



Diablo Gazette™

April 2026



Concord High Girls Wrestling Champions

Concord Mayor Nakamura with the Concord High girls wrestling team and Coach Sean King. Photo by Thomas Rimpel



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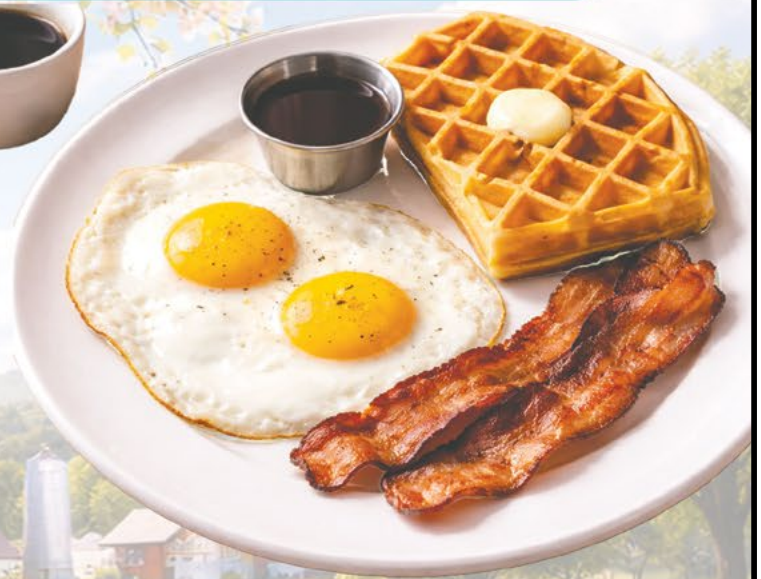
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It's Junk Art From the Heart



On a quiet stretch of Pine Street in Martinez, something unexpected is turning heads, and warming hearts.

At 1634 Pine, an eclectic, five-foot-tall sculpture rises from the front yard, pieced together from recycled propane tanks, motorcycle headlights, nuts, and bolts. It's the kind of artwork that makes passersby slow down, smile, and take a second look. But beyond its inventive design, this piece carries a deeper story, one rooted in family, creativity, and community.

The sculpture is a tribute to Bruce Glenchur, a 59-year-old Martinez resident who attends the RES Success Special Education

program. Commissioned by his sister Kristin, who now lives in Hawaii, the piece was created by renowned Sebastopol artist Patrick Amiot, known for transforming discarded materials into striking works of "junk art." Amiot's work has been featured by outlets ranging from KQED to the San Francisco Chronicle, Sunset Magazine, and even The New York Times.

But for Amiot, this project was personal.

After meeting Bruce, he set out to capture the essence of a man whose joys are beautifully simple. Bruce loves the classic film Herbie the Love Bug and spends hours playing with his extensive collection of Matchbox cars, hundreds, maybe thousands of them.

Inspired, Amiot brought those passions to life in sculpture form: Bruce, reimagined as a triumphant driver behind the wheel of his own Herbie, racing through a miniature version of Martinez.

The result is whimsical, kinetic, and unmistakably joyful.

Installed just a week ago, the piece has already become a neighborhood attraction. Kristin says she and others have found themselves lingering on the front steps, watching as people stop to admire the work, often breaking into smiles or striking up conversations. "People totally enjoy it," she notes. "It's brought a lot of happiness already."

The sculpture may also serve a larger purpose. Amiot is known for producing an annual calendar featuring his creations, with proceeds benefiting local schools. Over the past six years, those calendars have raised more than \$250,000 for Sebastopol schools.

Kristin hopes Bruce's sculpture will be featured in the 2027 edition, ideally in March, Bruce's birthday month, and possibly inspire future fundraising efforts for his program in Martinez.

For now, though, the piece stands as a vibrant tribute: to Bruce, to imagination, and to the idea that even the simplest joys, like a toy car or a beloved movie, can be transformed into something extraordinary.

(photo by Thomas Rimpel)

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CBCA Clayton Art & Wine Festival™ April 25 and 26



The CBCA Clayton Art & Wine Festival™ presented by the Clayton Business and Community Association is celebrating its 29th year of this family-friendly event in downtown Clayton on Saturday April 25, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Sunday April 26, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

In addition to a wide variety of premium red, white, and rose wines, a large selection of beers, including non-alcoholic beer, will be on tap. Stroll down Main Street and Marsh Creek Road to shop at over 135 spectacular arts and crafts booths. As it is every year, the streets will be jam packed with live music, a vast array of delicious food, a KidZone area, and a Petting Zoo.

What makes the Art and Wine Festival one of the best in the East

Bay is the incredible support it receives from the community to help organize and operate the weekend. The CBCA members, sponsors, local high schools, The CBCA Youth Ambassadors, local church organizations, and several hundred volunteers from the Clayton community make this a fun and entertaining event.

If you are looking for an exciting way to kick off your spring, there's no better way than joining friends and family at the CBCA Clayton Art & Wine Festival. Admission is free.

The CBCA is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, reinvesting proceeds from its festivals and events back into the Clayton community.

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German Occupation of the Netherlands May 1940 - May 1945

(Part 3) by Nell Fliemann

Nell Fliemann, Oakland, is 103 years old and is the mother of Jack Fliemann of Concord. She is one of a very few people still alive to tell the story of living through Germany occupation during World War II.

In 1933, Neil lived in Holland. She was only 10 years old and would have no understanding that Hitler's rise to power in Germany would relatively soon change her life. It was sudden.

She has written her experience of life under the German occupation of the Netherlands in a 50-page booklet that she and Jack has shared with the Diablo Gazette. This is the third installment of her story.

You can find the first two installments from our February and March editions on our website, diablogazette.com, past issues. Images are not part of the booklet but supplied by Wikimedia Commons.



DUTCH RESISTANCE MEMBERS IN THE HIDE OUT on the Groeneveld Farm. The hideout existed as a refuge for operating members of the Resistance, a place that they could go to if necessary for a few days. It was never used to hide others. To do so would have increased the likelihood of the hideout's eventual discovery and placed the Resistance fighters in mortal danger. Enemy soldiers appeared at the farm regularly, once taking a careful look at the hay barn and poking bayonets into the hay on all sides and from above the hideout.

Dutch Underground Movement

A Dutch underground movement emerged and was immediately in place and organized. They began to obstruct the movement of trains, blew up railroad tracks between Rotterdam and Delft and also established contact with Dutch command posts in England. Citizens who had gone to High School in Holland, all had learned English and German. Many German operations were sabotaged.

The Germans retaliated by rounding up a dozen prominent Dutchmen, such as a politician, a famous football player, a popular actor, a president of a large company, and other well-known citizens. Their pictures and names were re-leased to all the Dutch newspapers with the message that these persons would be shot to death if another act of sabotage occurred. It briefly "Slowed down destructive acts by the underground, but pretty soon the pace of their sabotage sped up again. And sadly, those hostages were all shot to death. That first incident, of course, was well advertised. This cycle repeated itself a few times. The Dutch underground kept sabotaging during the entire occupation.

One day in an upstairs bedroom, I heard a sound in the air so terrifying that I dropped to the floor and crept underneath the bed. It was the sound of the first V-2, a large missile shot off by some German soldiers from a launching

pad just one block from where we lived.

Over a period of months many more were shot off. They did not all go to England, as intended. The missiles would be shot into the air, stop suddenly, and then fall back to land. I always hoped that once I heard the sound that it would continue, rather than stop and fall back, possibly on us. Many missiles landed in Antwerp, Belgium. They were so unsuccessful that eventually they were no longer launched.

At this time, I had finished High School. For the first ten years of my life, I lived in Indonesia. My father worked there for the State Railway Company when the Great Worldwide Depression in 1929 changed our lives drastically. He was put on early retirement, received a small pension, and our family of six returned to Holland, where my parents came from. In those days, girls in Holland seldom went on to higher education after High School. Besides, my father could not afford further schooling for me. His savings for the future were wiped out, due to the occupation of Indonesia by the Japanese.

My First Job

Just before the German occupation started, I had begun my first job as a secretary. It was a rather peculiar job. I worked for three men, whose names I no longer recall.

They owned a company that imported and sold light balsa wood. I was told that at times when I had nothing to do it was perfectly all right if I filled my time with personal business, as long as I answered the telephone.

I was studying French and German and knitted an entire sweater while in their employ. The three men must have started out as friends. But now two men were no longer on good terms with the third. Soon after I started working there, the Germans confiscated their entire inventory.

Normally the Germans did not buy, they just took. But since these men seemed rather flush with money, they may have been paid for their large inventory of balsa wood. They had nothing to sell anymore but kept the office and did not let me go. During the day they popped in and out of the office. One confided in me that they preferred this overstaying at home, and I knew they liked to go out for lunch or have a drink in town. This was still possible early in the war.

The third man was very friendly to me and told me that he had just bought a nice big house and had given his wife a lot of silverware — and that I should come and have tea at his house sometime. He did not make it a secret that he wanted a young blond mistress. Politely and tactfully, I declined his invitation. A few days later, the youngest of the three men came in and told me that the guy he did not care for and his wife had been murdered the previous day and their house was burned down. Apparently, the murdered man had been doing lucrative business with the Germans. The office was then closed and I was let go. I was ready to leave this unusual job anyway.

Next month, "Some Partying Around the Curfew and Severe Food Rationing"



"The Summit" (2023, Blackstone Publishing, paperback, 594 pages, \$19.99) is a hefty read, but well worth the time. The story follows two men whose lives revolve around a struggle for survival on Mount Everest, but their expeditions to summit the mammoth mountain occurred seventy years apart.

Part One of the novel opens in 2009 with Neil Quinn, a Mount Everest guide, on his ninth expedition. His goal is to help the sixteen-year-old son of billionaire Nelson Tate summit. The boy's achievement would earn him a new world record as he became the youngest person to have climbed the highest peaks of seven continents. But during the descent, things went horribly wrong. Quinn ends up sheltering in a cave, where he discovers a frozen body and an ice axe with a Nazi swastika.

The book then toggles to 1938 in Southwest Austria where readers meet the second protagonist, Josef Becker, a German mountaineer and Nazi officer. When Becker is caught in the act helping Jewish refugees cross a treacherous mountain peak into safety by fellow Nazis, all seems lost. But after Becker's extraordinary mountaineering skills captures the attention of the notorious Heinrich Himmler, Josef's life takes an unexpected turn. Himmler recruits Becker to be the first man to summit Mount Everest, an unheard-of feat that would prove the superiority of the Aryan German.

Back in 2009, Quinn, who barely survived his ninth expedition, finds himself in danger from a livid boss and the revenge-seeking billionaire father of the boy. When one of his

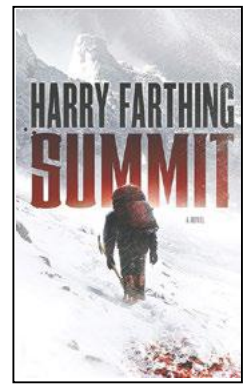
sherpas winds up dead under mysterious circumstances in Kathmandu, Quinn, desperate and low on money, flees to Europe to sell the ice

axe to a collector. Here, he steps into more danger from neo-Nazis, who seek to prove Nazi Josef Becker was the first man to summit Everest, not New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa mountaineer, Tenzing Norgay, in 1953.

Farthing's first-hand experience of climbing Everest creates a stunning realism in his prose. His in-depth historical details also nearly convinced me that the novel was based on actual events. Fans of certain nonfiction books such as Jon Krakauer's "Into Thin Air," and "Alive" by Piers Paul Read, and fiction books such as "The Forest of Vanishing Stars" by Kristin Harmel and "The Wager" by David Grann, will likely enjoy this book.

Harry Farthing is an experienced mountaineer who has climbed extensively, including Mt Blanc and the Matterhorn in the Alps, Shishapangma, the highest mountain in Tibet, and Everest. The sequel to "The Summit," "The Ghost Moths," continues the saga of Neil Quinn's mountaineering adventures in Tibet.

Farthing has a lifelong interest in exploration, archaeology, and world history. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He lives in South Carolina with his wife.



When Ryland Grace (Ryan Gosling) wakes up alone on a spacecraft floating through the galaxy, he has no recollection of who he is or how he ended up in space. As Grace regains consciousness, however, he begins to piece together the unusual circumstances that led him to be in a pretty dire situation.

Grace was once a respected scientist, but his stubbornness to stand by his outlandish theories now has him teaching science to middle school kids. Despite his exile from the scientific community, he has a reputation as a brilliant mind. This draws the attention of NASA official Eva Stratt (Sandra Hüller), who tracks him down and asks for his expertise on a top-secret project.

The first half of the film moves slowly, with plenty of scientific jargon being thrown around. Since the survival of the human species is at stake, there is enough to hold our interest until we get to the good stuff. Once Grace finds out he is not alone, the film ramps up.

For a film like this to resonate, viewers have to be invested in Ryan

Gosling's character, and he is the right choice for the role. He creates a reluctant hero that audiences can relate to and root for. Even when some of his adventures seem far-fetched, you accept them because you want to see him succeed.

Just when you think you are watching a thought-provoking space film, the action ratchets up and you are on the edge of your seat. Similarly, you may be caught off guard by how much emotion you feel during the more tender scenes. This movie delivers on many levels.

The spectacular visuals of outer space are best experienced in the theater. This is also a wonderful film for the whole family. The themes of courage, friendship, and working together for a common goal are all important topics that viewers of all ages can discuss after the movie.

Movies can entertain and educate in so many ways, but it is always rewarding to see a film that is not only about a personal journey, but one that reminds us of sacrifice, humanity, and the beauty of life in this expansive universe.

Project Hail Mary PG-13 In Theaters



Jeff Wan
Mayor, Clayton
jeff.wan@claytonca.gov

Audited ACFR

What the Results Mean for Our City

The City recently received the results of our audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). The audit confirms that our financial position remains stable, with manageable and expected operating deficits in certain funds. These results reflect current economic conditions, rising costs, and long-term structural factors that affect many local governments.

Some of these deficits are temporary and tied to timing differences or planned use of reserves. Others are structural in nature. Structural gaps occur when ongoing revenues do not fully align with ongoing expenditures. These require thoughtful policy discussion and deliberate action. We cannot solve structural issues with one-time solutions. We must align services, revenues, and long-term obligations in a responsible way.

To address these challenges, the City continues to review expenditures, evaluate service levels, and assess revenue opportunities. We are updating financial forecasts and identifying options for the Council and community to consider. Our goal is to remain proactive, not reactive. Careful planning today protects service levels and financial stability tomorrow.

Strengthening Internal Controls

Equally important, though less visible, is the progress we have made in strengthening internal controls. Since Fiscal Year 2019, the City's audits included findings related to significant

deficiencies and material weaknesses in internal control. These findings required attention and sustained effort.

With the addition of new finance leadership and resolute staff, the City has eliminated those findings. In Fiscal Year 2024 and again in Fiscal Year 2025, the audit reported no significant deficiencies and no material weaknesses. This marks an important milestone.

Internal controls are not abstract accounting concepts. They are the daily practices that safeguard public funds. They ensure accurate reporting. They reduce the risk of error. They require consistent oversight, clear procedures, and personal accountability. Staff must review transactions, reconcile accounts, and follow established processes every day.

