

NOVEMBER 2017

The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Communities
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NEW PULLOUT ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE
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Happy Thanksgiving!



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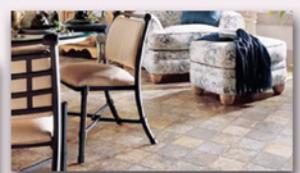
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 from the publisher *David King*

Zombie Attack on Claycord Kills It

An amazing thing happened on Claycord.com this past Halloween. Occasionally, Claycord.com will run a promotion offering free prizes on its Facebook page. They've given away Rachel Dunn Chocolates Shopping sprees, ballet tickets, movie tickets, comedy shows, airplane rides etc. And the contests are always well received with many, many readers participating. On Facebook, these are easy to enter, easy to claim prizes, no-hassle contests.

One would naturally think the larger the prize value the greater the contest participation. It works that way with the lottery.

For this Halloween, Claycord.com had teamed up with Patty's Original Cheese Zombies restaurant. The promotion "Zombie Attack!" an obvious tie-in to the Halloween season with a clever Pay-It-Forward twist. To enter, you had to sacrifice a friend to be attacked by a zombie, (so the contest fantasy implies),

by nominating/entering your friend into the contest. In other words, he or she wins the Cheese Zombie. But if that happens, you too were awarded a Cheese Zombie.

At the time of this writing, the contest was not over, but Claycord.com had committed to choosing 50 winners by Halloween. There were over 9,000 entries...for a roughly \$5 Patty's Original Cheese Zombie sandwich!

There's only one explanation for this. Patty's Cheese Zombie is ingrained in our stomachs and embedded in our hearts, (as a hometown/childhood favorite) Claycord.com is really big with 50,000+ Facebook followers, and its readers can be really nice to each other...and with all the adversity we've been facing recently, that's feels really good. Great job Claycord and Patty's.

Take note advertisers.

The New Veranda Announces Openings

Concord is now home to the newest East Bay's destination for shopping, dining and entertainment. Some stores have opened while others will open throughout November and December.

New openings include T.J.Maxx, LunchboxWax, Sleep Number, AAA, Travis Credit Union, Toys"R"Us® and Babies"R"Us®.

"It's an exciting time at The Veranda as our first retailers begin to open their doors this month," said Ashton Simmons, general manager of The Veranda at CenterCal Properties, LLC. "The development of this shopping and entertainment complex has been highly anticipated, and we'll be announcing additional openings and events through the end of the year."

The Veranda is a 375,000-square foot mixed-use plaza accented by unique architecture, local art and play spaces, including Northern California's first-ever Luckey Climber, a climbing structure offering adventure to kids of all ages.

MOD Pizza will open November 14. Beginning at 12 noon, the first 52 people in line will receive free pizza. MOD Pizza will donate 100% of pizza sales this day to Generosity Feeds.

The Veranda has also confirmed additional signings from Puesto, Residual Sugar Wine Bar and Coffee Shop.

When complete, Veranda Luxe Cinema by cinema West will be the only IMAX auditorium within 25 miles. The theater will feature luxury electric seats and recliners, full-service in-theater dining, a full bar and plush lounge. It is scheduled to open to the public in December as is 365 by Whole Foods.

The Veranda is located at 2001-2003 Diamond Blvd, Concord, and is developed by CenterCal Properties, LLC. CenterCal Properties, LLC also owns and operates Blackhawk Plaza in Danville. For more information about new restaurants, stores and upcoming events visit <http://shoptheveranda.com/>.

Readers Rants & Raves

Regarding Vice Mayor Edi Birsan's article "Haunted By Ghosts" in October's Diablo Gazette:

"Edi...I just read your article about Ghosts of the Past, and I must say that I respectfully disagree. My primary issue is with (any level of) government to pick and choose which laws to follow and which to ignore. We the people entrusted you to develop laws in order to protect the citizens, and then faithfully execute those laws. Emotions (or appeals of emotions) have no place - only the letter of the law. By selecting one group of people from the society (who are not even citizens, have broken laws to get here, and don't even face any consequences), you are merely encouraging others to do the same, and that too at the cost of lawful citizens who have been paying taxes and electing you to serve the community. In this country, most people get ticked off if someone cuts in line anywhere, or when someone cuts in front of your car on the road, and yet here you are willfully allowing those who are here illegally in front those thousands of others who are patiently waiting for legal process to gain an entry. How is that justifiable? Does the City Council represent citizens of all viewpoints, or only those that agree with you?". -J K (name withheld)

"The Diablo Gazette is a fine vehicle, and I really like the saying that you include all that is good in our communities. In that vein, perhaps the Contra Costa Chess Club scheduled sessions could be featured in your Calendar section". - Mike T.

"I was in Lafayette's beautiful library yesterday and just saw Diablo Gazette on the shelf. The article on "From Auschwitz to America" was excellent. I taught

high school history for many years in SFUSD in the West Bay and saw Bernie Rosner speak at a Holocaust forum. I remembered his story very well and often retold it to my students. My retelling of the details he told us seemed to move my charges.

Also, the article on "Life in Postwar East Germany" was poignant as well.

Though I rarely go to East Bay libraries let alone read East Bay local publications it was inspiring and interesting to read this addition of your publication with such universal and profound themes in such a small venue. Keep up the excellent work! With admiration and appreciation,"- Larry Prager, Retired Teacher/SFUSD

"My brother, while visiting the East Bay from San Francisco, came upon your current issue and was so impressed with it that he recommended it that I read it too. I did and now I can concur with his opinion. We are the adult offspring of German Jewish Holocaust survivors and we are both very moved by the in-depth coverage you provided to both the Auschwitz survivor and the woman who was raised in post-war East Berlin.

Such excellent reporting and writing on subjects like this is something one expects to come across in The New Yorker or the New York Times. To find it in a small local news gazette such as yours is quite amazing. Not even the East Bay Times or the San Francisco Chronicle is capable of producing stories like this anymore. Thank you for devoting the space and staff time to both these important stories. I hope you have received other favorable feedback on them. I look forward to the follow-up articles in the coming issues."

-- DPB (name withheld by request)

Got something to say? Send your Rants and Raves to DiabloGazette@gmail.com by the 20th of the month preceding issue publication. Length should not exceed 300 words. Publisher reserves right of rejection. All published letters reflect the opinion of the author only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher. We are unable to acknowledge receipt or publication of your letters.

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Selling Your Home in the Fall

If you're like some homeowners, it may be time to sell your home. While fall may not be the most popular time to list your home for sale, it can have its benefits. Follow these tips to make your home for sale stand out this season.

Know your buyers. When selling in the fall, it's important to understand who the most likely buyers are going to be. This allows you to target your efforts for the appropriate audience. Most families with schoolchildren probably made moves during the summer so that their kids would be settled in time for the school year. In the fall, you're more likely to encounter empty-nesters and millennials. Be sure to highlight amenities that would appeal to people in these age groups. This could include the ability to walk to nearby restaurants or any smart-home upgrades you may have made. In addition, think about staging an extra bedroom as a home office or gym.

Amp up your curb appeal. Fall is an easy time to add some curb appeal to your home. Be sure to clean up all the yard debris and dead leaves and clean sidewalks and driveways. Display some potted mums and pumpkins on the front porch.

Take photos now. A late fall or winter landscape can look pretty bleak. A gray sky, brown grass and bare trees don't show your home off at its best. If you're able, take marketing photos of your home now while the weather is nice, and trees still have their leaves.

Create a cozy atmosphere. With cooler

temperatures, it's important to make potential buyers feel comfortable and warm. If you have a fireplace, make sure it's clean and in working order. While you don't want to go overboard with seasonal decorations, a tasteful fall centerpiece or door wreath can add considerable charm. Nothing beats the scents of fall, so bake a pie or light a scented candle.

Check the furnace. Before you turn on the heat for the first time, check the HVAC system. Change the furnace filter and vacuum vents. An inspection is going to include your furnace, so it's better to discover problems now so you have time to fix them.

Turn on the lights. Fall also means shorter and darker days. To make your home appear as bright and spacious as possible, open all the curtains and blinds during showings. Turn on all the lights, adding more as needed. Also, be sure to turn on closet and appliance lights. If the walk up to the front door is dark, install some outdoor lighting along the path.

Be flexible. Lastly, understand that fall schedules can be more hectic. Weather can easily derail plans. Be flexible with showings and your closing date whenever possible.

While autumn can be a slower time in the real estate market, you can still sell your home quickly and for a great price. Follow the advice above and you can maximize what the season has to offer. Compliments of Virtual Results at www.virtualresults.net

ALERT! Zombie Attack! continues... **ALERT! Zombie Attack!**

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theconcordian
by Edi Birsan, Concord Vice Mayor
Email me CityCouncil@cityofconcord.org | Add EDI in subject line

No Politics at the Turkey Dinner Table

Being a member of the Baby Boomer generation, we were raised with the basic tenant that at the greater family dinner table you did not discuss three things: Sex, Religion or Politics. Now, my mother was raised a Greek Orthodox (and I was so baptized) and subsequently married a Baptist, a Catholic, and a Jew, divorcing all three rather quickly, and she sent me to an Episcopal church one summer to "get religion" at 11. So, the first two topics were easy to avoid. In the 50's and early 60's, politics was also avoided. The Vietnam War brought the family dinner to a truce agreement - we all would root against Dallas in the football game and everyone would mention that Yiayia (Greek for Grandmother) had the best food on the day.

Today's massively divisive political climate brings new challenges to the family table, compounded by the separation within families that are often split apart both geographically and politically. Some of the things that I have learned (and sometimes need to relearn) is to remember that most people do not vote FOR a national candidate but generally are voting AGAINST the other one or their party and its positions, if any.

1. Politics is emotional. Politics is more emotional than logical or issue driven. An attack on a favored candidate or position is seen as an attack on the person holding similar views who then tend to reinforce their initial views. There was a study in the UK where they gave people a set of 'facts' for and against something and divided the people into pro and con groups. They then measured how supportive they were of their positions. When they revealed to

each group separately that the 'facts' given were all false on their side they found that the support went UP! That is, it became stronger. Proving further that emotional commitment is more important than facts. We see this daily in our 3AM tweet alerts from Washington.

2. Counter arguments are not accepted. No matter what YOU say, people will generally not accept counter arguments. They will call the information 'false facts/news' or focus on negative aspects of the other side.

3. You can't win. Family dinner is not a debate society and there is no judge or set of criteria to measure winner and loser.

4. The only person who can always be relied upon to successfully change someone's mind is the person themselves. So, if you cannot avoid the topic, then steer it towards the aspect of "what would it take for you to have a different position?" Do not fall into the trap of answering the classic counter of "what do you think" or, "give me an example." Leave your initial question out there. Ultimately, it is the person themselves that must define the trigger to warrant a shift in their position. It is also a good technique to end the discussion.

Meanwhile, enjoy the dinner, compliment the cook, and root against Dallas.

Edi Birsan, while being Vice Mayor of Concord, is expressing his personal views (as a survivor of 67 Thanksgiving Bouts) and is not to be construed as either giving a position of the Concord City Council or our dearly departed Yaiyia.

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Hope and Selflessness Abound After Wine Country Fires

by Nik Wojcik



It was the early morning hours of Oct. 8 when winds tore through much of Northern California, sparking fires that ravaged across the state. But the concentration of damage in the Napa Valley alone gained national attention by the time morning news shows took to the air.

The combined infernos decimated whole neighborhoods, burning over 245,000 acres and at least 8,400 structures in Napa and Sonoma counties alone. The number of structures is expected to increase as crews move into areas that haven't yet been inspected. Forty-two people died and countless others lost homes, schools, pets and sources of income. An approximate 100,000 people were displaced. First responders were called on from every available station in order to take up the battle with a blaze that seemed to be coming from literally everywhere at once.

Just two weeks later, to the day, residents of the Napa Valley were hard at work to help their community heal and making plans to quickly rebuild. Even as 700 homes were still without power, while fire and police departments and PG&E continued to work tirelessly to ensure public safety, there was more hope than smoke in the air, and appreciation for first responders that cannot be understated. There was hardly a block in Napa, Calistoga, Santa Rosa or Sonoma without a handmade sign expressing love and thanks for the dangerous work so many people did to help save the area from what could have been so much worse.

But perhaps more amazing was the way people in still-threatened communities stepped up to help each other and the forces of men and women that came in to fight the fire and help the injured. Kaliber, a clothing store in Santa Rosa, not only established a clothing drive, but opened their doors to give away free underwear for first responders. Sonoma Outfitters donated free shoes to some residents to help while they rummaged through what was left. Brittney Hanson was one of those people.

