

Technology in the schools

Teachers tell trustees about high tech woes

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Danville

W E E K L Y

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Getting ready to run in Alamo

Potential candidates get the scoop from council members

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Streetwise

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Q: Crab season has just opened. Have you indulged?



I have not yet this season. I plan on it though. We grew up with crab cioppino every year made by my grandma. We'd all sit at the table and crack the crab for her.

Michele Pontious
owner of Honeybee Fashions



It's in my cart now! This is the second time this week. I just love crab. We eat it plain with butter.

Stacey Archbell
Realtor



We are going to a gourmet dinner gathering tomorrow night and I will be making a crab dip. It's a couple's thing where we share recipes. My crab dip is a new recipe and it has beans in it so we'll see how it turns out.

Danielle Bennett
stay-at-home mom



No, not yet but we are crab fans. We have a traditional crab feed at my mom's house every Christmas Eve so this will be Claire's first opportunity.

Claire and Corby Stead
car dealer



Yes, we eat it every day because we test it before we can sell it. It comes in everyday but Sunday. My favorite crab recipe is crab cioppino. We sell a lot of crab. Christmas crab feasts are huge in this town.

Tony Neal and Chris Gannon
fishmongers at Lunardi's

COMPILED BY PATTY BRIGGS

ABOUT THE COVER

Kelson Quan leads Luc Dillow and Bryan Dotzler up one of the many hills along the Pacific Coast Highway as Scouts from Troop 36 make their way down the coast on their 380-mile adventure trip to Disneyland.

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ I’ve nearly been run down. ”

—Mary Macleod, Alamo resident who wants people to slow down on Livorna Road. See story, page 7.

Alamo man named Rhodes Scholar

A 22-year-old Alamo man is one of 32 Americans to be chosen as Rhodes Scholars. Scott W. Hugo, a senior at UCLA, was informed Saturday by members of the Rhodes Trust.

Scott, the son of Greg and Pam Hugo of Alamo, is a 2005 graduate of De La Salle High School.

The scholarship, established in 1902 by philanthropist Cecil Rhodes, provides all expenses for two to three years of college at Oxford University.

At UCLA, Hugo is majoring in political science and history. At Oxford, Hugo will work toward a masters of philosophy in International Relations.

Committee chooses design firm for vets hall

Five architectural groups presented their plans for the Danville Veterans Memorial Building last week to the Veterans Steering Committee in a meeting that lasted from 4 to 10 p.m. The committee unanimously selected Architectural Resources Group Inc. of San Francisco for the job of designing the renovated/remodeled veterans hall. The five firms had been narrowed down from 31 proposals by Town Manager Joe Calabrigo and a subcommittee.

Next, Calabrigo will negotiate with the firm on its price and will report back to the committee in January. The committee also gave a second choice, Group 4 Architecture, Research and Planning of South San Francisco, in case the first firm proves unaffordable.

District trustees to appoint new school board member

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District board will appoint a replacement rather than holding a costly election for longtime board member Joan Buchanan; she was elected to the State Assembly and resigned from the school board effective Nov. 30.

District staff will recommend a process to the board, such as interviews, nominations by board members and how to apply for the office. School Superintendent Steven Enoch took preliminary actions such as contacting other districts. The term expires in 2010.

The board must make the appointment by Jan. 29 or the county superintendent of education will call for an election.

Web site makes it easier to shop in Danville

Jill Bergman, economic development coordinator for the Town of Danville, announced the soft launch of www.danvilleinstyle.com, a Web site to help people enjoy shopping in Danville “in style everyday.”

Currently the site includes a directory of Danville restaurants, shopping, spas and salons, an event calendar, and a page on things to do. It will soon have expanded search features and pages, including separate expanded pages for individual businesses and completed services pages.

“Over the next few months, the site will continue to evolve into an all-inclusive Web site for Danville business owners,” said Bergman.

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



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Technology glitches tick off teachers

School board hears about lack of training, crashing servers, and too many e-mails

by Harry Stoll

Teachers packed the school board meeting room on Tuesday night last week and gave rocking applause to speakers who—while acknowledging the potential of Internet technology—said they are dissatisfied with how it's being used in the district.

Individual teachers told the board that use of technology adds to their workload, training is inadequate, and hardware and software don't operate properly. They also said technical support is lacking, and teachers aren't asked for comments or suggestions.

"The servers are slow," said fourth-grade teacher Christy Glazier. Servers provide access to files, programs and peripheral devices to computers on a network. Glazier also said, "This is a steep uphill learning curve," and noted she is forced to spend more home time doing teacher duties.

Teachers also said they are deluged with e-mails from parents.

"I'm a strong advocate of technology," said science teacher Laura Finco, but she gets too many e-mails from parents. One

parent, she said, e-mailed that she was taking her daughter to Disneyland and asked what work she should do. Finco also said she received e-mails complaining about changes to her lesson plan.

"There is no full-time tech support," said parent and teacher Margot James, also noting that system crashes eat up a lot of time.

"Technology has increased prep time in front of computers," said Terry Pike, adding that she is worried about training. Two hours of uncompensated work time was added to teachers' schedules, she said.

"If you're wondering why we're saying nothing, it's because we can't," Board President Greg Marvel said to the teachers. "These are bargaining items."

He explained afterward, "They're trying to negotiate in public and that's inappropriate. In fact it's illegal."

The Brown Act, which prohibits undisclosed meetings by public officials, allows public bodies to consult in closed sessions with their labor negotiator but does not prohibit public discussion of issues.

► Continued on page 7

Who will be first leaders of Alamo?

Danville's 1982 council members share their memories

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

With Alamo incorporation on the ballot March 3, excitement is growing over selection of the first town council. Alamo Incorporation Movement, which is pushing the semi-rural community to govern itself, organized a presentation Nov. 19 at Creekside Community Church for residents to learn how to run for council and what is involved in the position.

The county Elections Division presented the nuts and bolts of running for council, then a panel with experience told about the realities of the position. It included Beverly Lane and Susanna Schlendorf, who were on Danville's first Town Council when it incorporated in 1982; San Ramon City Councilman Scott Perkins; and Lafayette City Councilwoman Carol Federighi, who moderated the discussion.

After the four described the long hours and hard work involved to become elected and

then to serve on a council, Lane encouraged people to run.

"I was talking to Susanna and that was one of the most positive memories in our lives—beginning with a clean slate, setting the path for your community," Lane said. "If any of you are wavering, I suggest that you do it. It will be memories you will treasure forever."

The first date to file papers for the Alamo council with the county was Nov. 10 and the deadline is 5 p.m. Dec. 5. Sixteen people had taken out papers to run as of Tuesday, Nov. 25, but no one had filed.

"By default the issue of cityhood becomes part of your own candidacy," said Schlendorf, remembering her campaign in 1982. "It goes beyond the paperwork. Time, money, your family, your work—these are all considerations."

"Then you get up the Wednesday after Election Day and have to put

► Continued on page 6



Cars heading west on Stone Valley Road on Sunday morning wait for the red light to change before turning right onto Danville Boulevard, as instructed by the new signs.

Alamo intersection gets new traffic control signs

Officials to examine whether 'No Right Turn' signs affect traffic

by Geoff Gillette

Commuters using Danville Boulevard near Stone Valley Road may soon see red after new traffic control signs have gone up to keep traffic from turning right on red at two of the four corners.

As of a week ago, the "No Right Turn on Red" signs have gone up for traffic northbound on Danville Boulevard at Stone Valley and for westbound Stone Valley traffic at Danville Boulevard. Members of the Alamo Roads Advisory Committee discussed the traffic effect at their Nov. 13 meeting.

County Senior Civil Engineer Mike Carlson said the changes came up during the final phases of a traffic realignment done at that intersection last year.

"We did a project out there last year that modified the intersection to add two left turn lanes off of southbound Danville Boulevard to eastbound Stone Valley to keep

traffic moving," he explained.

Carlson said after observing traffic patterns through the area, the county decided to consider the signs as a means of creating gaps in the traffic flow. "We needed to make some space so that people could get out of the driveways and shops along Danville Boulevard." He added that with the increased traffic flow from having two left lanes, people going north on Danville Boulevard were encroaching onto the eastbound roadway in an unsafe manner.

Committee member Mike Gibson said they have been discussing the possibility of adding traffic control signs at that intersection since 2004. Gibson said the comprehensive plan for downtown Alamo proposed doing something to control traffic turning from Stone Valley onto northbound Danville Boulevard to allow people to safely get onto the road from businesses.

"When they redid that intersec-

tion they kind of did the opposite of what they said they were going to do," Gibson noted. Instead of limiting the turning at the corner, they installed a green arrow. "We talked about that multiple times at the Road Committee."

Carlson said they have done computer modeling of traffic flow and patterns at the intersection using their most recent traffic survey data and he said that overall it looks workable. "It is going to create some backups but it will clear itself out," he said.

Predictions show that the traffic will build up in the queue during rush hours, but that it is expected to clear out within one signal cycle. Over the next two months, Carlson said the county will be examining the effects of the signs and it is expected to be discussed at the Jan. 8 meeting of the roads committee.

"I'd like to bring it back up at that meeting, do a health check at that time," Carlson said. ■

TAKE US ALONG



Having a great trip

The Great Wall of China gets a visit in October 2007 from (l-r) Danville and Alamo residents Walt and Pat Petrini, Bev Walsh and Diane Revetria—and their Weekly.



Studying abroad with the Weekly

Kristen Wittenberg enjoys the Danville Weekly while studying abroad in Salamanca, Spain. Kristen goes to school in San Diego.

Coach gets home detention after embezzling charges

Former Monte Vista High School girls water polo coach Todd Halvorson, 40, of San Ramon pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor count of embezzling \$3,000, in Contra Costa County Superior Court last week. He was sentenced to 150 days of jail time that he is being allowed to serve under home detention plus three years probation. He also paid \$3,000 restitution.

Halvorson was employed as an aquatics coordinator at the Clark Swim Center at Heather Farm

Park in Walnut Creek when he was accused of dipping into pool rental fees, taking amounts of \$20 to \$60 per day, according to reports. He tampered with the computer to cover the discrepancies.

Halvorson originally pleaded not guilty when charged with the crime in October 2007.

At the same time Walnut Creek's aquatics supervisor Jeff Tarpley, 49, of Fairfield, was charged with stealing more than \$150,000 from the city's two swim centers but the cases were found to be unrelated. ■

Leaders

► Continued from page 5

this business into place," she continued. "Everyone who voted for it is counting on you."

She noted that during the campaign it is important to talk to people, especially those with whom you haven't always agreed.

"I had people who didn't want cityhood who supported me," she said.

Perkins elaborated on the role of council members.

"You don't run the city," he said. "You hire three people to do this—the city manager, city attorney and city auditor. You give direction and guidance, and approve the budget."

He also said candidates need to vet themselves before throwing their hat into the ring. "Do you have anything in your past that might come back to haunt you? A DUI?"

Perkins said to develop a theme before starting a campaign—"two or three words that symbolize your campaign so people start to recognize it." He added, "Come out big, bold and ready."

Alamo has about 10,000 voters, he noted, and about half of those will vote. "You're going to kick yourself if you're No. 6," he said.

The difference in votes between the fifth vote-getter and the sixth in the first run for the Danville council was 78 votes, said Lane.

"It was a real heartbreaker for the man who came in sixth," she recalled.

"You need to really care about the community," she added. "You need to enjoy talking to people. You need to enjoy going to meetings."

She also said it's important to be able to read a budget and to be up to speed on the issues.

"People will say, 'Why are you running?' and 'Why are you the best person for the job?'" she said. "You can't go 'mumble, mumble.' ... You need to be articulate what your opinion is."

She also said candidates should carry incorporation campaign brochures as well as their own.

"No one wants to be on a council with no town," she said.

Lane, who is curator of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, pointed out that Alamo has voted on incorporation four times before—

once with Danville, and three times with Danville and San Ramon.

Federighi said the first thing a candidate must do is put together a committee, with the treasurer position being the most important. She also said to immediately get endorsements.

"Once I decided to run I knew I didn't want to lose," she recalled. "Out went the 'Dear Friend' letters. ... I always went door to door and almost always they were impressed. It's a chance to learn citizens' concerns and get to know the city."

"Plan on doing nothing else in January and February," advised Lane.

Lane and Schlendorf also talked about developing the government for Danville.

"We were our own planning commission for about six to nine months," said Schlendorf.

"We set up ad hoc committees to deal with things that came up," Lane added. "We started commissions gradually. They are a fairly significant step for a town."

"When Danville was incorporated most of us (on the council) had careers and young families and we managed to do it," said Schlendorf. "With a city manager form of government, they do the day to day."

"I'd look at Danville's budget," suggested Lane. "You need to take the feasibility study seriously. I think you can do a much better job than the county. Some cities are small—you need to look at the resources."

The 16 residents who have taken out papers to run for the Alamo council are Karl Niyati, Joseph Alexander Rubay, Dennis Eugene Johnson, Lawrence G. Kaye, Vishwas D. More, Stephan Alan Mick, Vicki Lee Koc, Edward M. Chiverton, Tejbir S. Khanna, Randall Evan Nahas, David Glenn Bowlby, Karen E. McPherson, Diane M. Barley, Tina Schumann, Bradley Harold Waite and Kevin G. Morrow.

