



Clayton resident Daren Olson, right, tapped as one of the best drummers in the world to become a member of the world renowned Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo Pipes and Drum band to perform in 26 shows during August at the Edingurgh Castle Esplanade. Pg.4

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## The News Will Continue with Your Help

On our cover this month, that is Daren Olson. To the right of this columns, that is also Daren holding a copy of the Diablo Gazette in front of Edinburgh Castle Daren brought the paper with him on his trip to Scotland, where he performed in the prestigious Royal Military Tattoo.

We're proud to see one of our own not only representing his community abroad, but also making the news in Edinburgh itself. Pictured below, his wife, Michaela, who was excited to get to Scotland in time to watch his performances. Sweet.

Closer to home, many of you are now aware that The Pioneer has come to an end. Publisher Tamara Steiner dedicated years to keeping our community informed, and I hope she finds comfort and joy in her retirement despite her health challenges.

But the news goes on. Diablo Gazette is expanding household distribution so that in time, every home that once received The Pioneer will now receive this publication.

It's worth remembering that community newspapers are sustained by small teams. The era of roving reporters chasing down every controversy is largely behind us; those resources are scarce, even in large organizations. What keeps local journalism thriving today is community involvement. That means sharing your stories, events, and achievements with us at [diablogazette.com](http://diablogazette.com), or by leaving a message at 925-298-9990.

We live in a remarkable part of the country, surrounded by talented, accomplished people whose stories deserve to be told. With your help, we can continue shining a light on them.



## Telemedicine: High-tech eye exams come to Concord

by David King

Everywhere we look, technology is working to make life simpler, easier, and more comfortable. In the field of eye care, new advancements are transforming what a routine exam can reveal—not just how clearly we see, but the overall health of our eyes.

Traditionally, most eye exams focus mainly on checking vision and measuring eye pressure. While these tests are important, they only scratch the surface of what modern technology can uncover. Thanks to the pioneering Oculus 20/20 system, patients can now benefit from a complete eye exam that captures detailed images of the eye's interior without the need for dilation.

Orion Optical, located in Concord's Veranda Shopping Center, is currently the only place in the area offering this breakthrough. Owner Sid Afshar invested nearly \$80,000 to bring the Oculus 20/20 to the community. Unlike many optical shops that are limited in scope, Orion's system allows an independent optician to provide the same level of diagnostic service as a doctor's office while still giving patients the convenience of walk-in access six days a week.

"Best of all there's no dilation needed. No one likes dilation, it leaves you blind for hours," Afshar punctuates.

The process is simple and comprehensive. Results are transmitted remotely to a licensed doctor, who reviews and finalizes the exam. In addition to standard vision and pressure testing, the Oculus 20/20 includes screenings for depth perception, color blindness, and motility (eye movement). Exterior images of the eyelids can also reveal early signs of disease, while inside the eye images can reveal sun damage or age-related degeneration. Patients leave with both a written prescription and a printed report of their results.

"You get not just a vision test but an exam on the overall health of the eye. There's more to the eye than meets the eye," he emphasized.

To complete the experience, Orion Optical offers a full selection of lenses and designer frames on site, making it possible to get your exam and eyewear in one stop. For added safety, every

patient fills out a short intake form to determine whether the technology is appropriate, or whether an in-person doctor's visit would be more suitable. The system is currently available for patients ages 8 to 80.

"The Oculus 20/20 gives us doctor-on-tab service six days a week, Monday through Saturday. We can even take walk-ins," Afshar said.

With this innovative technology, Orion Optical is setting

a new standard for accessible, high-tech vision care—right in the heart of Concord.



Oculus 20/20 test looks inside the eye for possible damage or disease. The image is also viewed by a doctor remotely.



Three of the five machines a patient will peer into during a comprehensive examination, without dilation.

## Kiwanis Club of Concord's 18th Annual Taste of Concord



October 12th  
1:00pm - 4:00pm  
Around Todos Santos Plaza

The 18th Annual Taste of Concord promises to continue the tradition of good family strolling around Todos Santos Plaza in Downtown Concord on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Come on down and sample food from menus of some familiar and new dining establishments for a donation of only \$30. This year, we will be including wine and beer tasting from some of Contra Costa County's award winning wineries and breweries.

The net proceeds will go towards supporting our Key Club leadership programs at Concord HS, Clayton Valley Charter HS, Las Lomas HS, and Northgate HS and other worthwhile non-profit organizations.

\$30/Adult | \$15/Children 12 and Under

Tickets can be purchased through Venmo, Square, or in person at Visit Concord

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**Kim Trupiano**  
Mayor, Clayton  
[kimT@claytonca.gov](mailto:kimT@claytonca.gov)

## Clayton is on the move!

### Staffing

By the time you read this, Clayton's City Hall will be fully staffed with an unrivaled team of experienced employees that are committed to the community, to each other and to being results oriented.

Thank you to our City Manager, Kris Lofthus, who has been hard at work building this outstanding team, by rightsizing the staff's roles and responsibilities, vetting through hundreds of applicants and finding the best employees to support our City.

We now have a new Police Chief, Jeremy Crone, a new Administrative Services Director, Dennis Bozanich, a new City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager, Leticia Miguel, a new Administrative Clerk, Sklyer Aitken, a new Community Development Technician, Jason McKinley and a Community Services Leader, Janessa Torres and joining us on September 2nd, we will welcome our first Public Works Director/City Engineer and a new Senior Planner. These exceptional employees are ready to serve the needs of the residents of Clayton.

### Finances

Over the last two years, many of us on City Council, along with City staff, have done the hard work of scrubbing the financial data, scrutinizing expense and revenue data, engaging the services of UBS to manage our investment account, implementing an accurate and updated Master Fee Schedule, making quality appointments to the Financial Sustainability Committee, attending

monthly (sometimes bi-weekly) Budget & Audit committee meetings, tasked with reviewing budget projections, contract analysis, updating the City's investment policy and bringing those recommendations back to the Council at large.

In August, we held Part One of a multi-part series on revenue generating ideas and will be taking a deeper dive to determine the City's needs and estimate what level of services we as a community can afford and supports, as it relates to major things like roads and paving, sidewalk repair and ADA improvements, special district funding, landscaping and maintenance and future staffing needs.

### City Projects

At the end of this year, the City is embarking on Phase I of a three-part library refresh project with Contra Costa County Library and the Clayton Community Library Foundation. Phase I will include all new paint and carpeting, for both the library and Hoyer Hall, as well as some new furniture. We know this is the most cherished building in the community and our collective goal is to make even more inviting to the public.

As one project begins, another is coming to a close this month and that project is in partnership with Climatec. The Climatec project was launched in 2023 and once completed will include all new irrigation controls, new HVAC systems, new interior and exterior LED lighting, a solar array panel that will provide energy to City Hall and the

library, as well as a new two-vehicle EV charging station in the library parking lot. We hope to announce a "flip the switch" date and ribbon cutting soon.

### Housing Element

After many years and even more meetings with our consultant and the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), I am excited to share that both the Planning Commission and the City Council have approved the final version of the City's Sixth Housing Element and we are awaiting final certification from HCD in the next 60 days. Thank you again to our City Manager for all of his work in getting us over the finish line.

### On the horizon

We will shortly be launching the 311 app, which will provide the community with an easy method for reporting issues they see needing attention throughout the City including but not limited to sidewalk repair, potholes, irrigation problems, graffiti and more.

We are also reviewing new rental facility software for our city-owned buildings and parks, in order to make reservations and payments easy and seamless for the community.

### Save the Date:

Hispanic Heritage Day Event on September 20th from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, at The Grove, to include food, music, dancing and lots of fun!

Holidays in The Grove, in partnership with the CBCA, Saturday, December 6, at 5:00 pm at The Grove



Park, downtown.

Thank you to all who attended, volunteered, sponsored, performed and participated in our 18th Annual Concerts in the Grove. It was an outstanding season and we could not have been successful without everyone who made it happen. Here's to season 19 in 2026!

I will be hosting a State of the City Town Hall meeting November 5 at 6:00 p.m. in Hoyer Hall, with updates from myself, our City Manager, Kris Lofthus, and each of our department heads. It will also provide you, the community, with an opportunity to ask us questions, and field your concerns so we can understand what's important to you now and for our City's future.

If you would like to reach me, you may contact me at [kimt@claytonca.gov](mailto:kimt@claytonca.gov) or at 925.673.7324. Remember, we are stronger together!



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**UPDATE**

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
1359 Shell Ln	\$749,000	1709	3/3	7/11/2025
3083 Windmill Canyon Rd	\$1,375,000	2657	4/3	7/17/2025
8015 Kelok Way	\$1,365,000	2843	5/3	7/21/2025
735 Bloching Cir	\$1,250,000	1813	3/2.5	7/30/2025
921 Arrowhead Ter	\$830,000	1939	3/2.5	8/8/2025
1 Malibu Ct	\$1,050,000	2010	4/2.5	8/14/2025
228 Stranahan Cir	\$919,000	1650	3/2.5	8/18/2025

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
4532 Birch Bark Rd	\$896,000	1709	4/2	7/24/2025
4880 Myrtle Dr	\$1,197,000	1713	4/2.5	7/30/2025
1335 Kenwal Rd #A	\$390,000	915	2/1	7/31/2025
5182 La Corte Bonita	\$940,000	1294	3/2	8/7/2025
1841 Gilardy Dr	\$1,045,000	2102	5/3	8/14/2025
3800 Bouwina Ct	\$1,150,000	2441	4/3	8/15/2025
3515 Halfmoon Ln	\$1,270,000	2123	4/2.5	8/19/2025

Based on information from CCRAR/Paragon MLS® as of 5/21/25. 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.



# Clayton Resident Performs at Prestigious Edinburgh Military Tattoo

by David King

Clayton resident and retired firefighter Daren Olson recently performed in one of the most prestigious musical events in the world — the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

For Olson, a lifelong drummer and original member of the California Firefighters Pipe and Drum Corps, the journey to Edinburgh began with a secret. Even his wife Michaela and his family were unaware that he had auditioned for the Tattoo's elite drumline, a group that draws musicians from across the globe.

"I didn't tell anyone because I didn't think I'd be selected," Olson said.

The Tattoo, staged each August on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle, is considered the pinnacle of performance for pipes and drums. The 2025 edition marked the event's 75th anniversary, drawing more than 230,000 spectators over four weeks.

The Olson family already had plans to attend the anniversary performances. Michaela, who was born in Scotland, had often spoken with her husband about one day seeing the Tattoo in person. Last November, Daren suggested they finally go, purchasing tickets for the entire family — including Michaela's mother, Sylvia Boyce, 83, who lives in Scotland.

For Boyce, the trip carried special significance. She attended the very first Tattoo at Edinburgh Castle in 1950 as a young girl. Seven decades later, she would watch her son-in-law perform on the same historic esplanade, which the Scotland media was quick to report.

"He was supposed to sit and watch the show with us in the stands, not be in the show," Michaela said.

## The Secret Revealed



Without sharing his plans, Olson submitted an audition recording to the Tattoo organizers late last year. To his surprise, an email arrived in February with the news: "Congratulations. You have made it. We're inviting you to join the drum line for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo pipes and drum band."

When he finally told his wife, her reaction was immediate. "Pipes and drums. Oh my gosh. Holy cow! That's so amazingly exciting," she recalled.

Olson traveled to Scotland six weeks before the first performance for rehearsals. In the final 10 days leading up to the opening show, he joined 85 drummers and pipers from around the world in intensive practice sessions.

"They search worldwide to assemble the group," Olson said. "The talent is amazing. There are so many great acts. I've been fortunate to play for some incredible venues, but this by far exceeds all of that."

## A Drummer's Journey

Olson's musical career began in his youth. He performed with the Concord Blue Devils Drum Corps before aging out and later helped form the California Firefighters Pipe and Drum Corps in

2000. Over the years, he has traveled widely for performances, including solemn memorial services and high-profile national events.

As a guest of the Florida Firefighters Pipe and Drum Corps, he performed at President Trump's inauguration in 2025. But even that moment doesn't compare with the experience of marching onto the Edinburgh Castle esplanade before a global

audience.

"This is the pinnacle," Olson said. "Being part of the Tattoo, especially during the 75th anniversary, is something I will never forget."

For Michaela and Sylvia, watching from the stands was a point of pride as much as a family milestone.

"We're so proud of him," Michaela said. "It was unbelievable to see."

The Tattoo's 26-show run in August was seen not only by live audiences in Edinburgh but also by millions through international broadcast. The event combines music, dance, military pageantry, and precision performances in a setting unlike any other.

Olson's performance this summer has already led to another opportunity. He has been invited to join the Tattoo

when it travels to Australia in February 2025. Though performers must cover their own expenses, Olson views the invitation as an honor and another chance to represent both his family and his community.

"Knowing my family's background, and especially my mother-in-law being born in Edinburgh, I thought it was a great opportunity to honor her heritage and of course represent the Tattoo," Olson said.

For a drummer who once kept his audition a secret, his story now resonates far beyond Clayton.



Above: Daren Olson with his Mother-in-law, Sylvia Boyce. Below, Olson family in the stands at Edinburgh Castle

## Clayton Theatre Company Launches 14th Season with "Tootsie"

Clayton Theatre Company is raising the curtain on its 14th season with the Broadway hit Tootsie the Musical, running October 17-19 and 23-26 at Endeavor Hall, 6008 Center Street in Clayton.

Based on the beloved 1982 film, this updated stage version brings the story into the present day. The plot follows Michael Dorsey, a gifted but notoriously difficult actor who, in a desperate attempt to land a role, reinvents himself as "Dorothy Michaels." What unfolds is a hilarious and heartfelt exploration of reinvention, ambition, and the unpredictable world of show business.



L-R Kevin Coren (Michael Dorsey/Dorothy Michaels), James Bradley Jr. (Jeff Slater), Katie Guilbeaux (Julie Nichols)

While filled with laugh-out-loud comedy, Tootsie doesn't shy away from modern conversations. It acknowledges the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, balancing sharp humor with timely social awareness. The production has earned widespread acclaim, including two Tony Awards in 2020 for Best Book of a Musical and Best Leading Actor.

Clayton Theatre Company's staging features Kevin Coren as Michael/

Dorothy, with Katie Guilbeaux, Rachel Decker, and James Bradley Jr. rounding out the lead cast. The show is directed by Roxanne Pardi, with choreography by La Tonya Watts and music direction by Jess Reyes.

Tickets are available at [claytontheatrecompany.com](http://claytontheatrecompany.com) or by calling 925-334-0880.

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# calendar of events

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## Fundraisers

### CLAYTON: CONCORD -

**October 4 - Don Fernando Pacheco Adobe Bowling** - 12:30 - 3:00 p.m. \$60 per individual, \$400 per team of five. Register by September 20.

Proceeds to fund the restoration of the Don Pacheco Adobe in Concord. Contact Carlyn4CityCouncil@gmail.com

## Clayton

**-October 4&5 Oktoberfest!** Carnival (October 3, 5:00-10:00 p.m.) Saturday 12 noon -10:00 p.m. Sunday 12:00-6:00 p.m. Downtown

## Concord

**July 2-September 30- "Caught in the Moment" Concord Art Association (CAA) exhibit at Visit Concord, 2151 Salvio St. downtown Concord.** Hours: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. [www.concordartassociation.org](http://www.concordartassociation.org).