Hanson was in her home with her husband, three children and a friend who had slept over when she received the evacuation call at 1:32 a.m. and they managed to get everybody up - including the dog, out the door and in the car within 20 minutes. When they tried to drive north on Highway 101 from their Santa Rosa Fountain-grove neighborhood, they were met with the sight of cars frantically trying to make their way south and were quickly informed that the fire had jumped and engulfed the highway.

"We found out that our home was gone

within about an hour or two of us leaving," Hanson said.

To make matters worse, her 15-year-old son's school was also destroyed. The Anova Center for Education works with approximately 125 children with autism and other severe learning differences. According to Hanson, the school's success with integrated services under one roof has attracted many families with special needs children to move to the area. They are asking for help to rebuild with a GoFundMe page and through donations that can be made directly on their website.

When she's not trying to maintain her wedding planning business, Runaway-withme.com, Hanson is juggling efforts to get Anova back up and running and arranging temporary housing for other Santa Rosa student families and teachers that lost homes. It was just the Monday after the fire when she was contacted by members of the Burning Man Camp Epic, "burners" she knows through mutual friends who called to offer housing pods.

The first pod is set to arrive Nov. 1 and will house up to 80 people. She and her team of eight are also working with Burners Without Borders, a grassroots organization dedicated to disaster relief. Together, they hope to significantly grow that number. "We're really trying to help



Continues on page 9...

From Auschwitz to America

Escape from Auschwitz, Part 2 of 3

San Ramon resident Bernie Rosner, 85, is one of the last remaining Holocaust survivors where he lost his entire family at the age of 12. This article is part two of three telling of his capture, witness, and escape from the most horrific atrocities man has endured in modern times. You can read October's edition, part one "The Round Up to Auschwitz" on our website, www.DiabloGazette.com. This is Bernie's story as provided to the Diablo Gazette from a recent presentation he made to the Concord-Diablo Rotary.

After the Nazis rounded up the Jews in Hungary, they were loaded by the thousands onto train cattle cars and headed to Auschwitz.

Having arrived, on the train platform in Auschwitz, there was chaos, brutality, and confusion. "My immediate family, my mother, father, and my younger brother were still together." Rosner's father was designated to be in charge of the cattle car they were in. An announcement on the loudspeaker ordered all such persons to report to authorities.



"My father left us and that was the last time we saw him," Bernie states.

Another loudspeaker announcement was made to separate the males and females because showers would be given.

"By now my mother was quite frightened and told my brother and me to stay with her. I told her that I didn't want to take a shower with a bunch of women." She didn't argue with him, but as she walked away her parting words to Bernie, "Whatever you do, make sure that you stay with your brother." That was the last time he ever saw his mother.

Next, all the males were lined up in single file and inspected by two SS officers. The officers would split able-bodied and fit to work to the right, and those that were too old young, or unfit went to the left. "My brother who was just 10 years old, was in front of me and the SS officer without hesitation sent him to the left. "Without realizing the consequences of his actions, and remembering what his mother had just told him, Bernie followed his younger brother to the left without being told to do so by the SS officer. The SS officer reached over and grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and shoved him to the right.

"To this day," Bernie says, "I do not know whether the Nazi thought that I just might be fit and old enough to be put to work, or whether he was simply irritated at my having made my own decision." At any rate, that shove from left to right made

the difference on that day between ending up in the gas chamber within the hour, and surviving the next screening process.

Bernie's ordeal did not end with that fateful shove. Every day for the next ten months, until his liberation by the Americans, was a battle for survival. At first, it was trying to avoid being sent to the gas chamber.

"This was because I kept flunking the physicals that the prisoners were subjected to in order to qualify for a permanent work assignment. By Mid-September of 1944, Rosner realized that most of those remaining in his barracks from being rejected consisted of the old, sick, or too young to be selected for work. Bernie realized danger he was facing to remain with this group and to continue to not be selected to work.

One day, when he was passed over yet again, out of desperation, he decided to jump over the wall and join the inmates on the right. A guard stopped him with his boot before he could get over the wall. The guard looked him over for some time,



shrugged and let him go. Bernie was able to join the group of workers who were boarding a cattle car with no idea what their destination was. They traveled for two days on that train, and 400 kilometers before they arrived at the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. Bernie lied to the registration officers there about his birthdate from 1932 to 1927, making him seem five years older. Bernie had escaped certain death in Auschwitz on a timely impulse of survival.

However, the battle for survival was not over. He was mostly fighting hunger, cold, brutal beatings, overcrowding, unsanitary conditions. It was so bad, upon liberation by the Allies, he was put on a scale... and at the age of 13 and a half, he weighed only 52 pounds.

Next month: Journey to America

Clayton's Ingrid Hempell: Life in Postwar East Germany

Ingrid Hempell is retired and living in Clayton. She grew up in Postwar East Germany in East Berlin under the Russian rule. She was 3 living in Berlin when the allies bombed it and Germany surrendered. This is part two of 3 articles of her life experiences growing up under communist rule before settling in America -- for which she is forever grateful. Part 1, "Bombed, Occupied, and Isolated" can be read online at www.diablogazette.com.

In 1945, after Germany had fallen, Berlin was a wasteland, and Germany and Berlin had been divided into four occupation zones, among the Americans, the British, the French, and the Russians. Ingrid lived in the zone awarded to Russia. Russia installed a communist political and economic system. Banks, farms, industries were seized and re-organized. Natural resources, equipment, scientists were taken back to Russia. There was no hope of things getting better anytime soon.

The children were encouraged to join communist youth groups. "I came home from 5th grade one day and asked my mother if I could become a young pioneer so I could wear that blue neck scarf. She had a fit." Russian children wore a red scarf and only a few people in her school had that privilege. It reminded Ingrid of the Hitler youth programs. Under communism, higher education was only possible with very strong political consent to the establishment.

They were impoverished. Ingrid's Mom worked as a Truemmer Frau. She and thousands of others worked in the fields of rubble, removing debris, and cleaning and stacking bricks for re-use, all by hand. When she came home, her gloves were worn out and hands were half frozen. Occasionally, Ingrid's mom would ride the train to the outskirts of Berlin with a

small backpack of her father's tools. After two or three days, she would return from bartering with farmers, perhaps bringing a few eggs, slice of bacon, bread, or some potatoes. "When we were lucky enough to have a few potatoes, I wanted to help my grandma peel them, but she always refused. Perhaps she worried that I would cut too much off. Sometimes, she would not let me touch them because some were half rotten and smelly. At one point, my grandfather left home with his greatest possession, a square radio called a Volksempfänger. Hours later, he returned from the black market with two loaves of bread.

Tensions increased between the WWII allies and historians see this as the start of the Cold War. In time the Russian became upset about the way West Berlin was governed and prospered. So, in June 1948, they blocked all access to West Berlin hoping they could then take over. But the allies organized a gigantic airlift to supply two million people in West Berlin with food, coal, medication, and everything else.

That year the American Marshall Plan gave \$13 Billion dollars (\$132 Billion in today's currency) to jump start the economies in Germany, England, and France. The Soviet Union refused to accept the help. After eleven months, the Russians gave up and ended the blockade. Several pilots had paid with their life to support the people in West Berlin.

"On the few occasions that my mother took me to the West, we marveled at all the things that were available in their stores: oranges, bananas, chocolates, clothing, shoes, pastries, even toilet paper. We had none of that," Ingrid admits. The food stamps were not enough, water and electricity outages were frequent. Neighbor would alert neighbor if a produce

store just received fresh produce. "Sometimes we were told that strawberries had arrived. We would rush down to the store and stand in line for an hour only to be told they were sold out by the time we got to the front of the line."

In 1949, I was eight years old. I had already spent a lot of time with various care homes: a catholic convent where nuns spanked us frequently, sometimes with my grandparents, which were the best of times, or with my mother. We moved countless times with a hand drawn wagon since we didn't have a home. The war had torn the country and millions of families apart.

Food was rationed, and it was never enough. There were shortages of everything. Communist oppression increased until in 1953 strikes and riots broke out. Overnight, Russian tanks and troops were everywhere and there were shootings in the streets. "My mother worked on street cars collecting fares, and I was mortally afraid that she might not come home during those days. "The rebellion was crushed in a couple of days.

One dark secret of the DDR was the politically motivated parental child abduction. Parents were expected to teach their children to become faithful to the communist doctrine. There were thousands

of different scenarios where children were taken from uncompliant parents, sometimes right after birth, and then given to communist adoptive parents. The grief and sorrow of the victims are still felt today. People are still searching for their lost children.

Due to all the hardships, thousands of East Germans fled to the West every week, approximately 3.5 million people. After 1953 all borders between East and West Germany were closed and secured by barbed wire fences, watch towers, and armed militia. The only window remaining open was in Berlin because it was still under authority of the four Allies.

Next month: West Berlin Refugee to Clayton Restaurateur.

Photos courtesy: WikiCommons





parentfootprints

by Dr. Dan Peters www.DrDanPeters.com

We Cannot Hide Fear and Uncertainty

I know many others share my devastation, sadness, and outrage about the Las Vegas tragedy. Today I'm answering the one question I keep hearing: what do we do?

Do we stop going to public places? Stop traveling, going to concerts, or sporting events? Do we live in fear and say we are not taking chances? How do we parent our children in a world that seems to be getting more and more vulnerable and fragile?

I know I am asking a lot of questions and I am usually the guy that spends his days helping to solve problems and fight fear and anxiety. I've come to terms with this fact: that I need to choose whether, or not, to live in fear. We all do.

And so...I do not want to live in fear. I have learned personally and professionally, that worry and anxiety are emotions that deplete us and take us away from the present while making us live in a future that has yet to exist. I offer these thoughts to you as a fellow

human and parent -- and not just a doctor -- who is trying to make sense of the latest tragedy just like you. I am working on accepting that:

- Life is precious
- Life is temporary
- Uncertainty exists (and always has)
- There are many things out of our control
- Many things don't make sense and that I have choices:
- Where I go and what I do
- Whether I will live in fear or embrace life
- To make a conscious choice to appreciate each day
- To show love and kindness to everyone I come into contact with
- To refuse anger and hate

We are living in unknown times just as many generations have before us.

We cannot give in to the fear and hate—we must choose love, compassion, and an appreciation for all life. We cannot hide.

The "Single Serve" Coffee Revolution

by Richard Eber

The days are long gone of Juan Valdez praising the attributes of Columbian coffee or patrons at 5-star restaurants thinking they were being served high-end products when consuming Folgers Crystals. We are currently living in a society where consumers are demanding convenience and quality with their cup of morning "Joe".

Local franchises Starbucks and Peet's, who reside on the top end of coffee world are meeting both of these demands at their stores and with their pods to take home. These one cup wonders made popular with the Keurig brand have become increasingly popular especially if consumers don't desire multiple mugs of their favorite brew.

As might be expected, there is a large discrepancy between not only the quality, but also the price of these single serving units. Testing a large sampling of my regular French Roast blend, I tend to favor Peet's rendition slightly above Starbucks. Both are good and possess the finish one might find at one of their stores. I just happen to like Peet's because of not liking the burnt finish of their principal competitor.

If these criteria would settle the whole question of Keurig K-cup clones, then the whole matter would be settled. But there is also a question of price. The high-end pods are double or triple the cost of their considerable competition. Like most Keurig devotees, I have ended up experimenting with different vendors because of the disparity between brands.

As might be expected, Costco puts out an excellent product under their Kirkland brand. While it might be a notch below in finish to gourmet brands, it cost less than half when purchased in large lots. In addition, Costco passes the second use test meaning you can brew a decent cup of coffee when a pod is used twice. Such an economic windfall is important for consumers who are trying to get bang for their buck.

Safeway store brand is close to Kirkland in price and quality. It is also not necessary

to buy in such large quantities. Then there are the traditional brands such as Folgers, Maxwell House, Donut Shop, and a large group of other choices that supermarkets offer consumers. I have tried many of them when they are sold at a discount. Quite frankly, it is difficult for me to distinguish between them as they seem to be generic in a similar manor to comparing brands of commercial orange juice.

Sadly, the coffee pods sold at Trader Joe's join this list of mediocrity. Quite frankly, the store that historically has offered their customers superior salads, tomato sauce, ice cream, macaroni and cheese, and just about everything else, disappointed me with their French single serves. While they passed the second cup test, they weren't any better than anything the grand dame Mrs. Olson could muster up.

