

The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Communities
Concord, Clayton, Walnut Creek, Martinez, Pleasant Hill
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JULY 2025



“Papa” Jake Larson WINS an EMMY!

Fabienne Ory of Normandy meets WWII Veteran Papa Jake Larson, Martinez, at the 81st D-Day Festival Normandy, May31-June 15. She greets him with her copy of the Diablo Gazette, July 2024 edition. (story inside pg.2). Inset: screenshot of a CNN interview for which Papa Jake was just awarded an Emmy on June 26.

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Papa Jake Larson: War Hero, Tik Tok Sensation, Movie Star, Emmy Winner and now, Two-Time Cover Guest

On the cover of this month's Diablo Gazette is a touching image: Fabienne Ory of Normandy is proudly holding last year's issue of the magazine, next to none other than 102-year-old World War II veteran Jake Larson—known to millions online as “Papa Jake.” A Martinez resident and viral TikTok sensation with over 1.2 million followers, Papa Jake is one of the last surviving soldiers who stormed Omaha Beach on D-Day and marched into Paris surviving five major battles along the way, including the Battle of the Bulge that lost 19,000 American lives.

Since 2019, Delta Air Lines has flown Papa Jake to Normandy each year for the region's D-Day Festival, where he's honored as a hero by locals who never forget the sacrifices made by American troops.

Ory met Papa Jake for the first time in 2024 and became an instant admirer. She shared photos and reports with Diablo Gazette showing the deep gratitude still felt in Normandy toward the liberators.

As a thank-you, a copy of the magazine was mailed to her. She saved opening it until this year's festival—in hope she would have the good fortune to meet Papa Jake again.

In a charming tribute, she took the magazine on a tour of the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, snapping photos along the way—giving all of us here a chance to participate in their D-Day memorial event with heartfelt meaning.

Just two weeks after returning from Normandy, Papa Jake received more recognition.

On June 26, it was announced that his 2024 CNN interview with Christiane Amanpour had won an Emmy for Outstanding Live Interview: Short Form.

In that interview, when Amanpour asked Jake if such young fellow soldiers knew what they were fighting for, Papa Jake didn't hesitate: “Definitely. Every one of us knew we were there to give our life to kick Hitler's ass out of Europe!”

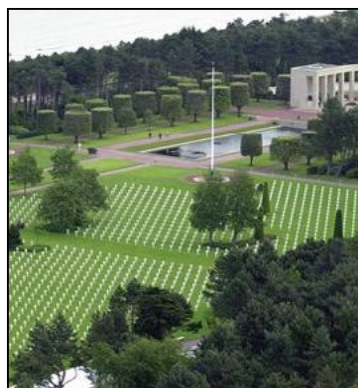
The Papa Jake's amazing life story continues to turn pages as he is now the subject of a movie, “Why We Dream”, a new documentary that premiered June 6 at the Tribeca Film Festival.

The film follows a group of WWII veterans—all over 100 years old—on their emotional return to Normandy. Produced by Pulse Films and Delta Air Lines, the documentary explores memory, sacrifice, and the enduring impact of war. It will be featured on Delta flights and is expected to stream on Netflix in 2026.

Papa Jake is still active with his Tik Tok series, “Storytime with Papa Jake”. On occasion, you may just catch him one morning at the Bagel St. Café located in the Muir Station Shopping Center in Martinez with family and friends.

“The friendship between USA and Normandy France is still alive,” Ory wrote us. With that, Diablo Gazette would like to thank her for thinking of and including us during their 10-day celebration.

Photos top to bottom: Fabienne Ory takes Diablo Gazette on a tour during this year's N-Day Normandy Celebration. From top to bottom: Diablo Gazette storms Omaha Beach, aerial of American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer followed by a tour of the cemetery. Thank you Fabienne..



In Case You Missed It...

Local News Items from Claycord.com and Other Sources

Fireworks are Illegal and Here's How to Report Them

All fireworks, including those labeled “safe and sane,” are illegal in the City of Concord and throughout Contra Costa County, except for permitted professional displays.

This ban includes items such as bottle rockets, roman candles, firecrackers, and sparklers.

Residents are encouraged to report illegal fireworks through the Concord Connect app. Just select “Make a Request”, then choose “Illegal Fireworks Reporting.”

This reporting tool reduces unnecessary 911 calls, improves police response times, and discourages unlawful use.

Anyone caught violating Concord Municipal Code 15.70.020 will have their illegal fireworks seized and will be fined up to \$500. Boom!

July 4th Events

Check out the Calendar page 4 for a list of activities and times for July 4th festivities for each local community.

Learn How Our City Operates

Applications are open for the Fall 2025 Concord Community Academy. The deadline is July 18 at 5 p.m. The Concord Community Academy offers a boots-on-the-ground view of what it takes to keep our city comfortable, safe, and livable. Participants engage in lively discussions and interactive activities as they meet elected officials and staff, and

they learn about the processes that guide how decisions are made.

Participants must be able to attend all six sessions: September 6, 11, 18, 20, 25, and 27 (Saturday mornings and Thursday evenings). There is no fee to attend, but applicants must be at least 18 years of age, and live, work, or own a business in Concord. Space is limited. See our Community Academy web page for class dates and times and to apply. cityofconcord.org/290/Concord-Community-Academy

White Pony Express Seeking Farm Partners for Food Recovery

White Pony Express (WPE), a leading CA food recovery organization, is interested in partnering with a farm or farm hub to pick up surplus fresh produce in their effort to provide access to fresh, healthy food to our most vulnerable neighbors.



Currently, approximately 50 organizations are on their waitlist seeking food assistance.

WPE accepts fruits and vegetables that are blemished, have unusual shapes, or are otherwise imperfect in appearance, but are safe and edible.

If you are interested in partnering with WPE, please contact CEO Eve Birge at Evebirge@whiteponyexpress.org or 202.251.4174.



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Clayton Council Responds to Grand Jury Report

by David King

At its June 24 meeting, the Clayton City Council criticized a recent Civil Grand Jury report, citing inaccuracies, misinformation, and perceived bias. Mayor Trupiano, Vice Mayor Wan, and Councilmember Diaz noted they had participated in multiple investigative interviews rebutting some accusations with evidence, to no avail. The council voted 4-1 to accept the language of their official response to the Grand Jury's findings and included a strong dissatisfaction with the quality of investigation. The council's formal responses to each of the Jury's recommendation are printed below.



Grand Jury Recommendations with City Responses

R1: By December 1, 2025, the City Council should consider adopting a new procedure for Council Members to request items be placed on future agendas.

The City will not be implementing this recommendation because it is not warranted. The Council has already adopted guidelines for Councilmembers to request items be placed on future agendas.

R2: By December 1, 2025, the City Council should consider directing the City Manager to maintain a written, on-going list-available for public view-of all items that have been requested for inclusion in the Council's agenda and either the date on which the item will be agendaized or the reasons for denial of inclusion.

The City will not be implementing this recommendation because it is not warranted. The Council has already adopted guidelines for making public items that have been requested for inclusion in the Council's agenda.

R3: By December 1, 2025, the City Council should consider directing all committees to post their minutes as a standalone document in the minutes column of the City website.

The City will not be implementing this recommendation because it is not warranted. This is not required by any law nor statute and may be done based on available staff time.

R4: By December 1, 2025, the City Council should consider directing all Brown Act committees to place on the agenda the opportunity for public comment on non-agenda items for all regular scheduled meetings.

The recommendation has already been implemented by the City.

RS: By December 1, 2025, the City Council should consider enforcing the Council Guidelines (City Council Guidelines and Procedures Section C.8.c) that committees come to the Council for approval of actions to be taken.

The City will not be implementing this recommendation because it is not warranted. Previous Council Guidelines section C.8.c does not state that Committees come to the Council for approval of actions to be taken. This enumeration was revised at our January 7, 2025 meeting. The new Council Guidelines section N.I.c. states, "Before sub-committees start moving in new directions, they will obtain direction from the rest of the Council." It is the current state that Committees are not authorized to act on behalf of the Council but may act within the purview of their committee responsibilities.

R6: By December 1, 2025, the City Council should consider directing the City Manager to conduct a study of the causes of senior staff turnover.

The City will not be implementing this recommendation because it is not warranted. 7 of 8 open City positions have been filled since February of 2025 and the City has experienced expected levels of turnover during the course of the last year.

RI: By July 1, 2026, the City Council should consider ways to increase City revenue.

This recommendation has already been implemented. Prior to receiving this recommendation, the City has already and is currently considering ways to increase City revenue. Refer to response in Finding #11.

RB: By December 1, 2025, the City Council should consider following Resolution 76-2022's requirements for qualifications of members to serve on the Citizens Financial Sustainability Committee.

This recommendation has already been implemented. Prior to receiving this recommendation, the City has already and is currently following Resolution 76-2022's requirements. Refer to response to Finding #12.



Kim Trupiano
Mayor, Clayton
kimT@claytonca.gov

Clayton Community Progress

For the first time, the City of Clayton adopted a two-year budget following several Budget & Audit Committee meetings, a community workshop, and a final presentation to the City Council on June 3rd. The budget passed unanimously 5-0—a milestone not reached in years.

Budget Overview

In Year One, the initial projected deficit was \$129,000. After rigorous review, this was reduced to approximately \$82,000 by the end of the council meeting. Cost-saving decisions included holding the line on the Senior Planner salary range and passing credit card processing fees to users. If anticipated CPI-related revenue increases materialize, the deficit may fall to around \$60,000.

Year Two's larger projected deficit of \$725,000 is primarily due to the scheduled dissolution of the Successor Agency for redevelopment. With all obligations fulfilled, its operations will cease next fiscal year, phasing out \$510,459 in associated revenues and expenditures. The remaining \$210,000 shortfall stems from anticipated increases in salaries, services, and supplies.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

The City Engineer presented the five-year CIP through 2028–2029, emphasizing road paving, sidewalk, and ADA repairs. The next major paving project is slated for 2026.

GHAD Assessment Vote

The Geological Hazard Abatement District (GHAD) board, comprised of the City Council, received 565 ballots (38.1% return) from Oakhurst property owners. The proposed assessment increase passed with 51.1% support. This secures funding for long-overdue maintenance, repairs, and monitoring, and allows reserve-building for future emergencies. Special thanks to Vice Mayor Wan for championing GHAD efforts.

Grand Jury Report

While I disagree with many findings in the recent Civil Grand Jury report, I recognize that improvement is always possible and remain committed to transparency and progress. The City and Council issued a formal response to the report at the end of June.



Clayton City Council swears in new Police Chief, Jeremy Crone at Council meeting on June 17 council meeting.

Workforce Updates

In a public hearing required by AB 2561, we shared progress on staffing. Seven of eight vacancies have been filled in the past four months, including hiring new Police Chief Jeremy Crone, who was sworn in on June 17 and began work June 23. Welcome, Chief Crone!

Infrastructure Projects

Work is underway in the library parking lot as part of the final phase of our Climate sustainability project. This includes installing solar panels at the maintenance yard and an EV charging station at the library. Completion is expected by the end of summer, with a project update scheduled for our August 17 meeting.

Community Events



- 4th of July Parade: Friday, July 4, 10:00 a.m. Rotary Pancake breakfast at Endeavor Hall from 7 to 10 am.

- Concerts in the Grove: Every other Saturday, 6–8 PM. Next concert: July 12th. (see our ad on page 12 for a complete list of bands.)

- Classic Car Show: Every other Wednesday, July 2, 16 and 30, 6–8 PM, downtown.

