

Diablo Gazette™

Happy 2026! It's Going To Be a Great Year!

JANUARY 2026

Photography by Thomas Rimple

Photo by Thomas Rimple of Martinez taken after recent rainstorms. We will take that as a sign of more good things to come.


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Publisher's Notes

by David King

Spreading a Little Concord in the World

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday Season and have genuine prospects to make 2026 your best year yet.

January always makes for an interesting edition. It's a combination of highlights from the end of the previous year, holiday hits, and what's to come in 2026. Here's some of the features inside.

This year's Turkey Trot Run over Thanksgiving raised a record amount of money for Loaves and Fishes. Page 23.

Diablo Gazette contributor, author, scientist and traveler, Jill Hedgecock reported on her travels to Tasmania. There's lots of wildlife there you won't see anywhere else. Page 11.

A faultline underneath Concord has been newly mapped thanks to some of the visible damage it is causing our streets. Page 22.

A new book on the history of Concord was just released this month. It's mostly a pictorial through the decades post-World War II, 1940s through 1990s. It's part three of a trilogy of books on Concord history by Joel Harris. Former Mayor Edi Birsan wrote its introduction. It's remarkably interesting, especially if you are intrigued by local history. The book is currently available at Berkshire Books. Page 19.

Each year we are greeted with new laws, I still haven't broken all the old laws yet. Page 7.

Diablo Gazette has introduced a new column, "The Way We Ate." Each month we will share an excerpt from a book published a few years ago of nothing but family recipes and way-of-life anecdotes that have been passed down through the generations of descendants of Martinez. The book was called "A Little This and a Little That." Our first recipe, "Maw Maw Miller's Sweet Tater Pie. Page 21.

I must give a shout out to our readers Kevin Cabral and Martin and Rene Steinpress for sending in photos of them with the Diablo Gazette brought on their travels over the Holidays. I will add

2026!



Diablo Gazette was spotted in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Kevin Cabral is the President and CEO of Concord Chamber of Commerce. And now he belongs to our elite group of international readers.



Martin and Rene Steinpress, Concord, brought a copy of the Diablo Gazette to Angkor Wat, Cambodia's most iconic landmark and the image on the Cambodia flag. We welcome Steinpress to our International readers group.

them to the archives of International readers group on our website. We have already gathered an impressive list of destinations.

If you would like to claim your membership into this elite club, simply bring a copy of the Diablo Gazette with you as you travel, and send in a photo showing a copy of the Gazette in front of a landmark or a confirming scene. Your photo will be published and your membership confirmed (please, no photoshop or AI.)

Let's spread a little piece of our community to the world.

The Science Behind Seeing Clearly: How Modern Lenses Transform Vision

by Sid Afshar Optician, Orion Optical

Several years ago, a young cartoonist came into our practice with one of the most unusual prescriptions you can imagine. His eyesight measured at plus 19 which is an extremely rare and severe condition.

The corrective lens we designed for his eye looked nothing like a typical eyeglass lens. It was nearly flat, with a small bubble in the center that served as his only clear viewing zone. Strange as it appeared, that tiny optical bubble allowed him to continue drawing, working, and living independently.

Stories like his illustrate how far lens technology has come, and why independence matters in eye care.

Unlike franchise optical chains that are often limited to corporate-approved products, independent practices can adopt the newest innovations as soon as they reach the market. That flexibility makes a real difference.

At the most basic level, eyeglass lenses fall into two categories: single-vision and progressive.

Single-vision lenses have one prescription across the entire lens. They are straightforward and effective, especially for younger patients whose eye muscles remain flexible enough to adjust focus easily.

Progressive lenses, however, tell a more complex story. Years ago, people relied on bifocals, lenses with a visible line separating distance vision from reading vision. Later came trifocals, which added a middle zone for intermediate distances.

While functional, these lenses carried an unwanted social stigma. The visible lines were seen as a marker of aging, and many people disliked how they looked.

That discomfort drove innovation. Lens designers began working toward a single, seamless lens that could transition smoothly from reading to intermediate vision to distance. The result was the progressive lens we know today.

Most people begin needing progressives in their mid-40s, and by age 50 or 55, roughly 90 percent of adults benefit from them. These lenses support three essential visual zones: reading, intermediate (such as computer

work), and distance (like driving).

The real breakthrough came with digital lens technology. Grinding a progressive lens by hand is early impossible, so modern lenses are cut using computer-guided systems. These digital lenses contain at least five distinct prescription zones, with smooth transitions between each. The result is clearer vision without visible lines.

That sophistication comes at a cost. Digital surfacing machines are expensive, and precision is critical.

One of the most important features of a progressive lens is what's known as the "corridor of vision". This is the central channel that allows clear sight from top to bottom.

Cheaper lenses have narrow corridors, which can cause distortion at the edges. Higher-quality lenses widen that corridor, reducing distortion and allowing the eyes to move naturally left, right, up, and down without visual discomfort.

Materials matter just as much as design. A century ago, lenses were made from glass, which provided excellent clarity but posed serious safety risks. A shattered glass lens could permanently damage the eye. Today's lenses are made from advanced polymers, and their quality varies significantly.

One key measure of lens quality is the ABBE value, which describes how much chromatic aberration, or color distortion a material produces. Crown glass, the gold standard, has an ABBE value of 60. Some low-cost lenses dip as low as 20 or 25, while higher-quality polymers reach into the 40s, approaching the clarity of glass but without the danger.

Higher ABBE values allow more light to pass through the lens, resulting in sharper vision, better depth perception, and more accurate color representation. Colors appear more detailed. Objects don't blur together. Ultimately, vision feels effortless.

As we age, the muscles around the eye lose flexibility. They become slower to adjust, sometimes favoring near or far vision while neglecting the rest. Progressive lenses compensate for that natural change, restoring balance and comfort. With the right technology, seeing well becomes less work and life comes back into focus.

Good lenses don't just improve eyesight; they enhance quality of life.



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California Condors visit East Bay

Annual Contra Costa Christmas Bird Count records more species

by Laura Kindsvater, Save Mount Diablo and Jill Hedgecock, Environmental Management

For the fifth year in a row, East Bay skies were once graced with visiting condors, the latest indication that their late-summer range is expanding north as their population recovers.

GPS data revealed that last fall, juvenile condors #1060 and #1191 flew north and spent the evening in the mountains just south of San Antonio Reservoir in Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve.

This East Bay visit might have gone under the radar without sufficient GPS tracking. Thankfully, Save Mount Diablo has so far been able to fund 60 GPS units for the Pinnacles National Park condor recovery program.

Along with identifying wing tags, GPS has been a great tool to monitor the health and travels of the recovering condor population.

A conservation plan put in place by the United States government led to the capture of all the remaining wild condors by 1987, with a total population of 27 individuals. Their numbers rose through captive breeding, and beginning in 1991, condors were reintroduced into the wild.

Five chicks that hatched from wild nests last year increased the flock to an all-time high of 119 condors.

Condors are highly social and often fly together in small groups. Because fewer than half the condors in the region wear GPS units, exactly how many condors make these trips to the East Bay is unclear.



In fact, an unidentified adult condor was photographed nearby at Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve during the most recent flight, indicating there may have been more than two condors in the East Bay that day.

Head color is an easy way to distinguish adults from juveniles. Adults feature colorful orange heads, while young condors have dark heads that become mottled as they age.

By five years, condors have their adult coloration. However, most are at least six before they begin nesting, and many don't nest until they are several years older.

Condors can soar from San Benito County to Alameda County in under two hours and easily cover more than 150 miles in a day. More condors have been visiting along the western front of the Diablo Range between Coyote Reservoir and Anderson Reservoir.

As condors become more familiar with those areas, and as the population

continues to grow, it's likely that flights to the East Bay will become more common.

More species and a rare bird reappearance in the 2025 Contra Costa Christmas Bird Count

The 2025 Contra Costa Christmas Bird Count organized by the Mount Diablo Bird Alliance took place on December 20.

While rainy conditions make finding birds a challenge, 73 volunteers ferreted out sightings of 155 different bird species, which is six species above the average seen for the count over the past 25 years.

Notable sightings included a Caspian tern which hadn't been found on the count since 2017, and a Northern Rough-winged Swallow, which had first been seen last year.

While the overall total number of species increased, golden eagle, a species that has been spotted every year since 1994, was not found this year. Because every bird that is seen is counted, notable local population increases or decreases of a given species can be assessed.

Record low counts of Great Blue Heron were noted while the 458 Western Sandpipers noted represent a 154% increase over the last 25 years of data. Burrowing owls and peregrine falcon were only seen in one area this year.



Rare bird sightings in the 2025 Contra Costa Christmas Bird Count: Burrowing Owl, Caspian tern, Great Blue Heron, Condor sightings were not a part of the bird count.

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Jeff Wan
Mayor, Clayton
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I hope everyone enjoyed a safe and healthy holiday season. This time of year offers a chance to pause and reflect, and I hope it brought moments of rest and time with family and friends.

As we begin a new year, I am honored that the City Council has appointed me to serve once again as Mayor of Clayton. It is a privilege to return to this role, and I am grateful for the trust placed in me by my fellow Councilmembers and by the residents of our City.

I would like to recognize the dedicated work of our City staff and the City Council. Staffing has been a challenge for Clayton in recent years, but we have made significant progress and nearly all City positions are now filled, with only a few key roles remaining.

Much of the work our staff does happens behind the scenes, yet it is essential in keeping the City operating smoothly and responsibly.

I am also thankful to serve alongside Councilmembers who bring integrity, professionalism, and a sincere commitment to doing what is best for Clayton. The Council's collaborative approach and respect for community input continue to strengthen our City.

Looking ahead, the coming year will be an important one. A major focus will be Clayton's long-term

Moving Clayton forward in 2026

fiscal sustainability. After extensive discussion throughout 2025, the City Council believes the right next step is to place a local sales tax measure on the November ballot.

This measure would bring Clayton in line with neighboring cities and provide a more stable revenue base to support core City services and ongoing needs. I encourage residents to stay informed, ask questions, and take part in this important decision about our City's future.

We will also begin meaningful work within the GHAD (Geologic Hazard Abatement Districts) supported by the new funding approved by residents last year. That vote reflected a strong commitment to protecting our hillsides and supporting public safety. I want to thank the community for its engagement and support, and I look forward to seeing that investment translated into progress in the year ahead.

As we move forward, I am optimistic about what we can accomplish together. Thank you to the City Council and to the Clayton community for the privilege of serving as Mayor, and for your continued trust and involvement.

I wish everyone a healthy, safe, and fulfilling year ahead.

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CLAYTON MARKET UPDATE

CONCORD MARKET UPDATE

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
9 Herriman Ct	\$1,070,000	1905	4/2	11/13/2025
1224 Easley Dr	\$1,140,000	2188	4/2.5	11/13/2025
1923 Eagle Peak Ave	\$662,000	1252	2/2.5	11/14/2025
1023 Pebble Beach Dr	\$1,440,000	4076	5/3.5	11/18/2025
1816 Eagle Peak Ave	\$978,000	1877	3/2.5	11/21/2025
186 Mt Wilson Way	\$901,000	2325	4/2	12/2/2025
1221 Buckeye Ter	\$810,000	1639	3/2.5	12/8/2025

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
1591 Glazier Dr	\$900,000	1658	4/3	11/18/2025
1505 Kirker Pass Rd #240	\$235,000	634	1/1	11/20/2025
3188 Fitzpatrick Dr	\$660,000	1108	3/2	11/25/2025
3875 Walnut Ave	\$1,230,000	1862	3/2	11/26/2025
1170 Ridgemont Pl	\$1,199,000	2901	5/3	12/2/2025
1798 Mariposa Ct	\$870,000	2032	4/2.5	12/4/2025
4161 Huckleberry Dr	\$815,000	1404	4/2	12/9/2025

Clayton's unsung heroes of 2025

by Kim Trupiano

Clayton is full of unsung heroes whose generosity and civic actions help contribute to Clayton's unique wholesome, small-town appeal. They are some of the glue that bind our community. Each month, one such hero was recognized. Here is a list of all twelve unsung heroes honored in 2025.

January: Linda Pinder is a tireless volunteer for the community, including Clayton Historical Society & Museum, Clayton Valley Village and American Association of University Women.

February: Paul Jordan amongst many volunteer posts that he holds or has held in the past, include current Treasurer of the Clayton Valley Garden Club, serving on the board of the Clayton Historical Society, former Treasurer for CBCA in 2015 and 2016 and helps with holiday decorations every year. In his spare time several times a week, he picks up garbage and trash throughout the downtown and along our trails; he says because he needs the exercise.

March: Jeanne Boyd (posthumously), Joyce Atkinson and Diana Bauer. In 1995, they had the inspiration and drive to bring a library to the Clayton community. It is because of their vision and perseverance that the library is now celebrating its 30th anniversary.

April: Clayton Valley Garden Club, founded in 1997, has a long list of accomplishments including their annual plant sale, student scholarship program, plantings at Mt. Diablo Elementary School, Diablo View Middle School, Clayton Valley Charter High School, Clayton Community Library, City of Clayton's fountain, Blue Star Moms Memorial at The Grove and the Native American and Educational Garden at the Clayton History Society Museum. They also conduct a series of education programs throughout the year.

May: JoAnn Caspar was a teacher at Mt. Diablo Elementary School for 18 years and upon retiring she became involved with AAUW, the Clayton Valley Garden Club (for 28 years), the Clayton Historical Society & Museum, which included an active role in the Clayton Gardens Tour. She is also a longtime member of CBCA and is still going strong after 94 years!

June: Debby Bruno became a member of CBCA in 2014, and since that time, has Co-Chaired the Art & Wine Festival in 2015, Chaired it in 2016, and has been a committee member since 2018. She also volunteers at CBCA's Oktoberfest and joined the Holidays in the Grove event committee back in 2018. She's been a volunteer with the City's 4th of July parade since 2016, has helped collect donations for Concerts in the Grove and volunteered for the reopening/dedication ceremony of Fire Station 11 in Clayton.

July: Sarah Brinkman has owned Clayton Valley Dance Academy

since 2016. She is a founder and the Head Coach of the Clayton Valley Charter High School Dance Team, Vice President of Events for the Mt. Diablo Elementary Parent-Faculty Club, Treasurer for Girl Scout Troop #31657 and in 2025 volunteered to become Clayton's 4th of July Parade Chair and has already agreed to Chair the parade again next year. Rumor has it, she may also be the Mt. Diablo Elementary School mascot, but she has not confirmed or denied that.

