

The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Communities
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JULY 2022

THE GROOVIEST DOG SHOW - WOOFSTOCK!

Savannah Leigh and Sally Rosenthal of San Diego prepare to Show Grand Champion Chase.

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Calendar of Events, Jazz Festival, Movie and Book Reviews

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CBCA Clayton BBQ Cook-Off

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Inaugural Pride Parade Does Clayton Proud



Clayton celebrated its inaugural Pride Parade on June 25 and judging from the size of the crowd the Clayton Pride Parade Committee's instincts were right - our community needed this.

The Committee began planning the event last summer and was thrilled that close to 500 registered parade entrants marched down Main St. in front of a peaceful, loving and exuberant crowd. Their persistence allowed the Bay Area's LGBTQ+ community to feel welcome and safe in our beautiful city. Families even arrived early to secure seats on the parade route and enjoy the activities in the Grove.



Let us give a huge thanks to the Clayton Police Department for their presence and support, our Firefighters from Station 11 for kicking off our parade in style, the local businesses who supported our event, and the elected officials from throughout Contra Costa County who did not hesitate to participate. Let the planning begin for

an even bigger and better event next year. For more information about Clayton Pride, visit claytonpride.com.

We have several other events occurring



throughout the month as the Concerts in the Grove series continues with "The Boys of Summer," featuring the music of The Eagles on July 2.

The Clayton 4th of July parade takes place in downtown Clayton, beginning at 10AM. The theme this year is "Stronger Together." Volunteers are still needed, so please go to claytonca.gov to sign up.

Also, on July 9 & 10, it is the return of the CBCA Clayton BBQ Cook-off. Two days of competition featuring pro pitmasters and backyard chefs vying for valuable prizes and Kansas City Barbecue Society championship points, along with some good eats for attendees! There will be plenty of vendors too.

July 16 and 30, the Concerts in the Grove brings us "Cut Loose" a rocking blues, rock, country, and R&B band, and then "Mixed Nuts" with music from the 50's to today.

We hope that you and your friends will join us for a July full of music, food, and fun in downtown Clayton. Please remember that all fireworks are illegal in Contra Costa County. Stay safe and hope to see you all soon. Contact Vice Mayor Holly Tillman at holly@claytonca.gov.

Developer Drops North Concord BART Housing Project

By John Ramos, CBS Bay Area

Concord is facing yet another Planned Development setback. A 360-unit housing development planned for the North Concord BART station has stalled after the developer cancelled the project with no explanation.

There is speculation the move may have something to do with what's happening on the other side of the fence.

Two years ago, BART chose a large, multi-national company called Brookfield Residential to develop the vast parking lot of the North Concord Station into a 360-unit transit village with a quarter of the homes reserved for affordable housing.

It was recently revealed that -- back in April -- Brookfield sent a letter to BART terminating their involvement with the project without giving a single reason why they were walking away.

"It would have been nice if we would have had a reason, because we need to learn from things," said BART Board member Debora Allen. "And if there was a compelling reason, something that BART did wrong that Brookfield could have shared with us, we as board members can make sure that we don't make that mistake again."

But Allen suspects the decision was connected to the lack of progress on developing the huge Concord Naval Weapons Station property, that sits across the fence from the BART station.

Allen said BART is pausing the North Concord development until a clear re-use plan is decided for the Weapons Station property, which will one day

house more than 20,000 people.

"Really, it only makes sense," said Allen. "This property right here [North Concord BART] will be the transportation hub of the entire development of the Concord Naval Weapons Station."

Allen said it may be some time before the North Concord site is revisited. She says BART is now focusing its housing efforts on the North Berkeley and Ashby projects, which are further along in the development process.

Concord City Councilmember Edi Birsan isn't shocked that Brookfield bailed on the project. He said Brookfield also wanted to be the developer for the Weapons Station. When the city selected a different company, he thinks they lost interest in the BART project.

"It was no surprise to me that, after a while, since they didn't get the Naval Weapons Station, that they would just hang out BART and just walk away. And that's exactly what they did," he said.

Birsan is no fan of Brookfield. He thinks in the future it would be wise for both BART and Concord to select a smaller, more accountable developer for their housing projects.

"The world is a dangerous place," he said. "And if you're going to wrestle with alligators, you pick the smallest alligator and you wrap as much stuff around their mouth as you can! And that's how you go forward."

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Summer and All That Jazz

Summer is officially here, and it has been hot, but things will heat up even more next month with a nod to Brubeck's "Take 5" as the Concord Jazz Festival returns for a five-day tribute to Concord's jazz roots with featured artists and events at various locations around town.

The events run Wednesday, August 3 through Sunday the 7th and feature live performances by Jinx Jones, Carlos Reyes, Glib Rig, Chaz Gunter and Howard Wiley. Admission is free for the first four events. You can see the full schedule of performances at visitconcordca.com/concord-jazz-festival-2022.

The can't-miss "Java & Jazz" happens on Sunday, August 7 from 11am -2p.m. Presented by the Concord Historical Society, the event features Stratify and KJ Focus performing live at the Concord Museum and Event Center. The \$15 ticket price includes a cool jazz and refreshing iced coffee and tea drinks. All proceeds benefit the Historical Society and tickets can be purchased in advance through Eventbrite.

If you have friends or family planning a trip to Concord for the Jazz Festival or during any of Concord's other summer events, let them know about Visit Concord's great Stay & Play hotel packages deals. These welcoming themed packages include gift cards for local businesses, beer and wine vouchers, attraction tickets and exclusive Concord merchandise. Just



send Visit Concord the confirmation number when they book a room at any of Concord's nine great hotels, and the gift pack of their choice will be waiting for them when they check in.

Concord is a proactively ADA accessible city and we continually seek out ways to improve accommodations, information and communications to better welcome travelers of all ability levels. Check our website for a directory that includes ADA lodging amenities, accessible parks & trails, attractions, transportation, services and more.

The Concord Visitor Center is open and ready to help with free advice, maps, visitor guides, brochures, wearables and the latest Things to Do in Concord event listings card. You will also find exclusive Jazz Fest merchandise including a variety of t-shirts, pins and posters.

2151 Salvio Street, Suite T, Concord.
Phone: 925-685-1182. Email: info@visitconcordca.com. Website: www.visitconcordca.com

(See calendar for complete scheule, pg 10)

Murals Dazzle Downtown Concord

The great mural project organized by CreativeConcord left Concord with brilliant murals at nine locations on buildings most within walking distance of Todos Santos Plaza. Fantastic work all around.



CONCORD JAZZ FESTIVAL

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Jennifer Stojanovich

Realtor, Better Homes Realty

Whose Big Idea Was it to Shoot Fireworks?



Fireworks are synonymous with the Fourth of July. Everyone looks forward to beautiful and colorful explosions in the sky after a fun-filled day of parades, swimming and BBQs. But have you ever wondered why we celebrate this holiday with fireworks?

Fireworks were used to celebrate the first anniversary of the holiday in 1777. Since then, Americans have used fireworks every Fourth of July.

Most people are aware that the Fourth of July celebrates the date when Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence in 1776. However, President John Adams is the reason we celebrate the Fourth of July with fireworks

As a founding father, leader of the American Revolution and the second president of the United States, Adams was well known and respected in the colonies.

He wished for a great celebration and wrote a letter to his wife before signing the Declaration of Independence in 1776 expressing this.

The first Fourth of July celebration was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on July 4, 1777, and like Adams had hoped, the celebration included illuminations, bells, a parade, and explosions. It also had a 13-gun salute to honor each of the 13 colonies, the military band performed, bells were rung, and 13 firework rockets were set off in the town square.

Thanks to John Adams and his wishes for grand celebrations, there has not been an Independence Day celebrated without fireworks.

So come enjoy the tradition at this year's safe 4th of July Fireworks show high above Mt. Diablo High School in Concord. Gates open at 6 PM and Fireworks begin at 9 PM.

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NEWS & TALK

In case you missed it...

Fire Burns 105 Acres Between Pittsburg And Concord



A grass fire burned 105 acres between Pittsburg and Concord on June 24, afternoon before firefighters stopped forward progress on the blaze, fire officials said.

The fire, reported at 12:15 p.m. along Kirker Pass Road, according to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. No structures were threatened, and no injuries were reported. The blaze was sparked by a malfunctioning vehicle, fire officials said. photo credit: East Bay Regional Park District Police

BART Ridership for Warriors Parade Highest Since March 2020

BART's ridership for the Golden State Warriors' championship parade was the largest it has been for a single day since March 2020, according to the transit agency.

The 190,519 documented riders Monday was the largest since COVID-19-related shutdowns in the Bay Area two years ago but was still well short of the largest daily numbers ever recorded by BART.

The busiest day in BART history was for the 2012 San Francisco Giants World Series victory parade when 568,068 people rode the trains, while the second highest was for the Warriors' 2015 championship parade when more than 551,000 people used BART.

However, the agency said a large number of riders who didn't have a Clipper card were allowed on BART by workers so they would not miss the parade.

The Claycord Online Museum – The Master Links Mini-Golf Course On Clayton Rd. In Concord



Who remembers this place?

These are photos of the old Master Links golf course on Clayton Road, next to the Hunan Chinese restaurant. Thanks so much to "Lisa" with "Captive Wild Woman" for the photos!

The Claycord Online Museum is made up of historical photos, documents & anything else that has to do with the history of our area.

BART To Celebrate 50 Years In September With A Party And 50% Discount

BART is turning 50-years-old and is inviting the public to help celebrate at Lake Merritt Station on Saturday, September 10, 2022.

The 50th Birthday Party and Family Fun Festival is free to the public and will be from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. The event will include food trucks, music, games, prizes, and the opening of a time capsule.

In addition, Riders using Clipper will also get half off all published BART fares throughout September. That includes 50% off already discounted fares for youth, senior, Regional Transportation Connection, Clipper Start, and Gator Pass riders. You can learn more about BART's anniversary at bart.gov/50years.

SF Zoo Takes in Three Parrot Chicks Rescued From Smugglers



Three parrot chicks that were being smuggled into the U.S. were rescued and have a new home at the San Francisco Zoo and Gardens.

The yellow-crowned Amazon parrots were 10 weeks old when they were confiscated and placed at the zoo by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, zoo officials said.

"We feel that these chicks are among the lucky ones," said Tanya M. Peterson, CEO and executive director of the San Francisco Zoological Society.

"Not all trafficked animals will be able to live a quality life, and we hope these three can serve as ambassadors in our South American Tropical Rainforest and Aviary to tell the story of illicit wildlife trafficking and its negative consequences on wild populations."

The yellow-crowned Amazon parrot (*Amazona ochrocephala*) has a life expectancy of 60 to 80 years and is native to South America, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, according to zoo officials.

They are highly intelligent, with the ability to mimic what people say.

Smuggling has depleted wild parrot populations, with most species considered threatened or endangered, zoo officials said.

Parrot chicks taken from their nests as hatchlings are often shipped in boxes without proper ventilation or water for the illegal pet trade.

The zoo's veterinary staff gave the chicks a check-up and found them to be healthy.

Guests to the zoo will not be able to see the chicks until they have matured, officials said.



A Walk Through Time

with Misty Bruns

Union Boarding House fire - 152 years ago



On Monday afternoon, on the first day of August, about half-past 4 pm,

The Union Hotel at Somersville took fire from a defective chimney or stove pipe. The Union Boarding house was entirely enveloped in flames including its contents. Citizens rushed and tried their best to save the furniture but only managed to rescue a few chairs. In this attempt, the cook was severely burned.

