

The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment & Community News That's *Good* in Our Communities
 Concord, Clayton, Sutter Creek, Martinez, Pleasant Hill
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MARCH 2023



A Journey to Yosemite

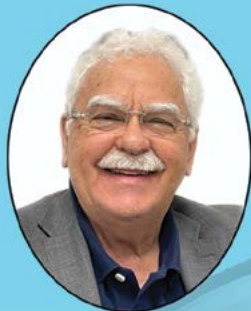
Concord resident, Scott Feuer, tackles snow camping at Yosemite National Park, joyous as a storm approaches.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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- Swimmer, 63 and Still Setting Open Water Records
- "Kiteman of Martinez" Found on Google to Fly in Qatar's Kite Festival
- Marathon Refinery Produces First Gallon of Renewable Diesel
- Calendar of Events, Oscar Predictions, and more...

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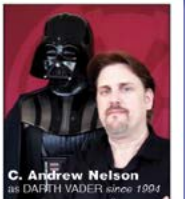
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Hoffmeister Delivers Concord's State of the City Address

By David King

At the Mayor's Luncheon on February 1, hosted by the Concord Chamber of Commerce, Mayor Hoffmeister delivered the State of the City to a sold out audience of community leaders, business owners, and invested citizens.

It had been a few years since her last address. As she pointed out, "Flip phones was the technology of the day." In that address she had mentioned that someday in the near future we will all become reliant on mini-computers as a daily device. That would now be our smartphones.

What can we expect in the future? How far away are we from the life of the Jetsons? With increasing traffic congestion, are we headed towards a city of flying cars? Maybe not, but we already are on the verge of driverless cars, and pilotless drones. "We are getting there," she says.

She began the address by first paying homage to Concord's Veterans and to recognize the City's memorials to honor them: the annual Beacon Lighting on Mount Diablo which just honored the 81st Anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Korean War Memorial, Vietnam War Memorial, Blue Star Memorial, Gold Star Memorial, and the High School Fallen Soldiers Memorial.

Overall, the state of the City is positive. Concord is full steam ahead rebounding after the Pandemic with

goals of rebuilding the staff, roadways, and its finances.

In recovering from the Pandemic, Concord received \$27 million in ARPA Federal funds which the city is in the process of distributing.

\$7 million will go to City projects, infrastructure, public safety and special events.

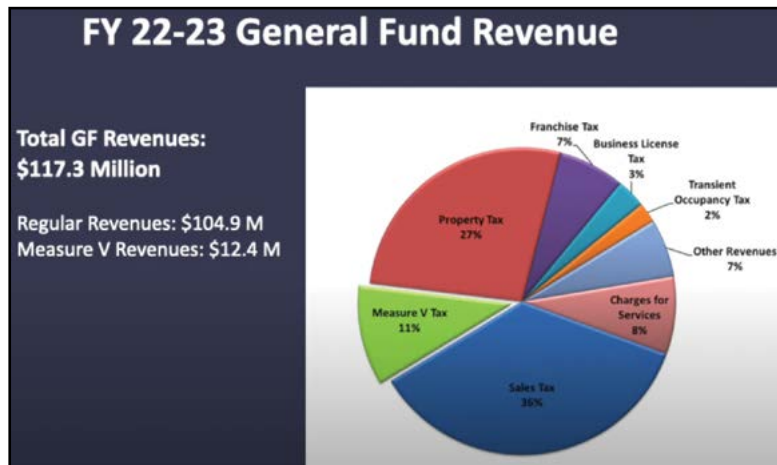
\$7 million is targeted to supporting non-profits.

\$3 million is destined to help the unhoused.

\$2 million goes to small businesses.

\$8 million in assistance to the City for Covid testing, PPW, CORE social workers, small business relief, etc. While some small business grants have been distributed, the remaining grants will be dispersed this Spring.

On the subject of our unhoused. A community panel will be assembled to help in preparing a strategic plan to present to the City staff and Council. The council has approximately \$5.4 million in its coffers to support the unhoused which it will direct upon completion and acceptance of the plan.



Property Taxes

For those wondering where property tax money goes, Hoffmeister broke it out. Of every tax dollar: .53 cents goes to schools and colleges, .15 cents to Contra Costa County, .11 cents goes to the City of Concord, and .21 cents towards other taxing entities.

Capital Improvement

Fixing roads is the primary concern voiced by Concord citizens. In response, City has approved \$120 million for Improvement Projects which includes a 5-year pavement improvement plan. It is the largest such funding ever committed in the city's history. This is a result of the passage of Measure V which allowed the City to leverage funding for those projects. This includes:

- Grant and East streets pavement rehabilitation,
- Some of the trench work road delays on Willow Pass traffic is for traffic signal upgrades installing technology for better traffic flow.,
- Port Chicago /Bates Avenue pothole base repair.
- Hillcrest Park Green Infrastructure,
- Monument Boulevard,
- Bike lanes and ADA, installing license plate readers, maintaining the 343 parks, community centers, and community pool.

Housing

The city is planning for the state-mandated housing increase of 5,000 more units by 2031. Currently, some housing projects are already underway such as the Rick Judd Commons 62-unit affordable housing project on Galindo Street. Penny Lane with 70 units just completed on Clayton Road. The Argent is building 181 apartments on Willow Pass Road, Salmon Run - 32 units Downtown on Clayton Road, and others. Another 200 units have been approved for construction including the Avesta Senior Living of 150 units.

Housing will be a combination of market rate to low to moderate income housing. Grant Street is completed downtown with 228 luxury units in two mixed-use buildings, now available for lease.

As per the white picket fence property on Galindo, State mandated that it be offered to non-profits.

Continues on Page 8



Fiscal Stability

In June of 2020, the general fund was down \$7 million. To offset this, the City ultimately cut about \$10 million which translated to the loss of 36 positions in 2021.

Fortunately, the City has rebounded and generated higher than anticipated revenues in 2022. With this the City has set priorities to fund its Unfunded liabilities, staff positions, and increase funding towards

Public Works' improvement projects, deferred maintenance and addressing homelessness.

General Fund Revenue

For fiscal Year 2022-2023, Hoffmeister points out the importance of local business as it is responsible for 36% of tax revenues, and there is an additional \$12.4 million in tax revenue due to the passage of Measure V. Our taxes are responsible for about \$86 million in general fund revenues.

Part of the rebound credit was given to Visit Concord for its role in increases in travel related spending — up over 37% in 2022 and over \$30 million in hotel sales, an 11% increase.

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YOUR NEIGHBOR'S SHOES
by Michael Barrington

Suzanne Heim-Bowen

Age Sixty-Three, Still Setting Open Water Swim Records

Sometimes we can live on a particular street for years and sometimes never get to know all of the people who live there. Some of our neighbors have amazing tales to tell.

With two Masters degrees and having worked for Contra Costa County Office of Education as a School Psychologist for twenty-four years, most people would consider that a life's work.

But Suzanne Heim-Bowen's passion for helping others focused on children who were medically fragile, had severe behavior disorders, were intellectually delayed and some with autism. She went even further and spent her final seven years with the county at the Mt. McKinley School located at Juvenile Hall which itself is an amazing feat and achievement. She speaks



Suzanne wearing her critter suit in 2022

about her experiences with passion, and it is clear these were special meaningful times for her.



Suzanne featured in 1981 after a Tiburon to San Francisco swim.

But this amazing lady from Walnut Creek has another passion. She is the holder of 35 Masters World Swimming records. She won medals in the USA, Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Bermuda, and England. With a swim record that covers multiple pages of her massive resume, it is difficult to single out some of her incredible achievements.

In her own words, "I was introduced to the water as a baby with the Mommy & Me classes at the local YMCA in Marin and as a youngster competed in AAU competitions. At age 14, I quit swimming to play boy's water polo at San Rafael High School, and run cross country. I later helped start the Women's Swim Team at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Fearful of the ocean due to a near drowning accident at age 5, I never stepped foot into the ocean again until age 18. At 19 I joined the San Francisco Dolphin Clubs and competed in 25K open water swims as part of the USA National Team."

She began her long-distance swimming career in the late 1970s and in the 1980s pioneered many swims trying to understand what was swimmable with the notorious tides/currents of San Francisco Bay.

Suzanne was voted USA Long Distance National Swimmer of the Year and Team Captain in 1988 and represented the United States in the 1988 FINA World Cup in Lake Geneva where she won a Silver Medal (First Amateur) and the USA Team won a

Gold Medal. She swam the English Channel three times and has set numerous Open Water speed world records including a three-way, six-person relay, England-France-England-France that set the world record in 1986 at 32 hours and 54 minutes. She has swam around Angel Island, Alcatraz to San Quentin, Lake Tahoe (21.3 miles), Catalina Island to the mainland (20 miles), Manhattan Island (28.5 miles) and so much more. Her induction into the International Masters Swimming Hall of Fame in 2007 reads:

"Many swimmers spend their youth focusing on pool swims and later turn to open water swims. It was the opposite for Suzanne Heim-Bowen.



Suzanne wearing a few of her medals

"At 19, she teamed up with the San Francisco Dolphin Club competing in open water swims around the world. Some of these swims include three crossings of the English Channel, Lake Geneva, 17 swims in San Francisco Bay waters—many of her records have yet to be broken. In Masters open water events she has 29 age group first place finishes.

"Suzanne jokes that the 50 free is her favorite event. Returning to the pool, she has accumulated over 23 Masters World Records in freestyle events ranging from 100m to 1500m."

At age 50, Suzanne was asked if she would like to swim distance events for Diablo Valley College. Since she still had her college eligibility she agreed and enrolled as a freshman where she outpaced most of her teammates 30 years younger who affectionately

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100th Happy Birthday Jane Peterson

Congratulations to local centenarian, Jane Peterson who was born March 17, 1923. Jane was married to Grover "Pete" Peterson for 64 years until his passing. They have four children together: Ellen, Robert, Andrew and Samuel.

Jane is college educated and was a teacher of second and third grades at Ayers for many years. Over the years she has enjoyed playing bridge, exercising, traveling, attending plays and the opera and visiting with her family of many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

She had been very active in the Clayton Women's Club. She headed

a program making Christmas packages for the families of inmates for many years. She also was very active providing lunches for volunteers at Habitat for Humanity and has been an active member and volunteer at Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church since 1964.

Happy 100th Birthday Jane!

Cake image courtesy of Alpine Pastry.

called her the Great Granny. She placed third in the State for Junior Colleges in the 1650-yard freestyle. In 2010 she was featured in a documentary which won several awards.

In 2021, she set the record at age 61 for the 33km DC Marathon Swim (20.5 miles) in the Potomac and remains one of the fastest swimmers from the Fastnet Rock in the southwest of Ireland to the mainland (13 miles), and held the overall speed record at age 61.

Suzanne continues to regularly place in the top five females in races from 1.5k to 25k competing at the International, National, and Amateur levels in open water swimming—pioneering swims, setting course records as well as completing traditional marathon swims. In January, she set the National record for 1500m short course for women age 65-69.

Take a walk to the Concord Pool on any Thursday, early in the morning and you might get to talk to this amazing lady where she continues to encourage and support up and coming swimmers with the Terrapin Swim Team. She also proudly serves as a lifeguard at the Concord Community Pool. She's your neighbor and lives down the road.

Michael Barrington is a local humanitarian and author: his memoirs, "The Bishop Wears no Drawers", a historical fiction novel, "Let the Peacock Sing" and romance novel, "Becoming Anya". www.mbwriter.net.



Luck of the Irish

Here is a menu for this year's Irish holiday that is packed with flavor. It starts with a classic Irish beverage, beer, and continues with a California petite sirah, one of the biggest wines on the planet. Finally, end the evening with a nutty Irish whiskey.

Crack open an ice-cold wheat beer to pair with a starter salad of arugula and spinach. Tossed with a tart sherry vinaigrette blended with pungent shallots, this is no wimpy salad. Counter the strong flavors of the dressing with cubes of red pears and aged cheddar cheese. The floral and citrus notes in the beer echo the fruitiness of the pears, and the nutty cheese complements a similar character found in the beer.

Your entree beverage is made from the 'black' petite sirah grape that is now grown almost exclusively in California. However, the petite sirah pedigree is French in origin.

An offspring of the Rhone varietal syrah, petite sirah usually makes a wine that has substantial alcohol and tannin levels. Both of these components make it a challenging wine to pair with food.

Ground beef seasoned with plenty of salt serves to tame the tannins. A little pepper and some fragrant allspice complement the spicy flavors in the wine. The creamy potatoes and melted brie further balance the full body of the petite sirah.

Finish the meal with a pot-distilled Irish whiskey. Clean nutty notes and flavors of honey, ginger and light molasses are the hallmarks of this beverage. The ginger and spice notes of the whiskey soar with the caramelized fruit flavors in Pears Charlotte with Chamomile Crème Anglaise.

So, go on. Pair Up!

Sherry Shallot Vinaigrette

INGREDIENTS

1 large shallot, thinly sliced
1½ tablespoons sherry vinegar
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl, toss the shallot with the vinegar and season with salt and pepper. Let stand for 15 minutes, then whisk in the oil.

Yield: about ½ cup

Elegant Shepherd's Pie

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 tablespoons softened cream cheese
1 large egg yolk
½ cup cream
Salt & pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
1¾ pounds ground beef
1 teaspoon allspice
1 onion, chopped
8 crimini mushrooms, sliced
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup beef stock
2 teaspoons Worcestershire
3 ounces brie cheese, sliced thin
2 tablespoons fresh parsley leaves, chopped

DIRECTIONS

Boil potatoes in salted water until tender, about 12 minutes. Drain potatoes and pour them into a bowl. Combine sour cream, egg yolk and cream. Add the cream mixture into potatoes and mash until potatoes are almost smooth.