August: Mechele Fong. From the time she opened her mouth to sing as a toddler, music became the heartbeat of her life. She became involved in musical theater and while attending Clayton Valley High, she joined the choir. Over the years, she has performed in Europe, Carnegie Hall, Fort Worth Convention Center, Mexico, and currently sings at the Bay Church and with a band called the "Eastbay Grooveline." Mechele has had the honor of singing the national anthem for the annual Clayton 4th of July Parade since 2016 and also volunteers to sing at Clayton's Memorial Day Ceremony and Concord's Veteran's Day Ceremony.

September: Dan Sullivan and Richard Nelson. Dan Sullivan has been outstanding volunteer for Clayton's City-sponsored and CBCA events. He has always been willing to help out in any capacity, including the Art & Wine Festival, Memorial Day Ceremony, Concerts in the Grove, the July 4th parade, and Holidays in The Grove. He is the hardest working and most dedicated "Non-Clayton Resident" who effortlessly makes his mark on our Community.

Richard Nelson is a Team Leader who has volunteered for Concerts in the Grove for years. He is one that arrives early and stays late to make sure that every detail is handled. He takes pride in the set-up of the Performance Stage and makes sure all toters are in place for each Concert event. He also makes sure that the Blue Star Memorial in The Grove remains protected for all to see and treasure. He is a true asset to the entire Concert Volunteer Team.

October: Clayton Valley Village - In 2016, Clayton Valley Village (CVV) was established as an entirely volunteer-driven non-profit organization created to meet the needs of Clayton's growing senior population. They began serving its first members in 2017, enabling them to remain active and independent in their own homes. CVV serves as Clayton's own community senior center and today is providing services to 91 members with 74 volunteers. The Village provide transportation help, handyman assistance, as well as a number of social activities like birthday parties, game nights, lunch dates, hikes, and movie outings. For volunteers, it's a wonderful way to help your neighbors, get to know new people and participate in fun events and they are always looking



for new volunteers.

November: Clayton Theatre Company (CTC) was founded in 2012 to bring the live theatre experience to the greater Clayton community. A community-based, non-profit organization CTC's mission is to entertain, educate, and enrich our community. CTC produces a wide variety of plays and musicals. Through their Summer Stage program they offer a 2-week summer camp for children ages 7-14, and introduces all aspects of singing, dancing, acting, and the many components of putting on a musical. The camp culminates with a final musical performance.

They are led by Managing Director, Roxanne Pardi. While teaching music, drama and dance at Pittsburg High School, she met CTC's Artistic Director, La Tonya Watts. Today CTC is celebrating its 14th season and their dream is to open a 350-seat theatre in downtown Clayton. They thank the City of Clayton and the CBCA for the financial support which has sustained them for so many years.

December: Clayton Valley Women's Club founded by Eldora Hoyer and Emmy Joakimson in 1973. They were inspired to invite local women to join them at Endeavor Hall to form a woman's club, thus, Clayton Valley Woman's Club was organized, and federated a year later.

The Club's purpose is service including the first Christmas Home Tour and Craft & Bake Sale, completing the Bi-Centennial Quilt which is on permanent loan to the City of Clayton and can be seen at Hoyer Hall. They published

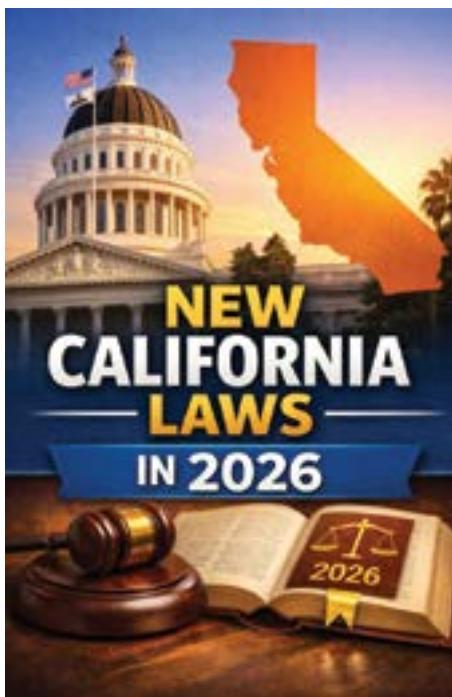


Photos: Four of the Unsung Heroes honored by Clayton City Council. (Top-bottom) Clayton Valley Village, Clayton Valley Women's Club, Clayton Theatre Company, Debby Bruno (next to Mayor Kim Trupiano and Councilmembers Jim Diaz, Jeff Wan, and Rich Enea.)

cookbooks, organized fashion shows, held Art Auctions & Wine Tastings, walked for the March of Dime, organized blood drive and several Black Diamond Balls, chili cook-offs, casino night and fashion shows.

Today, service is still their mission, including offering a \$2000 annual scholarship to one girl graduating from Diablo Valley College matriculating to a California university.

They also give donations to the Clayton Community Library, the Clayton and Concord Historical Societies, collect donations for Pennies for Pines to support reforestation in our State, collect for the Heifer Project, donate to a women's shelter, the Silverwood School and several local food pantries. Still going strong 52 years later, continuing to make friends, have fun and supporting the community.



Starting January 1, a new set of California laws took effect, impacting health care, housing, workplaces, schools, technology, and corporate disclosure requirements. Review the list for what may apply to you. Sponsoring Congressman is in parentheses.

Ban on ultra-processed foods in schools- AB 1264 (Gabriel): This first-in-the-nation law will remove the most concerning ultra-processed foods from being served at public schools, requiring students to be served healthier, real-food meals to improve nutrition and overall health.

Streamlining college admissions- SB 640 (Cabaldon): Establishes a California State University (CSU) direct admissions process by notifying eligible high school students of automatic admission to participating CSU campuses. It also requires California Community Colleges to create programs that will support a smoother transfer for community college students to a four-year university.

Capping insulin costs - SB 40 (Wahab and Wiener): Large state-related health insurers must cap insulin copays at \$35 for a 20-day supply, improving affordability for Californians who rely on insulin.

Student immigration rights- AB 419 (Connolly): Requires schools to post information about students' rights regarding immigration enforcement in administrative offices and on school websites, helping families understand that all children have the right to a free public education.

Protecting renters - AB 628 (McKinnor): Requires landlords to provide working stove/refrigerators in rental units, ensuring tenants have access to essential appliances.

Statewide ban on cat declawing - AB 867 (Lee): Bans non-therapeutic cat declawing statewide. Only medically necessary procedures performed by a licensed veterinarian remain allowed.

Addressing the puppy mill pipeline - AB 506 (Bennett): Holds pet sellers accountable, requiring them to disclose the pet's origin and health information.

Supporting survivors of workplace sexual assault cover-ups -AB 250 (Aguilar-Curry)
- Temporarily lifts the statute of limitations for adult survivors of workplace-related sexual assault cover-

ups. From January 1, 2026 through December 21, 2027, survivors may file civil claims regardless of when the incident occurred.

Preventing AI from posing as licensed professionals - AB 489 (Bonta): Prohibits AI chatbots from presenting themselves as doctors, nurses, or other licensed professionals to increase transparency and prevent misrepresentation by AI chatbots.

Safeguards for minors using AI chatbots - SB 243 (Padilla): Requires AI companies to include disclaimers that chatbots are not real people when used by minors and mandates safety protocols to prevent chatbots from encouraging self-harm.

Transparency in police reports drafted with A I- SB 524 (Arreguin): Requires law enforcement agencies to disclose when AI tools are used to draft official police reports.

Food delivery platforms/ customer service: - AB 578 (Bauer-Kahan): Prohibits companies from using tips to offset base pay, requiring clear and itemized pay breakdowns for delivery workers, mandating access to a real customer-service representative when automated systems cannot resolve an issue, and guaranteeing refunds when orders are undelivered, incorrectly or only partially fulfilled.

Updated plastic bag regulations - SB 1053 (Allen and Blakespear): Strengthens California's plastic bag ban by closing loopholes that allowed thicker plastic film bags to be distributed as "reusable" bags. The law eliminates plastic film checkout bags altogether and requires retailers to transition to truly reusable bags that meet higher durability standards or to paper bags with recycled-content requirements, reducing plastic waste and improving statewide recycling efforts.

New California Traffic Laws that Impact Drivers, E-Bikes And Autonomous Vehicles

A pilot program will begin to catch people who speed through work zones by snapping a picture of their license plate. The pictures will be collected via a fixed or mobile radar or laser system and citations will be issued to the vehicle's registered owner. This legislation was put forth by Assemblymember Matt Haney,

Car thieves' materials will also be added to the tools that are illegal to possess with the intent to commit burglary. Being in possession of a key programming device will now be a misdemeanor.

All e-bikes will be required to have a red reflector or solid or flashing red light attached on their rear during all hours of operation, not just at night.

The "slow down and move over for vehicles" law is being expanded to apply to any highway maintenance vehicle or stationary vehicle with its flashing hazard lights on or warning devices such as cones or flares.

Drivers approaching such vehicles must move to the lane that is not next to the stopped vehicle, or, if changing lanes is not possible, slow down to a safe speed.

Area Councils Reorganize for 2026



Concord City Council

L-R: Councilmember Pablo Benavente, Vice Mayor Dominic Aliano, Mayor Laura Nakamura, Councilmember Carlyn Obringer, and Councilmember Laura Hoffmeister



Clayton City Council

L-R: Councilmember Jim Diaz, Mayor Jeff Wan, Councilmember Kim Trupiano, Vice Mayor Rich Enea, and Councilmember Holly Tillman



Martinez City Council

L-R: Mayor Bianne Zorn, Vice Mayor Jay Howard, Councilmember Greg Young, Councilmember Debbie McKillop, and Councilmember Satinder S. Malhi.



Pleasant Hill City Council

L-R: Dist. 5 Councilmember Amanda Szakats, Mayor Zac Shess, Councilmember of Large Sue Noack, Vice Mayor and Dist 2 Councilmember Andrei Obolenskiy, and Dist. 1 Councilmember Belle La.



Walnut Creek City Council

Mayor Kevin Wilk, Mayor Pro Tem Matt Francois, Councilmember Cindy Silva, Councilmember Craig DeVinney and Councilmember Cindy Darling

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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 your 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

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.

January 11 - Concord Historical Society Speaker Series "Author Lindsay Marie Morris" 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. "Beneath the Sicilian Stars" (WWII fiction) Concord Museum and Event Center, 1928 Clayton Rd. FREE! concordhistorical.org

January 12 - Camp Concord Family Camp registration opens for Concord residents. January 15 for non-residents. Plan your summer family camping vacation in South Lake Tahoe. Cabin accommodations, delicious meals, and activities for all ages. Register online at cityofconcord.org or call 925-671-3404.

January 30 - Kiwanis Club's 19th annual Police Officer of the Year. Old Spaghetti Factory. Open to public. 11:30 a.m. 1955 Mt. Diablo St. Concord

January 31-February 1 Tilden Fungus Fair. View hundreds of local mushroom specimens, enjoy vendors sharing their talents through fungi, mingle with the mycological community, and enjoy presentations by guest speakers at this two-day special event. Saturday, Jan. 31, and Sunday, Feb. 1, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Tilden Nature Area.

February 1 - Super Valentines Boutique 2026 11:00 a.m. Hilton Concord. Free

February 13, BD Performing Arts Crab Feed. Home of the Blue Devils, 5:00 p.m. Pleasant Hill Community Center, 320 Civic Dr. \$9, \$125 (with wine) \$1000 Table.

February 20 - Concord Chamber Annual Crab Feed and Auction. 5:00-10:00 p.m. Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd. \$110, Table \$1000

March 6 - Concord's Got Talent 6:00 p.m. Come for a night of show stopping performances and fun. Calling all musicians, singers, dancers, actors, stand-ups and more to audition for your 3-minute spotlight. Proceeds benefit the Senior Scholarship Program. Call 925-671-3017 for audition time. Concord Senior Center.

Pleasant Hill

January 24 Crab Feed hosted by Pleasant Hill Lions Club. All you can eat crab, pasta, salad, bread. no host bar 6:00 p.m., dinner 7:15 p.m. Door prizes, raffle, music and dancing. Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd. Concord. \$80

March 17-19 Geology and Plate Tectonic Setting of Mt. Diablo lectures. 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Instructor Martin Steinpress. Mt. Diablo Adult Education-Lifelong Ed, One Santa Barbara Rd. Rm. 210 Pleasant Hill. Register at www.mdae.mdsd.org.

February 21 5:30 p.m. CTK Crab Feed 2026 Christ the King Chruch; 199 Brandon Rd. Pleasant Hill. \$100

Martinez

> January 25 Amphian Amble Briones Regional Park. Join Greenbelt Alliance on a visit to some of Bay Area's newt colonies. With winter rains, California and rough-skinned newts return to their home to mate and lay eggs. Nature hike to view these amphibians in Maricich and Sindicich Lagoons. Leaders Liz Watson and Ken Lavin. 2-4 mile

round trip hike. Free. Pre-register. <https://www.eventbrite.com/d/cacconcord/amphibian-amble/>

February 14 Wine & Chocolate Stroll 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Downtwon Martinez. Grab your seatie and indulge in the exquisite combination of 25+ wines and delectable chocolate treats from various businesses. Tickets \$40-\$50

At the Martinez Campbell Theater

Walnut Creek

Walnut Creek Merry Mixers Dances 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. \$20, \$15 members. Walnut Creek Elks Lodge 1475 Creekside Drive.



> January 16 - Bob Gutierrez Trio preceded by 6:30 potluck

> February 6 Duo Gadjio, preceded by Two Waltz moves for center floor at 7 PM

> February 20 - Take 2, preceded by optional 6:30 potluck

At the Leshner Center

1601 Civic Dr. Walnut Creek

>January 15-25 Synergy Theater "Improvised Stephen King". Completely improvised. Our poorly lit basement full of vampires, ghosts, demons, and zombies will have you screaming with laughter. Thursday-Saturday 8:15 p.m., Sundays a 3:15 p.m. George & Sonja Vukasin Theatre. \$27 925-943-7469 or online leshercenter.org.

>February 6-7 Diablo Ballet presents "The Little Mermaid". Choreographed by Julia Adam and based on Hans Christian Andersen's beloved tale. Also on the program is the Diablo Ballet premiere of Paul Taylor's "Company B", and an encore presentation of George Balanchine's cheerful "Donizetti Variations." A pre-performance talk and meet and greet with the cast. Feb. 6 at 7:30 p.m., Feb. 7 two shows, 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$30-\$59, Visit diaboloballet.org.