The last category and perhaps the most important one to discuss are the single cup boxes that are found at the Dollar Store. Sold in small boxes of 4 or 6 for a buck, these Keurig wanna-bes hold an important place in my heart. With a passable taste, the value at 16 cents for a cup of coffee versus 65 is a disparity that is not to be ignored.

While the Dollar Stores brands fade into the dishwasher class with a second use, they are a useful tool for us in the middle class and below households. In addition, the Dollar Store, much like their competitors, features a bunch of other flavors ranging from Vanilla to Hazelnut. As a purest, I stay away from these gimmicky concoctions, but I am not too proud to admit I shop at discount stores from "99" cents up on a regular basis.

If recent history is any indication, prices are dropping on all levels for Keurig authorized or clone single serves. As consumers continue to demand a better product, we can likely look forward to improved quality and value for America's sacred drink consumed one sip at a time.



Richard's Ratings: Comparisons of One Cup Wonders

BRAND	COST	QUALITY	FINISH	2 ND CUP
Peet's	5	1	1	1
Starbucks	5	2	2	1
Costco	2	3	3	1
Safeway	3	3	3	2
Folgers	3	4	4	3
Dollar Store	1	4	5	5

1 = Superb 5 = Poor



computercorner

by William Claney, Computers USA

Tech in English

Too Many Hats

IT is migrating from the corporate headquarters to small businesses, in many ways like the main-frame computers gave way to PCs the IT revolution is upon us. Business owners are beginning to recognize the benefits of having IT help. To compete in today's business environment, you're going to need some of the services IT experts provide. It's one way to remove some tasks from your busy day and delegate responsibility and keep your enterprise running smoothly.

According to Wiki.com, "Information technology (IT) is the application of computers to store, study, retrieve, transmit, and manipulate data, or information, often in the context of a business or other enterprise."

As a small business owner, I understand the need for the boss to wear several hats. Keeping the budget under control, making sales, and focusing your business are enough hats; one doesn't need more of them. No one wants to spend gobs of money tinkering with computers, networks, and the like. So, hiring an IT staff is out of the question because they are expensive employees and you may not be ready for them. All the while you realize that computer safeguarding is vital to your business.

One doesn't need a full or part-time IT staff if your business is under 20 people and you have fewer than a dozen computers to maintain. At the same time not having an IT staff makes every decision, research project, hacker invasion, update, software patch, or network outage your top priority. If your computer or network is down, then it becomes a critical chore for the boss.

A small business

solution involves keeping costs down at the same time keeping computers up and running. One can receive IT services from a service provider, called an MSP (Managed Service Provider), for low rates. As your business needs change it is simple to change your coverage.

I want to discourage you from relying on a staff member or a one-man independent contractor for your computer needs. You haven't solved the problem, potentially making it worse. Yes, having a staff member as a key person to go to when there are issues is good, but, the real work should be done by professionals.

MSPs are constantly being schooled in the latest technologies and trends that independents are not privy to and that gives them special powers. So, go ahead, pick up the phone and ask, "are you a certified MSP, do you provide service to small business, what can I get and how much does it cost?" Most MSPs will have a menu of options that will fit your needs and budget.

I am totally convinced this is your next decision. So, make it.

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Your **NOVEMBER 2017** Guide to the Bay Area

The **Diablo Gazette's**

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

FUNDRAISERS

Pancake Breakfast - Supporting Veterans of Foreign Wars - 2nd and 4th Sundays includes eggs, pancakes, sausage, beverage. 8 - 11 a.m. Willow Pass Road, Concord \$5, \$3 Children under 12. <http://www.vfwpost1525.org>

November 23

3rd Annual Concord Turkey Trot at Todos Santos Park in downtown Concord on Thanksgiving morning. The proceeds of this 5K/10K Run & Walk will benefit Compassion Outreach. Registration is limited to the first 1500 participants. Each participant will receive a race t-shirt and a custom designed Turkey Trot finishers medal. FREE Kids Dash around Todos Santos Park for kids ages 10 and under at 7:45am (just before the 5K/10K starts). Presented by Calvary Temple Church.

December 5

Fire Benefit Holiday Concert. Join Bay Area musicians at the Jazz Room at the Village Theatre in Danville.

OUTDOORS

Concord: Todos Santos Park OFF the Grid Mondays, offering cuisine from around the world from 5 to 9 p.m. Full lineup available at <http://offthegridsf.com>.

Farmers' Markets

Concord Tuesdays, 10am to 2pm, year-round, rain or shine, Thursdays 4P-8P,

Todos Santos Plaza. • Martinez Sundays, 10am to 2pm, year-round, Main St. and Estudillo.

Walnut Creek Diablo Valley Farmers Market Saturday 9a.m. - 1 p.m. Shadelands Business Park, N. Wigett Lane and Mitchell Dr. Also, from Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market - North Locust St between Giamona and Lacassie St. Sundays 9 am - 1 pm, Year Round, (925) 431-8361 <http://www.cccfm.org>

Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden Work parties 11/5, 11/12 9:am-12pm. Work with U.C. Master of Gardeners of Contra Costa and many youth organizations with many needed garden tasks. Our living Garden demonstrates healthy garden practices using no pesticides, water conservation and recycling, and drought-tolerant and native plants. The garden is a certified wildlife habitat and registered Monarch butterfly waystation. <http://phig.webs.com>

FAMILY EVENTS

Galindo Home and Gardens Tours - 1721 Amador Avenue, Concord. Visit the fully-restored 1856 Victorian home of Francisco Galindo, one of Concord's founding fathers, and his wife, Maria Dolores Manuela (Pacheco) Galindo. This includes the 1875 addition by Francisco Galindo's son, Juan "John" Galindo. No reservations needed. Fee \$5 for adults and children

over 12. One of only a few Victorian ranch houses in the country. By 1880, the structure was reconfigured in the Queen Anne style, with bay windows, sweeping steps, and a broad porch. Visitors can tour the 10 rooms and see 15 original pieces of Eastlake furniture. For more information go to concordhistorical.org.

November 2017-January 2018

13th annual Ice skating in Civic Park brought to you by the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors. Grab a pair of skates and join in the seasonal fun at this outdoor rink. 1375 Civic Drive.

November 3

World Community Day sponsored by Church Women United. Hear the compelling story of Takashi Tanemori, who was blinded by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima when he was a young boy. The horrific event filled him with an intense hatred for the United States, and he struggled for years trying to find inner peace. He found that peace when he moved from hate to forgiveness. This exciting program for World Community Day is open to all at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda. Coffee fellowship is at 9:30 a.m. followed by the program at 10:00 a.m. There is no charge for this event, but a free-will offering will be received.

November 3 (Martinez)

Holiday Bazaar: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Martinez Senior Center, 818 Green St. Handmade crafts, cards, jewelry, books, seasonal decorations, white elephant, baked goods and more! Lunch, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Pasta, Salad, Garlic Bread, Water and Tea \$5.00 Pre Sale \$6.00 Day of Sale. 925-370-8770

November 6

"Retire on Track" a free seminar on planning for retirement will take place from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in Travis Credit Union's Clayton Branch located at 5441 Clayton Rd. Clayton, CA 94517. Refreshments and registration will be from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. To register for the Retire on Track seminar visit www.traviscu.org/calendar.

November 8

"Raising Resilient Girls", a parent educational workshop, the first topic of this year's Talk Solution Speaker Series at Pleasant Hill Middle School with Simone Marean, Executive Director and Founder of Girls Leadership. Principal Terry McCormick will be the onsite contact, and can be reached at mccormick@mdusd.org or (925) 256-0791. Dan Roll of Talk Solutions will also be available as an onsite contact, and can be reached at Dan@talksolutions.com.

CALENDAR continues on page 9

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Small Business Saturday

Wine Walk & Shop
 Saturday, Nov. 25, 2017 • 2:30pm-5:30pm
 Visit www.MainStreetMartinez.org for more details and tickets.

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS RICHARD CAMMACK & EMILY BORTHWICK
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The Nutcracker

This festive, hour-long production of The Nutcracker is a holiday delight for the entire family.

FRIDAY NOV. 24
 4:30 & 7:30 pm

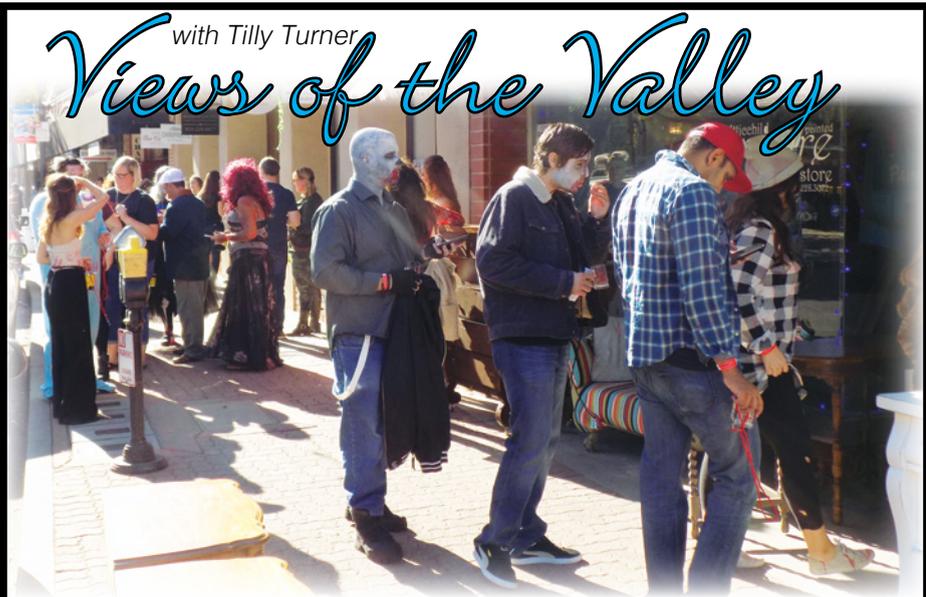
SATURDAY NOV. 25
 2:00, 4:30 & 7:30 pm

SUNDAY NOV. 26
 2:00 & 4:30 pm

Guest Artists:
 Larissa Kogut
 Christian Squires

Leshner Center for the Arts
lesherartscenter.org
 1601 Civic Drive
 Walnut Creek
 Call 943-SHOW (7469)
 Tickets: \$28 - \$38
www.contracostaballet.org

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The annual Zombie Brew Crawl drew large crowds for Main Street Martinez - Photo by Micah



Martinez Mobilizes rallied residents to donate and store supplies for Santa Rosa fire victims.- Photo by Micah



Ladies enjoying an early morning Zumba class at Todos Santos in Concord. - Photo by Micah



Gordon Gravelle, ex-Pittsburgh Stealer offensive tackle and graduate of Ygnacio Valley High School, MC'd for the annual Antioch High School Sports Hall of Fame Induction Dinner and is shown introducing his daughter, Kris Gravelle Lorang as a three sport hall of Fame inductee. - Photo by Tillie Turner



Pleasant Hill Art and Wine Festival - Photo by Micah

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Contra Costa Ballet Presents "The Nutcracker" at The Leshher Center

Celebrate the Season with the holiday tradition families have treasured for decades. Returning for its 27th year, Contra Costa Ballet presents the Bay Area's most family-friendly production of "The Nutcracker". For one weekend only, November 24-26, join Clara and her beloved Nutcracker-turned-Prince on a magical journey among giant mice and toy soldiers into the deliciously delightful Candy Kingdom. Contra Costa Ballet brings "The Nutcracker" to life in this festive production filled with colorful costumes, whimsical sets and an array of talented, young dancers. This one-hour performance is an elegant introduction to the holiday classic.



Artistic directors are Richard Cammack and Emily Borthwick. Featured guest artists include Christian Squires, Larissa Kogut, Charles Anderson, Michael Galloway, Katarina Wester, and Felipe Leon. Show times are Friday, November 24 at 4:30 and 7:30pm; Saturday, November 25 2:00, 4:30, and 7:30pm. Sunday at 3:00 and 4:30pm at The Leshher Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$28-\$38 and can be purchased at the center box office, or by calling 925-943-SHOW (7469) or Online at <https://lesherartscenter.showare.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=874>.

The Contra Costa Ballet Company is a regional, pre-professional, youth company of unusual stature. Under the direction of Richard Cammack and Zola Dishong for thirty years, and sponsored by the non-profit Contra Costa Ballet Foundation, they produce two high-quality productions annually at The Leshher Center for the Arts: "Spring Rep" and "The Nutcracker".