You can visit our city website for more information on each of these events. Claytonca.gov/our-city

Finally, thank you to VFW, Post 1525, and the USMC for a memorable and well-attended Memorial Day Ceremony at The Grove Park. It is always an honor to be a part of this remembrance.

Meet Clayton's New Police Chief: Jeremy Crone

There's a new Police Chief in town. Effective June 23, 2025, Jeremy Crone brings 20 years of law enforcement experience to lead the Clayton Police Department.

Chief Crone has dedicated his career to public safety, having previously served in various significant roles at the City of Pinole and the City of Suisun City. Most recently, he held the position of Commander in the City of Pinole, where he demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and a commitment to community engagement.

"I am honored to serve as the Police Chief of the City of Clayton," said Chief Crone. "I look forward to building strong relationships within our community and fostering a collaborative environment to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents."

Chief Crone holds degrees from Northwestern University, American Public University and his POST certification from the Napa Police Academy, as well as various other qualifications, awards, and notable achievements that further highlight

his commitment to excellence in law enforcement.

Kris Lofthus, City Manager stated, "After an extensive national search, Chief Crone distinguished himself as the standout candidate. He brings a wealth of experience in police management, but what impressed me most was his unwavering commitment to community engagement. I am truly excited about the opportunity to work alongside someone who exemplifies integrity and exceptional leadership."

Chief Crone was sworn in on June 17 at the City Council meeting held at the Community Library, Hoyer Hall, introducing him to the community.



Jeremy Crone, City of Clayton's new Police Chief

calendar of events

JULY 4 CELEBRATIONS

CLAYTON: Concord/Clayton Sunrise Rotary Pancake Breakfast 7 & 10 am, Endeavor Hall, Parade 10AM, Main St.

CONCORD: Todos Santos -Stars and Strips 5K Run/Walk 6:45 a.m. Rotary Pancake Breakfast 8:00 a.m., Parade 10:00 a.m. Mt. Diablo High School: Festival 4:00 p.m. Fireworks 9:15 p.m. 925 Band 7:30 p.m. Fireworks 9:15 p.m.

MARTINEZ: Parade begins at Court St. 10 AM. Fireworks 9:30 PM. Martinez Waterfront Park 245 N Court St, Martinez

PLEASANT HILL: Firecracker 5k & Kids 100-Yard Dash 7:45-9:30 AM, Parade 9:30-10:30, Fireworks 6:30-10:30

WALNUT CREEK: FREE 4th of July Concert in the Park, 6-7 PM. 1375 Civic Drive Walnut Creek

Clayton

July 7-11 & 14-18, Clayton Theatre Company's Summer Stage Camp for ages 7-16 "Disney's Jungle Book Jr." Register at claytontheatrecompany.com 925-334-0880

CONCERTS IN THE GROVE

> **July 12, Take 2 Band Dance Band**

> **July 26, Camp Jeff Band Classic Rock**

Concord

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

MUSIC & MARKET SERIES

Thursday Evenings 6:30-8 PM

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> **July 3, The New Frantics Party Band**

> **July 10, David Martin's House Party** Classic Rock from 60's to now

> **July 17, Ronstadt Retrospective,** Tribute to Linda Ronstadt

> **July 24, Quattro Latin and world beats**

Todos Santos Plaza, Concord. For schedule: www.visitconcordca.com/

Pleasant Hill

Off the Grid Nights July 3, 10, 17. Picnic on the lawn. Bring blankets to the gazebo for live music, food trucks, beer, cocktails, and wine.

Pleasant Hill Night Market. First and third Fridays of each month. Food, beer truck, vendors, corn hole and other activities plus live music. 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. in Chilpancingo Park.

- **July 18, 19, Pleasant Hill Blues & Brews Festival 2025.** 4PM. The 14th Annual Pleasant Hill Blues & Brews Festival is the best FREE summer party of the season. Sip on local craft brews, listen to epic live bands, and explore a mix of food trucks and artisan vendors. 147 Gregory Ln, Pleasant Hill. BluesAndBrewsFestival.com

- **August 5 National Night Out** Join PHPD for a neighborly camaraderie and meet those who serve us on the force. 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. City Hall.

DOWNTOWN MERCHANTS SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

7-9 PM at the plaza in front of Jack's Restaurant and Bar, Crescent Drive, Pleasant Hill

> **July 17: Patron Latin Rhythms**

> **August 21: The Cheeseballs**

> **September 18: Foreverland**

SUNSET BY THE LAKE

Summer Concert Series. 6-8 p.m. Sundays. Family Fun Zones on July 6 and July 20.

> **July 6: The Bell Brothers** County, Rock & Americana

> **July 20: The Uninvited** alt rock/ americana

Outside Pleasant Hill City Hall, 100 Gregory Lane.

FUN IN THE SUN

July 12, Noon-2 p.m. A lively family afternoon with tote bag decorating, popsicle craft, face painting, balloon artists. FREE Downtown In the plaza next to Urban Plates

Martinez

- **July 8 Martinez Community Foundation Grant Workshop,** 10am-12pm. Learn how to receive funding for your Martinez community nonprofit group. Martinez Yacht Club, 111 Tarantino Dr. Click: "Pre-application Workshop" at <https://martinezcommunityfoundation.org>

- **July 9, 16, 23, 30, (Every Wednesday through August), Picnic on the Plaza - 5-8 PM.** Each week is something special: movies, live music, special guests and activities. Pick up a Grab & Go dinner from downtown restaurant or pack your own picnic. Bring chairs or blanket. Main Street Plaza.

- **July 10, August 14, September 11, Downtown Martinez Car Show Series 6-8 PM.** Come Downtown for classic cars and vintage vibes.

- **July 10, August 14, September 11, Downtown Martinez Car Show Series 6-8 PM.** Come Downtown for classic cars and vintage vibes.

- **July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14. Open Air Market,** 9 AM. Embrace the charm and allure of unique finds at the Downtown Open Air Market, a monthly treasure trove of Vintage, Collectibles, Antiques, Arts & Crafts, and more. 718 Alhambra Ave, Martinez.

- **July 19, Martinez Ready! Earthquake Safety Workshop,** 9am-11am. Learn how to mitigate common earthquake risks in your home. Martinez Senior Center, 818 Green St., FREE. No registration needed.

- **July 19, Martinez CERT,** Free showing of the disaster film classic "FIRE!" followed by a post viewing discussion. Learn the dos and don'ts of wildfire preparedness. 1pm-3pm,

At the Martinez Campbell Theater

- **July 27-"Port Chicago: The Rest of the Story"** Dean McLoed, author, historian and former resident of Contra Costa County discusses Suisun Bay, including theories of secrets, spies, and bombs. 4:00 p.m. Presented by Contra Costa Historical Society. \$10 members, \$20 non-members.

Martinez Campbell Theater
636 Ward St, Martinez,
www.campbelltheater.com

Walnut Creek

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

> **July 11, DJ Geri Foley** preceded by 7:00 p.m. Fox Trot lesson

> **July 25, Oaktown Strutters Band** preceded by 6:30 p.m. potluck

> **August 1, 100 PRUF** preceded by 7:00 p.m. dance lesson at Elks Lodge 1475 Creekside Dr. www.merrymixers.life

July 16, August 6,

Locust Street Festival, 5:30 - 9 PM. Each Wednesday, May through August! FREE. 1421 Locust St, Walnut Creek

At the Leshner Center

> **July 11, Best of San Francisco Stand-Up**

> **July 15-16 William Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors** performed by Vallet School of Performing Arts

> **July 17-27, Synergy Theatre** presents Spontaneous Hitchcock

> **July 19, You Should be Dancing Bee Gees Tribute**

> **July 26, Tuttie Frutti,** Tribute to Little Richard

> **July 27, Beatles vs. Stones**

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

Other Areas

Moraga

- **July-August 24th --Gallery, June 28, Free Gala Reception,** Noon - 5PM. Acrylic paintings by guest artist Judith Rohrer and a display of Wenda Pyman's "knock-the-socks-off" photography. moragaartgallery.com or call (925)376-5407. Moraga Art Gallery, 432 Center Street, Moraga.

Pittsburg:

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

Library Events

Clayton

- **July 9, Wonderful Wednesdays** Presents Diana Shmiana. Children's Program. Wednesday, July 9 from 2:00-2:45 p.m. Storytelling, songs, magic, puppets, wacky hijinks. 6125 Clayton Rd, Clayton

Concord

- **July 10 Family Storytime 10:00-11:00 a.m.** Stories, songs, and dances! Activities appropriate for learners ages 3-5, all ages are welcome with a parent or guardian. Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street Concord.

Martinez

- **July 19 Needle Arts Meetup 1:00-3:00 p.m.** 740 Court St, Martinez

SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIES

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



Bedroom Sacrifices

and Other Buyer Turnoffs

“What Buyers Hate,” “What Things Turn Off a Buyer,” “Things That Sabotage Your Sale,” “How to Get Less Money When You Sell”—anyone of these would make an appropriate title for this article.

Sellers take note. The presentation of your home affects buyers and their decision as to what to offer on your home, that is, if they offer all. Here are some of the most common mistakes sellers make.

Odors - This comes up most often. Food, pets and moldy smells are a huge turnoff.

Cleanliness – Clutter such as dishes in the sink, cluttered kitchen countertops (people want to envision themselves cooking there), piles of laundry/clothes and cluttered corners in rooms. Less clutter means more space.

Haunted House Landscaping. Yards with too many weeds, or too much of any one thing, dead lawn or foliage or no landscaping at all. (Chris and Dena you know you are exceptions!)

Personalized Decor - HGTV and the décor shows think you should put up wallpaper and paint accent walls, but personal taste is just that, personal to you. If you are getting ready to sell, do not put up wallpaper, or paint unusual colors. Ask the Realtor or Stager about color choices that neutralize.

Valuable collectables should not be left out. They should be packed up and

removed from the homes. Bottom line, too much of anything — collections, color, décor, etc.—could inhibit a buyer’s vision of your property becoming their home.

Less Bedrooms - A music room or a pet room is great as long as you are not sacrificing (converting) one of the bedrooms. Not all buyers have pets, some are allergic to them. Forty-four percent of all American homes do not have pets. More bedrooms is best.

Think about appealing to the buyers most interested in a home like yours. Then neutralize your home so they can realize their dream there, and not yours. Unless you are in a senior’s only community, you may need to offer flexible space options for the type of buyer coming through.

While it does take effort and a budget to prepare your home for sale, the return will be more interested parties resulting in more offers and thus more money to take to your next home. The emotional difficulty is taking your “home” and turning it back into one of the largest investments most folks make in a lifetime. Once you make that shift, primp, polish and treat your home like the investment it is. It will pay you back.

If the slower market, as indicated in the statistics to the right, gives you pause, remember a well-prepared and staged home brings more money and a faster sale.

HOME STAGING: IMPACT ON BUYERS' & SELLER'S

BUYERS'

60% of buyers' agents cited that home staging had an effect on most buyers' view of the home most of the time, and 17% of buyers' agents said that staging a home increased the dollar value.

BUYERS'

83% of buyers' agents said staging a home made it easier for a buyer to visualize the property as a future home.

SELLER'S

When staging a home, 19% of seller's agents reported an increase of 1-5% of the dollar value offered by buyers in comparison to similar homes.

SELLER'S

The most common home improvement items agents recommended to sellers were decluttering the home (91%), entire home cleaning (88%), & improving curb appeal (77%).