This work rarely draws attention, yet it forms the backbone of responsible fiscal management. Strong internal controls build trust. They allow the Council and the community to rely on the accuracy of financial information when making important decisions.

As we look ahead, we will continue to address structural financial challenges while maintaining the discipline that has strengthened our internal control environment. Financial stewardship requires both transparency and persistence. The City remains committed to both.

Historical Clayton Club Saloon to be Auctioned April 3.



George and John Robles prepare for the potluck BBQ at Clayton Club on its announced final day, Sunday, March 29, with Clayton Club going to Auction on April 3. Hopefully, this won't be their last BBQ.

The future for the Clayton Club Saloon is unclear, but the rumors of it closing for good are exaggerated. On April 3, it will go up for Auction with a bid of \$130,000 at current time of writing with the minimum initial overbid at \$137,000.

The Historic Clayton Club Saloon is almost as old as Clayton itself, opening in 1873, 153 years ago. It is renowned for being one of the oldest continuous running bars in California.

It's current ownership, a limited liability company partnership of Misty Leone, Dean Cafiero and Charles Hammond, bought the business in 2020 for \$210,000. But Hammond died in 2022 without naming a successor leaving Leone and Cafiero in litigation leading to the Superior court assigning a receiver to manage the bar.

On the Clayton Club Facebook page, the Club was hosting its final hurrah on Sunday, March 29, a potluck (bring your own meat) BBQ in the beer garden.

Long-time barbecuers John and George Robles, who have been cooking there for more than 25 years were already working the grill by 10:00 a.m. Unfazed, "We been through multiple owners, hopefully things will continue. We just go with the furniture," John said.

For the most part, Clayton residents are hoping for new stewards to write the next chapter of its legacy.

Auction will be held at the Contra Costa County Superior Courthouse, 725 Court Street in Martinez on April 3 at 1:00 p.m. A \$25,000 deposit, proof of funds is required.

Consider it **SOLD!**

\$788,000

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\$849,000

1394 El Camino Dr, Clayton

\$399,000

1430 Bel Air Dr #103, Concord

\$1,395,000

376 Blue Oak Ln, Clayton

\$999,000 PRICE Improvement

2000 Curry Canyon Rd, Clayton

\$599,000 PENDING

5070 Bonwell Dr, Concord

\$1,332,000 SOLD

5900 High St, Clayton

\$955,000 SOLD Overlist

1367 Yosemite Cir, Clayton

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CLAYTON MARKET UPDATE

CONCORD MARKET UPDATE

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
9006 Elk Dr	\$1,310,000	2543	4/2.5	2/11/2026
3056 Windmill Canyon Dr	\$1,025,000	1816	3/2	2/18/2026
5895 Herriman Dr	\$900,000	1637	4/2	2/20/2026
23 Mt Wilson Way	\$555,000	1075	2/2	3/3/2026
102 Forest Hill Dr	\$1,335,000	3820	5/3	3/4/2026
327 Mt Washington Way	\$1,160,000	2619	5/2.5	3/9/2026
1367 Yosemite Cir	\$955,000	1875	3/3	3/11/2026

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
3061 San Miguel Ct	\$1,155,000	2078	4/2	2/18/2026
1687 Westwood Dr	\$848,000	1573	3/2	2/25/2026
1834 Venice Dr	\$735,000	1024	3/1	2/27/2026
1014 Bancroft Rd	\$490,000	1386	3/2	3/2/2026
3770 Boxwood Ct	\$928,000	1928	4/2	3/4/2026
1833 Helena Dr	\$900,000	1924	4/2	3/6/2026
4045 Sacramento St	\$680,000	1390	3/2	3/13/2026

Based on information from CCRAR/Paragon MLS as of 3/16/26. 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.

Concord High Girls Wrestling Makes History with Undefeated Season and NCS Title

by David King



Concord Mayor Laura Nakamura delivers a Proclamation honoring the Concord High girls wrestling team for their historic achievement in recognition of March being National Women's History month. Image is video screen capture of City Council meeting..

The Concord High School girls wrestling team has officially etched its name into the record books, delivering a historic season defined by grit, determination, and breakthrough achievement.

In a year that will be remembered for generations, the team finished undefeated in dual meets and captured the inaugural NCS Dual Team Championships title, becoming the first girls wrestling team in California to do so. For head coach Sean King, the accomplishment reflects far more than wins and losses.

"We are the inaugural champions of this NCS title," King said. "This milestone represents years of dedication by these student-athletes and highlights Concord's leadership in supporting girls athletics and opportunity in youth sports."

The achievement carries statewide significance, marking a defining moment in the continued rise of girls wrestling across California. Alongside King, coach Johnny O'Shea has helped guide the program through its rapid growth and success.

The team's dominance extended beyond dual meets. Concord also claimed the inaugural NCS Division II East Bay Divisional championship and placed second overall at the highly competitive Masters Tournament. From there, four wrestlers advanced to the CIF State Wrestling Championships, the largest representation from the North Coast Section.

Senior leaders Ayaka Naddy, Elysia Youngblood, Liezel Talosig, and Emy Calvillo anchored the team throughout the season.

Naddy, a four-time CIF qualifier and team captain, finished among the top 16 in the state. Youngblood, also a captain, earned a top-12 finish, while Talosig and Keirabella added state qualification to their resumes. Though the four competitors narrowly missed podium finishes, their presence at state competition underscored the program's rapid rise.

Additional standout performances included Keirabella Brown's second-place finish at the NCS Championships, while Naddy, Talosig, and Youngblood each secured third-place medals, further cementing Concord's depth and competitiveness.

The team's undefeated season also earned them a top-28 statewide ranking, making them the first girls wrestling team from the NCS to ever be ranked in dual meet competition.

Off the mat, the recognition continued. The season concluded with a celebratory banquet at Skipolini's in Clayton, where both the boys and girls programs gathered. The girls team received a

surprise visit from Concord Mayor Laura Nakamura, who presented each girl athlete with individual certificates honoring their accomplishments.

In recognition of their historic season, and fittingly during Women's History Month, the team was also honored at a March 24 Concord City Council meeting, where a formal proclamation celebrated their groundbreaking and historical achievement.

Now in his fifth year at Concord High, Coach King has witnessed firsthand the evolution of girls wrestling. What began with no female wrestlers in the program has grown



 **Jennifer Stojanovich**
Broker/Owner, Better Homes Realty

Buy First or Sell First?

One of the questions I hear most often from homeowners thinking about making a move is:

Should we buy our next home first, or sell our current home first?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer. The best choice depends on your finances, your comfort level, and the current market.

Buying first can feel less stressful because it gives you time to find your next home before giving up the one you're in. It may also allow you to move just once instead of needing temporary housing or storage.

But you may need to qualify for a new loan while still owning your current home, come up with a down payment before your sale closes, and possibly carry two house payments for a short period.

Selling first is often the safer financial option. It gives you a clear picture of how much money you'll have to work with and helps avoid the stress of carrying two mortgages.

The challenge is timing. If your home sells before you find your next one, you may need temporary housing, a short-term rental, or a rent-back agreement while you continue your search.

So, Which Is Better? If your finances allow it, buying first can make the transition feel smoother and less rushed. If you want more financial clarity and less risk, selling first is usually the safer route.

In today's market, low inventory can make buying first more appealing if you're able to do it. But if your current home is likely to sell quickly, selling first may give you more confidence and a better understanding of your budget.

Make Either Option Easier

The good news is that there are strategies that can help make the process smoother, no matter which direction you choose.

Sometimes sellers negotiate a rent-back, which allows them to sell their current home and remain in it for a brief time while they shop for the next one.

Other buyers may make an offer that is contingent on the sale of their current home, although whether that is viable can depend on how competitive the market is at the time.

And in some cases, a lender may be able to discuss bridge financing or other options that can help homeowners access equity before their current home sells.

Every situation is unique, which is why planning ahead is so important.



Before deciding whether to buy or sell first, start with a Sit down with a trusted Realtor and lender to review your equity, financing options, and timing. Every situation is different, and the right strategy can make all the difference. The good news is, with the right guidance, either path can lead to a successful move.



Liezel Talosig (12), Keirabella (Bella) Brown (10), Elysia Youngblood (12), and Ayaka Naddy (12)

into a 15-athlete roster.

"Five years ago, we didn't have a single girl in the program," King said. "Now we're making history."

He credits increased visibility, expanding collegiate opportunities, and a shifting perception of the sport. With

more colleges offering scholarships and families recognizing wrestling as a form of self-defense and empowerment, participation continues to rise.

For Concord High, this season was more than a championship run, it was the foundation of a legacy.



When Assisted Living Makes Sense and Why It Can Improve Daily Life

by Francisco Sudiagal

For many older adults, remaining at home represents independence, familiarity, and comfort. As needs change with age, however, there may come a point when living at home becomes more difficult or less safe than it once was. Assisted living is often most helpful when it is considered thoughtfully and before a crisis occurs.

One common sign it may be time to explore assisted living is difficulty with everyday tasks. Managing medications, preparing meals, bathing, or keeping up with household chores can quietly become overwhelming. Frequent falls, mobility issues, or trouble navigating the home are also important warning signs that the current living situation may no longer be the best fit.

Social isolation is another factor families should recognize. Seniors who live alone may find their social circles shrinking over time, which can affect both emotional and physical well-being. Assisted living facilities offer regular opportunities for connection through shared meals, activities, and events, helping residents stay engaged. San Sor, Executive Director of Oakmont of Concord, notes that finding fulfillment from a sense of community is one of the most important reasons why seniors should consider assisted living.

While these signs may prompt

consideration, many families are surprised by the advantages assisted living can offer once the move is made. Modern assisted living is designed to support independence, not replace it. Residents receive personalized help only where needed, while continuing to make their own choices about daily routines, hobbies, and activities.

Safety and peace of mind are also major benefits. Assisted living communities are designed with older adults in mind, with accessible layouts, safety features, and staff available around the clock. This allows residents to move about confidently while knowing help is nearby if needed.

Daily life also becomes simpler. Meals, housekeeping, transportation, and maintenance are typically provided, freeing residents from responsibilities that may have become tiring or stressful. This allows more time and energy for enjoying life.

For adult children, assisted living often eases the strain of caregiving and restores family relationships. Visits can focus on connection rather than tasks or worry.

Assisted living is a way to gain support, safety, and community, while continuing to live with dignity, choice, and peace of mind.

The Papa Jake Larson Statue Project

Honor a Bay Area Hero

Papa Jake Larson is our local World War II Veteran and a beloved storyteller who touched millions by sharing his firsthand history with the world through TikTok

We are creating a memorial statue to honor Papa Jake's memory, service, sacrifice, and incredible impact on future generations

This statue will stand as a permanent reminder of the men and women who served and the importance of remembering their stories

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(Next to Sprouts in the Crow Canyon Plaza)
925-866-2200

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calendar of events



Fundraisers

“Papa Jake” Larson monument Brick Drive. Be forever a part of this bronze monument in Martinez Igancio Plaza honoring War Hero Jake Larson. Engrave hour name on a brick. all brick purchases are donations and are tax deductible. papajakelarson.com.

Cars 2nd Chance, vehicle / car donation programs turns donations into cash for charities Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary Charitable Fund. www.cars2ndchance.org/

Clayton

April 25-26 CBCA Clayton Art& Wine Festival Sat 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.. Sun. 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.. Free admission. 135 arts and craft booths, petting zoo, live music, kid zone, and food. Of course wine and beer for 21 years and older. Downtown Clayton.

Concord

Concord Chamber First Fridays Coffee - 2nd Friday of the month, 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM at Gratitude Coffee Bar, 1655 Willow Pass Rd. Suite B (Park n Shop). Business leaders and community members come together to network, share updates, and hear the latest from the Chamber and the community. Members Free, non-members \$10.

April 4 Gehringer Community Garden Open House 1:00 -3:00 p.m. UC Master Gardeners of Contra costa County come out to witness the launch of the new CA natives Demonstration Garden. California natives displays, handouts, free seed packets. UC Master Gardener volunteers will be on site to answer your gardening questions. Refreshments. Free admission. 1790 Lynwood Dr. Concord.

April 11 Concord Rec Expo and Job Fair 1:00-3:30 p.m. Discover the recreational programs for all ages. Explore sports, summer camps, fitness classes, aquatics, and enrichment programs. Free recreation swim and free lap swim during the event. Concord Community pPool, 350 Cowell Rd.

April 15 Concord State of the City 2026. 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Mayor Laura Nakamura will share updates on Concord's progress, priorities, and vision for the year ahead. Includes small bites, refreshments. Hilton concord, 1970 Diamond Blvd. Tickets \$75 contact Concord Chamber of Commerce, 925-685-1811.

April 18 Honoring Earth Day- Volunteers needed at Markham >Nature Park to spread mulch. Plus Nature Walk. 9:00 a.m. to Noon. 1202 La Vista Ave.
>Cambridge Park , plant up to eight trees, spread mulch. 1135 Lacey Lane.

April 24 Food Sort at the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Join Concord City Councilmember Carlyn Obringer at Concord Warehouse from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 4010 Nelson Ave, Concord. Email carlyn.obringer@cityofconcord.org for more information.

April 25 Honoring Earth Day 9:00 a.m. to noon. -
>Willow Pass Park, volunteers needed to plant trees and spread mulch. 2748 E. Olivera Rd.
> Brazil Quarry Park, repair split-rail fence, plant up to six trees, and spread mulch. 1598 Kent Way
>Lime Ridge Open Space, spread mulch, weed, and litter clean up. 370 treat Blvd.
> Hillcrest Community Park, clean up creek. Grant St. and Olivera Rd.

May 2 -3 Concord Historical Society's Spring Tea - at the Galindo Home. 72 Amador Ave. Two seatings, 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. each day. Call Carol at 925-899-9737 for ticket information. Reserve early.

Pleasant Hill

April 10 Whiskey Tasting Pleasant Hill Chamber invites adults 21 and over to experience the fine art of whiskey tasting with whiskey sommelier, Frank Jakuba 6:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m.

Includes bites from Pleasant Hill restaurants, live entertainment by Debra Del Mastro and Company. Pleasant Hill Senior Center chateau Hall, 233 Gregory Lane. Tickets: \$125 ea. or \$200 for two. <https://tinyurl.com/3n2a8j2z>

April 11 Pleasant Hill City Councilmember and Metropolitan Transportation Commission Chair Sue Noack will speak to the American Association of University Women Pleasant Hill-Martinez Branch at 10 am at the First Congregational Church of Martinez, 1229 Court Street,

April 11 Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm Spring Expo and Plant Sale 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Thousands of plants including tomatoes, peppers, herbs, succulents and flowers. Advice on plants, trees, and bees. Live music by Maxine and Farmer John cooking. 35 Carlsen Rd.

May 16-17 Pleasant Hill's Art, Wine & Music Festival Crescent Drive. Two music stages, Kids and Cultural Stages. Arts and Crafts booths, craft beer and fine wine, food. Hosted by Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce. Admission is free.

