Responding to downturn

Danville tackles declining revenues ➤ **page 5**

Buchanan survives budget battle

Assemblywoman says they 'paid ransom'

➤ **page 5**

Vol. IV, Number 43 • February 27, 2009 www.DanvilleWeekly.com

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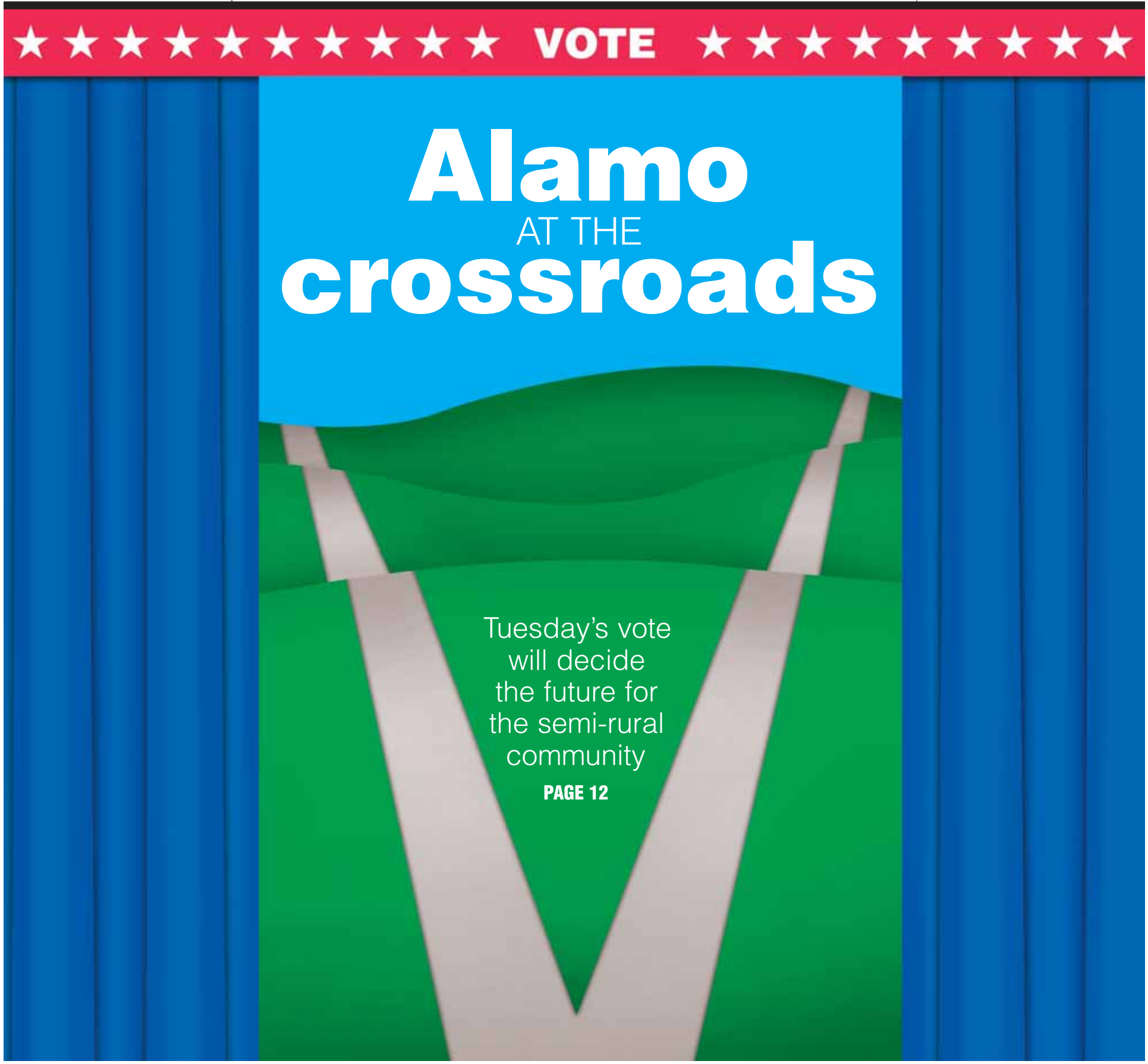
Journaling for caregivers

New book starts people writing to keep sane

➤ **page 17**



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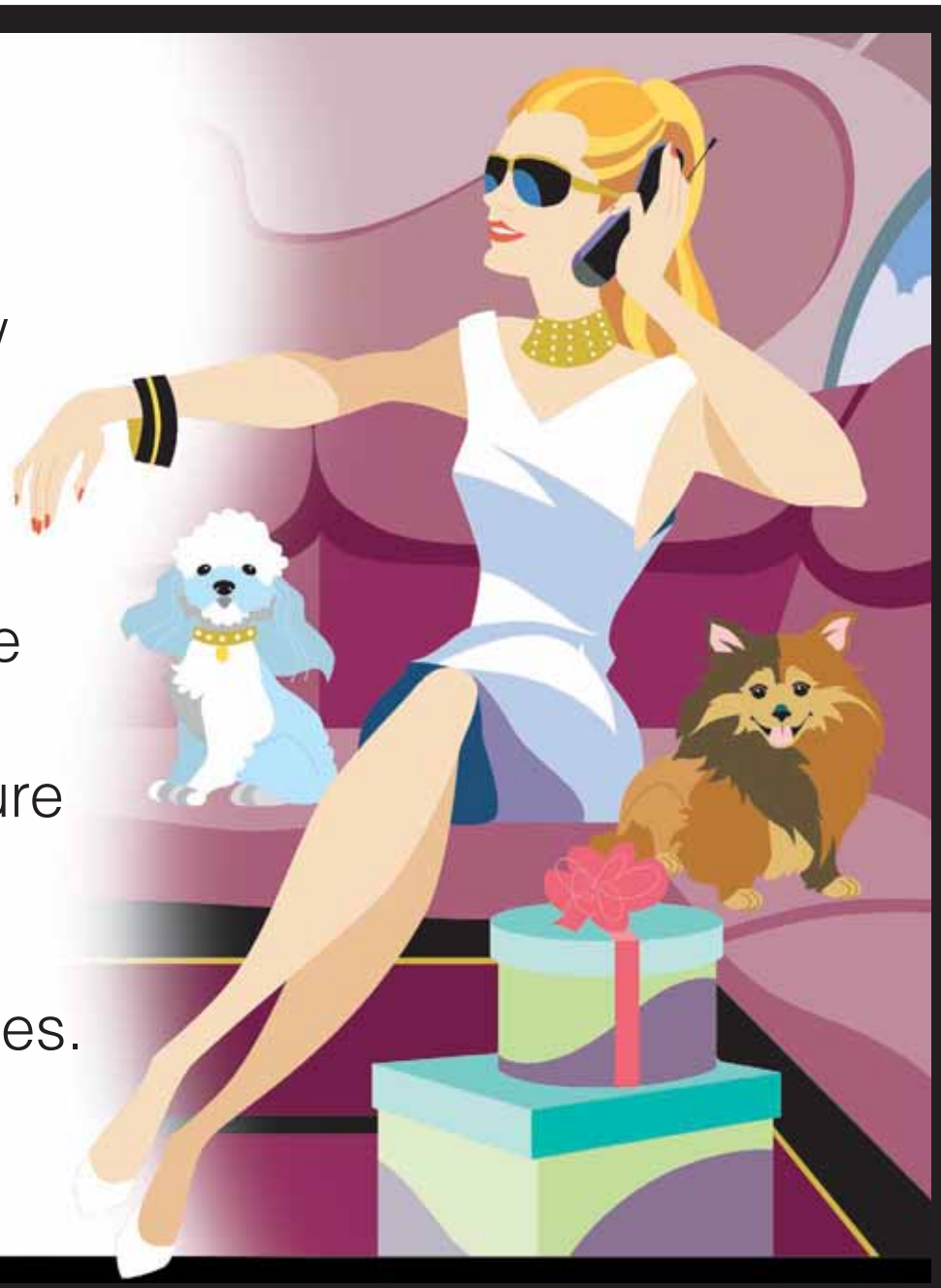

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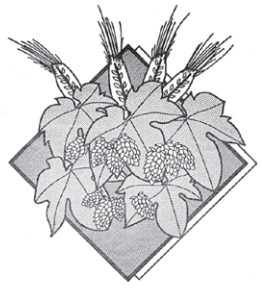

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Streetwise

ASKED AT THE DANVILLE LIBRARY

Q: How effective will the new Economic Recovery Act be?

Somewhat, but not very effective. It has a lot of good things but probably not enough help to quickly put spending money in the hands of those who most need it. It also does not spend enough on our failing infrastructure.

Joel Goldman

Alamo resident

The bill will be effective for specific jobs in specific industries. I think it's patching a small crack on a huge fault line. I don't think it will be effective for a lot of us. Most of us are experiencing a drop in the value of our home, increase in our healthcare and our expenses. It will take a few years of controlled corporate and government spending until we see recovery for the average American.

Sara Jane Morris

homemaker

No one can predict the outcome of this stimulus package. However, I believe in my heart that President Obama is trying really hard, and we just have to hope for the best.

Carmen Pack

Troy and Alana Pack Foundation

It depends on the specifics of the plan. The money needs to be spent wisely, not to be wasted on industries or business plans that are doomed to fail but to be spent on growth industries that can create future American jobs.

Kwong Tan

physician

I think it will have a positive impact. As an educator I see school districts across the country looking to cut back, and they still will need to, but not as wide and deep as a result of this package. The same is true in other areas like healthcare and water resources. In the long run, it will probably cause the economy to recover slowly, but we need the shot in the arm now.

Tom Fendyan

educator

COMPILED BY STAN WHARTON

ABOUT THE COVER

The 50 percent of Alamo residents who did not already vote by mail will head to the voting booths Tuesday, March 3, to decide whether to incorporate the community and to vote for the five people to represent them on the new Town Council if Measure A passes. Cover design by Rick Nobles.

Vol. IV, Number 43

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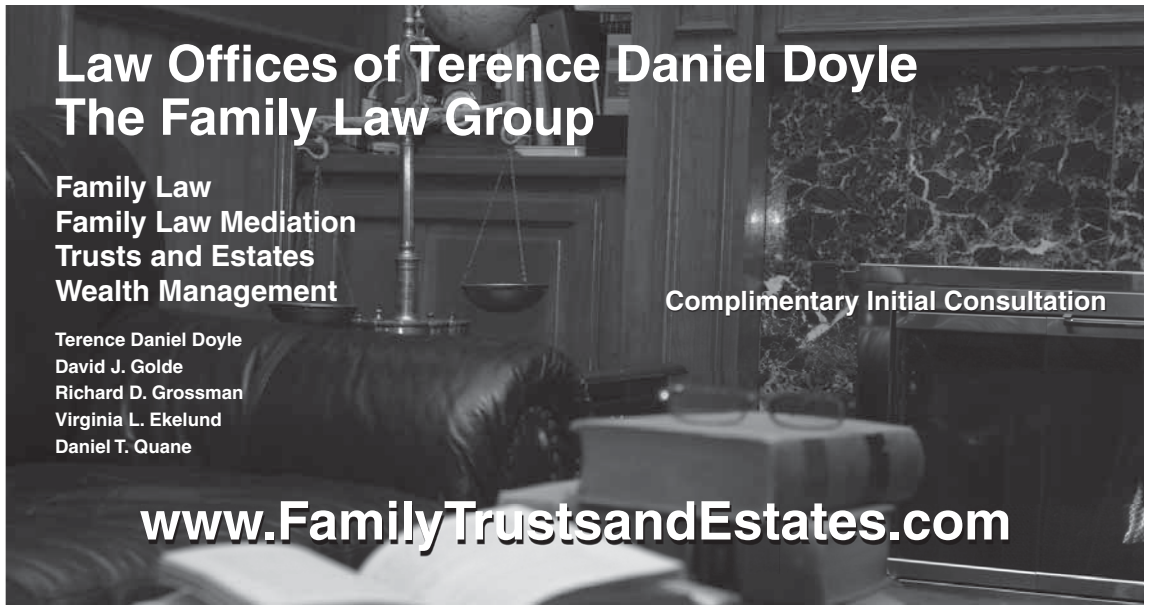

2 FREE Community Seminars

1 INFERTILITY
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Thursday, March 5, 2009 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Many couples experience difficulty conceiving a child. About 85 to 90 percent of women will get pregnant during a year of unprotected sex. However, an estimated six million Americans struggle to get pregnant and carry a baby. There are many reasons for infertility—female and male physiological issues, such as blocked fallopian tubes and the low sperm counts. Learn what you can do to help improve your chances of conceiving a healthy baby. Aimee Eyvazzadeh, M.D., will provide information on medical and surgical treatments that may improve fertility. Come learn about the options available. Partners are welcome to attend.

2 MENOPAUSE
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Thursday, March 12, 2008 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.

With the baby boomers reaching their middle years, there are probably more women experiencing menopause than any generation. Perhaps you have read articles about treating uncomfortable symptoms such as hot flashes, sleep disturbances and changes in mood. You may have many questions, including: It is safe to take hormone replacement therapy? Do herbal products work? How can I protect my bones and my heart? Aimee Eyvazzadeh, M.D., will discuss the latest research and answer your questions.

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Aimee Eyvazzadeh, M.D.
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NEWS DIGEST

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We had just gotten the information on the Great Bunny Giveaway."

—Mary Ann Corbett, whose son and friends opened a hot chocolate stand to raise money to buy chocolate bunnies for foster children. See story, page 6.

Mayor's Morning Friday

Danville Mayor Newell Arnerich is hosting his monthly get-together at 7:30 a.m., Friday, March 6. Arnerich said a special guest will be Steve Enoch, superintendent of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.

The informal Mayor's Mornings are held each month as a chance for residents to become informed on what is new in town and to ask questions. A light breakfast is served. This month's event will take place at Father Nature's on East Prospect Avenue.

$19,634 to Rotary

George and Darlene Gayler of Gayler Construction in Danville spearheaded a Community Solar Program, which led to discounted solar pricing for residents and 903.4 kilowatts being removed from the grid. It also generated $19,634 in referral fees from SolarCity, the company who did the solar installation. The Gaylers designated this money to go to Rotary International—earmarked for San Ramon Valley Unified School District and Rotary's international programs for clean water and child vaccinations.

The Gaylers started the community solar program as a way of giving back to the community they live and work in, hoping to positively affect both the environment and people's lives.

"This program was doubling rewarding," said Darlene Gayler. "Not only were we able to take a lot of energy off the grid, but we are also able to make a significant donation to causes we strongly support."

The Gaylers were nominated for the Danville Chamber's Business Person of the Year, acknowledging the company's community service philosophy.

Town of Danville looking for committee members

The Danville Town Council is recruiting for several volunteer positions, including to fill vacancies on the Parks and Leisure Services Commission, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority Citizens Advisory Committee, the County Connection Citizens' Advisory Committee and the Contra Costa County Library Commission.

Volunteers for these positions must be Danville residents. More information and applications are available on the town's Web site at www.ci.danville.ca.us. Or contact City Clerk Marie Sunseri at 314-3401. Interviews will be conducted by the Town Council and appointments made at a subsequent council meeting.

