

# The Diablo Gazette

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## The Lady Bug Project, Addressing Period Poverty

pg. 3

Stephanie Prescott and husband Brad with their donation of Lady Bug kits of menstrual products to for those who lack access or cannot afford them in Contra Costa County.

PRSRT STD  
 ECRWSS  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 9 Reasons to Visit Puerto Rico
- Martinez: Seeking the Best of Martinez
- Concord's New Rent Stabilization Ordinance Suspended
- Brookfield's Naval Weapons Station Development Term Sheet Approved, Now What?

Book Review, Movie and Streaming Review, Calendar of Events by City and much more...

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# Publisher's Notes

by David King

I will start with a salute to Clayton which just celebrated its 60th Year as an incorporated city. Clayton is going through some bitter and divisive growth/anti-growth and mild political pain, but still remains one of East Bay's most charming and friendly communities. I look forward to its Art and Wine Festival, Concerts in the Grove, bocce, and Oktoberfest every year. Salute!

Congratulations to Kori Barton. After the successful publishing of her children's book "C is for Concord," an alphabetical tour of Concord, she has now completed "W is for Walnut Creek." You and your children will thoroughly enjoy reading this together. It is an extraordinarily simple way of educating them on some highlights and history of Walnut Creek — A is for Aquanauts.

Barton is on to something here. This concept should work for every city. How many cities are there in Bay Area, California, even the country? I wish her fame and fortune!

Another author from Concord, Glen Dahlgren just completed book signing events at Half Price Bookstore and Barnes and Noble. Dahlgren is the award-winning author of the acclaimed book series, the "Chronicles of Chaos," which fantasy legend Piers Anthony says is "what fantasy fiction should be." He is a two-time winner of the Readers' Favorite Gold Medal for YA Epic Fantasy for both his debut novel, "Child of Chaos," and the prequel, "Game of War." The former also won the American Fiction Award for Fantasy and the latter also won the Dante Rossetti Award for YA Fantasy.

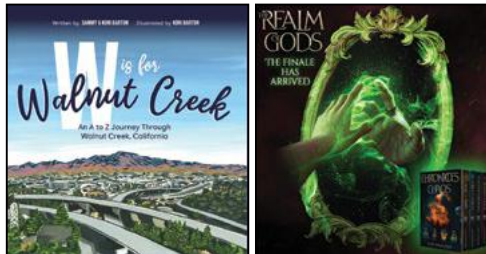
Barton and Dahlgren books can be found on Amazon and local bookstores.

I always write my "Notes" last for the Gazette. As I am manically pecking at the keyboard to meet our printer's (SF Examiner) deadline, I am sadly missing today's (March 30) Spring Brewfest in Concord. With the photos and comments that I have been receiving today from those who attended, it looks like a big thank you and congratulations are in order for organizer, Justin Crossley, and the Todos Santos Business

## Accolades All-Around



Glen Dahlgren enjoying a book signing at Barnes & Noble bookstore



Kori Barton & Glen Dahlgren's books.



Many enjoying the Spring Brewfest in Concord.

Association for throwing another successful festival Downtown. I do not have an attendance count, but the photos say plenty—a job well done. Cheers.

Over in Martinez, I am excited that Diablo Gazette has been nominated as a 'Best of Martinez' in the media category. (More on this on page 17.)

Now Diablo Gazette needs your vote, even if you do not live in Martinez. I would like to have a good showing in this contest. We are currently in second place. Regardless of the outcome, we are flattered and humbled.

Go to [www.thebestofmartinez.com](http://www.thebestofmartinez.com) and vote.

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# A Period Should End a Sentence, Not a Girl's Education

After spending most of adult life working internationally on humanitarian projects and more recently having completed a five-year project in Honduras providing clean water and bathrooms to 34 schools, I became aware of the issues surrounding sanitary supplies for women and girls. It never crossed my mind that I would discover a similar problem right here in Concord.

In a meeting with students from Diablo Valley College, I learned a new phrase, "Period Poverty," a term used to describe a lack of access to proper menstrual products and the education needed to use them effectively. The main cause is the lack of affordability and accessibility of products, coupled with cultural stigma and other societal factors. I was shocked that such a problem existed in our county.

Stephanie Prescott, a member of Concord Rotary Club, a mother of five children herself, after learning about this problem, decided to do something about it. She started calling County Health Services, which led her to schools, and outreach programs. She quickly realized there was a huge issue in the county.

Gathering a few of her friends, they brainstormed as to what could be done. She would make it her business to help women and girls in need by providing them with the necessary products. With a \$1,000 donation, she began buying essential supplies and holding house parties where they would pack and then deliver sanitary kits to Concord Adult Homeless Shelter, the Monument Crisis Center and Shelter Inc. The Lady Bug project was born. I interviewed this bubbly, energetic and charming lady.

## "Why Lady Bug?"

"It was the name we used for my granddaughter, and my team of lady helpers liked it, so "Ladybuggers." We decided to purchase red polka dot paper bags and make discrete Ladybug bags which we fill with assorted products. They look cute. Presentation is so important. We are dealing with such a taboo subject and I wanted to make it easy to be around to remove the intimidating aspects of it. That also meant educating people. In the beginning I just supplied essential items, but after talking with providers and teachers, I developed a series of simple educational flyers in English and Spanish which are now included."

## "When did you actually start doing this?"

"Three years ago, in 2021. I knew there was a national problem but learned that here in Contra Costa one in four women and girls cannot afford menstrual products. I had no idea where my idea would take me. Now I deliver products to 21 centers in Concord, Pleasant Hill, Martinez, Walnut Creek, Antioch and even Richmond. I am building relationships, and the response is wonderful: Concord Library, Contra Costa Family Justice Center-Concord, Hope Solutions and Winter Night's Shelter, the Trinity Center Walnut Creek and many more."

## "And how many bags have you delivered so far?"

"A little over 15,000."

## "That's amazing. But how did you fund this project?"

"I started applying for small grants and writing begging letters. I received a huge



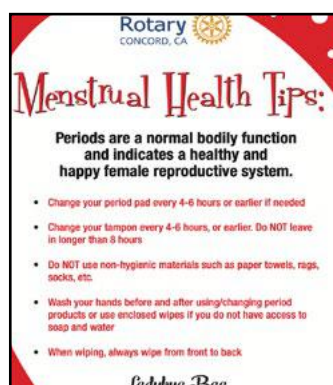
Ladybug working with Ygnacio Valley High School and DVCO Outside Lands concert



Bags delivered to Monument Crisis Center



Ladybug Program menstrual Health Management presentation to Concord Public Library



Rotary Club Informational Flyer



Ladybug Bag assembly party with Ygnacio Valley Robotics club and Interact Club

amount of free products from the U by KOTEX/Alliance for Period Supplies which is wonderful. The Period Project has been very generous and donated many pallets of supplies to the Lady Bug Program. You cannot move inside my home just now. I'm using every available space for storage. Concord Rotary Club also supported my efforts with a grant."

The Period Project is a National non-profit organization based in South Carolina whose stated purpose is to eradicate period poverty.

## "What attracted you to this work?"

"Education has always been a passion of mine. Before I started my family, I taught Human Sexuality to middle school students. My degree is in Community Health Education and Human Sexuality was part of it."

## "Where would you like the project to go?"

"That's a great question. I know we are meeting a real need, but there are two parts to it. There is a sense that in supplying shelters, it is almost a bottomless pit. I get so frustrated at times. Staff there are so overwhelmed with providing beds, food, clothing etc. there is no time for education. There should be county or state funding, a budget line item specifically for feminine hygiene products. We are simply providing essential products but without a long-term solution. That needs to change. Schools on the other hand, are a different issue."

The Lady Bug Program actively serves many Title 1 schools in our county. Stephanie has made presentations on menstruation management to a few schools. She states that while their response is gratifying, she is concerned with the large amount of incorrect and unknown information regarding the

physiology of puberty and healthy menstruation among our

budding teenagers.

Sadly, there seems to be a fear in the public school system that learning about the human body, simply physiology, equates to encouraging teenagers to engage in sexual behaviors.

"Before I make a presentation, I like to meet with the parents and show them in detail what will be involved. They get to see the full PowerPoint, and so far, I have not received a single negative response."

The State passed AB 367 in 2021 'Menstrual Equity for All.' It requires all public schools in California to provide free menstrual products in their restrooms, but it is not fully implemented.

Schools have to apply for funding. If a student needs supplies, she must approach a teacher or the custodian, which can be

embarrassing. Others will miss school completely because of lack of access to supplies.

"I find this unacceptable. I am an advocate for having dispensing machines (dispensing free products) in school bathrooms, family shelters, libraries, and community centers. But meanwhile, through the Ladybug project, we will continue what we started, until the State catches up."

## "And what about continued funding?"

"It's difficult, as you can imagine. Right now, my annual expenses are almost \$20,000. Female menstrual products are expensive. Unless you know of some wealthy donors, I will just have to keep looking for grants."

There are people in our communities doing extraordinary things and Stephanie Prescott is one of them — and she is your neighbor.

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# “Commissions” Lawsuit: What

## Does It Mean For Californians?

You may have heard about the antitrust lawsuit by home sellers against the NAR (National Association of Realtors) and several major brokerages over the way agent commissions are set. The National Association of Realtors have agreed to a \$418 million settlement.

In one aspect of the complex lawsuit, sellers and/or buyers felt that sale prices were higher because there was a buyer agent commission included in the MLS. In some states, they felt that it was not disclosed and so folks were unaware of them. In California we have had the listing agent compensation and buyer agent compensation separated and disclosed in our listing agreements for quite some time. More than likely this will add to a formal contract with a buyer and their agent called a Buyer Broker Agreement; thereby formalizing their fiduciary duty to the buyer, exclusivity protection, and payment for their services, much like the listing contract with the seller and listing agent.

Buyer compensation will be separated, no longer part of the MLS listing. You are going to think this is crazy, but this is not necessarily a bad thing. Is it best for each party in a transaction to have their own representation? There is a reason attorneys will not represent both parties in a negotiation. They cannot possibly aggressively protect opposing interests. It is a conflict of interest to do so. If one wants the best advice, would you ask someone who has a conflict of interest?

As it has always been, all commissions are negotiable. Some feel the sellers will not want to pay a commission to a buyer's agent (thinking it through, maybe/maybe not).

### allowed to be advertised in the MLS

However, commissions can be advertised in social media, fliers, marketing and agent and broker websites. If listing agents and sellers are vying for the largest buyer pool, hoping for multiple offers, will they advertise their buyer agent compensation? You can bet they will.

Will it cut down the number of buyers who can purchase? Possibly. If there is no offer of compensation to their agent, buyers may not have the resources to provide down payment, closing costs and buyer agent commissions?

Will buyers move on to other properties, where sellers are offering compensation to buyer agents? Or, will they just drop out and decide not to buy? Buyers can ask the seller to pay compensation, but will they be too afraid the seller will say no? Or will they ask their agent to only show them properties where there is an offer of compensation to their buyer agent?

No one knows how it will all play out, with buyers struggling to come up with down payments and closing costs, it might be more of an issue than the litigators even realized. Sellers, it is still your decision whether and how much to offer compensation to a buyer's agent and how it will impact the marketing of your property and whether buyers will make an offer. It will all play out, but at least we will have more formal representation for all parties of the transaction. That is a good thing to build upon.



buystagesell.com

**Commission will no longer be**

### MONTHLY MARKET REPORT

#### FEBRUARY 2024

CONCORD		CLAYTON	
Existing SFR Median Price		Existing SFR Median Price	
<b>\$856K</b>		<b>\$1.18M</b>	
% Change from Last Year		% Change from Last Year	
<b>+5.7%</b>		<b>-1.7%</b>	
MARKET COMPETITION		MARKET COMPETITION	
Median Days on Market	<b>10</b>	Median Days on Market	<b>8</b>
Sales-to-List Price %	<b>101.7%</b>	Sales-to-List Price %	<b>100%</b>
% of Active Listings with Reduced Prices	<b>20.0%</b>	% of Active Listings with Reduced Prices	<b>0.0%</b>

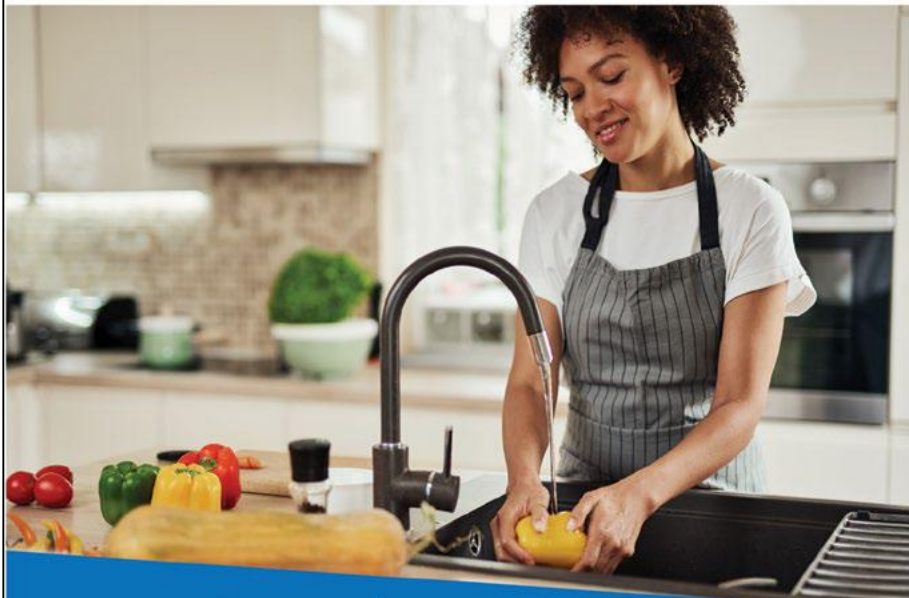
Source: Car.org

Terrylynn Fisher

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**Jim Diaz**  
Mayor, Clayton  
jdiaz@claytonca.gov

## Clayton Mayor

# A Letter from the Mayor

March 2024

*Dear Friends and Neighbors,*

For those of you not in attendance at our Tuesday, March 19, 2024, Council Meeting, the City Council approved the process to authorize the search for both an Interim City Manager and new City Manager.

To that end, at the upcoming City Council Meeting on April 2, the City Council is planning to select and appoint an Interim City Manager. This, as you may know, is due to the pending departure of our current City Manager, who has taken the position of City Manager with Suisun City in Solana County.

Also at the March 19 City Council Meeting, the Council directed the Staff to initiate the process to declare surplus portions of the City-owned open space property along Marsh Creek Road adjacent to the Oakhurst Country Club's lower parking lot. This is the result of the City receiving an interest from a developer for a potential residential project.

Further, at the upcoming April 16 City Council Meeting, the Council plans to appoint the third member to the Financial Sustainability Committee. With the third Committee member's appointment, the Financial Sustainability Committee will have the necessary team to review the City's Financial resources and then recommend a course and direction for the Financial future needs of the City.

Regarding April Civic events in

Clayton, there are two activities of note:

**Clayton Cleans Up -** Saturday, April 20, 2024, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon. This Annual event, co-sponsored by the City of Clayton and Republic Services, is an excellent way to help Clayton pick-up and remove excess trash and debris. Join us at City Hall where Republic Services will provide a terrific Bar-B-Q of Hot-Dogs and Hamburgers for all.

**2024 Clayton Art & Wine Festival - Saturday -Sunday, April 27-28, 2024.** This Annual festival in Downtown offers great food, wonderful vendors, beer and wine, and live entertainment, The Art & Wine Festival is always a terrific April event.

As I mentioned in my previous Mayor's Column, the City Council and I look forward to the events celebrating Clayton's 60th Anniversary of its 1964 Inauguration. We encourage everyone to get involved. Please contact City Hall if you would like to volunteer your time or expertise.

As your mayor, I will work hard to maintain Clayton's charm and character while running an open and transparent local government.

You can reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns at 925-673-7316 or JimD@claytonca.gov.