Other Areas

Benicia: >January 17 A Reading of "Benicia's Changing Tides" Author Fiona M. Hughes, (Clayton) will read from her book which celebrates the proud history, landmarks and local characters that provide Benicia its unique and timeless charm. Illustrator Samantha McNally (Martinez) will be showing some of her original watercolors which were used for the illustrations in this beautiful volume. 6:00 p.m. at Bookshop Benicia, 635 First Street, Benicia. Free event.

Lafayette

>January 9 Women's Council of Realtors Contra Costa -

Pearls, Power, & Possibilities

Gala. Installation of 2026 Governing Board, black tie, buffet, complimentary wine and champagne, music/dancing. 6:00 p.m. Tix, \$95, Table \$750. Lafayette Veterans Memorial, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Pittsburg:

>January 19 8:00 a.m. Martin Luther King Day Breakfast East County NAACP Annual Prayer Breakfast. Speaker Keith Carson, former Alameda County Supervisor. Martin Luther King Junior High School, 2012 Carion Ct. FREE

Library Events

Clayton

>January 21 Creative Cupcake Decorating for Seniors 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. A cupcake decorating program focused on creativity and camaraderie. Each participant will receive two cupcakes and a laminated practice sheet keepsake to take home. Arizaly Padilla will offer both detailed instruction and an easy demo, making it fun for all skill levels. Space is limited to 25 participants and registration is required. Presented in partnership with the Clayton Valley Village and sponsored by the Clayton Community Library Foundation.

> Wonderful Wednesdays presents a 3-D Astronomy Show from 2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Dave Rodrigues, "The Astrowizard", will present a 3-D slide show about stars and planets (3-D glasses provided). Afterwards, you might touch a moon rock! This program is intended for children ages 5 and up. Sponsored by the Clayton Community Library Foundation.

6125 Clayton Road, Clayton CA

Concord

>January 26 Art Therapy-Use your creative expression and destress with this free art program led by the Library Wellness Team every second and fourth Monday of the month. 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Martinez

740 Court St.

>January 13 Clutter-Free: How to Let Go and Get Organized. 6:00-7:00 p.m. Register

Pleasant Hill

2 Monticello Ave

>January 12 Drop-In Shop for Adults If you're a seasoned artist, someone crafty, DIY enthusiast who likes to dabble, come check out Drop-In Maker Space. Our volunteers and community experts are there every Monday night to assist with starting a new project. 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Walnut Creek

1644 N. Broadway,

>January 14 Kids Movie Matiness - "Shrek" (PG,2001) 4:00-5:45 p.m.

Walnut Creek Ygnacio Valley

>January 16 Friends of the Ygnacio Valley Library Book Sale "Members Night". 6:00-8:00 p.m.

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.claytonvalleywomansclub.org

Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary meets weekly 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

Do you want to improve your speaking skills and leadership skills? Come 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. More information at the link below: <https://400.org>.

SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIES by the 20th of the month before Issue month. diablogazette@gmail.com

toastmastersclubs.org/

Martinez Clubs

Kiwanis Club meetings. Every Thursday 12-2, lunch is free to visitors or potential members. 750 Allen St. Martinez.

www.martinezkiwanis.org

Martinez Rotary Club meets weekly, 5-6 PM on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. Campbell Theatre, 636 Ward Street., Martinez. www.martinezrotary.org

Walnut Creek Clubs

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

Farmers Markets

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

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

**Diablo Valley Farmers Market**-North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr. Shadelands, Walnut Creek, Saturdays 9AM-1PM Year Round 1799 Locust St. [www.cafarmersmkt.com](http://www.cafarmersmkt.com)



After a long, cold holiday season of heavy foods and red wines, I crave a light, refreshing dish with crisp, white wine. The wines that immediately come to my mind are the great white wines from down under.

New Zealand makes some of the best wines in the world. The fact that this country is on the other side of the world, basking in the warmth of summer, makes their wine somehow even more appealing.

I first tried this Avocado Grapefruit Salad on a winter afternoon, when trying to utilize some seasonal winter grapefruit. It instantly became one of my favorites. If you are looking to add protein to your meal, chicken or shrimp are both welcome additions.

A great wine to pair with this salad is a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. Their Sauvignon Blanc is super fragrant and flavorful, with zesty citrus notes that just scream "refreshing."

It's the perfect match for a salad that's got a little bit of everything: creamy avocado, tangy grapefruit, and a punchy vinaigrette. The citrus in the wine echoes the grapefruit, while

## Lighten Up Down Under

the avocado's creaminess balances out the acidity. Plus, bold flavors like shallot and mint stand up to the wine's intensity.

So, go on. Pair Up!

*Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the San Francisco Bay Area. [www.LaSommelier.com](http://www.LaSommelier.com)*

### Avocado Grapefruit Salad

#### INGREDIENTS

1 head butter lettuce  
1 small bunch young spinach leaves  
2 ruby red grapefruit, sectioned  
2 avocados, diced  
12-16 oz. of cooked shrimp or chicken  
Dressing:  
4 tsp. sherry vinegar  
2 tsp. raspberry vinegar  
1 shallot, finely diced  
1/4 tsp. salt  
6 tbsp. olive oil  
1 tsp. mint, finely chopped  
2 tsp. chives, finely sliced  
Fresh ground pepper

#### DIRECTIONS

Whisk together the dressing. Toss the dressing with the greens, and then gently arrange the grapefruit, avocado, and optional shrimp or chicken on top. Sprinkle with pepper. Yield 4-6 servings.

*Yield: 4-6 servings*

## Save Mount Diablo is offering a total of 37 excursions in 2026

The 2026 Discover Diablo free public hikes and outings series will begin on January 25 with Mary Bowerman's 118th birthday hike.

The Discover Diablo program began in 2017 to connect local communities to the spectacular natural world of the Mount Diablo area.

Hikes and outings take place at Save Mount Diablo's conserved properties or on park lands in the Diablo Range. These include Mount Diablo State Park, East Bay Regional Park District, Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation, Contra Costa Water District, Stanislaus County Parks, and National Park Service lands.

Discover Diablo hikes are guided by experts steeped in the natural history and lore of the region, who both educate and entertain while emphasizing the breathtaking beauty that the Diablo Range has to offer.

"It is the goal of the Discover Diablo program to build connections between people, Save Mount Diablo, and the land, helping our communities develop a strong sense of place and a deepened appreciation for our collective backyard," stated Ted Clement, Executive Director of Save Mount Diablo. "Most importantly, we want to cultivate a love of the land in participants, as that is what it will take to ensure the precious Diablo natural areas are taken care of for generations to come."

The Discover Diablo outings series offers guided hikes, themed walks, and other outdoor activities: mountain biking; rock climbing; meditation in nature; plein air painting events; and



Discover Diablo Pinnacles photography hike, Photo by Scott Hein

property tours.

New this year are a Green Ranch rove, and a Spanish language hike at Pine Canyon.

The much-loved events will be continuing in 2026 such as rock climbing at Mount Diablo State Park and Pinnacles National Park, stargazing with the Mount Diablo Astronomical Society, Mitchell Canyon medicinal herb walk, LGBTQIA+ hike with Branching Out Adventures, Pinnacles condor hikes and the tarantula treks.

All events are free to the public. Trailblazers of all ages and skill levels are welcome.

RSVPs are required. To ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to attend, registration for hikes and outings will open one month prior to each hike's date.



You can also download and print a flyer of the schedule here: <http://bit.ly/DiscoverDiablo>

# Concord Chamber CRAB FEED



**BENEFITTING**  
**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR THE FUTURE**

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2026**

**CENTRE CONCORD 5298 CLAYTON ROAD CONCORD**

**5:00 - 10:00 PM**

**BUY TICKETS**

**BUY TICKETS NOW!**





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

## East Bay Real Estate:

# What to Expect in 2026

East Bay homebuyers, sellers, and real estate professionals are watching closely to see what 2026 holds for our local market.

After several years of intense competition and affordability challenges, the market is showing signs of stabilization with some modest growth expected next year. Here's what industry experts forecast for 2026.

### Modest Price and Sales Growth Expected

According to the California Association of Realtors' forecast, the broader California housing market, including the Bay Area and East Bay, is projected to see slight increases in both home sales and prices in 2026.

Statewide, existing single-family home sales are forecast to rise by about 2%, and the median home price is expected to climb about 3.6% next year.

Mortgage rates are projected to drift lower, averaging around 6% by the end of 2026, which could help support more buyer activity compared to this year.

While that forecast covers all of California, many of the same forces are visible locally. I

In the East Bay, home prices have remained relatively stable over the past year even as inventory has increased in many cities. Some communities have seen higher inventory and longer market times, which can give buyers more choices and negotiation power.

### Inventory and Buyer Opportunities Increasing

According to [evolvereca.com](http://evolvereca.com), one of the biggest trends of 2025 has been rising inventory in cities across Alameda and Contra Costa counties, with many markets experiencing multi-year highs in available homes for

sale. This shift toward a more balanced market compared to the hyper-competitive market of earlier years means buyers may have opportunities that were scarce just a few seasons ago.

That said, inventory hasn't spiked everywhere, and homes priced right in desirable locations still move quickly. Neighborhood-specific conditions will continue to matter in 2026.

### Mortgage Rates and Affordability Remain Key Factors

Mortgage rates have eased from recent peaks but remain well above the ultra-low pandemic era. Experts expect rates to stay in the low-to-mid-6% range in 2026, which could keep affordability tight for many first-time buyers. At the same time, even modest rate declines from current levels could encourage some homeowners who've been "locked-in" on very low rates to list their homes, adding to inventory.

### A Market More Balanced Than Before

Overall, the East Bay housing market in 2026 looks poised to be more balanced than the red-hot years of 2020–2022. Prices aren't expected to fall sharply. Instead, modest gains or stabilization are more likely if interest rates hold and demand stays steady.

For buyers, this could mean more choices and less pressure to make rushed decisions. For sellers, the market is likely to remain healthy but with greater emphasis on pricing.

Whether you're planning to buy, sell, or just watching the market, 2026 looks like a year of transition toward a more balanced housing market here in the East Bay — not dramatic swings, but meaningful shifts that could open opportunities for both sides of the transaction.

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Email: [info@macfloor.com](mailto:info@macfloor.com)  
[www.MacFloor.com](http://www.MacFloor.com)

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(Next to Sprouts in the Crow Canyon Plaza)  
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### WORD SEARCH - WORKOUT

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CARDIO  
CRUNCHES  
CYCLE  
EXERCISE  
FITNESS

JUMP ROPE  
LIFT  
LUNGES  
MUSCLES  
PLANK

PULL UP  
PUSH UP  
RESISTANCE  
SQUATS  
STRENGTH

STRETCH  
TOWEL  
TREADMILL  
WEIGHTS  
YOGA

### SUDOKU

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### WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble these five MUSCLES:

GNMRASTIH  
PCETIR  
ZTIUESPAR  
OTDIELD  
LBNMDAIAO

### MAZE



PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PAGE 22

Marc Rokoff makes puzzle books, t-shirts, free printable coloring pages & more at [RokoPuzzles.com](http://RokoPuzzles.com)

# JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

by Jill Hedgecock, [jillhedgecock.com](http://jillhedgecock.com)

When most people hear "Tasmania," they picture the Tasmanian devil, specifically the wild-eyed, spinning cartoon character from Looney Tunes. While the real animal is thankfully less chaotic (most of the time), Tasmania itself is far more delightful than many travelers expect.

This 26,000-square-mile island state of Australia is an underrated vacation gem. My husband and I spent ten days exploring Tasmania and were completely smitten. Between its fascinating history, spectacular hikes across jaw-dropping landscapes, and an impressive cast of wildlife, the island kept us happily busy and pleasantly exhausted.

And then there was the seafood. Oh, the seafood. One standout meal was at a quirky maritime restaurant in Hobart called The Drunken Admiral. Here, fish and chips arrived stacked in a dramatic spiral tower. Somehow, the Pirates-of-the-Caribbean-style décor made everything taste even better. Either that, or we were just very susceptible to nautical charm.

Hobart, the capital city, sits at the southern end of the island and serves as Tasmania's main airport hub. Many of the island's highlights can be visited on guided excursions, which is perfect for travelers who prefer not to test their reflexes driving on the left side of the road. We, however, rented a car and embraced the adventure.

Our road trip included a stop at Mount Field National Park for hiking before heading north to Cradle Mountain for wildlife spotting, more hiking, and an evening Tasmanian devil feeding.

From there, we crossed the central island toward the east coast, exploring Mole Creek Caves in Mole Creek Karst National Park and strolling through the scenic Cataract Gorge in Launceston.

We spent two nights in Bicheno and hiked along the stunning Bay of Fires, then headed south to Freycinet National Park, where we took a boat trip to the famously photogenic Wineglass Bay, considered by many as one of the top ten beaches in the world.

Our driving tour wrapped up with a visit to Maria Island before returning to Hobart. While there, we joined guided bus tours to Bruny Island and the former penal colony of Port Arthur, proof that sometimes it's nice to let someone else handle the logistics.

Tasmania's human history stretches back some 35,000 years, when Aboriginal people first settled on the island. It remained isolated from European influence until Dutch explorer Abel Tasman arrived in 1642.

Hobart was later established to secure British interests, eventually becoming a hub for transporting convicts which had devastating consequences for the native population.

Between 1803 and 1833, as British penal colonies expanded, the Aboriginal population suffered enormous losses due to disease, conflict, and forced relocation.

We visited the haunting remains of penal facilities on Port Arthur and Maria Island, both now UNESCO World Heritage sites.

## Tasmania: A Devil of a Good Time

Another memorable stop was Mawson's Museum in Hobart, which offered a sobering look at the harsh conditions endured by the men of the first Antarctic expedition between 1911 and 1914. Spoiler alert: polar exploration was not for the faint of heart.

### World-Class Hiking

Tasmania is a world-class hiking destination, and we happily tested that reputation.

Russell Falls in Mount Field National Park, one of Tasmania's iconic waterfalls, is part of the "Great Short Walks" collection, and it delivered lush, Jurassic-Park-worthy fern rainforests. We extended our hike at Mount Field to include Horseshoe Falls and the Tall Trees Trail, another Great Short Walk.