American Red Cross offering free CPR training

The American Red Cross is offering free CPR training at 10 locations throughout the Bay Area on Saturday, March 14. Register today and learn lifesaving skills that will better prepare you and your family for emergencies.

For a detailed list of training sites and to preregister, visit RedCrossCPRSaturday.org. Registration is also available by phone at (888) 686-3600.

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Newsfront

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GEOFF GILLETTE

Going out in style

Former San Ramon Valley Union High School Principal and District Superintendent Roger Schulte shows Danville Historian Beverly Lane his photo from the high school's 1967 annual at a party held Tuesday night at SRVHS to bid adieu to the school's small gymnasium. The facility is slated to be torn down, and an auxiliary gym has been built to handle the classes normally held there. At the farewell party, attendees viewed exhibits from the gym's 70-year history, toured the new auxiliary gym and heard a performance by the SRVHS Jazz Ensemble.

Danville faces declining revenues

Staff to work on ways of reducing costs

by Geoff Gillette

The economic spiral affecting the county, state and federal governments is also being felt in Danville, as revenue numbers in the town are falling below projected levels.

At their Feb. 17 meeting and again at their annual workshop Monday, members of the Town Council discussed the decline in revenues and how the town will respond to the dwindling funds.

Town Manager Joe Calabrigo presented the report, saying that they are seeing across the board decreases in several areas resulting in a shortfall of $399,028 in general fund revenues from where they expected to be at the mid-year point. The decreases affect nearly every revenue source, from a flattening of property tax money to a 20 percent drop in development revenues.

Calabrigo said the shortage is not a great cause for concern because of the way the town does business.

"Our town is doing very well because we budget conservatively," he explained. "Our council uses a rather unique system for budgeting."

The Town of Danville puts revenue into two separate funds. The Operating Fund is used for the day-to-day running of the town. The Capital Fund is utilized for infrastructure improvements, projects and facilities work.

"At the start of the year we look at how much goes into Operating and how much goes into Capital," Calabrigo said. "At the end of the year, if there is money left over

➤ Continued on page **8**

Buchanan talks budget

Freshman assemblywoman disappointed in forced compromises

by Geoff Gillette

Last week legislative aides in Sacramento passed out toothbrushes to the members of the Senate and the Assembly in preparation for the budget battles to come. They obviously needed them as lawmakers stayed in session until early Thursday morning hammering out the final compromises to allow passage of the state's budget.

Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan (D., Alamo), weary from the long and arduous budget process, said Thursday she was pleased that they were able to reach an agreement.

"I appreciate the efforts of the Democratic and Republican leaders to reach a bi-partisan solution to California's unprecedented budget crisis," she said. "The steps we took today have prevented the eighth largest economy in the world from going bankrupt."

The spending package passed by the Senate and Assembly will include $15 billion in spending cuts, $11.4 billion in new borrowing, and $12.8 billion in temporary tax increases. In addition it will create a $1 billion reserve fund.

As part of the state's attempt to trim back expenditures, members of the Assembly have chosen to reduce their budget by 10 percent. The cost savings has been directed to the Employment Development Department.

Joan Buchanan

Buchanan herself took it a step further, asking the State Controller's Office to reduce her salary by another 10 percent as well.

"I've always believed that people in leadership positions should lead by example. If we're willing to cut funds to programs around the state we should be willing to cut our own funding, too," she explained.

Schools are expected to take a sizable hit from the cuts in the budget as will health care institutions and entitlement programs. Buchanan, a former school board member, estimated that the San Ramon Valley Unified School District could see a decrease of $400-$450 per student.

"If there's any light at the end of the tunnel," she stated, "it is that the education cuts could have been a lot worse. I'm proud we were able to fight for the education cuts to be paid back in future years."

Partisan disagreements were largely to blame for the long delay in passing the budget, a factor which nearly caused the furloughing of 20,000 employees and a multi-million-dollar expenditure in temporarily mothballing and then restarting a number of costly state projects.

The Democrats finally gained enough ground to pass the budget when Sen. Abel Maldonado (R., Santa Maria) agreed to cast his vote in favor. Buchanan had a no-nonsense explanation for how they won over Maldonado.

"We agreed to pay the ransom," she stated. "He wanted several things and we agreed to them."

Some of the concessions forced from the Democrats included:

- Non-partisan, open primaries
- Legislators will receive no salary increases while the state is in a recession.

This was Buchanan's first budget session as a freshman legislator and while she didn't come in wearing rose-colored glasses, she was surprised by the behavior she saw at the capital.

Buchanan said she was surprised at the level of ransom they had to pay at the end in order to get the budget passed.

"It was very disappointing. If all 120 legislators did that we'd never have a budget," she said. ■

Scherer murder suspect seized

Son accused of killing parents now in Santa Rita Jail

by Janet Pelletier

The son of a couple brutally killed in their Castlewood home last March waived extradition from Las Vegas late Tuesday night and was brought to Santa Rita Jail. Ernest Scherer III, 30, arrived by plane at midnight, escorted by authorities. He was taken for questioning by Alameda County Sheriff's investigators to San Leandro, Sgt. J.D. Nelson confirmed just prior to his arrival.

Scherer III was arrested in Las Vegas on Monday in connection with the brutal murders of Ernie Scherer Jr., 60, and his wife, Charlene Abendroth, 57. Scherer Jr., an active Republican fundraiser, was a former member of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District board, where he was recalled by voters.

Scherer III was charged Tuesday with two counts of murder and two special circumstances clauses that could lead to the death penalty for the murders of his parents, according to Alameda County District Attorney Tom Orloff. Detectives believe the couple had been dead inside their Castlewood Country Club home for about a week before they were found by a club employee acting on a request by the couple's daughter.

Orloff said the special circumstances clauses filed against Scherer III are multiple murder and murder for financial gain. He will be arraigned in the Wiley Manuel Courthouse in Oakland, Orloff said.

Scherer Jr. dabbled in playing poker for small amounts of money but made his living in real estate. The son gambled on a more professional level, and had total earnings of more than $300,000, according to multiple gambling Web sites. Alameda County Sheriff's investigator Scott Dudek said the son was known to have debts.

Ernest Scherer III

As funeral services were held for the couple at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Pleasanton, where Abendroth was a devoted member, suspicion clouded around the son. The same day as the services, investigators served a search warrant on the son's home in Orange County. They also focused on a security video showing a red Chevy Camaro seen in the neighborhood at the time of the killings.

—Bay City News contributed to this report.

The chocolate bunny trail

Montair entrepreneurs raise money for foster children

by Geoff Gillette

In the blazing hot days of a Danville summer, many street corners are dotted with young residents raising extra cash by opening a lemonade stand.

But when winter comes around and the skies turn gray, the shrewd marketer brings out a different product. Four students from Montair Elementary School last week opened a hot cocoa stand near the Iron Horse Trail entrance off West Prospect Avenue.

What sets second-grader Nathan Garcia and first-graders Jake Romero, Daniel Corbett and Matthew Murdough apart is the reason they held the cocoa stand. Daniel's mother, Mary Ann Corbett, said the money raised by the boys will go to the Foster A Dream charity and its Great Bunny Giveaway.

"When my son and his friends wanted to do a hot cocoa stand I said that I would support it but only if they used a portion of the proceeds for charity," she explained, adding, "We had just gotten the information on the Great Bunny Giveaway and so we decided on this charity."

Foster A Dream, based in Benicia, is a nonprofit group dedicated to providing programs and resources for Bay Area foster children. Corbett said it provides a pillow, blanket and stuffed animal for children so that they have some comfort and consistency when moved from home to home. The Chocolate Bunny Giveaway is just one of several holiday giveaways they do.

Corbett said once the boys decided to have the sale they dove right in. "The boys got very serious about this project and made notes on who would bring whipped cream, marshmallows, etc. They passed out fliers at school," she said.

PHOTOS BY MARY ANN CORBETT

Nathan Garcia, Jake Romero, Daniel Corbett and Matthew Murdough tell hot chocolate near the Iron Horse Trail to raise money to buy chocolate Easter bunnies for foster children.

The boys were out along the trail last week for two hours selling hot cocoa and baked goods for 50 cents each. Corbett said that they had a goal of raising $50, in order to provide Foster A Dream with 25 bunnies. She said they were very excited when they counted up their proceeds and discovered they had raised enough money to buy 46 of the solid chocolate bunnies. ■

First-grader Daniel Corbett flags down potential customers along the Iron Horse Trail.

Incorporation 101

Proponents get a glimpse of what lies ahead

by Geoff Gillette

Members of the Alamo pro-incorporation movement got a chance to hear the firsthand experiences of people who had recently gone through the incorporation process and the clear message was, "You're not alone."

Wildomar Mayor Pro-tem Bridgette Moore spoke to around 40 people Monday at Ristorante Forli's, including 11 of the 15 residents running for Town Council, about the perils and pitfalls of incorporation. "We had some bumps along the road," she told the crowd. "We got through it. You will get through it, too."

Wildomar incorporated in 2008 after a nearly 10-year long effort. The vote taken in February of last year was 62 percent Yes, to 38 percent No.

Some of the "bumps" were having to fight off an annexation effort by nearby Murrieta, and losing more than 200 acres of their town in an annexation bid by Lake Elsinore. Another issue that threatened their ability to get on the ballot was a member of the incorporation movement who switched sides on the day of the LAFCO vote and paid several thousand dollars to have a review done of the proposed town's finances.

Moore said that same resident, only five days after Wildomar was incorporated, paid $25,000 to sue the town. She said that in any event of this nature there are going to be people on both sides and things will often become heated.

One resident asked Moore about sign stealing, referring to the recent spate of Yes on A signs that have gone missing or been torn down.

"Oh yes, we had signs stolen too. I think that happens in any election," Moore said. "If you have the resources, keep putting them back up."

City Manager John Danielson focused more on the nuts and bolts of how to run the newly formed city. He said for the elected council members there is going to be a sense of urgency, a feeling that they need to do something as soon as the votes are counted. He advised them not to give in to that feeling.

> "You're going to need to figure out how to untie the financial knots with the county. It's kind of like a divorce."
>
> *—John Danielson, city manager of newly incorporated Wildomar*

"You don't have to rush into anything. Take a breath. Don't make fast decisions, think it through and make good decisions."

Danielson said that in the first blush of a new city he recommends working as a contract entity, so that there are fewer financial demands or obligations. This will give the newly incorporated town time to get a handle on where revenues are and what residents are looking for in regards to services.

"That's when you'll find out what your community is made of," he stated.

He said that one of the biggest things the Town Council will have to do in the first six months is figure out how best to separate from the county. "You're going to need to figure out how to untie the financial knots with the county. It's kind of like a divorce."

Another piece of advice was to

➤ Continued on page 8

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Beauty in our back yard

Ace nature photographer Joe Christianson went hiking in Las Trampas right after the heavy rains and shared this gorgeous photo of the waterfall off Madrone Trail near Camille Avenue in Alamo. How fitting since the East Bay Regional Park District, which is responsible for the 5,342-acre Las Trampas Regional Wilderness and its expanded trails, is celebrating its 75th anniversary.

The district is offering its self-guided hiking program for free again this years, thanks to a partnership with Kaiser Permanente. The program includes detailed descriptions, including driving directions, to 20 of its most popular hiking, biking and equestrian trails, plus a chance to register for a free T-shirt and commemorative pin. Go to www.ebparks.org.

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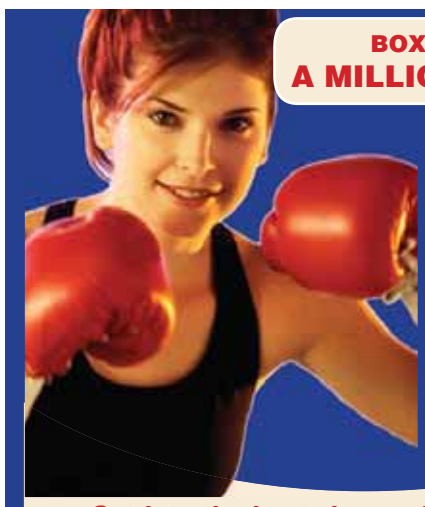

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Incorporation

➤ Continued from page **6**

always negotiate. He said that if a town has been receiving services from the county, they can contract with the county. And they should negotiate, not just take the first offer from the county.

Council candidate Karl Niyati pointed to the divisive nature of the issue and the distance that has formed between the two groups, and asked how a newly elected council can heal that rift.

Danielson said the key is to include everyone, no matter where they stood on the issue of incorporation. "They are going to come to the meetings and they are going to want to have their say. And meeting after meeting you let them talk. And then do the good job," he explained. He said that in some cases, as time passes you will find some of those same people seeing what is happening in the town and wanting to be a part of it.

No opponents of incorporation attended the luncheon. However, plans are under way for the opposition group to meet in Alamo Plaza at 10 a.m. Saturday and then begin canvassing the neighborhoods in one final push to defeat the incorporation issue set for a vote on Tuesday. ■

Prisoner release concerns chief

State budget plan could allow thousands of prisoners out on the street early

by Geoff Gillette

One of the ways California Gov. Schwarzenegger proposed closing a $42 billion budget shortfall in the state is by reducing spending for corrections and parole supervision services by 8.7 percent.

The reductions would mean that the state's parole population would be cut by more than 60,000 by June 30, 2010, as well as allowing for the early release of non-violent offenders for good behavior and for time served in county jail while awaiting court hearings and transfer to state facilities.

Danville Police Chief Chris Wenzel expressed his concerns to the Town Council at its Feb. 17 meeting.

"Sixty-thousand scares me," he said, "and how it's going to affect Danville. We're not sure how that's going to affect us."

Wenzel reassured the council that the plan would not allow for the release of offenders who have been put in jail for violent crimes.

"Most of the people getting out will be for property crimes or drug offenses," he explained.

He said that he isn't sure whether these cuts will affect Danville or Contra Costa County, but he said his office will be stepping up its efforts to educate residents about keeping their homes and cars locked up.

"We're going to continue to be more proactive. We'll keep providing information to the public on crime and how not to be a victim," he explained.

In many of the burglary cases the Police Department handled in 2008, residents had left their homes and vehicles unlocked, or had left the car with purses, laptops and other valuables sitting out in open view on the seat.

Wenzel was asked about whether there has been an increase in property crimes since the start of the year. He said that there had been an increase seen in January, but he was not certain what the cause could be.

He said his office is continuing to look at the numbers and working out how best to respond.

"The main thing," he said, "is remind people to lock up when they leave and not to leave their valuables sitting out in the open." ■

Music as art

Thursday nights have been buzzing with music and activity at the Pioneer Art Gallery on Hartz Avenue for more than a year now as local musicians have congregated for a weekly music "jam" session. "We get an incredible mix of musicians, artists and passers-by from all over the Bay Area who stop in to enjoy the performances," said Stephen Sanfilippo, drummer and creator of the Thursday night jams. Each week up to 15 musicians show off their talents, each with the chance to pull off an epic solo or two. The music tends to be upbeat rock 'n' roll that is easy to follow along and play to. The Pioneer Art Gallery is losing its downstairs digs March 15, but the beat may go on.

PHILIP "STARMAN" HELLSTEN

Revenues

➤ Continued from page **5**

in the Operating Fund it gets transferred over to the Capital Fund."

"The plan in Danville has never been to aggressively forecast and then spend every dollar," he added.

