

Diablo Gazette™

December 2025

THE HOLIDAY EDITION



Jeremy and Sally Altman, and their son John, narrowed down their search at the Alhambra Christmas Tree Farm. in Martinez. Story on page



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Spoiler Alert: Holiday messages hidden in this edition

Welcome to the Holiday Edition. Virtually every bit of content will be related to this festive season. I am grateful for the ongoing support the community has given this publication.

Congratulations goes out to Claudia Lemus, staff and the Sugar Plum Coffee Shop downtown Concord. This is Sugar Plum's 66th year in business in Concord. I also like it when advertisers are supported by readers and the community at large.

This photo is a screen shot of a video posted on their Facebookpage of the actual anniversary date, November 29. I

It was so nice to see how the community supported this beloved coffee shop on its anniversary. Every booth, table and bar stool was filled. Congratulations Sugar Plum.

In Clayton, Vinnie's Taqueria is in the stages of a soft opening getting the crew experienced while the restaurant awaits its liquor license. Once approved, be listening for a Grand Opening announcement.

Last month, Faith Taylor started advertising her Snowfire Ranch Magical Minis. She leases out ponies, Buffy and Dazzle, and puppies Romeo and Rudy. The puppies are trained to ride the ponies. This is a guaranteed kids delight, especially at birthday parties.

But birthdays are not the only use for these ponies, as one client sent her this 10-year photo when they rented the ponies to stage a Nativity scene.

Do you remember ponies being mentioned in a manger? They were not. These minis were disguised as camels.

Happy Holidays! May 2026 be all you wish for and more.



It was a full house on November 2, as Sugar Plum celebrated it's 66th Anniversary.



No ponies here, just these two camels.

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AND CAJUN CREAM SAUCE

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ROASTED CARROTS AND SQUASH

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Kim Trupiano
Mayor, Clayton
kimT@claytonca.gov

That's a Wrap

It's hard to believe that it's been a year since I became Mayor in the City of Clayton. It has been the honor of my lifetime to serve the community I love so much. I want to thank everyone for all of their support, feedback, advice, and engagement this year. You helped make this year's accomplishments that much sweeter.

I started off the year with quite a checklist of goals that I wanted to accomplish, and I am happy to say that the majority of my list has been completed as I end my term. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the support and hard work of our City staff, my fellow Councilmembers, and the support of the community.

Here are just some of the highlights from this past year:

Approval of the City's first two-year budget for 2025-2026/2026-2027

Sixth Housing Element completed and submitted to HCD for final approval and certification

Completion of our two-year, \$2 million Climatec project: LED lighting, solar array, EV charging, HVAC, and irrigation controls.

Successful City-sponsored events like Concerts in the Grove, 4th of July Parade, Classic Car Show, and Hispanic Heritage Day.

A renewed collaboration with Clayton Business & Community

Association (CBCA)

Passage of Geological Hazard Abatement District assessment

City Council Good Governance Training

Hosted the Contra Costa County Mayor's Conference in April

Recognized the Unsung Heroes in our community each month

Do The Right Thing Year: a year-round recognition, honoring students from Mt. Diablo Elementary (MDE) and Diablo View Middle Schools

A continued partnership with the Parent Faculty Clubs (PFC) from both local schools

Hosted two "Coffee with the Mayor" events to connect with the community

Let's Talk Business

Attention Dog Owners: Clayton Station Shopping Center is welcoming a new business called Woof Gang Bakery and Grooming. If you haven't been to their website yet, you must check it out, woofgangbakery.com. They hope to be open early next year. Keep an eye out for other announcements from the shopping center in 2026.

I want to congratulate Nick Maamari, the owner of La Veranda Café in Clayton, for opening his second restaurant in our downtown



called Vinny's Taqueria, named after his first grandson. Vinny's had a soft opening in early November and will be announcing their grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony soon. What a nice addition to our downtown, and we wish them all the best.

In addition to Vinny's, consider other dining options this holiday season like Moresi's Chophouse, Enye Latin Table and La Veranda Cafe.

I also want to congratulate Cup O' Jo for celebrating 20 years in business and the Village Market for 35 years in business. What a testament to the dedication and hard work of our business community.

Make It to Clayton for the Holidays!

Be sure to join us on Saturday, December 6, at 5:00 p.m., as the City of Clayton and the CBCA put on another exciting "Holidays in the Grove" program at The Grove Park in our downtown. Festivities include the performances by the CVCHS marching band, the MDE second-grade choir, the Merrie Olde Carolers, hot cider and donuts, Santa and Mrs. Claus including photos with Santa, and of course, the spectacular tree lighting.

The traditional Lighting of the Menorah will take place from December 14 to December 22, at the

Corral Plaza in downtown Clayton. Thank you, Claude Heifetz, for organizing a beautiful ceremony all eight nights every year.

Ode to Mayor Kim Trupiano (Short, Sweet, and Beautiful)

I want to conclude my last Mayor's column with a wonderful poem from the CVCHS Senior Class of 2025:

"Oh, Mayor Kim Trupiano, you're simply the best,
With wit and charm, you pass every test.

Short and beautiful, you're quick on your feet,

Fixing problems with smiles, no task you can't beat.

From potholes to speeches, you've got it all,

You handle each challenge, standing tall.

With a twinkle in your eye, and laughter so sweet,

You make every town meeting an unforgettable treat.

You balance the budget with a flick of your wrist,

And no one can top your "Mayor's list!"

So here's to you, Kim, who leads with grace,

Making our town a much better place."

Thank you, Class of 2025 (CVCHS)

Wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season and remember, we're stronger together!



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MARKET
UPDATE

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UPDATE

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
3052 Mirwok Way	\$1,450,000	3373	5/3.5	10/2/2025
1290 Easley Dr	\$1,285,000	2391	4/2.5	10/15/2025
117 Crow Pl	\$900,000	1493	3/2	10/27/2025
1980 Curry Canyon Rd	\$1,400,000	4435	3/2.5	10/31/2025
15 Mirango Ct	\$995,000	2010	4/2.5	11/4/2025
1343 Shell Ln	\$649,000	1145	2/2	11/6/2025
1923 Eagle Peak Ave	\$662,000	1252	2/2.5	11/14/2025

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
721 Santa Ana Ln	\$1,020,000	1648	3/2	10/22/2025
5341 Forte Ln	\$828,000	2002	4/2.5	10/29/2025
1739 Sapling Ct #A	\$470,000	1288	3/2.5	10/30/2025
889 Madigan Ave	\$910,000	1432	4/2	10/31/2025
5508 Connecticut Dr	\$750,000	1158	3/2	11/3/2025
2730 Calpine Pl	\$925,000	1735	4/2	11/10/2025
1170 Sunrise Hill	\$1,049,000	2405	3/2.5	11/13/2025

Based on information from CCRAR/Paragon-MLS® as of 11/17/25. All data, including all measurements and calculations of area, is obtained from various sources and has not been, and will not be, verified by broker or MLS. All information should be independently reviewed and verified for accuracy. Properties may or may not be listed by the office/agent presenting the information.

Flip the Switch ceremony lauds energy efficient infrastructure transformation

by David King

On November 17, the City of Clayton held a “Flip the Switch” ceremony at Hoyer Hall to celebrate its completion of its Comprehensive Infrastructure Renewal and General Fund Savings Program marking a significant milestone in the City’s commitment to fiscal responsibility and environmental sustainability.

Through energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy installations, including a net zero energy site, the \$2 million program is expected to deliver \$4.7 million in lifecycle savings through reduced utility and operational costs.

“By modernizing our infrastructure, we’ve taken the steps to improve the functionality and comfort of our facilities while generating substantial savings that benefit our entire community,” Mayor Trupiano said.

In 2023, an assessment of the City’s infrastructure revealed many opportunities to update or replace inefficient or failing systems with more energy efficient equipment. Key improvements made include citywide LED street lighting, interior and exterior LED lighting upgrades, smart irrigation control systems, high-efficiency HVAC modernizations, building automation systems and a solar PV parking shade structure.

These improvements create a net-zero energy site across City Hall, the library, the maintenance and operations building and the Police Department. The program also included the installation of new electric vehicle charging stations and a comprehensive water study.

The short presentation included comments from City Manager Kris Loftus, Mayor Kim Trupiano, and Vice Mayor Jeff Wan, among others.

“Clayton’s leadership in energy modernization demonstrates how



Mayor Trupiano “Flips the Switch” to ceremoniously launch the City of Clayton’s conversion to an energy efficient infrastructure.

public agencies can transform aging infrastructure into high-performing assets,” said City Manager Kris Loftus.

Mayor Trupiano added, “The City’s achievement sets a strong example for municipalities throughout the region.”

“Mayor Kim Trupiano and I were proud to help guide this effort through staff transitions, ensuring the project stayed on course and true to the City’s long-term vision,” stated Vice Mayor Jeff Wan.

The program was funded through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and a California Energy Commission 1% ECAA loan, which minimized impact on the City’s general fund and maximized community benefits. Additionally, the City is in the process of applying for Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) reimbursements for solar and EV charging infrastructure investments.

The City invites the community to join them in “flipping the switch” at City Hall on Nov. 17 at 4 p.m. There will be light refreshments provided.



Pleasant Hill is known throughout the region for its festive and well-decorated homes, with many people driving in from surrounding cities to enjoy the displays.

The Civic Action Commission of Pleasant Hill announced a new tradition...the Holiday Glow Decoration Contest!

You have until December 10, 2025, to decorate your home for the holidays, and then register to have it put on a downloadable map. Neighbors, friends, and the community will be able to walk or drive by and check out your fantastic decorations.

Members of the Civic Action Commission will go to each house, and vote on the best decorations, with

winners announced on December 20, 2025.

To register your home, go to www.phillca.gov/holidayglow. Registration deadline is December 10, 2025.

After December 10th registration deadline, anyone who enjoys cruising through the neighborhoods in search of stunning lighting displays, return to the website to download a map of all the contestants.

Once the competition has begun, you can vote for your favorite house and provide feedback on the decor, themes, and special flourishes you particularly love.

Winners will be announced on December 20, 2025. Happy decorating!

Council Recognizes Clayton Valley Village as Unsung Hero



Clayton Valley Village members and volunteers attended the awards ceremony at the Clayton City Council meeting on November 18, 2025.

The Clayton City Council recognized Clayton Valley Village (CVV) as October’s Unsung Hero Award Recipient.

In 2016, Clayton Valley Village was established as an entirely volunteer-driven non-profit organization, in order to meet the needs of Clayton’s growing senior population, which represents 35% of our city’s population.

In 2017, it began serving its first members, enabling them to remain active and independent in their own homes. This organization serves as Clayton’s own community senior center and today provides services to 91 members with 74 volunteers. They are always looking for new volunteers. My husband and I have been proud volunteers since 2022.

Clayton Valley Village, like the more than 350 “Villages” nationwide, is a membership-based organization, that provides transportation help, handyman assistance, from changing light bulbs to computer assistance, as well as a number of social activities like birthday parties, game nights, lunch dates, hikes, and movie outings.

These tasks are carried out by CVV’s network of screened volunteers and seniors working together, using

resources and personal talents that we have right here in our own community.

For many, a life-changing event, illness or a single accident can create the need for some assistance. Often they are suddenly facing driving difficulties. Or completing household tasks becomes an issue. Life can spiral into isolation and suffer a lack of companionship.

So, for seniors who want to stay happily in their own homes for as long as possible, these member services are invaluable. For volunteers, it’s a wonderful way to help their neighbors, get to know new people and participate in fun events.

This is why we are especially thankful that Clayton Valley Village steps up to care for our own seniors, many of whom have lived here a long time having raised their families.

Thank you, Clayton Valley Village, for being such an important part of our community and for all you do for seniors and their families.

Article was shared by Clayton Mayor Kim Trupiano from the awardspresentation at the City council meeting on November 18, 2025)



Clayton Valley Village President, Marilyn Wollenweber, receives Unsung Hero award from Mayor Trupiano.

Cal writer member sounds alarm, scams are targeting authors

Bruce Lewis, author and member of the California Writers Club, Mt Diablo Branch, is sounding the alarm about AI-generated scams targeting authors with an eBook, “Fool’s Gold - AI’s Assault on Indie Authors.”

“Fool’s Gold” includes conversations with scammers, some contentious, and tips on how authors can protect themselves.

“After dealing with a daily deluge of fake emails praising my books while trying to pick my pocket, I took several weeks off from my regular writing schedule to deal with the issue,” said Lewis.

Lewis was a newspaper crime reporter for seven years, including three years with the Contra Costa Times (now the East Bay Times). Retired, he is the author of six novels and lives in Walnut Creek. “Fool’s Gold” is now available on Amazon.