**September 27- Garage Sale** 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Ygnacio Woods and The Palms neighborhoods in Concord. Enter at Treat and Oak Grove or Citrus Ave. Organized by Veronica Hildalgo, Realtor®. Call 925-381-9585.

**October 1 - Contra Costa Water District Free Value of Water Tour 8:40 a.m.** All day bus tour to the Delta and learn how CWD manages and protects water to your home. Register at [eventbrite](http://eventbrite). Search Contra Costa Water District.

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**October 9- Health Expo,** Free health screenings and information for seniors and families, and caregivers. Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle, Concord. Go to [www.cityofconcord.org/SCEvents](http://www.cityofconcord.org/SCEvents)

### October 12 - Taste of

**Concord.** Come out for Kiwanis Club of Concord's 18th annual culinary stroll around Todos Santos Downtown Concord. Sample food from menus and enjoy tastings of beer and wine from some of Contra Costa County's award winning breweries and wineries. \$30 adults, \$15 children 12 and under. Proceeds to benefit Key Club leadership programs in local schools. 2072 Salvio St. Concord. Call Rocci 925-285-2225

**October 9 Water Treatment Plant and Pacheco March Tour.** Learn how water is treated and waste water is handled and discharged. 1:00 p.m.. FREE register at Eventbrite, search Contra Costa water district

**October 18 - La Concordia Wellness Center's 3rd Annual Gala: "Breaking the Stigma—Men Feel Too"** Black-tie event. Spotting Men's mental health. Gathering of mental health professionals and supporters. Full course dinner, live entertainment and auction. Concord Hilton 6:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. 1970 diamond Blvd. Concord.

## MUSIC & MARKET SERIES

Thursdays 6:30-8 p.m.

>September 4- Native Elements, Salute to Bob Marley, reggae

>September 11- Strange Days Tribute to the Doors

>September 18- Annie Simpson. Concord's Queen of Blues and Soul.

>September 25- The Purple Ones, Tribute to Prince > August 28 Roy Rogers and the Delta Rythm Kings Bay Area Blues Slide Guitar Master

## Pleasant Hill

**Off the Grid Nights** September 4, 11, 25, October 2, 9, 6 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. Picnic on the lawn. Bring blankets to the gazebo for live music, food trucks, beer, cocktails, and wine.

**Pleasant Hill Night Market.** First and third Fridays of each month through November 7. Food, beer truck, vendors, corn hole and other activities plus live music.

>September 5 Illuminated sculptures and Magic Show 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. in Chilpancingo Park.

**September 7, 14, 21, 27 Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden (PHIG) Garden Work Party** 9:00 a.m.-12 Noon. Help restore the garden at Pleasant Hill Education Center. email [phinstructionalgarden@gmail.com](mailto:phinstructionalgarden@gmail.com) or call Monika Olsen 925-482-6670.

**September 13-American Association of University of Women (AAUW) Pleasant Hill-Martinez Branch Welcome Back Brunch** 10:00 a.m.. Attendees will hear from the girls who the Branch provided scholarships to attend the Tech Trek at Sonoma State over the summer. \$15. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 1601 Mary Drive, Pleasant Hill.

## DOWNTOWN MERCHANTS SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

7:00-9:00 p.m. at the plaza in front of Jack's Restaurant and Bar, Crescent Drive, Pleasant Hill

> September 18: Foreverland

## Martinez

-September 5- Pumpkin

**Dunkin** - 5:00-7:00 p.m. Hunt for floating pumpkins, decorate and enjoy splashy games in the pool. Pre-registration required. Costumes encouraged. \$5 Rankin Aquatic Center, 100 Buckley St Martinez.

## WILLIAM WELCH WINES

Tasting Room Events  
837 Main Street

>September 5: Ray Goodman and the Soulmates

>September 9: Alignable Business Networking

>September 19: Gemtones (live music)

>September 26: Comedy Night

**September 11, Downtown Martinez Car Show Series** 6-8PM. Come Downtown for classic cars and vintage vibes.

**September 12-19 - Historical Ghost Tours** of Downtown Martinez. 6:45 - 9:00 p.m. A spine-tingling journey through the haunted streets and alleyways, where the spirits of the past still linger. Meet at Market and Main Approx. 2 mile walk along with ghost tales of Martinez. Minimum 6 guests per tour, maximum 30. No children under 12. \$30. 60 Main St. More info call Malena Clegg, 925-872-4069.

**September 14, October 12, November 9, 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, Martinez.

**September 13- Martini Shake-Off Gala.** 5:30 - 10:00 p.m. People's Choice Award, those who imbibe vote their favorite martini. Live music, dinner, silent auction. This is a semi-formal event. Gala held at Plaza Ignacio, 525 Henrietta, Martinez.

**Sundays - Farmers Market Main St. Martinez**

**At the Martinez Campbell Theater**

>September 5-21 **Sexy Laundry** an adult comedy. Diablo Actors Ensemble. Starting at \$22. Discount Thursday \$15

>September 7 -**Improv Partners in Crime.** 2:30 p.m. 2 hours. \$20

>September 7 **Open Mic** 6:00 p.m. \$3 cover

Martinez Campbell Theater  
636 Ward St, Martinez,  
[www.campbelltheater.com](http://www.campbelltheater.com)

## Walnut Creek

**Walnut Creek Merry Mixers Dances** 7:30 to 10:00 p.m.

>September 5 **Claudio Medeiros Trio** preceded by Will's East Coast Swing + Sliding doors

>September 19- **Fabulous Cruise Tones** preceded by 6:30 p.m. potluck.

Elks Lodge #1811 1475 Creekside Dr. [www.merrymixers.life](http://www.merrymixers.life) \$20 guest/\$15 member

**September 13-California Writers Club "Changing World of Audiobook making".** Voice actor and copywriter Dena Kouremetis is guest speaker. Zio Fraedo's Restaurant 611 Gregory Lane Pleasant Hill. 10:30 a.m. check-in. \$30 members, \$35 guests. \$40 for walk-ins. Register at <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/meetings-and-workshops/>

**September 20, Heather Farms Plant Sale** 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.. 540 marchbanks Drive. [gardenshf.org](http://gardenshf.org)

## At the Leshner Center

1601 Civic Dr. Walnut Creek

>September 6 **Best of San Francisco Stand-Up**

>September 19 **Smuin Contemporary Ballet**

>Oct 4 **On Broadway Gala** 6:00-11:00 p.m. Celebrate 35 years of excellence

## Other Areas

### Crockett:

> **October 12 4th Annual Oktoberfest.** 628 2nd Ave. 12:00-.5:00 p.m.. Axe throwing, Pretzles, WURSTL, Maypole Dance, Car Show, Beer & Wine

### Danville:

**Through September 19. "Art in Miniature", Village theatre Art Gallery.** Miniature paintings, sculptures landscapes, etc. Wednesday-Friday 12:00-5:00 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Free 233 Front St. Danville.

### SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIES

by the 20th of the month before Issue month. [diablogazette@gmail.com](mailto:diablogazette@gmail.com)



# Agent 2000 Celebrates 50 years in business



Laurie Limrite, Derek and Lorie Knapp, current owners of Agent 2000 Insurance agency. Right: Retired founders, Jim and Joan Knapp.

We all know running a small business can be a challenge, with national averages suggesting half of all new ventures fail within their first five years. But those odds don't apply to Agent 2000 Insurance Services, which proudly celebrated its 50th anniversary on August 28 at its Concord office, 1255 Diamond Way.

The milestone celebration drew an impressive turnout, including Concord Mayor Carlyn O'bringer, representatives from the offices of Supervisors Carlson and Scales-Preston, Assemblymember Farias and Senator Grayson with each awarding the business with Certificates of Proclamations.

After heartfelt remarks, guests raised a glass for a champagne toast and enjoyed delicious refreshments provided by Mi Casita Mexican Restaurant of Martinez, Parma Deli of Concord, and Sweet Affair Bakery of Walnut Creek.

The ceremony culminated with a dual Chamber of Commerce ribbon-cutting by Concord and Pleasant Hill Chambers of Commerce with the extended family.

Agent 2000 was founded on September 1, 1975, by Jim and Joan Knapp in Walnut Creek. Their son Derek and his wife Lorie later assumed leadership of the family-owned agency, relocating operations to Concord. Meanwhile, Laurie (Limrite, sister) expanded the business further by launching a branch in Manchester, Tennessee, in 2024. Now, a third generation has joined the team working the web and social media assets for the company.

"Our success is built on a foundation of strong relationships with our clients. Insurance is not just about policies and premiums; it's about peace of mind," Derek said. "As we look back on fifty years of service, we are filled with gratitude for the trust and loyalty of our clients. Your support has been instrumental in our success, and we are excited to continue serving you in the years to come."

The Knapp family has also given back generously to their community. Derek serves as a Director of the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce, and the agency has long been active in supporting and sponsoring local events.

# Look who's a centenarian

by David King

Happy Birthday and congratulations to Dorothy Press of Concord, who celebrated her 100th birthday on August 12. Dorothy, a resident of the Towers in downtown Concord, enjoyed a joyful gathering of nearly 70 family members and friends from around the country.

Dorothy was born in Sioux City, Iowa, and spent part of her childhood on a cattle ranch in western Nebraska before her family moved to Caldwell, Idaho. After graduating from Caldwell High School in 1945, she moved to San Francisco to work for Western Union. That same year, she married her Navy sweetheart upon his return from serving in the Pacific during World War II. Together, they spent 30 years in the military.

Dorothy dedicated herself to raising seven children, including a set of twins, at a time when childcare was not available on bases. Her family has since grown to include 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Reflecting on her century of life, Dorothy says some of the greatest advancements she has witnessed were the automobile, television, air travel, and the unforgettable achievement of landing a man on the moon. She also treasured the opportunity to travel and meet people across the country as a military wife.

In 1958, the family purchased a home in Pleasant Hill, where they lived until a transfer to Hawaii. Following her husband's passing, Dorothy returned to California to remain close to her children.

Looking back, Dorothy says proudly, "I've done very well, and my husband did very well in the Navy."



Dorothy Press, Concord,, in yellow, celebrates her 100th birthday on August 12, 2025.



Concord Mayor O'bringer presents a Proclamation September 1, 2025 as Agent 2000 Day.



Four generations of the Knapp family gather around for the ribbon-cutting. they are what Agent 2000 refers to as "The Team."

### WORD SEARCH - Street Festival

H	W	H	N	I	L	S	M	Y	F	N	L	Q	L	K	Q
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B	F	U	N	C	B	W	S	C	S	N	G	V	S	O	N

ART	COMMUNITY	FIREWORKS	MUSIC
BALLOONS	CRAFTS	FOOD	PARADE
BAND	CROWD	FUN	STREET
BOOTH	DANCING	GAMES	STROLL
CARNIVAL	FAMILY	LOCAL	VENDORS

### SUDOKU

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

### WORD SCRAMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE 5 SCHOOL WORDS:

ECHREAT	_____
NPIELC	_____
SCLAROMOS	_____
NOSELS	_____
CKAPABCK	_____

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Marc Rokoff makes puzzles, books, T-shirts & more @ [RokoPuzzles.com](http://RokoPuzzles.com)

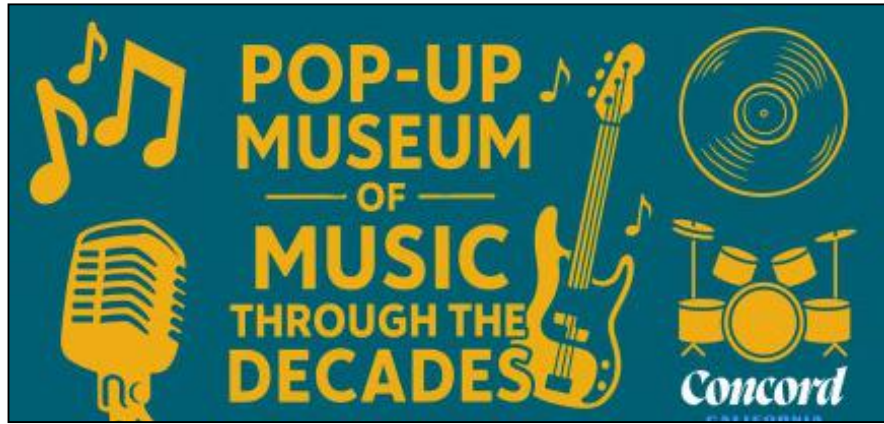
### WORD LADDER

- For each ladder, change one letter per rung until you have turned the top word into the bottom word.
- Use 4-letter English words only.
- No rearranging letters.
- Each Ladder is a separate puzzle.

<b>Ladder #1</b>	<b>Ladder #2</b>
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>SICK</b>
_ E _ _	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ _	_ _ _ _
_ _ _ L	_ A _ _
_ _ _ _	_ _ _ _
<b>TAIL</b>	<b>WELL</b>



# Pop Up Museum - Celebrates 50 Years of Music at the Pavilion



The Concord Pavilion turned 50 this May, and the milestone is being celebrated with a special pop-up museum in downtown Concord.

Originally designed in 1975 by renowned architect Frank Gehry, the Pavilion opened with 8,500 seats and a focus on the arts, hosting the Concord Jazz Festival, symphonies, and other cultural events. While the programming elevated the city's cultural profile, it also strained the city budget. Rock bands were eventually introduced to the chagrin of some councilmembers and staff. In 1996 the venue expanded to 12,500 seats to better accommodate major touring acts.

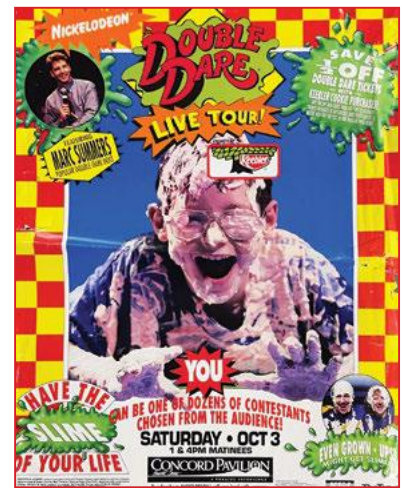
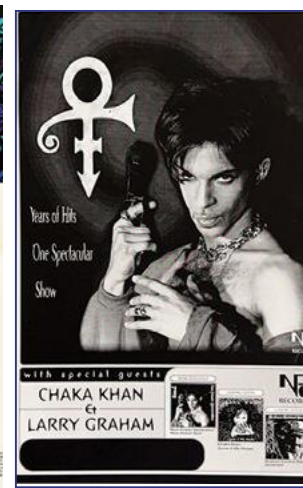
Over the years, the Pavilion has welcomed jazz legends, comedians, pop stars, rock icons, and countless community events. One might expect a warehouse of memorabilia from its half-century history, but little has survived.

The exhibit features vintage posters, photographs, newspaper clippings, and other artifacts that bring back musical

memories. Visitors can also watch a new 30-minute documentary produced by Matt Bolendar, once known as "Metal Matt" from his longtime cable TV show that would feature bans and capture band interviews and performances at the Pavilion. Many of the posters that were preserved by Jay Bedecarré, who handled marketing for the Pavilion in its early years, are also featured in the documentary.

Fortunately, Matt had boxes of footage from his cable show still lying around to add to the documentary. It can be viewed at the Pop-up Museum.