In order to deal with the expected shortfall, the Town Council has directed staff to work on reducing general fund operating expenditures below 2008-09 levels; reduce general fund transfers to the capital improvement fund for the current fiscal year; and use contingency or reserve funds set aside by the council to offset any shortfalls.

Calabrigo said that this year he does not expect to need the reserve funds, as they will be closely examining expenditures to see where they can trim back.

Next year could be another story.

"As we look ahead we're looking at revenues being $2.2 million less than when we did the forecast last year," he stated.

Mayor Newell Arnerich said he is confident that Danville will weather the economic storm and he is continuing to push for residents to work with local businesses and services to help keep the downtown viable.

In addition, he said the town is taking steps to help out as well. Staff members have been at work over the past several weeks on a Danville Economic Stimulus Package that he said he hopes will provide some needed assistance.

No details are available currently regarding the stimulus effort and how it will work. Arnerich and the Town Council will unveil the plan at their March 3 meeting, which will begin at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Town Meeting Hall, 201 Front St. ■

TAKE US ALONG

Weekly reaches new heights

The Byron family—Mark, Kristen, Reid and Michele—are having fun at 8,516 feet in the San Jacinto mountains after riding the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. They rode to the top of the San Jacinto Mountains National Monument to take their picture with the Danville Weekly.

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Perspective

EDITORIALS • LETTERS • OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES IN OUR COMMUNITY

EDITORIAL • THE OPINION OF THE WEEKLY

Let Alamo run itself

Alamo, with a population of 16,700, offers sophisticated semi-rural living. Convenient to nearby cities and jobs, this desirable community has been built out to Las Trampas Wilderness and Walnut Creek on the west and north, and to dedicated open space on the east. The newest homes are sprouting on hillsides near I-680, and modern multi-storied mansions are replacing ranch houses on Alamo's country lanes.

Now residents are embroiled in an argument over the best government to keep Alamo the way it is, and to lead it through any inevitable changes in the future. This is what will be decided by the vote on Measure A. The anti-incorporation side focuses on whether Alamo is better off financially under the county; it also worries that an incorporated Alamo's fate would be in the hands of the five people elected to serve on the Town Council, who might prove unresponsive to the wishes of the majority.

Regarding the financial question, governance by Contra Costa County is not free. The county charges Alamo for the services it provides including manning its advisory committee meetings—both the time spent at the meetings and mileage for county employees to get to Alamo from Martinez. Members on the advisory committees are volunteers, but county personnel are not. An example of money not well spent is the recent no-right-turn-on-red sign placed on northbound Danville Boulevard at Stone Valley Road. Yes, the county responded when residents complained the sign did more harm than good but Alamo had to absorb the cost of making the sign, installing the sign and removing the sign.

Perhaps the Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis underestimated the cost for the town of Alamo, but it will be up to the first council members to plan the town according to its income. The county is in bad financial shape but Alamo's tax base is strong and it will be able to do things more cheaply than the county, which has a growing burden of employee retirement benefits. Alamo leaders can learn from the lessons of other small newly incorporated towns, keep it solvent, and write its General Plan accordingly.

To address the second point: The town of Alamo governance would not rest solely with the first five people elected to the council. The town would also have people on commissions, plus the residents—the voters—who could come to meetings and workshops and keep up a dialog on every issue. Its public meetings will inevitably attract watchdogs if the people arguing on both sides of the election stay involved. Advisory committees would not have to be disbanded, and Alamo Improvement Association has been looking out for Alamo's best interests since 1955. The smaller the democracy, the better it is; Alamo is a good size for this.

When Gandhi was fighting for India's independence from the British, Lord Mountbatten told him, "If we just leave, there will be chaos."

Gandhi replied, "Yes, but it will be our chaos."

We do not expect chaos but it is time for Alamo to govern itself as it works to resolve traffic issues, neighborhood planning and redevelopment, and policing. Alamo has the brainpower and the financial resources to run itself—and to run itself well.

First council members

Alamo has a fine field of qualified candidates running for its first Town Council. Fifteen are still in the race, although 16 will be on the ballot, and the five receiving the most votes will serve. After much deliberation, the Danville Weekly recommends the following candidates: Bob Connelly, Vicki Koc, Randy Nahas, Karen McPherson and Steve Mick.

There will be a steep learning curve in the first few years to transition from county rule to the Town of Alamo as well as hard work to write the General Plan and hire key administrators. The change will go more smoothly with people in office who understand Alamo and the workings of Contra Costa County, and these five candidates bring this background as well as considerable other talents to the table.

TO THE EDITOR

Voting Yes and No

Dear Editor:

I have appreciated reading both pro and con opinions on Measure A. I've noticed, however, many of the same points being made every week and wanted to propose something different.

I enjoy my neighbors and the strong sense of community in Alamo. With the natural differences of opinion and understandable emotional intensity that surrounds the idea of incorporation—isn't it likely that should we incorporate, we will continue to duke it out with one another on all the issues we would then have local control over?

Perhaps to some this concern seems naive or quaint—but I think there is a successful—and peaceable—way we can keep on keeping on. While this is only a component of the details I've considered, I vote Yes for my neighbors and community, and No on incorporation.

Diane Stevenson, Alamo

No plans for four lanes

Dear Editor:

A Feb. 7 opinion by an Alamo Incorporation advocate contained a serious misrepresentation. In it, he states that by incorporation, "We will prevent the county's proposed expansion of Danville Boulevard to four lanes to offload I-680—but only if we are an incorporated Town." This has also been erroneously stated on numerous occasions by the Alamo Improvement Association (AIA).

I wish to assure all Alamo residents, and those of neighboring communities, that the county has no plan to widen Danville Boulevard to four lanes beyond the existing Stone Valley Road interchange. The county's guiding planning document, the County General Plan, reflects a circulation element of Danville Boulevard as a two lane roadway. The county could not widen this roadway to four lanes under this plan.

It is an exciting time for Alamo residents, as their destiny lies in their own hands. No matter which vote you make, for or against incorporation, it is most valuable for that vote to be an educated vote.

Mary Nejedly Piepho, Contra Costa Supervisor, District III

Unincorporated hit hardest

Dear Editor:

We are two former members of the Contra Costa Grand Jury. One of the Grand Jury's mandates is to investigate county government. For those of you who feel that being part of the county rather than having local control is preferable, we say it is not. We know the county. The county tries its best to be responsive, but with such a large entity it often does what is expedient. With the present financial crisis and most likely a freeze on hiring, fewer people will be doing more of the work. Unincorporated areas will be hit the hardest. They will lose services and the continuity of the personnel which will limit their ability to use their funds. Incorporated areas will fare better.

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GUEST OPINIONS

Vote Yes on Measure A

by David Dolter

When we started the Alamo Incorporation Movement, we did it to preserve Alamo with its large lots, horses, 4-H programs and small town ambiance. We committed ourselves to double- and triple-checking every fact that we published. We assumed Alamo citizens would debate incorporation based upon facts and their love for the community. How wrong we were! We said in the voters' pamphlet rebuttal to the opponents' ballot argument that every statement they made was untrue. They have continued to lie throughout the campaign. Recent opposition fliers, mailers and a so-called "report" all repeat a series of falsehoods about Alamo incorporation that go beyond incompetent research and ignorance to bare-faced lies.

These are not matters of opinion but documented facts. For example, opponents claim that there are no funds for road maintenance in the fiscal study. Nonsense—the funds are clearly documented at $750,000/year for our 56 miles of public roads and clearly sufficient to meet our maintenance needs. They claim the new town could be in deficit at the end of the second year. Also nonsense—there is no set of assumptions that could cause this since the County provides services for the first year, and Alamo will receive about $5 million in fund transfers from the County in the second year. They claim there are no funds for parks and recreation programs—more nonsense. The County will transfer $3 million in accumulated park funds on top of the $800,000 per year that Alamo will receive in R-7A tax revenues.

The opponents misrepresent Vehicle License Fee revenues. Since 2004, newly incorporated cities are paid before all other cities under a per capita formula with a floor. Our Vehicle License Fee revenue is stable and unaffected by low auto sales.

We could go on—but we're sure you get the point. Our opponents will say anything, no matter how false, to defeat Alamo incorporation.

What makes this worse is that Linda Best and Cecily Barclay, who wrote a recent article repeating these lies, are sophisticated community members. Best is a long-time political consultant who has had many developers as clients. Barclay is a land-use attorney married to the president of Centex Homes West. They have to know their arguments are fundamentally untrue. You can read a detailed item by item rebuttal of their false statements on our Web site at www.alamoinc.org.

We believe that incorporating Alamo gives us control over our own future. It takes advantage of Alamo's stable property tax base: Alamo's assessed values increased 5 percent in 2008 and mean home prices rose 2 percent in Q4 2008 while the County's fell almost 50 percent. The Town of Alamo will be managed for all Alamo citizens. Objective observers, including the local press, all of whose publications endorse a Yes vote on incorporation, agree that there are sufficient revenues to maintain and even improve Alamo services. The County is broke—let's manage our own future and not succumb to an electoral strategy based upon lies.

David Dolter is a former City Manager, former VP Centex Homes, and director of Alamo Incorporation Movement

Vote No on Measure A

by R. Jean Taylor

Proponents of Alamo Incorporation Movement (AIM) have failed to demonstrate that formation and operation of a contract-city, in tandem with County Board of Supervisors, is in the best interest of 16,700 citizens of Alamo. AIM has modeled its proposed government on surrounding incorporated cities, which, over time, have grown into little fiefdoms of bureaucratic control over their citizens.

Over the past several years, a few political savvy activists have been preparing to launch their incorporation campaign, secure in the belief that an apathetic population and a few vocal "old guards" would be no opposition to a well oiled, well funded, political machine. AIM's paid advertorials, letters to the editor printed in the monthly freebee, Alamo Today, as well as articles and letters printed in this Weekly, sparked the attention of residents who, up to that point, showed little interest in the incorporation process.

On Sept. 18, 2008, at Creekside Church in Alamo, LAFCO Commissioners alleged that a 2006-07 financial analysis was feasible to support the incorporation of Alamo, and sent the issue to the County Board of Supervisors to rubber stamp approval for a March 3 election, Fanned by anger and disappointment that incorporation had moved so swiftly, meeting all dates exactly as scheduled and printed in AIM advertorials, a sleeping giant of outraged citizens gathered to form the committee WE R ALAMO. This logo was designed to send the message, that while "I" may love Alamo, it is "WE" who ARE Alamo.

From a small grassroots meeting in August, opposing AIM and its huge network of political supporters, the voice of opposition is being heard loud and clear through signs, posters and mailings. Forced into a high speed learning curve of how to secure an election law firm, establish a political action committee, write opposing talking points to incorporation for the voter pamphlet, to printing and distribution of 10,000 No on Measure A pamphlets, WE R ALAMO has become a formidable opponent against AIM. In a few short months, opponents to incorporation have revealed AIMs pattern of half-truths and omission of factual information to the citizens of this community, which did not promote their position on incorporation.

AIM sponsored a petition drive without full disclosure of its true purpose to signors; AIM negotiated a $3 million payback debt with the County without authority; AIM continues to claim, in spite of a professionally updated financial analysis showing otherwise, that the LAFCO 2006-07 CFA is valid; AIM proposes a government with no formation of a committee for citizen oversight and no provision for the high cost of litigation to both plaintiff and the town; AIM has excluded the majority of neighborhood representatives from being part of the incorporation process.

If, on March 4, Alamo voters wake up to the BAD DEAL imposed on them by AIM, take heart. AIM will only have succeeded in establishing a feudal community, pitting neighbor against neighbor, which they will call "local control," but AIM will have permanently lost that HEART of love they claimed they had, and wanted so much, for Alamo.

R. Jean Taylor is one of the founders and leaders of the WE R ALAMO Committee

Letters

➤ Continued from page 9

Therefore, as residents of Alamo, we support Measure A and urge you to vote Yes on March 3.

Nancy D. Kaplan, T.S. Khanna, Alamo

Koc, Nahas and Schmidt

Dear Editor:

We are proud to single out Vicki Koc, Randy Nahas and Grace Schmidt as three candidates for Alamo Town Council who have made outstanding voluntary contributions to our community. We know first-hand that they all have consistently worked and spoken up for Alamo interests—Vicki for our public schools and roads, Randy for recreational opportunities and school facilities for our youth, and Grace for opposing the proposed widening of our downtown intersection to increase freeway traffic access.

They bring expertise and talent in the form of longstanding knowledge of the civic life of Alamo, community planning and development, and public sector planning and funding.

Vicki, Randy and Grace also bring commitment and integrity to the work they do for Alamo. They all agree on local control and minimal change for our small community. Because of our genuine concern and love for our community and as 30-year residents of Alamo, we urge you to vote for Koc, Nahas and Schmidt.

Dianne Ehlers and Pam Hugo, Alamo

Laissez-faire Alamo

Dear Editor:

I have been a resident of Alamo for 27 years. I am grateful every day for the wonderful quality of life that my husband and I have here in semi-rural Alamo, where there are horses, geese, goats and cows and yet are so close to the amenities of city life. We truly have the best of both worlds. While some change, over time, is inevitable, we maintain our quality of life as a rural enclave in the larger County of Contra Costa. Incorporation would indelibly change all that in ways that no lover of Alamo, if fully understood, would ever desire.

"Local control" means more control, with an officious bureaucracy interfering in every aspect of our lives. As played out in community after community surrounding us, we can see that more government is simply not the answer. It is disingenuous and foolhardy to claim that to keep Alamo the way it is, we must change; this argument, on it's face, is absurd.

The proponents of incorporation, despite repeatedly provided with evidence to the contrary to their claims, refuse to acknowledge concerns about compelling issues, including the existence of verifiable state law: State mandated growth via Housing Element. One is reminded of the great philosopher, Sir Francis Bacon, who wrote long ago about such shortcomings of the human condition, i.e., the "Idols of The Mind," whereby people cling tenaciously to their desired beliefs despite evidence to the contrary. Save our beloved Alamo. Don't change our laissez-faire community. Vote No on Measure A, No on Incorporation.

Denise Padovani, Alamo

Consider expenses

Dear Editor:

The incorporation group has done an excellent job of NOT defining but continuing to say the 2006 CFA is feasible and it is not. Helen Allen, the former Mayor of Concord, also did not agree the numbers they presented at the LAFCO hearing saying they were insufficient

Cecily T Barclay, who is an attorney specializing in Land Use, at the debate Jan. 27, who is against incorporation, debated Vickie Koc who is pro incorporation. Cecily said the figures they are using are insufficient and incorporation will be expensive and we should not incorporate at this time. It will be expensive and another layer of government.

Please when you vote consider the following expenses: affordable housing; roads; police protection, another layer of government; the current economy/more taxes; low population and business base; and yearly demands by the state.

Vallejo, Rio Vista, Orinda, Lafayette are in a fiscal chaos and that is why we have people moving here from those areas. Vote No on Measure A. No incorporation.

SC Thompson, Alamo

Let's control our town

Dear Editor:

Rip van Winkle awoke today from a long sleep. The long time Alamo resident asked his friends what had changed during his slumber. "A lot!" they replied. "There are now 12 more houses on the 680 hillsides, two new traffic lights and a roundabout on Danville Boulevard between Stone Valley Road and Livorna, and only two policemen due to county budget cutbacks. And oh, by the way, Danville Boulevard is now four lanes wide."