Other scenic highlights included Dove Lake at Cradle Mountain, (also a Great Short Walk), Wineglass Bay hike in Freycinet National Park, the Bivouac Bay hike at the Bay of Fires and the Painted Cliffs walk on Maria Island.

Dove Lake proved to be our most challenging trek not just because of elevation changes, but because the weather seemed determined for us to experience all four seasons in one afternoon. Sunshine, rainbows, clouds, rain, hail, and even snow flurries made appearances. Thankfully, the scenery made every soggy step worthwhile.

### Tasmanian Devils



Tasmanian devils truly deserve their reputation. They are the largest carnivorous marsupials in the world and possess the strongest bone-crushing bite of any land mammal relative to size. Unfortunately, they are endangered due to Devil Facial Tumor Disease, a contagious genetic condition linked to inbreeding and overhunting.

Because devils are nocturnal and hard to spot in the wild, we attended an evening feeding at a sanctuary. Watching them squabble over their dinner of wallaby leg was both fascinating and slightly terrifying. Their high-pitched screeches and growls sounded like zombies auditioning for "The Walking Dead."

Watching them tear into their meal and snarling evoked images of tiny, voracious T-Rexes flashing teeth and chasing rivals away.

Encouragingly, our guide shared that a vaccine for the tumor disease is in development with hopes of releasing some sanctuary devils back



Top, Tasmanian devil feeding. Left: Mawson's Hut Replica Museum of Antarctic Expedition Base. Above, Port Arthur Historic prison. Below: Russell Falls, echidna, pademelon, and wombats.

into the wild within the next couple of years.

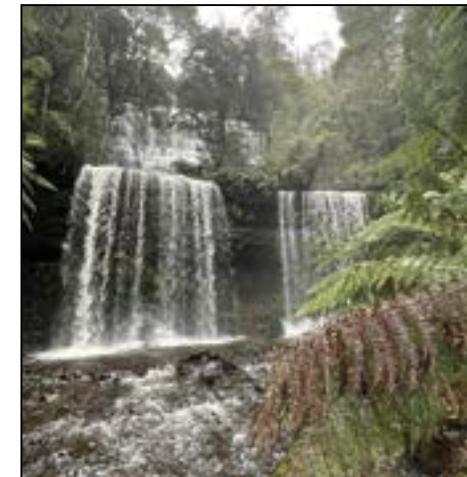
### Other Strange Wildlife

Tasmania's wildlife lineup is impressive. While echidnas are shared with mainland Australia, the island's pademelons, wombats, kangaroos, and wallabies are distinct.

We were lucky enough to see a mother wombat and her joey on Maria Island, and on Bruny Island we even spotted rare white wallabies.

Birdlife was equally special, with sightings of green rosellas, yellow wattlebirds, Tasmanian native hens, black currawongs, and the endangered swift parrot—all species found only in Tasmania.

Throughout our trip, the people were friendly, the food was fresh and delicious, and the accommodations were clean and comfortable. Tasmania also boasts a very low crime rate, making it feel both welcoming and safe. In short, Tasmania absolutely deserves a spot on any "Down Under" travel itinerary.





## Byron Rodriguez joins Fisher team

For many in Contra Costa County, Terrylynn Fisher is a familiar name in real estate. A local Realtor with years of experience, Fisher has built her reputation on understanding market shifts and guiding clients through changing conditions with clarity and confidence. Her approach focuses on realistic expectations and practical strategies designed to help clients achieve the best possible outcome in any market situation.

"Life happens," Fisher said. "Whether someone is a first-time buyer, an investor, a repeat buyer or seller, or navigating a 1031 exchange or probate, we're here to help."

And now we have a Spanish-speaking member of our team to serve their community." With that said, I am proud to welcome Byron Rodriguez to my real estate team.

A lifelong local, Byron grew up in the community he now serves. Mentored by me and already a property owner of two homes by age 26, he brings real-life experience, passion, and enthusiasm to his work.

As Byron says, "If I can do this, it enables me to show others how to do it too."

Let Byron's lived experience show you how to grow your real estate wealth. He can be reached at 925-457-3159 text or call for guidance on where your journey begins.

**Announcing** BREAKING NEWS 12-4-2025

I'M PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT OUR TEAM IS EXPANDING -

TERRYLYNN FISHER - WELCOMES-



**Byron Rodriguez**  
Real Estate Agent  
**OPEN for business!**  
*Se habla español*

## MONTHLY MARKET REPORT

NOVEMBER/ 2025

### CLAYTON



MARKET COMPETITION  
Median Days on Market 16  
Sales-to-List Price % 99.7%  
% Change from Last Year -1.0%  
% of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 50.0%

### CONCORD



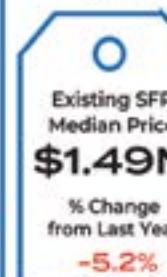
MARKET COMPETITION  
Median Days on Market 16  
Sales-to-List Price % 100.0%  
% Change from Last Year -3.1%  
% of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 24.7%

### MARTINEZ



MARKET COMPETITION  
Median Days on Market 18  
Sales-to-List Price % 99.0%  
% Change from Last Year +19.5%  
% of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 35.3%

### WALNUT CREEK



MARKET COMPETITION  
Median Days on Market 14  
Sales-to-List Price % 100.0%  
% Change from Last Year -5.2%  
% of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 47.4%

SOURCE: Car.org



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## CVCHS News

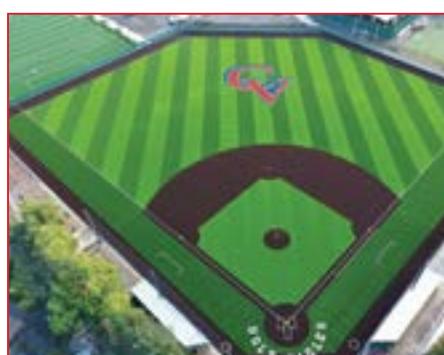
Bill Morones, Executive Director  
Clayton Valley Charter High School

As we return from the Winter holiday break, I want to warmly welcome our students, teachers, staff and administrators back to campus. The start of a new year is always a moment for reflection and renewed purpose, and at Clayton Valley Charter High School, 2026 promises to be an especially exciting chapter.

With the new year comes the beginning of our Spring sports season and the debut of our new athletic fields. While academics and extracurricular activities remain central to our mission, CVCHS places a strong priority on physical fitness, student health and well-being, and good sportsmanship. Athletics play a powerful role in developing discipline, teamwork, leadership, and resilience. These qualities will serve our students long after graduation.

CVCHS student-athletes, both individually and as teams, have consistently excelled in league, regional, and state competitions. Their success is a testament not only to talent and hard work, but also to the commitment of our coaches, families, and school community who support them every step of the way.

This Spring, we are proud to offer a wide range of athletic opportunities for students of all interests and skill levels. Our sports teams include: Coed Badminton, Boys Baseball, Beach Volleyball, Competitive Sport Cheer (STUNT), Coed Esports, Boys Golf, Lacrosse, Girls Softball, Coed Swimming & Diving, Boys Tennis, Coed Track & Field, and Boys Volleyball. These programs reflect our belief that every



student deserves access to activities that promote both physical and personal growth.

CVCHS is also part of a broader trend across the East Bay. Many municipalities and high schools are investing in new outdoor athletic facilities to replace aging grass fields that are difficult to maintain and often unsafe. This long-needed shift ensures safer, more reliable spaces for students and the broader community to stay active year-round.

Our Governing Board approved approximately \$7.5 million to complete our outdoor field project. This investment represents one of the largest turf installations in the state, covering roughly 400,000 square feet. The project includes new baseball and softball fields, as well as full-size soccer, lacrosse, and football practice fields that are currently nearing completion.

The proposal for these new fields was first introduced to the administration by Varsity Baseball Coach Casey Coakley,

who saw firsthand the limitations of our previous grass surfaces. "Our old fields were often overused and under-rested, which increased maintenance challenges and injury risk," Coach Coakley said. "These new turf fields give our student-athletes a consistent, safe playing surface while dramatically expanding access for multiple teams, PE classes, and year-round use."

We selected Pivot® Performance Turf, a product biomechanically engineered to replicate the performance and feel of natural grass. Pivot requires no performance infill, uses fewer raw materials, is easier to recycle, and features 16 times as many individual fibers as competitive turf systems. With a lifespan 50% longer than other synthetic turf, this surface reflects our commitment to safety, sustainability, and long-term stewardship of school resources.

Athletics at CVCHS extend far beyond competitive teams. More than 1,200 students participate in physical education classes on our campus each day, making these new fields an essential part of our broader commitment to student health and wellness.

Weather permitting, our new fields will be ready for play in time for Spring sports season beginning in mid-February. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in mid-January and inviting our school community and the public to join us.

As we begin the new year together, I am confident these investments in our students, our programs and our facilities



will continue to strengthen the CVCHS experience for years to come.

## A New Year, New Fields for CVCHS Athletics



**The Naked Gardener**  
David George, UC-Certified Master Gardener  
[nakedgardener@diablogazette.com](mailto:nakedgardener@diablogazette.com)

## Make your own fruit salad tree

Have you ever dreamed of creating a fruit market in your own backyard, with multiple different varieties of apples or plums on just one tree? You can become a tree artist just by adopting the skill of grafting. Tree grafting is ancient and practiced throughout the world. I saw it firsthand on a recent trip to the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, used by a family nursery to supply jackfruit trees to Saigon markets.

Grafting is the process of joining two or more trees to grow as a single plant. In most cases, one tree provides the roots, root crown, and lower trunk, collectively known as the rootstock, while other tree branches furnish the upper leafing, flowering, and fruiting parts, known as scions. The new tree takes on the best qualities of each part. Commonly, rootstock may offer disease resistance and hardiness to cold, while the scions offer different fruit varieties side-by-side.

Home gardening hobbyists are fascinated by these "fruit salad" trees. Grown typically for confined spaces, these trees bear several types of stone fruits on a single tree. If you adopt a few simple grafting techniques, you, too can develop your own "fruit salad" trees. Just follow the steps below.

Pick out a healthy, disease-resistant rootstock that is compatible with your choice of scion tree parts. Your friendly garden center staff can help you choose.

Choose one or multiple scion branches from existing healthy fruit trees or purchased from a garden center. Scions are typically available at the same time as bare-root trees in late winter which is now. You can also purchase healthy fruit tree scions online.

Use clean, sharp pruning shears to make precise cuts for a snug fit between the graft surfaces. The most common home grafting technique for adding new scion branches of one-inch or less in diameter to an existing tree is called "T-bud" (see diagram):

Make a T-shaped cut in the existing fruit tree branch where you would like the new bud branch to grow (A & B).

Cut off a single bud under the cambium layer (green, growing tissue just beneath the bark) or a short length of branch with a couple of buds (C).

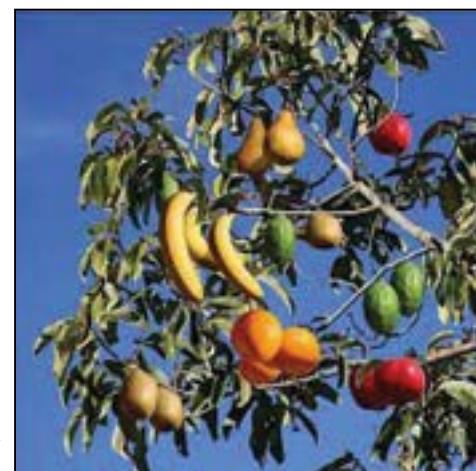
Narrow the thicker end of the bud or branch into a sliver (C).

Insert the bud or sliver into the T-cut on the existing tree branch (D) then align the cambium layers of both parts as closely as possible to achieve successful fusion.

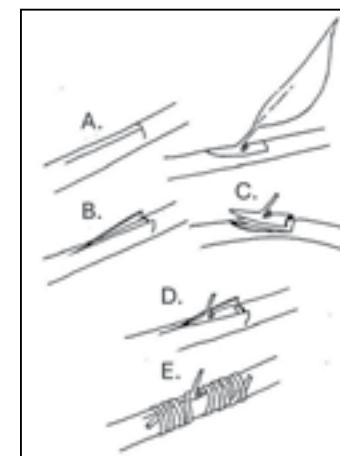
Secure the graft union tightly with grafting tape or rubber bands, with no gaps to prevent drying out or infection (E). Grafting wax or tree wound dressings can reduce this threat also. Follow the container instructions.

Keep the grafted plant in a sheltered location out of direct sun and wind until new growth appears, indicating a successful union. This typically takes 30-40 days in mild spring weather. Then in 60-90 days, your grafted combo will be ready to transplant into its permanent spot.

University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR)



A fruit salad tree of wild dreams-photo courtesy Facebook



T-Bud grafting technique diagram. Photo courtesy UCANR.



A graft scion inserted into root-stock. Photo courtesy UCANR.,

provides literally dozens of grafting technique videos on their YouTube channel. Just search for "UCANR grafting videos". Many are introductory videos for home gardening enthusiasts. With time, practiced technique, and imagination, your garden will become home to some interesting and productive fruit trees to amaze your friends and family.

**Seasonal Notes:** January is a good time for planning, cleaning, and preparing for your next garden bed, fruit tree, or landscaping project.

Order and start seeds indoors or in a greenhouse. Clean your garden tools and apply a protective coat of linseed oil after tools dry.

For easy and effective sharpening, a tungsten carbide sharpening tool is essential.

Email comments and questions to: [NakedGardener@diablogazette.com](mailto:NakedGardener@diablogazette.com).

## Wild Mushroom Advisory

Due to this year's early rainy season, wild mushrooms are popping up in great numbers throughout East Bay Regional Parks. Mushrooms are an ecologically important part of the parklands and can look beautiful, but some of them contain dangerous toxins. The death cap (Amanita phalloides) and western destroying angel (Amanita ocreata) are two of the world's most toxic mushrooms, and both can be found in Regional Parks during the rainy season. Deadly toxins can also be found in Galerina and Lepiota mushroom species, which also occur in the Bay Area.

The death cap and western destroying angel mushrooms contain amatoxins, molecules that are deadly to many animals. Symptoms may not appear until up to 12 hours after consumption, beginning as severe gastrointestinal distress and progressing to liver and kidney failure if treatment is not sought immediately.

These mushrooms can be lethal to humans and pets if consumed. Contact a veterinarian immediately if you suspect your pet may have eaten



Toxic mushrooms: L) Death Cap and R) Western Destroying Angel can be fatal to humans and pets if ingested.

a toxic mushroom. They are mainly associated with oak trees. The death cap is a medium to large mushroom that typically has a greenish-gray cap, white gills, a white ring around the stem, and a large white sac at the base of the stem.