While potatoes boil, preheat a large skillet over medium high heat. Add oil to hot pan with beef. Season meat with salt, pepper, and allspice. Brown and crumble meat for 3 or 4 minutes. Add the mushrooms and onion to the meat. Cook veggies with meat 5 minutes, stirring frequently. In a second small skillet over medium heat cook butter and flour together 2 minutes. Whisk in broth and Worcestershire sauce. Thicken gravy 1 minute. Add gravy to meat and vegetables.

Preheat broiler to high. Fill a small

rectangular casserole with meat and vegetable mixture. Spoon potatoes over meat evenly. Top potatoes with slices brie cheese, broil 6 to 8 inches from the heat until the cheese melts and the top begins to brown. Top casserole dish with chopped parsley and serve.

Yield: 4 servings

Pears Charlotte with Chamomile Crème Anglaise

INGREDIENTS

Raisins and pears
½ cup water
¼ cup sugar
¾ cup golden raisins
¼ cup dark rum
3 tablespoons honey
1¾ pounds firm but ripe Bartlett pears (about 4 medium), peeled, cored, cut into 1/2-inch cubes

Custards

2 16-ounce brioche or egg bread loaves, crusts trimmed, bread cut into 1/3-inch-thick slices
1 1/3 cups heavy whipping cream
6 tablespoons sugar
3 large eggs
2 tablespoons dark rum
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Anglaise

2½ cups half and half
8 chamomile tea bags
8 large egg yolks
1/3 cup sugar

DIRECTIONS

For raisins and pears:

Bring 1/2 cup water and sugar to boil in heavy small saucepan, stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat. Mix in raisins and rum. Let soak 1 hour. Drain raisins.

Meanwhile, heat honey in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add pears; sauté just until tender, about 2 minutes. Cool. Mix in raisins.

For custards:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter eight 1 1/4-cup custard cups, then sprinkle with sugar. Place cups on baking sheet. Place 8 bread slices on work surface. Cut out 1 round from each slice to fit cup bottoms. Line cup bottoms with bread rounds. Cut enough of remaining bread slices into strips wide enough to line cup sides; line cup sides completely with strips, cutting to fit. Cut enough of remaining bread into 1/2-inch cubes to measure 4 cups.

Whisk cream, sugar, eggs, rum, and vanilla in large bowl to blend well. Add 4 cups bread cubes and fruit mixture; stir to blend. Divide among prepared cups.

Bake charlottes until center is puffed and set, about 55 minutes. (Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Warm in 350°F oven for 7 minutes.) Run knife around sides of charlottes. Invert onto plates. Spoon crème anglaise over warm charlottes.

For anglaise:

Bring half and half to simmer in heavy medium saucepan. Add tea bags; remove from heat. Cover; let steep 30 minutes. Strain mixture through strainer into bowl; discard tea bags. Return half and half to same saucepan; bring to simmer.

Whisk egg yolks and sugar in medium bowl to blend. Gradually whisk in hot half and half. Return mixture to same saucepan. Stir over medium-low heat until sauce thickens very slightly, about 15 minutes (do not boil; sauce will be thin but will thicken slightly when cold). Cover and chill overnight. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Keep refrigerated.) Serve cold.

Yield: 12 cakes

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

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Finding the Right Real Estate Agent

There are so many things to do when you are buying or selling a home. But none is more important than choosing a real estate agent. Finding the right agent can make the whole real estate process easier and less stressful. You are less likely to make costly mistakes and bad decisions. In fact, a professional real estate agent can make everything run more smoothly and efficiently. But you should not just randomly choose an agent. You should find the one that is the best fit for you. Here's how to find the right real estate agent for your needs.

Be ready. If you are prepared, then choosing the right agent will be much easier for you. If you are a buyer, then that means getting pre-approved for a mortgage, knowing how much house you can afford, and knowing what you are looking for in a home and a neighborhood.

For sellers, it means knowing your timeline and what kind of home you are selling, for example, a vacation home or a starter home. Being prepared can help you choose an agent that specializes in just what you need.

Get recommendations. There are many real estate agents out there to choose from. So where do you begin to look? Ask your friends, family, and colleagues who recently bought or sold a home for recommendations. You can also look Online for reviews of real estate agents in your area. Check out a real estate agent's website and social media accounts to get a feel for who they are.

Interview several agents. Yes, you should interview real estate agents

before deciding with whom you would like to work. Center your search around agents that have expertise in your neighborhood and find out if they work full-time or part-time. Ask to see their recent transactions so you can find out what kind of experience they have. You will also want to get a sense of whether or not an agent fits your personality. You want to work with someone you trust and who you can rely on when you hit bumps in the road. While buying or selling a home is a big financial transaction, it also has an emotional side. When you find an agent that fits your personality, they can also help you navigate the stress and anxiety that buying or selling a home can create. Some of the questions you might ask include:

How do you like to communicate?

What are your hours for showings or to answer questions?

Will you be the person I work with primarily or someone else on your team?

Get it in writing. Once you have decided on an agent, you will want to put your commitment in writing. Some of the things you will want to discuss with your agent include:

Length of your agreement (typically three months for buyers and six months for sellers).

Confirm commission fees, which are usually a percentage of the selling price of the home (often five to six percent).

How commission fees are spent including costs of marketing.

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801 Gray Fox Pl, Clayton

Fabulous single story in Falcon Ridge at Oakhurst Country Club. 3 bedrooms plus large den or optional 4th bedroom, 2 baths approx. 2237sf on an approx. .23 acre lot with an attached 3-car garage Buyer representation.



120 Samuel Ct, Clayton

Sensational Rancher in Regency Woods tucked away at the end of the court in an irreplaceable location. 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths approx. 2011sf on an approx. .24 acre lot with inside laundry and an attached 2-car garage. Adjacent to open space and trail.

Market Update - Clayton

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
8 Nottingham Cir	\$1,000,000	2210	4/2.5	1/10/2023
714 Bloching Cir	\$1,055,000	2079	4/2.5	1/13/2023
4970 Morgan Territory Rd	\$1,385,000	1904	3/2.5	1/27/2023
1272 Shell Cir	\$720,000	1355	3/2.5	1/30/2023
1302 Easley Dr	\$1,355,000	2391	4/2.5	2/13/2023
801 Gray Fox Pl	\$1,250,100	2237	4/2	2/14/2023
1421 El Camino Dr	\$835,000	1352	3/2	2/15/2023

Market Update - Concord

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
3737 Clayton Rd	\$557,500	1108	2/2	1/27/2023
849 Madigan Ave	\$855,000	1403	3/2	1/30/2023
1685 Roseland Dr	\$900,000	1628	3/3	2/1/2023
4661 Bishop Ct	\$990,000	2247	5/2.5	2/6/2023
5514 Kirkwood Dr	\$935,000	2049	3/2.5	2/10/2023
1820 Bailey Rd	\$750,000	1429	3/3	2/16/2023
5550 Plaza Nogal	\$919,000	2358	4/2.5	2/22/2023



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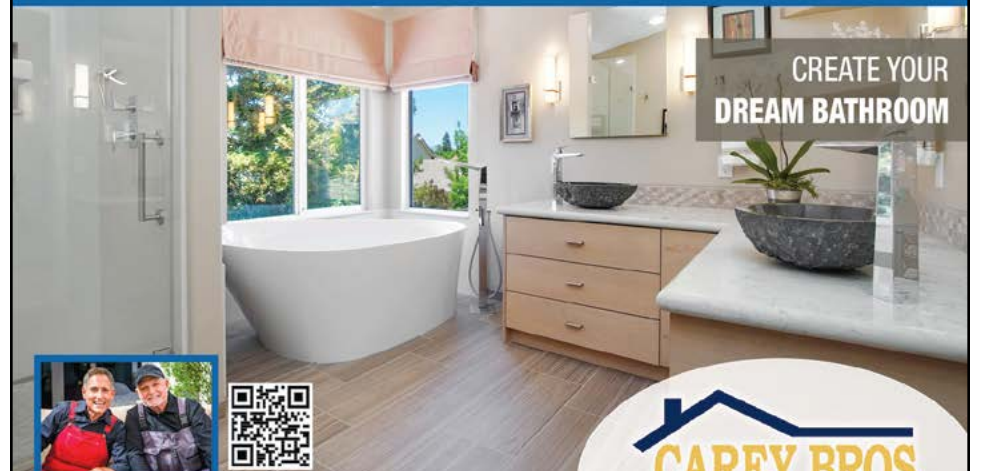


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by Deb Morris, Pacific Coast Farmers Market



MissBeeHaven Kelly Combs and daughter Jasmine harvesting honey

We don't think much about bees, except when we get bothered by them buzzing around us, but bees are a very important link between fresh fruits and you. They provide pollination for orchard trees and some vegetables which results in fertilization so fruit can develop. There would be no handful of almonds or a bowl of sweet cherries without them.

But how do these miracle insects make honey and where did it come from? Honey starts as flower nectar collected by thousands of bees. This nectar is taken back to the hive where it is passed to other bees. This liquid nectar is broken down into simple sugars as it is regurgitated by the bees several times and finally placed in the honeycomb.

Then many bees set to work fanning the honeycomb with their wings to speed up the process of evaporation to make the thick liquid honey we put in our tea. The honeycomb itself is made as bees consume the nectar/honey. As they digest it, the honey is converted into wax through a series of glands on the bee's abdomen.

Honey's color and flavor varies based on the nectar collected by the bees. For example, honey made from orange blossom nectar might be light in color, whereas honey from avocado or wildflowers might have a dark amber color.

Miss Bee Haven out of Brentwood brings the best pure local honey in a variety of flavors and sells them Online and at the farmers market on Sunday's in Martinez.

Springtime is coming and soon humming with the sound of bees

buzzing around the hills of Martinez and Concord.

Cinnamon Honey Roll-ups

Walnut Mixture

- 2 cups ground walnuts, toasted
- 12 sheets frozen phyllo dough, thawed

- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1/4 brown sugar
- 2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Syrup

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup sugar

METHOD

Preheat air fryer to 350°F. Combine toasted walnuts, sugar, and cinnamon in a small bowl. Place 1 sheet of phyllo dough on a 15x12-inch piece of waxed paper; brush the top with butter and then place a second phyllo sheet on top, also brushing it with butter. Place a damp paper towel on remaining phyllo dough to keep it moist.

Sprinkle 1/4 cup of walnut mixture across the top of the dough, spreading evenly. Using waxed paper, roll up tightly jelly-roll style, starting with a long side removing the paper as you roll. Slice roll into 4 smaller rolls; then repeat the process with the remaining phyllo dough and walnut mixture.

Bake for 14-16 minutes at 350°F. Combine syrup ingredients and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes and let cool. Drizzle on roll-ups.

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CITY OF CLAYTON NEWS



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

Filling Key Positions and Other Objectives

When I first took on the role as Mayor of Clayton, I established a few key objectives, which included filling key vacant positions and enhancing fiscal sustainability. I would like to take this opportunity to provide an update as it relates to each.

During our first meeting in February, the Council approved upleveling one Police Officer position to the role of Sergeant while leaving the total number of sworn police unchanged.

Prior to this adoption, Clayton had three Sergeants who acted in a supervisory capacity while on duty. Because the police operate 24/7/365, this meant that there were a couple of days each week where there were no supervisory roles on duty and should the officers who were working at the time need guidance or support, they would need to call one of the off-duty Sergeants.

By making this change, we ensure that there is always a supervisor on duty, and we provide additional advancement potential for our police. This idea was brought forward by Chief McEachin and received the support of the Clayton Police Officers Association and for these reasons, I was glad to support the Chief and the POA in providing better protection to the city.

As a result, I am happy to announce that Officer Torey Jarvis was promoted to Sergeant Torey Jarvis. Congratulations!

In other City staffing news, Clayton is pleased to welcome Angeline Loeffler as our new Finance Director who started in mid-February. This is a key role within the city especially as we look towards achieving fiscal sustainability. Because of the vacancy in this role, we have had to put a number of projects on hold. With the start of Ms. Loeffler, I am hopeful we will be able to gain traction on both fiscal sustainability efforts and an improvement in overall operational excellence.

One such effort that we will be undertaking in the very short term is looking at our overall asset allocation as it relates to investments.

According to our latest report, our asset portfolio was approximately \$13M, with a blended rate yield of approximately 1.66%. The bulk of our investments are in longer term CDs, with smaller components placed in Treasury Notes, US Bonds, and local government investment pools.

Due to the longer durations of some of our investments, the yields on these have not kept up with what is currently

available. Had we invested in shorter duration assets, we would have been more able to adjust as the market moved and our prior year budget deficits would have been reduced significantly if not entirely.

With the current short and mid-term US Treasuries yielding at nearly 5% as of this writing, there is a significant opportunity to earn greater returns with zero added risk. As a result, I have asked staff to prioritize this asset reallocation effort as soon as possible.

We have also closed the application period to fill the City Manager position and have several viable candidates. The Council will be meeting to discuss the candidates and continue the vetting process. I am again grateful that we have Ron Bernal as Interim City Manager to fill the role so we as a Council can be thoughtful in whom we select as our next City Manager.

Within the last six months, the city has had vacant positions for its Police Chief, Finance Director, and City Manager — each of whom are critical roles within the city. We have now filled two of the three, have an experienced interim person for the last one and are on track to filling it full time in the near term.