In the March election the two candidates with the most votes will serve four-year terms; the three candidates with the next most votes will serve two-year terms. The council members will choose among themselves for the first mayor, which will be a rotating position.

A Candidate's Handbook is available with details on how to file at www.cocovote.us. ■

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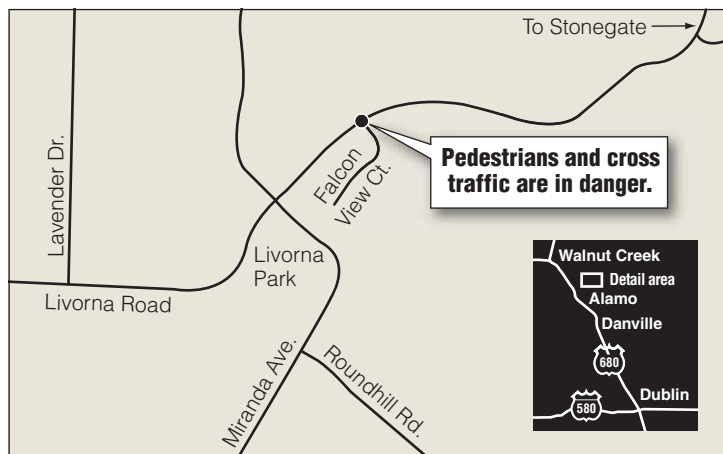
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Roadway or speedway?

A resident complained to the Alamo Roads Advisory Committee that vehicles do not adhere to the 35 mph speed limit on this section of Livorna Road, making it hazardous for cars to pull out from Falcon View Court.



35 mph speed limit 'not enforced' on Livorna Road

Speed picks up approaching Stonegate, says resident

by Geoff Gillette

One of the attractive features of living up in the hills of Alamo is the rolling terrain. For some residents, that same terrain is causing distress as traffic flies up and down the roads creating a hazard for both pedestrians and motorists.

The issue of speed along the upper reaches of Livorna Road was a topic of discussion at the Nov. 13 meeting of the Alamo Roads Advisory Committee. Alamo resident Mary Macleod, who lives on Falcon View Court near Livorna Road, addressed the committee.

"I'm very concerned. The cross traffic when we pull out is dangerous. There are people who ride it like a rollercoaster," she said.

Macleod said when the road is busy it is very hazardous trying to get out from the side streets and courts along Livorna.

In addition, she said there is a crosswalk to Livorna Park at Miranda and it is dangerous for pedestrians trying to cross. "I've nearly been run down," she told the committee.

Currently the speed limit on Livorna Road is 35 miles per hour. It was recently raised from 30 mph after a California Highway Patrol traffic study concluded that 35 was a safe speed for the roadway.

Macleod said that speed is too fast for the traffic coming down the hill. "At least from Miranda on up it should be lowered," she said. "It's

an accident waiting to happen."

Committee member Vicki Koc agreed that there is a speed issue in that area. "From the east going to the west they just sail along there," she said. "The way the road winds, you come over the crest and you can't see the crosswalk until you're on it."

Committee member Mike Gibson suggested putting a warning sign along the roadway in that area. "It does seem to me because of the rolling hills that people drive pretty fast and when you come up over the crest of the hill it's not great because the drivers can't see it," he said. "You need to be able to mark it in advance for the drivers to see it."

Macleod said a warning sign would be a good start. "Ultimately, what we need (at Falcon View Court) is a stop sign. I don't want a stop sign, I don't want to listen to cars stopping and starting, but this is a safety issue."

Contra Costa County Civil Engineer Mike Carlson suggested the committee take up the issue with the CHP, since the road is its jurisdiction. "It comes down to enforcement," Carlson said. "You can make the speed 15 miles or 50 and people are going to drive at the speed they feel comfortable."

Committee members said they will continue to look into the issue as well as check with CHP on enforcement along the roadway. ■

Trash pickup in Danville

Council approves 4 percent jump to offset deficit

by Geoff Gillette

Getting that blue bin emptied out in Danville is going to cost a bit more, following recent action by the Town Council. At their Nov. 18 meeting, council members gave their approval to a 4 percent rate increase for removal of solid waste and recycling.

Danville is part of the Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority, along with several other area municipalities. The authority handles contract negotiations for waste services for all of its members. Currently, Danville residents pay \$16.35 for the 32-gallon service. With the increase, that number will climb to \$17.

Councilman Mike Shimansky opposed the increase. Shimansky, currently chairman of the solid waste authority, said, "Anybody in Danville is going to be hurt by this." He added, "Right now we have a \$900,000 projected surplus in the Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority. It's set aside for a rainy day. Well, it's a rainy day in Danville."

Mayor Candace Andersen, the other Danville representative to the authority, said it is better to provide a gradual raise in the rates over a number of years rather than hit residents with a large increase all at once.

"Each year we're charging our customers a fee that's not covering the cost of providing the service," she said. She added that without the rate increase, the surplus would be down to \$248,000 by this time next year. "In order to meet our costs in rate year six (2010), we're estimating a 10-11 percent rate increase if we don't approve the increase now."

Danville enjoys some of the lowest solid waste rates in the East Bay area. For a similar service San Ramon pays \$21.58/month and Pleasanton pays \$25.20/month. Walnut Creek, another member of the CCCSWA, pays \$15.12/month.

Andersen said the reason Danville can keep its rates low is because it's part of the waste authority. "There's an economy of scale when you have several cities working together in this," she said.

Council members voted 4-1 in favor of the rate increase, with Shimansky voting against.

The CCCSWA will meet in January to finalize the rates, and the new rate structure is not expected to take effect until March 2009. ■

Technology

► Continued from page 5

Monte Vista High School math teacher Andrew Hillman, in a pre-meeting interview, called the district's technology "a humungous step backward." He said the schools were using unsophisticated methods and tools, and the district ignores teacher input and is not "negotiating in good faith."

"Why aren't we being involved?" Hillman asked.

San Ramon Valley Education Association President Darren Day said teachers want to discuss implementing technology with the district as well as the additional workload.

"SRVEA presented a new technology article proposal to our contract at the beginning of this school year," Day e-mailed after the meeting. "It is my understanding that when we meet in December the

District and SRVEA will be talking about technology again at the bargaining table."

"Your presentation was helpful," Superintendent Steven Enoch told the teachers at the meeting. "I won't make excuses."

He noted that the district has lacked a director of technology for a year and a half, but Bruce Chmielewski was hired for the position Nov. 1.

"Bargaining is continuing," Enoch said in an e-mail later last week. ■

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POLICE BULLETIN

Police nab alleged hotel TV thieves

A Danville woman was among four people arrested last week on suspicion of stealing flat screen TVs and other goods from hotels in San Ramon, Dublin and Pleasanton.

Angela Bartoni, 32, from Danville; Michael Darrin Jr., 38, from San Ramon; Eric Stage, 30, from Pleasanton; and Eric Dennis, 34, from Dublin were arrested on charges of possession of stolen property and booked at Santa Rita Jail, after Pleasanton officers allegedly found stolen goods in their homes and vehicles.

Police said beginning in October the suspects had entered hotel rooms and offices using electronic key cards. Stolen items included handheld radios, laptop computers, various hand tools and cell phones.

Bartoni, Stage and Dennis are being held on \$10,000 bail; information was not available on Darrin. Charges are being sought against the suspects with the District Attorney's Office in both Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

—Emily West

POLICE LOG

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

Sunday, Nov. 16

- Misdemeanor driving under the influence (DUI), arrest, on Center Way and Crow Canyon Rd. at 12:06 a.m.
- Drunk in public on 100 block of Hartz Ave. at 12:57 a.m.
- Petty theft on Nerine Ct. at 7:02 a.m.
- Petty theft from vehicle on Squirrel Ridge Way at 8:24 a.m.
- Auto burglary on Casablanca St. at 10:47 a.m.
- Auto burglary on Blackstone Dr. at 10:53 a.m.
- Auto burglary on Shelby Ct. at 12:07 p.m.
- Petty theft on Lily Ct. at 12:19 p.m.
- Auto burglary on Glasgow Cir. at 2:51 p.m.
- Auto burglary on Squirrel Ridge Way at 3:35 p.m.
- Misdemeanor battery on Hartz Ave. and Railroad Ave. at 5:27 p.m. and 5:56 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 17

- Credit card fraud on Serene Ct. at 9:42 a.m.
- Vandalism on Remington Dr. and Sheri Lane at 2 p.m.
- Petty theft from vehicle on Princeton Lane at 2:40 p.m.
- Petty theft on Danville Blvd. at 4:17 p.m.
- Terrorist threats on Heritage Park Dr. at 6:14 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on El Capitan Dr. at 6:24 p.m.
- Identity theft on Garden Creek Pl. at 6:39 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 18

- Drugs violation, arrest, on Shadowhawk Cir. and Starling St. at 3:47 p.m.
- Drunk in public on San Ramon Valley Blvd. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 8:49 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 19

- Grand theft, arrest, on Danville Blvd. at 9:04 a.m.
- Grand theft on Railroad Ave. at 2:12 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. at 6:04 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 20

- Auto burglary on W. Prospect Ave.

- at 5:36 a.m.
 - DUI, arrest, on Camino Tassajara and Crow Canyon Rd. at 5:54 a.m.
 - Auto burglary on Houston Ct. at 7:32 a.m.
 - Auto burglary on W. Prospect Ave. at 7:32 a.m.
 - Auto burglary on Cameo Dr. at 7:39 a.m.
 - Accident, property damage, on Sycamore Valley Rd. and Tunbridge Rd. at 9:51 a.m.
 - Residential burglary on El Quanita Ct. at 10:22 a.m. and 10:42 a.m.
 - Auto burglary on Danville Oak Pl. at 12:13 p.m.
 - Auto burglary on Cameo Dr. at 1:20 p.m.
 - Petty theft from vehicle on Shadewell Dr. at 3:16 p.m.
 - Petty theft on Sunglen Way at 3:53 p.m.
 - Accident, property damage, on Hartz Way and Railroad Ave. at 4:59 p.m.
 - Petty theft from vehicle on Shadewell Dr. at 8:39 p.m.
 - Auto burglary on Cameo Dr. at 8:38 p.m.
 - Armed robbery on Diablo Rd. and southbound I-680 off ramp at 9:08 p.m.
- ### Friday, Nov. 21
- Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on Front St. and E. Prospect Ave. at 12:46 a.m.
 - Miscellaneous burglary on Quinterra Lane at 8:58 a.m.
 - Identity theft on Glasgow Cir. at 11:32 a.m.
 - Identity theft on El Pintado Rd. at 3:53 p.m.
 - Drunk in public on 400 block of Hartz Ave. at 7:55 p.m.
 - Vehicle traffic stop, arrest, on San Ramon Valley Blvd. and Sycamore Valley Rd. at 10:02 p.m.
 - Defrauding innkeeper on S. Forest Hill Pl. at 10:47 p.m.
- ### Saturday, Nov. 22
- Accident, major injuries, arrest, on E. Linda Mesa Ave. and Rose Ave. at 1:59 a.m.
 - Miscellaneous burglary on Old Orchard Ct. at 9:08 a.m.
 - Public assembly check, arrest, at Meenar's at 8:35 p.m.

OBITUARIES

Susan Jane Sears

Susan Jane Sears, a resident of Danville, died Oct. 5 at the age of 63.

She was born to Genevieve and Warren O'Callaghan on June 21, 1945, in San Francisco and raised in a traditional Irish/Italian Catholic community along with her sisters Terry Catudio and Jeanne Nixon. She attended Mercy High School, then Lone Mountain College where she earned a degree in social sciences. After college, she married and lived in Germany for a year in the late 1960s with her husband Andrew Sears Jr., while Andrew served in the U.S. Army. After returning from Germany, they settled in the Bay Area and in 1970, she gave birth to son William and in 1979, daughter Nicole.

She was a social worker, working with disadvantaged families in Oakland; she later became a successful information technology professional at AT&T for 25 years. In retirement Sue and Andrew traveled California and Oregon in their travel trailer.

A funeral service was held Oct. 9 at St. Joan of Arc Church in San Ramon. Memorial contributions are appreciated to the American Diabetes Association.

Marvin J. Watson

Marvin J. Watson, a former resident of Danville, died Oct. 13 in Camino, Calif., at the age of 81.

He was born in Concord on Oct. 31, 1926, attended Mt. Diablo High School, and served in the U.S. Navy. In 1945 he married Shirley Cahill and they raised their six children. They relocated to Sonoma for 29 years before retiring to Camino in 2004 to be closer to their family. He worked in concrete construction for more than 50 years. He enjoyed golf and was truly dedicated to the "Driving Range" in Sonoma. He liked spending time with his children and grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Shirley, in August; and three children, Lori (1990), Tad (2005) and Scott (2007). He is survived by his sons Mike Watson of Auburn, Kirk Watson of Clayton, and Jeff Watson of San Ramon; by his daughters-in-law Karen Watson and Gail Watson; by 11 grandchildren and two his great-grandsons; brother and sister-in-law Bill and Sylvia Watson; sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law Colleen and Buck Wilson and Sheila and Jerrell Gilreath, as well as numerous nieces and nephews. Memorial services were held Oct. 22 at Chapel of the San Ramon Valley at Wilson and Kratzer in Danville. He was buried with his wife and their children at Oakmont Cemetery. Memorial contributions can be made to Snowline Hospice, 6520 Pleasant Valley Road, Diamond Springs 95619.

