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July 2026

# Diablo Gazette™



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**Publisher's Notes**  
by David King

# All Good Things Must Keep Happennng

Edi Birsan, Concord, and Karlan Larson Martinez, are the latest travelers caught with a copy of the Diablo Gazette. Birsan went to Las Vegas and Larson was in Normandy. Hey are now members of the Gazette Elite Travelers Club.

I get a chuckle out of the idea of a beverage donkey, like the one available at Snowfire Ranch in Clayton. Word is, this little guy can serve at your next golf Tournament fundraiser. Wouldn't that be fun? I told Faith Taylor, owner of Snowfire Ranch, that it could make a cameo in this month's edition. I'm sure he would be welcome at some Fourth of July events. Snowfire Ranch is known for their party animals.



Have you tried Espetus at The Veranda yet? They opened in December but have been very quiet. This is the third establishment of this family-owned business. But this all -you-can-eat Brazilian steakhouse is a nice addition to Concord's dining choices. Read more on page 18.

Speaking of dining, Luna's Chef battle night was a great success and owner Habib Jacifi intends to keep that concept going monthly. Another battle is set for August 12. Who won? Story on page 19.

Coming up in July, Crockett's largest event of the year with it's Sugartown Music Street Fair. Coming up Jul 19.

Every year the King of the County BBQ and Music Festival in Martinez continues to grow. It was an outstanding turnout this year. Congratulations to all the Backyard BBQ winners. It is such a great Father's Day Festival. I go every year.

Have a happy Fourth and keep celebrating our Independence throughout the year.



Our newest member to the Gazette elite travelers club is former Concord Mayor, Edi Birsan. He spent the weekend in Las Vegas with his Diablo Gazette. Because, what is there to do in Vegas? Welcome to the club Edi.



Karlan Larson of Martinez, Veteran Papa Jake's son and with his daughter Michaela Larson, is greeted by Fabienne Oriy of Normandy in Carentan, Normandy at the D-Day Parade, this past June. with previous copies of the Diablo Gazette. Story page 19..

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## Blue Devils Bus Catches Fire to Start Summer Tour

by David King

As the Blue Devils begin their summer tour, traveling from Laramie, Wyoming to Denver, Colorado, one of the tour buses caught fire.



Screen shot YouTube courtesy 9news.com

Blue Devils reported to KUSA-TV9 Denver that the bus cabin began to fill with smoke. The bus quickly pulled over for everybody to get off. As soon as everybody exited, the bus burst into flames. Thankfully, all members, staff, and their instruments escaped unharmed.

However, many of our members lost personal belongings in the incident, including clothing, electronics, and other essential items.

They visited the local Walmart and bought air mattresses, pillows and blankets, and some clothes. But some items lost were irreplaceable. Performer Eddie Morales told Channel 9 news he lost his journal which had logged his entire six years with the Blue Devils.

Despite this, Blue Devils made it to Fort Collins, Colorado, and competed. In addition to overcoming the adversity, they also took time to thank all those who stepped up to help them

including Cracker Barrel and Serve 68, a Northern Colorado Christian non-profit organization offers relief to families in need of food, clothing, and housing.

Firefighters believe the fire started from an axle malfunction.

Locally, a number of people have asked how they can help support those who were affected. "Anyone who would like to help can make a gift through our donation page and simply include "Bus Fire" in the comments so we can direct those funds to the impacted members," said Claire Simpson, Blue Devils Performing Arts Director of engagement. <https://bluedevils.org/donate/>



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# German Occupation of the Netherlands May 1940 - May 1945

(Part 6: Foraging for Food) by Nell Fliehmann

Nell Fliehmann from Oakland is 103 years old and is the mother of Jack Fliehmann who lives in Concord. She is among the very few individuals still living who can recount the experience of enduring the German occupation during World War II.

In 1933, Nell resided in Holland. At just 10 years old, she could not have realized that Hitler's ascent to power in Germany would soon dramatically alter her life. The change was abrupt.

She has documented her experiences living under the German occupation of the Netherlands in a 50-page booklet, which she has kindly shared with the Diablo Gazette.

This is the sixth part of her narrative. The first five parts are available at [diablogazette.com](http://diablogazette.com) and in earlier issues starting with the February 2026 edition.

## Foraging for Food

Many people from the cities made trips to the farmers in the Province of Friesland, in northeastern Holland.

My sister and I decided to do the same. By then I was 22 years old and my sister Truus was 24, strong enough to undertake long tiring bicycle trips.

My father bought us four new bicycle tires on the black market. My mother prepared a small bag lunch to take along for the first day. She gathered items to trade with the farmers.

We decided when and where to go in Friesland and packed a change of clothes. Women did not wear pants in those days so we bicycled in skirts. In hindsight, that was probably safer for us.

Early in the morning we left. After hours of bicycling a hundred miles, we arrived at dinnertime in the village of Den Oever. The little town is situated at the beginning of a bridge on a dike, in those years called the Zuiderzee dike.

In this little hamlet we asked around to find a roof over our head for the night and were very lucky to find a room with a wonderful family. The woman was just the most warm-hearted person we could have found. We were invited to sit down for dinner with her family; two little boys, and a husband. Dinner was simple, but good.

Before we went to bed in the tiny bedroom, our hostess gave us some helpful information for our trip across the long bridge the next morning. The woman charged us a small sum for our stay. She really did not make any profit, considering we had dinner and breakfast for two.

On this trip we discovered that people in the country were very sympathetic to the plight of their countrymen around the towns and big cities. Food shortages were not as bad in the country as in the West. Everywhere we went on this trip, people went out of their way to help.

Early the next morning, we bicycled to the guard building at the entrance to the dike. We stopped and went inside a small building to get permission from the two German guards to cross the bridge.

The woman had told us the time when one particular guard would be there. He was known to be more lenient. Truus and I hated to have to be friendly with

our enemy. These men were obviously happy with some company from young girls, however brief. We were out of there in no time.

Bicycling on the long bridge, we were not protected from the elements. A strong cold northwesterly wind was gusting into our faces, slowing us down and we really had to step on the pedals.

Years later, on a tour bus with my husband, I went over that same bridge and I realized then how very long and cold that trip must have been.

There was little traffic on the bridge. The bridge separates the sea from the inland waters. It is built on a dike and has traffic lanes in both directions for cars and bicycles.

We had with us some gold jewelry and also, tea; my mother had a great supply of tea when the war started. My father's knee high fishing boots were in great demand.

We would bicycle up to the front door of prosperous farmhouses. Sometimes we were invited in for lunch. The people were eager to hear from us how things were where we lived. The farmers were more than generous giving us cheese, butter, beans, flour, etc. Butter did not suffer much in our bicycle bags, because it was fairly cold outside.

## Accommodations for the Night



That night we slept on a tall hayloft with many other people from the city. That was the first and only time I ever slept on a haystack. When full, the stack is very high, has an adjustable roof and one has to climb a long ladder to reach the top. These stacks were huge and very wide at the top.

The best way to get hay fever is sleeping with hay right under the nose. But we were tired and slept well, with our money safely tucked in a money belt around our necks.

With effort, and help from others, we pulled our packs of food up the rickety steps and covered these with hay. Because this was the beginning of our trip, we did not have much food at this point.

The next night we could not find any accommodations. So, we went to the police station. They took us in and we slept with dozens of city people on the floor. Having a young body, fortunately, I did not have to get up in the middle of the night.

The floor was pretty hard and my improvised pillow made of a jacket, was not comfortable. Upon our arrival we asked one police man what to do with our packs. He was nice enough to lock these away in a closet.

Two years previous, while on a sailing trip in that area, Truus and I had become acquainted with a young



Hunger Expeditions, Photos courtesy Wikimedia commons

shoemaker. He told us to be sure to stay with him if we ever returned to that area. We looked him up and he was now married. The newly married couple invited us for dinner and we could sleep there, albeit not too comfortably in chairs.

Unfortunately, dinner was too rich for me, and during the night I felt sick, so I wanted to go to the toilet. We slept in the living room and a trip to the facilities went through the kitchen and then out in the open where it was very cold, across the garden to an outhouse. In those years, homes in the country still had outhouses. Without a flashlight this became a true ordeal. It was not entirely dark outside, but the outhouse was pitch black. Not feeling well, walking in the cold night air without a coat, I was miserable.

Our accommodations were not exactly five-star hotels: a haystack, exposed to the cold outside elements, a hard linoleum floor at a police station, two chairs each at the shoemaker.

Most hotels in the country were now closed. Our dinners were often better than at home and in the most unexpected places. I do not recall how many of these long, tiring, but eventful trips we made, back and forth to Friesland. Perhaps four in all.

Large double bags were slung over the rear of our bicycles. Many times on the way home, when I got off the bike, the front would lift up, because all the weight was in the rear.

While we were still in Friesland, on the way back to cross the Zuiderzee bridge, we were stopped by a man wearing an armband stating that he was a food inspector. What we did was not allowed. By now the Germans had forbidden this type of foraging. He looked at our bulging sacks and asked us what we were transporting. My heart skipped a beat. I thought we would have to hand over everything. (We knew he was legitimate) I told him that there was not much in those sacks, nothing important, just some beans that had been given to us.

"OK, on you go then. Have a good day". We were incredibly relieved; I was ready to hug the man, who knew damn well that we had more than beans with us.

Bicycling back over the bridge, we went straight to the house of the friendly woman. We had pre-booked the night with her for the return trip. She told us that we were always welcome and on our successive trips to Friesland, we would stop there again for an overnight.

I will never forget their kindness towards us. This is so long ago that I have forgotten her name as well as the names of other persons we met on these trips.

The next day we bicycled home and my father was overjoyed with the food we brought home.

**Next month: "Teaming up With the Underground"**



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

## Local Sales Tax

### Measure Headed for November Ballot

Over the past several months, the City Council and staff have worked through one of the most important financial issues facing Clayton: how to maintain the basic services our community depends on in a sustainable way. After many meetings, detailed analysis, and public discussion, the Council voted unanimously to place a one percent (1%) local sales tax measure on the November ballot.

This decision did not come before first taking a hard look at how the City operates. Over the past several years, we have reviewed the City's fee schedule, updated our investment policy, moved to managed investments to improve returns, restructured staff, combined positions, reduced certain service contracts, and consolidated others where possible. In short, we have looked closely at how to operate more efficiently and how to capture available revenue without asking residents for additional taxes.

The challenge remains straight-forward. The cost of providing city services has continued to rise, but the revenue the City receives has not kept pace. That gap is not sustainable over the long term. We either need to raise additional revenue or reduce services. Because our police staffing is already at the minimum level needed to safely serve the community, with only two officers regularly on duty at any given time, further reductions would create public safety risks. That means service

reductions would likely fall in areas such as landscape maintenance, park upkeep, road and infrastructure maintenance, and other quality of life services that help define Clayton.

It is also important to understand why this proposed measure would have a more meaningful local impact than the sales tax residents pay today. Under the current sales tax structure, most of the revenue goes to the State and County, while Clayton retains just over 10%. If voters approve this local measure, Clayton would retain 100% of the new revenue. That means the funding would stay here and directly support the City's ability to provide services to Clayton residents.

The proposed sales tax measure would also bring Clayton more in line with nearby cities. Today, Clayton has one of the lowest sales tax rates in Contra Costa County, and the City has not increased its sales tax since incorporation.

There will be two community town halls to discuss the proposal, answer questions, and hear from residents. They will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26, and Wednesday, October 7, at Hoyer Hall in the Clayton Library.

I encourage residents to attend, learn more, ask questions, and take part in this important conversation about Clayton's future.



## Pearl Harbor Survivor Earl "Chuck" Kohler to Serve as Grand Marshal

Every year the City of Clayton pulls out all the stops for its annual 4th of July parade and this year will be no exception. As the nation celebrates its 250th birthday, Clayton's parade theme is Happy 250th Birthday America.

This year, the Grand Marshal is none other than Clayton's own Earl "Chuck" Kohler, WWII Pearl Harbor Survivor. Earlier this year, Chuck celebrated his 102nd birthday and on the 4th of July, the entire City will come out to celebrate Chuck.

There will be many of Clayton's favorites at this year's parade, including, Diablo A's Model A Club, Claytonville BBQ, and Oakhurst Orcas, along with some new participants, like Woof Gang Bakery & Grooming, one of Clayton's newest businesses.

**Pancakes** - The morning begins with a pancake breakfast, sponsored by the Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary, from 7:00 to 10:00 am, at Endeavor Hall. Adults are \$10 and Kids 10 and under are \$7. 6008 Center Street.

**Kiddie Parade** - At 10:00 a.m. the City kicks off the Kiddie Parade at the corner Oak and Main Street, and it's come one and come all. No registration is necessary for the kiddie parade and all types of transportation are welcome:

feet, scooters, bicycles and other modes.

**Parade & Ceremony**- Immediately thereafter, the official parade begins with the raising of the American flag by the Color Guard from VFW Post 1525, the national anthem performed by Clayton's own Mechele Fong, followed by all of our parade participants and emceed by former Mayor and current CBCA President, Carl (CW) Wolfe. The City will also have a special photo opportunity this year at the gazebo inside of The Grove Park.

So come out in your red, white and blue and celebrate America's 250th birthday with the City of Clayton this year and be sure to visit all of Clayton's wonderful restaurants downtown afterwards like Ed's Mudville Grill, Vinny's Taqueria, La Veranda, Moresi's Chophouse and Enye Latin Table.

If you would like to learn more about the parade, reserve a spot in the parade to participate or volunteer to help us that morning, please visit the City's website at:

claytonca.gov/our-city/annual-events/4th-of-july-parade/.

**Happy 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday America!**



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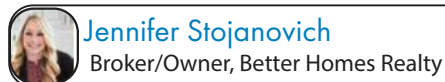
**CLAYTON**  
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**CONCORD**  
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Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
14 Weatherly Dr	\$943,000	1895	4/2	5/13/2026
1273 Shell Cir	\$660,000	1367	3/2.5	5/18/2026
9013 Elk Dr	\$1,550,000	2879	4/3	5/22/2026
367 Mt Washington Way	\$1,555,500	4318	4/4	5/26/2026
541 Mt Davidson Ct	\$1,260,000	2481	5/3	5/29/2026
3091 Windmill Canyon Dr	\$1,125,000	2315	4/2.5	6/5/2026
49 Tule Ct	\$820,000	1939	3/2.5	6/16/2026

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
5555 Maryland Dr	\$753,000	1128	3/2	5/20/2026
4869 Wolf Way	\$525,000	966	2/2	5/22/2026
5244 S Montecito Dr	\$1,437,000	2923	5/3	5/29/2026
839 McElroy Ct	\$970,000	1712	4/2	5/29/2026
1255 Poppy Seed Ct	\$859,000	2018	4/2.5	6/3/2026
5515 Langford Ct	\$1,195,000	2052	3/2	6/5/2026
3997 Mulberry Dr	\$770,000	1196	3/2	6/10/2026

Based on information from CCRAR/Paragon MLS as of 6/15/26. All data, including all measurements and calculations of area, is obtained from various sources and has not been, and will not be, verified by broker or MLS. All information should be independently reviewed and verified for accuracy. Properties may or may not be listed by the office/agent presenting the information.