And finally, not related to staffing but related to the business at City Hall. During the height of COVID, we demonstrated that the work of the city could continue even if City Hall was not always open to the public. Considering this and looking for a way to alleviate some of the unpredictable demand on staff, I suggested that we provide dedicated time to focus for our city staff without distractions. This idea was met enthusiastically by both our prior and current Interim City Manager, as well as city staff. Accordingly, City Hall will be closing to the public on Wednesdays, beginning February 15. Often there is work that requires dedicated attention, but because of vacancies and our small staff in general, when they need to address individuals who come to City Hall it can disrupt their work and cause inefficiencies. Staff will continue to be working, but allowing them to have dedicated time to focus should allow them to structure their workload to be as efficient as possible while still being available to provide service to the public.

I continue to look for ways to improve efficiency for staff, service to residents, while making progress towards fiscal sustainability. More to come as we move forward.



Petition Could Bring More Hardship to “The Olivia on Marsh Creek” Development

By David King

The planned project, “The Olivia on Marsh Creek” on High Street and Marsh Creek Road has so far overcome significant headwinds causing delays in its groundbreaking.

Despite the State’s looming housing mandate to build affordable housing, which was the basis for its original application to the city, there has been opposition among nearby neighborhood residents. The primary issue with the now planned 81-unit senior 55+ community now is that it will have insufficient parking .

With a divided Council and Planning Commission, the project was approved. Neighborhood opposition filed a lawsuit in 2019 to derail the development, but the judge found in favor of the City. However, the litigation delayed the developer from starting work on the project.

Now the adjacent neighborhoods,

Stranahan, Diablo Village, Upper Easley Estates, Lower Easley Estates want the City to implement a resident-only parking permit program.

With each unit only assigned one covered parking space, the belief is that most tenants will come with multiple vehicles, requiring overflow parking to bleed into their neighborhood streets.

One complaint is that despite being a proposed senior living community, there are no enforceable requirements that tenants must be 55 years of age, or only have one car.

Organizers have circulated a petition to residents to support the parking permit program which will be presented to Council in March. If approved, it is possible the developer, Bill Jordan, may be faced with a shrinking market of prospective tenants.



A Walk Through Time with Misty Bruns

112 Years Ago

The mail came to Somerville in 1863. It was the focal point of information for those living in the Somerville vicinity. It brought steady income for those that were able to become the Post Master.

At one time the Somerville post office was the principal distribution of mail and the only one in Contra Costa County that did international money orders, during the coal boom. International money orders were so important during the coal boom because of the amount of foreign-born people working at the many different coal mines.

Somerville post office also made history when it employed Belle Waters making her the first female post mistress in Contra Costa County.

As time went on, the population within the Mt. Diablo coal fields dwindled. Coal mine companies closed, which lead to the general store, hotels, boarding houses, livery and saloons also closing. Then the people also left looking for more plentiful employment, leaving the remnants of what used to be a flourishing community of a larger population. A town came and went within a 60-year time frame.

OFFICE WILL SOON BE DISCONTINUED

OFFICE WAS AT ONE TIME PRINCIPAL DISTRIBUTING POINT IN COUNTY—ONLY ONE ISSUING INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS.

At one time the Somerville post-office was the principal distributor of mail and the only one in this county which did an international money order business, but that was many years ago, at a time when a large number of foreigners were employed in the mines, and the town a busy and prosperous place. Following the closing down of these properties the business gradually decreased as people moved away and finally grew so small that on Tuesday of this week the office was discontinued by order of the Department. Furthermore, it is said that the Nortonville office will also be discontinued at an early date, but this cannot be verified.

Such is the march of progress and it is probable that when mining operations were at their best in that section, few if any of those employed or residing there ever imagined that the mines would be abandoned until the entire coal supply was exhausted, but in those early days little was known of the possibilities of oil, which has completely revolutionized the fuel problem.

While the office at Somerville is a thing of the past the patrons formerly served there, who reside on the route traversed by the mail carrier who takes the mail to Nortonville will still be served provided they furnish a box, as all carriers of Star Routes are required by their contracts to do this.

W. J. Laird, who has been postmaster at Somerville for several years, will remove to Antioch next week.—Antioch Ledger.

LAST CAR OF FRUIT SHIPPED SATURDAY

OFFICE DISCONTINUED

Post Office at Somerville is Now Matter of History.

At one time the Somerville post office was the principal distributor of mail and the only one in this county which did an international money order business, but that was many years ago, at a time when a large number of foreigners were employed in the mines, and the town a busy and prosperous place. Following the closing down of these properties the business gradually decreased as people moved away and finally grew so small that on Tuesday of this week the office was discontinued by order of the Department. Furthermore, it is said that the Nortonville office will also be discontinued at an early date, but this cannot be verified.

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W. J. Laird, who has been postmaster at Somerville for several years, will remove to Antioch next week.

The postmaster, W. J. Laird, was informed in November 1910 that his post would be terminated at the Somerville post office. He would be dispatched to Antioch for the remainder of his employ within the United States Postal Service.

Source: Antioch Ledger and Contra Costa Gazette



Clayton Library Calendar

Computer Tech Assistance. Every Friday from 10 a.m. – Noon. Adult Program. Need help with your technology? Come visit with our wonderful and knowledgeable volunteer for a half hour of one-on-one assistance. You can bring your own device or work on one of our available computers. You can sign up for an appointment at the Library Desk or call anytime we are open. Clayton Library, 6125 Clayton Rd. For more information please call 925-673-0659

Clayton Library Book Club. 4th Thursday of each month from 6 pm – 7:45 pm. Adult Program February’s book for discussion is Deacon King Kong by James McBride and March’s book is These Precious Days by Ann Patchett. While supplies last. Clayton Library, 6125 Clayton Rd. For more information please call 925-673-0659

Clayton Knit & Crochet. 1st Wednesday of the month 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Adult program. Come knit, crochet, and make friends with this friendly group at the Clayton Library. This program meets on the first Wednesday of each month. Staff will be present the first hour to answer questions followed by two hours of free crafting.. Clayton Library, 6125 Clayton Rd. For more information please call 925-673-0659.



the concordian
by Edi Birsan
EdiBirsan@gmail.com

Runner-up, Runner-down

In central county, Supervisorial District 4, the main cities are Concord, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, and Clayton. Repeatedly, in the last 15 years, there have been times when a sitting councilmember seat has fallen vacant shortly after an election.

In Concord it has happened three times including when a councilmember suddenly passed in council from a heart attack, but more commonly, when a sitting member has won a higher office such as Supervisor, Assemblymember, District Attorney, etc.

The question then always comes up: what about the recent runner-up, especially in a seat that was 'at large' so that there were the top two or three people that made it to the Council and a Runner-up designated?

In nearly all cases, the option of calling for a special election has never been taken and the recent Runner-up has never been chosen. The question is why?

Why No Special Election

This is easy to understand as there are two overriding considerations:

One, a Special Election runs about \$4 or more per voter. So that could mean \$200,000 in the case of Concord. Cities do not want to dip into their General Fund.

Two, no Council wants to pass up the opportunity to decide who is going to sit next to them and have an equal vote on all things going forward. This golden opportunity is irresistible.

However, California laws give a short deadline for the Council to decide. If they do not, then by default it goes to a Special Election.

Thus, in a 2-2 divided council, this leads to a game of Chicken or Election Roulette. The rally cry of "democracy is worth it" is nice on paper until you have to decide what are you going to cut from the city's budget to put the money up for a special election.

And how about the fiscal burden placed on the candidates who would have to run a 90-day campaign? The last at-large campaign in Concord (2016), one candidate had over \$120,000 spent on their campaign.

The Runner-up Downside

The Runner-up has traditionally had the following problems when dealing with the newly elected and especially the newly re-elected Council.

The Runner-up has just run against the people who are to decide, unfortunately.

Also, in most cases, the Runner-up has been an outsider from the status quo majority as well as an outsider from government in that they are not a known entity from a city commission or some other high and positive profile.

And in some old-school cases, culturally, the attitude is that the Runner-up is the First Loser.

There is also a marked historic bias towards picking people, especially from the Planning Commission in the area. Part of the reason for this is that to be on that commission you first had to have a majority and often a unanimous vote of the Council.

Further, being on the Planning Commission exposes you to land use decisions and subjects you to appeal and review by the Council. So, they have a track record of sorts.

Throughout California the Planning Commission was the most common training ground for candidates for Council. A Runner-up with no such

experience is at a disadvantage, in that Councils often go with a 'known entity' rather than an unknown — likewise for past Mayors who are cast in a "caretaker" position for the remaining term of the seat.

Running an Appointment Campaign

The worst thing you can do is to bring a bunch of people into the public comment period of council to advocate for the appointee without a thorough understanding of what each of the voting councilmembers want to hear.

Councilmembers all know that the Runner-up is just that, a Runner-up. Saying it over and over again has never worked.

Further, councilmembers do not like to be seen as being bullied by public comment, especially if there is clear special interest or out-of-area major players at work when it comes to appointments.

That sort of pressure is best applied outside of public comment. Yes, the infamous backroom discussions. Shocking? Wake up folks, this is the real world of power and influence.

Think in terms that the councilmembers are the totality of the electorate. Find out what the electorate that is going to vote wants. Note that I wrote what "Councilmembers want to hear." This is when relationships with councilmembers are paramount. There should be one-on-one discussions separately with each councilmember to find out where they stand and what they are looking for.

If it is clear that the Runner-up is dead as a doornail, then a public powerplay will do more harm than good. But if the Runner-up has a chance, then there may be tips or approaches that may be found to gather strength or weaken the opposition, and this is only found by engagement of the councilmembers.

A secondary or lesser win is if the Runner-up is subsequently appointed to a Commission to be positioned for a future run and be on the bench for the next round of openings.

Alternatives

Having been in the situation as a Runner-up, I have steadfastly adhered to what I stated when I finally won in 2012 (and have repeatedly proposed as an ordinance for Concord):

In the case of an empty position within six months of an election where there was a Runner-up for the post and the Runner-up had at least 70% of the winner's vote count, they will be appointed by ordinance.

Seventy percent is to make sure there is some substantial support for the person and keep people from simply tossing in their name in the hope that the popular candidate vacates suddenly.

The six months is to avoid a situation where two years later the incumbent is in mid-term and then moves up/out. In that timespan, the whole political landscape will have changed.

So far this concept of taking the backroom and front-room politics out of the Runner-up challenge has not been given any support. But that does not make it an invalid concept.

By Edi Birsan, Runner-up in 2010 for Concord City Council and never made it to the Planning Commission. My views and biases are totally based on that experience with some bitterness. Tell me if you care: EdiBirsan@gmail.com



Neuroplasticity
by Jessica Raaum Foster,
NeurologyofPresence.com

"Nice Lateral Rectus, Babe," Said No One Ever.

I have a hunch that if people knew how important their eyes were for their health and well-being, we would start to see more vision training stations in commercial gyms. I mean, why don't you work out your Lateral Rectus Eye muscles the same way you work out your glutes?

The answer is you should.

The brain pays an immense amount of attention to your eyes. In fact, your eyes control up to 90% of your postural stability. Because vision is so important, deficits in visual function can have devastating effects on your entire nervous system. This creates all types of pain, especially neck or back pain, digestive issues, and can even impact mental health.

There really is no way to say this loudly enough: "You need to train your eyes!"

The truth is that most of us have some visual deficits. Modern humans typically spend most of our time indoors, often staring at screens. Our eyes were designed for so much more than this. Even if we don't consciously understand that we are missing out on a whole bunch of necessary stimuli, our brain does.

So, let's take a closer look at vision training:

When most people think about vision, they think about one skill, visual acuity. In reality, there are actually four general visual skills necessary for our survival: Visual Acuity, Depth Perception, Peripheral Awareness, and Eye Movement.

Like any skill, each of these visual components can be trained and improved.

But because they are interconnected, improving one area of vision can actually improve the other three. This means that training your eyes' ability to move can actually improve your acuity.

You read that right. You could lose your readers by exercising your eyes.

Try asking your eyes to move in these five ways:

1. Stare at objects in various positions without moving your head.
2. Track an object in motion without moving your head.
3. Stare at an object while you are moving.
4. Track a moving object while you are moving.
5. Shift focus from one object to another without moving.

Add these skills into your daily practice, and see what happens.

I believe it is only a matter of time before vision training becomes standard practice. You have the advanced opportunity to spare yourself the pain, frustration, or limitation that others will have to wait years to discover. Do yourself the favor, prioritize your eyes.

Your brain does, so why shouldn't your self-care practices reflect that?

Jessica Raaum Foster is a Neuro Performance Coach. For more information:

www.NeurologyofPresence.com,

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NeurologyofPresence

Email: NeurologyofPresence@gmail.com

State of the City, Continued from pg. 2

The City has received six proposals for 100% affordable housing. City staff will make recommendations to Council to choose from there.

Public Safety

In addition to recruitment for more police officers, the City has introduced a community camera registry program. It is Free for those with security cameras around residences and businesses which could help police in their investigations when solving crimes. It is still your option to allow or not share your video.

City has purchased 65 license plate readers. and drones.

New Business

Several businesses have opted to make Concord its home.

Vinfast Electric Cars is a Vietnamese electric vehicle company poised to compete with Tesla, and will have a retail showroom at the Veranda.

Pet Food Express is moving its headquarters from Oakland to Concord.

Berk's Beans Coffee Roasting is family owned on Solano Way.

Hammerhead Security is moving from Richmond.

Robert Skate Academy is a non-profit teaching mindfulness through skateboarding and is coming to Sun Valley Mall.

Bay Rubber Company, Urban Air Adventure Park, Chick-fil-A is coming



into the former Claim Jumpers location in the Willows.

Hampton Inn

Dutch Bros. Coffee wis under construction on Clayton Road.

Concord Life Science Center is a privately owned company offering flexible space, laboratory suites and shared workspaces for start-up life science companies.