Martinez

April 01 Martinez 150th Anniversary Celebration — City Council will hold a commemorative meeting featuring reflections, special recognitions, and highlights of Sesquicentennial initiatives taking place throughout the year. City Hall 525 Henrietta ST. 6:00 p.m.

April 4 Martinez Kiwanis/ Lady Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt at Waterfront Park. Baskets will be provided or bring your own. Egg hunt and face painting for kids 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 and 8-9 year olds. Free to all. 10:00 a.m. sharp.

April 18 John Muir Birthday Celebrate Earth Day at John Muir National Historic Site. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Learn of John Muir's legacy of conservation and his love of nature at the home and ranch Enjoy a day filled with music, food, and funn family activities. Free admission. Park at Alhambra High parking lot. Parking and shuttles are free. Organized by the John Muir Association and National Park Service at 4202 Alhambra Avenue.

For more Martinez Community events, go to Martinez Section, page 20.

At the Martinez Campbell Theater

634 Ward St.

> **April 12 Renegade Orchestra** Bay Areas's most rock and roll symphony. Music based on sounds of San Francisco and the Bay Area featuring pieces written by famous Bay Area rock bands. 3:00 p.m. \$35

> **April 19 The Lowell Ensemble** A fun festive concert of Classical, folk, pop music. Proceeds go to John Muir Land Trust. \$20

> **May 1-17 Four Old Broads** Four sassy senior ladies, Beatrice, Eaddy, Imogene, and Maude need a break from bingo and macrame and take a Cruise. Throw in a senior citizen beauty pageant, Elvis impersonator, bizarre thigh exerciser incident and you have a laugh a minute. \$24, Discount Thursday \$18

Walnut Creek



Walnut Creek Merry Mixers Dances 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. Free coffee and water, no-host bar, \$20 corkage. Outside liquor prohibited. \$20, \$15 members. Walnut Creek Elks Lodge 1475 Creekside Drive. 925-969-9693 Membership dues \$25

>April 03 (1st Friday) Take 2 preceded by dance lesson

>April 16 (3rd Thurs) Claudio Medeiros Trio preceded by potlucka

April 18 Community Service Day Volunteer for Earth Day activities, plant trees, spread mulch, etc. in parks.

At the Leshner Center

1601 Civic Dr. Walnut Creek. 925-943-7469.

> **March 29-April 19** Lost in Yonkers by Neil Simon.

> **April 16 -26 Improvised Clue:** The Unscripted Murder Mystery A Synergy Theater improvised two act-comedy. Thurs - Sat 8:15 p.m., Sundays 3:15 p.m.

Other Areas

Benicia:

> **April 18 2nd Annual Local Author Book Festival** - Benicia Library 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. To register as an author, please contact Geoffrey Jacobs 707-746-4347. or GJacobs@ci.benicia.ca.us. Must register by April 11. Limit 30 authors. benicialiteraryarts.org

Lafayette:

> **May 1, May 3 Diablo Women's Chorale presents 'Bon Voyage'**, a spirited musical journey celebrating the joys of setting out, returning, and reconnecting with the people we love. May 1 at 7:00 p.m., May 3 at 3:00 p.m. Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette \$30 adults \$20 Student 11-17. Age 10 and under are free. diablowomenschorale.org

Pittsburg:

> **April 11 East Bay Anza 250 Symposium** at Los Medanos College, Student Union bldg. 2700 East Leland Rd. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 250th anniversary of the Juan Bautista de Anza expedition. Explore its impact on the East Bay, and honors indigenous legacies. Registration \$30. Lunch included. Register at Eventbrite.

> **May 06 SIR Branch 19 Luncheon** 11:00 a.m. This will be a special event honoring our wives and significant others. Providing entertainment will be The Swinging Blue Star Singers, who will serenade us with songs from the 50's through the 60's. Pittsburg Elks Lodge, 200 Marina Blvd. Pittsburg. 925-338-1996. www.sirinc2.org/branch19

Library Events

SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIESby the 20th of the month before Issue month. diablogazette@gmail.com**Afternoon or After Dinner Pairings**

>Clayton 6125 Clayton Rd.
April 8 Wonderful Wednesdays: Mind tricks, a Neuroscience Magic Show 2:00=2:45 p.m.

>Martinez 740 Court St.

April 11 Plant Swap Bring in cuttings or starts of your plants and take home some new ones. Drop in any time between 10:30 and 2:30.

>Pleasant Hill

April 10 Friday Book Club 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Discuss the book 'The Frozen River' by Ariel Lawhon.

>Walnut Creek

Mondays, through April 13. AARP Tax Preparation 10:00 a.m.-3:00p.m.. AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers will provide free tax assistance.

>Walnut Creek Ygnacio

>April 18 Fratello Marionettes: Carnival of the Animals 11A-12N

Rotary meets Thursdays at 7:00 a.m. at the Clayton Valley Charter School Administration Building, 1300 Alberta Way, Concord www.claytonvalleyrotary.org/

Concord Clubs
Concord NorCal Helping Hands Lion's Club. lionsclub.org

Rotary Club of Concord. www.concordcarotary.org

Toastmasters Meeting Improve your speaking skills and leadership skills. Check out Word Weavers Toastmasters Club on the 1st, 3rd or 4th Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at John Muir Hospital in Concord, 2450 East Street, in the Kunkel conference room. <https://400.toastmastersclubs.org/>

Martinez Clubs

Kiwanis Club meetings. Thursdays 12-2, lunch is free to visitors. 750 Allen St. Martinez. www.martinezkiwanis.org

Walut Creek Clubs

Diablo View Rotary meets Tuesday nights from 5:45 to 6:45pm at Bourbon Highway 1677 N Main St. Walnut Creek. diablowviewrotary.org/

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. www.rotarywc.org

Clubs**Clayton Clubs**

GFWC Clayton Valley Woman's Club 9:30 a.m. Serving the communities of Clayton and Concord, meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month September - June. Clayton Community Church, 6055 Main St, Clayton. www.claytonvalleywomensclub.org

Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise

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Most people think of sweet wines as something for novices, or as bottles reserved strictly for after dinner. While sweet wines are undeniably easy to love especially when we're full and craving something indulgent, they are also surprisingly versatile and complex. Their sweetness can make them an ideal counterpoint to spicy, salty, and high acid foods, many of which we tend to enjoy before the meal even begins.

Sauternes is a French winemaking region that specializes in an intensely sweet white wine that shares its name. Made primarily from a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon grapes, Sauternes owes its distinctive character to Botrytis cinerea, often referred to as "noble rot."

In the region's foggy mornings, this beneficial fungus develops on the grape skins. As the grapes remain on the vine, the botrytis slowly draws water from the fruit, concentrating its sugars and flavors. When the grapes are finally harvested and pressed, the resulting juice is thick and luscious. The finished wine offers rich notes of ripe pear, dried apricot, fragrant gardenia, and tangy honey.

At the table, Sauternes proves itself far more than a dessert wine. Served well chilled on a warm summer day, it makes a wonderful picnic companion and pairs beautifully with a classic charcuterie board. Savory salumi, briny olives, and a wide range of cheeses all shine alongside its sweetness.

One especially classic pairing is blue cheese, whose salty, pungent character creates a striking contrast with Sauternes. Blue cheeses go by many names depending on their origin: Stilton in England, Roquefort in France, Gorgonzola in Italy, Cabrales in Spain, and, in the United States, simply Blue Cheese. But they all share an affinity for this wine.

Sauternes truly comes into its own after dinner as well. Its natural sweetness makes it a perfect match for desserts featuring stone fruits such as apricots and peaches. It is also lovely alongside a simple poached pear, where the wine's honeyed notes echo the fruit's delicate sweetness. And unlike many wines, Sauternes is forgiving once opened; an unfinished bottle will keep in the refrigerator for up to a month.

Whether served before the meal, alongside savory bites, or as a luxurious finish to dinner, Sauternes defies its reputation as a one note wine.

So go on. Pair Up!



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

Poached Pears With Quick Chocolate Sauce**INGREDIENTS**

1 1/2 cups sugar
 1 cinnamon stick
 Peel from 1/2 orange
 Juice of 1/2 orange
 4 Bosc pears

Quick Chocolate Sauce

1/3 cup heavy cream
 2/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

DIRECTIONS

In a medium saucepan, bring 4 cups water, sugar, cinnamon stick, orange peel, and orange juice to a boil.

Peel the pears, leaving the stem intact. Core the pears from the bottom using a corer or vegetable peeler.

Add the pears to the simple syrup, and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook until the pears are tender, but not mushy, about 15 minutes. Chill the pears in the syrup.

For the sauce: Place the chocolate chips in a small bowl. Heat the heavy cream to hot, but not boiling in the microwave, about 15 to 20 seconds. Pour over the chocolate chips and let sit undisturbed for 5 minutes. Mix until smooth and serve.

Place the pear standing up on a dessert plate and drizzle with the chocolate sauce.

Yield: 4 servings

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Neuroplasticity
by Jessica Raaum Foster
NeurologyofPresence.com

Train Your Brain for Better Memory and Focus

We all dread it; you walk into a room and forget why you're there. You lose your place while reading. You know the person, but their name sits just out of reach.

The common response to improve memory is to train memory, to reach for memory games, puzzles, or brain apps in hopes of sharpening recall.

But there's another piece of the picture that often goes unaddressed.

Your brain doesn't work in isolation. It depends heavily on input from your eyes and your sense of balance to stay oriented, alert, and clear. As we age, changes in vision and balance are common and when those signals become less precise, thinking can feel less precise too.

It's not just about memory. It's about the quality of information your brain is receiving from the world around you. If the input is a bit "noisy," the output, your focus, recall and clarity can feel that way as well.

The encouraging part is that these systems can be trained. Here's a simple exercise you can try:

Hold your thumb out in front of you at eye level. Place a second target (another thumb, a pen, or a spot on the wall) about 12–18 inches away. Gently move your eyes back and forth between the two targets. Move just your eyes and not your head for 20 to 30 seconds. Go at a pace that feels clear and comfortable.

This works because quick, accurate eye movements help stimulate the brain networks that support attention and mental clarity.

Pause and notice how you feel. Many people experience a subtle shift, like things come into sharper focus, both visually and mentally.

This isn't a replacement for medical care, and it's not a quick fix for every concern. But it is a reminder that the

brain is responsive. When you improve the signals it relies on, you often improve how it performs.

If you've been putting your energy into "brain training" alone, it may be worth widening the lens. Supporting your eyes and balance can be a powerful and often overlooked way to support your mind. There's power in communication with your nervous system.

Need help? Try a free week of brain training with the Focus Challenge April 6 – April 10. neurologyofpresence.com/5-day-focus-challenge



5 Day FREE FOCUS CHALLENGE

4/6/26 - 4/10/26
9:00am - 9:15 am PST
Location: Zoom

2026		APRIL					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
				1	2	3	
				4	5	6	
				7	8	9	
				10	11	12	
				13	14	15	
				16	17	18	
				19	20	21	
				22	23	24	
				25	26	27	
				28	29	30	

Reset, Refocus, Show up!



Neurologyofpresence.com/5-day-focus-challenge

Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery Give Back Program Donates \$20,661 to Food Bank

Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery is celebrating its 15th anniversary of its Give Back Program (GBP). This long-standing community initiative provides annual support to the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano.

As part of the program's 15th anniversary, Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery presented a \$20,661 donation to the Food Bank.

The Give Back Program reflects the company's broader commitment to strengthening the communities it serves while protecting the environment. Through community partnerships and resource conservation efforts, Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery continues to support programs that reduce waste, conserve natural resources, and benefit the community.

This year marks a significant milestone in the company's sustainability efforts. More than 31,000 customers, representing nearly 40% of all accounts, are now enrolled in paperless billing, reducing paper consumption and the environmental impacts associated with printing and mailing paper statements.

Based on environmental impact estimates, the shift to paperless billing helps conserve natural resources each year, including saving an estimated 90 trees annually and reducing associated greenhouse gas emissions.

"Through the Give Back Program, our customers play a vital role in protecting the environment," said Kish Rajan, CEO. "This initiative links waste reduction efforts with supporting local food programs, creating a meaningful, multi-layered impact across the region."

Customers can enroll in paperless billing through their online account and receive secure email notifications when their statement is ready. For every



sign-up to paperless billing Mt. Diablo Recycling donates \$5 to the Food Bank.

Customers who opt to paperless billing have access to their billing history and account information through a protected online account.

Customers receive an email notification as soon as your monthly statement is available. It's Better for the environment: Reducing paper statements conserves natural resources and reduces environmental impacts.

Today, MDRR serves over 250,000 residents and thousands of businesses throughout Contra Costa, Napa, and Solano Counties.

By operating recycling and recovery programs designed to increase sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, MDRR demonstrates its leadership in the environmental services industry.

The company's RCI-Certified Material Resource Facility in Pittsburg, California, contains the area's largest state-of-the-art recycling processing center and C+D line to ensure the vast majority of material can be recycled, reused, and kept out of landfills.

Mt. Diablo Recycling continues to grow. It is being transformed into the Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery Park. This facility will expand their recovery efforts, increasing the diversion of material away from the landfill.

Solutions, puzzle page 18

WORD SEARCH - CHEESE

E G R C L M Y I F C Y J V Y O E R J
C J N J L U V K L F S E S Y V R K A
H R H J P A R M E S A N K W O A T I
Y O H G U T G V K K Q V I M I T T E
I D G F M W B R E L A V A B O S T V
E J I Y S F L S E L C N U C T R S I
M A N C H E G O L B O U I A Y A T D
O E C F J L E E Q W S R V B T R H O
O S B T B Q R R T Y L L L A A S P J
H H R W C A W N G D A O R V B T E I
A H U G Z A J J Q T C R A A A I C B
V O O Z C N D N L N U H S T J L O G
K T O U H Q C U R B R I E H C T R T
Y M V L M K U M O M A F D D T O I K
H D J E R E Y U R G R V A I D N N F
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H G W V A Q P R O V O L O N E E R H

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|---------|---------|------------|-----------|
| ASIAGO | EDAM | JARLSBERG | PROVOLONE |
| BRIE | FETA | MANCHEGO | ROMANO |
| BURRATA | GOUDA | MOZZARELLA | RICOTTA |
| CHEDDAR | GRUYERE | PARMESAN | STILTON |
| COLBY | HAVARTI | PECORINO | SWISS |

SUDOKU

		3	6	4				
	5					1	3	2
	8	9	3					
	4		8			5	1	
	7	8	1	5	3			
		1	2			9	8	
3					9	2		1
				2	1		5	6
2		4			6			9

WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble these five APPETIZERS:

- TEHTCBUSRA _____
AMALARCI _____
VELISO _____
SAHONC _____
SKERTICTOPS _____

CRYPTOGRAM

In the quote below, each letter has been substituted for another letter. For example, if A = H, then A will always represent H in this puzzle.

AOL VUSF APTL AV LHA
KPLA MVVK PZ DOPSL
FVB'YL DHPAPUN MVY
AOL ZALHR AV JVV.R.
—QBSPH JOPSK

DO YOU KNOW?

