

The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Communities
 Concord, Clayton, Walnut Creek, Martinez, Pleasant Hill
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NOVEMBER 2024



Peyton and Christine Seville of Walnut Creek compete in a 10-day off road rally.

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Martinez Section, Book Review, Movie and Streaming Review, Calendar of Events by City and much more...

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Two Angels Lost

The city of Clayton lost two of its angels this past month. **Adelaide Young, 6**, passed away on October 13, succumbing to her cancer. We featured Adelaide on the cover in March 2024 for her profound generosity.

When Adelaide learned of a toy drive for children younger than her who were without toys when visiting their moms in recovery, she wanted to help, "I don't want any other babies to be sad. These are my babies (referring to her own toys) and I'm happy to let them go and make other kids happy. I want the little babies there to be happy."

She then gave away her toys. This while she herself was being treated for a very aggressive form of bone cancer.



Shortly after that article was published, Adelaide was flown to Houston for weeks of advanced treatment. Unfortunately, it didn't work. Our condolences go out to the Young family. Goodbye Adelaide, may you rest in happiness. We all love you.

The other loss is Clayton's Debra Gonsalves.

The following obituary excerpt was originally published in the East Bay Times.

Debra Gonsalves

Debra Elizabeth Gonsalves was born on January 23, 1954, to Frank and Marie Culum and passed away on October 4, 2024, in Clayton, California. She married Steve Gonsalves on September 25, 1976. She was a devoted wife, phenomenal mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, aunt, and a truly loyal friend.



Debra was lovingly known as "Sissy" by many of her relatives and closest friends. Her warmth and love touched everyone she knew.

She is survived by her beloved husband, Steve Gonsalves, her daughters, Kelli Dupell and Jennifer Herrera, along with their husbands, Josh Dupell and Brandon Herrera. Debra was a cherished Gigi to her grandchildren: Whitney Dupell, Andrew Dupell, Steven Herrera, Camden Herrera, and Paige Herrera. She also leaves behind her mother, Marie Culum; her sisters, Demery Donovan, Denise Willett, and Diane Culum; her brothers, Frank Culum, Donald Culum, and David Davi; and her in-laws, Karen Watson, Janice Giacoma, Kirk Watson, Kim Davi, and Michael Willett. Debra was a loving aunt to many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

She was preceded in death by her father, Frank Culum; her mother-in-law, Marlene Gonsalves; and her father-in-law, Matt Gonsalves.

Debra graduated from Clayton Valley High School in 1972 and was proud to be a lifelong CVHS Eagle. She regularly attended the football games, cheering on the sidelines in her CVHS jacket.

She was a dedicated volunteer at her daughters' schools, where she was known as a force in the community—planting flowers and leading yard duty with care and enthusiasm. Her commitment to fostering community extended far beyond the school grounds, as she was actively involved in many charitable causes. Debra's generous spirit and kindness touched

many lives through her involvement in these efforts. Debra had a heart of gold and will be remembered as warm, caring, and always ready to lend a hand.

Everyone who knew Debra knows she was one of a kind—truly without precedent. She lived by the motto "Be Who You Are," embracing life with a fearless, genuine nature. She was never pretentious, befriend everyone and making each person feel special.

Her magnetic personality made her the heart of every gathering. Debra loved to have fun, tell jokes, and pull pranks on her friends and family. Many believed she could have had a career as a comedian. In true "Debra fashion," she made a grand entrance at her 40th birthday party on a motorcycle, perfectly capturing her vibrant and fearless spirit.

Debra also loved to travel and formed special bonds with people wherever she went. In Cabo, she was affectionately known as "Miss Debra," while Steve was often simply referred to as "Miss Debra's husband." When Cabo was devastated by a hurricane, Debra personally organized relief efforts for the victims, making a difference in so many lives.

Debra's passing leaves a void that can never be filled. Debra's legacy of love, laughter, and generosity will live on in the hearts of those she leaves behind. Her heart of gold and infectious kindness made the world a better place, and she will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

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DIFFERENT NAMES SAME POLITICS

EDI BIRSAN & PABLO BENAVENTE DON'T WE DESERVE BETTER THAN THAT?

"Concord voters should oust this councilmember [Birsan] after weapons station fiasco..."
 ~East Bay Times 10/17/24

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A Rare Blessing for Buyers

To all whom you call family, I hope you have blessings in your life to reflect upon this Thanksgiving holiday. Sometimes (often), it is the little things that matter. Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Now for some real estate talk... I have read a series of articles this week on "Why did more people decide to sell now?" History has shown that there is normally a lessening of listed homes for sale in September. But have you noticed more real estate signs suddenly? There are more homes listed for sale than the typical Fall market. Realtor.com says homes for sale in September increased 11.6% over this time last year.

What does this mean for buyers? Fewer people looking with more choices to consider could mean more negotiating on price, terms, concessions, and/or contingent sales on selling your home. Lenders are also getting more creative. You can potentially buy down your interest rate and/or refinance at a lower rate later. Some lenders have loans that allow you to finance concessions in the loan.

If the predictions that rates will come down to around 6% by year end are accurate, that would help sellers. There would be more competition for their homes, they would receive more offers and be less inclined to negotiate. Buyers will likely pay



higher prices. The time to buy is when everyone else is not thinking about buying.

Your first step is knowing what you can afford. Talk with a reputable lender recommended by someone you know who experienced good results with them.

Preapproval involves sharing income, paystubs, tax returns and other credit information to determine what loan amount you can afford. Ask about new loan products that might fit your situation. If you need a credit boost, ask the lender if they know a reputable company that can boost your credit score. The higher the credit score, the better loan options you have to choose from. This is usually money well spent.

If you've been on the fence waiting to buy, now is your time, cease the day! Pick a Realtor skilled in negotiation and they will take you to the finish line.

JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

by David King

Rebelle Rally, True Grit Drives Mother-Daughter Bonding Adventure

The Rebelle Rally is America's longest competitive off-road rally and the nation's first all-women's navigation rally. This October marked the 9th edition of this eight-day race, which began in Mammoth Lakes, California. Each team consists of one driver and one navigator as they attempt to navigate 1500 miles through some of the most challenging terrain Nevada and California has to offer. It is a tough, raw, authentic, 10-day event with eight days of competition that is attracting adventurous, smart, empowered women from across the globe.

Christine Seville of Walnut Creek and daughter Peyton, 24, Oakland, were one of 65 teams to compete in this grueling experience.

"When your 24-year-old daughter sends you a text with a link and says, 'Hey, mom. How about we do this together?' Basically, I don't even look at the link. I just say 'yes.'"

Any empty-nester parent knows what she's talking about. Once committed, she began researching what she had agreed to do. "I realized what a giant undertaking it is. But I'm, of course, still super excited to spend 10 days with my daughter, learning that we can do hard things." It is not cheap. Registration alone is more than \$15,000 and does not include training course fees or safety gear rentals.

Rebelle Rally is a navigational-based race. You are stripped of your devices that have GPS software, including phones, computers, and your car. Each



team is given a compass and a map.

Each day, you are given longitudinal and latitudinal checkpoints to reach. Each checkpoint successfully navigated will earn your team points. Checkpoints are colored coded for varying values based on their

Journeyman continues on p 23

MONTHLY MARKET REPORT SEPTEMBER / 2024

CLAYTON

Existing SFR Median Price \$912K % Change from Last Year -18.9%	MARKET COMPETITION Median Days on Market 10 Sales-to-List Price % 101.5% % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 35.7%
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CONCORD

Existing SFR Median Price \$861K % Change from Last Year +57%	MARKET COMPETITION Median Days on Market 21 Sales-to-List Price % 100.0% % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 31.2%
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MARTINEZ

Existing SFR Median Price \$780K % Change from Last Year -2.6%	MARKET COMPETITION Median Days on Market 14 Sales-to-List Price % 100.0% % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 18.8%
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WALNUT CREEK

Existing SFR Median Price \$1.52M % Change from Last Year +1.3%	MARKET COMPETITION Median Days on Market 18 Sales-to-List Price % 101.2% % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices 34.4%
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SOURCE: Car.org



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YOUR NEIGHBOR'S SHOES

by Michael Barrington, mbwriter.net

In Honor of Veteran's Day: A Veteran's Story

Somebody once wrote that there is a book in each of us waiting to be written, and veteran Marine Staff Sergeant Mark Clifford, from Lafayette, has done just that and more, with his historical novel "Typhoon Coast." He also has a forthcoming book, "Earthquake Coast."

But Mark is no ordinary author. He faced death, not by being targeted by enemy snipers, but by almost being buried alive by the scalding ash from the volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo, a seemingly dormant volcano on the island of Luzon, in the Philippines. It happened simultaneously as a typhoon hit the area.

The fateful day was June 12, 1991. Mark was stationed at Subic Bay Naval Air Station. There the volcano had already been spewing ash into the air for three days which resulted in Clark Air Force Base at the foot of the volcano being evacuated. They moved to Subic, together with approximately 20,000 civilians.

Sadly, Pinatubo will displace 1.2 million people, but Operation Fiery Vigil will be credited for saving thousands of lives, 250,000 from imminent death, in one of America's largest non-combatant evacuation operations, engaging an armada of 22 Navy ships. What was not known at the time, was that Pinatubo would be the second largest volcanic eruption of the century, killing almost 1,000 outright. Thousands more will later be swept to their deaths in rivers of ash, mud, and rock (lahars). Pinatubo became the largest eruption ever, in a densely populated area.

Due to the immense milk white ash cloud lofting in the heavens, Mark's unit

was ordered to return to quarters in the Upper Marine Expeditionary Force part of the Subic camp.

As Mark tells it himself, here is his story.

"We stocked our Quonset hut, a small, prefabricated structure, with water and meals ready to eat. I was responsible for 19 Marines. On June 15, the major eruption took place. Pinatubo had been sleeping for 600 years. The violent eruption vaporized 500 feet of its summit, sending debris 28 miles into the atmosphere. A massive cloud of ash and debris engulfed the surrounding landscape, turning day into night. The earth shook constantly. Meanwhile, a typhoon hit Luzon, its torrential rain turning the ash into cement. All bridges within an 18-mile radius were washed away.

"My Marines found themselves in a fight for their lives. The weight of ash defoliating the jungle was like constant machine gun fire. Amidst the chaos and confusion, our refuge was quickly being turned into a tomb as tons of ash and debris poured down upon us. We were being slowly buried alive, trapped beneath the weight. The heat was suffocating. We fought against despair, struggling to survive in the dark.

"Pinatubo robbed some Marines of their legendary fighting spirit. Battle hardened warriors who had faced the



Iraqi Army were reduced to panic and tears. Huddled inside our tiny Quonset hut, the noise was deafening. The time of darkness was terrifying. The lack of air was suffocating. I was becoming acutely aware of the weight of the ash above us.

"As I waited for what seemed like days, I reflected on my life. I thought about all the things I planned to accomplish: family, life beyond the Corps, and all the things I had yet to do. I thought about the people back home, my fiancé — I wondered if they would remember me. Will my remains be excavated like a soldier in Pompeii? At that moment, the thought struck me that this might be the end. I had always imagined that my life would end in a more peaceful or meaningful way. But here I was, trapped, with no possibility of escape. I made my peace with God. I was going to die."

Mark says after what seemed like an eternity, there was silence. Then the marines began to dig themselves out. The scalding ash burned and skinned their hands and arms as they clawed and burrowed their way through, first creating a small hole, then pulling each other out.

Surprisingly, Mark's Pinatubo story did not end there. Still today he suffers from the loss of two Marines to major injury, and death. Due to their advanced climbing skills, they were tasked to climb to the top of an eighty-foot-high aircraft hangar to free the doors now twisted and jammed shut by the heavy, wet ash and assess the situation.



The trapped helicopters were urgently needed to deter the NPA (New Peoples' Army, formed in 1969 to overthrow the government) guerillas they had been fighting and who were now exploiting the chaos. The Corps was desperate to mount a base defense. The eruption had devastated their land, sea, and air readiness.

Mark told the Commander that the task was too dangerous, that after a review with their own engineer, it was anticipated that if they attempted to open the doors, the structure would collapse. But the order was to proceed.

"I heard their screams. I saw their twisted bodies as two of my men fell to their deaths," he told me. "I felt the tragedy was my fault. But Mission comes before troop welfare in the Marines. I accomplished the mission. The trapped helicopters took to the air. We probably saved many lives."

But Mark is not done yet. Memories of his Mt Pinatubo trauma have haunted him for the past 33 years. In February 2025, he plans to return to the Philippines and expunge some of them. Together with a colleague, he plans to climb to the top of the volcano. There are many veterans living in our communities, and Mark is just one and he is your Lafayette neighbor.

Moroccan Night Dinner & Show

November 7 & 10, 2024

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calendar of events

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CLAYTON

CLUBS

Concord NorCal Helping Hands Lion's Club. <https://www.lionsclubs.org>

Rotary Club of Concord. <http://www.concordcarotary.org>

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

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

EVENTS

November 2-December 2, 'Winter's Embrace, Jor Fine Art Gallery, 1026 Oak St. Ste 102, Clayton. www.jorfineartgallery.com

November 9 Diablo Bowmen Club Shoot, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm, open to the public. Club shoots are for all members and guests! You don't need to be a pro to participate. Diablo Bowmen Oak Hill Lane, Clayton

November 15, Plein Air Painting Hike, 1-4 PM. Join us for a beautiful evening of plein air painting at Save Mount Diablo's Curry Canyon Ranch. Keep your eyes out; you might see Curry Canyon Ranch, 3500 Curry Canyon Road, Clayton. savemountdiablo.org

LIBRARY

November 6, Clayton Knit & Crochet, 10:00am-1:00pm. Come knit, crochet, and make friends with this friendly group at the Clayton Library. This program meets on the first Wednesday of each month.