"What?" Rip shouted. "The county imposed all this on Alamo's residents? Why didn't they DO something about it?"

"Well, they had the chance five years ago, but unfortunately voted No on incorporation. I guess they just didn't understand what having control of our town would mean."

Let's take control of our own town. Please vote Yes on incorporation.

Bob Burke, Alamo

Adversarial process

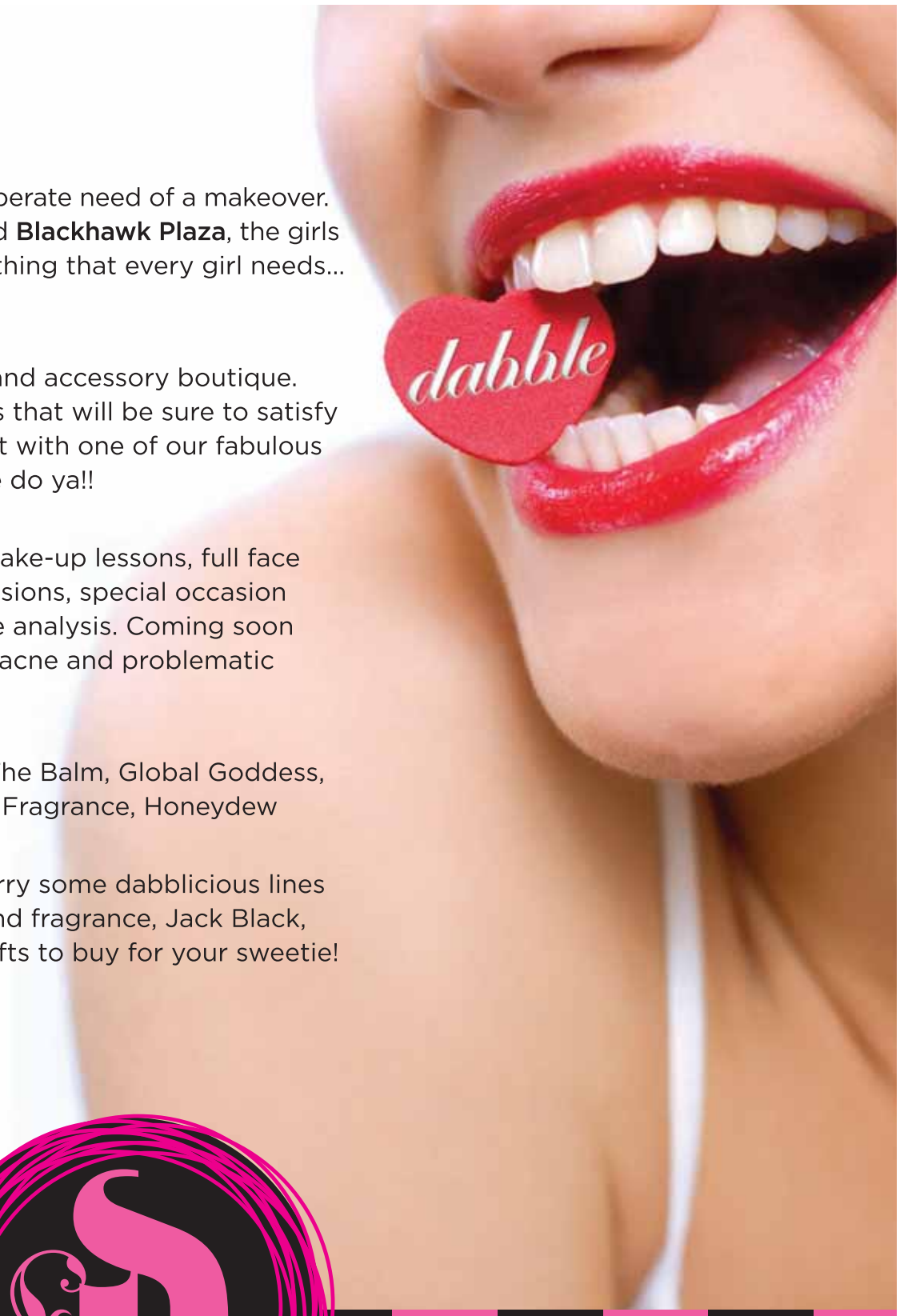
Dear Editor:

I am a land use attorney. From the standpoint of my own economic self interest, I should be a strong proponent of Alamo's incorporation. The various communities which surround Alamo—in particular those featured prominently for comparison purposes in the Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis—create myriad problems for their residents which, in turn, frequently require my services. Notwithstanding my economic self interest, I do not believe that Alamo residents deserve the trials and tribulations which the other area cities routinely visit upon their citizens.

When proponents of the new Town trumpet "local control" as the principal reason for incorporation, they are normally referencing the planning function which the new Town Council would ultimately control. In the area cities, planning is an adversarial process between the particular city and the property owner who would propose some improvement or change to that owner's own property. That process is lengthy, painful and very expensive.

If the time and effort were devoted to a representation of Alamo interests at the County level, I would expect results similar to those which might be realized upon incorporation—without the added bureaucracy and cost.

Dave Bowie, Alamo



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Alamo at the c

Tuesday's vote will decide future for semi-rural community

by Geoff Gillette

Campaign signs all over unincorporated Alamo—including these on Danville Boulevard at the intersection of Hemme Avenue—urge residents to vote for or against incorp

'Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference." Robert Frost's classic poem "The Road Not Taken" captures the mood in Alamo in these final days before the March 3 election.

Two very distinct paths lie before Alamo, currently known not as a town but as a "census-designated area" with 16,700 residents. Either Alamo will incorporate through the will of the voters; or it will stay as it is now, also at the will of the voters, with all services and governance coming through the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

Here is where the similarity to Frost's poem ends. In the poem, the two paths were different and it was easier to see which was the one less traveled. The same cannot be said for Alamo where arguments have been made on both sides claiming that their vision of the future for the small community is best.

Where things stand now

Currently, residents of Alamo receive all of their services from the county. The County Sheriff's Department provides police service through a sub-station and designated deputies who patrol the area. Additionally, some roads are patrolled by the California Highway Patrol.

Extra police service is provided to the P-5 district in Round Hill. The service is paid for through an assessment to the homeowners in the special district.

Emergency services are provided by both the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District and the Contra Costa Fire Protection District depending on the location of the residence.

Roads and maintenance are covered by the county's Public Works department. Building permits and inspections are carried out by the county Planning Department. Any hearings over permit infractions or issues go before the county planning commission and then on to the Board of Supervisors.

Alamo residents do have some input into what happens, as they have local representation on several advisory committees for county service areas whose members are appointed by the District 3 County Supervisor, currently Mary N. Piepho:

- P-2B advises on the policing needs of the Alamo community;
- P-5 committee oversees the special police district in Round Hill;
- R-7A handles parks and recreation; and
- Zone 36 is for lighting and landscaping, the Alamo Beautification Advisory Committee.

Also Alamo Improvement Association, a paid membership organization, provides advisory input on planning issues.

How did we get here?

If services are provided, if local input is allowed, why incorporate? Proponents have been pushing hard during the last two years to incorporate into a town and take control away from Contra Costa County. The question is ... why? In cases like this there is usually a tipping point, an issue or event that becomes the lynchpin around which a movement forms.

According to the Alamo Incorporation Movement, the issue could best be summarized as "local control." Some of the things AIM has been concerned about are the possibility of widening Danville Boulevard, planned expansion of the Stone Valley Road interchange (aka the Ultimate Configuration) and no-right-turn-on-red signs at Danville Boulevard and Stone Valley Road.

Incorporation supporter Chris Kenber said "local representation" is not the same as local control.

"We have these committees, but you have to understand these are all advisory committees. And the county is free to ignore our advice," he said. "I think one of the reasons the incorporation movement got started was that people on these committees got frustrated."

The Alamo Community Foundation (ACF), formed to fund the incorporation movement, stated that its supporters feel the community is often overlooked because it represents such a small portion of Contra Costa County. An informational document from the ACF reads, "The County Board of Supervisors makes decisions in the interests of the County that may or may not reflect the interests of Alamo, which is only 1.7% of total County population, and only 6% of the population of County District 3."

Proponents have said all along that the ability to make the decisions that affect their community are what's at stake in incorporating. At one of the hearings on incorporation, resident Vishwas More said, "Washington doesn't do it, Sacramento doesn't do it. County doesn't do it. Let us do it ourselves. We can do this."

Vicki Koc, who has spearheaded the incorporation movement, said that incorporation is about the ability to determine the town's own destiny. "Let us make the decisions that affect us," she said, "Let us have our own voice."

The argument against incorporation

Those who oppose incorporation say that while the county may not be perfect, they feel the system works

Alamo Hay and Grain and the adjacent shoe repair shop in the former little post office symbolize the s to many people.

crossroads

DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

oration and for various candidates.

DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

semi-rural community of Alamo

and they don't want to see change. Early in the discussions of incorporation, opponent Robert Myrhe used the old adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Myrhe is not alone in his trepidation. Many residents have expressed deep concerns about how a local town government would impact Alamo and the lifestyle that many residents love. Both sides say they don't want Alamo to change, but opponents feel the best way to maintain the town's character is to keep things the way they are.

A dedicated and very vocal group has formed, calling for the defeat of the March 3 ballot issue and maintaining Alamo as is, under county rule.

Another issue for many of those standing against incorporation is the strong belief that the Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis performed by the firm of Winzler and Kelly as part of the approval process was flawed.

Cecily Talbert Barclay, a land use attorney, joined the ranks of the opposition after studying the proposal and determining that the assumptions made in regard to revenue generation and expenditures were based on 2006-07 data which, in the current economic climate, is no longer relevant.

Barclay and other opponents commissioned their own study of the CFA, which they say showed serious errors in revenue projections that could lead the newly formed town to bankruptcy within two years. At a meeting in January, Barclay said, "My bottom line is we should incorporate someday, but we absolutely should not incorporate based on a report created in 2006."

Additionally, Barclay and other opponents maintain that incorporating will not truly sever ties with Contra Costa County but will instead impose an additional layer of bureaucracy into the situation. They feel that since, at least initially, the new town will be utilizing the county for many of its services that the town's governing body will be an unnecessary filter between the county and the residents.

For more information

For more information on the Alamo Incorporation efforts, for and against Measure A, visit the following Web sites:

- www.alamoinc.org – supporting incorporation
- www.alamospotlight.com – opposing incorporation

The end of the debate

Over the last several months, the two groups on either side of the issue have formed deeply entrenched beliefs in regards to what is best for Alamo. What started out as spirited debates has devolved into acrimonious argument of the "he said/she said" variety. One side makes a claim, the other responds, to which the first responds again ... and so on.

The debate, for all practical purposes, will come to an end March 3, when voters cast their ballots, making the final decision as to where they've placed their trust —in the proponents and their CFA or the opponents and the Barclay Analysis.

Regardless, the question that remains is: Where will Alamo and its very disparate residents go on March 4? Has the rift that has grown between the two sides become too wide to bridge?

To return to Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken," when Alamo chooses its path, be it town or census-designated area, its 16,700 residents all will be walking that path together. ■

Statements of candidates for town council

Fifteen candidates are left in the running for the Alamo Town Council, if Measure A passes to incorporate. Here they speak to you through their own words, excerpted from their candidate statements for the sample ballot. (Brad Stribling is no longer running although his name is on the ballot.)

For more information on each candidate, see the Danville Weekly issue of Jan. 9, 2009, at www.danvilleweekly.com/toc.php?i=193

Diane Barley

Alamo is such a unique little town that my husband and I loved it 33 years ago when we moved here from the East. Over the years it has changed, but slowly, and it still retains the friendly semi-rural atmosphere.

That is why I am running for council. I want to keep it that way. Little change and no new taxes. I appreciate what Alamo is through my years of involvement in the community. It started years ago when our two sons went to Stone Valley and Monte Vista High School.

I have also been President of Alamo Rotary Club. I have been on Zone 36 committee, P5, an officer and President of AIA and am presently on P2B.

Bob Connelly

My wife and I have lived in Alamo for 19 years. We feel Alamo is a very special place. I have the experience and leadership skills necessary to help the Town of Alamo get off to a good start. My banking career spans 33 years including five years as a Chief Operating Officer and three years as Chief Executive Officer.

Currently, I am President of the Alamo Oaks Homeowners Association. I also work on our local precinct election board.

I strongly believe in dealing openly, honestly and fairly with all people and I know the importance of proper fiscal planning.

I strongly believe that I can help ensure that Alamo continues to be a special place.

Dennis Johnson

I care about the quality of life in Alamo. I strongly support protecting the existing semi-rural character of the city. I will ensure that Alamo remains one of the safest cities in the region. I will help keep Alamo ranking among the best places to raise children.

As Town Council member I will recommend we establish a citizen's committee to advise the Council on budget matters. I support a mandatory annual budget surplus ordinance, with surplus funds to be held in a reserve account in order to ultimately reduce our tax burden.

I have served for years on the budget advisory committee of a small town, and as a business owner I understand the importance of operating the Town as a low-overhead, fiscally conservative, entity.

Vicki Koc

I am honored to run for Town Council and defend Alamo's exceptional quality of life. Alamo needs regional representation of its interests and a local voice overseeing the use of our funds. This will protect our beautiful community and preserve Alamo's small-town character.

➤ Continued on page **14**

Incorporation

➤ Continued from page 13

As President of the Alamo Incorporation Movement, I'm uniquely qualified: founding the organization, gathering volunteers, learning the process, meeting nearby city, public safety and county officials. From petition drives to hearings, hundreds of steps were analyzed, planned and accomplished.

This knowledge and my leadership on incorporation will help create a solid foundation for our future town.

Drawing upon all my experiences volunteering in the community where I have lived for 28 years, I will continue to exercise diligence, commitment, accountability and carefully review all funding to get the most for citizens.

Karen McPherson

If Alamo is to be successful as a Town we will need leaders who will be financially conservative. My strengths lie in communicating and building consensus among the community. My hope is to ensure Alamo maintains the quality that drew us to this community. We need to maintain our level of police protection as well as improve the appearance of our community by street sweeping on a regular basis. We need to work with Caltrans to make our freeway exits attractive. The Town of Alamo needs a council member who is interested in making all decisions with full community participation.

Steve Mick

As a member of the Alamo Town Council I will be an agent of minimal change. Alamo has a unique semi-rural character which I will strive to preserve. I believe that Alamo's commercial area is currently well suited to serve the local community. Future residential growth needs to be measured. Additional development and lot splits must be carefully studied and new construction or remodels must reasonably conform to the existing ambiance of their neighborhood.

Vishwas "Vish" More

I am running for City Council in order to ensure that Alamo preserves its character and continues to thrive. As council member, I will bring my prior public/private sector experience to move Alamo in a positive direction. I have over 30 years experience at SLAC (Stanford), LBL (Berkeley) and as past president of the California Community Colleges. This background gives me unique management, financial and engineering qualifications which will allow me to serve as an effective councilmember from day one.

I am proud of my involvement in community activities. I have served on the boards of the Wheelchair Foundation, CSU East Bay and am presently serving as the Treasurer of the Rotary Club of Alamo.

John Morrow

(No candidate statement was available, what follows is an excerpt from the Danville Weekly profile.)