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FIRES continued from page 4

Coffey Park and Fountaingrove,” Hanson said, “people that had no time and have nothing but the clothes on our backs.”

She’s not the only one. “I think everyone I know is doing some type of volunteering somewhere, whether they’re cooking food for firefighters or collecting donations.”

Outside of the immediate area, people and businesses from all over the country have stepped up to help Wine Country, with a tremendous amount of support coming from the Greater Bay Area. Concord Chamber of Commerce immediately began accepting food and clothing donations. Warriors’ “Splash Brother” Klay Thompson pledged to donate \$1,000 per point he makes during the first three home games. Customers at Safeway stores from Northern California and Nevada have been making cash donations at the register, which the Safeway Foundation will match up to \$500,000, according to local Public and Government Affairs Director Wendy Gutshall.

“Along with financial assistance, we have made in-kind product and gift card donation to multiple local organizations and first responders throughout Napa and Sonoma counties to provide food and other necessities to multiple shelters,” Gutshall said.

“In addition, a number of our employees volunteered their time and donated supplies to help people recover in the affected communities.”

The Contra Costa Fire Protection District sent approximately four engines with between 12 to 16 fire department personnel, according to Captain George Lang.

He explained that during that time, there were blazes all over the state and they needed to be cautious enough to protect “our own backyard” in case fire erupted in our own community. “Those are America’s heroes,” Lang said, a sentiment deeply shared by residents throughout Wine Country.

Damon Mushrush, a Napa resident and owner/operator of Bliss Tours, hopes tourists will start coming back to the area for what it does best: wine, food and beautiful views. And there are still many beautiful places that survived. “The news is focused on the damage - everybody thinks the whole place has burnt down,” Mushrush said. “You can drive for miles and not see evidence of the fire.”

Despite some tragic loss, many establishments have reopened for business and that’s exactly what people like Mushrush need. By his account, his business “has taken a punch to the face.” Few tourists are coming in during what would normally be the busiest month of the year. “It’s like there’s five people here and 20 wine tour companies are fighting for the customers.”

Hanson suggests that local people from the Bay Area can help immensely by volunteering their time in shelters or renting their weekend homes to help people get back on their feet, but she agrees that it will take the return of tourism to really get things up and running. “Come tasting, buy our wines and stay,” Hanson said.

There are certainly worse ways to do a good deed.

CALENDAR continued from page 7

org or (510) 760-1213. 7:00 p.m. at Pleasant Hill Middle School, One Santa Barbara Rd., Pleasant Hill

November 9

The Concord, Pleasant Hill and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce will be hosting a Business Expo at the Clarion Hotel in Concord between 4:00pm-7:00pm.

November 11, 2017

Mt. Diablo Branch, California Writers Club Meeting and luncheon Speaker. Arlene Miller, the Grammar Diva, will present “Is This the New Normal? Grammar Gone Horribly Bad!” at the next meeting at Zio Fraedo’s Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Miller is the author of nine books of grammar, including “The Best Little Grammar Book Ever”. She will discuss whether the old grammar rules have gone away, are rules different for fiction and non-fiction, and what are the most important rules these days? Sign-in is from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm, luncheon 12:00 pm to 12:45, including a short business meeting, and speaker from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. Registration is \$25 for CWC members, \$30 for guests. Reservations are required, and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, November 8. Go to <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/>

November 12

Pancake Breakfast: 8 a.m. – 11 a.m. Sunday Nov. 12th, Martinez Senior Center, 818 Green St.

Pancakes or toast, sausages, eggs cooked any style, orange juice, coffee. Handmade crafts for sale \$4.00 adults, \$2.50 for children under 10. Need no reservation, everyone is welcome. 925-370-8770

November 12

LITTLE GEMS OF MARTINEZ. Tom Zamaria will show pictures of Old Martinez from the files of the Martinez Museum. 1 PM Sunday. at the Veteran’s Memorial Hall, 900 Ward Street. Light Refreshments will be served courtesy of Martinez Historical Society.

Walnut Creek Model Railroad Society – Friday 8-10pm. Monthly show. All aboard the Diablo Valley Lines Railroad model show. See one of the largest exclusively HO scale model railroads in the United States. 2751 Buena Vista Avenue, Walnut Creek. \$3.00 Adults \$2.00 Seniors (60+) & Children (6-12) Children under 6 FREE. Cash or Checks Only

November 17-26

Holiday Model Train Show - The Walnut Creek Model Railroad Society (WC-MRS) operates the Diablo Valley Lines (DVL) model railroad, one of the most mountainous and one of the largest exclusively HO scale model railroads in the United States. This model railroad features standard gauge, narrow gauge, and interurban (overhead electric) freight and trolley lines. Nov. 17 8P-10P; Nov. 18 11A-6P; Nov 19 11A-6P; Nov 24 2P-10P; Nov25 11A-6P; & Nov. 26 11A-6p (week-end show), Oat Buena vista in Walnut Creek.

VISUAL ARTS/THEATRE/MUSIC

November 10, 11, 12

Diablo Ballet “A Swingin’ Holiday and More” at the Del Valle Theatre, 1963 Tice Valley Blvd. in Walnut Creek. The performances are: Friday, November 10 at 8:00 pm. Saturday, November 11 at 2:00 pm & 8:00 pm. Sunday, November 12 at 2:00 pm. The ballet is set to the exhilarating music of the 30’s and 40’s, with holiday favorites by legends Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Nat “King” Cole, and Wynton Marsalis, as well as jazzy renditions of Tchaikovsky’s “The Nutcracker Suite”, performed by the sixteen-piece Diablo Ballet Swing Orchestra under the Musical

Direction of Greg Sudmeier.

November 11th

The Kelley Park Big Band at the Jazz Room in the Village Theatre. @ 8pm Don’t miss this seventeen piece ensemble that performs original compositions and arrangements. Guest Soloist Lisa Lindsley and Guest Soloist Paul McKnight ‘The Art Gallery and wine bar opens at 7:15pm. For Tickets: Call 925-314-3400 or go order online at www.villagetheatreshows.com Facebook @TheJazzRoomdanville Pre-purchase \$25 adults, \$15 students door \$30 Box office opens at 7:15pm

November 24- 26

THE NUTCRACKER presented by Artistic Directors Richard Cammack and Emily Borthwick and Contra Costa Ballet. Friday, November 24 - 4:30 and 7:30pm. Saturday, November 25 - 2:00, 4:30 and 7:30pm. Sunday, November 26 - 2:00 and 4:30pm at Leshar Center for the Arts Hofmann Theatre 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Tickets, Visit the Leshar Center Box Office, call (925) 943-SHOW (7469), or purchase online at <https://lesher-artscenter.showare.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=874> . Price \$28 - \$38

December 1-3

Diablo Choral Artists presents “Carols and Lullabies” featuring “Christmas in the Southwest” by Conrad Susa, with harp, guitar, and marimba, three settings of “Ave Maria” (by Verdi, Victoria, and Biebl), Ola Gjeilo’s “A Spotless Rose”, Eric Whitacre’s “Alleluia”, and more. The evening will also include a carol sing-along. Mark Tuning, Music Director, John R. Walko, Accompanist. Friday, December 1, 8:00pm, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Pleasant Hill. Sunday, December 3, 4:00pm, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, Walnut Creek.

There will be a reception after the Sunday concert and a drawing for gift basket at each concert.

Details and ticket purchase on website: www.dcachorus.org. General Admission: adults \$25, seniors 60+ \$15, students \$5, children 5-12 free. Season Tickets available.

December 17

Diablo Choral Artists presents singing with the Diablo Symphony Chorus for “A Christmas Fantasia”, 3:30pm, \$35. Details and tickets at 925-943-7469.

For a complete list of local clubs and meeting dates, go to diablogazette.com.

Tapestry Handbell and Vocal Ensemble

presents

Light One Candle

directed by Cindy Krausgrill
accompanied by Craig Beattie

Wednesday, November 29 7:00pm
Rossmoor Event Center *
(for residents & guests)

Friday, December 1 7:00pm
Walnut Creek United Methodist Church *
1543 Sunnyvale Ave.
Walnut Creek

Saturday, December 2 6:30pm
Christmas by Candlelight
(advance ticket sales only)
Faith Lutheran Church
Pleasant Hill
(go to our website for ticket information)

Sunday, December 3 4:00pm
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church *
2925 Bonifacio St.
Concord

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www.tapestryingersandsingers.org



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Diamond Terrace Hosts 5th Annual Veterans' Dinner

Public Welcome to Attend

Diamond Terrace Retirement Community is hosting their 5th Annual Veterans' Dinner. This is a wonderful opportunity to bridge the generational gap of resident veterans, VFW members, with members of the community. Boy Scouts from Troops 262 and 484 will be performing the Flag and White Table Ceremony, and Bugle Call, with VFW members, resident veterans and their family mem-

bers, in attendance. The public is invited to this touching tribute. The dinner will be Texas-Style Chili, as much as you can eat, for a \$5 donation, with musical entertainment throughout dinner by renowned banjo-extraordinaire and singer Jack Convery. All proceeds will go to the local VFW chapter. The Flag Ceremony will begin at 6PM on Friday, November 10th, with dinner and music to follow.

Please RSVP with Elizabeth Sanches, Activity Director, at (925) 524-5100 by Wednesday, November 8th. Don't miss this special opportunity to say "Thank You" and honor veterans in our community.





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VETERAN'S TRIBUTE DINNER

happy
VETERANS DAY

Join us for a chili dinner featuring a special tribute by the Boy Scouts. Music provided by Jack Convery on his Banjo.
Friday, November 10th at 6 PM
\$5 for Chili Dinner, Proceeds go to our local VFW chapter.

"A Brush with Death"



The Main Street Art Gallery in Martinez is featuring the works Eric Carlstrom through November 12th. Besides being a fine painter, he has a fine sense of humor, as noted by the titles of his art as well as his photos of himself. This is his second annual **Day of the Dead** show at the gallery.

Day of the Dead (Spanish: *Día de Muertos*) is a Mexican holiday celebrated throughout Mexico, in particular the Central and South regions. The multi-day holiday focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died, and help support their spiritual journey. Traditions connected with the holiday include building private altars, honoring the deceased using calaveras (skulls), Aztec marigolds, and the favorite foods and beverages of the departed, and visiting graves with these as gifts.

"A Brush with Death' was the name I



chose for the show, because of the paintings I do are in the style of Day of the Dead," says Carlstrom.

Main Street Arts Gallery is located at 216. Main St, Martinez.

Kelly Park Big Band Returns to The Jazz Room

On November 11th, The Kelly Park Big Band returns to Village Theatre. You don't want to miss this seventeen-piece ensemble from the San Francisco Bay Area that performs original compositions and arrangements.

Kelly Park is a former faculty member and alumnus of the Berklee College of Music, Boston MA. He has been a fixture of the San Francisco Bay Area music scene for many years, most notably as Musical Director of the Razz Room, the premier SF nightclub from 2007-2013. There he performed with such stars as Loretta Devine, Keely Smith, Pia Zadora, the Shirrelles, Deborah Gibson, Trini Lopez, Deana Martin, and many others. He has performed throughout the United States and Europe, and was the owner of the jazz club Kelly's of Alameda.

Guest Soloist Lisa Lindsley "A truly sultry singer who captures the evening mood with gusto, Lisa Lindsley casts a musical spell on Long After Midnight, voicing beautiful love songs from the city for lovers, for the lover in all of us." Edward Blanco - All About Jazz (3.5 stars) Lisa recently dropped a new CD "Wouldn't it Be Lovely?" www.lisalindsley.com



[LisaLindsley.com](http://www.lisalindsley.com)

Guest Soloist Paul McKnight with a voice of great beauty and versatility returns once again to The Jazz Room with the Kelly Park Big Band. A seasoned and veteran singer of Danville/Alamo, Paul McKnight performs yearly with the BlackHawk Chorus, and has toured throughout Europe

with the Chorus as a featured Soloist. Paul is also a member of Special Blend Vocal Ensemble, which was born out of the BlackHawk Chorus. Paul performs throughout the Bay Area with Special Blend Vocal Ensemble and together they are working on a new CD Release!

The Art Gallery and wine bar opens at 7:15 pm and The Kelly Park Big Band hits the stage at 8pm! For Tickets: Call 925-314-3400 .or go order online at www.villagetheatreshows.com; Facebook @TheJazzRoomdanville. Pre-purchase \$25 adults, \$15 students door \$30 Box office opens at 7:15pm

To learn more about The Kelly Park Big Band <http://kellyparkbigband.com/>

Diablo Women's Chorale Celebrates 75 Years with Fall Concert

The Diablo Women's Chorale invites you to join them in celebrating 75 years in the community with their Fall Concert "Season of Light," to be held on Sunday December 3. Show time is 2 p.m. at Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, in Lafayette.