The western destroying angel is a medium to large mushroom that usually has a creamy white cap, white gills, a white ring around the stem that can disappear with age, and a thin white sac at the base.

Collecting any mushrooms in East Bay Regional Parks is not allowed.

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**Laura Nakamura**  
**Concord Mayor**  
[cityofconcord.org](http://cityofconcord.org)

## Renewable energy providing environmental benefits and savings to Bay Area, Concord

As I begin my service as Mayor of the City of Concord, I am honored to serve our community not only at City Hall, but also on numerous regional boards and commissions where local voices help guide decisions that affect our residents every day. As an example, I am thrilled to represent Concord residents on the Marin Clean Energy Board (MCE), and I would like to share my experiences with you.

Fifteen years ago, a bold new public agency launched in the Bay Area: MCE. It started as a determined group of advocates and community leaders who believed we deserved cleaner choices in our electricity supply.

Today, MCE offers renewable electricity choices, competitive costs, and innovative customer programs. Since 2018, MCE has provided the City of Concord with an alternative to PG&E for electricity service to homes and businesses. MCE sources or generates renewable electricity from responsible and often local suppliers. Then the existing electrical utility, PG&E, delivers that power. When Concord joined MCE, residents were automatically enrolled in receiving cleaner electricity.

MCE reinvests revenues back into the communities it serves, supporting programs that reduce emissions, strengthen resilience, and expand access to clean energy solutions. Just this month, Concord partnered with MCE as part of its Strategic Energy Management program. At no cost to the City, MCE will work with staff to identify energy savings opportunities at City facilities. Such savings can be better deployed to enhance city services.

MCE's governance model, which includes my role on the Board, ensures that local voices help guide decisions that affect our residents.

## A look at MCE's first 15 years

That accountability matters. It means programs are shaped by community needs, not shareholders, and that public dollars stay local. Serving on MCE is especially meaningful to me, as it reflects Concord's commitment to sustainability, regional collaboration, and public accountability.

MCE has reinvested over \$400 million back into the Bay Area, including \$80 million in bill savings and discount programs for residents and businesses most in need. For Contra Costa residents, this has meant:

- Over 173,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions reduced
- \$19 million in bill savings and discount programs
- \$400,000 in energy efficiency rebates distributed
- Almost 500 EV charging ports installed
- Rebates for 130 low-income residents to transition to EVs

MCE has also worked alongside cities, community organizations, and regional partners to ensure that clean energy benefits are shared equitably. From supporting low-income energy assistance programs to investing in projects that strengthen grid reliability, the focus has remained clear: a just and sustainable transition that leaves no one behind.

As we look ahead, I am confident that MCE will continue to evolve, innovate, and serve as a trusted partner. On behalf of the City of Concord, I extend my congratulations to MCE on 15 years of service and my gratitude to the staff, board members, and community advocates who helped turn a bold idea into a lasting public benefit.

For more information about MCE, please visit <https://mcecleanenergy>.

## Concord awarded high honors again for climate action efforts

The City of Concord was recently recognized as a climate action leader by the Institute for Local Government (ILG). ILG awarded the City with a 2025 Beacon "Platinum Level Spotlight" Award in the "Sustainability Best Practices" category, recognizing Concord for its wide-ranging efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, transition to clean energy, and otherwise combat climate change.

The annual Beacon Awards are the highest recognitions from ILG through their well-renowned Beacon Program, and Concord is one of only 13 local government agencies statewide to achieve a 2025 Beacon Spotlight Award. This is Concord's second-ever Beacon Spotlight Award, with the first in 2017 at the Gold Level for the same category. To achieve a Platinum Level in 2025, Concord ranked high in 10 unique

activity categories, ranging from energy efficiency and conservation to promoting open space and offsetting carbon emissions.

Concord Vice Mayor Laura Nakamura and Councilmember Dominic Aliano accepted the award on behalf of the City at the 2025 League of California Cities Annual Conference.

Concord's then Vice Mayor Laura Nakamura and Councilmember Dominic Aliano accepted the award on behalf of the City at the 2025 League of California Cities Annual Conference.

Since 2013, the City has established a Citywide Climate Action Plan (CAP), which continues to drive the policy decisions to help meet the City and State's reduced greenhouse gas emission goals.



## Free Residential Christmas Tree Recycling



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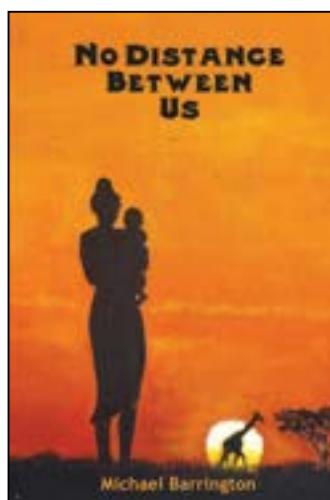
**Jill Hedgecock's bookends**  
Author, *Picco and Between Shadow's Eyes*

"No Distance Between Us" (Independent, 2025, paperback, 350 pages, \$19.99) by Michael Barrington is the story of two British colonials, Reggie and Cynthia, living in Nigeria in the 1920s. Survival in this harsh environment proves difficult for Reggie and Cynthia, whose whirlwind marriage did not play out the way either of them envisioned.

Cynthia soon realizes she was not cut out for the extreme weather and isolated conditions of the African bush. With her husband often away on safaris associated with his work, her boredom and despair soon led her to finding solace in the arms of other men.

Although Reggie was ill-prepared for the loneliness of a District Officer's position, his ambition forced him to soldier on at the expense of his marriage. Even after his wife decided to return to England for the winter months, he remained dedicated to his work duties. But when an unfortunate accident landed him in the local hospital, he fell into an unusual and forbidden relationship with a French nun, the doctor and director of the facility. Their jobs and the sensitive nature of their fondness for each other are told through letters written between the two characters, which allowed them to explore their feelings in secrecy.

The perspective of the Nigerian staff regarding



their employers' indiscretions provides insights into the expectations of house servants in this era. In some respects, "No Distance Between Us" plays on the storytelling elements of "Downtown Abbey" and "Out of Africa." Fans of "Circling the Sun" by Paula McClain will likely enjoy this novel.

Michael Barrington was born in Manchester, England. His international travels and time abroad as a missionary priest have inspired Barrington's author career. His first novel, "The Bishop Wears No Drawers" is a memoir of his time spent in Africa during a civil war. In addition to "No Distance Between Us," Barrington has written five other books, including historical and thriller novels and another memoir

about his years as a priest. He has also published over sixty short stories.

The proceeds from Barrington's writing have been used for philanthropic projects such as supporting water and infrastructure development in Honduras and Burkina Faso schools, starting an orphanage for teenage girls in Ethiopia, and supporting bridge construction in the Andes. Barrington lives in Concord with his wife, an artist who also designs his book covers. To learn more, visit his website: [www.mbwriter.net](http://www.mbwriter.net).



**SCREEN TIME**  
by Colleen Gonzalez  
[colleengonzalez.substack.com](http://colleengonzalez.substack.com)

Millie (Sydney Sweeney) desperately needs a job. She takes a chance with a fake resume and answers an ad to be a live-in housemaid for the Winchester family. The interview goes well with the young and beautiful Mrs. Nina Winchester (Amanda Seyfried), who appears more like she wants to be Millie's friend than her employer. The job entails keeping their McMansion clean and assisting with their young daughter, Cecelia (Indiana Elle).

A surprise call from Nina offering her the job leaves Millie wondering how she passed the reference check. Nonetheless, she is grateful to have a place to live and works hard at cleaning and keeping to herself. She must also navigate the personalities of the very handsome husband/father, Andrew Winchester (Brandon Sklenar), and the aloof Cecelia.

It does not take long before Millie sees erratic behavior from Nina, who flies off the handle easily and blames Millie for anything that goes wrong. As Millie tries to do her job and avoid ruffling Nina's feathers, she slowly finds an ally in Andrew. He exhibits great patience with Nina and seems to dote on her, but he also defends Millie and helps her thwart Nina's angry tirades.



## The Housemaid

Rated R, in theaters

As tensions flare, we learn that each character has secrets. When we learn more about Millie, it is easy to see why she cannot simply walk away from this job. She has to make it work and get along with Nina.

Spending time with the other nannies and housemaids allows Millie to hear the gossip about her rich bosses. The rumor mill enjoys speculating theories about Nina, and all the wealthy socialites have a crush on the ever-accepting Andrew.

This film piles on the secrets and does a good job of keeping the audience guessing. It is also participatory as viewers can relish yelling at the screen when the characters make bad choices and plot sinister schemes.

The movie has something to say about how wealth holds power in our world and the way our current society looks at privileged, beautiful people, assuming they have no problems. There are no heavy-handed messages, however, just a few tidbits to get you thinking.

While "The Housemaid" may not live up to the thriller status of films like "Fatal Attraction" or "Gone Girl," it still delivers as an enthralling plot that keeps you engaged till the final scene.

# No Distance Between Us



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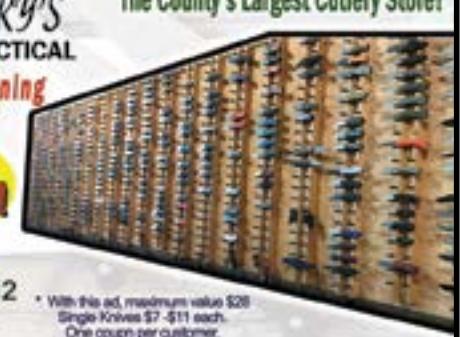
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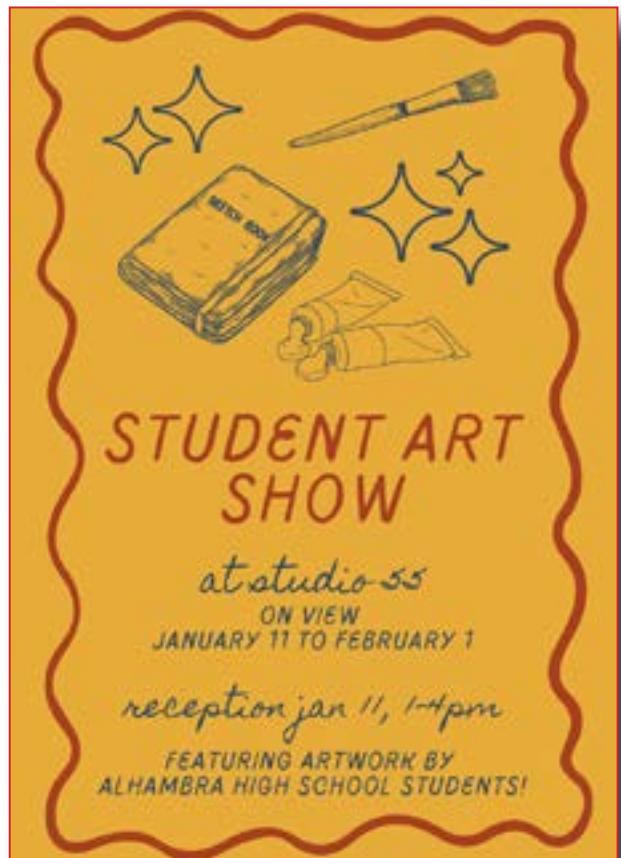
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# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## Studio 55 Exhibition Alhambra Student Art Show

Studio 55 in Martinez next exhibition is a Student Art Show January 11 to February 1, featuring works by Alhambra High School Students. Opening reception will be held on January 11 from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

55 Howe rd. Martinez.



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## Don Cresswell Photographer-Artist

by Julia O'Reilly

Born in Oakland, California, photographer Don Cresswell has spent a lifetime observing the world through a creative lens. With a career shaped by travel, design and quiet reflection, Cresswell's photography reflects both global experience and deeply personal passions.

Cresswell spent more than 35 years working in aviation, a career that allowed him to travel extensively and experience cultures, cuisines and landscapes across the globe.

While aviation became his profession, creativity was always present. As a child, Cresswell loved drawing cars and once aspired to become an automotive designer.

His interest in visual arts expanded during his time studying graphic design at Skyline High School and later advertising at San Jose State University.

Although he ultimately chose a different professional path, photography remained a constant companion. During his travels, Cresswell was rarely without a camera, documenting moments that caught his attention and quietly shaped his artistic voice.

In 2015, Cresswell decided to pursue photography seriously, stepping into public exhibitions and earning recognition and awards for his work.

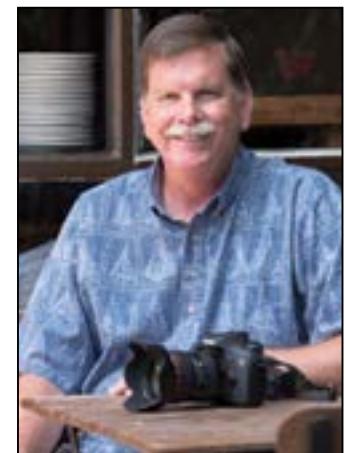
His images often reflect his lifelong appreciation for automotive design emphasizing form, balance and movement and he has a passion for cooking, where texture, light and detail play a central role.

**"Whether I have my camera or not, I am constantly capturing images with my eyes and seeing the world through the perspective of a lens."** — Don Cresswell

"The creative process fills me with inspiration, and I find it very therapeutic," Cresswell said. He describes his approach as mindful and intentional, inviting viewers into each photograph. "I capture my images mindfully and let the shot draw people into that image to respectfully see through my eyes," he said.

Cresswell is an active member of the Alamo Danville Artists' Society, Pleasanton Art League, and Art Inc.. His work is currently exhibited at Blackhawk Gallery and JOR Fine Art Gallery.

More information about Cresswell and his work can be found [dcresswelldesign@gmail.com](mailto:dcresswelldesign@gmail.com).



Photographer Don Cresswell finds inspiration through travel, design and mindful observation.

## Celebrating 58 Years of Martinez Arts

by Denise Hillman

The Martinez Arts Association (MAA) enters its 58th year of serving the community, thanks to the continued support of local residents, businesses, and partner arts organizations.

As the new year begins, MAA is preparing a full calendar of programs and events designed to engage the community, highlight local talent, and support arts education throughout Martinez. Plans are already underway for two of MAA's upcoming events: SWAN Day (Support Women Artists Now), returning this Spring, and the 55th Annual Art in the Park, scheduled for August.