The fire had spread so rapidly that it was impossible for the inmates to do anything but get out of the house themselves as it took only twenty minutes for all of it to be up in flames.

The house belonged to Steve Whipple, Esq., of San Francisco, who owns the Union mine, and is worth about \$2500 – and was not insured. The hotel business and its contents belonged to proprietor, Mr. H. Johnson who had a small policy of \$500, and stood to lose about as much more.

Fortunately, nearly all its boarders were away working in the mines at the time. When those miners returned from work, they found all their clothes burned, their gold and silver dissolved and returned to mother earth. As may be imagined, there were uttered din of surprise, as well as some empathetic imprecations.

However, with Crukshank's stock of dry goods which could be drawn on to re-supply some deficiencies and with some luck in panning out the gold and silver bullion from the ashes, the victims soon became tolerably reconciled to the "bad streak of luck."

Fire seemed to be particularly fatal to hotels in Somersville, as it was just a few months earlier that a large hotel had burned there.

Source: Antioch Ledger, August 1870

Fire at Somersville.

On Monday afternoon, about half-past four, the Union Hotel, at Somersville, took fire from a defective chimney or stove pipe, and was entirely consumed, together with its contents, despite the efforts of the citizens, who used their best endeavors to save the furniture, but rescued nothing at all from the flames except a few chairs. In these efforts the cook was badly burnt. The fire spread so rapidly that it was impossible for the inmates to do anything but get out of the house themselves. It took only about twenty minutes for the flames to lick up the whole concern. ... Nearly all the boarders were away in the mines at the time. The house was owned by Steve Whipple, but the hotel business and the equipments of the house belonged to Mr. H. P. Johnson, a hard-working, industrious man, upon whom the loss is heavy. There was a small insurance upon the property. Fire seems to be particularly fatal to hotels. It is but a few months ago that a large hotel was burned there. Take warning, publicans.





pair up!

By Maria Terry,
Sommelier



French Riviera in Summer

The Côte d'Azur, or French Riviera, is one of the most beautiful and relaxing places on earth.

This menu is anchored by the classic salad of Nice — Salad Niçoise. While the menu may seem daunting, do give it a try. There is a lot of chopping for the salad but no complicated cooking techniques, and the rest of the meal is “purchase and plate.”

Start off this French inspired meal with a classic Italian sparkler, Lambrusco. Light red in color, Lambrusco is low in alcohol and lightly sweet — a red wine that is remarkably similar to an easy to find, Italian Moscato. It is delicious with salty, fatty salumi.

Salumi are Italian cured meat products predominantly made from pork, like prosciutto. The word salumi is not a misspelling or variant of salami (sing: salame). Salame is a specific type of salume.

Rosé is a quintessential summertime wine. Some like it dry, others like it a little sweet. One of my favorite dry rosés is from a village in Provence named Bandol.

Bandol is light salmon in color and has the aroma of fresh picked strawberries. It also has a lovely herbal quality that is the perfect complement to the green flavors of the Niçoise salad. Any rosé will go wonderfully with this salad, pick your favorite.

Sauternes is a French winemaking region that specializes in very sweet, white dessert wine. The wines are made from a blend of sauvignon blanc and sémillon grapes that have been affected by the fungus Botrytis Cinerea. Blue cheese is one of sauternes best pairings.

But to stay in the French theme, pick Roquefort or choose another of your favorite cheeses and find a white dessert wine you like for a European twist on “dessert.”

So, go on. Pair Up!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in Northern California. www.LaSommeliere.com

Salad Niçoise

INGREDIENTS

Vinaigrette

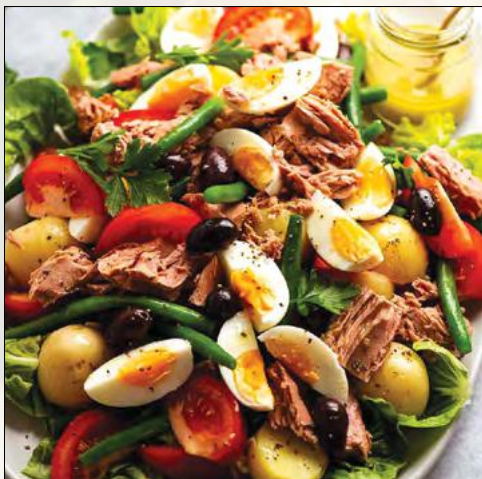
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium shallot, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh basil leaves
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh oregano leaves
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Salad

- 2 grilled or otherwise cooked tuna steaks (8 oz each) or 2-3 cans of tuna

6 hard boiled eggs, peeled and either halved or quartered

10 small new red potatoes (each about 2 inches in diameter, about 1 1/4 pounds total), each potato scrubbed and quartered



Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 medium heads Boston lettuce or butter lettuce, leaves washed, dried, and torn into bite-sized pieces

3 small ripe tomatoes, cored and cut into eighths

1 small red onion, sliced very thin

8 ounces green beans, stem ends trimmed, and each bean halved crosswise

1/4 cup niçoise olives

2 tablespoons capers, rinsed and/or several anchovies (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Marinate tuna steaks in a little olive oil for an hour. Heat a large skillet on medium high heat or place on a hot grill. Cook the steaks 2 to 3 minutes on each side until cooked through.

Whisk lemon juice, oil, shallot, thyme, basil, oregano, and mustard in medium bowl; season to taste with salt and pepper and set aside.

Bring potatoes and 4 quarts cold water to boil in a large pot. Add 1 tablespoon salt and cook until potatoes are tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Transfer potatoes to a medium bowl with a slotted spoon (do not discard boiling water). Toss warm potatoes with 1/4 cup vinaigrette; set aside.

While potatoes are cooking, toss lettuce with 1/4 cup vinaigrette in large bowl until coated.

Arrange bed of lettuce on a serving platter.

Cut tuna into 1/2-inch-thick slices, coat with vinaigrette. Mound tuna in center of lettuce.

Toss tomatoes, red onion, 3 tablespoons vinaigrette, and salt and pepper to taste in bowl; arrange tomato-onion mixture on the lettuce bed. Arrange reserved potatoes in a mound at edge of lettuce bed.

Return water to boil; add 1 tablespoon salt and green beans. Cook until tender but crisp, 3 to 5 minutes. Drain beans, transfer to reserved ice water, and let stand until just cool, about 30 seconds, dry beans well. Toss beans, 3 tablespoons vinaigrette, and salt and pepper to taste; arrange in a mound at edge of lettuce bed.

Arrange hard boiled eggs, olives, and anchovies (if using) in mounds on the lettuce bed. Drizzle eggs with remaining 2 tablespoons dressing, sprinkle entire salad with capers (if using), and serve immediately.

Yield: 4 servings



Turn Up the Heat! Hot Peppers

By Deb Morris, PCFMA

Are you one of those people who like peppers so hot they make your eyes water, your throat close, and your hands shake? Then Thai chili peppers, habanero peppers, or even the infamous ghost pepper will have you reaching for the milk. Look around, a farmers' market will usually have everything from mildly warm to 5-alarm, blistering hot peppers during the summer months.

Call them chili peppers or hot peppers, they come in lots of varieties, with many only found at your farmers' market. The heat you feel from eating a hot pepper is determined by the amount of capsaicin in the pepper. These levels of capsaicin are measured on the Scoville scale to determine how hot you can expect a pepper to be. Developed by Wilbur Scoville in 1912, Scoville Units measure pepper heat in multiples of 100.

Bell peppers and sweet Italian peppers stand at zero, jalapeños at 5,000, cayenne peppers at 50,000, and habanero peppers at 300,000 units. Thai chili peppers that have names like Volcano and Scorpion come in at 115,000 Scoville units. With new hotter varieties of habaneros named Carolina Reaper, Devil's Tongue, and Komodo Dragon at over 1.4 million Scovilles, you know they are going to make you sweat!

What is the hottest part of the pepper? There are many who say the seeds are what makes a pepper hot. But the folks who say it is the white pith inside that is the hottest are correct. The inner wall of the pepper is what gives the pepper its heat, not the seeds, which only contain a small amount of capsaicin.

If you want the taste of pepper flavor while avoiding most of the hotness, remove the pithy inner wall of the pepper.

The amount of heat in a pepper depends on when the pepper is harvested during the growth cycle. Peppers that are harvested while still green have less heat, while those harvested when they have begun to ripen to a red, orange, or golden color are hotter. Even hotter are peppers

that have been left to fully ripen on the vine.

If you want the taste of pepper flavor while avoiding most of the hotness, remove the pithy inner wall of the pepper.

Try these straightforward ways to prepare and enjoy peppers to fire up your taste buds:

1. Stuff jalapeños with cream cheese and herbs, top with shredded cheddar, and broil.
2. Add chopped and seeded jalapeños to your cornbread for an extra zip.
3. Add finely chopped habaneros to your 5-alarm chili recipe.
4. Stir fry vegetables with pork or chicken. Add Thai peppers*. Kung Pao chicken, anyone?
5. Add finely chopped habanero* peppers for homemade pepper jelly. Serve with a cream cheese block. *Use a milder pepper for a not-so-spicy version.

*When preparing extremely hot peppers like habanero or ghost, it is wise to use gloves and eye shields when working with them. We are not kidding! It is also advisable to open windows or put on a fan. Do NOT put your hands in your eyes and thoroughly wash your hands when you are finished.

Now that you are ready to cook with delicious, hot, chili peppers, stop by your farmers' market and pick up some Thai peppers, jalapeños, or habaneros and ask your farmer how to prepare and cook with them. See how hot you can go! Find hot peppers at your Concord Farmers' Market at Bautista Ranch from Stockton, FT Fresh out of Fresno, and Ventana Organic Produce in Hollister.

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Use Concord Connect App to Report Fireworks



All fireworks (even those labeled “safe and sane”) are illegal in Concord and all of Contra Costa County, except for permitted professional displays. This

includes bottle rockets, roman candles, firecrackers, and sparklers.

Fireworks are dangerous and cause fires, severe injury and even death.

People who possess, discharge, sell or manufacture fireworks will be cited and fined.

To report illegal fireworks activity, please use the City’s Concord Connect app. Select “Make a Request,” and click on “Illegal Fireworks Reporting.”

In 2021, the Concord Police Department deployed this successful strategy to help decrease fireworks-related calls to 911, improve response times to community reports of illegal fireworks use, and deter fireworks usage overall.

Between July 1 and July 7, 2021, more than 450 reports of illegal fireworks usage were reported through the app, while 320 fireworks-related calls came in through the City’s 911 or non-emergency dispatch phone lines.

If you are reporting an injury, fire or medical emergency, please call 911. If you are not reporting a life-threatening emergency, please use the app so the Police Department can keep its 911 dispatch lines open.

computercorner
by William Claney, Tech Writer, Computers USA

Tech in English

Old Computers Are No Joke

“Why did the computer show up at work late? It had a hard drive.” – (RD).

People, as we age, we gain grace, wisdom and understanding, but when computers age, not so much.

So, how old is old in computer parlance? I have customers that have had our custom-built computers for nearly a dozen years and wonder if we could upgrade them. My answer is, “of course you can, and it’s just going to look a little different than it does now.”