SOURCE: NAR



Terrylynn Fisher

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Walnut Creek Chooses Contractor For Phase One Of \$77M Heather Farm Overhaul

by Tony Hicks, Local News Matters

Walnut Creek has hired a contractor for phase one of building a new aquatic center and community center at Heather Farm Park. The City Council on Tuesday approved setting aside \$2.292 million for the initial phase, including \$300,000 in contingency funds.

About \$2 million of the funding will come from Measure O, a measure voters passed in 2022 to increase the city's sales tax for projects like the \$77 million overhaul of Heather Farm. The project will replace the existing community center and swim center with a new combined aquatic and community center. The Heather Farm facilities were mostly built during the 1960s.

Carone & Company Inc. will handle the massive project's phase one, which will modify Heather Farm's pond and nature lake just a few yards to the north of the pond.

The lake will be expanded during phase one, resulting in a smaller concrete pond. A staff report from the meeting said the resulting shoreline will be replanted with native trees and shrubs.

Phase one is scheduled to begin later this month or in early July and conclude in the fall.

The aquatic component will feature a new 18-lane, 50-meter competitive lap pool and a 25-meter family recreational pool with a beach entry, a slide, and a children's water spray device. Locker rooms will be part of the adjacent community center building. The center will operate with electricity from solar panels.

The new 23,400-square-foot community center will also be able to function as an emergency operations center for the city. The city's current emergency operations center is a conference room at City Hall.

The current swim facility will eventually be demolished and filled in.



The new Aquatic and Community Center at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek appears in an architectural rendering. The Walnut Creek City Council has approved development of the \$77 million project, which is expected to begin construction in 2025. (City of Walnut Creek via Bay City News)

New Concord Nonprofit Takes Flight to Protect and Educate About Birds

by David King

The Feathered Follies Foundation, a newly established nonprofit in Concord, is on a mission to promote the care, safety, and understanding of birds—both domestic and wild. Founded by Mercedes Kemp, the organization was inspired by a dramatic event last fall when two birds were stolen from her business, Feathered Follies. The incident drew widespread media attention and generous offers from the public to fund a reward for the birds' return. That outpouring of support sparked the idea of creating a nonprofit dedicated to avian welfare.

With the help of an attorney, the Feathered Follies Foundation officially launched a few months after the theft. As a nonprofit, the organization now has access to volunteers and can pursue a broader, community-based mission. “As a business, we couldn’t have volunteers,” Mercedes explained. “Now people who want to learn about birds and get hands-on experience finally can.”

The Foundation’s mission focuses on three pillars: education, conservation, and rescue/rehoming/rehabilitation. Education is key, Mercedes says, noting that birds are one of the most misunderstood species. Their website will serve as a hub for trustworthy resources—videos, documents, blogs, and classes—all aimed at helping the public better understand avian needs. “Petco and PetSmart don’t teach you these things,” she added.

Currently, most of their work centers on parrots, but plans are in place to expand into care for native wildlife.

Volunteers are trained in proper bird care, from identifying signs of illness to understanding nutrition and cleaning procedures. They also engage in basic behavioral training to help socialize young birds. “Birds are super social and friendly. They want to be part of what’s going on. That socialization helps keep them happy and well-adjusted,” Mercedes said.

For those interested in volunteering, the Foundation encourages potential helpers to fill out a “contact us” form online, sharing their background and interest.

Looking ahead, the Foundation hopes to establish a bird sanctuary in Concord and possibly a zoological facility to support both conservation and education. The rescue and rehabilitation component is especially urgent, Mercedes notes, as there are always birds in need of safe, supportive environments.

The Feathered Follies Foundation is already making an impact—offering care, connection, and hope to birds and bird lovers alike.

featheredfolliesfoundation.org



Supporting Concord's Growth: A Local Business Perspective

by Kevin Cabral , CEO, Concord Chamber of Commerce

The Concord Chamber of Commerce is in an active period of rebuilding—reinvigorating both its membership base and the suite of programs designed to help businesses grow and thrive in our community. As ever, the Chamber remains committed to staying engaged with the evolving landscape of this vibrant city.

In recent city council meetings, updates have emerged about the upcoming fiscal year's budget, alongside the early development of an economic plan for Concord. We encourage residents and business owners alike to explore these developments on the City's website. It's essential for all of us to understand where public funds are directed—most of it goes to worthwhile projects, though some are expensive and require thoughtful financial planning to be sustainable.

A few elements of the City's economic plan particularly resonate with us at the Chamber. Chief among them is the retail strategy. While comprehensive, no single plan can cover every challenge retail faces today.

Concord, like many cities, grapples with a rapidly evolving commercial environment: big-box retailers are entrenched, and the rise of Amazon and other delivery platforms continues to reshape consumer expectations. For local businesses, the key is finding a sustainable blend of service-oriented and retail offerings—while staying nimble, informed, and forward-thinking. That's no easy task.

I've often spoken about the importance of supporting our local shopping centers and small businesses. Concord is home to many vibrant plazas and neighborhood hubs—each offering its own collection of hidden gems.

One such example is the Vineyard Shopping Center on Clayton Road. This charming center is home to essential services like grocery shopping, fitness studios, shoe and watch repair, as well



as a variety of unique small retailers. But perhaps what makes it most special is the food. Lisa V's, a family-owned business for 43 years, is beloved for its hot dogs and burritos. The Kreamery and Bake Shop offers a rotating selection of ice cream and fresh-baked pies. Fiore serves up classic Italian cuisine with a creative twist, and like the others, is family-owned and deeply rooted in the community.

Centers like this don't just meet our needs, they enrich our lives. While shopping locally can sometimes feel like an extra effort or expense, the truth is, it offers something irreplaceable: human connection, community, and a slower, more intentional rhythm.

A quick walk or bike ride to a neighborhood shop can feel like a mini-vacation — while waiting for a package to land on your doorstep often feels like just another task to track, and another box to recycle.

It's worth asking ourselves: do we really need instant access to everything? Breaking the habit of convenience-based consumption is challenging—but building a new habit of local engagement starts with small, meaningful steps. And those steps have a real impact—not just on our economy, but on the character of our city.

For more information about the businesses and organizations that make Concord great, and to learn about the benefits of becoming a member, visit the Concord Chamber of Commerce at www.concordchamber.com.

Concord Police Association's Annual Golf Classic to Honor Fallen Officer



The Concord Police Association has announced this year's annual Golf tournament will be played on September 15, 2025, at Diablo Creek Golf Course in Concord.

The event will be held in honor of Matthew Bowen, a former Concord Police Officer who tragically lost his life in the line of duty while serving with the Vacaville Police Department. All proceeds from this Golf Tournament will go directly to support the Bowen during this difficult time. Participation or donations will help honor Matt's legacy and provide meaningful assistance to his loved ones.

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



supporting various programs that uplift our community .

The Concord POA Annual Golf Classic will feature food and beverages, raffle prizes, and more... and of course, a fun day of golf.

For more Information, become a sponsor, or register as a golfer, go to concordpoa.org and open the "In The Community" tab. Any additional questions can be submitted to administration@concordpoa.org.

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WORD SCRAMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE 5 SUMMER WORDS:

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CAVTIANO	_____
EHCAB	_____
SLDNAAS	_____
GESSNALSUS	_____

ROKO PUZZLES

Marc Rokoff produces a variety of fun word puzzles, sudoku, coloring pages, T-Shirts and more at RokoPuzzles.com



Judging wine competitions was always one of the best parts of my job. From big competitions like the California State Fair and the LA International to little ones like the Contra Costa Wine Group and the Eldorado County Fair, I stand behind the statement that Northern California has some of the highest quality wines in the world.

Often a shoo-in for the top white wines, the Anderson Valley has excellent growing conditions for white wines including both sweet and dry Rieslings. Low night and morning temperatures keep the acid levels high and lots of daytime sunshine ripens the grapes to their peak intensity.

Riesling is my favorite cheese wine. Its ripe apricot flavor offers a lovely counterpoint to all different types of cheese. Arrange three of your favorite cheeses on a cutting board with bright green and red grapes. Slice up some crunchy baguette and you have a beautiful, delicious starter.

Cabernet Sauvignon is a historical grape from the Bordeaux region of France that grows beautifully in Northern California—great with red meat dishes.

This tri-tip marinade includes lemon and needs a red wine with acidity. Cabernet is one

Best Summer Tri-tip

of the most balanced grapes providing just the right amount of acidity to stand up to the pop from lemon. Add some standard BBQ sides like potato or macaroni salad, baked beans, and coleslaw. They will all match seamlessly with the herbal and dark berry flavors.

To finish your meal, pick out a late harvest wine made from Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, or Gewurztraminer. These grapes become rich and honeyed as they hang on the vine. Their caramelized floral and stone fruit flavors will be delicious with an Upside-Down Pear Polenta Cake.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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

LaSommeliere@gmail.com

6-HOUR TRI-TIP

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp. black pepper
2 tbsp. seasoned salt
1/4 cup white sugar
1/4 cup chopped dried onions
1/4 cup chopped garlic
1/4 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup lemon juice
1/2 cup cooking oil
4 lbs. beef tri-tip

DIRECTIONS

Place all the marinade ingredients in a one-gallon zip lock bag. Shake until ingredients

are well mixed. Add meat. Let stand in the refrigerator for 6-24 hours. Grill to desired doneness. approx. 35 minutes..

Yield: serves 4-6

UPSIDE DOWN PEAR POLENTA CAKE



INGREDIENTS

3 bosc pears, ripe but still firm, about 1 1/2-1 3/4 pounds
1/2 lemon, juiced
6 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons corn syrup
3/4 cup light brown sugar
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 1/2 cup sugar
3 eggs
2 1/2 cups flour
3/4 cup fine yellow cornmeal/polenta
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1 cup milk

Optional Garnish:

1 cup heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Preheat oven to 350°. Butter and flour the sides of a nonstick 9 x 13-inch pan.

Peel pears, cut in half lengthwise and remove the core and tough stem. Acidulate pear halves (to minimize browning) by dipping them in mixture of one cup of water and the lemon juice; drain, cover with plastic wrap and set aside.

In a small saucepan, heat six tablespoons butter, corn syrup and brown sugar and whisk until sugar melts and mixture is combined. Pour butter-brown sugar mixture into the prepared pan, spreading evenly across the bottom.

Cream one cup of softened butter and sugar together until they are lightened and light yellow in color, scraping the bowl often. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition and scraping often.

Combine flour, Corn-meal, salt and baking powder in a medium bowl; in a measuring cup, add the vanilla and almond extracts to the milk.

Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture alternately with the milk; end with the dry ingredients. Mix just until well combined, frequently scraping bottom and sides of the bowl.

Cut reserved pears lengthwise



into 1/4-inch thick slices. As each piece is cut, shingle the slices in rows on top of the brown sugar mixture. Spoon batter on top of the pears and spread evenly. Bake until golden brown, about 50-60 minutes. Cake should spring back when touched, but center should still be slightly moist when tested with a toothpick.

Rest for 15-20 minutes; run a knife around the edge of the pan before turning out onto a platter for serving.

Meanwhile, mix cream, sugar and vanilla; whisk to soft peaks. Serve cake with a dollop of whipped cream.

Note: If cake cools too much and is difficult to turn out, warm the bottom of the pan slightly before flipping it over.

Yield: 12-14 servings



The A-B-C's of Naked Gardening Quiz

July is a busy month in my all-natural garden, with fruit tree maintenance and harvesting on the top of the list. Sometimes I get so busy with the details of managing our garden that I forget to appreciate its beauty and health. While friends and neighbors complain that their rose bushes have aphids or that no honeybees are visiting their veggie blossoms, I marvel at our bountiful berry harvests and our vigorous, colorful roses.

