Investigation Sgt. Dan Hoffman later in the meeting. "We live in a nice area—we get a little complacent sometimes."

In 13 of the 15 residential burglaries the town has seen so far this year the burglarized house was unlocked.

But Andrew Kerr, whose home was locked when it was broken into in January, said he doesn't think complacency is the whole extent of the problem.

He said he believes a group of burglars have honed in on certain

parts of the town and they need to be stopped.

"I think at least the word is getting out that the whole, kind of, south part of Danville is a target," he said. "It's not just something that's going to happen to someone else. I think that's the message that police need to be highlighting more."

Kerr's house was robbed when his wife stepped out for about 25 minutes, locking up behind her. The thieves broke in through the side door and entered through the garage, he said.

It's a typical scenario. The break-ins usually occur in broad daylight, specifically between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Tuesdays through Thursdays, police said. Thieves will often pose as solicitors, knock on doors and if no one answers, walk into the house. They'll be in and out in mere minutes.

The last home burglary in the targeted area occurred Feb. 20. Police attribute the slow down to special suppression teams that were formed to prevent residential and auto burglaries.

At the meeting police answered questions from the audience and cleared up some false information they'd been hearing in the last few months.

Hoffman explained the difference between a burglary and a "home invasion"—which is when residents are home during the break-in and are held at gunpoint, handcuffed or otherwise abused by the robber.

He also explained that, despite what the TV show CSI has led

many people to believe, fingerprints take three to six months to process—a fact that provoked murmurs of surprise from the crowd.

And unfortunately, he added, fingerprints usually don't generate leads. There have been no fingerprint hits for any of this year's burglaries in Danville.

Police recommended writing down serial numbers on valuable possessions like laptops and cameras. The numbers are then entered into a national database that can be referenced if something is stolen.

When someone asked for the best way to contact police, dozens of people quickly fished out a pen and paper to jot down the phone number: 646-2441. The number goes directly to dispatch and will almost always be picked up by someone right away, Hoffman said.

"We need you to pick up the phone and call," he pleaded. "Don't feel like you're bothering us, 'cause you're not at all."

Calling and reporting any suspicious activity is one way residents can band together to help police catch the culprits, Kerr said.

He said it was important for people not to turn a blind eye or assume they're immune to the problem.

"I think that's what most people in Danville are doing," he said. "They're saying, 'It's not going to be me ...'"

The message of collaboration was echoed by one of the meeting's facilitators, Brenda Fallon, a former board member of the Greenbrook Homes Association.



Concerned homeowners from south Danville look over literature handed out by the police at a Neighborhood Watch meeting last week.

"We all need to work together, because it wasn't just Greenbrook that had burglaries," she said. "With a little education—if we're all aware—we can stop this stuff. We can help the police." ■

Write down this number

The best phone number to call for non-emergency crimes is 646-2441, which goes directly to police dispatch.

Danville offering funds for businesses

Apply for promotion dollars by April 18

Danville officials do more than talk about helping businesses. The town annually appropriates funds for business promotion, and the Town Council will consider requests as part of its annual budget process.

"The funding is from the Business License fee revenue," said Jill Bergman, town economic development coordinator, in an e-mail.

The funds will be given to groups that will most benefit the Danville business community, and that could be expected to get good, fast results. The purpose of the funds is not to promote specific businesses or organizations.

Preference will be given to requests that provide matching funds, and to those that target both residents and folks outside the community to make everyone aware of businesses in town and encourage people to patronize them. Funds have been given in the past to the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce, Discover Danville Association, the Museum of the San Ramon Valley and the Livery.

Applications are due to Danville Town Offices by 5 p.m., Friday, April 18. Request applications on the town Web site (www.ci.danville.ca.us) or contact Bergman at 314-3369. ■

Homicide

► Continued from page 5

when he was recalled, as well as an active member of the California Republican Party, and police are looking into these leads for possible motives.

He donated \$250 in the November 2006 re-election campaign for Danville Town Councilwoman Karen Stepper, who served on the school board with him.

"It's very disturbing," said Stepper. "He was passionate about this valley and standing up for his principles."

She said that Abendroth was her instructor at Cal State East Bay when

she was studying toward her CPA.

"I probably knew her first but didn't know they were related," Stepper said.

Abendroth was a professor at Cal State East Bay in the accounting department for more than 30 years.

Stepper said the couple had been traveling a lot recently.

Two motives investigators are looking into include Scherer's activities as a poker player and as a former school board member.

Dudek declined to answer a claim that Scherer kept large amounts of cash in the home.

"I'm not going to confirm or deny that for safety reasons," Dudek said. "It has been reported on gambling.com and some of the other Web sites

that he was in fact being referred to as a professional poker player. I don't believe that's accurate that he was a professional poker player. His main business interests were buying and selling property."

Dudek went on to say there were some items in the house that were disturbed but declined to say if police thought it was a burglary or "made to look like a burglary."

He added that police don't believe Scherer had any gambling debts.

Scherer's son, Ernest Scherer III, is considered a professional poker player and at least one Web site lists his earnings at \$300,000. Dudek declined to comment on whether the son had gambling debts. ■

TAKE US ALONG



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Carol Keathley-Emig and Meghann Keathley enjoy the breathtaking views from the Baikal restaurant in Acapulco, while also enjoying their Danville Weekly.

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Kurtzes are 'Living Treasures'

Joan and Don Kurtz are being recognized as Living Treasures by the Museum of the San Ramon Valley for leading the museum's One Room Schoolhouse program at the old school on Finley Road for 13 years.

"They are true Living Treasures," said Betty Joyce, one of the organizers.

The Living Treasures program got a shot in the arm when it received a \$10,000 grant from the Leshner Foundation at the beginning of this year, she said. Its first presentation was in October, when Norm Kittler spoke at the museum on the "Family Clan."

Joyce said they are looking for other people to recognize who have

given a lot to the community, and they can be from other fields besides history, such as art, literature, music or sports. Museum curator Beverly Lane will be honored July 30.

The Kurtz event will take place at the Mount Diablo Room in the Danville Library on Wednesday and is free and open to the public.

"Our wonderful Mistress Kurtz will lead guests (as students) in manners, rules, reading, writing and numbers as if you were attending school," reads the invitation. "Master Kurtz will introduce important facts and items of the period."

Since Joan and Don Kurtz proposed the One-Room Schoolhouse program at the old Tassajara

Grammar School, third-graders from throughout the school district visit the old school each spring, dressed in bonnets and country dresses, vests, straw hats and coonskin caps, and are transported back to 1888 for a few hours. Tassajara Grammar School was open from 1889 to 1946 and is owned by the San Ramon Fire Protection District. ■

School days, 1800s style

What: Living Treasures Program of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley
Honoring: Don and Joan Kurtz
Where: Danville Library
When: 6:30-9 p.m., Wednesday, March 26

Homeschooling

► Continued from page 5

social challenges. Others want more time to focus on creative subjects.

Every once in awhile families just don't like the amount of homework assigned at elementary school level—so they choose to teach their own way, Diamond said. In general,

students do the Home Independent Study Program at the elementary and middle school levels.

Venture School has 560 students total; 100 of them participate in the home study program, others attend because they work better in a non-conventional school setting. Services begin with an assessment of the student's school history and an analysis of his or her learning style.

District staff members haven't had any official discussion on whether they agree with the ruling—or feel parental certification is necessary.

"There are two sides to it certainly," Koehne said. "On one hand: Who knows their child better than their parents? On the other: The state requires all other teachers be credentialed." ■

Duffield

► Continued from page 5

Permit application.

A request to cut down 20-plus trees was approved by the county, subject to public appeal. Save Mount Diablo appealed, and now the project is open to a hearing before the San Ramon Valley Regional Planning Commission, likely in April.

"This is a very controversial, political project. (County) staff knew that it would be decided in the political arena," Adams said.

"Our hope is that the commission will do the reasonable thing."

The "reasonable thing," he said, is to put a scenic easement over the property stipulating that Duffield can't build structures on it, in order to protect the natural habitat.

Adams said the sticking point is that Duffield wouldn't agree to protect a large enough area, proposing a small scenic easement in legal language full of loopholes.

Hill called the nonprofit's insistence on having a larger easement—especially after the extensive review process Duffield has

already undergone—"is just not a fair proposition from our perspective."

If the parties don't settle their differences, the debate will be heard by the planning commission. But Hill said "our hope is we can reconcile our differences with Save Mount Diablo in the next month."

That may, however, be tricky. "We went into this thing with an open mind but Duffield hasn't moved one inch from what he was willing to do," said Adams. "He showed no willingness to compromise." ■

Film

► Continued from page 6

faxes but to no avail.

After reading about their plight in the Chronicle, Lantos, a Holocaust survivor, called them and said, "This is not what America is about." He used his

powers of persuasion to get the niece a visa.

"And now we have a 2-year-old baby," said Pack, wiping tears from his eyes.

Their daughter Noelle was dancing on the stage before her babysitter brought her to the rear for the presentation to begin.

The Pack Foundation has entered

into a partnership with Scholastic to distribute "Graduation Day" to 20,000 high schools, to reach 25 million teens nationwide, along with information about why it is important. ■



Little Noelle Pack leads the way down the aisle with her babysitter before the show begins Thursday night.



Carmen Pack (left) visits with Nikki Villa outside the auditorium where the film is about to show. "I'm here to support the Packs," said Villa, whose husband Steve used to coach with Bob Pack.

Diablo Views

BY NATALIE O'NEILL



Staring for a living

As a kid, I would always get caught staring at people. I'd be studying the lines on an old man's face or the way a teenage girl flips her hair, when our eyes would meet—and I'd be busted.