The consensus among computer experts and pundits are that computers reach their end of life at ages 3 to 5 years. If your computer has an old fashion hard disk drive (HDD mechanical drive) then the expected lifespan is nearer the three-year mark. Those with solid-state drives (SSD electronic drive) are still reliable up to five years old. So how old is your computer, laptop or tablet?



The signs of aging, and that it is time to trade in your old rig for a new one, is reiterated by Reader’s Digest, “Whoever said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results has obviously never had to reboot a computer.”

—William Petersen

Of course, most of us spend a great deal of time setting up our computers, learning how to use them, figuring out how to correct minor issues, scanning for virus and malware, and putting up with it slowing down as time passes. Humans invest a great deal of time with their machines while developing an attachment to them. This attachment can mimic the affection one has to a family pet.

Just like a family pet, over time they quit listening to you. I think my dog has selective deafness, he hears the frig open from across the house, but ignores you when you say come here. My com-fuser is doing the same thing. Maybe it is just my auto correct, “Autocorrect can go straight to he’ll.” —Constance Normandeau -- (RD). Oh well, all’s well that ends we’ll -- (RD).

If your computer is reaching the end of its life and beginning to show signs of slowing down, it is likely time to review your options.

Should you upgrade the existing components or scrap it and start over. If you have already exceeded the life spans discussed above, then replacement is your

best option. Upgrading can extend the life of a good computer for another two to three years and costs about half of what a new one would.

If you decide to purchase, be sure to have a method of moving your files to the new one. Your professional computer caregiver (that’s PC – get it?) can help you move files and preserve settings. Give them a call RSN (real soon now). Contact your local computer professional for an opinion on your rig’s life expectancy.

Now go do the right thing.

Get Back Up

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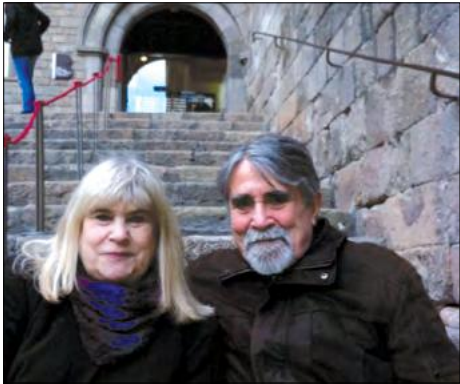
Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery



YOUR NEIGHBOR'S SHOES

by Michael Barrington, www.mbwriter.net

SENIOR NOMADS



Vicki and Bob Enteen pose on the steps of an old palace from the Middle Ages in the Bari Gothic of Barcelona.

Who has ever heard of such a group? Are you brave enough to sell your home, your cars, and pretty much all that you have and set out to continuously travel the world? Vicki and Bob Enteen did just that. They are currently trying to settle down again in Walnut Creek to be near their two daughters, but one must ask, for how long? They certainly have the wander bug and with good reason.

Vicki has an MBA in Marketing and Bob a Ph.D. in Sociology. After retirement in 2014, they decided to take to the road with their two cats. They lost one in Italy, but the other has its own passport, and has visited 25 countries. The Enteens spent the next four years traveling from one end of Europe to the other but have also spent time in

Morocco, India, China, Turkey, and Israel. They have been to 65 countries.

They had previously rented an apartment in Paris where they worked for seven years. Their junior high French was so rusty they decided to enroll classes. Finding a "Meetup" group in Paris was a life changer allowing them to make friends from all over the world as well as with expats. As they tell it, you can find an expatriate group in almost every big city. Without even looking for it. Bob was offered a full-time job in medical advertising.

What makes their story incredible is that they believed, by living this lifestyle, they were saving money. For example, to live in El Cerrito, rent, utilities, insurance, etc. and auto related expenses added up to around \$3200 per month. While in Europe, living almost exclusively in Airbnbs for about \$1500E per month and relying mostly on public transportation, and cheap SIM cards for their phones, they were saving about \$1,000 a month on average. They usually stayed in major cities for a month, some places up to seven months, returning to Amsterdam for four summers and Barcelona for four winters.

They always selected a home in the suburbs away from tourist spots wanting to blend into the local scene and have developed lasting friendships with fellow Airbnb hosts and people from the neighborhood. With their help and knowledge, they got to know where the



best and cheapest restaurants were, and how to access free shows and bargains of all kinds. Taking advantage of low-cost airlines, they traveled cheaply all over Europe.

Vicki says they were not living off their savings. "We were both on Social Security by 2015 when we left for Europe and lived exclusively on that. In addition, we were paying off student loans for our daughters. We lived frugally, never eating out more than once a week, taking advantage of bargain airfares and train fares, and generally limiting our expenses to the minimum."

They preferred shopping at local supermarkets, and in many ways, they become part of the community.

"We liked different things about different countries, but in general, we liked the warmth and hospitality of the people we met (including our Airbnb hosts), the safety in the streets, the diversity of the landscape and the attractions, the cosmopolitan attributes of the people. We especially liked being in places with considerable history and places that offer a sense of the exotic

like Turkey, Egypt and Morocco."

In deciding their next destination, they work as a team and plan their moves four or five months in advance with Vicki doing the research and planning and Bob doing everything else.

The next move might simply be from a referral by another Nomad. They usually send their bags ahead using www.sendmybag.com. They travel light and by using a luggage shipping service they could travel luggage free, skip long queues at

the airport and avoid paying extortionate airline baggage fees while still having as much luggage with them as they liked.

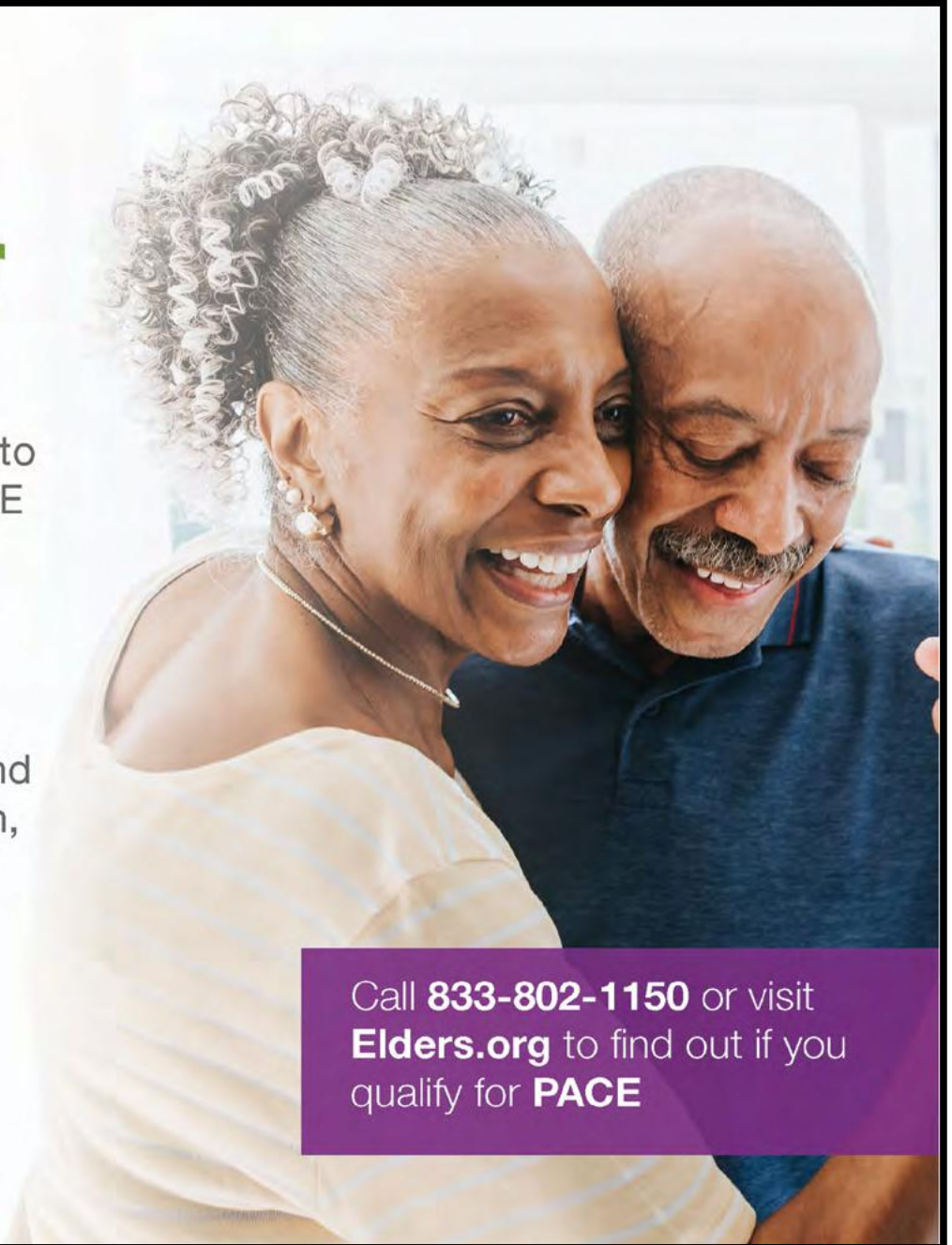
They have one piece of advice to potential retirees, "Don't wait, do it now. It is fun and exhilarating and keeps you young." There are a couple of Facebook groups, Senior Nomads, and Senior Nomads in America, where Members ask questions and post advice about destinations, experiences, and practical matters like visas and health insurance. Some Nomads only travel for a part of the year, and some only in the USA, but there are great opportunities out there. Vicki and Bob believe most people have never imagined this wonderful alternative to traditional retirement. And these folks are your neighbors... well sometimes.

Michael Barrington author of "The Ethiopian Affair" (2022); "The Bishop Wears No Drawers" (2016); "Let the Peacock Sing" (2020); and "Becoming Anya" (2021)

Staying connected to your roots makes your health blossom

Center For Elders' Independence is here to help you flourish through personalized PACE healthcare and services that keep seniors living safely and independently at home, because home is where your roots are.

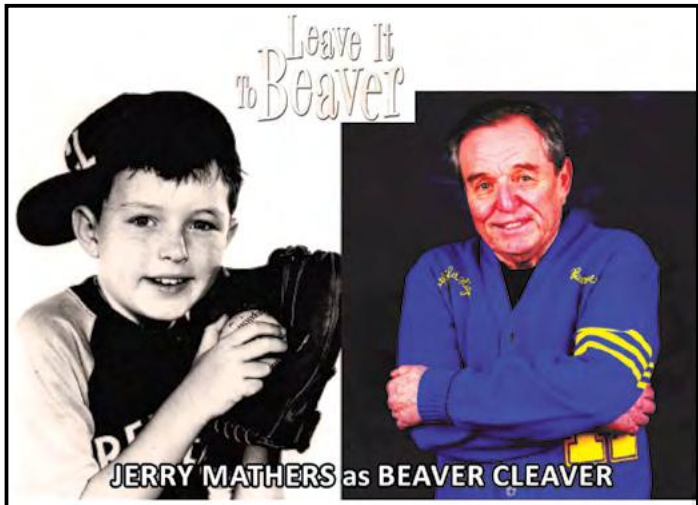
East Bay seniors 55 and older with health needs can rely on us for medical, dental, and vision care, plus services like transportation, a senior gym, group activities and more, all with no deductibles for you.