Director Lisa Forkish, accompanist Emily Tian, and the Diablo Women's Chorale present a program filled with reflective songs of peace and unity. The concert theme, "Season of Light," speaks to both the light within us and the light that connects all of us. From classic to contemporary, reverent to joyful, DWC's music will warm the heart,



uplift the spirit, and soothe the soul.

Advance purchase tickets are \$18.00 General admission, \$10.00 Student, and \$24.00 Premium seating. Purchase at the door for \$25.00. Call 1-800-838-3006, or go Online at www.DiabloWomensChorale.org

Diablo Women's Chorale is a lively group of singers from the Bay Area presenting concerts in December and May.

Lisa Forkish is an Oakland-based vocalist, composer, arranger, and music educator. She served four years as music director for the University of Oregon's a cappella group, Divisi, featured in the best-selling

Oakhurst Chef John Evans Offers Cooking Class

The Clayton Valley Woman's Club (CVWC) is holding its Tuesday, November 14, meeting at the Oakhurst Country Club, 1001 Peacock Creek Drive in Clayton. The meeting starts at 10:00 am (coffee and iced tea available) followed by a fall cooking class at 11:15 am by Oakhurst Head Chef John Evans with recipes and meal following. Cost is \$27.00. Guests are welcome.

To reserve a place for the cooking class



Chef John Photo by : Michael Gardner

and meal, mail check for \$27.00 made payable to CVWC to Rosemary Harwood, 374 Mt. Sequoia Place, Clayton, CA 94517. Deadline is November 4.

The CVWC is a local, non-profit organization of women serving our local communities. They have been active since 1973 giving both time and monies to many local organizations plus scholarships.

For more information, call Linda at 415-652-3503 or Sheila at 925-672-7947 or visit www.claytonvalleywomensclub.org.

GFWC Clayton Valley Woman's Club Donates to Contra Costa Blue Star Moms Care Packages for Troops

Clayton Valley Woman's Club "adopted" Contra Costa Blue Star Moms as a service project in 2006. CVWC donates to the Care Packages that CC Blue Star Moms sends to our overseas troops for the 4th of July and the Holiday season. In 2017, CVWC members donated approximately \$1185 towards postage and supplies, prepared 740 creamer/sugar/stir stick packets, folded and stacked over 700 Sunday Comics and sewed more than 395 patriot-

ic pillow cases for the Care Packages.

CVWC regularly meets at 10:00 a.m. the second Tuesday of each month at St. John's Episcopal Church, 5555 Clayton Road, in Clayton. New members are always welcome. Come make new friends and join in the fun working together for the community.

For more information call Sheila at 925-672-7947 or Linda at 415-652-3503 or visit www.claytonvalleywomensclub.org.

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book "Pitch Perfect," later made into the hit film of the same name. Lisa studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. She is part of the vocal music faculty at Oakland School for the Arts and the director of Vocal Rush, OSA's award-winning a cappella ensemble. This is her second season directing DWC.

Emily Tian was the former vocal and

instrumental coach at Cal State East Bay University. She was the accompanist for Young Women's Choral Project in San Francisco, CSU East Bay Singing Society. Currently, Emily collaborates regularly with emerging and established composers and musicians. She is the lead piano faculty at Oakland School for the Arts.



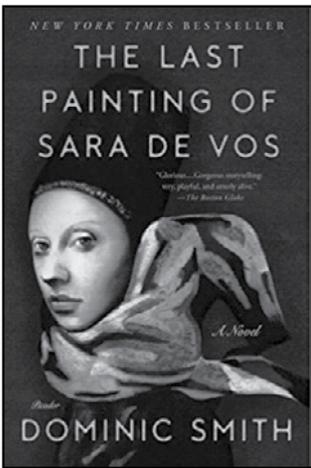
bookends

by Jill Hedgecock, Program Coordinator Mount Diablo California
Writer's Club jillhedgecock.com

The Last Painting of Sara de Vos: A Novel

"The Last Painting of Sara de Vos" by Dominic Smith (2017, Picador, paperback, 304 pages \$11.00) is the story of three lives intertwined by a famous Danish painting: the painter—Sara de Vos, a forger, Ellie Shipley, and Marty de Groot whose de Vos painting was stolen and replaced by Shipley's forged painting. Sara de Vos' story depicts a slice of life in Holland in the 1600s. In this fictional account of history, she becomes the first woman admitted to the Guild of St. Luke in Holland as a master painter in 1631.

The novel explores the intricacies of forgery in the art world through the eyes of Ellie Shipley, an art history professor and skilled art restoration who, during her graduate years in college, gets caught up in a scheme in 1957 to create a forgery of Sara de Vos' "At the Edge of the Wood." The artwork depicts the ethereal form of a young girl clad in black that was created by Sara to remember her only daughter after the child's devastating death from the plague. Manhattan lawyer Marty de Groot, whose determination to recover the stolen de Vos painting that has been in his family for 300 years, completes the triangle of lives interconnected by this haunting painting. Ellie thinks she's dodged a bullet when her complicity in generating the fake goes undetected, but her world implodes in the year 2000 when a mix-up has two copies of the same painting surfacing to be on exhibit at an Australian museum event in Sydney—which happens to be where Ellie Shipley



works as a curator. Smith says of his novel, "I've always been fascinated by art forgers, who've been infiltrating the art world since the ancient Greeks. Having a fake at the center of the novel allowed me to explore ideas of authenticity and the notion that 'every fake should tell a good story'—something I learned from interviewing and studying master art forgers. In my novel, though, there are two forgeries: a technical forgery of a painting and a moral forgery."

"The Last Painting of Sara de Vos" is a New York Times Bestseller and a New York Times Editors' Choice. Its popularity extends into more than a dozen countries. The novel was also selected as a "Best Book of the Year"

by Amazon, Kirkus Reviews, Slate and the San Francisco Chronicle. Additional accolades include being long-listed for the Carnegie Medal for Excellence from the American Library Association, being chosen as the Fiction Indie Book of the Year by the Association of Independent Booksellers, and through its selection as the Literary Book of the Year as part of the Australian Book Industry Awards. Fans of Donna Tartt's "The Goldfinch" will probably enjoy the book. But readers don't have to be art enthusiasts to appreciate the novel because Smith has created an atmosphere of intrigue that will appeal to fans of thrillers and spy novels.

Check This Out. Contra Costa Chess Club at Starbucks.

The game of chess is not dead yet. Not here. For 11 years come this November 2017, the Contra Costa Chess Club has held weekly evening sessions at the Starbucks located at 1536 Kirker Pass Rd., in Clayton. "We meet for fun, challenging chess "over the boards" every Wednesday evening, from 5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., and players come by any-time, the earlier the better for the better tables, more matches, and some really nice, interesting company," says Mike Treshler who heads up the club. "We are an Affiliate Club of the United States Chess Federation (USCF), and have been in good standing with the USCF for over 10 years." On



any given session, the place fills up by 7 p.m. or so, with players ranging from kids to senior citizens,

"We welcome players of all ages, gender and skill levels, from novice to master and everything in between. Several of our players enter in chess tournaments."

There are no required membership dues. There is no purchase required (though it would be nice). If asked, Treshler says they do provide qualified chess instructors and/or coaches for individuals or groups, including instructors for increasingly popular after-school chess programs. More information is available on this last item, upon request. www.cchess.com

"We had our first CWC meeting after (taking) the summer off and quite a few of our guests say they saw the announcement in the Diablo Gazette. Thanks for supporting our group!" --Jill H. Walnut Creek

"Right on target, I have received a few comments on the article "Concord and Clayton is the Right Move" (September 2017), and the owner liked (seeing his listing in) the ad." -- Terrylynn Fisher, Real Estate Broker



moviemavericks

by Jason Rugaard www.moviemavericks.com



Kingsman: The Golden Circle is the best sequel that could have been made following the surprise success of the 2015 film Kingsman: The Secret Service. No, it's not as innovative as the original, but it retains the energetic spirit and mischievous tone of its predecessor, and that makes Kingsman 2 an entertaining action-filled romp. Director Matthew Vaughn has upped the ante in terms of visual tricks and gimmicks, leaving contemporaries like Guy Ritchie and Michael Bay looking lethargic in comparison.

Julianne Moore is Poppy Adams, the head of the world's largest drug cartel. She is forsaken to hiding in the remote jungles of a South American country but has redecorated the area as a 1950's style suburban boulevard, complete with a diner and twin-bill movie theater. After an attack on the Kingsman's headquarters, Eggys (Taron Egerton) and technical guru Merlin (Mark Strong) travel to Kentucky to join their American counterparts in stopping Poppy's plans. Her nefarious scheme involves tainted recreation drugs that turn the user into

zombies. The infected are first seen with a blue rash before a horrendous death ensues. Of course, Eggys is on the job and with the aid of Agent Whisky (Pedro Pascal), a smooth-talking good 'old boy with an electrified lasso, the duo must recover the antidote that will save millions of lives.

I was intrigued by the central argument the film makes about the 'war on drugs' effort and the debate over recreational drug use. It's a compelling subtext hidden within a blockbuster overtly designed to appeal to the masses. In a time where James Bond has been drained of the daft cheekiness of the Connery/Moore era, and the fun of the Brosnan flicks; Kingsman: The Golden Circle is a modernized throwback and serves as a reminder of how entertaining this type of story can be told. Aside from a celebrity cameo that feels endless, Kingsman rarely makes a misstep in telling a well-written story.

Director: Matthew Vaughn
Stars: Colin Firth, Julianne Moore, Taron Egerton

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frugelegance

by Carol and Randi -The FruGirls www.frugelegance.com

Super Easy Give Thanks Home Decor Projects

Do you think you are not crafty or think it's too difficult? We put together a few super quick and easy DIY (do it yourself) decor ideas for Thanksgiving, FrugElegant Style of course. We love using lots of ordinary items from around the house, which we reuse season after season. We hope you can take these ideas and create some special "Give Thanks" decor for your home.

(Pic) These large frames with attached chicken wire, shown displayed on the mantle, have been used many times before for parties and room decor. Using clips, we attached faux leaves and simply wrote a letter out with a sharpie marker. We spelled out "Be



We have a tradition of sitting down to Thanksgiving dinner, saying grace, then each person saying what they are thankful for. This year, as our family and friends are having appetizers we will have our jar of thanks. Each person will write something they are thankful for. Then when we sit at the table for dinner, we can pass around the

jar and we can each read one out loud. To create the jar, we used a chalkboard sticker and just hand wrote the words using a chalk marker. Tie some ribbon, jute string or twine around the top with

or without a Fall leaf charm. The wooden craft sticks are spray painted gold and words are hand written with a sharpie marker.

From our homes to yours, we wish you a very happy, healthy and wonderful Thanksgiving!

Updated from November 2015. Carol and Randi, the FruGirls, are local home stagers and decorators. You can also find them

blogging about many other ways to live an elegant life for less at www.frugelegance.com FrugElegance is where Frugal and Elegance come together.



Thankful". The other frame holds a wreath tied on with a fall ribbon. The small white frame holds a free printable we found online, and printed on our home computer. Then we taped it to the back of our frame. Easy and done.

Using the sharpie marker, we wrote the letters "t-h-a-n-k-s" across small white pumpkins, on the mantle. It doesn't get any easier than that.

For another idea, "Give Thanx" was written in chalk and framed, perched on a tray full of candles and pumpkins. We love the warm rich Fall colors. The frame has been used for the past three seasons and the only difference is the chalk written message and what is attached to the frame. We painted chalkboard paint onto the board but another easy option is to buy large chalkboard stick-ons.



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What Causes Buyer's to Pay More?

The most recent statistics for September 2017 vs September 2016 in Clayton show that there were 14 homes on the market in 2017 vs. 32 in 2016. The Clayton solds were 12 in 2017 vs. 10 in 2016. Concord 94521 had 35 in September this year and 50 on the market in 2016, with sold properties of 32 in 2017 vs 38 in 2016.

On the face of this report, you see that there is definitely a shortage of homes on the market. This puts pressure on the buyers looking for a home. But for sellers, this can drive multiple offers and/or higher prices. Keep in mind, interest rates have jumped up a bit, and that will also impact sold prices.