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

## Preparation Sells Homes, Not Just the Market

Realtors often hear homeowners say, “We’ll just put the house on the market and see what happens.”

Recently, I worked with a family who was preparing to sell their parents’ home after many years of ownership. Rather than rushing to market, we took the time to create a plan. We discussed which improvements would give them the greatest return, completed a few strategic updates, professionally marketed the home, and began building excitement during the Coming Soon phase.

The result? The home received a strong offer before it was ever officially available to the public.

That experience is a perfect reminder that successful home sales rarely happen by chance. They happen because of preparation.

Today’s buyers are more selective than they were just a few years ago. They have access to hundreds of listings online and can compare homes with just a few clicks. When they walk through a property, they notice everything, from deferred maintenance and outdated finishes to cluttered rooms and poor presentation. First impressions matter.

The good news is that preparing your home doesn’t necessarily require a major renovation. In many cases, simple improvements like fresh paint, new flooring, updated lighting, landscaping, decluttering, or minor repairs can make a significant difference in how buyers

perceive a home.

Preparation also means having the right marketing strategy. Professional photography, video, floor plans, targeted online advertising, and pre-market exposure can generate interest before the home officially becomes active. Creating excitement early often leads to more qualified buyers and stronger offers.

Pricing is another critical piece of the puzzle. Even a beautifully prepared home can sit on the market if it’s priced above what today’s buyers are willing to pay. A well-researched pricing strategy based on current market conditions gives sellers the best opportunity for success.

If you’re considering selling your home, whether it’s next month or next year, start planning now. Meeting with a knowledgeable real estate professional early in the process can help you focus your time and money on improvements that truly add value while avoiding unnecessary expenses.

I’ve always believed that preparation creates opportunity. The sellers who take the time to prepare their homes, price them strategically, and market them effectively consistently put themselves in the best position for success.

In today’s market, it’s not just about listing your home, it’s about launching it the right way.

## CBCA Awards \$50,000 to 10 Graduating Students



Clayton Business and Community Association (CBCA) awarded \$50,000 in scholarships to ten outstanding seniors of the 2026 high school graduating class to help them continue their journey in education and to a brighter future. (Photo Courtesy Facebook/CBCA).

These funds are generated by successful CBCA events such as the annual Art and Wine Festival and Oktoberfest where proceeds are distributed each year to benefit the community in a variety of ways.

**Is there someone who should be recognized in our community? Centenarians? Award recipients?**

**Send us YOUR news and announcements.**

**Email us: [Editor@DiabloGazette.com](mailto:Editor@DiabloGazette.com) and let us know.**

## In Case You Missed It...

Local news items from [Claycord.com](http://Claycord.com) and other sources

### Things Turn Sour At C&H Sugar Factory

Warehouse workers at the C&H Sugar factory in Crockett walked out June 22, launching a strike against a three-year contract renewal they call “egregious.”

The 90 warehouse workers, represented by Oakland-based International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 6, say C&H proposed cutting five of 10 annual sick days, doing away with benefits for retired workers and revising rules so management could dodge paying overtime.

Dozens of workers have shown up at 4:30 a.m. outside the factory, often staying until past 7:00 p.m.

“We are disappointed the union has chosen to walk out, but we respect their right to do so,” said Peter O’Malley, vice president of corporate relations at American Sugar Refining, C&H’s parent company. “We remain committed to an open and constructive dialogue with the union and sincerely hope to welcome these employees back soon,” said O’Malley. A 20% wage increase is being offered in the new contract.

“We’re willing to work around some of the stuff they’re proposing but not eliminate it,” said ILWU Local 6 representative Cesar Garibay

It’s the first C&H strike since 2003.

### July 17-19: The Port Chicago Weekend

Join the Port Chicago Alliance for its Port Chicago Weekend, an annual public history initiative bringing the Bay Area together to honor the Port Chicago Sailors and their pivotal role in World War II and the civil rights movement.

The weekend includes Commemoration, Exhibits, Film Screenings and ship tours. All to explore one of the most significant yet overlooked events in American History.

#### July 17 Port Chicago Remembrance Day

Gather at sunset at Port Chicago Monument overlooking the San Francisco Bay, adjacent to the historic site of the 1944 Port Chicago Mutiny Trial, on Port Chicago Remembrance Day to honor and salute our Sailors whose act of courage desegregated the US Navy. Enjoy light refreshments and live jazz by the Lee Waterman Trio. Panorama Park is at Yerba Buena Island. 7:00-8:45 p.m. Reservations are required.

On Saturday, July 18, 10:00 a.m., attend a commemoration event at Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial in Concord to honor the lives lost in the tragic explosion of July 17, 1944.

The commemoration includes a solemn memorial ceremony, featuring speeches from guest speakers who reflect on the historical significance of the disaster. Information tables from both the park and various partners provide additional context and educational materials, enriching attendees’ understanding of the events and their aftermath.

#### Free Community Screening of “Glory” (1989)

Then at 5:00 p.m. head over to the Veranda in Concord for a special free screening of the Academy Award-winning film *Glory* (1989) at the Veranda LUXE Cinema in Concord, 2035 Diamond Blvd.

Starring Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, Matthew Broderick, and Cary Elwes, the film tells the story of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, one of the first Black regiments to serve in the Union Army during the Civil War. Through its powerful portrayal of military service, courage, sacrifice, and the pursuit of equality, “*Glory*” offers a moving historical experience that resonates with the themes of Port Chicago Weekend.

#### The Red Oak Victory Experience

On Sunday, July 19, Step aboard the historic ship, Red Oak Victory, for a day of live music, food, film screenings, vintage cars, and free, self-guided tours overlooking the San Francisco Bay. Visitors will enjoy the rare chance to explore one of the last remaining Victory Ships still afloat and learn about its vital role in World War II and maritime history. Operating 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Admission is free.

Guests are welcome to explore at their own pace and experience the ship’s decks, passageways, and historic spaces. For detailed visitor guidelines, including safety information and what to expect on board, please review the official guidance here: <https://redoakvictory.us/visit/#preparing>

Located at SS Red Oak Victory Ship, 1337 Canal Blvd, Berth 5, in Richmond.

For more information, register or make reservations go to: [Portchicagoweekend.org](http://Portchicagoweekend.org)



## JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

Jill Hedgecock, jillhedgecock.com

# Even After Lahaina Fire, Maui Still Paradise

Maui is called “The Valley Isle” for good reason. Two large volcanoes, Haleakala Volcano and the West Maui Mountains, create a lush valley between these imposing geological features. Polynesian folklore claims the demigod Maui was responsible for stealing the secret of fire from the underworld goddess, Mahuika. Perhaps she sought her revenge in August 2023 when a combination of wind, dry vegetation, and broken power lines swept a firestorm across a portion of western Maui and Lahaina creating the deadliest fire in the United States in more than a century.

Costly shoreline regulations and a tedious permitting process have stalled the rebuilding process along iconic Front Street.

Yet, Maui remains a wonderful place to visit.

Lahaina aside, there are still many dining options to experience. The classic activities of snorkeling (or visiting the Maui Ocean Center for landlubbers) to observe tropical sea life, visiting the iconic grounds of the Grand Wailea, navigating the Road to Hana, embarking on a horseback riding adventure, and ascending the summit of Haleakala.

**The Food!** But seafood lovers will have no shortage of options. We splurged on Roy’s in Kaanapali for our anniversary dinner and frequented the affordable Coconut’s Fish Cafe for multiple evening meals. Food in Maui is notoriously expensive so we also picked up a few prepared meals from Costco to heat up at the condominium. Budget.

**Snorkeling and the Maui Ocean Center.** Snorkeling with turtles is my favorite activity on Maui. The best beach spots in South Maui for turtle encounters are a short swim from Maluaka Beach and Makena Landing, but guided boat tours are also available.

Black Rock Beach is another snorkeling hot spot. We spotted day octopus on two occasions and witnessed these masters of disguise camouflage themselves to blend perfectly on a coral outcrop.

Moray eels slithered through the water. We also saw an impossibly shaped, skinny trumpet fish. Non-snorkelers can see a variety of sea life at the Maui Ocean Center.

**The Road to Hana** has jokingly been called Divorce Highway due to its 64-mile stretch of tension-filled one-lane bridges and hairpin turns. Our 40-year marriage survived unscathed. We opted not to add the additional 20-mile roundtrip extension to see the Seven Sacred Pools. We opted for a leisurely pace to explore The Garden of Eden Arboretum and gazed at stunning stands of bamboo and the quite unique rainbow eucalyptus tree bark.

No journey is complete without a little shopping for some items created by local artists. The proprietor gifted us Hawaiian leis because of our generous purchases.

On we traveled to the scenic lava shoreline at Ke’anae Peninsula. After a quick stop at Auntie Sandy’s for her

popular banana bread, we stopped at a few waterfalls before arriving at Hana and indulging in our planned picnic lunch, then heading back for a stop in Paia to watch the windsurfers ride the waves.

**Haleakala Crater National Park** has been called the most spectacular place to watch the sunrise. But even if you missed the show, Haleakala is still worth the drive to the summit. After visiting the top and taking in the view, then hiked the Sliding Sands Trail, a stunningly colorful, barren landscape with cinder cones that resemble an extraterrestrial planet.

Maui may have experienced some hard knocks, but this slice of paradise has weathered the hardships well. The sunsets and activities are still amazing, and it was the perfect destination to celebrate four decades of marriage.



Above Jill and Eric Hedgecock, (L-R) Haleakala, Maui Ocean Center, waterfalls, Grand Wailea, horseback along the shoreline, famous Hawaiian sunsets, Garden of Eden. Jill Hedgecock is a world traveler and author of several destination novels, including “Rhino in the Room” and “Pizco.”

## End of Passport Stamps for Overseas Travel Another Sign of the Digital Age

by David Scholz

Passports, the primary document for international travel, especially since the 1950s when going by air made overseas destinations more accessible, also enabled travelers to garner something nostalgic that future generations may eventually never experience.

The passport stamps. Those permanent reminders of countries one has visited also evoke fond memories of particular places seen or perhaps experiences endured along the way.

“Versions of passport stamps go all the way back to the Middle Ages or Renaissance,” said Patrick Bixby, a professor at Arizona State University and author of “License to Travel: A Cultural History of the Passport”, noted in a BBC interview last December. “[A wax seal] would be put on letters of conduct by sovereigns in Europe.”

“[It was] really only after World War Two and the resumption of international travel [that] the stamps begin to take on the kind of sentimental value that they have now,” he added.

The 1980s and ’90s saw specific precautions of certain ink to be used that couldn’t be replicated, and distinctive symbols and marks and machine-readable text in the early 2000s. This all helped make passport stamps more secure.

But the latest global trend toward digital records, driven by security, efficiency, and standardization, are now

making the traditional stamps a thing of the past as increasing numbers of countries proceed in this direction.

According to an April article on the yourmileagemayvary.com website, 137 countries still stamp visitors’ passports upon entry and exit. The vast majority of them are in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Countries like the UK, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the US are moving to e-gates and electronic entry/exit systems that scan biometrics and record data without physical stamps. This reduces processing time, minimizes errors, and allows for more secure data collection.

Folks traveling to Europe are now experiencing ESS (The Entry/Exit System) that is a fully automated border control mechanism that registers and tracks non-EU citizens entering and exiting the Schengen Zone. It was rolled out last October. Unlike the traditional manual passport stamping, EES collects biometric data (fingerprints and facial recognition scans) at border checkpoints, records entry and exit dates electronically, eliminating reliance on passport stamps, and monitors the duration of stay for non-EU visitors to prevent overstays.

Biometric details are scanned at self-service kiosks or through designated counters before meeting a border official. The system then cross-references these details with existing databases to ensure

compliance with visa and entry rules.

However, those expired passports locked away in your home represent mini time capsules of various shaped stamps from a bygone era of foreign travel.

Paging through my two expired passports from 1998 to 2018, they harken back memories of my first overseas solo trip to Thailand and Hong Kong, and later more extensive travel with my intrepid traveling late wife, Lisa, with whom I took Europe by storm via train (with its unique stamp marking) and planes from our home base outside London. Yes, lots of memories.

Then we were off to Australia and New Zealand, before returning to the states via stops in Cambodia, Vietnam and Japan.

Even if a country “officially” no longer offers passport stamps, immigration officers in most countries typically still have the authority to stamp a passport. So, read the room (are there long lines?), smile, and ask politely for a stamp and they just might oblige, especially if they’re not very busy.



Clayton’s Chuck Kohler at the White House as honoree at the National Memorial Day Concert. image: screenshot from the PBS Broadcast on PBS.org.

Alternatively, some airports offer commemorative stamps for visitors and it’s worth asking at a tourist information desk. To stamp your own passport would invalidate it.

Passport stamps aren’t completely gone. But if nostalgia of collecting them exists, start asking for them now.

Arriving back to the US through Michigan’s Detroit Metro Airport, from Munich, Germany, in early May, I initially asked for a stamp and folks behind the Immigration window said no. Fortunately, a third person standing nearby who heard my request stepped forward to stamp my passport. It doesn’t hurt to ask. But if the answer is ultimately no, accept it with grace and walk on.

While I have future overseas planned, I may have seen my last stamp signaling my entry back to the United States.

# calendar of events

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**Cars 2nd Chance, vehicle / car donation programs** turns donations into cash for charities Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary Charitable Fund. [www.cars2ndchance.org/](http://www.cars2ndchance.org/)

**July 10 Pacific Service Credit Union Blood Drive for American Red Cross.** 1:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Community Room 1355 Willow Way, Concord. Make appointment at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) Sponsor code PSCU.

## Clayton

**July 6-10; 13-17 Summer Stage 2026. “The Lion King”.** A two-week theatre camp for kids age 7-14. 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Instructed by Clayton Community Theatre Managing Director, Roxanne Pardi, and Artistic director and Choreographer La Tonya Watts. Final performance on June 17.