Call 833-802-1150 or visit Elders.org to find out if you qualify for PACE

DIABLO GAZETTE FUN ZONE

Television icons appearing at Contra Costa Con 4 on July 17 in Hilton Concord Golden Gate Ballroom



Concord, CA --- Contra Costa Con 4 returns to Concord on Sunday, July 17, at the Hilton Concord Hotel featuring stars from three iconic shows from the Golden Age of Television.

Jerry Mathers (Beaver Cleaver) from "Leave it to Beaver", Jon Provost (Timmy) from Lassie and Charlotte Stewart (Miss Beadle) from "Little House on the Prairie" will meet guests at Contra Costa Con 4. Stewart was also featured in "Twin Peaks," "Tremors" and "Eraserhead."

Adding to the star power is one of the most prominent voice actors of the past 30 years, Mark Dodson. He voiced Salacious Crumb in "Star Wars: Episode VI Return of the Jedi" and provided various voices for Ewoks: "The Battle for Endor" and "Star Wars: Episode VII The Force Awakens." Dodson is best known as the voice of the eponymous creatures in "Gremlins" and "Gremlins 2: The New Batch."

The Endor Base Rebel Legion will come as favorite Star War characters to meet and have their photo taken with fans of the iconic movies.

Toys, art, comics, LEGO, anime, collectibles, games, apparel and much more will be featured at the family-friendly show hosted by Bay Area Festivals and American Brick Builders.

Contra Costa Con 4 will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with free parking at the Hilton.

Contra Costa Con's first three shows in Concord were big hits with attendees, many of whom came dressed in their favorite costumes.

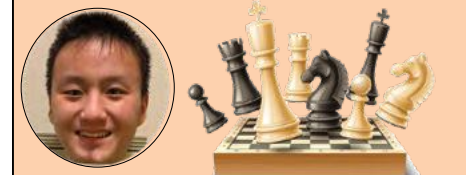
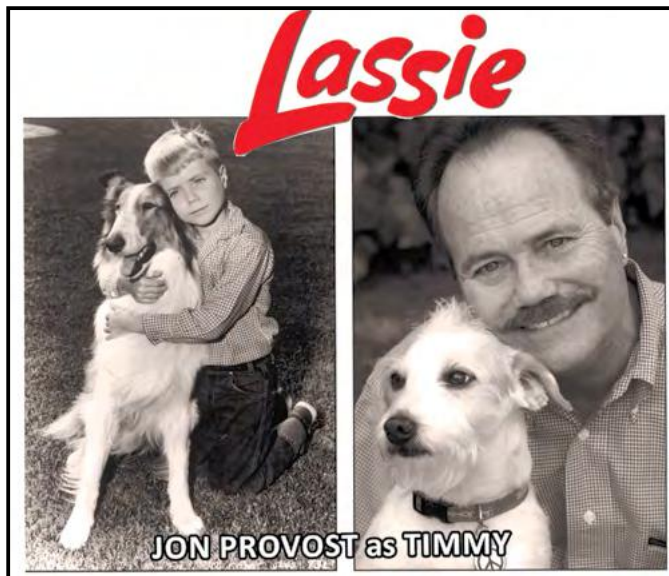
Featured guests enjoy meeting and chatting with attendees. However, the ticket admission price does not include picture, autograph or audio with featured guests.

A free, family-friendly Cosplay Costume Contest for attendees awards cash prizes in different age groups. Contest registration will

be taken during the day with contest judging at 2:30.

New items and collectibles from Disney, Transformers, Funko Pop, LEGO, Pokémon, G.I. Joe, Marvel, DC, Dragon Ball Z, My Hero Academia, Hot Wheels and much more will be available from the wide variety of exhibitors at the show. Posters, anime, art, prints, t-shirts, hats, books, buttons, classic video games, jewelry and cards are featured too.

The Hilton is located at 1970 Diamond Blvd, two blocks off Interstate 680 in Concord. For more information visit www.ContraCostaCon.com.



Chess with Yoo

Composed by Christopher Yoo, 15, Grandmaster, Dublin, Calif.

The New York Times chess column has returned after eight years! The new columnist, Daniel Naroditsky, is a Grandmaster and popular online chess streamer who grew up in the Bay Area. He was a chess as well as academic prodigy and published his first chess book (about my favorite topic, endgames!) when he was just 14 and subsequently attended Stanford. I wish his column well. It's great to see chess reach a bigger audience. Here is a tactic from one of the many games we've played together online.

In this game, I was White against Naroditsky, and here he had a chance to capitalize on his position with a nice tactic, but fortunately for me he missed it. The game ended in a draw. Can you find the tactic GM Naroditsky and I originally overlooked?

Black to play and win.



SOLUTION:

- 1... Ncb4!
- 1... Nxe3? A serious mistake, as he cannot win my c2 pawn.
- 2.Rxe3 Nd4 3.Rc1! =+
- 2.Nxb4
- 2.Rac1 There are many good moves here, but I think the simplest is just to take on d3 and go Nb4. 2... Nxd3 3.cxd3 Nb4-+
- 2... Bxb4
- 2... Nxb4? 3.Rec1! White avoids losing material.
- 3. c3
- 3.Bg5 f6!-+ The bishop cannot hold on to the knight on d2.
- 3... Nxe3
- 3... Bxc3 Transposes
- 4.Rxe3 Bxc3!
- Winning a pawn, which is enough for a winning position, as White's pieces are badly coordinated, and the pawns on the 2nd rank are in danger when my rook gets to d2.
- 4... Rxd2?! 5.cxd4 Rxb2 6.Re7 Rf8 7.a3 Rd2-/+ Black should still win, but it is quite unnecessary to allow White's rook to go to e7.
- 5.bxc3 Rxd2-+

CALIFORNIA DESTINATIONS

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



- ALCATRAZ
- BIG SUR
- BODIE
- CATALINA
- DISNEYLAND
- GLASS (BEACH)
- JOSHUA TREE
- HEAVENLY
- LAKE SHASTA
- LAKE TAHOE
- LASSEN
- LEGOLAND
- MONTEREY
- NAPA VALLEY
- PALM SPRINGS
- PINNACLES
- SEQUOIA
- SONOMA
- VENICE BEACH
- YOSEMITE

SAN FRANCISCO

Solution on page 12

calendar of events

FUNDRAISERS

White Pony Express

Calling All Restaurants and Catering Companies!

Local restaurants and catering companies are invited to donate their surplus food to White Pony Express. WPE will distribute it upon receipt – free of charge – to dozens of nonprofit partners and school pantries that serve our hungry neighbors. When you donate food to WPE, you help end food insecurity in our county and reduce the production of methane gas caused by rotting food in landfills. If your business would like to donate excess food, please contact WPE's Food Sourcing Manager at donatefood@whiteponyexpress.org.

July 29
Back to School Backpack Drive. Family Giving Tree's 25th annual drive is collecting backpacks and school supplies to support local students for the next school year.



NBC Bay Area, Telemundo, and NBC Bay Area Sports are partnering with Visit Concord and will take over Salvio Pacheo Square for a day dedicated to the program. Backpacks can be donated or purchased and donated on site. visitconcordca.com.

EVENTS

July 9 -10
11th Annual Clayton BBQ Cookoff. A KCBS sanctioned event. This year's festival will feature a 4-meat competition (chicken, pork ribs, pork shoulder, and brisket) as more than 40 BBQ Masters and backyard chefs face off to take home over \$10,000.00 in prize monies. Pro Pitmasters and Backyard Chef competitions. Food vendors, craft beer, and live music, and more. Presented by CBCA.

July 10
Open Air Market featuring vintage, collectibles, antiques and more. Martinez Main Street, 800 block. 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

July 17
Contra Costa Con 4
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Toys, apparel, collectibles, art, anime, comics, LEGO, games and much more. Featured guests include Jerry Mathers (Leave It to Beaver), Jon Provost (Lassie) and Charlotte Stew-

art (Little House on the Prairie, Twin Peaks), voice actor Mark Dodson (Star Wars, Gremlin and others). Cosplay Costume contest for cash awards.

Kids under 10 and parking are free. Advance discount tickets can be purchased at www.ContraCostaCon.com with a \$2 Toy Buck included with each advance sale. Hilton Concord Hotel. 1970 Diamond Blvd. www.contracostacon.com

FARMERS' MARKETS
Concord Todos Santos Plaza
Tuesdays, 9:00am to 2:00pm.
Thursdays 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Martinez Sundays, 9:00am to 2:00pm, 700 Main St.

Walnut Creek Kaiser 1425 South Main 10 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Fridays 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Rossmoor Golden Rain Rd.

Saturdays 9:00am.-1:00 pm. Shadeands North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr.

Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 1799 Locust St.

Ruth Bancroft Gardens

July - Aug 27 - Sculpture in the Garden Show. Tour the Garden enjoy the sculptures.

July 29
The Walnut Creek Model Railroad Society - (WCMRS) operates the Diablo Valley Lines (DVL) model railroad, one of the largest exclusively HO scale model railroads in the United States. Enjoy several running model trains running through miniature cities and mountainous terrain. 8:00pm - 10:00 pm. 2751 Buena Vista Ave.

July 25-28
Junior Pickleball Camp, Concord Parks and Recreation, designed for youths ages 7-15. Offered by pickleball pro Patricia Strazzi. Concordreg.org.

CLUBS

SIR Branch
SIR is a group of mature men who enjoy various activities and each other's company. All are welcome. Activities include weekly golf, bocce, bowling, wine tasting, dining out, day trips and many others. If interested,

July 7 - Branch #19 Luncheon
12N Greenery Sports Bar & Grill, 55 Marchbanks Dr. Walnut Creek. Guests are welcome. visit us at www.sirinc2.org/branch19 or call 925 338-1996.

July 11 - Branch #8 Luncheon -
11:30 a.m. at the Boundary Oak Golf Course in Walnut Creek, 3800 Valley Vista Rd. Begins at 10:30 a.m.

ARTS/THEATRE/MUSIC

August 3-7 TAKE FIVE Concord Jazz Festival 2022

August 3: Jinx Jones kicks off the festival with a FREE show at The Veranda as part of The Veranda Unplugged series. Showtime is 6:30pm to 8pm.

August 4: Catch Carlos Reyes for a FREE show at Todos Santos Music & Market Series from 6:30pm to 8pm.
August 5: Glib Rig performs at Jazz Night at the Concord Tap House, 5pm to 7pm. The show is FREE and features special guest KJ Focus.

August 6: Jazz in the Park - 1pm to 4pm in Todos Santos Plaza featuring performances by Chaz Gunter and special guest Howard Wiley. This show is FREE.

August 7: Java & Jazz with Stratify and special guest KJ Focus at the Concord Museum and Event Center from 11am to 2pm. \$15 and includes a collectible cup and unlimited pours of iced coffee and iced tea (while supplies last). Proceeds benefit the Concord Historic Society.



CONCORD PAVILION

Tickets @ livenation.com

July 16 - KMEL Summer Jam

July 21 - Encanto: The Sing Along Film Concert

July 22 - Kingdom Tour: Maverick City Music x Kirk Franklin

July 28 - Dierks Bentley: Beers On Me Tour 2022

July 30 - Train, AM Gold Tour

August 9 Backstreet Boys: DNA Tour

Music and Market Series
6:30PM - 8PM Todos Santos Park, Concord

July 7 AJA VU - Steely Dan Tribute

July 14- George! George Harrison Tribute

July 21 - Mitch Polzac & the Royal Deuces/The Greasy Gills rockabilly

July 28 - David Martin's House Party

August 4- Carlos Reyes jazzy violin and harp



PLEASANT HILL CONCERTS

SUNSET BY THE LAKE 6:00 P.M. - 8:00P.M. FREE. 100 Gregory Lane at the City Hall lake.