How many windows does New York's Empire State Building have?
582 | 1023 | 2935 | 6514

Puzzles column by Marc Rokoff
RokoPuzzles.com



Walnut Creek Welcomes Spring with Community Service and New Programs

by Kevin Wilk, Mayor, Walnut Creek



Walnut Creek commissioners L-R Kathee Colman, Edward Guerro, Ryan McMahon, Matthew Brockhaus, Jeffrey Prose, Sheri Kurland, with Mayor Kevin Wilk..

Spring has arrived and Walnut Creek has already been filled with celebrations, recognitions, and important updates. As the weather warms and residents begin to spend more time outdoors, we are excited to share several upcoming community events and City initiatives.

At the March 3 City Council meeting, five newly appointed Commissioners were recognized and sworn in, marking the beginning of their service to Walnut Creek. Our boards and commissions play an important role in advising the City Council and helping to shape the future of our community, and we are grateful to the residents who volunteer their time and expertise in these roles. Several retiring commissioners were also recognized for their years of dedication and service to the City.

Walnut Creek's Community Service Day, April 18

Residents looking for ways to help improve our community are encouraged to participate in Walnut Creek's Community Service Day on Saturday, April 18.

This annual event brings volunteers of all ages together to complete projects at parks, gardens, community centers, libraries, and schools throughout Walnut Creek. Residents can also consider joining the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which provides training in disaster preparedness and emergency response.

Arts + Recreation

The Arts + Recreation department is preparing for another season of camps, which will run from June through early August. Camp options include arts, sports, preschool-aged, classic day camps, and specialized options for participants with intellectual or developmental disabilities, offering opportunities for youth to stay active, creative, and engaged throughout the summer months. Spring classes are also underway, with programs available for youth, teens, adults,

and older adults in arts, fitness, technology, and recreation.

Walnut Creek's arts and culture scene continues this April with performances at the Leshner Center for the Arts, including AXIS Dance Company, SFJAZZ concerts, and the Dance Theatre of Harlem. The Bedford Gallery also opens a new exhibition, Aztec Stories in Modern Mexico, exploring Indigenous storytelling and cultural preservation through the work of artist Inocencio Jiménez Chino.

Public Art Walking Tours will return beginning April 18. These monthly docent-led tours provide residents and visitors with an opportunity to explore Walnut Creek's public art collection and learn more about the artists and stories behind the sculptures and installations located throughout the community.

New Downtown Trolley Route

Residents and visitors may also notice changes to the Downtown Trolley route as of March 29. The updated route creates a more direct and efficient loop through downtown, improving travel times between downtown destinations and BART, and includes several new and relocated stops.

No Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers Allowed

Beginning April 1, the City's ordinance prohibiting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers will go into effect. The ordinance is intended to reduce noise and air pollution and support a healthier environment for residents, workers, and visitors.

As always, Walnut Creek continues to be a community shaped by volunteerism, civic engagement, and thoughtful investment in our programs and services. We encourage residents to stay involved, participate in community events, and continue helping make Walnut Creek a wonderful place to live, work, and visit.



For the Love of Pets

by Jill Hedgecock, Jillhedgecock.com

Ouch!

Tips to Avoid Dog Biting Behavior

A dog bite happens about every seventy-five seconds in the United States. California leads the U.S. in dog bite lawsuit claims. In honor of National Dog Bite Prevention Week (the second full week of April), let's explore steps dog owners can take to correct its biting behavior.

Puppies bite. It's part of their growing up. Teaching them bite inhibition early will prevent problems in the future. To discourage nipping, avoid waving hands and feet in a pup's face. If a rambunctious puppy bites during play, yelp in a high pitch. Most dogs will startle and stop the undesirable behavior. Some dogs require frequent reminders. Persistent biting can be avoided by spraying areas of your body and clothing that your puppy likes to mouth. Deflect their behavior by providing a chew toy or bone to gnaw on. Teething puppies need this outlet. Another option is to put a puppy in a "time out" in a crate or ignore them. Avoid hitting a puppy which only aggravates them and encourages them to bite harder. It is much more effective to place them in a room by themselves and take away their fun.

Older dogs should never be allowed to bite. The above techniques for training puppies also apply to older dogs. Mature dogs with basic obedience skills can also have their unwanted behavior redirected by commanding them with a "sit" or "down." These deflections can calm an excited dog from the unwanted mouthing or biting.

Some dogs inadvertently bite when taking food from a hand. To avoid this, cup the food in a closed fist and offer the back of the hand until the dog settles. Then open the fist with flat fingers. Or tossing the treat is another option to avoid a food-motivated nip.

Resource-guarding, such as when



Domestic dog accidentally biting little girl's arm during game at backyard lawn. Adobe stock image

placing or taking away a food bowl, can also escalate into a bite. Train the dog to sit before it receives its dinner. If the dog stands, don't put the food down. Repeat until the dog understands it does not get its meal unless it is sitting.

A protective dog may also "resource guard" its owner. In that case, it is best to move the dog away from the human (or another dog) that it is upset about, or distract it with a toy or treat. Never force a dog to approach something or accept a pet to "show it" that everything is fine.

If a dog's biting behavior is unmanageable, despite trying the above techniques, your best option is to hire a professional trainer to address the problem.

Safety Alert: Elite Treats Chicken Chips for Dogs has been recalled. The lot No. is 24045 (expiration date 04/2027). Throw away the food and contact the manufacturer for a refund.

Jill Hedgecock is an award-winning author of several books, including the Doberman trilogy series: "Between Shadow's Eyes," "From Shadow's Perspective," and "In Shadow's Reflection." Her books are available on amazon.com.

Heather Farm Aquatic and Community Center Construction

Walnut Creek - Work is moving forward on the Heather Farm Aquatic and Community Center, one of Walnut Creek's most significant capital projects. Demolition of the existing building began in early March, and cleanup, material sorting, and foundation removal are currently underway.

The City continues to follow all environmental and wildlife protection requirements throughout construction, including on-site biological monitoring and contractor training.

Tree and stump removal and site clearing are progressing with mitigation measures in place. In alignment with the City's commitment to sustainability and responsible resource management, staff is partnering with Bay Area Redwood to repurpose the removed redwood



trees into artisanal wood products. Additionally, for every tree removed, two will be planted on the park premises.

Throughout construction, traffic control measures and signage will be in place to ensure public safety and minimize disruptions for park visitors.

Residents can find project updates, timelines, and frequently asked questions online at the project website:

walnutcreekartsrec.org/parks-facilities/new-aquatic-and-community-center



Do I Owe Tax?

PART 2 -Stepping Up Cost Basis at Time of Death

In the March edition of Diablo Gazette, you learned that surviving spouses could exclude up to \$500,000 of capital gains from the sale of their main residence if they sell within two years of their spouse's death. If it is more than the two years since the death, the surviving spouse will be classified as single and can exclude up to \$250,000 of the capital gains from a sale of the main residence.

So, let's define some terms:

CAPITAL GAINS - A capital gain is the difference between the "cost basis" or "stepped up basis" of your property and its selling price.

COST BASIS – What you paid for the property.

STEPPED UP BASIS – Cost Basis if calculated as of the time of the death.

EXCLUSION – Exclusion of an amount from being taxed for this purpose.

The cost basis of property is "stepped up" under federal law when a property owner dies. In California, that means the current value (at time of death) of the property becomes the new "cost basis."

After last month's article on Capital Gains Tax, Part 1, a reader, "John" wrote in that he sold his property two years and two months after his wife's passing, but because he had the home value at the time of death documented, the \$250,000 exclusion in his case was

enough that he did not have to pay more in capital gains tax.

Had "John" been in one of those areas of California where value went up more quickly in those two years, or had he wanted to live in the home another five years, he might have had capital gains on the value over the \$250,000 exclusion.

Check IRS Publication 523, Sale of Personal Residence, for more information and updates on exclusions to Capital Gains Tax, deductions for some costs of purchase/sale. Consult the booklet or a CPA tax attorney for which updates qualify and for Capital Gains calculations for your situation.

The "Value Letter" as we commonly call it is used to determine "Stepped Up Basis" by providing an appraisal of value at time of death. (Often, Realtors ® and/or appraisers provide this service.) It provides a Market Analysis of comparable homes sold around the time of death. This is kept with the home to be used when you sell to show the new "cost basis" or "stepped up basis" of the property, for figuring out the potential capital gains. This simple step can potentially save a seller thousands of dollars.

When a spouse passes, a Value Letter to adjust your property's cost basis is the last thing you are thinking about. Maybe, just maybe this will trigger a memory of something to ponder when the time comes.

MONTHLY MARKET REPORT

FEBRUARY / 2026

CLAYTON	CONCORD
<p>Existing SFR Median Price \$1.06M</p> <p>% Change from Last Year -4.9%</p>	<p>Existing SFR Median Price \$805k</p> <p>% Change from Last Year -10.6%</p>
<p>MARKET COMPETITION</p> <p>Median Days on Market 9</p> <p>Sales-to-List Price % 101.2%</p> <p>% of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 27.3%</p>	<p>MARKET COMPETITION</p> <p>Median Days on Market 14</p> <p>Sales-to-List Price % 101.1%</p> <p>% of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 26.2%</p>
MARTINEZ	WALNUT CREEK
<p>Existing SFR Median Price \$800K</p> <p>% Change from Last Year +5.6%</p>	<p>Existing SFR Median Price \$1.49M</p> <p>% Change from Last Year -10.5%</p>
<p>MARKET COMPETITION</p> <p>Median Days on Market 11</p> <p>Sales-to-List Price % 102.0%</p> <p>% of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 38.9%</p>	<p>MARKET COMPETITION</p> <p>Median Days on Market 9</p> <p>Sales-to-List Price % 102.4%</p> <p>% of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 22.4%</p>

SOURCE: Car.org

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Two Central County Students to Be Honored at 32nd Farmworkers' Rights Movement Celebration

by David Scholz

A pair of students from Alhambra High School and Pleasant Hill Middle School are among 12 youngsters being honored by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors as part the panel's 32nd Annual Farmworkers' Rights Movement Celebration on Tuesday, April 14.

Nominations were sought in two categories: Youth Hall of Fame and Rising Stars. Marisela Villezcas, a senior at Alhambra High School, was tabbed for volunteerism, and Soraya Dang, a 7th Grade student at Pleasant Hill Middle School, was recognized in the category of Leadership & Civic Engagement.

Villezcas is being recognized for her outstanding dedication to community service. Since 2020, she has volunteered regularly at the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry, helping distribute food to local families several Saturdays each month. As a bilingual volunteer, Marisela often assists Spanish-speaking residents. Her reliability, compassion, and teamwork have made her a strong example of youth leadership in Contra Costa County.

Dang is the founder and president of her school's Community Service Club. She launched this club to improve both her campus and support the surrounding community. Dang has led initiatives including a campus beautification

project, a school-wide food drive collecting hundreds of pounds of food for local families, and a Kindness Challenge that encouraged students to support one another. A dedicated student leader, she exemplifies leadership through her initiative and ability to mobilize her peers to improve their community.

The name for the annual event has been updated in light of the allegations of sexual misconduct that surfaced in March against Cesar E. Chavez to center the focus on the broader Farmworkers' Rights Movement.

"Following the lead of the United Farm Workers, Contra Costa County remains focused on supporting farmworkers and advancing equity, safety, and opportunity in agriculture," said Board Chair Diane Burgis.

The proceedings will begin at 11:00 a.m. in Board Chambers at 1025 Escobar St. in Martinez. The event will be broadcast live on Contra Costa Television channels and the County's website.

The event will include live musical performances from Mariachi Monumental and Ballet Folklórico Netzahualcoyotl, and celebratory remarks from members of the Board of Supervisors.



Concord Police Association Annual College Scholarship Program to Award \$5,000.

The Concord Police Association has a strong commitment to our community's youth.

As such, they are announcing their annual Scholarship Award Program.

This program targets outstanding college-bound graduating high school seniors, as well as community college transfer students and continuing college students who attend Concord schools, are from the Concord community or dependents of active or retired Concord Police Association members.

The scholarships are competitive, merit-based and intended to help the leaders of tomorrow defray their costs of continuing their quest for higher education.

The Concord Police Association encourages all graduating seniors, full-time community college transfer students, and full-time continuing college students from high schools in the Concord community bound for a four-year college or university to apply. Dependents of active or

retired Concord Police Association members are also eligible to apply.

Information is posted on their website on the "Scholarship" page at www.concordpoa.org.

Applications and Scholarship Guidelines may be downloaded from the website but may also be obtained by calling their office at (925) 676-8298 or via e-mail at concordpoa54@yahoo.com.

The deadline for application submission is Friday, May 22, 2026.

\$5000 in scholarships will be awarded; 1-\$1000, 4-\$500 and 8-\$250.





Growing Beans and Snap Peas in Containers

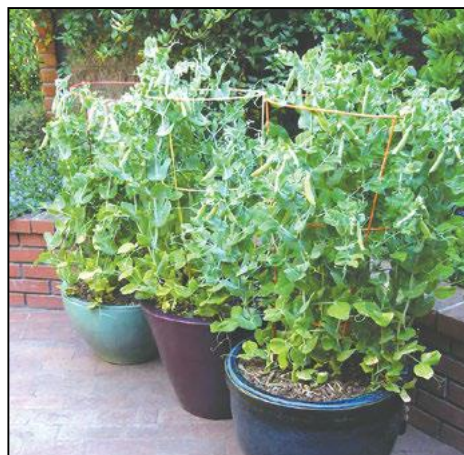
Have you thought about growing snap peas or green beans in containers? It's easy. You can locate these healthy and delicious dinner veggies right on your deck or patio near your kitchen. Both bush beans and snap peas are excellent candidates for container gardening because they mature quickly, have shallow root systems, and are compact.

Snap peas produce best in spring when afternoons are cooler than summer temperatures and nighttime temperatures are relatively mild. Seeds or seedlings can also be planted in late August for harvesting during cool weather. In summer, the best container results come from green beans, both compact bush and vining varieties.

Both snap peas and green beans have climbing varieties. Trellis these varieties above your containers, orienting your trellis north-to-south for best sun exposure, or use an existing wall to trellis. Plant seedlings in 5-gallon or larger containers that are 12-16 inches deep with good drainage and filled with quality organic potting mix. No supplemental fertilizers should be needed.

Provide immediate trellising for shoots to climb and keep soil consistently moist. Remember that container soil dries out more quickly than in-ground beds, so you will need to irrigate more frequently.

Position your containers in a location where they get full sun, which is six to eight hours of direct sun daily. Harvest snap pea pods when they grow plump



Crunch Snap Peas in containers. Courtesy Shutterstock

(see Days-to-Maturity guidelines below). Harvest green beans regularly to encourage more production.

Here are some recommended varieties for container growing:

Snap Peas:

Little Crunch – Designed for containers, compact sprawl, sweet, Days-to-Maturity (DTM): 58-60

Sugar Snap – Classic, high-yielding, needs trellising, DTM: 70

Snack Hero – Prolific, perfect for hanging baskets, DTM: 58-65

Green Beans:

Provider – Fast-growing and reliable

bush, DTM: 50-60

Contender – High production, heat-tolerant bush, DTM: 50-60

Rattlesnake – Colorful, delicious pole bean, needs trellising, DTM: 75-80

You may want to place your containers on plant dollies for easy movement when weather turns too hot, cold, or rainy. It's best to place a 2-inch layer of mulch on the soil surface to preserve moisture. And don't locate your containers near onions, garlic, or chives that produce chemicals which can stunt pea and bean growth. Watch for slugs, snails, and birds, which may need to be managed with bait or netting.