What You Need to Know About Recalled Electrical Panels

Recently, while preparing a home here in Clayton for sale, I was reminded just how important a thorough home inspection can be whether you're selling or staying put. During the buyer's inspection, the home inspector flagged the electrical panel as one that had been recalled. Out of curiosity, I went home to check mine and discovered I had the exact same panel. You can imagine how quickly I called my electrician to have it replaced.

Electrical panels aren't something most homeowners think about. They sit quietly in a garage or side yard, and unless something trips, we rarely give them a second glance. But outdated or recalled panels can pose serious fire and electrical hazards—hazards homeowners often don't know are hiding in plain sight.

Which Panels Are Known Issues?

Home inspectors and electricians routinely check for several brands and models that have been linked to safety concerns. Some of the most commonly flagged include:

- **Federal Pacific Electric (FPE) Stab-Lok** panels, widely known for breakers that can fail to trip in overload situations.
- **Zinsco/Sylvania** panels, which may overheat and melt internal components.
- **Challenger** brand panels, associated with overheating and breaker failure.
- **Recent recalls**, such as certain **Schneider Electric** panels manufactured between February 2020 and January 2022, which may overheat under specific conditions.

These issues aren't cosmetic. They relate directly to fire risk and the safe operation of your home's electrical system.

What Happens During an Inspection?

A home inspector will typically open the panel, look for branding or model information, and identify any known recalls or safety concerns. If anything looks questionable, they will recommend that a licensed electrician step in for a full evaluation or replacement.

For sellers, this can mean an unexpected repair during escrow. For homeowners, it's a chance to address a safety issue before it becomes a bigger problem.

When a Home Inspector Saves More Than a Sale

My own recent experience was a reminder that safety doesn't begin and end with a real estate transaction. An inspection report meant for a buyer ended up protecting my home, too.

Whether you've lived in your house for 30 years or just moved in, it's worth taking a moment to check your electrical panel. Or, better yet, have a professional do it. Replacing a recalled panel may not be the home improvement project you had planned this year, but it's one of the most meaningful investments you can make in your family's safety.

If you are unsure what kind of panel you have or want recommendations for licensed electricians in the Clayton area, I'm always happy to help point you in the right direction. Sometimes the most important fixes are the ones we never see.

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WORD SEARCH - CHRISTMAS

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

ANGEL	GARLAND	NATIVITY	SLEIGH
CANDLE	GIFT	ORNAMENT	SNOWFLAKE
CAROL	GINGERBREAD	REINDEER	STOCKING
COOKIE	HOLLY	RIBBON	TREE
FIREPLACE	MISTLETOE	SANTA	WREATH

SUDOKU

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

WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble these 5 CHRISTMAS words:

NMRANTOE	_____
RBRGNDEEIA	_____
CLEAND	_____
CTRKUCANRE	_____
NILEST	_____

CRYPTOGRAM

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

BRX FDQ WHOO D ORW
DERXW D SHUVRQ EB WKH
ZDB WKHB KDQGOH WKUHH
WKLQJV: D UDLQB GDB,
ORVW OXJJDJH, DQG
WDQJOHG FKULVWPDV
WUHH OLJKWV.
—PDBD DQJHORX

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calendar of events

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Fundraisers

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

December 10 -Supervisor Carlson’s Holiday Open House 4:00-6:00 p.m.



Celebrate the Counties Care Holiday Food Fight for Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. RSVP at tinyurl.com/D4Holidayopenhouse. 2255 Contra Costa Blvd. Ste 202.

December 12 - Sip and Paint by Green Ties 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. includes complimentary bites and wine, networking, pre-sketches and paint supplies. \$50 1000 Burnett Ave. Suite 450
Tickets available at Eventbrite.com

Christmas Events

CONCORD

Friday, Dec. 5, 5:30 to 8 p.m.

The Annual Tree Lightings & Mayor’s Sing-Along. Enjoy pictures with Santa, letters to Santa, real reindeer, crafts, and shopping. On-stage entertainment will include performances by local children groups, talented high school musicians, dancers, and the 925 Band.

The Official Concord Tree Lighting will take place at 7:30 p.m.

In the lead up to the Annual Tree Lightings, the City of Concord and the Todos Santos Business Association recently launched the Todos Santos Snowy Scenes Showdown. Downtown businesses are invited to decorate their front windows with festive holiday and winter-themed displays.

The public will vote for their favorites from Dec. 5 through Dec. 31. All participating businesses will be showcased during the tree lighting and sing-along event on December 5, 2025. To sign up or to learn more,

businesses should email Lisa.Roeber@cityofconcord.org. The deadline for sign-ups is November 14, 2025.

CLAYTON

Saturday, Dec. 6, 5 p.m. The City of Clayton is partnering with CBCA for the annual **“Holidays in the Grove”** event. This year’s program, will feature a canned food drive, carolers, marching bands, tree lighting, arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus, and photos with Santa, and other surprises.

Clayton

December 6 “Holidays in the Grove” City of Clayton and CBCA have organized carolers, marching bands, tree lighting, photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Also a canned food drive and many more surprises. The Grove Park downtown clayton. 5:00 p.m.

December 14-22 - Lightng of the Menorah 5:00 p.m. Corral Plaza Downtown Clayton at the “Corral” on Marsh Creek Road, across from the Grove Park gazebo and next to La Veranda Cafe.

Concord



Concord Chamber First Fridays Coffee - 1st Friday of the month, 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM at Gratitude Coffee Bar, 1655 Willow Pass Rd. Suite B (Park n Shop). Business leaders and community members come together to network, share updates, and hear the latest from the Chamber and the community. Members Free, non-members \$10.

December 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day ceremony. 3:45 p.m. Beacon lighting at 5:00 p.m. Ceremony at Cal State University, Chuck Kohleer, the only Pearl Harbor survivor remaining in California will be guest speaker. Ygnacio Valley Rd. in Concord.

December 12 - Tapestry concert “Love Came Down” Womens chorus and English handbell ensemble. Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, 2925 Bonifacio St. 7:00 p.m. Free. Donations to benefit Peter Pan Foundation.

January 11 - Concord Historical Society Speaker Series” Author Lindsay Marie Morris 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. “Beneath the Sicilian Stars” (WWII fiction)

Concord Museum and Event Center, 1928 Clayton Rd. FREE

Pleasant Hill

December 6 - Mt. Diablo Adult Education Open House and Arts & Craft Sale. 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Over 1000 original works of art and crafts by students and instructors. Toys, jewelry, ceramics, paintings, quilts, knits, and more. Folk guitar minstrels dance demo, . 1 Santa Barbara Rd. Pleasant Hill.

December 10 - Winterfest 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. Enjoy winter-themed indoor/outdoor hands-on activities, live performances, Santa, family rides on the Winter Express train and lots of fun sure to delight the whole family. Food available to purchase. Pleasant Hill Community Center, 320 Civic Drive. Free

December 10 - “Tapestry concert “Love Cam Down” women’s Chorus and English handbell. 7:00 p.m. St Andrews Presbyterian Church, 601 Mary Dr. Free, donations accepted to benefit Peter Pan Foundation.

January 24 Crab Feed hosted by Pleasant Hill Lions Club, All you can eat crab, pasta, salad, bread. no host

bar 6”00 p.m., dinner 7”15 p.m.. Door prizes, Raffle, Music and dancing. Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd. Concord. \$80

Martinez

December 7 - Holiday Craft Hop 12:00-5”00 p.m. Get in the holiday spirit with a day of cheerful crafting in Downtown Martinez! Free craft stations will be located at businesses throughout the downtown. Pick up your crafting list at Busywork Craft Supply located at 605 Main St. Hosted by Busywork

December 12 - Lighted Boat Parade 6:00 p.m. Santa, music and refreshments. Views from the renovated fishing pier. All boats, any size welcome. email ann1159@sbcglobal.com.

December 12, 13 - Live Nativity 6:30-8:30 p.m. Shepherds, Roman soldiers, bakers, and potters will all



be here as the story of Christmas comes to life!

Stroll through Bethlehem with us and enjoy this interactive fair, with dramatic presentations, live animals, period costumes, caroling, food, and

activities for everyone! Morello Hills christian church, 1000 orelllo Hills Dr. Tickets at: morellohills.org/livenativity.

Through December 23 -Santa House. Get a S’Elfies in Santa’s little red house. Take unlimited photos with your own camera in a professionally lit photo area or allow one of Santa’s Helpers assist you. \$10 Located on the Plaza on Main sStreet.

December 13 - Santa Beer Crawl 30 plus vendors, ugly christmas sweaters and who knows how many Santas will align Main St. Each participating business will be the next beet station. So go spread some Hoilday cheer! Tickets now on sale. Must be 21. downtownmartinez.org/santa-beer-crawl. 1:00-4:00 p.m.

December 13-14 Holiday Boutique 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. 20+ arts and craft vendors. Martinez Refining Company Clubhouse. 1635 Pacheco Blvd.

December 14 - Open Air Market, 9 AM. Embrace the charm and allure of unique finds at the Downtown Open Air Market, a monthly treasure trove of Vintage, Collectibles, Antiques, Arts & Crafts, and more. 718 Alhambra Ave.

Sundays - Farmers Market Main St. Martinez

At the Martinez Campbell Theater

>December 13-14 - Star Quest Final Bow. All great things must come to an end, and it is time for our little searching star to take a final bow. This year the show will have video clips from shows past, medleys of songs from our favorite shows, and a cast of 21 talented performers from ages 5 to 18. Tickets from \$5

>December 19 “Improv for Good” 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$15

636 Ward St, Martinez, www.campbelltheater.com

Walnut Creek

December 13 - Tapestry Concert “Love Came Down” Women’s chorus and English handbell ensemble. United Methodist Church , 1543 Sunnyvale Ave. 5:00 p.m. Free

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

>December 4 Unwrapped toy and gift drive for Christmas for Everyone. Nob Hill Sounds performs. 7:00 p.m. dance lessons.

>December 18 - Holiday Ball music by Oaktown Strutters. 6:30 p.m. potluck.

> **January 2- Claudio Medeiros Trio** preceded by 6:30 potluck

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

At the Leshner Center

1601 Civic Dr. Walnut Creek

> **January 15-25 Synergy Theater "Improvised Stephen King"**. Thursday-Saturday 8:15, Sundays a 3:15 p.m. \$27

Other Areas

>Lafayette:

> **December 13-14 Christmas concert, A Musical Nativity** by Lopic Choir and Orchestra 1:00 p.m., Petting zoon and concert 4:00 p.m., Concert and reception p.m. Dec. 14 4:00 p.m. Concert and reception. Suggested \$30. Lafayette orinda Presbyterian Church. 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette

Library Events

Clayton

Homework Help. Wednesdays from 3:30-5:30 p.m. Homework Help is available for elementary school in all subjects. Assistance for 6th through 12th grade is available for select subjects. Contact library staff for more information. Call or stop by the library to make a 30 minute appointment. Drop-ins available if no one is waiting for an appointment. Homework help will not be available on Wednesday, November 26.

6125 Clayton Road, Clayton CA

> **December 3 Crosspulse Duo 2:00-2:45 p.m. From bells and banjos to body music**, Keith Terry & Evie Ladin make music out of anything and everything. Jazz, World Music, Appalachian Banjo, Step Dancing and more, all blended together with delightful humor and skill. Appropriate or all ages. Sponsored by the Clayton Community Library Foundation.

> **December 11 Chair Yoga & Meditation** Join us for a session of low impact chair yoga followed by a guided meditation with teacher Johanna Baig. This program is for adults and seniors. All are welcome. Registration is not required.

Concord

> **December 8 Art Therapy 1:00-2:00 p.m.** Use your creative expression and destress with this free art program led by the Library Wellness Team every second and fourth Monday of the month.

> **December 16 Pen & Ink Society Writing Group** Winter Magic. We'll talk about stories of enchanted forests, moonlit quests, and the quiet spells that stir when the world grows still. 16:00-7:00 p.m.

Martinez

> **December 20 Winter Soltice Celebration Winter Solstice**

is the shortest day and longest night of the year, a time of reflection and new beginnings. Join us to commemorate this day and celebrate the return of the light with crafts, activities, and warm beverages. 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Pleasant Hill

2 Monticello Ave, Pleasant Hill

> **December 8 Drop-in Shop for Adults** seasoned artist, someone crafty, DIY enthusiast who likes to dabble, come check out Drop-In Maker Space. Our volunteers and community experts are there every Monday night to assist. 6:00-7:45 p.m.

> **December 8 Contra Costa Jazz Band** Join the Contra Costa Jazz Band for a performance of winter favorites! The Contra Costa Jazz Band is made up of local musicians who share a love for big band music and the joy of playing together. From classic swing tunes to modern. 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Walnut Creek

1644 N. Broadway, Walnut Creek.

> **December 10 Kids Movie Matinee "Frozen II (PG, 2019)"** 4:00-5:45 p.m.