The pop-up museum is open on weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. For longtime fans and new residents alike, it's a chance to relive the performances and community spirit that made the Pavilion a Bay Area landmark. The museum is temporary and is expected to close in October. It is located at 2151 Salvio Street, in the Salvio Pacheco Square.



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## Golden days are here again

September in Northern California epitomizes the phrase “The golden days of summer.” The sunsets arrive earlier, but the days are still filled with sunshine.

This menu celebrates our golden state with golden fruits and vegetables and even golden candy; paired with sparkling wines and our famous California Golden Chardonnay.

California provides beautiful ripe fruits and vegetables for a Cornucopia Salad. Tart apples, sweet mango, crunchy celery and creamy avocado, this salad has it all.

Only sparkling wine can handle all these flavors and textures. Consider a rosé wine made from Pinot Noir grapes to provide full-body and intense flavor. If you like a hint of sweetness, the sweeter ingredients will welcome an off-dry wine.

With fall's arrival comes comfort foods. Bright yellow, Butternut Squash Mac-n-“Cheese” will fool you into thinking you are about to partake in tangy cheddar pasta, but the lightly sweet flavor of butternut squash touched by earthy sage and piquant garlic will be an unexpected pleasure.

Look for a slightly “toasted” chardonnay to partner the dish. Chardonnay develops a deep golden color when it spends time in oak, which complements the golden pasta. Oak flavor will balance the sweetness of the squash, and the chardonnay's full-bodied texture will harmonize with the cream in the sauce.

Golden Butterscotch Bars are too sweet for wine, but would be perfect with hot, black coffee made from beans grown in Mexico. Mexican coffee beans produce a cup that is soft and smooth, yet still bright with light to medium body.

### So, go on. Pair Up!

#### CORNUCOPIA SALAD

##### INGREDIENTS

½ cup sliced almonds  
3 tbsp. sugar  
½ head green leaf lettuce  
½ head romaine lettuce  
1 cup celery  
4 green onions sliced  
1 apple, peeled and diced  
¼ cup raisins (dried cranberries)  
½ cup blue cheese, crumbled  
1 mango, peeled and diced  
1 avocado, diced

##### DRESSING

½ tsp. salt  
½ tsp. pepper  
¼ cup oil  
1 tbsp. chopped parsley  
2 tbsp. sugar  
2 tbsp. white wine vinegar

##### DIRECTIONS

In a small frying pan, heat 3 tbsp. sugar until just beginning to melt. Add almonds and toss to coat with melted sugar. While stirring at all times, cook until almonds begin to brown lightly. Transfer to a sheet of aluminum foil to cool.

Blend dressing ingredients and pour dressing onto the bottom of a large bowl. Add lettuces, celery and green onion and toss with dressing. Add remaining ingredients, caramelized almonds and toss again gently.

*Yield: 8 starter or 4 entrée servings*

#### “BUTTERNUT SQUASH MAC-N-“CHEESE”



##### INGREDIENTS

1 medium butternut squash (about 1½ pounds), peeled, seeded and cut into 2” chunks  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
½ teaspoon dried rubbed sage  
Coarse salt and ground pepper  
5 cloves garlic, peel on  
1 cup half-and-half  
1½ lbs. elbow macaroni  
Toppings, such as grated Parmesan cheese, chopped toasted walnuts, finely chopped fresh sage

##### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Toss squash with oil and sage; season generously with salt and pepper. Scatter garlic around squash. Roast until squash is very tender, about 40 minutes, tossing once halfway through. Remove and discard skin from garlic.

Transfer squash and garlic to a food processor; puree. With motor running, add half-and-half through the feed tube; process until smooth. Add 1 to 2 cups water; continue to process until smooth, adding water to thin if necessary. Season generously to taste with salt.

Cook pasta according to package instructions. Reserve 1 cup pasta water; drain pasta and return to pot. Pour sauce over pasta; toss to coat. Add some pasta water to thin sauce if necessary. Serve with desired toppings.

*Yield: 8 servings*

#### GOLDEN BUTTERSCOTCH BARS

##### INGREDIENTS

1 package (17-1/2 ounces) sugar cookie mix  
1 package (3.4 ounces) instant butterscotch pudding mix  
1/2 cup butter, softened  
1 egg  
14 ounces caramels  
1/2 cup evaporated milk  
2 cups mixed nuts  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup butterscotch chips

##### DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine the sugar cookie mix, pudding mix, butter and egg. Press into an ungreased 13-in. x 9-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until set.

In a large saucepan, combine caramels and milk. Cook and stir over medium-low heat until melted. Remove from the heat. Stir in nuts and vanilla. Pour over crust. Sprinkle with butterscotch chips. Cool completely. Cut into bars. Store in an airtight container.

*Yield: 3 dozen*



## Manage pests without pesticides

September can be a disappointing time when you see your peach tree stripped of fruit, your half-eaten tomatoes, and your apples bird-pecked and worm-eaten. If you are among the many members in this disappointment camp, you have a pest management challenge.

Remember, the mantra for pest control is to avoid insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and poisons. They are expensive, kill beneficial creatures, and can cause long-lasting damage to your soil, pets, and family. Pests are hungry dudes, so what are your all-natural pest management alternatives?

**Cultural Pest Controls** — Make your garden less attractive to pests. Clean up fallen fruit or produce to remove food magnets. Trellis climbing or spreading vegetables off the ground protects them from ground-scurrying rodents.

Healthy plants tend to have fewer pests and better tolerate leaf damage. Water-stressed fruit trees drop fruit before ripening and are attacked by wood borers.

Make sure your watering system delivers healthy amounts without over- or under-watering.

For tomatoes, trim off excess lower leaves to ensure good air flow and pest visibility.

**Physical Exclusion** — Install fencing at least 6-feet high with ½” wire mesh to exclude deer and non-climbing rodents.

Bird netting placed directly on fruit trees can destroy fruit-bearing limbs and fruiting spurs.

Trim your trees on the short side, then build a canopy or hoop house over them to support the weight of netting and heavy rodents that crawl onto it.

Veggie plants can also be covered with fabric cloth to keep birds, rodents, and chewing insects away from ripening produce.

If you live near wildlands like me, consider installing a “squirrel baffle” of metal flashing around the top of your fencing.

### Mechanical Traps

Rodents can be captured using snap traps. Be sure to wear gloves when handling dead things. Place traps inside a secured box with a small access hole to protect your pets and kids from harm.

Underground rodents like voles and gophers can be successfully trapped also. There is no need to use poisons. Be diligent about setting, checking, and resetting traps regularly and you will eventually break the rodents' breeding cycles.



Install a bird netting canopy. Total pest exclusion is key to successful fruit harvests. Photo courtesy David George

### Beneficial Creatures

Biological control relies on natural enemies of pests that eat or parasitize them. They include ladybugs and larvae, soldier beetles, spiders, syrphid flies, praying mantids, and parasitic wasps.

These bugs along with birds can help manage pest infestations and exist in your garden naturally. Avoid using pesticides that also kill these good bugs, then just sit back and let them do their job!

I know all this sounds like work. It is. But nothing is sweeter or healthier displayed on your dinner table than fresh-grown, ripe produce.



Row cover cloth will protect your vegetables. Photo courtesy Fordyce - UC IPM.



Ladybugs are voracious eaters of aphids. Photo courtesy of UCANR.

Choose your management technique wisely by educating yourself at the UC Integrated Pest Management website: [ipm.ucanr.edu/](http://ipm.ucanr.edu/).

**Seasonal Notes:** September is the month to celebrate with fresh produce. Learn how to identify perfect ripeness. Unripe produce contains fewer sugars and nutrients, while overripe veggies quickly lose their nutritional value.

Please donate surplus produce to family members, friends, or community non-profits, such as the Monument Crisis Center.

[NakedGardener@diablogazette.com](mailto:NakedGardener@diablogazette.com).



## Step up to the Plate, Walnut Creek Crawdads invite you to Bingo Night

Tucked quietly into the summer baseball scene is a team with big-league dreams—the Walnut Creek Crawdads. Competing in the prestigious California Collegiate League (CCL), the Crawdads provide rising collegiate players, and standout high school seniors heading to college, the chance to sharpen their skills, gain valuable playing time, and prepare for what could one day be a shot at the majors.

Each summer, a new roster of athletes joins Head Coach Brant Cummings, who was named CCL Coach of the Year in 2022. Over the course of 50 games in June and July, the Crawdads square off against 11 other talented squads, stretching from Sonoma all the way down to Irvine.

The league attracts players from powerhouse programs like Arkansas, Tennessee, Texas A&M, Oregon, and closer to home, Saint Mary's, San Jose State, and Cal State schools.

The Crawdads currently call Monte Vista High School their home field, thanks to the generosity of their coach.

"In 2021, we competed in our home field of Saint Mary's College. They were right in the middle of a stadium build, so we were forced to find another location. I was introduced to the head baseball

coach at Monte Vista High School, Mateo Miramontes, and he's been wonderfully accommodating, and that's been our home since 2022," Cummings explained.

Their true support comes from the community. Host families open their doors each summer to out-of-state players, often building lifelong friendships that extend far beyond baseball.

Running a collegiate team, however, isn't easy. With no large marketing budget, the Crawdads rely on donations, player fees, and local fundraisers to keep the program strong.

"People have no idea these teams exist because for the most part, most of these teams do not have gigantic marketing budgets." That's where the community can step in:

The Crawdads are hosting "Bingo 4 Baseball" on Saturday, October 12—a lively night of games, raffle prizes, and community fun. Proceeds go directly to supporting the team, and since the Crawdads are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tickets are tax-deductible.

So, whether you love baseball, bingo, or simply cheering on local athletes, join the Crawdads for a night that's sure to be a home run!



Scan to  
Buy Your Tickets

### Bingo 4 Baseball

Fundraiser for the Walnut Creek Crawdads

Saturday, October 4th | 6:00-9:30PM  
(Dinner 6:00 / Bingo 6:30)

Winslow Center - 2590 Pleasant Hill Road, Pleasant Hill

Tickets are *tax deductible*: \$100 per person. Payable via PayPal, Venmo, Zelle, Cash or Check (**Pre-Payment required to attend**). Ticket price increase after Friday, September 26th to \$125/per person.

- 15 bingo games, with many chances to win cash from each game
- All bingo supplies provided
- Dinner and libations included
- Raffle prizes. Bring cash to buy your raffle tickets at event
- **Seats are limited - buy your tickets TODAY!**\*



### Support the Crawdads!

The Walnut Creek Crawdads are a collegiate summer league baseball team and member of the California Collegiate League (CCL). The team provides a venue for young men to further develop their athletic/life skills while competing against some of college baseball's very best talent. As a non-profit group, the team relies heavily on donations to help pay for league fees, field rental, uniforms, equipment/gear, umpires, transportation, hotels, and more.

Please join us at the Bingo for Baseball fundraiser and help position the Crawdads for success during the 2026 season!

\* Your ticket purchase is tax deductible under More Than a Game (EIN # 27-2164949) the parent organization of the Walnut Creek Crawdads.

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**Reuse Center: 555 California Ave, Pittsburg**



# The Yolo Bat Adventure

by Jill Hedgecock, retired, environmental scientist-author [jillhedgecock.com](http://jillhedgecock.com)

An amazing phenomenon occurs during the spring and summer months every year near Davis, California.

Up to 250,000 Mexican free-tailed bats congregate under the eastern section of the Yolo Causeway bypass, mate and raise their cubs before returning to their winter grounds in Mexico.

It is here where the Yolo Basin Foundation offers guided tours for the public to learn about these bats, see rescued bats up close, tour a wetland, then witness the mass exodus of bats from under the bridge at sunset. It's simply an amazing sight and experience you must do at least once.

The tour starts in a classroom where a naturalist gives a 45-minute talk on bat biology and debunks common myths about bats.

One of the most interesting things about bats is their wings. Unlike birds, bats use their shoulder muscles to fly and never glide. There are also marked differences in the wings of different bat species. Mexican free-tailed bats have slender wings and a collapsible tail because they are built for speed, while big brown bats have wide wings that help them fly short distances from tree to tree.

Most bats consume their body weight in insects each night, making them a significant component of mosquito and crop pest control. Many people are under the impression that many bats are infected with rabies, but only a small percentage of bats carry the disease

and most die before they have the chance to spread it.

I took this tour in July. Jo Ellen Arnold, a retired teacher and NorCal Bats volunteer, presented several live bats with injuries that prevent their release back into the wild.

She walked around the classroom with a pallid bat, one of seven bat species that are common to the Central Valley.

The pallid bat, with its distinctive big ears, became the official California State bat in 2024. Pallid bats are particularly important because they eat bark beetles and wood borers which helps keep trees healthy. Arnold also brought a living Mexican free-tailed and big brown bat to show the attendees.

After this informative class, we were given walkie-talkies and toured the wetlands near the bridge. As the skies darkened, we walked a short distance to watch the main attraction.

Observing thousands of these amazing creatures emerging from under the bridge in clustered groups against the orange, pink, and yellow sky was an experience I will not soon forget.

Bat tours season begins in June and will continue through September 26. So go ahead, grab the family or friends and get a little batty one evening. It's only a short drive from here. Reservations are required.

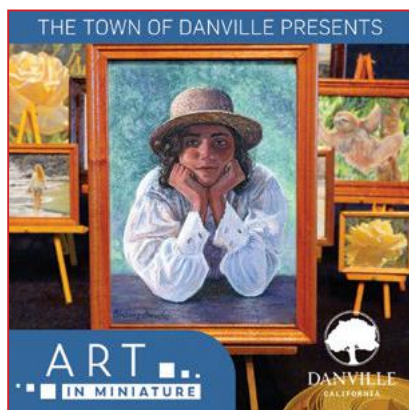
For details visit: <https://norcalbats.org/yolo-basin-bat-talk-and-walks/>



Yolo causeway near Davis, Calif. is home to more than two hundred thousand bats during mating season and makes for an interesting and educational adventure culminating in a fascinating spectacle as they swarm out to feed on insects as the sun sets. The safe guided tour begins with a demystifying class and close-up inspection of rescued bats. Right: Retired teacher and volunteer JoEllen Arnold conducts bat talks. Below right: a pallid bat and free-tailed batwing.



## “Art in Miniature” showcases the power of small at the Village Theatre Art Gallery



The Village Theatre Art Gallery in Danville invites the public to experience “Art in Miniature,” a juried exhibition that proves great things truly come in

small packages. On view now through September 19, the show features an impressive range of fine artworks, each created on a miniature scale, but brimming with detail, creativity, and emotional impact. Magnifying glasses are ready for you to enjoy the art up close. Admission is free, and all are welcome.

This year's exhibition was juried by Barbara Stanton, an internationally recognized miniature artist from Livermore. With over four decades of experience and countless awards from national and international miniature shows, Stanton brings deep expertise and a discerning eye to the selection process. Her own paintings, some measuring less than an inch across are celebrated for their vivid realism and jewel-like precision.

“Miniature art invites you to slow down, lean in, and discover a world within a few square inches,” says Stanton. “It's an art form that values skill, restraint, and storytelling. This exhibition highlights the exceptional talent of today's miniature artists.”

The show includes paintings, drawings, and sculpture, representing a broad spectrum of media and subject matter: delicate florals, moody landscapes, vibrant still lifes, expressive portraits, and imaginative three-dimensional works, all presented in an intimately scaled format. Each piece is approximately 4x6 inches or less.