November 13, Camp Clayton: Arts & Crafts, 2:00pm-3:00pm. Join us every Wednesday for STEAM focused events and drop-in programs for kids! Get creative on the second Wednesday of every month with seasonal arts and crafts.

November 20, Experience Magic and Mystery with Robert Vogel. 11 a.m. - Noon. Adult Program. Robert blends comedy with mind-bending illusions and real psychological methods

November 19, 3D Printing Workshop, 1-2 pm. Adult Program. Discover the exciting world of 3D printing at your local library.

Clayton Library, 6125 Clayton Rd. For more information please call 925-673-0659. <https://ccclib.org>

CONCORD

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CLUBS

• **Concord NorCal Helping Hands Lion's Club.** lionsclub.org

• **Rotary Club of Concord.** <http://www.concordcarotary.org>

EVENTS

November 2-3, Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society's Annual Mineral & Gem Show Sat. Nov. 2, 10AM-5PM. Sun. Nov. 3, 10AM-4PM. Location: Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd., Concord, CA 94521. Learn more at www.ccmgsclub.com/show.

November 9, Concord High School Holiday Community Fair, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM This in-person event will be held at Concord High School, where local vendors will be showcasing their unique products. From handmade crafts to delicious treats. 4200 Concord Blvd. Concord

November 3, The 9th Annual Mouse-Con Disneyana Fan Convention, 10:00am TO 5:00pm, Concord Plaza Inn, (Formally Crowne Plaza Inn), 45 John Glenn Dr, Concord

November 7, 10, Moroccan Night Dinner & Show. Fiore Italian Fusion Restaurant. 5100 Clayton Rd. Concord.

November 9, Costume Skate, 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM, Celebrate the grand opening of the 2024 Season of Ice at The Veranda with our annual Costume Skate. The Veranda, 2001-2003 Diamond Blvd, Concord

November 17, Musketeer Archery, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. 18 year and younger Youth Archery practice and instruction every third Sunday. Youth Archery Equipment is provided. No charge for the event. USI Archery Range 4700 Evora Road, Concord. diablorodandgun.com

November 17, Santa Paws, 7-8:30 PM. Bring your furry friend for pictures with Santa. Sunvalley Shopping Center, Center Court, 1 Sun Valley Mall, Concord

November 19, Diablo Rod and Gun Monthly Social, 5:45 pm - 8:00 pm. Come out & share some time with other Club members. 4700 Evora Road, Concord. diablorodandgun.com

November 28, Concord California Turkey Trot 5k, 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, 5K RUN/WALK Benefiting Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa will take place at Newhall Park on Thanksgiving Day, Newhall Park, 1351 Newhall Pkwy,

Concord

November 24, Holiday Market: Concord Historical Society, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Concord Historical Society Event Center, 1928 Clayton Rd, Concord

December 6, Holiday Stroll With A Little Sip! 5-8PM. Sip & Stroll through downtown Concord restaurants & establishments with drinks and treats. Todos Santos Plaza

December 6, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1525 and Auxiliary will host Candy Cane Lane Craft & Gift Fair 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Concord Veterans Memorial Building, 2290 Willow Pass Road, Concord.

December 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Ceremony, 3:45 PM, Beacon Lighting, 5 PM. Cal State University, 47100 Ignacio Valley Road, Concord

FARMERS MARKETS

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

LIBRARY

November 15, Drop-In Tech Help, 10:00am-12:00pm. Do you have basic computer and technology questions? Need help with eBooks, emailing, printing, or basic web searching? Drop in to the Concord Library for help from one of our tech volunteers!

November 19, Forever Young: Online Book Club for Adults, 4:00pm-5:00pm. Are you an adult who enjoys reading Children's and Teen titles? We will meet virtually. Conversation will be casual, informal, and designed for all adult book lovers!

November 25, The Library Wellness Team, 10:00am-4:00pm. Contra Costa County Health Services in partnership with Contra Costa County Library System.

Concord Library, 2900 Salvio St, Concord For more information please call (925) 646-5455. <https://ccclib.org>

CROCKETT

November 30, Crockett's Sip and Shop Small Business Saturday. 11 AM - 5PM. Downtown Crockett

MARTINEZ

CLUBS

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

EVENTS

November 16, Bingo Bash. Soroptimist International of Martinez. 5 PM. www.soroptimistmartinez.org

November 2, \$10 Bag of Books Sale, 10:30 AM - 4 PM. Friends of the Martinez Library, 740 Court Street, Martinez

November 5, 2024 Call for Art: Studio 55 Invites you to "Bits and Bytes on a Small Scale" Studio 55, a local art gallery in Martinez, California, is excited to announce an opportunity to display and sell

artwork at the Studio 55 Gallery November 15 thru January 17. Studio 55 Gallery, 55 Howe Road, Martinez, studio55martinez.com

FARMERS MARKETS

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

LIBRARY

November 9, 23 Martinez Library Storytime. 10:00am-10:30am. Build early literacy skills with stories, songs, finger plays and fun. Stay after for playtime or a simple craft. Ages 1 to 5, but all ages and abilities welcome.

Martinez Library, 740 Court St, Martinez (925) 646-9900 <https://ccclib.org>. www.friendsofthemartinezlibrary.com

PLEASANT HILL

EVENTS

November 9, Whiskey Tasting And A Taste Of Pleasant Hill, 5:00 - 8 PM the plaza at back 2 Perfect Pain Management and Massage Center, 2651 Pleasant Hill Rd, Pleasant Hill

November 16, Holiday Boutique & Craft Fair (Free), 10:00am - 3pm, Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Ln, Pleasant Hill

November 23, Light Up the Night. 4:30-7:30 p.m. Family event including music, dancing, crafts, train rides, Christmas tree lighting, visits with Santa and hot chocolate. Crescent Drive in downtown Pleasant Hill. For more information, call 925-671-5229

February 22, 2025, Blue Devils Crab Feed, 5 PM. Funds raised benefit the community arts programs of the Blue Devils. bluedevils.org

DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE

November 1-3, DVC Drama 2024-25 Season of Shows: Sweet Charity, 8:00pm - 10:30pm, The DVC Drama Department presents *Sweet Charity*, a Tony Award-winning musical about Charity Hope Valentine, in 1960s New York City.. DVC Performing Arts Center,

November 7, DVC Fall 2024 Piano Concert Series, 2:45pm - 3:45pm. Enjoy captivating piano recitals featuring talented DVC pianists and special guest performers. DVC Music Building M-101,

November 22, DVC Jazz Guest Artist Series featuring a Tribute to Henry Mancini, 7:00pm - 9:00pm. Enjoy a performance by the DVC Jazz Ensemble, followed by a special tribute to the iconic music of Henry Mancini. DVC Performing Arts Center

Diablo Valley College, 321 Golf Club Rd, Pleasant Hill.

LIBRARY

Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library. 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month.

November 2, Lego Builders Club, 2:00pm-4:00pm. Build your own unique Lego creations! With Duplo for small hands to Technic for advanced creators. No registration required. All ages and abilities

Dirty Politics by David King

In 2017, Vice Mayor of Concord, Edi Birsan, held a workshop at Diablo Valley College called the “Dirty Secrets of Politics.” It was mostly about how politicians will follow where the votes are. Silence never swayed a politician, and money equals votes. Are these tactics considered dirty... or a secret? No, but here are a few real examples of dirt in our local politics this election.

Fake Websites

In the race for the Concord council seat in District 4, what appears to come from the Pablo Benavente camp are two website domains using opponent Myles Burks name in the domain name (ex. myles4concord.com).

For weeks, when visited, you would be greeted with the home page that said, “A vote for Myles is a vote for Edi Birsan, implying to vote for Benavente. Now it has replaced its content with the depiction of Family Guy’s Peter Griffin with the text “Am I taking Crazy Pills?”

Poking the Bear

In this brazen act, Pablo Benavente’s supporters left a flyer on opponent Mayor Birsan’s door with a handwritten message addressed to Birsan’s wife Carol, “Carol, Your vote is private, (heart) Pablo.”

Restraining Orders

In the Concord City Council meeting on October 22, Ady Olvera, District Director for the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County,



announced during the comment portion of the meeting that Birsan had made violent statements to third parties regarding his frustration with Olvera’s policies and that he would like to “wring her neck.” She goes on to state that this prompted her to file a report with the Concord Police on September 27 and request a restraining order against Birsan.

Her case was heard in court on Monday, October 21 the day before the Council meeting. According to Birsan, Olvera submitted two articles published in the Diablo Gazette as evidence of Birsan’s ongoing harassment against her. Both articles were written by Birsan.

One article, “Land Acknowledgement,” March 2024, discussed the history of Native American migration and the origination of land ownership in this country. The other article, “Scariest than Halloween,” October 2024, Birsan declares himself an “eater of chickens (mostly fried)” in his op-ed disclaimer.

According to Birsan, Olvera presented these as evidence of his hostilities towards her since she is of Indigenous heritage and raises chickens. Even though neither article mentions Olvera or her chickens.

The judge dismissed her charges. Olvera is a Pablo Benavente supporter. By bringing this to the council meeting after the court’s denial reeks more of dirty political posturing and a public lynching before an election than of anything else. Others who spoke to

denounce Birsan in this manner were supporters of Benavente.

In his statement to Diablo Gazette, Birsan confirmed he is frustrated with Olvera and the party’s identity policies. He did not deny that he made those, or similar sounding statements, but said it was never directly to Olvera or with intent to intimidate.

Regarding the articles, the judge cited freedom of the press and that as a public figure, she is subject to scrutiny and criticism.

Padding Resumes

Both Birsan and Benavente have overstated their resume. Burks claims Birsan’s boast of “28% reduction in Homeless” in Concord from the previous year is a dubious use of stats. Burks team challenges the accuracy of the Point in Time methodology to make such statements — and even if there has been a decline, Birsan wasn’t the mayor in 2023.

Incidentally, if the City of Clayton were to make similar interpretations from the same report, it reduced its homeless population 100%! So, Burks may have a point here.

Benavente’s online claim “as Co-chair of Measure V” is misleading. He is not and has never been on the oversight committee for Measure V. He was however involved in helping the campaign committee for the Measure V tax to be passed in 2020 election.

FPPC Violations

In the race for Assembly, Sonia Ledo claims that opponent Anamarie Farias has not been truthful in her disclosures. In an action taken by the FPPC (Fair

Political Practices Commission) “FPPC Case No. 2024-00760; Anamarie Avila Farias was notified in August that the FPPC “...has commenced a commission-initiated investigation regarding your potential violations of the economic interests disclosure provisions of the Political Reform Act.”

Farias reported on her 2018 tax return of two rental properties, neither of which were reported on her FPPC form 700 (transparency of economic interests).

In 2020, Farias’s mother requested a TRO (Temporary Restraining Order) placed on Farias, citing elder abuse and a financial dispute that they eventually settled, according to Ledo.

Smile Your On Camera

In Clayton, the Political Action Committee which runs the website Clayton Watch has been highly active in holding its government officials accountable and demanding transparency.

It also has expressed its disdain for Council member Holly Tillman who is vying for re-election. Clayton Watch takes exception to Tillman’s depiction of Clayton in her earlier campaigns insisting that her campaign materials calling out the city as racist tainted its image and were unfounded.

Tillman’s messaging this election has been far more unifying. Nevertheless, the Clayton Watch website has posted seven videos of some of her hostile interactions at Council meetings and including one video touting her role in organizing the Black Lives Matter protests in Clayton.

Calendar continued

welcome.

November 12, Air Powered Rockets for Teens, 2:45pm–3:45pm. Craft your own rocket using craft paper to launch in our parking lot after school. No reservations required. Limited to tweens and teens (6th grade+.)

Pleasant Hill Library, 12 Monticello Avenue. For more information please call 925-673-0659. <https://ccclib.org>

WALNUT CREEK

CLUBS

Rotary Club of Walnut Creek meets weekly 12:15 to 1:30 on Tuesdays at Assistance League Diablo Valley, 2711 Buena Vista Ave, Walnut Creek. <https://rotarywc.org>

EVENTS

November 1, Dinner with The Rat Pack, 6 pm to 9:00 pm. Enjoy a Vegas style evening with the Rat Pack. Come enjoy the antics, music, and horseplay of the Rat Pack as they take the stage at The Garden to recreate some of their legendary Las Vegas performances at the Sands Hotel. Enjoy dinner, then laugh, dance, and sing along. Your ticket includes a 3 course meal. 1719 Bonanza St, 1719 Bonanza Street, Walnut Creek,

November 13, Walnut Creek Career Fair, 09:30 am to 12:30 pm Join us for this exciting career fair! Meet face to face with recruiters and HR managers from local and Fortune 500 companies to learn about open career opportunities. Dress to impress and please bring an updated

resume.100% free event for job seekers to attend. Renaissance Walnut Creek Hotel, 2805 Jones Road, Walnut Creek

Broadway Plaza

November 16, Makers Market Outdoor Market, Come to lovely Broadway Plaza to enjoy our Makers Market Fair. 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

November 18, 25, December 2, Pet Night with Santa, 4-7PM. Be picture pawfect with Santa!