> **December 18 Fratello Marionettes: The North Pole** Fratello Marionettes' winter extravaganza, "The North Pole Review," is the perfect way to get into the holiday spirit! This music-based production showcases the graceful ice skater Crystal Chandelier

Walnut Creek Ygnacio Valley

> **December 6 Friends of the Ygnacio Valley Library Holiday Book Sale.** 9:00 a.m.5:00 p.m.

> **December 31 Noon Years Eve** Ring in the Noon Year at the Ygnacio Valley Library! Join us for a fun and festive celebration for the whole family as we count down to noon! Enjoy a fantastical performance by Coventry and Kaluza

Clubs

Clayton Clubs

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

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

Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary meets weekly at 7am at the Clayton Valley Charter School Administration Building, 1300 Alberta Way, Concord www.claytonvalleyrotary.org/



Party Pairings



Here are two great starters to share with friends at your next holiday party. Pair with with delicious wines from the region and celebrate Italian style.

Crispy Prosciutto Cups with Pear are a fun twist on the classic prosciutto and melon starter. Although the recipe makes 24 cups, it is easy to scale up or down to suit the size of your guest list.

The perfect partner for these salty-sweet bites is Italian Prosecco, an off-dry sparkler from the Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions. The bubbles always make the evening more festive, cut through the fat of the meat, and complement the sweetness of the pears. Even the lemon drizzled on the pears will resonate with the citrus flavors in the wine.

If you prefer a red wine, a terrific choice is Aged Gouda. In my opinion, it is one of the only cheeses that really pairs with reds (most cheeses are better with white wine or bubbles).

Italy makes great Sangiovese-based red wines either sold as Chianti, or blended with Cabernet or Merlot and called a Super Tuscan. Serve with Crostini or crackers. So, go on. Pair Up!

Crispy Prosciutto Cups with Pear

INGREDIENTS

3 oz. prosciutto, thinly sliced
1 ripe Bartlett pear, finely diced
1 tsp. fresh lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375°F. Cut prosciutto into (24) 2" squares. Place one square (overlapping any tears) in each cup of a mini cupcake tin. Bake until fat turns golden, about 15 minutes. Using a fork, immediately transfer to a paper towel to drain; cool completely. In a small bowl, combine pear and lemon juice. Place 1/2 teaspoon mixture in each cup just before serving. Yield: 24 pieces

Crostini

INGREDIENTS

1 baguette sliced into 1/4" slices
2 tablespoons olive oil
Kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

Arrange slices of bread onto large baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt.

Bake at 275° for 10 minutes or until just beginning to brown.

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

I'm more reserved now, that's why I need a reservation

by DavidKing

The days of attending loud wild parties to bring in the New Year are fading. Having a family may have a lot to do with that but aging in general seems to reason me into more subdued celebration options. In Concord, Luna and Fiore are two such locations.

Both are renowned for their quality culinary menu options. Habib Jacifi owner of Luna in Concord likes to step it up occasionally with special dining events, which he also has for the Holidays. To a lesser extent, so has Hafed at Fiore. Both will be serving their special menu on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, all day. For many, that certainly is preferable to preparing such meals at home.

And on New Years, Luna has prepared a special three course pre-fix menu, added live music and DJ, and is offering other subtle surprises to help bring in the New Year. Those who prefer dining at Fiore but would like to continue with the evening celebration until midnight, may wish to countdown the New Year at Luna.



Fiore and Luna are no stranger to throwing parties.. Here ladies are learning to belly dance during Moroccan night.

If this is your plan, it will be important to make those reservations as soon as possible.

Whatever you decide, Luna and Fiore wishes everyone Merry Holidays and a very happy New Year.



Habib and patrons are enjoy everyminute of the New Year Countday relery.



Santa pays a visit to Luna . He knows when you are dinning out. You never know who you will run into.

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



CVCHS News

Bill Morones, Executive Director
Clayton Valley Charter High School

Having concluded our month of Thanksgiving, I am reminded of the many blessings we enjoy each day at Clayton Valley Charter High School (CVCHS). November was a month filled with reflection, accomplishment, and optimism for the future; reinforcing what makes CVCHS such a special place for our students, families, and community.

At CVCHS, we take great pride in preparing students for success in whichever paths they choose to pursue. While many of our graduates plan to attend four-year universities, we are equally proud of those who choose to serve in the military, enroll at community colleges, or pursue technical and career training programs. Every student's journey is unique, and it is our privilege to walk alongside them as they discover their strengths, passions, and purpose.

The 2025 California School Dashboard, released on November 13, shows significant progress at CVCHS, including lower suspension rates, a 24% rise in English Learner proficiency, improved outcomes for students receiving Special Education services, and a 10% increase in College & Career Readiness—earning the school a BLUE rating.

Paired with strong English performance, record-high Lexile growth, and recognition as a U.S. News Great Schools designee, supported by expanded AP access and a 22% increase in AP pass rates, these results reflect



CVCHS Engineering Academy students explored STEM pathways at UC Berkeley's Mini University.

the hard work of our entire community and our commitment to preparing every Eagle for life after high school.

This month carried particular significance for our Seniors as the application window for the California State University and University of California systems came to a close. Our students rose to the challenge of finalizing applications, crafting thoughtful personal statements, and representing the very best of who they are and what they hope to achieve. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2025 as they take this important step toward their futures.

Among November's many highlights, we were thrilled 11 students from our

Engineering Academy were selected to participate in UC Berkeley's prestigious Mini University program, hosted by the Society of Women Engineers. This day-long experience offered a rare and enriching opportunity for students to engage in hands-on engineering projects, attend seminars led by Berkeley faculty, tour cutting-edge labs, and connect with current engineering majors. Designed to expand access and exposure to STEM fields, Mini University provided our Eagles with a vivid, motivating glimpse into the possibilities that await them in college and beyond.

November also marked an outstanding finale for the Ugly Eagle Marching Band and Color Guard. The team wrapped up their season on November 15, at the Lincoln Review of Champions, performing with trademark energy and determination, even as the rain became part of the show.

After their spirited performance, the program honored its 13 Seniors with a special dinner served by underclassmen, creating a heartfelt and memorable sendoff.

In a dramatic awards ceremony held in the pouring rain, CVCHS proudly took home 2nd place in the 2A division. It was an exceptional season for both the Marching Band and Color Guard.

Excitement is already building for their spring trip to Southern California.

We were also proud to welcome new members into the Clayton Valley Charter chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS). During an uplifting induction ceremony, students were recognized for exemplifying the four pillars of NHS: scholarship, leadership, character, and service. I was honored to deliver the keynote address and personally congratulate each inductee on their achievements and commitment to service.

We should all remain deeply grateful for the dedication of our teachers, staff, families, and most of all, our students. Achievement takes many forms, and that every success, big or small, deserves to be celebrated.



CVCHS chapter of the National Honor Society proudly welcomed its newest inductees in November.

CVCHS students revitalize Heather Farm's Riparian Garden receives plants to start their own school garden



Shared in a newsletter from the Gardens at Heather Farms, the Gardens welcomed a group of students from Clayton Valley Charter School to help revitalize their Riparian Garden.

It is located at the southernmost end of the Gardens along the creek and features native plants, shrubs, and other species to create a moist, shaded environment.

With the rainy season underway, their timing couldn't have been better to clear beds, prepare the soil, and get plants into the ground.

During their most recent visit, the students planted a diverse mix of plants grown in the Gardens' nursery. The plants include ceanothus, dogwoods, salvia, iris, coyote brush, willow, and

more, along with a few unique ornamentals for added color and interest. Many of these went in just ahead of the welcome stretch of rain, giving the garden a perfect start.

"It's been inspiring to watch them support one another while learning real gardening skills. We're also proud to help them jumpstart their own school garden with donated plants from our nursery, so they can continue practicing and growing their skills back at school," stated the newsletter.

This is your community garden, a place of beauty, learning, and connection. The Gardens opens its gates freely to all, welcoming families, nature lovers, students, and anyone seeking beauty and tranquility.

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Walnut Creek

Suburban tranquility meets urban energy

Walnut Creek offers suburban tranquility and vibrant urban energy. It's location in the heart of the Bay Area offers an easy commute to Oakland and San Francisco while providing residents incredible schools, walkable neighborhoods and top-tier amenities.

You will love what you find here: delicious restaurants including high-end breakfast spots and quality vegan options, local breweries, and classic steakhouses. Broadway Plaza is the centerpiece of upscale shopping and is accompanied by other bustling retail centers helping establish Walnut Creek as a regional shopping destination.

Residents here also enjoy Heather Farm Park, organic farmers' markets; medical centers; art festivals; the Leshner Center for the Arts; the Ruth Bancroft Garden, BART access, the Lindsay Wildlife Experience, and plenty of parks, walking trails, and open space — all in the scenic shadow of Mount Diablo.

How's the Walnut Creek Real Estate Market?

We often hear the question: Is it a buyer's market or a seller's market? Here's what that means. A Buyer's Market is one with more than six months of inventory, based on closed sales. Contrast to a Seller's Market which is defined as one with less than three months of inventory. A Neutral Market falls between three and six months of inventory.

As of October, Walnut Creek remains

a seller's market, with just over two months of available inventory. So, is it a suitable time for buyers?

In many ways, yes. Inventory levels have been tighter in past seasons, sometimes dipping below 30 days' worth of homes. Today's conditions may offer a bit more breathing room.

Pending homes tell the real story of the current market. With 51 homes pending, that's an 88.9% increase from the previous month. This surge may be tied to the recent dip in interest rates, motivating some buyers to take the leap and write offers.

At 57 homes for sale, which is down 24% from previous month, this is signaling that sellers are serious about closing before year's end.

The 27 closed sales in October, reflects the typical fourth-quarter slowdown.

So why is it still a seller's market? Limited inventory continues to favor sellers. That said, buyers may find more negotiation opportunities and even a bit of time to make thoughtful decisions.

A Great Time to Explore Walnut Creek

If you're considering a move, and looking for top-rated schools, community amenities, or proximity to neighboring towns like Pleasant Hill, Lafayette, Concord, and Martinez, Walnut Creek is a wonderful city to explore.

MONTHLY MARKET REPORT

OCTOBER/ 2025

CLAYTON		CONCORD	
Existing SFR Median Price \$1.24M % Change from Last Year +13.0%	MARKET COMPETITION Median Days on Market 20 Sales-to-List Price % 100.0% % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 54.5%	Existing SFR Median Price \$795K % Change from Last Year -7.0%	MARKET COMPETITION Median Days on Market 16 Sales-to-List Price % 100.0% % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 41.1%
MARTINEZ		WALNUT CREEK	
Existing SFR Median Price \$710K % Change from Last Year -15.7%	MARKET COMPETITION Median Days on Market 25 Sales-to-List Price % 99.2% % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 29.5%	Existing SFR Median Price \$1.41M % Change from Last Year -11.8%	MARKET COMPETITION Median Days on Market 13 Sales-to-List Price % 100.0% % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 32.8%

SOURCE: Car.org



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Holiday Magic From Your Garden

by Angela Dawne, landscape designer

There's something extra special about decorating for the holidays with pieces gathered from your own garden. Not only is it simple and inexpensive, but it brings a warmth and natural charm that store-bought décor can't match.

The personal touch of handcrafted decorations creates an authentic, heartfelt atmosphere that resonates with the true spirit of the season. With just a few snips of greenery, berries, and seasonal branches, you can create a beautiful centerpiece or welcoming wreath for your front door that reflects your unique style and the natural beauty of your landscape.

Walk around your yard with a pair of sharp pruning shears observing what nature has to offer.

Look for evergreen branches like pine, cedar, or rosemary that hold their shape well and give off a cozy, wintery scent that fills your home with the essence of the holidays.

These fragrant greens not only provide a sturdy base for your arrangements but also release their aromatic oils, creating a sensory experience that synthetic decorations simply cannot replicate.

If you have holly or pyracantha bushes, rose hips, or any shrub with bright orange or red berries, add them too, for instant color and a festive sparkle. Even bare branches with interesting curves or dried

seed pods can provide intriguing texture and architectural elements that give your arrangements depth and character.

The creative possibilities are endless. Add elegant bows in seasonal colors like deep red, gold, or silver, along with tiny LED battery-operated lights that twinkle softly without the hassle of cords.

Incorporate small holiday decorations such as miniature ornaments, pinecones dusted with artificial snow, or cinnamon sticks tied with twine for added visual appeal and fragrance.

For a door wreath, layer your greenery in a circular pattern, even securing it to a purchased wreath form, then accent it with your collected berries and embellishments.

For a table centerpiece, arrange your branches and berries in a low, wide container, adding pillar candles of varying heights to create a warm, inviting glow

for holiday gatherings.

Have fun with the process and try not to be too critical of your creation, as you may be pleasantly surprised at how great it turns out and how many compliments you receive!

Remember that the beauty of handmade decorations lies in their imperfections and organic nature. Each piece tells a story of your garden and your creativity, making your holiday décor truly one-of-a-kind and meaningful.