## Concerts in the Grove

> **July 11 The Bell Brothers.** Country with line dance instructors 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

> **July 25 The Houserockers** Pop/Dance hits 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

> **August 08 Midnight Flyers** Eagles Tribute 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

> **August 22 Pride & Joy** R&B and Motown Music. 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

## Concord

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

**July 17-19 Port Chicago Remembrance Weekend** Honor the legacy, courage, and enduring impact of the Port Chicago Sailors and all who have served. Commemorative events will take place throughout the weekend of July 17-19. Presented by Port Chicago Alliance. [portchicagoweekend.org](http://portchicagoweekend.org)

**Sept. 17 The 54th annual Contra Costa County Teachers of the Year Dinner & Celebration** Honor 22 outstanding educators from across the county and conclude with two Teachers of the Year announcement. 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.. \$100, \$40 for youths. Hilton Concord. 1970 Diamond Blvd. <https://www.cccoe.k12.ca.us/>

## MUSIC AND MARKET

Todos Santos 6:00-8:00 p.m.

> **July 2 Funk Shui** Band Funk, R&B, and Soul

> **July 9 Super Diamond** The Neil Diamond tribute

> **July 16 Zeparella** All female Zeppelin tribute

> **July 23 Green-182** Green Day and Blink 182 tribute

> **July 30 Court n' Disaster** Popular country music

> **Aug 06 Twist on Taylor** Taylor Swift tribute

## Pleasant Hill

**June 8-July 27 Diablo Women's Chorale Summer Workshop** for youth singers (middle and high school) and mixed voice adult choir (men and women). Open to public, no audition required. Weekly classes meet Monday evenings from June 8 to July 27, 2026, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 3051 Putnam Blvd, Pleasant Hill. Sign up at [diablowomenschorale.org](http://diablowomenschorale.org).

**July 4 - 50th Annual 4th of July Celebration:** The 4th of July Commission puts on a day of events, starting early with the Firecracker 5k, followed by the downtown Parade, the Party in the Park, and ending with a fireworks show at College Park High School. For details and to register for the 5k go to <https://phjuly4.com/>

**August 14 Community Service Day Proposals Due** PH Civic Action Commission is seeking project ideas for community Service

Day on Saturday, September 19 from 5:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Submit project proposals to [phillca.gov/514/Community-service-day](http://phillca.gov/514/Community-service-day)

## Sunset by the Lake

City Hall 100 Gregory Rd.

> **July 5 The Bell Brothers**

> **July 19 Van Goat**

> **August 02 Zydeco Flames**

> **August 16 King Tritone**

> **August 30 The Big Jangle**

## Martinez

**July 1- July 17 Martinez Sturgeon Baseball Camp** Monday's 9:00 - Noon, Kids age 6-17. Joe Dimaggio Field #3 at Waterfront Park, Martinez. Proceeds benefit the Martinez Sturgeon players. \$40. Sign Up at [martinezsturgeon.com](http://martinezsturgeon.com).

**July 11 Virtual Evacuation Drill** 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. This exercise will simulate the evacuation and response to a wildfire emergency. Live mock messages will be sent to all registered Martinez Alerts users. Messages will be clearly marked as drill-related. For more information, visit the evacuation drill webpage at [cityofmartinez.org/july11](http://cityofmartinez.org/july11).

**July 20-27, 27-31 John Muir Mountain Day Camp.** 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Two one-week camps packed with exploring nature trails, painting, baking sourdough bread, journaling as Muir did, and discovering local plants and animals. For children ages 7-12. \$400 [johnmuirassociation.org](http://johnmuirassociation.org)

**August 16 Art in the Park** More than 65 artist vendors present their original artwork for this 55th annual event. Plus live music, food trucks, and wine vendors. Susana Park, Martinez.

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

## At the Martinez Campbell Theater

636 Ward St.

> **July 10-26 “You Can't Take it With You”** presented by B8 Theatre Company. A Pulitzer Prize winning comedy. Thursday-Saturday shows at 7:30 p.m. Sunday performance at 2:30 p.m. \$24-\$28 Discount \$18 on Thursday July 16.

[campbelltheater.com/you-cant-take-it-with-you](http://campbelltheater.com/you-cant-take-it-with-you)

## Walnut Creek

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

> **July 3 - Claudio Medeiros,** preceded by a Cha Cha lesson.

> **July 17 Take Two,** preceded by potluck

## Summer Concerts

> **July 04 Fourth of July Patriotic Concert** 6:00-7:00 p.m. Civic Park

> **August 04 Foreverland** 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Broadway Plaza free

## Leshner Center

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

> **July 09 Tom Rigney and Flambeau** 5:30-7:00 p.m. Free

> **July 16 Mustangs of the West** All-female Americana infused country rock 5:30-7:00 p.m. free

> **July 30 Alpha Rhythm Kings** Swing 5:30-7:00 p.m.

## Other Areas

### Crockett:

> **July 19 Sugartown Festival** 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. Rolph Street transforms into a vibrant celebration with live music from four different bands, artisan vendors, beer garden, food and family entertainment. Admission is Free. [sugartownfestival.com](http://sugartownfestival.com)

**August 15 - 5th Annual Dreamin' of the Islands** by SugarCity Marketplace. Enjoy an afternoon of Island vibes. 20 vendors, island eats, tropical treats and shopping. 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Free admission 991 Loring Ave.

### Pittsburg:

> **July 9 SIR Branch 19 Luncheon** with social hour and then lunch at Pittsburg Elks' Lodge, 200 Marina Blvd. Guest speaker. SIR is a social organization of men who participate in fun activities, such as golf, bowling, hiking, bocce, fishing, dining, wine tasting, day trips, and more. All are welcome. Call 925-338-1996 for more info. or go to [www.sirinc.org/branch19](http://www.sirinc.org/branch19).

## Library Events

**July- August 1 Summer Reading. Plant A Seed, Read!** The Contra Costa County Library's 2026 summer literacy program is all about feeding your body and your mind. Whether you're planting a flower garden, growing your next meal, or fueling your brain, the library is your greatest resource in finding everything you need this summer.

Every reader who completes a passport or the online challenge with Beanstack is eligible for a free book and a chance to win prizes. Visit your local library or [cclib.org](http://cclib.org) for more

information.

## Clubs

### Clayton Clubs

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

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

**Clayton Valley Garden Club (CVGC)** Serves the communities of Clayton and Concord. Meets the second Wednesday of the month February through November at Diamond Terrace. 6401 Center St. Clayton at 6:30 p.m. claytonvalleyGardenClub.org 925-276-2299 July 8 program: Trees

**Concord Clubs**  
Concord NorCal Helping Hands

**Lion's Club.** lionsclub.org  
**Rotary Club of Concord.** www.concordcarotary.org

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

**Nar-Anon Family Group Meetings** - If someone's addiction is affecting you, first you must help yourself. Nar-Anon is a twelve-step support group for families and friends of addicts.

**Concord** -Tuesdays, 7 p.m., John Muir Hospital Concord, Kunkel room, 1st floor near cafeteria.

**Martinez**-Thursdays, 7 p.m., 1st Baptist Church, 1802 Alhambra Ave., Library behind sanctuary

Information Line: 510-500-5251 email: info@naranonnorcal.org

### Martinez Clubs

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



## A Sunny Pairing for Lemon Chicken

Lemon is bright and appealing any time of year, but it seems especially refreshing on a hot July day.

My kids inspired this recipe. They often order lemon chicken at Chinese restaurants, so I set out to create a version I could make for them at home. Pan-frying is easier than deep-frying and leaves a little extra flavor in the pan for the sauce. Even if a bit of the coating slips away, the result is still delicious. I like to serve this main dish with steamed jasmine rice and crisp pea pods on the side.

A dry white Albariño from Spain is a lovely match. Its peach and lemon notes cut through the richness of the chicken while standing up to the dish's lively flavors. If Albariño is hard to find, a dry or off-dry Riesling makes a fine substitute.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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



### DIRECTIONS

Cut the chicken into strips about 1/2 inch wide and transfer them to a mixing bowl.

Add the sesame oil, sherry, ground ginger, salt, and pepper to the chicken. Mix well and marinate at room temperature for about 15 minutes.

In a separate bowl, whisk the egg white and cornstarch together until white and frothy. Add the mixture to the chicken and combine well.

For the sauce, whisk the cornstarch and cold water together and set aside.

In a large nonstick skillet, heat vegetable or avocado oil over medium-high heat. Add the chicken strips one at a time, leaving space between them so they do not stick together. Cook until golden brown on all sides, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate and set aside.

Return the pan to the heat and add the lemon juice, sugar, and salt. Bring to a boil. Stir the cornstarch-water mixture once more, then add it all at once. Stir until the sauce is smooth and syrupy, 1 to 2 minutes. Return the chicken to the pan and toss to coat with the sauce. Add the scallions, cook for 1 minute, then transfer to plates and spoon any remaining sauce over the chicken.

Yield: 4 servings

### Asian Lemon Chicken

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon sherry
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 egg white
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Vegetable oil for cooking
- Garnish: sliced scallions and lemon wedges

#### For the sauce:

- 5 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 2-1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 6 tablespoons cold water

## Finding Purpose: Local Retiree Rediscovered Connection After Leaving the Workforce - staff writer

When Glenn Breslin retired after 42 years in information systems, he imagined his days would feel like a permanent vacation.

"At first, it was great," said the 68-year-old Contra Costa County resident. "I slept in, watched the games, worked around the house. But after a few months, something felt off."

The routine that had shaped his adult life disappeared almost overnight. Morning coffee breaks with coworkers were gone. Casual conversations stopped. Even small things such as having somewhere to be or people to see quietly faded away.

"I didn't realize how much of my social life came from work," Glenn said.

Experts say Glenn's experience is common. While retirement offers freedom, many men struggle with the sudden loss of daily interaction and structure.

"I wasn't unhappy exactly," Glenn explained. "I just felt... disconnected."

### A Suggestion That Changed Everything

The turning point came when a friend suggested he look into a local men's retirement group: SIR 146, Men's Retiree Social Group, a long-standing organization located in Central Contra Costa County since 1988.

Glenn admitted, "Joining a group sounded awkward. I thought everyone would already know each other." Instead, he found the opposite. "Within minutes, I was talking with guys who had similar careers, hobbies, and

experiences," he said.

SIR146 offers members a wide range of activities from golf and hiking to cooking groups, travel outings, and dining events along with monthly gatherings designed to keep members socially connected.

Today, the organization includes more than 240 members participating in over 25 different activities which many also include spouses and partners.

### More Than Just Activities

What surprised Glenn most wasn't the calendar of events, it was new friendships.

Regular social interaction, experts note, plays a significant role in healthy aging, reduced stress, improved mental sharpness, and longer life expectancy. Glenn says the difference in his daily life has been noticeable.

"Retirement feels active now instead of empty."

For many retirees, groups like SIR 146 help replace the sense of community once provided by the workplace.

Glenn wishes he had joined sooner. "I thought retirement was about slowing down," he said. "Turns out, it's about staying connected."

Residents interested in learning more about SIR 146 can visit: sir146.com or email sir146inquiries@gmail.com for information about upcoming meetings and activities.

## SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIES

by the 20th of the month before Issue month. diablogazette@gmail.com

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**For the Love of Pets**  
by Jill Hedgecock, [Jillhedgecock.com](http://Jillhedgecock.com)

# My Dog Hates the Car!

For some dogs, traveling by car is not a pleasant experience. Unfortunately, some canines experience motion sickness or anxiety during vehicle rides. Symptoms of travel anxiety can be subtle, such as yawning, unusual stillness, or whining. These can escalate to barking and pacing. Lip-licking and panting are signs the dog may be on the verge of vomiting.

While individual dogs of any genetic makeup may enjoy car outings, some breeds can be more inclined to find vehicle rides stressful. These include boxers, border collies, bulldogs, dachshunds, and beagles. Motion sickness is common in puppies of all types but they often overcome it with training or maturity.

If a dog balks at getting in a car, it could be experiencing anxiety or anticipating motion sickness. Fortunately, approaches such as distraction, exercise, food management, managing the car environment, as well as use of dog crates or safety harnesses, and medications can help desensitize a travel-stressed dog.

For some dogs, providing a new enticing toy or reserving a favorite one specifically for car rides can distract pups from fear or queasiness. A long walk or extended bout of fetch may be enough to tire out high energy dogs that tend to become overstimulated in vehicles. For dogs susceptible to car sickness, avoid feeding them a meal six to eight hours prior to the trip to discourage vomiting.

Keep the car temperature around 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Stress increases a dog's cortisol levels, which raises its internal temperature and

promotes panting, further promoting anxious feelings. Avoid recirculating the air for long periods to avoid carbon dioxide buildup from a dog's heavy breathing. Some pets benefit from open windows, creating a fresh cross breeze.

For pets that are sensitive to the operating noises of your vehicle, turning on music may be enough to mask these car noises.

Some dogs feel more secure in a crate where their view of moving objects is removed when traveling, while others benefit from facing forward or being placed in a harness or sling to stabilize them.

Making frequent short trips may help desensitize them over time. But if not, over-the-counter antinausea, pheromone sprays, and motion sickness medicines might prove beneficial. In extreme cases, a veterinarian may prescribe a sedative.

While canines that are anxious or susceptible to motion sickness can create challenges, managing their environment and symptoms can make traveling more enjoyable for you and your pet.

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



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## Declaration of Independence Trivia

by Edi Birsan

Here are some trivia questions for you about the July 4th document on display at the National Archives:

1. Whose handwriting is it?
2. Who was the author of it?
3. Where is the original signed on July 4th?
4. Were the signers really going to be hung upon capture by the British?
5. How many times does the word democracy appear in it?
6. Did we misspell British, and complete and Pennsylvania?
7. Which of these did NOT sign it: George Washinton, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, James Monroe, and Ben Fanklin.
8. Do they have the 4th of July in England?

ANSWERS BELOW

### Declaration of Independence Trivia Answers

1. Timothy Matlock (no relation to the TV lawyer) as the Secretary Clerk of the Congress
2. Since it was modified by Congress, Congress is the actual author not Thomas Jefferson alone who was also the lead writer of a Committee.
3. I have no idea, but if you find it I will trade you a bridge in Brooklyn for it.
4. Richard Stockton was captured by the British, he was not hanged but also gutlessly renounced the whole thing.
5. Democracy never appears in it.
6. In today's English we do not spell British, complete and Pennsylvania.
7. Only Ben Franklin of those listed signed it.
8. Yes, it comes between the 3rd and the 5th of July.