Let's make 2024 a year to remember in Clayton. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

*Jim*



**Edi Birsan**  
Concord Mayor  
cityofconcord.org

## Concord Mayor

# Land Acknowledgement—Sort Of

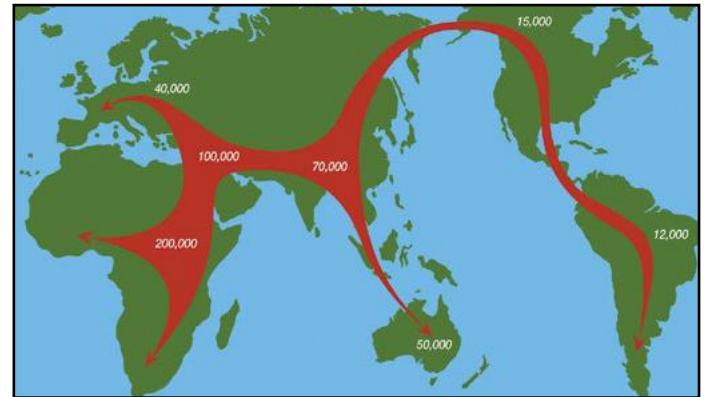
There is a trend that is growing called Land Acknowledgement with the typical format being: "This is to acknowledge that the (tribes) were the indigenous people here and their land was taken and that we are on that land".

While it is valid to note the past abuses, no details are given about the history from the point of the implied origin to the current day, the implication being that the current occupants are the ones that did the 'taking'. This has recently been extended by one of the major political parties wherein the District Director at their recent meeting expanded it to include all 'indigenous peoples' including naming the Aztecs and the Palestinians as victims of having their land taken.

We should understand that indigenous simply means the earliest known. In this area, between 10,000 and 30,000 years ago, there was a migration of folks from northeast Asia (currently known as Russia) across a land bridge to Alaska and then down the coast all the way to Argentina.

However, where did they come from? Currently, the evidence seems to point that somewhere in central East Africa the current human species developed and started to take over the planet. So maybe we should all be considered African — at least until someone discovers an even older set of bones elsewhere.

Throughout human history, our story is about the arrival of people and either the assimilation, displacement or annihilation of the previous people of the land. We know that various tribes/people came and went, some of which we know how, such as the Carthaginians, but not the cause for the end of the



Archaic humans ventured into Eurasia in waves, not always successfully. They may have started their journey in North Africa or West Asia. Credit: Peter Hermes Furian / Adobe Stock

Anasazi.

What complicates the definition of indigenous is also the lack of records or even the concept of specific ownership of lands. It is not as if there was a central land registry somewhere that details maps of what parcels were owned by whom.

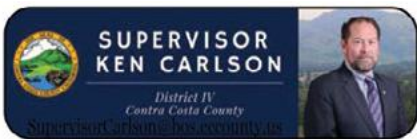
Whereas, looking back from today, we do have a significant land registry and associated map concept that would run something like this: currently, the National entity is the United States with individuals and companies owning land as recorded.

The U.S. obtained the land because of the War of 1845 against Mexico. The treaty required the U.S. to recognize the land ownership by individuals as detailed by Mexico in what is known as the Mexican Land Grants which covered most of Central Contra Costa and elsewhere.

Previously the Mexican government detailed and gave recognition of land ownership to its chosen citizens and clearly excluded anyone who was there prior to the arrival of the Spanish explorers and attempted colonists.

The Mexicans were originally part of the Spanish empire who claimed all the land and engaged in a series of wars with

**Continues on p.20**



# Contra Costa Animal Shelter to Expand Services with Help of Measure X Funds

Contra Costa Animal Services (CCAS) is committed to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of all people and animals in our community. CCAS's responsibilities involve the investigations and enforcement of inhumane and dangerous animal allegations, domestic animal rescues, and removal of deceased domestic animals. They also respond to calls about livestock on the loose, deceased wildlife on public property, and investigations of animals potentially exposed to rabies.

According to California Law, cities and counties are mandated to provide animal services. Every city in Contra Costa County, except Antioch, contracts with the County for these services.

As a municipal shelter, all animals, except wildlife and exotic animals, that are abandoned, found, or taken into custody must be accepted at the shelter.

The most well-known service CCAS

provides is animal adoption. In 2023, 2,338 animals were adopted. The number of adoptions has increased every year since 2020. CCAS has worked hard to remove financial barriers and increased offsite opportunities to adopt, including mobile adoption events and community partnerships.

CCAS also runs the Animal Foster Program which allows residents to temporarily care for animals and provide a break from the shelter. Other services include taking lost pet reports, animal ordinance enforcement, and reunification services. CCAS manages the licensing for all the pets across Contra Costa County.

Lastly, CCAS is one of the largest providers of low-cost spay/neuter (S/N) surgeries in Contra Costa County. These services on the private market are very costly. This program's impact has progressively increased over the last four

years (2,378 in 2020 to 4,226 in 2023). CCAS has accomplished this through community S/N clinics, S/N of every animal that is adopted or returned to their owner from the shelter, and through grants to community organizations to provide additional low-cost S/N services. However, the demand far exceeds the capacity, and the Measure X funds will assist in expanding this program.

In December, I garnered support from my colleagues for a one-time distribution of \$750,000 over three years in Measure X funds to support CCAS low-cost spay/neuter services, vaccination services, pet retention, and micro-chipping efforts. As a dog owner myself, I want to ensure that CCAS can help owners keep their pets and thrive.

CCAS staff choose this challenging profession out of a profound love and commitment to animals. They provide

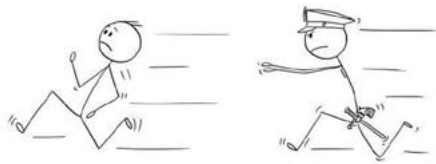


care for the animals, resources to the animals' families, and assistance when an animal is separated from their home. CCAS staff are passionate and want to make a positive impact on the lives of animals in our community. I invite you to learn more about CCAS, please visit <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/9974/Animal-Services>.





# A Prisoner Shot-161 years ago



Robert Spencer, confined in the county jail at Martinez, endeavored to make his escape on Saturday last, while his cell was open for the reception of another inmate. Officer Tilton was guarding the door, with whom the prisoner shook hands, and then dashed by him and ran out of the building. The officer followed him as rapidly as possible, calling on him to stop, but on gaining the open space, Spencer bounded off like a deer and was rapidly increasing the distance between himself and his pursuer. Finding it impossible to overtake him, Mr. Tilton drew his pistol and fired, the ball taking effect in the muscle of the back.

He was finally captured in the Morgan House and taken back to the jail. His wound was dressed by Doctor C.A. Ruggles. The ball had not been extracted at last accounts, but the wound was not considered dangerous.

Spencer is insane, and has since been sent to Stockton, but the officer had no knowledge of this fact at the time of the escape.

Contra Costa Gazette-February 7, 1863

**MORGAN HOUSE. MARTINEZ.**

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**PRISONER SHOT.**—Robert Spencer, confined in the county jail at Martinez, endeavored to make his escape on Saturday last, while his cell was open for the reception of another inmate. Officer Tilton was guarding the door, with whom the prisoner shook hands, and then dashed by him and ran out of the building. The officer followed him as rapidly as possible, calling on him to stop, but on gaining the open space Spencer bounded off like a deer, and was rapidly increasing the distance between himself and his pursuer. Finding it impossible to overtake him, Mr. Tilton drew his pistol and fired, the ball taking effect in the muscle of the back. He was finally captured in the Morgan House and taken back to the jail. His wound was dressed by Dr. C. A. Ruggles. The ball had not been extracted at last accounts, but the wound was not considered dangerous. Spencer is insane, and has since been sent to Stockton, but the officer had no knowledge of this fact at the time of the escape.

## Earth Day Events Happening Saturday, April 20

The City of Concord's Public Works staff is facilitating several Earth Day cleanup events throughout Concord on Saturday, April 20, in partnership with community groups and volunteers who want to beautify our parks and open spaces and show some love to Mother Earth.

Saturday, April 20, 8 a.m. – noon. Please bring your own gardening gloves, and be sure to wear sunscreen and a hat, and bring some water. City will provide all needed supplies for each location.

To get involved, check this list for a project in your neighborhood.

Newhall Park — Clean up and remove debris from creeks, going from Newhall Parkway to Second Lake Shoreline. Meet at Newhall Parkway parking lot.

Ygnacio Valley Park — Spread mulch around the perimeter fence lines in several areas around the park. Meet at the front of the tot lot.

Dave Brubeck Park — Spread mulch around the perimeter fence lines in several areas around the park. Meet by the stage parking lot.

Markham Nature Park — Markham volunteer group will have projects for anyone wanting to volunteer in the international gardens. Meet at parking lot.

Hillcrest Park — Clean up and remove debris from creeks, going from Grant Street to the spillway exiting Hillcrest



Park. Meet at disc golf first tee.

Monument Blvd. — Pick up litter along the new Monument Blvd pedestrian and bike pathway to Detroit Ave. Meet behind skate park on trail.

San Miguel Rd. — Pick up litter along San Miguel Rd. from Cowell to Treat Blvd. Meet at corner of Systron, Donner and San Miguel.

Downtown District — Pick up litter around Todos Santos Plaza, Willow Pass Rd., Mt. Diablo St., Grant St. to Port Chicago. Meet at Todos Santos Plaza behind stage.

Lime Ridge — Weeding around newly planted wildflowers and native plants. Spread mulch around plants. Meet at the parks building.

No need to RSVP, but please scan the QR code and sign our Online waiver form. Contact Tyce.Dekker @cityofconcord.org for more information.



Local News Items from Other Sources

## In Case You Missed It...

### New(er) Electric Vehicle Chargers In Concord's Park & Shop Shopping Center



Park & Shop on Willow Pass Rd. in Concord recently installed a few new electric vehicle charging stations.

### New Speed Bumps, Stop Signs Make Their Debut In Pleasant Hill



The following information is from the Pleasant Hill Police Department: We have some new speed bumps and stop signs around town, including these locations:

- Viking Dr./Odin
- Viking Dr./Ruth
- Pleasant Hill Rd/Paradise
- Oak Park Blvd./Wendell

Please help us keep Pleasant Hill safe and remember to slow down, proceed carefully, and always be aware of pedestrians near these intersections.

### Concord High School Gets New "Bears" Sign



### Exhibit Features 9 East Bay Photographers:

Nine East Bay photographers, including two who have shown at San Francisco's de Young Museum, are featured in a photography and art exhibit in Walnut Creek.

The show, which runs now through May 31 at the De Valle Educational Center, is the culmination of an advanced photography workshop led by longtime Acalanes Adult Education photography instructor Bill Helsel.

The nine photographers are Jonathan Bitz, Kimberley Enright, Rob Hamner, Jeff Heyman, Rich London, Sunyo Suhaimi, Robin Sullivan, Westeigh and Rosemary Wheeler. Also displayed are paintings and drawings by students in several Acalanes Adult Education art classes.

### Owl Boxes in Parks Installed to Help with Rodent, Gopher Control

Concord's Public Works Parks Division installed seven owl boxes in Newhall Park. These boxes are designed to utilize barn owls for rodent and gopher control, as well as reduce costs of contract rodent control services.



More owl boxes will soon be installed at Willow Pass Park, Hillcrest Community Park, and Boatwright Park.

### Mayor's Cup Charity Golf Tournament Set for May 10

The annual Mayor's Cup charity golf tournament will tee off at Diablo Creek Golf Course on Friday, May 10. This year's beneficiaries include the First Tee of Contra Costa, the Concord Junior Giants, and the Rainbow Community Center.

Registration and lunch at 11 a.m., and a shotgun start time of 12:30 p.m. It will conclude following dinner, a raffle, and an awards presentation. The entry fee is \$150 per person, \$125 for seniors ages 60+. This fee includes a golf shirt, lunch, golf cart and green fee, awards dinner, and prizes. For more information and to register by May 3, visit City Calendar at cityofconcord.org.

### Concord Restaurant Has Robot Delivering Food To Tables

If you've always dreamed of a robot delivering your food, you're in luck! The Cajun Crack'n Restaurant in the Willows Shopping Center in Concord has a new robot (we'll call her Rosey).

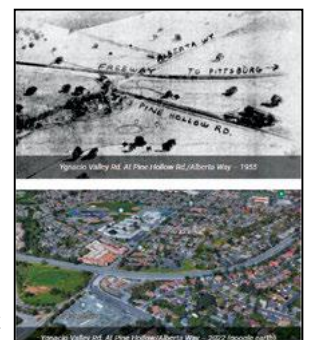


The robot plays music and you can interact with it. "Our food got to the table so fast it was still hot and we had to wait for it to cool down. Overall it was a good experience," reported one patron.

### Claycord Online Museum – The Freeway To Pittsburg (Ygnacio Valley Rd.) At Pine Hollow Rd./ Alberta Way In 1955

Look! It's Ygnacio Valley Rd. when it was called "The Freeway To Pittsburg," in 1955.

Back then, they considered this a freeway, and at one time, they even thought about making it an extension of hwy.24.



More stories at [Claycord.com](http://Claycord.com)



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**Financially Savvy**  
by Kristin Peterson  
Pacific Service Credit Union, [pacificservice.org](http://pacificservice.org)

## The Rising Popularity of ADUs

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) have become a transformative solution to the evolving housing landscape. These compact, secondary residences, also known as granny flats or in-law suites, offer some homeowners an innovative and practical way to maximize property use. Typically constructed in the backyard or attached to the main residence, ADUs provide added living space without compromising the existing structure.

ADUs address the growing need for affordable housing, offering a practical option for multi-generational living or can be a useful source of rental income. Their flexibility in design and functionality allows for customization based on the homeowner's preferences and local zoning regulations. Many cities and municipalities have recognized the benefits of ADUs, relaxing regulations to encourage their construction.

### Tips to Get Started

- Research local regulations: Before diving in, familiarize yourself with local zoning laws, building codes and permit regulations.

- Design a functional space: Plan the layout to optimize space and functionality. Consider the unit's purpose – whether it's for family members, rental income or a home office – and tailor the design accordingly.

- Select a qualified contractor: Choose a licensed and experienced contractor with expertise in ADU construction. Verify their license,

check references and review previous projects.

- Budget planning: Establish a realistic budget covering construction costs, permits and any unforeseen expenses. Obtaining multiple quotes from contractors can help control costs.

### How to Pay for It

- Cash-out refinance: You can refinance your existing first mortgage to take cash out to pay for the ADU. Your existing mortgage balance will increase, but first mortgage loans typically offer lower rates than other types of loans.

- Construction loan: This type of loan typically has shorter terms and may require a different payment structure compared to traditional mortgages.

- Home equity loan or line of credit: Using the equity in your existing home is a popular choice for paying for an ADU project. This allows you to borrow against the value of your home and pay back the balance over time.

As the demand for affordable housing options continues to rise, ADUs are an innovative and practical solution for some homeowners. The real estate team at Pacific Service Credit Union can help you understand your financing options.

Visit our Concord branch at 1355 Willow Way or our Pleasant Hill branch at 1600 Contra Costa Blvd. Suite E.

*Written in conjunction with AI.*

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# The UCSF New Hospital Takes Shape

The UCSF-John Muir Health Cancer Network is taking significant steps toward offering prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care coordination for patients close to home. Central to the network is the opening of a world-class outpatient cancer center on February 26, 2024, on the campus of John Muir Health's Walnut Creek Medical Center.

The Jean and Ken Hofmann Cancer Center at the Behring Pavilion is a one stop location for patients rather than having to travel to multiple locations for consultations, tests, and treatment.

"Our partnership with UCSF Health builds on the outstanding cancer care already delivered in our community..." said Mike Thomas, president and chief executive officer of John Muir Health. "All of the services essential to the world-class care of cancer patients are readily available through our partnership with UCSF Health."

The UCSF-John Muir Health Cancer Network's joint cancer network provides distinguished, disease-specific treatment capabilities, expanded clinical trial enrollment and precision medicine offerings by the region's top cancer specialists. UCSF Health's cancer program has been consistently recognized by U.S. News & World Report as the best cancer program in Northern California. John Muir Health is accredited as an Integrated Network Cancer Program by the American



College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer.

Within the UCSF-John Muir Health Cancer Network, multidisciplinary teams of specialists have vast experience treating cancer, including breast, gastrointestinal tract, head and neck, lung, thyroid and prostate, as well as uterine and ovarian cancers, hematologic malignancies and sarcomas.

"This is a partnership between two organizations that are deeply committed to providing outstanding care, and expanding access to patients in the region is a critical part of that commitment," said Alan Ashworth, PhD, president of UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center and senior vice president for Cancer Services with UCSF Health.