Sold prices in Clayton and Concord have maintained at 98%-100% of list price for the past year. Sold price as a percent of list price statistics can tell you the story of the cycles of the market and this stat validates what we are seeing going on with listings.

It can mean that there are fewer homes on the market that buyers consider a "10". This generally means, that if you have a less-than-perfect home, it's a good time to sell. There is less competition on the market, and buyers looking this time of year may have been beaten out of the "10" condition homes, and have gravitated to purchasing something that needs some updating. It could be your time to get top dollar for what you are selling, if you are not wanting to invest in the upgrades yourself.

So, let's talk about condition and how buyers see homes they look at for sale. In Clayton over the last six months, for example, most of the homes priced over \$800,000-\$900,000 were move-in ready, with updated kitchens and bathrooms. They were in good condition, with reports, i.e. recommendations on pests,

and home inspections completed in most cases. Or, they had compensating factors that were a big draw to buyers, like an extra-large lot, a view, or a location next to a park or walking distance to schools. Homes that sold under \$800,000 were often in original condition, or needed some updating in the rooms buyers consider most important. According to the 2015 Remodeling Impact Report, the top five preferred updates are (in this order): Kitchen upgrade, complete kitchen renovation, bathroom renovation and new wood flooring. Appeal, plain and simple is important, and new is better.

Having been in the local real estate market for over 35 years, I can say with certainty, that I've never had a buyer ask for acoustic ceilings, wallpaper or a home in poor condition, unless they were flippers or contractors looking for homes under market value.

Staging is about presentation. It helps buyers visualize themselves in the home, which is a good home in good condition. The steps you take prior to market getting your home in top condition can make a huge difference in your final sale price, it can be tens of thousands of dollars in your pocket.

Consult early in the process with your Realtor and staging professional. They know what brings \$\$ in today's market. We are out there every day showing homes to our buyers, and buyers tell us what they want as the market changes.

Terrylynn Fisher, Real Estate Broker Associate (CalBRE# 00615420) with Dudum Real Estate Group (CalBRE# 01882902) is a veteran of real estate. (925) 876 0966 www.BuyStageSell.com

Help Save Homeless Lives Through Cold Weather Clothing Program

White Pony Express (WPE), headquartered in Pleasant Hill, launched its third Cold Weather Clothing Program (CWCP) for the upcoming winter. The program's focus is to help the homeless in Contra Costa County endure the cold and often wet winter.

WPE's ambitious program, being handled by its "Free General Store" (FGS), is to distribute at least 10,000 articles for the 2017-18 winter, such as warm coats, pants, shirts, socks, hats, gloves, scarves, underwear, and boots.

White Pony Express' CWCP originated in January 2016 when two homeless men died in Walnut Creek from exposure to very low temperatures. It was that sad situation that spurred our founder to ask that warm clothing be procured and provided to the homeless to enable them to endure the freezing cold. FGS was able to provide hundreds of items to many homeless persons who were most at risk.

Earlier that winter, a man we'll call "Roy," had told one of our WPE volunteers that he was looking for some thermal pants, as he knew that a very cold weather was coming and that he was sleeping out in the open. WPE happened to have a large thermal jumpsuit that had just been donated to the Free General Store, which we gave him.

A year later, as the same volunteer was giving a new pair of jeans to a man who had been wearing the same pants every day for three months, Roy came on the

scene and exclaimed, "White Pony Express saved my life last winter. You gave me that thermal jumpsuit!"

WPE is primarily asking for monetary donations to help with purchases of clothing for WPE's CWCP. These can be sent to White Pony Express, 1966 Tice Valley Blvd., #101, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.



Donations of coats, etc., are also being accepted, but they need to be new or like-new donations of cold weather clothing. This excludes stained, torn, or clothing that shows wear (clothing that is faded, or has worn collars, cuffs, or hems). Garments should be in a condition that might be given to a close family member. Donations of new or like-new clothing can be delivered to Suite 101, 3380 Vincent Plaza, Pleasant Hill, during hours of operation listed here: <http://www.whiteponyexpress.org/donateclothes/> Volunteers are also needed to either process or deliver items to agencies that will distribute the clothing to the homeless. For more information about volunteering for the Cold Weather Clothing Program, contact Mandy Nakaya at (925) 818-6361 or at Mandy@whiteponyexpress.org

Talk Solutions: "Raising Resilient Girls"

Learn practical, actionable advice to use at home to support young girls

Pleasant Hill Middle School in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District will host the first of this year's Talk Solutions Speaker Series with a parent education workshop, "Raising Resilient Girls", with Simone Marean, Executive Director and Founder of Girls Leadership. The presentation will cover the development of girl dynamics from pre-school through high school. While targeted toward girls, the information will be beneficial for parents of boys as well.

The event is free and open to the community. A Spanish interpreter will be available.

On the surface, girls are thriving. They are outpacing boys in test scores, college admissions and athletic achievements. But beneath the surface experts are seeing a rise in female aggression and depression. Girls continue to suffer from eating disorders, anxiety, abusive relationships and self-mutilation, signs that their internal experience doesn't match the surface. Girls who appear to "have it all" are being pushed to the brink to maintain their "perfect girl" image. By attempting to excel in all arenas, including appearances, academics and athletics, girls succumb to a pressure that

limits them. These "super girls" develop an inability to take risks, practice authenticity and make mistakes. So what can be done to help our girls? How can we help raise them to be more resilient?

Girls Leadership's Executive Director and Co-Founder Simone Marean has a few ideas about what can be done.

Regularly, Simone speaks to parents and teachers across the country about the challenges girls face today, the reasons why we see girls struggling, and what we can do to help them. Simone shares how to help girls practice assertive self-expression, emotional intelligence and healthy relationships, preparing them for a life of personal and social leadership. Her engaging presentation covers the development of girl dynamics beginning in preschool through high school.

She also tackles topics like The Good Girl Phenomenon, conflict as an opportunity for positive change, and how and why girls can be aggressive with one another.

The event will include a 60-minute presentation followed by a 30-minute Q&A session. Principal Terry McCormick will be the onsite contact, and can be reached at mccormickt@mdusd.org or (925) 256-0791. Dan Roll of Talk Solutions will also be available as an onsite contact, and can be reached at Dan@talksolutions.org or (510) 760-1213.

Wednesday, November 8, 2017, 7:00 p.m. at Pleasant Hill Middle School, One Santa Barbara Rd., Pleasant Hill.

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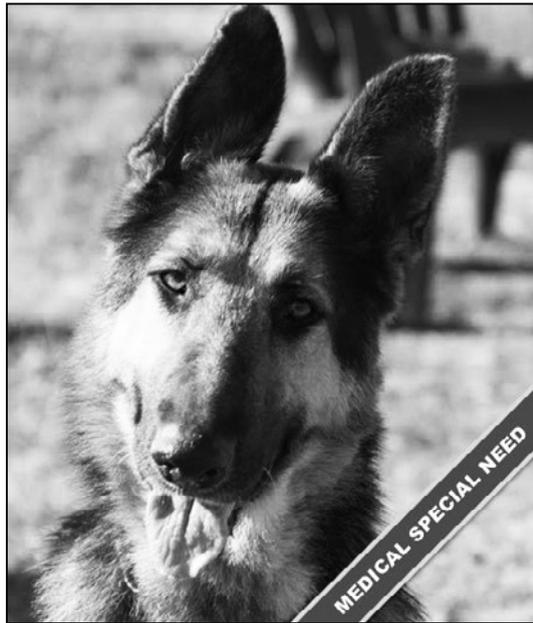
Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

Each month a hard to place dog in foster care will be featured to give them extra exposure to find their forever home.

Hero is a special needs German Shepherd that is available through Walnut Creek's Second Chance German Shepherd Rescue (SCGSR). After being rescued from a hoarder, five-year-old Hero has blossomed into a beautiful, quiet, loving pet that is good with other dogs. Unfortunately, Hero has advanced perianal fistulas, a condition that results in chronic lesions around the anus.

For now, he is not in pain and they are not leaking. However, this is a progressive disease. True to his breed, Hero is a devoted, protective, and intelligent companion. This loving dog has no bad habits, is crate-trained and is suitable for any home.

He is a "pawsitively special dawg". If interested in adopting or becoming a long term foster for Hero, please fill out the adoption questionnaire (<http://www.scgsr.org/adoption/aq/>). For more information or to see other adoptable dogs, contact SCGSR at info@scgsr.org or (888) 815-6222. You can also support this nonprofit organization by making a donation or sponsoring an adoption fee



(<http://www.scgsr.org/adoption/#available-dogs>).

Editors Note: Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram celebrity with more than 49,000 followers. [Instagram.com/rubydoobydo](https://www.instagram.com/rubydoobydo). Special thanks to Jill Hedgecock, Program Coordinator, Mount Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club for her help in translating canine for this article. www.jillhedgecock.com.

Dogs Healing Veterans, Veterans Saving Dog

by Jill Hedgecock

They come from different backgrounds, they served our country in different ways, but these military veterans have one thing in common: their faces light up when they speak about the service dogs they acquired as part of Tony LaRussa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF)'s Pets for Vets Program. Jon Belanger, a combat veteran who served in the Navy during Desert Storm and his black Labrador mix, Skyler, have been in the program for five months. Belanger says the whole program has been therapeutic. Ethan Shattuck who served in Iraq for 10 years suffers from agoraphobia—a fear of leaving home. He says that his one-year-old retriever-pit bull mix, Finnegan has changed everything. Having the responsibility of a dog not only forces him to go outside to walk his dog, but he has to venture from his house to come to the ARF training classes.

"Finnegan is a goofball that helps me remember how to smile and laugh," Ethan says, "I've never had a better dog."

The Pets for Vets Program, which is offered free of charge, requires the veterans to participate in seven weeks of basic dog training, seven weeks of intermediate training, seven weeks of Canine Good Citizenship training and 7 to 14 weeks of service skills and public access interactions. The program even includes navigating their dogs through a grocery store. After this nearly yearlong formal training concludes, the veterans are required to continue with follow-up training sessions.

"Watching the transformation of stray to well-behaved dogs and the bond that develops between the veterans and dogs is her favorite part of the program," says Merritt Rollins, the Program Manager.

During a training session on October 6, Danny Kimbrell, the Pets for Vets dog trainer, guided the veterans through several service skills. Many veterans suffer from hypervigilance, a condition that can escalate into a panic attack, especially in crowds. To alleviate the symptoms, Danny showed the veterans how to create a canine barrier between the public and themselves. To achieve this, the dogs are trained to precede their owner through doorways and grocery aisles. Through the use of clickers and food rewards, Belanger and Shattuck quickly taught Skyler and Finnegan this new skill. Another common



Animals With Unusual Jobs

by Shereen Motarjemi

Some of us like our jobs, but how many of us can say we feel enthused to go to work? Here are three remarkable animals that are actually eager to do their jobs. They show us that when we are driven to serve, work is joy!

FRANKIE THE CAT

About twelve years ago, Frankie the cat hopped over the fence into Navlet's Nursery in Pleasant Hill and assumed the job of rat catcher. Thereafter, like a loyal employee, Frankie showed up for work daily. Soon a staffer brought in a cat bed, placing it among the garden statuary for Frankie's napping comfort.



Many customers became regular shoppers because Frankie the Nursery Cat brought smiles to his many fans. But his contributions didn't end there.

Frankie was also a masterful hunter with a personal record of six rats in one day. The staff kept a tally comparing Frankie's catches to the official nursery "approved" rat traps, and Frankie's totals were always higher! Few among us are as passionate about our jobs as Frankie was about his. Every evening at closing time he was escorted home, or his presence would trip the night alarm system.

Sadly, Frankie's life was cut short on September 1, when he was struck by a car. The nursery staff and customers were devastated. The nursery (now Sloats) has planned to install a memorial garden near his favorite spot by the fence.

BETTY THE RAT

Betty the rat has a job that few of us would

volunteer for, yet every day she willingly goes to work as the prey in a dog sport called Barn Hunt. Well that's Betty's job, hide under straw while a large carnivore tries to sniff you out. But don't worry about Betty. She comes to no harm because she's a pro at her work.



You probably haven't heard of Barn Hunt. It's a new sport on the competitive circuit. The course is in an enclosed arena with a maze of hay bales, tunnels and loose straw. The rat is placed inside a plastic tube (with air holes) and hidden under the straw. The object is for the dog to find the rat by using scent discernment, and then to alert the human. Betty's tube is strong enough to resist puncture, a fact she appears fully aware of. Betty willingly crawls into her tube every day to do her part for the sport. Not only is Betty unafraid to enter into the tube, she seems almost mischievously eager. She gets treats and breaks, just like the dogs, and after practice she is a beloved family pet.