Janice Marie Tucker

Janice Marie Tucker, a Danville resident, died Oct. 19 at the age of 70.

She was born in Memphis, Tenn., on May 31, 1938, to Leland and Ruby (Sawyer) Jordan and raised in San Mateo and Redwood City. She graduated from Sequoia High School in Redwood City and earned her bachelor's degree from San Jose State. After graduation, she worked as an elementary school teacher in the Union School District in San Jose and later became a stewardess and traveled all over the world, initially for United and then Pan American Airlines.

For the past 40 years she lived in the San Ramon Valley where she taught for the San Ramon Valley Unified School District until her retirement in 2001. She worked at Rancho Romero in Alamo, Country Club in San Ramon, and Vista Grande in Danville. She cared for her elderly father for the past 10 years. She was an avid traveler and loved to golf and read, plus was a big fan of film, theater and concerts.

She is survived by her father Leland Jordan; brother Gayland Jordan (Mary); daughters Stacey Tucker-Blosch (Eric) and Jillian Manley (Richard); and three grandchildren. A memorial service was held Oct. 24 at Wilson and Kratzer Chapel of San Ramon Valley in Danville. Donations may be sent to the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, 1710 Gilbreth Road, Burlingame 94010.

Janet Ann Drozdowski

Janet Ann Drozdowski, 60, a resident of Danville, died Oct. 14 at her home surrounded by her family after a long battle with cancer.

She was born June 18, 1948, in Cleveland, Ohio, the daughter of the late Joseph and Eleanor Homway. Following graduation from Bedford High School in 1966, she married her high school sweetheart Leon Drozdowski and raised two daughters. She fell in love with California early on in her life and with her family moved to the Bay Area more than 20 years ago. A devoted mother and grandmother, she loved to travel, collect elephants and dote on her five grandchildren.

She is survived by her husband of 41 years, Leon Drozdowski of Danville; daughters Michelle Gereb of San Ramon and Kristina Komar of Poulsbo, Wash.; and five grandchildren. A memorial service was held Oct. 25 at St. Isidore Catholic Church in Danville. Any memorial contributions can be sent to the Colorectal Cancer Coalition at fightcolorectalcancer.org.

Doris T. Clinch

Doris T. Clinch, a Danville resident, died Oct. 17 at the age of

86 following complications from surgery.

She was born Sept. 11, 1922, in Richmond. She was a homemaker and lived in Danville for the past 44 years. She enjoyed painting in watercolor and oil as well as creating art in stained glass. She was also an avid gardener, especially of roses. She also enjoyed traveling throughout the U.S., Europe and South America.

She was predeceased in 2000 by her husband of 52 years, John E. Clinch. She is survived by her son Melvin E. Clinch and his wife, Terry; two grandsons and three great-grandchildren. Donations to the charity of choice are kindly appreciated.

Donald James Morris

Danville resident Donald James Morris died suddenly of a heart attack Oct. 20 at the age of 47.

He was very active in the Danville community as a well liked coach involved in Mustang Soccer, SRVGAL Softball and the Indian Princesses. He was an avid downhill skier, loved power boating on Lake Tahoe and entertaining family and friends.

He is survived by his loving wife Michelle; daughters Alexandra, Brittany, Brooke and Madison; parents Bert and Betty Morris of Sarasota, Fla.; brother Mike Morris of Sacramento; sister Lori Brock (Doug) of Orlando, Fla.; three nieces and a nephew; uncle and aunt Paul and Sharon Morris of Oakland; cousin Katie Morris; mother-in-law Barbara Ageno of Danville; and brother-in-law Michael Ageno of San Francisco. A Memorial Service was held Oct. 26 at St. Mary's College Chapel with a private burial service at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Lafayette. Donations can be made in the memory of Donald J. Morris to the UCSF Foundation-Pediatric Heart Center, P.O. Box 0248 San Francisco 94143-0248 or to a favorite charity of choice.

Deaths, Weddings and Births

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EDITORIAL • THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Teachers and technology

Internet technology has taken all of us by storm, making jobs easier while at the same time challenging employees to learn new skills—sometimes a whole new way of thinking—and to embrace new systems as they become outdated every few years. The school district has had the huge job of integrating technology at its schools and district offices, training its 2,000 teachers plus other employees, and coordinating these efforts while providing support.

It was disheartening to learn that the San Ramon Valley Unified School District has fallen short in these goals and has been without a director of technology for a year and a half, partly in response to budget woes. Luckily new Superintendent Steven Enoch understands the importance of technology and has hired Bruce Chmielecki as the new director. He started Nov. 1.

Technology affects teachers as employees, plus they must use it to create opportunities for learning and to promote student achievement. Hopefully all teachers by now are comfortable with computers but they need to accept the potential of technology and have the knowledge and confidence to integrate it into their classrooms.

It can be frustrating for busy employees to be told a new

system will make their job easier—but they have to find time in their already overburdened schedules to learn the new system. Some teachers have complained they've had inadequate training in technology and also that technology has made their jobs more time-consuming. The district, or perhaps each school, also needs guidelines so technology improves communication between teachers and parents, teachers and teachers, and teachers and students, making it more efficient, not a burden.

Now that the new director is in place, he can develop a comprehensive plan to guide the district on better ways to implement software, lay out an effective plan for teacher training, and provide adequate support services for when inevitable problems arise.

While the district has an obligation to provide the training—and follow-up training—teachers must understand their obligation to take the training and master the technology. Internet technology continues to be a learning experience for all of us.

Enoch has said his job is to make students successful for the 21st century. He stepped in at a good time.

Guest Opinion

Gay Straight Alliances fight discrimination

by **Lauren Gareau**

As members of the LGBTQQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, and IntraSex) “come out” at younger ages, they face more and harsher discrimination than ever before. Many are even realizing and admitting their sexuality in high school. In such situations, they face bullying and harassment that has a huge effect on them. According to GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network), only 30 percent of LGBTQQI students who experience high frequencies of physical harassment say they will go on to college.

But there is no need to fear anymore; many high schools now have a club known as the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). High school GSAs are student-run clubs that aim to help protect kids who feel discriminated against, to discourage homophobic bullying and harassment, and to educate people in the community.

This year, the Monte Vista Gay-Straight Alliance hosted a week of action from Oct. 13-18 known as Ally Week. Ally Week teaches no tolerance for discriminatory remarks regarding someone's sexual orientation. It was established in 2005 by members of GLSEN's Jump-Start National Student Leadership Team.

The Monte Vista GSA promoted Ally Week by announcing it every

day over the bulletin, passing out rainbow ribbons for students to wear as a symbol of support, encouraging teachers to treat cases of homophobia as they would treat cases of racism, and posting hundreds of colorful posters and flyers with the phrase, “Be an Ally, Be the Change.” The posters were meant to send the message that change can happen with small steps, and the first step must be joining the cause. By being an ally, students did their part to help their peers feel safe at school.

There has been some controversy over Ally Week. The Hayward Unified School District (HUSD) promoted Ally Week on all its campuses. GLSEN encourages schools that host Ally Week to have their students sign pledge cards stating that they will take “a stand for a safe ... school for all students ... (refrain from using) anti-LGBT language or slurs, intervene ... in situations where others are using anti-LGBT language or harassing other students, and actively supporting safer schools efforts.” Some parents felt that this was very inappropriate. It has been reported that even kindergarten teachers were told to sign these pledge cards. Although it is not known what exactly transpired in every classroom, the goal of Ally Week is to create an inclusive and safe environment for all students at all schools, not to force youths to change their beliefs.

The Monte Vista GSA held a very

important meeting Thursday, Oct. 16. During this meeting, members wrote down stories about the issues they had faced that week on post-its. The post-its were then collected and read out loud. Members then discussed what to do when put into a situation like that. Members also discussed what they did to help promote Ally Week and how much of a success it had been. Ally Week inspired people by saying they could be the change by preventing people from discriminating against their peers.

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District has a GSA at each of its high schools (California, Dougherty Valley, Monte Vista and San Ramon Valley). Some of these GSAs have been around for a while, like San Ramon Valley's, and some have just been added, like Dougherty Valley's. Each club does its part to cultivate and maintain a safe environment for its school.

Monte Vista's GSA club has been in existence on and off for the past 16 years. The current GSA was reinstated in the 2006 school year by senior Kevin Peruch, junior Simone Miller and sophomore Rachel Horn. This is the fourth consecutive year for Monte Vista's GSA.

GSA has a meeting almost every Thursday where they do anything from planning events, to supporting peers who have recently faced harassment or bullying, to just hanging out. The Monte Vista GSA tries to stop all discrimination from hap-

pening by educating others about why homophobic phrases are wrong and hurtful, gathering and reporting data about cases of harassment and bullying, and encouraging members to intervene when they witness acts of homophobia.

GSA Network, founded in 1998, is the parent organization of GSAs. Its purpose is to connect school-based GSAs to each other and to community resources. Within GSA Network's first year, it expanded to 40 clubs in schools in the San Francisco Bay Area; by 2001 it had become a statewide organization. Today the organization has more than 650 clubs and 8,000 activists, representing 50 percent of California high schools.

GSA Network and local GSAs have done a lot to teach about homophobia and its effects. They have been extremely successful in fighting discrimination, harassment and violence in schools based on sexual orientation. They help not only in educating students but also in educating adult members of local communities. Their goal is to promote equality among Californians. GSA Network and school-based GSAs are helping to make the state of California better in understanding and accepting of gay, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender, queers and questioning.

Lauren Gareau, 14, is the media coordinator for the Monte Vista Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA).

A RIDE TO REMEMBER

Danville Scout troop bikes down California coast to Disneyland



by Geoff Gillette

When most kids get to go to the Magic Kingdom and see Mickey Mouse and the other beloved Disney characters they travel in a car or a jet.

That would have been a bit too easy for the young men of Boy Scout Troop 36.

Twenty-two scouts, ranging in age from 12 to 17, along with 11 adult chaperones, hopped on bikes and rode 380 miles down the California coastline with Disneyland as their destination.

The trip was the brainchild of Dave Dotzler, Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 36. He also serves as the group's High Adventure Coordinator.

"We do a big high adventure outing every year," he said. "We went to Alaska to hike in the back country. We try to do something different every year."

The Scouts have also journeyed to Sea Base, a facility deep in the Florida Keys where Scouts can undertake sailing, snorkeling and scuba adventures.

Dotzler, a long time mountain biker, said that for years he and Scoutmaster Steve Krome have been trying to get the boys to go on a cycling trip as their high adventure.

"We've been trying to get them to augment the hiking, backpacking regimen of their high adventure trips but there had never been enough interest." That changed when Krome came up with an idea to make the trip a bit more palatable.

"We asked if anyone would be interested and there were one or two hands up. Then Steve (Krome) said, 'And we'll finish in Disneyland' and wham! all the hands were in the air," Dotzler recalled.

Once it was decided that this would be the trip for the year, the planning and preparation phases began. Dotzler said he handed those duties off to the Scouts themselves.

"In the Scouts we really try to teach the kids self reliance," he explained. "So they planned all our meals, bought all the food. They really did it all."

Two of the scouts who handled the behind-the-scenes planning of the event were Senior Patrol

Leader Trevor Willis, a 16-year-old junior at Monte Vista High School, and Assistant Patrol Leader Bryan Dotzler, a 14-year-old freshman at San Ramon Valley High School.

"We bought all of the food and made the meal plans," Bryan. "We wanted to make sure everybody had plenty to eat at the end of the day."

Trevor echoed the sentiment, adding, "There were theme nights, things like that. Bryan really did a nice job."

Dave Dotzler praised his son's planning and meal preparation skills: "We ate very well every night."

The major part of the planning was in getting the Scouts and adult chaperones out on bikes for training.

"You can't just hop on a bike and ride 40-70 miles a day for a week. You have to train for it. We trained for eight months prior to leaving on the ride," Dotzler explained.

In order to be allowed to go, each Scout and adult had to participate in a minimum of six training rides. At least one of those rides had to be in excess of 50 miles.

Dotzler said the training was structured to be progressive with distance, level of difficulty, and elevation gain increasing with each ride so that by the time July rolled around they would be well prepared for the physical toll of being in the saddle all day every day for a week.

"In the six months preceding the trek, the adult leaders and I hosted 35 training rides that totaled nearly 1,000 miles of riding and over 20,000 feet of climbing," he noted.

In addition the Scouts were being trained in rudimentary bicycle maintenance and repair, just in case of a mechanical problem while out on the road.

"We did have sag vehicles but we wanted the kids to be able to handle any problems themselves," Dotzler said.

Even with such a grueling training regimen the Scouts saw little attrition among their ranks. Bryan said the training was hard, with the most difficult ride being a trip up Mount Diablo. Dotzler said they took 11 Scouts to the top of Diablo, a ride with 3,200 feet of climbing.

"The idea behind all of this training," he explained, "was to make sure that they were ready for this,



Dave Dotzler (front, right) and the members of Crew 3 arrive, exhausted but exultant, at McGrath State Beach just south of Oxnard.

COURTESY OF BOY SCOUT TROOP 36

way down the coast. We called it the 'Tour de Graze.' We'd leave camp right after eating breakfast and 15 miles later we'd be at a Mexican restaurant eating enchiladas. It was good," he said.

And as if making and breaking camp and riding their bikes weren't enough, the Scouts took time out on their trip to do a one-hour service project along their route.