July 10 - The Bell Brothers

July 24 - East Bay Mudd

August 7 - Cut Loose

August 21 -The Landbirds

September 4 -The Big Jangle

aRT COTTAGE

July 6 - August 26

"en Plein Air" artist reception on July 9 2P-4P. Live music, refreshments.

MAIN STREET ARTS

Through July 31

"From Clay to Table" ceramics exhibit. Hours Wednesday-Sunday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. . 613 Main St. Martinez.

Leshar Center for the Arts

1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek
Tickets Call 925-943-7469 Wednesday - Sunday Noon to 6:00 p.m.

July 7-17
Improvisors in Space: a Spontaneous Starship.

July 9 Ryan Hamilton - One of Rolling Stone's five comics to watch. 7:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m..

July 15-17 The Sound of Music

July 19 Summer "Pops" Concert. New works, march favorites, Broadway and movie classics.

July 29 Wiley Ray & The Big O Band. Tribute band to Roy Orbison. 7:30 p.m.-9:30p.m.

The City of Clayton Proudly Presents

Concerts in The Grove 2022

Saturdays 6:00pm to 8:30pm
Downtown Clayton

July 2 The Boys of Summer	The Boys of Summer are deemed the best Eagles Tribute band this side of the Rockies, with spot on vocals, playing the true musical heart and sound of the Eagles. With a hit list too long to name, this is a true sing-a-long tribute band that will keep you singing and dancing in the park. www.boysofsummertribute.com
July 16 Cut Loose	Cut Loose has dynamite vocals and searing leads backed by a solid rhythm section. Based in California's East Bay, Cut Loose will make you want to dance, swing and sway along to their Rockin' Blues, Rock 'n Roll, R&B, Rockin' Country and more. https://cutlooseband.com
July 30 Mixed Nuts	Mixed Nuts plays a wide variety of dance music from the 50s to today. Bill, the Pied Piper of music, will have you and your kids up doing the Hokie-Pokie, or joining the Conga Line around the park. This is going to be a get-up-and-dance concert. So be sure to bring your dancing shoes. www.mixednutsband.com
August 13 HouseRockers	The HouseRockers - This 10-piece powerhouse Rock and Soul band plays the greatest songs recorded. Their high energy gets everyone dancing to the music of the Rolling Stones, Earth Wind and Fire, Tower of Power, Springsteen and more. They bring together elements of Rock, Swing, Blues, 60s Soul and R & B. www.svhouserockers.com
August 27 The Sun Kings	The Sun Kings - Northern California's premier Beatles tribute band. For years, the Bay Area's Sun Kings have been thrilling packed houses and outdoor festivals with their musical tribute to The Beatles. Their energy is reminiscent of the joy and excitement of a Beatles concert with the tunes that changed rock & roll. www.thesunkings.com
September 10 East Bay Mudd	East Bay Mudd - This dynamic nine-piece band is a great finale for our concert season with their upbeat take on Classic Soul, Funk and R&B classics. This horn-heavy, funk-inflected, rhythm & blues ensemble with a soulful, dynamic lead vocalist, a tight four-piece horn section and a solid rhythm section will rock you with the best of Tower of Power, Chicago, Earth Wind and Fire, and more. www.eastbaymudd.com

Why Age 7 is the Right Time to See an Orthodontist...

By the age of 7, the first adult molars erupt, establishing the back bite. During this time, an orthodontist can evaluate front-to-back and side-to-side tooth relationships. For example, the presence of erupting incisors can indicate possible overbite, open bite, crowding or gummy smiles. Timely screening increases the chances for an incredible smile.

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In Theaters

JURASSIC WORLD: DOMINION



Full disclosure...I have not seen all six films in the Jurassic series. I was a huge fan of the original 1993 Jurassic Park and I didn't want to sully it by watching the other two.

When Jurassic World came out in 2015, it seemed enough time had passed that if they were reviving the franchise, the original would be respected enough to produce a quality reboot. I found the first "Jurassic World" film very entertaining, yet it didn't have me running to see the next installment. I did, however, want to see "Dominion" as it's reported to be the last in the franchise.

Since the first film, the plot has always included clever ways to explain genetic science or recap past plotlines. The first time, viewers were shown the cartoon that theme park attendants would watch to learn how the dinosaurs were made. Since then, the franchise has used similar techniques to remind us where we left off from the last film.

This time, the movie opens with a "Now This" news segment and it details everything we need to know and shows how dinosaurs are currently part of everyday civilization. Although I was able to follow the plot without a problem, I would recommend watching "Jurassic World: Lost Kingdom" first, if possible.

The big draw for this last film is that the original cast members, Laura Dern, Sam Neill and Jeff Goldblum all reprise their roles. It's wonderful to see them all again, but the first 45 minutes of the film involves so much jumping around the globe and catching up with so many characters, it can be difficult to absorb it all.

In the end, it doesn't matter too much because we're all there for the dinosaurs.



They do not disappoint and the visual effects are stunning. There are dinosaurs lurking in the water, dinosaurs soaring in the air and more dinosaurs, ginormous ones, stomping around, squishing everything in sight. You'll find yourself reminded why it's great to see this type of movie on a giant screen.

There are also some interesting messages about our moral responsibility to our creations and how far we should go with our scientific discoveries. In all honesty, though, viewers will walk away talking about the over-the-top visuals and cool dinosaur battles. And since it's summertime, maybe that's all we should expect from a movie.

In Theaters

PG-13 for intense scenes

Streaming on Amazon Prime

I Want You Back



Romantic comedies are tough and it's hard to pin down what makes one work. It's easy to say a solid storyline but let's face it, Meg Ryan never would have forgiven Tom Hanks for forcing her to close her beloved bookstore in "You've Got Mail."

So then maybe it comes down to the chemistry of the two leads? In the new Amazon Prime film, "I Want You Back", Jenny Slate and Charlie Day seem oddly cast at first. Any reservations, however, will quickly dissolve when you see that these two can steer the ship of the romantic comedy boat.

Jenny Slate plays Emma, whose personal trainer boyfriend, Noah (Scott Eastwood), breaks up with her. Peter (Charlie Day) also gets dumped by his girlfriend of six years, English Teacher

Anne (Gina Rodriguez). Shortly afterward, Emma and Peter meet in the office building where they both work and decide to become each other's "Sadness Sister," which entails being there for each other emotionally and keeping them from contacting their exes.

Peter and Emma struggle to move on and in a desperate attempt to win their exes back,

they devise a scheme to ruin Noah's and Anne's new relationships. Nothing goes as planned, of course, but the story takes some unexpected twists and turns as Slate and Day create characters you find yourself rooting for.

This film doesn't stack up to a "When Harry Met Sally" or "Bridget Jones Diary". Instead, it's a worthy watch for those who appreciate the genre and want to see it thrive with well-made films starring talented actors.

Rated R for language and sexual situations



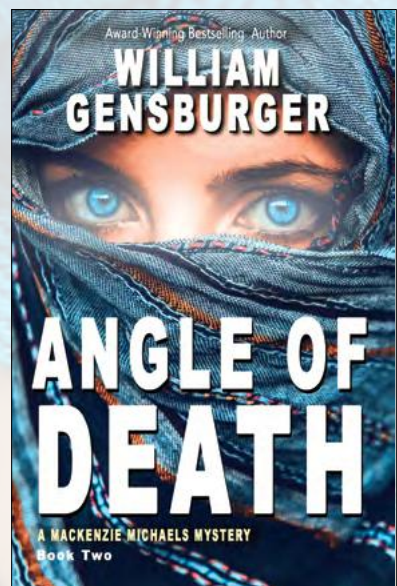
Angle of Death

"Angle of Death" (AltPublish, 2021, 192 pages, \$6.99) by William Gensburger is the second novel in the Mackenzie (Maxie) Michaels Mystery series. In "Angle of Death," celebrity detective Maxie leaves Texas to investigate the kidnapping of 28-year-old Jennifer Marcel. Her return to Hollywood includes the unfortunate situation where she must stay in the home of actor Brad Paschal, her ex-husband and Marcel's boyfriend. Meanwhile, an even bigger threat to Maxie arises after the terrorist, Ahmad Hassan, apprehended in "Texas Dead" (Book 1), escapes law enforcement during his transport to a different prison. While both storylines figure prominently in the book, the primary focus in Book 2 is the kidnapping case.

Three familiar characters from Book 1 accompany Maxie to California to solve the case: Devin Parker, an investigative reporter and Maxie's love interest, Kobe Jameson, Maxie's partner, and Tyson, an at-risk teen who Jameson mentors. The complex web of Maxie's relationships adds depth to the story. Her deepening fondness for Devin, and respect for fellow detective, Kobe Jameson, provides a stark contrast to her attitude toward Brad, who clings to the idea that he might rekindle a romance with Maxie, despite her clear dislike for him. Gensburger also explores the darkest recesses of humanity through the nefarious actions of Hassan and his followers. This is offset by young Tyson's delight in Paschal's mansion, which provides levity and humor to the storyline.

Reminiscent of Michael Connelly's depiction of Los Angeles, Gensburger infuses the pages of "Angle of Death" with the glamorous life of the uber-rich, and the not-so-glamorous reality of the smoggy air of the "City of Angels." Maxie's opinion of Hollywood is that everything looks pretty, but there's a lot of emptiness hidden within. She could have very well said the same thing about her ex-husband.

Throughout the tale, Maxie's reputation as a kick-ass detective is solidified as she investigates Jennifer's disappearance. The lack of a ransom request, coupled with



Pascal's descent into alcoholism, casts suspicion as to the actor's role in his girlfriend's disappearance. But delightful plot twists abound that keep readers guessing. "Angle of Death" is fast paced and makes for a perfect summer read.

Jennifer Marcel's kidnapping case is solved in Book 2 and the groundwork is laid for the last novel in the series where Maxie, Devin, and Kobe will face a nuclear threat masterminded by Hassan. In Book 3, Maxie will have to thwart the one called "The Extremist" as he sets out to destroy all of Los Angeles.

William Gensburger is the author of "Texas Dead", the award-winning first novel in the Mackenzie Michaels trilogy, "Distant Rumors", an anthology of 16 stories about life and death, and "Homo Idiotus", a collection of published newspaper editorials.

He is the former publisher of The Concordian, a proficient graphic designer, photographer, and audiobook narrator. He lives in Boise, Idaho with his wife and children, and a cat that runs his life. He's currently working on the third novel in the Mackenzie Michaels series "The Extremist". To learn more, visit <http://www.misterwriter.com/>.

TOP GUN MAVERICK

by William Gensburger, www.BooksNPieces.com



Let's face it, sequels usually disappoint. Top Gun was originally released in 1986 with a twenty-four-ish Tom Cruise, before he yielded much star power. While it was great back then, rewatching it now made it seem a bit campy and outdated.

Flash forward 36 years and we have a rarity; a sequel that is excellent and vastly superior to the original.

Tom Cruise was 59 when he produced and starred in this film. Cruise looks far younger than 59; not just in facial appearance but in his endless physicality. Every Tom Cruise film is an exhausting physical experience leaving the viewer with wonder at whatever regimen he uses. And honestly, send it my way.