The first UCSF-John Muir Health Cancer Network location opened in February 2020 in the Berkeley Outpatient Center, which is jointly operated by UCSF Health and John Muir Health. Additional locations include Brentwood, Concord, San Ramon and Vallejo.



**Neuroplasticity**  
by Jessica Raam Foster,  
NeurologyofPresence.com

# Take Five Minutes and Bust Through Procrastination

**Pick A Task.** What is that one thing you keep putting off? One that's been on the to-do list a long time, but you just never quite get around to it.

**Cut It Way Down:** What is the simplest step you could take to get that task started? Pick a step that takes five minutes or less. But first ...

**Wake Up Your Brain:** Here is a simple Brain Boost that takes 30 seconds.

Stand up and tap your right hand to your left leg, and then switch. Count to 30 aloud while you do this. **Scan the QR code to watch a video demonstration or to follow along.**

Now do that 5-minute task.

**Celebrate.** Give yourself a pat on the back or say, "Good job!" Even something simple like this can fire up the reward centers in the brain and make it more willing to do challenging tasks again in the future.

### Why Does This Work?

Cross-body contact is a simple way to drive communication between both halves of the brain across the hippocampus, pulling your brain

together and allowing you to get into action.

Counting will fire up the frontal cortex, which is the home of focus and self-control, and vocalization can activate the vagus nerve to help calm you down.

If you do this to a steady beat, you will fire up the basal ganglia, the architects of movement and deeply connected to the frontal cortex. It will also activate the cerebellum, the part of the brain responsible for accuracy, balance, and control which includes control of your thoughts and actions!

By adding all of these elements together, we can force multiple areas of our brain to fire together and increase communication between them. And voila! Your brain is more awake.

Now, plan for the rest of the task you started. Put it on a calendar if you don't have time to complete it today. Then go tackle the rest of your day.



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Visit **Elders.org**  
or call **844.326.1150**



**For the Love of Pets**  
by Jill Hedgecock, [jillhedgecock.com](http://jillhedgecock.com)

# World Rat Day — It's a Thing

World Rat Day, April 4, was established in 2002 to celebrate “the fancy rat as a wonderful pet and companion animal for people of all ages.” Domesticated rats make great low-maintenance pets. They are curious animals, easily learn tricks, and are entertaining to watch.

Pet rat owners celebrate World Rat Day by buying a special treat for their pets or making a video and posting it on social media.

Rats have been vilified as carriers of the Black Death during the 14th century. However, in January 2017 “Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences”, researchers simulated Black Death outbreaks in European cities by studying three possible infection routes: rats, airborne transmission, and humans infested with fleas and ticks. The study found that the plague spread too fast for rats to be the carrier. Humans were the

culprits. While the stigma remains that rats are dirty, they constantly groom themselves. They do not carry diseases any more than dogs or cats.

If you don't have a rat, consider adopting through Rattie Ratz Rescue. Two sisters, Beatrice and Elma are a great option for first-time rat owners. They are 9 to 12 months and are inseparable, needing to be adopted together. They are very sweet girls with lots of energy. These shy but adventurous girls are fine with being handled but want to be fully supported with both hands. They like chewing on wood, cardboard, and plastic and running in the rodent wheel. They need a loving home and someone to spend lots of time with and build trust with. Their adoption fee is \$50 for the pair.

Rattie Ratz is a non-profit 501(c)(3) rescue organization founded in 1998 and is dedicated to the rescue,



rehabilitation, and adoption of domestic pet rats in the Bay Area (Northern California). Rattie Ratz operates a limited-access rescue, accepting needy rats from local, overwhelmed shelters and from individuals and emergency situations on a case-by-case basis. Since its inception, Rattie Ratz has rescued and re-homed approximately 300 domestic pet rats annually. Donations are used to purchase supplies, cages, transportation, animal maintenance

costs, and pay for veterinarian care when required. Learn more at [www.rattieratz.org/](http://www.rattieratz.org/).

*Jill Hedgecock is a local author of several novels featuring animals. Her new release “In Shadow’s Reflection” is the third novel in her young adult Doberman series. This novel, along with “Between Shadow’s Eyes” (Book 1) and “From Shadow’s Perspective” (Book 2), is available on amazon.com.*

## Pet Fun Facts You Might Not Know

- 94% of pet owners say their animal pal makes them smile more than once a day.
- Every dog has a unique nose print with no two alike.
- Nine percent of dog owners will have a birthday party for their pet.
- Cats spend approximately 30% of their waking hours grooming themselves.
- Cats have over one hundred

- vocal sounds, while dogs have about ten!
- Dogs sweat through their foot pads to help keep them cool. They also keep cool by panting.
- Cat whiskers are so sensitive they can detect the slightest change in air current.

Learn more at [animalmedical.org](http://animalmedical.org)

## Rain Can Increase the Risk of Mice

by Nola Woods, Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District

This winter's off-and-on rain has reminded many folks of the four months of rain Contra Costa County received this time last year.

While the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District (District) does not have a crystal ball at our disposal to know how long this year's rain will last, something we do know is continued rain not only increases the likelihood of mosquitoes, it can also increase the chances of mice.

The more rain we receive, the more vegetation grows and the more dense the vegetation can become. Plentiful, dense vegetation creates more areas where mice can find shelter and protection to grow their population.

And when that dense vegetation is on your property or close to your property, these curious animals, which are known to venture out of their shelter dozens of times every 24 hours, can stumble upon food sources in your yard like fallen fruit, vegetables, seeds, snails, and other eatables at their disposal.

If they find both shelter and a food source on your property, they are less likely to leave the area on their own.

What can you do about mice on your property?

Thin or remove any dense vegetation on your property. When thinning the vegetation, make sure there are at least 10 inches of open space at the base of any shrubs or other dense vegetation. The open



space allows light to pass under the plant and reduces the risk that mice would use the vegetation for shelter.

Trim climbing vegetation at least four feet from the roof, walls, fences, utility poles, and trees.

Store wood and lumber piles at least 12 inches above the ground and 18 inches away from any structure.

Harvest fruit and nuts as they ripen.

Pick up fallen fruit and nuts daily.

Feed pets amounts of food that will be totally consumed at each feeding. Do not leave pet food outside at night.

Keep shed doors closed at night and install a screen on the base of the shed to prevent animals from establishing shelter under the shed.

Contra Costa County residents who have taken these steps and still see evidence of mice on their property can request the District's Rat and Mouse service by phone at (925) 685-9301 or Online by visiting <https://www.contracostamosquito.com/request-services>.



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## Contra Costa Kennel Clubs Donates Disaster Relief Trailers to Animal Services

Contra Costa County Kennel Club purchased two fully stocked mobile AKC Pet Disaster Relief trailers that deliver essential, nonperishable necessities for sheltering pets when and where needed to local emergency management. They then donated both trailers to Contra Costa County Animal Services. The trailers provide animal care services during the first critical hours following a disaster, before FEMA support and services can be deployed.



two AKC Disaster Relief Trailers to Contra Costa County Animal Services (CCAS) to support our community,” said Leslie Savoye, representative from the Contra Costa County Kennel Club. “We are thrilled and delighted that because of our successful Woofstock Cluster, Contra Costa County Kennel Club was able to make a meaningful contribution to the safety, health and welfare of canines

The equipment in the AKC Pet Disaster Relief trailers helps to create a safe, temporary home base for at least 65 pets during the first 72 hours after a disaster is declared. The trailers house and deliver essential animal care items including crates and carriers, AKC Reunite microchips and an AKC Reunite universal microchip scanner, bowls, collars and leashes. It also contains fans, lighting and a generator, cleaning supplies and maintenance items.

These supplies can be used as co-location shelters, where people can evacuate with their pets, as well as emergency animal shelters for displaced animals.

“Contra Costa County Kennel Club is so proud that we were able to give

in distress. We thank our exhibitors, supporters and vendors for helping us reach this goal.”

Of course, the CCAS were grateful. “The trailers will allow our department to deploy to critical events and major incidents within the state in a more efficient and skillful manner to better serve the community and their animals in times of great need,” said Alana Weissman, Animal Services Lieutenant for Contra Costa Animal Services. “We thank the Contra Costa County Kennel Club, the American Kennel Club and AKC Reunite for their generous gift.”

Upon receipt of the two new AKC Disaster Relief Trailers, Contra Costa Animal Services donated their other trailers to a neighboring county.

## Caitlyn Sly named President and CEO of Food Bank

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano County has named Caitlyn Sly their new President and CEO after an eight-month search.

She most recently served as the Executive Director of Meals on Wheels Diablo Region – an organization dedicated to delivering meals to over 8,600 seniors annually, and a partner of Food Bank. Before that, she was Director of Programs at the Food Bank and helped build the children’s and nutrition programs.

Over the years, the Food Bank has evolved from a small emergency food provider to a leader fighting against food insecurity and promoting nutrition through education and the distribution of fresh, seasonal produce, she stated in a press release. Sly is a lifelong hunger fighter, with deep roots in our community and proven dedication to serving

“Fighting hunger is near and dear



to my heart. I grew up watching my father, Larry Sly, who was one of the Food Bank’s founding employees, commit his life to ending food insecurity. His work inspired me, and I am following my calling to work to end hunger as well. In many ways, my return to the Food Bank as the President and CEO feels like coming home. I look forward to working with all of you as we continue to find innovative, resourceful ways to fight food insecurity today and end hunger in our community for good.”

**Is there someone who should be recognized in our community? Centenarians? Award recipients?**

**Send us YOUR news and announcements.**

**Email us: Editor@DiabloGazette.com and let us know.**



**The Naked Gardener**  
David George, UC-Certified Master Gardener

## Plagued by a Black Thumb

I was not born with a “green thumb.” I grew to be a good student of gardening through 50 or more years of struggle. Much of my acquired knowledge was from spectacular failures: 14 California lilacs that died one year, three winter-blooming Daphnes that croaked in the same spot, and my beautiful Texas wisterias that shriveled to sticks.

Have you also said, “I have a black thumb because I kill most everything I grow.” Believe me, it is not you that is killing your plants. One or more of the plant’s essential needs has not been met.

What is the first move when considering new garden plants? Good research. Carefully read the plant container’s label because it lists essential requirements. Talk to a garden center professional about the plant’s needs and your garden location. Research requirements Online and in trusted guides like Sunset’s Western Garden Book. Essential requirements are often vague or misleading and may not provide enough information for your planting situation.

Here are areas you may need to look into more thoroughly before planting.

**Native Habitat** – When possible, select California native plants. Even still, plants that will thrive in Richmond or Brentwood will not enjoy central Contra Costa locations. Avoid plants native to the tropics or sub-tropics.

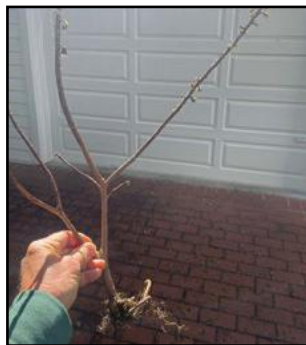
**Sun Exposure** – What does “Full sun to part shade” really mean? Full sun in Clayton could cook plants that need full



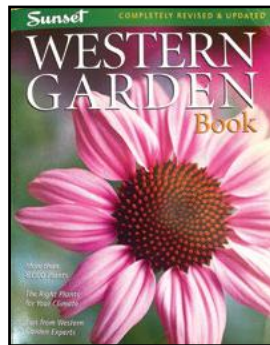
Viburnum that Seeded Itself and Naturalized without Planting - Yay!



A Happily-spreading Japanese Rose



The Latest Daphne Failure - Ick!



Sunset Western Garden Book - A Gardener’s Companion

sun in Orinda. Plant categories are helpful: maples, redbuds, and dogwoods are considered “understory” trees, meaning they grow under canopies of taller trees. Too much sun or shade will harm them.

**Soil Nutrients** – Our native clay soils

usually require amendments to add nitrogen to balance acidity. But do your homework since high soil nitrogen can kill succulents or cacti.

**Water Requirements** – Is your planting space wet or dry? Is it near a watered lawn or on a hillside? Locations such as under tall trees or in the open also matter. Great spaces exist for all plant water needs, but you need to know their requirements or you may be selecting a potential drowning victim.

**Disease Susceptibilities** – Many plants are hybridized to minimize vulnerabilities to disease. Even roses are available now that are resistant to rust, black spot, and mildew. When possible, choose varieties bred to avoid common diseases.

If you take time to research and seek professional advice, your black thumb will grow greener with each success.

**Seasonal Note:** Summer vegetable planting season is near. But do not plant until your soil has warmed up; veggies will just languish. They need soil temperatures above 55 F. (65 F. for tomatoes). A rule of thumb is to wait until the last week of April, or even the first week of May if April is unusually cold. Your darlings will grow rapidly in warm soil and make up for lost time.

To prepare, condition your beds with an all-natural fertilizer such as home-grown compost. Gently mix it into the top 2 inches of soil, being careful not to disturb the microbiome in deeper layers. Rain and watering will soak nutrients into deeper layers.

### Great Tomato Plant Sale

Check out the healthy veggie seedlings at the annual UC Master Gardener Great Tomato (and other veggies) Plant Sales. The closest location for Concord and Clayton residents is the UC Master Gardener demonstration garden at the corner of Shadelands Dr. and N. Wiget in Walnut Creek. The Walnut Creek GTPS is Saturday, April 13 through Monday, April 15 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Seedlings are \$4 each. The seedling variety list is online at [ccmg.ucanr.edu](http://ccmg.ucanr.edu).

Email your comments and questions to [NakedGardener@diablogazette.com](mailto:NakedGardener@diablogazette.com). In some cases, these may appear in future columns.



# JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

by Jill Hedgecock, www.JillHedgecock.com

# Top Nine Reasons to Visit Puerto Rico



Puerto Rico History/Fort - Castillo San Felipe del Morro Castillo San Felipe del Morro

The Caribbean Island of Puerto Rico has it all: bioluminescent bays, turquoise beaches, tropical rainforests, culture, history, unique wildlife, fabulous food, and more. While Puerto Rico had its challenges from the 2017 extreme weather, evidence of damage from Hurricanes Maria and Irma was largely gone during our February vacation. The low risk of hurricanes between December to May makes these months the best time to visit. Plus, with temperatures averaging 85°F in the lowlands and 70°F at upper elevations, the tropical climate is a welcome escape during winter.

Our itinerary circled the island with overnight stays in Luquillo, La Parguera, Aguadilla, and San Juan. Unfortunately, we didn't have time to visit Rincon or take an excursion to Vieques Island.

**Here are the top nine reasons to visit:**

**#1. Traveling There is Hassle-free.** As a United States territory, American visitors do not need a passport and the United States currency is used. United States phone plans also work there. Although Spanish is the primary language, almost everyone speaks English. Tap water is safe to drink. The people are friendly, and except for occasional petty crimes (pickpockets and car break-ins), it is a safe country for tourists.

**#2. Bioluminescence Experience.** This one-of-a-kind experience was my favorite Puerto Rico activity of the trip. Bioluminescence is caused by microbes called dinoflagellates that emit light when disturbed. To be visible, there must be a large concentration of the organisms and a dark night. There are several places to see the "fireflies of the sea": Mosquito Bay on the island of Vieques, Laguna Grande in Fajardo, and La Parguera in Laja. We chose La Parguera because it is the only location where you can enter the water and swim with the organisms. Although the moonlight was bright, our boat captain put a black tarp over us as we treaded water next to the boat, and the result was like swimming in stars—a truly magical experience!

**#3. The Beaches, Snorkeling, and Surfing.** I prefer quiet beaches over crowds and amenities. On the southwest end of the island at Playa Sucia, (Dirty Beach), the turquoise waters of this beach are anything but dirty. However, seaweed and suspended sand do impede visibility if snorkeling.

The short hike up to the lighthouse is worth the effort. We also visited Jobos Beach on the north shore, where the



Blue cobblestone roads made from Spanish ship ballast



Beach and arch at Cuevo del Indio Nature Reserve



Canonballs and canon positioned on fortress wall



Fortress at Castillo San Felipe del El Morro



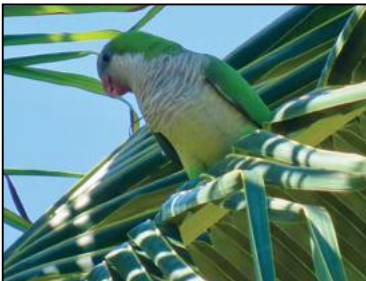
Venezuelan Troupial



Playa Sucia Lighthouse



Green Iguana at El Yunque National Forest



Monk Parakeet



Puerto Rico Art Museum



snorkeling was better. Turtles bopped around the surface where surfers waited for their next wave.