Automotive is extremely important to Concord's sales tax base. Future Automotive Group is undergoing expansion, Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram opened on Diamond, Lincoln under construction on Burnett, Hyundai on Marsh Road.

Concord Pavilion had its best season in over a decade with 173,019 tickets sold to 19 shows.

All in all, Concord's robust economic recovery in 2002 has paved the way for aggressive infrastructure and maintenance funding, more housing, and a growing economic future.



The Three Amigos

Art by Robert Bradley, Walter Crew, and George Rammell, will be available for viewing March 8 through April 24 at the aRt Cottage. Featured as friends showing together, these artists are extremely different in their styles of painting.

Robert Bradley mixes it up with transparent watercolor, acrylics, colored pencil and more, all on the same canvas. George Rammell's work is acrylic with loads of texture, broad strokes and paint skins. Walter Crew uses acrylics as well as oils and mixes it up with texture by adhering mesh grocery bag materials in his work. He has a unique style of incorporating geometric lines and patterns in his backgrounds.

Crew and Rammell were at Diablo Valley College in the early 2000s. They were part of the cc-14 group (Contra Costa 14). This group consisted of adults continuing and developing their artistic skills and critiquing each other's work monthly in their homes. Rammell was also involved in the East Bay Artist Guild. Paintings could be found in downtown Pleasant Hill hanging in a big storefront window. They were also members of that guild.

Bradley's work is dreamlike. One can look at it and make up fantasies about another world or dreamscape scene. It is very surreal and relaxing at the same time. His pieces are large but feel light and airy. He is not afraid to experiment with pastels, pencils, and paint and is meticulous in his application of materials. How long he has been making art? "Probably



Art by Walter Crew

since I was born. My mom was an art teacher," says Bradley. As for what keeps him inspired, he is quick to say, "My desire is to be the best painter in this time period."

Although Rammell is no longer with us, we will have a wonderful display of his paintings made available by his widow, Pam. He has left a legacy of work for us to enjoy. My favorites are the ones with paint skins and lots of drips incorporated in his work.

"When George retired, he needed something else to do other than just play golf," she told me. "Just look at our house!"



Art by Robert Bradley

And I have. George left a treasure trove of work, including lots of drips on his studio floor — all lovely colors of memories.

These Three Amigos have much to offer and we look forward to sharing their work with you. We are hosting a free reception for the artists on March 11 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. aRt Cottage is located at 2238 Mount Diablo Street, Concord. Hours are from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM Wednesday through Saturday.



New County Department to Strengthen Equity and Inclusion in Government

Contra Costa County is Developing the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ), a new County department.

The ORESJ's primary function will be to better coordinate, strengthen and expand the County's existing work on equity and inclusion, create new opportunities to deepen the work, and partner with the community in prioritization and implementation.

The mission of the office is to make a transformational shift within County government to eliminate inequity, harm, discrimination, and bias (implicit and explicit) based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, socio-economic status, and for people with disabilities by focusing County efforts on understanding what it takes to achieve equity with a priority focus on racial equity.

The Board of Supervisors approved the initial concept and authorized the launch of a Community Planning Process. A Host Table was developed and composed of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) residents, the Board of Supervisors, and community-based organizations that came together to lead Community Listening Sessions to develop the priorities and office structure. These listening sessions were held across Contra Costa and many residents, departments and local nonprofits participated. The Host Table reported

its findings and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors at our meeting on October 25, 2022. At that meeting we approved the recommendation to hire two co-directors to lead the office. One co-director will focus on coordinating and expanding the equity work of County Departments and the other co-director will work directly with community partners.

The ORESJ will be established as a separate County department that reports to the County Administrator with regular oversight by the Board of Supervisors' Equity Committee. The Equity Committee is currently comprised of Supervisors John Gioia and Federal Glover. Their first meeting was held on February 9, where they discussed the outreach and hiring process for the co-executive directors.

Contra Costa County is a large and diverse county. The ORESJ is an exciting step in shaping our County government to be more responsive and inclusive as we provide services and care. It will enable services to reach those who need them the most and address existing barriers. This office will ensure that Contra Costa County is continuing to better reflect every community we serve.

To follow the development of the ORESJ, you can follow the Board of Supervisors' Equity Committee by subscribing to their agendas at <https://tinyurl.com/CCC-ORESJ>.



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An Enticing Beer-cation Destination

March promises spring weather, and in Concord, a celebration of beer. Local breweries have been tempting beer lovers from all over the Bay thanks to inspired craft brew offerings and unique experiences.

And to this, we say, March is a time for a beer-cation.

Any vacation worth taking is worth planning. So, start by downloading the 2023 Contra Costa Beer Trail passport from VisitConcordCa.com. The passport is an official guide to our local breweries. It is also your chance to win Beer Trail merchandise including shirts, mugs and the coveted Contra Costa Beer Trail Map. Or come by the Concord Visitor Center to pick up your free map.

A Beer-cation would be a perfect outing for visiting family and friends, that are also brew enthusiasts. (They can stay at any of Concord's 9 Hotels.)

Each featured spot on the passport offers the perfect impromptu outing. Some locations brew right on site, but all feature cold, crisp local beers, food and entertainment.

Your group can enjoy a night of trivia, open mic singing and karaoke. Some locations offer live music and comedy. Or, for something completely new, Epidemic Ales is taking its grain game up a level with Artisan Breadmaking classes.

Tasty beer bites abound — cooked on site or served up by Bay Area Food Trucks. Whether you indulge in shrimp and fried cheese grits, banana pudding made from scratch, smothered cheesesteak sandwiches and delicious lobster rolls, each dish is ready to pair with a palate pleasing choice of beer.

Concord Brewfest

March culminates with the 12th Annual Spring Brews Festival. While there will be plenty of St. Patty parties to attend on March 17, none will match the jubilation of this beer-cation finale on Saturday, March 25, at Todos Santos Plaza. Over 50 craft breweries will pour their finest amidst an afternoon of non-stop live music and food. Find out more at VisitConcordCa.com.

Visit Concord Champions Sensory Tourism

Visit Concord will host trainings for our local hotel and business partners who serve individuals and traveling guests that are diagnosed with sensory

sensitivities or are on the autism spectrum.

Businesses and their frontline employees will learn insights from the traveler's standpoint through these valuable travel industry trainings. If you would like to have your business included in these trainings or find out

more, contact Visit Concord at info@visitconcordca.com.

For more about the experiences in Concord, visit www.visitconcordca.com. Or better yet, visit the Concord Visitor Center in Downtown Concord. We would love to meet you.

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ouimetbrothers.com

The Naked Gardener
David George, UC-Certified
Master Gardener

Eco-Friendly Fungicides

March is full of springtime outbursts in the garden. With our abundant winter rains this year, decorative and perennial fruiting plants are waking up to moisture-rich soil and sunshine, a great combination to ensure a fast start to our growing season. Since this is an especially moisture-rich year, let's focus on all-natural techniques to control spring fungal damage.

Fungi comprise a huge proportion of planetary plant life. From mushrooms to mistletoe to the micro-fungi that feed plant roots with essential nutrients, life as we know it could not exist without them. Ninety-nine percent of fungi are benign or beneficial, but 1% or so can be harmful to plants or animals. Our beautiful roses for example can languish with fungal infections of white powdery mildew, black spot, or rust. Peaches and other fruit trees can suffer from peach leaf curl, a nasty leaf disease that eventually kills the tree if not controlled.

Fungal diseases of roses and fruit trees are effectively controlled with copper or sulfur-based sprays in March when new buds

and leaves unfurl. But copper and sulfur are toxic in general to the environment and are slow to break down naturally. They are also tricky to apply because they can burn eyes and irritate

skin if the spray drifts onto you. That is one reason why California has banned the sale of sulfur-based fungicide sprays for residential gardeners. Copper-based sprays may be next.

Organic or home-formula fungicides are a natural option for dedicated naked gardeners. They break down soon after application and are less irritating to eyes and skin. Three categories of organic fungicidal sprays are available:

There are those based on citric acid, the natural acid formed by orange, lemon, and other citrus trees.

Some are based on several bicarbonates such as baking soda (sodium bicarbonate),

ammonium bicarbonate, or potassium bicarbonate.

And, there are those which supplies beneficial bacteria to break down fungi (bio fungicides).

To make your own fungicidal solution, add 4 teaspoons or 1 heaping tablespoon of baking soda per gallon of water.

Spray it on your roses and fruit trees as you would a store-bought product. Ammonium or potassium bicarbonate

can be substituted for baking soda, but these are not common home ingredients. Creating a citric acid-based fungicide at home is harder since too high of a concentration in water can harm plant leaves. Several organic

citric acid-based fungicides can be found with a simple online search or at your favorite garden center. In response to last month's column focusing on backyard birds, David B. writes, "Public Health strenuously urges people to avoid leaving standing water anywhere on their property, going as far as saying that even a bottle cap full is too much. As much as I enjoy watching birds in my backyard, I'd much rather avoid (mosquitos and) West Nile Virus."

Thank you, David, for your comment. Yes, none of us likes breeding and biting mosquitos. I recommend adding mosquito dunks to any standing water in yards. The dunks are donut-shaped and release a bacterium into the water that is deadly to mosquito larvae but harmless to birds, people and pets. Flowing or recirculating water (such as in decorative fountains) also prevents mosquitos from breeding as mosquito larvae require still water. And remember to always apply a DEET-based insect repellent on all exposed skin areas while working or walking outdoors. We can enjoy our backyard birds and at the same time prevent the spread of mosquitos and their diseases.

Email your comments and questions to: NakedGardener@diablogazette.com. In some cases, these may appear in future columns.



Powdery Mildew on Roses



Rust on Roses



Peach Leaf Curl can Kill a Tree

CVCHS NEWS
Dave Fehle, Executive Director
Clayton Valley Charter High School

Exploring Career Technical Education at CVCHS

February was Career Technical Education (CTE) month at Clayton Valley Charter High School – an opportunity to raise awareness of the role that CTE has in preparing students for careers and college, achieving economic success, and showcasing workforce competitiveness.

CVCHS offers a variety of CTE programs for our students including Regional Occupation Program courses, Career Pathways, and The Academies at Clayton Valley Charter High School. The course sequences are designed to connect high school classes to college, industry certification, or a career upon graduation from CVCHS.

CTE provides students with not only career and academic skills, but soft skills that are needed for the modern workplace, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, teamwork, integrity, and leadership. Our CTE programs also allow our students to use some innovative tools designed for professionals. It's a great feeling for our students to be trained and gain first-hand experience with the types of tools used by real-world professionals.

So why CTE at CVCHS? One of the school outcomes expressed in the CVCHS

charter is a focus on college and career readiness. As such, the school provides relevant career and technical pathways designed to prepare students for high-need, high-wage, and high-skill jobs.

Plus, a mountain of research has shown that CTE leads to higher student achievement and graduation rates. Early career exploration also provides students with a sense of direction and targeted career focus. Our goal is to provide students with a unique experience to explore possible career interests and skill sets. CTE is yet another reason why our students graduate with real-world experience and the confidence to pursue their dreams.

Here is a snapshot of the current CTE courses offered at CVCHS:

- Computer Science
- Game Design / Art & Animation / Video Production
- Engineering / Computer Integrated Manufacturing
- Design / Architecture
- Nutrition / International Cuisine
- Automotive Engineering
- Sports Medicine

In February, CVCHS Juniors in Civil Engineering and Architecture visited the Lennar Homes residential job site in Antioch to learn about the various professions in Civil Engineering, Architecture, Land Development, and Building Industries.

Students learned about



To celebrate CTE month, CVCHS students toured the Lennar Homes residential job site in Antioch.

the building construction process from start to finish including plumbing, solar, HVAC, structure and manufacturing, electrical, foundation, framing, and home design. Touring the property in the various stages of construction allowed our students to interact with professionals on-site who shared their backgrounds and

professional journeys.

CTE students also get the opportunity to work with culinary professionals leading up to the annual Restaurant Wars and to learn about the latest automobile engineering from local Audi and Subaru technicians.

CVCHS is seeking to foster new CTE relationships with local companies specializing in Information Technology, Health Science, Food & Hospitality and Automobile Technology. CTE field trips and professional mentorships allow our students to explore various careers they never would have the opportunity to consider. If your company is interested in participating in our CTE partnership program here at CVCHS, contact our school for more information.



Students practice attaching brackets to wood beams.



CVCHS students learned about structural design from bundling professionals.

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Your Realtor is Key to Protecting Your Private Property Rights

What can your Realtor do for you? A little-known fact to the public but a well-known fact to your Realtor, is that while we list and sell your homes, the California Association of Realtors (CAR) and National Association of Realtors (NAR) take contributions from their Realtor members for a legal action fund.

These funds help us monitor proposed legislation and issues related to housing and home ownership and notify the Realtors for any potential bills going before the legislature which may affect your homeownership rights.

Examples of things that our California Association of Realtors have called to our attention, sponsored and helped pass and/or defeat are below:

PASSED

AB 633 (Calderon) Implementation: Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act. AB 633 preserves family wealth by providing a series of simple due process protections to ensure all parties receive their fair share of the inherited proceeds and ensure the best value for the inherited property is obtained.

AB 2536. Creates new standards and practices for determining reasonable fees for providing sewer and water service to a development. These costs are added on your purchase price by the builder; however, if they are unreasonable, someone still has to pay them anyway, and that will usually be you, the buyer.

SB 989. This bill provides temporary relief for qualifying property owners who have applied for base year value transfer (Those over 55 and moving within the state may keep the tax base) if county assessor has not processed their application due to administrative delays.