Jennifer Connelly dazzles in this film as an old flame abandoned by Cruise's Lt. Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell, mentioned in the original as one line that refers to her by name. Now, a single mother of a teen, she runs the bar at TopGun.

I don't want to give you a synopsis of the film because frankly, it's an experience you want untainted. Go and be surprised.

Remember when you would go to a movie and just be delighted? This one will delight you. There are many scenes that touch back to the original story and

you'll thank me for not mentioning any of them.

I will say that the cast had to learn the F18 for authentic flight scenes and that included high-G moves after launching off an aircraft carrier. Cruise insists on authenticity and wherever possible does his own stunts to the degree that he often is injured. (He broke his foot while filming the last "Mission Impossible" movie jumping across rooftops.)

Val Kilmer (Iceman) from the original is in this movie in a way that is fitting for the actor reprising his role, and the scenes are both poignant and even with some brevity.

Ed Harris plays Cain, cranky and stubborn, but allows Maverick to step up on what is considered a suicide mission.

The dogfights are superb. Shot in a way that draws you in as a participant more than an observer.

The story is rich with twists and turns that keep you on the edge until it's over and you find yourself wanting more.

I do suggest seeing it on a big screen theatre or see it in IMAX.



Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

Raffie

Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Online celebrity with 1.8 M TikTok followers, 1M FB, and 299K followers on IG. Each month a hard to place dog in foster care will be featured to give them extra exposure to find their forever home. Column by Jill Hedgecock.



Fourteen-year-old Raffie is a black lab whose only crime was to be a causality of his owner's moving plans. He is a big boy, weighing

in at 100 lbs. This loyal boy likes to keep a close watch on his humans and follows them around the house. He has some arthritis, but it does not affect his mobility. He sometimes has trouble getting to his feet. His happy-go-lucky attitude is sure to melt your heart.

Raffie is:

- Friendly with other dogs
- Okay with cats that keep their distance
- Gentle with taking treats from hand
- Almost completely housebroken
- A tail-wagging happy boy
- Good on leash

Raffie is not neutered and will not be due to his advanced age, is current on vaccinations, heartworm negative, and microchipped. He has mild case of laryngeal paralysis (lar-par) which causes him to breathe heavy and wheeze a bit, but the condition does not require medication. His adoption fee is \$200. For more information about Raffie, contact Dave at david.c.ely@sbcglobal.net.



GGLR was established in 1986 and places about 250 labs per year. They are a nonprofit/tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. The all-volunteer organization has no offices or overhead, so all direct donations go directly to shelter fees and medical care (shots, microchipping, spay/neuter) for labs in need. Other options to help GGLR include purchasing lab-inspired shirts and face masks, bags, dog bone toy, scarves, and baseball caps (<http://labrescue.org/store.html>).

Diggin' It

What My Dog Did on Summer Vacation: How cool is this? DogTrekker (<https://dogtrekker.com/sharecontent.aspx>) wants to hear about your dog's favorite adventures in California. There is an easy to fill out webform and a tab to upload a few photos. Be aware if you submit a story/photo(s), you give DogTrekker Inc. permission to use your name, image, and story across the DogTrekker channels as editorial content.

July 11th is All American Pet Photo Day: Break out the camera or phone and start snapping photos for this picture-perfect event. You can create a collage or simply pick out a favorite pic and post it on social media. Make sure to include #AllAmericanPetPhotoDay.

Bone to Pick

Pets in Hot Cars. In summer, the temperature inside a vehicle can rise almost 20° F in 10 minutes, and almost 30° F in 20 minutes, even with cracked windows. With an outside temperature of 70° F, interior temperatures can rise to 110° F in less than an hour. According to the Humane Society, signs of heat stress in dogs include heavy panting, glazed eyes, unsteadiness, a staggering gait, a red or purple tongue, and vomiting.

Humane Society suggests if you come across an animal in distress, call your local animal care and control agency or police department immediately with the vehicle's tag number. If applicable, enter the nearest store or business to request an emergency announcement be made about a pet left in a hot car, then return to the vehicle and wait for police. In California, Good Samaritans can legally remove animals from cars if the animal is in severe distress but remain with the animal nearby until law enforcement arrives.

California Penal Code Section 597.7 PC: Leaving A Pet Unattended in a Vehicle states it is illegal to leave a pet unattended in a motor vehicle under conditions that endanger the health or well-being of the animal such as that when conditions are too hot. Law enforcement officers are entitled to take whatever actions necessary to help the animal, including smashing windows or prying open car doors to rescue a distressed pet. Penalties can range from a \$100 fine to six months of jail time and extensive penalties for first time offenders. Subsequent violations are punishable by a fine up to five hundred dollars (\$500), imprisonment in a county jail up to six months, or by both.

ARF ADOPTION STARS Jasmine & Kerr

Looking for a furry friend? Visit arflife.org to view all of ARF's adoptable animals or read more about ARF's adoption process. [.arflife.org](http://arflife.org).

Jasmine



One-year-old Jasmine is a gentle, snuggly girl who will woo you with her bashful demeanor. Though she's a tad coy, she cannot resist the temptation of cuddles and as soon as she realizes she's safe with you that sweet, loving side will show right through!

Miss Jasmine would much appreciate a family who will provide her with plenty of socialization and help her build up her confidence so that she can feel at ease wherever she goes and flaunt her silly, sweet, endearing personality.

She is sure to make an amazing and devoted companion. Jasmine has a positive history with other dogs. She currently weighs 52 pounds.

ARF adoption fees: \$250 for an adult dog, \$375 for a puppy (<6 months), \$150 for a special-needs dog, \$200 for a special-needs puppy (<6 months), and \$150 for a senior dog (7+ years). Adoption fees are waived for US military Veterans.

Kerr



Eight-year-old Kerr is a handsome, gentle, sweet boy, with big, pleading eyes that will play your heart strings like a fiddle!

He is a little shy at first, but give him a few pets and chin scratches and he will be making his special toe-bean biscuits in no time.

He likes to burrow to feel safe and secure, and would do well in a peaceful home that provides him plenty of places to cubby up or snuggle into.

Kerr is FIV+, requiring him to be an indoor only kitty, and his adoption fee has been prepaid by a generous donor.

ARF adoption fees: \$125 for an adult cat, \$175 for a kitten (<6 months), \$200 for two adult cats, \$300 for two kittens, \$75 for a special-needs cat, \$100 for a special-needs kitten (<6 months), and \$75 for a senior cat (7+ years). Adoption fees are waived for US military Veterans.

KIDS CAN GET WILD AT LINDSAY WILDLIFE EXPERIENCE SUMMER CAMPS

Geared towards children ages 4-10, weekly camp programs help kids learn about animals and the environment while having fun. Meet California native wildlife in curriculum-based camps designed to engage, challenge and delight children.

Parents can choose from hybrid

indoor/outdoor camps at Lindsay Wildlife Experience or outdoor camps at Newhall Park in Concord (with a day at Lindsay!)

Camps are held Monday through Friday and have a maximum size of 20 children per camp, with a ratio of campers to helpers at 4:1.

WORD SEARCH SOLUTION

From page 9

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Contra Costa Kennel Club's Groovy Woofstock Among Country's Favorite Dog Show

By Jill Hedgecock. Photos by Diane Walsh, Endlesspaws28.com

Woofstock, ranked as one of the top American Kennel Club (AKC) dog shows in the United States, is a favorite of confirmation dog show

judges and the dog exhibitors from across the country (and internationally) who are vying for the coveted Best in Show title.

Yet, this amazing four-day event hosted by Contra Costa Kennel Club (CCKC) at the Solano Fairground June 9-12 is surprisingly understated locally.

With roughly 2400 dogs each day, tallying over 8000 entries, it is a dog lover's paradise adorned in iconic fashion.

The show's theme is a parody of the infamous Woodstock. Owners, handlers and judges alike come out in full hippie regalia including bell bottoms, fringe jackets, paisley and tie dye attire, and floral headbands. Continuous Woodstock era music is playing over the PA and in the rings. Sixties era merchandise is everywhere. Who doesn't need a new lava lamp? Or to score some CBD to make your canine feel fine?

Over 350 RVs were snuggled in the fairground parking lot. Most of the participants know each other as they compete in several shows throughout the year.

The process of selecting the best of the best is fascinating. For a first-time attendee, the judge's task may seem impossible. How does one compare the attributes of a Chihuahua to a Great Dane to pick a winner? It turns out the dogs are competing to best meet a written standard for their own breed. Connecticut-based Judge Abby Patrizio, one of 60+ judges, sat with me in the judge's observation area, and gave me a crash course in the judging process.

According to Mireille Bischel, the Show Chair and President of Contra Costa Kennel Club (CCKC), Woofstock launched in 2008. This year's show was jointly hosted with the Yosemite Kennel Club.

A separate competition called Junior Showmanship is where handlers between the ages of 8 to 18 are judged on how well they show the dog. But Junior handlers can also show in rings where the dog is judged. Best Junior Handler, Brielle Villarreal, has been showing dogs since she was 8 years old. She and her bulldog, Olive, have been learning the ropes for seven years now.

"I take a lot of pride in bringing recognition to my breed, and that's what I intend to do in the future," Villarreal said. Villarreal went on to Westminster with her bulldog the following week.

Group competitions slate the best individual dogs within a specific breed against other breeds in their designated group. The seven groups are working, herding, toy, hound, terrier, sporting and nonsporting. The top four dogs in each group receive an award, with the first-place winner moving on to the Best in Show competition.

"What the judge is looking for is how does each of those individual breeds meet the described standards of the AKC?" Patrizio said. "Can that dog do what it was bred to do? She also described the importance of temperament. "Does the dog have confidence? Is it unsure of itself?"

The next group entering the ring was the working group, which includes up to 31 breeds. Every judge must also be a breeder and Patrizio's breed is Bernese Mountain Dog. Because the largest dogs are often judged first in the group competition, a Great Dane was up.

"Great Danes should be the Apollo of the group," Patrizio said. "It should be noble and regal and stand proud. They were originally bred to take down wild boar."

As applause erupted for a Bull Mastiff, Patrizio indicated judges should also not be influenced by the crowd's cheers.

When asked about the hazards of judging, Patrizio said very few people bring a truly aggressive dog to a dog show, but an Akita puppy once bit her forehead. It never returned to the ring, she explained. But AKC has procedures for reinstatement.



It is no small feat to become an AKC conformation judge.

Prospective judges must have a minimum of 12-years' experience in the breed they propose to judge. Besides taking workshops and gaining ring experience, they must have bred and raised at least five litters in their own home, and breed or own four or more champions.

Whistles and clapping filled the air, drawing our attention to the ring as the seven winners entered. The Sporting Group was represented by a Weimaraner, the Working Group by the Standard Schnauzer, the Nonsporting Group by the Keeshond, the Herding Group by the Shetland Sheepdog, the Terrier Group by the Smooth Fox Terrier, the Hound Group by the Long-haired Dachshund, and the Toy Group by the Affenpincher.

The Judge first selected the Affenpincher as the Reserve Dog. If the Best in Show winner is disqualified, the title and ribbon go to the reserve dog. Then with the giant Best in Show Ribbon in hand, she pronounced Roam, the Weimaraner, as Best in Show. Pautz and Roam, as were many other exhibitors, rushed off to travel to the Lyndhurst Estate in Tarrytown, NY for the upcoming Westminster Dog Show, where they will pursue another Best in Show title—this time without the tie dye.