"The relevance of the service project," Dotzler said, "is that when we do a high adventure trip we try to incorporate a service project into it. It's usually something with conservation."

Trevor said the project they undertook on their ride was a cleanup of San Simeon State Beach. "When we were doing the planning for the trip we called and asked what we could do and they suggested the cleanup."

None of the cyclists experienced much in the way of mechanical difficulties, except for Dotzler himself. "Coming out from a picture stop, my chain got pulled into the derailleur. It ripped the derailleur into the spokes."

The vehicle that had provided Dotzler with many comfortable miles now had all the mobility of a paperweight. "The worst of it was we were 50 miles north of anything and 50 miles south of anything."

Bryan added, "And we were in hills so it was hard to radio the sags that we needed help."

Eventually they were able to get the bike loaded into a car and a repair shop was found. An impatient Dotzler said he was ready to be back on the road. Rather than drive on to the next campsite to meet up with the Scouts, he asked to be let out on the road so he could keep riding. "I just wanted to get a few more miles in."

After seven days of riding, the crews all pulled in to McGrath State Beach, just south of Ventura. This would be their final campsite of the journey. "With the heavy traffic in L.A. we decided to have the boys ride a bus to Disney," Dotzler said.

Even though it was the final day of the ride, the Scouts' work was far from over. In addition to setting up camp, they had to take apart their bikes for the return journey. The bikes were then stored in bike boxes for the trip back north.

Because they wanted to get an early start on their day at Disneyland, they didn't set up the tents—they just slept beneath the stars.

The following day the Scouts spent 15 hours touring the sights and enjoying the rides of Disneyland and, far too soon, the trip was winding down to its close. The Scouts, weary but triumphant, boarded an Amtrak train heading home.

The trip back paralleled much of the route the Scouts took down, so they could see just what they'd accomplished.

"It was a spectacular thing," Trevor said. "It's certainly something I would never have done."

Dotzler said that is exactly the purpose of trips like this one. "The object of the high adventure trips is to get these kids out and have them do something they've never done before. Something they'll remember for a lifetime." ■



Boy Scout Matt Dotzler does some roadside repairs. As part of their training for the ride, all of the Scouts were taught basic bike maintenance and repairs, from fixing flats to replacing chains.

COURTESY OF BOY SCOUT TROOP 36

not just physically but mentally."

Finally, on July 24, a group of 22 scouts and 11 adults mounted up for the first time at San Gregorio State Beach, about 10 miles south of Half Moon Bay. The plan was for the Scouts to ride Highway 1 to Ventura. The group detoured inland around Solvang and Santa Ynez in order to spend a night at Lake Cachuma.

"I'm not sure why they wanted to stay there but it was something they wanted to do so we went inland," Dotzler said.

Seven other adults followed in automobiles as support. They also hauled along a 17-foot trailer that held all of the camping gear as well as the duffle bags for all 40 participants.

Since riding in such a large group would be unwieldy, they split into three "crews" of 11 with Trevor, Bryan and a third assistant patrol leader taking charge of each crew.

Trevor said the first day on the road was amazing. "It was great. After we got over that first hill. That was the most beautiful day."

Dotzler said the excitement over just getting on the road made the first day in the saddle a really great experience for the Scouts. "It was just gorgeous. After planning for nine months, training for eight months, just the anticipation to get going was incredible."

Of course the ride was not without its fits and stumbles. "We didn't even get an hour into the ride and one kid went over his handlebars and cracked his helmet," Dotzler said. Fortunately the Scout was not injured in the incident. In another mishap a Scout hit a pine cone on the roadway and crashed, again with just a few scrapes.

Bryan said he and his crew got an object lesson on staying out of the way of the cars along Highway 1. "One of our guys kicked his water bottle out of his cage—his whole crew got to watch it explode when a pickup ran over it."

Both Dotzler and Krome said incidents like that were few and far between, something they credited to the long months of training prior to the ride.

At the end of each day's ride, the Scouts would care for their bikes, then unload the trailer with all their gear, set up camp and make dinner. They camped on the beach most nights, and when the sun came up they took down the camp, loaded the truck and started back out again.

Bryan said after a while the daily regimen became rote. "By Day 4 you're kind of in a daze, just following the guy ahead of you."

That didn't mean there weren't some interesting detours along the way. "Our crew sort of ate their

Holiday Party

at the
Crow Canyon Country Club

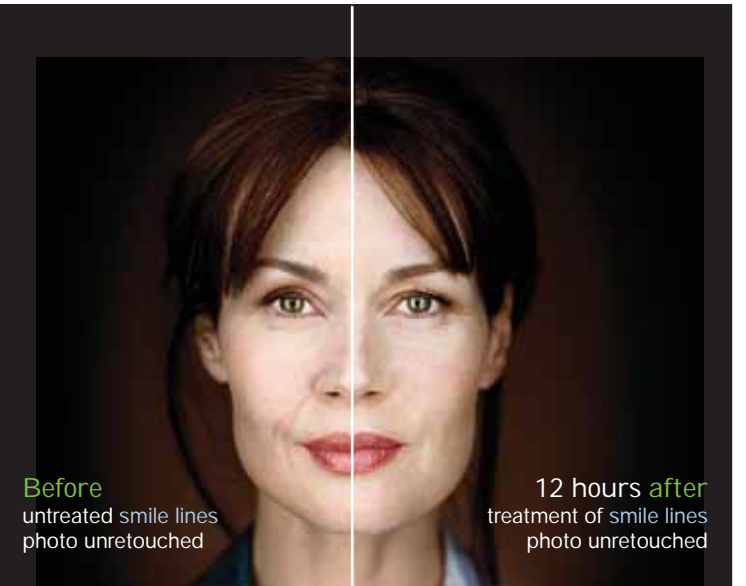
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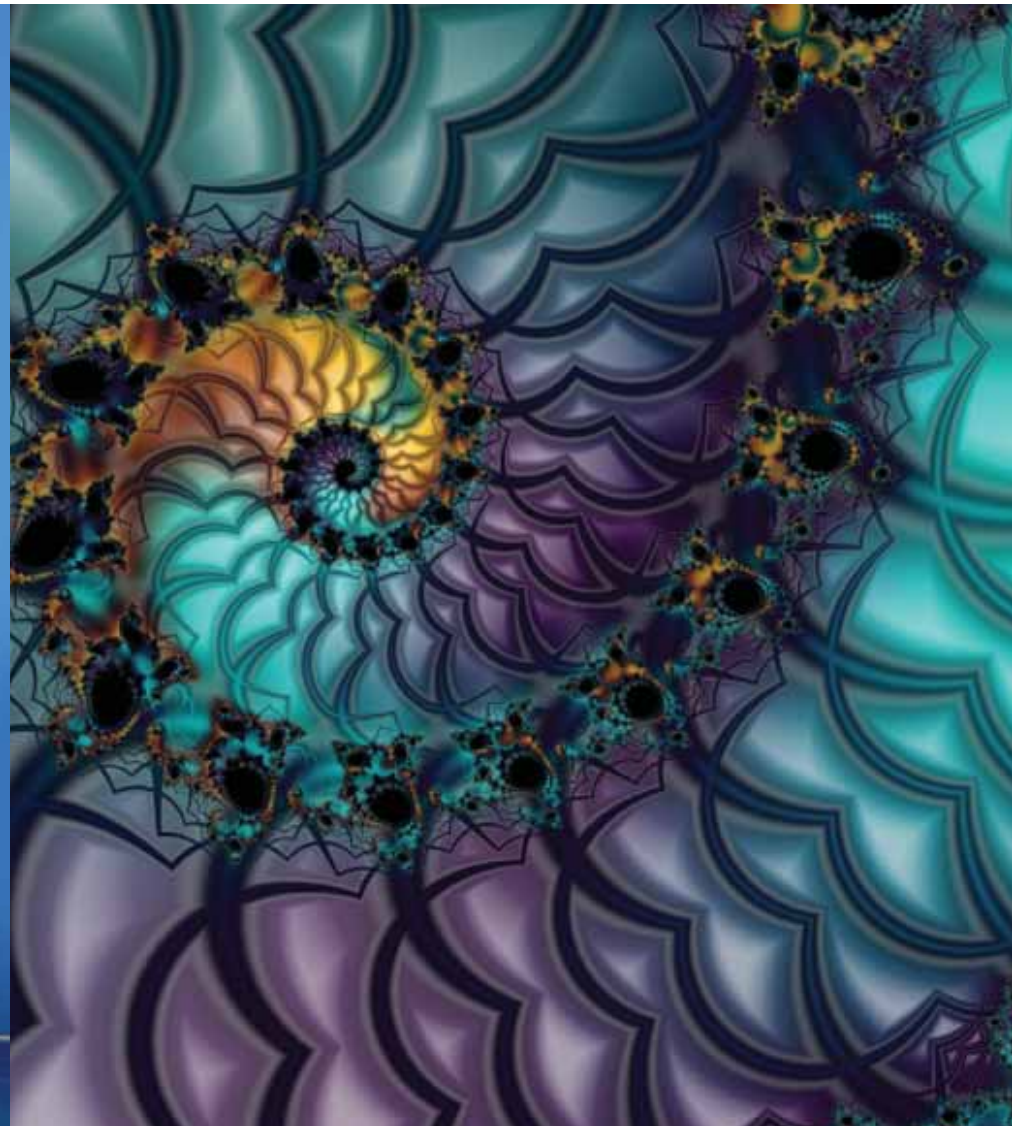
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*Susan Saul, President and
CEO of Azzulina*

In a few short years, Azzulina has evolved beyond being just a retailer of fine home furnishings. We are now an internationally acclaimed manufacturer of the Azzulina brand of furniture and lighting. Boasting an exquisite line, we are featured in the most sought after showrooms and high-end retailers in the country. As such, we are excited to announce that Azzulina is restructuring to shift our focus into exclusively marketing our own Azzulina brand.

This means that we need to liquidate every item that is not manufactured by Azzulina to make room for our own distinctive designs.

We've always been renowned for having the widest range of the best accessories found in town. Here is your chance to get them at a never-before heard of wholesale pricing.

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- Christmas ornaments and decorations
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- Lighting: table & floor lamps, chandeliers and sconces.
- Jewelry

We have always carried only the best, most unique 3rd-party items, so you know that this will be a special sale with an incredible selection. The world's most beautiful, high-quality pieces will only be available for a limited time on a first-come first-serve basis. Come early and come often for the absolute best in selection and price.

WHAT'S NEXT...

Experience Azzulina Across the Nation and Around the World

From our Bay Area home base to international acclaim, our line has been shown in trade shows and industry magazines from New York to Europe; currently, Azzulina products are distributed in some of the world's finest locales, such as the Laguna Design Center. We are represented in galleries across the nation – San Francisco's Union Square, Santa Fe NM, Sedona AZ, and the Venetian in Las Vegas. We can also be seen at select retailers in destination cities like Beverly Hills, Woodland Hills, and Del Mar.

We are establishing a distribution network across the United States and in early 2009 will strengthen our focus on the international market while continuing to exhibit at:

- Art Basel, Miami
- HD Expo, Las Vegas
- LightFair, New York
- Light Middle East, Dubai
- Index, Dubai

Azzulina is proud to announce the opening of its 10,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Livermore located at 580 & Vasco road. In early 2009 we will make it possible for our clients to shop wholesale during the last weekend of every month. *For more information, please contact us at the Azzulina Danville showroom.*

Parent photographers

Send a jpeg to Editor@DanvilleWeekly.com of the best action shot from your child's game for consideration for our Sports page. Remember to include caption information: who, what, when, where—and the score.



Bringing home the big treat

The Division 3 Mustang Viper U12 team won the San Ramon Halloween Tournament played Oct. 25-26. After allowing three goals in the first game, the Viper's defense came alive and only allowed one goal in the final three games en route to their second tournament championship this season.

Team members are (front row, l-r) Mitch O'Brien, Jason Hare, Trevor Grauman, Daniel Reget, Blake Englehart, Brandon Wise, Zach Chase, (back) Nick Bear, Blake Ogburn, Greg Gibbert, Chris Dobberpuhl, Collin Thompson, Drew Kunde, R.J. Motter, Riley Struck and John Quinn. Coaches are Jim Reget, Kelly Kunde, and Jim Motter.



Saddleback puts on good show

Alamo United White Plus U-12 Boys came in second at the Saddleback Tournament held Oct. 11-12, winning their first three games 2-0, 3-0 and 4-0 before being defeated by the San Ramon Valley Spartans, 4-1.

Team members are (back, l-r) Coach David Langon, Christos Dereschuk, Bryson Waite, Coach Bruce Dereschuk, Aaron Colman, Nathan Stone, Jordan Weil, Chirs Taverriate, Ryan Langon, Zareb Razvi, Coach John Stame, (front) Callum Alston, Ethan Hall, Aidan Sparks, Nathan Aepli, Jackson Stenger, Klye Souza, Brad Mori and Benjamin Stame.



Shooting Stars reach the top

The Mustang Shooting Stars U12 White and Dick King League Playoff Champions also placed first in regular season league play and were champions at the Mustang Saddleback Tournament in October.

Team members are (front row, l-r) Kendall Kessler, Lindsey Larson, Danielle Norris, Tessa Sternberg, Andie Cunningham, Makenna McClaskey, Lauren Steingraf, (middle) Sam Londynsky, Katelyn Krommenhoek, Gianna Bain, Payton Bull, Sarah Foreman, Casey, McCracken, Amanda McNutt, Paige Selbach and Alex Gray. The coaches are Assistant Rob Gray, Head Coach John Bain, Assistant Tripp McNutt.



