

The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Communities

Clayton, Concord, Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, Lafayette and Danville.

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APRIL 2018

Diablo Gazette
Welcomes
Rossmoor Residents
courtesy of
The Heritage Downtown (Pg.20)

Dreams Come True for Local Teen Dancer

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Get a Free Kitchen Remodel for Local TV Show
- Local Teen Accepted at NY's Prestigious American Ballet Theatre (ABT)
- Legal Briefs: What the Supreme Court Ruled on the 2nd Amendment
- A Real March Madness: The Walkout and March for Our Lives
- Computers the Size of a Grain of Salt
- Concord Residents Propose Land Swap at North Concord Bart
- Recipes, Concerts, and Calendar of Local Events

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Cove Photo: Claire Churchill has been bending over backwards to achieve her dream to be accepted at American Ballet Theatre. Photo by Julie Churchill



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from the publisher *David King*

6 Reason Why March Was Madness

1. We heard from Concord's 150th Celebration Committee. They are the ones preparing Concord for the installation of Father Don Salvio Pacheco bronze statue with a time capsule of modern day artifacts to be reopened in 150 years from now. Despite announcing the bricks were sold out, upon closer inspection, there are still a few bricks available after all. This is your last chance to get yours. Only \$150. Why, that's just \$1 per year! (paid in advance). So, if you think you are a legend, then let your legacy become lore and sponsor a brick for future generations to honor you.

2. It was nice to see some meaningful rain. My lawn enjoyed it. So much so, that it looked like time lapse photography as I watched it grow just days following. However, my lawnmower is still enjoying its long winter's nap... I hate having to wake it.

3. Sports. Los Lomas High School Boys Varsity Basketball just missed being CA State Champions in a five-point loss to Chino Hills, 73-68. Congratulations to them for their stellar season. Anyone who has a meaningful final four bracket in the Men's NCAA March Madness tournament clearly didn't know what they were doing.

4. Real madness has been stirred by the Parkland, Fl school shooting. Gun control vs. 2nd amendment advocates are locked in another high-stakes debate

that threatens to impact midterm elections. Students everywhere conduct a walkout despite attempts by some school administration to put a kibash on the protest. Media has been quick to latch on to the young Parkland newsmakers. And the March for Our Lives rally was larger than the Women's March. Several contributors helped Diablo Gazette recap local reactions (Pg. 3) to this National and avoidable tragedy, including Attorney Douglas Prutton's. His column, "Legal Briefs" gives an excellent review of the Supreme Court's latest ruling on the 2nd amendment. (pg.2)

5. We are discovering that Facebook's cavalier handling of user behavior data may have impacted the last Presidential election, (more so than any Russian influence) and other disturbing privacy revelations. This has sent shockwaves among its users and investors. Even though others including Google, AT&T, Homeland Security, elementary schools, angels, deceased relatives, God and Santa Claus have all been reported as "keeping an eye" on us. Perhaps we should all just do the right thing all the time.

6. Do I understand this? Trump didn't arrange for payment to someone to not tell anyone about something that he didn't do to them, but wants \$1 million every time that someone does.

It's all madness.



legalbriefs

by Douglas A. Prutton, Attorney
Doug@PruttonLaw.com

The Supreme Court and the Second Amendment

The entire Second Amendment to the United States Constitution reads as follows: "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." In the case of *District of Columbia v. Heller*, decided in 2008, a 5-4 majority of the United States Supreme Court for the first time concluded that this right to "keep and bear arms" is not limited by the reference in the first part of the amendment to a "Militia." The Court concluded that this first part of the Amendment was merely a "preamble," and that the "operative" part of the amendment involving the right to keep and bear arms protected an individual's right "unconnected with service in a militia."

So, what is this right to "keep and bear arms?" The five-member majority in *Heller* articulated that the Second Amendment did not create this right. Rather, this right evolved from English common law and the amendment simply provides that this ancient right "shall not be infringed." The Court described the right to keep and bear arms as "the right to possess and carry weapons in case of confrontation." The Court was quick to explain though that this right is "not unlimited" and does not "protect the right of citizens to carry arms for any sort of confrontation," just like the First Amendment right of free speech does not protect the right to "speak for any purpose." The Court refused to "undertake an exhaustive historical analysis of the full scope of the Second Amendment," but emphasized that "nothing in our opinion should be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms." The Second Amendment, according to the Court, does not protect those weapons not typically

possessed by law-abiding citizens for lawful purposes, such as short-barreled shotguns." It only protects weapons "in common use." Similarly, the amendment does not protect the "carrying of dangerous and unusual weapons."

The *Heller* case involved a challenge to the District of Columbia's laws forbidding handguns in homes and requiring all firearms in homes to have trigger-locks making them useless in defending the home from intruders.

The Court noted that "the inherent right of self-defense has been central to the Second Amendment right and that the D.C.s laws went too far. The Court recognized the "problem of handgun violence in this country," and that the District of Columbia still had a "variety of tools for combating that problem, including some measures regulating handguns." The Court also stated that it was not rendering its opinion on whether or not the right to keep and bear arms makes sense in our modern society: "Undoubtedly some think that the Second Amendment is outmoded in a society where our standing army is the pride of our Nation, where well-trained police forces provide personal security, and where gun violence is a serious problem. That is perhaps debatable, but what is not debatable is that it is not the role of this Court to pronounce the Second Amendment extinct."