Jill Hedgecock writes Diablo Gazette's dog rescue column, Ruby-dooby do to the Rescue and is the author of two dog inspired novels, Between Shadow's Eyes and From Shadow's Perspective.



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The Naked Gardener

David George, UC-certified Master Gardener

Native Plants and Irrigation Reduces Water Use



Mary Wattis Brown Natives Garden, courtesy UC Davis Arboretum

July ranks high in outdoor entertainment, with patio parties and barbecues surrounded by gardens. So, is your garden looking green and flowery or somewhat dried up? Mine is drying up quickly.

Gardeners have some options of what can be done to help their struggling plants through yet another summer of low natural water without driving your water bill through the roof.

Take out the lawn

Lush green lawns are a delight to naked feet. Kids and dogs also love them. But lawns are by far the largest consumers of irrigation water in urban and suburban regions. Watering a lawn takes about four times as much water as the same area planted in low water needs plants such as California natives.

You will cut your overall water bill substantially just by replacing your lawn with decorative stones or native landscaping. CA natives have adapted to go nearly or completely dormant during scorching summer months. Commercial grass in lawns often originates in Oregon where it experiences much different summer weather and quickly turns brown in intense California heat.

Another option for lawn replacement is a sturdy, low-water usage ground cover. Two favorite Contra Costa master gardener lawn replacement ground covers are dymondia (Silver Carpet) and kurapia.

Dymondia grows densely up to 1-2 inches high, tolerates foot traffic, and requires low water use once established. It is increasingly used in Southern California as a lawn replacement and produces yellow daisy-like flowers. Dymondia may get burned edges by short-term frosts in temperatures in the twenties but will bounce back.



lay Dymondia for a low-water lawn substitute. Photo courtesy of UCANR.

Kurapia, originally from Japan, is greener than dymondia and can tolerate temperatures down to the teens Fahrenheit. It is drought-tolerant once established, incredibly good with foot traffic, and grows faster and taller than dymondia. An occasional mowing will keep it in the 2-3-inch-high range. Its white flowers attract bees, so that is another reason to mow if you are bee sensitive.



Kurapia, courtesy UCANR

Overhead vs. Drip Irrigation

If you are above-ground watering large areas, you are using more water than your plants need. Above-ground water tends to evaporate quickly and often ends up in unintended places like sidewalks, driveways, gutters, and drains.

A better option is to install a drip and micro-spray irrigation system. Run 5/8-inch main tubing, staked along the surface of your soil in the general area of your plantings. Connect 1 or 2 1/4 inch tubes and run them to each of your individual plants, with a staked 1-gallon per hour emitter at the end (emitters can also attach directly to the main tubing). Then cover up the lines with a thick 1-3-inch layer of organic compost. Do not use weed cloth underneath as it breaks the connection between the mulch and your in-ground microbiome that consumes it. This guarantees that your plant roots get the water they were intended to receive.

For groundcover or closely planted areas in your landscape, use adjustable micro-sprayers elevated on 12-16-inch risers and stakes. Be sure to install a smart irrigation controller that can adjust watering cycles based on ground moisture levels, temperatures, and seasonal changes.

Always be waterwise in your California naked garden and enjoy those outdoor parties.

Email with your questions at NakedGardener@diablogazette.com.

Water Use Surcharge Begins July 1

Costa Water District's Board of Directors adopted a temporary drought surcharge as part of its Drought Management Program. The surcharge will be effective July 1 to encourage conservation and to recover costs related to the impacts of an ongoing drought.

In April of this year, facing a third consecutive dry year and responding to an executive order from Gov. Newsom aimed at bolstering statewide water supplies, Contra Costa Water District implemented Stage 2 of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan seeking an overall 15% reduction in water use as compared to 2020. A temporary drought surcharge was proposed as part of that Drought Management Program and required a public notification and review process. After conducting an open public hearing on June 15, the Board adopted the proposed surcharge.

"This is a decision that we take seriously and comments and questions from our customers were important as we considered the entire Drought Management Program," said Board President Ernesto Avila. "The District has tightened expenditures and used reserves to balance finances, and we concluded that this surcharge is another temporary measure needed to maintain 24/7 water service during this drought."

The approved temporary drought surcharge of 15%, or \$0.79 per 748 gallons for treated water customers, is effective for water delivered starting July 1.

For the average customer using 260 gallons of water per day, the surcharge amounts to approximately \$0.28 per day;

customers achieving the 15% conservation goal will see little to no increase in their total water bill.

The Drought Management Program also includes a credit to offset the drought surcharge for efficient treated water households using 200 gallons per day or less; the credit is funded with non-rate revenues.

President Avila added, "Our customers are known for responding to calls for conservation and we are confident that this year we will see the same. The District has numerous programs and resources to help customers achieve the conservation goals and manage their own water bill."

Full details of the Drought Management Program and information on conservation resources and rebates are all available at www.ccwater.com/drought.



"Keep Your Showers Short" by Sophie, Walnut Creek. Artwork featured in the Contra Costa Water District Youth Wall Calendar Contest.

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Ancestral Healing – Inherited Memories of Trauma



By Dr. Holly Holmes-Meredith, D. Min., MFT, Board Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist and Bill Yarborough, CHT and Certified EFT Practitioner

Do you have any exaggerated emotional tendencies that puzzle you? Perhaps you fly off the handle whenever a car cuts in front of you or freeze up around assertive personalities or fear your partner will desert you.

Sometimes you can make reasonable assumptions about what causes such emotional reactions, either on your own or with the help of a healing professional. Regarding the tendencies highlighted above, traumatic experiences could be a contributing factor, such as people violating your boundaries as a child, bullies picking on you in school, or your experiencing abandonment issues early in life. But sometimes there may be no apparent life experiences that created your exaggerated emotional reactions.

It could lead you to conclude that you were just born that way – and recent advances in epigenetics indicate you might be right.

Epigenetics is the study of changes in organisms caused by a modification of gene expression rather than an alteration of the genetic code itself. Recent epigenetics studies indicate trauma can change the expression of the DNA in our cells, and these changes are passed down from our parents and previous generations to us—and we pass them down to our children and generations beyond. There is also evidence that we can inherit memories of trauma in our bodies.

DNA expression is not the only form by which trauma or other dysfunctional family patterns go from one generation to the next. Dysfunctional family patterns are often passed down through behavior, language, programming routines, family rituals, and numerous other forms. Often, we are unconscious of these patterns, many of which developed during our parents, grandparents, and forebears' lives.

A simple overview of history tells us that many of our parents, grandparents, and family ancestors experienced considerable trauma, including wars, pandemics, slavery, genocide, economic turbulence, homelessness, and others. It would be naïve to think none of our ancestors experienced trauma.

How do you break this generational cycle?

The first and most important step is to heal yourself. When you heal trauma and/or dysfunctional patterns within yourself, you heal generations in the future, preventing the passing of trauma by genetics and/or destructive behaviors. Personal transformations resulting from healing can allow future generations to overcome the limitations of the current and previous generations. In the certain native shamanic traditions, it is believed that healing yourselves heals seven generations in the future—and seven generations in the past.

If you believe you are struggling with issues that could relate to your ancestral history, look for reoccurring patterns in your family and ancestors that are dysfunctional, such as abandonment, drug or alcohol abuse, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse,

poverty, or other disabling patterns. Are there any of these patterns you are experiencing or possibly perpetuating either consciously or unconsciously?

Bill experienced significant trauma during a period in his childhood and used a range of therapeutic tools to heal. However, when he looked beyond the traumas in his own life, he realized there was significant trauma in his family history. His mother was raised in Nazi, Germany, and experienced the bombing of Dresden. His father fought in two wars and worked for the American War Crimes staff interviewing perpetrators who operated the Nazi death camps. Bill's grandparents and great grandparents likewise experienced wars and other major traumas. Bill is now addressing ancestral traumas

besides those that occurred during his own life.

If you find ancestral patterns or behaviors exist within you that are beyond what you can handle, consider professional

help. Professional practitioners are available online or in-person. Teaching professionals often have interns who charge minimal amounts.

A professional practitioner can use hypnotherapy, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), Reiki, self-hypnosis, and many other modalities to help you heal. EFT is an energetic healing approach that involves tapping on pressure points on the body to get release from negative emotions or traumas. Reiki is a hands-on, energetic healing technique that can create deep relaxation to help the body release stress and traumas. Hypnotherapy and self-hypnosis may provide you an opportunity to connect with your ancestors. For example, in Family Parts Therapy, you can go into a hypnotic state and visualize healing dialogues with your parents and other ancestors.

Several of the above healing techniques can be learned and practice on your own such as EFT, self-hypnosis, and Reiki.

You can also embark on an inner journey using prayer, meditation, yoga, mindfulness, and journaling to create an inner peace your current lifestyle may not provide. Such practices can lead to greater mental clarity, allowing you to better recognize habits to keep, discard, or start. Such explorations can create a heightened sense of well-being and a powerful determination to continue on a spiritual path of transformation, supporting you in rising above hardships and connecting with a power greater than yourself.

When you take steps to heal yourself, you are also taking steps to heal future generations of your family and maybe your broader culture. You may even trigger a spiritual transformation within yourself.

If you have questions or comments, please reach out to us via the contact information on our websites: Holly at hypnoheapytraining.com or Bill at billyarborough.com.



Neuroplasticity: You Were Born to Move

By Jessica Raam Foster, NeurologyofPresence.com

As a Neuro Performance Coach, the overwhelming majority of pain or performance limitations I see in my clients stem from a LACK OF USE

Our lives have become physically convenient. We have machines that do just about everything for us at this point; and while this is certainly advantageous in many areas, our lifestyle deserves a caution label.

The original blueprint for the human brain requires MOVEMENT, and despite how advanced our Frontal Cortex has become, that fundamental design still exists. If we don't include a healthy dose of movement in our lives, the entire organism will decline.

Neural real estate is also calorically expensive, so if you stop using a specific area, it will eventually atrophy and die to make more resources available for the parts you are using. As our world's demand for physical activity decreases, our general health is going down with it.

So, what do we do about this? Here are three simple things you can do today that can slow neural decline!

1 LOOK UP! Thanks to our devices, most of us are clocking an inordinate amount of downward convergence (looking at something up close). Looking at something off in the distance can help reset the eyes and can have some immediate effects on anxiety, energy, and even posture.

2 Choose complex movements. If the only exercise you get is on an

exercise machine, you are limiting the brain's opportunity to respond physically in the world. Yoga, dance, martial arts, and ball sports are all practices that allow the body to move through the world in multiple planes. These stimulate the brain in important ways.



3 Stimulate your senses. Stop and smell the flowers, play beautiful music while you work, or ask for a hug. All these things can help remind your brain that you have a physical body and that it matters to you!

These suggestions may seem superficial but incorporating them into your daily life can have a significant impact on pain and performance. Your brain and body work hand in hand. If you want to take care of one, you must take care of the other.

Jessica Raam Foster is a Neuro Performance Coach.
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theRIGHTmove
By Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate
www.BuyStageSell.com

How's the Market?

Let's talk about the elephant in the room. The most asked question for Realtors, and particularly now is, "How's the market?"

The Sky is not falling.

Yes, interest rates are up. When Bob and I bought our house years ago, the interest rate was 9.5% and we felt lucky that they were under 10%.

Sure, it does slow the market for the interest rates to rise, but a more balanced market for buyers will allow those who have been trying and unable to buy, to be able to do so at last. For sellers, it will mean you may get offers and must negotiate a bit.