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The Naked Gardener

David George, UC-Certified Master Gardener
nakedgardener@diablogazette.com

Mulch the Natural Way

I was browsing through my local garden center recently when I passed by a stack of "Organic Mulch" 2 cu. ft. bags. \$15.99 per bag. Wow! Buying mulch bags has turned into an expensive venture.

When I returned home, I saw several inches of oak leaves covering my driveway – a season's worth of all-natural mulch just waiting to be relocated into my garden. What a bonanza!

The cost is high to process, package, and ship bags of Pacific Northwest forest products (mulch) from Washington and Oregon to the big population centers in California.

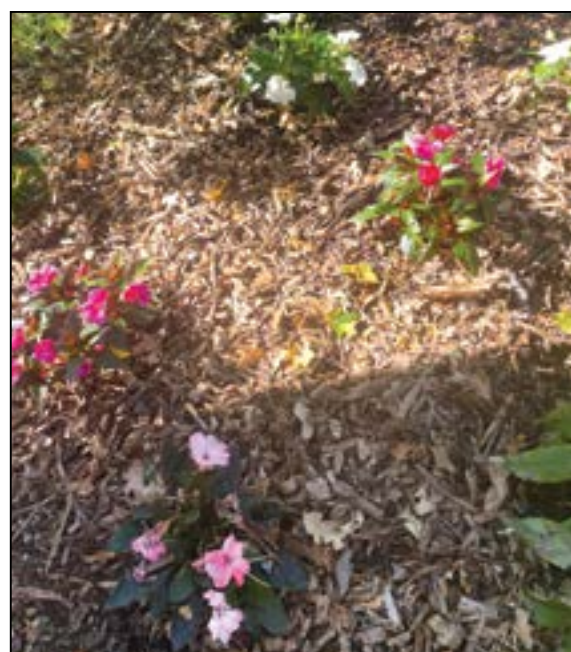
Are these products good for our gardens? Yes and no.

"Forest products" are debris left over from timber and lumber company operations: fir tree needles, ground up branches, mosses, sawdust etc. They are high in nitrogen content, an essential food source of plants, but the nutrient is in raw form that takes many months of biological activity in your soil to break down into a usable form for plants.

About half of the cost per bag is for fuel and trucking to transport them to stores 1,000 miles south.

Plus, non-native diseases can hitch a ride that introduces these risks into your unsuspecting garden.

Two great alternatives exist to



Master gardeners recommend adding 3-4 inches of locally sourced mulch into your veggie garden and landscaped areas.

buying expensive Northwest forest products. Both replenish depleted nitrogen in your soil in an all-natural way.

The first is your own abundant leaf litter. Our native oaks and imported deciduous trees provide a plentiful source of quickly usable nitrogen with their annual leaf drop.

Don't bag and dispose of these valuable leaves. Rake them into your

garden beds and landscaped areas where they can form a thick layer of mulch. The leaves turn dark and mushy over time. In a few short weeks, the combination of regular winter rains and beneficial microbes in your soil work together to break down those leaves into usable nitrogen fertilizer.

The second local source of longer-lasting nitrogen is supplied by tree-trimming crews in the area. Call up your favorite local tree trimming firm and ask for a *free* delivery of tree chips. These firms are always seeking legal places to dump their loads after big trimming projects. Your driveway is a great choice.

Allow your new mountain of free mulch to "cool down" for one month to allow microbes to begin their breakdown process. Then use a wheelbarrow to transport 3-4 inches of locally sourced mulch into your veggie garden and landscaped areas.

Your choice is clear. Pay a bunch of money for imported fir products or utilize your own locally sourced mulch to rejuvenate and prepare your garden for the coming warm season. Be a naked gardener and go all-natural this time.



Local tree services will provide free local mulch to your driveway.

Seasonal Notes:

Mulch, mulch, mulch! Take advantage of breaks in the wet weather to lock moisture into the soil by applying 3-4 inches of mulch onto naked patches of topsoil.

Watch the weather reports for Freeze Warnings. Protect winter-ripening citrus (Mandarin and navel oranges) from frost and freeze with breathable bed sheets or blankets, as well as other tender or newly planted landscape varieties.

Older small incandescent holiday lights strung through the citrus tree add a few extra degrees of warmth on very cold, windy nights.

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



Carlyn Obringer
Concord Mayor
cityofconcord.org

The passing of the gavel is time to reflect on Concord's milestones of 2025

It's hard to believe a year has passed since I had the privilege to accept the gavel and title of "Mayor of the City of Concord." We have experienced many significant milestones in 2025 including the 50th Anniversary of the Concord Pavilion; the repaving of major arterials including Concord Boulevard, Treat Boulevard, and Willow Pass Road in accordance with the ambitious five-year pavement improvement plan my fellow Councilmembers and I approved in 2022; the inaugural Don Fernando Pacheco Adobe bowling fundraiser; and the grand opening of Blue Oak Square Apartments and Rick Judd Commons totaling 243 new units of affordable housing, including 13 units for formerly unsheltered individuals.

Public safety remains a top priority for me so I am thrilled that thanks to aggressive recruitment efforts, the staffing level of our Police Department is nearly full. This will enable an increase in the number of traffic enforcement officers from four to six beginning in April 2026.

Since being elected to office, including during my time as mayor, I have focused on enhancing economic development so that more people can both live and work in Concord. Throughout 2025, I met with businesses, large and small, both established and start-ups, to hear directly what they need to grow and maintain their businesses in Concord.

I convened a meeting with the Consulate General of Canada and the Provinces of British Columbia and Ontario to discuss potential collaboration opportunities for the redevelopment of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station. I continue to

represent Concord on bodies focused on economic development, including the Diablo Valley Tech Initiative, the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, and the Green Empowerment Zone Board. It is my goal that through such efforts, we will be able to increase opportunity and prosperity for all Concordians.

As Mayor, I wanted Concordians to feel connected to their neighbors and proud to live in our city. To that end, I led the annual "September of Service," with more than 200 volunteers participating in this community initiative every Saturday in September! Together, we planted 200 trees in parks located in all five City Council Districts.

Thank you to all the Concordians who took time to meet with me during my year-long "Mayor's Office Hours" most Friday afternoons and monthly "Coffee with the Mayor" or "Beer with the Mayor." And, thank you to the Concord establishments who graciously hosted us, providing an informal setting in which to connect more deeply with the community.

As I turn over the mayoral gavel, I will continue to strive each day to serve the people of Concord to the best of my ability as a Councilmember. I look forward to continuing to work on public safety, fixing more of our roads and infrastructure, job attraction and retention, implementing our community-informed homeless strategic plan, and getting more homes built at all affordability levels while working with the rest of the City Council to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.



Moving Way Too Fast for Some of Us

by Kevin Cabral, CEO, Concord Chamber of Commerce

When you think about it, the impact of technology on how we live, communicate, travel, spend, and earn money is astounding.

Once upon a time, I rode my bicycle across the United States, coast to coast, with my brother Jimmy. That was back in 1991. What a time we had: meeting people, keeping no schedule, just getting up to eat, ride, eat, stop for a few beers, talk with locals, go to bed, and then repeat it all the next day. We did this in an era with no cell phones, no MapQuest, no GPS, just paper maps and relying on the kindness of others to show us the way. It's funny to think about it now—writing letters home and calling our parents or girlfriends once a week. (Mine is now my wife) Good stuff.

These days, I've driven up and down this state hundreds of times, yet I still find myself pulling up MapQuest or GPS to get where I'm going quickly. I would never consider leaving the house without my phone. What a change in just 25 years.

Now we're entering the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It's all the

rage—moving faster than a speeding bullet and more powerful than a locomotive. For many of us (including yours truly), it's not always easy to understand what it's all about.

Here's what I do know: check it out for yourself and use caution when putting personal information into any chatbot or online tool. But get a little education, too. In many cases, AI can be a useful tool to help manage your business or your household. Technology is everywhere, but it's still our choice how deep we want to go with it.

Since it's the shopping season, don't forget to browse the Concord Chamber's membership directory on our website and do your best to shop local whenever it works for you. A little planning makes a big difference to local businesses, families, and our economy.

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



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Concord Art Association's teacher grants have lasting impact on students

by Denise Hillman



Mabel Ventriglia, a TK-Grade 2 teacher at Sun Terrace Elementary School in Concord inspires creativity during art activities.

The Concord Art Association (CAA) is the oldest nonprofit arts organization in the East Bay. It is dedicated to supporting creativity in the community through art education grants for local teachers.

Among this year's recipients is teacher Mabel Ventriglia, who used her CAA grant to purchase art supplies for students in her TK-Grade 2 classroom at Sun Terrace Elementary School in Concord. And according to Ventriglia, the projects made a big difference in her students' creative experiences.

The students explored a wide range of art activities, from creating Piet Mondrian-inspired chalk drawings to a plant unit featuring "fluffy dirt" made from glue, shaving cream, and brown paint, topped with yellow tissue paper sunflowers.

"We even mixed borax and water to make Oobleck for a hands-on science and art activity," Ventriglia said.

Her innovative lessons, made possible through CAA's teacher grant program, demonstrate the lasting impact that community support for the arts can have on young learners. The association will continue to fund classroom art projects through its 2026 grant cycle.

The community is invited to attend CAA's annual fundraiser dinner party on Friday, December 12, from 5:00–9:00 p.m. at Legends at Diablo Creek Golf Course in Concord. Tickets and CAA membership information are available at concordartassociation.org.

Founded in 1963, the Concord Art Association members include artists, crafters, makers, and art supporters. As a nonprofit 501(c)(3), CAA is dedicated to enriching the creative lives of local artists and the Concord community through exhibits, education, public art, and community engagement.

Teacher grants and local exhibits offer critical support for Martinez artists

by Denise Hillman

The Martinez Arts Association (MAA) has awarded \$3,750 to 14 teachers in the Martinez Unified School District from its 2025–2026 Teacher Grant Program. The grant funds will support classroom art projects and help teachers offset any reduced district-level funding for the arts. A public exhibition of student artwork will be presented in Spring 2026.

MAA also offers local artists opportunities to display their work in Martinez businesses. New this year is an exhibition titled "Cheers to Art!" featuring the MAA Best of 2025. The show will be on view at Five Suns Brewing, 626 Main Street, from December 11 through January 28, 2026, with an artist reception on Thursday, December 11, from 5:00 –

8:00 p.m.

The annual MAA Holiday Boutique returns the weekend of December 13–14 at the Martinez Refining Company Clubhouse, 1365 Pacheco Blvd. and will feature over 20 arts and craft vendors showcasing their one-of-a-kind creations. Hours are 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. both days.

As a nonprofit organization, proceeds from sponsorships, membership dues, donations, and the annual Art in the Park event fund scholarships for graduating seniors and provide art grants for teachers from elementary through high school.

The Evolving Abstract World of Terin Christensen

by Julia O'Reilly

California artist Terin Christensen creates from the heart. Guided by intuition, color, and texture, her abstract works invite viewers into emotional landscapes where feeling takes shape on canvas.

Raised in the Bay Area by a family of artists, Terin's creative spark was ignited early. Childhood visits to San Francisco's great museums, where she stood in awe before Monet's light and Wyeth's quiet intensity, left a lasting imprint and taught her the emotional power of art.

Although she began her studies in art, life took her into the nonprofit world, where she spent years directing events and fundraising with her trademark compassion and creativity. Still, art was always close by whether through stained glass, photography, greeting cards, or collage. Her hands never stopped making.

In 2019, Terin finally returned to painting full-time, discovering her artistic voice in abstract impressionism. Working primarily



in acrylics, she layers brushstrokes, marks, and textures to evoke memory, movement, and emotion. Her paintings feel both spontaneous and deeply intentional, a balance she continues to refine as her style evolves. terinchristensen.com.

Tapestry women's chorus and handbell ensemble rings in the holidays with free concerts

by Norm Hallquist



Tapestry, the East Bay's long-running women's chorus and English handbell ensemble, kicks off its 2025-26 concert season with a series of three holiday performances December 10-13. This year the subject is angels.

The "Love Came Down" programs will begin on Wednesday, December 10, at 7:00 p.m. at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 1601 Mary Dr. in Pleasant Hill. Concord's Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, 2925 Bonifacio St., hosts the 7:00 p.m. performance on Friday, December 12. Wrapping up the series will be a Saturday 5:00 p.m. program at Walnut Creek United Methodist Church, 1543 Sunnyvale Ave.

Tessique Houston takes the Tapestry baton this year. The

University of Nevada music education graduate has arranged a program of serious but beautiful music, with a few lighter touches.

Program highlights include the singers performing "Pavane for a Silent Night," by Maurice Ravel, and a vocalized version of Tchaikovsky's "Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy."

The bell ringers' offerings range from Gustav Holst's haunting "In the Bleak Midwinter" to the beloved spiritual "Go Tell It on the Mountain."