Solutions page 23

**WORD SEARCH - 4<sup>th</sup> of July**

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

AMERICA	FIREWORKS	INDEPENDENCE	SPARKLERS
BARBECUE	FLAG	JULY	STARS
CELEBRATION	HAMBURGERS	PARADE	STRIPES
COUNTRY	HOT DOGS	PATRIOTIC	SUMMER
DEMOCRACY	ICE CREAM	PICNIC	VACATION

★★★★ **SUDOKU** ★★★★★

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

**WORD SCRAMBLE**  
Unscramble these 4<sup>th</sup> of July words:

CAMEIRA \_\_\_\_\_  
KFSWROIRE \_\_\_\_\_  
RDAEPA \_\_\_\_\_  
TSEATS \_\_\_\_\_  
YERLITB \_\_\_\_\_

**CRYPTOGRAM**

Each letter in the quote below is consistently substituted for another letter. (If A=H, then A=H every time).

**CNGEVBGV FZ VF**

**FHCCBEGVAT LBHE PBHAGEL**

**NYY GUR GVZR, OHG LBHE**

**TBIREAZRAG BAYL JURA**

**VG QRFREIRF VG.**

**— ZNEX GJNVA**

**DO YOU KNOW?**

How many signatures are on the Declaration of Independence?

**19, 30, 56, 76**

Puzzles column by Marc Rokoff  
[RokoPuzzles.com](http://RokoPuzzles.com)



# July 4th and the Declaration of Treason

by Edi Birsan, Concordian edibirsan@gmail.com



Treason? That is correct. My favorite document, the “Declaration of Independence” was simply a statement about why we were committing treason against our lawful sovereign government.

I ritualistically read the Declaration of Independence every July 4th. I have written parodies and given talks echoing its familiar phrases and applying it to all sorts of irreverent situations, such as a screed against the War in Vietnam or why the Boston Red Sox’ stink.

The Declaration of Independence is not the law. The Constitution is the law. The Declaration of Independence was simply a series of statements and grievances against King George III and cutting ties with Great Britain. The wording is beautiful and emotionally provocative, especially at the beginning:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of happiness.”

In lieu of the word God the Declaration empowers man’s Creator and the concept of ‘Creator’ was rather far removed from Protestant Evangelical and Fundamentalist dogma of current day.

The word: “unalienable” which around 1830 was changed to “inalienable” (but definition is the same) has nothing to do with Roswell aliens, but that they are inherent non-transferable rights; however, the focus was on the issue that King George III or government cannot take them away. However, like other things in actual law at the time, they ignored the application to slavery.

This leads to the more mundane listing of offenses. In a notable example of personalization, it details and focuses not on the actions of the country of Great Britain but on what King George III did.

“The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.”

Who were we who wrote this? If you look at the title and elsewhere in the document, you could easily consider it the Declaration of the States of America as “united” was not capitalized or even written in the same font and size of the rest of the title.

### Other things not commonly remembered:

It was proposed on July 2 and subsequently modified by the

Continental Congress most famously deleting the clause relating to the creation of the slave trade and the importation of slavery in order to secure Southern support and maintain colonial unity.

A draft was signed by some delegates on July 4th {it was passed unanimously}; however, not everyone signed it. The version that we all see today was not the one that was presented on July 4th, 1776. What we have in the National Archives on display is what is called the engrossed copy. That is a special handwritten copy of the actual original on better and larger paper, with better ink and handwriting.

In fact, there was another signing ceremony months later wherein John Hancock put his giant signature on the engrossed document as acting president. Several of the original delegates that were around on July 4th came around to sign. Seven who voted on July 4th never got around to signing it and there were people who were not at the July 4th vote that did sign it. Then again it was good enough for government work.

How well do you know the Declaration of Independence? Test your knowledge against my Trivia questions on page 10.

*The views above are those of EdiBirsan@gmail.com and represent what we do when in the course of human deadlines, we are compelled to stay up late and present the cause of which we are separated from our sleep.*



## 2026 Schedule of Events

Events at Todos Santos Plaza

8:00 am : Stars & Stripes Kids Fun Run

8:00 am : Rotary Pancake Breakfast

8:15 am : Stars & Stripes 5k Run & Walk

10:00 am : Independence Day Parade

Events at Mt. Diablo High School

4:00 PM : Festival Gates Open

5:30 PM : Brooks Lundy

7:30 PM : 3day Weekend

9:00 PM : Fireworks over Concord



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## Focus

### It Isn't Willpower — It's Coordination

For most of my life, I believed focus was a matter of discipline: sit down, grit your teeth, and force your attention to stay put. When that didn't work, I assumed the problem was me, my ADHD, which I viewed as a character flaw.

It took years of studying the nervous system to realize I had it backward. Focus isn't an act of willpower. It's an act of neural coordination.

Consider everything that has to cooperate for you to concentrate on one task. Your eyes have to settle and hold. The part of your brain that filters out distractions has to do its job. The part that keeps a goal in mind has to keep holding it, while another part quietly keeps you calm enough to stay in your chair. Focus is all of those systems pointing at the same target at the same instant, a kind of internal teamwork. In fact, the very coordination that lets you touch your nose with your eyes closed is the same machinery, at a larger scale, that lets you pay attention.

Which is why focus can break down in more than one direction. I've come to think of these as the five P's:

**Procrastination** is the coordination failing to get you started.

**Pin-ball brain** is when it can't keep you going, and your attention ricochets from one thing to the next.

**Perseveration** is the opposite trap — when you can't stop, circling the same

thought or task long after it has stopped being useful.

**Performance** anxiety is coordination collapsing under pressure, the body seizing up at the precise moment you need it most. And,

**Pain**, whether it lives in the body or the heart, commandeers so much of the system that there is little left to think with.

None of these are an indicator that anything is wrong with you, and none are simply the toll of getting older. They are signs that your internal coordination needs tuning, and coordination, is thankfully a lot more trainable than character. We improve it the way we'd improve any skill, through small and specific practices that teach these systems to work together again. It is rarely about trying harder; far more often it is about helping the team get back in sync.

Here's a really simple drill to try to get your brain team playing together: Tap your right knee with your left hand, and then your left knee with your right hand. Repeat this 30 times. You can do it standing, sitting, or turn it into an ab exercise lying down. This cross-body contact connects the left and right hemisphere of the brain and gets interbrain communication up and running again.

Give it a whirl and see if you feel a bit more pulled together afterwards.



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# Summer Staging

## To Sell, to Live, to Love Your Home

It's that time of year when we devote more of our time to outdoor activities and spaces. Home staging, whether to sell a home or simply to attract you and your guests outside, requires some sprucing up of the dusty cushions, patio furniture and flora.

Embracing flower power. Be sure to water and feed your plants. Healthy looking plants create an invitation to come outside and enjoy the space.

Hose off or clean the old patio furniture. Scrub cushions with a vinegar and dawn mixture to bring back their color. Or purchase pillow covers to refresh or change the color scheme to your 2026 theme. (My favorite this year is sunflower yellow).

Always stage the outside and the porch. Sitting on the porch or patio in our moderate weather are the reasons people love living in California. It is a selling point, so embellish those areas.

### Tips for staging.

If you are selling your home, empty closets of winter things and leave them half full. This will create the illusion that there is lots of storage. Make a "model home" bed and take a picture so you can remake it every morning. Add only subtle scents, to leave a clean and fresh smell. Why risk repulsing those who might be allergic or dislike the smell of strong scents?

A buyer's "wish" list often includes "light and open and airy spaces." Give them some of those light and bright spaces. Change to high watt light bulbs and keep lights on in darker rooms even in the daytime so that dark spaces fade away.


Turn on the air conditioning. This might be the buyer's first time in your home. When it's a sweltering 90-100 degrees outside, they will remember the "ahhhh" moment when they walk through the door into a cool relief from outside temperatures. This is incredibly important. They will stay longer and look with more intent. Sometimes, this alone can make or break a sale if they consider your home as cool and comfortable

Your home should feel light, open, uncluttered, and comfortable. Consider fresh paint, remove wallpaper, accent walls and remove clutter. A buyer should not leave thinking about the extra work they will need to do to move in.

Why do move-in ready homes sell more quickly? Because they are move-in ready! Attend to small details. Clean, clean, declutter, and clean. Or hire a cleaner if it's not your strong suit. It matters.


## MONTHLY MARKET REPORT MAY / 2026

CLAYTON	CONCORD
<p><b>Existing SFR Median Price</b> <b>\$1.19M</b></p> <p>% Change from Last Year <b>-1.0%</b></p> <p><b>MARKET COMPETITION</b> Median Days on Market <b>10</b> Sales-to-List Price % <b>100.9%</b> % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices <b>22.2%</b></p>	<p><b>Existing SFR Median Price</b> <b>\$878k</b></p> <p>% Change from Last Year <b>+6.4%</b></p> <p><b>MARKET COMPETITION</b> Median Days on Market <b>13</b> Sales-to-List Price % <b>100.0%</b> % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices <b>24.3%</b></p>
MARTINEZ	WALNUT CREEK
<p><b>Existing SFR Median Price</b> <b>\$799K</b></p> <p>% Change from Last Year <b>-9.7%</b></p> <p><b>MARKET COMPETITION</b> Median Days on Market <b>14</b> Sales-to-List Price % <b>100.0%</b> % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices <b>42.9%</b></p>	<p><b>Existing SFR Median Price</b> <b>\$1.65M</b></p> <p>% Change from Last Year <b>+0.0%</b></p> <p><b>MARKET COMPETITION</b> Median Days on Market <b>11</b> Sales-to-List Price % <b>100.8%</b> % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices <b>20.0%</b></p> <p><small>SOURCE: Car.org</small></p>




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## A Red, White, and Blue

# Dinner for a Healthier Holiday Fare



Are you planning an All-American festive meal to celebrate America's 250th anniversary? Perhaps this is the year you can get a bit more colorful than traditional grilled cheeseburgers and freedom fries perhaps?

Think about a healthier Independence Day meal and look no further than your own garden for a historic Red, White, and Blue dinner to go with your choice of meat, chicken, or fish.

The real All-Stars to every diet are those freshly harvested, locally grown vegetables and fruit. Let's examine your Reds, Whites, and Blues options of nutritious health-promoting holiday fare.

Red fruits and vegetables receive their vibrant colors from powerful antioxidants such as lycopene and anthocyanins.

Tomatoes lead this large category of

healthy foods, and they're ripening on the vine right now.

Red chili peppers also make the list as well as red bell peppers, red potatoes, radish, and beets.

For a red dessert, strawberries are the popular favorites. But also ripening right now are raspberries, cherries, red plums, watermelon, and red grapes. These are all delicious food choices for heart health and they reduce inflammation which lowers long term disease risk.

White foods are generally excellent sources of dietary fiber, potassium, and healthy nutrients like allicin and flavonoids. This includes white potatoes (cooked or fried with olive or avocado oil), cauliflower, garlic, ginger, white onions or shallots, mushrooms, and jicama.

For different and memorable desserts, look for recipes containing pears, white peaches or nectarines. Bananas are a classic favorite.

The blue (and indigo) produce is great for making desserts and salads. These delicious fruits and vegetables derive their blue and purple coloration from anthocyanins, powerful antioxidants that reduce inflammation and promote brain health. Blue cabbage, eggplant, blue bell peppers, and purple potatoes become healthy dinner table additions. Blueberries, blackberries, black currants, elderberries, prunes,

purple plums, figs, grapes, and raisins are all tasty and healthy desserts or salad ingredients.

In addition to red, white and blue, yellow and orange veggies and fruits are packed with carotenoids, vitamin C, potassium, and folate. These support your eye health and boost your immune system which fights diseases and infections all year long. Sources include carrots, corn, citrus, kiwis, yellow figs, and yellow pears.

So, enjoy a great Fourth of July meal and stay naturally healthy for many more Independence Day celebrations to come.

**Seasonal Notes:** Protect your ripening fruit from the harsh July sunshine and hot days with shade cloth mounted on poles above your bushes or trees. Heat scorch is the second largest threat to maturing fruit after vertebrate pests.

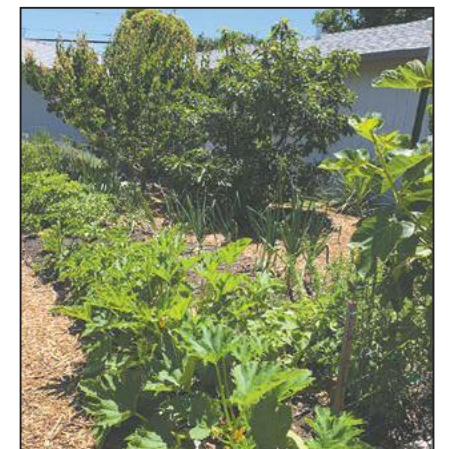
Provide a clean water source for thirsty birds and bees (but be sure to apply mosquito bits or dunks to the water).

Mulch your planting beds to protect roots from hot spells and retain soil moisture.

Deadhead roses and other ornamentals to increase fall blooming.

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

## The Front yard Gardener



David Loza and his beautiful front yard vegetable garden on the corner of Rhine Court & Mitchell Canyon Road in Clayton.

## Red, White, and Bloom: The Ins and Outs of Potted Gardens

by Angela Dawne, Landscape Designer

Potted plants are an excellent way to elevate your outdoor spaces this July. Adding containers to your patio, deck, or entryway provides an instant burst of seasonal color. These vibrant arrangements can provide visual anchors, softening the sharp lines of hardscaping while also allowing you to garden in tight spaces and easily rearrange your layout.

However, container gardening comes with unique challenges. Unlike plants in traditional garden beds, potted plants lack the deep soil needed to find natural nutrients and stay insulated from summer heat. This means they require extra attention to thrive.

The primary drawback of a potted garden is how rapidly the soil dries out. In the peak of July, containers may require watering once or even twice daily. Because frequent watering flushes nutrients out of the pot, you must also fertilize more regularly. Furthermore, plants in confined spaces are generally shorter-lived as



they can quickly become rootbound.

Despite these challenges, containers are the perfect canvas for festive displays. You can celebrate America's 250th Anniversary with a patriotic mix of red Geraniums, white Cosmos, and trailing blue Lobelia. This combination brings a cheerful energy to holiday gatherings and highlights how rewarding container care can be.

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### Jill Hedgecock's **bookends**

Author "Between Shadow's Eyes" and "Rhino in the Room"

Two liars! Or maybe not liars? "The Strange Case of Jane O." by Karen Thomas Walker (Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2026, \$14.78, 304 pages), is told from the perspective of two narrators, and it is hard to know who to believe. Jane O., a young mother with an extraordinary ability to remember the details of virtually every life experience, has her own version of what happens, while her psychotherapist, Dr. Byrd, a single father struggling to balance work and home life has another. Their two lives intersect when Jane O. has a memory loss episode of twenty-five hours and seeks treatment from Dr. Byrd to understand what triggered the event.

Jane is a devoted mother whose photographic memory was considered odd by her schoolmates during her formative social development. To fit in, she pretended not to remember the smorgasbord of information that clutters her mind, a survival mechanism that she carried into her adult years. But her unique skill has trained her to be deceptive. Is she really encountering a man on the street who died twenty years ago or is this a hallucination?