Art in the Park remains one of Martinez's most beloved traditions, drawing hundreds of artists, visitors, and families to enjoy original artwork, live music, and community connection. Both events create vital opportunities for artists to share and sell their work.

Currently, MAA artists are showcasing their original pieces in the group exhibition "Cheers to Art" at Five Suns Brewing, located at 626 Main Street in Martinez. The show runs through January 28, 2026, with a closing reception date to be announced soon.

In celebration of Black History Month, MAA will present a special concert on February 28 at the Alhambra High School Performing Arts Building, featuring celebrated vocalist Faye Carol and her Septet. This event highlights MAA's ongoing commitment to supporting performing arts and cultural programming in Martinez.

This spring, local graduating high school seniors planning to pursue art-related studies will begin applying for MAA's annual scholarships. These scholarships, funded through membership dues, sponsorships, donations, and proceeds from events, allow the organization to directly invest in the next generation of artists. MAA also provides classroom art grants to teachers from elementary through high school. For more information, visit [www.martinezarts.org](http://www.martinezarts.org).



MAA exhibition "Cheers to Art" at Five Suns Brewing, located at 626 Main Street in Martinez. The show runs through January 28, 2026.



## aRt Cottage Four Amazing Artists!

aRt Cottage will be representing four amazing artists for the month of January and February. This is something new, exciting and a mix of four different styles.

The artist being represented are: Lee Von Rackel, a pen and ink artist who once worked for Disney; Thomas Freeman, a watercolor artist known for his glowing landscape; Tim Aguino, Native American, who grew up on a reservation and is known for his acrylic art mixed with beadwork; and Lori Larks, who is the curator at aRt Cottage and is a plein air artist who works with acrylic and oils. Each of these fabulous artists will be filling the gallery with unique, one-of-a-kind pieces.

As the saying goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words." I hope these images will entice you to come in and check it out.

There will be a free reception and open house on January 10, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. aRt Cottage is open Wednesday through Saturday from

11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., located at 2238 Mount Diablo Street in downtown Concord.



Lee Von Rackel



Thomas Freeman



Timothy Aguino



Lori Larks

## Portrait artist Lorraine Curtis exhibition

MARTINEZ, CA – January 2026 – Main Street Arts Gallery, home to 12 local artists, welcomes guest artist Lorraine Curtis to kick off 2026.

Curtis, a portrait artist with more than 20 years of experience as a teaching artist, fine artist, graphic designer, and illustrator, brings a deep passion for capturing the human spirit in her work.

Her series of paintings, titled "Beautiful People" will be featured at the gallery through the end of February.

"Portraits tell a story, hold memories, and share the truth that is in a person's eyes," says Curtis. "My love of music motivates me to ask, 'What is your favorite song and lyric?' The answer becomes part of the portrait." All of the paintings in the exhibition incorporate hand-written lyrics.

Visitors can enter the monthly free art giveaway, featuring an artwork by gallery artist Bonnie Fry.

Now approaching its tenth year in downtown Martinez, Main Street Arts Gallery is located at 613 Main Street. The gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday and displays a wide range of media, including painting, sculpture, ceramics, glass, jewelry, and mixed media.



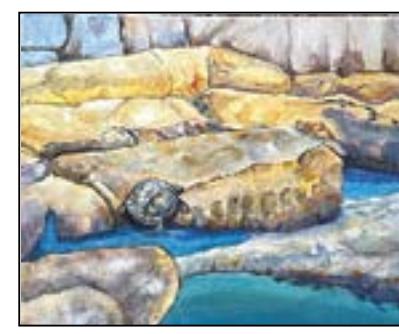
Sometimes by Lorraine Curtis



Lorraine Curtis



Broken Dreams by Lorraine Curtis



Free Drawing Prize for January 2026 by Bonnie Fry

## Blackhawk Gallery - Christmas Party

The ADAS General Meeting with the Guest Speaker Greg Starnes is scheduled to take place on January 13, at 7:30 p.m. at 3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville.

"I'm a Fine Art Landscape and Cityscape Photographer from San Francisco Bay Area.

"I love capturing beauty—from quiet natural spaces to vibrant city energy.

:Nature's serenity inspires me, especially in places like Yosemite and our National Parks.

"Some of my favorite locations include Hawaii, Sedona, Ireland, Italy, and anywhere near water." - Greg Starnes



## Winter's Glow: one more month at JOR Fine Art Gallery

There's still time to experience the warmth and beauty of Winter's Glow at JOR Fine Art Gallery. With one more month remaining, now is the perfect moment to visit. This inviting seasonal exhibit features the luminous watercolor works of Fiona Hughes, including her exquisite mini-paintings and serene landscape compositions that capture light, mood, and quiet elegance.

The gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday, welcoming art lovers to enjoy Winter's Glow alongside the compelling Solo Black & White Photography Exhibit currently on view.

For details on both exhibits and up-to-date gallery hours, visit [jorfineartgallery.com](http://jorfineartgallery.com).  
1026 Oak St. #102 in Clayton



Fiona M Hughes, "My Konos at Dusk"



## 120 years ago

# Concord Race Track

**Right of Redemption Waived and Improvements to Be Inaugurated at Once. Races for Thanksgiving**



A meeting of the old Board of Directors of the Contra Costa Driving Association was held at the office of Melvin E. Lyon last Monday evening. The object of the gathering was to learn what action would be taken in regard to the Concord racetrack.

In September last Mr. Lyon bought in the property at foreclosure sale on a judgment obtained against the driving association. The law allows one year for redemption. To remove all doubt in the future and permit of immediate permanent improvements in and around the track. It was necessary to secure a waiver from all parties interested of the right of redemption. This Mr. Lyon states, he has been able to secure, and now it will be smooth sailing to go ahead and make the improvements mapped out.

The improvements contemplated are the erection of several large barns, a number, of new stalls and several windmills. The track is in good condition and ready at any time for the exercise of horses. We believe this track will, in time, become very popular with horsemen. It is easy of access and can be easily reached by railroad from any part of the State.

Some of our best citizens are lending aid, both morally and financially, to the new track, and are going to help it along.

Arrangements are being made to give a matinee Thanksgiving

## CONCORD RACE TRACK.

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Source: Concord Transcript, November 4, 1905. Photo courtesy Contra Costa Historical Society

## In Case You Missed It...

Local News Items from [Claycord.com](http://Claycord.com) and Other Sources

**Bay Area bridge tolls increase to \$8.50 - BART fares also increase**



Photo courtesy of claycord.com

Tolls on seven Bay Area bridges increased by 50 cents for two-axle cars, trucks and motorcycles. The prices will rise to \$8.50 on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, Antioch, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez, Dumbarton, Richmond-San Rafael and the San Mateo-Hayward bridges.

BART fares increased 6.2 % on New Year's Day based upon actual inflation in 2023 and 2024. The average fare will increase \$0.30. The fare increase is expected to raise \$15.6 million for Calendar Year 2026.

### Contra Costa County seeking nominations for Youth Hall of Fame

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors is now accepting nominations for the 2026 Contra Costa County Youth Hall of Fame Awards.

These awards are presented annually to outstanding Contra Costa County residents who are 12 to 18 years old. Students will be recognized at the 32nd Annual César E. Chávez Commemorative Celebration at 11 a.m., on Tuesday, March 31 in Board Chambers at 1025 Escobar St. in Martinez.

For more information and the application form to nominate a youth in our community, visit: [contracosta.ca.gov/YouthNomination](http://contracosta.ca.gov/YouthNomination)

Nominations must be received or postmarked by February 20, 2026.

### Recent storms boost State water supply

Recent storms delivered a welcome boost to California's snowpack and water supply, reversing an early-season dry trend and improving conditions for water managers statewide, according to the California Department of Water Resources.

Engineers conducted the season's first snow survey at Phillips Station in the Sierra Nevada on Dec. 30.

The manual survey recorded 24 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 5 inches, which is 50 percent of average for this location.

"Major reservoirs are at their top of conservation, which is at a really good place right now," said Angelique Fabbiani-Leon, state hydrometeorologist with DWR. "Our snowpack is actually a natural reservoir, so we usually reach a peak about April 1...ideally we would like to get our snowpack to reach our April 1 average."

**Concord receives \$300,000 State grant to upgrade traffic crash data system**

The City of Concord has received a \$300,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety with federal support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to upgrade its traffic crash dashboard.

The improved system will combine real-time traffic sensor information with past crash data, allowing the city to better spot problem areas and respond more quickly to safety issues. The grant runs through September 2026.

The next-generation crash dashboard includes tools to identify high-injury streets, send real-time alerts to law enforcement, track traffic safety assets, and help predict future risks. By pulling together data from multiple sources, the system will help guide safety improvements, enforcement efforts, and long-term planning.

**Betty Reid Soskin, once the nation's oldest park ranger, dies at 104**



On Dec 21, the Rosie the Riveter Trust announced that Soskin had died at the age of 104.

Soskin was the country's oldest active National Park Service ranger until her retirement.

As a park ranger and author of a memoir titled "Sign My Name to Freedom," Soskin told her story. She became a park ranger at the age of 85.

Soskin participated in meetings with the National Park Service and the city of Richmond to prepare the general management plan for Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park.

She worked on a park service grant to tell yet untold stories of Black Americans who worked in the U.S. during the war.

Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park was established in 2000.

"As a World War II home front worker, she brought lived experience, historical rigor, and moral clarity to the Trust's work, ensuring that the stories preserved and shared reflected the full complexity of the American home front," said the trust in a statement.

Soskin was born in Detroit, Mich. in 1921, and she was raised in Oakland. During World War II, she worked in a segregated union hall and spent the years after the war advocating for the recognition of the war's unsung heroes, such as women of color, working families, and those excluded from wartime opportunity, the trust said.



## For the Love of Pets

by Jill Hedgecock, [Jillhedgecock.com](http://Jillhedgecock.com)

### Do dogs and cats watch television?

Dogs and cats can watch television. In a 2021 survey performed by The Center for Canine Behavior Studies, which evaluated 708 dogs, half of them reacted when exposed to TV images.

There is less scientific data for cats. But in 2008, a Belfast study evaluated whether 125 shelter cats showed interest in television. They found that some felines noticed the TV, but individual cats differed in their interest level in screen images. Overall, the study concluded that moving images on the television could represent enrichment for domestic cats.

Both the dog and cat studies indicated the pets showed the type of content was important. Cat and dog perceptions differ from humans, so their interests often differ from their owners. That is why movies featuring a dog or cat that are geared for humans may be a snoozefest for Fido and Fluffy.

Fortunately, there are television services made for canine and feline pets. DogTV and Happy Dog TV provide content scientifically designed for canine viewers to reduce stress, anxiety, and boredom by using appropriate colors, sounds, and subjects such as other dogs, other animals, and nature scenes. Netflix has a special section for dog-related movies and shows called "Stuff for Dogs to Watch — SQUIRREL!"

CatTV focuses on including images of fast-moving prey such as birds or rodents to trigger a cat's hunting instinct.

In addition to the types of images, capturing a dog's or cat's interest can depend on the colors and audio. Colors that interest dogs and cats overlap, with both species being drawn to high-contrast blues and yellows.

There is more variation in noises. Cats are interested in chirps and squeaks, while a dog's attention is captured by barking, meowing, high-pitched squeals and human gasps and laughter. For both dogs and cats, calming and soothing music is a better option if the goal is to relieve a pet's stress.

Not every dog or cat can be entertained by television. A dog's



attention is often tied to its breed, personality, and sensitivity to visuals and sounds.

Some dogs may react to the TV monitor by barking or approaching the screen. Cats may chase moving objects and bat at the screen.

For dogs who have separation anxiety, and for stressed or sick cats that need a little Zen in their lives, low-key programming on Cat TV and Dog TV may make your pets feel more comfortable.

Because too much screen time may cause frustration or overstimulation, break up television watching with playtime with toys. Be sure not to leave the TV on for extended periods to ensure pets do not become stressed by uncatchable prey or loud noises.

*Jill Hedgecock is a retired environmental scientist, and 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](http://amazon.com).*

## Why cognitive health involves more than your brain

Most of the wisdom around aging and cognitive health focuses on memory games, mental sharpness, and maybe some discussions on nutrition. These tools absolutely have value. But they miss something essential.

Cognition does not live in the brain alone. It is an expression of how well the entire nervous system is functioning.

The brain is constantly receiving information from the body through vision, balance, movement, breathing, and internal sensation. When those signals are clear, thinking becomes easier. When they are noisy, restricted, or overwhelmed, cognitive performance suffers.

This is why periods of stress, isolation, illness, or inactivity often show up

### Movement, Sensation, and Thinking

As people age, movement tends to become more repetitive and less varied. We start to worry about safety and stop challenging ourselves. Yet the nervous system depends on variety to stay adaptable.

Balance, eye movement, posture, and coordinated motion all directly influence attention, alertness, and emotional regulation. When these systems are

## Letters to the Editor

We now have over a year's worth of data on Concord's rent stabilization ordinance and the numbers are predictable and are not pretty. According to Costar, 181 units went under construction in the first quarter of 2023, those are expected to be delivered to the market in the springtime of next year.

There has been no new construction started in the city since the ordinance went into effect in 2024. Costar reports that in the 4th quarter sales averaged 290k per unit, they report in the most recent quarter to be 201k per unit, a decrease of 30.6%. Brokers are reporting low sales volume and decreased prices.

If construction on multi-family

housing stopped two years ago. How do they plan to build the quota of units that Sacramento requires them to build?

According to Costar the price and volume has dramatically dropped decreasing the velocity and ability of the city to revalue multi-family to generate funds to provide the city services to the voters?

Which begs another question that the city council certainly doesn't want to answer: what taxes will you raise and services to cut to make up for the shortfall of tax revenue?

Looking at the data it's been an absolute failure on all fronts.

The city voted down prop 33. As some of the city councilmembers goes into yet another election cycle asking for votes and another four years, do they deserve it when they don't have their voters back? -

Reed Robertson

## New book features extraordinary Concord's history post World War II

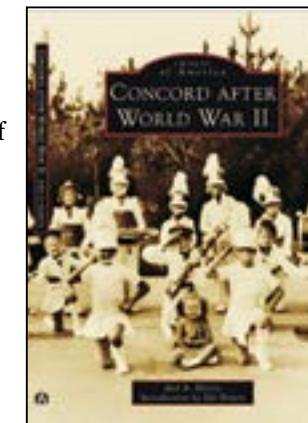
by David King

Concordians will be interested in a new book released this month titled "Images of America, Concord After World War II," a post-war history of the area by author Joel A. Harris published by Arcadia Publishing.