Over ice cream once, a babysitter told me that staring at people is rude. I had no idea. I was a wild-haired tomboy with perpetually skinned knees, and manners weren't exactly my strongpoint.

Growing up on a farm in Oregon, there weren't many people around. The animals outnumbered the humans 10-fold, so when a person did come knocking on our unlocked door, there was always some degree of shock.

"There's someone at the door?" my sister and I would say.

That kind of isolation really put a damper on my people-watching hobby. The closest "neighbors" to spy on were over a fence and across a four-acre field. They drank beer from cans and shot birds with guns.

In the summer, when the grass was tall, I would creep through the field and watch them. They wore flannel shirts, barbecued at lunchtime, and shouted swear words at each other. It was fascinating.

The way we lived, by Danville standards, was pretty hickish. We had a chicken coop and a stubborn donkey who served no real purpose, other than to mope around and be our aloof pet.

One spring day, my mom brought home a potbelly pig she had named Packwood, after Oregon state Sen. Bob Packwood.

The politician had recently been charged with sexually harassing his staff and the joke was that he was "a male chauvinist pig." My mom thought it was funny, anyway.

As I got older, I remember being embarrassed to invite my friends over. We were a different type of family, a breed of hippie-hick. And back then, I didn't realize that different could be cool. So the farm became even more of an island.

Still, it wasn't like I never saw other people. There was school, restaurants sometimes, and small stretches of suburban life at friends' houses. These were prime times for my hobby.

At school, I would study kids at the lunch table. I wondered why some kids came to school with no lunch, while others had moms who packed smiley-face notes with their three-course meals.

At restaurants, I noticed the waitresses. I wondered why one had purple bags under her eyes and another had a big, booming laugh.

I wanted to know their stories. So I started to ask.

Strangely enough, most people didn't mind telling me. I couldn't believe it.

Fifteen years later, not much has changed. Noticing people, asking them questions and telling their stories is a big part of what a journalist does. You're paid to be inquisitive—even nosy at times.

In the summer, when the grass was tall, I would creep through the field and watch the neighbors. They wore flannel shirts, barbecued at lunchtime and shouted swear words at each other. It was fascinating.

Now, I pass my staring off as "observing." And I keep trying to perfect the casual-look-away when people do catch me. (The goal: to come off curious instead of creepy.)

They say when you're choosing a career, you're supposed to pretend like you just won the lottery, that you'll never need money again. The idea is that, this way, you'll pick a job you love and want to do. Not something you think you should do.

Sure, it's not the most pragmatic way to plan your life. But my parents were idealists and encouraged me to think this way, at least when it came to picking a college major.

As far I could tell, there was no such thing as a major in people-watching. So I narrowed it down to psychology and journalism. I'm a better writer than scientist, so the rest is history.

Writing and reporting for the Danville Weekly for the last two years has rarely felt like work.

I've met all kinds of incredible characters: Alamo country bumpkins at heart, like me. Eccentric artists. Slick politicians. Wealthy playboys. Jovial war vets. Angry mothers.

Alamo and Danville are full of stories. I've loved hearing them and sharing them in print. And I hope that in some way, on some issue, I helped make things better around here.

Now, I'm off to Miami to write for another weekly—and to meet a whole new cast of characters. I'm hoping the folks in Florida don't think staring is rude.

Thanks for telling me your stories.

Stay in touch at inkonthepad@hotmail.com

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Perspective

EDITORIALS • LETTERS • OPINIONS

EDITORIAL • THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Clean water plans

Danville sent its heavyweights to a hearing last week held by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board in Oakland. On the table was a discussion about new rules being mandated by the federal government with its new Municipal Regional Permit, to improve the quality of water that flows from local communities into the Bay and prevent pollution from storm water runoff.

Town Manager Joe Calabrigo stresses that he doesn't think stricter regulations are necessarily a bad thing. He is primarily concerned about how Danville will pay for them. Currently, Danville resident fees contribute \$470,000 a year that goes toward clean water: creek cleanup, street sweeping, trash removal and the county's clean water program. Since no funding has been passed down along with this new mandate, it is especially important to be efficient in moving toward its goals.

Calabrigo, Mayor Candace Andersen and Councilman Newell Arnerich from Danville testified at the hearing, as did representatives from other cities throughout the Bay Area. Calabrigo took the lead for Contra Costa County, consolidating the long, complicated document into a three-page summary, plus distributing background information. He noted the importance of the water board understanding the costs to implement the new Municipal Regional Permit—\$175 million-\$200 million countywide over five years. He pointed out that existing stormwater fee revenues have been exhausted and fees cannot be increased without voter approval. Another priority for the hearings was to discuss phasing in the new policies and, possibly, how to tie requirements to obtaining funds.

The board is expected to reconvene this summer with a decision. Hopefully, its members will have listened to the Danville contingent, looked at its good record, and will let it come up with its own more cost-effective plan. Rather than impose a blanket plan on all the communities, we would hope the board works with Danville, and each town, on how best to make sure the water that enters the Bay from its location is clean.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Services could be downsized

Dear Editor:

My previous letter (Feb. 22) understandably provoked comment from committed Danville police volunteers. Please note that I respect almost anyone who contributes time to a cause. Although my tone was humorous, I did not intend to belittle volunteerism, which is a far better pastime than, say, golf.

That said, I remain unconvinced that this program makes our town "safer"—as the headline claimed. Further, "cost effectiveness" is never measured in hours contributed, since any bureaucracy can create activities that it believes add value; many, however, do not. I question whether these services are necessary, or a good investment of oversight and training time, or better than alternatives. As to parade duty, for example,

are the Scouts unavailable?

The article struck a chord with me because I believe Danville should consider downsizing services that are over-provided, including policing. I recently witnessed an officer's deep concern about a Mayflower moving van parked on a side street, in a legal zone, early on a Sunday morning, encroaching some four inches over the white line defining the ample traffic lane. He said he wanted it towed. If he succeeded, he only managed to inconvenience a new resident: Welcome to Danville—your furnishings are in hock! Town leaders would earn my gratitude if they had the fortitude, judgment and discipline to make tough calls on superfluous stuff.

Note to Alamo: Take heed, lest you add another government layer to regulate your little burg—no moving van will be safe!

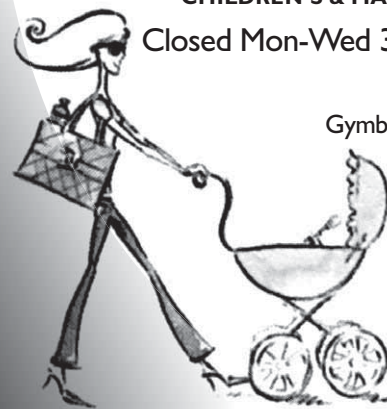
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The No. 121 bus transports passengers through Danville and Alamo. Many say public transportation is both an economical and estimable way to travel or commute. But if it's forced to scale back service for financial reasons, fewer people are likely to ditch their cars and opt for the bus.

The bus system's caught in a Catch-22. People don't want to ride the bus if they have to wait an hour and walk a mile to catch it, but at the same time the public transit agency can't increase service when it sees only a handful of passengers per ride.

"It's a chicken and egg issue," said Tai Williams, transportation services director for Danville. "The longer the headways, the less of a tendency there is for people to use the service. And of course, the less people use the service, the more County Connection might conclude that there's no demand for it."

The cycle deepens even further since County Connection, the bus system that serves Danville and Alamo, may be facing cuts due to a lack of funding.

"When the economy gets bad we look at having to shrink service," said Cindy Dahlgren, County Connection's director of administration.

During an economic downturn about five years ago the agency cut services by almost 20 percent—about \$2.6 million worth. They never quite recovered from those cuts, Dahlgren said.

"We have gradually started to add back a little more here and there, but with the way the economy's looking now we're probably going to face more cuts again - just as we're starting to get back on our feet."

Cutting service can be a dangerous, slippery slope if it means fewer and fewer people choose to take the bus. The question is: At what point is convenience so diluted that there's no point in having buses at all?

Welcome aboard

Shary Lee opens a book on the No. 121—the route that runs through Danville and Alamo—on her way to work at Costco on Fostoria Way. For almost a year she's been commuting via public transportation to her job in Danville from her Oakland home—a two-hour commute each way.

"The only time I don't like it is if I'm really tired, worked really long hours, and have to wait 30 minutes," she said.

The sentiment is shared by many regular bus riders. A ridership survey conducted by County Connection in January shows passengers' No. 1 complaint is long wait times between buses.

Illustrating this, Lee explains that on Sunday mornings she has to be at work by 9 a.m. and BART pulls into the Walnut Creek station at 8:45—the exact same time the No. 121 is scheduled to leave. If she misses that 8:45 bus, the next one doesn't come for an hour.

At the end of the work day, the last Sunday bus is at 6:06 p.m., she said, pulling out her schedule to double check the exact time. If she misses that bus, she's stranded in Danville.

Lee represents the most popular category of rider in the area: the commuter. Seventy-two percent of route 121 riders use the bus to commute to and from work. Of those, people in the higher-income bracket are typically commuting from the suburbs to the city, whereas lower-income riders are traveling within the area.

With nearly a quarter of County Connection riders earning less than \$10,000 a year, low-income riders represent a substantial chunk of passengers. So do minorities, which make up approximately 60 percent of all riders.

"(We get) just about everybody," said John D., who has been a bus driver with the company for 11 years. He requested not to have his full last name used. "All socioeconomic types of people," he said, motioning from his driver's seat to the dozen scattered passengers behind him.