Artists from across the region and beyond were selected for their ability to combine technical mastery with artistic expression on a small stage.

The star of the show are the oil paintings by Gini's Harris, who is an internationally acclaimed miniaturist from South Africa. “We are so honored to have Gini's work in our gallery!”

Miniature art has a rich tradition stretching back centuries, but this exhibition proves it is as vital and compelling as ever. Whether you're a seasoned collector or simply curious, “Art in Miniature” offers a rare chance to experience the delight of small-scale excellence.

Showing through Sept. 19, 2025. Village Theatre Art Gallery, 233 Front Street, Danville. Hours: Wednesday–Friday, 12–5:00 p.m.; Saturday, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Admission: Free



# The Arts Page

## East Bay Artist Guild Exhibit at aRt Cottage

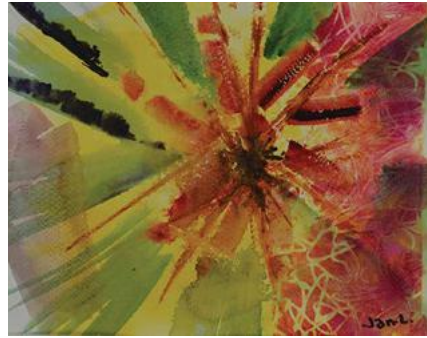
by FRO, aRt Cottage

Remember when the new downtown was built in Pleasant Hill? It was during that time that East Bay Artist Guild (EBAG) was trying to develop a way to have a gallery of their own. They were using the storefront window next to the cinema to display their work. This was the beginning of my art journey. I joined the group and was encouraged to show my work. I volunteered and found venues in many places to exhibit, serving as their exhibition director for a number of years. It was through this group that I got my confidence and met many wonderful artists.

The Pleasant Hill Recreation Department has been a long-time sponsor for this art group. First they sponsored the Los Juntas group and later they also added the East Bay Artist Guild to their sponsorship.

Los Juntas started in 1951 and later merged with the East Bay Artist Guild which was first formed in 2006. The merge took place in 2017. This new merged group has been serving the Pleasant Hill community with exhibits at the Pleasant Hill Senior center since 2014.

Phyllis Couillard, board member and secretary keeps the membership informed through a monthly newsletter of the activities that are offered. Phyllis says, "Anyone can join



"Fleur" by Jan Lainoff

this group. You don't have to live in Pleasant Hill or even be an artist. Art aficionados are welcome." <https://www.eastbayartistsguild.org/>

aRt Cottage is featuring the guild though September and October. The exhibit opens September 6, with an artist reception and open house from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. We hope to see many at this free event. aRt Cottage is located in downtown Concord at 2238 Mt. Diablo St.



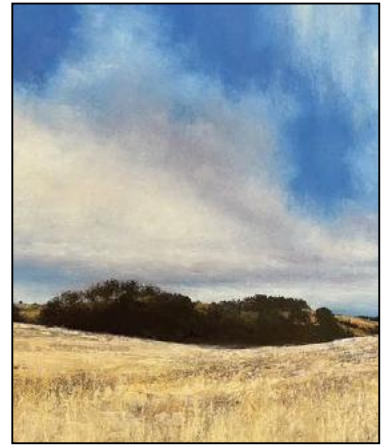
## Picture This

The Main Street Arts Gallery welcomes the Lamorinda Arts Alliance for a special group exhibition called "Picture This" featuring 29 artists. [www.laa4art.org](http://www.laa4art.org). This show runs from September 5 - November 1. The public is invited to a reception on Friday, September 5 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., coinciding with First Friday. Meet the artists and enjoy refreshments.

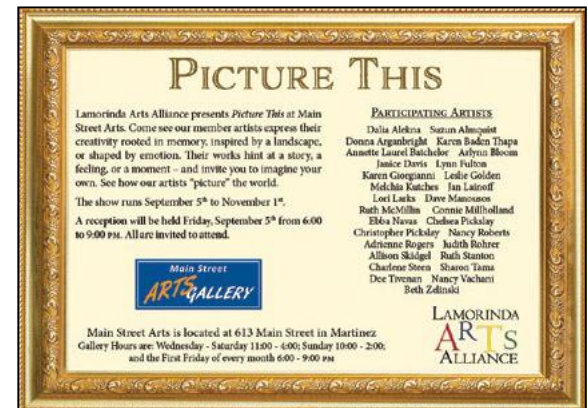
Main Street Arts will be one of 15 galleries participating in the East Bay Gallery Tour that runs from September 1 - October 31. Visitors have two months to visit at least 11 of the 15 galleries and have a special postcard stamped for a chance to win a gift certificate up to a \$300 value. More details can be found on the Main Street Arts website.

Each month, the gallery hosts a free prize drawing for an original artwork by one of our members. September's giveaway features a painting by artist Dean Evans. Stop by, fill out an entry form, and you might take home a unique new work for your collection.

Main Street Arts Gallery is located at 613 Main Street, Martinez. Open Wednesday-Saturday 11-4, Sunday 10-3 and Martinez First Fridays 6-9. [mainstreetarts.net](http://mainstreetarts.net).



SEPTEMBER FREE DRAWING:  
"Fernandez Ranch" by Dean Evans



## Blackhawk Gallery to Feature Peggy Magovern

Peggy Magovern is an award-winning artist, instructor, and judge.

Published cover and editorial illustrations include the Smithsonian, Newsweek, the Wall Street Journal, Sports Illustrated, and Oxford University Press.

In addition to her career as a free-lance commercial illustrator, she was also Senior illustrator for the iconic Banana Republic catalog.

Peggy received the CPSA DC210 First Place award for "Explorations in Colored Pencils" and CPSA Award for Distinction "Explore This! 13", as well as Best of Show and Merit Awards from Bay Area galleries. Her fine art has been purchased across the U.S. and in Great Britain, and is in permanent collection at the Beat Museum, San Francisco and at the Mendocino Art Center, Mendocino.

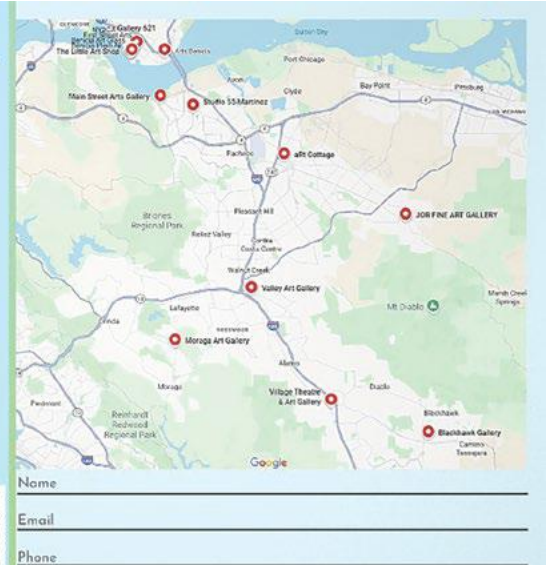
The ADAS General Meeting with art demo is scheduled for September 9, at 7:30 p.m. at 3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Learn more at [https://www.pal-art.com/gallery\\_magovern/](https://www.pal-art.com/gallery_magovern/)



## East Bay Gallery Tour 2025

The 3rd Annual East Bay Gallery Tour has 15 galleries to visit this year during the months of September and October. You have 2 months to have your Gallery Tour postcard stamped by all 15 galleries for a chance to win a \$300 certificate. Get your postcard stamped by just 11 galleries for a chance to win a \$100 certificate. The winners will be chosen at random. Turn in your postcard at the last gallery you visit. The certificates can be used to buy artwork from any of the galleries in the Tour! The galleries will start stamping postcards in September.

Use this QR code to go to the website for more information



## LAA Exhibit Channels Wellness and Healing at John Muir Gallery

Lamorinda Arts Alliance's show, "Wellness & Wellbeing", at the John Muir Health Auxiliary Gallery at John Muir Health, Aspen Center, Walnut Creek features 14 artists and 34 original artworks in photography, printmaking, watercolor, oil, and mixed media.

Wellness and wellbeing are reflected in the artwork creating an ambiance of healing which is important to the patients, their families and friends, staff, volunteers, and healthcare practitioners. All are welcome to visit the exhibition. The free show runs September 1 through October 30. Lamorinda Arts Alliance web-site: [www.laa4art.org](http://www.laa4art.org)



"Cowboy Riding the Surf" by Marilyn-Verducci

## Jor Gallery Presents "Seasons of Splendor"

Celebrate the beauty of the changing seasons at the "Seasons of Splendor" exhibit at JOR Fine Art Gallery in downtown Clayton. This vibrant exhibition brings together local and regional artists whose works capture the warmth, richness, and wonder of nature's cycles.

Among the highlights, don't miss Chelsea Tikotsky's stunning floral bouquet "Blushing Beauty", a bold yet delicate painting in oil and acrylic that blooms with color and energy.

Equally captivating is Patty Taylor's Raku-fired ceramic art "Tagalog Goddess of the North Wind", where organic textures and rich earthy tones combine



Blushing Beauty by Chelsea Tikotsky



Happy Day, Nancy Hartley

in works that are both timeless and contemporary. These pieces and many more are waiting to be discovered inside the gallery.





**CVCHS News**  
Bill Morones, Executive Director  
Clayton Valley Charter High School

## Clayton Valley's Charter renewal matters to all of us

At Clayton Valley Charter High School (CVCHS) a few years, most of us have to renew something important: a driver's license, a business permit, or a professional credential. Those renewals aren't just red tape; they are a chance to show we still meet the standards that earned us those privileges in the first place. For California's charter schools, the same idea applies.

Clayton Valley Charter High School (CVCHS) was established in 2012 as a conversion charter school, born from a shared commitment by parents, teachers, and the community to create the best learning experience for our students. Our first renewal came in 2019 and was unanimously approved by the Contra Costa County Board of Education. This was a clear affirmation that our vision and hard work were delivering results. Those efforts have been successful throughout our history, and this year's renewal process focuses on continuing to expand and strengthen those efforts.

Every five years, each charter school must go through a rigorous renewal process to prove it is delivering high-quality education and serving its students and community well. At CVCHS, our authorizer, the Contra Costa County Board of Education, makes that determination based on a thorough review of our academic results, fiscal stewardship, and overall performance. This process isn't just a box to check; it's a public accountability moment that reflects our commitment to continuous improvement.

While our next renewal decision won't come until the 2027-28 school year, the work to prepare for it begins now. Building a convincing case means focusing on three key areas: academic achievement, community partnership, and student well-being.

First, academics. The 2027-28 renewal will evaluate how well we've supported the students who enter our doors this year. That means the incoming Class of 2029, our new freshmen, will have their academic journey closely tracked and measured over the next four years.



The CVCHS community will play a significant role preparing for its charter renewal in 2027

We are already putting resources in place to ensure they thrive. This includes targeted intervention programs, advanced coursework opportunities, and a learning environment that balances high expectations with personalized support. These students' success will be one of the most visible indicators of our school's impact.

Second, our relationship with the community. A charter school is a public school, and like any public institution, it must earn the trust of those it serves. For us, that means continuing to show how CVCHS contributes not just to the education of our students, but to the vitality of the greater East Bay area. From parent engagement to partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits, to student service projects, we are committed to being a good neighbor and an active partner. When renewal time comes, these connections will help demonstrate that CVCHS is a valued and indispensable part of the community fabric.

Third, the well-being of every student. Education today is about more than test scores. Our renewal will also depend on how well we've nurtured students'

mental health, safety, and sense of belonging. That is why we are continuing all efforts and expanding them to strengthen social-emotional learning programs, invest in counseling services, and create extracurricular opportunities that help students discover their passions. A healthy, engaged student body is the foundation of long-term success both in school and in life.

Over the next few years, we will share our progress openly and often. I invite our community to join us on campus and attend academic showcases, enjoy our music, theater, and art performances, cheer on our athletic teams, participate in board meetings, ask questions, and share your ideas. When renewal time arrives, it won't just be CVCHS standing before the Board of Education, it will be all of us, presenting a united story of commitment, achievement, and partnership.

Our renewal in 2027-28 is more than a check-the-box milestone. It's a chance to reaffirm what we stand for: high-quality academics, deep community roots, and a dedication to the well-being of every student who walks onto our campus. Together, we can make that case and keep CVCHS moving forward for the next generation.



Students, family members, teachers and administrators demonstrated support for CVCHS' charter renewal in 2019.

## Doll and Toy Show attracts collectors and fascinates the curious, Sept. 20

In a world of sharing Tik-Tok videos, Instagram reels, and "Snapping and Chatting," one forgets that there is a world out there of hands-on fun for enthusiasts of dolls and toys.

Mary Senko is a life-long doll collector and shares the joy of Doll Shows with her World Doll Day Show business on her Facebook as Mary Senko and as World Doll Shows Events.

"Treasure hunters that are looking to connect with other enthusiasts, see and learn about dolls and toys in person, and hoping to snag that specialty item and take it home, will be delighted with what's in store at upcoming shows and sales in the Bay Area," says show owner Mary Senko.

Doll and Toy Shows not only feature the Internationally known brands of Barbie and Monster High but are a great spot to find some fabulous vintage items that seldom come to market. Usually, these have been in others' collections being enjoyed over some time.

Doll Shows routinely feature artisans that are building their brand and bringing one-of-a-kind merchandise that millennials are often looking for.

"What makes the artisan items so special is the opportunity to talk first-hand to the artists, find out about what inspired them to create the treasure you are interested in."



Often collectors get a signature that will add to the value in years to come. Much like an Art Walk or finding something unique at an art gallery, artisan items are a delight to see and there is always something that captivates at a show.

Connecting and networking with other enthusiasts is also a special treat for shoppers at a Doll and Toy Show. One never knows if that person in line is a historian or expert, a collector of something totally

unique, or just a gatherer of all things dolls and toys fun.

Shows bring out many experts/dealers offering tremendous information and provide real inspiration to grow a specific collection.

"Learning more about an area of interest beyond Google search is half the fun at these shows. The fun and excitement of attending a show can't be beat!" Senko insists.

Have you been to a doll show lately? Two shows are coming to the area—the Concord Plaza Hotel on September 20 and on October 18 in Santa Clara at the American Legion Hall Post 409.

Vendors will offer information on more events coming to the area. To find listings for California or the Western U.S., check out [www.DollShowUSA.com](http://www.DollShowUSA.com). To find more World Doll Day Shows, go to [www.worlddolldayshows.com](http://www.worlddolldayshows.com).

**Mary Senko Presents**  
**World Doll Day Show & Sale**  
**Concord CA Sept. 20th, 2025**

**Tickets**  
\$10.00

**Children**  
under 13  
Free

**10am-3pm**

**Concord Plaza Hotel**  
(Bay Area)  
45 John Glenn Dr.  
Concord, CA

BP





## Gerrymandering: for 250 years, still a weapon of choice to hold power

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

Every ten years, after the U.S. Census, political districts are redrawn to reflect population changes. This applies not only to congressional seats at the federal level but also to state legislatures and city councils. The goal is equal representation, though the process has long been contentious. Occasionally, redistricting takes place because of a court order. Locally, in 2018, Concord shifted from electing its city council "at large" to creating five council districts, each represented by one councilmember. Pleasant Hill recently made a similar change. The California Voting Rights Act had concluded that at-large elections limited fair representation for minorities and certain communities of interest.