November 18 - December 2, Holiday Parade of Lights & Tree Lighting. Experience the excitement of an evening parade that ushers in the Holiday Season.

FARMERS MARKETS

Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market
<http://www.cccfm.org>

Sundays 9AM-1PM, Year Round. Locust Street between Cole and Lacassie St <http://www.cccfm.org/walnut-creek-market/>

Diablo Valley Farmers Market North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr. Shadelands, Walnut Creek, Saturdays 9AM-1PM Year Round 1799 Locust St. www.cafarmersmkts.com
Rossmoor Farmers Market Rossmoor residents and their families only. Fridays 9AM-1PM, Golden Rain Rd. <http://www.cafarmersmkts.com/rossmoor-farmers-market>

LESHER CENTER

November 15, 16, Diablo Ballet presents The Nutcracker Suite.

November 9, The Amazing Bubble Man. Presented by Louis Pearl. 3:15 PM.

November 22, 23, Best of San November 23, 24, The Christmas Ballet. Presented by Smuin Contemporary Ballet

November 29-December 1, Contra Costa Ballet's The Nutcracker. Presented by Contra Costa Ballet

November 29-December 1, Guys and Dolls JR. Presented by Poison Apple Productions

November 30, Laurie Roldan Sings Carpenter Christmas Favorites. Presented by A Voice To Comfort

December 3, Holiday Concert- Presented by Walnut Creek Concert Band

Leshar Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, <https://www.lesherartscenter.org>. Tickets: (925)943-7469 Wed-Sun Noon to 6:00 p.m.

LIBRARY

November 4, Gentle Yoga for All. 6:30pm–7:30pm. Join us Monday evenings to practice Yoga in a comfortable and friendly setting.
November 6, Read to a Dog, 4:30pm–5:30pm. Kids aged 6-12 are invited to sign up for a one-on-one reading session with a therapy pup. Bring a book from home or grab one from our shelves.

November 7, Lego Break! 4:30pm–5:30pm. Take a break and stretch your brain! Build with Lego bricks, KEVA planks, and more! Ages 5-12. No prior registration required.

November 8, Meditation, hosted by the Divya Babaji Sushumna Kriya Yoga Foundation, 10:30am–11:30am. Please join our weekly meditation group! The meditation will be simple, effective, and

designed for contemporary times to suit the needs of our community.
November 14, Cheyenne and Mexica Shields. 4:30pm–5:30pm. In honor of Native American Heritage Month, learn about the Native American tribe of the Cheyenne and the Mexica indigenous people of Mexico and create your own shield or Chimalli with traditional designs.

November 20, Kids Movie Matinee. 4:00pm–5:00pm. Join us for a family-friendly movie afternoon!

For more information: Walnut Creek Library, 1644 N Broadway, Walnut Creek. (925) 977-3340 <https://ccclib.org>

Other Cities

EVENTS

LAFAYETTE: December 13, 7PM, December 15, 3PM, Diablo Women's Choral presents "Feelin' Good!" Jazzy theme with songs from Nina Simone, Spice Girls, Elton John & more. Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Dr, Lafayette.

PITTSBURG: November 7, SIR Branch 19 will hold its Monthly Luncheon, 11 AM with a guest speaker. SIR is a social organization of men who get together and participate in fun activities. Pittsburg Elks' Lodge, 200 Marina Blvd., Pittsburg. www.sirinc2.org/branch19 or call: 925 338-1996

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



Jim Diaz
Mayor, Clayton
jdiaz@claytonca.gov

Clayton Mayor

A Letter from the Mayor

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The City Council proclaimed November 6, 2024, as National Shelter in Place Education Day.

The City Council also received a presentation from our Code Enforcement Unit that the Coded Enforcement Team is stepping up activities to address issues throughout Clayton.

The City Council also received input on the process of creating a City Flag. The presenter, Ted Kaye, Secretary of the North American Vexillological Association (NAVA), is also the author of the Guidebook on Flag Design. The City Flag process could involve the City Council and representative Clayton citizens. This effort could not only produce a City Flag, but the beginning of a unifying event for Clayton. The next step will be to place it on the agenda for a future City Council Meeting.

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 — The City Council recognized Public School Students for exemplifying the “Do The Right Thing” character trait of “Responsibility.” Students recognized were from Mt. Diablo Elementary and Middle School. Well done to all of the recognized Students!

In addition, the City Council recognized Clayton U.S. Postal Service Acting Postmaster Jim Mahan, for his leadership efforts in improving property maintenance, updating, and building enhancement to our Postal Building. Thank you, Jim Mahan!

The City Council appointed Amit Prayag

to the Contra Costa Library Commission.

The City Council designated Council Member Tillman as our Voting Delegate to the League of California Cities 2024 Annual Conference in Long Beach.

Sadly, the City Council adjourned the meeting in honor of three (3) community members who had recently passed away:

Bette Boatmun passed on September 20, 2024. Ms. Boatmun was a Community Leader and member of the Contra Costa Water District for over 45 Years.

Kellie Howard passed on October 5, 2024. Ms. Howard and her husband, Allen, were residents of Clayton for over 15 years.

Debra Gonsalves passed on October 4, 2024. Ms. Gonsalves, born in Pittsburg, was a lifelong resident of Contra Costa County. She was a wife, mother, and grandmother, and her husband, Steve, was a graduate of Clayton Valley High School. The Gonsalves were major supporters of their High School and the greater community.

As always, as your mayor, I will continue to work hard to maintain Clayton’s small-town charm and character while running an open and transparent local government.

You can reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns at 925-673-7316 or JimD@claytonca.gov.

Sincerely,

Jim

Re-Elect Mayor **JIM DIAZ**

Clayton City Council

Paid for by Jim Diaz For City Council | FPPC ID#1248998

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Concord City Council

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HOMELESSNESS IS STILL UP!

BUSINESSES ARE FAILING!

RENT CONTROL IS FAILING!

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AND PABLO BENAVENTE IS NO BETTER!

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I PLEDGE TO DO BETTER!

www.VoteMyles.com

PAID FOR BY MYLES BURKS FOR CONCORD CITY COUNCIL 2024 FPPC# 1474764

VOTE **MARIA SHULMAN**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

FOR CLAYTON CITY COUNCIL

MY PRIORITIES

- BALANCED BUDGET
- COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
- ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- ECONOMIC VITALITY

Elect **MARIA SHULMAN**

CITY COUNCIL

Common Sense for Clayton

Mariaforclayton.com

PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT MARIA SHULMAN FOR CLAYTON CITY COUNCIL 2024 FPPC ID # 14 54147



State Mandates Affordable Housing Zoning Change

The city is subject to a state mandate that requires us to rezone 20 acres for affordable housing in what the state calls "High Resource" areas. The directive was one of the worst written mandates that increased divisiveness and guaranteed to start an uproar...which it accomplished under the title of "Affirming Furthering Fair Housing." (AFFH)

There is a federal housing rule that states in effect that we cannot concentrate affordable housing in one area of the city. The state has taken this to heart and provided a mandate with contradictory metrics in hope of scattering affordable housing around the cities into areas where there is, by their definitions, currently no affordable housing. They further include conditions to require rezoning to allow for higher densities which we have to follow, a requirement that I hate.

Initially, this caused a panic because under their raw criteria, all sorts of spaces within large areas of single-family homes would end up on the target list.

Also required was a series of open meetings both physical and virtual. The idea was to present these as possibilities and let the neighborhood residents make their comments. From these meetings, the staff would then narrow the list to the final sites making up the 20 acres.

There was just one real problem, fear and loathing took hold making the meetings, shall I say, unpleasant.

As of this writing, October 23, there are still two more meetings to go and the city staff has already considered public input (sometimes better described as outrage) followed by a survey, honing it down to a few places, eliminating some of the more

absurd locations.

The next two meetings will be:

Monday, October 28 at Centre Concord, and on Wednesday, October 30, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. Go to city website to register for this AFFH zoom meeting. Cityofconcord.org.

You can see the current possible sites based on the input so far by scanning the QR code.

The top areas are the intersection of Oak Grove and Treat, Clayton Road and Treat at the Bel-Air Shopping Center (Staples), the Kmart Center, and Clayton Fair Shopping Center (Clayton Bowl).

As of this writing, nothing has been decided. There are two more rounds of bloodletting, er, discussion. Also, it is important that the landowners of the sites agree to the rezoning to avoid legal fights.

For this effort, affordable housing is defined for people making less than \$80,000 and as low as \$34,000. Many expressed fears as to who "those people" are. For the record, I am one of them, my two adult kids are amongst them as are my two grandkids.

The question was asked about Section 8 housing. That is a different concept. AFFH deals with constructing specific buildings that are deed restricted and required to be operated under the Affordable criteria. Section 8 is a federal voucher system where individuals can get payments to their landlord to allow them to go into market housing.

All of this will then come down to a council meeting in November or December as we are required to respond. At that time

there will be a staff report and instead of making a flat-out recommendation, I hope staff will list the pros and cons of each of the remaining sites as this is a real policy (POLITICAL) decision and I am sure there will be an extraordinary amount of public comment before the Council will have to decide.

When there is such a big issue, my policy is that I do not want staff recommendation but rather simply the pros and cons of each option. As a councilmember, we have to own the decision and be held accountable for it regardless of staff. This also avoids a lose-lose situation where one side will scream "why didn't you listen to staff" and the other side will say "why do we need you if you are going with staff?"

Such is the joy of being on the Dias.

Views expressed here are by Edi Birsan and not to be confused with someone who has been told by staff what to write or a Dodger Fan.



Scan or click the QR code above to view map of the possible sites based on current community input.

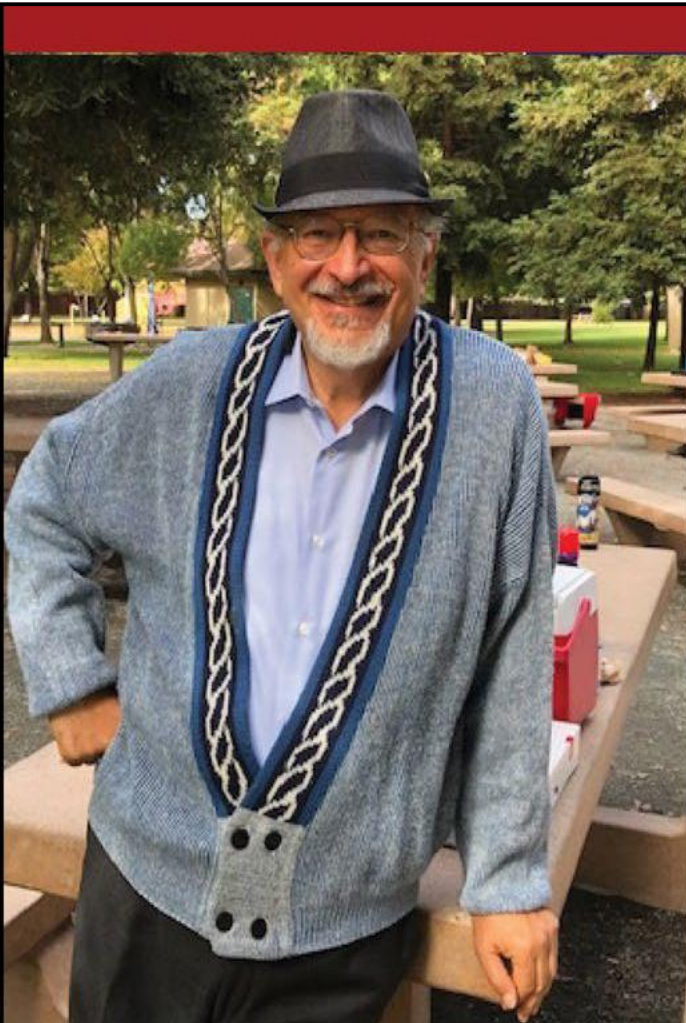
Concord Awards \$5 Million To Organizations For Homeless Plan

The Concord City Council on Oct. 22 approved the allocation of \$5 million to six local organizations for the implementation of the strategies contained in the Homeless Strategic Plan that the Council adopted in February 2024.

Beginning in November, the City will distribute \$5 million of one-time, non-recurring funding to the following organizations. These organizations will offer a combination of temporary housing and comprehensive support services to help individuals transition out of homelessness.

Additionally, they will deliver field-based services to people in their current sheltering locations, addressing essential needs such as medical care, substance abuse treatment, food and hygiene, and workforce development. The ultimate goal of implementing the strategies listed below is to support individuals with successfully exiting homelessness and achieving permanent housing.

- Caminar, Rapid Rehousing: \$1,580,000
- GROW Concord, Mobile Resource Unit: \$1,705,000
- Hope Solutions, Permanent Motel Supportive Housing: \$760,000
- NAMI Contra Costa, Mobile Resource Unit: \$200,000
- Northern California Family Center, Scattered Site Interim Housing: \$25,000
- Veterans Accession House, Scattered Site Interim Housing: \$730,000.



CONCORD CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

UNDER **Edi Birsan's** PROVEN LEADERSHIP:

28%
CONCORD'S HOMELESS POPULATION IS DOWN 28%

10%
CRIME IN CONCORD IS DOWN 10%

\$120 MILLION
INVESTMENT IN ROAD REPAIRS

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CONCORD POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION



CONCORD FIREFIGHTERS

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to Protect Yourself

In today's digital era, taps and clicks are part of everyday conveniences that help us shop, pay bills, and order food. Websites and apps allow quick and easy communication, money movement and other sensitive tasks. While convenient, this accessibility can expose personal information to cybercriminals. As online services grow, so does identity theft by fraudsters.