Piano accompanist Craig Beattie performs "Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming, by Michael Praetorius, from the early 17th Century, and "Mary, Did You Know," by Lowry and Greene, published in 1991. Free admission.

The Arts Page

Jill Conrad jewelry and Tom Quinlavin abstracts at the aRt Cottage to Dec. 20

Tom Quinlavin and Jill Conrad exhibit their work through December 20.

Quinlavin's large abstracts are unique colorful paintings which would make anyone look twice.

Conrad's silver and brass jewelry pieces are gorgeous and ideal holiday gifts.

Both artists will be on the premises through December 20. While visiting, ask them any questions you may have about their craft and painting style.

2238 Mt. Diablo St. Concord

COMING SOON

aRt cottages next exhibit will be featuring Thomas Freeman a watercolorist and landscape, painter; Lee von Rackel, a pen and ink drawing artist who once worked for Disney; Lori Larks, plein air painter and photographer and Tim Aguino, a native American artist from the Hopi and Tewa Tribe.



Blackhawk Gallery - Christmas Party

Blackhawk Gallery is hosting a party with Santa Claus on Saturday, December 6, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

This event is open to the public. 3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville.

Current exhibit, "Fall Splendor" features members' artworks including paintings, sculptures, ceramics, photographs, and wearable art. Guest artist is sculptor Shelley Spira Burns.

3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville.

Gallery Hours:

Wed. 12-5:00 p.m.

Thurs. - Sat. 11:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

Sun. 12-5:00 p.m.

Closed Mondays and Tuesdays



A Festive Showcase of Member Art

Main Street Arts Gallery is welcoming the holiday season with a vibrant new exhibition featuring the work of its 12 member artists. The show highlights 12" x 12" creations in a variety of mediums, including paint, glass, metal, and ceramics, offering a unique variety of styles, colors and textures.

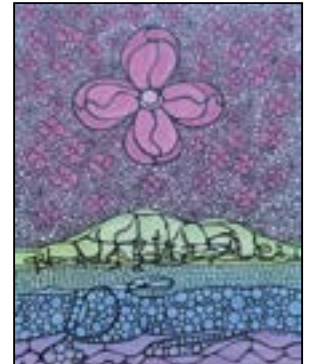
These distinctive, small-format artworks make thoughtful gifts and accessible additions to any art collection. From expressive paintings and luminous glass pieces to sculptural clay and metal, the exhibition celebrates the diversity of talent within the Main Street Arts gallery.

Adding to the holiday spirit, the gallery's festive tree is adorned with original handcrafted ornaments created by member artists and ready for your tree.

Visitors can also enter the monthly free art giveaway, featuring a signed limited edition print of Pretty Magenta Flowers in the Sky by Mason Roberts.

The current exhibition will be on view through December, with a reception planned for Friday, December 5 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., coinciding with First Friday and downtown holiday festivities.

Main Street Arts is located at 613 Main Street, Martinez, Open Wednesday-Saturday 11:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m., Sunday 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. On Martinez First Fridays, 6:00 -9:00 p.m.



L-R: 12x12 "Metal Art" by Bronze Holbein, 12x12 "New Grass" by Dean Evans, and Free Drawing Prize - "Pretty Magenta Flowers in the Sky." A limited edition print by Mason Roberts.





Jill Hedgecock's bookends
Author, Pizzo and Between Shadow's Eyes

"A Walk in the Park: The True Story of a Spectacular Misadventure in the Grand Canyon" (Scribner, 2024, hardcover, 512 pages, \$16.99) by Kevin Fedarko recounted the author's adventures in the Grand Canyon as an extreme hiker trekking along the varied landscapes of the canyon's walls.

Fedarko's planned 750-mile journey along the length of the Grand Canyon with his best friend and expedition partner, Pete McBride, a National Geographic photographer, was fraught with rookie mistakes. The year-long journey took him through snow and temperatures of over 112 degrees Fahrenheit. At times, Fedarko's prose bordered on poetry and was so detailed and filled with wonder. His ability to describe the grueling conditions, the unfettered beauty, and capture special moments is unparalleled.

Fedarko's honesty about his shortcomings and misguided opinions revealed his vulnerability and humanity. His regrets surrounding his relationship with his dying father pulled at the heartstrings, while his descriptions of his fellow hikers shone a light on their generosity and patience.

Fedarko was also willing to wander into the politics of the canyon, delving into the mistreatment of Native American tribes, the abuses of the landscape, and the arrogance of park rangers in the early days of their stewardship. I really appreciated his willingness to present both sides of contested issues, such as whether a tram project should be built that would mar the landscape, but could also bring much-needed income to some marginalized Native American tribes.

Fedarko recounted his experience with a touch of nostalgia as he looked to the future and saw the eroding of a national treasure as commercial tourism puts more and more pressure on this unblemished landscape.

A Walk in the Park

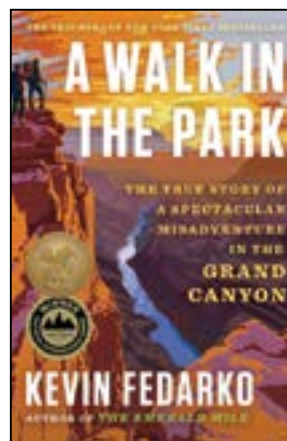
He described the crowded airspace, the noise pollution, and the tragic accidents created by a massive influx of airplane and helicopter rides landing on the banks of the Colorado River or on the canyon floor.

He lamented the West Rim Skywalk, located at the Grand Canyon West, a horseshoe-shaped glass-floored structure that extends seventy feet over the canyon's edge, allowing visitors to look down 4,000 feet to the Colorado River..

"A Walk in the Park" was the winner of the 2024 National Outdoor Book Award in Outdoor Literature and received the 2025 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction. It was also named a Best Book of the Year by "The New York Times" and "Smithsonian Magazine."

Kevin Fedarko has spent the past twenty years writing about conservation, exploration, and the Grand Canyon.

His other book, "The Emerald Mile", focuses on his adventures as a whitewater raft guide on the Grand Canyon. He has been a staff writer at "Time" and a senior editor at "Outside". His writing has appeared in "National Geographic", "The New York Times", and "Esquire". He and his wife live in Flagstaff, Arizona, where they often hike the Grand Canyon. Follow him at www.kevinfedarko.com.



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SCREEN TIME
by Colleen Gonzalez
colleengonzalez.substack.com

In Your Dreams

Rated PG Now Streaming on Netflix

Twelve-year-old Stevie (Jolie Hoang-Rappaport) has bigger problems than having to share a bedroom with her annoying little brother, Elliot (Elias Janssen). She overhears the recent late-night discussions between her parents (Simu Liu and Cristin Milioti), and she fears they are headed for a divorce.

On a trip to the thrift store, her brother brings home an old relic of a book about the Sandman. Stevie becomes intrigued when she discovers the Sandman can grant wishes. Subsequently, she enlists her brother to work together to find the Sandman in their dreams and have their wishes granted. Her secret wish, of course, is to have her family stay intact.

Animation is a perfect choice for this film, as it allows the various dream worlds to be filled with delight and terror in innovative ways. There is also a good dose of humor thrown in, mostly provided by Elliot's stuffed giraffe, Baloney Tony (Craig Robinson). It is also fun to see some of our most common nightmares depicted on screen humorously.

Although a large part of the story takes place in a magical world, the older sister/little brother

relationship feels relatable. Elliot is the right amount of annoying, while Stevie is a believable pre-teen going through all the emotional challenges. Seeing them work together and begin to connect and respect each other is the strongest part of the film.

Most kid movies do not explore topics like lucid dreaming, but it is refreshing to see the characters have to do more than simply fall asleep to enter the mystical world. They have to learn how to control their dreams in order to reach the Sandman.

If you decide to let children watch this film, you will need to gauge their fear level. Some of the subject matter of the dreams could create new ideas for nightmares for the little ones. This is mostly a family-friendly film that showcases the complexity of family, emphasizing there are no

easy answers in real life. Our dreams can be silly, strange, scary and thought-provoking, but they are rarely better than living in the real world with the people we love.



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“Magical” Alhambra Christmas Tree Farm forges new holiday memories

by David Scholz



Tucked away from the sounds of traffic from Highway 4 and Alhambra Avenue, a farm has been making dreams come true for more than 55 years.

But it's not just any farm. The Alhambra Valley Christmas Tree Farm has made the holidays special for generations for those who have made the trek along the winding country roads of the beautiful Alhambra Valley in search of quality evergreen trees, wreaths and garlands to adorn their home.

A longtime destination for forging seasonal memories, operators opened their gates to the public the Sunday before Thanksgiving, continuing a holiday tradition occurring since 1969.

There was a crispness to the air as well as a lingering morning dew welcoming first day visitors. “It feels like the last gem in the East Bay and we try to keep it a secret,” said Sally Altman who with husband, Jeremy, and their son, John, arrived mid-morning to walk among the rows of trees to pick just the right tree for their home. The Altmans cited the freshness and smells of the trees that make the experience even more appealing. “It is magical,” she said.

The Scheberies have been stewards of the Alhambra Valley Christmas Tree Farm business since taking it over a dozen years ago according to Beatrice Schumgler. Initially, when they moved here, Schumgler admitted they hadn't processed that the site was a tree farm. Then her husband, Mark Scheberies, insisted they continue in keeping with its storied Christmas tree history.

“This is historic, we gotta do it,” Schumgler recalled him saying. “That is why we do it, to make it mean something because people have been coming for years,” Schumgler said.

There are trees growing on the hillside overlooking the lot where pre-cut trees stand majestically in long straight rows, and more trees growing in adjacent fields. Patrons have plenty of options whether they seek to cut their own or

choose one ready to load. Schumgler expressed optimism that the conditions have been right for it to be a good year for them.

The pre-cut selection features Noble, Nordmann, Douglas and Grand Firs, which were brought in from small farms in Oregon and Washington. Douglas and Monterey Pines are grown on site for those choosing to cut their own.

“[It's] been a long time learning how to farm and learning how to grow, and so now this year is the first where we really have a nice crop,” Schumgler said.

The response on opening day was a bit above past seasons. That may bode well for the rest of season. By the end of the season, she estimated upwards to 3000 trees would leave the farm.

Regardless of the trees that are available each year, the constant from one season to the next is the families that make the pilgrimage to the farm and the energy their children bring.

Contrasting the peacefulness of rural Martinez where one can hear the cows moo off in the distance, she noted there is a different vibe here when you are looking for a tree than in a parking lot.



“I think there is a Christmas excitement,” said Schumgler about the ritual visit to their tree farm. “It feels like a Hallmark movie. “It is an outing and a family experience that is

more than going to a lot.”

The day before the official opening, people came by and were let in to walk around. She recounted a couple of little guys running around and the parents could not believe their energy.

Likening it to when parents take their kids to the beach, Schumgler says, “There is something that happens being outdoors in this space.”

The Altmans added that it feels like a forest and their son loves forests. “It's like the North Pole for him,” said Sally. “We love it; it's the best,” she added.

In Case You Missed It...

Local News Items from Claycord.com and Other Sources

New Chick-fil-A Without Drive-Thru Nears Completion In Walnut Creek, Near Concord



Photo courtesy of claycord.com

Construction is moving steadily on Walnut Creek's upcoming Chick-fil-A, a unique location that will open without a drive-thru, setting it apart from the chain's traditional layout.

Located at 2290 Oak Grove Road in the Citrus Marketplace shopping center, it is replacing a long-vacant building at the corner of Oak Grove and Citrus Avenue. Crews have been active on site for months.

The new Chick-fil-A was approved by the city in 2024 after multiple public hearings, partly due to concerns about drive-thru traffic in surrounding neighborhoods. The decision to eliminate a drive-thru lane was intentional, aimed at reducing congestion and avoiding the long car lines that have become common at the existing North Main Street location.

Concord Police Receive \$270,000 Traffic Safety Grant To Boost Enforcement And Education

The Concord Police Department has been awarded a \$270,000 state traffic safety grant aimed at reducing serious injuries and fatalities on local roads.

The funding, provided by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, will support a year-long enforcement and education campaign running through September 2026.

According to Concord Police, the grant will expand several key safety initiatives, including DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols, high-visibility distracted driving enforcement, and targeted operations to address dangerous driving behaviors such as speeding, red-light running, failure to yield, and improper lane changes.

The initiative will also include focused enforcement to protect bicyclists and pedestrian, groups particularly vulnerable in traffic collisions.

Martinez Pier has Reopened



The Martinez Fishing Pier officially

reopened Saturday, November 8, marking the return of a beloved community landmark to the city's waterfront. Crowds of families, anglers, and residents gathered along the shoreline to celebrate the occasion.

The year-long renovation project included extensive structural upgrades, with new decking, railings, and lighting, as well as accessibility enhancements such as ADA-compliant benches, picnic tables, and receptacles.