Speaking of surfing, this is a wonderful place for beginners, and I tried it for the first time.

**#4. Hiking/Nature Reserves.** El Yunque National Forest is the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest System. I recommend overnighting in Luquillo, which is a

beautiful place to stay for the beaches and to get an early start to enter El Yunque. Parking is limited and visitors will be turned away when the lots fill. Also, a must-do is Cuevo del Indio Nature Reserve, which rivals Carmel's picturesque cliffs in beauty with beautiful archways, waterfalls, and powerful surf.

**#5. History.** Castillo San Felipe del El Morro and Castillo San Cristóbal in Old San Juan are part of the U.S.

National Park System. These 250-year-old historic fortresses offer scenic viewpoints of the city, describe Puerto Rico's storied history, and contain wartime memorabilia. In Arecibo, a colossal sculpture of Christopher Columbus built in 2016 to honor the 500th anniversary of Columbus's landfall in 1492 towers above the palm tree shoreline. This 350-foot, 6,500-ton monstrosity is the tallest statue in the hemisphere.

**#6. The Food.** The Spanish/Caribbean influence is prevalent throughout the island, as is fresh seafood. One of my favorite meals was at La Fonda Gourmet in Luquillo, where local food is served. I tried mofongo, a dish where fried green plantains are mashed with garlic and olive oil. A free souvenir keychain accompanies the check.

**#7. Exotic Wildlife.** The coqui frog is a national symbol in Puerto Rico. Although not native, Puerto Rico's up to six feet long green iguanas are impressive. Monk parakeets, bananaquit, and noisy grackles are easily spotted, but by far the most beautiful bird I saw was the Venezuelan troupial.

**#8. Old San Juan.** The blue cobbled streets of San Juan are bookended by a rainbow of colorful buildings. The cobalt roadways were created from furnace slag brought over on Spanish ships as ballast. Amidst these streets are interesting architecture, historical spots, water fountains, shops, and restaurants.

**#9. Art Museums.** Art is a window into culture and the Museo de Arte de Puerto is no exception. This former hospital contains 1,000 visual treasures dating back to the 17th century and houses the wall-size "Mural la Plena" by Rafael Tufiño, which celebrates the people and music of Puerto Rico.

I could have easily included twenty reasons to visit Puerto Rico, but whether the natural wonders, culture, adventure sports, or bioluminescent bays hold the most appeal, one thing is certain: Puerto Rico has all the ingredients for an unforgettable vacation.

*Jill Hedgecock is a local author of several novels featuring animals. Her new release "In Shadow's Reflection" is the third novel in her young adult Doberman series. This novel, along with "Between Shadow's Eyes" (Book 1) and "From Shadow's Perspective" (Book 2), is available on amazon.com.*





## Arthur the King

Based on the true story of professional athlete Michael Light (Mark Wahlberg), this film tells the incredible story of Light's experience competing with his team at the Adventure Racing World Championship in the Dominican Republic. (Actual race was in Ecuador.) and a stray dog, Arthur, which befriends them during the competition.



Light has one last shot to compete and win, a grueling endurance challenge filled with hiking, kayaking and biking. The film does an excellent job depicting how taxing this challenge is and, at times, viewers find themselves on the edge of their seats as Light and his team trek through the jungle. Beautiful cinematography helps make this an engaging adventure film, but if we are honest, we are here for a heartwarming story of man and dog.

The backstory is necessary to understand how desperate Light and his team are to win the race. Each of the four members has their personal reasons for wanting to go the distance. It is awhile before Michael Light crosses paths with Arthur the dog, and the filmmakers made a wise choice to intersperse snippets of Arthur's assumed life before they intersect.

Once man meets dog, you will be rooting for the team and falling in love with the brave Arthur, the cutest scruffy dog since Benji.

The team cannot have a dog as a member, but Arthur proves himself

to be a vital component. He also becomes impossible to shake.

You may remember this story from the news (2014), but the retelling does not detract from the enjoyment. If, however, you are hearing this story for the first time, you might have involuntary tears as Light and Arthur meet their challenges head on. This is a film about teamwork, endurance, doing the right thing, and putting others ahead of yourself.

The film is only an hour and thirty-three minutes and moves at a fast pace. Despite some foul language and intense adventure scenes, it can still be a film for the whole family to watch and discuss afterwards.

When I saw the trailer for this movie, I thought I would wait for it to stream, but I am so glad I saw it on the big screen. The sound and visuals were incredible in the theater, and it was a wonderful afternoon at the movies.

Make sure you stay through the credits so you can see the real Michael Light and Arthur.

Rated PG-13 In theaters

## Now Streaming The Greatest Night in Pop History

If you are a person of a certain age, you may recall "We Are the World," a song recorded in 1985 to raise money to help combat famine in Africa. Purchasing the album, which included other songs recorded by various artists, helped raise money for the USA for Africa, but what everyone talked about at the time was the video.



In 1985, MTV aired music videos, and certain songs had big live premiere dates. Many viewers gathered around their televisions, not just to hear the song but to see all of the music greats together in one room. That room is now the source of the documentary, "The Greatest Night in Pop." For the generations that remember watching the video and the generations after who watched it Online, this is the incredible story of how it all happened on one night.

Even if you think the song is a bit corny, it has always been a fun video to watch. Where else have you seen Stevie Wonder, Bob Dylan, Diana Ross and Willie Nelson sing with Michael Jackson and Cyndi Lauper? When you watch all these musical powerhouses, it is easy to be so star-struck that you fail to appreciate the logistics of getting them all together in the same room on the same night. It was a Herculean task.

Lionel Richie was tasked with co-writing the song with Michael Jackson. Richie is also the lead storyteller in the documentary and, wow, does he have remarkable stories! Other performers also sit down to discuss their recollection of that wild night.

Richie was the host of The American Music Awards in 1985 and because so many musicians

were already in town for the awards, it was the perfect night to record the song. It is amazing that Lionel Richie was able to do his hosting gig and then co-manage the recording sessions in the wee hours after the Music Awards.

Producer Quincy Jones wrote "leave your ego at the door" on a piece of paper and taped it above the door for all the artists to see as they entered. It was a night with no handlers or assistants and the artists were able to interact with each other in an unscripted and natural way.

There are so many story gems here, from the juicy to the heartwarming, but to reveal any of them would take away from the fun of watching this documentary. With so many musical icons and legends, this is not only a treat for fans of 1980's music, but for all music lovers. A group of artists came together to do a good thing and raised over \$11 million in record sales for famine in Africa. It is a nostalgic watch of a simpler time before the Internet and cell phones, and probably impossible to replicate today.

Rated PG-13

Now streaming on Netflix



## The Three Marias by Donna Darling

Because I love to read novels set in a country where I plan to travel, "The Three Marias" (Independent, 2022, paperback, 359 pages, \$12) by Donna Darling proved a perfect vacation read when I visited Puerto Rico in February. Not only was I not aware of the turbulent time in Puerto Rico's history described in the novel, but when I walked around Ponce, I could envision a time when oxen and horse-drawn carts occupied the streets.

The family saga depicted in "The Three Marias" opens in the summer of 1895 when many Boricuas, a term derived from the indigenous Taino name for the island, were dissatisfied with being under an autocratic Spanish rule.

Three sisters, Maria Josefina ("Fina"), Maria Celia, and Maria Martina, are privileged girls living on a coffee plantation with loving parents. Their world as they know it collapses

after the death of their mother.

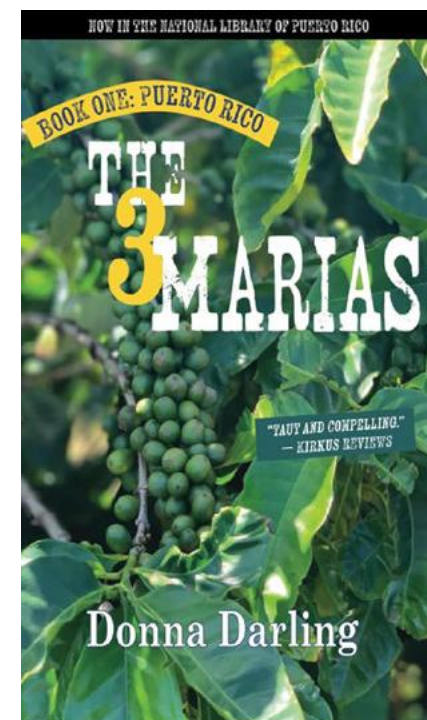
Told primarily from the point of view of Fina, the middle sister, readers soon learn that her father's gambling debts threaten their livelihood. To resolve Papa's financial issues, Fina's eldest sister, Martina, is forced to abandon her schooling in San Juan and become betrothed to a neighborhood plantation owner, Dino Cesari. Despite her husband being considerably older than her, Martina learns to love her elderly spouse. But unrest under the Spaniards and the Marias' brother and Dino's existing children's involvement in the uprising continues to create problems for the family.

Darling created an interesting time-frame for her novel, which transpires over the course of five years. Besides tackling the United States military involvement in ousting the Spanish from Puerto Rico, the author describes the devastating consequences

of the massive 1899 hurricane to the island of Puerto Rico and its people.

Part love story, part history, and part family tragedy, "The Three Marias" is a sweeping tale of times gone by and the devastating consequences of family secrets. The illustrations of people and photographs of Puerto Rico are a bonus. "The Three Marias" is a compelling read for fans of cultural heritage fiction such as "The Island of Missing Trees" by Elif Shafak and "Wandering Stars" by Tommy Orange.

Donna Darling writes short stories, and historical and flash fiction. "The Three Marias" was inspired by her great grandparents, who came to America from Puerto Rico. Darling is a member of the Mount Diablo branch of the California Writers Club and is working on a second novel in the series. Darling grew up and currently lives in California.





# Around Martinez



## Mayor Highlights Progress, Challenges and Goals During State of City Address

City Hall staffing rebounds, financial headwinds; Zorn touts waterfront plan, future economic development initiatives

by Craig Lazzeretti, *Martinez News And Views*

The city of Martinez has made significant progress over the past year addressing a City Hall staffing crisis, adding 13 full-time positions and fully staffing the community and economic development, dispatch, public works and community services and recreation departments, Mayor Brianne Zorn said in her State of the City Address at a Martinez Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting.

Recruiting and retention was the top goal that the City Council identified last year, and Zorn thanked City Manager Michael Chandler and his leadership team for the strides they have made returning City Hall to full staffing; she also highlighted the 11 sworn-officer hires in the Police Department, aided by a special 6.25% salary increase last April. The city is planning to announce soon hires for two major positions: chief building official and the finance director.

But that progress is tempered by a “challenging revenue climate with increasing expenses” as the city works toward a second goal of achieving fiscal sustainability, Zorn told the audience. Zorn pointed out that recent reports indicate that revenues from sales tax, cannabis sales and fee services are all down, while property tax is up. One-time funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is also expiring, and the city is required to completely allocate the remaining funds this year and spend them by 2026.

“Our Finance Department has prioritized cost-recovery initiatives that are years past needing an update,” Zorn said in the remarks she prepared for the address, pointing to a user fee schedule and water rate study.

According to a city staff report, “There have been very few recreation fee adjustments in the last decade, yet staffing, maintenance and utility costs have all increased over the same timeframe. This lack of regular fee adjustments ...has created a strain on the General Fund. Without adjusting fees, the city risks its fiscal stability when balancing stagnant revenues with increased demand and expense.”

The city will hold a public hearing on April 17 to consider increasing water rates by 6% annually from 2025 through 2029.

Zorn also laid out some of the City’s Council’s top goals going forward, namely beginning the process of creating a “vibrant” waterfront and marina, including such components as new dining options, an events

center, tidelands restoration and “sea level rise” considerations. The council recently sent its waterfront blueprint to the California State Lands Commission for consideration. The Water Emergency transportation Authority (WETA) is also considering Martinez for a pilot study for Carquinez Strait ferry service, a long-hoped for dream in the city.

The city is also focusing on creating strong downtown and commercial centers through the leadership of new Community and Economic Development Director Jill Bergman.

“She hit the ground running addressing immediate needs such as clearing out the permit backlog, streamlining the permitting process, and rolling out Online accessibility,” Zorn said.

Next up are initiatives such as attracting and marketing new businesses, and further support



for businesses and entrepreneurs citywide.

Other topics Zorn addressed during the speech:

Zorn praised the community activism from the Healthy Martinez group in mobilizing “our community to turn out to advocate for the health and safety of our residents,” and noted that the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is “considering automatic distributions to local community funds from penalties incurred.” She also noted that the city is partnering with PBF to hold quarterly cleanup events in the city, the next of which is planned for April.

A local road safety plan expected to be implemented starting this summer that will include a \$240,000 grant for Safe Routes to School designs.

The continuing efforts to craft a Housing Element that will pass muster with the state’s Department of Housing and Conservation Development (HCD). City staff are currently working on a third draft of the plan to guide housing development through 2031, after HCD sent back the previous two drafts for revisions. The city has been given a goal of creating 1,345 housing units in the next eight years.

Park projects for the new Pine Meadow Park and Hidden Valley Park.



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Explore Martinez

## Martinez Junior High Named California Distinguished School

by Craig Lazzeretti, *Martinez News and Views*

Martinez Junior High School has been named a California Distinguished School, marking the first time in four years that a Martinez Unified School District school has received the statewide honor.

John Muir Elementary was recognized with the honor in 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Superintendent Helen Rossi said at the March 11 MUSD school board meeting. Before that, Morello Park Elementary and John Swett Elementary were named Distinguished Schools in 2012.

In all, 293 middle and high schools throughout the state received the distinction this year from the California Department of Education. MJS was one of seven Contra Costa County schools honored.

According to the department: Schools are recognized for exceptional student performance based on achieving exemplary performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, reducing

suspensions, and demonstrating high graduation rates (high schools only).

Rossi noted at the school board meeting that MJS had shown notable progress in its English Language Arts, math and English learners metrics, as well as reducing chronic absences and suspension rates. This is the fifth time MJS has been named a California Distinguished School, the most of any MUSD school, Rossi added.

In other district news, Alhambra High English teacher Samantha Gross has been named Martinez Unified’s teacher of the year.



## New Study Identifies Retail Opportunities for Martinez

As part of the City’s overall Economic Development Work Plan, the City partnered with TRI Commercial, a nationally known real estate firm, to produce a Citywide Retail Commercial Study and Analysis. Vice President Edward Del Beccaro discussed some of the findings at the meeting.

TRI produced two documents that are now available on the City’s website: a citywide retail commercial analysis; the other, a Martinez Retail Marketing brochure.

TRI’s analysis shows that Martinez has potential to attract high quality retail, identifying more than 20 specific retail categories that could potentially be attracted to Martinez. The categories include specialty grocery, wine shops, discount department stores, boutique fitness, furniture, sports and outdoor

recreation, and other types of shopping.

TRI also identified several challenges that Martinez must address to reach its full potential to attract high-quality retail. In particular, TRI concluded that, to support the existing shops and restaurants in Downtown, it is necessary to attract more housing units close to the Downtown’s transit hub. TRI also recommended looking at ways to take better advantage of the Amtrak, County offices, development of the Marina, capitalizing on the City’s historic heritage, visibility along Highway 4, and other assets.

City staff is using both the retail analysis and the marketing flyer as tools to plan out the City’s retail attraction efforts for 2024.