John Morrow, who worked for U.S. Steel, Standard Oil of Ohio and British Petroleum, and owned two small businesses, wants to bring his knowledge to the table to help run the new town of Alamo. He believes no one should make a dishonest gain in government, and he would like to help prevent this. He says he could hold the line on spending in Alamo with the expertise he gained from the years he spent doing competitive bidding.

He says he "is not in great favor of incorporation" but he respects those who are. He likes having no sidewalks and no streetlights in Alamo.

Kevin G. Morrow

Alamo is a great place to live. I know this because I have called this place home for the past 29 years. I've grown up here, gone to school here, graduated from high school here and after college continued to call this place home. I have a vested interest in this community.

I am an insurance agent, licensed by the State of California and the Department of Insurance. I work with a local agency, managing sales and accounts, purchasing and accounting. I understand the need to stay within any budget, and especially during these difficult economic times.

I am not a lifetime politician. I am a responsible member of the community and if elected, I will do my best to keep spending down, costs down, and taxes down.

Randy Nahas

In my 28 years living in Alamo and raising four sons, I have been committed to maintaining Alamo as a rural community. My wife Jan and I are Project Leaders of the Tassajara 4-H. We have raised market animals and are currently boarding horses on our property.

I run my own property management business and as a licensed real estate broker and general contractor I am conversant with budgets and saving for future emergencies and community improvements.

As a 25-year Urban Land Institute member and Project Manager I have a firm grasp on General Plan and land planning issues.

I look forward to continuing to serve my community in its blossoming infancy.

Karl Niyati

As a 25-year resident, I have seen many changes in Alamo and am deeply invested in its future. I credit this community and its people for much of my success and I feel that it's time to give back.

I have proven ability to recruit qualified staff, experience to negotiate the best services for residents, and background to plan solutions for the future challenges of Alamo. I am highly motivated to utilize my unique business management and entrepreneurial skills to make a positive impact in Alamo's new direction. I will bring stability by drawing upon my financial planning and real life leadership experience.

Joseph Rubay

I am running for the office of Alamo Town Councilmember to preserve the small town feel of Alamo while bringing a high level of fiscal responsibility and leadership to the new council. My roots in Alamo are deep. I am a graduate of Monte Vista High School and California State University East Bay.

I am a former CPA who for the last 19 years has been a partner in my families Real Estate Appraisal business. Running a small business, I have found it is best to under budget future income and overbudget future expenses. I believe these real world skills will be an asset I will bring to the new Town Council.

Grace Schmidt

I want Alamo to retain its character, its two-lane roads, its trees, its minimum half-acre zoning and its local businesses that serve Alamo needs. From my experience in opposing an expansion of the Danville Boulevard/ Stone Valley Road intersection that would invite new freeway traffic into Alamo, I believe Alamo needs representatives on its Town Council and on regional planning bodies who will resist outside pressure to support road expansion projects.

I believe in open, inclusive, fiscally responsible local government and I will use my local and national government experience to work with residents, other elected officials and regional stakeholders toward preserving Alamo the way Alamo citizens want it.

Roger Smith

Alamo residents have a rich history of volunteering their valuable time to organizations such as the Alamo Improvement Association, Alamo Merchants and Professionals Association, R7A, P5 and P2B and many others.

These valuable organizations need to be encouraged to continue their involvement in our community and to have a role within any newly incorporated city structure so all of us can benefit from their experience, knowledge and hard work.

Overall, the small town ambiance of Alamo needs to be preserved.

To do so, we need to have a balanced approach to our community's development, one with common sense and awareness of protecting the values of our community.

I would like to be of service to Alamo in finding solutions that work for our community.

Brad Waite

As a 17-year resident and as a long time Alamo Improvement Association Board member, I have heard from residents who don't want Alamo to change. I agree and for this reason, I am running for Town Council.

If no change is necessary, then why incorporate? Because we need to take control and make our own decisions on local issues. Land use issues and Danville Boulevard issues that affect the quality of our lives should be made by Alamo residents. Alamo tax revenue should stay in Alamo and not continue to be spread across the county. We need local accountability.

My agenda has been clear: "Keep Alamo a low density, semi-rural community."

I will work hard and I will listen to residents with ideas or opinions on Alamo issues.

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CONTRA COSTA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
COUNTY CONNECTION

Individuals interested in serving must be Town of Danville residents. To obtain an application and learn more about the duties and responsibilities of these volunteer positions, visit the Town's website at **www.ci.danville.ca.us**, or contact the City Clerk at **314-3401** or **msunseri@ci.danville.ca.us**.

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An online forum to

Discuss Community Issues

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and more

Danville WEEKLY.com

Calendar

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

Author Visit

Isabel Allende East Bay Women's Conference will host Isabel Allende as its keynote speaker from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday, March 2, at the San Ramon Marriott, 2600 Bishop Dr. She will sign copies of her book "The Sum of Our Days." Other speakers include Elizabeth Colton and Meagan Johnson. Cost is $165. Preregistration is required; call 934-2007 or visit www.walnut-creek.com.

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.

Orchids 101 Glenn Smith, of the Marin Orchid Society, will discuss the care of orchids at 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 28, at Sloat Garden Center, 828 Diablo Rd., Danville. This class is free. Call 743-0288.

Clubs

San Ramon Valley Newcomers Luncheon This club will host a luncheon with guest speaker De'Etta Bauchman, a member of Parents for Lesbians and Gays, at 11:30 a.m., Friday, March 20, at Forbes Mill Steakhouse, 200 W. Sycamore Valley Rd., Danville. For reservations, call Paula at 735-6483.

Concerts

'Music From Around The World' Discover new music with the San Ramon Symphonic Band and its talented conductor Larry Colon by celebrating "Music From Around the World" at 8 p.m., Friday, March 13, at Dougherty Valley Peforming Arts Center, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are $5 for adults; free for students with a valid ID or youth under 12. Visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com.

'Sea, Sky and Stars' Danville Girls Chorus presents "Sea, Sky and Stars" spring concert at 11 a.m., Saturday, March 14, at Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church, 9015 South Gale Ridge Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for children under 14 years old. Visit www.danvillegirlschorus.com.

California Symphony Concert Conductor Barry Jekowsky and the California Symphony present the world premiere of Mason Bates' White Lies for Lomax, soloist Stefan Jackiw and Johannes Brahms' Symphony No. 4 at 4 p.m., Sunday, March 8, and at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 10, at the Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Tickets are $39-$59. Visit www.lesherartscenter.org.

Danville Community Band at Blackhawk Museum The museum is delighted to host the Danville Community Band performing musical tributes to America's Luminaries in Postal Art at 2 p.m., Sunday, March 1, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Tickets are $10 for adults; $7 for seniors and students; and children under 6 years old are free. Call 736-2277.

St. Patrick's Day Concert The luck of the Irish will be with you if you attend the San Ramon Community Chorus Concert at 7 p.m., Friday, March 6, at the Dougherty Station Community Center, Front Row Theater, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon. This concert is free. Visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com.

Events

15th Hats Off America Run and Walk The 15th annual Hats Off America Red T-Shirt 10K Run/5K Run or Walk will start at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 4, at Sycamore Valley Park, 1101 Holbrook Dr., Danville. Cost is $35 per person, including a T-shirts and lunch. Proceeds benefit Gold Star Families. Rain or shine. Call 855-1950.

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.

Free E-Waste Recycling Event Get rid of old TVs, monitors and other electronics for free from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., on the first Saturday of every month, at two Diablo Valley College locations; Pleasant Hill campus, 321 Golf Club Rd. and the San Ramon campus, Bollinger Canyon and Watermill roads. Visit www.noewaste.com.

Middle School Youth to Youth Conference Community Against Substance Abuse presents its 15th annual Youth to Youth Conference for students in grades 6-8 from 8 a.m.-10 p.m., Saturday, March 14, at Gale Ranch Middle School, 6400 Main Branch Rd., San Ramon. Cost is $35 before Feb. 28; $45 thereafter; including lunch, dinner and a dance. Call 838-0663 or visit www.srvcasa.org.

Poetry, Prose and Arts Festival Early Registration Early registration and all contest entries must be postmarked by Saturday, March 7, for the Poetry, Prose and Arts Festical taking place April 4-5, at the Pleasanton Senior Center, 5353 Sunol Blvd. The festival will include workshops, contests, awards banquet, literary row, reception and fine arts exhibit. Call 931-5350.

'Reinventing Retirement' Miriam Goodman author of, "Reinventing Retirement: 389 Bright Ideas About Family, Friends, Health, What to Do, and Where to Live," will speak at Friends of Danville Library's First Wednesday Program at 1 p.m., Wednesday, March 4, at the Danville Community Center, 420 Front St. This event is free. Call 837-4889.

Seventh Annual Youth Food Drive The seventh annual Youth Food Drive, rain or shine, will be from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, March 7, in Danville, Alamo, San Ramon, Dublin and Pleasanton. Donations of non-perishable items go to local food pantries. Call 998-6513 or e-mail youthfooddrive@comcast.net.

Exhibits

Art and Artists of the Valley Museum of the San Ramon Valley and Alamo-Danville Artists Society present "Art and Artists of the Valley," which runs until May 30. It will focus primarily on 150 years of Valley history including works from local artists, the Museum's collection and local high school students. The museum is open from 1-4 p.m., Tuesday-Friday, and from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday; located at the corner of Railroad and Prospect avenues. Admission is $3. Call 837-3750.

Celebrating 75 Years of Regional Parks East Bay Regional Park District has a new exhibit on display titled "Ours to Keep, Celebrating 75 Years of Regional Parks" until April 23, at the Center, 610 Main St., Martinez. The center is open from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday. Call 229-1042.

Trailblazers and Trendsetters Blackhawk Museum will host the "Trailblazers and Trendsetters: Art of the Stamp" exhibit from Feb. 28-June 21, at the museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. A special presentation by exhibit curatory, Terry McCaffrey, on "The Chicken, the Cowboy and the King" will be from 3-5 p.m., Sunday, March 22. The museum is open from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday. Admission is $10 for adults; $7 for seniors and children 6 and under are free. Call 736-2277.

PET OF THE WEEK

CATHERINE HANSEN RUSH

Paco packs a punch!

Meet a little dog with a big attitude. This 14 pound, neutered male Chihuahua mix loves people but his motto is "No cats allowed!" Paco's not very fond of other dogs either. But what's a small dog to do? He has some personal space to protect! SPCA dog trainers recommend an experienced dog owner who can help Paco work on those important social skills with other dogs. Paco loves treats and is smart. Show him a cookie and he'll show you a dog who wants to learn. Paco is 2 years old and likes to go, go, go. Visit this active little people pleaser at the East Bay SPCA Tri-Valley Adoption Center, 4651 Gleason Drive in Dublin, open from 1 to 8 p.m. Wednesday through Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Call 479-9670. See more available pets at www.eastbayspca.org.

Fundraisers

'Freezin' for a Reason' The "Freezin' for a Reason" 2009 Polar Plunge will begin at noon, Saturday, Feb. 28, at Crissy Field in San Francisco. The event will include entertainment, a costume contest, awards and prizes. Registration begins at 10 a.m., followed by a parade of costumes at noon. The event is raising money for Special Olympics Northern California. To learn more, visit www.sonc.org/polarplunge or call 944-0594, ext. 232.

Auction and Crab Feed Dinner Join Contra Costa Children's Chorus at their Auction and All-You-Can-Eat-Crab Feed Dinner from 6:30-10:30 p.m., Friday, March 13, at Shadelands Arts Center, 111 N. Wiget Lane, Walnut Creek. Tickets are $45 in advance; $400 per table. Proceeds benefit Children's Chorus and its projects. Call 945-7101, ext. 201.

Family Breakfast San Ramon Senior Foundation will host a Family Breakfast from 9-11:30 a.m., Sunday, March 8, at the San Ramon Senior Center, 9300 Alcosta Blvd. Pancakes, sausages, eggs, fruit, coffee and juice will be served. Cost is $4 for adults; $2 for children. Call 833-2760.

John Baldwin Elementary 'Bid for Kids' The school's major fundraiser is now open for donations; services and items, large or small, are welcome and appreciated. The event helps the elementary school pay for many important activities like art and science. The auction starts March 4 at www.bidforkids.com.

Monte Vista Keynoters Spring Fling Monte Vista High School Instrumental Music Program will hold its annual "Spring Fling" fundraiser from 6:30-11 p.m., Friday, March 6, at the Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Tickets are $85. Proceeds benefit the school. To bid online, visit http://mvhs-keynoters.revtrak.net/tek9.asp.

Ninth Annual Bookies Awards Dinner Project Second Chance will host the ninth annual Bookies Awards Dinner at 6 p.m., Thursday, March 19, at the Lafayette Park Hotel, 3287 Mount Diablo Blvd. Tickets are $50, including admission, dinner, dessert and wine. There will also be a silent and live auction. Proceeds benefit Project Second Chance. For tickets, call Fremont Bank at (510) 723-5811.

Raffle Fundraiser Contra Costa for Every Generation (CCEG) is a non-profit organization helping to make the county a good place to age. It is hosting a raffle to benefit the programs including Chevron gas gift cards in different amounts. Tickets are $50 per person. You do not need to be present to win. Call 746-7169.

Health

Free Skin Cancer Screening Lazarex Cancer Foundation will host free skin cancer screening by appointment only from 8 a.m.-noon, Thursday, March 5, at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, 3100 Summit St., Oakland. For an appointment, call (510) 869-8833.

Infertility: What You Need to Know Many couples experience difficulty conceving a child. Learn about medical and surgical treatments and what you can do to improve your chances of having a baby from 7:30-8:30 p.m., Thursday, March 5, at San Ramon Regional Medical Center, South Conference Room, South Building, 7777 Norris Canyon Rd. Partners are welcome. This event is free. Call 275-8230.

Jin Shin Jyutsu Learn how to place your hands on specific areas of your body to help reduce and better manage the effects of cancer and its treatment from 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday, March 7, at the Wellness Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. This event is free for cancer patients and their support. Call 933-0107.

What you Need to Know About Menopause Learn about treating uncomfortable symptoms such as hot flashes, sleep disturbances and changes in mood from 7:30-8:30 p.m., Thursday, March 12, at San Ramon Regional Medical Center, South Conference Room, South Building, 7777 Norris Canyon Rd. A doctor will discuss the latest research and answer questions. This event is free. Call 275-8230.

Holiday

Family Purim Party Tri-Valley Cultural Jew's will host a Family Purim Party from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Sunday, March 8, at Bothwell Center, 2466 8th St., Livermore. The party will feature games and crafts, baking of the traditional three-cornered cookies, and a costume parade for everyone. people of all ages. Non-traditional and dual-culture families are welcome. Cost is $5 per household for non-members. Call 485-1049.

Kids and Teens

'Expanding Your Horizons' Conference Sandia National Laboratory, Diablo Valley College, American Association of University Women and Lawrence Livermore National Security present "Expanding Your Horizons" conference for girls in

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grades 6-9. The conference starts at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 28, at Diablo Valley College, San Ramon Campus, 1690 Watermill Rd. Cost is $20. Call 422-2453 or visit http://tveyh.org.