The Court noted that "since this case represents the first in-depth examination of the Second Amendment, one should not expect it to clarify the entire field ... there will be time enough to expound upon the historical justifications for the exceptions we have mentioned." The lower Courts have been applying the *Heller* decision over the last 10 years in adjudicating the constitutionality of various gun control laws and in a future article, I intend to provide you with an update.

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The Real March Madness Diablo Valley Residents React

by David King

The Parkland, FL school shooting killing 17 and injuring more has reignited the contentious debate for viable solutions to gun violence. Either enact more gun control or employ greater security solutions as the opposition relies heavily on protecting the 2nd amendment interpretation. Within this argument, everybody agrees that they want and need gun deaths to stop.

The Stoneman Douglas High School shooting may have been the tipping point for action as more than 800 events throughout United States and around the world coordinated a March for Our Lives protest on March 24, including Walnut Creek.

Inspired by the determined and emotional core of Florida students, Diablo Valley's reaction has been impressive, surpassing participation in the recent Women's March.

"In Walnut Creek, we marched for our lives.....and for yours, and for your family's lives; for the lives of those who wished they could be there but couldn't, and for Democrats and Republicans alike. We marched so that not another parent, who sent their child off to school in the morning, will end that day by making that child's funeral arrangements. We marched to show our legislators at every level, how frustrated we are with their failure to DO something about this agonizing fact of American life that has been with us since Columbine, and how serious we are about calling them out for



a booth and assisted marchers with voter registration.

"So, off we marched, into the bright afternoon, hopeful once again that the will of the people will be done, the way our government is supposed to function," Skarr concluded.

On March 17, several local schools participated in a walkout despite school administrations attempt to thwart it. Clayton Valley Charter locked the gates and encouraged kids to channel their energy towards befriending a lonely student or outcast during lunch breaks.

Mt. Diablo High staff locked main gates around campus before the 10 a.m. walkout, but students broke through a back gate and walked down Grant Street around 10:15 a.m. shouting "enough is enough!" before administrators took them back to campus. Some held signs with messages protesting gun violence. A photo of the breakout taken by Mercury News went viral and Mt. Diablo students received accolades from Stoneman Douglas student protest organizers.

Correspondent Nik Wojcik approached several local gun shop owners for their reaction to this latest tragedy. All uniformly declined to be on record with media. However, when one store owner revealed that its gun sales have been down by as much as 30% since Trump became President, she did a little digging. In a 2016 NY Times report, gun sales tend to sharply rise each time there is a new gun control measures being proposed. This also

meant a rise in sales when existing gun control laws were relaxed.

The FBI has been tracking the occurrences of NICS Firearm Background Checks since November 1998, just five months prior to the deadly shooting at Columbine High School. The FBI says, "a one to one correlation cannot be made between a firearm background check and a firearm sale." What is determined is since 1998 when background checks were put in place, there have been 280 million of them.

[Special thanks to Nik Wojcik and Jackie Skarr, for their contributions to this article and to the photographers: Gail Murray, Micah, Christina Angell, Kristy Buchholz and Aric Crabb/Bay Area News Group]



their actions and inactions," said Concord resident Jackie Skarr.

In an email to Diablo Gazette, Skarr reported that the mood was somber and joyful all at the same time, with one singular theme: Putting Americans' safety from peacetime gunfire AHEAD of our love affair with weapons.

"With all due respect to our Founding Fathers, we seem to have gone a little more than slightly off the deep end," she wrote. Children's' faces in the crowd were looking to the adults there for answers and promises. They asked questions of our legislators who attended, requesting and deserving answers.

Contra Costa County District Attorney, Diana Becton, California Assemblywoman, Catharine Baker, and United States Representative, Mark DeSaulnier, all promised to keep fighting for gun law reform. "We mean to hold them to those promises," Skarr proclaimed.

Once again much has been said about changing things and now, more than ever, our resolve has been strengthened to HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE, right up through the very next time they ask for our votes. No change equals no elected office, period.

An important rallying point during the March for Our Lives was that marchers could influence change by voting. The League of Women Voters of Diablo staffed





Jennifer Stojanovich

Realtor, Better Homes Realty

Buying Near a School

Is buying near a school a good idea, or could it be inviting trouble? Here are the pros and cons you should weigh when deciding whether or not to buy a home near a school.

Pros of buying near a school - One of the biggest perks of buying near a school is the boost to your property value. But be aware that in order to get that extra value, it needs to be a high-performing school. Other advantages of living in close proximity to a school include:

Being within walking distance: If you have kids in school, it can be a huge plus if they live close enough to the school to walk. It's comforting to know that they are close by, and it can make mornings less hectic knowing you don't have to battle traffic to get there.

Having access to school amenities: Do you like to run or play sports? Living near a school often means having access to running tracks or sports fields. Many schools allow members of the community to use these facilities before and after school.

Living in a safer neighborhood: In general, the areas around schools tend to be safer. They are more likely to have regular police patrols and crossing guards for busy streets.

Cons of buying near a school

When considering the disadvantages of living near a school, the type of school matters. An elementary school generally causes less of a disturbance than a middle or high school. Older students are more likely to cause trouble, vandalize property or loiter. Other cons to think about include:

Traffic: The number of cars and busses passing through the neighborhood at the beginning and end of the school day can



increase dramatically. More traffic can also cause more traffic noise, like the sound of idling cars and busses.

Parking: More traffic means more parking-related issues. Once the school parking lot is full, parents will be parking on the street, which could impact the parking situation in front of your home.

Limited number of potential buyers: When it comes time to sell your home, you may find that there are fewer buyers interested in purchasing a home near a school.