But there are noticeable trends, he added. It's typical to see elderly or handicapped passengers, immigrants, low-income workers and students. The common thread linking these groups is that—for disparate reasons—they often lack the means to get either a vehicle or a driver's license, or they don't have the ability to drive.

Which leads to an interesting observation: If people are able to drive instead of taking the bus, they usually will. Only 23 percent of County Connection riders have both a vehicle and a license, meaning 77 percent take public transit because it's their only way to get around.

Williams said that in Danville it's students whose parents who don't have time to drive them to school, and the town's "working population" that rely on the bus. She said perhaps more people would use it if service were enhanced.

Funding conundrum

Dahlgren called the bus industry "the height of paradox":

It's expected to get people quickly to and from their destination, but has to have many stops so it's convenient for anyone who wants to ride. It's expected to reduce congestion on the roads but doesn't have the necessary resources to compete with private cars.

"How can you do both of those things at the same time? You can't. We have to juggle these competing and sometimes self-cancelling demands, and try to do the best we can with the resources we have," she said. "And it's always an enormous challenge."

And here's another bus paradox.

Considering the extra high price of gas these days it would seem logical to turn attention and resources toward alternatives to cars. What's more, climbing gas prices are generating more funds from its sales tax than was originally predicted—funds many say should go toward public transit. But with the state budget in a slump, the government is tempted to take these "spillover" funds and put them into the state's general fund instead.

The legality of the situation is murky. Proposition 42 stipulates that gasoline sales tax revenues should be used for state and local transportation purposes. But "spillover is not protected under Prop 42," said Dahlgren. "It can be creamed off and used for other things."

County Connection depends on those funds. The agency estimates that it could serve about 1,200 more passenger trips a day with its share of the spillover money. Otherwise it would very likely be forced to cut service.

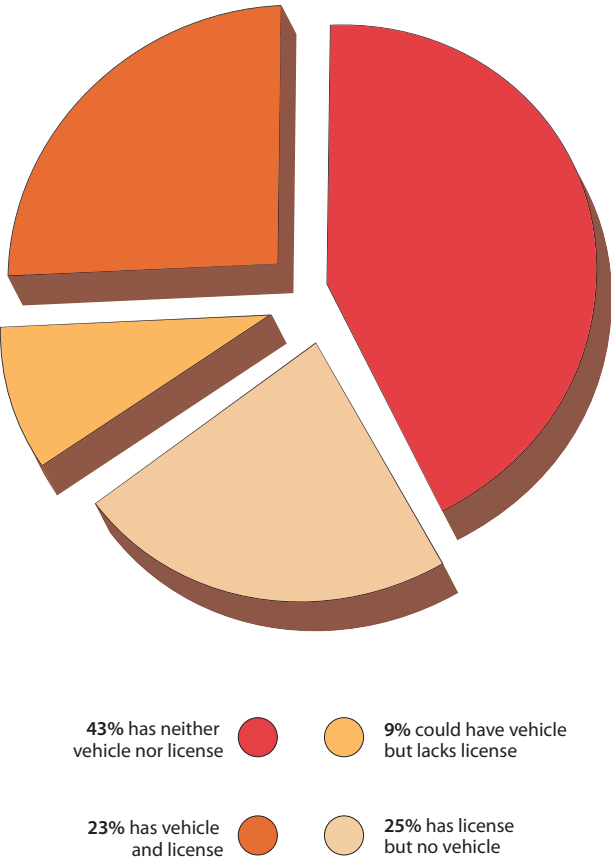
Dahlgren said Gov. Schwarzenegger has diverted spillover money to the general fund in the past. And while the good news is that this year some of the money is getting paid back, the bad news is that it has strings attached.

A good chunk of the funds from the state are reserved for "regional priorities," she said. "That means that we don't get all of the Prop 42 money back."

Part of County Connection's funding comes from the state and federal government and part from local sales tax. The latter is also posing financial problems for the company. The sagging economy of late means fewer sales, which means less revenue from sales tax, which means less funds for the bus.

With no spillover funds, incomplete payback from Prop

Transit-dependence in Contra Costa County



42 and less local tax revenue, the bus company’s outlook is dreary, Dahlgren said. “All three of those things combined put us in a very precarious financial situation.”

What it could mean

Williams said she understands the financial constraints public transportation’s facing, but fears that if service is cut too much it will disappear entirely. At some point, she considered, it wouldn’t be worth running a bus system at all anymore.

“Who can really say that they don’t want more public transportation?” she asked. “It would be important to have additional service in the right place in the right time.”

For example, she would like to see service to key middle schools in the area and enough routes so that folks can make their way downtown or to the Danville Park and Ride from just about anywhere.

“The more service we have, the greater benefit we would derive from it,” she said. “It would certainly help alleviate some of the congestion. I think we all understand—globally—that our streets are congested because we have a lot of vehicles.”

She said public transit has the potential to be “a huge part” of the solution to traffic congestion. The reason being that when you can’t expand roadways or intersections—because the town is at capacity and there just isn’t space—you have to instead consolidate the people on the road.

If 50 people need to get somewhere, rather than have 50 individual cars, put all those people on a bus together.

This of course also benefits the environment, by the reducing carbon emissions that contribute to global warming.

One-third of all greenhouse gas emissions come from automobiles, according to American Public Transportation Association statistics. But a solo commuter switching to public transit is estimated to reduce emissions by 20 pounds a day. And, public transportation saves the country the equivalent of 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline each year.

Get on the bus

On top of benefiting the environment and helping with

County Connection Quick Facts

Established 1980
Service Area 200 square miles; 10 cities and unincorporated areas in Contra Costa County
Service Hours Weekdays 5 a.m. - 11 p.m. Weekends 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.; limited Sunday service
Wait Times Weekdays: 40-80 minutes Weekends: 60-80 minutes Peak Commute: 10-40 minutes
Number of Routes 37
Annual Ridership 4.5 million
Fare \$1.50 per ride; \$53 per month

traffic congestion, public transportation provides an alternative to those for whom owning a car just isn’t an option. And it’s usually much easier on the pocketbook than its pricey counterpart; statistics show households that use public transportation save about \$6,000 a year on average.

So given all its benefits, why aren’t more people jumping on the bus?

“People are just too into their cars,” said John D. “They like that freedom of being able to go whenever, wherever. It’s a difficult thing to give up.”

Not to mention buses tend to suffer from some bad PR. “Some people think ‘only this type of person rides the bus,’ if you know what I mean,” he said, elaborating that some of the passengers don’t have the advantage of being able to bathe and put on fresh clothes, and the outcome can offend people.

Laura Bozeman, a route 121 regular, said she used to be “kinda snobby” about the bus and the kind of people who ride it. But when she started taking it everywhere after her license was suspended, her opinion turned around.

“I was kind of forced to go check it out, and it was pleasant,” said the Danville resident. “It’s very convenient and it’s cheap, too ... You don’t have to deal with other cars. You don’t have to buy gas. I usually sit here and read.”

Before the suspension, she hadn’t taken a bus for 30 years. But she said now that she’s started, she’ll probably continue riding even when she gets her license back.

“I have been telling people that I ride the bus regularly now and I like it,” she said. “I don’t have to commute but if I did, I would definitely do it this way.”

Lee shares the sentiment. She said her two-hour commute from Oakland to Danville would probably only take 30-45 minutes by car, but even if she got a car she’d probably leave it at home to save on mileage and gas expenses.

“I think we’re finding a lot more people—since gas prices are skyrocketing—jumping on the bus thinking, ‘Hey, this isn’t so bad,’” John D. said. “I think we could get some more people on if people just gave it a chance, and tried it a little bit.” ■



A County Connection driver parks the bus at the Walnut Creek BART station.



A sign marks a bus stop for route No. 121, outside of Costco on Fostoria Way. The bus travels up Danville Boulevard all the way to Walnut Creek BART.



A woman references her County Connection bus schedule. Passengers’ biggest complaint is the long wait time between buses.

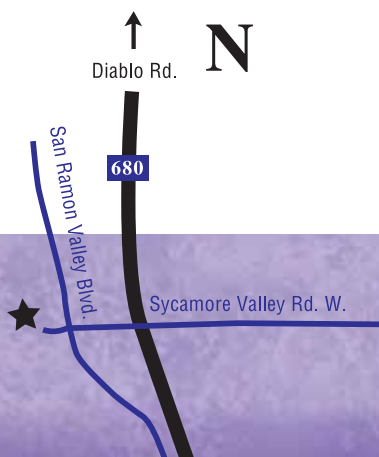


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State acknowledges June Hannon

Energetic Republican recognized for her years of community service

Museum volunteer June Hannon poses on the job, wearing clothes she enjoyed sewing herself, earrings that show she's a jazz fan, and an elephant pin symbolizing the Republican Party.

by Meghan Neal

God, country, community. That's the mantra of June Hannon, who was recently named Woman of the Year for 2008 for District 15 by state Assemblyman Guy Houston.

"God through my church, country through the Republican Party and community, these days through the museum," Hannon explained, sitting on a park bench outside the Museum of the San Ramon Valley.

"I thought, yeah, those are the three main things I do," she went on. "And they tie together."

Hannon was named Woman of the Year for her extensive contribution to the community. She volunteers much of her time at the museum and served as its chairwoman up until last year. She founded the Danville A.M. Toastmasters, a speaking organization, 25 years ago and is still a member. She also attends and is an active volunteer at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Walnut Creek.

"She has strong principles," said Roxanne Lindsey, office manager for the assemblyman. "Everyone pretty much knows what she stands for."

Hannon is extremely devoted to the Republican Party, and has been since she was young. Sitting outside the museum she illustrates this point, motioning to an elephant pin—the party symbol—that's fastened to the front of her

turtleneck sweater.