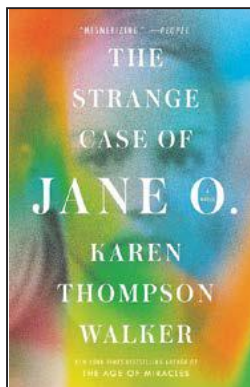
On Dr. Byrd's recommendation during a therapy session, Jane starts a diary that recounts much of her early life. She addresses her entries to her young son as if she is writing the journal for him to read in the future. Through these snapshots, Jane reveals information she withholds from Dr. Byrd, including various encounters with deceased people. But when Jane has another lengthy memory lapse and disappears with her son, it is not clear if she has intentionally

disappeared, or if she had suffered a mental breakdown that could endanger her child.

Told as he recounts the past, Dr. Byrd reports on his time treating Jane in journal format. It soon becomes clear that he has his own secrets. His professional reputation was tarnished early on in his career which seems to affect what he is willing to put in writing. He repeatedly withholds key information, essentially lying by omission. Aspects of his personal life that might be coloring his clinical opinions of Jane O's condition are only revealed later on in the journal. Sprinkled throughout the book are fascinating examples of how the human brain functions.

Part psychological thriller, part mystery with a sprinkle of romance, this novel has it all. "The Strange Case of Jane O." was a Belletrist Book Club Pick. Fans of "The Silent Patient," and "The Sixth Sense" movie should add this to their To-Be-Read pile.

Karen Thomas Walker is the author of the New York Times bestseller "The Age of Miracles". Her second novel, "The Dreamers," was named one of the best books of the year by "Good Housekeeping." She is an associate professor of creative writing at the University of Oregon. Walker lives with her husband and two daughters in Portland, Oregon.



## LEGAL NOTICE

### EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT NOTICE OF ELECTION

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of California Public Resources Code §5529 and California Elections Code §12112, that a general district election to be consolidated with the Statewide General Election will be held in the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, to choose a successor for four (4) offices of the Board of Directors to be elected in Wards 3, 5, 6, and 7 of the Park District each for a full term of four (4) years.

Generally, the wards include the following areas:

- Ward 3, which comprises the election precincts of Castro Valley, Fairview, a portion of Fremont, a portion of Hayward, a portion of San Lorenzo, and Union City. This ward is within Alameda County.
- Ward 5, which comprises the election precincts of Dublin, a portion of Fremont, Livermore, Newark, Pleasanton, and Sunol. This ward is within Alameda County.
- Ward 6, which comprises the election precincts of Alamo, a portion of Alhambra Valley, Blackhawk, Byron, Camino Tassajara, Castle Hill, Clayton, Concord, Contra Costa Centre, Danville, Discovery Bay, Norris Canyon, North Gate, Pleasant Hill, San Miguel, San Ramon, Shell Ridge, and a portion of Walnut Creek. This ward is within Contra Costa County.
- Ward 7, which comprises the election precincts of a portion of Alhambra Valley, Antioch, Bay Point, Bethel Island, Brentwood, Clyde, Crockett, Hercules, Knightsen, Martinez, Mountain View, Oakley, Pacheco, Pittsburg, Port Costa, Rodeo, and Vine Hill. This ward is within Contra Costa County.

The qualifications required for each office for which the candidates are nominated are: Each director shall be a resident and a registered voter in the ward from which he or she is nominated. (PRC § 5522) A nomination paper containing the name of the candidate to be nominated shall be signed by at least 50 voters residing within the ward. (PRC § 5531)

Official nominating petitions for eligible candidates desiring to file for any of the elective offices shall be obtained from the Alameda County Registrar of Voters (1225 Fallon Street, Room G-1, Oakland, California 94612), or the Elections Officer of Contra Costa County (555 Escobar Street, Martinez, California 94553), on or after Monday, July 13, 2026, and must be filed not later than 5:00 pm, Friday, August 7, 2026.

If nomination papers are not filed by the incumbent by the Friday, August 7, 2026 deadline, any qualified person, other than the incumbent, will have until 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 12, 2026, to file nomination papers.

If no one or only one person is nominated for an elective office, appointment to the elective office may be made as prescribed by law.

Ballot drop-off locations open October 5, 2026. Polls will be open between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, November 3, 2026.

The Board of Supervisors of Alameda and Contra Costa counties are hereby authorized and requested to canvass the returns of the District and certify the results to the District.

Date: July 3, 2026 s/ Kelly B. Clancy, Clerk of the Board



## Disclosure Day

As the 2026 summer movies descend upon us, it is exciting to have a newly directed Steven Spielberg film that is about aliens.

"Disclosure Day" is a big movie. Emily Blunt, Colman Domingo, and a menacing Colin Firth lead the cast with a musical score by legendary composer John Williams.

The plot centers around Daniel Kellner (Josh O'Connor), a mathematical engineer for an ultra-secret agency named WARDEX. Daniel has stolen materials that he and his boss, Hugo Wakefield (Colman Domingo), feel the public should know about. While he is on the run, we meet Margaret Fairchild (Emily Blunt), a Kansas City on-air meteorologist who exhibits some strange behavior during a news telecast. These two characters feel a connection they cannot explain but know they must get to each other.

Complicating matters is Noah Scanlon (Colin Firth), the head of WARDEX, who uses any and all tools at his disposal to stop the release of the stolen materials.

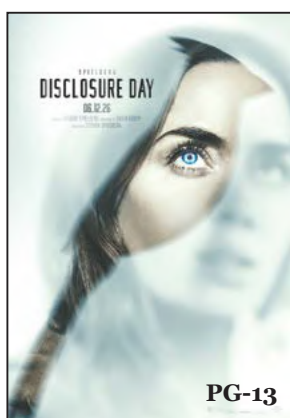
This film is best compared to Spielberg's "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." Characters are confused, yet compelled to follow their unexplained feelings, and the viewer goes along for the ride while also getting no answers to what is going on. While

there are many car chases and intense scenes, you will need to wait until the end to understand anything. Since the plot is more of a cerebral puzzle that needs to be put together, some viewers may find it too slow-moving.

One of the many things Spielberg has always done well is extracting powerful performances from young actors. Although this film is stacked with A-list actors, it's the up-and-comers who really shine.

Eve Hewson as Jane, Daniel's girlfriend, is not only a standout but has no trouble holding her own with the more veteran actors. Also, look for Courtney Grace, whose role as a newscaster toward the end of the film is so powerful, she will bring you to tears.

While this is not a fun-for-the-whole-family summer film, it is a thought-provoking look at aliens, religion, the universe, and our place in the world. This may not rank high on the list of Spielberg's masterpieces, but it is still worthy of a hot afternoon in an air-conditioned movie theater.



PG-13

## DVC's Professor is Major League Cricket Caller by David Scholz

Joe Hickey, a professor of Chemistry at Diablo Valley College (DVC) in Pleasant Hill, has been calling cricket matches since 2021. Chemistry and cricket have more in common than one might think. "Every question leads to a few more questions," he says.

Last June, and again this summer, Major League Cricket is at the Oakland Coliseum, for both regular season as well as the playoffs and finals, and Hickey is behind the public address mic boosting excitement for all the runs and wickets for cricket-crazed fans.

He honed his chops calling sports for the DVC soccer team in 2014 after he gained tenure. Baseball and softball followed as did water polo and track and field action.

Hickey got the cricket bug seeing an



ESPN+ match between New Zealand and Ireland. It didn't take long for the game to grab his attention. He learned the ins and outs of the game during the winter break.

It is played on a 365-degree field with nine players defending it. Watching where the players were positioned and how the batter makes adjustments, "it was a real cat and mouse game."

Calling minor league cricket came his way in 2021. By 2024, he was invited to call action in the World Cup being held in New York City including a match with the titans of the sport, India and Pakistan.

Among his trademark calls has become "timberrrrr" when the bowler knocks over the stumps against an opposing batter. "(In cricket) when it gets exciting, it gets insanely exciting," Hickey said.



**Laura Nakamura**  
Concord Mayor  
cityofconcord.org

## Drones as First Responders

### Helping Officers Respond Faster and Safer

When residents call 911, they expect help to arrive quickly and safely, with accurate information that first responders need to make good decisions. As part of the City's commitment to public safety, Concord has invested in tools that help officers respond more effectively, including the Concord Police Department's Drones as First Responder (DFR) Program.

Since 2021, CPD has used drone technology to support emergency response, assist officers in the field, and provide real-time information during critical incidents. The DFR Program builds on that experience by allowing qualified drone pilots to deploy drones quickly in response to certain 911 calls, often arriving before officers on the ground.

These are not the same drones many people use at home. The DFRs are public safety aircraft operated by trained personnel and used only for specific law enforcement and emergency response purposes.

The drones launch from strategically located sites throughout the city and are operated by trained pilots in the department's Real Time Intelligence Center (RTIC). The RTIC is a centralized hub where professional staff use technology and real-time information to support officers and detectives responding to calls for service.

As a drone travels to an incident, its



camera is generally directed toward the horizon rather than focused on the ground. Once it arrives, the live aerial video provides responding officers with valuable information about the situation before they reach the scene. This additional perspective helps officers better understand what is happening, make informed decisions, and coordinate the safest and most effective response.

The DFR Program supports a variety of emergency situations, including disaster and fire response, search and rescue operations, fleeing or barricaded suspects, and other critical incidents. For example, a drone may help locate a missing child, provide information about hazards at an active scene, or safely monitor a suspect's movements while officers respond. In many situations, this real-time information can improve response times, reduce risks to the public and first responders, and help officers use resources more effectively.

As with any new public safety technology, transparency and accountability are essential. Concord Police Department drone operations are conducted in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, state law, and department policies. The drones are deployed only for specific public safety purposes and are not used for general surveillance. Residents can review drone flight activity and deployment information through CPD's public Transparency Portal.

Public safety remains one of the highest priorities for my colleagues and me on the City Council. Investments in tools like the Drones as First Responder Program help Concord Police officers gather critical information more quickly, improve situational awareness, and respond more safely to emergencies. At the same time, new technology should always be paired with clear safeguards, public transparency, and accountability. We are committed to balancing innovation with accountability as we continue working to keep our community safe.

To learn more about the Drones as First Responder Program, visit the Concord Police Department website at <https://www.cityofconcord.org/1367/Real-Time-Intelligence-Center>.

## Concord Police Association Annual Golf Tournament

The Concord Police Association has announced August 28, 2026, as the date for their annual Golf Classic to be played at Diablo Greek Golf course in Concord.

This year's event is again held in honor of Matthew Bowen, a former Concord Police Officer who tragically lost his life in the line of duty while serving with the Vacaville Police Department. The proceeds from this Golf Tournament will go directly to the Bowen family to provide support during this time.

For over 45 years, the Concord Police Association has been dedicated to enriching the lives of youth and families in our community through charitable initiatives. From providing meals for families in need during Thanksgiving and Christmas to supporting various programs that uplift our community with meaningful impact.

Enjoy a day of golf and contribute to a worthy cause. The event will feature food and beverages, raffle prizes and much more and we anticipate a strong turnout of players and supporters.

Information as well as the ability to sponsor and/or register as a golfer is posted on their website on the "In The Community" page at [www.concordpoa.org](http://www.concordpoa.org). Any additional questions can be submitted to [administration@concordpoa.org](mailto:administration@concordpoa.org).

## Community Lecture Explores How Trauma Shapes Families and Communities Across Generations

Community members are invited to attend a free public lecture, "Trauma Lives in the Body: How Communities Carry Pain," on Wednesday, July 8, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. at the Cal State East Bay Concord Center, 4700 Ygnacio Valley Road in Concord.

Presented by criminologist and forensic psychology expert Dr. Talia Moore, the program will examine trauma not only as an individual experience but as a collective one that can affect families, neighborhoods, and communities across generations.

Drawing on trauma science, historical context, and lived experience, Dr. Moore will explore how chronic stress, systemic inequities, and historical harms influence the ways communities adapt, survive, and protect themselves over time. Participants will learn how trauma can become embodied and how stress responses may be passed through families and social networks. The session will also include guided reflection and discussion focused on pathways toward healing, connection, and community restoration.

Dr. Moore serves as Associate Professor and Graduate Forensic Psychology Program Director at Saint Mary's College of California and teaches within the Department of Criminal Justice and Addictions Studies Certificate Program at California State University, East Bay. Before entering higher education, she spent more than a decade working in law

enforcement and community corrections as a Deputy Probation Officer, supervising juveniles, adults, felony drug offenders, and individuals living with serious mental illness.

In addition to her academic work, Dr. Moore hosts the podcast "Want Moore with Dr. Moore: The Criminologist of the Bay", which explores the successes, challenges, and complexities of the justice system and related systems through education, advocacy, and community dialogue.

The lecture is part of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Cal State East Bay, a vibrant learning community designed for adults 50 and better. OLLI offers non-credit courses, lectures, and special events that encourage lifelong learning, intellectual curiosity, and social connection. Programs bring together local residents, educators, and subject-matter experts to explore topics ranging from history and science to current social issues, current events, and the arts.

Admission to the July 8 lecture is free, and advance registration is required. For more information or to register, contact the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the Cal State East Bay Concord Center, 4700 Ygnacio Valley Road, Concord, CA 94521, by phone at (925) 602-6776 or email at [OLLI@csueastbay.edu](mailto:OLLI@csueastbay.edu), or visit the OLLI website at: [www.campusce.net/csueastbay](http://www.campusce.net/csueastbay).



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# The Arts Pages

## The Creative Journey of John Tullis

by Julia O'Reilly

For Martinez artist, illustrator, and author John Tullis, creativity has been a constant companion, one that has evolved from family inspiration to graphic design, from printing presses to fine art, and now to the pages of compelling noir fiction.

Tullis' artistic story begins long before he was born. His great-grandfather, Hjalmer Ofverborg, was born in Sweden in 1859 and immigrated to the United States around 1900. Settling in Chicago, Ofverborg true gift was painting portraits and landscapes. More than a century later, his artwork continues to inspire future generations.

Three of Ofverborg's original paintings remain in the Tullis family today.

"I remember gazing at them and wishing I could be an artist," Tullis recalls.

With encouragement from his parents, that childhood dream steadily became reality. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Graphic Design from California State University, Long Beach, in 1972 and began working for a design studio in Los Angeles before relocating to the Bay Area in 1973.

In 1974, Tullis embarked on what would become a successful 40-year career in the printing industry. Although his profession centered on graphic design and visual communication, his passion for painting never disappeared.

Today, visitors to the Main Street Arts Gallery in downtown Martinez can enjoy Tullis' paintings and illustrations. Yet painting is only part of his creative journey.