Noise: In addition to increased traffic noise, you will likely also hear other noises from the school. This could include school bells, football games and even band practice.

Ultimately, the choice is yours. To get a clear picture of how the school might affect your daily life, you should visit at different times of day. Notice what it's like on a Monday morning compared to a Friday afternoon. Research crime statistics and see if more acts of vandalism are reported during the school year. Talk to neighbors to get their thoughts about living near a school. In the end, you can feel good about your decision once you know all the important information.

Compliments of Virtual Results at www.virtualresults.net

Views of the Valley

with Tillie Turner

Photos by Micah



CVWC President, Judy Disbrow showcases one of the beautiful themed tables at the Thirteenth Annual Festival of Tables and Song Spring fundraiser at the Concord United Methodist Church on March 24.



There was lots of bubble fun at Matteo's Dream Playground in Concord celebrating World Down Syndrome Day. World DS Day is recognized around the world on 3/21 because of Down syndrome having a 3rd copy of the 21st chromosome.



There was an Easter Arts and Crafts event taking place at the Contra Costa Animal Services building on March 25 as part of their weekly adoption event. Fortunately, at least two of these three cuties successfully found a home on this day.



British artist Liam Sharp made a signing appearance to fans at Flying Colors on March 21 before heading to WonderCon in Los Angeles to promote a story arc he worked on for DC Comics, The Brave & the Bold featuring Batman and WonderWoman.



The Zuconni family enjoyed the 12th annual Knights of Columbus #5811 St. Patrick's Day celebration at Christ the King Church in Pleasant Hill.



Gordon Gravelle and Steve Gonsalves share a few memories at the celebration of Life for Matt Gonsalves, Steve's father and Founder of CONCO Concrete.

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parentfootprints

by Dr. Dan Peters www.DrDanPeters.com

How Do We Talk About School Shootings to Gifted Kids?

A wonderful parent of gifted/2e (twice-exceptional) children emailed me this morning to ask if I had written anything on school shootings: did I have advice for parents of gifted/2e kids? Did I have words of wisdom for the gifted/2e kids themselves? I responded that I had written about fear related to deadly viruses, the flu, terrorism, and our political situation, but nothing on shootings. I then said that I wasn't sure what to write and to offer. I didn't like that answer but it was the truth as I have been reeling from all the shootings myself with the most recent one taking the life of psychologists and a social worker.

I went for a run and pondered this. What can we tell gifted/2e children? What am I telling my children? What should I recommend? As a recovering perfectionist who happens to be a psychologist who is supposed to have answers, I often feel tremendous pressure to give the "right" answer. The older and more experienced in life I get, the more I realize that not only do I not have to have the right answer, but sometimes there aren't "right" answers and that is okay. As I worked this out during my run I felt a quiet sense of relief that allowed me to get in touch with my thinking. This led me to realize (because I was in my thinking brain rather than my emotional, anxious brain) that these latest scary shootings are yet another example of unpredictable situations like deadly viruses, terrorism, and natural disasters. They are all scary and powerful and can impact our lives in permanent ways.

So what do we do about it and what do we tell our bright and sensitive children?

- We must remember to be honest and authentic. Our kids can generally sniff out our attempts to shield them from information and the related white lies a mile away. We need them to keep trusting us so we need to be honest.

- We need to remember to focus on their developmental and maturity level and only give them as much information as they need to know – often determined by combination of what they want and what you think is appropriate.

- We need to acknowledge that these shootings are scary and it is normal to feel scared.

- We need to talk about the probability of a tragedy like this happening at their school. It is VERY low, like being struck by lightning or dying in a plane crash (parents don't use the plane crash example if that is one of your child's fears) or winning the lottery -- and probably less likely than any of these things.

- We need to talk about living in the present and controlling what we can, while trying to let go of what we cannot control.

- Finally, we need to manage our own fears, so they don't get absorbed by our sensitive and intuitive kids. They also look to us to determine how much to worry.

In the end, all we can do is our best to comfort our children during these often scary and unpredictable times. Keep your news to a minimum and focus on your daily life. Stay focused on the present and the moments and keep sending out good thoughts to our community and fellow humans to show increased compassion and love for one another.



concordmayor

by Edi Birsan, Email me CityCouncil@cityofconcord.org

Add EDI in subject line

What Is An Issue For You?

In local government elections for office the question is often what are the issues? In a recent survey and field work, I asked what were the important issues in the last campaign and if your position was satisfied. Many could not remember who they voted for two years ago, or if their issues were resolved or what they were for that matter. This brings up the concept that maybe there are often no specific issues and there is only a general feeling of things going ok so keep the incumbents, or things are falling apart and it must be their fault. Has voting become, or has it always been mostly emotional and driven by casual connections such as the nature of your name, or the ballot job description?

What defines an issue? And how much weight is given to it by the electorate? Will the electorate even seek out the position or the candidates make clear statements of positions on them? Recent elections have shown that in local Council races voters are not focused on specific Yes/No issues and do not hold the candidates to task to find out. Here are some simple specific yes/no issues that could be applied to the Concord City Council race. What would you add that has a yes/no answer and how would you weight them?

Economic:

1. Should we have an additional sales tax of .5% to be funneled into roads and city fund balances?

2. Should we limit rent increases for complexes of 25 or more to 10% year (only building built before 1995)?

3. Should we require the offer of 1-year leases at all rollovers and initial rental agreements?

4. Should we require just cause evictions and prevent eviction for people paying their rent and following the rules of the lease?