SB 392 (Archuleta) Mandating HOA's Email Communications. SB 392 requires HOA's to communicate with homeowners via email, if that is the homeowner's preferred method for communication. This bill makes it clear that property owners, not the HOA, get to define their two preferred communication methods, and permits general notices to be placed on an association's website.

AB 2170 sponsored by CAR prohibits large mortgage entities like GSE or Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac from selling foreclosed homes in bulk to large Wall Street Investors and institutions.

It also requires for the first 30 days that they consider and respond to bids from potential homeowners before considering any bids from investors.

DEFEATED

These bills affecting Landlord/Tenant rights in California were defeated.

AB 1771. This would have imposed high taxes on homeowners for sales in the first seven years after purchase.

AB 1105 attempted to increase property and other taxes on homeowners in San Diego.

AB 2527, AB 2203 and AB 1335's aim was to prohibit a housing provider from using a credit report as part of the rental application process.

AB 2383 would have imposed onerous and costly requirements on small housing providers if they turn down an applicant based on his or her criminal history (including pedophiles, rapist, murders, etc.).

Year after year our government continues to attack small home providers as 12 of the 17 defeated bills relate to property owner/tenant issues. A large portion of these housing providers are folks with moderate incomes, who have rentals to supplement retirement income.

Private property ownership is constantly coming under threat with these small and large attempts to chip away at your private property rights by well-intentioned and sometimes not so well-intentioned government entities (HOA, Neighborhood, City, County, State and Federal). We must be vigilant to protect your property rights.

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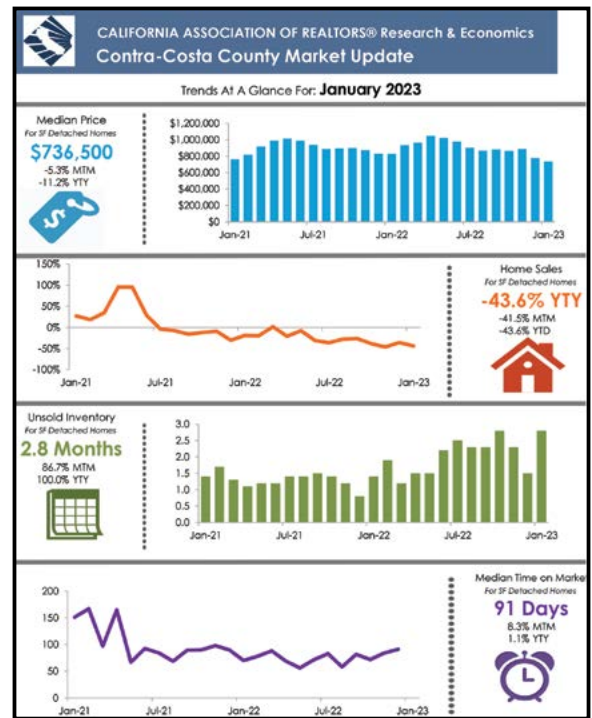
KFAX AM 1100

Dr. Jerry L. Buckner

•Pastor •Author •Seminary Professor •Counselor •Lecturer •Renowned Expert on the Cults

Friday March 17th 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM "The Christian Walk" (Part One)	Saturday March 18th 10 AM - Noon "The Christian Walk" (Part Two)	Sunday March 19th 10:30 AM - Noon "The Gospel is Fully Loaded!"
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Refuge Church, 1187 Meadow Lane, Concord, CA. 94520 • 925-671-0702 • refugeconcord@gmail.com
www.RefugeCares.com All Events Are Free. Donations Are Welcomed



Terrylynn Fisher

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calendar of events

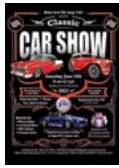
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CLUBS

June 10, Classic Car Show presented by Walnut Creek Elks Lodge. Participants and Sponsors register now. Sponsorship call Judy Godar 925-937-8995. Registration fee \$40 includes meal. A portion of proceeds to benefit Elks charity projects. Register Online at <https://bpoe1811.square.site/>.



Concord NorCal Helping Hands Lion's Club.
<https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/start-our-approach/club-locator/details?id=148928>

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

FARMERS' MARKETS

Pacific Coast Farmers Market Concord Todos Santos Plaza
 Tuesdays 9:00am to 2:00pm.
 Thursdays 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Martinez Sundays, 9:00am to 2:00pm, 700 Main St.
Walnut Creek Kaiser 1425 South Main 10 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
 Fridays 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.,
Rossmoor Golden Rain Rd.
 Saturdays 9:00am.-1:00 pm.
Shadelands North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr., Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 1799 Locust St.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

March 4, American Legion Post 29 St. Patrick's Day Dinner, Corned Beef & Cabbage Raffle tickets sold at the event Door Prize Drawing, Contact Jeff for reservations: (925) 957-1662, Suggested Donation \$15.00, Martinez Veterans Memorial Building, 930 Ward Street, Martinez <https://americanlegionpost29.shutterfly.com/>

March 11, 2023, St. Patrick's Day Beer Crawl, 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM, Let out your Irish cheer and sample craft beers inside participating businesses in Downtown Benicia. Ages 21 and older. Tickets are limited! Benicia Main Street 90 First Street Benicia. www.Benicia-MainStreet.org.

March 17, St. Patrick's Day BASH w/ Irish Rockers ONOFF! Plus U2 Tribute & MORE! 5:00 PM, Retro Junkie 2112 North Main Street Walnut Creek. <https://retrojunkiebar.com>

EVENTS

March 3, Bead & Design Show, 10 AM - Sun, Mar 5, 1 PM. This three-day event brings together a diverse group of independent artisans, beadmakers and tradespeople. Taking over all the space at the Plaza Hotel, 45 John Glenn Dr, Concord.

March 18, Hot Concord Nights, 6 - 10 PM, Los Tacos De Pancho, 2699 Clayton Rd, Concord. weather permitting. Meet up time is Still 6:00. Bring your family, friends & appetite, and support the locals.

March 12, Contra Costa Con 5 - Celebrating 40th Anniversary of Return of the Jedi, 10 AM - 4 PM,

featuring actors and behind the scenes Star Wars creators. Everything pop culture with toys, apparel, new and vintage collectibles, art, anime, comics and more. Benefiting Food Bank of Contra Costa. Free parking. Tickets at www.ContraCostaCon.com with a \$2 Toy Buck included with each advance sale. Kids 9 and under free. Hilton Concord Hotel, 1970 Diamond Blvd., Concord, 2 blocks off Interstate 680. [See cover]



March 12, City of Concord Wedding and Party Expo - Cancelled

March 19, Concord Wedding Fair, 12:00 PM, You could walk out as the winner of a \$10,000 WEDDING PACKAGE GRAND PRIZE! Concord Crowne Plaza 45 John Glenn Drive Concord. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/concord-wedding-fair-tickets-453452959007>



March 19, Doll Show & Sale From the Independent Spirits Doll Club, Featuring Dolls and Accessories of all types, antique to modern. 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM. Admission at the door: \$6. DollShowUSA.com \$1.00 Off General Admission Coupon. www.DollClubs.com Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Ln, Pleasant Hill.

March 25, 12th Annual Spring Brews Festival, 12 - 4 PM. Get ready to get outside for a great day in the park with a lineup of the best craft beer in California. Live music and great food.

Tickets are \$60 pre-sale (until early bird purchase availability runs out) and then \$75 until sold out. Tickets include unlimited pours and a commemorative glass. This is a 21 and over-only event so all attendees must be of legal drinking age. Everyone must purchase a ticket to enter. Todos Santos Plaza, 2175 Willow Pass Rd, Concord

March 25, Family Event 9 - 11 AM, Lafayette Reservoir. Explore all upcoming Lafayette Reservoir events in Lafayette, California. 3849 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette <https://www.ebmud.com/recreation/east-bay/lafayette-reservoir>

April 22-23, Spring Contra Costa Crystal Fair, Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek.

Martinez Calendar of Events, see Page 17

CRAB FEEDS

March 03, California Waterfowl's 36th Annual Contra Costa Crab Feed. 5:30pm. Reservations required. Contact: Kevin Confetti at 925-889-9769. Ticket packages can be purchased Online at <https://calwaterfowl.org/events/> Center Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd, Concord

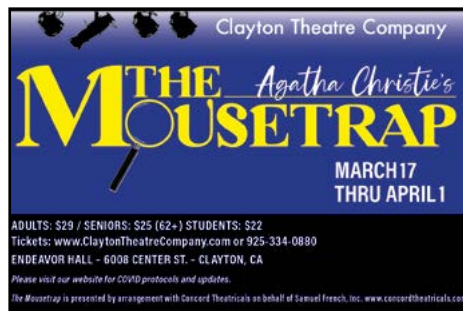


March 4, NAMI Contra Costa Crab Feed Fundraiser, 6 PM "Also celebrating Former President Charles Madison's Birthday. ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT Dungeness crab. Hosted by Dave Clark, KTVU News Anchor. Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. <https://www.namicontracosta.org/crabfeed.html>

ARTS/THEATRE/MUSIC

March 11, AM Marks Point-of-View Workshop Set for California Writers Club March Meeting, Four-hour California Writers Club - Mt. Diablo Branch workshop. AM Larks, an accomplished writer and story performer, will lead the meeting. \$45 for members and \$55 for non-members, covers the workshop and a buffet lunch. Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. To register: visit the CWC website at <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/meetings-and-workshops/#register-for-the-workshop>.

March 17-April 1, Clayton Theatre Company presents "The Mousetrap" by Agatha Christie, Endeavor Hall 6008 Center St., Clayton. Visit claytontheatrecompany.com or call 925-334-0880 for tickets.



Lescher Center for the Arts:

March 2, Amy Grant, 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM. Amy Grant put Contemporary Christian Music on the map, becoming the first CCM artist to have a platinum record, the first to hit No. 1 on the Pop charts.

March 10, 11, College Notes A Cappella Sponsored by Kaiser Permanente,



7:30 PM- 9:00 PM. The perfect harmony of bright minds and collegiate voices! The evening will feature a cappella groups from top universities from across the country and is sure to be the perfect harmony of bright minds and bright voices!

March 16, 17, Dance Theatre of Harlem



Presented by Lesher Center and Diablo Regional Arts Association. The multi-ethnic company performs a forward-thinking repertoire that includes treasured classics, neoclassical works by George Balanchine and resident choreographer Robert Garland, as well as innovative contemporary works that use the language of ballet to celebrate Black culture.

March 25 - April 16, SWEAT, Presented by Center REP. A group of friends in a Rust Belt town has spent their lives sharing secrets and laughs on the factory floor. But when layoffs begin to chip away at their trust, they're pitted against each other in a heart-wrenching fight. See website for showtimes.

Thru April 2, Erin Fong: Sensation of Color, Noon - 5 PM, FREE admission. Bedford Gallery Walnut Creek. Bay Area artist and letterpress printer Erin Fong explores the concept of how color affects our emotional responses, transforming the gallery into a vibrant lab with the artist's prints, paintings, and installations.

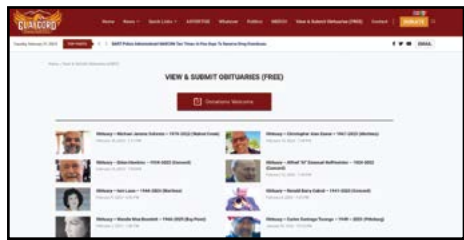
April 13 - April 23, Synergy Theater presents The Mating Game: An Improvised Game Show that's More than a Game! Three enchanting contestants, a hopeful single looking for love, and a fast-talking game show host who seems to know too much. Don't miss this completely improvised romantic-comedy all based on your suggestions! Thursdays - Saturdays at 8:15 PM and Sundays @ 3:15 PM at the George & Sonja Vukasin Theatre. Tickets \$25

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

In Case You Missed It...

Local News Items from Claycord.com and Other Sources

New Claycord Feature: VIEW & SUBMIT OBITUARIES (FREE)



A new service offered by Claycord.com allows you to submit photos and obituary of loved ones which will be posted on the website. See the website for details.

Mt. Diablo High School Students Complete Community Emergency Response Team Training



Mt. Diablo HS students, who are part of the school's Medical and Biotechnology Academy (MBTA), recently volunteered for FEMA Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training in partnership with the city and Office of Emergency Services.

They spent 25 hours – one hour each morning at 7 a.m. weekdays for five weeks – learning how to assist with triage and medical operations, light search and rescue, fire science, terrorism, and general emergency and

disaster preparedness. The training culminated with a hands-on drill Feb. 11 at the school that required students to use a radio to communicate with emergency responders, douse flames using a fire extinguisher, and practice treating and rescuing injured people (simulated by other students).

East Bay Regional Park District Awarded \$7 Million Grant For Acquisition Of Finley Road Ranch Property Near Mount Diablo

The East Bay Regional Park District has been notified that it will receive a \$7 million grant from the California Coastal Conservancy for the purchase of the 768-acre Finley Road Ranch property near Mount Diablo.

The property is located at the mouth of Riggs Canyon off Finley Road at the western edge of Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and the southern edge of Mount Diablo State Park.

"Acquisition of the Finley Road Ranch property will preserve forever one of the largest remaining pristine open spaces adjacent to Mount Diablo State Park," said Park District Board President Dennis Waespi. "The California Coastal Conservancy grant provides vital funding toward the purchase of the property. Preserving the property is also a key step toward the state's 30x30 initiative of conserving 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030."

Lindsay Wildlife Experience In Walnut Creek Reminds People About Baby Animals And Tree Trimming

Baby season has officially begun in the Lindsay Wildlife Rehabilitation Hospital in Walnut Creek.

With baby squirrel patients already arriving, the Lindsay Wildlife Experience



wants to remind everyone that you should wait until November to trim your trees.