"I'm very, very patriotic," she said. "I always have been. I would see a flag as a child and just stop and look at it. I remember sitting at my desk (in school) looking at the flag. And I can remember Mrs. Flemming saying, 'June, pay attention!'"

"She always wears a flag," related Lindsey, who is also a personal friend of Hannon's. "She is just such a patriot and has given back to the community, so the assemblyman wanted to recognize her."

Hannon's favorite holiday is the Fourth of July and her favorite colors are red, white and blue. And, she carries the U.S. Constitution with her wherever she goes.

Her passion for politics started when she was in her 20s, in 1952. Dwight Eisenhower was running for president and had chosen a man named Richard Nixon as his running mate. Hannon said she was so impressed with Nixon after seeing him on TV, she called up the Young Republicans that very night and joined the group.

Her political debut was as an "I like Ike" girl—she and the other girls wore white dresses with "Ike" written all over them. She has worked on a political campaign every year since.

When Hannon was pregnant with her son she told fellow Young Republicans that she was "building the party—

one person at a time." She joked she would name her son "Incumbent" so it looked good on a ballot. When the baby was born, all her friends called him Incumbent.

"So as you can see, my whole life—my adult life—was involved," she said, laughing at the story.

At St. Paul's church, Hannon volunteers her time as an usher, a greeter, and with the church's Good Samaritans service.

"St. Paul's is a very active community and June is very active in our community," said Bill Ennis, also a volunteer, who has known Hannon since they were kids. "I think June would do anything for anyone. A finer compliment I could not make and a finer lady I do not know."

From outside the museum, Hannon looks out over the town of Danville. She loves its "smallness," she said, and remarked on how it's evolved over the years. "I've seen it grow and change so much. I think it's changing nicely."

Last week, Hannon attended a ceremony at the state capital in Sacramento that honored the recognized women from each of California's 80 districts. Each woman was given a plaque in celebration of the award.

Hannon said she was excited and a little awed to receive the recognition.

"For heaven's sake," she said playfully. "I'm just doing what I'm doing." ■



BY JACQUI LOVE MARSHALL

Don't spare the asparagus

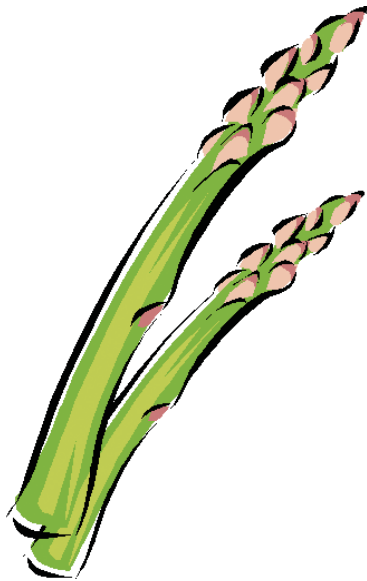
Asparagus is one of my favorite vegetables and they are beginning to show up in produce departments although their primary season is April through June. The taste, texture, color and beauty of fresh asparagus is like no other.

More importantly, asparagus is one of the most nutritionally well-balanced vegetables available. Asparagus is the lead provider of folic acid among vegetables. It tops nearly all other produce in the quantity and range of nutrients it supplies, i.e., potassium, vitamin B6, vitamins A and C, and thiamin. Asparagus contains no fat or cholesterol, is high in fiber yet low in sodium as well as in calories, usually less than 4 calories per spear.

A member of the Lily family (along with onions and garlic), asparagus grows as spears from a crown that is planted in sandy soils. Asparagus was first cultivated in Greece about 2,500 years ago. In fact, asparagus is a Greek word, meaning stalk or shoot. The Greeks believed asparagus was a herbal medicine which provided cleansing and healing.

The best asparagus will have firm spears with closed, neat tips. Select spears with uniform diameter so the spears will cook evenly and at the same time. Despite assumptions to the contrary, the larger diameter spears are the more tender ones.

Keep fresh asparagus cold and covered until ready to cook. Trim the stems 1/4 inch and wash in



lukewarm water two to three times. Wrap a moist paper towel around the stem ends and store in a moisture-proof bag. For best quality, refrigerate and use within two to three days.

Asparagus may be cooked in a variety of ways: boiled, steamed, microwaved, stir-fried, etc. Here are some simple preparation techniques:

- Stovetop: Cook asparagus in a saucepan in a small amount of boiling water until tender. Fresh asparagus will be tender in 5-8 minutes.
- Pan: Place two strips of folded aluminum on the bottom and up the sides of the pan, extending over the edges. Bring water to a boil; add

asparagus and cook, uncovered, until crisp-tender, 3-5 minutes. Use the foil strips to gently lift the spears to a serving dish.

- Double boiler or asparagus pot: Bundle the stalks with string or a band of foil; stand them upright in the pot, with the tips extending 1 inch or more above the boiling, salted water. Cover and cook until tender, 5-8 minutes.

- Stir-fry: Cut spears diagonally in 1/2-inch pieces, leaving tips whole. Stir-fry pieces in butter or hot oil, in a skillet or wok at medium high heat. Stir constantly until tender-crisp, 3-5 minutes.

- Microwave: With fresh asparagus, place 1 pound in a microwavable baking dish or serving bowl. Add about 1/4 cup water and cover tightly. Microwave at 100 percent power 4-7 minutes, stirring or turning halfway through cooking time.

My favorite way to enjoy asparagus is steamed and garnished with butter and fresh-squeezed lemon juice. This simple method allows you to savor the full flavor of the asparagus. However, asparagus can be the primary ingredient in an appetizer or entrée. Here are a couple of recipes to try. Whichever way you serve them, don't spare the asparagus!

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

RECIPES

Bacon-Wrapped Asparagus (makes 16-24 spears)

- 1 pound fresh asparagus
- 8-12 strips bacon
- 1. Wash and trim asparagus spears. Cut bacon strips in half crosswise.
- 2. Wrap one-half strip bacon around each asparagus spear, leaving tip and end exposed. Lay on a cookie sheet with sides.
- 3. Bake in a preheated 400 degree oven for 20-25 minutes, or until bacon is cooked. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Asparagus and Crab Salad (4-6 servings)

- Dressing:
 - 2 Tbsp olive oil
 - 2 Tbsp rice vinegar
 - 2 Tbsp sugar
 - 1 Tbsp orange juice concentrate
 - 1 Tbsp lime juice
 - 1 Tbsp dark sesame oil
- Salad:
 - 2 cups cut-up fresh or frozen asparagus
 - 12 oz. crab meat, fresh or canned

- 1 (10-oz.) bag lettuce mix
- 1 cup 1/2-inch pieces cantaloupe
- 1 cup sliced seedless cucumber
- For Dressing: Combine all ingredients and mix well. Set aside.

- For Salad:
 1. Steam or microwave asparagus until tender-crisp; drain and let cool.
 2. Cut crab into bite-size pieces.
 3. Combine asparagus and crab in a large bowl; add lettuce mix, cantaloupe and cucumber. Toss gently.
 4. Add salad dressing and toss to evenly coat. Serve immediately.

OF NOTE



Brownies lead the Pledge

Girl Scout Brownie Troop 30397 led the flag ceremony and Pledge of Allegiance at the Danville Town Council meeting March 4, with members (back, l-r) Maya Webb, Hailey Gage, Sophia Trani, Rashmi Bhoj, Mayor Candace Andersen, Nicole Pfund, Samantha Hoover; (front) Kaelee Cruz, Jessica Schneider, Morgan Dowling and Gloriane Tong.



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A movie review of what's **AT THE MOVIES****Funny Games**

★★★★

Rating: R for violence, language and excessive abuse

Run Time: 1 hour, 47 minutes



Edgy auteur Michael Haneke ("The Piano Teacher") uses the head fake to extreme advantage in this shocking, uncompromising thriller that's a shot-by-shot remake of his own 1997 German-language original.

Haneke taps into the notion of home invasion as everyone's worst nightmare, the very essence of its latent reality making for horrific and disconcerting viewing.

As Ann (Naomi Watts) and George (Tim Roth) and son arrive at their swanky lakeside digs it's business as usual: Unpack the bags, launch the boat, and thaw out some steaks for a lazy summer barbecue.

Even when the neighbors pop in with a pair of handsome houseguests all seems status quo. Or does it? The boys are clad in cool tennis whites with the curious addition of pristine white gloves. Good manners dictate they go unmentioned.

While Paul (Michael Pitt) busies himself with outdoor pursuits, Peter (Brady Corbet) makes camp in the kitchen with Ann, insisting the neighbors need some eggs for their morning omelet.

There's nothing overtly amiss but the tone is distinctly off in Peter's provoking persistence, his flat, impassive gaze and long, lingering close-ups on cold empty spaces.

Slowly, painstakingly, it all goes to hell; the visitors' carefully mannered conduct imploding into malignant domestic abuse—pregnant pauses and loaded silences punctuated by displays of sadistic brutality and tension without resolution.

And that tension is too close to home. Haneke utilizes a sporadically raucous score to uneasy effect and raises the fear-factor with what you don't see, forcing an overactive imagination to do the dirty work for you.

It's a thriller of exceedingly repellent thrills; a visceral and disturbing homage to decades of what is commonly referred to as "theatre of cruelty." The anger is palpable—how could they? Why would they?

Climax is an agonizing leap of ruthlessness—infuriating, outrageous and unbearably provocative. "Games" rests so heavily on tenterhooks of guilt that an apology is in order for admiring it; it is so profoundly unsettling, so thoroughly wrong that it nearly feels right.