With a dose of care and good weather, you will be harvesting a continuous batch of healthy and fresh snap peas and green beans for your dinner table..

Seasonal Notes: You are invited to the launch of the new California Natives Demonstration Garden outside the gates to Concord's Gehringer Community Garden at 1790 Lynwood Dr. The event will be held from 1:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 4 and will feature a ribbon-cutting ceremony, free UC Master Gardener advice, free seed packets, and refreshments.

The annual Central County Great Tomato Plant Sale at the UC Master Gardener Walnut Creek Demonstration Garden at the corner of N. Wiget and



Using a wall to trellis container peas. Courtesy Shutterstock



Bush beans grown in a container. Courtesy Shutterstock

Shadelands Dr. Saturday and Sunday, April 11 and 12 from 10 AM-3 PM. Visit online for details: www.UCanr.edu.

Send your comments and questions to: NakedGardener@diablogazette.com.

Finding Your Favorite Garden Style

by Angela Dawne, Landscape Designer

Finding your favorite garden style is less about following trends and more about discovering where you feel most at home.

Whether you have a sprawling backyard or a few balcony pots, your garden is an extension of your personality.

To start, look at your lifestyle and the architecture of your home. Do you crave order and symmetry?

Formal Garden

A Formal Garden might be your match, characterized by clipped hedges, geometric paths, and a limited color palette that feels serene and sophisticated.

Cottage Garden

If you prefer a bit of "organized chaos," the Cottage Garden style is a romantic choice. It celebrates abundance, with flowering perennials like lavender, roses, and foxgloves spilling over walkways. It's low-pressure and high reward for those who love a lush, lived-in look.

Zen of Japanese Garden

For those seeking a personal sanctuary, a Zen or Japanese Garden focuses on natural materials like stone, gravel, and evergreens to create a space for meditation.

Wildflower Garden

Conversely, if you prioritize sustainability and local wildlife, a



Cottage Garden

Native or Wildflower Garden offers a rugged, effortless beauty that supports bees and birds with minimal maintenance.

Still unsure? Take a walk through a local botanical garden or browse photos online.

I personally like to grab a cup of coffee and pour over garden books at the local bookstore or library.

Pay attention to the "feeling" of each space. Do you feel energized by the bold textures of a modern tropical garden, or comforted by the earthy tones of a Mediterranean Courtyard?

Ultimately, your favorite style is the one that makes you want to step outside. Don't be afraid to mix elements. The best gardens are those that evolve with you.

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Earth Day

Celebrate by Volunteering to Improve our Urban Forest

The month of April is extra “green” in Concord as we recognize both Earth Day and Arbor Day by improving and caring for our urban forest.

Earth Day, celebrated on April 22, recognizes the importance of protecting the environment and the natural systems that support everyday life. Arbor Day, April 24, focuses specifically on planting, nurturing, and celebrating trees.

Each year, the City organizes Earth Day volunteer opportunities that allow residents to participate in hands-on environmental stewardship through park cleanups, tree plantings, and other improvement projects.

To sign up, simply fill out the volunteer waiver at the City’s website CityofConcord.org. On our home page, type “form center” in the search bar, then scroll to Public Works, there you will see the volunteer waiver form. Or scan the QR code.



Earth Day Volunteer Opportunities in Concord

April 18 – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Markham Nature Park (1202

La Vista Avenue) – Wood mulch spreading and a nature walk
Cambridge Park (1135 Lacey Lane) – Mulching and planting approximately eight trees

April 25 – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Willow Pass Park (2748 E. Olivera Road) – Tree planting and mulching

Brazil Quarry Park (Kent Way) – Split-rail fence repair, mulch spreading, and planting approximately six trees.

Hillcrest Community Park (Grant Street and Olivera Road) – Creek cleanup

Lime Ridge Open Space (3701 Treat Boulevard) – Mulch spreading, weeding, and litter removal

Concord’s Award-Winning Urban Forest

A key part of Concord’s environmental identity is its urban forest, which includes thousands of trees planted along city streets, in parks, and throughout neighborhoods. Our urban forest helps improve air quality, reduce urban heat by providing shade, lower energy costs for nearby homes and businesses, and enhance the overall beauty of the city.

Concord has been recognized as a Tree City USA community for the

past 44 years and received the Tree City Growth Award for 25 years. This national designation, led by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, honors communities that demonstrate a strong commitment to urban forestry through tree programs and demonstrate progress.

The City’s Public Works Parks Division manages tree care and implements policies that help protect trees throughout the community. Concord’s urban forest is supported not only during seasonal events but also year-round through grants and partnerships.

In 2024, the City received a \$1 million grant to improve the management, condition, and education surrounding its urban forest. As part of the effort, the City partnered with the Mount Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) to engage students in learning about the value of trees. This collaboration led to the creation of a micro-forest at Ayers Elementary School. Supported by teachers, students, and MDUSD maintenance staff, the micro-forest now serves as a hands-on learning space that demonstrates the benefits of planting trees in urban areas.

In Concord, caring for the urban forest through tree planting, responsible management, and community volunteerism helps ensure that parks, neighborhoods, and public spaces remain healthy and vibrant.

Concord
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- Reduces weeds
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- Spread mulch 2 - 3 inches deep!

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- 📍 Concord

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JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

Jill Hedgecock, jillhedgecock.com

The Wild, Wonderful Worlds of Point Reyes and Tomales Bay

April is a fantastic time to visit the California coast. Whether embarking on a day excursion to step into the past and explore the Point Reyes Lighthouse, a whale- or seal watching expedition, a birding walk, a wildflower hike, or an overnight visit that includes the culinary exploration of Tomales Bay, the Point Reyes National Seashore area has all the ingredients for a delightful trip.

My daughter and I took advantage of this local gem in March, spending a fabulous weekend at an Airbnb in Marshall, California, near Tomales Bay, hitting the highlights of Point Reyes along the way, and only two hour drive from concord.

No visit to Point Reyes feels complete without standing at the edge of the continent, and for that, the Point Reyes Lighthouse delivers. While the 313 steps down to the building are “wicked hard”, the exertion is worth the effort if visitors are physically able.

We didn’t spot whales that day, though late April often brings passing gray whales migrating north with their calves. Still, there was something powerful in simply scanning the water, hoping for that fleeting spout. Inside the lighthouse, gazing up at the massive Fresnel lens, it was easy to imagine the isolation of the keepers who once tended this light. No notifications. No noise. Just wind, waves, and the slow passage of time. This lighthouse is the only one in the United States with its original First-Order Fresnel lens, clockwork, and tower still operational.

In late April, California gray whale mothers and calves often pass by Point Reyes on their northern migration to Alaska. At the Lighthouse Visitor Center, a ranger explained that the gray whale population has been declining.

In June 2025, researchers estimated that fewer than 13,000 gray whales migrated along the North American Pacific coast, less than half the population’s 27,000 peak in 2016. Scientists believe the changing climate’s impact on the animals’ Arctic and subarctic food supply may be the cause.

Hikers will delight at the different landscape options with more than 150 miles of hiking paths, Point Reyes offers landscapes that shift with every turn, windswept bluffs, hidden beaches, and quiet forests. We chose the Chimney Rock Trail, a modest two-mile round trip that feels anything but ordinary.

Spring had begun its quiet show, beautiful patches of wildflowers swaying in the breeze include delicate white wallflowers, bright yellow gum plant, and flashes of purple iris tucked between rocks.

Historians will enjoy the scenic view of the historic lifeboat station. At the hike’s terminus, the stunning arch and rock islands provide roosting habitat for gulls, brown pelicans, and cormorants. In the spring, wildflower sightings can

Along the shoreline, elephant seals lay sprawled in the sand, enormous and unmoving except for the occasional flip of a flipper. Nearby, harbor seals with their pups bobbed gently in the surf,

their curious eyes tracking movement from a safe distance. Even scanning the skies becomes an experience, binoculars revealing predatory birds circling high above or shorebirds such as whimbrels darting along the tide line.

At Drakes Bay Beach, the landscape softens. The dramatic cliffs give way to wide, open sands and a sense of calm that invites you to linger. Inside the small Kenneth C. Patrick Visitor Center, we found a towering whale skeleton, an awe-inspiring reminder of the scale of life just beyond the shoreline. Tule elk are native to California and are a unique elk species given that they live in open country under semi-desert conditions. It’s easy to mistake deer for them at a distance, so look for the large antlers on the males.

Tomales Bay Trailhead, located off Highway 1 near the southern end of Tomales Bay and north of Point Reyes Station, is a relatively flat hike that meanders through ponds and ends at Tomales Bay Ecological Reserve. The distinctive rocks, known as blueschist knockers, at the trail’s beginning are worth checking out even if the 2.6-mile loop does not fit the schedule.

Birdwatching along the marshes and ponds, seasonal wildflower blooms, and sweeping views over the bay are the draw here. Watch for white-tailed kites hovering overhead and great egrets and herons in the various ponds.

Tomales Bay is a quiet culinary destination, where cheese tasting and oyster indulgences are food highlights of this area. Though we skipped formal tastings, we stopped at the local Nicoise Farm store to buy their award-winning, herb-laced cheeses.

No matter what time of year, a visit to Point Reyes and Tomales Bay is a worthwhile journey. To breathe in the ocean scent and take in its vastness, whether from the bottom of the Lighthouse Stairs or from the easily accessible deck at Drake’s Beach, it is possible for a visitor to feel like they have reached the edge of the world.

That’s the quiet magic of this place.

Jill Hedgecock is a retired environmental scientist, an ecological risk assessor, and an award-winning author of several books, including the ‘Rhino and the Room’, and Doberman trilogy series: ‘Between Shadow’s Eyes,’ ‘From Shadow’s Perspective,’ and ‘In Shadow’s Reflection.’ amazon.com.



Lindsay and Jill Hedgecock explore Pt. Reyes and the elephant seals.



Lighthouse at Pt. Reyes National Seashore



Lighthouse fresnel lens at Pt. Reyes National Seashore



Whale skeleton at Kenneth Patrick Visitor Center



Arch view from Chimney Rock



Tule Elk



Elephant Seal basking along the shore



Sunset view from the Airbnb in Marshall, Calif. near Tomales Bay.



Great egret



Headland wallflower



Chimney rock Lifeboat house

Shea Cervelli: Bringing History to Life Through Exploration and Displays

by Julia O'Reilly



Shea Cervelli's display at the Antioch Library.

For Bay Area historian and explorer Shea Cervelli, history did not begin in the classroom; it began on the trails.

As he reflects, "I was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. I was not particularly interested in history while in school."

Everything changed in his early twenties when he began hiking throughout the region. While exploring the hills and landscapes, he discovered abandoned mines and historic mining towns that awakened a curiosity about the past. That curiosity soon evolved into a passion for sharing history with others.

In 1980, Cervelli created his first historical display at the Concord Library, focusing on the Mt. Diablo Coal Fields and Black Diamond Mines, an important part of Contra Costa County's local heritage. The exhibit was met with enthusiastic reactions from both library staff and visitors.

"Those responses gave me a sense of pride," Cervelli recalls. The encouragement inspired him to continue creating displays.

Over the years, building historical displays has become a meaningful hobby for Cervelli. Each presentation combines research, artifacts he has collected during his travels, and photography. Preparing and assembling each display requires careful planning and dedication and approximately three hours to set up.

Cervelli has created displays about California's Gold Country, National and State Parks, Las Vegas, and even the art and history of Italy. His Italy-themed display highlights iconic figures such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci while celebrating what he calls "the splendor of Italy."

Cervelli has also created displays honoring historical figures who shaped American culture, including Mark Twain, Jack London, John Muir and Elvis Presley.

Photography plays an important role in his storytelling. "I often use photos that I have taken as well as historical photos that I have collected," he says.

Some of Cervelli's most memorable experiences happened while exploring the historic mines near Nortonville, experiences that were both fascinating



Shea Cervelli with Rica Bernardo making poster for his display.

and dangerous. One local legend he often references is the story of the "White Witch of Nortonville," Sara Norton, who is buried in Rose Hill Cemetery in the former mining town of Somerville and is said to haunt the coal mining region.

For those interested in safely experiencing the area's mining history, Cervelli recommends visiting the Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, where the Somerville Mines are open for guided tours through the Hazel Atlas Silica Sand Mine and historic coal tunnels.

"If you're interested in a cave experience, only the Somerville Mines are accessible and safe for touring," he explains.

Despite the dangers he encountered during his early explorations, Cervelli's enthusiasm for hiking and discovery remains strong. He continues sharing his passion for history through educational displays that connect the past with the present. His current exhibit on the Black Diamond Mines is on display at the Antioch Library throughout the month of April.

"I hope after reading this, you will decide to take a tour of the mines and visit your local library or even decide to create a display of your own!"

CAA's "1 Squared" exhibit seeking submissions

Two dimensional or hanging 3D artwork, 12 inches by 12 inches, is being sought to part of Concord Art Association's next show at Visit Concord, 2151 Salvio Street, Suite T, in downtown Concord.

The theme is 1 Squared and will on display from April 27 – Aug. 28. A committee of CAA members will jury this show. Submissions are due by April 20. Artists will be notified April 22.

Participants may submit up to two pieces for consideration. Entry fee is \$10 per piece plus 10% commission on sales payable to Concord Art Association. Fees and commissions

help fund CAA's Teacher Grant and Scholarship programs.

Requirements include membership in the CAA. Join at any time during the year. You get a full twelve months of membership benefits. Membership benefits include access to members-only meetings with guest artist demonstrations, Online Member Art Gallery, Showing and selling work at quarterly shows at CAA Gallery Centre Concord and CAA Gallery Visit Concord, and Opportunities to participate in community outreach projects.

Contact the CAA at concordartassociation@yahoo.com



Student Art Exhibits April 20-May 1

The Martinez Arts Association (MAA) continues its long-standing mission of supporting the arts and arts education in the local community.

A key initiative of the organization is to provide financial support for arts education through student scholarships and grants for teachers. These programs help encourage the next generation of artists by providing resources for art supplies, classroom projects, and continued artistic study.

Throughout the school year, local students have been creating art projects with the help of MAA Teacher Grants, which provide funding for classroom art supplies.

A special exhibit of student artwork will be featured in the windows of Five Suns Brewing from April 20 through May 1, where it can be viewed from the Main Street Plaza.

The public is invited to attend an outdoor reception celebrating the student artists on May 1, at 5:30 p.m. on the Main Street Plaza.

Exhibits of MAA member work can currently be found at the Martinez Library, Roxx on Main, Five Suns Brewing, and the Campbell Theater, bringing local art into everyday spaces throughout the community.

The organization is also preparing for its annual SWAN Day celebration in May, an international event recognizing the achievements and contributions of women in the arts.

The Martinez event will feature local artists, live music, and opportunities for the public to meet artists.