St. Joan Sharks win tourney

The St. Joan of Arc Sharks, a sixth-grade girls national basketball team, won the MVP Pre-Season Tournament in Martinez on Oct. 19 with a hard fought win over its sister team, also from St. Joan's, in San Ramon. The nailbiter game was decided in the last seconds when the Sharks pulled out a 23-21 victory.

Sharks team members are (front, l-r) Summer Canavan, Alexis Meyer, Selina Guevara, Mimi Diekman, Christy Hammill, (back) Tia Kim, Alyssa Gonzales, Jackie Combs, Anna Vojvoda, Kathleen Casey, (far back) Coach David Meyer.



680 Drivers earn silver at Nationals

The 680 Drivers seventh-eighth-grade boys water Polo team set out for the Speedo Cup at the University of Michigan with high hopes of bringing home a medal—and they did. They won the silver in this nationally competitive tournament in the U.S. Water Polo Organization. On their way to second place, the 680 Drivers beat Lamorinda and San Diego Shores in some of its final games.

Team members are (front, l-r) Andrew Parese, Connor Thompson, Ryan Auker, Samuel Yorke, Andrew Shutt, (back) Coach Mundy (Matthew Mundelius), Brian Roudnev, Spencer Creed, Colin Chiappello, Tyler Martin, Tucker Angelo, Grant Garcia, Nick Pasichuke and Alex O'Laughlin.



Halloween champs

The boys U16 Mustang United soccer team won the San Ramon Halloween Tournament 2008 played Oct. 26-27. The team played four outstanding soccer games (San Ramon Rampage, 3-0; Vallejo United, 1-0; and Petaluma Inferno, 1-1) and beat Eldorado Hills, 2-0, in the championship match.

Team members are (back row, l-r) Coach Jim Powers, Ky Rhoda, Brian Pande, Stuart Massengil, Alex Powers, Arman Ghorbani, Mitchell Fairchild, Jake Martellaro, Coach Ali Naderi, (front) Zach Rice, Clayton Correa, Cameron Naderi, Kyle Weiss, Zachary Pierce, Dan Riopelle, Trevor Chang and Greg Allinson.



Gold Mavericks take first

The U12 Division 1 Gold Mavericks took first place in the Placer United Tournament, with (back row, l-r) Coach Curt Cox, Courtney Clark, Clare Da Silva, Leah Emerson, Arianna Zamora, Marissa Savoldi, Morgan Pearce, Christina Nuti, Asst Coach Trevor Rodd, (middle) Mallory Hromatko, Kathryn Rodd, Chelsea Barry, Madeline Gibson, Celina Gines, Hailey Balma, (front) Summer Stamates and Megan Melara.

CELINIE GRAY

KATHY MELARA

BATTER UP

Girls' softball league provides positive play for all skill levels

by Geoff Gillette

The weather is turning cool, holiday decorations are going up, and Monday Night Football has become a staple in the television lineup. It must be time to sign up for the 2009 girls' softball leagues.

As any Danville area parent who's been involved at any level with youth sports knows, signups for their child's activity are usually about six months in advance of the new season. And the San Ramon Valley Girl's Athletic League (SRVGAL) is no different.

What is different about this particular league is that in spite of the years it's been around, it still tries to keep things fresh, to bring in new players, and to keep the game accessible to girls of any skill level.

Bill Burchard is the newly elected president of SRVGAL, and he said its goal in the coming years is to provide quality athletics for the girls of Danville while working to stay connected to the community and be mindful of the realities of a fickle economy.

"We're the largest girls softball league this side of the Mississippi," he said. "We have 1,200 girls playing from pre-K all the way up to high school. We want to see those numbers grow."

Established in 1974, SRVGAL serves young women along the 680 corridor from Walnut Creek to Dublin. Burchard said the organization has continued to strive to provide the best play it can while also giving young athletes the level of competitiveness and skill they desire.

From pre-K to third grade, they only play at the recreational level. But from then on players have three levels to choose from, each successively more competitive than the others.

"Of course we have our recreational level," said SRVGAL Baseball Commissioner Matt Nyland, "then we have our blue level, where the games are a bit more competitive and the

girls are at a higher skill level, and then there's the red level, which is the most competitive."

Nyland said SRVGAL differs from other large athletic leagues in that it keeps the recreational level of play all the way up until high school.

Burchard said, "Everyone will have a place to play and a team to play on no matter how competitive they are or what their skill level. Which is pretty cool."

Burchard, Nyland and Jan Tomsic are all parents who have had children go through the program and become involved with SRVGAL. The league has a 36-member board, showing a mix of new members and old. Burchard represents about a 25 percent turnover of new members joining the organization.

He said that the new blood means fresh ideas and perspectives, which helps the league thrive. "One of the things we've found is that not everyone knows about us. We always assumed that people did, but now we're trying to be a little more high profile. We want to get the word out about the league and what's available to the girls in Danville."

The league marches in the Fourth of July parade and other events but Burchard said the board is continuing to brainstorm ways to get the word out to people.

At the same time, Nyland said they are trying to curtail issues that creep up when an entity grows to their size. "When a league gets this big, you lose that personal touch. We've gotten to the point where we've lost some of that so we're trying to get that back."

One way is through direct communication with parents and players, rather than an impersonal e-mail blast. "We have players try out at the higher levels. A lot of times we just send out a 'thank you for trying out' e-mail. I think that could leave people feeling a little cold. I sent out a personal e-mail to each kid who tried out and I signed it, 'thanks, Matt.' It's a way of reaching out to the parents who have

already committed to being in the league."

Another way to stay connected is by showing empathy for things like a falling economy. "Normally, Nov. 1 is the cutoff for signing up and after that you pay an extra \$50," Tomsic said. "This year we're not going to raise the fees. We don't want any girl not to play because we brought fees up after Nov. 1."

Tomsic, the league's secretary, said SRVGAL is one of the better deals cost-wise in the area. "We're one of the least expensive extra-curricular activities a girl can do. We can do that because of our size and because we're very well managed."

Tomsic said another draw is that they work to make sure their coaches are trained properly in the style of the Positive Coaching Alliance, or PCA. They hold skills clinics for both coaches and players, and they have girls who've been through the lower leagues come back to help coach the younger girls.

"It's a perpetuation of what we're trying to do here," Burchard agreed. "The girls come back, they see how excited the younger kids are, and it reminds them of why they enjoyed the game." He added with a smile, "And you've got an older girl talking to a younger girl, instead of a parent or a coach. Who do you think they're going to listen to?"

That attitude of making sure the kids have a positive experience pervades the league's philosophy, and it shows. Rosters continue to grow; the league has about 100 teams, 200 coaches and around 1,000 regular season games.

All three commissioners said they hope that continues in the future, as they look at partnering with other leagues to provide inter-league play and other ways of making the game fun and exciting for hundreds of Danville girls.

"When our kids move on, we want the league they leave to be vibrant, with kids still wanting to play," Burchard said. "When girls are school age and they want to come out and play softball, then we've done our job." ■



Andi Quilalong of the 14-and-under Stompers winds up for another strikeout.



Joelle Williams changes her stance to lay down a bunt during a game last season.



Kelsey Nyland digs in at first base, while Mackenzie Murphy stretches out into a lead-off.



BY MARIA SHEN

Best teachers will stay with me

My mom loves to tell me that the best years of my life are the ones I am spending in school. With my high school graduation approaching in a few months, I think I'm inclined to believe her. Reflecting on my high school years, I think that, really, the best part about school is not the friends I've made, the books I've read, or the knowledge I've gained. The best part is the teachers I've had, the ones that really *taught* something.

For many of my classes at Monte Vista, we follow a standardized list of state requirements in the beginning of the course. For example, in trigonometry, a standard is that "students know the definition of sine and cosine as y- and x-coordinates of points on the unit circle and are familiar with the graphs of the sine and cosine functions." Sine and cosine curves are ultimately things I can learn from a textbook, should I be so inclined to sit down and flip through one.

Teachers show me more than

just which page to flip to. Mr. Kindley, who teaches trig, was not my teacher because he showed me what a sine curve looked like. My AP English Language teacher, Mrs. Buckley, was not a teacher because she taught me the meaning of "litos" (and, to be completely honest, I really can't remember the meaning of "litos"—I just remember the word because it's so peculiar). Mr. Bowling was not my teacher because he made me memorize all the countries in Africa, from Zambia to Togo.

My favorite teachers are the ones who help me think in a new way, become more curious about the world, and build the foundation of my beliefs—all things textbooks can't offer. After being in Señora Estevez's Spanish class, I realized the Spanish language was not a bunch of grammar rules and vocabulary words I needed to memorize. She read us famous Spanish literature in her lilting accent and then patiently explained the meaning of each line. Now, months after I've

left Señora Estevez's class, I often find myself browsing the library for the poems of Federico Garcia Lorca and the fiction of Jorge Luis Borges, two authors I encountered first in her class. She introduced me to something that really resonated with the person I am, and I've loved Spanish literature ever since.

I guess that's the thing with good teachers—they teach me about myself. I won't forget how the final of my AP English language class was an "ethics" roleplay. In the roleplay, my classmates and I questioned whether our ethics are strong enough for us to always adhere to them. The imaginary scenario was that our class was suspected of cheating on a major exam. I assumed a character with her private motivations and desires. The object was to avoid being expelled for cheating. I was given the chance to rat on my classmates, make up lies, bribe school officials, or anything that could prevent me from being "expelled." The

point was to make me look within myself and find my own course of action—whether I accuse another student to save myself or carry on honorably as my choice and mine alone.

It's hard to talk about good teachers without sinking into hopeless clichés. But, to be honest, the more I've grown, the more I've realized that clichés are true (that idea is another cliché, isn't it?). Sometimes, I don't feel like doing math homework, or writing that English essay, or finding all the African nations on a map. Sometimes I don't like school at all and I can't wait for the bell to ring. But when I walk out of a class like chemistry and I find myself thinking about the way everything can be reduced to atoms, the way there is commonality among all things, I realize my teachers have left a lasting trace of themselves within me.

Since I've been doing college applications recently, I've been putting a lot of thought into imagining

my future. And, it's nice—exciting, even—to look forward to all the great teachers I'll meet in the future, the people who change me because they encourage me to look within myself and find what I'm made of. I could meet a teacher like, perhaps, Mrs. Moore, who, because she listened to my short story back in freshman year and said "wow" with her eyes glittering, made me realize I wanted to write for the rest of my life.

I've had so many great teachers that I don't even have the space to mention all of them and I'm much too embarrassed to show any of them this article, anyway. But if you're a teacher (maybe even my teacher), I really would like you to know that you're very much appreciated.

Maria Shen, reporting on Generation Y, is a senior at Monte Vista High School. She founded Contra Costa County's Young Bohemians creative writing club and is editor of Voicebox, a literary magazine. E-mail her at youngbohemians@gmail.com.

OF NOTE

Give a cheer for Spirit Elite

California Spirit Elite, an All-Star competitive cheerleading team with about half its members coming from Danville, took home top honors at the Jamz Xtreme Cheerleading Championships at the University of Pacific in Stockton recently. The CSE Junior Level 2 All Star squad tumbled, stunted and danced its way to a nearly flawless performance, winning the team a full paid bid to the International All Levels Championship to be held next spring in Los Angeles. The squad not only earned the high point score in the Junior division but also in the entire competition, making CSE the first team on the West Coast to win a paid \$4,500 bid.



The basket brigade



Students at Los Cerros Middle School joined together in their annual Basket Brigade last week to gather food items to be given out for the Thanksgiving holiday. The students stuffed 300 laundry baskets with the fixings for Thanksgiving meals, most of which was collected during the previous few weeks in a food drive.

SARAH DEJESUS

The Wine Guy

BY DON, THE EVERYDAY WINE GUY

Just an average, everyday wine guy

I have a love for wine. I love red wine. I like dessert wine. I will drink white wine and tolerate champagne. Get the idea? I must admit that I am not a wine snob and I hate paying too much for a bottle of wine.

A year ago, I purchased a subscription to one of "those" high-end wine magazines. I thought I would become a "wine connoisseur." What happened? I realized that the wine reviewers simply gave 90 percent of the wines a good-to-great review—and very rarely could I decipher what they tasted in the wine.

In my opinion, this is no help to the average, everyday wine drinker.

I have taught my kids: "When faced with a problem, you are either part of the problem or part of the solution." Solution: Write a wine column not for the wine snob but for the "rest of the people."

So here are the rules for the column:

- I like red wine. You will see more red wine reviews in here than any other. Given that I am not being paid to write the column—I am going to drink what I like.
- I don't like to spend \$100 on

a bottle of wine. My goal is to review wines that you can buy for under \$30. Periodically, I will review what I call special occasion wine or gift wine. I will put an upper limit of \$60 on this wine. Wines that would be good for graduations, holidays, birthdays or gifts.

- The wine has to be available at a local store and must be available in reasonable quantities. So many reviews are of wines that can only be purchased if you are a member of a wine club—or they only made 300 cases. It seems to me that the everyday wine drinker will never get the opportunity to try these wines—so I won't review them.