Districts cannot be drawn based on party registration or the number of voters. Instead, they must be based on geography, population distribution, and communities of interest. In Concord, with a population of about 125,000, each district holds roughly 25,000 residents.

When Concord drew its district maps, input from residents identified important communities of interest, and council added renters as one. That explains why one district extends deep along Clayton Road, ensuring renters' concerns are fairly represented. Gerrymandering, manipulating district lines for political advantage, has existed since the early years of the nation. In the 1780s, Patrick Henry used his influence in the Virginia legislature to design districts intended to block James Madison's election to Congress, though unsuccessfully.

Throughout U.S. history, gerrymandering has often been used to dilute the power of racial minorities or immigrant communities. Over time, court rulings and civil rights required some states to redraw maps to ensure fairer representation.

Recent court decisions, however,

have shifted authority back toward state legislatures. In 2019, the Supreme Court ruled that questions of partisan gerrymandering fall largely outside federal judicial review, leaving states more discretion. A 2024 ruling went further, allowing legislatures to draw maps based solely on political alignment, without considering racial impacts.

For decades, California redistricting was controlled by the state legislature. But in 2008, voters approved the creation of an independent redistricting commission. The 14-member body is designed to balance partisan interests, with five Democrats, five Republicans, and four members not affiliated with either party. The commission is tasked with drawing maps based on population, geography, and communities of interest, not partisan advantage.

In Texas, despite Democrats outnumbering Republicans statewide, the legislature redrew districts to strengthen Republican representation. This has prompted California to consider temporarily suspending its independent commission and returning redistricting authority to voters.

I commend my readers on Facebook who engaged in a civil discussion about this. Their phrases used on each side perfectly frame the emotional intensity of the subject: "Two Wrongs don't make a Right" versus "Fight Fire with Fire," and "When they go low, we go high" versus "Don't bring a knife to a gunfight."

Since the ultimate aim of political parties is to maintain power, redistricting remains one of the most powerful tools in that pursuit. How can democracy ensure fair representation when the rules of the game change to favor those in power?

*Views are of Edi Birsan who has been known to say, "When someone throws garbage in your face, you run them over with the garbage truck."*



## For the Love of Pets

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

## Corn snakes

### The perfect first reptile pet

Corn snakes get their name from the spotted pattern on their belly that resembles maize. They are nonvenomous. And while corn snakes are native to the southeastern United States, captive-bred snakes are readily available. Here are six reasons that corn snakes make good beginner pets:

**They are friendly.** Corn snakes are easy-going snakes. They are typically gentle, comfortable with humans handling them, and will willingly seek out their owners during active periods.

**Feeding is easy.** Because of their slow metabolisms, corn snakes can go weeks and even months without eating. But more importantly for those that are squeamish, corn snakes are not fussy eaters and will eat frozen or thawed mice.

**Hibernation is optional.** Unlike many snakes, corn snakes do not require brumation (a mild form of hibernation), so keepers can interact with them year-round.

Owners who decide to put their snakes through brumation should reduce the temperature in the cool area of the enclosure to 41 to 59 degrees Fahrenheit (F) for approximately three months.

During brumation, the snake should have access to fresh water and should not be held or disturbed. To bring them out of brumation, slowly increase the temperature over a two-week period to 80 to 84 degrees F. Once the final temperature is achieved, the corn snake should immediately be fed.

**Corn snakes are a work of art.** They typically have a spear-shaped blotch on their heads, often with distinctive, black-bordered orange blotches, and a checkered belly. Although they are



commonly burnt orange, corn snakes come in an assortment of other colors and intricate patterns, including red, brown, white, and yellow.

**They don't get too big.** Fully grown, corn snakes range in length from 3 1/2 to 5 feet. They typically reach adult size at three years old. A nonstandard 20-gallon glass tank that is long and shallow makes a good-sized enclosure for a corn snake.

**They are low maintenance.** Corn snakes prefer the humidity found in a typical household and only low-level ultraviolet lighting. They are relatively clean, so regular spot cleaning coupled with a monthly ground cover replacement is all that is needed. Coarse beech or aspen woodchips are cheap, easy to spot clean, and dust free. Avoid aromatic pine or cedar shavings that can cause irritation and respiratory issues. An upside-down cardboard box just large enough for the snake to curl up in is a low-cost option to provide a hide box.

The icing on the cake for reptile enthusiasts is that corn snakes are active during the day and they can live up to 20 years.

*Jill Hedgecock is a retired environmental scientist and award-winning author of several books, including "Rhino in the Room", and the Doberman trilogy series: "Between Shadow's Eyes" on amazon.com.*



Corn snake, so named for its belly resembles maize.

## Clayton's Infamous Oktoberfest Returns October 4-5

Clayton's infamous Oktoberfest is just around the corner, filling downtown with music, dancing, food, and plenty of Bavarian cheer. Mark your calendars for October 4-5, it's the Clayton weekend we look forward to all year..

Kids' festivities kick off Friday evening from 5:00-10:00 p.m. with the ever-popular carnival, where kids can dive into rides, games, and family fun. On Saturday, the streets will come alive with music as a third band joins the lineup this year. The perennial favorite, The Internationals, return to the main stage in the Biergarten tent. Also, back for a

second year, the lively Grand Isle Fire Brigade, a five-piece 1930s-style oompah band, will roam the streets and take the Corral Stage on Saturday. On Sunday, Polkageist West keeps the party going on the Corral Stage for its first appearance.

The official keg-tapping ceremony happens at noon Saturday inside the Biergarten tent. Festivalgoers can enjoy authentic German food, schnapps, roasted German nuts, giant pretzels, decadent German desserts, and plenty of dancing led by traditional Bavarian dancers.

Once again, the streets will also be bustling all weekend with art vendors, delicious food booths, and of course beer and wine. Kids will love the mini petting zoo in the Grove. "All the animals are small for the Mini Zoo Experience." Also, a first for Oktoberfest..



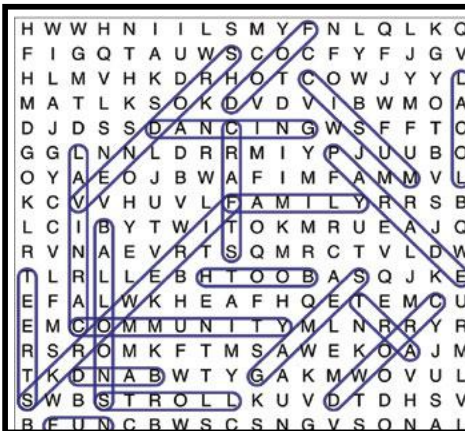
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4	5	6	3	1	2	7	9	8



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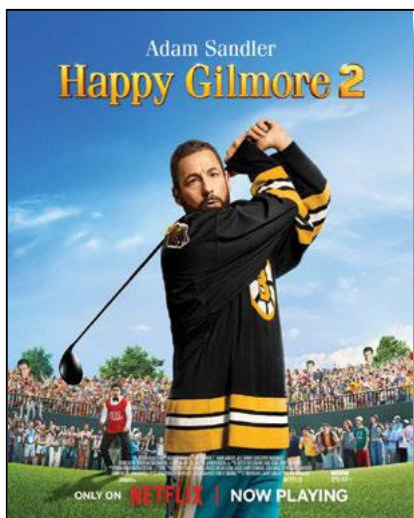
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## Happy Gilmore 2



Adam Sandler has made a successful comedy career by creating underdog characters that audiences want to root for. In the original “Happy Gilmore,” Sandler portrays a young man who struggled with anger issues and lost his dream of playing professional hockey. He also really loved his grandma, which endeared him to audiences. Now, almost thirty years later, we get to reacquire ourselves with his story and catch up with all the characters in “Happy Gilmore 2.”

Comedy films often end on a positive note with the main character achieving their goal. For a sequel, you need new conflict. This time, Happy hits rock bottom. His life is in shambles, and all he has

left is the love of his five children. His youngest, Vienna (played by his real-life daughter Sunny Sandler), is a ballet prodigy who needs tuition to attend an elite school. Happy no longer golfs due to a personal tragedy and grapples with the idea of returning to the links to make money for his family.

With the plot in place, the film focuses on what fans want to see: crazy golf stunts and celebrity cameos. In these two areas, the film does not disappoint. There are so many cameos from the comedy, music and sports world, you may miss some. Golf lovers will enjoy seeing old and new champions of the game in goofy roles. Sandler's other daughter Sadie and wife Jackie also appear in minor parts. A standout in a larger role is Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, better known in music circles as Bad Bunny. He holds his own as Happy's caddy Oscar, delivering an amusing performance.

As a nice bonus for Contra Costa County residents, this film is directed by Concord native Kyle Newacheck. You may know Newacheck as one of the members of the Comedy Central show “Workaholics.” He began directing feature films in 2018 and “Happy Gilmore 2” is his second outing with Adam Sandler. The two previously worked together in 2019's “Murder Mystery.” It can be an arduous task to step into such an iconic and beloved film, but Newacheck clearly understands the assignment and gives fans all they could hope for in this long-awaited sequel.

Netflix PG-13



Clayton Valley High graduate Kyle Newacheck shooting a scene with Adam Sandler for Happy Gilmore 2. Courtesy Newacheck Instagram.



## Here One Moment

“Here One Moment” (Crown, 2025, paperback, 512 pages, \$12.76) by Liane Moriarty opens with a plane stuck on a runway in Tasmania. The outward-bound flight from Hobart is filled with passengers heading to Sydney, Australia. An older woman named Cherry walks down the aisle, stopping to address each passenger. This might be a nice gesture if Cherry were checking to see if they were alright, but she is not. She tells each person how they will die and at what age. This page-turning beginning will grab your attention and never let up.

Some passengers are told by “The Death Lady”, as she is soon labeled, to expect a lifespan over one hundred years, while others are appalled to have been given shortened lives. Many of the recipients of the woman's predictions laugh it off, but when people start to die at the age and manner Cherry had predicted and social media gets ahold of the news, some plane occupants join forces to track down the mysterious “clairvoyant”.

Typical of Moriarty's books, there are many characters to follow. But Moriarty deftly develops them with a myriad of memorable traits. The effect of Cherry's pronouncements on the plane's passengers is mesmerizing. Allegra, the beautiful twenty-eight-year-old flight attendant who is told she will die of self-harm, allows herself to fall in love. After Cherry informs a mother named Paula that her child will drown at age seven, enrolls her toddler in swim lessons. Newlywed couple Dom and

Eve separate because his new wife is told that she would die at the hands of an intimate partner. The book delves into questions of destiny, free will, and love and loss. Best of all, a twist at the end lends for a satisfying conclusion.

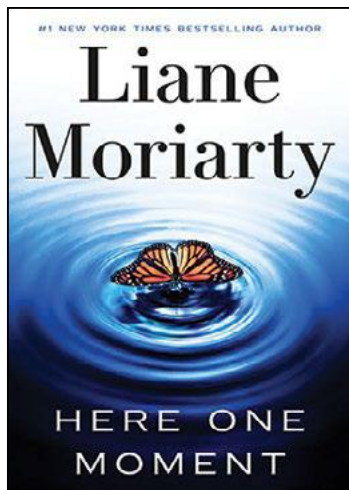
“Here One Moment” was named a #1 New York Times and an NPR Best Book of the Year. Fans of “The Measure” by Nikki Erlick and “Midnight Library” by Matt Haig will likely love this novel. I have yet to pick up a book by Moriarty and be disappointed. She possesses the secret sauce for writing compelling novels.

Australian author Liane Moriarty has written ten novels. “Big Little Lies” landed at number one on the New York Times bestseller list, making Moriarty the first Australian author to debut in the top spot in the United States. It was optioned for television and film, which led to the HBO limited series “Big

Little Lies”, winning multiple Emmys.

“Nine Perfect Strangers”, “Apples Never Fall”, and “The Husband's Secret” are among her other New York Times bestsellers. Moriarty has sold over 20 million copies of her books worldwide and translated into forty languages. She has also written three books for children.

Moriarty lives in Sydney with her husband, son, and daughter. Follow her at <https://lianemoriarty.com.au>.



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# JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

by Kevin Parker j

## Explore the Stunning Dipsea – Steep Ravine Trails

Tucked between the towering redwoods of Muir Woods and the sweeping vistas of Stinson Beach lies a trail as storied as it is stunning.

It took two trips of field research detailing all the trail aspects, counting steps, noting the trees, ferns and fauna, and most importantly, should you hike this bad boy clockwise or not. All these factors needed to be nailed down to share what is arguably one of the best trails in the Bay Area.

Begin at Stinson Beach and park in the free lot just behind Parkside Café. Follow Marine Way, cross Shoreline Highway to make your official start onto the Dipsea Trail. The trail is peppered with steps right from the get-go and navigating through shady overgrowth provided a cool canopy with ocean breezes. An abrupt elevation gain into a wide-open expanse on a bluff high above Stinson Beach are some early views that set the tone for this hike.



The Dipsea and Steep Ravine trails require constant attention and nimble footing to navigate all the trail roots, rocks and other ankle biters. The trail traffic was semi-constant with hikers and runners alike, but everyone has the same goal; enjoy the trail and all its offerings.

Just before heading into the Muir Woods National Monument Boundary, make a left onto Lower Old Mine Trail. This wide-open gravel trail will take you to the high point for this hike. There are restrooms and water at this junction.

Jump onto Steep Ravine Trail, a lush and shady rollercoaster type trail that descends through Redwood filled canyons and mimics Webb Creek for most of the way down. Find one of many spots to cool off in the water or enjoy a waterfall. The scenery on this trail were so different from the Dipsea, which is

**Dipsea – Steep Ravine Trails**  
**Distance: 7.5 miles**  
**Elevation Gain: 1,769 ft**  
**Time: 3.5 hours**  
**Drive time to Stinson Beach: 90 minutes**

why this hike is so special. Two distinctly different trails types packed into a 7-mile loop. Bonus for this hike, the creeks and waterfalls in Steep Ravine were still flowing in May.



Many people tackle the Dipsea one way (7.2 miles) between Stinson Beach and Mill Valley or the double Dipsea (13.7 miles). We opted for a loop hike so we could stay near the shoreline, and not have to drop a car off.

A shout out to the Mt. Tam trail crews who were working this trail during our hike. Sections have massive sets of steps that arc up and around natural obstacles. Picture wooden framed earthen steps gliding upward into a naturistic paradise.

Steep Ravine Trail reconnects with the Dipsea that will take you back to Stinson Beach and complete the loop.

Was it the rugged switchbacks, sun dappled canyons or the panoramic ridgelines that had me hypnotized? I'm not sure I will ever know, but there were too many steps to count, wooden bridge creek crossings to remember, and enough epic views to make me want to come back again.

I have hiked all over California and it also amazes me how much more exploring I need to do. If you are seeking a soul stirring escape, then look no further as the Dipsea delivers. This hike and the Mt. Tamalpais State Park are true gems that need more exploring

## In Case You Missed It...

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

### More Clowns: Clown Classes See Rise in Enrollment



(Clown School of San Francisco via Bay City News)

In San Francisco, clown teachers are seeing a surge of people attending recreational clown classes.

The interest is spurred by a desire to form community during turbulent times, according to Sara Toby Moore, an award-winning clown and instructor for Circus Center in San Francisco.