Yes, I am fortunate to have time for regular care and maintenance. I also believe that our “naked” garden is responding well to many years of natural and healthful practices—you know, no pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides, and natural amendments. Let's take a fun quiz that reemphasizes the A-B-C's of naked gardening.

What is the healthiest possible mulch for your garden?

A) Artificially-dyed black wood chips from the Pacific Northwest.

B) Wood chips produced from local tree-trimming operations.

C) Your own composted leaf litter and chippings from fire safety trimming.

Answer: Both B) and C) are acceptable but give yourself 2 points if you choose both. My preference is to use my own oak tree leaf litter and trimmings, recycled back into the garden. Sometimes, a diseased tree will be removed and chipped by local tree trimmers, and the pathogen may

be introduced into your own garden. Generally, locally sourced mulch is safe and free. Imported forest products consume truck fuel and are expensive to purchase.

How do you best control aphids that attack your roses?

A) Spray rose leaves twice per week with a broad-spectrum insect killer.

B) Spray roses once per week with insecticidal soap until aphids are gone.

C) Knock off aphids with a sharp water stream and let beneficial predators do the rest of the work for you.

Answer: C) Why work so hard when you can foster a garden full of happy, well-fed aphid predators? One of my colleagues refers to aphids as “Cheetos of the insect world”! They are an important link in your garden's natural food chain. While effective, insecticidal soap is not just “soap” but contains artificial ingredients that can harm your pets or kids.

If you chose A), as homework, read every one of my monthly columns beginning in 2018. You've killed every good bug in your roses, including aphid lions, lady bugs, and aphid-eating soldier beetles.

The fire department orders are to take care of my weeds and dead winter grasses. What's the best approach?

A) Hire a weed abatement service to



Aphids can be sprayed off with a jet of water. Photo Shutterstock

weed-whack weeds and grasses, or do it yourself.

B) Spray and kill the weeds and winter grasses with glyphosate (Roundup) when they are still small, then regularly through spring.

C) Pour boiling water around roots to kill pop up weeds, or a vinegar/dish soap mix.

Answer: Both A) and C) are non-chemical solutions, A) for larger areas, and C) for limited areas such as in driveway cracks. (Mix: 1 gal. 30% concentration vinegar with 1 gal. water, 4 oz. Dawn dish soap.)

Use of glyphosate has been linked with genetic plant mutations and sickness in the folks that spray it. Keep your family and pets safe by staying away from chemical solutions.

Seasonal Notes: Visit your produce garden regularly to harvest freshly ripe squash, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, and other summer veggies. Produce begins to lose nutritional value after 48



Local trimming services can supply tree mulch for free.



Glyphosate and other chemicals are not welcome in an all natural garden. Courtesy Shutterstock.

hours of ripeness. This is also a good time to trim out and discard diseased growth in fruit trees.

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

Aspen Senior Living: Where Care Feels Like Home

When it comes to choosing long-term care for a loved one, compassion, comfort, and peace of mind are paramount. Aspen Senior Living, nestled in a quiet Concord neighborhood, offers all that and more in a newly renovated home designed specifically for seniors needing daily support.

Unlike large facilities, Aspen provides care in an intimate setting—with only six residents—ensuring each individual receives

personal attention and is truly known by their caregivers. State-licensed professionals are available 24/7, providing expert support while treating residents like family.

What sets Aspen apart is its genuine warmth and dedication to quality of life. Residents enjoy comfortable living spaces, daily housekeeping, laundry services, and engaging activities like games, arts, and even golf. There's a bocce court onsite and plenty of opportunity for

connection, conversation, and joy.

Health and wellness are top priorities, but so is nourishment of the soul—and stomach. Three delicious meals a day, plus snacks, are lovingly prepared by Chef Habib, known for his work at Luna and Fiore restaurants.

At \$7,000 per month, Aspen offers an affordable option for long-term, non-acute care without sacrificing quality or comfort. Families gain peace of mind knowing their loved ones are safe, supported, and part of a caring

community.

Aspen Senior Living invites you to see the difference for yourself. Join us for our Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting on July 22 at 1130 Aspen Drive, Concord. Tour the home, meet our team, and experience the warmth that makes Aspen not just a place to live—but a place to belong.

Because at Aspen Senior Living, care doesn't just happen—it comes from the heart.

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Carlyn Obringer
Concord Mayor
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Oakland Urban Farming Project to Establish a Community Garden at Hillcrest Park



Bee Markham Garden in Markham Nature Park and Arboretum in concord. Photo courtesy Yelp

At the June 24 Concord City Council meeting, my Council colleagues and I unanimously approved a five-year License Agreement with Oakland Urban Farming Project (OUFP) for a community garden at Hillcrest Park.

To provide background, for more than 40 years, the City of Concord has collaborated with outside community groups and volunteers to transform underutilized publicly owned land into spaces that provide public benefit at minimal public cost. Since the city does not have the bandwidth or resources to run our own community garden program, these collaborations and use of volunteerism maximize the utility of public space to provide public benefit.

One successful example of such a partnership is the planting and care of the many varieties of plants and trees at the International Garden and the community garden, both located at Markham Park. The community garden, operated by the all-volunteer Markham Regional Arboretum Society (MRAS), allows Concord residents to grow their own fruits and vegetables in a communal

setting.

In early 2022, community members, led by former Concord resident, Mariah Lauritzen, approached the City, including me, as the Council member representing District 2 where Hillcrest Park is located, requesting the establishment of a secondary community garden. City staff collaborated with its existing partner, MRAS, to identify a suitable location for this new community garden within Hillcrest Park.

The establishment of the community garden was delayed to allow for the completion of a significant capital project in the park, the Hillcrest Park Green Infrastructure Project. While the infrastructure project was underway, Public Works staff, MRAS, and members of the community began planning the garden.

In April 2025, MRAS withdrew from the agreement to establish a community garden at Hillcrest Park. At the same time, residents from the Northwood neighborhood, which is located across the street from Hillcrest Park, brought forth a proposal to invite OUFP, which

has experience successfully operating community gardens, to enter into a licensing agreement with the city to establish the Hillcrest Community Garden.

This proposal was presented to the Policy Development and Internal Operations Committee on which I serve with Vice Mayor Nakamura, on May 12, and after lengthy discussion and presentation of a conceptual plan, we recommended that the full City Council enter into an agreement with Oakland Urban Farming Project to establish a community garden at Hillcrest Park.

Thank you to Mariah Lauritzen for her vision and the advance work she did to get the community garden going, and her efforts over the past months to establish the right team to move the garden from a concept to reality, as she moves to another community.

Thank you to MRAS Board Member Christine Boschen who did significant work on the Hillcrest Community Garden concept and graciously shared her learnings with OUFP.

Thank you to former Park Supervisor, City Arborist, and MRAS Board Member Tyce Dekker for believing in Mariah's vision and shepherding it forward successfully before tragically passing away in May.

And thank you to Northwood resident, Ruth Gusakov, who strongly advocated for neighborhood voices to lead this project, identified OUFP as a suitable partner, and is leading the effort going forward.

I look forward to continuing to support this exciting project and will share more information on how to get involved with the Hillcrest Community Garden as it becomes available.

Back-to-school Free School Supplies

To help students prepare for their return to the classroom this fall, Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery ("MDRR") and the Pittsburg Police Department invite everyone to attend its annual Back to School Supply Giveaway on July 19 from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at 65 Civic Avenue in Pittsburg.

Now in its sixth year, this annual giveaway is extremely popular. To ensure every child gets a backpack, reservations are a must, and up to four children per family. All children must be present.

"My favorite aspect of this event is hearing from kids and parents that they were able to gather items they need to start the new school year without spending any money," says MDRR CEO Kish Rajan. It also gets these items into the hands of people who can use them instead of sending more items to the landfill. Reuse is an important practice in MDRR's deep commitment to environmental sustainability.

Throughout the year, the MDRR Reuse Team works hard to gather a variety of pre-owned school supplies, which are later redistributed through the company's network of more than 20 partnering nonprofit organizations and during this annual community event. Due to popular demand, MDRR is partnering with the Pittsburg Police Department to ensure there is a backpack for every child who signs up.

"Events like this also allow us to strengthen the partnership between our department and the community we serve," said Pittsburg Police Chief Albanese. A parent or guardian must accompany minors under 18. Mark your calendar, July 19.

County Board of Education Appoints Student Members

The Contra Costa County Board of Education (CCCBOE) has appointed Sanvi Panda and Keerthi Eraniyan as student board members for the 2025–26 school year. Both students are rising juniors and were selected from a competitive pool of 54 applicants representing 18 schools across nine school districts in Contra Costa County.

Eraniyan is a student at California High School in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Panda attends College Park High School in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District.

"Their voices will bring valuable insight and help ensure that student perspectives are reflected in our decisions," Contra Costa County Board of Education President Annette Lewis said.

As student members of the CCCBOE, Panda and Eraniyan will actively participate in meetings, offer insights on issues affecting students, and collaborate with other members. They have a preferential vote, which means they may formally express their preference on a motion before a vote by the board. Preferential votes do not count in the final numerical outcome of a motion.

Their first meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 13, 2025.



Sanvi Panda, College Park High

Keerthi Eraniyan, California High

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Jill Hedgecock, jillhedgecock.com

Exploring Bodega Bay's Scenic Coast

At less than a two-hour drive from the Concord area, a day visit to Bodega Bay offers one of the most picturesque coastlines in California. But to fully explore this amazing stretch of California coastline, a one- or two-night stay is recommended. My husband and I spent two nights at the Bodega Inn and Suites (Hotel Dega) in a partial ocean view room in May to celebrate our wedding anniversary. We failed to see any gray whales during their spring migration, but other wildlife sightings, hiking, dining, wine tasting, and beach visits, plus an excursion to see Fort Ross more than made up for it.

Seabirds and marine mammals are generally easy to spot if you know where to look. California sea lions can be seen at Lucas Wharf in Bodega Bay. While eating lunch at Rocker Oysterfeller's, our window seat provided views of several of them sunning themselves. Western gulls also entertained us as these birds raided a trash can. Their antics resembled scenes from Alfred Hitchcock's film, "The Birds," which was partially filmed in Bodega Bay.

To the north, Goat Rock Beach is a wonderful place to see harbor seals lounging on the sand spit. At Doran Beach, I observed Franklin's gulls and whimbrels, and a pair of noisy black oystercatchers at Pinnacle Gulch Bay. You will likely spot brown pelicans and gulls as well.

Fort Ross State Park is a must see for history buffs.

Fort Ross is known for being the location of California's first windmill. The land was established as a California State Park in 1906. A \$10 entrance fee also includes access to Sonoma Coast State Park for the day.

Fort Ross was a Russian American Company settlement which harvested seal and otter furs between 1812 and 1841. The residents were a melting pot of Russians, Alaska Natives, and local Native people.

In 1971, arsonists burnt down the Rotchev House and many artifacts were damaged or stolen. Even still, the refurbished building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to the Rotchev House, the Kuskov House was reconstructed in 1983 and includes a display of an impressive array of armory. Another room contains skulls and other natural history artifacts to represent the work of the Russian naturalist Ilya G. Voznesenskii who spent part of 1841 at the fort. Several local plants and animals were first identified by Voznesenskii. Before it was acquired by the State, the site operated as a working ranch where butter and apples were the primary exports. Fort Ross is a unique re-creation of early California history.