Beneath the surface, major reinforcements to the pier's foundation and sheet pile breakwater improvements are expected to extend the pier's life by another 50 years.

A \$2.5 million federal Community Project Funding grant awarded in 2023 made construction possible. City officials said the renovated pier will once again serve as a gathering place for recreation, relaxation, and community connection for decades to come.

City Of Concord Plants Two Dozen Trees At The George Krueger Playfields On Cowell Rd.

No More Kasper's With A “K”: Concord Location Closes For Good

Kasper's with a “K” has officially closed its doors on Clayton Road in Concord, marking the end of an era for fans of the once-popular East Bay hot dog chain. The closure means there are now no more Kasper's with a “K” locations left in existence. The name once sparked confusion with the similarly named “Caspers” hot dog chain. Caspers with a “C” opened in 1934, but after a disagreement between family members (possibly brothers) it split into Kasper's and Caspers.

Concord Police Take Public Safety To New Heights With Drone Program



The Concord Police Department is taking drone technology to the next level with the launch of its Drone as First Responder (DFR) Program — a cutting-edge initiative designed to help officers respond to emergencies faster, smarter, and more safely.

Under the new program, trained drone pilots will operate from strategically placed launch sites throughout the city. When certain 911 calls come in, drones can be deployed within seconds, streaming live aerial video to officers on the ground.

Concord PD says each flight will adhere to strict FAA regulations and departmental policies to maintain transparency, accountability, and protect residents' privacy. Implementation of the DFR program will begin in the coming weeks, with full deployment expected in the near future.

Around Martinez



Vacant to Vibrant policy to breathe life into empty buildings

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

I walked Ferry Point at the Martinez WEvery day, the Martinez City Council hears from residents, business owners, and community leaders. One message we continue to hear is: why can't the city do something about vacant buildings?

It is clear our community is ready to breathe new life into long-neglected properties and enhance enforcement effectiveness. That is why I was proud in October when, after months of public meetings and outreach by city staff and council, we officially adopted the new code-enforcement policies that form the backbone of our "Vacant to Vibrant" initiative, a comprehensive effort to transform underutilized and vacant properties into dynamic and thriving spaces that are safe, productive, and activated to enhance economic vitality.

Although there are only a small number of buildings that are perpetually vacant, when commercial properties remain vacant for years, it can create economic stagnation, visual blight, and safety hazards. These empty storefronts often sit in the heart of our city, places that should have local businesses filled with families and good energy.

With our newly adopted policies, Martinez is taking meaningful steps toward implementing one of the economic development goals in our Strategic Plan. Under the new ordinance, the criteria to be a vacant building is clearly defined, such as not leased within 90 days, unless the property is "ready for occupancy," and in a condition for immediate use, lease, or sale, or actively being offered.

Once a commercial building has been determined to be vacant, the owner must register their properties and keep them to standards for maintenance, safety, and security. Structures must be secured, inspected regularly, and kept free of debris.



Recent ribbon cutting at Ross Dress for Less at the Village Oaks shopping center (credit: Eve Kearney).

To prevent empty buildings from becoming visual dead zones, we are also introducing storefront-activation requirements, encouraging window displays, public art, or other creative elements that keep our streets inviting and engaging.

These measures aren't about punishing property owners; rather, they're about partnership and accountability. We are pairing enforcement with incentives, including streamlined permitting and potential fee reductions for those who maintain their buildings and bring them back into use. At the same time, we now have stronger tools to address chronic neglect when cooperation fails.

"Vacant to Vibrant" is more than a policy change: it is a statement of support for our local businesses and to foster community pride.

This holiday season, you too can contribute to your community by shopping at your local businesses first. Not only at our downtown businesses, but all of the businesses in our city, including Village Oaks, Virginia Hills, or Alhambra Avenue. Remember that dollars spent in Martinez stay in Martinez via salaries and sales tax, and help keep your shopping districts vibrant.

"Let's go fishing!"

by David King and David Scholz



From left, council members Debbie McKillop, Satinder S. Malhi, Greg Young, Mayor Brianne Zorn and Vice Mayor Jay Howard officially launch the pier's reopening by cutting the ribbon. Photo credit: Thomas Rimple

The reopening of Martinez fishing pier is a welcome sight for anglers. This one can ascertain just by the sizeable turnout for the city leaders' ribbon cutting ceremony on a foggy Saturday morning, November 8, many who came with poles in hand.

"Fishing runs in the soul of the people in Martinez, and fishing remains a popular recreational activity at our waterfront," Martinez Mayor Brianne Zorn said at the ribbon-cutting event. The Martinez Fishing Pier is one of very few locations in California where recreational fishing does not require a fishing license.

Christian Cota, born and raised in Martinez and one who has dropped a line or two over the railings of the Martinez Pier regularly through the years, was among the dozens with rods and their tackle boxes in tow who turned out to resume the pastime of trying to land that big one. "I hope to catch something that is swimming," he said, cracking a smile.

Fernando Saenz, of Concord, was glad to see the pier reopen after trekking to Crockett during the past year to fish.

Upgrades to lighting and amenities like benches and picnic tables accompanied the top side renovation. Substructural reinforcements and work on the sheet pile breakwater also were addressed and are expected to extend the lifespan of the pier by another 50 years.

Congressmen Mike Thompson and John Garamendi were instrumental in securing the \$2.5 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to fund the pier renovations.

Before cutting the ribbon, Zorn also was excited to announce the return of the annual kids fishing derby in 2026, and the opportunity to "introduce another generation of children to fishing."



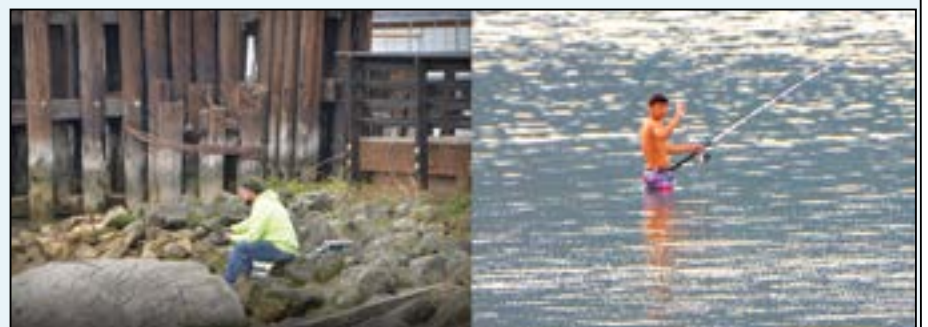
A large public turnout came to the early Saturday morning ribbon cutting ceremony on Nov. 8.



And fishing begins. Photos by Thomas Rimple.



Nov. 11, Carleya of Oakley reels in a crab too small for a crab feast. She released it back into the Bay. Photo courtesy John Grubka.



Nov. 11, not everyone fishes off the pier. Photos by John Grubka.



Community Events

Dec 5 Holiday Frolic Light Parade
 Dec 12 Martinez Lighted Boat Parade
 Dec 13 Santa Beer Crawl
 Dec 14 Open Air Market

Nov 29- Santa House Visits Downtown
 Dec 23 (hours vary)

Sundays Farmers Market

Wishing everyone a happy and safe holiday season!

Follow Us on Social Media for more!

www.cityofmartinez.org/events

City Council approves new Marina fees effective beginning of 2026

by Tom Lochner, freelance, Martinez News and Views

On November 19, The Martinez City Council approved a new fee schedule for the Martinez Marina, in hopes of reducing its dependency on subsidies from the General Fund.

The schedule raises mooring, utility and liveaboard fees starting in the coming new year. The increases will bring the Martinez Marina in line with its “regional peers” in Benicia, Vallejo, Pittsburg and Antioch according to a staff report.

The mooring fee will go up by 40.69 percent, equivalent to the 10-year cumulative increase in the Bay Area Consumer Price Index from 2014 to 2025, with an additional \$5 per month water charge per vessel.

The increase will be phased in over two years, half next year, half in 2027, to soften the impact on boaters as recommended by the council’s Marina subcommittee consisting of Jay Howard and Debbie McKillop.

Utility fees for gas and electricity will increase from the current \$5 a month to \$10 a month next year for 20-foot slips; on the larger end, 45-foot slips, currently \$15 a month, will jump to \$30 a month.

Liveaboard fees which are surcharges for remaining on a vessel beyond the 72-hours will increase from the current \$200 a month to \$275. This is in line with the lower range of Martinez’s regional peers.

According to the staff report, since fiscal 2021-22, the city has used \$2 million in General Fund reserves on the marina, including \$419,902 in loans.

An additional \$560,000 loan to the Marina Enterprise Fund from General Fund reserves is included in the 2025-26 fiscal year budget. Many city officials have characterized the marina’s dependence on loans and subsidies as unsustainable.

Without the increases approved by the council, the city was facing an ongoing, \$650,000-a-year Marina subsidy, according to the staff report.

Another commenter, a Pacific Grove resident who grew up in Martinez and keeps a boat at the Marina, said he is personally OK with a 40% increase but that the lesson should be that a 2%, 3%, 4% or 5% increase every year is preferable to a 40% increase after 10 years.

Community and Economic Development Director Jill Bergman noted that much has been accomplished since the arrival of F3 Marina, the firm that came onboard at the beginning of this year as manager of the Martinez Marina.

Those accomplishments include improvements such as lighting, painting, dock and utility repairs, landscaping, security and waste management.

This article has been truncated from its original post at martineznewsandviews.substack.com

Second year with Christmas lights hopefully leads Engine No. 1258 to even brighter future

by David Scholes

The second consecutive Christmas season is seeing Train Engine No. 1258, parked across from the Martinez Amtrak station near the entrance to Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline Park, lit up for the holidays.

The duo of Martinez resident Joseph Chavez and Liam O’Leary, of nearby Pittsburg, have taken the lead in the festive project.

Phase one saw them initially string approximately 1000 lights to the engine before Thanksgiving. In phase two, it was adorned with an additional 1,260 lights. The lights are connected to a regular car battery, and a timer has the lights set to go on from 5:00 p.m. to midnight nightly.

Back in the day, O’Leary described the engine doing unceremonious grunt work of moving freight cars around a railroad yard before it was finally taken out of service in 1958.

The Southern Pacific Co. eventually presented it to the City of Martinez in May 1959. During its time in service, there was never a thought to string lights on it to add a bit of cheer, Chavez recalled.

So, the TLC the engine has undergone this holiday season has hardly gone unnoticed. The two train aficionados who are associated with the brightly



Joseph Chavez proudly decorated engine No. 1258 for the holidays.

lit Christmas trains that Niles Canyon Railroad operate annually during the holidays - O’Leary is a brakeman and Chavez serves as a docent inside the carriages - recounted a recent evening when a family came by and the children’s eyes beamed with the sight of the brightly lit Engine No. 1258.

While glad to see the reaction and know it is adding joy as the Christmas season chugs along, O’Leary and Chavez also hope “it gets more eyes” on the plight of the aging Engine No. 1258.

Financial support is being sought to give it the cosmetic care it so richly deserves to ensure it looks good well into the future.

A sister engine in San Jose, which just recently had lights strung on it as well, has been restored to its glory. The hope is for the same results for the one here, Chavez said.

The design of the “Papa Jake” Larson statue

by David King

Many people behind the scenes will be responsible for making sure the Papa Jake Larson bronze statue is finished by September 2026. Installation is proposed to happen between September and November, 2026, with an unveiling ceremony schedule for Veterans Day, 2026.

Two women who are the drivers behind this project, Brandy Leidgen, a banking professional out of Concord, who oversaw the project of getting the Don Salvio Pacheco statue installed and funded at Concord’s downtown Todos Santos Park.

She was a close friend of Papa Jake and his family. She spearheaded this idea and presented to the Martinez Council to earn a unanimous vote to proceed with the Larson statue. Now her job is focused on fundraising for the project.

A large part of that funding will come from us, local residents and businesses, by purchasing bricks, either 4” x 8” for \$200 or 12”x12” for \$2500. It is such a unique and rare opportunity to be immortalized for future generations to see.

Sculptor Paula Slater is the other woman leading this charge. Slater sculpted the Pacheco stature in Concord which is how the two ladies met.

Slater has been sculpting for 30 years. Her works have been viewed by millions of people each year. She is internationally recognized for her life size Bronze portrait sculpture including Presidents, military heroes, industry leaders, and more. Two of her sculptures have been designated State Landmark Monuments.

Regarding Papa Jake Slater said, “I hadn’t heard about Papa Jake, but Brandy told me all about him, and it seemed like a very inspiring project, so I was definitely interested. However, the moment I looked him up on the internet and saw his wonderful, sweet face and kind eyes, I knew I just had to sculpt him!”

Papa Jake had 1.2 million Tik Tok followers, in addition to his Instagram and Facebook followers worldwide. Slater said she will sculpt Papa Jake, as she does with all her pieces, in clay.