Beth Chaim Tot Shabbat Young families are invited to a 30-minute Shabbat service with Jewish educators and storytellers Mark Novak and Renee Brachfeld at 6:30 p.m., Friday, March 6, at Beth Chaim Congregation, 1800 Holbrook Dr., Danville. The program will be followed by dinner just for families with young children up to age 6. Call 736-7146.

Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss! Everyone is invited to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday with crafts, treats and favorite Dr. Seuss stories from 4-5:15 p.m., Tuesday, March 3, at the Danville Library, Children's Reading Room, 400 Front St. Registration is required for the craft program for children 4 years and older. Call 837-4889.

Paws to Read Friends of the Danville Library and the Valley Humane Society present "Paws to Read" at 4 and 4:35 p.m., Monday, March 2, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. Children in grades 1-5 will read to dogs brought by handlers from the Valley Humane Society. This event is free, but registration is required by calling 837-4889.

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 Blvd., Walnut Creek. Richard Gonzales on Wednesday, March 18; Mark Yudof on Thursday, April 2; and Noah Alper on Thursday, May 21. Call 938-7800, ext. 0 or visit www.ccjcc.org/dialogues.

Journaling for Caregivers Journaling relieves the stress of care giving. Come put your truths on paper and share them if you like with Lynn Goodwin from 1-3 p.m., Tuesday, March 10, at the Danville Library, 400 Front St. This event is free. Call Jenn at 314-3491.

On Stage

'Forbidden Broadway' The Great White Way presents a musical revue parody "Forbidden Broadway" at 8 p.m., Saturday, March 14, at Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon. Tickets are $39; visit www.sanramonperformingarts.com.

'MacHomer' "MacHomer" is a comedy melding of William Shakespeare's Macbeth with the television series, The Simpsons. It will show at 8 p.m., Saturday, March 7, at Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd. Tickets are $25, $30 and $35 for adults; $15, $20 and $25 for students. Call 931-3444 or visit www.civicartstickets.org.

'The Producers' Diablo Light Opera Company presents "The Producers" at different times, until March 15, at the Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Tickets are $34-$43. Call 943-7469 or visit www.dloc.org.

'Women Speak Out' Danville-Alamo AAUW presents "Women Speak Out: An Evening of Monologues" at 8 p.m., Saturday, March 14, at Montair School, 300 Quinterra Lane, Danville. Cost is a $10 donation. Proceeds benefit AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund. Call 820-9071.

Political Notes

Blackhawk Republican Women Luncheon This club will host Patricia Welch, Northwest Regional Vice Chair, CA Republican Party who will speak on State Election Laws and Republican Party Rules at 11:15 a.m., Monday, March 9, at the Blackhawk Country Club, 599 Blackhawk Club Dr., Danville. Cost is $25; reservations are due by noon, March 5. All are welcome. Call 820-6452 or visit www.blackhawkrwf.org.

Recreation

Diablo Trail 50K Run Save Mount Diablo presents the Diablo Trail 50K Run starting at 8 a.m., March 22, beginning at Valley Regional Preserve in Brentwood and ending at Castle Rock Park in Walnut Creek. Enjoy live music and food at the finish line. Cost is $75 before March 10. Visit savemountdiablo.org or active.com.

Scholarships

Danville-Alamo Branch of the AAUW Scholarship Danville-Alamo Branch of the AAUW is offering scholarships to local women. Applicants must have resided in the San Ramon Valley School district boundaries during high school and must be at least a college junior as of September 2009. Applications are online at www.aauw-da.org. Deadline is April 6.

Exchange Club of SRV Scholarship Essay Competition Exchange Club of San Ramon Valley will host its fourth annual college scholarship essay contest entitled "Your Vote—How Does it Count?" at 5:30 p.m., on three remaining Mondays, Feb. 23 and March 9 and 23, at Veterans Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. Awards are $1,000 for first place; $750 for second place; and $250 for third place. Call 352-7704.

Seniors

Home Workout Program for Seniors Diablo Lodge will host part three of its Wellness Speaker Series on "A Home Workout for Seniors" from 3:30-4:15 p.m., Wednesday, March 4, at Diablo Lodge, 950 Diablo Rd., Danville. This event is free. Call 838-8300.

Senior Crime Prevention The Town of Danville Police Department and Senior Services Division are partnering together to host a Senior Crime Prevention Workshop from 11 a.m.-noon, Tuesday, March 10, at the Veterans Memorial Hall, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville. The workshop will include the following topics: elder abuse, financial crimes, and fraud and property crimes. This workshop is free. Call 314-3705.

Spiritual

Beth Chaim's Purim-speil Rabbi Dan Goldblatt will lead the Purim-Speil service with Jewish educators/storytellers Mark Novak & Renee Brachfeld at 7 p.m., Friday, March 6, at Beth Chaim Congregation, 1800 Holbrook Dr., Danville. Purim costumes are encouraged and not just for the kids! All are welcome. Call 736-7146.

Men and Women's Lenten Retreat Come join presenters Fr. Rusty Shaughnessy, OFM and Paula Jenkins as they explore Lent as an invitation to do "spiritual exercise" or "soul work Friday-Sunday, March 13-15, at San Damiano, 710 Highland Dr., Danville. The weekend will include presentations, prayer and quiet reflection time. Cost is $205 for a private room; $175 for a shared room. Call 837-9141, ext. 315.

Purim Stories for Grown-ups A little wine, cheese and a fun-filled Purim celebration will be held for adults at 8:30 p.m., Friday, March 6, at Beth Chaim Congregation, 1800 Holbrook Dr., Danville. "Honey from the Rock Theater" with storytellers Mark Novak and Renee Brachfeld will be the guest speakers. Call 736-7146.

Silent Contemplative Retreat Fr. Bruno Barnhart presents "Finding Easter: The Continuing Event of Christ" retreat Friday-Sunday, March 20-22, at San Damiano, 710 Highland Dr., Danville. Participants will learn about the new creation in the New Testament, in our common history and in our personal experience. Cost is $205 for a private room; $175 for a shared room. Call 837-9141, ext. 315.

Support Groups

Stroke Support Group This group will meet from 7-9 p.m., Monday, March 9, at John Muir Medical Center, Concord Campus, 2540 East Ave. The program will be about "Get Moving, Sports Programs for the Disabled." After the presentation, attendees will break up into three coping groups. The meeting is free and open to the public. Call Ann at 376-6218.

Welcoming Your Jewish Baby Join a Mommy and Me group for new moms adjusting to motherhood and considering Jewish options for their family from 1-2:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 4, at Contra Costa Jewish Community Center, 2071 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. Cost is $36 for five sessions. Call (510) 845-6420, ext. 11.

Volunteering

Citizens Police Academy Danville Police Department will be offering a Citizens Police Academy to residents of Danville. The Citizens Police Academy is an "All in One Day" program that will meet at 8:30 a.m., Monday, March 16. Participants will learn all about the Police Department. Call 314-3700.

Diablo Valley Literacy Training English tutors are needed to help non-English speaking adults to read, write and speak English well enough to function in our society. Three tutor-training workshops will be held from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Saturday, March 7; 6:30-8:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 10; and from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Saturday March 14, at the Diablo Valley Literacy Council, 4000 Clayton Rd., Concord. There is a $15 non-refundable registration fee. Call Shirley Mattes at 685-3881.

Journaling for caregivers

'Prompts' help people write their feelings—and keep their sanity

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

When B. Lynn Goodwin was caregiver for her mother for six years, she found it stressful—and lonely—as she coped with driving to medical appointments, stopping by the pharmacy, cooking, paying bills and helping with matters that had once been private. As a writer, she found solace in putting her feelings down on paper.

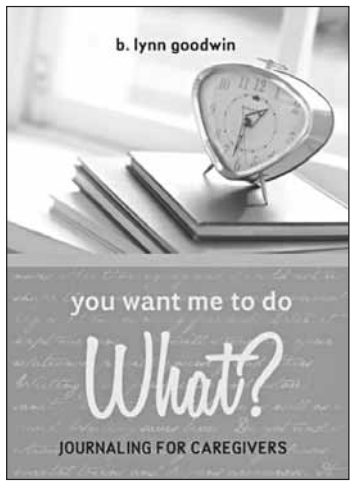
Now Goodwin wants to help others going through the same life-altering experience of being caregivers for their loved ones. To this end she has written "You Want Me to do What? Journaling for Caregivers."

It's a small paperback book, designed to be handy for writing in when a caregiver might have a moment's respite, whether waiting at the doctor's office or when the patient is napping. It offers "prompts" to start a person writing.

"Journaling is a 'way out,'" Goodwin said. "You vent, you explore. Often a place of hope will come up. Sometimes."

The opening chapters tell how "Writing Saves Lives" and "How to Write Your Story." At the end, there is information about creating your own prompts and "Honing Your Voice."

Although Goodwin was caregiver for her mother from 1994-2001, this book is not her story.



"It's not about me at all," she said. "This is about you telling your story."

Studies, like those by Dr. James W. Pennebaker at the University of Texas, Austin, have shown that journaling to express emotion can protect the body against the ravages of stress and help people to say healthy.

Goodwin found this to be true when she cared for her own mother. Her background as a caregiver, combined with her life as a writer and an English teacher, resulted in the book.

"I had listened to a friend talk about creating a book of 'prompts' for writers," she said. Journaling had helped her immeasurably during the caregiver period of her life and she knew it could help others. She remembered thinking, "If I could just get them started."

Most chapters in "Journaling for Caregivers" have prompts to get the caregiver going to express his or her feelings. The chapter on Getting Started has prompts that include:

- Today I feel ...
- Today I believe ...
- Today I want ...
- Today I am ...
- Today I hope...

After each prompt in the book are six lines for the caregiver to fill in. They can only write only a sentence, or if they have a lot to say they can continue their writing on another piece of paper or on a computer. The prompts are just to get them started writing.

Subsequent chapters with prompts are titled "Thoughts about Me"; "Thoughts about Caregiving"; "Thoughts about the One I Care For"; and "Thoughts about Reclaiming Myself," each designed to help caregivers express themselves from their hearts.

"It's great to relieve stress by journaling—and loneliness," Goodwin said. "It's a safe way to do that."

Goodwin, who is managing editor for WriterAdvice.com, once headed up the drama departments at San Ramon Valley High and California High as well as teaching English. She is directing the AAUW production, "Women Speak Out," being presented March 14, and said she gives the actresses prompts to help them start thinking as their characters.

"You are discovering new things about the character," she explained. "When you are writing about yourself, you are discovering new things about yourself."

Goodwin has been presenting her book around the Bay Area, which events draw many caregivers and has turned some author appearances into writing sessions.

"It's very clear who's been a caregiver and who has not," Goodwin said.

COURTESY OF B. LYNN GOODWIN

B. Lynn Goodwin's new book, titled "You Want Me to Do What? Journaling for Caregivers," helps them process, analyze, plan, rant and dream.

She looks back over the journaling she did while caring for her mother and says, with a smile, that some of it was "blithering."

"You write, and can obsess, in your journal," she noted. "You can write the same stuff over and over—if you can stand it—inching forward."

"People are relieved to have a 'listener,'" she said. "A journal is a very good listener." It's a safe, neutral place to get rid of one's "judgment gremlins," she said. "You can write terrible things."

"You Want Me to do What? Journaling for Caregivers" is published by Tate Publishing and Enterprises and sells in bookstores for $10.99. Goodwin is hoping to find a corporate sponsor who will provide the book for nonprofit groups such as Alzheimer's Association, Hospice of the East Bay or Family Caregiver Alliance to hand out to caregivers and volunteers.

One beauty of journaling is that it "can be all about you," writes Goodwin. "The journal validates your right to be who you are and your worth as a caregiver."

As a writer, Goodwin also appreciates the value of chronicling one's life journey.

"A lot of journals have memoir potential," she said.

"Writing gives perspective and restores sanity," Goodwin explains in the book. It also is a written record. "Do not underestimate its power." ■

Meet the author

B. Lynn Goodwin is scheduled for the following local events:

- Borders in San Ramon—noon-2 p.m., Sunday, March 29
- Pleasanton Poetry and Prose Festival—April 4
- Town of Danville Workshops:

Library: 1-3 p.m., Tuesday, March 10

Town Meeting Hall: 1-3 p.m., Thursday, April 16

Library: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Monday, May 4

Library: 1-3 p.m., Tuesday, June 2

E-mail Goodwin at Lgood67334@comcast.net

Epicure

BY JACQUI LOVE MARSHALL

Africa's imprint on America's cuisine

I used to question the value of Black History month yet, over the years, I have seen how the 28 days of cultural celebration each year have profiled people and events in ways that have created broad, lasting impact. So, consider this Epicure column my donation to Black History month.

As slaves, Africans introduced certain food items to the U.S. and adapted certain foods to their cultural tastes. Historic ship logs also show that slave traders, in a self-interested effort to yield the highest prices for their slaves, brought indigenous foods from the respective regions of Africa from which they took slaves to ensure the slaves ate well.

One staple food for various African groups was the yam, sweeter with a different skin than the sweet potato found here. In African culture, the yam has been growing in Africa for about 8,000 years. Throughout Africa, the porridge made from yams and grains and eaten with sauce or meat is a common meal.

Peanuts were introduced to Western Africa in the early 1500s by Portuguese traders. Before peanuts, West Africans relied on the Bambara nut, a legume similar to peanuts. However, the peanut quickly replaced the Bambara nut as it was easier to grow, produced a higher yield and also generated oil for lighting and cooking.

Peanuts came to the Americas through Portuguese slave traders, and slaves in America quickly adopted the peanut to their culinary needs, eating them raw, boiled, roasted, as a flavorful ingredient in soups and stews and as oil for frying. Recipes using peanuts began showing up in early American cookbooks, and peanuts became popular as snacks among working class Americans who ate them in the cheap theater seats known as the "peanut gallery."

In the 1600s, Arab traders introduced bananas to Africa and they quickly became an important crop and food item. In fact, the name "banana" was generated in West Africa and, as with peanuts, Portugese slave traders brought the fruit to America along with their slaves. Similarly, the Spanish grew bananas in the Caribbean as food for their growing population of slaves.

Okra, native to Africa, is the most typical African food of all American foods. While okra was originally brought here as food for slaves, it has become closely associated with Southern cuisine, especially the Creole cuisine of Louisiana. Okra stews, later called gumbos, were creative blends of okra, meats, fish, vegetables, rice. In fact, "gumbo" comes from the word for okra in Ghana's Twi language.

The watermelon originated in Africa over 5,000 years ago but the fruit arrived in America via the Spaniards and was grown in New England by the early 1600s. A fruit familiar to slaves, Africans grew it and made it popular throughout the Southern U.S. Because of slavery, the watermelon leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouths of some, yet its origins are positively African ... and it has become an American iconic food.

Rice has been cultivated in West Africa since 1500 B.C. In the lowlands of Senegal and Gambia, rice was grown in a wetlands system similar to the paddy system of Asia. Initially grown as food for slaves, South Carolina plantation owners produced and exported rice throughout North America. Africans brought both the rice growing expertise and slave labor that fueled the "Carolina Rice" export business and the creation of wealth among rice plantation owners.

As Africans from many different tribes arrived here in America, they were exposed to the foods and culinary traditions of other tribes. Rice eaters met yam eaters, meat eaters met fish eaters; hence, many foods and recipes were shared among tribes. On some plantations, slaves were allowed to grow familiar foods: okra, yams, watermelon, rice, bananas, peanuts, etc., but they did not always have control over their own crops or meals. Instead, they adapted to their surroundings by altering how they cooked the foods they were given.