—Jeanne Aufmuth

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

The 411



BY KATHARINE O'HARA

The latest drug: Why do we want it?

An up and coming drug has parents, teachers and lawmakers worried. Salvia divinorum, the strongest hallucinogen found in nature that was historically used by the Mazatec Indians for its healing powers, has become increasingly popular among youth for its availability, legality and inexpensive cost (an effective amount of salvia can be purchased for as little as \$15). Usually smoked out of a bong, chewed, or brewed in a tea, the drug has made recent headlines, as lawmakers fear it "could become the next marijuana."

The drug, which is known by names that include "Sally D," "Magic Mint," and "Diviner's Sage," produces a wide array of effects (depending on its potency and form of consumption) that commonly last anywhere from one to 35 minutes. The effects are immediate and short-lived, and are physically no different than those of smoking tobacco.

Users report feeling relaxed, experiencing a dream-like state, out-of-body sensations, communication with the spirit world, impaired vision and judgment, and short-term memory loss. In his user's guide, ethnobotanist and author Daniel Siebert reports that salvia can induce "fascinating psychoactive effects, sensual enhancement, magical journeys, enchantment, apparent time travel, philosophical insights, spiritual experiences and perhaps even healing and divination."

More negative effects include paranoia, and intense fear—and anxiety-producing hallucinations, and often occur if an individual is extremely stressed, uncomfortable

or anxious before using the drug.

A San Ramon Valley High School student and one-time salvia user, who requested anonymity, described her experience using salvia.

"Everything around me was really bright. Light looked like a solid object, and I was giggling a lot. Then, bam—within 10 or 15 minutes it was over, and everything went back to normal."

The Internet has had an extraordinary effect on the drug's increased usage. Internet purchase is the most popular method by which people obtain salvia, and its spiritual benefits are largely played up on Web sites advertising it, luring in teens looking to define their identity, or escape the reality of their situation. The drug leaves users feeling energized, does not result in a hangover, and because it is legal, accompanies less associated guilt, offering more incentive for use.

"If salvia was as hard to get as weed, it would not have been worth it, because its effects are not nearly as good," said another salvia user at San Ramon Valley High School who also asked to remain anonymous. "But, given that I knew it was completely legal and pretty cheap, I really, really liked it. It was fun and short and had no consequences; I could go home soon with no side effects. I guess I just liked it a lot for its convenience."

Even YouTube is popularizing the substance. Over 3,000 videos come up for "salvia" on the site, with names like "Trippin on Salvia—First Timer—So Funny," and "Crazy Ass Salvia Trip," depicting people's sometimes frightening, sometimes "hilarious" salvia experiences.

Many teens who use the drug are under the misconception that because salvia is not illegal, it must not be dangerous. In fact, the Drug Enforcement Administration deemed salvia a "drug of concern," and based on its effects, researchers have placed it in the same category as drugs like LSD and marijuana.

Despite salvia's relatively heightened use, the number of users is still fairly low, and most parents—even many students—remain essentially unaware of its usage. A 2006 U.S. Department of Health & Human Services report revealed that about 2 percent of 18- to 25-year-olds had

used salvia in the past year. Four percent of the 1,500 San Diego State University students surveyed in 2007 reported doing so.

One SRVHS user said, "I had never even heard about salvia before I had it in front of me."

A mother in Delaware, who attributes the suicide of her 17-year-old son Brett Chidester to the drug's hallucinogenic effects, is pushing for its outlaw. Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Spain, Sweden and eight states have already placed restrictions on the drug, and 16 states are considering banning it. Assembly Bill 259, which would make the sale of salvia to minors a misdemeanor, is currently working its way through California legislation.

Opposition to banning the drug lies in the fact that, because salvia is fairly uncommon and legal, little research has been conducted and its long-term effects have not been studied. In a statement to lawmakers, the California Attorneys for Criminal Justice wrote, "As a matter of public policy, we should not simply criminalize behavior without sufficient scientific information." Adding another drug to the list of criminalized substances also means that more resources will be spent on locking up offenders—a cost the justice system cannot afford to make.

Before we put any temporary fixes on this up and coming problem, it is important to investigate why it is that the problem exists to begin with. Once one drug is illegalized, it does not take long before young people gravitate toward another drug that's a little cheaper, and a little easier to obtain—but why? Why is it that the current generation is so quick to alter their brain chemistry? Why are kids so stressed or pained that drugs seem like the only way out? It is these questions and thousands more our society must reflect on if permanent and effective change is desired.

The 411 offers information and insight on the teen scene by Katharine O'Hara, a senior at San Ramon Valley High School who spends her free time going to concerts, enjoying her friends, and playing the piano. E-mail her at ohara5@comcast.net.



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OF NOTE**Seatbelt contest**

Students at Monte Vista, San Ramon Valley and California high schools are participating in the California Highway Patrol's Impact Seat Belt safety campaign this year. It includes a competition among the three school for the highest seatbelt compliance rate.

The goal of the CHP campaign is to close the gap between the state's overall seatbelt use rate of 93.4 percent and the teen seatbelt use rate of 90.8 percent. CHP offi-

cers are monitoring seatbelt use of vehicles entering the Monte Vista, San Ramon and Cal High campuses over a four-week period starting in late February. Meanwhile important information regarding seatbelt awareness is being announced regularly, along with activities on the campuses, and students are being encouraged to be safe while driving.

Parents are included in the final seat belt compliance tally, so they can show support by buckling up when they drive and reminding their kids to do the same.

Calendar

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

Author Visit

David and Nic Sheff Rakestraw Books will host David Sheff, author of "Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey Through His Son's Meth Addiction," and his son, Nic Sheff, author of "Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines" at 9:45 a.m., Thursday, April 3, at The Athenian School, 2100 Mount Diablo Scenic Blvd., Danville. This event will be open to the public by reservation, call 837-7337.

Careers

Fire Fighter Recruitment Fair California Commission to Recruit Women for the Fire Service will host the 2008 Northern California Firefighter Recruitment Fair from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, April 12, at 6723 Sierra Court, Suite G, Dublin. Meet women firefighters and fire department recruiters. Learn about an exciting career in the fire service. Call (916) 648-1717.

Clubs

Alamo Women's Club This club will host Suzanne Johnston, an expert on family genealogy, at their monthly meeting at noon, Wednesday, March 26, at the Alamo Women's Club, 1401 Danville Blvd. Cost is \$20 for non-members; reservations are due by March 22, call 837-6548.

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.

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 Callender's, 1101 S. California Blvd., Walnut Creek. Visit www.pca.org/dia.

Rakestraw Books Book Group The Morning Book Group will meet at 10:30 a.m., Friday, March 28, at Rakestraw Books, 409 Railroad Ave., Danville. The group will discuss "Three Cups of Tea" by Greg Mortensen. Call 837-7337.

Valley Stitchers Guild This group will host Yoshiko Iwamoto Wada, at 10 a.m., Monday, April 7, at Faith Lutheran Church, 50 Woodworth Lane, Pleasant Hill. Ms. Iwamoto Wada is an artist, curator and textile researcher on the art and craft of traditional Japanese textile design. Cost for this meeting is \$5; annual membership is \$25. Call Marie at 947-5817.

Concerts

'Songs for a New World' Diablo Light Opera Company presents "Songs for a New World" at 8 p.m., April 3-5, 10-12 and at 2 p.m., April 6 and 13, at the Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St., Lafayette. Tickets are \$28 for adults, \$25 for seniors and \$15 for students. Visit www.dloc.org.

Don Lewis and Young Expressions Professional musician and synthesizer pioneer Don Lewis and musicians from Pleasanton high schools will perform from 8-10 p.m., Saturday, March 29, at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. Tickets are \$10, \$14 and \$18 for adults; \$6, \$10 and \$14 for children and students. Call 931-5361 or visit www.civcartstickets.org.

Steve Seskin Steve Seskin is one of the most successful writers in Nashville today. He will perform at 7 p.m., Friday, April 4, at the Front Row Theatre, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$14 for adults, \$9 for youth and seniors. Call

973-3372 or visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com.

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 dmds@aol.com.

Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour Come and enjoy a free garden tour at 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.

Contra Costa County Small Business Fair Betty T. Yee, Vice Chairwoman of the State Board of Equalization, will host a free small business fair from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 25, at Crowne Plaza Hotel, 45 John Glenn Dr., Concord. Call (916) 341-7389.

Danville Library Grand Re-opening Celebration Danville Library will host its Grand Re-opening Celebration from 1-5 p.m., Saturday, April 5, at 400 Front St., Danville. Celebrate the completion of renovations and enjoy refreshments, a steel drum band performance, Harry Potter Magic Show, slide presentation, face painter and henna artist. This event is free. Call 837-4889.

Spring Plant Sale Ruth Bancroft Garden will host a Spring Plant Sale from 9-11 a.m. for members only and open to the public from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., April 5-12, at the Ruth Bancroft Garden, 1500 Bancroft Rd., Walnut Creek. Visit www.ruthbancroftgarden.org.

Tommy Dorsey Big Band Dance USS Hornet Museum will host an evening with the Tommy Dorsey Big Band Dance from 7 p.m.-midnight, Saturday, March 22, at USS Hornet Museum, 707 W Hornet Ave., Alameda. Cost is \$45. Cash bars, food concessions and plenty of free parking are available. Visit www.uss-hornet.org/dance.

Exhibits

'In Our Own Backyard' Take a virtual tour of the East Bay Regional Parks at Oakland Museum of California's "In Our Own Backyard" exhibit running until Oct. 12, at the Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St. Museum admission is \$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students (youth and adults, with valid ID) and children under the age of six are free. Museum hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday and noon-5 p.m., Sunday. Visit www.museumca.org.