Data breaches have exposed hundreds of millions of consumers to hackers. In 2023, the Federal Trade Commission reported over one million identity theft complaints, with thieves stealing more than \$10.3 billion. Many scammers pretend to be government officials, fraud departments, distressed relatives, well-known businesses, or tech support experts.

Cyber thieves who access personal data, such as birthdates, social security numbers, addresses, or financial information can use the information to open accounts in your name, convince you to send money to money to a fraudulent person and file bogus tax returns in your name. Victims often remain unaware until weeks or months later, typically realizing the issue when verifying account balances or viewing statements. Damage may include financial loss, adverse effects on your credit score and the time and cost associated with having to restore your name.

Here are a few valuable tips to protect your personal information:

1. Secure your devices and accounts with strong, unique passwords, and turn on multi-factor authentication. Also, don't reuse passwords for different accounts,

Identity Theft: What to Know and How

especially bank accounts.

2. Use an encrypted password wallet to store your passwords. This way you can create complex passwords without having to remember them.
3. Request to freeze your credit from the three primary credit bureaus – Experian, Equifax and TransUnion. A credit freeze prevents loans from being opened in your name. You can request to 'unfreeze' the account when you want to apply for a loan. This service is free.
4. Regularly update your software and operating systems to stay current with the latest upgrades.
5. Enable alerts on your financial accounts to receive notifications for every transaction or for transactions that exceed a specified dollar amount.
6. Don't open emails, click on links, or answer calls from suspicious addresses or numbers.
7. Avoid using public Wi-Fi for financial transactions, such as online banking or shopping, as well as for checking email or browsing social media.
8. Invest in an identity theft protection service to monitor, detect and alert you about attacks on your identity or finances.

By following these best practices, you can help protect yourself from fraud and identity theft. For more information, visit www.pacificservice.org or contact a member service representative at (888) 858-6878.

Written in conjunction with AI



Home Buying Experience

When it comes to buying a home, many buyers focus on the property itself, overlooking an essential player in the process: the loan officer. Understanding the vital role of a loan officer can make a significant difference in your home-buying journey. Here's how they can help you navigate the complexities of securing a mortgage.

Understand Your Financial Situation

Before you start house hunting, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of your financial landscape. A loan officer can help you assess your income, expenses, credit score, and overall financial health. They will guide you in determining how much you can afford, ensuring you set realistic expectations before you begin your search.

Exploring Loan Options

With a plethora of mortgage options available, it can be overwhelming for first-time buyers to choose the right one. A knowledgeable loan officer will explain the pros and cons of various types of loans, such as fixed-rate, adjustable-rate, FHA, and VA loans, enabling you to make an informed decision that aligns with your financial goals.

Pre-Approval Process

One of the most critical steps in the home-buying process is getting pre-approved for a mortgage. A loan officer will assist you in gathering the necessary documents, such as income verification, tax returns, and credit reports. This pre-approval not only strengthens your position when making an offer but also gives you a clear budget to work within.

Loan Officers Are Key to a Smooth

Communication with Lenders

Throughout the mortgage process, your loan officer will act as your primary point of contact with lenders. They will facilitate communication, ensuring that your application is processed efficiently and addressing any issues that may arise. Their expertise in navigating the lending landscape can save you time and stress.

Closing the Deal

As you approach the closing date, your loan officer will explain the closing process, review closing documents, and ensure that you understand your mortgage terms. Their guidance during this final stage can help you avoid any last-minute surprises.

Post-Purchase Support

Even after the purchase, a loan officer can remain a valuable resource. They can provide information on refinancing options, home equity loans, and other financial products that may benefit you in the future.

When buying a home, a loan officer plays a pivotal role that goes beyond just securing financing. They provide essential support, knowledge, and guidance.

A seasoned realtor will have trusted lender partners they can recommend, ensuring you are in good hands throughout the home-buying process. It can make all the difference in finding a lender who understands your unique needs and financial situation.

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\$1,349,000

56 La Honda Ct, Clayton

Beautifully Updated Home Tucked Away at the End of the Court in Desirable Regency Meadows with pool/spa & partial Mt. Diablo views. 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, approx. 2390sf on an approx. .28 acre lot with an attached 3-car garage.



\$399,000

5430 Roundtree Ct #B, Concord

Beautifully updated Roundtree Unit with stylish and functional upgrades throughout. 2 bedrooms, 1.5 baths, approx. 973sf. In-unit laundry & assigned carport. Great location in complex.



\$1,750,000 SOLD OVER LIST!

50 Mountaire Pl, Clayton

Sensational Remodeled Dana Hills Rancher nestled at the end of a court on a premium view lot backing to Mt. Diablo State Park. 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, approx. 2637sf on an approx. .32 acre lot with an attached 3-car garage. Beach entry freeform in-ground pool w/ built in spa & cascading waterfall.



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jennifer@bhrbroker.com
www.jenniferstojanovich.com

Clayton Market Update

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
21 Clark Creek Cir	\$675,000	1113	3/2	9/30/2024
1378 Yosemite Cir	\$1,100,000	1592	3/2	10/3/2024
6028 Golden Eagle Way	\$1,050,000	2536	4/2.5	10/4/2024
5122 Keller Ridge Dr	\$1,070,000	2467	4/3	10/7/2024
27 Rialto Dr	\$1,045,000	2324	5/2.5	10/7/2024
415 Zinfandel Cir	\$999,000	1811	3/2.5	10/7/2024
51 Mt Olympus Pl	\$1,200,000	2152	4/2	10/11/2024

Concord Market Update

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
5511 Pamplona Ct	\$780,000	1420	3/2	9/20/2024
788 Terrapin Ct	\$1,045,000	1852	4/2	9/23/2024
1317 Saddlehill Ln	\$1,250,000	2537	4/3	9/26/2024
5567 Ohio Ct	\$843,550	1346	3/1.5	10/4/2024
3051 Treat Blvd #121	\$298,500	805	1/1	10/7/2024
3861 La Vista Ct	\$1,148,000	2448	4/3	10/7/2024
1865 Las Ramblas Dr	\$902,000	2041	4/2.5	10/16/2024

Based on information from CCRAR/Paragon MLS® as of 10/18/24. 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.



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WINTER'S EMBRACE

NOVEMBER 2ND THROUGH FEBRUARY 2ND, 2025



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Assemblage
Guest Artist



New Hope
Mix Media on Yupo



Dee Tivenan
Guest Artist

1026 Oak Street, Suite 102, Clayton, CA.
jorfineartgallery.com

RECEPTION ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND FROM 4-6 PM

Carlyn Gets Results



Together, we have accomplished a great deal: *Repaved Roads, Safer Neighborhoods, New Housing and Jobs, a Cleaner Downtown, and Spruced Up Parks.* You told me your concerns, and we delivered results.

I ask once again for your support so I can continue to fight for what matters most to you.

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CONCORD CITY COUNCIL

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Instagram: @CarlynObringer1

Paid for by Carlyn Obringer for Concord City Council 2024 • FPPC# 1324644


NOT EDI BIRSAN AGAIN!

"It's long past time for Edi Birsan to go. He was one of three councilmembers in 2016 who pressured the city manager to withhold a staff recommendation for a master developer, and he cast troubling votes in 2021 and 2023 for a second master developer."
~EastBayTimes 10/17/2024

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- °Is **NOT BEHOLDEN** to ANY Corporate Interests
- °Has **Hometown Values** and **Great Community Relationships**
- °Has **Decency, Honesty & Integrity**

Vote Myles Burks
Concord City Council



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PAID FOR BY MYLES BURKS FOR CONCORD CITY COUNCIL 2024 FPPC# 1474764

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

When a Pet Crosses the Rainbow Bridge

There is no good time to lose a pet to illness or a tragic accident, but having your beloved animal cross the rainbow bridge can be particularly difficult. No matter how they leave us, it is never easy to say goodbye. We hope that heart-wrenching day never comes, but when it does, here are a few coping strategies to help you through it.

According to Dr. Sarah Hoggan, an emergency veterinarian, who gave a TED talk about grieving the loss of a pet as “a bona fide medical condition.” She says: “Navigating through grief is not a straight line. As we learn to live with a loss, there is no timeline, no deadline; it is a process of discovery to be experienced at one’s own pace.”

Holidays may trigger feelings of seemingly unbearable sadness. By scheduling time to remember a pet, the complex feelings of loss can be more manageable. Some coping strategies during the holidays include lighting a candle in the pet’s honor at the dinner table and sharing the good times or a funny story. Writing down feelings in a journal or having a child draw a picture of the deceased pet may be helpful. Consider attending a pet loss support group such as Walnut Creek’s Joybound’s in-person free monthly sessions. And if the need to have someone listen is urgent, the Pet Compassion Careline is a 24/7 grief support call center available to everyone: (855) 245-8214. Remember, the stress of the holiday season will end. With time, the pain will ease. But your love for your pet and the joy they gave you is timeless.

Free Dog Food

Joybound’s FoodShare Pantry offers free dog food for Contra Costa County resident dog owners in need. The next giveaway is November 5 between 9:00 am - 11:00 am at 2890 Mitchell Drive, Walnut Creek and on November 12 between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm at the Joybound Thrift Store, 1950 Market St, Concord, CA FoodShare pantry. FoodShare operates on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants must be at least 18 years of age. Joybound People & Pets reserve the right to refuse service to anyone.

Xylitol Warning:

Some food manufacturers are now calling xylitol, an additive that is highly toxic to dogs, by different names such as birch sugar, birch sap, or birch bark extract. Xylitol can cause liver failure. Be aware of this new terminology and avoid giving dogs foods such as sugar free gum or candy. Xylitol may also be in Jello, peanut butter, candy, mints, toothpaste, cough drops, syrups and other medicines. Signs of xylitol ingestion include vomiting, weakness, decreased activity, staggering, collapse, and seizures. Call your vet immediately if you think your dog has eaten xylitol.

Jill Hedgecock is a local author of several novels featuring animals. Her new release “In Shadow’s Reflection” is the third novel in her young adult Doberman series. This novel, along with “Between Shadow’s Eyes” (Book 1) and “From Shadow’s Perspective” (Book 2), is available on amazon.com.

The Blue Devils C Corps Announces 2025 Auditions for Young Performers

The Blue Devils C Corps, which is part of the world-renowned Blue Devils Performing Arts organization, is announcing auditions for its 2025 season. This is a perfect opportunity for beginner brass, percussion, and color guard students in Northern California,” says Claire Simpson, Director of Engagement for the Blue Devils organization.

Since its inception in 1980, the Blue Devils C Corps has been a gateway for young performers ages 8-15 to jump-start their journey into the marching arts.

No Prior Experience Is Necessary. The inclusive and welcoming environment is ideal for students just getting started with music and performance. The Blue Devils C Corps focuses not only on teaching performance skills but also

on fostering personal growth. “Participants build lifelong friendships while developing key values like dedication, hard work, and teamwork through engaging social activities.”

The 2025 season will officially begin with Opening Night on Monday,



December 2, 2024, but new members are welcome to join at any point throughout the season.

“The Blue Devils C Corps is an incredible opportunity for young performers to discover their passion for music and the marching arts,” said Matt Sieve, Director of the Blue Devils C Corps. “Our program is designed to nurture beginner students in a supportive, fun environment, where they can grow not only as performers but as individuals.”

The Blue Devils C Corps is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants. CDC guidelines will be followed to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 exposure, allowing students to fully enjoy their experience.

For more information about auditions or how to get involved, visit BlueDevils.org/programs/c-corps. Interested participants can also contact Matt Sieve directly at msieve@bluedevils.org. BlueDevils.org/programs/c-corps



Sugar Plum Coffee Shop Turns 65!

Sugar Plum, known as the 2nd oldest-running restaurant in Concord, is now another year older (Barney's Hickory Pit is the oldest) and will be celebrating its 65th anniversary throughout the month of November.

Sugar Plum Coffee Shop first opened its doors on November 30, 1959. Soon after, it became "the" meeting place in Concord, known for its delicious food and homey atmosphere. Over the years, several owners have operated this historic diner, but its reputation for homemade biscuits and gravy, smoked applewood bacon, and fresh hash browns, remains.

The current owner, Claudia Lemus, sat in a booth with me, along with previous owner Ray Rosenblatt for some coffee and historical reminiscing. Ray said he bought the coffee shop on February 13, 1996. Claudia worked for him off and on all her life since the age of 15, as well as other members of her family. We went through the names of past owners and employees. We pulled out old newspaper clippings, some original dining tickets and took photos off the wall too wax nostalgia.

The City of Concord proclaimed July 2, 2009, as "Sugar Plum Coffee Shop Day" to honor its 50 years of community service. But Claudia and Ray claim every July 2 to be Sugar Plum Day.



Ray and Claudia recall their 26 years working together.

And, of course, much of the success belongs to Jose, the man behind the apron and before the grill. This cook extraordinaire has been pushing out meals there for 25 years. If you ever dine alone, I recommend you take a seat at the bar and watch Jose Tapia, Esteban Chavez and the rest of the staff perform their wizardry behind the counter. It's quite the choreography.

We discussed how Claudia purchased the restaurant in what may have been the worst possible timing. She bought it in early 2020 — the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. With severe dining restrictions imposed, she improvised and navigated through those lean years relying on a variety of promotions, car hopping, street dining, pick-ups and take outs.