This is the third book of Harris' Concord trilogy. The first book, "Images of America Concord" ends at the Port Chicago explosion, the new book starts at the Port Chicago 50 Mutiny Trial and escorts you through each decade up to the 1990s. The second book is called Concord Past & Present.

"Images of America: Concord after World War II" begins with the largest explosion in human history, leading to the infamous Port Chicago Mutiny trial. Explosive growth after the war made Concord a popular stop for presidents, celebrities, and musical events.

What was once a small town of about 1,500 in the 1940s now is home to more than 120,000.. Jazz musician Dave Brubeck was born here, and the



internationally acclaimed Concord Blue Devils still perform here. The 1960s saw the birth of the annual Concord Jazz Festival and Concord Jazz Records. Concord became sister cities with Kitakami, Japan, in the 1970s. The controversial Spirit Poles were erected in the 1980s, and De La Salle High School's unbelievable 151-game football winning streak began in the 1990s. Peruse images of Concord's marquis moments in time.

Area native Joel A. Harris is the author of Images of America: Concord and Past & Present: Concord.

Harris is a board member of the Concord Historical Society, who provided many of the outstanding images presented in this book. Other wonderful photographs are provided courtesy of the Contra Costa

County Historical Society and local residents. Locally, the book can be found at Berkshire Books in Concord.

under-stimulated, the brain must devote more effort to staying oriented, leaving fewer resources for learning, memory, and creativity.

Cognitive health, in this sense, is less about "keeping the mind busy" and more about keeping the nervous system engaged.

One other key ingredient for the longevity of our nervous system? Community! Community offers rhythm, novelty, and emotional safety—all of which support cognitive flexibility. Social engagement is not simply protective against decline; it actively supports learning and adaptability across the lifespan.

### Practical Ways to Support

#### Cognitive Health

Rather than adding more mental tasks, consider small daily inputs that support the nervous system:

- Move in ways that gently challenge balance and coordination
- Let your eyes explore: look up, down, side to side, and into the distance
- Change posture often instead of staying still for long periods
- Breathe slowly and fully, especially during transitions
- Spend time moving or learning with others whenever possible

These simple practices can go a long way in keeping that brain sharp.

# Around Martinez



## Happy Sesquicentennial to our remarkable City

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

Since our founding on April 1, 1876, Martinez has been shaped by generations of dedicated stewards, leaders, families, and community builders who poured their energy and love into our city.

Throughout 2026, the City of Martinez will celebrate its Sesquicentennial under a unifying theme: Past, Present, Future, Together.

### Celebrating Our Past

“Past” honors the people and events that shaped Martinez. From even before its early days as a ferry crossing and commercial hub to its evolution into a city known for natural beauty and historic character, the past provides the foundation for everything Martinez is today. Moments throughout the year will highlight these stories so we can both learn from and appreciate them.

### Celebrating Our Present

“Present” recognizes the community as it exists now: diverse, engaged, and proud. It is important to celebrate “Martinez Now” including its parks and waterfront, thriving arts and music scene, vibrant businesses, dedicated volunteers, and everyday moments of connection.

### Celebrating Our Future

“Future” looks ahead with optimism. The Sesquicentennial year encourages residents to imagine what Martinez can become as it continues to value sustainability, inclusivity, and a strong sense of community. It’s an opportunity to think boldly about the next 150 years.

### Celebrating Together

There is no better way to celebrate such a big milestone than celebrating together. The theme underscores that Martinez’s story has always been a shared one. The Sesquicentennial

is not just a celebration of our history, but also the people who make the City vibrant today and will shape its tomorrow.

### Celebrate With Us

Wednesday, April 1, 2026: To mark the anniversary of incorporation, the City will host a small, elegant reception in Ignacio Plaza, followed by a special City Council Meeting at City Hall honoring 150 years of civic history.

Saturday, August 29, 2026: This free community festival will feature live music, food, and other attractions focused on bringing Martinez together in a family-friendly celebration.

**Partner Events:** The City of Martinez is partnering with community groups and local nonprofits to sponsor special events highlighting the sesquicentennial throughout the year. Updates about each of these celebrations are forthcoming.

**Signature Initiatives:** The City will also launch three efforts to enhance and beautify our community this year:

**150 Trees for 150 Years** – A tree and median beautification program that will add lasting natural beauty across the City.

**Utility Box Art Project** – A vibrant showcase of community-inspired artwork transforming everyday infrastructure into public art

**Parks Master Plan Update** – A forward-looking community collaboration to shape the future of our parks and public spaces.

As Martinez moves through our 150th year, “Past, Present, Future, Together” will serve as the guiding vision to ensure each facet of our collective story remains at the center of our community’s commemoration.



## CITY OF MARTINEZ SESQUICENTENNIAL

*We are looking forward to celebrating our 150th Year of Incorporation in 2026. Visit our website for more information about all of the ways Martinez is commemorating this milestone year!*

### SAVE THE DATES!

APRIL 1, 2026

150th Anniversary of Incorporation

Celebratory City Council Meeting and Reception, celebrating our town's civic history.

AUGUST 29, 2026

Sesquicentennial Festival

Free community festival focused on bringing Martinez together in a family-friendly celebration!



[www.cityofmartinez.org/Martinez150](http://www.cityofmartinez.org/Martinez150)

## City Council approves ENA for Waterfront/Marina Revitalization

by David King



Renderings of Marina-Waterfront Revitalization vision from developer Tucker Sadler presented to City Council in July 2025.

At its December 17, 2025, regular meeting, the Martinez City Council unanimously approved an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) with Tucker Sadler Architects, a San Diego-based architectural planning and development firm with extensive experience in public and private waterfront projects.

The approval marks a significant milestone toward revitalizing the Waterfront and Marina and begins a structured, collaborative process to determine what its future could look like.

### A Longstanding Community Priority

Revitalizing the waterfront has been a community priority in Martinez for years, but limited resources and escalating operational pressures made incremental fixes increasingly unsustainable. The marina alone has required ongoing subsidies from the City's General Fund, while major capital needs including dredging, seawall repairs, and breakwater replacement loomed large.

City leaders determined that a comprehensive reimaging, pursued through a public-private partnership, offered the most realistic path forward.

The ENA establishes a 24-month period during which the City and Tucker Sadler will work exclusively together to evaluate feasibility, refine design concepts, conduct environmental review, and negotiate the terms of a potential Development Agreement.

“This partnership gives us a path to activate our Waterfront, rebuild the Marina, and create a regional landmark that reflects Martinez’s identity without placing the financial burden on our residents,” Mayor Brianne Zorn said following the Council’s approval.

### From Concept to Community-Centered Planning

Tucker Sadler first presented a conceptual vision for the waterfront in July 2025, sparking extensive public comment and City Council discussion. The Council directed staff to pursue an ENA to allow deeper analysis, technical studies, and robust community engagement.

Under the agreement, the City and Tucker Sadler will work together to shape a comprehensive plan aimed at creating a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable waterfront that serves both residents and visitors. While thoughtfully scaled commercial elements are envisioned, they are intended to support the project’s long-term financial viability.

### A Waterfront Reimagined

On land, the vision includes expanded public open space and new recreation amenities such as sports fields, a dog park, kite-flying areas, and public art installations. Plazas, pedestrian pathways, restored marshland, and stronger connections to downtown Martinez are central to the plan, reinforcing the waterfront as an extension of the city rather than a separate destination.

Hospitality and community-oriented uses are also proposed, including hotels, restaurants, a community and event center, a new Martinez Yacht Club and Sea Scouts facility, and an outdoor amphitheater. Supporting infrastructure from parking and utilities to lighting would be upgraded.

On the water, the plan calls for a full reconstruction of the marina, with modernized boat slips, fueling stations, and improved access for both motorized and nonmotorized vessels.

Marina cont'd on page 21

Marina cont'd on page 20

Longstanding structural issues, such as the aging northern breakwater and eastern seawall, would be repaired or redesigned. Public amenities along the shoreline could include promenades, viewing decks, launch points for kayaks and paddleboards, and space reserved for potential future ferry service.

#### Financial Sustainability at the Core

A defining feature of the ENA is its emphasis on fiscal responsibility. Any future development must be privately financed and self-sustaining, with no City subsidy and no financial risk to Martinez taxpayers. During the negotiation period, Tucker Sadler will reimburse the City for all staff, legal, and consultant costs.

If a Development Agreement is ultimately approved, the project could eliminate the City's annual marina subsidy, estimated at more than \$650,000 per year, while generating new long-term revenue through hotel, sales, and possessory interest taxes, along with lease payments.

#### What Comes Next

Community engagement will begin in early 2026 offering residents

an early look at concepts and the planning process. Additional outreach opportunities will follow, alongside detailed studies and formal environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

As City Manager Michael Chandler noted, the ENA represents a rare opportunity: one that could secure the waterfront's future, strengthen the City's fiscal health, and deliver a revitalized public asset for generations to come.

For Martinez, the shoreline is no longer just a reminder of the past, it is becoming a focal point for the city's next chapter.

The City will also maintain ongoing information and feedback opportunities on its website at [www.cityofmartinez.org/MarinaProject](http://www.cityofmartinez.org/MarinaProject).

"We're grateful for the opportunity to move forward in partnership with the City and the community," said Greg Mueller, Design Principal and CEO of Tucker Sadler Architects. "The ENA allows us to work collaboratively on a waterfront vision that honors the area's history while creating new opportunities for the future."

#### Martinez Students Score Above State, County Averages in Assessment Results

Director of Educational Services Amy Espinoza presented the 2025 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress results to the Martinez Unified School District Board of Trustees, telling board members that Martinez Unified scored above Contra Costa County and the state in English language arts, math and science.

Espinoza cautioned that achievement gaps remain among certain student groups. She also pointed to chronic absenteeism as a continuing challenge. Espinoza told the board the district is "sitting at 10.5% chronically absent," noting higher rates among African American, Filipino, homeless students and students with disabilities.

#### Declining enrollment/attendance key to School district financial woes

Chief Business Official Andy Cannon presented the school district's 2025-26 first interim budget report, which reflects

the district's financial position as of Oct.

Cannon described the report as an early indicator of whether the district can meet its financial obligations for the current year and the next two fiscal years.

While overall revenue is projected to increase modestly this year, Cannon cautioned, "Even with cuts of \$2 million, we will continue to deficit spend."

Looking ahead, Cannon warned, "We're looking to see only \$206,000 above our (minimum) reserve. That means we are dangerously close to falling below our statutory requirement."

Cannon said improving attendance remains one of the most direct ways to strengthen district finances under California's attendance-based funding model.

Superintendent Gigi Patrick said that fiscal challenges are affecting districts statewide. "School districts across California are grappling with serious fiscal issues," she said, adding that declining enrollment and attendance-based funding are central problems. "We need to organize around advocating for public school funding to shift. Because the manner in which we're doing it is just wrong."



## The Way We Ate

Recipes and excerpts from "A Little of This and a Little of That", published by the Martinez Historical Society, © 2019

While science has not mastered traveling through time, family recipes have. Each recipe tells a story of the culture, economic conditions and traditions of early Martinez residents.

Take a peek into the culinary history of Martinez with this recipe that has been passed down through generations by word-of-mouth, apparently originating from a time when metrics were not yet invented.

Use your imagination and skill as a cook, taste as you go, and make the recipe your own.

#### Maw Maw Miller's Sweet Tater Pie

Ingredients: Yams, butter, sugar, evaporated milk, eggs, nutmeg, allspice, mace (small amount of mace)

#### DIRECTIONS

Boil yams and skins. Drain and peel. Add butter and mash well hot. Add sugar milk, eggs and spices. Mix together until right consistency and taste. Pour into unbaked pie shells. Bake at 350° 45 to 50 minutes or until a toothpick comes out of center clean.

"Our mother, Esther Miller, called Maw Maw by family, made sweet potato pie every Christmas and Thanksgiving holiday."

She and her mother, L.V. Johnson, would be up at the break of dawn, rattling those pots and pans. The rest of the family would wake up to all the wonderful smells coming from the kitchen. We all looked forward to the

scrumptious dinner and gathering a family together. It was a happy, joyful occasion.

Maw Maw's sweet potato pies were the icing on the cake at the end of the day. She was taught to make them many years ago by her grandmother, Clora Anderson, of Fort Worth, Texas. There was no cookbook. She didn't know what that was. There was no recipe just the instinct of a good cook and a wood-burning stove. You'd use a little bit of this and a little bit of that. When it tasted just right, into the oven it went.

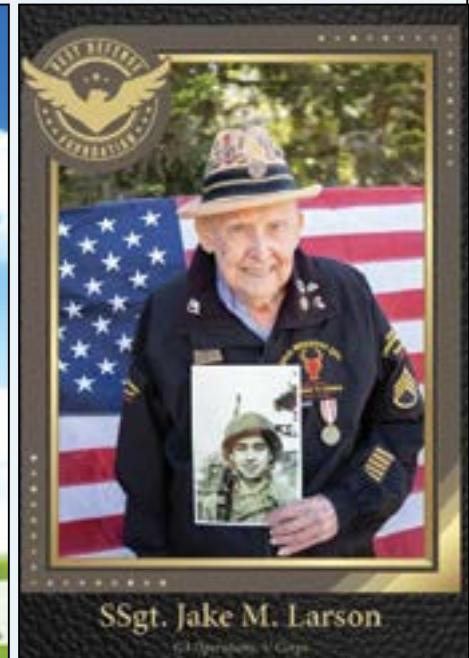
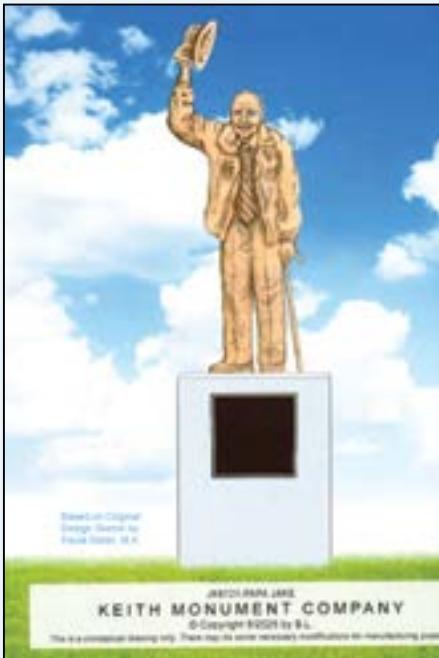
Maw Maw was also taught to make her pie crust from scratch. The pies were beautiful and yummy.