Twelve Stunning Beaches

It is nearly impossible to visit all 12 stunning beaches and other scenic vistas along this 17-mile stretch in one day at Sonoma Coast State Park. Consider narrowing your choices. Birders and wildlife enthusiasts will prefer Goat Rock Beach with its harbor seal colony and variety of seabirds.

Those looking to lounge on a sandy beach should check out Portuguese Beach.

For iconic scenery, Arched Rock Beach is worthy of a stop. For beachcombing and tidepool exploration, Schoolhouse Beach is an excellent choice. You can bring your dog to Carmet Beach, Schoolhouse Beach, Portuguese Beach, Wright's Beach, Shell Beach, and Blind Beach. Other beaches and some campgrounds prohibit dogs.

A walk along compact beach sand at Doran Beach (3.8 miles out and back) is quintessential Bodega Bay. This flat, easy hike is perfect for observing seabird life, people watching, and spotting an occasional sand dollar.

Pinnacle and Shorttail Gulch Loop is a moderate hike that passes through the edges of a golf community and exits onto a gorgeous, quiet beach. The rocky terrain is perfect for tide pooling and birdwatching. But to hike the complete loop, it must be low tide..

The Sonoma Coast Vista Trail is an easy 20-minute loop of stunning views of ocean sea cliffs. Your dogs will love it too.

Dining and Wining

Seafood lovers will be thrilled with dining options along the Bodega Bay coast. For the budget-minded



Goat Rock Beach



Pinnacles Beach tide pool



Shorttail Gulch Trail



Fort Ross



Bell Tower



Nicholas Green Memorial

traveler, the Fishetarian offers a satisfying meal at lower cost. I loved their clam chowder bowl and fish and chips.

The crab sandwiches at Café Aquatica were delicious, as was the ambience of the dazzling sea view. Rocker Oysterfeller's Restaurant is best known for its oysters, but their salads and shrimp and grits are also quite tasty.

The Sonoma Coast Vineyards wine tasting offers the unique flavors of coastal grown grapes. Crisp notes and, in some cases, the apple tones of their white wines and smooth pinot red wines are worth the \$30 tasting fee.

Other fun things to do include fishing, kite flying, and sampling locally made saltwater taffy at the Candy and Kites Store. A quick stop to see the Children's Bell Tower is also worthwhile. The bell tower was erected as a memorial inspired by the tragic death of seven-year-old Nicholas Green in 1994.

Whether you come for a day or stay for three, there is an abundance of activities to explore at scenic Bodega Bay and perfect get-away for a wedding anniversary.

Jill Hedgecock has a master's degree in environmental management and a bachelor's degree in biology. Her love of nature influenced her to write "Pizco," inspired by her trip up the Amazon River, and her award-winning "Rhino in the Room" (available on Amazon).

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MAY 31 **THE HOUSEROCKERS**
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JUNE 14 **THE CHEESEBALLS**
Bringing the funk, soul and 70s, 80s, 90s

JUNE 28 **THE BELL BROTHERS**
Country, Rock & Americana

JULY 12 **TAKE 2 BAND**
Dance Band

JULY 26 **CAMP JEFF BAND**
Classic Rock

AUGUST 9 **THE SUN KINGS**
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The Life of Chuck



Adapted from the 2020 novella by horror master Stephen King, "The Life of Chuck" is one of King's non-horror films. This movie falls in the category of "The Shawshank Redemption" and "Stand by Me," with some disturbing subject matter, but no traditional horror tropes.

The story unfolds in three acts and is told in reverse. It begins with environmental disasters happening around the world. Although we only see the effects in one small American town through the eyes of schoolteacher Marty (Chitwetel Ejiofor), you can still feel an impending doom.

As routines turn more stressful and it becomes harder to maintain daily life, Marty and others focus on the curious billboards, radio and TV ads that simply say, "CHARLES KRANTZ 39 Great Years! Thanks Chuck!"

No one seems to know who Chuck (Tom Hiddleston) is and why his name and face seem to be everywhere. As the characters and viewers wonder about Chuck, the film shifts to a pivotal moment in Chuck's life and then shifts one more time to Chuck in his boyhood.

This film is better the less you know about the plot. It unfolds like the petals of a blooming flower.

All the performances are top-notch, and you instantly feel for the endearing characters.

If you read Stephen King, you know that his character development is so adept that even minor characters are interesting enough to carry a whole story. That translates extremely well in this film.

Although you want to spend more time getting to know everyone, the true standout is Jacob Tremblay, whose performance is brilliant as the young Chuck.

It is also a treat to see Mark Hamill in a meaty role, and it is an extra bonus to hear the distinctive narration of the formidable Nick Offerman.

As odd and confusing as this film may seem at the start, it is a journey worth taking. It is a quiet film that leaves you with many thoughts and emotions to ponder long after the credits roll.

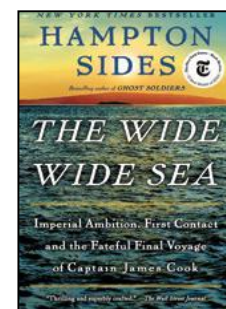
In a sea of remakes and action-filled blockbusters, this film will make you step back and appreciate the tiny beautiful moments in life that we need to help overcome tough times.

*Rated R
In Theaters*



Jill Hedgecock's **bookends**
Author, *Pizco* and *Between Shadow's Eyes*

The Wide Wide Sea



"The Wide Wide Sea" (Vintage, 2025, paperback, 432 pages, \$15.99) by Hampton Sides is a historical book about Captain James Cook's final sailing voyage across the globe. Cook, an 18th-century English naval officer, was retired when the HMS Resolution expedition to plot a route through the Northwest Passage was in the planning stages.

Cook became so enthusiastic about the prospect of finding this elusive route that he volunteered to lead the expedition. So, on July 12, 1776, Cook set off on his third and final multi-year voyage that would take him through the Pacific Ocean and into the uncharted waters off Alaska.

Hampton Sides' meticulous research transports readers to a time when portions of the Earth's navigable waterways remained unmapped. The author recounts details about the health issues his crew faced. Cook's crew never succumbed to scurvy because of the way he fed his men.

The captain also tried to keep the crew from interacting with island women because he understood the devastating impacts of venereal disease to indigenous peoples.

Sides also explores other aspects of the voyage, such as the strong obligation Cook felt to return Mai, a native of a volcanic island 130 miles northwest of present-day Tahiti.

Mai had been brought to England as part of a previous expedition. Mai's story is tragic. The young man's experiences in Europe changed him so dramatically that reintegration into his native culture became nearly impossible.

Cook's ship suffered from poor

craftsmanship even before the HMS Resolution had set sail.

These and other dangerous situations that Cook and his men faced often make the book read like fiction rather than a true account of this doomed voyage.

"The Wide Wide Sea" transports readers to a period in history when men risked everything to see the world. This book is a page-turner that deserves the many accolades it has received.

"Wide, Wide Sea" was a New York Times bestseller and was Featured on Barack Obama's Summer Reading List. It was also considered A Best Book of The Year by "The New York Times", "Time", "The Economist", "NPR", "The New Yorker", and "The Smithsonian."

Hampton Sides is best known for his thoroughly researched nonfiction works of American history as well as his depictions of epic adventures of survival, exploration, or first contact.

He is the author of five other books: "In the Kingdom of Ice", "Ghost Soldiers", "Blood and Thunder", "Hellhound on His Trail" and "On Desperate Ground."

Sides is a board member of the Society of American Historians and the Author's Guild. He was a Miller Distinguished Scholar at the Santa Fe Institute. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico with his wife Anne. Follow him at www.hamptonsides.com.

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The Arts Page

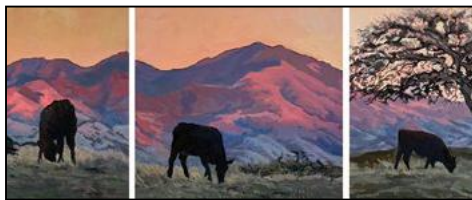
New aRt Cottage Exhibit Features Works of Lamorinda Arts Alliance

aRt Cottage is featuring the wonderful organization, Lamorinda Arts Alliance (LAA) for the month of July and August.

LAA was founded in 1994. It is an organization of local artists and friends who reside or work in the East Bay area. Its purpose is to provide coordination, education and service in order to promote and increase knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts, and to enhance the cultural development of Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda. Membership offers an opportunity to support the arts. You can support your local art community by joining. The website is LAA4ART.ORG

Participating artists will have work reflecting on their chosen theme, "The Neighborhood." The exhibit will open to the public with a reception on July 5 from 2-4.

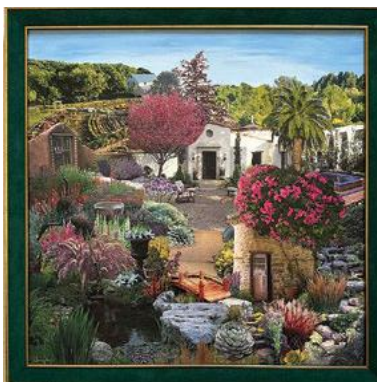
aRt Cottage is located at 2238 Mt. Diablo St. Concord.



Cows with Mt. Diablo by Ruth Stanton



Jane Russell mosaic



Enchanted Villa by Amy Bauer

Final Days for "Spring Flowers" Exhibit at Blackhawk Gallery

The Spring Flowers exhibit at ADAS - Blackhawk Gallery ends July 20. This vibrant and inspiring showcase features 24 member artists including special guest Juliee Richardson's and her stunning sculptures. Stop by before it's over. 3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville. Visit adas4art.org for details.



Watercolors Tribute to Betty Guy at Jor Gallery

JOR FINE ART GALLERY's solo exhibition, Tribute to Betty Guy, ends July 27, 2025.

Experience the beauty and legacy of this celebrated San Franciscan watercolorist.

While you're here, explore the current group exhibit "Whispers of Warmth" featuring 40 talented artists. Visit us at 1026 Oak Street, Suite 102, Clayton. jorfineartgallery.com



Valley Art Gallery: Paintings by Nancy Roberts Through August 2

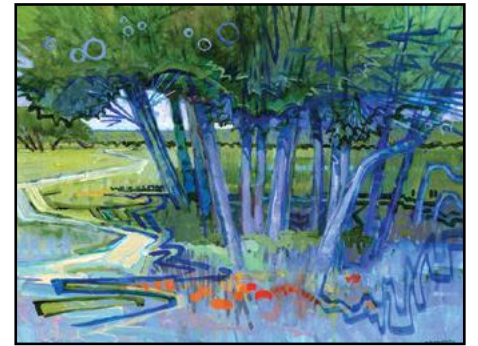
Valley Art Gallery invites the public to experience "Fresh Eyes", a stunning exhibit of local landscapes by acclaimed Bay Area artist Nancy Roberts, on view through August 2. Known for her crisp lines, joyful colors, and imaginative interpretation of reality, Roberts brings a vibrant and fresh perspective to the landscape tradition.

With each piece, Roberts transforms familiar landscapes into radiant expressions of quiet beauty. Her work reflects an intuitive process—where reality serves as a launch point and each painting evolves into its own language, revealing hidden secrets along the way.

Guests will have a chance to meet Roberts who will share her creative process during an Artist's Talk on Monday, July 14, from 11:00 a.m. to noon.

In addition to being a professional painter, Roberts is a retired architect, arts educator, and active member of the regional arts community. Her award-winning work has been widely exhibited and is held in collections nationwide.

Visitors can also explore Valley Art



Sycamore Spring, by Nancy Roberts

Gallery's extensive collection of over 300 works by East Bay artists, displayed on innovative sliding walls. Most two-dimensional works are available to rent through the gallery's exclusive "No Regrets" program. Sculpture, fine crafts, and artist-designed cards round out the offerings.