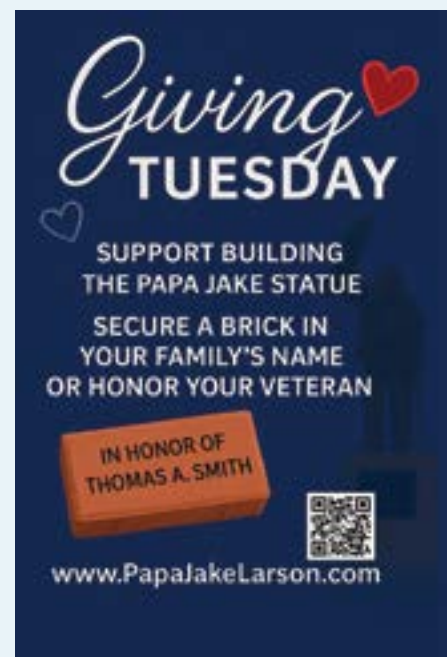
Her husband, Chris, makes all the complex silicon rubber and plaster molds from the clay sculpt; those molds are then delivered to the Artworks Foundry in Berkeley, where they are used to cast “lost wax” bronze with “exquisite patinas,” the greenish film that forms naturally on copper and bronze that brings out detail.

“I will seek to capture Papa Jake’s unique spirit, infectious smile and that twinkle in his eyes,” Slater said. “I sculpt portraits in natural poses in high detail, so I will include all the medals on his jacket and his hat, etc.”

To see Slater’s other works and learn more go to: paulaslater.com



Image based on original design by sculptor, Pala Slateer, M.A.



Summer '26 opening earmarked for Osaka Marketplace in Pleasant Hill

by David Scholz

One of two big empty big box store locations near the Pleasant Hill downtown corridor will have a new occupant when Osaka Marketplace opens its doors by next summer.

The Japanese grocery store will be bringing new life to the long vacant Orchard Supply Hardware site that went dark in 2018.

“Osaka Marketplace will bring the flavors of Japan to Pleasant Hill,” said General Manager Kazuhiro Takeda.

The retail outlet will offer an extensive selection of authentic Japanese groceries, fresh produce, seafood, ready-to-eat meals, and hard-to-find imported foods and goods – all under one roof.

“We are thrilled to join Pleasant Hill and are looking forward to growing as a part of the community,” said Takeda.

Osaka Marketplace looks to employ between 70 and 80 staff, a mix of part-time and full-time workers.

OSH vacated the 42,000 square foot space in Pleasant Hill after a two-year stint at the Crescent Plaza site.

Osaka officials began looking about two years ago for potential places to expand and identified this site as a strong opportunity to meet the demand



it saw in Pleasant Hill and Concord. It currently is operating in Fremont with another store in Foster City having its grand opening this month.

“Osaka Marketplace offers a shopping experience that feels like a trip to Japan,” said Kazuhiro Takeda, owner and founder of Osaka Marketplace, of what folks who have never experienced the retailer.

“Our stores feature a wide selection of goods curated by experienced Japanese managers, along with high-quality service,” he continued.

With an eye towards creativity, an investment of approximately \$6 to 8 million into the Pleasant Hill project is envisioned. This will include plans to

reuse the garden center portion of the former hardware store to create a semi-outdoor Japanese market hall with several mini restaurants. These small eateries will include offerings such as sushi, ramen, chicken karaage, and bento boxes.

Barring issues with construction, June or July 2026 is the target time frame for opening the latest Osaka Marketplace location with its creative “grocerant” innovative blend – a portmanteau describing how a grocery store and several small restaurants can be situated all in the same building, a unique and complementary offering along the I-680 corridor.

“Osaka Marketplace shows the



City’s commitment to prioritizing the attraction of businesses that are local,” said Pleasant Hill Mayor Sue Noack in welcoming the new addition that is contributing to a revitalization of the downtown.

Osaka Marketplace will join an exciting mix of downtown destinations, including Cantina Jack’s, Paris Baguette, Crumbs Breakfast & Lunch Bar, The Royale, Morgan Territory Brewing, and the Batter N’ Icing cupcakery, that have had openings in recent years.

“A mix of local and national retailers provides Pleasant Hill residents a diversity of products and price options to choose from,” Noack said.

Another nearby retail outlet catering to Asian goods and eatery opportunities, 99 Ranch, is located nearby along Willow Pass Road in the Park N Shop. Asked about Osaka being a comparable experience, Takeda said its business strategy focuses specifically on Japanese goods and services, including popular items and hard-to-find products sourced for local customers.

“We believe this creates a distinct experience compared to other Asian grocers,” Takeda added.

Two entrepreneurial women bring unique health care businesses to Crockett

CROCKETT - Two enterprising women in Crockett have launched unique healthcare services in downtown Crockett. Luxe Body Image, a cutting-edge wellness center, the other, All Access Healthcare a mobile phlebotomist service.



Mariko Diblase

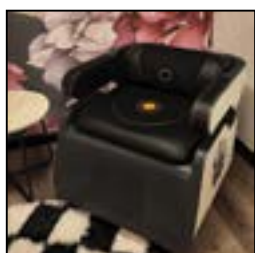
Luxe Body Image is redefining how a small town cares for strength, recovery, and confidence. The studio blends advanced science technology with a welcoming neighborhood feel, making modern wellness easy to

access and simple to understand according to its owner Mariko Diblase..

Mariko opened Luxe with a clear goal. Bring advanced, non-invasive tools to a space that feels calm, beautiful, and personal. She is joined by partner Sharon who is passionate about staying fit as you age gracefully. Together they have created a modern studio where neighbors can pursue better function and everyday vitality without surgery or downtime.

Luxe Body Image focuses on services that help the body work better. No massages and facials here. Instead, sessions target muscle strength, circulation, and cellular repair.

A signature offering is the HIFEM chair, which uses high intensity focused electromagnetic energy to stimulate the



pelvic floor. A 30-minute session can deliver more than 10,000 Kegels while you sit fully clothed and relaxed. Clients choose it to improve bladder control, rebuild core strength, and support sexual health. Many men find it helpful for symptoms related to erectile dysfunction. The approach is non-invasive and does not require recovery time.

The environment is intentionally soothing. Soft lighting, gentle music, and thoughtful design help clients unwind the moment they step inside. Sessions are private and unhurried. Luxe also features full body red and near infrared light therapy.

Luxe Body Image is part of the energetic wave along Pomona Street where art, food, fashion, and wellness are thriving together. For Crockett residents, it is one more reason to linger in town, support local owners, and invest in personal well-being close to home. Website luxebodyimageca.com. Location 1322 Pomona Street, downtown Crockett



Concierge Phlebotomy Service by All Access Healthcare and Unique Phlebotomy

All Access Healthcare was founded in 2017 as a mobile concierge lab collection

Con't on page 22

Crockett Chamber of Commerce

CHRISTMAS IN CROCKETT

COME DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF CROCKETT

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- Art Galleries • Jewelery
- Antiques • Clothing
- Restaurants • Coffee Shops

DEC 2025 MOST SHOPS OPEN THUR-SUN. NOON-5:00 P.M. SOME HAVE HOLIDAY EXTENDED HOURS



Observing Local Government Explained by Quantum Politics

by Edi Birsan, Concordian edibirsan@gmail.com

In the last century, the scientific world was shocked to its Newtonian/Einstein core when physicists did an experiment shooting a series of single electrons at a set of double slots to scorch a pattern on a distant panel. The results were that when there were observers, they got different results, a wave pattern when unobserved, and a particle beam when observed. Again, the only difference was someone was looking at it.

Is government ruled by quantum politics?

People have known for millennia that watching or not watching government can get you different results, which is why there is always the great cry out and need for transparency.

Presenting 'data' is always a demand. Unfortunately, the reality of data is that it is truly quantum; that is, you can get any result you want except for one: the truth.

But data is not the only thing that transparency in local government can reveal. What is often most important is the thinking behind a decision that sometimes data is used to justify.

So, in local government observation

requires two additional aspects: understanding and engagement.

Whatever perspective the politicians display to you, if you do not understand what they are doing, you are not going to affect change.

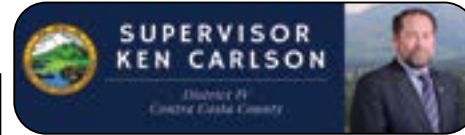
And after truly understanding what is going on, get engaged with those making decisions. Only then will you see the true effect of real observation.

My favorite mantra of local government: "They are either listening to you or to someone else. Speak up, act, and vote."

After all, unlike the quantum physics experiment where there is only a small set of different patterns that the electrons can show you, in local government, the range of outcome appears to be almost infinite.

So, how are you observing your government these days?

Opinions above are by Edi Birsan and not reflective of Schrödinger's Cat that someone should have let out of its box so people would NOT argue over whether it was dead or alive.



A Year of Resilience

The resilience of our county was tested this year, but our resolve has never been stronger. As we look back on 2025, I am proud of how Contra Costa and its residents showed up for each other. I witnessed that moving display of humanity not just from the dais, but in daily life.

Earlier this year, I fought to open the Services and Access for Everyone (SAFE) Center, a central hub for immigrants and non-immigrants alike to find resources from employment and legal services to education and healthcare. The SAFE Center represents our commitment to ensuring that every resident, regardless of background, has a place to turn for support.

We also faced the threat of federal cuts to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which would have jeopardized food security for thousands of families. While those cuts were ultimately reversed, Contra Costa was prepared to act. We developed an emergency plan to issue grocery debit cards to more than 107,000 recipients, ensuring that if the worst happened, families would still have access to food. That readiness reflects our values.

Another sign of resilience is the progress we have made in addressing homelessness. This year, Contra Costa reported a 26% drop. That achievement is the result of a sustained collaboration

between service providers, advocates, and local government. It shows that when we invest in housing solutions and supportive services, we can make measurable change.

In the past few weeks, I was proud to announce the 25 recipients of the District IV Community Impact Fund, awarding a total of \$1 million. These grants empower local organizations to expand their reach, strengthen neighborhoods, and uplift those who need it most. Investing directly in our communities is how we build lasting strength.

This year also brought change to our Board of Supervisors. We mourned the loss of Supervisor Federal Glover, a trailblazer whose decades of service left an indelible mark on Contra Costa. At the same time, we welcomed Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston. Her leadership and perspective will help guide us into the future and I look forward to working alongside her.

Looking ahead, I remain committed to ensuring District IV and Contra Costa County thrive by preparing for challenges, investing in people, and staying true to the values that bind us together.

I wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season.

CONT'D FROM PG. 20, ALL ACCESS HEALTHCARE,



CEO, Genetia Roberts

service in the San Francisco Bay Area by Genetia Roberts, a certified, licensed phlebotomist with nearly 30 years of experience across dialysis, oncology, education, and laboratory field services.

Driven by her vision to make blood draws and specimen collection easy, accessible, and stress-free for everyone, Roberts expanded her services in April, 2025, with the opening of her first dedicated blood draw center, Unique Phlebotomy located at 1214 Pomona Street, Unit C in Crockett.

"I love what I do and I am eternally grateful for the support of my clients over the past eight years, enabling me to open a new onsite draw center for my community," said Roberts.

All Access Healthcare serves dozens of physicians, laboratories, three major Bay Area athletic teams, and hundreds of patients throughout Northern and Southern California. The company



maintains partnerships with Access Medical Lab, Boston Heart, Cleveland Heart, DNA testing, Genova Diagnostic, IGX, Sneak Peek, Spectra Cell and more.

"Whether you need complex blood draws and specimen collection or your schedule simply doesn't allow for long lab waits, we provide a calm, private experience at your home or workplace, whenever you need us," added Roberts.

Learn more about their VIP mobile and in-person specimen collection services provided by experienced, credentialed, and caring professionals. Contact All Access Healthcare / Unique Phlebotomy at 1-888-341-9098 to schedule an appointment and learn more about their VIP mobile and in-person specimen collection services provided by experienced, credentialed, and caring professionals. <https://uniquephlebotomy.com/>

Be a Santa to a Senior



Volunteers at a Be a Santa to a Senior wrapping gifts to be presented to seniors.

Now in its 15th year, the Be a Santa to a Senior (BASTAS) initiative has spread holiday cheer to seniors in the community who might not otherwise receive gifts this holiday season.

Each year, hundreds of thoughtful gifts make their way to seniors living in nursing homes, board and care facilities, and subsidized housing, reminding them that their community cares.

This is an easy program to commit to. To help, simply visit any of the following locations,

where you will find Christmas trees adorned with gift tags: City of Concord facilities (Civic Center, Concord Community Pool, Senior Center), Concord Library, Pleasant Hill YMCA, Visit Concord, Concord Chamber of Commerce, Luna Restaurant, Fiore Restaurant, Min's Kitchen, Old Spaghetti Factory.