'The Art of Diorama' Bedford Gallery presents "The Art of Diorama" which features 23 artists who transform an enclosed area using sculpture, painting, video and photography which runs until June 8, at the Bedford Gallery, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Admission is \$3. Gallery hours are from noon-5 p.m., Tuesday-Sunday and 6-8 p.m., Thursday-Saturday. A reception with the artists will be celebrated from 6-8 p.m., Wednesday, March 26. Call 295-1417 or visit www.bedfordgallery.org.

Fundraisers

'A Glamorous Feast for the Senses' Youth Homes will host its annual Fashion Show and Luncheon at 11 a.m., Saturday, April 12, at Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Dr., Danville. Tickets are \$40, including lunch. Proceeds benefit Youth Homes. Deadline for reservations is April 4; call 938-4148 or e-mail lmartyn@netzero.com.

American Girl Fashion Show Golden View Elementary presents an American Girl Fashion Show at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, April 5-6, at Castlewood Country Club, Pleasanton. Tickets are \$45. Proceeds benefit Golden View Elementary. Call (800) 299-0972 or visit www.eastbayfashionshow.com.

Health

Colon Cancer: Curable if Caught Early John Muir Cancer Institute will present a free community lecture

WEEKEND PREVIEW



KATE LAMONT AND BLUEPRINTMUSIC

Coffee, tea and Blueprintmusic

Yellow Wood Coffee & Tea will host Kate Lamont and Blueprintmusic, a musical blend of progressive folk, bluegrass and world jazz, from 6:30-8:30 p.m., Thursday, March 27, at Yellow Wood Coffee & Tea, 215 Alamo Plaza, Alamo. This event is free. Call 837-1175 or visit www.blueprintmusic.com.

for men and women to raise awareness about colon cancer from 6:30-8 p.m., Monday, March 31, at John Muir Women's Health Center, 1656 N. California Blvd., Walnut Creek. Call 941-7900, option 3 or visit www.johnmuirhealth.com.

Mindful Chi Kung and Healthy Being Chi Kung is a moving meditation that integrates mind, body and spirit to enhance health and strengthen the immune system. Come and learn how to meditate from 2-4 p.m., Tuesday, March 25, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. This event is free to cancer patients and their families and caregivers. Call 933-0107.

Spring Immunization Clinics for Children Free immunization clinics are open to all Tri-Valley families who are low income or uninsured from 9-11:30 a.m., Saturday, April 5, at Axis Community Health Clinic, 4361 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. Parents should bring child's immunization records and information about family income and medical insurance. Call 462-1755.

Holiday

Eggstravaganza Town of Danville will host Eggstravaganza from 9:30 a.m.-noon, Saturday, March 22, at the Danville Community Center, 420 Front St. Activities include an egg hunt, crafts, face painting and a visit from the Spring Bunny. Parents should bring their cameras for pictures with the bunny. The egg hunts are organized by age: 1 year olds at 9:30 a.m., 2 year olds at 10 a.m., 3 year olds at 10:30 a.m., 4-5 year olds at 11 a.m. and 6-9 year olds at 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$5 for residents, \$6 for non-residents. Pre-registration is required; call 314-3400 or visit www.ci.danville.ca.us.

Kids and Teens

Danville-San Ramon KidsRead 2008 Pick up a free copy of the selected KidsReads book, "Hooray a Pinata," by Elisa Kleven from April

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7-May 3, at the Danville, San Ramon or Dougherty Station Libraries and pass on to friends or family. Read the book with other students throughout the SRV and participate in the Young Writers Challenge for a prize. Call 837-4889.

Job's Daughters at the Sixth Annual CASA Community Faire Job's Daughters will be at the sixth annual CASA Community Faire from 6-8:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 2, at Iron Horse Middle School, San Ramon. Young girls ages 10 and older, will enjoy dances, sleepovers, parties, social events, snow trips, ice skating, camping, traveling and other fun activities. Come see us and get more information on membership. Call 829-8505.

Mt. Diablo Junior Rangers Program The Junior Rangers Program is for children ages 7-12 years old held from 1-4 p.m., Saturdays, May 3-June 7, at Mt. Diablo State Park. Learn about wildlife, plants and geology; hikes each week. Awards for each stage of completion. Cost is park admission. Advance registration required. Call 362-8697 or visit www.mdia.org.

Princeton Review SAT Strategy Session Princeton Review will host a SAT Strategy Session for high school students from 7-8:30 p.m., Thursday, April 10, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. This workshop is free, but registration is required by April 9; call 837-4889.

When Mom or Dad Has Cancer A program for families with school-age children when a parent has cancer. Each workshop has an activity-based group for children where they identify feelings and learn coping skills, a support group for teens, and a group for parents from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Call 933-0107.

YMCA Activities The San Ramon Valley YMCA hosts a number of activities including Adventure Guides/Princesses, Adventure Trailblazers, Youth Basketball, Youth Lacrosse and Youth Soccer for chil-

dren of all ages. For information, call 831-1100 or visit www.mdrymca.org.

Lectures/ Workshops

Infant Signing Jessica Salaam will host a workshop on infant signing from noon-1:30 p.m., Thursday, April 10, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. She will discuss the benefits of signing for parents and infants as well as demonstrate the signing techniques. This workshop is free, but registration is required by April 9; call 837-4889.

Kayaking the World with Beth Rypins East Bay World Affairs Council will host Beth Rypins, a Whitewater World Champion, at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 10, at Lafayette Public Library, 952 Morgan Rd. This event is free. Call (415) 293-4600 or visit www.itsyourworld.org.

Managing Symptoms and Side Effects Learn what you can do to feel better during cancer treatment from 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday, March 29, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Learn ways to cope with the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation such as fatigue, nausea and other symptoms. Call 933-0107.

Marriage Alive Seminar Marriage Alive Seminar is an exciting marriage seminar from 6:30-9:30 p.m., Friday, April 11 and from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Saturday, April 12, at Community Presbyterian Church, 222 West El Pintado Rd., Danville. David and Claudia Arp, nationally known educators, speakers, and authors will be speaking. Cost is \$80 with early bird registration; \$90 for late registration. Call 837-5525 or visit www.cpcdanville.org.

Newly Diagnosed Breast Cancer Group This 12-week workshop is for women who have just been diagnosed and are either in treatment or starting treatment from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., every Tuesday, April 1-July 15, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. This series will help them address the emotional and physical issues that surface after diagnosis. Call 933-0107.

Understanding Social Security and Medicare Social Security Bay Area Public Affairs Specialist, Linda Zamfino, will discuss updates about Social Security and Medicare benefits from 7-8:15 p.m., Tuesday, March 25, at the San Ramon Community Center, 12501 Alcosta Blvd., Room 102. This event is free, but reservations are required by March 24; call 867-2906.

Literary Events

First Wednesday Program Friends of the Danville Library will host the First Wednesday Program featuring Art and Nature at the di Rosa Preserve in Napa at 1 p.m., Wednesday, April 2, at the Danville Library, Mt. Diablo Room, 400 Front St. Kathleen Gaines, public relations manager for the di Rosa Preserve, will speak at this free event. Call 837-4889.

Live Music

Steinway Cabaret Series Come and enjoy the Steinway Cabaret Series at 5 p.m., Sundays in April, at The Steinway Room at Sherman Clay, 1388 Locust St., Walnut Creek. Wesla Whitfield on April 6; Meg Mackay and Billy Philadelphia on April 13; Russ Lorenson on April 20; and ML Parr and Richard Nelson Hall on April 27. Tickets are \$15. Call 932-0100.

Miscellaneous

Host Families Needed Host families are needed for Spanish, French and Slovakian exchange students from

PET OF THE WEEK



CATHERINE HANSEN RUSH

Green-eyed Smokey

Meet Smokey. This young adult neutered male, short-hair housecat has nice sleek fur the color of ashes. He has beautiful green eyes and a loving personality. Smokey was found wandering in Dublin and he is currently available for adoption at the East County Animal Shelter. For more information about Smokey (pet # 76364) visit him at the animal shelter, located at 4595 Gleason Drive in Dublin, open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call 803-7040.

July 7-27 in Danville. Host families provide a bed, meals and transportation to daily planned activities. The teens speak English, are fully insured and bring spending money. E-mail Dawn at garlieb@sbcglobal.net.

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

'Mystery Manor' Who is kidnapping all the dogs in the neighborhood and why? The answers lie at Mystery Manor. Join Alan and Wendy and their friends as they solve the mystery and save the dogs from March 21-23, at the Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Tickets are \$10 for adults; \$8 for children. Call 314-3400 or visit www.villagetheatreshows.com.

'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.

Political Notes

'Congress at Your Corner' Jerry Mc Nerney will host "Congress at Your Corner" at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 26, at Borders Books and Music, 120 Sunset Dr., San Ramon. Congress at Your Corner is designed to reach out to residents in California's 11th District. Visit www.mcnerney.house.gov.

Trade and Human Rights East Bay World Affairs Council will host Susan Ariel Aaronson who will speak on "Trade and Human Rights: Can They Co-exist?" at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 27, at the International House Homeroom, 2299 Piedmont Ave., Berkeley. This event is free. Call (415) 293-4600 or visit www.itsyourworld.org.