San Francisco is home to three prominent programs: Church of Clown, The Clown School of San Francisco and Circus Center. All offer classes for beginners on how to dress, act and perform as a clown, for fees ranging from \$79 to \$675. ([localnewsmatters.org](http://localnewsmatters.org))

(Clown School of San Francisco via Bay City News)

### Bailey Road Improvements Coming Soon

The City of Concord's upcoming Street Maintenance Project No. 1 will start in early September, and this project includes paving work on Bailey Road from Myrtle Drive to the northern City limits with a full road closure.

The work on Bailey Road is expected to start on Sunday, September 7, and be completed by Thursday, September 18. All work will be performed at night between 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. to avoid the morning and afternoon commute hours.

Other streets in this project include Laura Alice Way, Nelson Avenue, Burnett Avenue, and Willow Way.

### Concord Museum Grand Renovation unveils "Celebrating Concord's Past, Present, and Future"

The Grand Renovation celebration will take place on Sunday, October 5, 2025, beginning at 1:00 PM. The festivities will feature special remarks from community leaders, musical performances, book reading, guided tours, and the 1960 film "The Wild Ride" starring a very young Jack Nicholson which was filmed in and around Concord.

Concord Museum, 1928 Clayton Road, (Parking in the rear). Free on Grand Reopening day

### DeSaulnier Bill Aims To Rein In CEO Salaries and Boost Worker Power

Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (CA-10) introduced the CEO Accountability and Responsibility Act (H.R. 5019), a bill that he says would limit corporate greed, invest in working Americans, and reduce income inequality.

While in the 1970s, the average CEO earned roughly 20 to 30 times the compensation of a typical worker, that disparity has exploded with estimates placing the ratio at over 300:1 for top S&P 500 companies.

The CEO Accountability and Responsibility Act would increase corporate taxes on companies that have extreme disparities between CEO and worker pay. It would also offer preferential treatment in federal contracts to companies with pay ratios below 50:1.

### Bay Area Homeowners, Landlords Eligible For Up To \$10K In Earthquake Retrofit Aid

Homeowners, landlords and property owners with residential properties in areas at high risk of earthquake damage in the Bay Area are eligible to receive grants of up to \$10,000 to seismically retrofit select houses that are vulnerable to earthquake damage, the California Residential Mitigation Program said. This is the first time the Earthquake Brace + Bolt grant program has been opened to non-primary residential property owners, meaning landlords can apply to retrofit rentals.

Eligible properties must have been built before 1980 and have wood frames and raised foundations, CRMP officials said. In addition to grants of \$3,000, homeowners with an annual income of \$89,040 or below may be eligible for an additional \$7,000 in grant funding. CRMP estimates that this additional funding could help cover the cost of a full seismic retrofit. Grant applications are being accepted through Oct. 1 at [earthquakebracebolt.com](http://earthquakebracebolt.com).

### Concord Invites Volunteers To September Saturday Tree-Planting With Mayor Obringer

Every Saturday in September, Concord residents are invited to roll up their sleeves and help plant trees alongside Mayor Carlyn Obringer and members of the City Council. The community projects will take place in parks across the city as part of Concord's effort to preserve its long-standing recognition as a "Tree City USA," a designation awarded by the Arbor Day Foundation for strong urban forestry programs. Volunteers of all ages are welcome to participate, and the City is encouraging residents to sign up in advance.

### Feds Pump Millions Into Bay Area Ferry Services For Upkeep And Upgrades

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced Aug. 12 that over \$175 million in funding under the Federal Highway Administration's Ferry Boat Program would be allocated to 35 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa.

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority operates San Francisco Bay Ferry and the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District.

According to the department, the funding is eligible to construct and operate ferry boats, ferry terminals, and ferry maintenance facilities.

The Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District received just over \$800,000 that will be used for their services. The SF Bay Ferry will have \$1.97 million allocated to them, which director of operations and customer service Thomas Hall said will contribute to their regular operations, maintenance, and improvements.





# Around Martinez



## New Approach to Community Challenges Paying Dividends

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez



In 2024, Martinez Police Chief Andrew White launched the city's first Strategic Enforcement Team (SET), a specialized two-officer unit led by a police sergeant, to tackle the community's most pressing challenges head-on.

The SET team zeroes in on chronic offenders, recurring crime "hotspots," quality-of-life concerns, issues involving the unhoused, and traffic safety. Beyond supporting downtown businesses, the unit works to enhance safety and well-being across the entire Martinez community. The initiative directly advances the City Council's goal for Community Health, Safety, and Well-Being, set to be adopted in September as part of the city's new four-year Strategic Plan.

"The SET team brings a data-driven, strategic approach to problem-solving by using intelligence and community partnerships to deliver real solutions," Chief White explained.

While enforcement remains a core mission, the department recognizes that true progress requires collaboration. SET works alongside business owners, residents, mental

health providers, and homeless outreach teams to develop long-term solutions. This collaborative model has already shown greater impact than enforcement alone.

Residents are noticing the difference. "They responded to my request for a wellness check on a neighbor," said downtown resident Meghan Ketsdever. "It meant a lot to see police following up with kindness and respect..."

Downtown businesses and community members have appreciated the team's early efforts, though police leaders stress there is more work ahead.

"It is our sincere hope that through a partnership with the community, together we can develop tangible solutions to some of our most pressing issues," said Captain Patrick Salamid.

The Martinez Police Department views SET as more than a unit—it's a proactive step toward building stronger, safer neighborhoods together.

### Quick Reference Guide

Use this phone guide when faced with a need for professional support.

<b>Strategic Enforcement Team:</b> (Martinez Police Non-Emergency line, SET hours Tues – Fri 10 am to 8 pm)	<b>925-372-3440</b>
<b>Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime (A3)</b> For support for a behavioral health crisis	<b>844-844-5544</b>
<b>CORE</b> For support for unhoused services or encampments	<b>211</b>
<b>Emergency Police, Fire, or Ambulance:</b>	<b>911</b>



## Superintendent Gigi Patrick Begins First Year at Helm of MUSD

Gigi Patrick officially stepped into her new role as superintendent of Martinez Unified School District bringing more than three decades of experience in public education and a reputation for collaborative leadership and fiscal expertise.

A Vallejo native and UC Berkeley graduate, Patrick earned a doctorate in education leadership from Cal State East Bay and spent the past 30 years working in Vallejo City Unified School District.

Patrick said the move to Martinez felt like a natural next step.



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More event details at [www.cityofmartinez.org/events](http://www.cityofmartinez.org/events)



Full City Council Calendar [www.cityofmartinez.org/meetings](http://www.cityofmartinez.org/meetings)

## September Events

- 9/01 Labor Day Holiday, City Hall Closed
- 9/05 Pumpkin Dunkin
- 9/05 Music on Main / First Friday
- 9/06 Sgt. Paul Starzyk Memorial Flag Raising
- 9/11 Main Street Thursday Car Show
- 9/13 Martini Shake-off
- 9/14 Open Air Market
- 9/19 Alhambra HS Homecoming Parade
- 9/20 Martinez Pride
- 9/27 Volunteer Community Cleanup
- 9/28 MRC-MEF Run for Education

- Every Wed Picnic in the Plaza
- Every Wknd Aire Libre Weekends (Del Cielo B.)
- Every Sun Downtown Farmers' Market

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## Healthcare access in Contra Costa County threatened by H.R. 1

Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston joined Congressman John Garamendi, Supervisor John Gioia, and hospital leaders at the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center for a press conference and tour highlighting the serious consequences of the recently Tax bill H.R.1. The legislation imposes deep federal cuts to healthcare funding, threatening access to essential care for the more than 333,000 Contra Costa residents who rely on Medi-Cal.

Supervisor Scales-Preston spoke on behalf of District 5, emphasizing that healthcare is not a privilege but a necessity. She warned that the proposed reductions would hit vulnerable communities the hardest, destabilizing local hospitals, overwhelming emergency departments, and forcing families to delay or forgo needed medical care.

Supervisor Scales-Preston toured the facility to see firsthand the critical services provided every day and to hear directly from staff about the mounting challenges created by shrinking resources. The visit underscored how deeply District 5 communities, particularly Pittsburg, Bay Point, Antioch, and surrounding neighborhoods, depend on Contra Costa Regional Medical Center as a cornerstone of local healthcare.

From her perspective, the proposed funding reductions carry real human costs. Fewer dollars for Medi-Cal mean fewer preventive care visits, more untreated illnesses, greater financial strain on hospitals, and widening health

disparities, especially for families already struggling to make ends meet. She noted that when healthcare becomes harder to access, the consequences ripple outward: children miss school, parents lose workdays, small health issues become chronic conditions, and emergency rooms become the last resort rather than a safety net.

She also reflected on the economic burden these cuts would create for local hospitals. Without adequate federal funding, facilities like Contra Costa Regional Medical Center would be forced to absorb the

cost of uncompensated care, potentially leading to reduced services, longer wait times, and fewer community health programs—all at a time when residents most need support.

For Supervisor Scales-Preston, the issue comes down to both fiscal and moral responsibility. Budgets, she emphasized, should reflect community values, and protecting access to primary care, behavioral health, maternal health, and preventive services is not just good policy but the right thing to do. Stripping away essential healthcare dollars does the opposite: it places the heaviest burden on those least able to carry it.

The visit reinforced her commitment to advocating for investments in local healthcare systems so every resident regardless of income or zip code has access to the care.



## NewsWrap Stories of Local Interest

### Council poised to get first raise in over 20 years

The City Council gave initial approval to a Municipal Code amendment that would raise the monthly compensation of each council member and the mayor from \$585 to \$832 “for all the services rendered to the community.”

This would be the first raise for the council since 2002, according to a staff report, and “would still be below the median for cities between 35,000–50,000 in population.”

The staff report also notes that state law authorizes monthly compensation of up to \$1,275 per month per member for a city Martinez’s size.

The recommended increase was initiated by city staff and not the council. A “second reading” to officially adopt the raise is expected to occur in September.

In a bit of levity, Councilmember Jay Howard asked, “When is the next time we can ask for a raise?”

City Attorney Teresa Highsmith responded that the council can ask that its compensation be reviewed again next year. “You don’t have to wait another 20 years,” she said.

### 150 trees for city’s 150th anniversary

City Engineer Joe Enke unveiled a plan to plant 150 trees along city medians by next April 1 to help commemorate Martinez’s 150th birthday.

The plantings will be prioritized for

entryways along the following major corridors: Alhambra Avenue, Center Avenue, Chilpancingo Parkway, Marina Vista Avenue, and Morello Avenue.

The city plans to hire a contractor to conduct the plantings and landscaping.

The 150 trees are part of a larger median upgrade project budgeted at \$800,000 to be funded by the city’s gas tax, spread evenly over the current and next fiscal year. Enke estimated that the cost for each tree planting would probably range from \$500 to \$1,000.

Enke clarified that the overall project will consist of two phases and include curb repairs, irrigation work and other beautifications in addition to the tree plantings. As per what type of trees would be planted, Enke said a proposal on tree types would be brought before the council in September.

### Free physical exams and health services offered at community colleges

Contra Costa Health (CCH) announced this week that it is now offering free school and sports physical exams as well as confidential reproductive health services for eligible students at Contra Costa County’s three community colleges.

CCH mobile clinics will visit each of Contra Costa Community College District’s (4CD) main campuses weekly to offer services such as reproductive education, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and general physicals.

*by Martinez News and Views and other sources*

## Civil grand jury issues report on MDUSD bond oversight—MDUSD responds

*by Craig Lazzeretti, Martinez News and Views*



The Contra Costa County civil grand jury has issued a report on the Mt. Diablo Unified School District’s Measure J Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC), concluding that the current structure and operation of the committee does not satisfy the requirements of the California Education Code and “does not meet the best practices for creation and operation of a CBOC.”

The Mt. Diablo district encompasses a portion of Martinez that falls outside the boundaries of Martinez Unified, including Hidden Valley Elementary School, as well as Pleasant Hill, Concord, Clayton, portions of Walnut Creek and Pittsburg, and various unincorporated areas such as Pacheco and Bay Point.

The grand jury report said Mt. Diablo’s CBOC “is not independent as its bylaws are written and controlled by MDUSD.” It goes on to state:

These bylaws give MDUSD the authority to control who is appointed as a member of the CBOC. In addition, under the bylaws, the CBOC is prohibited from

amending the bylaws without MDUSD consent and approval. This undermines the principle of independence that is essential for effective oversight.

The report also says MDUSD has failed to provide the CBOC the independent legal support that it has requested to aid its review of Measure J expenditures. “The lack of independent legal representation has impeded the committee’s ability to carry out its oversight duties,” the report states.

The full report can be read at the following link: <https://contracosta.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/2507-measurejcitizenbondoversightcommittee.pdf>

The grand jury has requested responses to the report from both the district and CBOC. District response was received on August 28, 2025, and can be viewed with this link.

<https://contracosta.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/response-report-no-2507-mt-diablo-unified-school-district.pdf>

## Honoring America’s First Veterans at the America 250 Marker Dedication

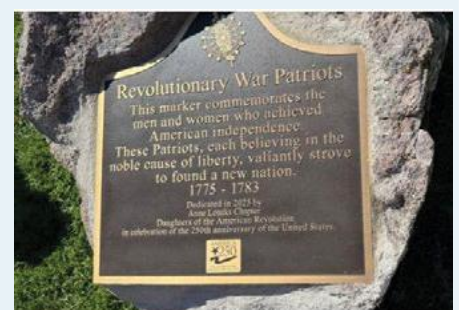
On August 23, 2025, Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston joined community members, veterans, and local leaders at the Veterans Memorial Hall in Martinez for the dedication of the America 250 Marker.

Hosted by the Anne Loucks Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), this event honored America’s veterans and commemorated the nation’s 250th anniversary. The ceremony featured the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1351 and American Legion Post 29 with a flag raising, National Anthem, invocation, and unveiling of the commemorative marker.

Supervisor Scales-Preston expressed gratitude to the DAR and veterans’ organizations for their commitment to preserving history and honoring those who fought for independence. She emphasized the importance of remembering the sacrifices made for freedom and ensuring future generations carry forward the values of service and dedication.

The program included remarks from dignitaries, a three-volley salute, and a benediction, concluding with a warm invitation for attendees to gather for refreshments and community fellowship.

*Photos courtesy of Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston.*





## City Begins to Revitalize Old Train Depot with Demolition of Interior

by Craig Lazeretti, [MartinezNewsandViews.substack.com](http://MartinezNewsandViews.substack.com)

Launching its latest effort to find a viable use for the Old Train Depot on Ferry Street, the City Council authorized city staff to spend an estimated \$125,000 on the demolition and abatement of the interior of the historic building.

City Engineer Joe Enke said the city hopes to see the demolition work completed by the end of 2025, which would set the table for a “request for proposal” (RFP) process to redevelop the property into what a city staff report describes as “active use as food, retail and/or cultural use.”

The demolition work will consist of both an abatement phase to remove lead paint, asbestos and any other hazardous materials, followed by general interior demolition to “take the building back to the studs,” Enke told the council Wednesday. The goal is to eventually turn the property into an “economic driver in the downtown,” he said, though what form that ultimately takes remains to be seen.

Efforts to return the depot, originally built in 1877, to active use has long stymied the city. Prolonged talks over several years with the Martinez Historical Society to turn the building into a local museum finally collapsed last year.