With that said, I welcome suggestions, criticism (constructive would be better) and, heaven forbid, praise. Please feel free to e-mail with any of the above (or wines you think I should review) to everydaywineguy@hotmail.com.

In two weeks, the first review! The wine: Beringer, Founders Estate, 2005 Merlot. Available at Safeway for approximately \$15. Until then, cheers!

Don, the Everyday Wine Guy lives in Danville and can be reached at everydaywineguy@hotmail.com

Time for a holiday home tour

Be cheered, be awed, be inspired

The fourth annual Danville-Alamo AAUW Holiday Home Tour is taking place soon with five elegantly decorated houses opening their doors to visitors. The tour is a chance to visit spectacular homes right in our backyard, enjoy holiday decorations, and contribute to women's scholarships through the American Association of University Women.

The five homes on the tour are described as follows:

- A traditional Diablo estate remodeled in a beautiful setting among heritage oaks, pool and golf course. The owner has collected enough ornaments to decorate more than 20 Christmas trees, each with a different theme, plus has an extensive Dept 56 Christmas village, complete with skating pond and twinkling lights. The home also features lovely garlands and wreaths, a sophisticated media room with bar and wine cellar, a study with a cozy fireplace, golf trophies and much more. Visitors also may walk along the side yard to visit the cozy guest cottage.

- Another home features a life-size nativity scene and a beauti-

ful entry to welcome visitors. The owners completely remodeled and landscaped two years ago, and their concern for detail is apparent. Enjoy the view of the garden from the French doors and notice the hand-carved fireplace in the family room and master bedroom. The kitchen was customized with entertaining in mind. The dining room is faux painted, and the home has an elegant staircase with a floral iron railing designed by the hostess, leading to a large master bedroom with a coffee bar.

- An elegant hilltop estate with a beautiful blend of family tradition and today's modern style. The original home has been expanded to 7,000 square feet of grandeur with soaring coffered ceilings, stunning views and endless opportunities for entertaining. The unending knot, one of the symbols of Buddhism, has been incorporated into the iron-work of the front door and the beautifully crafted stair rail. The added space includes a thoroughly modern kitchen, spacious family room and wrap around deck overlooking the hills of Blackhawk and Mount Diablo.

- An original 1917 Diablo country cottage has been completely

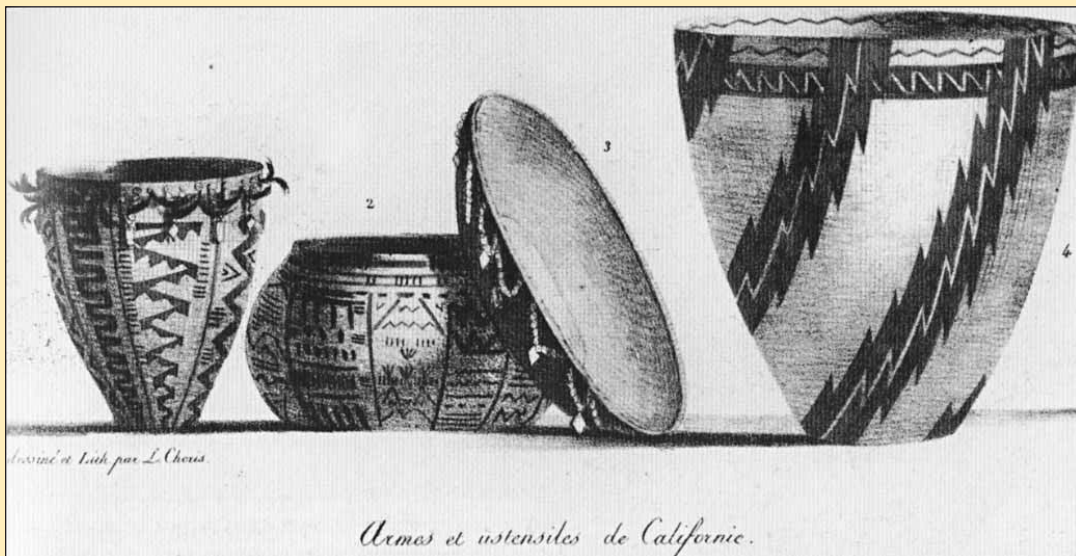


These little ornamental birds decorated a tree last year on the AAUW Holiday Home Tour.



Presenting the Past

BY BEVERLY LANE



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

California Indian baskets were stunners

Baskets were called utensils in this 1816 drawing by Louis Choris. California Indians used baskets for storage, holding babies, gifts, cooking and other uses. Intricate designs and fine workmanship were characteristic of their fine basketry.

restored. It is in a beautiful setting with large decks, a bridge over a running creek that connects to a guest cottage, a new pool, fireplace and an outdoor entertaining area. This wonderful home is warm, open and inviting, with large spacious rooms. The owner has collected American antiques for most of her life and her collection is displayed throughout the house. The large upstairs master bedroom, bath and workroom areas are decorated in colors of celadon green and white. Plus everything is decorated for the holidays.

- Beautiful views of Las Trampas, Diablo golf course and open space

can be seen starting at the front porch of this lovely Diablo home, which was totally transformed by the visions and creativity of its owner and contractor into a calm, airy, light filled space. Adding crown moldings, raised coffered ceilings, Brazilian oak floors and new bathrooms, they created a charming house whose focus is a beautiful modern kitchen. A large red glass globe ornament is centered in the living room window, a 100-year-old treasure from France inherited from her grandmother. Many lovely wreaths and Christmas trees and much, much more decorate the home. ■

Holiday Home Tour

The fourth annual Danville-Alamo AAUW Holiday Home Tour will take place from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday, Dec. 12, and Saturday, Dec. 13. Tickets are \$30 per person if postmarked by Dec. 5 and \$35 thereafter or day of tour. Tickets for seniors 65 and older are \$25. Purchase tickets by sending a self-addressed, stamped return business sized envelope along with a check payable to: Danville-Alamo AAUW to Danville-Alamo AAUW, 255 Morris Ranch Ct., Danville 94526. Tickets may also be purchased at Leku Eder on East Prospect Avenue in Danville.

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Dec 8 15% OFF SURF				
Dec 9 15% OFF DENIM				

Calendar

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

Art

Bedford Gallery Celebrates Civic Arts Bedford Gallery will honor artists who have taught as part of Walnut Creek's arts education program at a 45th anniversary exhibition held from 5-7 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 3, at the Bedford Gallery, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. General admission is \$5; \$3 youths; 12 and under are free as are Friends of the Bedford, members of Diablo Regional Arts Association and ticket holders to events on that day. Visit www.bedford-gallery.org or call 295-1417.

Danville Multimedia Art Group Multimedia artists talk about contemporary art, exchange concepts and work from 6-8 p.m., the first Wednesday of every month, at Pioneer Art Gallery, 524 Hartz Ave., Danville. Call 648-4885.

Auditions

'Twelve Angry Women' Danville-Alamo Branch of AAUW will host auditions for "Twelve Angry Women," a remake of "Twelve Angry Men" during the first week of January. For information, call Lynn at 324-0143 or Susan at 820-9071.

WomenSing Auditions Auditions for experienced women singers are currently being scheduled for WomenSing from 7-10 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 9, or by special appointment, at Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. To schedule an appointment, call 974-9169 or e-mail audition@womensing.org.

Author Visit

Rakestraw Books Rakestraw Books will host numerous authors during the month of December including: Amanda Hesser and Dorothy Allison, authors of "Eat, Memory: Great Writers at the Table," at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 2; Jon Meacham, author of "American Lion," at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 3; Wally Lamb, author of "The Hour I First Believed," at 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 5; Jeremy Greenberg, author of "Relative Discomfort: The Family Survival Guide," at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 9; and John Winthrop Haeger, author of

"Pacific Pinot Noir," at 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 12, all at Rakestraw Books, 409 Railroad Ave., Danville. Reservations are essential. Call 837-7337.

Civic Meetings

Alamo Community Council Alamo Community Council meets at 5 p.m., the second Thursday of each month, at Hap Magee Ranch Park, Swain House, 1025 La Gonda Way, Danville. The public is welcome to attend.

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

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

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

Class Reunions

Granada High Class of 1989 Reunion The Reunion Committee for Granada High School Class of 1989 in Livermore is searching for classmates to celebrate their 20th year reunion. They will be celebrating, Saturday, Sept. 5, 2009, at The Bridges, 9000 S. Gale Ridge Rd., San Ramon. Cost is \$105 per person. Visit www.GHS1989.net.

Classes

Drought Tolerant Plants for Yards Come and learn about drought tolerant plants for yards from 10:30-11 a.m., every Saturday, at Sunset Color, 1435 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville. These classes are free. Call 914-0035 or visit www.sunsetcolor.com.

Clubs

Alamo Cribbage Club The club plays cribbage for fun. It meets at 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday at the

Safeway conference room, 200 Alamo Plaza, Alamo. Call 284-7044 or e-mail almoy1@prodigy.net.

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

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

Alamo-Danville Artists' Society Alamo-Danville Artists' Society (ADAS) hosts monthly meetings featuring well-known guest artist demonstrations on the second Tuesday of every month. These meetings are free and open to the public. This society also hosts Art in the Park and Open Studios to raise funds for art programs in the San Ramon Valley area schools. Visit www.adas4art.org.

Alamo-Danville Newcomers Club This club is open to new and long-time residents of the surrounding areas. If you are interested in making new friends, learning more about the area or getting involved in various activities, call 775-3233 or visit www.alamodanvillenewcomers.com.

Business Development Network BDN is a group of professionals that share resources and develops business through relationships. It meets 7:45-9 a.m., the second and fourth Thursday of each month at Denny's, 807 Camino Ramon, Danville. Call 648-8316 or visit www.bcdndanville.com.

Communication Arts Network This organization meets at 11:45 a.m., the second Tuesday of every month, at Forli Ristorante, 3160 Danville Blvd., Alamo. The organization is for professionals interested in networking with others in the communications industry. Cost is \$20, including lunch. Visit www.commartnet.org.

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

WEEKEND PREVIEW



'Eat, Memory' author to appear

Rakestraw Books will host food writer Amanda Hesser and novelist Dorothy Allison at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 2, at the bookstore, 409 Railroad Ave., Danville. Hesser will speak about her book "Eat, Memory: Great Writers at the Table: A Collection of Essays from the New York Times." Call 837-7337.

Danville Job's Daughters Job's Daughters International is an organization for young ladies (minimum age 10 for full membership) who enjoy dances, sleepovers, parties, social events, snow trips and more. The girls develop confidence, good character, life-long friendships, moral and spiritual values, and leadership abilities. The group meets at 7 p.m., the second and fourth Tuesday of every month, at the Danville Grange Hall, 743 Diablo Rd. Call 829-8505 or email IOJD247@yahoo.com.

Danville Lions Club This club meets at 7 p.m., on the first and third Wednesday of every month, at the Brass Door, San Ramon. For information, call Tom Jackson at 984-1541.

Danville PM Toastmaster Club #1785 The club meets from 7:30-9 p.m., every Wednesday, at DVC, San Ramon Campus, 1690 Watermill Rd., San Ramon. Guests are welcome. For information, call Debra Elmore at 934-3113 or visit www.danvilletoastmasters1785.com.

Danville Rotary The Danville Rotary meets at noon, every Monday at the Brass Door, 2154 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. For information, visit www.danvillerotary.org.

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

Exchange Club of San Ramon Valley The Exchange Club of San Ramon Valley meets from noon-1 p.m., on the second Wednesday of every month, at Faz, 600 Hartz Ave., Danville. Meetings include lunch, a guest speaker and business networking. Guests are invited with reservations; call 275-2412.

Friends of the Danville Library Friends of the Danville Library are renewing annual memberships and recruiting new members to help support, raise funds and sponsor programs for the Danville library. There are many benefits of being a Friend including merchant discounts, volunteer opportunities and preview of book sales. Dues and donations are tax deductible. Application forms are at the library, 400 Front St. Call 837-4455.

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

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

Kiwanis San Ramon Valley San Ramon Valley Kiwanis meets from noon-1:30 p.m., every Thursday, at Round Hill Country Club, 3169 Roundhill Road, Alamo. Meetings include networking, lunch and a guest speaker. For information, visit its Web site at www.kiwanis-srv.org or call 244-1227.

Moms Club of Danville-Tassajara Come join a support group for stay-at-home moms. It meets at 10 a.m., the last Tuesday of every month; moms with children of all ages are welcome. Dues are \$28 per year. E-mail Angeline@hal2006@att.net.

San Ramon Valley Newcomers Luncheon This club will host its Christmas luncheon at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, Dec. 11, at Barones, 475 St. John St., Pleasanton. The Sweet Adelines will be singing and the club will have its "Yankee Swap" gift exchange. To reserve a seat, call Paula at 735-6483. Visit www.srvnc.com.

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

Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 75 The organization meets at 7:30 p.m., every second Thursday of the month (except December), at Danville Veteran's Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. The next meeting is Thursday, Jan. 8. For information, call Post Commander Tony Carnemolla at 932-4042 or visit www.vfw.org.

Concerts

'Evening At The Pops' San Ramon Symphonic Band opens its 22nd season with "An Evening at the Pops," 8 p.m., Friday, Dec. 19, Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$5 for adults; students and children under 12 are free. Visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com or call 973-ARTS.

'Lift Every Voice and Sing' St. Timothy's Episcopal Church will host a benefit concert "Lift Every Voice and Sing" at 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 5, at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 1550 Diablo Rd., Danville. Admission is free, but donations are accepted to support EQCA: Equality for All.