Scholarships

College Student Scholarships Contra Costa Association of Realtors' Scholarship Foundation is now accepting applications for college grants; the deadline for application is April 25. In 2007, 15 students received over \$50,000 in scholarships; visit the Web site for all the eligibility and acceptance criteria at www.ccarscholarship.com. Free College Scholarships

Spiritual

Day of Sacredness Young adults can come and leave their burdens behind and contemplate God's role in their day to day life from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, April 5, at San Damiano, 710 Highland Dr., Danville. A special team comprised of nine

young adults leaders will guide your experience. Cost is \$45, including lunch. Call 837-9141, ext. 315 or visit www.sandamiano.org.

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.

Sports

Spring Soccer Children will learn the fundamentals of dribbling, passing, shooting and defense during the YMCA's Spring Soccer from April 26-June 14. Great for all levels; outdoor 5-v-5 league. Call 692-2344 or visit www.mdrymca.org.

Spring Teeball Introduce your child to America's pastime and join them on the field while they learn the basics of baseball from April 19-June 14. Children will need only a glove; YMCA will provide all other equipment. Call 692-2344 or visit www.mdrymca.org.

SRVGAL High School Registration In high school? Want to play softball? SRVGAL is accepting registration for the high school division for the season beginning in mid-April. For information, e-mail solarisele@aol.com or visit www.srvgal.org.

Stick School Lacrosse YMCA will host Stick School Lacrosse, a great introductory program for kids, from April 19-June 7. Participants will learn the basics of lacrosse, including catching, throwing, scooping, cradling and shooting. No equipment is required. Call 692-2344 or visit www.mdrymca.org.

Support Groups

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.mended-hearts254.org.

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.

Overeaters Anonymous The group offers a 12-step approach to issues around food, overeating, anorexia

and bulimia. There are many different groups that meet at different times and places, visit www.dvig.org.

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

Tri-Valley Parkinson's Support Group This group provides peer support for those affected by Parkinson's Disease and for their caregivers, families and friends. The group meets from 10 a.m.-noon, the second Saturday of each month, at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. Call Norman at 831-9940 or Jackie at 244-1231.

Worried About Your Teen? Concerned moms are invited to meet informally to talk about issues in raising teens, at 9 a.m., Wednesday, April 2, in the Starbucks at Blackhawk Plaza. Any mom who'd like to talk to other moms about helping their teens grow up safely is invited to attend.

Volunteering

California Independent Film Festival Association Support the Arts in the Tri-Valley by joining the California Independent Film Festival Association. The donation of the membership will support independent film events. For information, visit www.ca indiefest.com.

CCI Volunteer Puppy Raising Program Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) are looking for special volunteers interested in raising a CCI puppy for 15-18 months and are now accepting applications. For information, call 1-800-572-BARK (572-2275) or visit www.cci.org.

Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa This organization is looking for volunteers to help serve in East Contra Costa County. Positions open are: men and women to provide companionship and practical support for terminally ill patients and families, licensed hair stylists and certified massage therapists. Call 887-5678 or e-mail volunteers@hospicecc.org.

Hospice and Palliative Work at Bruns House Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa Bruns House In-Patient Hospice is looking for volunteers to fill two- to four-hour shifts during the weekdays and weekends. For an application, call 887-5678 or e-mail volunteers@hospicecc.org.

Lindsay Wildlife Museum Docents are needed to lead class tours, teaching children and others about our important connection with wildlife and the world we share. No experience needed. Call 627-2444 or visit www.wildlife-museum.org.


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



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Community Pulse

POLICE BULLETIN & LOG • OBITUARIES • BIRTHS & WEDDINGS

POLICE LOG

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

Sunday, March 9

- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on Mustang Dr. at 10:18 a.m.
- Petty theft, arrest, on Railroad Ave. at 1:11 p.m.
- Investigation, arrest, on Railroad Ave. at 1:45 p.m.
- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Greenbrook Dr. and Iron Horse Trail at 2:13 p.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on 3100 block of Stone Valley Rd. at 3:55 p.m.

Monday, March 10

- Petty theft on Fostoria Way at 8:27 a.m.
- Grand theft on Barrons Pl. at 9:17 a.m.
- Identity theft on Podva Rd. at 10:38 a.m.
- Petty theft on La Gonda Ct. at 12:02 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Linda Mesa Ave. and Railroad Ave. at 12:45 p.m.
- Petty theft on La Gonda Way at 12:58 p.m.
- Possession of counterfeit bill, arrest, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 1:42 p.m.
- Conspiracy on Linda Mesa Ave. and

Railroad Ave. at 2:05 p.m.

Tuesday, March 11

- Accident, property damage, on Estates Dr. at 9:36 a.m.
- Credit card fraud on Ashley Cir. at 10:55 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Glasgow Cir. and Glasgow Dr. at 11:18 a.m.
- Court order violation on Leonard Ct. at 12:19 p.m.
- Auto burglary on Camino Ramon at 2:06 p.m.
- Identity theft on St. George Rd. at 2:18 p.m.
- Forgery of fraudulent documents on Richard Lane at 3:32 p.m.
- Identity theft on Boone Ct. at 3:40 p.m.

Wednesday, March 12

- Weapon brandishing on Camino Ramon at 12:48 a.m.
- Suspicious subject, arrest, on Montana Dr. at 4:31 a.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run on Plaza Ct. at 6:30 a.m.
- Grand theft from vehicle on Hope Lane at 7:47 a.m.
- Vandalism on Montana Dr. at 8:13 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Camino Ramon and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 11:02 a.m.
- Suspicious subject stop, arrest, on

3100 block of Stone Valley Rd. at 2:29 p.m.

- Court order violation on Leonard Ct. at 2:48 p.m.

Thursday, March 13

- Residential burglary on Edinburgh Pl. at 9:17 a.m.
- Residential burglary on Alamos Dr. at 12:36 p.m.
- Identity theft on Mockingbird Pl. at 4:24 p.m.
- Vandalism on Blackstone Dr. at 6:00 p.m.
- Auto burglary on Sycamore Valley Rd. at 10:00 p.m.

Friday, March 14

- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Camino Tassajara and Shady Creek Dr. at 1:52 a.m.
- Accident, major injuries, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 8:58 a.m.
- Identity theft on St. George Rd. at 9:21 a.m.
- Audible alarm, arrest, on Railroad Ave. at 10:28 a.m.
- Auto burglary on Ynez Cir. at 12:14 p.m.
- Petty theft on Danville Blvd. at 12:16 p.m.
- Misdemeanor driving under the influence (DUI), arrest, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 12:47 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on Crow Canyon Rd. at 7:04 p.m.

POLICE BULLETIN

Money disappears from garage

A Danville woman left \$4,000 in cash overnight in her purse on the front seat of her unlocked car recently, and when she got up to go to work the next morning, it was gone.

The woman arrived at her home on Montego Drive at 10 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5, and parked the car in the garage. She closed and secured the garage door, she told police.

"The next morning she got in her car, went to work, discovered that the \$4,000 was missing and notified us," said Lt. Mark Williams of the Danville police.

"She said that she had taken it out to place in a petty cash fund at a business that her husband owns," he said.

Police found no evidence of a break-in at the house—no kicked in door, no smashed windows. The incident was reported as a lost property case.

"I wouldn't recommend leaving large amounts of cash in a vehicle in a garage for a variety of reasons," said Williams.

Police processed the scene for fingerprints but were unable to locate any. Williams said it's a possibility that the money was stolen, but with no evidence of criminal activity, there's not much they can do.

—Meghan Neal

- DUI, arrest, on Hartz Ave. and Railroad Ave. at 7:57 p.m.
- DUI, arrest, on Diablo Rd. and southbound I-680 off ramp at 11:10 p.m.

Saturday, March 15

- Suspicious subject stop, arrest, on Greenbrook Dr. and Iron Horse Trail at 8:09 a.m.
- Possession of drugs, arrest, on

- Brookside Dr. and Greenbrook Dr. at 8:36 a.m.
- Investigation, arrest, on Camino Ramon at 9:17 a.m.
- Battery on Ashley Cir. at 9:47 a.m.
- Petty theft on Crow Canyon Rd. at 2:43 p.m.
- Petty theft, shoplift, arrest, on 3400 block of Camino Tassajara at 9:02 p.m.

OBITUARIES

Donald J. Roscelli II

Donald J. Roscelli II, a resident of Danville, passed away peacefully at his home Feb. 9 at the age of 66.

Born Nov. 21, 1941, he was a graduate of San Ramon Valley High, attended the University of Washington and was a Specialist in the armed forces.

He was an avid golfer who loved to travel to Hawaii.

He is survived by his wife Jane; his children Monica, Carrie and James; his brother Robert; cousins Jimmy and Hugh Steffey of Seattle; and his grandson.

A memorial Mass was celebrated Feb. 15 at St. Isidore Catholic Church. Donations can be to the Pulmonary Hypertension Association, 801 Roeder Road, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

E. Virginia Morison

E. Virginia Morison of Alamo passed away Feb. 10 at the age of 94.

She was born March 2, 1913, in Oakland and was a long time resident of Alamo. She was the last surviving daughter of the founder of Fenton's Creamery in Oakland.

She loved to bake, crochet and do crossword puzzles.

She is survived by daughters Judith Anne Knowles (Marvin) and Nancy Fay (Phil); five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband William W. Morison

in 1994.

A Celebration of Life was held March 1 at the San Ramon Presbyterian Church. Contributions may be sent to Fresh Start: P.O. Box 681, El Cerrito 94530, or to Shepherd's Gate: 1660 Portola Ave., Livermore 94551.

Ronald Lee Tulis

Ronald Lee Tulis died Feb. 18 in his home in Danville, at the age of 62.

He was a graduate of UC Berkeley, with a degree in architecture. He spent 27 years as an airport consultant, and his career afforded him the opportunity to travel all over the world.

He loved classical music, fine wines and reading mystery novels.