“That has been another holy grail, what are we going to do with it, for 20



years,” former Councilman Mark Ross said last summer when the council began talks of a remediation effort following the failure of negotiations with the Historical Society.

“I think this is a long time coming,” Councilmember Debbie McKillop said emphasizing the need for the city to finally find a suitable use for its own vacant property at a time when it is pushing a broader “Vacant to Vibrant” program for vacant commercial properties in the downtown.

While the work is estimated to cost \$125,000, the project is funded with up to \$400,000 in Cultural Facility Impact fees.

City Manager Michael Chandler said there also is a plan to reconstitute an ad-hoc subcommittee of the City Council to help guide future plans for the depot. Such a subcommittee was created several years ago to try to facilitate negotiations with the Historical Society.

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## Congressman Garamendi addresses impact of SNAP/CalFresh cuts on local Food Bank

by David Scholz

The unimaginable has descended upon the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano with the forthcoming loss of \$186 billion to SNAP/CalFresh over the next decade as part of the Trump Administration’s self-proclaimed “Big Beautiful Bill,” and the hope is now increased awareness about the significant cuts to funding and benefits will stimulate a ground swell of public support.

“There have always been proposals about cuts to benefits and programs but not to this extent,” said Food Bank Executive Director Caitlyn Sly.

The approaching demands on local Food Bank offerings was put front center during a visit by Congressman John Garamendi to the Food Bank’s Fairfield warehouse on Thursday, Aug. 28, when he highlighted the loss of these programs will mean more families being forced to turn to them, pushing already stretched resources past the breaking point.

“We have already seen an uptick,” said Sly. “Cuts to people’s benefits means they will not have as much to spend with they go to the grocery stores, so they will be coming to us.”

Sly, who served under her father and the Food Bank’s founder, Larry Sly, before departing to take helm of the Meals on Wheels Diablo Region, and then eventually returned hardly envisioned she would be facing such a



Caitlyn and Garamendi sort pears for distribution.

challenge.

Sly acknowledged in the past the regular need to advocate for preservation of programs and funding that were part of the annual Farm Bill discussions. But what has unfolded now is demanding a new level of raising awareness in the community and speaking to those in power.

Sly noted her organization has already been dealing with the wind down of \$1.9 million in funding that has annually supported purchase of fresh produce that goes out through mobile food pantry distribution efforts. With the new year, that will go away.

Sly’s plan going forward is to raise awareness about the impact of these federal cuts locally. Food Banks Food Banks around the country forecast to





# Your posture

## It's about more than just standing up straight

As we age, posture often becomes something we worry about along with stooping, balance issues and falls.

What if posture wasn't just a matter of standing tall, but a reflection of how well your brain and body are working together? Good posture is more than muscle strength. It's a sign of strong neurological coordination.

Three major systems shape your posture from the inside out:

**The Visual System.** Your eyes aren't just for seeing. They help your brain know where you are in space. When your visual system isn't functioning optimally, like if one eye does all the work or if your peripheral vision is declining, your brain compensates by adjusting your head and neck position, pulling your posture off-center.

**The Vestibular System.** This inner ear system helps you stay balanced and upright. It detects head movement and tells your body how to respond. If your vestibular system is underperforming, your posture may lean or stiffen to create a false sense of stability, leaving you more prone to falls.

**Proprioception.** This is your body's ability to sense itself, like knowing where your feet are without looking. With age or injury, this feedback can fade. Without clear signals from joints and muscles, your brain guesses, and your posture subtly shifts into protective patterns often without you noticing.

The good news? All three of these systems can and should be trained. Small drills that engage the eyes, improve balance, and boost body awareness can radically improve posture, reduce fall risk, and even support internal systems like digestion and breathing.

Here's a simple vision drill to try. Sit or stand tall and notice how much effort it takes to hold that upright posture. Now,

pick a target directly in front of you and keep your eyes focused on it.

While maintaining your gaze, wiggle your fingers at chest height like you're playing the piano without looking down. Notice your fingers moving in your lower peripheral vision.

Wait a few seconds. Does it feel any easier to stay upright?

This works because when your brain gets clearer input from your lower visual field, like where the ground is, it doesn't feel the need to pull your head and eyes down to look at your feet. That means less tension, less forward collapse, and a lot more ease in your posture.

It's a small shift with significant impact, especially for fall prevention and long-term stability.

The nervous system controls everything. When we train it directly, we build more than strength, we build resilience. If you've been blaming your posture on age or bad habits, consider this:

You are not stuck; you just haven't been shown how to retrain the systems that hold you up.

If there is space, I have a FREE Posture workshop coming up September 2-4 at 9:30 a.m. on zoom. Please email [neurologyofpresence@gmail.com](mailto:neurologyofpresence@gmail.com) for more information.



Food Bank Director Caitlyn Sly escorts Congressman Garamendi through the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano County warehouse. in Fairfield. Photo Credit Food Bank Facebook.

eliminate up to 6 billion meals worth of benefits every year, a loss that no local entity can absorb.

"We have been trying to raise the alarm and get the word out to the

community from a policy standpoint so they can be pushing back (to their elected leaders)," she said.



This free community event brings together a diverse array of resources, free health screenings, and information for seniors, families, and caregivers.

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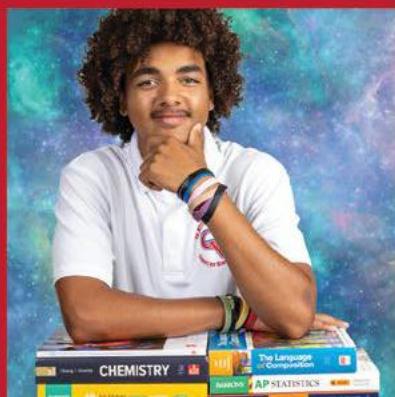
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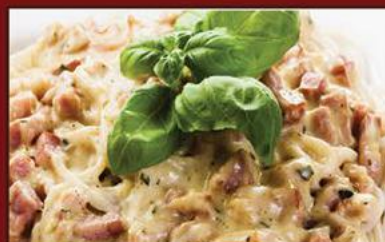
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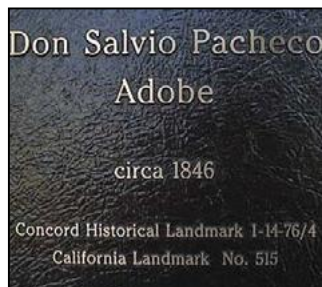






**Carlyn Obringer**  
Concord Mayor  
[cityofconcord.org](http://cityofconcord.org)

## Bowling fundraiser to benefit Pacheco Adobe



Did you know that Concord is home to a landmark listed in all three Historical Registries? The Fernando Pacheco Adobe, located next to the 26-acre Hillcrest Park in North Concord was built in the early 1850s by Don Fernando and served as his ranch headquarters and family residence. He was the oldest son of Don Salvio Pacheco, who founded Concord, then known as Todos Santos. Fernando and his wife Pasquala raised their six children at the Adobe and were famous for their generous hospitality.

The City of Concord acquired the Adobe from Contra Costa County in 1979 via a grant deed requiring the property be used "for the purposes of public park and recreation and for the preservation of the historical aspect of the site." The Contra Costa Horseman's Association helped manage the property and hosted horse shows on the site for decades.

Because of this rich history, the City of Concord has been seeking partners to rehabilitate, adaptively reuse, and manage the Adobe and its surrounding property, since 2020.

Since the time of Don Fernando Pacheco, the Adobe has been almost

continually occupied, but now it needs significant structural and aesthetic repairs in addition to updated fixtures and furnishings.

Our goal is to return this National Historic landmark to life and further revitalize the North Concord area. This has been done successfully in Monterey, at the Cooper Molera Adobe.

I am organizing the inaugural Don Fernando Pacheco Adobe Bowling Fundraiser, in partnership with the Concord Historical Society on Saturday, October 4, from 12:30 -3:00 p.m. at Clayton Valley Bowl. This fun event is open to all ages and will help start a seed fund for matching grants to rehabilitate the historic Don Fernando Pacheco Adobe.

Sponsorship opportunities are available at the \$1,500, \$1,000, \$500 and \$300 levels. You can also register your individual team for \$400 per team of five bowlers or sign up as an individual bowler for \$60.

Contact [Carlyn4CityCouncil@gmail.com](mailto:Carlyn4CityCouncil@gmail.com) for more information. Confirm your registration/sponsorship by Saturday, September 20, 2025.



**Jennifer Stojanovich**  
Realtor, Better Homes Realty

## Why now could be the time to buy a home

I've been in real estate long enough to see the market move through many different seasons. Some favor sellers, some favor buyers, and every once in a while we hit a point where opportunity opens up if you're paying attention. That's where we are right now.

Just the other week, I worked with a young couple who had been searching for their first home in Clayton. A year ago, they would have been one of a few offers fighting to get in the door. This time, they toured several homes, took their time, and ended up with a house they love—without the frenzy or the feeling of "having to rush." They even negotiated a few repairs and asked the seller to pay some of their closing costs to help buy down their interest rate which would have been

unheard of not too long ago.

For buyers, this is a rare chance to have choices and breathing room. Waiting on the sidelines, hoping rates will get "better," may mean missing out on exactly the home you've been dreaming about.

For sellers, this doesn't mean the sky is falling—far from it. Well-priced, well-presented homes are still moving, often quickly. But the balance has shifted just enough to give buyers a little more confidence and leverage. That balance can be a healthy thing for our whole community's housing market.

If you've been thinking about buying, don't let the moment slip by. Opportunities are here now—and the right time might be today.

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## Community Impact Fund and Other Allocations



## Antioch 162 Years Ago

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Contra Costa County provided support to our community in a multitude of ways: ensure food for the homebound, safely providing shelter to the unhoused, providing personal protective equipment to first responders and those working with vulnerable populations, setting up testing sites across the County, providing vaccinations, etc.

These efforts cost approximately \$82 million dollars and the County strived to apply for all reimbursements from the federal government.

As a precaution, the Board of Supervisors allocated \$37 million in case our reimbursements were denied. To date, the County has been reimbursed for 99.6% of our claims.

Now we have approximately \$20.9 million unused funds. The Board has met the need of the community by allocating \$6.2 million to support our immigrant neighbors with the establishment of the Safety and Access for Everyone (SAFE) Center.

In June, the Board held a discussion to consider how to allocate the remaining \$14 million. During our discussion, I secured \$1 million for each Supervisorial district. Because each district is unique, I felt it was important that these funds be deployed according to the needs of each district.

To put these dollars to work quickly, the \$1 million for District IV, now called the Community Impact Fund, will be available as one-time grants for non-profits serving the District.

I am looking to allocate these funds to organizations that are serving our historically marginalized communities through innovation. Each recipient of these grants, ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000, will be required to report back on the effective use of their funds.

On August 14, I held a townhall where over 70 non-profits attended to learn more.

I will be holding a webinar on Thursday, September 4 at 2:00 p.m. and I will be hosting my quarterly Coffee with Ken on September 19 at 10:00 a.m.

To register for the webinar please go to: [tinyurl.com/D4CIFWebinar](http://tinyurl.com/D4CIFWebinar).

To stay in the loop on the upcoming

Coffee with Ken, please email: [D4info@bos.cccounty.us](mailto:D4info@bos.cccounty.us).

### Residents Survey to Help Determine How to Allocate Remaining \$9 Million.

In October, the Board of Supervisors will consider allocating the remaining \$9 million as it pertains to the needs of the County as a whole.

For this, we are asking residents to take a short survey to help us understand the community's priorities for how one-time funds should be used. This feedback will guide us as we decide how to distribute these limited resources in ways that matter most to you and your neighbors.

The survey asks about your quality of life, the challenges your household is facing, and the areas where you believe investment would make the biggest difference; whether that's affordable housing, public safety, health and wellness, youth services, broadband access, or something else. Responses are anonymous unless you choose to share your contact information, and it only takes a few minutes to complete. To participate in the countywide survey, please visit [tinyurl.com/CoCoCIFsurvey](http://tinyurl.com/CoCoCIFsurvey). Or scan the below QR code below.



I am excited to learn more about the projects that our local non-profits are working on to meet the needs of our community and to better understand the gaps that are being felt by our community.

I hope you'll take a moment to complete the survey and, if applicable, sign up for the webinar and our upcoming Coffee with Ken.

(Published From Contra Coosta Gazette March 21, 1863)

Antioch-- It is with surprise and pleasure that we have observed during the past week, the extraordinary progress made by the little town, located on the northeastern border of the county.

Its distance from Pacheco by the pleasant road over which we travel, via Willow Pass, is about 15 miles. Its distance from the Pittsburg, the Union, the Manhattan, and the Independent coal mines is not more than 5 or 6 miles, being the nearest point that affords deep water, convenient for the shipping of the coal brought from these mines.

It is from its position in relation to these productive deposits of black fuel that it derives its chief importance. To this will soon be added the salt works about to be erected and put in operation a few miles back of that place, and also the copper smelting works soon to be built and set to work right in the limits of the town itself.

The fact that there is a depth of 40 feet of water at the Wharf, and a good channel thence up towards Stockton and down in the direction of San Francisco, is an item of essential value in determining the permanent prosperity of the place, as well as of the Salt and Copper works and other like auxiliaries that may hereafter be added.

Two years ago, hardly a solitary house could be seen at the point where Antioch now stands, yet at present there are from 50 to 60 buildings, all occupied and still more needed. There are two stores, and an express office, and the usual number of saloons common to most California towns.

The Stockton Steamboat calls their every night on its way up and down the San Joaquin, so that the inhabitants of Antioch can obtain the news of the morning from the journals of San Francisco or Stockton the same evening.



Antioch, Photo Courtesy Contra Costa Historical Society

Religious services are held there on Sunday also, and a school of some 25 to 30 pupils is in successful progress.

The spirit of enterprise and activity seemed to pervade the community, and all look forward to the steady, if not the rapid growth and advancement of their flourishing little burg.

Why should they not? We confess ourselves well disposed to sympathize with them in these feelings and anticipation.

The Back country, too, is receiving constant and considerable accessions to the number of settlers about there. In the region of the salt works particularly, we are informed there are already quite a respectable population, estimable in point of numbers as well as in character.

We rejoice in the progress and prosperity of every part of our county, in this, to us, new district, not less than in those more familiar. We only wish that the means of communication with this district, as well as with the entire range of the coal mines, were made more certain, regular and reliable. The mail should certainly run at some stated times through these growing, busy bee hives of mining and other industry, and not leave all business to be transacted through the express companies, whose praiseworthy diligence and energy, however, cannot be too much commended. We hope something will soon be done to remedy this serious evil.



## Concord's access to open space helps fuel local economy

by Kevin Cabral, CEO, Concord Chamber of Commerce

Concord is blessed with remarkable access to open space. For more than 40 years, I've been hiking and riding the trails in and around this city, and I still feel fortunate every time I set foot outdoors. The trails may have evolved over the decades, but the magic of the experience remains the same.

The foothills leading up into Mt. Diablo State Park are, in my opinion, one of the most precious parts of Concord and the surrounding cities. Its attraction is undeniable for outdoor enthusiasts. Whether you go alone or with friends, hiking and biking these trails is a social, healthy activity that keeps you coming back for more.