Valley Art Gallery is located at 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110 in Walnut Creek. Open Tuesday-Saturday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. For more information and to browse available works online, visit valleyartgallery.org.

Beyond Color: The Language of Black and White Opens July 12 at Bedford Gallery

Explore the complex simplicity and expressive power of artwork rendered exclusively in black and white. Bedford Gallery's annual juried exhibition presents a stunning survey of 80 local, national, and international artists.

Featuring a diverse range of work in a variety of mediums, "Beyond Color" highlights the remarkable ways artists harness the stark contrasts and subtle gradations of achromatic media to convey profound emotion, intricate detail, and striking composition.

Exhibit runs July 12 through September 14, 2025. Opening Party Saturday, July 12, 2025, from 5:00 –



7:00 p.m. General Admission (ages 13+) \$5.

General admission "Pay What You Can" starts July 13.

Bedford Gallery is located at Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive

Walnut Creek. Open Wednesday-Sunday Noon to 5:00 p.m.

Ceramics Exhibition at Main Street Arts

Main Street Arts is kicking off July with "Handle with Care", a special group exhibition showcasing the work of Bay Area ceramic artists Olga Jusidman, Leigh Miller, June Bowens and Kate Chenok. The show features a striking variety of pieces, including ikebana vases (the Japanese art of giving life to flowers), Raku and Saggar-fired works, and both wheel-thrown and hand-built clay sculptures.

The public is warmly invited to an artist reception on Friday, July 4, from noon to 7:00 p.m. "Handle with Care" exhibit will be on view through

Free drawing prize – "Spamalicious" by Paula Oesterling



Chinese Dragon, ceramic by June Bowens

Sunday, July 27.

Main Street Arts is home to 12 gallery members working in a range of media, including painting, metal, glass, mixed media, and ceramics. Each month, the gallery hosts a free drawing for a piece of original art by one of its members. July's giveaway is. Stop by, fill out an entry form, for a chance to take home a unique piece of art to decorate your home.

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

Around Martinez



Summertime in the City

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

Martinez is a wonderful place to live any time of the year. But when the days get hotter and the kids are out of school, we look for activities to relax and enjoy our long, summer days. Summers in Martinez are filled with free activities for everyone in your family.

A summer in Martinez wouldn't be complete without some time on the water whether cruising the Delta or simply paddling our local creeks.

Don't have a boat yourself? Come down to the Martinez waterfront to cheer on the Golden State Outrigger Canoe Club at the annual Sugar Run: an event that brings together outrigger canoe clubs from around the region to show their team's strength and speed in a race from Martinez to the Crockett C&H sugar factory and back. A joyful day of family, competition, and aloha.

Cool Off at Rankin Aquatic Center.

On the hottest days of the summer, cool off at Rankin Aquatic Center. The pool is open daily throughout the summer until the kids go back to school (opens at 1:00 p.m. on weekdays; 12:00 p.m. on weekends) for general recreation swim and for party rentals.

Wednesdays Are for Picnic on the Plaza.

Every Wednesday, bring your family downtown for Picnic on the Plaza, a community event to gather on the Main Street Plaza with friends and family. The community is encouraged to bring their own picnic, and Downtown Martinez & Co. will provide different activities and movies each week.

Music is Added to First Fridays.

On First Fridays, businesses will stay open late and offer activities for the community. First Fridays has a terrific addition this summer: Music On Main, a collaboration between Martinez Music Mafia, Downtown Martinez & Co, and the City of Martinez, will host live music at the Plaza. The street fronting



the plaza will be closed, and everyone is encouraged to bring your camping chairs and grab some food at any of the downtown businesses to enjoy a night out on the town.

National Night Out

Speaking of night outs, our annual National Night Out will again be held at the Martinez waterfront on Tuesday, August 5. National Night Out is a nationwide event held on the first Tuesday of August, where residents are encouraged to spend the evening outside with neighbors, to strengthen relationships between the community and law enforcement, to make our neighborhoods safer and more caring places to live.

Movie Nights

Movies in the Park is a free community event that brings together film enthusiasts of all ages for an outdoor cinematic experience. TMNT Mutant Mayhem plays on August 8 at Nancy Boyd Park. Food for purchase will begin at 7:00 p.m. and the movie will begin at dusk. Bring your blankets, chairs, and picnic baskets.

Downtown Classic Car Shows

The downtown Car Show is held on the second Thursdays of each month. The downtown streets will be closed to highlight the classic cars on display from members of our community. Come for the classic cars; stay for the community.

There are so many activities in Martinez this summer. I hope to see you downtown, in our parks, or out on the water.

City in a Pickle Over Pickleball

by Gage Walker courtesy Martinez News and Views

Martinez city officials are weighing new regulations and restrictions at the Hidden Valley Park pickleball courts in response to ongoing complaints from nearby residents about excessive noise, overcrowding and rules violations.

Since the courts opened in February, nearby residents have raised concerns about persistent noise, evening play and noncompliance with posted rules.

"The noise has become a constant and significant disruption," one resident said during public comment at a meeting of the Parks, Recreation, Marina and Arts Commission (PRMAC) on June 17. "As a local firefighter, I often sleep during the day on my days off. Unfortunately, the noise from the courts has made it very difficult for me to get the rest that I need."

Assistant City Manager Lauren Sugayan outlined several potential short- and long-term measures aimed at reducing disruptions at the site.

Sugayan proposed reducing daily court hours to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., updating signage with clearer rules, and requiring USA Pickleball "quiet category" compliant equipment. She also suggested an approximately \$19,000 camera system with speaker capabilities that would allow police dispatchers to issue live warnings to players who violate posted rules or remain after hours.

Police Chief Andrew White said due to staffing limitations, he supported the camera system as a tool for managing

behavior after hours and reducing the need for frequent patrols.

Commissioners expressed both support and concern. Some questioned the effectiveness of cameras without added enforcement resources or clarification of rules in the city's municipal code. Court hours and equipment requirements would need additional code provisions to be enforceable.

Public comment reflected a deep divide between residents seeking relief and players defending the courts as a valuable community resource.

Meanwhile, pickleball players acknowledged the frustrations but emphasized the courts' social and recreational benefits. Some expressed concern about proposals to limit play or require "quiet" equipment, which they say changes the way the game is played and may be cost prohibitive.

Among the long-term ideas discussed were limiting the number of active courts, rotating closure days, relocating future facilities, and exploring noise-dampening infrastructure.

Sugayan noted that installing sound blankets on additional sides, would be costly and may not significantly reduce decibel levels.

Commissioners indicated support for the short-term proposals and agreed to continue monitoring the situation. Sugayan said the camera system could be operational by late July or August.

M is for Martinez



Kori and Sammy Barton

"M is for Martinez" is a delightful alphabet picture book highlighting interesting facts, special people, and wonderful destinations in Martinez. Written and illustrated by

Concord residents, Kori (illustrator) and Sammy Barton (author), the city's past and present are beautifully woven together through vibrant artwork, whimsical poetry, and fascinating local history. An educational and entertaining journey for visitors and Bay Area residents of all ages.

It is an alphabetical portrayal of some of Martinez's best amenities, (26 to be exact, one for each letter) and their historical and community significance. Its purpose is to introduce Martinez in a clever and fun way so kids will enjoy learning about their hometown.



This is an idea long past due.

"It just occurred to me as I was doing yard work and playing with my kids in the backyard. I thought, you know, I don't think anyone's done this yet." Kori has always wanted to write a children's book because she loves reading to her kids. "I wanted to write something close to home, something that they are a part of."

"C is for Concord" was their first book of the series, published in December 2023. Since then, Clayton, Walnut Creek, and Brentwood all have their own version. Kori says their plan is to do all the local cities. "M is for Martinez" is available on Amazon Books, or visit hometownalphabet.com.




Event Details Posted on Social Media

July Community Events

7/3 12 PM	Pine Meadow Park Official Opening
7/4 10 AM	4th of July Parade
7/4 9:30 PM	4th of July Fireworks
7/8-10 AM	Community Groups Funding Program Pre-Application Workshop
7/10 5 PM	Main Street Thursday Car Show
7/12 9 AM	Martinez Volunteer Community Cleanup - Holiday Highlands Park
7/13 9 AM	Open Air Market
7/18 8 PM	Movies in the Park - The Wild Robot
Every Wed	Picnic on the Plaza
Every Wknd	Aire Libre Weekends, Del Cielo B.
Every Sun	Downtown Farmers Market
Thru Month	Martinez Sturgeon Baseball Games

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Welch Family Reunion Shines Light on the Founding Families of Central Contra Costa

by David King, Publisher

Few realize that nestled in the hills of Martinez, the William Welch Winery holds a remarkable place in the story of Central Contra Costa County. More than just a boutique winery, it sits on land steeped in the region’s earliest history—land originally granted to William Welch, whose lineage is tied to some of the most iconic founding families of the area.

Names like Salvio Pacheco, Francisco Galindo, Ignacio Martinez, Vallejo, Moraga, and Patrick and Mary Rodgers are familiar to local historians—and all connect back to Welch and the original Rancho Las Juntas. Yet, over time, this chapter of this shared heritage has faded from view.

That is changing, thanks to Welch descendant and current winery owner Steve Welch, who is committed to reviving his family’s storied past and sharing it with the community. In a celebration over a decade in the making, the William Welch Winery will host a historic family reunion from July 3–6, 2025. More than 30 confirmed Welch descendants from across California, Arizona, and beyond will gather, marking a significant moment in preserving this local legacy.

William Welch, Steve’s great-great-great-grandfather, was an Irish sailor who leapt into California history—literally. In 1821, at just 24 years old, he jumped ship in Bodega Bay from the British vessel Lady Blackwood. With fellow crewmate Joseph Lawrence, he fled to San Francisco, then to Los Angeles. While Lawrence stayed south, Welch returned north and integrated into early Californio society, being baptized at Mission Santa Clara as Julian Willis and later marrying Maria Antonia Galindo, sister of Concord co-founder Francisco Galindo.

Welch’s journey from sailor to soldier to landowner was hard-fought. Initially granted land near Mt. Diablo by Alcalde Salvio Pacheco—only to be displaced when Pacheco realized it was land he had also



Mary Rodgers of Rodgers Ranch (Patrick and Mary Rodgers). John and Patrick Rodgers named Pleasant Hill

claimed—Welch eventually found a home between the Pacheco and Martinez ranchos, along the confluence of Alhambra and Walnut Creeks. In 1844, after years of perseverance, he was granted the 13,324-acre Rancho Las Juntas, which then spans parts of what is now Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, and Pacheco.

Today, Steve Welch honors that heritage through wine. The William Welch Winery and Rancho Las Juntas Vineyard are more than places to enjoy a glass of wine—they are living history. Visitors are welcome Sundays from 2–5 p.m. at the vineyard (1830 Franklin Canyon Rd.), or Fridays and Saturdays at the downtown Martinez Tasting Room (837 Main St.). Sip, savor, and step into the story of one of Contra Costa’s original pioneers.

For more on Welch’s adventurous life, visit www.williamwelchwinery.com.



The photo of the family in front of the house titled Felipa Soto is the oldest known picture of the original Welch Ranch adobe in Walnut Creek. This is the original homestead of Rancho Las Juntas Mexican Land Grant to Welch, 13,400 acres.... nearly all of Martinez, all of Pleasant Hill, a share of Walnut Creek.