Betty is owned by Laurie Cowhig of Redwood Ratters in Fairfield. As a team, Betty and Laurie teach dogs and their humans how to play this new sport. All are welcome, and most dogs quickly become enthusiastic for the game, as it taps into a basic instinct.

As you might expect, Betty was bred for her job. When Laurie was asked what traits she breeds for, her answer might come as a surprise: cuteness.

"If I have to look at a rat's face every day", Laurie says with a smile, "I want to see cute!"

symptom of Post Traumatic Source Disorder (PTSD) that these pets can help veterans deal with is overstimulation. Because dogs are known to be a calming influence, the dogs are taught to touch their handler when their owner's heart rate starts to increase. To start the training process, the veterans were asked to bob a knee as a signal of stress, then invite the dog to jump up onto their lap. The goal is to eventually have the dog recognize early cues that a veteran's are on the verge of an episode of over-stimulation.

Danny Kimbrell who served in the 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan, is an essentially self-taught dog trainer after working with Berkeley Humane to train a support dog for himself. He stepped in to fill a need when he discovered that there were no official programs in service dog training.

It's not all work and no play for these dogs. Time is reserved after the formal training for the service dogs is complete to interact with their fellow service animals. Skyler and Finnegan's joy was evident as they romped around the room chasing each other.

On September 9, (the date the City of Walnut Creek declared Pets for Vets Day)

dog trainer Danny Kimbrell and Program Manager Merritt Rollins achieved a milestone when eight veterans graduated from the first Pets for Vets assistance dog program. Jon and Skyler and Ethan and Finnegan will soon join the ranks of Pets for Vets graduates. On that day, their faces will no doubt light up the room.

ARF's Pets for Vets Program participants must be veterans of the United States Military serving after 1990 and must meet other requirements such as receiving ongoing treatment for service-related emotional trauma within Contra Costa or Alameda Counties, and reside within a 30-mile radius of ARF's headquarters located in Walnut Creek, CA. Veterans in inpatient housing are not eligible. To apply veterans should review the requirements and fill out an application. For more information, visit <https://www.arflife.org/pets-for-vets> or call (925) 256-1ARF (1273) and ask for Merritt Rollins.

Dog Trainer Danny Kimbrell instructs Ethan Shattuck on handling Finnegan.

-Photos Courtesy of Diane Walsh

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SportStars Joins NCVA as New Official Media Partner

The Northern California Volleyball Association (NCVA) and SportStars Media have formalized an Official Media Partnership.

Since 1982, NCVA has been on a mission to build one of the nation's most comprehensive and encompassing club volleyball landscapes. Executive Director, Donna Donaghy and Chief Program Officer, Melissa Walker, continue to push the much-respected association forward with innovative ideas — and they're thrilled with the opportunity to bring those ideas and innovations to light through the pages of SportStars.

We are excited to collaborate with SportStars and their incredibly talented team to bring volleyball news to more households. As the fastest growing youth sport, we are always looking for more ways to bring these achievements to light.

One of the goals of the partnership is to increase tournament play throughout northern California.

"This is a long-anticipated, very exciting partnership," said SportStars President, Mike Calamusa. "Pairing with Donna and the NCVA team gives us the opportunity to provide content from THE SOURCE — one of the most respected regional chapters under the USA Volleyball umbrella. That allows us to present a more compelling picture of this fast-growing sport, with up-to-the-minute content emanating from the most trusted source...!"

The NCVA covers Northern California and parts of Northern Nevada. It produces 21 weekend tournaments and as many as 49 regional tournaments each year for girls and boys, including beach volleyball. In addition, they host tryouts and clinics for all skill levels.

Together, they hope to attract more middle and high schools to offer volleyball programs, allowing more athletes to join the community. NCVA remains an active supporter of local high school volleyball and continues to train and assign officials to many leagues throughout the bay area.

Founded in 2010, SportStars is California's largest youth-sports media company, producing and providing youth sports content to over 300,000 households via digital and print media.

Built Tough

by JAMES G. KANE | Photos by BOB LARSON

[Editor's note: On April 15, 2013, two bombs went off near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three spectators and injuring more than 260 other people including 12-year-old Aaron Hern of Martinez. Aaron was struck by shrapnel from the pressure cooker blast while waiting for his mother to finish the race.

Surgeons removed the metal shards and sealed the wound with 86 staples, mostly to his legs. He also suffered hearing loss from a ruptured ear drum in his left ear. Fortunately, no one else in his family was injured.

I became curious as to how Aaron had adjusted these past four years, when coincidentally, our associates at SportStars Magazine was covering an Alhambra Valley High School Football game, whose coach is Aaron's father, Alan Herns, and Aaron is the team's quarterback.]

Aaron Hern's bedroom is simply immaculate. Bed neatly made. No clothes on the floor. Dust is absent from the drawers.

Quarterbacks tend to be organized. They think big, too.

"I want to go the Naval Academy," he says, when asked where he sees himself in a couple of years. The place is dear to his family — his father, Alan, went there, and met Aaron's mom, Katherine — and he has the grades, the athletic pedigree and all the intangibles needed. Yet, he says it with a self-assuredness and presence that's disarming.

"Live your best life," he says. "Right?"

The words carry real power when they come from this set of lips. The 16-year-old speaking them is living and after April 15, 2013, the day bombs burst near the Boston Marathon finish line, that alone is the best.

But there's far more to it than that.

For one, Hern is rolling toward straight A's at Alhambra High in Martinez, his dreams squarely aspiring to participation in a future Army-Navy game. For two, he's starting quarterback for the 6-2 Bulldogs who defeated Northgate 40-33 on Oct. 27 to clinch at least a share of the program's first league title since 2009.

That puts him ahead of last season, when as a sophomore starter, he suffered a season-ending broken collarbone in

Alhambra's opener against Acalanes-Lafayette.

And no, that hit did not take away his nerve.

"One of my favorite things about football is the physicality of it," said Hern, who went 9-for-9 passing for 147 yards and two touchdowns in the big win over Northgate. "I've never been opposed to getting hit. Really, I'll have some jitters before each game, and they last until I get hit for the first time. I love that first hit."

And, he says, he loves the chaos of it all. Which might seem strange, given the chaos of that day in 2013.

The gory details of the bombing have been well-chronicled, but Hern is more than willing to retrace them — "I still remember looking up, seeing people running and the buildings in the sky and thinking, 'Wow, I guess this is it.' I thought I was dead" — with almost a matter-of-fact demeanor. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time when two bombs detonated 12 seconds and 210 yards apart near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Three people died. Sixteen others lost limbs.

That he wasn't one of them was no less than a miracle. Aaron and the family acknowledge it, along with occasional posts on a Facebook Page titled "Aaron Hern Recovery." A banner atop the page reads "Boston Strong."

"He's done really well with what has come his way," Katherine says. "The overwhelming attention from the beginning was a lot. And I don't want that in any way to be construed as a negative. But it's a lot. And it was a lot. Here he is, this athletic boy who has been moving around his whole life and he's having to learn to walk again at 11."

"But you know, you have the process of the athlete. You accept it and you plan to give yourself the best chance possible to deal with what you're facing. And we just kind of did that the best we could."

None of the Herns came out of it completely unscathed. Alan Hern says that in the year after the bombing, he lost some of his intensity for coaching and struggled to reconcile the adversity already thrown at his first-born child.

The autumn before the bombing, he suffered a dislocated elbow playing football, a "particularly nasty injury," Alan Hern says.

"I had a really hard time with the fact that here he was this 11-year-old boy, and he'd already been through all this trauma," Alan Hern said. "I struggled with that for a long time."

Mom suffered watching her baby hurt. Words don't do it justice. The shaking of her head as she turns away does.

The other side of that? Some of the other pain the Herns face now doesn't strike nearly as deep. But they are there. The Bulldogs, a school with a winning and proud tradition, are far from a perfect team, and Aaron Hern — 5 feet, 11 inches, 160 pounds and possessing an average arm and speed — won't be on the home page of any recruiting websites.

"In the games I've seen when he's had time to throw, he threw it really well," said Acalanes-Lafayette coach Floyd Burnsed, a veteran of more than 20 seasons. "He would have a long way to go (to be considered elite), but he's a good high school quarterback."

Throw into the mix that his dad is the head coach, and hard feelings can fester in a small community. As one Alhambra official put it, "Some parents can be very cruel."

Hern has more than enough support to cope. He does the teenage socializing thing occasionally but says he prefers a quiet night with his folks and sisters Abby, 14, and Caroline, 4.

Plus, he's been the coach's son his entire life, so that brings perspective in a situation that can appear to be wholly unfair. Not that he needed the perspective.

"You know what?" he says. "It's just noise. You get used to it. People who say those things and participate in it, they really don't understand all that goes into playing the position I play and all that's gone into preparation. I don't skip workouts. I don't skip film. I don't skip anything. So, it's just noise."

Besides, as both he and his father point out, everything can change in an instant. One second, he's quarterbacking the Bulldogs as a sophomore, the next he's getting clocked blindsided and his collarbone is broken. One second, he's standing along the road in Boston, the next ...

"You realize," he says, "that when people say you have to be in the moment, you really do have to be in the moment."

And wow, some of those moments. There was the night during his recovery that he threw out the first pitch at an Oakland A's game, and that other night he did the same things before the San Francisco Giants played. He has those baseballs — and dozens of others — signed and inside an encased glass box mounted on a shelf along his bedroom wall.

There was the day the Oakland Raiders honored him, and all of them signed a game ball. That's in Aaron's room, too.

There are the strangers who tell him he's an inspiration, that he embodies Boston Strong.

Yet there are other moments, too. Like the ones when Aaron thinks about 8-year-old Martin William Richard, of Boston, who died when the second bomb exploded. Martin and Aaron were mere yards apart.

Survivor Guilt, as Katherine says, "is a very real thing."

"There's definitely times, yeah, where I wonder 'why did an 8-year-old have to die', and it's rough," Aaron says. "But I try not to stay there too long."

It's a fine line to walk. A hard line to walk.

"There's pressure that comes with it," Katherine says. "He does a good job with it."

A few minutes later, Alan is showing a video on the family's desktop computer. It shows Aaron in a rehabilitation room, struggling to walk with the aid of a walker. His legs move rigidly. His eyes reflect despair.

"It breaks my heart, but I keep it and watch it occasionally to remind myself of where he's been and what he's overcome," Alan says. "But it's also to remind myself and us that you keep moving forward, because sometimes, that's all you can do."

Silence follows. Aaron stares intently at the screen. It's a deeply intense, deeply personal moment, in the open, for others to see.

"It's OK," Aaron says. "It's who I am. It's a huge part of my life. But day-to-day now, I don't see it as defining me, and I don't feel like it will be all that does define me."

Because, clearly, there's much more to Aaron Hern and his life than just that day in Boston.



Sunchokes – Tasty Tubers!

Sunchokes – Tasty Tubers!
This month we have details on sunchokes, or Jerusalem artichokes. Artichokes and sunchokes are two entirely different species of plant edibles. The artichoke is from the nettle family with spiny leaves, whereas the sunchoke is a tuber and grows in the ground like a potato. Sunchokes have been around for centuries and were cultivated and eaten by Native Americans.



The sunchoke is nutritionally well-balanced, with lots of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. They can be eaten raw, like parsnips in salads, roasted, or sautéed like a potato. Keep in mind that the flesh of the artichoke oxidizes like apples or pears when exposed to air.

Try some of these tasty ideas:
•Potato Pancakes: Cook and use like a potato and make some potato/sunchoke latkes, the traditional potato pancake. Serve with applesauce.
•Salad: Slice or julienne raw for a salad addition.
•Soup: Make a potato/sunchoke

soup with leeks and cheese for a nice, warm meal this fall.
•Pasta: Add chopped sunchokes to pasta along with regular artichoke hearts, sundried tomatoes, and toss with an olive oil and Parmesan cheese.
•Mashed Potatoes: Cook and mash them with potatoes and chives, a splash of milk, butter, salt, and pepper. Awesome!
•Roasted: Peel, cut in chunks, toss with olive oil, salt and pepper, and roast at 400°F for a half hour – check for doneness, add more time if needed.
Try some of these tasty tubers real soon. You know what they say - the joy of life comes from new experiences!