Moreover, slaves began substituting American ingredients for items no longer available to them, thus creating whole new cuisines. In fact, what we call "Southern cuisine" was primarily created by those who did most of the cooking: black slave cooks who labored in the kitchens of Southern aristocracy, putting their own personal cooking style into the foods that were eaten in those households. Watermelon, fried chicken, flaming bananas foster, peanut butter sandwiches, rice and beans, sweet potato pie ... all American foods ... foods all influenced by African Americans.

The recipe for Gumbo includes several of the ingredients introduced into American cuisine by slavery and is a wonderful example of the many dishes created from an African-plus-American culture. It's also a delicious, heart-warming dish your family will undoubtedly love. Note: You can halve the recipes but don't fret about the large quantity ... gumbo always tastes better on Day 2 and makes for a great leftover for lunch!

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

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2/28 - In Store Educational Tasting 1-4pm

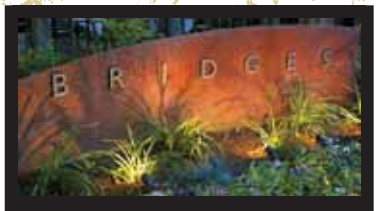
3/3 - Wine Club Pick Up Party 5-6pm

3/5 - Peay Vineyards Tasting 6-8pm. $20 tasting fee

3/7 - In Store Educational Tasting 1-4pm

3/12 - Balcom Years Tasting 6-8pm. $10 tasting fee

For more information about events please visit **www.thevineatbridges.com**



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RECIPE

'Nawlins Gumbo
(serves 16 or 2 meals for 8)

1 cup vegetable oil

1 cup all-purpose flour

6 large onions, chopped (about 12 cups)

6 red bell peppers, seeded, chopped (about 7 cups)

8 celery stalks, chopped (about 3 cups)

16 garlic cloves, chopped

1 tsp cayenne pepper

1 cup dry white wine

1/2 cup chopped fresh thyme

6 bay leaves

2 - 28-oz cans diced tomatoes with juice

4 - 8-oz bottles clam juice

4 cups low-salt chicken broth

4 pounds andouille sausage, cut crosswise into 1/2-inch-thick slices

3 pounds skinless boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1-inch cubes

2 - 16-oz packages sliced frozen okra

4 pounds peeled deveined medium shrimp

Salt and pepper

Minced fresh Italian parsley

Steamed rice

1. Heat oil in a large, heavy pot over medium-high heat until very hot and almost smoking. Add flour and stir constantly until the mixture is dark reddish brown, about 5 minutes (this is the critical "roux").

2. Add chopped onions, chopped bell peppers, and chopped celery and cook until onions are soft and brown, stirring frequently, about 20 minutes. Add garlic and cayenne and stir 2 minutes.

3. Add wine, thyme and bay leaves; bring to boil, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes with juice, clam juice, broth, sausage, and chicken; simmer until chicken is cooked through, about 15 minutes.

4. Add okra and simmer until tender, about 10 minutes. Cool slightly; chill uncovered until cold, then cover and keep chilled. This gumbo base can be made two days ahead.

5. Bring base to simmer before continuing. Add shrimp to pot and cook shrimp until just opaque in center, stirring often, about five minutes. Season gumbo to taste with salt and pepper.

6. Garnish with minced parsley and serve with steamed rice alongside.

OF NOTE

Rotary rewards excellence

The Danville Sycamore Valley Rotary club recently recognized Sycamore Valley Elementary School Student of the Year Shannon Perault, and Teacher of the Year Kathy Said. Pictured are Shannon with her parents, Said and her husband, Principal Bob Scott and Rotarians Paul Rowan and Mary Tuttle.

Buena Vista turns 20, gives to others

Kari Rees (left), the principal at Shore Acres, accepts a donation from Shannon Kelly, Buena Vista Auxiliary's Chairman-Elect, when the Auxiliary donated $5,000 worth of educational tools to support Shore Acres Elementary School's Parental Involvement nights in celebration of its 20th anniversary.

"Shore Acres was an especially worthy recipient of this donation, as it is a school with a highly committed staff and parent community who support the learning of their students," said Rose Lock, Superintendent of Elementary Education for Mount Diablo Unified School District. "The school recognizes that families are partners in the education of their students. The entire community is focused on the success of all students."

Buena Vista is an auxiliary of Assistance League of Diablo Valley. Its donation of school supplies, including dictionaries, fluency timers, bilingual books, games and flashcards, provides 65 families with items that will help reinforce concepts and support follow-through.

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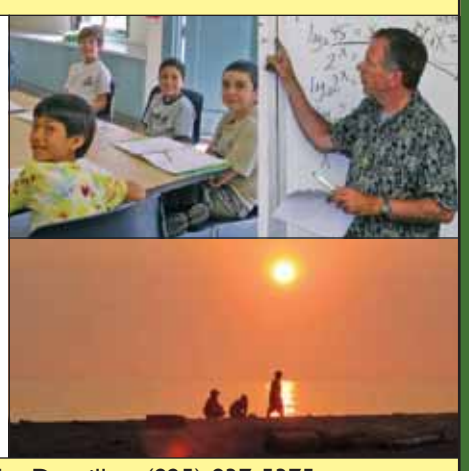

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Community Pulse

POLICE BULLETIN & LOG • OBITUARIES • BIRTHS & WEDDINGS

POLICE BULLETIN

Maintenance truck stolen in front of work crew

An early morning work detail for the Town of Danville saw their transportation drive away, after an unknown individual stole their vehicle.

Sgt. Kevin Daley said the incident occurred at Sycamore Valley Park shortly before 8 a.m. Sunday morning. Daley said the work crew had stopped at the park to do some cleanup.

The driver left the engine of the white 2009 Ford F-250 running and got out of the car after parking it near the restrooms. A moment later he saw the vehicle moving and assumed it was one of his crew driving the truck. It was only after he looked around he realized that all of his men were accounted for.

He looked back in time to see the truck drive out of the parking lot and turn west onto Camino Tassajara. The only description given of the driver was a person wearing a baseball cap.

The crew chief contacted Danville police and officers converged on the area. Daley said CHP covered the freeways, and Sheriff's Deputies from Contra Costa County searched the area along with officers from both the Danville and San Ramon police departments.

Neither truck nor driver was located.

Daley said the truck was recovered Tuesday morning on a cul de sac off Hill Meadow Place. The location was in the direction the vehicle had fled so it is possible that it was dumped immediately after being stolen.

Anyone with information on the theft is urged to contact the Danville Police Department at 314-3410.

—Geoff Gillette

POLICE LOG

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

Sunday, Feb. 15

- Suspicious vehicle stop on Diablo Road at I-680 exit at 2:33 a.m.
- Misdemeanor hit-and-run in the 400 block of Railroad Ave. at 11:40 a.m.
- Suspicious subject arrested in 100 block of Railroad Ave. at 5:18 p.m.
- Report of threats being made to person near Greenbrook Dr. and Merrilee Pl. at 6:57 p.m.
- Disturbance: Fight, arrest made in the 700 block of Diablo Rd. at 9:37 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 16

- Disturbance: Party reported in the 800 block of Lancelot Ct. at 12:43 a.m.
- Burglary auto in the 1300 block of Strawberry Ct. at 8:58 a.m.
- Forgery of fraudulent documents in the 1500 block of Mission Dr. at 12:18 p.m.
- Accident, property damage, at Greenbrook Dr. and San Ramon Valley Boulevard at 5:10 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 17

- Vehicle repossession in the 100 block of Joaquin Ct. at 2:47 a.m.
- Accident, property damage, in the 100 block of Laurel Dr. at 9:24 a.m.
- Grand theft in the 600 block of Sycamore Dr. at 11:01 a.m.
- Drugs, health and safety violation in the 500 block of Farragut Pl. at 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 18

- Identity theft in the 100 block of Liverpool St. at 9:16 a.m.
- Malicious telephone calls in the 100 block of Barcelona Ct. at 10:11 a.m.
- Petty theft in the 1000 block of Glasgow Pl. at 10:41 a.m.
- Accident, property damage only, at Crow Canyon Rd. and El Capitan Dr. at 11:14 a.m.
- Reckless driving at the intersection of Alamatos Dr. and Amigo Rd. at 1:37 p.m.
- Burglary to automobile at Adobe Dr. and Highbridge Ln. at 7:04 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 19

- Traffic stop, arrest on Diablo Road at I-680 at 1:43 a.m.
- Identity Theft in the 400 block of Alisal Ct. at 11:56 a.m.
- Vandalism in the 300 block of La Questa Dr. at 12:52 p.m.
- Misdemeanor driving under the influence at Hartz Ave. and E. Linda Mesa Dr. at 1:46 p.m.
- Arrest, reckless driving, on Boulder Creek Ct. and Cedar Ln. Ct. at 5:36 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 20

- Accident, property damage only, on Hartz Ave. at Railroad Ave. at 1:17 p.m.
- Disturbance, unwanted guest in the 100 block of Brightwood Cr. at 7:26 p.m.
- Disturbance, music in the 1300 block of Lawrence Rd. at 11:24 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 21

- Burglary to auto in the 100 block of Haskins Ranch Cr. at 7:05 a.m.
- Residential burglary in the 200 block of Still Creek Rd. at 10:56 a.m.
- Reckless Driving on El Capitan and Starlight Pl. at 2:27 p.m.
- Traffic stop, arrest in the 400 block of Front Street at 10:17 p.m.
- Disturbance, music in the 600 block of Shelby Ct. at 10:47 p.m.
- Promiscuous shooting in the 600 block of Rock Island Cr. at 11:09 p.m.

Snowboarder dies of hypothermia

Aline Christina Martins, 19, discovered in fresh snow just off trail at Dodge Ridge

by Janet Pelletier

The Tuolumne County coroner has released results from the autopsy on Aline Christina Martins, 19, who died while snowboarding Feb. 16, ruling her death as a result of hypothermia.

"The cause of death was determined to be hypothermia," said Tuolumne County Sheriff's spokesman Paul Tualla. "The staff at Dodge Ridge ski resort felt it was suffocation, but it actually was not."

Martins was discovered just feet from a trail at Dodge Ridge ski resort near Pinecrest, which was inundated with more than five feet of snow over the long President's Day weekend. Tualla said the clothing Martins was wearing may have contributed to her hypothermic condition.

"Some of the factors may have been the clothing she was wearing—she was wearing cotton sweats, a cotton sweatshirt with a nylon shell over it," Tualla said. "It was snowing pretty good on that Monday; it was coming down pretty heavy."

Tualla added that there were no signs of trauma to Martins, ruling out that she hit a tree.

Aline Martins

Martins was snowboarding with her brother when they became separated, according to Tualla.

"They got separated at some point in the late afternoon," he said. "She didn't meet up with him and he contacted the ski patrol. They sent out a search party to look for her. They eventually located her by a tree."

Sally Helm, who owns the ski resort with her husband Frank Helm, said Martins' brother first contacted the ski patrol at about 1 p.m. "We began a systematic approach to getting people out around the base area, getting all of the patrollers to the location of where she was last seen by her brother," Helm said.

Helm said when they located Martins, first responders could not detect a pulse and she was not breathing. Rescuers performed CPR, but resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful.

Martins and her family moved to Danville from Pleasanton last year, and she finished her senior year through San Ramon Valley Unified School District's Venture independent study school. She recently moved to Santa Barbara and was attending Santa Barbara City College with a major in child psychology. She was said to love children and had always enjoyed being a nanny, both locally and in Santa Barbara.

Martins was born June 26, 1989, in Brazil and became a U.S. citizen Jan. 29. She is survived by her parents, Adenise Medeiros and Armelio Martins; siblings Jardel and Murillo Martins; and relatives in Brazil. She modeled, played soccer for Amador, was a gymnast and a straight-A student. For a time, she worked at ClubSport. Services were held Saturday in Pleasanton. Donations in her honor may be made to the Children's Make A Wish Foundation. ■

OBITUARIES

Jean Viola Gretz

Jean Viola Gretz, a resident of Alamo, died Feb. 12 at the age of 93.

She was born Feb. 25, 1915, in Scarsdale, N.Y. She discovered her life-long love of travel and adventure at an early age, giving up college to work in her mother's travel agency. She met her husband Charlie while skiing and they were married for 63 years. They moved with their family of five across the country to Los Angeles in 1948, where they lived on a ranch. She became a travel agent extraordinaire, traveling the world to more than 90 countries. In the 1980s they moved north to be near their grandchildren, spending vacations at their home at Bass Lake. She was active at Community Presbyterian Church in Danville in Bible Studies and Prime Time, continuing to sell travel to the age of 92.

She was preceded in death by her dear husband Charlie. She is survived by her daughters Betsy (Tim), Bonnie; son Jeff (Jeannie); five granddaughters; five great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews; brother Bert; sister-in-law, Eva and many dear friends in California and around the world.

A celebration of her life will be held at 1 p.m., Saturday, March 7, at Community Presbyterian Church, 222 West El Pintado Road, Danville. Memorial gifts can be made to the charity of choice, or Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Edward James Padden

Edward James Padden, a resident of Alamo, died Feb. 8 at the age of 78 after a courageous battle with lung cancer.

He was born Dec. 27, 1930, an only child of Irish immigrants. He attended Fordham University, in lieu of an invitation to play baseball with the N.Y. Giants. During the Korean War he joined the Marine Corps, was invited to Officers Candidate School, and retired as a captain. He had a successful 42-year career in the insurance business, which brought him from New Jersey to California in 1972. He retired at the age of 66 and spent his remaining years doing the things he loved—reading history and biographies, traveling to many countries, spending time with his family and looking forward to Sunday night family dinners.

He is survived by his wife Linda; six children Karen (Pete), Ted (Kim), Tom (Cindy), Rick (Aimee), Chris (Kristen) and Jennifer (Mike); and 15 grandchildren. The services were held Feb. 12 at St. Joan of Arc Parish in San Ramon. Donations can be sent to Seattle Cancer & Wellness Center, 900 SW 16th St., Suite #100, Renton, WA 98057.

Wilfred Gladstone 'Mac' MacGillivray

Wilfred Gladstone "Mac" MacGillivray, a resident of Alamo, died Feb. 2 at the age of 83.

He was born Nov. 25, 1925, in Paisley, Ontario, Canada. When he was 17, he joined the Royal Canadian Navy and served during WWII. While stationed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, he met Lois Morton, whom he would eventually marry. Upon leaving the Navy, he began his career in the bread business, initially delivering his wares from a horse drawn wagon. They moved west across Canada as his career advanced, finally settling in Vancouver, British Columbia, where they had their only child, Clifford. In 1965, the family moved to South Pasadena where they made many friends. His wife passed away in 1985 following a lengthy battle with cancer. Shortly thereafter he retired from Langendorf Bakery, concluding a nearly 40-year affiliation in the bakery industry. His son and wife gave birth to his grandchild, Michael, and moved to Alamo in 1991; he joined them several years later.

He is survived by son Cliff MacGillivray; daughter-in-law Robin MacGillivray; grandson Michael MacGillivray; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. No services were planned.