A lifelong admirer of classic detective stories and film noir, Tullis turned his imagination toward writing. In 2022,



he published *Ebony Bangs: A Richard Dake Noir*, introducing readers to a gritty world of crime, mystery, and moral conflict.

Now comes the highly anticipated sequel, *Ebony Skies*, scheduled for release in 2026.

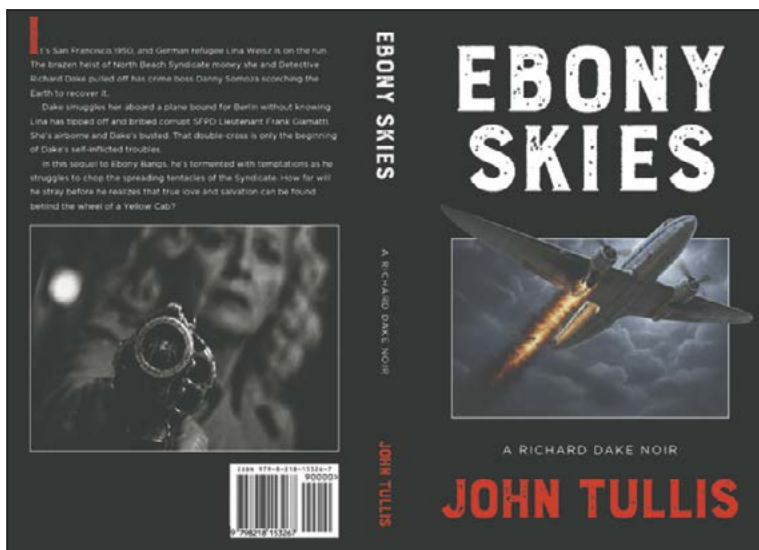
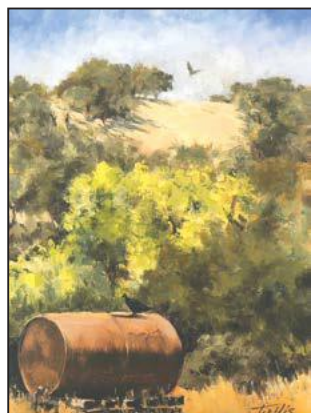
Set against the foggy streets of 1950s San Francisco, *Ebony Skies* plunges readers into a world where trust is fleeting and danger waits around every corner. Detective Richard Dake finds himself caught between organized crime, corruption, betrayal, and impossible choices after a daring robbery of the North Beach Syndicate goes terribly wrong.

Rich with suspense, vivid historical detail, and the unmistakable atmosphere of classic noir, *Ebony Skies* promises to keep readers turning pages. Tullis plans to complete the Richard Dake trilogy with *Ebony Bones*, expected to be released in 2027.

Whether standing before an easel or sitting behind a keyboard, John

Tullis' remarkable journey reminds us that it's never too late to embrace new chapters, pursue lifelong dreams, and inspire others through the power of art and storytelling.

Visitors can meet John Tullis and experience his artwork at the Main Street Arts Gallery, 613 Main Street where his paintings continue to reflect the same imagination and passion that have defined his lifelong creative journey.



## DRAA - Transforming Lives Through the Arts

by Brandy L., Correspondent



For more than three decades, Peggy White, Executive Director of the Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA), has witnessed firsthand the power of the arts to change lives.

"I have seen the arts transform lives," White said. "Arts can always bring people together."

As the nonprofit partner of the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek, the Diablo Regional Arts Association has spent years fulfilling its mission of "investing in outstanding arts experiences and creating meaningful avenues for everyone to enjoy the arts."

While many residents know the Leshner Center as a destination for outstanding theater productions, concerts, dance performances, and visual arts exhibitions, many may not realize that DRAA works behind the scenes to ensure these experiences remain accessible to the entire community.

"The goal is to keep the organization fresh, innovative, and focused on access to excellence," White explained.

Access is at the heart of everything DRAA does.

One of the organization's most impactful initiatives is Arts Access, which provides students from Title I schools the opportunity to experience live performing arts at the Leshner Center. Through this program, teachers complete a simple application and DRAA covers transportation and admission costs, removing financial barriers that might otherwise prevent students from attending.



For many students, attending a professional theater production or arts performance is a life-changing experience and, in some cases, their very first exposure to the arts.

"We meet the kids where they are," White said, explaining that DRAA is committed to ensuring all children have access to the arts, whether that means bringing students to performances at the Leshner Center or bringing arts programming directly into schools and community settings.

One initiative launching this year is the Deluxe Puppets program at Los Juntas Elementary School in Martinez. Designed for students in the school's special needs after-school program, Deluxe Puppets uses interactive puppetry, storytelling, music, and creative play to encourage self-expression, communication, and social connection. The program

reflects DRAA's belief that every child, regardless of ability or circumstance, deserves the opportunity to experience the transformative power of the arts.

DRAA also celebrates the rich cultural diversity of Contra Costa County through events such as Del Sol Celebration and Fiesta Cultural, bringing together families and community members from all backgrounds to celebrate culture, creativity, and shared experiences.

"When I see people come to events and they feel like they belong, that's incredibly meaningful," White shared.

Looking ahead, White says there is still much work to be done.

"We have so much more work to do," she said. "One of our major goals is expanding arts opportunities for even more students and incorporating seniors into our programs."



The organization is exploring ways to bring arts experiences directly to seniors by creating opportunities for older adults to attend performances and participate in meaningful arts programming where they live.

The impact of the arts extends far beyond entertainment. Participation in the arts has been shown to foster creativity, strengthen communities, support academic achievement, and enhance social and emotional well-being. The arts create connections between people, encourage understanding across cultures, and provide spaces where everyone feels welcome.

None of this work, however, happens without community support. All funding for Diablo Regional Arts Association programs comes from the community. White emphasizes that the organization's ability to provide arts experiences for students, families, and seniors depends on the generosity and engagement of community members.

Community members can support DRAA by attending performances at the Leshner Center, volunteering, becoming a business sponsor, or donating auction items, products, services, or experiences for DRAA's annual Gala on Broadway fundraiser on October 3, 2026. The nearly sold-out event is one of the organization's premier fundraisers, helping expand arts access throughout the community. To learn more, visit draa.org

As White reflected on her 30 years leading the organization, one message stood above all others: the arts belong to everyone.

And when communities invest in the arts, everyone benefits.



## Las Juntas~East Bay Artists Guild Exhibit



"Shades of Blue" - Phyllis Coullard

Works from members of the Las Juntas ~East Bay Artists Guild (LJ~EBAG) will be on exhibit for July and August at the aRt Cottage.

This non-profit art organization is near and dear to my heart because it's the first one I joined many years ago. It encouraged me to continue to make art and to purchase what has become the aRt Cottage!

Based in Pleasant Hill, Las Juntas ~ East Bay Artists Guild is dedicated to artists' success and committed to integrating the benefits of art into communities throughout Contra Costa County. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and community events, LJ~EBAG aims to enrich the region's cultural life and connect people through the power of art by highlighting emerging artists, local talent, and collectible art.

An artists' reception is planned for July 11, from 2:00 -4:00 p.m. There will be music and refreshments. This is a free public event, all are invited.

aRt Cottage is located at 2238 Mount Diablo Street Concord. For more information, please go to [artcottage.info](http://artcottage.info)



"Clouds of Calaveras" - Colin Hall



by Samantha McNally

## Summer Art Show on Main Street

The Main Street Arts Gallery in downtown Martinez is featuring a group exhibition by local metal artists during July and August. The show highlights a variety of pieces ranging from sculptural and functional works to imaginative creations that demonstrate the versatility of the medium. The metal artists include Nate Holbein, Brady Prisha, Luke Heimbigner and Steen Kjorlie. Visitors can enjoy this unique art form that combines creativity, engineering, and skilled workmanship.

Also featured in July is longtime gallery member Paula Oesterling. Known for her playful and whimsical approach, Oesterling creates imaginative mixed media works that often surprise viewers with unexpected subjects and storytelling elements. Her artwork reflects a sense of humor and curiosity, inviting visitors to look closely and discover its intricate details.

The public is invited to a reception on Friday, July 3, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., held in conjunction with Martinez First Friday. Guests can meet the artists, enjoy refreshments, and enter a monthly prize drawing. "Legs" by Paula Oesterling is the free drawing prize in July. When you enter the gallery, simply fill out a form for a chance to win.

Now in its tenth year, Main Street Arts Gallery continues to welcome art lovers and collectors alike. The cooperative gallery features the work of local and regional artists in a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, ceramics, jewelry, and mixed media.

It is located at 613 Main Street. Open Wednesday through Saturday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

[www.mainstreetarts.net](http://www.mainstreetarts.net)



"Horrified Scout Scence" by Steen Kjorlie



"Totem" by Luke Heimbigner



"Legs" by Paula Oesterling, will be given away in the monthly drawing.



## Art Exhibits Around Town

by Denise Hillman

The Martinez Arts Association (MAA) presents local artists in several partnering venues throughout Martinez. MAA's goal is to create opportunities for local artists.

The Martinez Library, 740 Court Street, is currently displaying a colorful exhibition by book artist Sherryl Keyes through July 24. Her latest work, "Cities", is comprised of abstract cut-paper collages. Keyes' books are held in private collections and have been exhibited widely in public, private, and university libraries.

Other venues hosting MAA artists include Roxx on Main, Five Suns Brewing, and the Campbell Theater.

On Sunday, August 16, MAA will present the 55th annual Art in the Park in Susana Park, Martinez. This free event features more than 65 artist vendors showcasing original artwork, along with live music, food trucks, and beer and wine vendors.

The Martinez Arts Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the arts and arts education in the community.



Sherryl Keyes "Collage"

Through exhibitions, scholarships, grants, and community programs, MAA works to promote creativity and make art accessible throughout Martinez.

More information on MAA can be found at [www.martinezarts.org](http://www.martinezarts.org).



## "Spring in Blossom" at JOR Fine Art Gallery

There's still time to experience the beauty of "Spring in Blossom" at JOR Fine Art Gallery in Clayton. This vibrant exhibition, featuring outstanding works by local and regional artists, will be on display through August 9.

Visitors can also enjoy a special Solo Abstract Exhibit by Gene Howard, showcasing his bold, colorful, and expressive paintings.

Whether you're looking for original art, a unique gift, or simply an inspiring gallery visit, don't miss this beautiful exhibition.



"Sunkissed Tulips" acrylic, Fiona Hughes

JOR Fine Art Gallery, 1026 Oak Street, Suite 102.

For gallery hours and more information, visit [jorfineartgallery.com](http://jorfineartgallery.com).

# Espetus Brings the Spirit of Brazil to Concord

by David King

A new dining experience has arrived in Concord, bringing the flavors, traditions, and warmth of Brazil to The Veranda. Espetus Churrascaria has transformed its space into an elegant Brazilian steakhouse where dining becomes more than a meal; it becomes a cultural experience.



The heart of Espetus is churrasco, the traditional Brazilian style of grilling meat over an open flame. The name Espetus means “skewers” in Portuguese, and guests experience the tradition of rodizio-style dining, where Gaucho chefs continuously bring skewers of fire-grilled meats directly to the table and carve each selection to order.



The menu features 14 cuts of premium meats, including steak, pork, lamb, chicken, and shrimp. The meats are grilled over natural mesquite charcoal, creating the authentic smoky flavor that defines Brazilian barbecue. Many of the meats are sourced from Harris Ranch, ensuring quality with every serving.



Beyond the parade of meats, guests can enjoy an abundant buffet featuring fresh salads, Brazilian specialties, hot sides, and the beloved pão de queijo, warm Brazilian cheese bread served throughout the meal. Weekend diners can also enjoy Feijoada, Brazil’s iconic black bean stew prepared with pork and traditional accompaniments.

The Concord location marks the third chapter for Espetus, a family-owned restaurant founded by Brazilian native Paulo Klein. Klein’s journey in the Brazilian steakhouse industry began more than 40 years ago in 1984 as a server and grill master. After opening his first restaurant in New Jersey in 1996, he brought Espetus to San Francisco in 2003 and later to San Mateo in 2008. Today, Paulo and his wife, Thays, continue to lead the company while sharing their heritage through food and hospitality.



“Taking over the former Texas de Brazil space in 2024, the we discovered the transition would be much more than a simple changeover,” said Thays. Indeed, the Kleins spent a year redesigning the space, transforming it from a rustic western theme into a glamorous dining destination. The result is a spacious, sophisticated setting, two outdoor patios, a striking bar, and seating for up to 300.



Owners Paulo and Thays Klein

Chef Robson Barreto, who helped create the original Espetus dishes, has been part of the company since its first San Francisco opening. Today, Chef Fernando Teles leads culinary operations and training across all three locations, maintaining the consistency and tradition that have become part of the Espetus experience.

Espetus Concord quietly opened its doors in December 2025, allowing the team time to perfect the experience and introduce itself to the community. The response has been positive, with diners discovering a place designed for date nights, family celebrations, business gatherings/corporate events, and special occasions.

### FIFA FEST World Cup Watch Parties

“Brazilian culture and football are inseparable,” says Thays. What better environment to watch all of FIFA World Cup than during Espetus FIFA World Cup Fest with an added energetic Brazilian flair during Brazil National Team’s matches.



FIFA Watch Party

So far, the watch parties have been wildly successful aided by a large 150” screen on the outdoor patio, Live DJ, Aquarela Samba dancers, plus all the food, specialty cocktails, and signature bar bites. Admission is \$25 and includes an Espetus FIFA World Cup Mug (while supplies last) of draft beer with \$5 refills. A complete VIP experience. They are planning a massive watch party celebration on the 4th of July!

Espetus Churrascaria is located at The Veranda, 2025 Diamond Blvd., Concord.

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**COMPASS**

# Luna's Culinary Chef Showdown A Big Hit

by David King



Chef Habib Jacifi vs. Nakima Williams known as Chef Klumzzy

"Incredible evening! Food is amazing!" one guest posted on Luna's Facebook page after the event.

The first showdown featured Chef Habib going head-to-head with Chef Klumzzy of Klumzzy Cuisine, (aka Nakima Williams from Martinez) a private

and event chef widely known throughout San Francisco and the Bay Area for her signature "Klumzzy Potato" and popular pop-up dining experiences.

Chef Habib presented a refined menu featuring salmon mousse with crab and lobster sauce, ahi tuna with mango and house dressing, stuffed pork loin over creamy polenta with lamb glaze, and a decadent chocolate pot de crème.

Chef Klumzzy brought her own culinary flair with lemon pasta featuring spinach-infused burrata, Gruyère spinach fried wontons, a cucumber salad with mozzarella, cherry tomatoes, olives, and edible flowers, plus lamb with broccolini and crispy onions, followed by lemon cake.