You may receive offers that require you to do repairs and/or have a contingency on financing or selling the buyers home or condominium.

Your home may stay on the market a little longer, but seriously, one to three days on the market is abnormal, although it has been the norm for a while. Historically, there were times where homes for sale were on the market for months, not days. This is more of what a balanced market looks like.

You might feel like you have missed the market. Conservatively, with 15% to 20% or more gains in market value in most cities each year in the last few years, you have done very well with your real estate.

Perspective is everything, isn't it?

You are living in California. Unless you just bought it within the last month, you probably have made money on your home. If you purchased your home after the 2010-2011 crash, you have made money on your home. If you have owned it for many years, you have also made money on your home.

The prices in places you will be moving to will be affected by the interest rates too, so you may sell a bit lower but also buy a bit lower. It's all relative. Buying a home as a place to live and grow and have security is why you want to buy. Speculators might get caught in this kind of market, but most folks want a place to call home. That is why they buy.

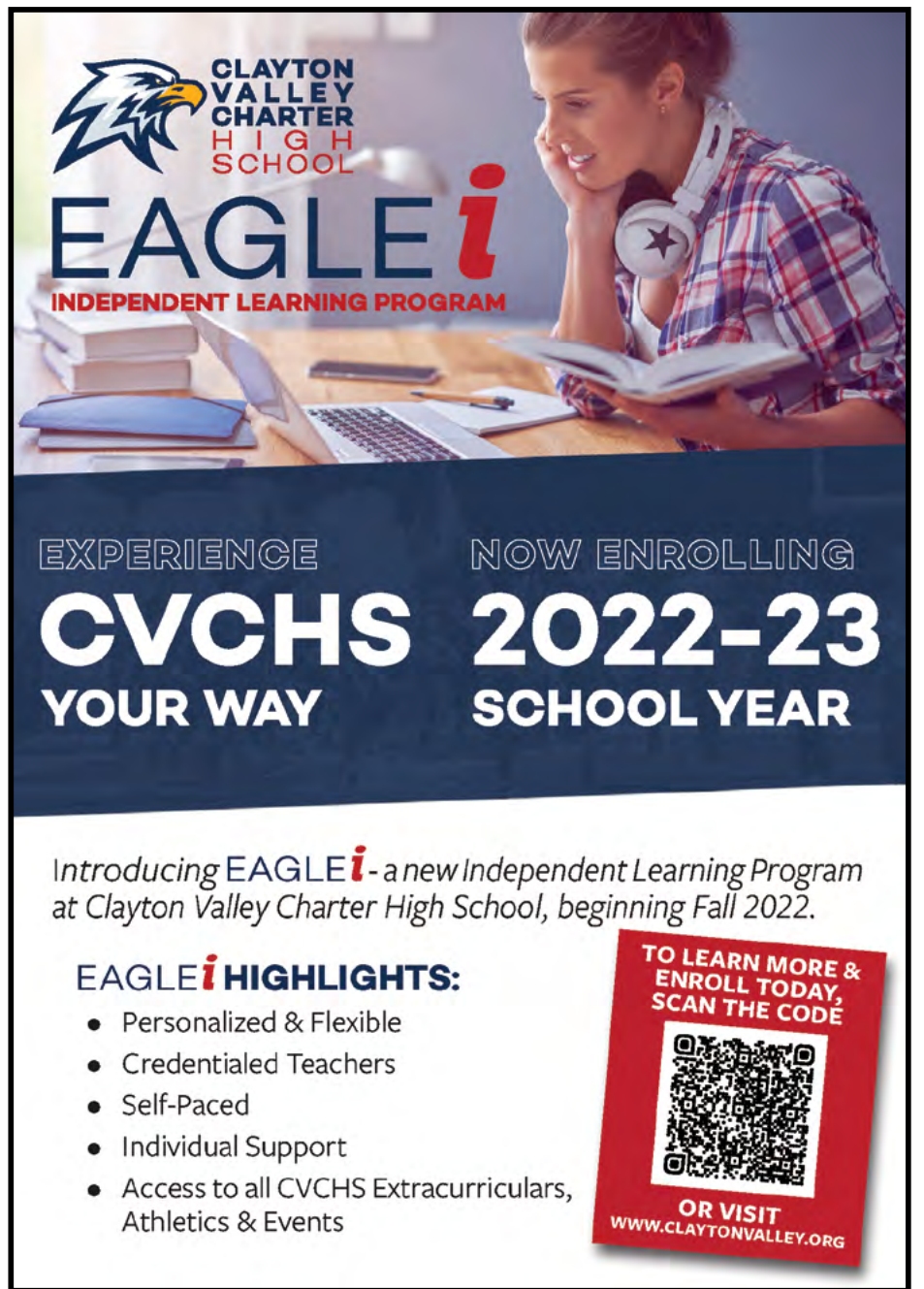
The market is just the market. Your Realtor's job is to know how to navigate the market you are in. This is where experience counts.



Terrylynn Fisher
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aRt Cottage
by FROgard www.artcottage.info

Let's Go Out in the Fresh Air to Paint en Plein Air!

Plein air painting is about experiencing, painting and drawing in the landscape. The practice goes back for centuries but was truly made into an art form by the French Impressionists. Their desire to paint light and its changing qualities, plus the invention of transportable paint tubes and the French easel gave artists the freedom to paint outside. It was a new way to paint and a new way to express yourself.

Still today we are seeing artists set easels up outside and paint what they see the way they see it. You will find many of the paintings in the current aRt Cottage exhibit are of public places right here in Contra Costa County: Black Diamond Mine, Markham Nature Park, Borgess Ranch, Lime Ridge, Eckley Pier, and Blake Garden, to name a few.

Two of the featured artists are Nancy Roberts, an acrylic painter, and MJ Lazarski, an oil painter.

When asked about the joys and struggles of creating a painting outside from start to finish, MJ Lazarski said, "Sunburn, dehydration, mosquitoes, suicidal bugs that fly into my wet skies frustrate me. Navigating and hiking up mountains with all my heavy gear, food, and water can be a bit painful. Then there is the finding a private area to potty, that can be tough."

Lazarski says that he typically paints for six to 10 straight hours in a day. He admits that rain and snow are incredibly tough to paint in, yet part of the plein air painting experience is all of that.

"I meet so many people that chat me up while painting. Some of them have become close friends, and a few others have added my pictures to their collections. This more intimate connection reinforces my passion and I get to learn how my composition makes them feel in real time authenticity. This is something I just can't replicate from my home studio painting alone and painting from reference photos. This is what really brings me joy!"

Roberts learned how to paint by watching her mother. "She was an outdoor painter and she let me paint alongside her when my family went on camping trips. Her landscapes were lively and colorful, and she encouraged me to have fun and be expressive. I've been painting outdoors ever since and loving it."

What are some of her favorite places to set up and paint? "I love gardens, orchards, regional parks, waterfronts, historic ranches, and vintage townscapes. I feel so fortunate to live in the Bay Area where we have all those environments in abundance," she says.

In finding the right spot Roberts agrees with Lazarski, "Schlepping your gear along a bumpy uphill trail to reach that perfect painting spot can be a challenge, but it's always worth it once you get there."

Contra Costa Plein Air artists are exhibiting July 6th through August 26th. There will be an artist reception and open house on Saturday July 9th

from 2:00 to 4:00. This is a free event and fun for all ages. Live music and refreshments are provided courtesy of the aRt Cottage and 21 participating artists.

The aRt Cottage is located at 2238 Mount Diablo Street concord. For more information go to artcottage.info.



Above: "Foggy Day at Big Break Regional Shoreline" by Gail Jones; MJ Lazarski painting en Plein Air at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco; (Right) "La Hacienda" by Roswitha Kress.; Nancy Roberts painting in the orchard.



BUSINESS UNUSUAL:



Engaging with Customers for Good

By Sheri Nelson, The Local Shop

Your customer has many choices when purchasing from you or others in your industry. Always look for ways to stand out so your business can always be top of mind.

A wonderful way to do this is authentically connecting with community.

Partnering with a cause that is personal to you allows your customers to know more about you and what you value. They will engage with your business more often knowing they are also contributing to others.

This kind of connection has always been available to local businesses but with social media and websites, your business can now offer so much more.

Instead of simply donating or volunteering, use your website and social media to invite your customers to add their support, credit your team for their help or highlight more about the non-profit and what they do. Earn extra points by telling your story of why you champion this cause or group.

Here are some common ways to connect with community:

Promote the local school or after-school program. Host special events on game days or during finals. Students, teachers, and parents will all appreciate your support.

Have the local animal shelter host an adoption day or clinic at your location. Animals are appealing to virtually everyone. Social media posts with animals receive some of the biggest engagement numbers.

Organize volunteer days at the Food Bank, park clean-ups, and city events with your staff.

Invite customers to participate with your team. There is no better way to create a more significant link between your business and your customer.

Highlight a customer or staffer who volunteers regularly on your social media or website.

Let patrons know with in-store signage and on social media that you will be donating once a month to a different non-profit (501c3) and ask them for their suggestions.

Tell customers on social media and your website how you donate leftover products to shelters or senior homes.

Use your social media and in-store signage to support local community

events by giving details and tagging them.

Be sure to tell others what you are doing. Some might consider non-profit work to be something you should keep to yourself. In this age of social media, it is more important to share your work and bring a bigger awareness to the cause.

Capture photos of everything: your staff at volunteer events, campaigns running at your store, or products that you are donating.

Post these pictures on social media or website. Always include your customers in any credit for their support.

Get Started



If you are looking for something to do in July: On July 29, Family Giving Tree will host their annual "Support Our Schools" backpack drive for Bay Area Schools in need, including schools in Concord.

NBC Bay Area, Telemundo, and NBC Bay Area Sports are partnering with Visit Concord and will take over Salvio Pacheo Square for a day dedicated to the program. Backpacks can be donated or purchased and donated on site.

Local businesses (including The Local Shop) are partnering and offering their products as thank-yous to those who donate. If you would like to partner, email sheri@welcometotheshop.com.

Sheri Nelson is a passionate marketer helping local businesses. She spent 27 years in Bay Area radio before starting The Local Shop. Follow her on Instagram for more tips at the_local_shop_bay_area or email her your questions at sheri@welcometotheshop.com

Views of the Valley

Photos by Micah



Clayton Valley HS baseball t 2022 freshman team that went 21-2 this Spring landing them atop the Diablo Athletic League'. Bottom row (kneeling), Left to Right: Leland Trevino, K.J. Crawford, Nick Caputo, Parker Schreiner, Coach Herc Pardi, Reggie Drummer, John Warrender Top row (standing), Left to Right: Coach John Dean, Caleb Muhlestein, Luke Dean, Mateo Perez, Alex "Jr." Gonzalez, Nate Underwood, Coach Scott Meylan, Alonzo Alvarez, Logan Knapp, Raul Ramos, Coach Chris Snyder, Ty Wilson. (Not Pictured: Cole Edmundson



Annual King of the County BBQ event at the Martinez marina. is always a crowd pleaser.



Citizens took to the streets in Walnut Creek on June 11 for an Anti-gun Violence March to Civic Park.



Diablo Valley Corvette Show at Todos Santos Park in Concord



Martial arts was one of many performances at Bay Area Kidfest on Memorial Day weekend at Mt. Diablo High School.



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