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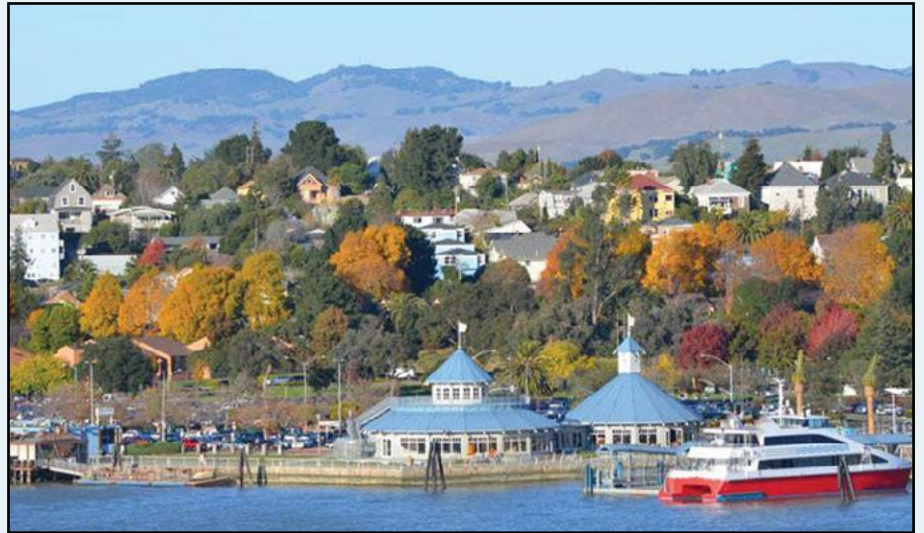
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@courtney.ayers.realestate  
courtneyayersrealtor@gmail.com

## Living On The Waterfront...and The Forefront

by Courtney Ayers, Realtor



View of the Vallejo Waterfront taken from Mare Island (photo courtesy of Visit Vallejo)

Vallejo, once on the brink, having declared bankruptcy in 2008, the future of this former State Capital was uncertain at best. Now, thanks to smart city government policies, including a plan developed by UC Berkeley Students, and the arrival of the ferry, this beautiful and historic waterfront city has become a vibrant and hip place to live and play.

As artists have been priced out of Oakland, many have taken up home in Vallejo's more affordable arms. Wherever artists go, inevitably, makes those areas hipper and more desirable. Vallejo is no exception. Just visit the Mad Hatter Festival or Second Fridays and you will experience some of the best art scene the Bay has to offer.

The downtown is bustling with great restaurants like Provisions, Zio Fraedos and Manny's Steakhouse, The beloved Mare Island Brewing Company's Ferry Taproom. There are plenty of inviting unique shops such as Alibi Bookshop, Yesteryears, The Joint and Anchor Pantry. And of course, there are an abundance of art galleries and studios.

Similar to Oakland in many ways, Vallejo is a large city with many varied neighborhoods from the historic core of grand Victorians to Vallejo Heights with views of Napa and San Francisco on a clear day. You will find tract homes by Six Flags Discovery Kingdom and modern 2-stories in Glen Cove with views of the Carquinez Strait. Oh, you must not overlook the McMansions by the golf course.

**Value is the operative word.**

Vallejo is still very affordable. A studio unit at The Charles, an old Victorian hotel turned to condominiums on Georgia St. with walking distance to the Ferry, can be purchased for around \$155,000. A beautiful old Victorian or craftsman can be purchased for around \$550,000 and a large modern 5-bedroom Glencove home will run you about \$1M. With its temperate weather, vibrant downtown and direct ferry line, it is no wonder more and more people are choosing Vallejo to be their next home.

## Martinez Community Foundation Announces 2024 Grant Process

by Darrel Foote, MCF Staff

The Martinez Community Foundation (MCF) is announcing a new grant program providing up to \$20,000. "The RGP process is designed to foster collaboration and build bridges while addressing community needs," says MCF Board Vice President and UC Berkeley Soils Science Professor Stephen Andrews.

Andrews adds, "We felt that an RGP centered on the concept of a community garden was very timely and appropriate way to engage the Martinez community and the excellent organizations that call our city home."

Interested organizations are invited to register via the website and attend



a Grant Workshop to be held on Wednesday, April 24 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Martinez Yacht Club.

The 2024 Request for Grant Proposal, "Building Community from the Ground Up," can be found on the recently updated MCF website at MartinezCommunityFoundation.org.



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# Bay Area Craft Beer Festival Returns April 13

Described as the ultimate beer lover's paradise, the 2024 Bay Area Craft Beer Festival returns to the Martinez Waterfront Park on April 13. This year's festival promises over 40+ local breweries and an impressive selection of over 100 beers to sample including some outstanding home brews.

The festival explores the diverse and dynamic world of craft beer as enthusiasts will spend the afternoon sampling unique brews, seasonal releases, and experimental flavors that showcase the creativity of the Bay Area's vibrant craft beer scene.

The Festival will provide delicious food offerings from local vendors and food trucks and live music blending a mix of genres.

Tickets for the 2024 Bay Area Craft Beer Festival are limited. Whether you're a seasoned beer connoisseur or just looking for an enjoyable time, this festival has something for everyone 21 years and over. Organized by Main Street Martinez, expect a day filled with craft beer, food, music and camaraderie on Saturday, April 13, from Noon to

4 p.m. Located at 245 North Court Street.

GENERAL ADMISSION TICKETS FOR BEER TASTING - or \$65 in advance, \$70 day of event. Purchases of Tickets on day of event may be made by credit card online through Eventbrite only. Admission Includes unlimited beer tasting, beer glass, free water at the Hydration Station and music.

Designated Driver Ticket: \$20 includes admission. Must be 21 and over. A Valid photo ID is required. \$15 of each event ticket sold goes towards beer and glass. The remaining proceeds after tax and processing fees of each event ticket sold benefit Main Street Martinez (Downtown Martinez & Co.), a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the economic vitality and hometown character of downtown Martinez.

For more information, directions, and ticket purchases, go to Eventbrite.com, and search Bay Area Craft Beer Festival 2024.



**BAY AREA Craft Beer FESTIVAL**  
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Martinez Calendar can be found in the Calendar section. p18



**John Muir BIRTHDAY / EARTH DAY CELEBRATION**  
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- Youth activities with National Park Service rangers
- Food and beverages are available for purchase

Free parking at the Alhambra High School (Alhambra Avenue at "D" Street) with shuttles to event  
Visit 511.org, Amtrak.com or CountyConnection.com for public transportation options

For information: [www.johnmuirassociation.org](http://www.johnmuirassociation.org)  
Or call the John Muir National Historic Site at: (925) 228-8860, ext. 6400

John Muir National Historic Site  
4202 Alhambra Ave, Martinez, California

## Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden Celebrates 54th Anniversary Earth Day

During Earth Week, on Sunday, April 28, Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden (PHIG) and many community partners will share how to better provide healthy communities, create sustainable gardens for pollinators, conserve water, restore our environment, and reduce our carbon footprint.

This free, family-friendly, educational Earth Day event is held in the garden at 1 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill, across from the Pleasant Hill Middle School, from 12:30 to 4:30 pm.

Speak with Georgette Howington of Bluebird Recovery on how to support bird habitat in your garden; discuss with Lesley Hunt from CNPS gardening with keystone native plants to improve habitat; hear from Heather Rosmarin of Friends of Pleasant Hill Creeks about the Walnut Creek Watershed restoration; and talk with Judy Ryan, Master Composter, U.C. Master Gardener of Contra Costa County, on easy, home composting to help reduce your carbon footprint. In addition, a garden tour of this sustainable wildlife habitat garden will demonstrate sustainable practices and provide ideas for use in your garden and in your community.



Help us celebrate this 54th anniversary of Earth Day in your local community!

Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden is a National Wildlife Federation registered wildlife habitat, demonstrating water conservation and recycling, use of drought tolerant and native plants, using no pesticides or herbicides which degrade our environment, to create an environmentally healthy living landscape and laboratory. PHIG has been honored by the City of Pleasant Hill, Sustainable Contra Costa, and others for creating an eco-friendly sustainable garden and for making a difference in our community. For more information and to register in advance for the free garden tour, Email [phigarden@gmail.com](mailto:phigarden@gmail.com).



# In Search of Best Of Martinez 2024



The Martinez Chamber of Commerce and Visit Martinez want to know who the community believes are the Best in Martinez of 2024. Through April 30, all are encouraged to nominate and vote for your favorite businesses, events, organizations and more among 84 different categories.

Nominations will be taken online by visiting [www.thebestofmartinez.com](http://www.thebestofmartinez.com).

“The past few years have been hard on businesses. That’s what makes this race so important to Martinez. The race uplifts our community and helps our businesses and people understand just how important they are. It is the ideal way to show your love for your favorites,” explained Lisa Bonnington, Martinez Chamber of Commerce President, and CEO. “Show support for our businesses in a way that costs you nothing and means everything to them.

We hope this will be an annual campaign followed by The Best Of Martinez Bash that celebrates the winners!” Voters also have a chance to win \$500 gift card just by voting.

### How to nominate:

Nominations are free and easy to complete. Visit [www.thebestofmartinez.com](http://www.thebestofmartinez.com) and enter the business name and select the category. Add a comment or two about the nominee.

Once the nomination is confirmed, visitors can access a list of nominees in each category.

The Nomination period will close on April 18, 2024. Voting is currently underway and will continue through April 30, 2024.

The community will have real-time access to view the rankings of votes within each category through April 19, 2024. For the final two weeks of voting, rankings will not be visible.

All residents of the community and surrounding areas are encouraged to vote for their favorites.

The Winners and Runner-ups will be announced at The Best Of Martinez BASH! where they will be awarded and be the Toast of the Town. This event will be a

ticketed celebration.

### How the contest works:

There are 84 categories. Businesses can be nominated for up to three of them.

This is a contest. Once confirmed, a nominee is encouraged to promote and campaign for votes, especially on social media. Voters may also win. All voters are entered into a drawing for a \$500 hotel savings card giveaway. (Must be 18 years old to qualify)

### Rules and regulations

Votes can be made by completing the online form at [thebestofmartinez.com](http://thebestofmartinez.com). All voting entries must have voters’ complete information, or the votes will not be counted.

There is only one vote per category per person. Winners are chosen by people who fill out the online voting ballot. We will track IP addresses; if more than one person wants to vote within your household, they may not use the same computer, tablet, phone, or shared network.

Nominees must do business (or work for non-business-related categories) within Martinez or have an active Martinez Chamber of Commerce Membership. Nominees/contenders may self-nominate in up to three categories maximum. All votes must be received no later than April 30, 2024.

Any contender caught “Stuffing Ballots will be disqualified. The BEST OF MARTINEZ facilitators reserves the right to remove any business that has entered the competition incorrectly or has used marketing materials, badges, language, or behavior that is not in line with the competition.

Winners and runners-up will be announced at the Best of Martinez Bash. A notification will be sent with a date and time.

For more information email [rachael@martinezchamber.com](mailto:rachael@martinezchamber.com) or call us at 925-228-2345.

# City Welcomes New Finance Director

The City of Martinez has hired June Du as Finance Director, beginning April 1. June brings over a decade of State and local government finance experience to Martinez.

Throughout her career, Du has excelled in the areas of cash management, payroll, operating budget, long range financial planning, five-year capital improvement and major maintenance program budget management, as well as implementing financial policies.

As Finance Director, Du will be responsible for monitoring the fiscal health of the entire organization and will play a strategic role in the overall management of the City. She will oversee the planning, implementing, managing, and control of all financial-related activities for the City and will ensure that all aspects of the financial and accounting functions follow laws and regulations. In the near-term, June will focus on transitioning the division into a department, updating policies and procedures, and team building.

Du most recently served as Finance

Director for the City of Los Altos, where she and her team earned budget excellence awards from the Government Finance Officers Association and California Society of Municipal Finance Officers. Du is a licensed Certified Public Accountant.

She has a master’s degree in business administration and civil engineering, and a bachelor’s degree in economics.

“June’s extensive experience in municipal finance will undoubtedly serve our staff and community well,” stated City Manager Michael Chandler. “The role of Finance Director is one of the most important jobs in an organization, and I am excited to see the value June will bring to our fiscal planning and operations.”



**Jennifer Stojanovich**  
Realtor, Better Homes Realty

# How Listing Agents Drive Faster Sales and Higher Profits for Homeowners

Selling a home can be a daunting task, especially in a competitive real estate market. While most homeowners are aware of the basic responsibilities of a listing agent, such as marketing the property and facilitating negotiations, these professionals work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure a quicker sale at a higher price. Here are some of these lesser-known tactics that listing agents employ to benefit homeowners.

**Masters of pricing strategy** – Setting the right price is critical for attracting potential buyers. Listing agents possess a deep understanding of local market trends, recent sales data, and neighborhood dynamics. They use this knowledge to strategically price your home, ensuring it is neither undervalued nor overpriced, which could deter potential buyers.

**Home staging** – Presentation is everything when it comes to selling a home. Listing agents often collaborate with professional stagers to enhance the visual appeal of your property. From decluttering and depersonalizing to arranging furniture and adding tasteful decor, staging can significantly impact buyers’ perception of your home’s value and desirability.

**Comprehensive Marketing Campaigns** – Beyond the standard online listings and open houses, listing agents go the extra mile by leveraging various marketing channels to reach a broader audience. This includes targeted digital advertising, social media promotion, email campaigns, and networking within their professional circles. By maximizing exposure, they increase the likelihood of attracting qualified buyers quickly.

**Negotiation Skills** – Acting as

advocates for homeowners, agents skillfully negotiate with potential buyers to secure the best possible deal. Whether it’s price negotiations, contingencies or repair requests, their goal is to protect your interests while facilitating a smooth transaction.

**Inspections and Appraisals** – Inspections and appraisals are inevitable steps in the home selling process. Listing agents prepare homeowners for these evaluations, offering guidance on how to address potential issues that may arise. They also provide valuable insights to help ensure your home meets or exceeds appraised value, maximizing your return on investment.

**Legal and Administrative Tasks** – From drafting contracts and disclosures to navigating legal complexities, listing agents handle a myriad of administrative tasks on behalf of homeowners. Their attention to detail helps streamline the selling process and minimizes the risk of costly errors or delays.

**Post-Offer Support** – Once an offer is accepted, listing agents continue to support homeowners through the closing process. They coordinate with all parties involved, including lenders, attorneys, and inspectors, to ensure a timely and hassle-free closing. Their proactive approach helps mitigate potential obstacles and keeps the transaction on track.

By leveraging their expertise, resources, and network, these professionals empower homeowners to sell their properties faster and for more money. So, if you are considering selling your home, entrusting the task to a knowledgeable listing agent could be the key to a successful and lucrative transaction.

*Compliments of VirtualResults.net*



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**Desirable Single Story in Windmill Canyon at Oakhurst Country Club.** 3 bedrooms plus office/ optional 4th bedroom, 2 baths, approx. 2053sf on an approx. .33 acre lot with an attached 2-car garage. Big back yard with expanded deck.



**\$849,000**

1927 Eagle Peak Ave, Clayton

**Spectacular Diablo Ridge Condo at Oakhurst Country Club** overlooking the 8th hole/par 3 with breathtaking views of serene lake & waterfall. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, approx. 1554sf with an attached 2 car garage.



**PENDING \$629,000**

1810 Cole Ave. #3, Walnut Creek

**California Gardens.** Prime condo living in sought-after city location with close proximity to downtown Walnut Creek with shopping & dining, 2 blocks from BART & easy freeway access. 3 bedrooms, 1.5 baths, approx. 1251sf with assigned covered parking space/carport.



**SOLD! \$1,400,000**

410 Wawona Ln, Clayton

**Gorgeous "McKinley" Model in Eagle Peak** overlooking hills-city valley & beyond! 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, approx. 2966sf on an approx. .17 acre lot with an attached 3-car garage. Downstairs bedroom & full bath. Fantastic view lot, perfect for entertaining, offers an expanded deck with trellis covered pergola, spa & RV/Boat parking.

**Clayton Market Update**

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
1055 Pebble Beach Dr	\$2,072,000	4076	5/3.5	2/2/2024
1833 Eagle Peak Ave	\$1,090,000	2313	4/2.5	2/16/2024
5840 Morgan Territory Rd	\$1,500,000	2058	3/2.5	2/26/2024
501 E. Myrick Ct	\$901,000	1648	3/2	3/4/2024
410 Wawona Ln	\$1,400,000	2966	4/3	3/8/2024
66 Antelope Ct	\$1,457,000	3162	4/2.5	3/11/2024
57 Weatherly Dr	\$1,311,000	2324	4/2.5	3/12/2024

**Concord Market Update**

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
2831 Minert Rd	\$900,000	1694	4/2	2/29/2024
5440 Roundtree Ct #D	\$419,000	914	2/1	3/1/2024
950 Nuala Ct	\$985,000	1434	3/2	3/4/2024
5486 Los Gatos Ct	\$750,000	1420	3/2	3/7/2024
1863 Scott Rd	\$960,000	2154	4/2	3/7/2024
4590 Deercreek Ln	\$890,000	1462	3/2	3/8/2024
1056 Kipling Ct	\$1,760,000	3185	4/3	3/15/2024



**Jennifer Stojanovich**  
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[www.jenniferstojanovich.com](http://www.jenniferstojanovich.com)

Based on information from CCR/Paragon MLS® as of 3/22/24. All data, including all measurements and calculations of area, is obtained from various sources and has not been, and will not be, verified by broker or MLS. All information should be independently reviewed and verified for accuracy. Properties may or may not be listed by the office/agent presenting the information.