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Above: The Duane house with Tom Duane and Verna on the horse. Verna is Steve Welch’s Great Grandmother.
Below: Rancho Las Juntas Vineyard

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Contra Costa County Historical Society Acquires Albert E. Davies Photo Negative Collection

The Contra Costa County Historical Society (CCCHS) has acquired the Albert E. Davies negative photo collection that was once believed to be forever lost.

Last fall, the CCCHS was contacted by the son-in-law of Mrs. Kay Randall with an exciting opportunity. Mrs. Randall was ready to downsize, and was looking for a place to donate a large collection of photo negatives for preservation and public access.

Unsure of what they had, Leigh Ann Davis, Executive Director, made a trip to Angels Camp, Calif. to interview Mrs. Randall and pick up the collection.

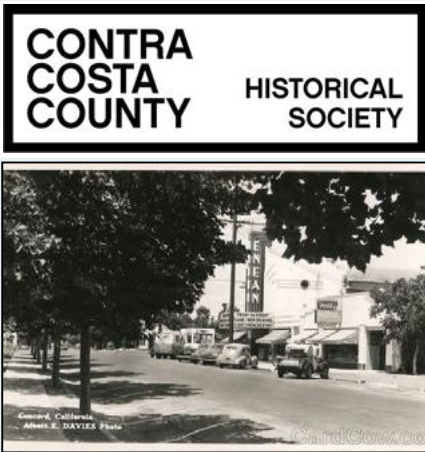
As described by Mrs. Randall, in the early 1950's, Mr. Maurice Randall of Randall's Drugs in Danville acquired the collection from Davies. The collection was passed down to her late husband, Ken Randall. She said he tried to start a side business printing postcards during his college days.

When he finished his degree and was offered a teaching job in the Sierras, his dreams of becoming a postcard printer were pushed to the side.

The Randalls moved to the mountains and the collection went with them, where they have kept the collection safe ever since.

Davies is a well-known photographer to postcard collectors around the East Bay Area. According to an article written by Carol Jensen (et al.) that appears in the November 2012 issue of the San Francisco Bay Area Postcard Club newsletter, he was born in Brooklyn, New York and moved to California with his parents, sister, and grandmother after 1900. By 1911, you can see postcards stamped with his identifier, "A.E. Davies/Berkeley."

Jensen writes that, "About 1933 Davies moved to the Contra Costa County town of Alamo as photographer and proprietor of The Davies Press, and quickly involved himself in local affairs as an Alamo Grammar School Board Trustee in 1935, and secretary of the nearby Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce by 1938... No copyright mark is seen on his work, suggesting the images may have been commissioned by other parties.



Postcard of Enean Theater in Concord. Albert E. Davies Photo. Postcard from Darlene Thome collection.

"Image numbers appear to be chronologically ordered, although they do not embed a specific date/year. Postmarks and stamp boxes provide a rough sequencing and seem to confirm this theory.

"After Davies closed down his Alamo and Walnut Creek studios he moved to Grass Valley, Calif.

"Retired Contra Costa History Center director Betty [Maffei] told the author that Albert Davies' records and negatives were thrown into a dumpster when the studios closed. What we collectors would give for that archive today!"

The CCCHS is thankful the Randall family thought to donate this special collection to its archive. It is the society and the family's wish that the collection remain together and eventually be digitized for public access.

With a budget shortfall of around \$15,000 to keep operations going for the rest of the year, the CCCHS cannot begin to plan preservation projects for items like the ones found in the AE Davies Collection. Hopefully, the Contra Costa community can help CCCHS achieve its goal of digitizing and preserving this collection for years to come.

For information about donating, visit www.cocohistory.org or contact Leigh Ann Davis 925-229-1042 or director@cocohistory.org.

Martinez Community Foundation to Hold Grant Workshop July 8

by Stephen Andrews, President, Martinez Community Foundation

The Martinez Community Foundation (MCF) will hold a pre-application workshop for local nonprofit organizations interested in applying for a FY 2025-2026 grant. The workshop will be held on Tuesday, July 8, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at the Martinez Yacht Club, 111 Tarantino Drive.

MCF's mission to promote, champion, and enhance an equitable and sustainable quality of life for the people of Martinez is carried out through grants approved by the Board of Directors that address one or more of the Foundation's five focus areas.

Community Engagement - Promoting cooperation and collaboration among Martinez residents to build community resilience and prosperity.

Environment - Sustaining the quality and health of the natural resources of Martinez with emphasis on clean air, water, and soil.

Arts & Culture - Celebrating the diversity of Martinez through community celebrations and art installations.

Economic Opportunity - Encouraging entrepreneurship and the creation of community-based small business to support and sustain Martinez residents.

Education & Skills Development - Fostering informal opportunities for community learning and skills development via workshops, work events, camps, and volunteer service.

The Board of Directors is pledged to utilize the funds of the MCF as a



The Martinez Community Foundation (MCF) presents New Leaf Collaborative (NLC) and partners with \$13,000 grant award for "Meet Me Martinez!" Phase 2. Pictured L-R: Shradha Shakya, Martinez Site Director Boys and Girls Club, Stephen Andrews, MCF President, Jamie Menusco, Friends of Alhambra Creek (FoAC), Jane Moore, FoAC with rescue canine Gracie, Ellen Concepcion, NLC Executive Director, Elaine Jackson, FoAC, and Jose' Luis Marquez, Executive Director, Boys and Girls Club. MCF is hosting its FY 2025-26 grant workshop on July 8. Photo by: Roan Foote, Youth photographer for the Diablo Gazette.

community incubator to foster a rich and sustainable legacy that benefits the whole of Martinez.

Attendees of the July 8 workshop will receive information about eligibility requirements, available funding, program milestone dates, application completion tips, the selection process, and reporting requirements.

Community nonprofit groups based in or serving Martinez are encouraged to attend. Interested organizations can register by visiting MCF's website <https://martinezcommunityfoundation.org> and selecting the "Pre-application Workshop" button at the top of the homepage.

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Representation - A Complex Dynamic

by Edi Birsan, Concordian

Representative democracy—also known as a republic, or “how we avoid total chaos most of the time”—is built on the idea that elected officials speak and act on behalf of their constituents. It sounds straightforward. Spoiler alert: it isn’t.

Take Concord, where the city is divided into five districts, each with about 25,000 people. But here’s the kicker: those 25,000 aren’t all voters. Some districts have lots of kids, non-citizen immigrants, college-aged adults who haven’t registered (because, you know, Netflix exists), and plenty of renters who just moved in. Still, every district gets one councilmember, whether five people vote or five thousand.

Meanwhile, in neighboring Clayton, the entire population—half the size of one Concord district—votes for all five councilmembers. This results in a significantly higher ratio of elected officials to residents in Clayton, though with that comes more competitive, and often costly, elections.

Councilmembers serve four-year terms and oversee city operations through the appointment of a City Manager who reports directly to them.

The picture becomes more complex at the regional level. Boards like the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) or the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) are not composed of directly elected representatives. Instead, local city councils or county boards appoint members—usually elected officials—to serve. These representatives often receive

little or no compensation yet they are responsible for decisions involving millions of dollars. Frequent turnover and lack of continuity further reduce their influence, while unelected staff and executive directors often wield greater power.

Proposals to elect regional board members directly come with their own challenges. Campaigning in large districts of 300,000 to a million residents requires substantial funding, which invites influence from political parties, donors, and special interests. This can limit who runs for office, favoring those with money or connections over those best suited for the job.

Currently, we operate under one of two models: directly elected officials (like BART board members) or appointed representatives (as with MTC). A possible solution could be to blend these systems—appointing members to longer terms with fair compensation, allowing non-elected individuals to serve, or combining elected and appointed members. Such changes could improve focus and accountability.

Or, perhaps, we could always await the return of the monarchy to settle democracy’s many complications.

This is the current opinion of Edi Birsan (EdiBirsan@gmail.com) and not to be confused with any Manifesto past or future that may exist, whether the Manifesto was by a directly elected or self-appointed Edi.



For the Love of Pets

by Jill Hedgecock, Jillhedgecock.com

Summer Pet Hazards

The summer months are fraught with hazards for pets, especially outdoor cats and dogs. Fireworks on the Fourth of July, hot temperatures, and toxic algal blooms are some dangers to be aware of.

Fourth of July. More pets go missing on the Fourth of July than at any other time of year. To avoid this heartbreak, secure your pet inside during the festivities.

Be prepared for when your animal may be lost. Microchip your pet and attach an up-to-date ID tag to its collar.

Hot Temperatures. Exposure to temperatures above 80 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) for longer than twenty without shade and water can be dangerous for most dog breeds. At 90 degrees, the potential for heat stroke exists, so it is best to keep pets indoors when it’s extremely hot.



Do not leave pets unattended in vehicles when outside temperatures are above 70 degrees, even with open windows. For some animals with certain conditions, leaving them in cars on even cool days should be avoided. Animals with flat faces, like pugs, Boston terriers, and Persian cats, pets with heart conditions, and overweight pets are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively.

Avoid walking dogs on asphalt on hot days to protect their paw pads from burning.

Shaving away a thick coat is not a good idea. These layers of fur actually help them avoid overheating. However, frequently brushing long-haired cats and dogs can be helpful.

Heat exhaustion can occur at a body temperature of 104°F and heat stroke

is possible at internal temperatures of 106°F. Signs of overheating include excessive panting or difficulty breathing, drooling, collapse, seizures, bloody diarrhea and vomiting and warrants taking your pet immediately to a veterinarian. Do not submerge the animal in water which might further compromise its health.

Try to cool the pet by wetting their fur and encouraging them to drink cool water. If the animal refuses to drink, use a damp cloth to wet the animal’s gums and tongue. If possible, put rubbing alcohol on the pads of the dog’s paws, rather than water.

Toxic Algae



Algal bloom season extends into October. Since there is no way to tell if an algal bloom is toxic by looking at it, it is best to keep your pets out of the water if green clumps of algae are visible or if red tides are present in the Bay.

If your pet enters contaminated water, do not let them lick their fur and bathe them as soon as possible. If they experience seizures, vomiting or diarrhea, take them immediately to a veterinarian.

By taking precautions against these known pet hazards, you and your pets can enjoy the summer season.

Jill Hedgecock is a retired environmental scientist and award-winning author of several books available on amazon.com.

How to Protect and Maintain Brain Function



By Dr. James Mittelberger, MD, MPH, CEI Chief Medical Officer

Many of us are concerned about developing dementia — the loss of memory and cognitive function. A common myth is that there is nothing we can do to prevent it. While a main cause of dementia is genetic and not in our control, many controllable factors have a significant impact on risk.

Fortunately, the same activities that can prevent dementia are the same that can help us live a vibrant, healthy life.

Exercise. Engaging in vigorous exercise has a significant effect on reducing the risk of dementia. It improves brain circulation and function and has

been shown to stimulate the growth of new brain cells in memory areas. Even 35 minutes a week of exercise makes a difference, but 30 or more minutes of moderate and even some strenuous exercise a day is best.

Use it or lose it. Challenging yourself to learn and stay socially engaged is essential to brain health. This does not have to mean doing crossword puzzles. The effects of lifelong engagement in education and learning are cumulative, providing a protective shield against dementia for many years to come.

Protect and support your hearing

and vision. Part of keeping the brain healthy is to keep the inputs as strong as possible. Hearing aids and treatment for vision problems, such as cataracts, have been shown to reduce the risk of dementia.

Eat a heart and brain-healthy diet. The same diet that protects your heart has been shown to be protective of your brain. Some of this is related to cholesterol and lipids. Diet also has a significant impact on inflammation, which is closely related to dietary choices. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in meat and saturated fat, protects your brain. Mushrooms may be especially valuable as an antioxidant.