5. Should we prevent rent increases by landlords that are in default on code enforcement and safety repairs?

6. What should be the division of access to affordable housing divided between very low, low, and moderate incomes?

7. Should the city minimum wage be raised to \$15 hour?

8. Should all additional multi-family housing be banned in areas like the Monument?

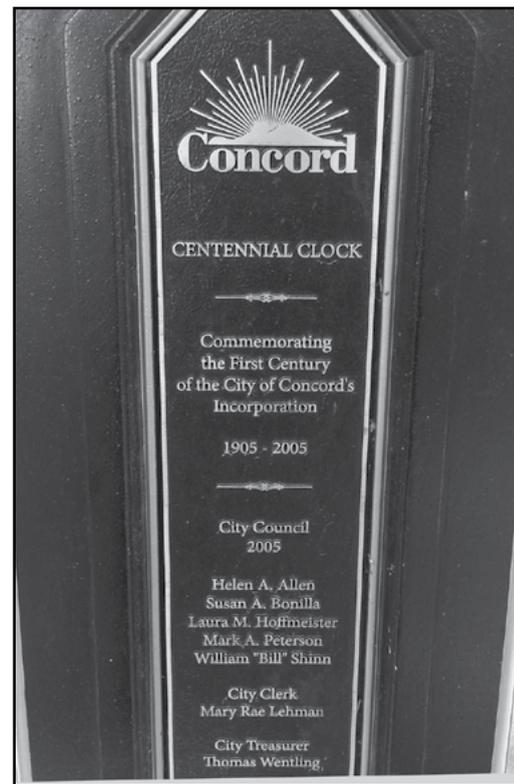
Social:

1. Should the city spend \$50,000 to support Historic signage around the city to tell the story of the city and the neighborhoods?

2. Should the city organize and spend \$50,000 on a day of Community Service around the city with various projects?

3. Should we have a police substation in the Monument and North Concord/Hillcrest area?

4. Should the city explore the creation of a Concord School District.



5. Do you support Cannabis retail stores in the city where the police chief feels comfortable with them?

6. Should we have Cannabis indoor grows?

Political

1. Should we have a directly elected Mayor?

2. Should we expand the Council to 7?

3. Should we have a defined rotation of the Vice Mayor or appointed Mayor based on seniority or based on districts or based on whatever the Council feels like?

4. Should the people have a method to force a topic on the Council Agenda and if so how?

5. Should the city pay for surveys on finding out what people approve of on political issues like the items above?

When we had an opening on the City Council two years ago, the Council had to make a choice amongst candidates to fill the post. I prepared a list of about 100 questions to find out their position on issues like the ones above. Do you do this? What specific yes/no questions are important to you? Email me your answers and thoughts at EdiBirsan@gmail.com.



computercorner

by William Claney, Computers USA

Tech in English

Honey I Shrunk the Computer

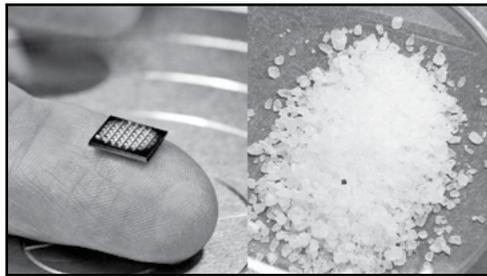
Ever since the original transistor radio debut in the early '60's, science has been miniaturizing electronics daily and the computer is no stranger to these changes.

Did you know it was only three years ago that Intel released a computer so small it looked like a thumb drive (USB flash drive)? Wait until you see what IBM just did.

Perhaps you can't see what IBM did to the latest computer because it is so small it is nearly invisible. This computer on a chip would fit nicely on the surface of coarse ground salt - yes, as small as a grain of sand, or salt in my example. It's simply amazing the transformation of circuits and transistors originally the size of a dime, now millions of them on a grain of salt.

IBM's new computer on a chip measures a scant 1 x 1 millimeter. Although not a super computer (yet) this marvel has the power of a 1990's full blown PC. Remember the Charlie Chapman commercials for the original IBM PC? Just think of mashing two or three of them into a 1 x 1 mm chip.

Even more amazing is the cost of this tiny marvel. The original IBM PC cost about \$2500.00. This little guy is only ten cents and is packed with "over one million transistors," according to



IBM. Yikes, with a hand full of these babies, I will rule the world. No wait, that's an exaggeration - it will take two hands full to rule the world.

"Within the next five years, cryptographic anchors, such as ink dots or tiny computers smaller than a grain of salt, will be embedded in everyday objects and devices," said Arvind Krishna, IBM's head of research.

Just imagine the uses of a computer as tiny as a grain of salt, then imagine the power these things will gain over the next four years. Are brain implants in your future? Could be, think about it.

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Out to Lunch

Management, Not Magicians Key to Tastier Quick-Service Meals

by Richard Eber

There is no magic formula for determining if a restaurant is to be successful or not. An eating establishment needs to be able to attract and serve customers at a profit.

In communities such as Concord, Clayton, Walnut Creek, and Pleasant Hill, it isn't always possible to employ a trained executive chef and staff out of culinary schools to operate these places. So how do the owners of eating establishments survive using less qualified employees than what they might like?

It's called developing an easy to produce menu, backed up with fresh ingredients that hourly employees can put together with minimal training. The classic case of doing a Keep It Simple Stupid (KISS) operation is In-N-Out Burger. They bring together fresh potatoes, meat, tomatoes, lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, and buns to make a high-quality product. Other than providing soft drinks, milkshakes, and a so called "secret menu", this chain has a fool-proof system.