Art by Kiera, 5th Grade, Morello Park Elementary will be displayed at Five Suns Brewery.



Art by Ezequiel, 3rd Grade Las Juntas Elementary will be on display at Five Suns Brewery.



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The Arts Page



Guest Artist Linda Sutton Wildlife and the Environment

Main Street Arts gallery is featuring guest artist Linda Darsow Sutton throughout the month of April. With a deep love for wildlife and the environment, Linda is a Signature Member of Artists for Conservation. She shares, "Living in the California hills adjacent to protected open space provides limitless inspiration. In my art, I seek the unique, delicate interactions of wildlife within their environments."



Coastal Friends by Linda Sutton

The public is invited to attend a reception on April 3 from 6 to 9 p.m., held in conjunction with First Friday. Guests will have the opportunity to meet the artist and view her vibrant work. Visitors can also meet many of the gallery's resident artists, enjoy refreshments, and enter a prize drawing.



Meager Spring by Linda Sutton

Each month the gallery offers a free art giveaway. In April, the featured artwork is a painting by Pam McCauley, one of the founding members of Main Street Arts. Pam is known for her colorful still-life, figure, and landscape paintings, and she currently teaches still-life classes at Studio 55.



Pam McCauley Free drawing prize

Reflecting on the gallery's history, Pam says, "I'm so happy to see Main Street Arts, which eight of us started 10 years ago, doing so well. We've been blessed with wonderful members, past and present." Come into the gallery and fill out a free ballot for a chance to win a painting by Pam McCauley.

Now in its tenth year in downtown Martinez, Main Street Arts Gallery continues to be a welcoming destination for art lovers and collectors as it showcases a wide range of media, including painting, sculpture, ceramics, glass, jewelry, and mixed media.

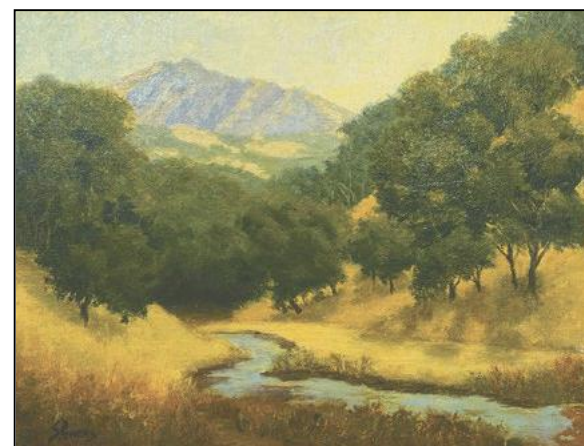
Main Street Arts is located at 613 Main Street, Martinez. Open Wednesday-Saturday 11:00 a.m.-

4:00 p.m., Sunday 10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. and Martinez First Fridays 6:00 -9:00 p.m.
www.mainstreetarts.net



Experience the Beauty of 'Between Light & Line'

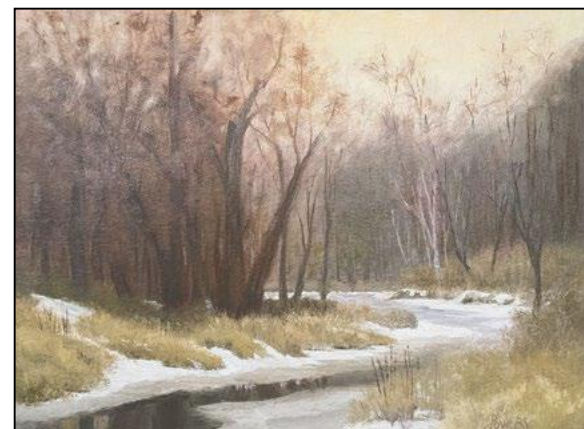
In Clayton, JOR Fine Art Gallery's contemporary art exhibit, 'Between Light & Line' continues through May 3 featuring the stunning landscapes of Susan Powers.



This exhibit invites you into a world of soft light, gentle movement, and breathtaking scenery.

Her paintings capture nature with a brilliance and serenity that must be seen in person.

Stop by and immerse yourself in the quiet elegance of her work on view now at JOR Fine Art Gallery, 026 Oak St. #102.



Top: *Where the Creek Wanders - Oil Susan Powers
Bottom: Thoughts of Home - Oil, Susan Powers



Teacher/Student Show

The current exhibit featuring 85 pieces by Mark Jezierny and his students from the Mount Diablo Adult Education Center is on display through April 24.

Visit aRt Cottage to enjoy their gardens and outdoor sculptures. Admission is free.

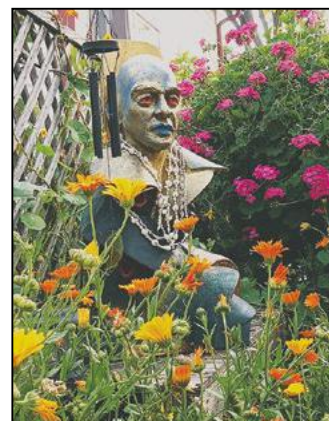
While you are here, you may even see our students at work on ceramic projects, watercolors, or plein air paintings. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The next exhibit running May and June will focus on plein air painters. Plein air artists interested in showing their work in this truly gallery should complete the submission form available online at artcottage.info. We welcome all plein air artists to participate in this upcoming show.

Happy Easter to all.



Mark Jezierny at the easel



"Ringo Star" in the garden

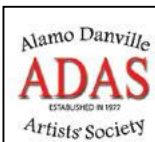


Nancy Roberts, Plein air painter at aRt Cottage



Diet Pepsi sculpture in the garden

Open Wednesday - Saturday 11am - 5pm
2238 Mt. Diablo Street



"VISIONS OF WINTER" at BLACKHAWK GALLERY

Experience the beauty and creativity of the season at the Alamo Danville Artists' Society's Blackhawk Gallery. Visions of Winter showcases a stunning collection of works by talented local artists, capturing the spirit, light, and mood of winter through a variety of styles and mediums.

This expiring exhibit will be on view through April 19, so don't miss your chance to see it in person. 3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville, CA adas4art.org

Blackhawk Gallery
VISIONS OF WINTER
EXHIBIT
January 24th - April 19, 2026
The opening reception - Saturday, January 24th, 2026
from 5-7pm
All are invited!

3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville, CA
www.adas4art.org



Students, Faculty Host Special Olympics Unified Sports Event



CVCHS students welcomed the Special Olympics Northern California. Nearly 300 students with special needs participated in the CVCHS basketball tournament.

At Clayton Valley Charter High School (CVCHS), academics, athletics, and a safe learning environment remain the pillars of our students' success. As Executive Director, I remain committed to strengthening these priorities so every student can fully benefit from their experience at CVCHS.

In March, CVCHS hosted Special Olympics Northern California's Unified Sports program, welcoming nearly 300 students with special needs from 10 East Bay schools to our campus for a day of athletic competition, friendship, and community. Students participated in a basketball tournament and a series of skills contests designed to celebrate ability, teamwork, and determination.

Unified Sports is about far more than athletics. The program helps create a more inclusive school community and empowers students of all abilities to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. For many students with special needs, participating on a team is a first-time experience that allows them to engage their talents, build confidence, and form meaningful friendships.

The experience was equally rewarding for our CVCHS students. Through volunteering and participating, they built connections with peers they may not otherwise meet on campus. These interactions also fostered empathy, understanding, and a stronger sense of community while everyone enjoyed the spirit of friendly competition.

More than 100 CVCHS students volunteered to serve in a variety of roles, including refereeing games, coordinating skills stations, keeping score, awarding ribbons, and assisting participants throughout the day.

This event demonstrated our campus's strong collaborative spirit. Members of our Associated Student Body (ASB) Leadership volunteered alongside players from our Boys and Girls Basketball teams. Our Women's Ensemble and Competitive Dance team also energized the day with performances during the Opening Ceremonies.

The Unified Sports program strengthened our school culture and contributed to the personal and social growth of our students.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the teachers, coaches, and community partners who helped make the event possible. Jenna Ebert (ASB teacher) played a key role in planning the event and coordinating our student volunteers. We are also grateful to Boys Basketball Coach Frank Allocco and Girls Basketball Coach Damian Young for their teams' support and participation. Our outstanding SPED Department faculty were instrumental in connecting with partner schools and ensuring that all students felt welcomed and supported.

We are also thankful for the leadership and partnership of Candace Penn from the Contra Costa County Office of Education and the staff from Special Olympics Northern California for their coordination and support.

Special Olympics Northern California relies on the dedication of more than 27,000 volunteers who coach and support athletes across 11 different sports. As we witnessed at CVCHS, their work continues to change lives every day. Events like Unified Sports remind us that when schools prioritize inclusion and opportunity, every student has the chance to belong, participate, and succeed.

In Case You Missed It...

Local News Items from Claycord.com and Other Sources

New Executive Director at Gardens at Heather Farms

After 12 years as Executive Director of The Gardens at Heather Farm, Joan Lucchese will be retiring from her role effective April .

Jere Peck, Garden manager for the past 10 years, will be the new Executive Director.

New Animal Daycare Facility Proposed At Joybound Campus Off Oak Grove Road In Walnut Creek



Joybound People & Pets has proposed construction of a new 12,577-square-foot animal daycare building at its campus on Mitchell Drive, a project aimed at increasing capacity and adding new services. The proposal was reviewed March 18 during a study session with the city's Design Review Commission.

The new building is designed to support expanded programming, including behavior specialty services, public training, disaster response, and new offerings such as pet boarding, daycare, and crisis support services.

Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers Banned In Walnut Creek

Beginning April 1, gas-powered leaf blowers will be prohibited in Walnut Creek as part of the city's effort to reduce air pollution and protect public health. City officials are encouraging residents to share information about the change with neighbors and landscapers.

According to the city, gas-powered leaf blowers produce high levels of pollution. Officials noted that Contra Costa County has higher-than-average asthma rates and reducing emissions from equipment like gas-powered blowers could help improve air quality.

Violations of the ban could result in fines. A first offense carries a \$100 fine, a second offense within a year can result in a \$200 fine, and additional violations may be fined \$500. The city says the property owner is responsible if gas-powered equipment is used on their property, even if the work is being done by a landscaper.

Weekly Off the Grid Food Truck Event Returns to Pleasant Hill

Off the Grid returns for a new season starting April 2, 2026 in Pleasant Hill. Each Thursday a dozen food trucks from Off the Grid line up on Trelany Rd from 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. serving a wide variety of cuisines. Picnic tables and Adirondack chairs are provided, but all are invited to bring a blanket or chairs to set up on the lawn at City Hall, 100 Gregory Ln.

Contra Costa Animal Services Now Open Seven Days a Week

Contra Costa Animal Services is now open for business on Sundays and Mondays from 10AM to 5PM. However, focus will be on serving customers who come to the shelter and will not be answering non-emergency phone lines on those days.

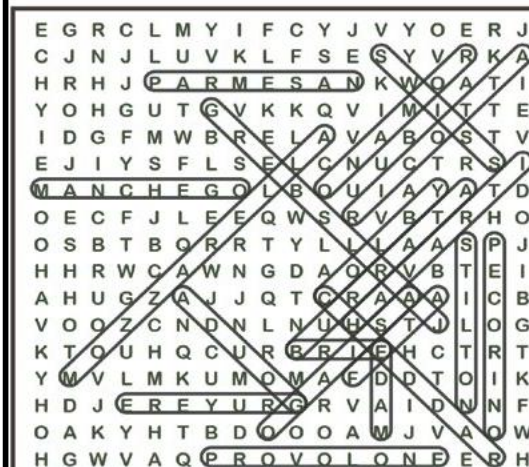
AARP Tax Aide Available at the Concord Senior Center

Free Federal and California income tax return preparation services are available in 2026 through the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program. IRS-certified AARP Tax-Aide volunteers will provide assistance on Wednesdays and Thursdays at the Concord Senior Center.

You do not need to be an AARP-member to participate. Appoints are required. Visit the Recreation Office at the Concord Senior Center or call 925-671-3318.

* The Concord Senior Center does not have an on-site tax professional. This program is operated solely by AARP Tax-Aide volunteers on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Appointment availability is limited

Solutions from page 10



1	2	3	6	4	5	7	9	8
4	5	6	9	7	8	1	3	2
7	8	9	3	1	2	4	6	5
6	4	2	8	9	7	5	1	3
9	7	8	1	5	3	6	2	4
5	3	1	2	6	4	9	8	7
3	6	5	7	8	9	2	4	1
8	9	7	4	2	1	3	5	6
2	1	4	5	3	6	8	7	9

WORD SCRAMBLE

- BRUSCHETTA
- CALAMARI
- OLIVES
- NACHOS
- POTSTICKERS

CRYPTOGRAM

"The only time to eat diet food is while you're waiting for the steak to cook."

—Julia Child

DO YOU KNOW?

6,514 windows



Thomas Rimpel: Chef de Cuisine

Rising above Union Square, the grand façade of The Westin St. Francis has stood for more than a century as one of the city's most storied landmarks.

Opened in 1904, it survived the devastation of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and soon resumed its role as San Francisco's glittering social center.

Within its marble halls and beneath its brilliant chandeliers gathered a parade of distinguished guests, presidents, magnates, artists and the restless literary giant Ernest Hemingway, who found inspiration in the city's vigor and restless energy. Figures such as Woodrow Wilson and the incomparable Charlie Chaplin also passed through its doors, adding their names to the hotel's long and colorful register.

One man who, in many ways, has seen it all over the past forty-one years is retired Chef de Cuisine Thomas Rimpel of The Westin St. Francis. When Queen Elizabeth II visited San Francisco during her U.S. tour, honored at a grand banquet hosted by Ronald Reagan at the de Young Museum, Rimpel was just a rookie line chef, far from the spotlight. He helped prepare the elaborate meal in the St. Francis kitchens, knowing it would be transported across the city since the museum had no proper culinary facilities.

But while others glimpsed history firsthand, he remained behind, assigned to kitchen cleanup—close enough to greatness to feel its presence, yet just out of sight of the Queen herself.

Through the years, Rimpel has seen many changes in the kitchen.

"When I first started working there, we had about 114 cooks. When I left, we were down to 47. That's because in the old days your team had to cut their own fillets, cut their own New York strips, clean their own fish and vegetables. Now all that stuff is available for you, so all those positions have slowly disappeared."

Although born in San Francisco, after his parents divorced he lived for the next ten years with relatives in Hamburg, Germany. His interest in food began in his grandmother's garden, where he tasted fresh, seasonal produce. She inspired him to enter into the culinary field.

After finishing school there, he apprenticed as a chef at the Intercontinental Hotel where he perfected his knowledge of classical European cuisine, before returning to San Francisco. Executive Chef Hans Lenz of The Westin St. Francis hired him on the spot, "If you show up tomorrow, you have a job," and would become his mentor.

Over the next twenty years, Rimpel honed his craft at The Westin St. Francis, rising steadily through the ranks until he became Chef de Cuisine, a role he would hold until retiring. His career unfolded not just in the kitchen, but in the presence of history, as he cooked for an extraordinary array of notable guests.