# calendar of events

## CLAYTON

### CLUBS

**Concord NorCal Helping Hands Lion's Club.** <https://www.lionsclubs.org>

**Rotary Club of Concord.** <http://www.concordcarotary.org>

**Cars 2nd Chance, vehicle / car donation programs** turns donations into cash for charities Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary Charitable Fund. <https://cars2ndchance.com>

### EVENTS

**April 13, Public Astronomy Program: Rocks & Ice In The Solar System.** Mount Diablo Astronomical Society, 7-11 PM., Comets, meteors and asteroids: how are they different, how are they related? Lower Summit Parking Lot off Summit Road - almost to the top of Mount Diablo, Summit Rd, Clayton. [https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/event-view.cfm?Event\\_ID=135396](https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/event-view.cfm?Event_ID=135396)

**April 27-28, CBCA Clayton Art & Wine Festival,** Saturday 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM, Sunday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Downtown Clayton. Stroll down Main Street and enjoy arts & crafts vendors while sipping your favorite wine or beer. Live music throughout the weekend. Hosted by the Clayton Business and Community Association. Main Street, Clayton, <https://claytoncbca.org>

### LIBRARY

**April 6, Repurposed Envelope Art with Roger Renn** from 2 - 3 p.m. Adult and Teen program. Celebrate Earth Day by learning how to create beautiful art with repurposed envelopes. All supplies will be provided.

**April 18, Teen Thursday:**

Succulent Terrarium from 4 - 5 p.m. Teen Program (6th - 12th grade).

Celebrate Earth Day by creating your own desert ecosystem! *Clayton Library, 6125 Clayton Rd. For more information please call 925-673-0659.* <https://ccclib.org>



## CONCORD

### CLUBS

**Concord NorCal Helping Hands Lion's Club.** [www.lionsclub.org](http://www.lionsclub.org)

**Rotary Club of Concord.** <http://www.concordcarotary.org>

### EVENTS

**April 1-30, Restaurant Bingo,** Get your taste buds tingling and your bingo cards ready because Visit Concord presents a thrilling month-long bingo game that will take you on a delectable journey through the city's finest restaurants! <https://www.visitconcordca.com/events/restaurant-bingo/>

**April 7, Concord Couch Concerts:** Singer Songwriter Sunday. Vallejo artist Soul Glitch will close the afternoon down, after 20 minute sets from Pleasant Hill's Ira Mato, Orinda's Daniel Ray Hilsinger, Margaret Jones, Aaron Burnham, and McClain Sullivan,

### YOUR PARTNER IN BUSINESS

GREATER



CONCORD

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

[concordchamber.com](http://concordchamber.com) | (925) 685-1181  
[kcbiral@concordchamber.com](mailto:kcbiral@concordchamber.com)

all from Oakland. 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM. FREE. Todos Santos Plaza, 2175 Willow Pass Rd., Concord.

**April 13, Concord High School Choir Boosters 1st Annual Fun In The Sun Car Show,** 10 AM - 3 PM. One ticket is for entry of a vehicle to the event and participation in the various categories of awards. We are inviting you to participate in this community event and to show off your amazing cars. Concord High School, 4200 Concord Blvd, Concord. Email: [obuickgnx@comcast.net](mailto:obuickgnx@comcast.net)

**April 15, Concord Historical Society: Membership Dinner,** \$50, Concord Museum & Event Center, 1928 Clayton Rd. Concord. To make a reservation contact Gail Van Tassell at [gmacvt@aol.com](mailto:gmacvt@aol.com)

**April 28, Bay Area Festivals' Mom's Day Boutique,** 11 AM - 3 PM. Our free, indoor holiday-themed boutiques are the largest holiday shopping extravaganzas in the Diablo Valley with local, small business vendors offering their unique goods and services for holiday gifts. Hilton Concord Hotel Ballroom, 1970 Diamond Blvd. Concord.

### FARMERS MARKETS

**Pacific Coast Farmers Market** <https://www.pcfma.org>  
Todos Santos Plaza.  
Tuesdays, 10AM- 2PM Year Round

### LIBRARY

**April 06,13, AARP Tax-Aide,** 10:00 AM-3:00 PM. AARP Tax-Aide will provide free tax preparation services by appointment only at the Concord Library. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 925-471-5686

**April 09, Mr. Elephant's Puppet Show,** 5:00-6:00 PM. Mr. Elephant sings original family-friendly songs, with styles ranging from rock to reggae, from beats to bossa nova. They're educational, diverse and fun.

*Concord Library, 2900 Salvio St, Concord (925) 646-5455* <https://ccclib.org>

## MARTINEZ

### CLUBS

**Martinez Rotary Club** meets weekly, 5-6 PM on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. Campbell Theatre, 636 Ward Street., Martinez <http://www.martinezrotary.org> Pleasant Hill. <https://pleasanthillrotary.org/>

**St Vincent de Paul Food Pantry,** Every Saturday from 9am to 10am. Located between Castro and Estudillo Streets. (Behind St. Catherine of Siena. Any one in need

of food welcome! Call 925-788-7409 for further information

### EVENTS

**April 6, Swan Day Martinez-Support Women Artists Now,** 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, FREE event. MRC Clubhouse - 1635 Pacheco Blvd., Martinez, <http://www.martinezarts.org>

**April 7, Partners in Crime,** Martinez Campbell Theater, 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM. This first of its kind improvised serial production is back for another installment. We continue to follow the exploits of two "partners" who rely on audience suggestions to help create their evolving characters and decide where the next investigation will lead them. Martinez Campbell Theater, 636 Ward St, Martinez. <https://www.campbelltheater.com>

**April 13, Bay Area Craft Beer Festival,** Noon - 4PM, returns to the Martinez Waterfront on April 13th! This year's festival promises an unrivaled experience with over 40+ local breweries and an impressive selection of over 100 beers to sample, including some fantastic Home Brews! Waterfront Park, 245 North Court Street, Martinez Tickets: <https://downtownmartinez.org/bay-area-craft-beer-fest>

**April 14, Lowell Ensemble & Cecilia Ensemble,** 3 - 5 PM, a festive afternoon of Classical, Folk & Pop music, from Bach to Bacharach. Musicians and theater staff are All proceeds (minus credit card fees) will go to the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano in their fight against hunger in our community. Martinez Campbell Theater, 636 Ward St, Martinez. <https://www.campbelltheater.com>

**April 20, Pirates of Penzance,** 2 PM, Alhambra High School Drama Club presents the Spring musical, The Pirates of Penzance, a two act comedic operetta. Alhambra High School Performing Arts Building, 150 E St, Martinez. <https://www.facebook.com/AlhambraHighSchoolDramaClub/>

### FARMERS MARKETS

**Pacific Coast Farmers Market** <https://www.pcfma.org>  
Sundays, 9AM-1PM, Year Round.

### LIBRARY

**April 13, 27, Needle Arts Meetup,** 1:00-3:00PM, Bring your crochet, knitting, embroidery, or other needle art project. Ask for tips from experienced volunteers, or just hang out and enjoy some craft time.

*Martinez Library, 740 Court St, Martinez (925) 646-9900* <https://ccclib.org>

## PLEASANT HILL

### EVENTS

**April 28, Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden (PHIG)** 12:30 to 4:30 PM How we can better provide healthy communities, create sustainable gardens for pollinators, save water and restore our environments, and reduce our carbon footprint. This free, family-friendly, educational Earth Day event is held in the garden at 1 Santa Barbara

Road, Pleasant Hill

### LIBRARY

**Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library.** 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month.

**April 06,13, 20, 27 Lego Builders Club,** 2:00-4:00 PM. Build your own unique Lego creations! With Duplo for small hands to Technic for advanced creators. No registration required. All ages and abilities welcome.

**April 12, 19, 26, Computer Help,** 10:30 AM-12:30 PM. Computer docents are volunteers who answer simple technical questions and offer basic instruction on library computers. They help you get started.

**April 16, Anime Club,** 2:45-3:45 PM. Enjoy different anime shows with other teens (12 to 18). Shows will be decided by the group, with snacks provided by the Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library. 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month during the school year.

*Pleasant Hill Library, 12 Monticello Avenue. For more information please call 925-673-0659.* <https://ccclib.org>

## WALNUT CREEK

### CLUBS

**Rotary Club of Walnut Creek** meets weekly 12:15 to 1:30 on Tuesdays at Assistance League Diablo Valley, 2711 Buena Vista Ave, Walnut Creek. <https://rotarywc.org>

### EVENTS

**April 6, Pollinator and Friends Day,** 10:00 AM. Learn what you can do to protect bees, birds, bats, butterflies, and other creatures both in their habitats and in a home garden. We will be offering free Garden admission for all children for this event. Please RSVP below for a morning session (10am-1pm) or afternoon session (1-4pm). The Ruth Bancroft Garden & Nursery, 1552 Bancroft Rd, Walnut Creek. <https://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/event/event-pollinator-friends-day-2/>

**April 13-15, Walnut Creek: The Great Tomato Plant Sale (GTPS)** at Our Garden, 10 AM - 3 PM, and will feature all kinds of tomato. ALL PLANTS \$4 per plant (that includes \$4 per six-pack of beans). Contra Costa Master Gardeners Our Garden, 2599 Shadelands Dr, Walnut Creek

**April 13, lunch meeting of the California Writers Club-Mt. Diablo Branch.** 10:30 AM. Writing Coach and New York Times best-selling author Eric Elfman will headline. Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Guests are welcome. Register for the meeting online, visit <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/meetings-and-workshops>.

**April 15, SIR Branch 116 - Walnut Creek Luncheon Meeting:** 11:30 AM. Guest speaker-Ron Baskett, discussing Climate Change/Global Warming. Call 925-322-1318 or email to [luncheon116@gmail.com](mailto:luncheon116@gmail.com) Boundary Oak Golf Course, 3800 Valley Vista Rd, Walnut Creek. [sirinc2.org/branch116](http://sirinc2.org/branch116)

**April 18, Fundraiser Luncheon for the Walnut Creek Garden Club,** 11:30 AM, Program Speakers Deborah Kirk, Editorial Director & Peter Crooks, Writer-Diablo



# april 2024

Magazine Since 1979, Diablo Magazine covers topics in the SFO Bay Area ranging from travel, culture, and personalities, to entertainment, recreation, and food. 711 Silver Lake Dr, Danville.

**April 20, Earth Day Celebration**, 11 AM-4 PM. FREE. Live music, City Speakers, Food Trucks, performance by Earthcapades, Workshops, Games for the kids, take your picture with the Polar Bear and Mr. Funnel Head. Tesla demos and Cyber Truck. Civic Park (Civic Drive @ Broadway), Walnut Creek

**May 18, 7 PM and May 19, 3 PM Diablo Women's Chorale presents A Lovely Way to Spend an Evening**, a magical musical program filled Bortin Hall, Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane in Walnut Creek Tickets: diablowomenschorale.org

## FARMERS MARKETS

**Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market**

<http://www.cccfm.org>

Sundays 9AM-1PM, Year Round. Locust Street between Cole and Lacassie St <http://www.cccfm.org/walnut-creek-market/>

**Diablo Valley Farmers Market** North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr. Shadelands, Walnut Creek, Saturdays 9AM-1PM Year Round 1799 Locust St. [www.cafarmersmkts.com](http://www.cafarmersmkts.com)  
**Rossmoor Farmers Market** Rossmoor residents and their families only. Fridays 9AM-1PM, Golden Rain Rd. <http://www.cafarmersmkts.com/rossmoor-farmers-market>

## LIBRARY

**April 08, 15, 22, 29, Tai Chi**, 10:15-11:15 AM. Tai-chi Ch'uan is an ancient Chinese art that combines meditation in movement and healthful exercise.

**April 10, Kids Movie Matinee**, 4:00pm-5:30pm. Join us for a family-friendly movie afternoon! This month we will be watching How To Train Your Dragon (2010, Rated PG).

For more information: Walnut Creek Library, 1644 N Broadway, Walnut Creek. (925) 977-3340 <https://ccclib.org>

## LESHER CENTER

**April 3, Center Repertory Company presents "The Great Leap"**

**April 11, 12, Shrek the Musical JR**, Presented by Performing Academy. It's a "big bright beautiful world" as everyone's favorite ogre, SHREK, leads a cast of fairytale misfits on an adventure to rescue a princess and find true acceptance.

**April 13, Steven Isserlis**, Presented by Chamber Music San Francisco. 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM. Acclaimed worldwide for his profound musicianship and technical mastery, British cellist Steven Isserlis enjoys a uniquely varied career as a soloist, chamber musician, educator, author and broadcaster.

**April 14, Krodhi - The Annual Recital 2024** Presented by Choros Charas - Destination for Arts, 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM. The name signifies the name of the South Indian Calendar Year and marks the thirty-eighth year in the sixty-year cycle of Jupiter.

**April 18, The Walnut Creek Jazz Band presents: An Evening of Big Band and Vocal Jazz**, presented by The Walnut Creek Jazz Band, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

**April 18 - 2, My Dearest Love: An Improvised Series of Scandalous Letters and Dangerous Liaisons!** This is our most SHOCKING and SCANDALOUS show to date! It's full of stunning confessions, callous betrayal, and ruthless revenge. French comedy-of-intrigue all made up on the spot and based on audience suggestions!

**April 20, 21, Dance Theatre of Harlem.** This multi-ethnic company performs a forward-thinking repertoire that includes treasured classics and innovative contemporary works that celebrate Black culture and empowerment through the arts for all.

**April 21, The Amazing Bubble Man**, "Greatest bubble show on Earth." Presented by Louis Pearl. Louis Pearl has been thrilling audiences around the world for over 30 years with the art, magic, science and fun of bubbles. He is a favorite at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where he has enjoyed twelve years of sell-out success.

**April 24, Percussion Discussion, Presented by Ken Bergmann**, "Whack!" Percussionist Ken Bergmann is back with his smashing spectacle of drums, cowbells, chairs and more.

**April 27, Dan Ashley presents: Rock the CASA, 10th Anniversary Musical Spectacular!** a benefit concert featuring an All-Star Tribute to Tina Turner, the Oakland Symphony, and the Phantom of the Opera's Franc D'Ambrosio 8:00 PM - 11:00 PM, benefitting: Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Friends Of Camp Concord, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys & Girls Club.

Leshar Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, <https://www.lesherartscenter.org>. Tickets: (925)943-7469 Wed-Sun Noon to 6:00 p.m.

## Other Cities

### EVENTS

**April 20, Earth Day Celebration**, 10AM - 1PM, Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery offers Jump Houses, Cart Racing, Arts & Crafts, Recycling Tour and more. **PITTSBURG MDRR Education Center**, 1300 Loveridge Rd. [www.mmdrr.com/earth-day-2024](http://www.mmdrr.com/earth-day-2024)

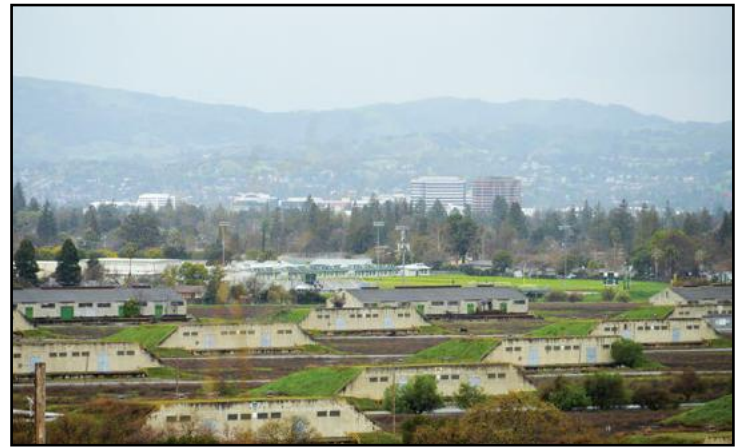
**May 2, SIR Branch 19 will hold its Monthly Luncheon 11 a.m.** at the Pittsburg Elks' Lodge, 200 Marina Blvd., Pittsburg. This luncheon will be honoring our partners for Mothers' Day. Featured guest, Nicole Hackett, owner of R and M Pool, Patio and Gardens will speak on how to beautify your property for spring. SIR is a social organization of senior men who get together and participate in fun activities, [www.sirinc2.org/branch19](http://www.sirinc2.org/branch19) 925 338-1996 for more information.

**SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIES** by the 20th of the month before Issue month. [diablogazette@gmail.com](mailto:diablogazette@gmail.com)

# City Of Concord Accepts Term Sheet For Former Naval Weapons Station Development

by David King and Tony Hicks

On March 19, the Concord City Council accepted the term sheet for the development of the former Naval Weapons Station from Brookfield Properties — a plan the developer would do in five phases spread over 40 years, with extensive community benefits and union involvement.



View of the Munitions bunkers at the old Concord Naval Weapons Station that will need to be removed.

The 2,300-acre site will feature 12,270 homes, 6 million square feet of commercial space and 880 acres of green space. The adjacent 2,600 acres to the east have been gifted to the East Bay Regional Park District for the new Thurgood Marshall Regional Park — Home of the Port Chicago 50.

"We're excited to enter into this Term Sheet with the City of Concord. This milestone will advance a multi-year engagement process with the City and the public to create plans that bring alive the community's vision. This project is an extraordinary opportunity to meet community housing, jobs, and infrastructure needs. Reaching consensus on terms is a great example of how we are partnering with the City to build a vibrant place that represents Concord's vision and values," assured Josh Roden, President, Brookfield Properties Development, Northern California Land & Housing.

Broden continued, "Our next steps in the next couple of months is to begin discussions with the Navy alongside the Local Reuse Authority (LRA) and continue our community outreach by holding our first community-wide open house and neighborhood meeting.

For the remainder of 2024, we will continue our stakeholder engagement, with additional community open houses and workshops to advance project infrastructure and phasing plans."

Councilmember Laura Hoffmeister acknowledges that there has been a notable positive shift in resident support, alluding to the contentious community response to the second Master Developer, Seeno-owned Concord First Partner.

Roden also pledges to provide quarterly updates to share their progress at City Council meetings.

### What's in the Plan? Plenty.

Of the 12,200 homes, 25% will be targeted as affordable housing. 886 acres will be dedicated to parks, recreation, and trails space.

Restoration of the Mount Diablo Creek Corridor.

A Project Labor Agreement (PLA) with local unions and local hiring priority, training programs and opportunities for local businesses. Brookfield has already entered agreements with Contra Costa Building and Construction Trades Council and the Nor Cal Carpenters



Guy Bjerke, responsible for the oversight of the Reuse Plan, explaining a concept for the transition.

Union to do all the construction. This was a requirement of the city and a sticking point with the first master builder Lennar FivePoint, with whom the city's initial deal collapsed in March 2020.

Other highlights included 120 acres set aside for a campus district, 55 acres for school sites, 10 acres for Food Bank expansion, 16 acres of permanent supportive housing, 4 acres for a Veterans Hall.

Over the life of the 40-year agreement, Brookfield will also commit more than \$495 Million in contributions towards a Tournament Sports and City-Wide park, Library and Civic Center, Schools, Fire Stations, and affordable housing subsidy.

\$1.67 Billion planned investment in infrastructure and environmental remediation for the project site \$336 Million dedicated to habitat mitigation and Mt. Diablo Creek restoration. The plan also commits to improvements to current infrastructure, such as a widening of Willow Pass Road.

The plan also includes green buffers and trails between phases and lower density housing on the southern end of the land, where bunkers are now located.

Higher density housing would be near state Highway 4 and most of the commercial development would be at the western end, near the North Concord BART station.

The council's initial exclusive negotiating agreement with Brookfield was also extended, giving the developer up to 48 months to negotiate with the U.S. Navy.

As master developer, Brookfield will receive \$6 billion. Once Brookfield has a deal in place with the Navy — which still has to clean the site from years of industrial use — the developer has to produce a specific plan and environmental reports.





### CVCHS News

Bill Morones, Interim Executive Director  
Clayton Valley Charter High School

## CVCHS Leading the Way in Gaming and Technology

As we embark on another month of educational exploration at Clayton Valley Charter High School (CVCHS), it is my pleasure to highlight the groundbreaking initiatives within our Game Programming Academy. Led by our visionary instructor, Mr. Anthony Anderson, this curriculum continues to nurture the talents of our students in the fields of game development, computer science, graphic design, animation, coding, and web design.

One of the most exciting endeavors is the collaboration between our Advanced Gaming Design Class and the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

It has been established through medical research that e-sports and gaming hold tremendous potential in positively impacting the physical, psychosocial, cognitive, and emotional well-being of our nation's Veterans. Leveraging this knowledge, CVCHS students

are working alongside VA medical researchers to develop innovative gaming applications tailored specifically for the rehabilitation needs of Veterans dealing with brain or physical injuries.

The significance of this collaboration cannot be overstated. Traditional rehabilitation methods often struggle to address certain deficits associated with brain injuries, particularly those affecting visual attention — a challenge that many Veterans face.

Through the use of gaming platforms, CVCHS students are pioneering solutions that leverage computational settings to target and rehabilitate attentional imbalances in Veterans. This not only requires a high level of programming knowledge but also demands creativity and empathy — qualities our students are demonstrating in abundance.

Under the guidance of Dr. Krista Parker and Dr. Kevin Carroll, both esteemed figures in the field of cognitive neuroscience and rehabilitation, our students are actively engaged in developing gaming tasks that specifically address the unique challenges faced by Veterans. Dr. Parker's expertise in visuospatial disorders and attentional imbalances, coupled with Dr.



Mr. Anthony Anderson leads the Game Programming Academy at CVCHS.



CVCHS students work with VA medical researchers to develop innovative gaming applications for Veterans.



CVCHS students are developing solutions to help rehabilitate attentional imbalances in Veterans.

Carroll's experience in utilizing gaming platforms in rehabilitation settings, provides our students with invaluable guidance and mentorship as they navigate this pioneering endeavor.

What makes this collaboration particularly poignant is the personal connection that Dr. Parker brings to the table. As a CVCHS alumna, Dr. Parker's journey from our halls to her current position as a cognitive neuroscience research specialist at the VA Northern California Health Care System serves as an inspiration to our students. It highlights the transformative power of education and underscores the potential impact that our students can have on the world around them.

Witnessing the passion and dedication of our students in projects like this gives our entire school community immense pride. It reaffirms our commitment to

providing an education that goes beyond textbooks and standardized tests — an education that fosters innovation, empathy, and real-world problem-solving skills.

Looking ahead, I am excited to see the continued progress of our collaboration with the VA and the impact it will undoubtedly have on the lives of Veterans. Moreover, I am eager to witness the continued growth and success of our Game Programming Academy as it continues to inspire and empower the next generation of innovators, problem-solvers, and leaders. As we move forward, let us continue to nurture and support the remarkable talents of our students as they strive to shape an UGLY future for us all.

## Land, Continued from p.6

the tribes in the area who were the earliest known peoples. When the Mexicans revolted from Spain, they claimed all the land and the local tribes did not matter.

We have no idea as to how the known tribes in the 1770s got possession of the land from whomever was before them, but we can surmise from human history that there was someone before that. The notion of several different tribes in the area probably suggests that land was not so much as 'owned' but held, and that one large happy family was not the norm.

Historically, this pattern occurred everywhere. It is ugly and does not portray human history as kind and gentle, nor offer any perception of what we would consider justice today.

In most retellings of history, there is an advantage or a purpose served beyond the simple declaration of chronological events. It is those who



Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo 1848 | Colorado Encyclopedia

call themselves historians who try to teach what they want from it — expanding and contracting or ignoring events to suit their needs.

*This is the opinion of Edi Birsan whose DNA indicates that his indigenous roots are on three continents as well as one non-homo sapient DNA contributor (OY). Moan and groans can go to EdiBirsan@gmail.com.*



## Savor Concord's Culinary Delights with Restaurant BINGO

by Beth Javens, President & CEO

Dining is about to get April is about to get a whole lot more interesting in April with Visit Concord's Restaurant BINGO. Prepare to embark on a delicious journey through Concord's diverse and expanding culinary scene while supporting hardworking local restaurants.

### How to Play and Win

From April 1 to May 3, grab your official Restaurant BINGO card from any of the 24 delicious restaurants listed on VisitConcordCa.com, or pick up a card at the Visit Concord Center. Each time you dine out at one of the participating eateries listed on your card, you will earn a sticker from the restaurant to mark off that spot. Score a BINGO and you will be entered into our raffle to win a special Visit Concord gift basket. You will receive additional entries for each BINGO you complete. Go to VisitConcordCa.com and type Restaurant Bingo in the search bar for complete details.

### Be In The Know About All Things Travel

Visit Concord is sponsoring the Greater Chamber of Commerce Women's Networking Luncheon featuring an insightful talk by Amy Chambers, the Director of Engagement at Visit California. Chambers will share the latest travel trends — information you will be sure to



At the Visit Concord booth: A park ranger from Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site and Port Chicago Naval Magazine along with Visit Concord Sales Manager Russ Emerson. Photo credit: Marilyn Olivia

use on your next getaway. You are invited to join us for an insightful talk and a delicious lunch at the Concord Plaza Hotel. Get your tickets now at ConcordChamber.com.

### Visit Concord Hosts Industry Elites

In May Visit Concord will host professionals from the travel industry at our annual tourism luncheon. This is our chance to showcase all that awaits casual and business travelers during their next stay in Concord.

### Port Chicago Disaster Remembered on 80th Anniversary

This July marks the 80th Anniversary of the devastating Port Chicago explosion, the worst home-front disaster in the United States during World War II. This year from July 18 - 21, Visit Concord along with the National Park Service, East Bay Regional Park District, Oakland Museum, African American Museum and so many others will host a weekend filled with events and tours to commemorate the lives and legacies of the Port Chicago Sailors.

### Visit Concord at Bay Area Travel Show

Visit Concord was at the recent Bay Area Travel Show at the Santa Clara Convention Center where we highlighted the delicious and diverse cuisine, our beautiful murals and other art installations and the outdoor experiences that Concord offers. Opportunities like these encourage more visits to Concord.

For all things Concord, visit the Concord Visitors Center, in Downtown Concord at 2151 Salvio St., Suite T, weekdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., or online at VisitConcordCA.com.

**Todd Wheat**  
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**SIR** Sons in Retirement (SIR)

A way for semi-retired and retired men over 50 to partake in social activities, make new friends, stay active and have fun.

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# Blueberry Bonanza

by Deb Morris, PACIFIC COAST FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

For centuries, blueberries were gathered from the forests and bogs by Native Americans and consumed fresh and also preserved. The Northeast Native American tribes revered blueberries and much folklore developed around them.

Commercial development of blueberries began in the early 20th century when they were successfully cultivated. Blueberries' ever-growing popularity in the marketplace is due to its list of health benefits, including reduced risk of cancer, prevention of urinary tract infections and improved eyesight.

Blueberry production in California is estimated at around 1,500 acres and is rapidly increasing. More producers are trying blueberries because they are popular and easy to grow. Highland blueberries are the most commonly cultivated forms and the type we see most often in the markets and cultivated high bush blueberries have often been hybridized to produce larger berries.

Blueberries should arrive in mid-April. Blueberries found at farmers' markets are hand-picked and harvested right before their delivery. They are as fresh as you can get, grown locally, and from those who love to talk about their crop.

Select berries that are completely blue, with no tinge of red. That natural shimmery silver coating you see on blueberries is desirable as it is a natural protectant. Blueberries that are too large tend to be watery. Purchase smaller blueberries and they will have more intense flavor.

Keep blueberries refrigerated, unwashed, in a rigid container covered with clear wrap. They should last up to a week if they are freshly-picked. Blueberries are highly perishable so do try to use them as soon as possible.



Alpine Blue out of Stockton and Medina Berry Farms from Watsonville are blueberry farmers you will find a farmer's market. Bake up some blueberry muffins or a pie. Or try this refreshing lemonade.

## Blueberry Lemonade with Mint

- 2 cups blueberries (plus a small handful for garnish)
- 1 mint sprig (plus 4 more for garnish)
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 cup lemon juice (juice from 3-4 small lemons)
- 3 cups water (or sparkling water)
- A generous pinch of salt

Muddle berries, honey, salt, and mint until all the blueberries are squashed. Scrape the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer with a rubber spatula, leaving only the skins and mint sprig. Be sure to scrape the underside of the strainer. Combine the blueberry juice mixture, lemon juice, and water and stir. Serve over ice and garnish with a mint sprig and some frozen blueberries in each of four glasses. For an adult beverage, add 1 jigger of gin or vodka per glass. Serves four.



## A Spring Celebration

Salad, pasta, and dessert are a great trio for many celebration meals. Prepare this meal of spring lamb with fresh ricotta cheese and a hint of mint, and you will agree that spring has sprung.

Spring is a good time to try a new white wine. Look for the Insolia or Inzolia grape made into its eponymous wine from Sicily. The Insolia grape is classically used to make Marsala from Sicily (along with Grillo and Catarratto), but it is also made into a delicate, drier wine.

Insolia wine is both floral and tropical with red pear and white grapefruit notes and, like most Italian whites, it has zesty acidity that will stand up to a salad like the Misticanza Salad dressed with white balsamic vinaigrette.

If you can't find Insolia, a Sauvignon Blanc will substitute. Add a slice of crusty bread with a spread of cheese and chives, and you have another bridge to pairing greatness.

For the pasta, simmer-up a pot of hearty Lamb Ragu. I love this recipe with its topping of fresh ricotta and mint. Less expected than basil and Parmesan, this garnish screams, "It's spring!"

Pair the ragu with an Italian Barolo made from the Nebbiolo grape. So very earthy and bright, Italian reds also have slightly higher acidity than Californian reds. And, they also have a rich gaminess that is perfect with lamb. However, if your cellar is low on Italian reds, try a Pinot Noir; it will fit the acid, earth profile.

Finish your meal with Tiramisu, a classic Italian dessert that is light and decadent at the same time. I prefer serving it with bitter black coffee to contrast the sweetness of Tiramisu. Plus, the heat from the coffee will cleanse any lingering fat from the cream. Consider choosing a Kona Coffee. Island coffees are more typically spicy, with nutty/chocolaty undertones that will sing with the delicate chocolate notes in this dish.

So, go on. Pair Up!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in Northern California. LaSommelier@gmail.com

## Misticanza Salad with White Balsamic Vinaigrette

INGREDIENTS: For the salad:

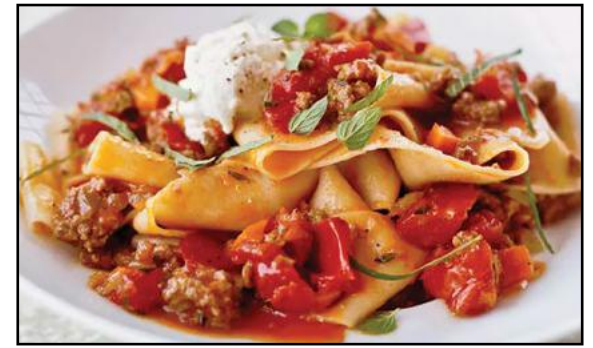
- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds, shelled, raw, unsalted
- 8-10 cups blend of bibb, arugula, and radicchio lettuces
- 1 cup thinly sliced seedless cucumbers
- 1/2 cup radishes, sliced
- 1 cup halved grape tomatoes
- 1/2 cup shaved fennel bulb

For the vinaigrette:

- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup white balsamic vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

DIRECTIONS

Toast sunflower seeds in a dry pan for about 3 minutes. Toss lettuce, arugula and radicchio in a large bowl with cucumber, radish, tomato and fennel. Whisk together all ingredients for the vinaigrette until emulsified.



Mix robiola, chives and olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Spread the robiola mixture onto the slices of toasted bread to

make the crostini.