Photo credit: Lindsay Wildlife Experience

Contra Costa County Doctors Union Says County Does Not Have Enough Doctors

There are not enough doctors in the Contra Costa County health system and the problem will only get worse next year, according to the union representing county doctors and dentists.

The Physicians' and Dentists' Organization of Contra Costa (PDOCC) released a statement Thursday saying the high number of doctor vacancies in the county system "is negatively impacting patient care and is expected to get much worse in the next year."

PDOCC is currently negotiating a new contract with the county.

The union said that according to county data, 83 out of 285 employed positions are listed as vacant in Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS), a 29 percent vacancy rate.

"The problem is expected to get a lot worse in 2024 when Contra Costa County will need an additional 40 primary care providers to care for 30,000 new Medi-Cal patients being added to the county's health services due to an agreement between the county and California's Department of Health Care Services," PDOCC said, in the statement.

McCarl said CCHS is one of the highest-rated family medicine training programs in the country. "We recruit well-trained physicians who are familiar with our system from each graduating class," she said. "Recruitment and retention of physicians is a top priority

at Contra Costa Health. We will continue to explore ways to fill every clinically relevant vacancy across our healthcare system."

Mount Diablo Interpretive Association Raising Money To Build New Education Center At Mitchell Canyon



A 25-year-old portable trailer currently serves as the visitor center. MDIA is raising \$3 million it says will

significantly increase access to the park and its programs.

The new 1,500-square-foot education center would incorporate a large outdoor pavilion and expanded indoor space to house permanent and rotating exhibits.

The Mitchell Canyon entrance is on the mountain's northwest side, about a mile from downtown Clayton, and would include lots of space for school bus turnarounds and parking. MDIA said the new center would greatly increase access for local students.

Another Tax? State Senators Form Select Committee To Figure Out How To Help Bay Area Public Transit Agencies Recover From Pandemic

Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco, will chair the Senate Select Committee on Bay Area Public Transit. The committee will also include state Sens. Nancy Skinner, D-Berkeley; Steve Glazer, D-Orinda; Bill Dodd, D-Napa; Aisha Wahab, D-Fremont; and Mike Maguire, D-San Rafael.

Many Bay Area public transit agencies are still struggling to rebound to pre-pandemic ridership levels. BART ridership routinely sits between 50 and 70 percent of its expected ridership on weekends, but weekday ridership has hit a ceiling of roughly 30 to 40 percent of expected ridership.

For more local stories visit Claycord.com.

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

Rabbits are fun, intelligent, can learn tricks, and will play games. Their fur is incredibly soft and petting them can lower your blood pressure and reduce stress. These smart animals can be litter box trained just like a cat. They make great pets for a household with full-time workers because they are most active in the mornings and evenings.

Rabbits are social creatures and thrive in pairs. They do not need much space making rabbits well-suited for rabbit-proofed apartment households.

These furry bundles are also loaded with personality and have a lifespan of eight to 12 years. Contra Costa Rabbit Rescue (CCRR) currently has a wide variety of sizes and types of bunnies in need of a good indoor home. Many of these rabbits are already housebroken, and all have been spayed or neutered.

However, according to long-time CCRR volunteer, Julie Cheshire, "Rabbits aren't low maintenance pets. That is a common misconception. These are not outdoor farm animals."

Cheshire also explained that they are not great for small children because they are quite fragile. Their backs and legs can be easily broken.

Most of the rabbits that end up in rescue are discarded Easter rabbits after a well-meaning, but misinformed parent

Bunnies Do Not Belong in Easter Baskets

gifts a bunny to a small child.

Such was the case for poor Clover, a young adult, medium-sized, brown bunny. Claire Smithey has fostered Clover since August of last year. Clover fell into the care of CCRR after a family adopted a male and female rabbit.

"Two rabbits quickly became several dozen rabbits," Cheshire said. "Rabbits can have a litter every 30 days. Mother rabbits can get pregnant the same day they give birth."

It is unfortunate that people will buy a bunny as an Easter surprise for a child who is not ready to accept the long-term responsibility. It is much better for all concerned to put a stuffed bunny in an Easter basket.

Deanna Fister, one of CCRR's

co-founders, has seen starved bunnies come into their rescue because the rabbit was not given proper food. Other rabbits are released to parks under the misguided belief that a domesticated rabbit can adapt to the wild.

"We rescue about 40 to 50 [rabbits] per year and we place typically between 30 to 40."

CCRR is an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) rescue organization in Contra Costa County that educates the public on current rabbit care. CCRR also offers a free grooming session and nail trim.



Claire Smithey with Clover who she has fostered since August.

ARF ADOPTION STARS

Looking for a furry friend? Visit arflife.org to view all of ARF's adoptable animals.

Poke



One-and-a-half-year-old Poke is a lively boy who is active and playful. He will be a great fit for an active and adventuresome family, and he is sure to make any experience all the more enjoyable with his energetic personality. Do you like going for hikes, beach trips, neighborhood runs, cuddles, and more? Poke would love to join you on your adventures. Poke has a positive history with other dogs. He currently weighs 45 pounds.

Tiger



Ten-month-old Tiger is a big orange ball of personality. Tiger loves to play and loves having a lot of toys to keep her busy.

Tiger will do fine on her own or with other cats. She is extremely friendly and loves your full attention.

Tiger has a positive history with other cats.

ARF Dog adoption fees: \$250 for an adult dog, \$375 for a puppy (<6 months), \$150 for a special-needs dog, \$200 for a special-needs puppy (<6 months), and \$150 for a senior dog (7+ years). **ARF Cat adoption fees:** \$125 for an adult cat, \$175 for a kitten (<6 months), \$200 for two adult cats, \$300 for two kittens, \$75 for a special-needs cat, \$100 for a special-needs kitten (<6 months), and \$75 for a senior cat (7+ years). Adoption fees are waived for US military Veterans.

The adoption fee for all CCRR's bunnies, including Clover, is \$150.

CCRR conducts adoption events at Petco, 1170 Arnold Drive in Martinez the second Saturday of the month between 1-4 pm and at Pet Food Express, 1388 S. California Blvd. in Walnut Creek from 3-6 pm the last Saturday of the month. To learn more visit <https://rabbit.org/>.

Photo by Jill Hedgecock

JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

by David King Photos by Scott Feuer

Yosemite's Winter Wonderland

Scott Feuer, Concord, is no stranger to backpacking in the California Wilderness. After all, he is a volunteer for Backcountry Patrol for California State Parks. As he puts it, he is basically “eyes on the mountain” for Mount Diablo, reporting any damaged trails, downed trees, as well as helping hikers along their way.

Readers may remember Feuer’s “Tales from the Trail” entries into Diablo Gazette’s Journey-man’s Journal column depicting his thru-hikes and advance camping adventures. In fact, he confesses it was this column that inspired his backpacking lifestyle. He has since hiked every mile of Mount Diablo Trails.

But none of those stories produced such beautiful imagery as his epic three-day backcountry winter camping adventure in Yosemite National Park in January.

“By far, one of the top three solo trips I have ever taken,” Feuer claims, even though he had to endure a 20-hour snowstorm. “It was nine miles of snowshoeing, sleet/rain, 15” of new snow, thunder and lightning, 25-50 mph wind gusts, and frigid 9°F temps were followed by periods of utterly complete stillness and solitude.”

After a strenuous 4.5-mile snowshoe trek from his truck to Dewey Point overlooking Yosemite Valley below, he found a tent site nestled among the trees to shelter in anticipation for the approaching storm. “I immersed myself in the beautiful winter wonderland which unfolded over the next three days.”

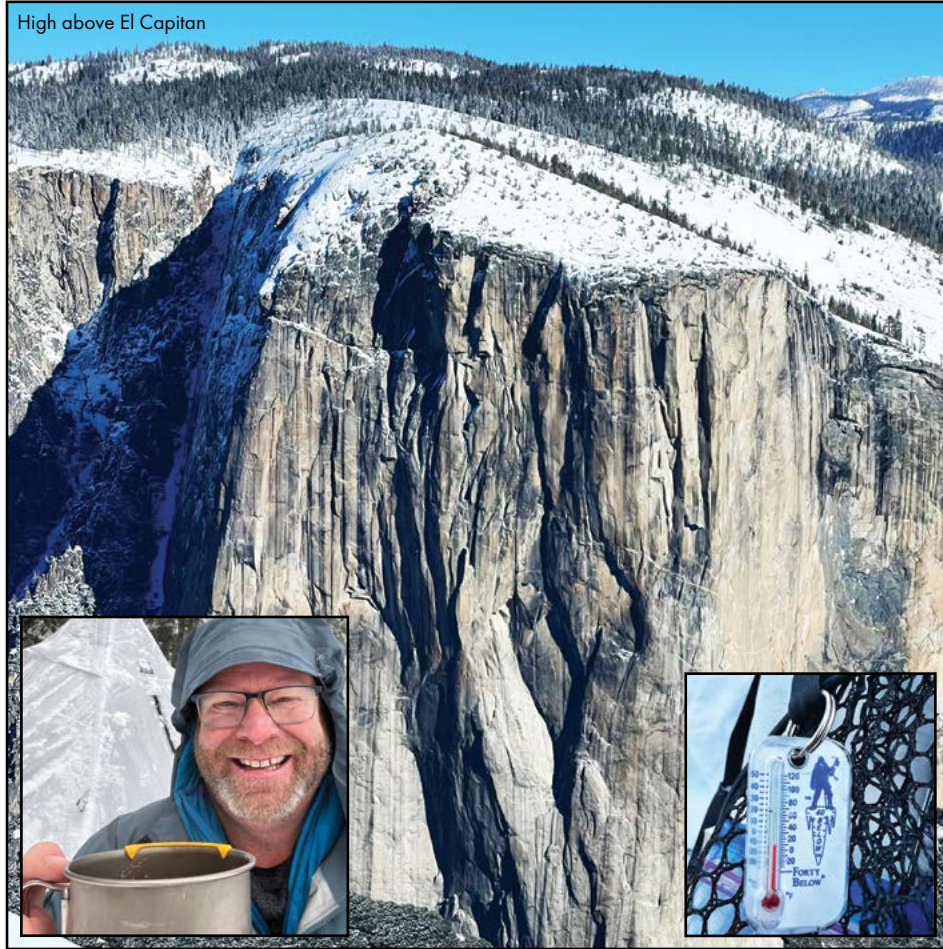
Feuer had packed a light-weight floorless pyramid tent called a mid which is propped up in the center by his walking poles. It is ample shelter to shield from moderate wind and snowstorms. Inside the tent, he dug into the snow and made a bed, and a bench. Yes, he slept on a snow bed, comforted by an 1/8 inch foam pad plus an inflatable pad and two quilts.

The hike was about 600 feet of elevation gain towards Dewey Point across from El Capitan on the south side of the valley. He picked up his backcountry permit at the trailhead, Badger Pass ski area.

For water, he melted snow to drink, cook, to prepare his de-hydrated meals, coffee, etc.

He admits that over the three days, there were times he did get

High above El Capitan



manageably cold, especially his toes. When he awoke, the thermometer read 9 degrees and his boots had frozen solid overnight. Feuer boiled water to fill water bottles and shoved them into his boots to thaw them.

For three days, it was complete silence and solitude with not a soul around. This was the solo adventure he had hoped to experience. “It was amazing.”

Nor was there a trail; it was all fresh snow. He had to break trail with snowshoes using his phone’s GPS, a map and blazes (metal plaques attached to trees which help mark where the trail would be) and fair weather to keep his bearing and guide him.

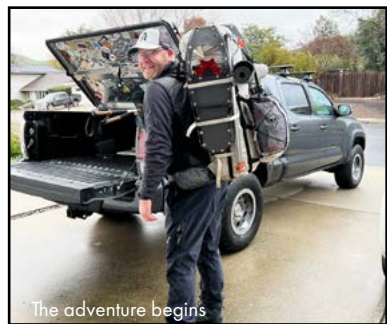
Feuer is an experienced backpacker. “Winter backpacking is not for everyone, but with lots of research/training, proper gear, and safety precautions, it is certainly good for the soul. Words and pictures cannot even begin to describe this amazing experience, but I share what I can. I hope you enjoy them. Cheers to a record snowfall season, finally!”

Thank you Mr. Feuer for sharing, We do indeed enjoy your photos.

Views from the valley with Half Dome in the background



The majesty of snow covered peaks of Yosemite



The adventure begins



Sleeping on the snow in a tent has its challenges



Snow camping

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Marathon Refinery Produces First Gallon of Renewable Diesel



Marathon's Martinez Renewable Fuels facility is making fuel again and has produced its first first cup of renewable diesel from biobased feedstocks such as animal fat, soybean oil and corn oil.

In March of 2021, Marathon Petroleum Corporation (MPC) announced that it was converting its Martinez refinery operation into a renewable fuels manufacturing facility. The plant shut down and laid off over 200 fulltime workers while it retooled to convert the operations from refining petroleum to manufacturing renewable fuel.

The Martinez Renewable Fuels (MRF) project is a joint venture between Marathon Petroleum Corp. and Neste of Finland. Neste paid Marathon \$1 billion for 50% of the project. Neste is known for its sophisticated supply chains to source waste for feedstock.

As of February 10, the idle refinery is now back up and making only renewable diesel, with pretreatment capabilities to come online the second half of this year.

The feedstocks would be processed into renewable diesel, naphtha, propane and treated fuel gas. Refinery feedstocks

and products are to be transported to and from the refinery using trucks, rail, marine vessel, and pipeline. Much of it had already been used to make Ethanol, a gasoline additive.

For a few days they had to flare (burn off) excess Hydrogen producing only a clear flame and water. They are not flaring Hydrogen anymore. The process creates it, but then uses that hydrogen later on in the creation of diesel. It also creates propane, and then uses it instead of natural gas to make heat and electricity.