Exploring our trails also supports the local economy. If you're hiking, Roadrunner Sports in the Willows shopping center offers expert shoe fittings to keep your adventures comfortable. Cyclists can turn to beloved family-owned businesses such as Encina Bikes in Walnut Creek and Clayton Bikes in Clayton. Under the leadership of John Kramer, these shops continue the legacy of his father, Tim, serving as pillars of the cycling community while giving back through youth sports sponsorships and local team support.

One of my favorite rides begins near Oakhurst Golf Course and winds over to Black Diamond Mines. While the

climbs can be steep, the reward is a breathtaking long cruise on a bike, or a challenging hike with incredible views.

Lime Ridge offers another option, ideal for a quick outing. Its trails vary in difficulty, and some of the technical downhill sections are a test of skill, but the scenery is always worth it.

Of course, Mt. Diablo State Park remains the crown jewel. Starting at Mitchell Canyon Visitors Center, visitors find multiuse trails that are steep, rugged, and full of surprises, from creeks to diverse wildlife. Parking is only \$6, a small investment that helps preserve these outdoor treasures for everyone to enjoy.

With the right gear and a little planning, the Concord area's trails offer endless opportunities for fitness, fun, and connection with nature. Support your health, your community, and the local businesses that make it all possible. And most of all, get outside and enjoy.

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



# CONCORD CITY COUNCIL APPROVES SPEED REDUCTIONS ON 20 STREETS

On August 26, the Concord City Council voted unanimously for an ordinance to lower speed limits on 20 city streets to improve safety.

The decision follows a comprehensive citywide Engineering and Traffic Survey conducted by the City’s Transportation Division which evaluated speeds, collision data, and roadway conditions to ensure that posted limits reflect actual traffic patterns and remain legally enforceable.

“This update ensures that our posted limits reflect real-world conditions while prioritizing the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers,” Mayor Carlyn Obringer said.

The ordinance requires a second reading for final adoption. Once approved, the new speed limits will take effect once new signage is installed at least 30 days thereafter.

The following street segments will see speed reductions of 5 mph or more:

- Alberta Way from Clayton Road to Ygnacio Valley Road (35 mph to 25 mph)
- Ayers Road from Ygnacio Valley Road to Clayton Road (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Babel Lane from Clayton Road to Cowell Road (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Burnett Avenue from Highway 680 Northbound on/off ramp to John Glenn Drive (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Clayton Road from Galindo Street to Oakland Avenue (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Concord Avenue from Market Street to Salvio Street (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Cowell Road from Monument Boulevard to Babel Lane (35 mph to 30 mph)
- David Avenue from Oak Grove Road to Bancroft Road (40 mph to 35 mph)
- Galaxy Way from Commerce Avenue to Via De Mercados (30 mph to 25 mph)

- Galindo Street from Monument Boulevard to Salvio Street (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Grant Street from High School Avenue to Solano Way (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Kirker Pass Road from City Limit to Myrtle Drive (55 mph to 50 mph)
- Laura Alice Way from Arnold Industrial Way to Nelson Avenue (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Marsh Drive from Solano Way to City Limit (45 mph to 40 mph)
- Meadow Lane from Market Street to Monument Boulevard (35 mph to 30 mph)
- Minert Road from Oak Grove Road to City Limit (40 mph to 35 mph)
- Oak Grove Road from Junction Drive to City Limit (40 mph to 35 mph)
- Oakland Avenue from Clayton Road to Mt Diablo Street (30 mph to 25 mph)
- Port Chicago Highway from Panoramic Drive to City Limit (45 mph to 40 mph)
- West Street from Clayton Road to Concord Boulevard (30 mph to 25 mph)
- Speed Increases
- Not all changes will be speed reductions. The survey data showed some street segments will see speed limit increases. These four streets will see increases.
- Rolling Woods Way from Pine Hollow Road to the northernmost boundary of the Crystyl Ranch development (30 mph to 35 mph)
- Turtle Creek Road from Treat Boulevard to Fallbrook Road (30 mph to 35 mph)
- Crystyl Ranch Drive from Ygnacio Valley Road to Hiddencrest Court (35 mph to 45 mph)

# Fireworks suspects sought in MDHS football field vandalism

by David Scholz



Screen shot of surveillance video of fireworks play that led to the burning of the new ly installed turf onthe MDHS football field.

Sports will go on, just not for a while at the newly installed synthetic turf field at Mt. Diablo High School that was scorched during the small hours of Aug. 24.

Contra Costa Fire Protection District and Concord Police Department were called to school’s sports complex for the report of a fire about 8:22 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 24. At the center of the football field, Con Fire quickly extinguished flames that left behind considerable damage, which was contained to approximately 20 yards by 20 yards.

The case is now being probed as an incident of arson by Con Fire arson investigators who responded to the scene.

Police are now seeking several suspects, possibly juveniles, as revealed in surveillance footage that shows them setting off fireworks on the field the night before that may or may not have led to the fire.

The new track and field replacement project came had an approximate price tag of \$1.8 million, according to Mt. Diablo Unified School District spokesperson Theresa Harrington Brandt.

“No games will not be played on the damaged field,” said Brandt, which already included moving the 2025 season opener to Concord High School’s stadium.

“If it takes longer than that to repair it, they will need to find alternate locations for their subsequent home games,” she continued.

Brandt noted the district is working with its installing contractor and manufacturer to formalize the repair plans to the field that was insured.

“We will be moving forward with necessary repairs as quickly as possible,” she said.

Not only is the football program impacted, but MDHS’s girls flag football squad may likely have been dealt a setback too. It had just opened its season on the newly installed field, but now school officials are potentially faced with scrambling to find an alternative site for their September contests if it becomes necessary.

Anyone with more information is encouraged to contact Concord Police Detective Lee Lawrence at (925) 671-3234.

# Many questioning the effectiveness of bike lanes

by Richard Eber

It’s 7:55 A.M. on a busy Monday morning along Concord Blvd. On one side of the road commuters head primarily towards Hwy 24. In the opposite direction kids are being dropped off at El Dorado Middle School and Concord High.

The congestion is made worse because seldom used bicycle lanes take up valuable space where cars once traveled. On this particular day not one two-wheel conveyance could be seen.

People have been known to shake their heads because they wonder why these bike lanes exist on Concord Blvd. and elsewhere, when demand for their use is so low. In close-by cities, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill and Martinez, a comparable situation persists.

As it turns out there is little choice in the matter. The State has mandated municipalities to continue to build these lanes that in effect create only one lane of automobile to travel where two used to exist.

Concord City Council member Laura Hoffmeister explains, “When we



Photo credit City of Concord

receive funds and grants from the State, they insist we include these special pathways in our construction plans. Without them, nothing gets done.”

Hoffmeister, a six-time mayor, who was first elected to office in the 1990’s says, “We have no say. When money for road for road improvements is allocated from Sacramento, there are always strings attached. Everything we do from fixing potholes to repaving major arteries has guidelines. Building bike lanes is no exception.”

Making such edicts work is up to City Staff under the direction of Abhishek Parikh T.E., Deputy Director of the Department of Public Works. He points out, “Complete Streets policies, which are mandated by most State

and Federal funding, generally require accommodations for all users including cyclists.”

Parikh goes on to say, “Removing a vehicular travel, or implementing a “road diet,” to accommodate bike lane may sometimes be necessary. This decision depends on several factors including traffic volumes, roadway capacity, safety

goals, design standards for all ages and abilities, community support, and compliance with the funding agency’s requirements.”

He concludes, “Omitting bike lanes is generally not an option for projects tied to Complete Streets or active transportation requirements, unless

an exception is approved with proper jurisdiction.”

According to Senate bill SB-127 in 2008 and later SB-960, authored by Senator Scott Weiner (D-San Francisco) in 2024, “State-owned roads that run through communities should be safe for everyone, not just cars and trucks.”

This has proven to be no easy task. Once these lanes have been constructed, it has been difficult to change or eliminate them.

Case in point is the bike lane constructed three years ago on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Some 80,000 commuters who travel across the bridge on Monday through Friday are adversely affected to accommodate an average of 27 cyclists per day.

Protests have been loud and angry. Even considering these hard figures, the California Coastal Commission has not yet taken decisive action to eliminate the lane.

For Concord, and neighboring communities, modifying the use of existing and future bike lanes appears to be an uphill battle for local governments..



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# Luna Restaurant Celebrates 25 Years in Concord

by David King

This September, Luna Restaurant marks a remarkable milestone, 25 years of serving Concord with flavorful cuisine, warm hospitality, and a true sense of community. For Chef-owner Habib, however, the celebration is just as much about the diners who have supported Luna over the years as it is about the restaurant itself.

To honor the occasion, Luna will be offering a special three-course anniversary dinner for just \$25, September 15 through October 15. Guests will also have the chance to win one of two prizes: a dinner for two plus a \$250 Luna gift card. Simply sign up when you visit, no purchase necessary.

## A Flavorful Blend

Over the years, Luna has become a cherished part of Concord's dining scene, thanks to a menu described as a "Mediterranean blend and Italian flavors with California freshness." The result is a collection of classic, comforting dishes elevated by seasonal ingredients and served with genuine hospitality.

"You have to keep things exciting and keep things curious for people," says Habib. "Food brings people together, so you have to share, share what makes it special."

That passion for food and service was born at family dinners during Habib's childhood in Morocco. After moving to the United States, he honed his skills in some of the Bay Area's most respected restaurants, including several in San

Francisco, the Black Hawk Grill in Danville and Left Bank in Pleasant Hill. He credits Left Bank's owner, Lance Bellamy, as a true mentor, especially in the art of hospitality.

## Building Luna

Habib opened Luna with the dream of creating a place where people could gather, eat well, and feel at home.

Part of that philosophy has always been keeping the experience fresh. Over the years, Luna has introduced themed



dinners such as French Night, Moroccan Night with live belly dancers, as well as popular wine dinners. More recently, the menu has expanded to include specialties such as duck breast and escargot, dishes that balance creativity with comfort.

## Meet the Family

The success of Luna naturally inspired a sister restaurant. In 2008, Fiore opened on Clayton Road as a smaller, neighborhood version of Luna, designed to bring the same hospitality and flavors closer to the Clayton community.

At the heart of both restaurants is family. Habib sees his guests as an extension of his own.

His partner and "cousin," Hafid Tadri, manages operations and the front of the house for both Luna and Fiore, alongside Hafid's wife, Hassna, and their two children, Ziyad and Lina.

Habib's own family is also deeply involved: his wife, Salwa Jalab, and their two young sons, Mohammed Ali, who at

six years old already greets guests with a smile, and Adam, who at just two and a half is quickly learning the ropes.

Family, food, and community are the pillars of Luna's success, and they are evident in every dish served and every guest welcomed.

## A Grateful Celebration

If you haven't yet, join the family, enjoy some exquisite flavors and a memorable evening. Take advantage of their 25th Anniversary 3-course dinner for \$25. We thank you for making Concord your home. Congratulations to Luna Restaurant on 25 years of excellence. Here's to the next 25.

Luna is located at 2118 Willow Pass Road in downtown Concord.



# Finding Fulfillment in Assisted Living Communities

by Francisco Sudiactal

Assisted living communities offer activities that add to residents' quality of life in ways that are not easily foreseen. Since I specialize in senior services, I attend an event to observe how one local community does so. Staff introduced me to Victor McPhun, whose story reflects how retired residents continue to find fulfillment.

Reclining in his chair, Victor focuses past the wall of his comfortable unit, reminiscing about faraway places and long-ago times. At 90 years of age, Victor has long been retired and currently resides with his wife, Diane, at Oakmont of Concord. Every day he makes his way downstairs to the memory care area to visit his high school sweetheart. I accompany him and notice how they chat with a loving patience born out of a lifetime together. Afterwards, he bends forward and kisses her goodbye.

Victor still remembers his first date with a beautiful girl at the movie theater, now over 70 years ago. He chuckles while detailing this and the other blessings in his life. Three daughters that live nearby. Grandchildren, great-grandchildren. Service as a proud Marine (once a Marine, always a Marine, he tells me with a glint in his eye). With radio & telephone training from the military and years of experience in telecom, Victor took the lead in implementing



the first selective routing for emergency 911, with Alameda being the first county in the nation to employ the system.

Victor recounts his family vacations to various places around the world: Paris, Sydney, Hong Kong, Rome...but today his mind fills with memories of Hawaii. Having visited many times, the islands have always been his favorite—the laid back and hang loose culture, the sights to see in his favorite town, Lahaina, the sand and water of Ka'anapali

Beach. Even the time Victor spent working for a month in Waikiki while Diane "enjoyed the beach" was unforgettable.

It's been many years since Victor enjoyed the warmth of Hawaii. Today, however, Oakmont is hosting a luau, and Victor is wearing a Hawaiian shirt to celebrate. He and Diane may not be in Hawaii this summer, but Oakmont has brought the sights and sounds of Hawaii to them. Hawaiian decorations adorn the community, Hawaiian food is served, and Hawaiian music fills the air. Hula dancers entertain the residents, who are decked out in Hawaiian outfits. I ask Victor, "Why is Hawaii your favorite?"

He replies, "It's nearest to my heart."



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## A toddlers passion for plants blossoms into Utopic Gardens by David King

Little did Angela Dawne, owner of Utopic Gardens in Walnut Creek, know that helping her grandparents harvest vegetables in Iowa at the age of three would spark a lifelong career in landscape design.

The impression was so strong that at age 8 when her family moved to an Oakland apartment with no garden space, she tried planting seeds in a patch of dirt beside the building.

Though they never sprouted, Angela's passion for plants grew. She nurtured houseplants instead, playing classical music for them, pruning with care, talking to them, and creating what she fondly calls her "little jungle" room. By the time she was 20, Angela had moved her beloved plants into her own apartment.

A turning point came when she stepped in to run a friend's small landscaping business during her pregnancy. For three years, Angela managed all the work herself. Little by little, clients began requesting her personally, and Utopic Gardens was born.

Drawing on six years of art instruction, Angela has always viewed landscapes as living works of art. Early in her career,

she and her husband paired her creative vision with his installation skills, but after their separation she partnered with JS's Modern Landscaping, Inc.

Today, her process begins with a one-hour consultation, followed by a hand-drawn, colored rendering of her vision. Through Utopic Gardens' website, clients can browse a "Greenery Guide" to select plants that match their style.

Angela's designs have been showcased multiple times on the Clayton Garden Tour, where her work is celebrated for its harmonious blend of color, texture, and natural elements such as wood, stone, water, and metal. One of her specialties is rock placement, weaving balance and flow into every project.

Now in her 38th year in business, Angela continues to serve communities across central Contra Costa County, from Clayton and Concord to Lafayette, Danville, and Orinda.

From serene Zen gardens to lush Mediterranean escapes, Angela's creations embody the vision of her clients while carrying forward a lifelong passion for plants. Utopic Gardens truly lives up to its name.



Before and after Utopic Gardens transform this space into alushgarden. Design by Angela Dawne.



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### Bands Playing Saturday, September 20, 2025

Jimbo Scott & Yesterday's Biscuits • East Bay Mudd  
The Bell Brothers Band • Kyle Athayde Dance Party  
The Big Jangle • The Spazmatics  
Lonesome Eddie and the Saddle Sores  
The Rippers • Other People's Money

### Bands Playing Sunday, September 21, 2025

California Repercussions • Rachel Smith  
Aja Vu • David Martin's House Party  
Charged Particles • ZEBOP! • The Sun Kings  
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Music schedule and bands subject to change.



Photo by Jeff Heyman 2024

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