Locally, this formula is very much in play for any successful small non-franchise restaurant. These businesses can't afford to offer a Cheesecake Factory sized menu. They must serve a limited number of dishes but do them well. Most have a cafeteria-like format where patrons order at a counter and either collect their food or have it delivered to a table with a numbered flag to identify the recipient.

Jack's Urban Eats in the new Orchards Shopping Center at Oak Grove and Ygnacio in Walnut Creek is a classic example of this. They offer salads with approximately 20 fresh ingredients from which seven are selected. As an example, I recently had one with Gorgonzola cheese, Kalmata olives, tomatoes, hard boiled eggs, candied toasted walnuts, and cucumbers. Everything is fresh, ready to serve, and easy for the staff to put together.

With this salad, which is enough for two, Jack's offers roasted whole turkey, tri-tip, and barbecued pulled pork which can be made into a plate or as a sand-

wich. These can be served with a few items including fresh vegetables, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, etc. Everything is delicious and quick. This place is packed every day.

Using a similar philosophy are several make your own pizza places. Customers select their ingredients which the staff puts together and places in a hot brick oven to cook. Among the restaurants that use this formula are chains Blaze, Mod, and the Pizza Studio that can be found locally. Having tried all these places, it is difficult to find major differences between them. They all offer fresh choices of goodies to fill one's pie; but, at the end of the day, I suspect a Papa Murphy's Take and Bake would be equally as tasty if I had a hot brick oven.

There are many smaller restaurants in our area which are unique but can still deliver a quick quality menu by offering easy to assemble selections. A good example of this is Naan 'N' Curry at Todos Santos Square in Concord. Because much of their food is served hot, people think that what they are making is complicated. This is not true.

Naan 'N' Curry makes a base of three basic types of curry sauces and places different variations of chicken, lamb, and beef into them. Served with rice and their homemade Indian-style Naan flat bread, this place is always crowded. Be prepared to stand in line. Serving customers complimentary Chua Tea with entrée prices at less than ten dollars, is just icing on the cake from this local favorite.

Similarly, The Mediterranean in Park and Shop and Yannis on Concord Ave. near Todos Santos are family operations that prepare most of their offerings in advance utilizing fresh native foods from their respective cultures. Gyro Sandwiches, grilled lamb, Hummus, stuffed grape leaves, fresh salads, and Baklava, are all in abundance.

These fast-casual restaurants have taken fast food dining up a notch by protecting food quality with sensible service systems for neophyte employees.



American Ballet Theatre Accepts Concord Dancer

Claire Churchill, 17 of Concord, who dreams of dancing professionally, has been accepted into the prestigious American Ballet Theatre's (ABT) summer program in New York. No doubt, she is thrilled.

Claire received word of her acceptance while at school.

"I just remember seeing the email and being terrified to open it, in case it was a rejection," Claire said. "When the teacher's back was turned, I opened the email and then tried not to scream."

New York City and ABT are a long way from Claire's first ballet class in a rented theatre in Pleasant Hill, where she began her dancing career at age six twirling scarves and skipping around the room. Over the years, her dreams and skills have grown, and so have her professional needs. Claire is currently training with Contra Costa Ballet in Walnut Creek. She credits their precise instruction with giving her the skills and training she has needed to progress to this stage. Her training also included attending last summer's program at the Joffrey Academy in Chicago, where she had the opportunity to improve her technique while exploring contemporary ballet and choreography.

ABT is one of the premier ballet companies in the world, and has been home to famous dancers like Mikhail Baryshnikov, Gelsey Kirkland, and more recently, Misty Copeland. Claire is looking forward to dancing in the same studios as



her dance heroes.

"I have always dreamed of dancing professionally. This is one step closer to my dream becoming reality," she explained.

Claire's acceptance into ABT is special not just because of the prestige of the program, but also because just one week before the audition, she was in the hospital not sure if she was going to live due to complications from the flu. Miraculously, she was able to find the

strength to audition for ABT.

"It was one of the most painful moments of my life, but I dug deep and made it through the audition. I don't know how I did it, but I did."

Like most dreams, this one comes with a price. Dancing with ABT is a very expensive endeavor with tuition, flights and housing costs totaling more than \$6,000. In addition to dancing more than 20 hours a week and waking at 5:30 each morning to commute to high school, Claire is working to fund her dream by babysitting and house cleaning. To help offset costs, she also has set up a "Go Fund Me." Contributions of any amount are gratefully welcomed as she prepares for this next stage in her dance career. Congratulations Claire. We are sure that within our generous communities, she will get all the support she needs.

www.gofundme.com/claire-project-abt

Rock the CASA

by Dan Ashley

I am very happy to report that this year's Rock the CASA charity concert (RTC4) was a huge success on every level.

Melissa Etheridge was the headliner for RTC4 and she absolutely brought the house down for more than two hours of incredible music. I created Rock the CASA as

a 501-c3 several years ago in order to help under-served Bay Area children in need through several worthy organizations that I am proud to serve as a board member. Rock the CASA benefits Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) which provides caring and well-trained volunteers to help young people who were removed from their homes because of abuse and/or neglect. RTC also proves financial support to Friends of Camp Concord which sends underserved kids to summer camp in Lake Tahoe, all expenses paid. In the twenty-two years that I've hosted a golf tournament to raise money for FOCC, this summer we will send our ten-thousandth



child to camp. Rock the CASA also provides an equal share of financial support to Big Brothers Big Sisters which pairs children with adult mentors.