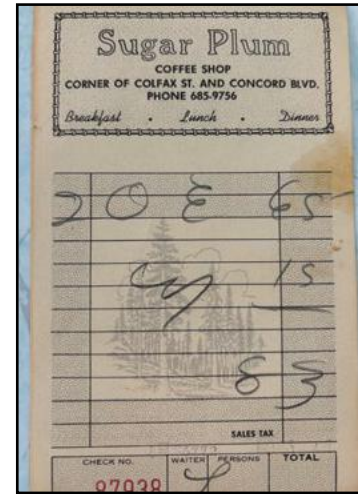
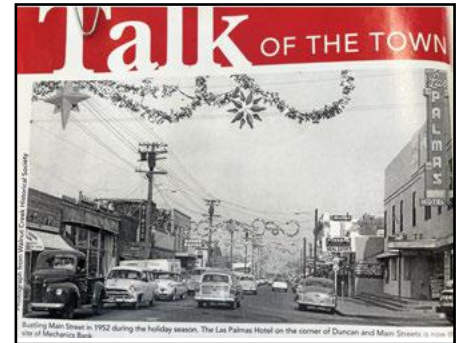
She also invested in updating and refurbishing the restaurant but maintaining its signature 50's style atmosphere.

"I was proud of being a part of the Concord community," Ray says. "Claudia was the perfect person to pass the legacy on to. She has always understood its charm having worked here since she was 15."

Ray says, Claudia was a godsend. In regards to COVID-19, "I would have been drowning." Claudia's use of social



Ray Rosenblatt, Esteban Chavez, Jose Tapia, and owner Claudia Lemus.



From 1959, check for two eggs and coffee, \$.83!



Old News clippings hang on the wall at Sugar Plum

celebration, congratulate them and enjoy a cup of coffee or meal. Sixty-five years is no small feat for any small business. The legacy of a truly family-oriented, friendly place to get a reasonably-priced meal and swap stories continues to this day.

On November 21 at 5:30- 8:00 p.m., come celebrate with Classic cars, discounts, music, and more. "Bring the kids, we're ready for the next generation of customers," Claudia says.

Happy 65th Anniversary Sugar Plum.

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Around Martinez



by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

Shop Local to Keep Your Sales Tax Dollars in Martinez

The holiday season has begun! We all inherently know that we should shop locally and support our local businesses, but there are some very real implications to your local economy when you purchase a product from a local Martinez business.

On June 21, 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court decided *South Dakota v. Wayfair, Inc* (Also known as the “Wayfair Decision”) which supported South Dakota imposing sales tax requirements on online retailers that meet a given threshold of sales. In this landmark decision, the Court overturned the requirement of a “physical presence” for a sales tax nexus.

In the state of California, we implemented the Wayfair decision by passing AB 147, which requires retailers to collect sales tax if they meet the economic threshold of cumulatively selling greater than \$500,000 worth of items for delivery to California, and defines a “marketplace facilitator” who is the retailer responsible for the collection of taxes. The facilitator processes payments, collects receipts, and may possess the seller’s inventory (such as in warehouses). This law took effect October 1, 2019, and loaded in new taxpayers into our economy (Amazon being the biggest).

Sales tax revenue from out of state shipment of goods is distributed by the State through state and countywide “pools” in proportion to the rest of taxable sales within the county. Approximately 20% of our \$29 million general fund budget comes from sales and use taxes; 80% of sales tax revenues come from our Martinez businesses while 20% comes from our share of the County pool.

Shopping local, rather than online, ensures that your tax dollars stay in your community this holiday season. Shop Local!



Looking for ways to support your local businesses?

Friday, November 22: #SHOPSMALLFIRST. Downtown Martinez & Co is joining The Boutique Hub and many other small businesses countrywide this holiday season in Pink Friday! On Pink Friday, we are shifting the holiday shopping narrative away from big corporations and towards our beloved local gems. Candy Cane Lane on Main Street with dancers, music, and a holiday market reaches the pinnacle with the annual Christmas Tree lighting in Main Street Plaza. This event will kick off Toys for Tots in collaboration with and sponsored by Nuvision Credit Union. Everyone is invited. For more details go to: <https://downtownmartinez.org/pink-friday>

Saturday, November 30: Small Business Saturday. Celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday then come on down y’all and Shop Small for Small Businesses Saturday. Small businesses will offer specials, discounts, giveaways and more. Visit your favorite Downtown Martinez businesses and Downtown Martinez social media to see happenings for the day. Come to the Santa House opening on this day for some s’elfies with Santa Claus from Noon-3pm.

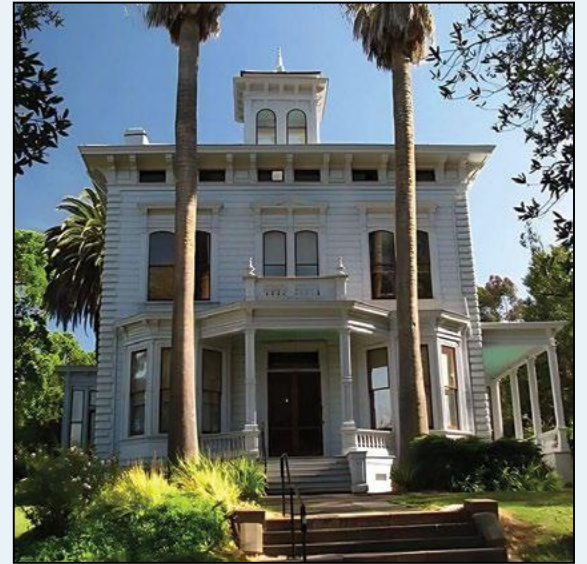


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Explore Martinez
www.martinezchamber.com

The John Muir Association Seeks New Board Members

The goals of the John Muir Association (JMA) are to celebrate the life, share the vision, and preserve the legacy of John Muir. This is accomplished through education and advocacy of John Muir’s values in partnership with the National Park Service at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez. This house was the home of John Muir for the last 24 years of his life.



JMA is looking for one or two new Board members to help continue their current annual events: John Muir Birthday-Earth Day, Mountain Day Camp, Muir Conservation Awards, and the Muir Native Garden. Members are also needed to help expand their work in the areas of grant writing, use of social media, increasing membership, and developing new educational events.

As a volunteer Board, Board members will be expected to: commit to the goals of the organization, attend monthly Board meetings and agree to serve on the Board for a minimum of two years

The Board continues to expand its impact on the local and regional community. The Board will meet with prospective candidates. If interested in serving, please send your letter of interest for consideration by December 31, 2024, to Linda Vida, JMA Vice-president, linda vida55@gmail.com or call 510-917-8648. For more on JMA go to ohnmuirassociation.org.

I See Dead People Photos by Thomas Rimpel.

Halloween is not lost on Martinez as Main Street was full of zombies and fabulous costumes for both the Zombie Crawl on October 12, and the Trick or Treat Spooktacular on October 26 as these photos indicate. Adults and kids alike came out for the festivities.



NOVEMBER EVENTS

- Nov 01 Alhambra Cemetery Tour
- Nov 02 Compost Giveaway
- Nov 02 Día de los Muertos
- Nov 7-9 Poppy Drives
- Nov 11 Veteran's Day Memorial
- Nov 16 Tree of Lights Ceremony
- Nov 22 Pink Friday Sip n Shop
- Nov 22 Frosty's Holiday Boutique
- Nov 22 Downtown Tree Lighting
- Nov 28 Happy Thanksgiving!
- Nov 30 Small Business Saturday
- Nov 30 Pop Up Party Knots & Found

www.cityofmartinez.org/events Follow our Social Media for more!



Martinez Library Celebrating Día de los Muertos

Join the Martinez Library staff in celebrating Día de Muertos with a variety of activities happening daily through Saturday, November 2. Día de Muertos is a holiday originating in Mexico to honor loved ones who have died. Typically, ofrendas are decorated with sugar skulls, marigolds, candles, pan de muerto and other goodies.

Planned activities, suitable for preschool through age 18, during the next month include coloring a paper sugar skull, creating a paper marigold, writing a poem or remembrance of a loved one, and/or bringing in a photograph of a loved one. Items will be put up on the bulletin board ofrenda.

Free Compost Giveaway Scheduled for November 2

Republic Services is hosting a free compost giveaway for Martinez residents on Saturday November 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Marina Yacht Club parking lot, 111 Taratino Drive. To participate, residents must reserve an appointment for the event in advance.

Click or scan the QR code to schedule your appointment time or go to <https://www.republicservices.com>. Click on November 2 in the calendar to choose appointment time.



Bring a government-issued ID (such as a driver's license) with a Martinez address to the event. Bring ID, a shovel, your containers, gloves if you can, and wear closed-toe shoes. You will have approx. 10-15 minutes to fill the containers you bring (40 gallons max.) 8 x 5-gal. buckets work best. No bags please. There will be some staff on hand to help.

For more information, call Republic Services Customer Service at 1-925-685-4711 or visit RepublicServices.com/MartinezCA. Happy Gardening!

Presto Autonomous Shuttle on the Move



Residents can now ride the Presto autonomous shuttle throughout Martinez. The free service from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority is available on-demand Monday through Friday from 6 to 10 p.m., with service from the county

hospital to select stops available from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. (stop by the hospital information desk to book a ride during this time). Other trips can be reserved by downloading the May Mobility app from the Apple or Google Play stores or calling 1-925-995-3797. The vehicles are wheelchair accessible and make stops at popular community and retail destinations, such as Walmart, Nob Hill Foods and Safeway, Susana Park, the Amtrak station and the Kaiser Permanente medical offices.

Although the vehicles are self-driving, a safety attendant is on board at all times and can take control of the vehicle in an emergency. Martinez is the third location for the Presto pilot project, following Bishop Ranch in San Ramon and the Rossmoor senior living community in Walnut Creek.

Go to <https://ridepresto.com/martinez/> to learn more about the service and how to ride.

New Regulation on Sturgeon Fishing as Fish Population Dwindles



Beginning October 1, sturgeons may be fished only on a catch-and-release basis as state officials seek to reverse dramatic decline of species whose origins date back 200 million years — and which holds a special place in Martinez

The recent decision by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) prohibiting anglers from keeping white sturgeon, the largest freshwater fish in North America, reflects the increasingly dire state of the fish species.

The white sturgeon population in California has plummeted an estimated 80% in the past 25 years because of various human-caused factors, according to CDFW, and the agency over the summer approved it as a candidate species for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).

Long popular in Martinez fishing circles, the sturgeon has become a prominent symbol of community pride in recent years as the mascot of Martinez's professional baseball team.

While Martinezians have been rooting for the Sturgeon baseball team at Waterfront Park the past few summers, there has been much less attention paid to the losing battle being fought by the fish itself in the Carquinez Strait a short distance away.

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Contra Costa County Board of Education Election Preview: Race for Area 3 Seat is an All-Martinez Affair

by Craig Lazzeretti, Martinez News and Views

The race for the Area 3 seat on the Contra Costa County Board of Education pits former and current members of the Martinez Unified School District Board of Trustees to fill the seat being vacated by another Martinez resident who is favored to win election to the California Assembly.

Vicki Gordon, who previously served on the MUSD and Contra Costa Community College District boards and ran unsuccessfully two years ago for county clerk-recorder, is running against Yazmin Llamas, who won election to her first term on the MUSD board in 2022.

Whoever wins will replace Anamarie Avila Farias, a former Martinez council member who is completing her first term on the board and is the Democratic Party nominee and favorite to win the District 15 seat in the California Assembly. Avila Farias is backing Llamas in the election.

In addition to Martinez, the Area 3 seat on the county board covers Bay Point, Clyde, Crockett, Hercules, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill, Pittsburg, Port Costa, Rodeo and parts of El Sobrante.

The County Board of Education works with the elected county schools' superintendent, Lynn Mackey, to oversee the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE). CCCOE serves multiple functions in local public education, such as providing direct educational services to students whose needs cannot be sufficiently addressed by their home school districts; as well as oversight and support services to schools and school districts throughout the county, including budget approval and fiscal support.

Gordon worked as a Martinez teacher in the late 1980s and early 1990s before returning to MUSD as a substitute teacher in August.

Gordon has significant financial and organizational support in the race, including from the Pittsburg Unified School District teachers' union, which has given her \$2,500. In all, Gordon had raised over \$20,000 in contributions to fund her campaign as of Sept. 21, mostly from her husband Scott, an attorney, and his

legal practices, and reported over \$11,000 in expenditures (the next campaign finance filing deadline is Oct. 24). Her endorsements include the California Teachers Association and state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond.

Llamas, meanwhile, had reported no contributions as of Sept. 21 and \$1,350 in expenses. She works in real estate finance. In addition to Avila Farias, she has the backing of Mackey and current County Board of Education President Michael Maxwell.

Gordon said that, as the daughter of a teacher, she was motivated to run for the county board seat "from my lifelong passion and dedication to education and student success."

In addition to over two decades of combined experience as a MUSD and Contra Costa Community College District trustee, she served on the MUSD Bond Oversight Committee and as chair of the West Contra Costa Unified School District Redistricting Commission (disclosure: She also served with Gordon on the WCCUSD Redistricting Commission).

"My experiences have prepared me well to hit the ground running and be able to get up to speed very quickly," she said.