During one extended visit to San Francisco, the Dalai Lama stayed at the hotel for an entire week, and Rimpel prepared all his meals, balancing simplicity with reverence. On another

occasion, when Barack Obama attended a semi-private event on the 32nd floor, Rimpel found himself once again close to history, but at a distance. His request take photographs was swiftly denied by the Secret Service.

"President Obama was so close I could have touched him," he later recalled, "but the Secret Service wouldn't allow so much as a glance. We all had to stand like statues until he passed."

There were warmer moments, too. Maria Shriver the then wife of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, graciously made time to thank Thomas and his team for the banquet they had prepared. The governor himself greeted him with a smile, a firm handshake, and a familiar promise: "I'll be back!"

He served Vice President Al Gore on multiple occasions, and over the years came to know Jackie Speier, who represented California in Congress from 2008 to 2023. Her presence carried a quiet weight of history as she had survived the horrors of the Jonestown massacre in 1978, where she was shot five times during the ambush at a remote Guyana airstrip. Rimpel prepared her breakfast, and on more than one occasion, they sat and dined together.

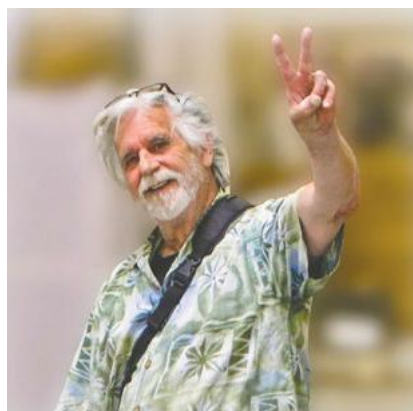
Not every moment was planned. When the renowned Dutch violinist André Rieu arrived seeking lunch after the restaurant had closed, Rimpel swiftly arranged a private setting and prepared a meal on the spot. And when the Emir of Qatar stayed at the hotel, the task extended beyond fine dining. Rimpel and his team were entrusted with preparing not only daily meals, but also the elaborate in-flight cuisine for the royal departure.

Through it all, Thomas Rimpel remained at his post, orchestrating excellence behind the scenes, even as the world's most powerful and celebrated figures passed through his dining room.

With his life's passion being food, food now serves as his muse. Now retired, residing in Martinez, he is fully engaged in his hobby, photography.

He offers his services to the Martinez Chamber of Commerce, and on occasion, the Diablo Gazette. You might see him with his camera at local functions in Martinez, Concord, or Pleasant Hill, especially where food is served or is sold. (Farmer's market for example.)

If you see him on the streets toting his camera, stop and talk with him, he has stories to share, a lifetime catering to some of the most renowned leaders and celebrities, and he is your neighbor.



Secret Service said no photos. This one made it back to Thomas Rimpel anyway.



San Francisco Chronicle reports candidate George Bush satisfied with the St. Francis during campaign stop..



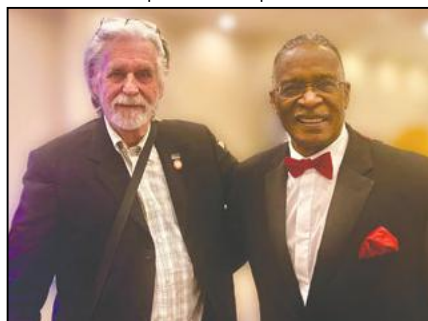
Celebrity Crab Festival at Union Square - A Fundraiser for the San Francisco 49ers Foundation



Pepper? Say when.



Chef Thomas Rimpel caters for production crew during filming of Jurassic Park



Thomas Rimpel with KTVU Fox 2 Morning anchor, Dave Clark.



Preparing 450 bento boxes



Left: A common sight, Thomas Rimpel with his camera. Above: A delicious Sea bass home cooked dinner for wife Lora Rimpel. She refers to as from TR's Bar and Grill.

Around Martinez



Martinez State of the City

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez



Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the Martinez State of the City on March 5, 2026, hosted each year by the Chamber of Commerce. This is an opportunity to share the progress city staff and city council have made over the past year, and to highlight the Mayor's vision for the years to come. Last year, the event became free to attend (thank you to the Chamber's sponsors!) and I have been so proud of how we have been able to reach even more members of our community.

The City of Martinez is busy, but we are aligned under the overarching umbrella of our Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is a 4-year roadmap of the City's future developed by staff, the public, and council, by establishing goals, identifying strategies to reach those goals, and scheduling implementation of these strategies over the next four years.

The Strategic Plan details five goals:

Fiscal Sustainability – We are using a long-range forecast model so staff can use data-driven decisions to explore new revenue and cost recovery methods to support city services.

Vibrant and Sustainable Waterfront and Marina – Revitalization of the waterfront and marina has been a long-standing priority for Martinez city councils. As a first step towards a public-private partnership, I signed the Exclusive Negotiating Agreement in December 2025, a two-year agreement that grants good faith negotiation rights with a developer. It is not a final deal, and there is no obligation for the city to proceed with a project.

Capital Projects and Infrastructure Improvements – We have completed generational projects such as the Fishing Pier and Pine Meadow Park, and we are now preparing two major plans: the Parks System Master Plan and the Vulnerable Road Safety Plan, evaluating how to better protect bicyclists and

pedestrians.

Economic Development and Housing – We have improved code enforcement, launched the Vacant to Vibrant program, and developed toolkits for new businesses. We continue to adopt housing programs to meet our housing needs, because we know people are integral to economic development.

Community Health, Safety, and Wellbeing – I was so pleased that we incorporated this resident-focused goal! This includes Sesquicentennial celebration events on April 1 (the official anniversary of incorporation in 1876) and August 29 (Sesquicentennial Festival at the Martinez waterfront), as well as advocating for the Martinez community with the Air District and County Health.

We have a busy year ahead of us to make progress towards our strategies, and the public will be brought along every step of the way. Community sessions were held in January and February to solicit feedback on each of the initiatives this year, and you can expect to see additional public meetings this year to provide input on the waterfront, parks, and traffic safety.

Lastly, I had the honor of rolling out a new element at the State of the City: The Mayor's Impact Award. For my inaugural award, I presented it to Mr. Vincent Pitzulo, music teacher at John Muir Elementary, who is training our next generation of musicians. To bring home the point, he brought his ukulele club to perform. Since I wrapped up my State of the City with a 5th grade ukulele performance, everyone forgot all the great things that I said. And honestly, I was so proud of my community, I didn't even mind.

Wishing you were there? You can watch the video on the City of Martinez website here: www.cityofmartinez.org/stateofthecity2026/ Or, scan the QR code at the top of this page.

Council Closes Hidden Valley Pickleball Courts

by Tony Hicks, Martinez News and Views

Frustration boiled over at City Council Meeting on March 18 as council voted 4-0 (Vice Mayor Jay Howard was absent) to shutter the Hidden Valley Pickleball courts after just over a year of operation. This was a hard but necessary pill to swallow after investing \$887,000 of the 2021 Federal American Rescue Plan Act funds. In February of 2025, the city unveiled The Hidden Valley Sports Courts with much fanfare.

Following years of limited pickleball play on shared tennis courts at Hidden Valley, the courts immediately became a popular regional destination for the rapidly growing sport.

The expensive project had converted two tennis courts into eight pickleball courts; created one new tennis court; resurfaced the existing basketball court; added new lighting; installed noise-minimizing sound blankets; added new benches, bike racks and trash cans; and included a new bioretention basin along with other planting.

Mayor Zorn lashed out over bad guidance council received when approving project in 2022 as council votes to permanently close the courts that disrupted quality of life for adjacent residents.

"I am disappointed to be here, and frankly I'm a little pissed off that we are here," Zorn said. "I want all of my decisions to be defensible, and the decision that we made to approve these courts was based on information that was given to us from professionals who did the analysis, specifically the noise analysis, and gave us guidance."

Tucked in tightly with the surrounding neighborhood, the courts quickly became a community splitter. Players said the courts promoted friendship, good health and community togetherness.

Neighbors described people yelling and cheering, leaving trash, turning matches into parties, using alcohol and drugs, and urinating in public.

Resident Tyler Harding described players bringing tables and having parties, playing music, leaving trash, bringing barking dogs, drinking alcohol, smoking, flying drones over private yards, yelling, urinating, and jumping fences to play during non-operational hours. "It hasn't just been the noise associated with pickleball courts; it's been the people coming into our neighborhood and showing zero respect, over and over and over again," he said.

Malhi played a recording of the courts, with distinctive, repetitive knocking of balls striking wooden paddles, but even louder was the constant human voices.

Zorn, who was a councilmember when the courts were approved in 2022, said she voted for them but were to have significant sound

mitigation.

The city tried appeasing neighbors by restricting once-daily court play to just 20 hours per week, spread over three days. Staff visited the courts daily. Police were called to the site.

Zorn said the community lacks a pickleball organization that can self-police. "The use of the courts is way more intense than we expected," Zorn said.

"Neighbors have spoken about the distinctive and repetitive noise associated with pickleball play time and time again." Councilmember Malhi said. "When a recreational amenity begins creating ongoing conflict with the surrounding neighborhood and exposes the city to potential litigation, we have a responsibility to reassess whether that location is in fact appropriate."

Every member of the council expressed a desire to find a new pickleball site but didn't offer specifics. It's likely safe to say wherever it is, it won't be near Hidden Valley

Best of Martinez

COMING SOON



BUSINESS NOMINATIONS OPEN APRIL 1ST

Get ready to nominate and vote for your favorite business! thebestofmartinez.com



★ April 2026

COMMUNITY EVENTS



150TH Anniversary OF INCORPORATION APRIL 1 2026

6:00 PM CELEBRATION
Music: Martinez Junior High Jazz Band
Flower Bouquet Bar: Make your own bouquets!
Appetizers and Celebratory Dessert
7:00 PM CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARTINEZ CITY HALL
525 HENRIETTA STREET

- 04/01 Martinez 150th Anniversary!
- 04/03 First Fridays, Downtown Main Street
- 04/04 Annual Easter Egg Hunt, Waterfront Park
- 04/04 Harajuku Marketplace, Susana Street Park
- 04/18 John Muir Birthday & Earth Day Celebration
- 04/25 Arbor Day Celebration, Pine Meadow Park
- Sun's Downtown Farmers' Market
- Wknds Aire Libre Weekends (Del Cielo B.)



The City of Martinez turns 150! Celebration info at www.cityofmartinez.org/150



More event details on our City Calendar at www.cityofmartinez.org/events

Call For Artists!

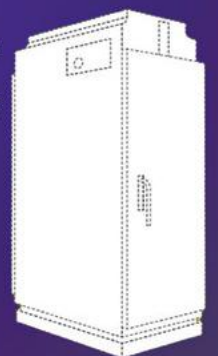
UTILITY BOX ART PROGRAM

Celebrating our Past, Present, Future, Together

Help transform our blank utility boxes into public art!

- Open to all ages
- Submit by April 30, 2026
- More info on website

Submit art here:



Or go to www.cityofmartinez.org/150

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NewsWrap Short Stories of Local Interest

by Craig Lazeretti, Martinez News and Views and Martinez Chamber

Martinez Sees Big Jump in Annual Cannabis Scorecard from Public Health Nonprofit

by Tony Hicks

Of 13 Contra Costa County cities allowing some form of recreational cannabis sales, Martinez receives the highest marks for steps it has taken to protect its youth, public health and the overall community from the harmful effects of the drug, according to an annual scorecard produced by the Public Health Institute (PHI), a nonprofit health-advocacy organization.

Assessments look at six policy areas: retailer requirements; local taxation; product regulations; marketing restrictions; smoke-free air protections; and equity measures. Scores are calculated based on how far a municipality goes above and beyond state requirements.

Martinez was the only city on the list with a significant rating jump. The other jurisdictions in the county that allow retail storefront cannabis sales are Antioch, Concord, El Cerrito, Pittsburg and Richmond.

Mt. View Sanitary District Proposes Rate Increase

by Tom Lochner

A proposed rate increase in the Mt. View Sanitary District will be the subject of a public hearing on April 9 at the district office, 3800 Arthur Road in Martinez.

Under the two-year proposal, the current residential rate of \$999 a year for single-family homes would rise to \$1,032 starting July 1, an increase of 3.3%. On July 1, 2027, the rate would go up again, this time by 4.65%, to \$1,080 a year.

Other residential categories, such as apartments and mobile homes, as well as businesses and industrial and institutional facilities would see rates rise by roughly similar percentages.

The MVSD board will vote on the proposed rate increase immediately following the April 9 public hearing, which will begin at 3:30 p.m. If a majority of property owners in the district submit written protests before the conclusion of the public hearing, a rate increase cannot be approved.

John Muir BIRTHDAY / EARTH DAY CELEBRATION Saturday, April 18, 2026



Jake Larson Statue Milestone Reached, Sculpting Underway

By David King

A month ago, the Jake Larson Bronze statue committee was in dire need to raise \$50,000 to make the deposit to start the sculpting process in order to meet the ideal unveiling date of D-Day June 6, 2027. That's the day "Papa" Jake, the last surviving member of the Army's 135th Infantry Regiment that stormed Omaha Beach to liberate Normandy and Europe from German occupation.

"We did it!" said Brandy Leidgen the committee chairperson who initiated this project. "We raised the \$50,000 needed to pay the deposit to the artist." The project is expected to cost over \$200,000.

Community support has been outstanding so far and it continues to build momentum. Rosie the Riveters have committed to purchasing one of the two \$15,000 benches. The other bench has already been sold.

Jake Larson visited the Rosie the Riveters Museum in Richmond often. He loved the Rosies, and they loved him.

Other major sponsors who have come forward include Ghilotti Bros, Inc.. Leidgen says they have verbally committed to overseeing the construction project start to finish. Sheedy Crane has committed to donating the crane for the project to move the statue. Together that may save as much as \$50,000 in costs.

"We still need a significant amount of money. We still have sponsorships available," Leidgen says. Engraved bricks and tiles can still be purchased as well as other sponsorship opportunities at papajakelarson.com



Jake Larson with Rosies at the Rosie the Riveter Museum in Richmond, Calif.

Artist Paula Slater is internationally recognized for her many public bronze monuments and memorials, as well as dozens of life-size and larger bronze portrait busts of presidents, politicians, military heroes, leaders of industry, celebrities and people from all walks of life, including concord's statue of don Salvio Pacheco at Todos Santos Park.

"I will seek to capture Papa Jake's unique spirit, infectious smile and that twinkle in his eyes," says Slater on her website.

Referring to "Papa" Jake Larson's social media presence on TikTok, Leidgen who has known Jake Larson for years says, "I don't think there was a more famous World War II veteran than Papa Jake."

May Ceremony to Mark 50th Anniversary of Yuba City High School Bus Crash

by David Scholz

The Yuba City bus disaster at the Marina off-ramp was the worst school bus disaster in U.S. history.

It's been fifty years since the fatal bus crash on the morning of May 21, 1976, that claimed the lives of 28 high school students and their teacher.

It's time to pause and remember. A ceremony will again take place at the Martinez Waterfront Marina, a testament that they have never been forgotten.

This year's remembrance ceremony will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday May 21, at the Marina memorial site, 7 North Court. Timing of the event will occur just minutes after the actual accident happened that day 50 years ago.