He was the beloved husband of Susan Tulis for 41 years and father of Jason Tulis of Lafayette and Corey Tulis of Burbank. He is survived by many cousins.

A memorial took place at his home March 8. Contributions can be made to Hospice of the East Bay, 3470 Buskirk Ave., Pleasant Hill 94523 or the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Iver Raymond Hilde

Iver Raymond Hilde, a resident of Danville, died Feb. 1 at the age of 74.

He was born Sept. 9, 1934, in Seaside, Ore., and in 1952 graduated from Roseburg High in Roseburg, Ore. He attended

Southern Oregon College.

He served his country in the U.S. Army's 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team "RAKKASANS," Fort Campbell, Ky., and was a member of the Civil Air Patrol.

A real estate developer, his many interests included flying his plane, boating, hunting, fishing, playing tennis, traveling and family and friends. He touched many lives with his humor and caring, sincere friendship. He could make a complete stranger feel like part of his family.

He is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Janice; sons Erik, Kurt and Iver; daughters Sonia, Greta, Anna and her hus-

band Tony; brother Mike Hilde and his wife Barbara; sister Anna Rodgers; and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held Feb. 23 at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church. Contributions may be sent to St. Vincent de Paul Free Dining Room, 675 23rd St., Oakland 94612, or Contra Costa Clubhouses Inc., 89 Stowbridge Ct., Danville 94526.

Lenora Ford Ash

Danville resident Lenora Ford Ash died peacefully in Walnut Creek at the age of 77 after a long illness.

She was born Aug. 2, 1930, in

Ft. Cobb, Okla. to Raymond and Ollie Ford. Her sister is Sybel Johnston.

She married Ed Ash in 1950 and moved to Danville in 1969, where she worked for many years for Bank of America and was an active member of San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church.

She is survived by her husband Ed; children Paul Ash, Donna (Ash) Sabatasso and Kelly Ash; and four grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at the San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church on Feb. 23 and a graveside service was held in Oklahoma the following week. Memorial donations can be made to your charity of choice.



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210 Garage/Estate Sales

Danville, 200 Alicante Place, March 29, 8am-Noon
DANVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD GARAGE SALE: Saturday, March 29th from 8am-12noon
Multi-family garage sale tour will include live music, coffee, and muffins at the first home located at 200 Alicante Place in Danville, and there will be a tour of garage sale homes from that location with appliances, furniture, kids toys, clothes, books, sports stuff and so much more! Come get your map, coffee and visit this fun event!

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805 Homes for Rent
Dublin, 3 BR/2 BA - \$2195
Dublin, 3 BR/2.5 BA - \$2900/Mont
Dublin, 3 BR/2.5 BA - \$2,900
East Dublin, 3 BR/2.5 BA - \$2850/mont
Pleasanton, 4 BR/3 BA - 2750/month
Pleasanton, 4 BR/3 BA - 2690/month

809 Shared Housing/ Rooms
Danville, 1 BR/1 BA - \$625
Pleasanton, 1 BR/1 BA - 600

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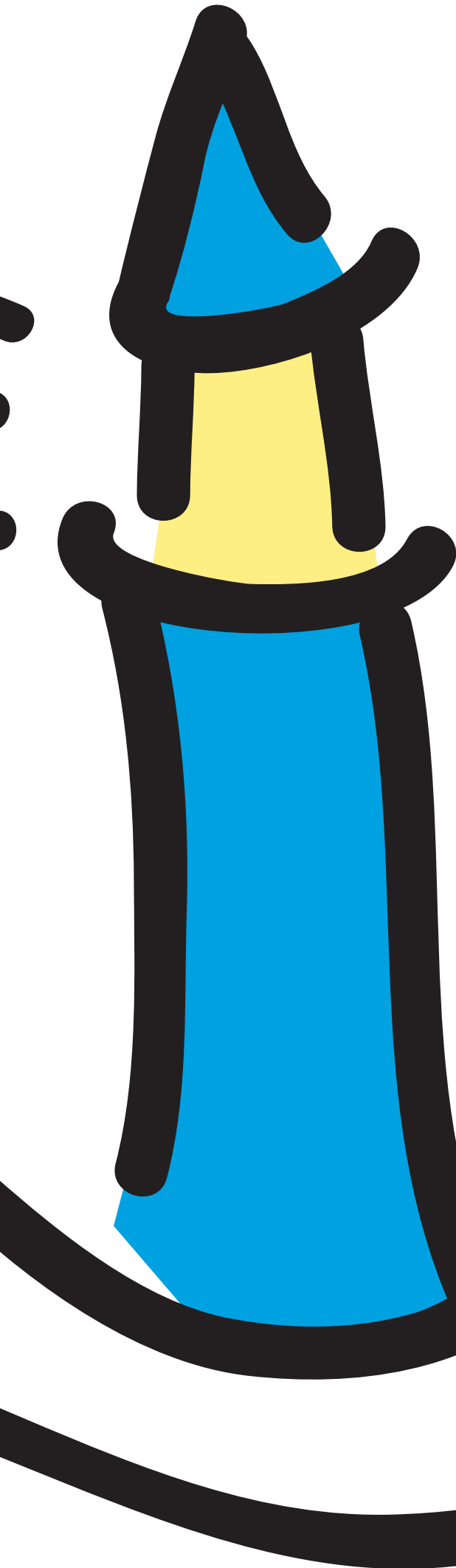
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Little League now at a field near you

The fields are alive, with the sounds of Little League. Left, Chris Thompson of the Tassajara Red Sox practices his pitch; below, the T-ball Cardinals team at practice.



Scorpions undefeated so far in lacrosse season

Danville Scorpions Kevin Braunschweig and Michael Tagliaferri face the always tough Walnut Creek Warriors at Las Lomas High School on March 9. The crowd witnessed an exciting game-winning unassisted goal from Jordan Weiss in the last minute of play to break a 7-7 tie and win 8-7. Jack McCormick and Jordan Weiss both scored 3 goals in the hard fought game. Joe Abajian, playing goalie for an injured Connor Lancaster, stopped 6 shots on goal.

The Danville Scorpion 8A lacrosse team hosted Granite Bay the day before at Diablo Vista Middle School earning their third season win, 12-0. Scoring two goals each for the Scorpions were Mike Tagliaferri, Jack McCormick and Kevin Kuptz. Patrick Worstell scored a goal and added several assists. Matt Corbin contributed to the strong defense picking up four groundballs.

PREP SCHEDULE

Friday, March 21

Swimming

Monte Vista vs. Cal High

Women's Lacrosse

Monte Vista at Cal High, 7 p.m.

San Ramon Valley vs. Granada, 7p.m.

Men's Lacrosse

Monte Vista vs. Cal High, 7 p.m.

San Ramon Valley at Granada, 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 22

Baseball

Livermore Tournament

Track and Field

Martinez Relays at Alhambra

Monday-Tuesday, March 24-25

Baseball

Livermore Tournament

Tuesday, March 25

Men's Lacrosse

San Ramon Valley at La Costa Canyon

Wednesday, March 26

Baseball

San Ramon Valley at Alemany, 1 p.m.

Thursday, March 27

Baseball

San Ramon Valley at Foothill, 10 a.m. and at Golden Valley, 4 p.m.

Thursday-Saturday, March 27-29

Men's Lacrosse

Langkammer Invitational at St. Ignatius

San Ramon Valley at Powaway

Thursday-Saturday, March 27-29

Softball

San Ramon Valley at Antioch

Tournament

Monte Vista at Livermore Stampede

Tournament

Friday, March 28

Baseball

SLO Tournament Finals



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Real Estate

OPEN HOME GUIDE AND REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

SALES AT A GLANCE

This week's data represents homes sold during February 2008

Alamo	Danville	Walnut Creek
Total sales reported: 1	Total sales reported: 10	Total sales reported: 15
Lowest sale reported: \$1,425,000	Lowest sale reported: \$393,000	Lowest sale reported: \$224,000
Highest sale reported: \$1,425,000	Highest sale reported: \$2,800,000	Highest sale reported: \$2,171,000
Average sales reported: \$1,425,000	Average sales reported: \$971,500	Average sales reported: \$738,867

OPEN HOMES THIS WEEKEND

DANVILLE

4 Bedrooms
842 Matadera Cir. \$1,099,000
Sat 1-4 Keller Williams 260-2508

SAN RAMON

3 Bedrooms
2238 S. Donovan Wy. \$659,000
Sat 1-4 Keller Williams 260-8883

PLEASANTON

3 Bedrooms
4159 Jensen St. \$724,500
Sat 1-4 Empire Realty 963-8294

4 Bedrooms

1062 Vinter Wy. \$859,000
Sat 1-4 Keller Williams 397-4300

LIVERMORE

3 Bedrooms

356 Rincon Ave. \$565,000
Sat 1-4 Hometown GMAC 487-1427

4 Bedrooms

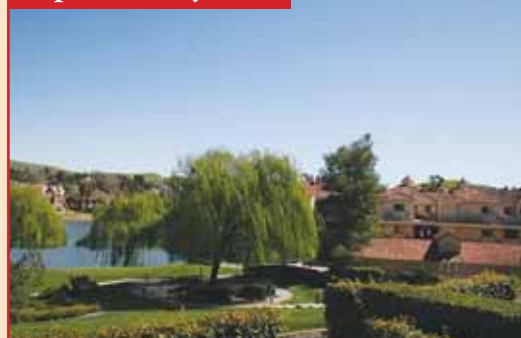
2043 Lomitas Ct. \$829,000
Sat 1-4 Alain Pinel 510-882-5312



For an online version of open homes with mapping or to list your open home go to:
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