With those terrific beneficiaries as the foundation of the concert, Rock the CASA was our best effort yet—

raising a lot of money and awareness for great causes and giving patrons a fantastic evening out at the same time.

Steven Adler, from Guns & Roses, flew up from Los Angeles to support the event—playing the iconic "Sweet Child o' Mine" with my new band of touring musicians and we were delighted to open the show.

One of the highlights each year for patrons is the remarkable collection of auction and raffle items that are available. Whether it's a signed guitar from Melissa Etheridge or Sammy Hagar, or a piece of fine jewelry from Heller's Jewelers, or a framed jersey signed by Warriors super

star Kevin Durant, there were plenty of opportunities to acquire something special and help children in the process.

Please join us next year for RTC5—Rock the CASA will be held on March 2nd 2019 in Walnut Creek.

For more information, please go to www.rockthecasa.org



Your March 2018 Guide to the Bay Area

The Diablo Gazette's

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

April 21 – Earth Day

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 buys a terrific breakfast. <http://www.vfwpost1525.org>

April 7

Ygnacio Valley Christian School Golf Tournament. For reservations or questions email: golf2018@yvc.school.org Price Per Person: \$140 includes golf, cart, snacks, drink ticket and post round BBQ. sponsorships available. Boundary Oak Golf Course, 3800 Valley Vista Rd. Walnut Creek.

May 6

Fiesta Nueva -From Cuba to Mexico and Puerto Rico to Peru, savor the flavors of Latin America at The Gardens at Heather Farm's annual gala fundraiser. The afternoon garden party takes place from 2 to 5 p.m., at The Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek. Tickets may be purchased online at <https://gardenshf.org> or by calling (925) 947-1678. Please, 21 and over only.

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. •

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 Giama and Lacassie St. Sundays 9 am - 1 pm, Year Round, (925) 431-8361 <http://www.cccfm.org>

Camp Concord

Affordable Family Vacations in Lake Tahoe. 2018 Family Camp Dates: Friday, June 22 - Saturday, July 14; Monday, July 30 - Friday, August 12 You choose the length of your stay. You choose your arrival and departure days.

CLUB/SUPPORT GROUPS' NEWS AND 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.

April 7

Kayaking Seminar Diablo Sail & Power Squadron is hosting a seminar of kayaking and other paddle activities at the City of Antioch, Maintenance Service Bldg, 1201 W. 4th Street, Antioch. Learn the techniques for safe boating in kayaks,

canoes and other paddle activities, risk & hazards, safety measures, how to select the craft for you, life jackets and various strokes. Kayaking will follow the seminar. Non-USPS members are \$60; USPS members \$40. Kayak rental fees apply. For more information see: www.usps.org/localusps/sss-di

April 10

Aging Well in Today's World - The Clayton Valley Woman's Club (CVWC) invites guests to attend this monthly meeting and hear Ann Thomas, innovative author, storyteller, teacher and psychotherapist give a wonderful presentation about humor and aging. It is this element of humor that is the topic of her newest book, "Unmistakably Old and Doing Pretty Well, Considering." St. John's Episcopal Church, 5555 Clayton Road, Clayton. 10:00 am business meeting, Speaker at 11:00 am. For more information, call Linda at 415-652-3503 or Sheila at 925-672-7947. (photo)



April 14

Free Document Shredding-- Up to 3 boxes or paper grocery bags from 10 a.m. to noon, at Travis Credit Union branch in the Clayton Station Shopping Center. Expert advice and resources for protecting personal information from ID thieves will be made available to the public. Clayton Police Department will be on site to answer any questions on Fraud Prevention. Presented by Travis Credit Union and Data-Safe. 5441 Clayton Road in Clayton. For more information call 1-800-877-8328.

April 21-22

Spring Contra Costa Crystal Fair - Saturday 10 a.m.- 6 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The Pacific Crystal Guild presents the 26th Annual Fall Contra Costa Crystal Fair. You will find a magical mix of crystals, minerals, beads, gems, jewelry and metaphysical healing tools. Massage and psychic readings. Admission \$12 for the weekend for adults (age 12 and under free, must be accompanied by an adult). jerry@crystalfair.com, Civic Park Community Center 1375 Civic Drive Walnut Creek.

April 21

2018 Faces of Wildlife. 6:00 – 9:30 pm. Lindsay Wildlife will be closed to the public to showcase all of Lindsay's beautiful and majestic animals during the wildest party of the year. Guests enjoy one-of-a-kind animal experiences, raffles, wine, beer, and food truck delicacies. 1931 First Ave. in Walnut Creek. 21 and over. Tickets \$68 or two for \$125. lindsaywildlife.org or call 925-935-1978

April 27

Walnut Creek Model Train Show. 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. 2751 Buena Vista Ave. Walnut Creek. \$3 Adults, \$2 Seniors and Kinds 6-12, under 6 are free.

April 28-29

Clayton Art and Wine Festival Saturday from 10:00am – 7:00pm; Sunday 10:00am – 5:00pm. Premium Wine & Beer, Arts & Crafts, Food Court, Continuous Live Music, Kids Fun Land

VISUAL ARTS/ THEATRE/MUSIC

Concord Pavilion

May 26-27 KBLX Stone Soul Concert
June 1 Joan Jett and the Blackhearts, special guest Tesla
June 13 Chicago & REO Speedwagon
June 21 Chris Brown
June 22 Kevin Hart
July 1 Spirit West Coast with Mercy Me
July 14 Kidz Bop Live
July 24 Imagine Dragons
August 11 comedy Get Down
August 18 Steve Miller Band
August 24 Avenged Sevenfold with Prophets of Rage
August 28 Rob Zombie and Marilyn Manson

roompas 7-10pm

April 14 Red Rick and Friends – Hot pickin' and lonesome harmony bluegrass. Shana Marie Opens.