So, who won?

In true spirit of the evening, everyone did. The diners won by enjoying two beautifully crafted menus in an elegant setting. Martinez's Chef Klumzzy earned



the People's Choice award, receiving a special plaque from Chef Habib, a thoughtful gesture that reflected the camaraderie behind the competition.

And Luna Restaurant won by creating an event so successful that another Chef Showdown is already scheduled for August 12, featuring Chef Isaac, Executive Chef at Hotel Shattuck Plaza, in Berkeley.

"It was a really fun evening," said Chef Klumzzy. "It was a full house, and I honestly didn't expect to receive an award at the end."

For those wanting another taste of Chef Klumzzy's creations, she will host a pop-up event on July 11 at Fiore in Concord, serving her famous loaded baked potatoes from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

At Luna, it appears the future of dining may include a little friendly competition and a lot of decadent memories.



Lamb with broccolini and crispy onions,



cucumber salad with mozzarella, cherry tomatoes, olives, and edible flowers



Salmon mousse with crab and lobster sauce



Stuffed pork loin over creamy polenta with lamb glaze



## Make Reservations Now!

**Chef Klumzzy Pop Up - Famous Potatoes**

*fiore* Saturday, July 11 1:00-4:30



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ITALIAN KITCHEN

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2118 Willow Pass Rd, Concord

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PRESENTS

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TWO CHEFS. ONE MENU. YOU DECIDE.

**CHEF HABIB**  
EXECUTIVE CHEF  
LUNA RESTAURANT

VS

**CHEF ISSAC**  
GUEST CHEF  
EXECUTIVE CHEF  
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# Around Martinez



## Martinez, a Great Place for Cycling

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

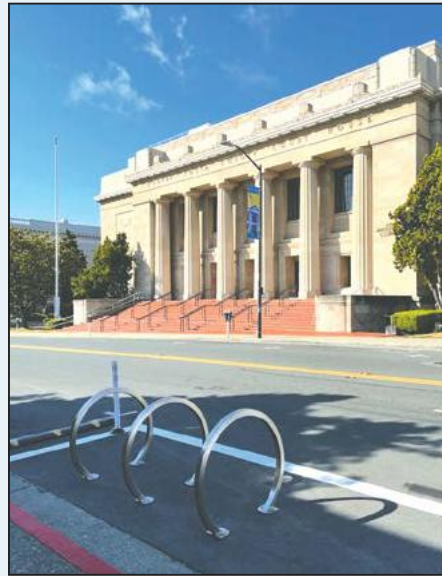
Martinez neighborhoods are filled with charming homes and bustling communities of neighbors walking their dogs and families riding bicycles to their destinations.

You will see me and my family riding our bikes (or skateboards) to the Farmers' Market every weekend. On a busy Sunday, every bike rack at the Downtown Plaza will be filled with bikes.

I'm happy to report that the City has completed the installation of 17 new bicycle racks throughout downtown.

In addition, we have included a bicycle repair station at Parking Lot 4 and at City Hall. These bicycle racks have been installed in the parking spaces where the "daylighting law" now prohibits parking by cars within 20 feet on an intersection to protect pedestrians. Bicycle parking is such an efficient and innovative use of this space.

The bike racks were funded by a grant from 511 CCTA, a program of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). Special thanks to



the Engineering and Sustainability departments for coordinating this work. Additional opportunities for installation of bicycle racks in the city are forthcoming.

**Cycling Events Coming this Fall.**

I hope you will join me for some upcoming bicycle events this fall:

**Bike Family Fest (BFF)** on Sunday, September 13. A free community wide event held at Diablo Valley Collage to encourage and support kids who want to bicycle. Bring the whole family to ride bikes and learn new skills. Martinez families are invited to ride all together to BFF via the Contra Costa Canal Trail.

**Bike the Bridges** on Saturday, October 3. A fundraiser for the Special Olympics, this annual event offers various loops ranging from 25 miles to 100 kilometers that all start and end at the Martinez waterfront and traverse the Carquinez and Benicia bridges. (And...there is a beer festival at the end to reward you for your hard work!)

If riding 100 km not really your jam, why don't you ride your bike to the Sesquicentennial Festival on Saturday, August 29 at the Martinez Waterfront and Downtown? We will have dedicated bicycle parking and fun bike activities for kids.

**Roads and Trails for Biking**

In addition to road riding on Franklin Canyon Road or mountain biking in Briones, we have regional trails such as the George Miller Trail and connections to the San Francisco Bay Trail.

If you are looking to get into riding, a great resource in downtown Martinez is Pegasus Cycles. They have new and used, road, mountain, and cruiser bikes, and they regularly host group rides throughout the year.

Are you interested in advocating for improved trail connectivity? The Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCTA) is working on a trail connection feasibility study, to evaluate potential routes to connect the Iron Horse Trail with the Contra Costa Canal Trail near the South Martinez/Pacheco area. The focus is on increasing access to open space, the Pacheco Transit Hub, and local bus services. I encourage cyclists in Martinez to advocate for the northern-most routes which will improve connections to existing trails in Martinez: [Tinyurl.com/ccta-ih-connection](http://Tinyurl.com/ccta-ih-connection)

Happy Riding!

**CITY OF MARTINEZ 150 YEARS 1876-2026**

**JULY 2026 COMMUNITY EVENTS**

- 7/03 First Friday
- 7/04 4th of July Daylong Festivities!
- 7/09 Downtown Martinez Car Show
- 7/11 Sesquicentennial Hike: Briones Labyrinth
- 7/11 Virtual Wildfire Evacuation Drill
- 7/12 Open Air Market
- 7/25 Martinez Community Cleanup
- 7/30 Small Business Workshop Series #3
- Sundays Downtown Farmers Market

**MARTINEZ, CA 4TH OF JULY Daylong Festivities**

- PARADE** ★ 10 AM ★ ON MAIN STREET By Downtown Martinez & Co
- BASEBALL** ★ 12 PM ★ AT JOE DIMAGGIO FIELD Martinez Sturgeons Game
- FUN FEST** ★ 5 PM ★ AT WATERFRONT PARK Activities and Food Trucks
- FIREWORKS** ★ 9-30 PM ★ AT MARTINEZ WATERFRONT A Fantastic Finale!

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



### West Nile Virus-Infected Mosquitoes Detected

The Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District has detected the first West Nile virus-infected mosquitoes of the year in the county. The infected mosquitoes were collected from a trap near Pacheco Marsh in the Martinez waterfront area, according to the district.

"West Nile virus is typically detected in the local mosquito population as summer temperatures rise..." said Steve Schutz, scientific programs manager for the district.

The district urged residents to inspect their yards at least once a week and dump out any standing water to eliminate places where mosquitoes can breed. Officials recommend using insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 and following the directions on the product label.

The district asks residents to report dead birds, which are often an early indicator of West Nile virus activity in an area.

Residents who continue to experience mosquito problems after eliminating standing water can request mosquito control service from the district since services are funded through property taxes.

For more information, go to [www.contracostamosquito.gov](http://www.contracostamosquito.gov). Residents can report dead birds by calling (877) WNV-BIRD (968-2473) or online through [westnile.ca.gov/report.php](http://westnile.ca.gov/report.php).

### City Pitches 'Entertainment Zone' Proposal

The city of Martinez is considering the creation of an "entertainment zone" to attract more people to the downtown area.

The state made it legal in 2024 for cities to establish entertainment zones, where people 21 and over can legally possess and drink open alcoholic beverages outdoors from local, licensed businesses within the designated zones during specified events, days and times.

San Francisco was the first to do so, with cities including Walnut Creek following the trend, which frequently involves live entertainment, food and other attractions. Each city sets its own rules on when its entertainment zone is "activated."

The City Council's Economic Development Subcommittee showed enthusiasm for the idea at its June 22 meeting in the Council Chamber. Associate city planner Salmana Shah presented the plan to subcommittee and City Council members Satinder S. Malhi and Jay Howard.

The proposed zone wouldn't differ much from other downtown events when streets are usually blocked to vehicle traffic. It would extend from just beyond Buckley Street and Marina Vista Avenue to the north, to Court Street to the east, to Green Street to the south, to Berrellesa Street to the west.

The subcommittee's recommendation will likely go to the City Council in August. Cass said if everything works out, the entertainment zone could be in effect before the end of the year.

For the full story and other news, go to [Claycord.com](http://Claycord.com) and [Martinez News and views](http://Martinez News and views)

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**11am - 7pm**

**Beer Festival 1pm - 6pm**

**Martinez Marina and Waterfront Park**

**IN PARTNERSHIP**

**BAY AREA Craft Beer FESTIVAL**

[cityofmartinez.org/150festival](http://cityofmartinez.org/150festival)

# Normans Appreciate Americans, They Love Papa Jake

by David King

For the first time, Karlan Larson and his daughter Michaela returned to Normandy for the D-Day commemoration without the man who had made the journey so meaningful, Karlan's father, WWII Veteran "Papa" Jake Larson who passed away in July 2025 at the age of 102.

The Larsons walked in the parade with Michaela carrying her grandfather's familiar hat, the one he wore for years. The light blue hat, covered with meaningful pins collected throughout his life, had become a symbol recognized by veterans, families, and admirers around the world.

"The people of France are so grateful and appreciative of the young men and women that helped liberate their country and free them of tyranny. That appreciation is passed down from generation to generation," Karlan said. "And that thanks is so apparent during parades, during different interactions. The love they have for the World War II veterans, and in our case, the love that they showed for our family even though Papa Jake wasn't there, it's overwhelming."

Papa Jake helped plan and fought during the storming of Omaha beach.

"As we walked in the parade behind the veterans, people would see the hat and shout out, 'Papa Jake, Papa Jake!' and then we would go over and greet them. We became so delayed in the progression of the parade; we actually got lost and had to catch up with the veterans."

One little girl had a shirt on that had an image of her and Papa Jake together.

"We went up to them and spoke with them. I was doing okay up until the point until I noticed the little beret cap that she had on was signed by my



This girl cheers "Papa Jake, Papa Jake" during the D-Day parade, and was wearing a T-shirt with a picture of her and Papa Jake from prior year, and a beret signed by Jake Larson (below).



Larson family attend D-Day in Normandy and met a citizen who presented past editions of Diablo Gazette featuring dad Jake. Larson.

dad."

It was emotional overload. Before the parade even began, the family experienced another unforgettable connection. A lady approached them who spoke little English but looked somewhat familiar to the Karlan.

With a tap of the hat, she asked, "Papa Family?" Once they acknowledged, she introduced herself as Fabienne Ory. Then she reached in her bag and pulled out three prior copies of Diablo Gazette.

"That's why she looked familiar," Karlan said. "Her picture was in those issues with my dad. And suddenly, here she was standing in front of us. It felt like a reunion with someone we had never met face-to-face.

It was very joyful, and there were some tears on both sides. Then she reached into her bag and opened pulled the August 2025 edition which announced Jake's passing last July.

In a crowd of tens of thousands, Ory had brought the newspapers hoping she would find the Larson family. Thanks to Papa Jake's hat, she did.

The artist for the statue, Paula Slater, will include the hat and every pin. the bronze statue from his hat.

Karlan swore to the French that they would return next year except on June 6, D-Day, for the unveiling of the Papa Jake's statue.

A miniature clay model, called a maquette, has been approved by City of Martinez and the Larsons. Artist Paula



Michael Larson at Omaha Beach paying tribute to a gift the Larson family received while in France. It's an etching of Papa Jake, a gift to show how moved the people still are of Papa Jake, still today, Papa Jake passed in July 2025. Photo Courtesy Delta Defense Fund..

Slater, who is creating Papa Jake's life-size bronze statue planned for Martinez City Hall, will include the details of his beloved hat, including every pin.

The Larsons and the City of Martinez have approved the miniature clay model, called a maquette, and said the project is moving forward. The remaining work is completing the sculpture and continuing fundraising efforts.

The community can show its love for Papa Jake and help preserve his legacy by purchasing an engraved brick or tile that will be displayed at the base of his monument. More information is available at papajakelarson.com.

"He is no longer with us physically, he is here in spirit, and he watches over us every day," Karlan says.



## Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared

Why did we take Community Emergency response Team CERT classes? The simple answer... you can't take care of anyone else until you can take care of yourself.

There are so many disasters waiting to happen in our area. We're surrounded by earthquake fault lines and forested areas. Cars bikes, trains carrying unknown possibly dangerous freight, oil refineries, bodies of water and more all offer pending danger.

If you want to be trained to be a CERT volunteer, please contact Martinez CERT: martinez.cert@gmail.com. We need more trained people

in our small towns to help during a disaster. who won't be scared, but will be prepared.



Martinez City Councilmembers and Martinez Area Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) completed its spring training emergency preparedness call.

*5th Annual*  
**Dreaming OF THE Islands**  
Saturday  
**August 15, 2026**  
11am-4pm  
**ONE DAY ONLY - FREE ENTRY**  
20+ Local Vendors  
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**Martinez Sturgeon Schedule July 2026**

7/2026 Schedule						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	
			1 AUS 6:00	2 DUB 6:00	3 AUS 6:00	
5 SRF 2:00	6	7 DUB 6:00	8 SRF 6:00	9	10 SRF 6:00	
12 PEC 2:00	13 BAK 7:45	14 BAK 7:45	15	16 DUB 6:00	17	
19 AUS 2:00	20	21 AUS 6:00	22	23 AUS 6:00	24 SRF 6:00	
26 SRF 2:00	27	28	29	30	31	

**The Papa Jake Larson Statue Project**  
Honor a Bay Area Hero  
Papa Jake Larson is our local World War II Veteran and a beloved storyteller who touched millions by sharing his firsthand history with the world through TikTok

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

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

You can help make this memorial a reality. Every donation, no matter the amount, brings us one step closer

**DONATE HERE**

**LEARN MORE AT PapaJakeLarson.com**

# Central San's 80th Anniversary Open House Gets Message Out

by Sam Richards freelance, Martinez News and Views

It was either a very effective advertising campaign, or the residents of Central Contra Costa County indeed have a sincere appreciation of the folks who process their poop, "gray" dish washing and bath water, and everything else that goes down their household pipes.

Throughout most of Central Contra Costa County, including about half of Martinez, it's the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (Central San) that processes all that wastewater. And free food, ice cream, go-kart toilets and bathtubs, along with some science-based learning opportunities, helped draw many of the estimated 1,500 people who came to Central San's 80th anniversary open house on Saturday, June 13 at the district's Martinez headquarters on Imhoff Place. The district throws such a party every 10 years.