MPC President and CEO Michael J. Hennigan stated in the March 2021 conversion announcement, "Converting the Martinez facility from refining petroleum to manufacturing renewable fuels signals MPC's strong commitment to producing a substantial level of lower carbon-intensity fuels in California."

At full capacity, MPC expects the Martinez facility to produce about 730 million gallons per year of renewable fuels, predominantly renewable diesel, by the end of 2023. It will be the leading refinery making renewable diesel in the world.

Refinery Oversight Committee Holds First Meeting

by Sam Richards

Almost three months after the release of heavy metal particles into the air near the Martinez Refining Co. refinery in Martinez, Contra Costa Health Services' MRC Oversight Committee met for the first time last week to lay out plans for short-term help and for a deeper dive into possible health effects the release may cause.

This response comes after the Nov. 24-25 release of hazardous "spent catalyst" dust from a catalytic cracker unit that left cars, buildings and other surfaces in surrounding communities with a visible dusty coating.

The MRC Oversight Committee met on Thursday, February 16, where members voted to commission a consultant to do an initial "quick analysis" of the environmental impacts and immediate steps to address those impacts, plus a more involved "comprehensive analysis" or "risk assessment" of the dust's impacts on people and the environment, as well as a timeline for a comprehensive action plan.

A request for proposals will be sent out to four firms deemed capable of doing an initial evaluation, including a soil evaluation of impacted areas and possible mitigating actions. The chosen firm will also be charged with communicating its report's results to the greater community and be able to address further questions from the general public.

"We know this is going to take some time," said Nicole Heath, acting director of CCHS hazardous materials programs and chairwoman of the oversight committee. "This will not be a fast process."

Committee members said they want proposals from interested firms within three weeks. Two firms will be selected for formal interviews, and one of those two ultimately chosen to do the studies.

"We're already 11 weeks since the incident," said Tony Semenza, executive director of the Contra Costa Community Awareness and Emergency Response, and a community member of the oversight committee. "We want to get this out as soon as possible with accurate



Brianne Zorn,
Martinez Mayor
bzorn@cityofmartinez.org

New Mayor, New Challenges

As the first new mayor of the City of Martinez in over 20 years, I was looking forward to working with city staff to plan and prioritize for 2023. What I did not expect was that before I was even sworn in, there would be a release of spent catalyst from the Martinez Refining Company (MRC) in November followed by other flaring events in December and January that would drive Council and staff priorities for several months. MRC is owned by PBF Energy.

The City of Martinez has supported Contra Costa Health Services (CC Health) in responding to and investigating this event. The City has held three public meetings on this topic to date: During my first meeting as mayor on December 7, we invited CC Health to present on the spent catalyst release event and to inform the public on actions taken by the County. We held a Town Hall on December 19 to answer the public's questions and concerns. We hosted a public workshop on February 15 to discuss the Community Warning System and ways to improve communication with the public. CC Health hosted the first meeting of the MRC Community Oversight Committee on February 16. Their task is oversight of the consultants who will conduct a risk assessment and soil sampling of affected areas.

I see the City's role as advocating for the health of our community and communicating out updates from CC Health. During my time on Council, it had become clear that communicating with the public needed to be a higher priority for the City of Martinez.

In summer 2022, the City began an email-based newsletter that included city announcements about events and opportunities for public participation. This newsletter became the initial tool for communicating with the public about events at MRC.

Our next step will be to improve time-critical communication with the Martinez community (both inside and beyond City boundaries). The current Community Warning System (CWS) only sends direct notifications (i.e., texts and emails) to the community when a Level 3 alert requires action by the public, such as a shelter-in-place or evacuation. But we have heard from the public that



they want more communication. So, our Chief of Police, in partnership with the County, is working to leverage the CWS system to increase direct notifications to the Martinez community for lower-level alerts (refinery events with no identified immediate health risk to the public) that have been previously limited to posts on websites and social media.

The City and County staff are working hard to advocate for your health and safety. I appreciate the staff's efforts, and community feedback, on this issue so far.

Moving forward, how can you stay informed?

Register your cell phone for the [Community Warning System](https://cwsalerts.com/registration/) at: <https://cwsalerts.com/registration/>

Review City and County websites at <https://www.cityofmartinez.org>.

Here you can register for the City Newsletter for regular City of Martinez updates.

City Staff regularly updates the City website with information about refinery events.

[Contra Costa Health Services](https://cchealth.org/hazmat/) posts updates on real-time events as well as 72-hour reports on past events: <https://cchealth.org/hazmat/>.

The MRC Oversight Committee will continue to hold their meetings online and available to the public. All updates on this committee will be posted here.

Review the Contra Costa Health Services FAQ. Many regularly asked questions are included in this document.

If you still have questions, don't hesitate to reach out to me at bzorn@cityofmartinez.org and I will connect you with the right person who can answer your questions.

information."

Starting about 9:30 p.m. on Thanksgiving night and continuing into the following morning, an inadvertent release from the refinery sent between 22 and 24 tons of that dust over the communities surrounding the refinery, mostly to the west and northwest.

A "root cause report" (<https://tinyurl.com/4brxfjbs>) compiled by the refinery said that refinery personnel were unaware there was any release into the community until the next morning (Friday, Nov. 25), when several reports of visible particles came inside the refinery.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District was notified of the incident later on Nov. 25, and county Health Services first learned of the accident from media reports on Nov. 26.

In calling for the independent investigation, Contra Costa Health (CCH) noted that MRC did not report the release via the county's Community Warning System or directly to CCH, as required by the county notification policy.

The refinery's "root cause report" lays out 11 prospective "corrective actions" its employees could take to help head off such emergencies and respond better to them when they do happen. Most of those measures would go into effect by July 31.

The next MRC Oversight Committee meeting will be held after the consulting firms respond to the requests for proposals.

The oversight committee members are Heath and fellow CCHS Hazardous Materials staff members Adam Springer, Michael Dossey, Sam Calvert and David LeCount; Martinez Refining Co. Process Safety and Assurance Manager Ken Axe; United Steelworkers (refinery) representative Nick Plurkowski; Martinez Assistant City Manager Lauren Sugayan; Benicia Fire Chief Josh Chadwick; and community members Semenza, Cheryll Grover, Benjamin Therriault, Pedro Babiak and Deirdre Castillo.

Excerpt from Martinez News and Views, courtesy of Craig Lazeretti, <https://lazeretti.substack.com/>



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*Please review complete program requirements prior to applying.

MARTINEZ CALENDAR

March 2, JAZZ IN THE COURTYARD w/ Wine Tasting & Pairing from Shuck It! Oyster Bar, 6 – 8 PM, Market & Main, Come sip wine with friends, shoot down some oysters while listening to live Jazz in the courtyard at Market & Main. Hosted by SHUCK IT! OYSTER BAR AND SEAFOOD RESTAURANT, 610 Main St, Martinez



March 3 - April 30, Tamsen Armstrong Exhibit at Main Street Arts. Artist Tamsen Armstrong was once told, "Don't paint the extraordinary, elevate the ordinary." And with a clear voice she has applied this to her impressionistic paintings whether still life, figures or landscapes. With beautiful, luscious brush strokes she honestly portrays her subjects. This is the fifth year Main Street Arts has hosted Armstrong's delightful works. She has also been busy exhibiting at the Blue Line Gallery, Crocker Museum and the Pence Gallery. The public is invited to the wine and appetizer reception on Saturday, March 11, from 4pm – 6pm located at 613 Main Street.



Magic in March, Magicians are gifted with a sense of humor that's off the charts. A big evening of amazing fun! California Magic Club, 514 Main St, Martinez, <https://www.calmagic.com>



March 16, Virtual Bingo Soroptimist International of Martinez is hosting a virtual Bingo to raise funds for our scholarship Dream programs. 7:00 to 9:00PM, \$25 First Card - \$5 Each Additional Card Play for \$15 & \$25 Gift Cards \$50 Blackout Gift Card. Purchase Bingo cards from our website: www.soroptimistmartinez.org. Sending a check? Must get to our P.O. Box 2202, Martinez, CA 94553 by Friday, March 10th. Note your email in the "For" section on your check. For more information visit www.soroptimistmartinez.org

March 17, Knights of Columbus St. Patrick's Drive By Dinner: Pick up dinners between 5 and 7 p.m. St. Catherine of Siena Parish Hall, 600 Henrietta St., Martinez. The feast, by Zandonella, includes corned beef, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, potatoes and Irish soda bread. Order before March 9. \$20. <http://bit.ly/3quRTN9>



Martinez Farmers Market, Every Sunday year-round, 9 AM - 1PM, located on Main Street from Las Juntas St. (800 block) - Castro St. (600 block)

April 15, BAY AREA CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL, Noon - 4PM, returns to Martinez Waterfront on April 15th, noon to 4pm with over 40+ local breweries and over 100 beers to sample including Home Brew! Local Breweries, live music, delicious food, and fun! Waterfront Park, 245 N Court St, Martinez. <https://downtownmartinez.org/bay-area-craft-beer-fest>

MARTINEZ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENTS

March 2, Chamber Mixer: Good to the Bone 'Business Networking' 5:30 - 7 PM 825 Ferry Street, Ste B, Martinez



MARTINEZ STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

APRIL 12TH
7:30AM - 9:00AM
CREEKSIDE CHURCH

This event showcases our city's direction and plans for upcoming projects and vision for the future as Mayor Brianne Zorn delivers the State of the City Address.



April 12, 2023, State of the City Mayor's Address & Breakfast, 7:30-9:00 AM, Creekside Church at 444 Fig Tree Lane Martinez

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Kiteman of Martinez is headed to Qatar

By David King



Martinez's famed kite pilot, Tony Jetland, (aka Kiteman of Martinez) is heading to Doha, Qatar March 16-18 for the inaugural Qatar Kite Festival. "I've been to many

participate in the Kite Festival which includes all expenses paid for a 5-day stay. The extra days — a day early on March 15 to recover from the flight, and March 19, the day after the event to explore and enjoy Doha. He would return on March 20.

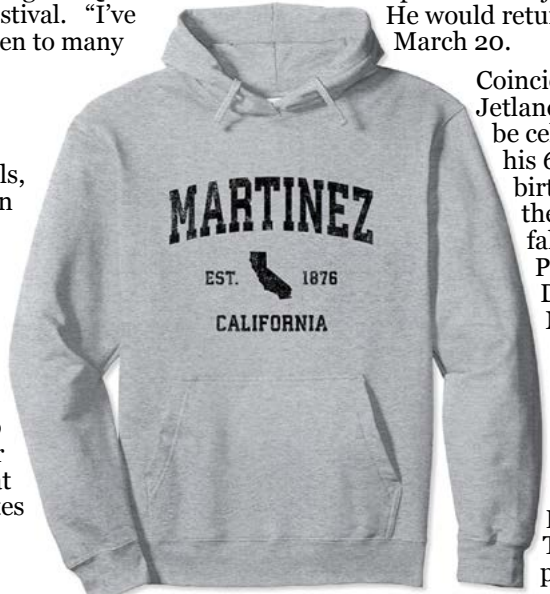
Coincidentally, Jetland will also be celebrating his 62nd birthday there as it falls on St. Patrick's Day, March 17.

international kite festivals, but it's how the invitation came to me, that is the real story," Jetland says.

This year, for Qatar's 3rd annual Hot Air Balloon Festival, a 10-day event held in January, organizers decided that if it gets too windy on days for hot air balloons to fly safely, that they should also have kites available as a backup.

The event organizer, Hassan Al-Mousawi, searched on Google for LED show kites. There he found several articles for the "Kiteman of Martinez."

In December, Al-Mousawi sent a Facebook



including China, Belgium, Italy, Netherlands, Germany, England, Switzerland, etc. All of them are world class kite pilots. Jetland plans to bring plenty of Martinez, CA apparel for his international friends to wear for photos. He is determined to put Martinez, CA on the map in Qatar.

He expects to bring about a dozen of his kites, including the big green dragon kite he is most known to fly. The entire event will be posted live on his Facebook page and on Martinez Rants and Raves' Facebook Group.

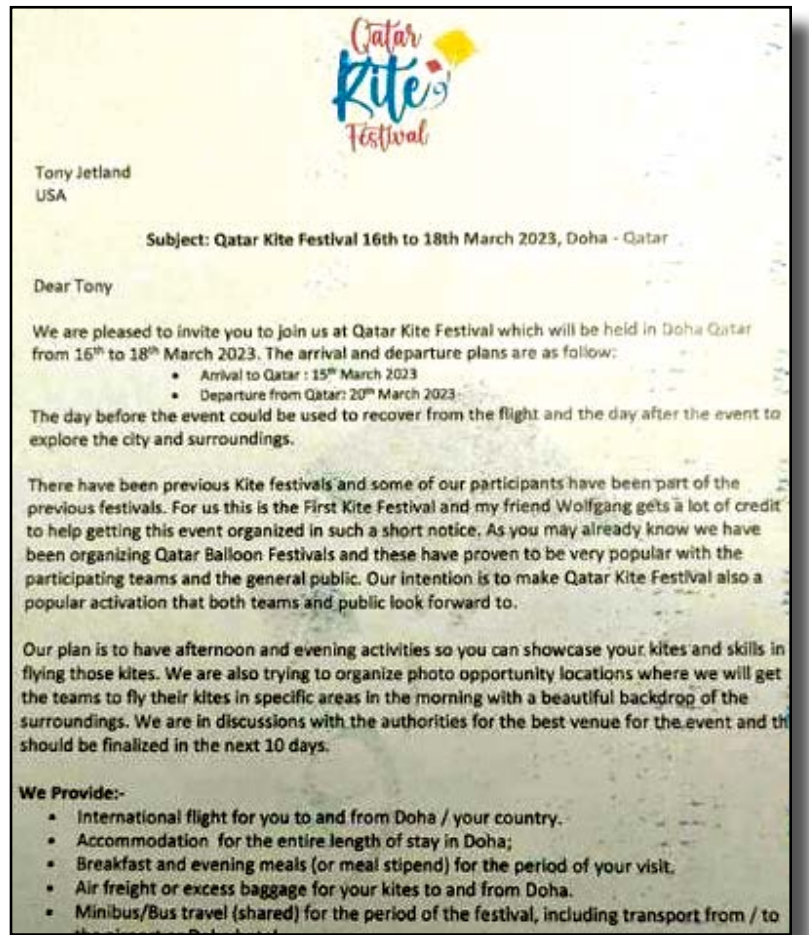
Jetland holds Diablo Gazette responsible for this turn of events. Six years ago, in the March 2017 edition, Diablo Gazette featured Jetland's spectacular and beloved kites often seen flying at the Martinez Marina. In that article, we gave him the name "Kiteman of Martinez." The name stuck as other local news agencies from around the country now refer to Jetland as Kiteman of Martinez. Mayor Rob Schroder even proclaimed a Kiteman of Martinez Day. Kiteman is making Martinez proud.