Llamas said that, as the daughter of a father who arrived in the United States from Mexico in the 1960s as a farm worker in the federal Bracero Visa Program, her motivation for running for the board seat is "simply to give back to our community."

"My parents raised me with the virtue of living 'in contribution,'" said Llamas, noting that she didn't speak English when she started elementary school. "They were firm believers of helping those in need."

Gordon said her top qualifications to serve on the board are "my direct



Vicki Gordon Yazmin Llamas

experience and knowledge of governing a school district for 15 years and a community college district for eight years as well as my training and experience as a classroom teacher; my wide community/governmental relationships and networks; and my years of leadership/advocacy and communications skills."

Llamas said her top qualifications for the board seat are holding a Bachelor of Art in Education and Ethnic Studies and a Master of Public Administration from UC Berkeley; working with at-risk, special education and English learner students in local school districts; and being a mother with children currently enrolled in Martinez public schools and at Diablo Valley College.

Gordon said her top three priorities if elected are expanding access to programs for county students "that will increase the knowledge and skills for success in college, careers and technological fields"; increasing "fundamental programs for skills in reading, math and science"; and leading and advocating "for compensation that will attract and retain quality teachers, which impacts student success."

Llamas said her top three priorities if elected are promoting student achievement; expanding wellness and behavioral health support for students, teachers and families; and ensuring financial transparency.

Gordon said the biggest thing that distinguishes her from Llamas is her decades of experience in the education field and service on public education boards, including the "unique experience" of serving on a commission that "dealt with setting boundaries for local school board races, ensuring that all voices in the community are represented." She added: "I am the only candidate that comes fully equipped to do the job from day one and the one that can continue to do the work of effective governance as well as represent the constituents of Area 3."

Llamas says what distinguishes her is her experience as a mother of school-age children during the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that she is "very familiar with the struggles and setbacks that transpired during this terrible period." Additionally, she highlights her current role as a school district trustee engaged in the various challenges facing students and the societal and technological factors forcing public education to evolve, along with a familiarity with "the economic struggles that many of our families are currently facing and our school budgets issues."

Learn more about Gordon and her campaign at <https://www.vickigordon2024.net>

Learn more about Llamas and her campaign at <https://yazmin4boe.com/>

This article has been truncated. To read the complete article and related articles regarding this race at <https://martineznewsandviews.substack.com/>



Soroptimist International of Martinez

7th Annual Bingo Bash
5:00 p.m., Saturday, November 16, 2024
Martinez Refining Company Clubhouse (formerly Shell Clubhouse) 1635 Pacheco Blvd., Martinez

\$30 Entry Fee covers 10 games including Blackout
(Players must be 18 years and older.)

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Proceeds from this fundraiser will support Soroptimist Dream Programs and fund scholarships for local women and girls. Soroptimist is a global organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.
www.soroptimistmartinez.org

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The Wild Robot

When a service robot becomes stranded on an island uninhabited by humans, it must learn to adapt to its new surroundings.

Rozzum unit 7134, or “Roz” for short, is a service robot programmed to help humans complete tasks. The robot speaks in a female voice (Lupita Nyong’o) and has the ability to access the needs and language of her potential clients. She is quite confused and dismayed, however, when she is unable to find and offer assistance to humans.

Roz quickly realizes the island is only occupied by animals that do not trust her and do not want her help, causing her to feel like an outcast. Even though she is not accepted, Roz believes she has no choice but to build a temporary home among the wildlife until she can get off the island.

Fate steps in and gives Roz the task of caring for a young gosling that has lost his family. When their lives intertwine, it creates challenges beyond the robot’s original programming of what completing an assignment can mean.

While it can seem implausible that a robot would experience personal growth and change, this is an intelligent story that has the audience on board with the evolution of this hunk of metal. The supporting characters in the wilderness offer



humor, wisdom and even fear. The messages of working together and accepting the responsibilities of your actions will resonate with children and adults alike. The animation is lush with vibrant colors and nuances that highlight the wilderness. It is best experienced in the theater where you can immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of this imagined island.

It is unlikely another animated movie will come along this year and usurp “The Wild Robot” from taking home the Best Animated Feature Academy Award. Usually, it is predictable that any movie from one of the big animation studios is a sure win, regardless of its ability to add anything fresh to the genre. This time, it will be satisfying to see if the award goes to such a beautifully created film despite its big studio cred.

Rated PG
In Theaters



The Supremes at Earl's All-You-Can-Eat

Do not be confused by this movie title. The film is not about a time when the legendary singing trio The Supremes ate at a diner. Instead, it is the story of three women and their decades-long friendship.

The title comes from diner owner Earl (Tony Winters), who pays the teenaged girls a compliment when they enter his establishment, remarking they look like the beautiful Supremes. The moniker sticks and the young girls keep the label into adulthood.

The three young women could not be more different. The refined, yet judgmental, Clarice (Uzo Aduba) hopes to be a concert pianist. Feisty Odette (Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor) relishes her fearless reputation, and quiet Barbara Jean (Sanaa Lathan) tries to rebuild her life after losing her troubled mother.

Even though the girls have vastly different personality traits, they bond over not quite fitting in with their peers. Clarice carries herself with an air of superiority, and some kids are just plain afraid of the tough Odette. The unfortunate Barbara Jean is stuck in the town’s gossip mill because of her hard-drinking, wild mother. Once these young women decide to rely on each other, their commitment to friendship makes others take notice.

As the girls grow into women, they fall in love, make mistakes, and face hardships. The film truly feels like a throwback with dramatic story arcs, confrontations, and three friends holding each other up when necessary.

The backdrop of Earl’s diner is pivotal to the nostalgic ambiance and essence exuded in this film. It is a treat to see the



diner change over the years and watch different generations of kids dance to the jukebox, and later meet there as old friends, remaining connected to the community and each other. In the midst of it all, Earl is like the beloved uncle in the neighborhood, looking out for everyone and stepping in when needed. Over the years, we see him help not only Barbara Jean, but other struggling youths who could use a helping hand.

Since the storyline spans multiple decades, some plot points feel rushed through. With so much terrain to cover, this may have been better as a miniseries. It is a compliment to all the performers that viewers will leave wishing they had more time with Clarice, Odette and Barbara Jean. Fans of the Netflix series “Orange Is the New Black” will also take pleasure in seeing how far the talented Uzo Aduba has come in her successive roles.

This is the perfect film for a quiet weekend when you want to surround yourself with snacks and sink into a juicy drama.

Rated PG-13
Available to stream on HULU



The Lost City of the Monkey God, by Douglas Preston

“The Lost City of the Monkey God” (Grand Central Publishing; Illustrated edition, 2017, paperback, 336 pages, \$11.23) by Douglas Preston chronicles the true events surrounding several expeditions into the Mosquitia mountains of Honduras in search of a fabled lost city. His compelling prose creates the intense experience of exploring a dangerous, impenetrable jungle potentially riddled with drug lords that had never undergone scientific study.

The book includes a comprehensive history of the search for the legendary civilization commonly known as La Ciudad Blanca, the White City. Preston describes the early explorers, including one unscrupulous man who pulled off a lucrative hoax for years. It took the modern breakthrough technology of LIDAR to uncover a massive hidden archeological site buried in the overgrown forest in a remote valley sheltered by mountains.

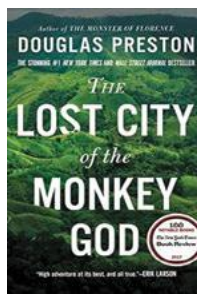
The logistics of flying into this hostile environment required permits, security personnel, and expert pilots. Once they arrived, adverse weather, poisonous snakes, and insect hazards plagued the expedition. The extensiveness of the lost city unfolded as the exploration went deeper into the forest. One of the most amazing finds was a buried cache of valuable artifacts.

After the core team returned to civilization, many discovered they had contracted an aggressive parasitic disease, called mucocutaneous leishmaniasis, which is an often incurable and sometimes lethal affliction. Preston returns for a second trip to view the excavation of the cache of ornate clay containers. The book tackles questions about why the ancient people who lived there left seemingly

overnight and how they might have survived the illnesses that plagued the explorers.

“The Lost City of the Monkey God” was named A New York Times Notable Book of 2017, a #1 New York Times and #1 Wall Street Journal bestseller, a Best Book of 2017 from the Boston Globe and an Amazon Best Book of January 2017. Fans of “The Lost City of Z by David Grann, Erik Larson’s books and true survival books like Jon Krakauer’s “Into Thin Air” will likely enjoy this book.

Douglas Preston is the author of over forty books, both fiction and nonfiction. Thirty-two of his books have been New York Times bestsellers. Although he is best known for his thrillers in collaboration with Lincoln Child (including the Agent Pendergast series), his solo novel, Jennie, about a chimpanzee was made into a Disney movie. His nonfiction book, “The Monster of Florence”, was made into a television series for Apple TV. He taught nonfiction writing at Princeton University. Preston has been published in “The New Yorker”, “National Geographic,” and “Smithsonian” magazines. He is the recipient of numerous writing awards including a shared Edgar Award. From 2019 to 2023, he served as president of the Authors Guild, the nation’s oldest and largest association of authors and journalists.



Have You Read the Authors Who Also Write for *The Diablo Gazette*

Available on Amazon Books & Kindle

Michael Barrington 'Your Neighbor's Shoes' www.www.mbwriter.net

Jill Hedgecock 'BookEnds' & 'For Love of Pets' www.jillhedgecock.com

David George 'Naked Gardener' amzn.to/46EQ6sP

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The Arts Page



by Paula Oesterling

The Colors of Change at Main Street Arts



13th Annual Holiday Boutique at aRt Cottage

The holiday season has arrived at the aRt Cottage with our 13th annual Holiday Boutique. It officially opens on Saturday, November 9, with a reception for the many artists and

crafters who will be there to present, discuss and answer questions about their products. The reception is from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

All of the items at the boutique will be available through December 22. Some of the items that you will find at this year's Holiday Boutique include large and miniature paintings, jewelry, knit and crochet items, glassware and trinkets, felted critters, Christmas ornaments, greeting cards, and much more. Items range from \$5 to more than \$1000. You are certain to find those one-of-a-kind host gifts for your next holiday party.



Donna Arganbright



Natalie Gamble



Mary Jane Dilke

At Main Street Arts Martinez in November and December, the theme for this holiday season will include art pieces that have something circular within. Our display will delight all who visit!

The gallery's Christmas tree, loaded with hand-crafted and hand-painted original ornaments will be on display throughout this two-month period. These mini-art treasures make terrific gifts for everyone.

When you visit the gallery, be sure to sign up for our monthly "art giveaway." In November, Chris Granillo will offer one of his colorful paintings.

Main Street Arts will celebrate First Friday on November 1, with extended hours from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and again on December 6.

Main Street arts is located at 613 Main Street in Martinez open Wednesday-Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m..

Happy Holidays to all.



Holiday tree, Pam McCauley



Dean Evans, Glazed Donut



Olga Jusidman, Raku Fish



John Tullis, Sweet and Sour



Pam McCauley, 5 Paint Cans

Blackhawk Gallery

Carlyn Lord Artwork Featured at Blackhawk Gallery

California artist, Carolyn Lord is inspired to paint vernacular architecture, landscape, and gardens. Her artwork is represented by galleries in Santa Rosa, San Francisco, Carmel, Fallbrook, Mt Carmel, UT and Crested Butte, CO.

Magazine articles and podcasts highlight her working methods and career. Lord is a member of the California Art Club, California Watercolor Association, National Watercolor Society, American Women



Calpella Garden By Carolyn Lord



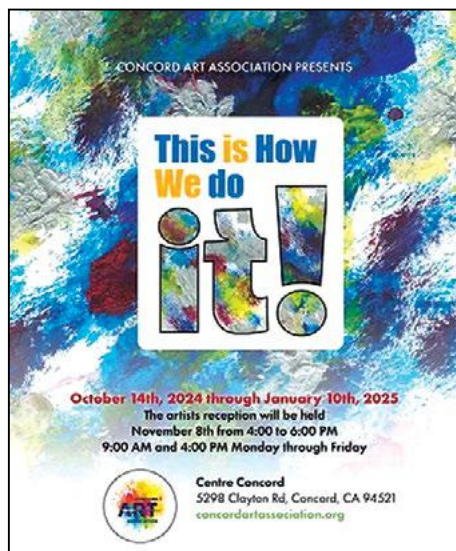
Sunnyside By Carolyn Lord

This Is How We Do It! Exhibit at Centre Concord

"This Is How We Do It" exhibit opened on October 11 and will continue through January 9, 2025 at Centre Concord.

Viewing is available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Public reception will be Friday, November 8, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Centre Concord is located at 5298 Clayton Road behind In-Shape Fitness Center.



Artists. 2024 highlights include solo and group art exhibitions: Studio Gallery, San Francisco; Firehouse Art Center, Pleasanton; Piedmont Center for the Arts; Fallbrook Art Center; San Marino League.

Meet Carolyn and view her work on November 12, at the General meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Blackhawk Gallery, 3416 Plaza Circle in Danville.