While some folks got a microscopic view of the organisms that live in raw sewage water, or a primer on how microbes (with or without the help of oxygen) are used to break down human waste, or a demonstration of the tools and machines that allow district workers to learn how to maintain the district's heavy equipment.

"Central San spokespeople have said for years that it can be a challenge getting people interested in the finer points of what happens to the toilet water after the flush," said Emily

Barnett, Central San's communications/government relations manager. "But the more people do know, the more they can help the agency do its job effectively.

There are basic things that can make it easier for the wastewater agency to better do its work. Heading that list is not letting cooking grease, fats or oils, or hazardous chemicals or solid objects (including "flushable" wipes), go down your drain. Cooking grease can congeal on the interiors of pipes, trapping food particles, in turn restricting water flow and increasing chances for backups and causing such problems in Central San's larger pipe system.

The open house also provided an opportunity to take tours of the facility, including where 54 million gallons of wastewater per day are subjected to various phases of the treatment process. Some water is released to cities' water-distribution systems as "purified recycled" water suitable for drinking and other domestic uses, while millions of gallons of "standard recycled" water from Central San goes each year to landscaping, irrigation and industrial uses.

The open house also featured opportunities to really dig into the nitty gritty of sewage treatment.

While opportunities for learning, and for making a poop joke or two in context, were there for the taking, this event was



Top: Kids ride go-kart toilets at Central San 80th anniversary event. Right: Jason Sweet, of Central San's laboratories, puts drops of sewage water under a microscope for inspection. Lower: Blake Brown, a Central San lab program administrator, talks with open house guests about the work she does.



also designed to be fun. And on a warm, sunny day, families enjoyed a bounce house (or bounce construction vehicles, more accurately), various games and those motorized toilets and bathtubs.

Tom Lerner of Concord was watching his young son and his friend drive the bathtubs around a small fenced-off area. "I think they're learning, but they're also having fun," he said.



Abrided article from its original publication at martineznewsandviews.substack.com




## MONTHLY EVENTS

CROCKETT RESIDENTS CAN JOIN AND SELL ON THRIFT DAYS

*Handmade treasures, local makers, support small business*

JULY 4	AUG 01	SEPT 05	
JULY 12	AUG 09	SEPT 13	
JULY 18	AUG 15	SEPT 19	
JULY 26	AUG 30	SEPT 27	

**HOURS:** Monday - Saturday 6am to 5 pm  
Sunday 7am to 4pm



**NEW WEBSITE AND VENDORS ON:**  
[WWW.THEREVIVALCOFFEECO.COM](http://WWW.THEREVIVALCOFFEECO.COM)

**REVIVAL COFFEE**  
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CROCKETT, CA

CROCKETT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTS




# Sugar Town Music & Street Fair FESTIVAL 2026

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**LIVE MUSIC BY**

- SCHOOL OF ROCK (KIDS BAND) 11:00am-12:05pm
- THE TERRY HANCK BAND 12:35pm-1:45pm
- THE BILLY MARTINI SHOW 2:30pm-4:00pm
- BEER DRINKERS & HELL RAISERS (ZZ TOP TRIBUTE) 4:30pm-6:00pm

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# Walnut Creek Celebrates Summer, Community, and America's 250th

by Kevin Wilk, Mayor, Walnut Creek

July is a wonderful time to be in Walnut Creek. This year, July provides a unique opportunity to participate in activities connected to our nation's upcoming 250th birthday while celebrating the people, places, and experiences that make Walnut Creek such a special community.

## America 250 Celebration and Relay

On July 7, Walnut Creek will serve as an important stop along the America 250 Relay, a nationwide event taking place on the American Discovery Trail to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States. Participants traveling by foot across the country will begin their day in Walnut Creek with a community breakfast hosted by the City in partnership with Save Mount Diablo before embarking on one of the relay's most challenging segments: a trek across Mount Diablo and through some of Contra Costa County's most iconic open spaces. This event highlights the natural beauty of our region and the significant role Walnut Creek plays in connecting people to the outdoors.

## Entertainment Zone and Downtown Events

Downtown Walnut Creek will be buzzing with activity this summer as the Locust Street Festival returns on July 8 and August 5. This popular community event brings together live music, local food and beverages, artisan vendors, and family-friendly activities, drawing thousands of residents and visitors to the heart of downtown. City staff will be on hand throughout the festival, providing an opportunity for community members to learn about City programs and services.

This year's July festival also marks the debut of Downtown Walnut Creek's new Entertainment Zone, designed to support local businesses and create a more engaging downtown experience during approved special events. This new program represents an exciting opportunity to support economic vitality while maintaining the welcoming, community-oriented atmosphere that makes downtown Walnut Creek special.

Live music downtown continues with the Leshner Center's Summer Sounds concert series, which returns to Rudney Plaza on July 9, July 16, and July 30. These free outdoor performances bring together residents of all ages for evenings of entertainment and connection. All concerts begin at 5:30 PM at the corner of Locust St and Civic Dr.

## Youth Leadership Opportunities

July is an important month for youth civic engagement. Applications remain open through July 15 for the Youth Leadership Commission and Seat at the Table program, providing young residents with opportunities to develop leadership skills, learn about local government, and share their perspectives on issues affecting our community. Interested students are encouraged to apply and become

involved in shaping Walnut Creek's future.

## Arts + Recreation Highlights

For those looking to explore their creative side, our Arts + Recreation department continues its Summer Nights Workshop Series with unique evening experiences designed for adults to learn, create, and connect. July offerings include a sustainable gelli plate printmaking workshop using repurposed materials and a watercolor paint-and-sip class celebrating the International Day of Friendship. Both workshops offer a welcoming opportunity to introduce yourself to new skills and enjoy a creative summer evening.

## Emergency Preparedness

Summer is an ideal time to review emergency preparedness plans and take steps to stay safe during periods of extreme heat and elevated wildfire risk. Residents are encouraged to sign up for Walnut Creek's emergency e-alert system by texting "WALERT" to 888-777 to receive timely information during emergencies and public safety events. Additional resources, including guidance on preparing your home for wildfire season, are available through the Contra Costa Fire Protection District.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome several new businesses to Walnut Creek, including restaurants Doppio Zero, Mensho, and Marafuku Ramen. Additional retail, fitness, and dining destinations are expected to open throughout the summer, including Milky Flakes, Masses (new location), Bacio di Latte, Ronbow, Matsu Yakitori, BodyRok, SKIMS, 7th Avenue, Läderach, and New Balance. The continued investment of entrepreneurs and business owners helps strengthen our local economy, create jobs, and contribute to the vibrant character of our city.

Whether you're enjoying live music downtown, participating in community events, supporting local businesses, or exploring Walnut Creek's parks and open spaces, this summer is an exciting time to experience all that our community has to offer.



# Home Kitchen Businesses Are Now Permanent

In May, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors voted to make our Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKO) program permanent.

In just two years, 79 home kitchen permits were issued across the county. The data shows the program has predominantly supported women-owned microenterprises and individuals from historically underrepresented communities, including Latino, Asian, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households, including those earning under \$50,000 annually. That's exactly the kind of economic opportunity and development our county should be championing.

Permitted home kitchen operators can prepare and sell up to 30 meals per day or 90 meals per week, with annual revenue up to \$100,000. Meals can be served in-home, picked up by customers, or delivered directly by the operator. Family members can help run the operation, along with up to one non-family employee.

The program is administered through Contra Costa Health's Environmental Health Division, the same team that oversees food safety across our county, from restaurant inspections to mobile



File photo, Contra Costa County Health

food trucks to temporary food vendors at farmers markets. They also handle body art facility permits, cannabis operations, septic and well systems, and medical waste compliance. It's a broad mandate, and they carry it out with care and professionalism.

For anyone interested in starting a home kitchen operation, permits and inspection information are available through Contra Costa Health's Environmental Health Division at cchealth.org or by calling 925-608-5500.

Our residents have the talent. We're glad the county can now offer a permanent pathway to turn that talent into a livelihood.

# Contra Costa County Historical Society Receives \$45,000 Donation

The Contra Costa County Historical Society (CCCHS) received a generous donation of \$45,000 in April 2026, from the California Foundation for Stronger Communities (CFSC). This funding fuels the Society's mission to preserve, protect, and provide public access to the rich records and heritage of Contra Costa County.

The California Foundation for Stronger Communities, is a California non-profit public benefit corporation that acts as the Board of Directors for the California Municipal Finance Authority ("CMFA"). Their goal is to strengthen local communities by assisting with the financing of economic development and charitable activities throughout the state. The donation is a direct result of the services CMFA provides to local governments, non-profits, and

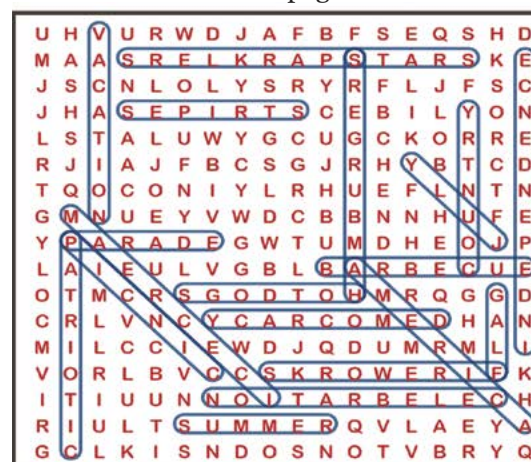
businesses.

As an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit, the Historical Society relies heavily on the generosity of philanthropic foundations and the ongoing involvement of the community. Gifts like this do much more than simply fund daily operations; they serve as a lifeline that keeps the County History Center running.

"Community partnerships and foundation grants are the backbone of our organization," said LeighAnn Davis, Executive Director of the Contra Costa County Historical Society. "Support like this not only keeps our doors open and our archives accessible today, but it ensures we can preserve our local history for generations to come. We are incredibly grateful to CFSC and CMFA"

Solutions from Puzzles page 10

Puzzles by Marc Rokoff RokoPuzzles.com



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

### WORD SCRAMBLE

- AMERICA
- FIREWORKS
- PARADE
- STATES
- LIBERTY

### CRYPTOGRAM

Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, but your government only when it deserves it.

-Mark Twain

### DO YOU KNOW?

56 signatures



# COUNTRY WAFFLES

BREAKFAST & LUNCH

# SAVE 15%

Cannot be combined with menu specials or senior menu. Expires July 31, 2026

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**WEEKDAY** 6 AM to 3 P every day  
**BREAKFAST SPECIAL**

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\*Add \$2.50 for 2 Strips of Bacon or 2 links of Sausage or 1/2 slice of Ham. Starting at \$9.99! Mon. - Fri. until 11:30am! (except holidays)

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**July SPECIAL**

All day every day

**Two Eggs Served with your Choice**

1/2 Waffle or 2 flapjacks & 2 strips of bacon or 2 sausage links or 1/2 slice of ham

THEN

1776

# America 250

1776 ★ 2026

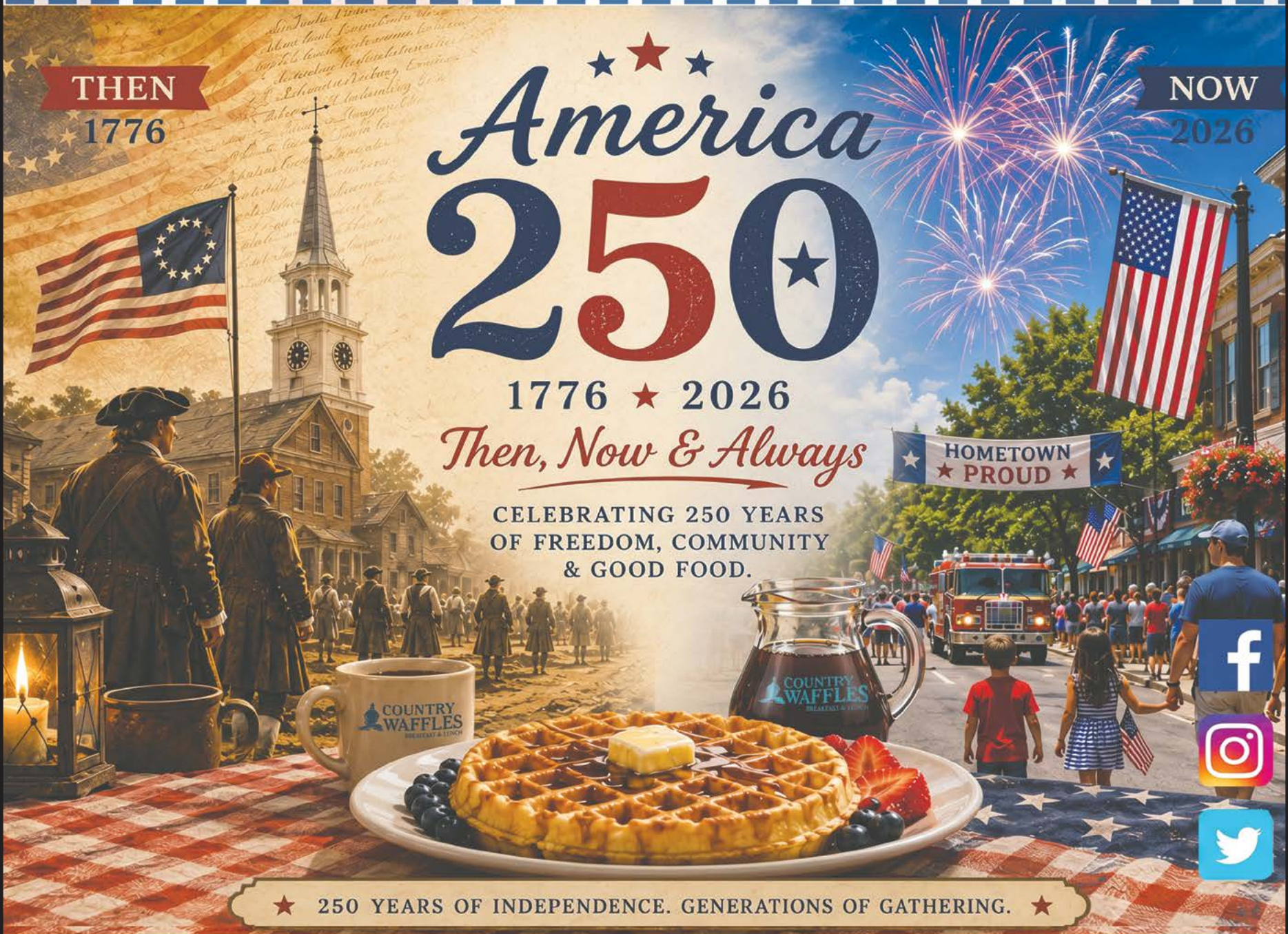
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