Mrs. Butterbanks, aka Sam Bowerbank, always finds the time in the middle of her busy schedule to destroy her kitchen one concoction at a time. With the freshest ingredients gathered from her backyard garden, along with eggs from her chickens, she creates beautiful, tasty dishes and desserts. You'll find more of her fabulous recipes on her blog butterrequired.wordpress.com.

Homemade Butter Rolls

November, the month where we officially start being gluttonous. Fortunately, it's sweater weather so we can cover up any added bulges to our mid-section. It's the happiest time in my household. Butter is constantly softening on the counter, the ovens are always on, and my house smells delectable. November means baking, baking, and more baking.



Many people are afraid of yeast. Why? What could be a better smell? There is something so intoxicating about the smell of yeast rising. Bread is not to be feared my friends. We are going to make homemade butter rolls. The best part, your fridge will do most of the work. For Thanksgiving your family deserves these over those that you pop out of a canister. Not to mention, you will be the most favorite of all the guests.

2 TBSP yeast
1 1/2 cups warm water
1/2 cup sugar

Put these 3 ingredients, inside your large mixing bowl, stir gently and leave them alone to become close friends for 5 mins.

After the 5 mins, add the following:
1/2 cup butter (aka-1 stick, sweet cream kind of course)
2 large eggs
2 tsp salt
4 1/2 cups flour

Start your mixer on slow and then medium speed until it's mixed well. Don't fret, this will be a sticky dough. Cover your

mixing bowl with a towel and let it rise for one hour. Do not peek. After an hour, find the largest mixing bowl you have that has a lid, or a large Tupperware container. I use a clean ice cream bucket. (I have five of them, don't judge me.) Spray the bowl/bucket with non-stick spray, and scoop your sticky dough in and then throw it in your fridge. You can store the dough for 2-3 hours, overnight or for a day or two. That's the best part, it's very forgiving.

Now comes the messy part. You'll need extra flour for this. Separate the dough in half, spread a nice layer of flour out on your countertop, place half of the dough on top. Using a rolling pin, roll it out top to bottom, left to right, to form a circle, like a pizza. Then slice into 12 triangles.

Now, I am a big fan of butter, so I place a little pat of butter on each triangle and then roll them up, starting with the larger section. Place on a cookie sheet (12 to a pan) that has been greased or has some parchment paper lining. Spray the tops of the rolled butter rolls with cooking spray and cover with plastic wrap. Let them rise for 45-60 mins. Remove the plastic wrap and bake at 375 degrees for 12-14 mins, until nicely browned on top. Continue the process with the other half of the dough.

When my rolls have cooled for 5 minutes, I brush melted butter over the top of them. I believe in doing it the right way, more butter the better! These are the best for soaking up that warm turkey gravy and even better for those leftover turkey sandwiches the day after. Trust me. Your family and friends will thank you.

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by Eric Enos
Stories from a Former Agent

[Editors Note: Few of us have ever met a Secret Service Agent, or maybe you have and don't know it. "Inside the Secret Service" is about life as a Secret Service agent. These are true stories of real life experiences of Eric Enos, a Concord resident who spent years as a Secret Service agent.]

I found a black and white photograph of my dad in the top drawer of his desk at home. Standing with dad in the photo was a fellow detective, their chief, and another man, whom I didn't know. They were standing behind an older man who was sitting at a desk. I didn't know who he was either, only that he was someone important. They were all wearing suits. Dad had a crew-cut, and looked very serious. I was maybe 5 or 6, and I always liked looking at the picture. I was so proud of my dad, and the picture reminded me of one of my favorite television shows, *Dragnet* (my other favorite shows were *Adam-12* and *Hawaii 5-0*). Dad always had a certain Joe Friday quality about him; direct and to the point - "just the facts."

As years passed, I came to learn that the other man standing in the photo was California State Senator, Hugh Burns (a friend of dad's chief) and that the man seated at the desk was then California Governor, Ronald Reagan.

My dad was always my hero even as an adult. Dad was a policeman for 20 years. He worked patrol, was a detective, and retired a Sergeant. I grew up idolizing the police and always admiring my dad's his work ethic, professionalism, his toughness, and that of the officers. I remember the pride I felt seeing my dad in his uniform and the countless work stories dad told of the job. The stories were priceless. Dad retired in 1974. I wish he had written a book. My brother and I were so influenced by our dad that we both ended up with careers in law enforcement.

That Reagan picture was taken in the Governor's office in 1968. Dad was very proud of the picture and it was mom's intention to someday have it enlarged and framed, as both were big admirers of Reagan. I too became a big admirer of Ronald Reagan. I remember being glued to the T.V. during the Carter-Reagan Presidential race. I was a sophomore in high school when John Hinckley came within an inch of assassinating President Reagan, when one of the .22 caliber explosive tipped bullets he fired at the President ricocheted off the door of the armored presidential limo and entered the president's chest, collapsing a lung and lodging within an inch of his heart. These incidents had an impact on me, and dad's 1968 photo with Reagan became even more of a cherished family possession.

Fast forward to 1997. I was a new agent, about six months out of the academy, and was working a foreign dignitary detail. As a new agent, my assignment was to stand post in front of the protectees hotel room door (boring assignment for a seasoned agent, but exciting for a new agent). At one point the Detail Leader (boss) who was as-

Ronald Reagan Photo Leads to Secret Service Career



1968 Gov. Reagan. Dad 2nd from right. CA Senator Hugh Burns 2nd from left

signed to the Dignitary Protective Division out of Secret Service headquarters, came out of the command post introduced himself. We shook hands and I addressed him as mister. He said, "Mister was my dad, I'm Rich." He understood I was new to the Service and asked how was I enjoying the job, etc. This was surprising to me because in most law enforcement cultures, the "brass" seldom deals with a low-rung newbie. But Rich was different. A really friendly guy nearing the end of his career who was acutely aware of the impact his kindness would have on a new agent just starting his career. During our conversation, Rich had mentioned that he had been assigned to the President Detail when Reagan was President. I told Rich, "Whatever you do, don't tell me any bad Reagan stories. I'm a huge Reagan fan. In fact, Reagan was one of the reasons I got into the Service."

Rich replied in a very direct tone. "There are no bad Reagan stories." He continued to say that I would be hard-pressed to find any agent who ever worked on Reagan's Detail who had anything bad to say him. Rich said Reagan was revered by the agents because he was truly a good man and always treated agents with respect and kindness. Rich relayed several Reagan stories (the subject of a future *Diablo Gazette* article) including how he would often come into the Secret Service Command Post and visit with agents and tell stories before it was time for all of them to depart via motorcade to an event. Rich talked of how Reagan truly respected the Office of the Presidency, how he never came into the Oval Office without wearing a coat and tie, and how he was never boastful.

Rich said, "I'll give you an example. I was in the Oval Office the morning they told Reagan that Democratic Presidential Candidate Gary Hart had been photographed with Donna Rice. Hart had been the front-runner for the 1988 Democratic Presidential nomination. The picture with he and Rice, in which she is sitting on his lap

holding and they're holding hands, supported speculation that he and Rice were having an affair, and resulted in Hart dropping out of the Presidential Campaign. They (Secret Service) brought the old man down from the residence (second floor at the White House). He, as always, entered the Oval in his coat and tie. Waiting inside was his Chief of Staff (Howard Baker) and several other staff members. He said good morning to everyone and the Chief of Staff says, 'Mr. President, there was a major development in the campaign within the last few hours. Senator Hart was photographed with a woman who is believed to be his mistress. The photo is going to hit the national press in fifteen minutes.' Everyone in the Oval, including Reagan, knew at that instant that Hart was finished as a Presidential candidate. Everyone waited for Reagan's reaction. It was dead quiet. Then Reagan says, 'Well, boys will be boys.' All the staff were looking out the corner of their eyes at each other wondering if that was all he was going to say. Then, Reagan raises his index finger and says, 'But, boys will not be President.' That was it. The Democratic front runner was toast and Reagan didn't jump, shout, laugh, or even smile. He did not mention the issue again and instead went right to the next item of his morning briefing. It was classic Reagan." This story just furthered my admiration for the man.

I told Rich of the old black and white photo of my dad with then Governor Reagan. I told him how much it meant to my dad and asked if he knew of anyway I could get it signed for him. Rich said, "Sure is. You need to call my friend, Fred, who is a supervisor on Reagan's Former Presidential Detail. Tell him I told you to call and he'll get it signed for you." I thanked Rich for sharing his Reagan stories with me and for passing me Fred's name. I contemplated calling Rich's friend, Fred, but felt uneasy about doing so as a new agent.

The following week, I got a phone call. The voice said, "Special Agent Enos, this is Very Special Agent Rich. I need you to do me a favor. You need to call Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Fred. I just spoke with him and he's expecting your call. He will personally hand deliver the picture of your dad with Reagan and have him sign it." Again, I couldn't believe that a high ranking Secret Service supervisor would go to so much trouble for a new agent. Rich epitomized what it meant to be in the "Se-

cret Service Family" (an inside term use to describe the brotherhood/sisterhood within the agency). I followed up with Fred and he too displayed the Secret Service Family values as he saw to it that Reagan signed dad's picture as well as others I had.

I gave the picture to dad on Father's Day 1997. Dad was 63. Dad opened the wrapping on the box, removed the lid, and had a look of shock on his face as he pulled open the tissue paper inside, revealing the now enlarged 1968 framed photo. Dad said, "Oh boy" (a term he often used when something good happened). He took the picture out of the box and read the personalized message, "To Jack Enos - With best wishes, Ronald Reagan" Dad's beaming smile, and now slightly tearing eyes, revealed the joy and pride he felt as he meticulously examined the photo. "Oh my...I'll be damned (two of dad's other terms). How did you ever get this signed?" Dad told me that night, "You know, I've had a lot of nice gifts over the years, but I think this just may be the most meaningful gift I've ever received."

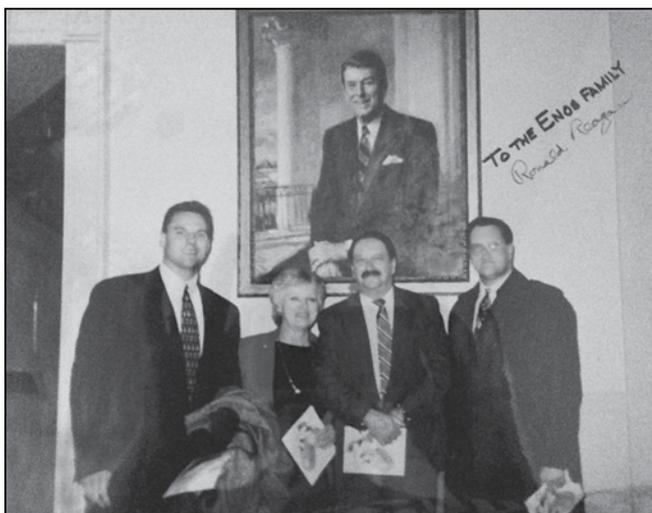
Later that year I gave my parents another signed Reagan photo. It was taken when my family were all in DC and we attended a White House Christmas party for the Secret Service.

When dad saw Reagan's Presidential Portrait on the White House wall, he insisted we take a family picture with it. Both that and the Governor Reagan photo have been proudly displayed at my parent's home ever since. We have often discussed those pictures and how things have come full circle. Life is funny that way.

It never crossed dad's mind in 1968 when he met and had his picture taken with Governor Reagan, that his son, who was four years old at the time, would one day be a Special Agent with the Secret Service, and would have that picture signed for him by the same governor who would later become the 40th President of the United States.

In 2004, the nation lost one its heroes when Ronald Reagan died. In 2014, I, and my entire family, lost our hero when my dad passed away.

My dad (and my mom) was my mentor, my hero and my best friend. His ever-present influence played a major part in my decision to join the Secret Service. And, to a lesser extent, the leadership, values, and patriotism, of President Ronald Reagan played a role in that decision as well.



Family Photo under Reagan portrait at White House



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ODE TO LIVING

LIFE'S DANCE

by O.J. Erickson, Resident

*And so we are born, become a new life,
With laughter and love and no little strife.*

*A slate not yet writ, much room to enhance,
Now we are ready to start our own dance.*

*Time passes by, we continue to grow,
With so much to learn, and so much to know.*

*Top of the list on our steady advance,
Always make sure to improve in your dance.*

*Finally one day, a thought does occur,
We have come far, are we now more mature?*

*But how to tell? In life's little mirror a glance,
Yes, it is true, we have learned how to dance.*

*But years quickly pass, too soon we grow old,
Our coin almost spent, story almost told.*

*We know not the end, but hope there's a chance,
Time will reset and we'll learn a new dance.*

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