For information about these and other upcoming shows, as well as watercolor workshops, visit her website www.carolynlord.com

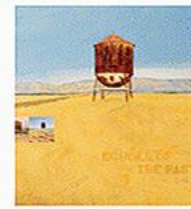
Winter's Embrace: A Wonderland of Art at JOR Fine Art Gallery



Edgar Tumbaga



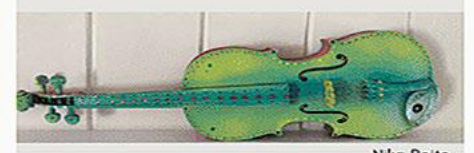
Lorry Bennett



Dennis Johnson



Chelsea Tikotsky



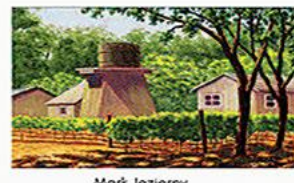
Nika Rojto

WINTER'S EMBRACE

November 2nd - February 2, 2025

Reception: Saturday, November 2, 2024

4-6 pm



Mark Jozierry



Leslie Golden

JOR Fine Art Gallery is excited to present Winter's Embrace, an upcoming exhibit featuring stunning works by 34 talented gallery artists and two exceptional guest artists. This collection showcases the beauty, magic, and emotions of the winter season through a wide range of artistic styles and mediums.

From serene landscapes to bold, abstract interpretations, Winter's Embrace offers a unique exploration of winter's charm and mystery.

Whether you're a passionate art lover or just curious, this exhibit promises to inspire and captivate. Experience this remarkable showcase of creativity and talent, perfect for anyone looking to be moved by the wonders of winter. From November 2 through February 2, 2025.

Enjoy the reception on Saturday, November 2, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at 1026 Oak St. in Clayton.



Five Tips Houseplants Want Black Thumbs to Follow

November is a “swing season” for gardeners. While some prepare beds and plant winter-growing vegetables for a spring harvest, others turn their attention indoors.

Many otherwise successful gardeners struggle with indoor plants, stating that they have a “black thumb” and a high kill rate. Learning successful houseplant cultivation and watering practices prevents more than 90% of these deaths. Let’s explore the all-natural gardener’s five secrets that houseplants want you to know.

Soil is different for indoors. Always start with a potting mix that contains a liberal amount of perlite or coconut coir, to ensure the pot soil holds even amounts of water and air. A couple of tablespoons of native mineral soil from your garden per inch of soil in the pot adds essential trace minerals. Houseplant soil should feel fluffy or spongy to the touch, not heavy or dense.

Water sparingly or not at all. Forget expensive moisture testing tools. Stick your finger an inch or two into the pot soil. If you feel moisture at all, do not add water. If you are home most days, many successful indoor plant growers wait until the leaves wilt before watering. But remember to water them before you go away for an extended vacation and invest in water bulbs if you travel frequently.

Houseplants need light. Houseplants manufacture their own food through photosynthesis. But direct sunshine can burn or kill them. Bright locations with indirect sunlight are generally best. These locations are near windows where sunshine reflects off sills, walls, or furniture and onto leaves. Check with a trusted source about specific houseplant sun needs.



Golden Pothos

Guard against cold drafts. Over the years, successful varieties have been selected for enjoying the mild atmosphere of indoors. Wild swings in temperature will weaken or kill these mild-temperature lovers. They should not be placed where windows are frequently left wide open, or doors that let in outdoor heat or cold. Even cold drafts from another room can affect a houseplant’s health. If you feel hot or cold, they will too.

Choose houseplants that thrive on neglect. Once you place these varieties in the right conditions, they are almost owner-proof. My favorites are Jade Plant (and other succulents), Golden Pothos, Chinese Evergreen, Peace Lilies, Monstera, Snake Plant, and for a larger space Fiddleleaf Fig tree.

Seasonal Notes: Plant flowering bulbs after the first soaking rain when the ground is moist and more workable. Dig a round, shallow hole to drop in bulbs. Cover them up and let nature keep them moist until they sprout and flower in early-mid spring.

Mandarin and navel oranges also begin to ripen now and peak before New Years. Nighttime temperatures in the lower 40’s turn their skins into the characteristic orange color. Cover trees with a breathable fabric or old sheet to keep fruit from freezing during an early cold snap.

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

Contra Costa Crisis Center

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CONTRA COSTA CRISIS CENTER

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For more info, visit mdrr.com/give-back-2024





Food & Wine, Gift Giving Season

Wine and food make great gifts because they can be consumed and don't clutter up the house. I like to offer a gift of wine or food in a pretty bag with a bow so the gift-receiver is welcome to serve it or save it.



When deciding on what wine to give, seek out varietals that pair with the most food.

For those that like something a little sweet, give an off-dry German Riesling. In fact, Riesling pairs with more types of food than any other wine.

Surprised? You shouldn't be. German Riesling grapes are grown in some of the coldest, steepest vineyards on earth. The cold temperatures maintain searing acidity and the angle of sun exposure provides maximum ripeness. This creates a wine with intense aromas and flavors as well as mouth-

watering acidity.

Off-dry Rieslings generally work with anything spicy or acidic and even many desserts. It is a white wine with enough punch to stand up to Mongolian Beef.

If red wine is the preferred choice of the receiver, consider a Pinot Noir. While the movie "Sideways" made it popular, sommeliers have known for years that Pinot Noir is a red wine that walks the line between delicate seafood and beefy rib-eye. I have even had it with strawberry ice cream and was pleasantly surprised.

What makes Pinot Noir such a great wine for food? First, it is the acidity. Many delicious foods are high in acid (tomatoes for instance). If the wine doesn't have enough acid, it tastes flat next to the food.

Second, Pinot Noirs usually have soft tannins as compared to other red wines. Bold tannins make anything spicy taste like a four-alarm fire in your mouth.

Third, Pinot Noirs are usually made with a restrained use of oak. Oak creates interest and complexity in wine, however, too much oak and you can forget about tasting the food, all you taste is oak.

A few regions known for growing great Pinot are the Willamette region in Oregon, or Mendocino and the Santa Rita Hills in California. All three have quality, well-priced Pinot

Noir.

As for gift foods, spiced nuts are my favorite. They are versatile because they can be served before or after dinner. They make a great snack and keep for quite some time in the fridge.

Here is a tasty recipe that has just the right amount of sweet, spicy and savory. Bonus... they pair well with both Riesling and Pinot Noir.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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

Spiced Nuts



INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 cups unsalted mixed nuts, such as walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, and almonds
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 6 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon water

DIRECTIONS

Mix spices and reserve. Heat the nuts in a dry skillet and cook, stirring frequently, until they begin to toast, about 4 minutes. Add the butter and cook, stirring, until the nuts begin to darken, about 1 minute. Add the spices, the sugar, 1 tablespoon water, and the salt and cook, stirring, until the sauce thickens and the nuts are glazed, about 5 minutes.

Remove the nuts from the heat and transfer to a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil, separating them with a fork. Let the nuts stand until cooled and the sugar has hardened, about 10 minutes. Store in an airtight container.

Yield: 4 cups

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In Case You Missed It...

Local News Items from Claycord.com and Other Sources

Meet the Bobcat Family

This small family of bobcats was seen roaming in Crystyl Ranch neighborhood. (Photo credit: John Cooper)



Contra Costa County To Celebrate Completion Of New Terminal Building At Buchanan Field



Join County Supervisor Ken Carlson, County Supervisor Diane Burgis, and the Contra Costa County Public Works Department in celebrating the completion of the new terminal building at Buchanan Field Airport.

The new building is approximately 18,000 sq. ft. and includes two aircraft rescue and firefighting bays, Airports Division administrative offices, and a terminal area for passenger processing.

“Cross-Examination”: A New Podcast From The Contra Costa District Attorney’s Office

Why would The Contra Costa District Attorney’s Office start a podcast? The answer is simple: to inform the public on legal issues that directly impact our community. The approach of the “Cross-Examination” podcast is one that focuses on depth and detail.

Aiming to unpack the complexities of the criminal justice system, shine a light on important public safety topics, and foster transparency in law enforcement as it applies to residents in Contra Costa County.

Cross-Examination is available now on Podbean, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, iHeartRadio, and other podcast platforms.

City of Concord Wins Prestigious Helen Putnam Award For ‘Creative Concord’



The City of Concord was honored October 17 with the prestigious Helen Putnam Award for Excellence, by the League of California Cities, in the category of Economic Development through the Arts for its Creative Concord public arts program.

Concord Mayor Edi Birsan accepted the award on behalf of the city.

“We are grateful to be recognized for this program, which sparked public

interest in the arts...,” Birsan said.

Established in 2022 as an effort to reignite Concord’s vibrant downtown, the program brought three annual multi-day events to the city, featuring mural installations, live canvas paintings, live music, sculptures, and community involvement.

Since its inception, the program has brought together more than 100 organizations, businesses, and advocates to collaborate and help make Creative Concord thrive. The program has also given back to the community in many forms, including paid opportunities for dozens of local artists and talent, donating artworks to local nonprofit organizations, monetary donations to charities.

Creative Concord is made possible through a collaboration among the city, Local Edition Creative agency and Visit Concord.

See’s Candies Opening Store In Clayton Near Safeway

See’s Candies is opening a store in the Clayton Station shopping center in Clayton (Safeway shopping center). The store will be located next to Little Caesar’s.

New Sourdough & Co. On Clayton Rd. In Concord



Sourdough & Co. opened a new location on Saturday October 19. The restaurant is located in the Safeway shopping center on Clayton Rd. at Denkinger in Concord.

Walnut Creek Police Get New Bomb Sniffing Dog Named “Lucky”



Lucky will specialize in finding explosives as a part of the Bomb Squad, but you will also see her around town on patrol with K9 Officer Dehl.

Lucky, just like most of the Bomb Squad resources, was paid for using federal grant funding and will be a great addition to the department.

For more stories visit Claycord.com



Neuroplasticity

by Jessica Raam Foster, NeurologyofPresence.com

Go Beyond Traditional Exercise Routines, Engage with the World

Something a lot of us are forgetting as we stare at screens and enjoy the conveniences of modern life, we are a physical being in a physical world. But it is not just lack of movement that can cause our health to decline, it is the lack of neurological stimulation.

Our physical bodies are designed to interact dynamically with the environment around us. This 3-dimensional engagement is essential for optimal health and well-being.

Multisensory stimulation and multiplanar movement, activities that extend beyond most traditional exercise routines, are crucial for thriving. Active engagement with our surroundings helps us function at our best, reminding us that it is not just about moving, but rather it is about how we move and interact with the world.

I recently had a client spend her session with me picking up garbage from the side of the road. It was a perfect brain boost for her as she felt amazing after that experience. Participating in such activities not only benefits the environment and our community but also serves as an excellent multi-planar workout. Activities like picking up trash provide the brain with novel movement patterns and sensory pathways, promoting both physical fitness and mental clarity.

Here are a few concrete ways to incorporate these principles into daily life:



Move Beyond the Gym — Look for opportunities to be active in your daily routine. Tasks such as gardening, playing with children, or even cleaning your space can provide valuable movement while breaking the monotony of traditional workouts.

Practice Multisensory Activities — Engage in activities that stimulate multiple senses. Cooking, dancing, or exploring nature combines movement with sensory experiences that invigorate both body and mind.

Incorporate Variety — Include different movement patterns in your day. A simple example would be to try walking backwards or sideways on your next walk. Mixing it up helps your body adapt and thrive.

By embracing and interacting with the world around us, we can unlock a multitude of health benefits. So, grab your walking shoes and engage with your community. Your body and mind will thank you.

Journeyman continued from page 3

degree of difficulty to locate. The plan is to reach as many of the checkpoints as possible for the most points each day. At the end of each day, all teams meet at base camp, set up camp, and enjoy dinner prepared by Michelin Star Chef Drew Deckman, and tuck in as the next day’s leg begins at 5:00 a.m., and repeat for eight days.

Neither Sevilles has any experience in any of this. While Peyton is an engineer, as is most of the competitors, Christine has had her career in medical sales. Nothing they have done could have prepared them for this, except, as Christine says, they have “grit.” So much so they named their team “Grit Chicks.”

Peyton has an adventurous soul. She had heard through a newsletter about an engineer at a different company who had done it and thought that sounded really interesting. She knew her parents had just purchased a 2024 INEOS Automotive Grenadier, a revered British SUV, and challenged her to enter the rally.

“You get up in the morning, you get longitudinal and latitudinal checkpoints, and then you plot them out on your map. And you take off in the car, and you find them only using a compass,” Christine explained.

This is hardcore. There are no bathrooms, no amenities, and lunch is Mountain House dehydrated camping meals. And no showers — Peyton said they used baby wipes.



This was also during some of the hottest days on record, from October 9 -19, driving through the outskirts of Death Valley, through the Dumont Dunes and Imperial Dunes in Nevada. At one point, one of their wheels caught fire. “We were in our car, and then someone pulled up, alongside and said, ‘Your wheel’s on fire.’ We had to put out the fire,” Peyton said.

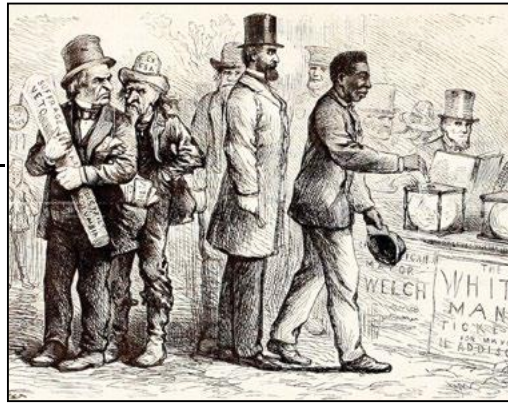
“It was so hot. When we were camping out in the dunes, the wind was so hard. It kept blowing our tents over.” They also broke their drive shaft but persevered over the final two days.