Summer Music Camp

July 9-13 9AM-noon. All children in the community entering K-5th grades are invited to this secular music camp where they can have fun learning music basics including the use of rhythm instruments and their voices. Led by experienced adult musicians and teachers. Includes mid-morning snack. \$40 per child/\$60 per family. Scholarships available. Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church, 1578 Kirker Pass Road, Clayton. To register or for more information, please call 672-4848.

April 24

Clayton Valley Theatre Auditions for fall production of "the 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee". 7PM-10PM Endeavor Hall. No appointment neces-

2018 Music Events at Todos Santos Plaza Concord

Tuesday Blues		
Date	Show Billing	Tagline
7/10/18	Dana Fuchs	Raw, Soulful Blues Vocalist
7/17/18	Tommy Castro and the Painkillers	Irresistible Contemporary Blues-rockers
7/24/18	Tia Carroll & Her Awesome Blues Band	Bay Area Rhythm & Blues Diva
7/31/18	Jr. DeVille Blues Band	Concord's own Hot Blues Guitarist
Thursday Night Music and Market Series		
Date	Show Billing	Tagline
5/17/18	Tom Rigney & Flambeau	Hot Cajun Fiddler and his Fiery Band
5/24/18	Concord High Jazz Band	Local, Award-Winning Student Jazz Band
5/31/18	Rock, Rhythm & Blues Revue	2nd Annual Tribute to Steve Sage--7 bands in 70 minutes
6/7/18	The Purple Ones	Insatiable Tribute to Prince (on Prince's 60th B-day)
6/14/18	DAKILA with DA ISLAND WAY	Latin Beat with a Filipino Twist and Polynesian Dance
6/21/18	LUMBERYARD	Favorite Covers from the 60's and 70's
6/28/18	The Highway Poets	New Retro Soul
7/5/18	Mariachi Mexicanisimo	Bay Area's Best Mariachi
7/12/18	Chance McKinney	Seattle's Country Music Sensation
7/19/18	Mike Amaral's California Beach Boys	Surf's up! Norcal's Premier Surf Band
7/26/18	Zepparella	The All-Female Zeppelin Powerhouse
8/2/18	James Clark Presents Elvis, Elton and Mick	The King of Rock 'n Roll meets the British Invasion
8/9/18	Stung	Concord's own Tribute to the Music of The Police
8/16/18	Incendio	Fiery Spanish Guitar Virtuosos
8/23/18	Kingsborough	New Generation Indie Rockers
8/30/18	Foreverland	An Electrifying 14-Piece Tribute to Michael Jackson
9/6/18	Lafayette Studio Big Band	Seventeen piece Count Basie style Jazz Orchestra
9/13/18	Annie Sampson	Concord's own Queen of Blues
Special Events		
Date	Show Billing	Tagline
10/4/18	Concord's 3rd Annual "Dark Side of the Moon" Night	A Family Friendly Music and Science Extravaganza

Concerts in the Grove, Clayton

May 12th - Plan "B"
May 26th - The Big Band Beat
June 9th - Take 2 Band
June 23rd - The Fundamentals
July 7th - Pride and Joy
July 21st - Southern Comfort
August 4th - Diamond Dave
August 18th - Apple Z Band
September 1st - Steel 'n' Chicago
September 15th - East Bay Mudd

April 19-22

Synergy Theater presents Spontaneous Noir: An Improvised Piece of Pulp! Murder, crime, seduction, private eyes, femme fatales, and ridiculous metaphors pile up like a heap of trash at the city dump. Completely improvised and all based on audience suggestions in this hysterical homage to Hollywood's Film Noir. The Leshar Center for the Arts, Vukasin Theatre, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, CA, 94596. Tickets \$20.00 at www.lesherartscenter.org or (925) 943-7469

April 21

Roxx on Main Street, Martinez -April Music Events
April 6 Simpatico bringing back trumpets, vocals guitar on classics you like to hear
April 7 Brooks Lundy – a living jukebox of rock; 7-10pm
April 13 Poison and Wine, the surprising duo of Keith Roberson and Carol Ca-

sary. Please prepare a 2-minute comedic monologue and 32 bars of a song in your key. Please provide music for the accompanist. Bring your headshot and resume. Visit ClaytonTheatreCompony.com for info and audition forms. 6008 Center St. Clayton.

May 4-5

Tapestry – Tapestry International singers performs "Déjà Vu" 7PM Friday, May 4 at St. John's Parish 5555 Clayton Rd., Clayton. 7Pm Saturday, May 5 at Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church, 1578 Kirker Pass Rd. Clayton. Free Admission. Directed by Cindy Krausgrill Accompanied by Craig Beattie

May 9-12

Tapestry Handbell and Vocal Ensemble presents "As Time Goes by" 7PM Wednesday, May 9th at Rossmoor Event Center (For residents and their guests) 1021 Stanley Dollar Dr., Walnut Creek.
7 PM Friday, May 11th at Walnut Creek United Methodist Church 1543 Sunnyvale Ave., 7 PM Saturday, May 12th at Hillcrest Congregational Church 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. *Free Admission. Directed by Cindy Krausgrill Accompanied by Craig Beattie