Who knew such a small publication could have such an international impact?



message to Jetland, "Are you the 'Kiteman of Martinez?'" Jetland responded that he was. Al-Mousawi then proceeded to invite Jetland to participate in the Hot Air Balloon Festival with his kites. Kiteman was unable to attend but referred six other professional kite pilots who did go. The show kites addition to the festival was such a hit that Qatar decided to host its first annual 3-day Kite Festival on March 16-18.

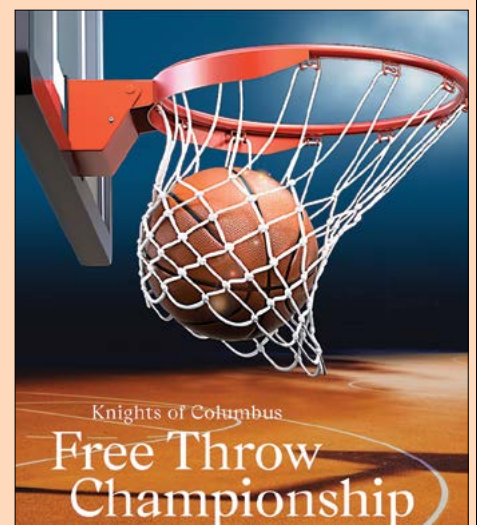
Al-Mousawi reached out to Kiteman again. This time with a written invitation to



Happy Birthday, Kiteman!

Knights of Columbus 50th Annual Free Throw Competition Underway

The annual Knights of Columbus (K of C) Free Throw competition. This is the 50th year K of C has hosted this competition. Since 1972, K of C councils have sponsored the Free Throw Championship for boys and girls from the ages of 9 to 14 to provide an athletic outlet and encourage the values of sportsmanship and healthy competition. Kids compete within their own gender and age and progress from local level to district, regional and state/province competitions. This program is a wonderful way to introduce the Knights to our community and recruit faithful family men of service. The following St. Bonaventure CYO competitors were winners at the district level and moved on to the Oakland Diocese Chapter Regional level of Competition to be held February 24 at Diablo View gym in Clayton. Congratulations to all the District winners. For boys Caleb Nolley, 9, Finley D'Arcy, 10, Eric Tizon, 11, Jackson Ramirez, 12, and Ryan Kern, 13. For Girls, Avery Jensen, Hannah Pascoe, 10, Raegan Braun, 11, Angela Nava, 12, and Brooke Rooney, 13. Special recognition goes out to Jacob Lls, 8, and Amelia Lauricella, 8. A strong contingent attended to cheer on the Regional competitors. Jackson Ramirez took 1st place shooting an amazing 23 of 25 free throws to advance to the State Championship on



March 25 in Folsom, California. The rest of the team also did well with two 2nd place and four 3rd place finishes. Good luck at State Ramirez. Coach and Coordinator of St Bonaventure CYO is Ferdandez Santos. Knights of Columbus Youth Director and Free Throw Coordinator is Claire Tryon.

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Some novels make us laugh. Others keep us up at night, turning the pages. Words on a page can tug at the heartstrings and sometimes make us cry. There are self-help books that may change the way we think. But few books are truly transformative. For me, "Breath, The New Science of a Lost Art" (2020, paperback, 304 pages, Riverhead/Penguin Random House, \$16.95) by James Nestor was one of those books.

"Breath" is an in-depth examination of how we inhale and exhale and what this does for our bodies. Nestor, a journalist who has struggled with respiratory ailments for all his life, explores how early humans have evolved to the detriment of a basic biological function. Our skulls have changed in a way that makes it hard to breathe. Our altered facial muscles, mouths, and noses create all kinds of problems, including snoring, sleep apnea, asthma, and even autoimmune disease.

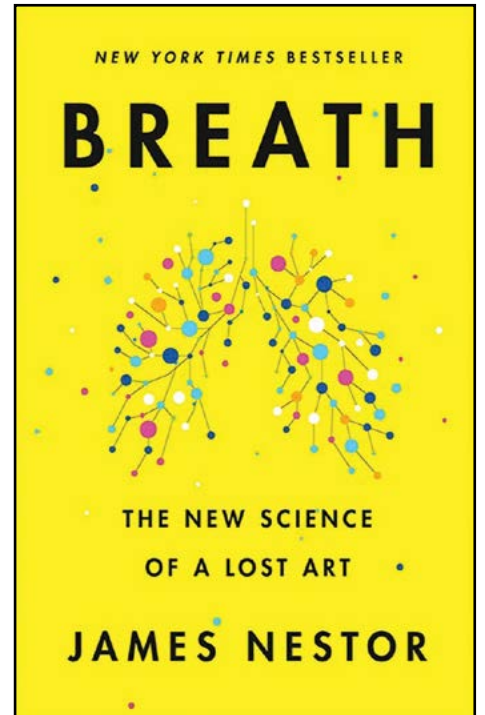
The saying that "breath is life" becomes clearer than ever through Nestor's investigative research. Besides conferring with scientific experts in

the fields of pulmonology, psychology, biochemistry, and human physiology, Nestor read through medical texts and interviewed practitioners of Pranayama, Sudarshan Kriya and Tummo. He recounts the success of athletic coaches who used breathing exercises as a way to mold athletes into Olympic medal winners. The book discusses the remarkable success of a German woman who altered the breathing habits of patients with scoliosis (a spinal disease) to straighten their backs.

Nestor describes his experience as a "lab rat" and puts himself through the tortuous condition of blocking his nostrils so that he must breathe only from his mouth for two weeks. Scientists took his body measurements and put him through physical exercises and the results were unequivocal. Mouth breathing is not healthy. Readers will both feel his pain and appreciate his contribution to science. Even people without respiratory problems will find this a fascinating read. Plus, the end of the book offers guided breathing exercises that everyone can benefit from. I cannot recommend this book enough.

Fans of "When Breath Becomes Air" by Paul Kalanithi, "Eat, Pray, Love" by Elizabeth Gilbert, and "Tuesdays with Morrie" by Mitch Albom will likely enjoy this book.

"Breath" is a New York Times Best Seller, A Washington Post Notable Non-fiction Book of 2020, and was named a Best Book of 2020 by NPR. It has sold more than two million copies and has been translated into over 35 languages. James Nestor is also the author of "DEEP: Freediving." "DEEP" was a BBC Book of the Week, a Finalist for the PEN American Center Best Sports Book of the Year, and was a Scientific American Recommended Read. His journalistic talents have appeared in "Outside Magazine", "The Atlantic", "The New York Times", "Scientific American", "The San Francisco Chronicle", and more. He has presented his research at Stanford Medical School and the United Nations, and has appeared on Fresh Air with Terry Gross, the CBS Morning News, and ABC's Nightline. He lives in San Francisco.



The Oscars Will Go To....

In 2009, the Oscars extended the Best Picture category from five films to ten. Moviegoers' main complaint was that popular films rarely got nominated, even though that is what most ticket buyers watch and enjoy. With the extension, there has since been more room for a variety of films. For cinephiles, this creates an extra challenge to see all the nominees before the awards are handed out. Luckily, streaming services now make this task easier than ever.

The ten films up for the big award this year offer a wide choice that should allow everyone to find at least one they feel ought to take home the top prize. Only two of the ten clock in under two hours, which sets the tone for longer stories being considered worthy of award recognition.

For those who like biopics, "Elvis" decided to focus on the relationship between the iconic entertainer and his manager. In the hands of director Baz Luhrman, we got a pulsing jolt of lights and glitz that seemed tailor-made for the singer's Las Vegas performances. Some found Tom Hanks' portrayal of Colonel Parker hammy and distracting, but Austin Butler delivered a star-making performance as The King.

It is interesting that the two blockbusters in this category, "Top Gun: Maverick" and "Avatar: The Way of Water," are both not only sequels, but sequels to films made decades ago. Both of these films delivered what fans of the originals desire: beloved characters, state-of-the-art visuals and a classic definition of good guys versus bad guys.

For the blockbusters, I would have liked "Wakanda Forever" to receive a nod. The filmmakers had such a difficult task of making a superhero sequel without the superhero. In the process, they created a beautiful film about grief. It is a shame this one did not make the cut.

"Tár" offers an intense character study and a timely topic. Can we separate the art from the artist's personal deeds? It comes as no surprise that Cate Blanchet chewed up the screen as a fictionalized composer struggling with the topical problem of her private actions made public and the ramifications that ensued.

If you are like me and shy away from war movies, you may be grateful that awards season can make you see films you may not have chosen otherwise. Such is the case with "All Quiet on the Western

Front", a fantastic film not just about the harshness of battle, but the instant loss of innocence for those youths caught in its glorification. First made for the big screen in 1930, then adapted for television in 1979, this third version is still not enough to remind us of the horrors of war.

"Women Talking" is intense and claustrophobic and the one film you probably had not heard of until the nominations were announced. The performances in this one should not be missed. Set in a small Mennonite community, a group of women must decide how they will deal with the abuses inflicted by a select group of men in a society where women have no voice.

Social satire gets its platform with, "Triangle of Sadness." The impossible-to-guess-where-it-will-go-next, send up of the uber rich is best experienced by knowing as little as possible going in. The less you know, the more shocked you will be as it unfolds.

The offbeat "The Banshees of Inisherin" delivered a tale about the demise of a friendship. It managed to be stressful, funny, insane and charming all at once.

"The Fabelmans" offers family drama while also giving viewers a glimpse into the inner workings of one of our greatest living directors. Although it is a fictionalized version, Steven Spielberg confirmed the story closely resembles his own.

In this critic's opinion, the deserved winner is "Everything, Everywhere, All at Once." Told in a dizzy, chaotic world of endless alternate universes, this film challenges the viewer to keep up with Evelyn (Michelle Yeoh) on her journey of self-discovery. Its message of family, community and how we view our worth in the world, is told in a way that will make you laugh and cry and wonder what the heck you are seeing. It sounds impossible that googly eyes, hot dog fingers, time jumping and martial arts can exist in one movie, yet somehow it all makes sense in the end, or does it? Nevertheless, for its quirkiness and heart, this is the one I will be rooting for to take home the gold statue.

All films available to stream or purchase on demand except for "Avatar" and "Women Talking" which are in theaters. The 95th Annual Academy Awards will air live Sunday, March 12th, 5pm PST and rebroadcast 8pm on ABC.

Contra Costa Con 5 is Coming to Concord

Contra Costa Con 5 is coming to Concord on Sunday, March 12, at the Hilton Concord Hotel featuring actors and behind the scenes creators from the Star Wars family celebrating Return of the Jedi 40th Anniversary movie release.

Actors from Return of the Jedi and other Star Wars films on hand at Contra Costa Con 5 include C. Andrew Nelson (Darth Vader), Margo Apostolos (Ewok Tokkat), Kevin Thompson (Ewok Chubbray) and Alan Fernandes (Tusken Raider).

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

Emmy Award-winning director, writer and producer Kirk R. Thatcher (Return of the Jedi, Star Trek, Spider-Man, Muppets and RoboCop) is part of the behind-the-scenes talents from Industrial Light & Magic at Contra Costa

Con 5 that also includes David Carson (Return of the Jedi, Empire Strikes Back), Randy Ottenberg (Return of the Jedi, Star Wars: Episodes I and II), Selwyn Eddy III (Return of the Jedi, Empire Strikes Back, Ewoks: The Battle for Endor) and David Tanaka (Star Wars: Episodes I and IV).

There will be panels with the actors and ILM technical stars at Contra Costa Con 5.



C. ANDREW NELSON
as DARTH VADER since 1994

The Rebel Legion Endor Base, Mandalorian Mercs Teren Clan, 501st Legion Golden Gate Garrison and Droid Builders members will come as their favorite Star War characters to meet and have photos taken with fans of the iconic movies.

Toys, art, comics, LEGO, anime, vintage and new collectibles, games, jewelry, apparel and

much more will be featured at the family-friendly show hosted by Bay Area Festivals and American Brick Builders.

Contra Costa Con 5 is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with free parking at the Hilton. The first 300 families get a free Toy Bag.

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

A free, family-friendly Star Wars Cosplay Costume Contest for attendees awards cash prizes in different age groups. Contest registration will be taken during the day with contest judging at 3 p.m.

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

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



Margo Apostolos
Ewok Tokkat
Return of the Jedi

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