Sports

A LOOK AT THE LOCAL SPORTS SCENE

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.

MVHS PREP WRAP

by Lizzy Hearne

Women's Soccer

Monte Vista women's soccer had an extremely challenging season this year. With only seven returning girls and 11 new players, the Mustangs had a lot to prove to their peers and to their community. Through weeks of hard work and perseverance, they grew as a team, and it began to show on the field. The Mustangs scored nearly 30 goals during the 2008-09 season, and allowed only 13. Junior goalkeeper Jessie May helped lead her strong defense to 13 shutouts, after senior goalkeeper Taylor Gonzales became injured. Monte Vista women's soccer ended its season with 13-8-2 record.

"If you were to compare the beginning of our season to the end, it was like we were a whole new team," said senior captain Chloe Langon. "Each girl stepped up and I am so proud to have been part of the sisterhood."

Though the graduating players will be missed, the Mustangs are looking forward to another great season next year. "Our team was very close, and we became like a family," said junior Jessie Schiff. Five of the graduating seniors will be attending Division 1 colleges in the fall.

Men's Soccer

Monte Vista men's varsity soccer endured a season full of highs and lows. Scoring more than 40 goals, the Mustangs at times played great soccer. Captains Kevin Vaughan, Jeff Chavez and Parker Doliber led a team full of spirit, energy and determination, which was evident in last minute victories over Cal and Livermore. Unfortunately, the Mustangs fell short in their first round of North Coast Section, but overall can be proud of their achievements this season. With eight returning players and a talented group of underclassmen, Monte Vista men's soccer has a bright future ahead of it.

Women's Basketball

The Monte Vista women's basketball team challenged Amador Valley High School on Feb. 18 at their home court. The Mustangs outscored Amador by more than 40 points, with a final score of 75-33. After the game, the seniors on the team were honored. Head coach Ron Hirschman announced that Niveen Rasheed's jersey, No. 24, would be retired, so no future player could wear it. Rasheed plans on attending Princeton University next fall, on a basketball scholarship. Other seniors honored were Nichole Vigar, Alexandria Whalen, Kendyl Bachelor, Christie Beeman and Amil Amin.

On Saturday, Feb. 21, the Mustangs defeated the SRVHS Wolves, at Dougherty Valley High School, 63-30. Women's basketball finished EBAL with a 13-1 record, and will play their first round of NCS at 6:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 27, at home.

Men's Basketball

Monte Vista men's varsity basketball played Amador Valley High on Tuesday, Feb. 17. The Mustangs dominated the game, outscoring the Dons, 57-44. Senior captain Mark Appel helped give the Mustangs the lead, with 3 three-pointers.

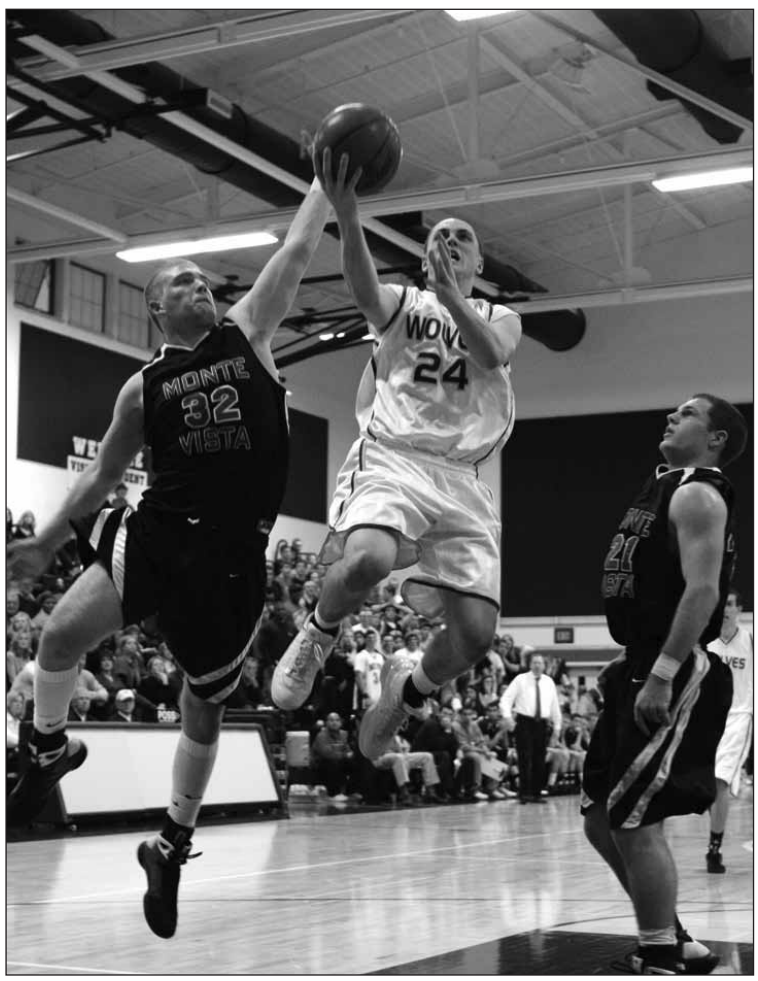
The following Saturday, the Mustangs faced off against cross-town rivals San Ramon Valley High at Dougherty High School. Monte Vista took an early lead, and scored 10 consecutive points before the Wolves even got on the scoreboard. Seniors Taylor Brewster, Brian Barbour and Tyrelle Phillips took control of the court, and led their team to a huge victory. Monte Vista beat San Ramon, 67 to 54, giving them a 12-2 EBAL record.

The Mustangs are scheduled to play in their first round of NCS at 8 p.m., Friday, Feb. 27, at their home court.

Wrestling

EBALS for varsity wrestling were held at Monte Vista on Saturday, Feb. 21. Two seniors, Alex Duran and Felix Manan, won their matches and are moving on to NCS. Juniors Vasili Karagiannis, Grant Dakin and Nick Ricart are moving on as well.

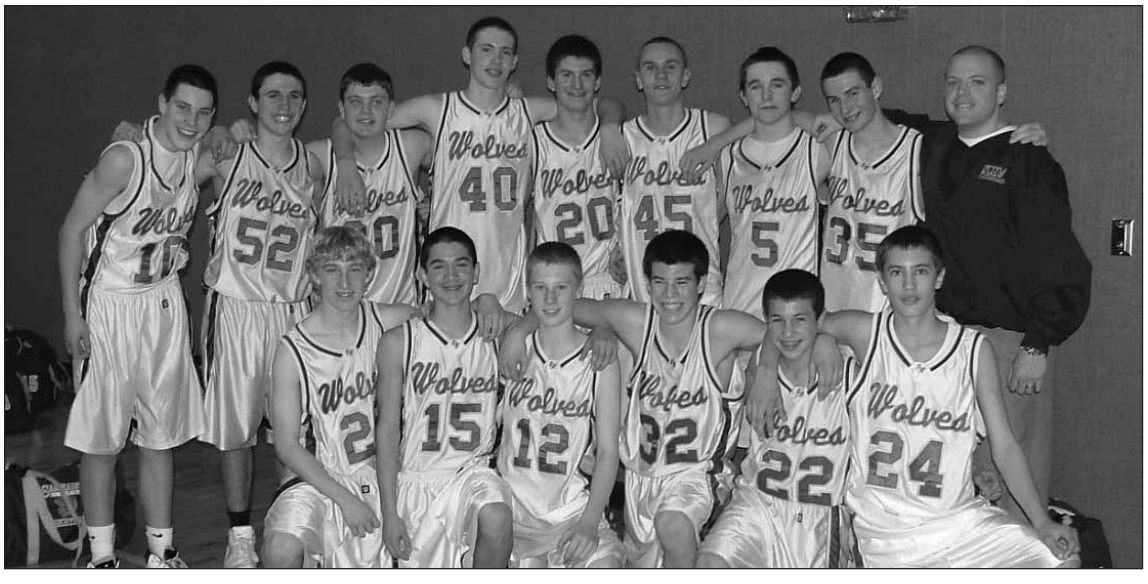
NCS will be held in Newark during the weekend of Feb. 28. From there, wrestlers who advance will move on to the state competition in Bakersfield.



CHRIS SCOTT/WWW.CALSPORTSPHOTO.COM

Rivalry continues

No. 32 Zack Ertz of Monte Vista blocks San Ramon Valley's No. 24 Joe Southwick as their cross-town rivalry continues on the varsity basketball court Saturday night. Monte Vista won, 67-54, giving it a 12-2 record in the East Bay Athletic League. The Mustangs play their first round of North Coast Section at 8 p.m. tonight at home.



Wolves triumph

The San Ramon Valley High School freshman basketball team is all smiles after clinching East Bay Athletic League first-place honors for the 2008-09 season after a 62-40 victory over cross-town rival Monte Vista on Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Dougherty Valley High School gym. Both squads entered the game tied for first, but the Wolves stretched a 10-point halftime lead with a 19-point outburst in the third period to pull away. The frosh finished 11-3 in EBAL (18-8 overall).

Team members are (front, l-r) Thomas Palumbo, Josh Fowler, Brody Lee, Griffen Kapulica, Clayton Correa, James Carter, (back) Anthony Villa, Patrick Massoni, Brian Peterson, Jake Simonich, Gavin Foltz, Michael Hernbroth, Chris Mullin Jr., Logan Louks, Coach Kenon Willis.

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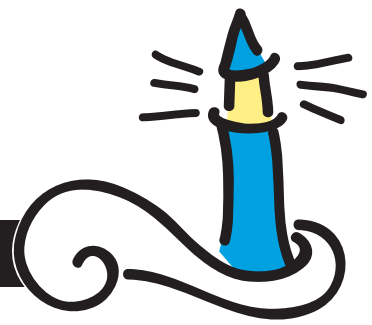

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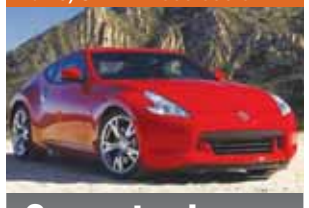

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Real Estate

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OPEN HOMES THIS WEEKEND

DANVILLE

5 Bedrooms

16 Hermosa		**$2,100,000**
Sat/Sun 1-5	Prudential CA Realty	577-4911

LIVERMORE

3 Bedrooms

306 Clarke Avenue		**$369,000**
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel Realtors	1-4

5 Bedrooms

2318 Peregrine Street		**$790,000**
Sat/Sun 1-4	Remax Accord	640-8824

PLEASANTON

1 Bedrooms

7880 Canyon Meadows Dr. #E		**$264,950**
Sun 12-3	Hometown GMAC	200-2457

2 Bedrooms

2130 Alexander Way		**$442,000**
Sun 1-4		
Keller Williams Tri-Valley Realty		397-4244

3 Bedrooms

4040 Jensen		**$529,000**
Sun 2-4	Alain Pinel Realtors	398-6706
2860 El Capitan Drive		**$549,500**
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel Realtors	846-6500

4 Bedrooms

1139 Mataro Court		**$1,029,900**
Sun 1-4	Remax Accord	918-3395
532 Rosso Ct		**$1,099,000**
Sun 1-4		
Keller Williams Tri-Valley Realty		202-6298
1608 Cindy Way		**$1,229,000**
Sat/Sun 12-5	Alain Pinel Realtors	785-7777
1624 Cindy Way		**$1,329,000**
Sat/Sun 12-5	Alain Pinel Realtors	785-7777
1640 Cindy Way		**$1,349,000**
Sat/Sun 12-5	Alain Pinel Realtors	785-7777
836 Piemonte Drive		**$1,699,000**
Sun 1-4		
Keller Williams Tri-Valley Realty		980-0273
3206 Novara Way		**$1,799,000**
Sat/Sun 1-4		
Keller Williams Tri-Valley Realty		980-0273
1766 Orchard Way		**$699,000**
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel Realtors	519-9080
2586 Skimmer Court		**$875,000**
Sun 1-4	Alain PInel Realtors	462-7653

5 Bedrooms

1368 Royal Creek Court		**$1,238,888**
Sun 1-4	Keller Williams Realty	260-2508
3776 Newton Way		**$1,399,000**
Sat 2-5/Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel Realtors	785-7777
1632 Cindy Way		**$1,449,000**
Sat/Sun 12-5	Alain Pinel Realtors	785-7777
1436 Irongate Court		**$1,485,000**
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel Realtors	519-9080
2215 Martin Avenue		**$1,675,000**
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel Realtors	519-9080
5179 Muirwood Drive		**$929,000**
Sun 1-4	Alain Pinel Realtors	785-7777

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Joe Combs

24 Hour Free Audio Tour (866) 374-0607

Wendt Ranch Open Space and View

Highly upgraded 4 bedroom 4.5 bath. Large guest suite and bonus room. $1,290,000

West Side Alamo 5 Bedroom

Situated on a flat .49 acre lot, with 4297 sq.ft. Tuscan Beauty was built in 2003. All the bells and whistles. $1,698,500

Greenbrook Area Remodel

A perfect "10." 5 bedroom 3 full bath remodel. 2,953 sq. ft. Stainless and granite kitchen, on .23 acres. Walk to Greenbrook School, backs Iron Horse Trail. $1,099,000

Danville El Pintado Loop

Updated Home and guest house on 1.7 acre parcel. Horse Set Up, Work Shop, Pool and more $1,770,000

Read Joe and Nancy's Real Estate Column in Alamo Today!

RE/MAX

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Read this – Alamo's future depends on it

For three years, the Alamo Incorporation Movement has worked to make Alamo our town. Why?

Local control and local accountability

Because we love Alamo with its large lots, horses and small town ambience.
Because with an accountable Alamo Town Council we will control our future.
Because we are losing police and other services due to County fiscal problems.

The County is broke

It's slashing services, driven by an 8% drop in property tax revenues. And a $1.7 billion unfunded retiree benefit obligation. And another $1 billion lost from the pension fund. It will cut $7 million from the Sheriff's budget next year, forcing another major cut in police presence in Alamo while crime is increasing. The County is considering a utility tax applied only to unincorporated areas but voted on by the whole county. And increases in business license fees.

Incorporation affordable

Alamo can afford incorporation with a stable property tax base (2% annual turnover) and assessed values far below market. Alamo's assessed values increased 5% in 2008 and its mean house price rose 2% in the fourth quarter of 2008. While the County's fell 50%. And with new Vehicle License Fee revenues only available to incorporated towns, paid under a formula that removes the impact of low auto sales.

Contract towns are efficient

We can operate the Town of Alamo much more efficiently than the County. Contracting for resources only when we need them. Far lower employee benefit costs when we do hire. Contracting with a neighboring city for improved police services at a 20-30% cost reduction. And providing better services to Alamo's citizens.

Vote Yes on Measure A

We can prevent really bad road and traffic decisions – and make good decisions much faster. Incorporating Alamo makes sense – and this is your one chance to do it. Ignore the deliberate misinformation from Alamo's developer-funded opponents. Vote Yes on A.

The Contra Costa Times/San Ramon Valley Times, Danville Weekly and Alamo Today all endorsed a Yes vote on Measure A.

They don't believe Alamo's opponents. Neither should you.

Visit www.alamoinc.org for the facts about Alamo incorporation

Paid for by YES on A-AIM for Incorporation. 2394 Ironwood Place Alamo CA 94507. ID 1313466