Southern families take pride in their good cooks. Ours is no exception. The younger generation in the family has now taken on the responsibility of our holiday traditions," Rosalyne Miller Boyd, Granddaughter.

#### GENERATIONS

Clora Anderson, Paternal Grandmother; L.V. Peoples Johnson, Mother Esther Anderson Miller, Granddaughter Rosalyn Miller Boyd and Dolores Miller McCrary, Great Granddaughters Cherise Preston and Deana McCrary, Great-Great Granddaughters

*Special thanks to Mary Goodman, author of "A Little of This and a Little of That".*



**"PAPA JAKE" LARSON HONOR A HERO!**

Be a Part of Martinez History  
Engrave Your Name on a Brick\*  
4" x 8" or 12" x 12"  
Purchases are tax deductible

[papajakelarson.com](http://papajakelarson.com)

**Jake Larson bronze statue**  
Plaza Ignacio Park, Martinez

\*Available first come, first serve basis

Based on original design sketch by Paula Stater.

# It's Our Fault!

by Martin Steinpress, Geologist

A new study reported in July 2025, indicates that an active creeping surface trace (branch) of the Concord Fault runs through suburban east Concord and Walnut Creek along a fault strand not previously recognized. The evidence includes horizontal right-lateral offset of concrete curbs and sidewalk slabs on both sides of every cross street, as shown in the photo.



Right-lateral offset curb and sidewalk and cracked pavement on Citrus Circle in the Woodlands east of Oak Grove Road in Walnut Creek (photo M. Steinpress)

The newly identified fault strand runs southward from downtown Concord between Oak Grove Road and Lime Ridge. It crosses Treat Boulevard and Ygnacio Valley Road and runs through the Woodlands (where it is projected beneath Valle Verde Elementary School), Diablo Shadows and Northgate neighborhoods.

## What does this mean for homeowners in the Ygnacio Valley?

Now that the fault's active trace is known, the state will establish a new Earthquake Fault Zone (EFZ) as required by the Alquist-Priolo Act. EFZs are regulatory zones surrounding the surface traces of active faults in California. Due to the potential for surface rupture, there are disclosure and investigative requirements for real estate transactions and development projects within EFZ zones.

For example, home sellers within an EFZ must inform buyers of the house's geological status in their Natural Hazard Disclosure Statement in the home-selling process. In addition,

## A newly identified strand of the Concord Fault is creeping beneath downtown Concord to Lime Ridge

proximity to an active fault increases the likelihood of intense shaking and damage to buildings, so the cost of local California Earthquake Authority homeowner's earthquake insurance policies may increase.

### What are the implications for residents in the greater Bay Area?

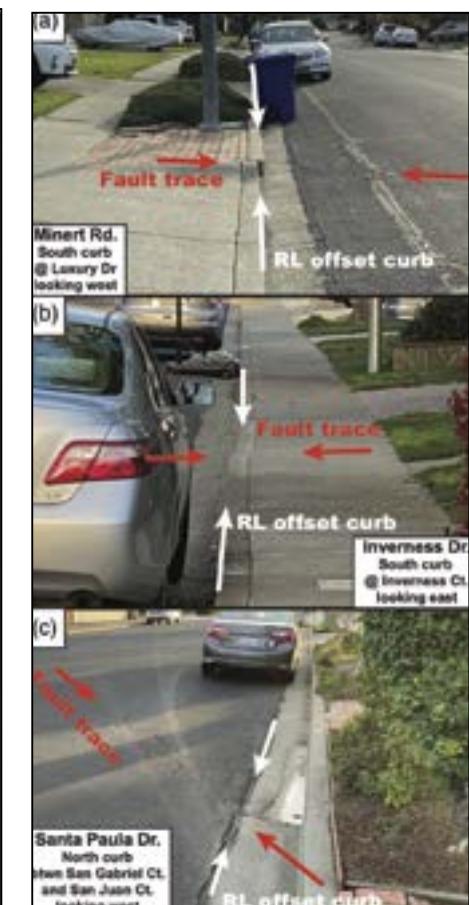
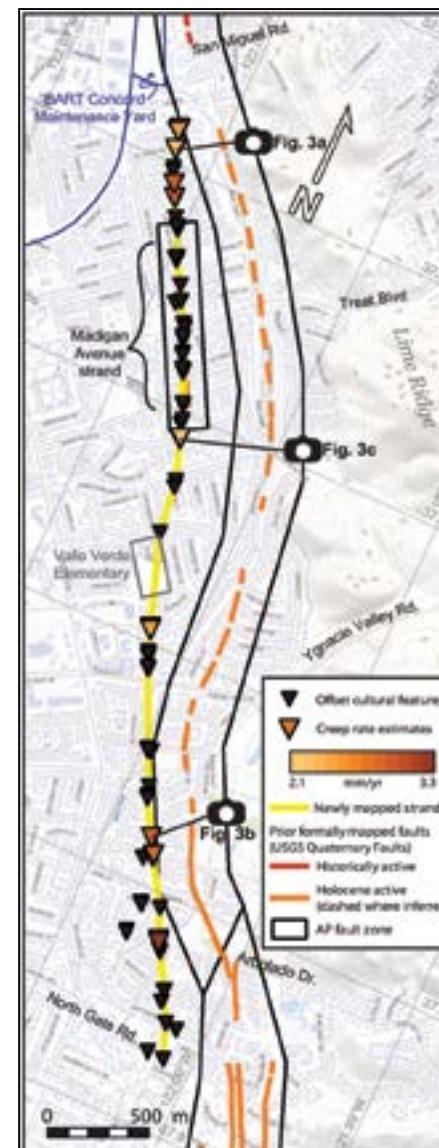
The Concord Fault is one of the many right-lateral strike-slip faults of the San Andreas Fault System (which also includes the Hayward and Calaveras faults) that together constitute the Pacific–North America transform plate boundary. Like parts of all these fault branches, the Concord Fault's long-term slip is partially accommodated by slow creep (aseismic slip), meaning it occurs gradually without a significant earthquake.

However, the Concord Fault also has the potential for an earthquake greater than a magnitude (M) 6.7 (roughly equivalent to the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake) and perhaps as large as M8.0 (similar to the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake).

A M5.4 quake occurred in 1955, but the last large earthquake was approximately 400 years ago. Much of Concord and Walnut Creek had a reminder of the fault's presence on May 30, 2025, when a small M3.2 shook the area.

The Concord Fault is the most urban fault in the East Bay and underlies much critical infrastructure, including refineries, pipelines, highways and railroad bridges. In the event of a large quake, intense shaking could render the north half of the state without fuel; water and electricity could be disrupted; and delta levee failures could cause flooding and impact drinking water quality.

The study was conducted by geologists with the U.S. Geological Survey and California Geological Survey (Elliott and others 2025) and the full publication can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1785/0220240454>.



Photographic examples of offset and deflected curbs (white annotations) and evidence of right-lateral shear along the interpreted fault trace (red annotations). Photo locations indicated RL, right lateral. (a) Discrete offset of curbstones on Minert Road, aligned with en echelon cracks in roadway asphalt. (b) Offset and deflection of the south curb and sidewalk of Inverness Drive. (c) Deformation at curb-line and en echelon cracks in road asphalt across Santa Paula Drive. Photos taken by A. Elliott.

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*He currently lectures on geology, plate tectonics and earthquakes and leads geologic field trips along the*

*Concord Fault and on Mt. Diablo through the Lifelong Education Program at Mt. Diablo Adult Education.*

*Registrations is open for his next class on March 17-19 under Personal Enrichment at <https://mdae.mdusd.org/programs/lifelongeducation>.*

*Or email, [martin@steinpress.com](mailto:martin@steinpress.com).*



## Words of Wizdumb for the New Dark Year

by Edi Birsan, Concordian [edibirsan@gmail.com](mailto:edibirsan@gmail.com)

I am trying to forget about last year as it was one of the more depressing years nationally, regionally and locally. It made you want to put Prozac in the water supply.

Nevertheless, we can look forward to 2026 and be reminded of some of the words of wisdom (or Wizdumb) depending on your rating on the cynical to optimist scale. These were thrown at me this year by those who shall remain nameless or else, Birsan Family favorites.

What people need is rarely what they want, what they want is rarely what they need.

Silence never moved a politician. They are either listening to you or to someone else: Speak, Act, Vote.

If the placebo works for you, take it. Life is not fair.

There is no complex societal problem that upon intense further study does not become more complex.

Local city government is where you can put your hand on the face of democracy; most try to slap it than caress it.

History does not teach us. It simply is. Historians, politicians, clerics and people teach us what they want us to do with it.

No real apology has a but in it.

If you are an only child, don't try to blame your sister.

Humanity is a wonderful concept; the problem is that people stink.

When people throw garbage at you, run them over with the garbage truck.

Apathy is complicity.

The lies of your enemy can never

hurt you, those by family and friends can destroy you.

You cannot change what you had for breakfast, let alone history, but you sure can plan for a better tasting dinner tonight.

Just because you feel paranoid does not mean that they are not out to get you.

An irrational number is one that never repeats itself. An irrational person always does.

Always remember to talk to your enemies, that way when your allies stab you in the back you have someone to go to lunch with.

Graduation from school does not make you educated but is merely a hope that you can be educated.

If they cannot call and wake you up at 3:00 am because they need help, they

are not a friend, and neither are you.

Virtue only shines in the shadow of evil temptation.

Elections are about emotion; governance is about logic.

The problem with democracy is those that have the skills to run do not have the skills to walk with power.

In old age it is better to wear out than rust out, so do something.

A New York Cynical Optimist is someone who hopes things get better, but if it doesn't, ask me if I care.

*Wisdoms above are expressions from Edi Birsan or directed at Edi Birsan from a host of those that sought to implant wisdom, or simply be a wise ass. [EdiBirsan@gmail.com](mailto:EdiBirsan@gmail.com).*





## Concord cares for our Seniors

by Kevin Cabral, CEO, Concord Chamber of Commerce

It's eye-opening what you notice as you age. I've seen firsthand how senior care has transformed over the course of my lifetime, and honestly, it blows my mind.

When my grandparents were in care, facilities felt like old-school hospital wings—bright lights, monitors beeping, bed pans, and an atmosphere that was more clinical than comforting. The services were limited, the food was bland, and visits were tough. You never stayed long. Thankfully, for many facilities including those here in the Concord those days are largely gone.

Today's senior living communities are impressive. Many offer packed activity calendars, restaurant-quality meals, happy hours, game rooms, private dining areas, outdoor courtyards, and amenities that feel more like a boutique hotel than a medical unit. And the staff? In many cases, they are extraordinary. Their care, patience, and attentiveness continue to amaze me.

My mother-in-law currently lives in one of these modern facilities, and I cannot express enough gratitude for the safety, comfort, and care she receives. My wife appreciates the support, and most visits are simply for conversation not additional caregiving. As for me, I occasionally visit Mrs. P., and I'm always glad I do. (We all know I'm her favorite true story.) It's clear

she's loved, and that matters deeply.

I also often run into Mr. and Mrs. Corsetti, parents of friends I grew up with. Seeing Mr. Corsetti always brings back memories of my youth running around Concord and hanging out with friends. It's still something I cherish today and an experience I value.

What continues to amaze me is the cost and complexity of senior care. The experience is incredible, but the expense is real. So, to all you younger folks out there: start saving now. Someday you might want to enjoy the kind of senior living that feels more like a four-diamond hotel than a care facility.

I consider myself fortunate to still see some of my friends' parents, people I might never have crossed paths with again. If you have aging parents in need of care, we are lucky to have many excellent local options. Take a look at our online directory under Senior Services for a list of resources right here in the area.

For more about the businesses and organizations that make Concord a vibrant place to live and to learn about the benefits of membership, visit the Concord Chamber of Commerce at [www.concordchamber.com](http://www.concordchamber.com).

## John Muir Heath's Trauma Center: injuries to E-bike and E-scooter riders have doubled from last year

Electric bicycles (e-bikes) and e-scooters are increasingly popular modes of transportation and recreation, which is leading to serious and sometimes fatal injuries.

"Over the past year, our Trauma Team has treated double the number of injuries to e-bike and e-scooter riders, as well as pedestrians hit by them, compared to the previous year," said Kacey Hansen, Executive Director of Trauma/Acute Care Surgery at John Muir Health. "This is an alarming trend."

As the Trauma Center for Contra Costa County and parts of Solano County for nearly 40 years, the team is also committed to injury prevention by providing information to help people of all ages make smarter and safer decisions.

The types of neurological and orthopedic injuries sustained are much closer to those often associated with motorcycle accidents than to those on non-motorized bicycles. With faster speeds comes more severe collisions and the likelihood of serious or fatal injuries.

The most prominent age groups suffering these injuries are seniors and teenagers, primarily teenage boys.

What John Muir Health's Trauma Center is seeing mirrors trends from around the country. According to the American College of Surgeons, head injuries occur most frequently, and only a third of injured patients were wearing helmets.

### What Everyone Should Know

Everyone who currently rides or has a family member who rides an e-bike or e-scooter should be aware of the risks and how to safely operate one. Know the different classes of e-bikes (1-3) and the safety requirements associated with each class. By law, children under 16 may not operate a Class 3 e-bike.

Also, know the rules of the road for e-bikes, regular bikes, e-scooters, cars and motorcycles, including where bikes and scooters can be ridden.

Wear a proper helmet. Head injuries on e-bikes are much closer to those seen in motorcycle accidents.

There are several resources available to learn about the right type of e-bike for you or your family member. They all reinforce the importance of helmets and other safety equipment, and how to operate an e-bike safely.

**Electric Bike Safety and Training Course** (developed by the California Highway Patrol)

**California's Electric Bicycle Law** at [511contracosta.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ebike\\_laws.pdf](http://511contracosta.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ebike_laws.pdf)

**Walnut Creek Police Department Safety Tips and Rules of the Road** at [www.walnutcreekpdca.gov/i-want-to-stay-safe/bicycle-safety](http://www.walnutcreekpdca.gov/i-want-to-stay-safe/bicycle-safety)

"We want to see people riding safely and responsibly, not showing up in our Trauma Center," said Hansen.

## Noticed a change over the holidays? You're not alone.

The next step can be as simple as a tour or just a conversation. We're here for you.

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