The Grit Chicks accomplished their goal and finished in 58th place. As for the mother-daughter bonding, both stated overall, it was amazing fun, and they would do it again, but with different teammates.

At midway through the week, during some of the more difficult days, Peyton turned to her mom and said, “If you’re ever wondering what I’m gonna talk about at your funeral, this is gonna be it.” And they laughed.



Negro Suffrage—Should they Vote? ~158 years ago



With the elections currently consuming our media, I found this historical article from 1865, shortly after the civil war, discussing the major voting issue of the times. Some may find this troubling to read.

Contra Costa Gazette - June 10, 1865

After the struggle of our Civil War, as soon as the pacification of the South and re-organization of labor begin in earnest, one of the great questions to be decided, will be whether negroes shall be allowed to vote. That they are to be paid for their labor, to have legal marriage and the control of their own children, learn to read and write, hold real estate, give testimony in Courts of Justice, and in general, enjoy all civil rights, no one pretends to dispute. But are they to have political rights also? On this question, there is a division of opinion.

President Johnson and the more conservative men favor their education and gradual preparation, before they be allowed actually to enjoy the high privileges of political citizenship. They may possess all the civil rights that minors and women now enjoy, and yet not vote and sit on juries and hold office. They may be good, and safe and useful citizens, and yet, for a long time be debarred all political rights.

How shall it be? This is a practical question that must be settled by each State for itself. Possibly the decision may be very different in the different States. In northern States, where there are few blacks in comparison with the number of the whites, it is a question of little importance. But in the South, where their numbers are equal to, or greater than the whites, this question is of immense gravity, involving the weal or wo of the entire framework of social structure. What shall be the decision?

The following are some of the arguments made use of by those in favor of allowing them all the political rights that belong to whites.

1. Political rights are the only

NEGRO SUFFRAGE.—After the struggle of our civil war, as soon as the pacification of the South and the re-organization of labor begin in earnest, one of the great questions to be decided, will be whether negroes shall be allowed to vote. That they are to be paid for their labor, to have legal marriage and the control of their own children, learn to read, and write, hold real estate, give testimony in Courts of Justice and in general enjoy all civil rights no one pretends to dispute. But are they to have political rights also? On this question, there is a division of opinion. President Johnson and the more conservative men, favor their education and gradual preparation, before they be allowed actually to enjoy the high privileges of political citizenship. They may possess all the civil rights that minors and women now enjoy, and yet not vote and sit on juries and hold office. They may be good, and safe and useful citizens, and yet, for a long time be debarred all political rights. How shall it be? This is a practical question, that must be settled by each State for itself. Possibly the decision may be very different in the different States. In northern States, where there are few blacks in comparison with the numbers of the whites, it is a question of little importance. But in the South, where their numbers are equal to, or greater than the whites, this question is of immense gravity, involving the weal or wo of the entire framework of the social structure. What shall be the decision? The following are some of the arguments made use of by those in favor of allowing them all the political rights that belong to whites.

1. Political rights are the only sure means of preserving and guaranteeing the continu-

sure means of preserving and guaranteeing the continuance of the natural, civil, personal and religious rights conceded to them. This is a strong argument.

2. They will be taxed, and it is a fundamental American principle, that there should be no taxation without political representation. Shall we deny them what our fathers fought for in the War of 1776?

3. They have shed their blood for the cause of the Nation. Shall they be denied the rights of men and citizens in that Nation?

4. White rebels who submit will be allowed to vote, although in heart, are haters of the Federal Government. Shall black patriots who love their country be deprived of the same privileges?

5. It is not certain that any one State can deny rights that are allowed in other States as the common rights of national citizenship, because the Constitution says, "the citizens of each State shall have all the rights and immunities of citizens in the several States."

6. Uneducated blacks are as capable of voting understandingly as uneducated whites, whether Mexicans, Irish, French, Germans or even Americans, and the educated are certainly not less capable. All the blacks will soon be educated.

7. Negro suffrage has wrought no harm in those States where it has been tried. It has only served to aid in elevating the character of the blacks.

8. The strength of a Government lies in the cordial support of all its inhabitants. The more numerous those who are excluded from the elective franchise the greater the number of possible enemies.

9. Political agitation on the subject will never cease, until these rights are secured to the blacks. This agitation in the South must grow in violence from year to year, so long as such exclusion continues.

A Final Look at California State Assembly Candidates

Sonia Ledo, Businesswoman

I'm committed to making real change in our district. I'm not a career politician — I'm a self-employed businesswoman who has spent over 30 years building a career and a life here in Contra Costa County. I'm also a single mother of four sons, including autistic twins.



I have earned the endorsements of local law enforcement associations, including the Martinez Police Officers Association and the Contra Costa County Deputy District Attorneys' Association.

I support Prop 36 and believe in expanding technology for our police departments to keep our communities safer.

I am deeply invested in supporting small businesses and cutting unnecessary regulations that stifle growth. It's time we make California a state where businesses thrive.

I'm passionate about reforming education, supporting parents' rights, and expanding vocational programs that prepare students for real-world success.

I will represent our district with fairness, transparency, and a strong work ethic, ensuring that your voice is heard and respected. Together, we can build a brighter future for California, one that works for everyone, not just the powerful few.

I'm Sonia Ledo, and I'm asking for your vote so that I can represent you in the State Assembly. Let's get to work.

www.SoniaLedo.com

Anamarie Farias, CCCOE Board member



Anamarie earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and a Master of Science in Information Systems Management from the University of San Francisco.

A lifelong, third-generation Contra Costa County resident, who devotes herself to public service, including public policy work in government and non-profit organizations focused on helping people escape poverty.

I am committed to creating greater economic opportunity for all while breaking down the barriers, myths, personal attacks, and stereotypes — especially those that affect women.

In 2012, she was elected to the Martinez City Council

In 2020 she was elected to the Contra Costa County Board of Education.

She chaired and served on the Martinez Planning Commission for nearly a decade and served on the Parks & Recreation and Marina Commission for five years.

In 2015, Anamarie was appointed by former Governor Brown to the Board of Directors of the California Housing Finance Agency. (CalHFA) and re-appointed to the CalHFA Board in 2021 by Governor Newsom.

Her priorities include: Provide Affordable Housing, Support Working Families, Transform Public Safety, Invest in Education, Healthcare, expand Behavioral Healthcare, Provide Affordable Childcare, Support Home Care/Aging in Place, Promote Environmental Justice, Support Vulnerable Communities, Bridge the Digital Divide, Climate Change.

www.anamarie4assembly.com/

MDUSD School Board Area 5: McDougall vs. Patel

Tom McDougall

I feel that there are complicated issues, both financially and administratively, that are present with the MDUSD District.



Financially, the district is operating with a deficit-spending mode. They are working through a \$160 mil reserve fund that was available in 2022, and by the end of the 2025 school year, that reserve fund is projected to be \$46 mil. There are a number of practices that need to be reviewed to stop this downward trend, primarily by addressing a declining enrollment.

Administratively: the district has increased its administrative staff by double, over the 2019 year (prior to Covid). The real need is to find more certified teachers (a problem for districts nationwide). Currently the district is running at roughly 76% certified, while the state average is 82%. Methods for attracting teachers need to be revised, by thinking "outside the box".

May Patel Top Priorities

Building Communities where every student and family feels accepted and engaged.

Stronger School Environment - A sense of belonging and community increases student engagement and motivation, which can lead to better academic outcomes.

Mental Health and Wellbeing for students, teachers, and staff.

Mental health is closely tied to academic performance. Addressing mental health challenges can help students focus, learn, and succeed in school.

Enhanced Career Pathways to local Apprenticeships and Higher Education.

By connecting students to local apprenticeships and higher education opportunities, you help them gain the skills and experience needed to secure well-paying jobs, which can significantly improve their economic prospects.



Proven leadership and dedicated public service—Anamarie has spent decades fighting for affordable housing, safer neighborhoods and working families.

As the only candidate raised in our district, **Anamarie will always put our community first.**

**Elect
Anamarie
Avila Farias
for State Assembly
District 15**

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CVCHS Journalism Program Continues to Soar

Photos by CVCHS journalism student Samantha Jinkerson.

At CVCHS, we believe that journalism is more than just reporting news. It's about fostering leadership, critical thinking, and communication skills that serve students well beyond the classroom. That's why I am especially proud of "The Talon," our school's student-run newspaper, as well as the students participating in our elective Journalism class. Both serve as a platform for students to explore journalism in all its facets. From writing and editing to fact-checking and interviewing, the skills developed through these programs are invaluable, and the positive impact they have on our students' academic and personal growth cannot be overstated.

One of the unique highlights this month was a press conference held inside our school library. This event, staged by our journalism students, provided an incredible opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience in the field. The press conference centered around interviews with members of the student homecoming committee, who were fielding questions about the much-anticipated homecoming activities, including the parade and the football game against Acalanes High School on October 18.

As our journalism students asked their well-researched questions, students from Clayton Valley's video production class captured the event on film. This dynamic, multi-disciplinary collaboration gave all participants a deeper understanding of how journalism and media work in tandem. Senior journalism student PJ Bazzano reflected on the experience, saying, "It was super valuable to be in that sort of environment, getting to interview people."

The benefits of our journalism program go far beyond the press conference. Numerous studies have shown that involvement in student journalism correlates with higher academic achievement. More than just a way to build writing skills, journalism teaches students how to analyze information critically, verify facts, and meet deadlines—all essential life skills. Moreover, student journalists gain an understanding of the role and responsibilities of a free press in a constitutional

republic. Journalism helps create a more informed citizenry, making people less susceptible to misleading information.

While high school papers across the country are in decline, we are proud to support "The Talon." Many professional journalists trace their roots back to their high school newspaper, and it's vital that we provide students with these opportunities. The responsibility to nurture the next generation of reporters does not rest solely on colleges; high schools must also play a part.

"The Talon", originally founded in 1958 and modified as an online publication during the COVID-19 pandemic, has been an essential source of information for both our campus and the community. Over the past few years, the newspaper has covered a wide range of topics, from school events to larger societal issues, helping students become well-informed and engaged citizens.

This month's press conference was a testament to the growth and potential of our journalism students. As junior Ryan Dusich, a member of the homecoming panel, noted, "I didn't know what questions were going to be asked coming into this. So, as they were asking me questions, it made me stop and think, 'Oh, I do know about this. I can answer that.'" Dusich was joined on the panel along with seniors Logan Remington and Dylan Swensen.

The hands-on experience and collaboration gained from these opportunities is invaluable to our students. It is this type of experiential learning that makes journalism such a powerful educational tool here at



Homecoming committee members participated in an October 1 press conference hosted by journalism students.



October 17 Homecoming parade in downtown Clayton and other activities were planned by CVCHS students.

CVCHS.

"It's a confidence builder for young reporters to ask questions and make their voice heard in an open setting like that," CVCHS journalism instructor Joe Stiglich said. "And for our students on the panel, it challenged them to think quick and articulate their thoughts in front of a big group."

While this year's homecoming has past, I encourage you to read more about our school, campus activities and issues impacting our students in "The Talon" (<https://www.cvchstalon.com>). Our student voices are powerful because they are diverse, inspiring and reflect our student population. I want to thank our students and staff for ensuring "The Talon" continues to soar, providing an outlet for creativity, leadership, and critical thinking.

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	BE GLOBAL		BE DRAMATIC
	BE ROBOTIC		BE SPIRITED
	BE VOCAL		BE ATHLETIC

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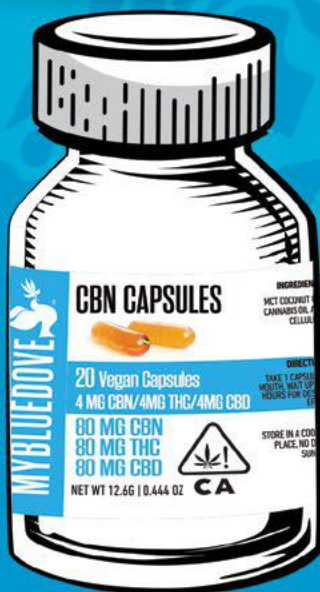
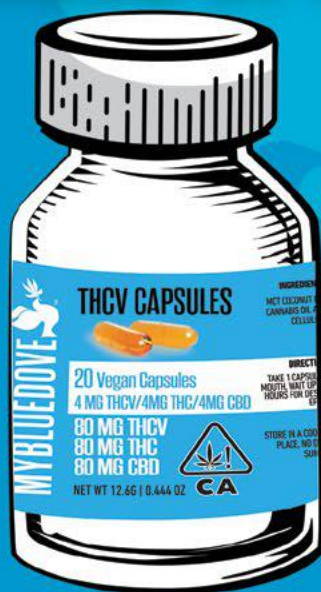
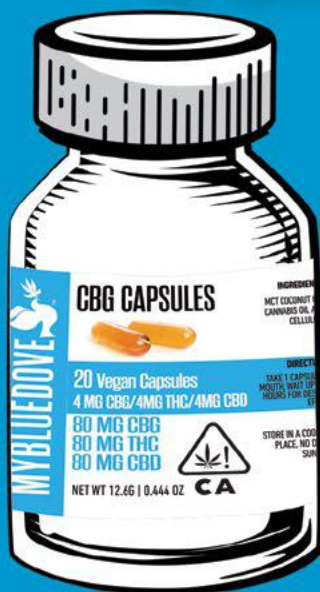
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