Lightly dress the salad with the vinaigrette and toss to coat. Sprinkle with the sunflower seeds on top and serve with crostini.

Yield: 8 servings

## Lamb Ragu with Pappardelle

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 1 celery rib, finely diced
- 1 1/2 pounds ground lamb
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground fennel seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chopped rosemary
- 1 teaspoon chopped thyme
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- One 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 1/4 cups chicken stock or low-sodium broth
- 3/4 pound pappardelle
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup fresh ricotta cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped mint

DIRECTIONS

In a large cast-iron casserole, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil. Add the carrot, onion and celery and cook over high heat, stirring occasionally, until slightly softened, 5 minutes. Add the lamb, coriander, fennel, cumin, rosemary, and thyme. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until the liquid evaporates, 5 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste. Add the wine and cook until evaporated, 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and their juices, along with the stock and bring to a boil. Cover partially and cook over moderately low heat until the liquid is slightly reduced, 25 to 30 minutes.

In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the pasta until al dente. Drain, shaking well. Add the pasta to the sauce. Add the butter and the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil and toss over low heat. Serve the pasta in bowls, topped with the ricotta and mint.

Yield: 6 servings



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### Expanding Creativity at the aRt Cottage



Artist reception with current CAA exhibit.

Photos by John Grubka

This little yellow bungalow started as a small fruit picker's shack in 1925. Then became the home for many generations of the West family. It was purchased from Marlette West in 2011 and became the beginning of my "dream come true" journey — an art gallery, beginning as a place where 14 colleagues painted, critiqued and showed their artwork.

Then it also became a teaching place for children and adults. It now accommodates 37 students, ranging in age from 5 to 85, who use it for their studio and learning time. As teaching goes on, it still serves as a gallery where local artists have exhibits. On average, there are approximately 80 paintings on display from about 24 different artists. For a student to be surrounded by lovely works is stimulating as one learns to paint.

On the adjoining property to the aRt Cottage, there is a sculpture garden and a lovely palette of flowers all in super bloom. Here I teach plein air painting, painting outdoors on easels. This spring, Nancy Roberts and the Contra Costa Plein Air painters will be enjoying painting in this backyard. Perhaps they will be on display with the others from the group in May and June in the aRt Cottage's Plein Air exhibit.

#### Our Mountainous Expansion

In August of 2023, a small cabin in the town of Twain Harte was purchased. This cabin has a future in the art world. It is my dream and heartfelt (or shall I say Harte-felt) desire to share this cabin for workshops and artistic adventures in the Sierra. I will refer to it as the Twain hARTE Cabin.

Our first adventure will be April 7 through April 10. There will be six participating artists going to a retreat at the Twain hARTE Cabin. Some will be drawing and journaling, others will have easels and paint in plein air outside on this spot, some may hang out at the cabin and watercolor or knit.



Twain hARTE Cabin



The West Family home is now the aRt Cottage



View from the Cabin

We all will be doing something creative while staying in that Twain hARTE Cabin. At the end of each day, we will meet at the round table and have a discussion of our creative process and critique each other's work. At times, it's not just about the product, but about the process that makes us all

creative.

The Twain hARTE Cabin is to become an extension of the aRt Cottage and be used by many for their artistic adventures. For more information go to artcottage.info or call 925 956-3342.

In the meantime, our current show at the aRt Cottage features the Concord Art Association through April 27. Thanks in part to a wonderful reception, seven pieces have sold. Your dream piece may be on our walls, so come by and visit at 2238 Mt Diablo St Concord. We are open Wednesday - Saturday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

## CBCA Celebrates 40 years with BBQ and Brews Festival

### CBCA 40th Anniversary BBQ Round Up!

On Friday June 14, join the community at Oakhurst Country Club to celebrate 40 years of the Clayton Business and Community Association (CBCA).

Enjoy a BBQ dinner catered by professional KCBS Pit Masters, live music and dancing with the Honky-tonk Heroes, raffle and silent auction. Tickets are on sale now. \$75 per person / \$700 per table of 10. 5 p.m. - 10 p.m.



The CBCA has put Clayton on the map in the KCBS BBQ world and we are excited to return the BBQ & Brews Festival to our line-up of festival fundraisers benefiting the Clayton community.

Volunteers are needed. Both events will take place at Oakhurst Country Club, 1001 Peacock Creek Dr. in Clayton.

### CBCA BBQ and Brews Festival

Then return on Saturday, June 15, for the all new, reimagined, CBCA Clayton BBQ & Brews Festival, sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbecue Society. Admission is free. Activities include craft breweries, KCBS Professional Pitmaster Competition, artisan vendors, entertainment, and great food. There will be free parking with shuttle service. 11a.m. to 6 p.m.



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# Concord's Ordinance on Rent Stabilization, Just Cause for Eviction Suspended

## Residents file proposed referendum petition

By David King

Just three days after Concord City Council adopted a Rent Stabilization and Just Cause Ordinance to further restrict rent increases and evictions over and above existing state restrictions, its implementation has been suspended, as required by law.

The ordinance was scheduled to go into effect on April 4, 2024. On March 8, the City Clerk received a proposed referendum petition by Concord resident Jo Sciaroni, indicating plans to gather signatures to place a referendum on the November ballot.

The ordinance amends Concord Municipal Code Chapter 19.40 Residential Tenant Protection Program and increases the "just cause" eviction protections, expands the City's rent registry, and establishes a rent stabilization program.

The petitioners will have 30 calendar days to gather the required number of valid signatures to allow the referendum to move forward. Signatures are verified through the County Clerk, and there must be 7,204 valid signatures from registered Concord voters to qualify.

Resident Reed Robinson has set up daily outside the Safeway on Dekinger Rd. to collect those signatures.

"Rent control has never worked where it has been implemented. It has stopped rental building development. Mayor said it will be 'smart rent control policies. I don't know what's smart about it," Reed



says.

Opponents point out the unintended consequences of rent control which include devaluation of single-family homes and apartment buildings, deferred maintenance, and blight of rental properties, decrease in new construction, increase in crime, negative impacts on local businesses, and loss of tax revenue affecting city services. In addition, the underlying sentiment is it is a government overreach into private business affairs.

Should the petition garner the requisite support, the fate of the ordinance will rest in the hands of the Concord City Council. They will have the option to either repeal the ordinance outright or place it on the November ballot for voters to decide its fate.

Should it fail, the final recourse for opponents is to elect new members to council in November. Both Mayor Edi Birsan and Councilmember Carlyn Obringer voted in favor of the ordinance and are up for re-election.

A summary of the ordinance and a link to the complete ordinance can be found at [cityofconcord.org/housing](http://cityofconcord.org/housing).

Complete ordinance can be found at [cityofconcord.org/housing](http://cityofconcord.org/housing).

# City of Clayton Celebrates 60th Anniversary



Peter Cloven, Vice Mayor Kim Trupiano, Mayor Jim Diaz, Supervisor Ken Carlson, Hollie, and Jeff Wan

The City of Clayton celebrated the 60th anniversary of the incorporation of the City. Congratulations to the City on 60 years of providing support and services to their residents.

**You can also read The Diablo Gazette Online at [www.DiabloGazette.com](http://www.DiabloGazette.com)**

## Views of the Valley

Photos by various photographers

### CRANES SPOTTED IN CONCORD WATERWAYS Photos by John Grubka



A crane was used to repair the canal



Three turtles and a Crane at Turtle Creek

### CELEBRITY CHEF HABIB



Chef Habib Jacifi with host Williams of the show "America's Best Restaurants." The show travels the country visiting restaurants that have caught the attention of the producers. Look for an upcoming feature of Luna Restaurant in Concord on YouTube. This is Luna's second TV feature in as many months.

### KINDNESS ON DISPLAY



Corey Katz of Brix & Craft on Main Street, Martinez, brought a trunk full of food donations for Loaves and Fishes responding to a request on Martinez Rants and Raves for pantry foods. This is a man who really cares about our community!!! Courtesy Kevin Murray.

### EASTER AT TODOS SANTOS



Easter Egg Hunt at Todos Santos Plaza thanks to New Hope Church Concord. The rain held off long enough for kids of all ages to pick up some great treats and prizes.

### THE HILLS ARE ALIVE WITH...



This year, wildflowers are again beginning to bloom across Mount Diablo, thanks to the heavy rains. One great place to look is Mount Diablo's Pine Canyon. California poppies bloom across a field in Pine Canyon. Photo by Stephen Joseph

### CNWS BUS TOUR



Brookfield Properties, Master Developer for the Concord Naval Weapons Station, hosts a bus tour on the property to discuss the proposed plans for the site.

### STORY TIME



Story Time performed by Senior Community Manager Patrick Remer at Pleasant Hill Library Photo by Micah

### EVERY 15 MINUTES



"EVERY 15 MINUTES" challenges 11th and 12th grade students at College Park and Concord High schools to think about the dangers and consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs and distracted driving with a simulated fatal DUI traffic collision. First Responders treat "injured" student participants, which also involved transport to the hospital via REACH helicopter. It looked so real. Photos by Derek Knapp.

### WATERSHED DAY



Friends of Concord Creeks is making a list of potential creek restoration sites for the Walnut Creek Watershed Restoration Plan (that's Walnut Creek the creek, not the city) offering interactive nature and art activities for the whole family on Watershed Day, March 3 Photo by Micah.



## LETTERS to the EDITOR

### Why I Voted for the Ordinance

The dual crises of housing fairness and affordability, and the harm they inflict on Concord families and the broader Concord economy, is both a long-standing issue and a matter of acute importance to us right now.

One of the most challenging human situations I have encountered is when a Concord family loses their home due to eviction. The lives of children are deeply disrupted, particularly if they must change schools or move farther away from other family members who provide needed support.

The Concord City Council started the work of doing something about this crisis early in 2023, worked all year in a very public process, and approved new rental housing fairness and affordability policies in a critical City Council vote on March 5. That work is now all at risk.

Rapidly rising rents have made terrible outcomes for our neighbors much more common over the years than they should be.

Concord families are having to make difficult choices between paying rent and covering other needed costs like healthcare, childcare and groceries. With more than 50,000 people in rental housing — roughly 40% of our population — a huge proportion of our neighbors are uniquely vulnerable.

The anguish I have seen in these circumstances was one of my prompts to run for the City Council in 2022. I hoped that I could do something, through government, to foster not just compassion but a greater share in the common good for Concord families.

Studies by both City staff (in 2016) and housing advocates (in 2018) made the plight of many Concord renters clear. Concord tenants and their families have been pleading for help for years.

And so it was with great hope that I was able to lend my support, in early 2023, to making work on tenant protections a priority for the council last year. It was a year full of hard work, outreach, engagement, dialogue, research, and debate. And I was gratified when the City Council passed a new ordinance on March 5th in support of Concord's tenant families.

While the ordinance does not preclude property owners from removing tenants who violate their leases, it does limit rent increases for multi-family dwellings and makes it harder to evict tenants who are clearly meeting their responsibilities.

Residents of Concord on all sides of the rental market were consulted frequently during the drafting of the ordinance, and I feel strongly that it struck a reasonable balance between protecting tenants and providing a guarantee to property owners that they can earn a fair return on their investment. It was a satisfying culmination to years of being a witness to suffering and then doing the work to try and make a difference.

Just a few days later, I was deeply saddened when a petition was filed which blocks the new ordinance from taking effect. The petition — which is now being circulated in our community for the required signatures — seeks to overturn the new law and

restrict the ability of the city's elected representatives to act with justice on this matter. This petition campaign will leave our community more divided and less able to support the most vulnerable among us. The deep needs of thousands of Concord renting families means the ordinance should stand and NOT be repealed.

I believe that decent, affordable housing is a human right, and supporting its availability includes public responsibility.

Government can and should do what it can to supplement and regulate the activities of private individuals and institutions, as needed, in order to achieve our housing fairness and affordability goals. The rental market does not always provide the housing that is needed.

As a landlord myself, I am mindful that property owners not only have rights, but also have the responsibility to be good stewards when their property can meet the fundamental needs and rights of families. Families come first. Residential real estate is a complicated investment given that moral duty. It therefore may not be an appropriate investment for everyone.

We are in a moment where an attempt, through city government, to provide our tenant neighbors with the much needed support of public policy is at risk. I appeal to all Concord residents to think long and hard before they sign the petition to revoke the justice we have created for our neighbors who need it. I hope you can discern, as I have, that this petition is not in the best interests of Concord and thousands of its residents, but only in the interests of a much smaller group of landlords, most of whom are not even resident in Concord.

When it comes to our housing stability and affordability crisis, there is much positive and constructive work that can and should be done — raising awareness about the human costs, advocating for our neighbors, providing services, stewardship, and community building.

This is where our energies should go, not into propping up a damaging and unjust status quo.

We have known, for years, the crushing harm experienced by Concord's renting families. There are many ways to respond. But the one thing we cannot do is to acknowledge the immoral and unbalanced impact of our housing crisis and do nothing about it. Or refuse to support our neighbors who rent.

Please do not sign the petition to repeal the rent stabilization and just cause ordinance. I invite you to reach out to me, I would be happy to discuss these matters further, most especially to provide clear and accurate information about the ordinance. My contact information is available on the City of Concord website, CityofConcord.org.

- Laura Nakamura,  
Concord City Councilmember,  
District 5

## Eleven Women who Shaped Concord's History

By Carol Longshore, Concord Historical Society

As we honor women closing out the month of March, many who have shaped Concord's history come to mind in no particular order.



**COLLEEN COLL** - Colleen Coll, daughter of Tom Coll, a high-powered lawyer, mayor and a city council member, served on the council for 15 years in the 1980's and 90's. During that time, Concord was in the heart of development and Coll was monumental in bringing Child Care into to city and the Brendan Theatre into action.



**RUTH GALINDO** - Ruth Galindo taught Spanish at Mt. Diablo High School for her entire career and she later donated her house to the Concord Historical Society. Ruth was a founding member of the Concord Historical Society which was established in 1970 and helped to save many of the historical buildings in Concord.



**LAURA HOFFMEISTER** - Laura Hoffmeister, the longest serving council member and now the Mayor of the City of Concord, has accomplished many actions for the people of Concord throughout the years. Her mother, Georgia, also worked for the City of Concord for years and set an example for her daughter to serve the people.



**BETTY MARTIN BARNES** - Betty Martin Barnes, an Executive Secretary for the construction firm, Martin Brothers, was a major donor to the Concord Historical Society and has the Event Center Hall named after her. The stage in the Hall also housed a harmonica concert for our pride and joy, Dave Brubeck, when he was just 6 years old.



**SISTER MARYGRACE PUCHAC** - Sister Marygrace is the Executive Director of East Bay Services for Developmentally Disabled Adults. One of her accomplishments was receiving a grant from HUD to build the first DDA housing project. Another was acquiring the historic Adobe building and transforming the building to a wellness center.



**CAROLYN LEHMER ANDERSON** - Carolyn Lehmer Anderson is the owner of the 2nd generation Pioneer Automobile Dealership and has been active with the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club of Concord for many years.



**JUNE BULMAN** - June Bulman was the first woman Mayor and the first woman elected to the Concord City Council who with guidance and direction, established the Lime Ridge Open Space and the first outdoor Vietnam War Memorial Hill in Newhall Park where 34 trees are planted to honor the soldiers that Concord and Clayton lost in the war.



**VIVIAN BOYD** - Vivian Boyd, educator and President of the Concord Historical Society is leading the growth of the Heritage Center where the Galindo home and Concord Museum and Event Center previously known as the Masonic Temple, are located.



**CARLYN OBRINGER** - Carlyn Obringer who is credited with studying the issues, talking to the people and working with the people of Concord, which has made her a favorite of the community.



**BERTHA ROMAINE** - Bertha Romaine was the principal of Mt. Diablo High School from 1917 to 1948. She applied as a mechanical drawing teacher and was appointed right away as principal. She was well respected and loved by the students and community.



**CHARLOTTE BALLINGER** - Charlotte Ballinger is one of the Concord Historical Society's founding members. A mailman was once quoted saying, "Who are you, a celebrity? Never have I delivered so many Christmas Cards to one person!" and with a twinkle in her eye she said, "Well, I was an elementary school teacher and music teacher, and a mother advisor to the Rainbow Girls for 60 years." After her husband died in 1953, she went back to teaching for 19 years at Concord Elementary.



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