'Peace on Earth' Danville Community Band presents its seventh annual Christmas concert, "Peace on Earth," at 3 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 7, at the East Bay Fellowship, 2615 Camino Tassajara, Danville. This free event is a collection of joyous Christmas music and a salute to those who gave their lives at Pearl Harbor. Call 736-1673.

'Welcome the Holidays' The 140-voice Blackhawk Chorus presents a dazzling concert of holiday music at 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 13, at the Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$21 for adults and \$16 for children. Call 973-ARTS (973-2787) or visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com.

'Winterfest' Contra Costa Wind Symphony presents "Winterfest" at 7:30 p.m., Monday, Dec. 15, at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Dr. The concert will feature holiday music, traditional carols and

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an audience sing-along. This concert is free.

Danville Girls Chorus Winter Concert Danville Girls Chorus presents its Winter Concert at 11 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 13, at Canyon Creek Church, 9015 S. Gale Ridge Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$10; \$5 for children. Call 837-2624 or visit www.danvillegirlschorus.com.

San Ramon Symphonic Band Holiday Concert San Ramon Symphonic Band will host a Holiday Concert at 8 p.m., Friday, Dec. 19, at Dougherty Valley Performing Arts, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$5 for adults; free for students with an ID and youths under 12. Call 973-ARTS (973-2787) or visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com.

Sing-A-Long-Messiah San Ramon Arts Foundation presents a Sing-A-Long-Messiah at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon. Free choral workshops will be offered. Tickets are \$10 adults; \$5 children 12 and under, and can be purchased at www.sanramonperformingarts.com.

Events

Brass Era Cars Blackhawk Museum will host Brass Era Cars featuring the Horseless Carriage Club of America Bay Area Region from 10:30 a.m.-noon, Sunday, Nov. 30, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Call 736-2277.

E-Waste Disposal EWM welcomes California businesses, schools, government agencies or residents to bring an unlimited amount of e-waste for proper disposal and recycling at no cost, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at Diablo Valley College in San Ramon. Acceptable items include TVs, computers, monitors, power supplies, microwaves and more. Visit www.NoEwaste.com or call (866) 335-3373.

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

Mayor's Installation and Community Service Awards Town of Danville will host the Mayor's Installation and Community Service Awards from 7-10 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 2, at the Community Center, 420 Front St., Danville. The public is invited. Call 314-3401 or visit www.ci.danville.ca.us.

Open Houses at the Flower Shop Alamo Flower Company is holding Holiday Open Houses to benefit the Alamo Tree Lighting Fund, by donating 10 percent of all pre-holiday orders placed during the Open Houses. The open houses will have good cheer, holiday libation, refreshments and drawings, from 4-7 p.m., Fridays, until Dec. 19, at the shop, 3000 Danville Blvd., #1, Alamo. The events are free and open to the public. Call 836-1456.

Fundraisers

'Music in the Halls' Come and enjoy wine, chocolate tasting, hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction and music at "Music in the Halls" from 7-11 p.m., Friday, Dec. 5, at Garden West School, 4576 Willow Rd., Pleasanton. Cost is \$25. Proceeds benefit Wine for Wheels Foundation. Call 463-6060 or visit www.gardenwest.org.

Pet Photos with Santa Tri-Valley Animal Rescue is holding its first annual Pet Photos with Santa fundraising event, 1-5 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, 4500 Arroyo Vista, Livermore. The cost is \$20 for two 4-by-6-inch photos. No appointment is necessary. All animals must be in carriers or leashed. Call 447-8903 or visit www.tv-ar.org.

Save Darfur Benefit Show The third annual benefit produced by the junior class at the Athenian School for save-darfur.org, will take place 6-9 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 3, at 2100 Mt. Diablo Scenic Blvd., Danville. Music, dance and poetry performances by Athenian students will be featured, as well as a Sudanese survivor of the genocide who will speak. Cost is \$5. Visit www.athenian.org.

Tell Me A Story Children's Home Society of California presents "Tell Me a Story," a holiday event for children of all ages featuring a storybook brunch with songs, storytelling and a special visit from Santa, at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 20, San Ramon Marriott, 2600 Bishop Dr. The cost is \$30/adults and \$15/children. Call (510) 267-1860.

Garden/Home Tours

AAUW Holiday Home Tour The Danville-Alamo AAUW Holiday Home Tour will take place from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Friday and Saturday, Dec. 12-13, previewing homes in Danville, Blackhawk and Alamo. The cost is \$30/ticket if purchased before Dec. 5 by sending a check made out to "Danville-Alamo AAUW" and a self-addressed stamped envelope to AAUW Holiday Tour, P.O. Box 996, Alamo 94507. Senior 65+ tickets are \$25 throughout the tour. Tickets are also available at Leku Eder, 178 E. Prospect Ave., Danville. Call Mary at 831-1784 or e-mail mixfamily2@sbcglobal.net.

Health

Immunization Clinics for Children Fall immunization clinic is open from 9-11:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at Axis Community Health Clinic, 4361 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton, to all Tri-Valley families who are low income or uninsured. Bring child's immunization records and information about family income and medical insurance. There is a fee for some immunizations. Call 462-1755.

Lazarex Cancer Foundation Sponsors Screenings Alta Bates Summit Medical Center and Lazarex Cancer Foundation will hold a colon cancer screening at the Summit Campus, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 5, 3100 Summit St., Oakland. Cost of screening is determined on a case-by-case basis. Call 820-4517 or visit www.lazarexfoundation.org.

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. A workshop will be held from 2-4 p.m., Friday, Dec. 12, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. This event is free for cancer patients and friends. Call 933-0107.

Holiday

Alamo Tree Lighting Festival Alamo Chamber of Commerce will present the Alamo Tree Lighting Festival, 5:30-8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 7, at Andrew H. Young Park, 3000 Danville Blvd. Choirs from Alamo schools will present their Christmas programs. Santa Claus, storytelling, refreshments and more! This event is free.

Breakfast with Santa Get a spirited start to your holiday season at the Job's Daughters 15th annual Breakfast with Santa, 7:30-11:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Danville Grange Hall, 743 Diablo Rd. For \$7 per person you will enjoy pancakes, eggs, sausage, crepes and a beverage. Kids can take a picture with Santa, and adults can shop at the holiday boutique and bake sale. For tickets call 683-8349.

Holiday Events at Blackhawk Plaza Blackhawk Plaza will host numerous holiday events including Photos with Santa from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Nov. 28-Dec. 23 and from 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Dec. 24; Live Holiday Music from Dickens Carolers from 4-7 p.m., Thursdays and from 1-4 p.m., Saturdays, Nov. 29-Dec. 20; Pet Night with Santa from 5-7 p.m., Tuesdays, Dec. 2, 9 and 16; and a Holiday Open House on Dec. 4; all at Blackhawk Plaza, 3480 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Call 736-2751.

Holiday on the Farm San Ramon will host Holiday on the Farm from noon-3 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at Forest Home Farms, 19953 San Ramon Valley Blvd. The day will include music, tractor rides, children's crafts, farm tours, refreshments and a visit from a Victorian Santa. Cost is \$7 at the gate; children under 2 years old are free. Call 973-3284.

Holiday Tea and Fashion Show Start the holiday season with a festive Holiday Tea and Fashion Show benefiting East Bay Children's Charities: Hospice Comfort for Kids, Family Stress Kinship Program and Vestia Children in Foster Care, from 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 13, at the Alamo Women's Club, 1401 Danville Blvd., Alamo. Cost is \$40. Call 820-7203.

Lighting the Old Oak Tree Join the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce for the 32nd annual Lighting of the Old Oak Tree, 5:15-8:30 p.m., Friday, Nov. 28. Gather on Diablo Road to hear the SRVHS Choral Singers and the Danville Girls Chorus and help Father Christmas and the Snow Angel light the tree at 6:15 p.m. Visit www.danvilleareachamber.com.

Menorah Lightings Celebrate the Holiday of Chanukah with a Grand Menorah Lighting of Contra Costa's Largest Menorah, from 4-6 p.m., on the First Night, Sunday, Dec. 21; and Eighth Night, Sunday, Dec. 28, at the Broadway Plaza Fountain, Walnut Creek. Fun for the whole family with face painting, balloons, donuts and music. Visit www.JewishContraCosta.com or call 937-4101.

Santa Arrival and Holiday Open House Santa arrives at the Danville Livery at 11 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 30, at 440B Sycamore Valley Blvd. Come enjoy visits and photos with Santa (bring your own camera) from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and a Holiday open house from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., featuring Old World Caroling, a balloonist and a juggler, music and more. Visit www.danvillelivery.com.

Kids and Teens

'The Frog Prince' Danville Library Foundation will host Fratello Marionettes "The Frog Prince" at 4 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 16, at the Danville Library, Children's Reading Room, 400 Front St. This event is free. Call 837-4889.

Danville Kidz Read Book Group Friends of the Danville Library and the Library are sponsoring a reading group for kids entering grades 3-5, at 4 p.m. Wednesdays at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. There will be book discussions, activities and snacks. Registration is required and ends Dec. 8; call 837-4889.

Elf Workshop Town of Danville will host an Elf Workshop for children with two different sessions, from 9:30-11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 13, at the Veterans' Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. Cost is \$5 for residents; \$6 for non-residents. Call 314-3400.


Kids Circle and Teen Talk The Wellness Community will host a program for families with school-age children when a parent has cancer from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 13, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. Each workshop has an activity-based group for children, a support group for teens, and a group for parents. This event is free. Call 933-0107.

Milk and Cookies with Santa Blackhawk Plaza will host Milk and Cookies with Santa at 3 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 13, at Blackhawk Plaza, 3480 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Santa's elves will sing carols and perform a puppet show. Kids will enjoy free holiday crafts and photos with Santa. Families are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item for donation. Call 736-2751.

Whistle Stop! Trains Funshop Blackhawk Museum will host a drop-in hands-on family funshop on Whistle Stop trains from 1-4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 30, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. This event is free with museum admission. Call 736-2277.

Lectures/Workshops

'Dialogues' Lecture Series Contra Costa Jewish Community Center will host a lecture series, "Dialogues," featuring guest speakers at 7:30 p.m., at Contra Costa JCC, 2071 Tice Valley



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Adopt-a-Family Christmas Outreach Program

Community Presbyterian Church in Danville is sponsoring a holiday outreach to inner city families in Oakland & San Francisco. We have families available for sponsorship this Christmas.

We make it easy: you can come by and select a family or we can e-mail / FAX one to you. You do the shopping, wrapping and package the gifts for delivery. We will make sure they get to your adopted family before Christmas.

The drop off deadline is Friday, December 12th
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For more information please call **Tim Ahlberg at 925.980.1769**
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Blvd., Walnut Creek. Jesse Choper will speak on Wednesday, Jan. 21; Michael S. Baker on Wednesday, Feb. 4; Richard Gonzales on Wednesday, March 18; Mark Yudof on Thursday, April 2; and Noah Alper on Thursday, May 21. Tickets go on sale Jan. 1; call 938-7800, ext. 0 or visit www.cjcc.org/dialogues.

Five Wishes The Wellness Community will host a workshop called "Five Wishes" from 2-4 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 2, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. This program helps you decide for yourself your personal, emotional and spiritual needs as well as your medical wishes should you become seriously ill. This event is free. Call 933-0107.

Mortgage Modification and Stress Reduction Learn how you could benefit from mortgage modification and how you can conquer stress, from 6-9 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 10, at the Radisson Hotel, 6680 Regional St., Dublin. This event is free. Registration is required; call 831-4831.

Radio As A Motivating Medium Mr. Doug Sherman, founder of Immaculate Heart Radio, will speak at the Catholics@Work breakfast at 7 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 9, at Crow Canyon Country Club, 711 Silver Lake Dr., Danville. Cost is \$20 for members; \$25 for non-members. Call 683-5263.

Literary Events

'Holiday Music and Books' Friends of the Danville Library presents the First Wednesday program about "Holiday Music and Books" at 1 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 3, at the Danville Library, Mt. Diablo Room, 400 Front St. The program will feature the San Ramon Valley High School singers performing music of the holidays and Michael Barnard of Rakestraw Books presenting books for holiday giving. This event is free. Refreshments will be provided; seating is limited. Call 837-4889.

Panel for California Writers Club Mt. Diablo Branch, California Writers Club, will meet at 11:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 13, at Zio Fraedo's, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Cost is \$20 for members; \$25 for non-members. Different books will be featured. Call 376-3631.

Miscellaneous

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

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

Red Cross Blood Drive The American Red Cross is holding a public blood drive, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 5, at the Grange Hall, 743 Diablo Rd., Danville. Call 1-800-GIVE-BLOOD or visit www.BeADonor.com.

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

'A Christmas Carol' Come enjoy the classic Dickens tale, "A Christmas Carol," on Dec. 5-7 and Dec. 12-14, at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 2 p.m. Sundays at the Front Row Theater, 17011 Bolinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are \$16 adults; \$13 children and seniors. Matinees are \$11 for all seats. Visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com or call 973-2787.

'Impressions of the Nutcracker' San Ramon Valley Dance Academy presents "Impressions of a Nutcracker" at 7:30 p.m., Friday-Saturday, Dec. 5-6; 3:30 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 6-7; and 1:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 7; at the Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Tickets are \$17 and \$20. Call 314-3400.