Hosted by the City of Martinez with support from the First Responders from that tragic day, the Remembrance, will include acknowledgement of the following:

The 24 "Survivors" (children) of the accident;

Fire Fighters, Sheriff's Department personnel, Coroner's Office, CHP, AMR, and Fire Rescue;

Shell Refinery personnel who miraculously appeared with their cranes, which may include the last living Shell person, an 87-year-old crane operator;

The medical ER staff and medical facilities that were instrumental in

saving so many lives - representing County Hospital, Veterans Hospital, Mt. Diablo and Kaiser Hospitals;

The City of Martinez, its leaders, and community members;

The Miramontes High School Choir, Orinda (which was the destination that the Yuba City Choir was going to that morning) will perform a tribute;

ConFire Fire Fighters Honor Guard will present the "Bell Reading" Service.

The brother of his twin sisters who died at the scene will open the Remembrance playing the bag pipes.

Retired Captain Christine Dean, who was a Sheriff's Coroner's Investigator in 1976 when the Yuba City High School choir bus accident occurred, remained present at scene when bodies were removed from the bus, children triaged for hospitalization, and made sure the last child was picked up by a mortuary and returned to their home in Yuba City.

Dean did the First-Year Memorial Service in Martinez. And, for five decades, Dean has carried on that tradition of a Remembrance Service every five years to honor those lost in this tragic episode.

"I have been working with Yuba City for this Remembrance Service, and they are most excited that something is being done," Dean said.

She has maintained friendships with

First Responders and has also kept in contact with family members of both deceased children and survivor-children. Dean and a retired Fire Fighter, Xon Burris, have stayed with the families and (now) adult surviving children for decades.

According to media accounts at the time, the bus, carrying the school's 53-member choir and two adult advisors, took the Marina Vista exit off I-680 after crossing the Benicia Bridge and crashed through a guardrail. The bus then plummeted 30 feet to the ground below, flipping onto its roof.

The choir was headed to Miramonte High School in Orinda where it was slated to participate in a choral exchange program.

Those at the scene recalled it not as "grotesque" but one of "serenity" as if the victims were acknowledging they knew they were in good hands with the emergency personnel.

In May 1996, on the twentieth anniversary of the accident, a memorial built near the water at the Martinez Marina was dedicated to the victims.

On the 35th anniversary of the



Black and white photos of students who died in the Yuba City Union High School bus crash were placed on the permanent memorial as part of a 40th anniversary observance at Waterfront Park, held Saturday, May 21, 2016, in Martinez. Photo by David Scholz

accident in May 2011, Contra Costa County firefighters dedicated a monument in Yuba City.[7]

In 2015, the I-680 freeway off-ramp was replaced with one having a longer and flatter approach.

Additionally, shortcomings and deficiencies for adequately responding to emergency situations also were revealed with the accident. But lessons were learned, and today a first-rate system is in place.



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New Leaf Collaborative Completes Garden Project at Boy & Girls Club

Through the first quarter of this year, the New Leaf Collaborative has been providing extraordinary gardenwork at the Boys & Girls Club in Martinez thanks to the support of the Martinez Community Foundation. New Leaf volunteers recently finished upgrades in irrigation, mulching and digging holes for the fruit tree plantings.

New Leaf Collaborative is a Martinez nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide hands-on, learning and leadership opportunities, in science, nature and environmental literacy in order to inspire curiosity and connection in our youth and communities.

This is in line with the Martinez Community Foundation who provides support to local nonprofits with programs



focused on Education, Environment, Arts & Culture, Community Engagement, and Education and Skills Development.



Concord Councilmember Dominic Aliano Not to Seek Re-election

Councilmember Dominic Aliano has announced he will not seek re-election for a third term.

“Serving the Concord community as a Planning Commissioner, as a Councilmember, Vice Mayor, and Mayor has been one of the greatest accomplishments and honors of my life. As a Concord native, I always knew that I wanted to serve this community,” Aliano states in e-mail to his colleagues.

“I have reached a point in my life where I need to focus on my family, my work, and my friends and because of that, I have decided not to run for re-election in 2026.”

Prior to being on the council, Aliano also served as Planning Commissioner. Currently, he is Concord’s Vice Mayor.

Aliano lists some of the accomplishments he’s most proud of while on the council:

- Investing in building the CYC (Concord Youth Center), the largest youth center in Northern California;

- Investing in license plate readers;

- Supporting a project labor agreement with the Concord Naval Weapons Station development;

- Supporting Measure V and using those funds to invest in our roadways;

- Getting through COVID without draining city reserves yet supporting service organizations and business;

- Supporting renters with tenant protections;

- Balancing our budgets.

In his remaining days, Aliano pledges

to fully commit to selecting a new city manager, work through the current labor negotiations, and focus on fully developing a financial plan for the city’s infrastructure and finances.

“Thank you to my council colleagues and staff, it has been an honor working with you all. Thank you...for entrusting me to lead this city for the past eight years. This experience and all of you will always be a part of me.” The message concludes with this advice.

“As I depart, I leave the City of Concord with the following: Public safety should always be a priority. If a community feels safe, then people will invest in businesses, the city, and their own communities within Concord. Always make sure the police department has the resources they need because public safety is the backbone to a thriving and robust city.

Always focus on what we as a city can control. Focus on matters that are within our jurisdiction: roadways and infrastructure, public safety, parks, and overall city operations. Thank you all for a wonderful experience!”

Aliano’s term expires in November of this year. At this time, there are no candidates filed to run District 3.



Agriculture

How Weights and Measures Department Protects Our Future

Contra Costa County’s agricultural landscape is one of our greatest assets, and at the heart of protecting it is the County’s Agriculture/Weights and Measures Department. Their work often happens behind the scenes, but it impacts every resident whether you’re shopping at a farmers’ market or tending a backyard garden. As we move into spring, I want to highlight how this department anchors a network of programs that keep our agricultural community thriving.

The department’s core mission is to safeguard our crops, environment, and consumers. This includes monitoring for invasive pests, enforcing fruit fly quarantines, and ensuring that scales and meters across the county, from gas pumps to grocery stores, are accurate and fair. These protections are essential to maintaining a healthy agricultural economy, preserving the integrity of our local food system, and making your dollars stretch.

From this foundation, the department partners with organizations that help residents learn and participate in agriculture. The University of California Cooperative Extension Contra Costa County is a key collaboration with the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and our county

Agriculture/Weights and Measures Department. This brings science based expertise directly to the public, supporting everything from sustainable farming practices to home gardening.

A standout example of this collaboration is the Master Gardeners of Contra Costa, who provide workshops, demonstrations, and advice for gardeners of all skill levels.

The Agriculture/Weights and Measures Department also supports residents interested in beekeeping. Through the BeeSafe program, a joint effort with the state, beekeepers can register their hives, helping the county protect pollinators and coordinate safely with pesticide applicators. For those curious about housing a colony, the department offers guidance on best practices and responsible hive management.

Finally, as “U pick” season approaches, I encourage residents to explore these programs and appreciate the work that this department does to keep our fields, gardens, and orchards flourishing. The Agriculture/Weights and Measures Department is the backbone of this effort, ensuring Contra Costa’s agricultural heritage remains strong for generations to come.



Outraged? Best if We Let Council Focus on Local Issues

by Edi Birsan, Concordian edibirsan@gmail.com

When waves of emotion spread throughout the community over worldly matters, where is that line that defines when the city council has a legal or acceptable platform to address such murky waters? Risks of repercussions exist regardless of which side of the podium they present.

Around eight years ago, there was a request for the City of Concord to take a position to repeal the Dodd-Frank Act and one of my colleagues looked at me and wondered if this had to do with health issues of BBQing hot dogs. We declined to take a position.

However, with wars involving the US directly or between other countries, the impact on the community often manifests with emotional outbursts and requests to stop the violence. This played out 60 years ago with the Vietnam War and repeatedly each time we get involved in a conflict.

Notably, I have never seen or heard of someone going to a City Council to advocate for the Council to demand that some place be invaded.

While Berkely has the reputation for having city council speak out in ordinances on the world stage, in Contra Costa, Richmond has set

the ultimate bar for grabbing the headlines with its official statements in the last few years. About nine years ago, their council made an ordinance to ban Space Weapons, including those that inflict psychological damage. A few years later, when I asked Mayor Butt how that has worked out (he did vote against it, but it passed 5-2), he quipped, “Well, in retrospect, it has worked since we have not issued any fines so far.”

In all seriousness, though, no matter how well-intended or principled a Council’s declaration is, it is a mine field. In Concord during the 70s, there was a storm in the City Council when a new mayor refused to have future bills paid by the city at a service club that refused to allow Black members, a major national issue in civil rights at the time.

Investments of city funds in the market are also very restricted. However, investing in things like tobacco industries, refineries, or anything to do with the Dodgers deservedly should be looked at by a council.

With the current divisiveness over the national and global scene, we can expect public comments and maybe



No Kings protest, November 2025, Photo file.

petitions to bring a city council on record for one position or another.

Please, think this through because a council can quickly go cross-eyed trying to follow and comment on visions of the ‘greater good’ rather than how much it costs to fix that darn fence on Galindo and Concord Blvd. that keeps jumping out and snagging cars.

Leave the trolling and moaning to Nextdoor and Facebook and let the

Council create their own tempest in a Tea Pot.

Views above are of EdiBirsan@gmail.com and not influenced by outside or non-terrestrial radio waves that are prohibited by the City of Richmond.

Pleasant Hill's Art, Wine & Music Festival Returns May 16-17

The Pleasant Hill Art, Wine & Music Festival returns May 16 and 17, transforming downtown and Crescent Drive into a vibrant corridor of art, music, local businesses, and culinary discovery.

Hosted by the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce, the two-day festival brings together artists, musicians, wineries, breweries, local merchants, and families for one special weekend. Crescent Drive will become a walkable festival street filled with live performances, artisan vendors from across California, and the welcoming energy that has made the event a signature tradition in Pleasant Hill.

This year's event introduces an updated layout that reflects exciting changes taking place in the city's commercial district. The event will feature two stages positioned at opposite ends of the festival Crescent Drive with a mix of 13 bands jammin' throughout the weekend.

Music That Sets the Festival Rhythm

Back Forty Stage — The Back Forty Stage will anchor the western end of the festival and feature an exciting mix of rock, blues, and crowd favorites throughout the weekend. Saturday's lineup includes The Great Space Coaster, Sixteen Scandals 80s, and King Tritone, leading into a special Saturday night concert with The Bell Brothers, a performance sure to bring the evening to a memorable close.

On Sunday, performances from Jinx Jones & The Kingtones, Jewels Hanson & Co., and Groove Doctors, will offer a blend of blues, soul, and classic sounds.

Wisegirl Stage — At the opposite end of Crescent Drive the WiseGirl Stage will showcase a dynamic group of regional performers. Saturday's lineup includes Hipster Cocktail Party, The New Frantics, and Junior DeVille Blues Band, delivering an eclectic mix of rock and blues.

Sunday performances feature Secret Sauce, Rusty Giraffe, and the Evan Thomas Band, rounding out the weekend.

A Stage for Kids, Families, and Cultural Celebration

Kids Stage — Families will find plenty to enjoy at the festival's dedicated Kids Stage, where performances throughout the weekend are designed to inspire and entertain younger audiences while celebrating the cultural diversity of the community.

Saturday will feature the dance group, Funkmode. On Sunday, festival goers will experience the beauty of Polynesian culture with Matahani, a group of traditional Tahitian dancers whose performances bring vibrant music, movement, and storytelling to the stage.

The Kids Stage will also feature a variety of local youth performers and community groups, showcasing the



talent and cultural traditions that make Pleasant Hill and the surrounding region so unique.

Toast to Craft Beer and Fine Wine

Guests can enjoy a curated selection of craft beers and wines. Several respected regional breweries will be pouring throughout the weekend, including Calicraft Brewing Company, Canyon Club Brewery, Parliament Brewing, Headlands Brewing, Epidemic Ales, Mike Hess Brewing, and Morgan Territory Brewing. Together they represent the craftsmanship that have made California one of the world's great craft brewing regions.

Festivalgoers will also have the rare opportunity to sample Weihenstephaner, the legendary Bavarian beer from Germany's Weihenstephan Brewery, widely recognized as the oldest continuously operating brewery in the world.

Wine lovers can explore a wide assortment of wines from around the

world alongside selections from local winemakers.

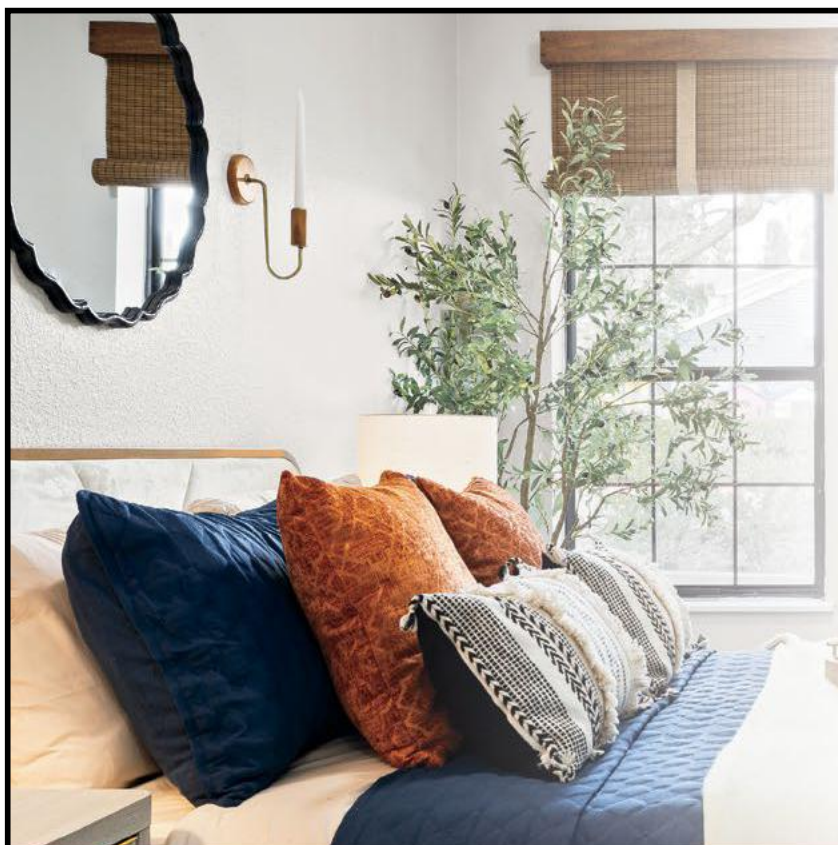
Discover Artisans and Makers from Across California

Shop a wide array of booths featuring handcrafted jewelry, fine art, home décor, specialty foods, and distinctive handmade goods.

Local Businesses Participation

Local businesses booths located throughout the festival allow companies to showcase their products and services, meet potential customers. Businesses interested in participating should contact the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce.

Residents, visitors, and businesses alike are invited to be part of this beloved Pleasant Hill tradition. For festival updates, vendor opportunities, and event details, visit pleasanthillchamber.com.



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