The correct use of medications is also critical to protect your brain.

Control of hypertension is proven to help prevent dementia, so using this medication is often essential. On the other hand, many medicines that impact neurochemicals are toxic to the brain and can accelerate the development of dementia and need to be avoided.

Sleep and rest. Recent studies show that lack of sleep in middle age can be related to later dementia. Sleep allows the brain to clear toxins and heal damage and is essential to long-term brain health.

Puzzle Solutions

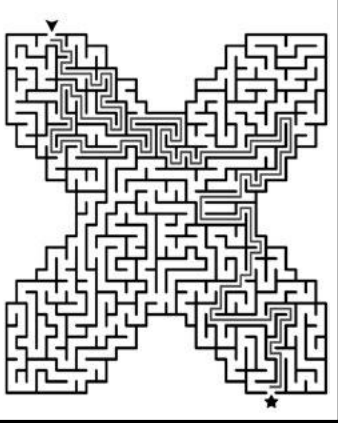
FROM PAGE 6

Word Scrambles Solutions:

SUNSHINE
VACATION
BEACH
SANDALS
SUNGLASSES

9	7	8	5	3	6	2	1	4
6	5	3	4	2	1	8	9	7
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8	9	7	6	4	5	1	2	3
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4	2	6	1	5	3	9	7	8
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G	A	S	T	A	G	E	S	O	K	B	E	R	D	M	R	E



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Soaring into the Future: Celebrating the Class of 2025

As another school year comes to a close, we take a moment to celebrate the remarkable achievements of Clayton Valley Charter High School's graduating Class of 2025. Last month, under the open skies at the Toyota Concord Pavilion, 567 proud seniors walked across the stage to receive their diplomas and step confidently into the next chapter of their lives.

These students represent more than just academic success; they reflect the strength, resilience, and promise of a generation ready to make a difference. Whether heading to a four-year university, enrolling in a two-year college, joining a military branch, or entering a skilled trade program, each student carries with them the values and spirit that define the Clayton Valley Charter community.

Among this accomplished group are several recognized students we are proud to recognize:

Congratulations to Alex Ternate on his acceptance to Johns Hopkins University! Alex's dedication to academics and passion for science has truly set him apart, most recently earning him first place and medals as part of the CVCHS Science Olympiad team. His hard work, curiosity, and commitment to excellence paved the way for this incredible achievement, and we look forward to seeing all he accomplishes at Johns Hopkins.

We are excited to announce that Sean Maniti, our Valorant Esports Captain and a standout from the Game Programming Academy, has earned a full QuestBridge scholarship to MIT. This remarkable accomplishment highlights Sean's academic brilliance, his leadership in competitive gaming, and his talents with the Technical Design & Production team. Congratulations to Sean on this milestone—a true testament to his drive and dedication!

Congratulations to Molly Gray for

becoming a member of the diving team for TEAM USA and attending Stanford University. Her ability to balance her academic achievements while training full-time demonstrates Molly's dedication to excellence. While diving for CVCHS, Molly became one of the nation's best one-meter female high school divers. As a junior, she won the state diving championship, set the all-time NCS record, and became a two-time NISCA All-American. In her senior year, she brought that same tenacity and spirit to Team USA, where she continues to train at an elite level—all while excelling academically. We are proud to see her continue her journey at Stanford.

These three students represent only a fraction of the talent, commitment, and character that can be found throughout the Class of 2025. Each graduate has left a mark on our school and community, and we could not be prouder of what they have achieved... and what lies ahead.

This moment of celebration would not be complete without recognizing those who have helped shape our school's journey. I want to take a moment to thank Kristy Powell, a parent of three CVCHS graduates and a longtime leader within our school community. Kristy has served as the chair of our governing board for nearly a decade, guiding our school through significant decisions, championing academically centered policies, and consistently prioritizing the needs of students.

Her steady leadership, unwavering commitment, and tireless work have helped define what makes Clayton Valley Charter special. On behalf of our faculty, staff, families, and students past and present, we extend our deepest gratitude to Kristy for her service. We wish her all the best as she enters the next chapter of her life.



CVCHS Executive Director, Bill Morones, congratulates graduating seniors at the commencement ceremony at Toyota Pavilion, June 5.



To the Class of 2025, we are proud of you. You have inspired us, and we know you will go on to accomplish great things.

Congratulations, Ugly Eagles!

MDUSD Board of Education Seeks Candidates for Provisional Appointment to Fill Board Vacancy

At its June 25, 2025 meeting, the Mt. Diablo Unified School District Board of Education voted to fill a vacancy in Trustee Area #4 through a provisional appointment. This vacancy follows the resignation of Trustee Cherise Khaund, who stepped down on June 16 to accept a position with the Walnut Creek Planning Commission.

Trustee Area #4 encompasses Walnut Creek, Concord, and Clayton.

Eligible applicants must be registered voters residing in Trustee Area #4 and not employees of the Mt. Diablo Unified School District. Additional eligibility criteria can be found in Board Bylaws 9220 and 9223.

The person appointed will serve the remainder of the term, which ends around December 14, 2026. The selected individual must also qualify and run in the next election if they wish to continue serving beyond that date.

Candidates can apply online through mdusd.org

The application deadline is July 23, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. Finalists will be interviewed during a Special Board of Education meeting scheduled for August 4, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

Unless a petition requesting a special election is submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools within 30 days of the appointment, the decision will become final.

For more information, contact Laura Juranek at (925) 682-8000 ext. 4000 or email juranekl@mdusd.org.



County Invests \$5 Million For New SAFE Center to Assist Immigrant Community



Contra Costa County is piloting a Services and Access for Everyone (SAFE) Center with a one-time \$5 million investment. The SAFE center will be a new community hub designed to connect immigrant individuals and families with resources, support, and opportunities.

Contra Costa County is home to more than 300,000 foreign-born residents—over one-fourth of the

county's population. They are teachers, nurses, artists, students, entrepreneurs, and essential workers who contribute more than \$16.8 billion to our local economy. But beyond the numbers, these individuals represent the diverse vibrancy of our community, and they deserve dignity, support, and a sense of belonging.

As federal support for immigrants and

refugees continues to erode, local leaders must step up. Building safe, inclusive communities has always been central to my public service. As a police officer, I worked daily to protect residents. On the Pleasant Hill City Council, I championed the Inclusive City Resolution to ensure everyone felt welcome.

Now, as a County Supervisor, I continue my work to make our community safe and welcoming for all residents in Contra Costa County. I am honored to have secured funding to establish the SAFE Center. This initiative is the result of months of collaboration with county staff, nonprofit partners, and community leaders—including Ali Saidi of Stand Together Contra Costa and Susun Kim of the Family Justice Center. Together, we identified a vision rooted in lived experience, community voice, and cross-sector partnerships.

Following the proven model of the Family Justice Center, whose long-term sustainability has relied on philanthropic donations following initial funding from the County, the SAFE Center will need the support of our community.

The initial hub will be in Concord,

with planned services to include a mobile component to meet needs across our county. The Center will bring together community partners with a focus on education resources, economic opportunities, financial and safety-net services, healthcare, legal aid, social connections, cultural celebrations, and civic engagement.

This pilot program is funded through a combination of \$1.5 million from Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 budgets, redirected from the Employment and Human Services Department's Measure X allocations, and \$3.5 million from the County's COVID-19 FEMA Reserves.

I thank my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors for their support in approving this one-time allocation. Contra Costa County thrives because of our diversity, and it is essential that we support all residents to thrive.

At its core, the SAFE Center is dedicated to creating a space where individuals and families can feel seen, supported, and valued.

To learn more about the SAFE Center, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/SAFECenterCoCo>.



One of the first financial factors to assess before selling is your home equity. If your home has appreciated significantly, selling might provide you with the financial boost needed to upgrade or downsize comfortably.

Additionally, the rising costs of home ownership can become overwhelming. Property taxes, insurance, and maintenance expenses tend to increase over time. If your monthly housing costs are stretching your budget too thin, selling could provide the opportunity to relocate to a more affordable home and regain financial stability.

Your home should align with your current lifestyle and future aspirations. A growing family may require a home with more space or a bigger yard. On the other hand, if your children have left the nest or maintaining a large property has become burdensome, downsizing can offer financial relief and simplify daily living.

Life events such as marriage, divorce, career relocations, or even health concerns can also trigger the need for a move. If your home no longer serves your personal or professional needs, selling and finding a property that aligns with your new circumstances can significantly enhance your quality of life.

If the burden of upkeep has become more trouble than it's worth, it might be wise to sell and transition to a home with lower maintenance demands, such as a condominium or a newer property with modern features.

Your neighborhood plays a significant role in your overall satisfaction with your home. If crime rates are rising, local

The Signs It is Time to Sell Your Home

amenities are diminishing, or traffic congestion is worsening, your once ideal location may no longer fit your needs. Similarly, if close friends and neighbors have moved away, you might feel more inclined to seek a fresh start elsewhere.

From a market perspective, a strong seller's market can present an excellent opportunity to sell at a premium price potentially maximizing your return on investment. However, trying to "time the market" shouldn't be your sole reason for selling; it should align with your personal and financial readiness.

Selling a home is not just a financial decision—it's also an emotional one. Letting go of a place filled with memories can be difficult, but if you've already started imagining your life elsewhere, it might be a sign that you're ready to move on.

Additionally, preparing for the selling process, including decluttering, staging, and handling buyer feedback requires a strong mindset. If you feel mentally and emotionally prepared for the transition, it's a good indication that the time is right.

Deciding whether to sell your home is a personal choice that requires careful consideration of financial factors, lifestyle changes, market conditions and emotional readiness. If several of these signs resonate with you, it might be time to start planning your next move. Consulting with a trusted real estate professional can help you navigate the process, ensuring that you make an informed decision that best suits your future goals. Compliments of VirtualResults.net

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Clayton Market Update

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
3 Rachel Ranch Ct	\$1,796,198	3060	5/3	4/30/2025
1140 Easley Dr	\$1,200,000	2391	4/2.5	5/5/2025
8051 Kelok Way	\$1,350,000	2894	5/3	5/9/2025
5544 Southbrook Dr	\$1,525,000	2727	5/3	5/15/2025
1237 Buckeye Ter	\$850,000	1343	3/2	5/16/2025
5121 Keller Ridge Dr	\$983,000	1877	3/2.5	6/9/2025
407 Grenache Cir	\$1,350,000	2052	4/2.5	6/11/2025

Concord Market Update

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
4403 Winterberry Ct	\$1,235,000	2886	4/2.5	5/23/2025
4370 Eagle Peak Rd #F	\$515,000	1180	2/1.5	5/29/2025
1728 Netto Ct	\$998,750	2305	4/3	6/5/2025
4467 Windflower Ct	\$1,128,000	2157	4/2.5	6/6/2025
4553 Wildcat Ln	\$768,000	1506	3/2	6/11/2025
762 Citrus Ave	\$1,030,000	2365	5/3.5	6/12/2025
3607 Hammond Pl	\$900,000	2087	3/1.5	6/17/2025

Based on information from CCRAR/Pearson MLS® as of 5/21/25. All data, including all measurements and calculations of area, is obtained from various sources and has not been, and will not be, verified by broker or MLS. All information should be independently reviewed and verified for accuracy. Properties may or may not be listed by the office/agent presenting the information.

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SALVAGE TITLE (ROCK COVERS) 2:00pm-3:30pm

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