Take as many gift tags as you can, and shop to fulfill the tag. But hurry. The tags will name a gift that senior has requested.. Shop and drop your present off unwrapped in the box where you picked up the gift tag or at the Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., by Monday, December 8. Make sure to include the gift tag.

Another way to support the program is donating wrapping supplies such as rolls of wrapping paper, tissue paper, large and extra-large gift bags, ribbons, bows and tape. Drop off or ship these donations to the Concord Senior Center.

BASTAS has one more volunteer opportunity to consider. On Friday, Dec. 12, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m., volunteers are invited to the gift-wrapping party at the Concord Senior Center. Enjoy holiday music and a festive atmosphere while you contribute to wrapping over 500 gifts, which will be delivered to seniors the following week. Please RSVP to concordsc@cityofconcord.org or call 925-671-3074.

The Commission on Aging and the Concord Senior Center, in partnership with Home Instead, will host. For more information, please visit the BASTAS web page. <https://www.cityofconcord.org/975/BASTAS>

Puzzle Solutions from page 7

G M V G V F I A H Y O G B D V B	5	3	6	2	1	4	7	8	9
I U R C U I K W I R S K O W A I	7	8	9	3	6	5	4	2	1
T O N E C O R D O N H B N B V A Y	4	2	1	8	9	7	5	3	6
R I F E O R S A D O B L L H U E	2	6	4	5	3	1	8	9	7
N A L O O C M G D E I N T H D J	1	5	3	9	7	8	2	6	4
S O F M G H E L E G Y D A I E	8	9	7	6	4	2	1	5	3
R O O R V N D I C T K N E B S	9	7	8	4	5	6	3	1	2
R E T U R H N W H S W Y N C N	3	1	2	7	8	9	6	4	5
U W B N V R I W B V E I K O D N O	6	4	5	1	2	3	9	7	8
N B O Q Q E O J W I R K T A D W									
M Q J D O G G K J Y E E N G R M F									
K Y T I V I T A D G P Y I L D L									
S L E I R D A D I G L N Y B U L A									
U T M U O A S A T A A R I A N D K									
C A Q I R H K G N I K R O T D V M E									
W W E H Y T A E R V K H R H C Q									
U C I F A F H A C S G D A T U N U F									

CRYPTOGRAM

You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.
—Maya Angelou

WORD SCRAMBLE

ORNAMENT, GINGERBREAD, CANDLE, NUTCRACKER, TINSEL

RokoPuzzles.com
Get free printable downloads of holiday word searches and coloring pages. Also - free sudoku at RokoPuzzles.com



For the Love of Pets
by Jill Hedgecock, Jillhedgecock.com

The key to great holiday pet photos is preparation

Whether you want to include a photograph of your pet on a holiday card, get a holiday keepsake picture of your pet with Santa Claus, or take professional photo of your pet to memorialize them, the key to a successful photoshoot is preparation. If the event is less stressful, the pet will be calmer and more photogenic.

The process of readying your pet should start before you leave the house.

A long walk for dogs or a vigorous round of “chase the string” for cats can tire them out. Also, while they are calm, give them a quick brushing if they are of the furry persuasion before you load them into the car. Some pets may need a second round of grooming after arrival, so bring the brush along. For other pets where a cute outfit will be worn, dress them up a few times beforehand to acclimate them to the clothing. And don’t forget to apply flea control. Santa and professional photographers will appreciate it,

If it has been a while since your dog has attended obedience school, practice “sit” and “stay” commands. Because waiting in an unfamiliar environment can be stressful, if possible, make an appointment beforehand rather than stand in line.

Once these preparations are completed and the day has arrived, remember to bring along a favorite squeaky toy or some high value treats to entice the pet to give their cutest face for the camera. Have the photographer or Santa give your pet a treat but only let him pet them if they are tolerant of strangers touching them.

If professional photos are being taken or if there are two pet parents in attendance, walking behind the

photographer can get the animal looking in the correct direction.

Try to relax during the experience. Animals sense their owner’s emotional state. A positive attitude in a human can be reassuring.

If the pet balks when you step away, consider joining them in the photo or abandon the plan. A smartphone photo or selfie at home with you dressed up in holiday clothes

with your pet may be a better choice for all concerned.

Where to Go for Pet Photos with Santa:

Concord and Walnut Creek PetSmart Stores. December 13 and December 14 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Free. Bring your own camera. Reservations are available on the PetSmart App and walk-ins are welcome. Concord PetSmart: 1700 Willow Pass Rd, Walnut Creek PetSmart: 2891 Ygnacio Valley Rd.

Joybound. Saturday, December 6 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., 2890 Mitchell Drive, Walnut Creek. Free (\$25 donation recommended). Registration appreciated but not required. All animals must be leashed or in carriers for transport and within the pet handler’s control the entire time for the safety of all.

Broadway Plaza (Pet Night with Santa). December 8 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., 1275 Broadway Plaza, Walnut Creek across from SoulCycle. Reservations (\$20 deposit) can be made and information on photo packages can be found at www.broadwayplaza.com.



Santa Paws, a pet photos with Santa event was held Nov. 30 at the Sun Valley Shopping Center in Concord. Photo courtesy of Sun Valley Shopping Center.



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- Companionship and Safety Supervision
- Meal Preparation
- Laundry and Linen Change
- Activities and Exercises
- Light Housekeeping
- Medication Reminders



Caregiving Agencies: Supporting Your Loved One at Home

by Francisco Sudiagal

As our population continues to age, families across the country are looking to caregiving agencies to support their loved ones at home. These organizations provide trained professionals who assist with activities of daily living and companionship. These services that can alleviate the stress family caregivers may experience. The agencies provide a proper alternative to residential care facilities for loved ones to enjoy the comfortable familiarity of the home while receiving the care they need.

Caregiving agencies offer a wide range of services. Personal care includes help with bathing, dressing, and grooming. Caregivers can also assist by preparing meals, doing laundry, housekeeping, and medication reminders. For those with chronic conditions such as dementia or Parkinson’s disease, specialized and compassionate care ensures safety and comfort. Many agencies also emphasize emotional well-being, pairing clients with caregivers who provide companionship as well as encouraging activity and exercise, to reduce feelings of isolation and help maintain cognitive function.

It is highly suggested that families conduct their due diligence when hiring an agency. A proper inquiry includes verifying license and

bonding, asking about caregiver training, reviewing client testimonials, and discussing rates and minimum shift hours. Flexibility is another factor, as scheduling needs often change, and agencies should adapt quickly. Families should also inquire about emergency protocols and backup staffing to avoid gaps in care.

Beyond credentials, compassion remains the cornerstone of quality care. Agencies that prioritize empathy and cultural sensitivity often earn the highest praise from families. Caregiving is not merely the completion of tasks. Quality caregiving also involves patience and a deep respect for the human condition.

Selecting a caregiving agency can feel daunting, but the right choice brings peace of mind. For many families, these services are more than practical, they’re a lifeline to mental health and well-being. With careful research and open communication, families can find an agency that offers not only skilled care but also the warmth and understanding every loved one deserves.

Francisco writes about senior services as the Community Relations Manager for At Home Support Senior Care. Email your questions and comments to fsudiagal@hsseniorcare.com.



Concord - The City of Concord and the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce have relaunched the popular Shop Concord e-gift card program to support the city’s small businesses by encouraging residents to shop locally. New this year, cardholders can now save their Shop Concord cards in their digital wallets and tap-to-pay.

Shop Concord helps local businesses increase their sales while also benefiting consumers and providing

Shop Concord Relaunches Bonus Gift Card Program

a boost to the local economy. Shop Concord relaunched on Nov. 24, thanks to a \$10,000 contribution from the City of Concord to supply a bonus gift card with every purchase. While supplies last, receive a free \$50 Shop Concord bonus card with every original \$100 gift card purchase, a free \$25 Shop Concord card with every \$50 gift card purchase, or a free \$10 Shop Concord card with every \$20 gift card purchase. Gift cards can be used for purchases at any participating business. The bonus gift cards with purchase are available until the allotted \$10,000 is distributed.

“As holiday shopping starts, we are excited to bring back our popular Shop Concord program to support local businesses and provide a special

incentive in the form of a bonus gift card,” said Concord Mayor Carlyn Obringer.

The initial Shop Concord program launched in November 2020. Local businesses saw the momentum and reaped the benefits. Since 2020, the total amount of gift cards distributed is more than \$342,000 in value.

“The Shop Concord program has been an overwhelming success since its launch in November 2020. The positive participation and feedback from both customers and local businesses have exceeded expectations, making it a key initiative for supporting our community,” said Kevin Cabral, President/CEO of the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce.

The e-gift cards can be purchased on the Shop Concord Yiftee page, <https://concordfirst.com/buy-gift-cards>, which includes a list of participating merchants. If you plan to use the card, follow the instructions to add to your digital wallet. The purchased cards can be redeemed at any participating Concord business. Customers can split the original and bonus portions to keep the bonus portions for themselves or gift to others via text or email.

Concord business owners can sign up anytime for free to participate in the Shop Concord program. Instructions for how to become a participating merchant are online at www.concordfirst.com/shop-concord.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Beacon Lighting Ceremony, Dec. 7

by Laura Kindsvater

On December 7th, Mount Diablo's Beacon will be relit by a survivor of Pearl Harbor supported by a Save Mount Diablo team.

The Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors, Chapter 5 are co-sponsors to the 62nd annual national Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Beacon lighting ceremony with Save Mount Diablo; California State Parks; and California State University, East Bay.

The ceremony will pay tribute to the lives that were lost and honor our surviving veterans of Pearl Harbor. The ceremony will be held at the California State University, East Bay Concord Center, at 4700 Ygnacio Valley Road in Concord.

Viewing of the USS Arizona exhibit at the CSUEB Concord Center will be available from 3:00 to 3:45 p.m. The ceremony will begin at 3:45 PM in the Oak Room. Pearl Harbor Survivor Earl "Chuck" Kohler is expected to attend.

The program begins with the posting of colors and pledge of allegiance by the Historical Forces Association, and the national anthem, sung by Erin Hegarty.

Dr. Anthony Muscat, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at California State University, East Bay will give a welcoming, followed by Ted Clement, Executive Director for Save Mount Diablo, who will give ceremonial remarks, and Cameron Morrison, Supervising Ranger at Mount Diablo State Park, who will give district remarks.

Sherron Sandini, a Pearl Harbor child survivor, will then speak. Sandini's speech



Mount Diablo Summit Beacon, the "Eye of Diablo," by Stephen Joseph. Additional high-resolution photos of the Beacon and the Pearl Harbor Survivors are available upon request by contacting lkindsvater@savemountdiablo.org.

will be followed by an introduction to the recipient of the Pearl Harbor Legacy Scholarship.

The Pearl Harbor Legacy Scholarship in history is a competitive scholarship that supports undergraduate and graduate history majors studying the World War II era, and with an interest in teaching at the K-12 or higher education levels.

Pearl Harbor Survivor Earl "Chuck" Kohler will share his experience on that fateful day, December 7, 1941.

"The Beacon lighting is a tribute to those individuals that lost their lives at Pearl Harbor," says Kohler.

Afterwards, Erin Hegarty will perform a patriotic medley, and Jose Valenzuela of Bugles Across America will perform "Taps."

The Beacon will be lit approximately between 4:48 and 5:30 p.m.

Steve Barton, associate member of the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors, Chapter 5, will then give a serenade.

All are encouraged to attend. The ceremony will be streamed live and rebroadcast on Contra Costa Television.

Contra Costa TV is available on Comcast channel 27, AT&T/U-verse channel 99, and Astound 32 and 1027, or online at www.contracostatv.org.

The Beacon on Mount Diablo was originally installed and illuminated in 1928 to aid in transcontinental aviation. It is one of the four guiding beacons that were installed along the West Coast by Standard Oil of California and is the only one known to still be operational.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Beacon's light was extinguished during the West Coast blackout, for fear it could enable an attack on California.

It stayed dark until Pearl Harbor Day in 1964, when Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander in Chief of Pacific Forces during World War II, relit the Beacon in a commemorative ceremony and suggested it be illuminated every December 7th to honor those who served and sacrificed.

Since that day, Pearl Harbor veterans and their families have gathered every December 7th to see the Beacon light shine once again.

The Beacon now shines brighter than ever since it underwent an extensive restoration process in 2013 thanks to a campaign led by Save Mount Diablo.

The Pearl Harbor Survivors now know that the Beacon will shine long after they are gone.

The Beacon is lit at sunset and shines all night on this evening each year. Beginning in 2022, it is also lit on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

On Sunday, April 11, 2021, Save Mount Diablo concluded a year of lighting the Beacon weekly to bring light and hope to our region during the worst of the pandemic.

Save Mount Diablo has restored, maintained, and operated the Mount Diablo Summit Beacon, also known as the "Eye of Diablo", for many years, and the organization is grateful to provide this service to our communities despite the time and cost involved.

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