'Romeo and Juliet' Town of Danville will host the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival featuring "Romeo and Juliet" at 9:30 and 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 10, at the Village Theatre, 233 Front St., Danville. Tickets are \$5. Call 314-3400 or visit www.ci.danville.ca.us.

Political Notes

Inaugural Celebration Festival An inaugural celebration festival honoring President Elect Barack Obama will be from 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Ave., Pleasanton. Admission is \$10. Visit www.oaklandinaturalball.myevent.com.

Seniors

Danville Senior Citizens Club The club meets from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m., every Monday at the Danville Veterans' Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., for line dancing exercise, bingo, mah jong and more. New members are welcome. Membership is \$12 a year. Call Patricia Graber at 443-0268.

Monday Classes for Seniors Join the group for Chinese brush painting, calligraphy, Yuan Ji Dance, lectures, karaoke, line dancing and Yoga at the Alamo Women's Club, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m., every Monday, Golden Crane Senior Center, 1401 Danville Blvd., Alamo. A \$20 annual registration fee is required. For specific class times, visit www.goldencrane.org.

Prime Time Prime Time for seasoned citizens meets from 9 a.m.-1

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

Senior Holiday Luncheon Town of Danville will host the annual Senior Holiday Luncheon from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 10, at the Veterans' Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. Seniors will enjoy a catered lunch with entertainment. Pre-registration is required; call 314-3400 or visit www.ci.danville.ca.us.

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

Spiritual

Discovering the Hidden Ground of God San Damiano will host an Advent Thursday Evening Series from 7-9 p.m., Thursdays, at San Damiano, 710 Highland Dr., Danville. "Nature's Wisdom" with Rena Grant on Dec. 4; "Slowing Down" with Kathy Miranda on Dec. 11; and "Mysteries of God's Love" with Nancy Burchett on Dec. 18. Check in begins at 6:30 p.m. Call 837-9141, ext. 315.

Simbang Gabi (9-day Advent Mass) St. Joan of Arc's Filipino Community invites everyone to "Simbang Gabi" (Misa de Gallo) at St. Joan of Arc Parish, at 7 p.m., Dec. 16-23, and at 5 p.m., Dec. 24, at 2601 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. Fellowship and refreshments follow after Mass in the multipurpose room. This event is free. Visit www.sjasr.org or call 525-6821.

Simple Jewish Spiritual Practices A class presented by Rabbi Gusfield explores simple Jewish spiritual practices that help us find a deeper meaning in our lives every day and cope with challenges in an environment where those with or without a Jewish background feel comfortable, 7:30-9 p.m., every Wednesday, until Dec. 10, Beth Chaim Congregation, 1800 Holbrook Dr., Danville. Cost is \$50 for Beth Chaim members; \$75 for non-members. Visit www.bethchaim.com or call 736-7146.

Sports

Danville Little League Registration Player registration for Spring 2008 is open for all league ages. Registration may be completed online at www.danvillelittleleague.net. Click on the "Register Online" tab on the left and follow the step by step application process. Registration deadline is Wednesday, Dec. 31. E-mail webmaster@danvillelittleleague.com.

SRV GAL Registration Ongoing Player registration is now open for the 2009 spring fastpitch season. Visit www.srv-gal.org to register. Due to the economy, they have extended the \$50 early bird discount through the end of the year.

Tassajara Valley Little League Sign-ups Sign up for Tassajara Valley Little League baseball now through Wednesday, Dec. 31. Visit www.eteamz.com/tvll. For information, call 837-3716.

Support Groups

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

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

Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous Are you having trouble controlling the way you eat? There is a solution to weight and diet obses-

sion. This effective 12-step program has proven results. There are no dues, fees or weigh-ins. This group meets from 7-8:30 p.m., every Wednesday, at Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. For a complete listing of East Bay meetings, call 838-1837 or visit www.foodaddicts.org.

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

Hospice Offers Support Hospice of the East Bay (formerly Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa) offers a variety of support groups and workshops for people experiencing grief and loss after the death of a loved one. All groups and classes are offered for a fee and require pre-registration. Fees are waived for those who cannot afford them. Call 887-5678, ext. 1068.

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.

Volunteering

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.

Child Abuse Prevention Council The Contra Costa County Child Abuse Prevention Council needs volunteer speakers for the community education program. Volunteers must complete a mandatory 24-hour speaker's training course. For information, call 946-9961.

Contra Costa Academy of Fine Art The academy seeks new volunteers and members to help with tasks ranging from bookkeeping to recruiting instructors. The group meets noon-1 p.m., the second Friday of the month at Richard's Art & Craft Store, 225 Alamo Plaza, Alamo. Call Beth Batchelor at 837-5654.

Friends of Discovery Discovery Counseling Center has received more than \$5 million, thanks to Friends of Discovery. The organization is looking for volunteers who can commit eight hours per month in the Thrift Station, 486 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville. Call Le Anne at 837-7998.

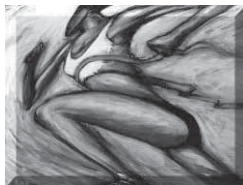
Help Your Senior Neighbors A lot of Danville seniors need rides to their appointments, stores or to special events. The Seniors' Club at Veterans Memorial Hall is looking for volunteers to provide rides on an "as-needed basis" on one or more Mondays a month. Call Jenn Overmoe at 314-3476 for more information.

Hospice of the East Bay Hospice of the East Bay (formerly Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa) is seeking volunteers to assist hospice patients and their caregivers. Opportunities include: volunteers who are fluent in Spanish; Patient Support Volunteers; Licensed Hair Stylists to offer hair cuts and styling; Certified Massage Therapists; Handymen to help with minor repairs and maintenance; Mobile notaries; and Bereavement Support Volunteers to provide support to family members after their loved one has died. To apply for free training, call 887-5678 and ask for the volunteer department, or e-mail peggyh@hospiceeastbay.org.

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The housing market: An analysis

Bank of America economists predict rebound in late 2009

by David Walden

In most years the holiday season is a season to give thanks for our riches and show our appreciation for others. This year, however, the markets are very concerned that consumers do not have the cash to show their appreciation. Poor retail sales in October could very well lead to a disastrous holiday season. In essence, this could be the peak of the recession.

The poor economy started spreading from the housing slump, and judging by tighter inventories, the housing market will have reached its bottom sometime this year. How long it will stay on the floor is anyone's guess, but Bank of America economists are predicting that the economy will start rebounding in late 2009. Just in time for the next holiday season.

While we are expecting Congress to come up with one more stimulus package and this package is likely to squarely aim at the housing crisis, we also expect that the government does not have much additional ammunition in reserve. The Federal Reserve Board has lowered short-term rates to record levels and we are in the process of running up a trillion dollar annual deficit to shore up the financial system. Now we must work through the hard times. Lower oil prices will help. Lower long-term rates would help even more. The

worse the holiday shopping season gets, the more likely rates could come down even further despite the fact that the government is borrowing so heavily to fund the deficit.

The Markets

Freddie Mac announced that for the week ending Nov. 13, 30-year fixed rates averaged 6.14 percent, down from 6.20 percent the week before. The average for 15-year fixed fell as well, to 5.81 percent. Adjustables were mixed with the average for one-year adjustables increasing to 5.33 percent and five-year adjustables falling to 5.98 percent. A year ago 30-year fixed rates were at 6.24 percent.

"Long-term rates fell slightly this week as signs the overall economy is weakening brought interest rates down market-wide," said Frank Nothaft, Freddie Mac vice president and chief economist. "In addition, the actions of the Fed in recent weeks to assist commercial paper markets appear to be thawing part of the credit freeze that has gripped capital markets in the U.S., giving banks some breathing room."

"This is the second week that rates have come down," he added. "The NAR reported that pending existing home sales fell 4.6 percent in September, below the market consensus; however, the index was 1.6 percent above that of the same period last year."

Mortgage Rates

Despite pressure on Congress to extend higher temporary limits, the government has announced that conforming limits for 2009 will stay at a base \$417,000 and move to \$625,500 in high cost areas, down from the current limit of \$729,750. FHA has released its limits for 2009 as well and these are set at 65 percent of conforming limits for low-cost areas (\$271,050) and 150 percent of conforming limits for high cost areas (\$625,500).

This means that prospective homeowners in high-cost areas should be acting before the end of the year to take advantage of these higher limits with lower rates.

First-time buyers

The 2008 NAR Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers reveals that the number of first-time buyers has risen as a percentage of the market share and that they plan to own their homes longer than buyers in the past.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, said a higher share of first-time buyers makes perfect sense, and it's a trend he expects to grow.

"First-time buyers are much more flexible in entering the market because they aren't concerned about selling an existing home," he said. "Given low home prices, plentiful

supply, and affordable rates, it's been an optimal time for entry-level buyers with a long-term view."

"Considering the temporary first-time buyer tax credit and improvements to the FHA loan program, we expect stronger entry-level activity as the flow of credit improves," he added. "That, in turn, should free more existing owners to make a trade in 2009."

The number of first-time buyers rose to 41 percent from 39 percent of transactions in last year's survey and 36 percent in 2006.

Housing inventories

Housing inventories in 29 major metropolitan areas declined 1.6 percent in October compared to levels in September, according to figures compiled by ZipRealty Inc. Typically home inventories rise in October compared with September, increasing an average of 1.1 percent, says research firm Zelman & Associates. The number of homes for sale in the 29 metro areas where ZipRealty does business was down 9.3 percent from a year earlier, the company says. This figure doesn't include foreclosed properties not included in the multiple-listing services.

David Walden is a Certified Mortgage Planning Specialist. He can be reached at david@WealthByStrategy.com

SALES AT A GLANCE

This week's data represents homes sold during October 2008

Alamo	Danville	Walnut Creek
Total sales reported: 2	Total sales reported: 16	Total sales reported: 13
Lowest sale reported: \$1,349,500	Lowest sale reported: \$429,000	Lowest sale reported: \$285,000
Highest sale reported: \$2,100,000	Highest sale reported: \$1,295,000	Highest sale reported: \$880,000
Average sales reported: \$1,724,750	Average sales reported: \$795,813	Average sales reported: \$570,885

HOME SALES

Source: California REsource

This week's data represents homes sold during October 2008

Alamo

414 Lagacy Drive West Coast Home Builders to J. & L. Huckestein for \$2,100,000
34 Oak Trail Court Poustinchian Trust to K. & S. Kim for \$1,349,500

Danville

248 Abigail Circle Greenpoint Mortgage to T. & K. White for \$695,000
14 Birchwood Place D. Lorenz to D. & T. Stephens for \$975,000
278 Channi Loop Shapell Industries to A. Preclaro for \$501,500
3836 Cottonwood Drive D. & J. Forrest to E. & M. Kan for \$1,180,000
170 Cottonwood Lane J. & C. Devlin to B. & J. Chan for \$888,000
135 Cottonwood Place Sonne Trust to P. Wisniewski for \$1,060,000
421 Garden Creek Place B. George to A. Janbakhshzadeh for \$435,000

100 Glasgow Circle M. Levitsky to Y. Liu for \$700,000
650 Glasgow Circle Hugill Trust to Lew Trust for \$825,000
39 Marques Court J. London to L. Bayman for \$449,000
29 Meadow View Court Fleiss Trust to C. & K. Harrison for \$1,100,000
7 Rainbow Circle Lew Trust to D. Lynch for \$630,000
123 Rubicon Circle D. Lynch to D. Carlo for \$429,000
7 Stirling Drive S. & N. Sharma to C. & D. Bliss for \$1,295,000
106 Stowbridge Court JP Morgan to H. Graham for \$820,500
3863 Welshland Street Shapell Industries to D. & J. Galeazzi for \$750,000

Walnut Creek

2365 Buena Vista Avenue P. Edgmon to G. Wang for \$420,000
1583 Candelero Drive M. Glezer to S. Deo for \$452,000
31 De Laurenti Court Beamish Trust to V. Venkatesen for \$880,000
7 Harold Court CWALT Inc. to Dyson Trust for \$525,000
5920 Horsemans Canyon Drive #4C Smith Trust to Dorough Trust for \$420,000
1212 Juanita Drive J. Lindemuth to C. & L. Vignoles for \$700,000
291 Kinross Drive Accredited Home Lenders to H. & H. Makhlof for \$470,000
2204 Lomond Lane Alexander Trust to L. Smith for \$850,000
2550 Oak Road #315 Washington Mutual Bank to I. Kukanego for \$285,000
2306 Parish Drive GMAC Mortgage to E. & A. Howard for \$590,000
1307 Rudgear Road Bayman Trust to A. Anoufrieu for \$749,000
2648 San Carlos Drive Moloney Trust to T. & A. McElroy for \$661,500
847 Terra California Drive #4 Dellisola Trust to D. & C. Trousse for \$419,000

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He's here because we're here.

Jerry Bishop, former cardiac bypass surgery patient

One-time teacher, full-time grandpa and part-time Santa, Jerry Bishop is back sorting out who's been naughty or nice. The heart surgeons, cardiologists and cardiac care team at San Ramon Regional Medical Center have put a glow back in Santa's cheeks.

As always, from everyone here at your hospital, we wish you a joyous holiday season and a very healthy New Year.



SAN RAMON
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

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This testimonial reflects results achieved by this patient. As each case is different and must be independently evaluated and managed, actual results will vary.