For complete listings visit us Online: www.DiabloGazette.com



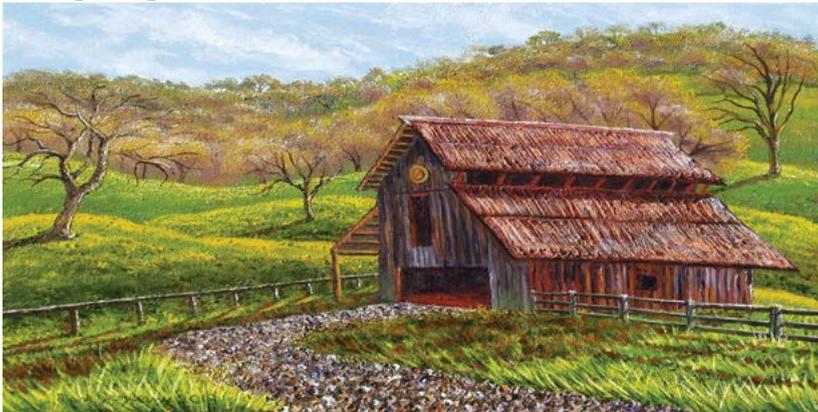
aRt Cottage

by FROgard www.aRtCottage.info

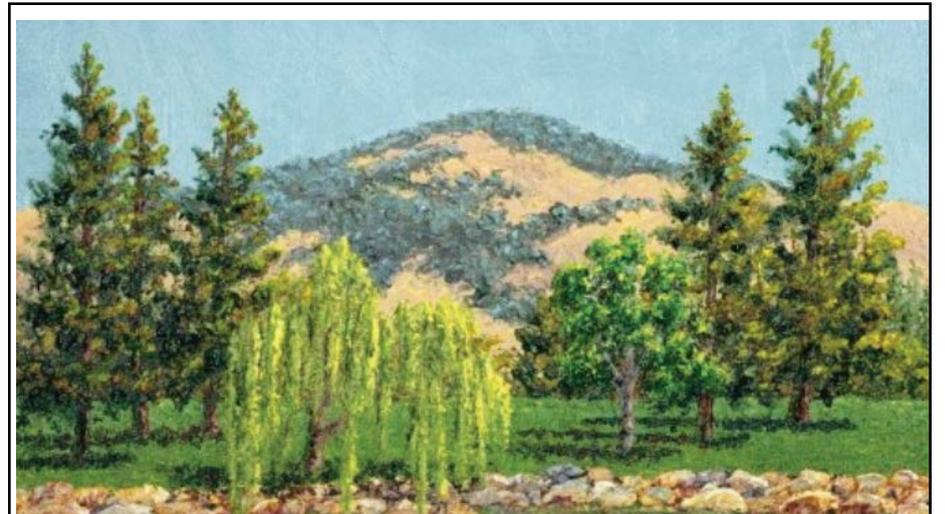
Mark Jezierny & Friends

I met Mark many years ago in Antioch as we were both painting near the Lynn House Gallery down by the train station and on the river bank. This part of Antioch is called Rivertown and is Old Antioch. He was doing this detailed picture of reeds in the foreground, cat-tails at mid-ground, and the river in the background. It was a beautiful small oil painting that would be in the Lynn House Gallery for an exhibit by local plein air (painting outside on location) artists. I was impressed by his technique with the palette knife. It was so realistic. I was more impressed that the lucky guy didn't have to clean brushes. Mark is a character. Once you meet him you will never forget him. His long burly black beard and his all over the place hair under his Greek fisherman cap is his signature, and so is his big white van (his outdoor studio), which is fully equipped with anything a plein air artist may need. Organized, wow, this artist is not like most. His van is quite the set up. His plate even reads JEZ

ART. Little did I know that a few years later I would be a gallery owner and Mark would cross my path again and again. Many of my art friends and colleagues have taken classes from Mark. He teaches at Mt. Diablo Adult Ed, at the Lafayette Downtown Center, and in Walnut Creek at the Center for the Arts. So many artists who have been featured at the aRt Cottage have turned to Mark for training and advice. Whenever I encounter a new painter and ask where you learned your skills, often Mark Jezierny's name comes up. It is such an honor to have Mark, his students, and friends back at the aRt Cottage once again. I believe this is the 6th Annual show. Welcome them at our opening artist reception on Saturday, April 7th from 2-5. Come find me and tell me if I gave you a good description of him. aRt Cottage is located at 2238 Mt. Diablo St. Concord for more information go to www.artcottage.info.



Mark Jezierny 2018 All rights reserved.



REVAMPING

EARTH DAY 2018

SATURDAY, APRIL 21 FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M.

Tours • Reuse Art Activity • Jump Houses • Trucks • Food
Cart Races • Table of Education Pieces • What we do in the park

REUSE ART
ACTIVITY
AND FOOD

VISIT
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RESOURCE
RECOVERY

Bring cans
of food for
Food Bank
and
receive
2 bags of
compost.

JUMP HOUSES
AND
CART RACES!

TOURS
AND
TRUCKS

Location: 1300 Loveridge Road, Pittsburg
Questions/RVSP: RecyclingCoordinator@Garaventaent.com or call 925.771.2721

Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery
reduce • reuse • recycle • respect • recover
A Gamavante Company

AUDITIONS

for
Clayton THEATRE Company's
fall production of

The 25th Annual Putnam County SPELLING BEE

April 24, 2018
7:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Endeavor Hall • 6008 Center Street • Clayton, CA
No appointment necessary.
Please prepare a 2-minute comedic monologue and
32 bars of a song in your key. Please provide music for the accompanist.
Bring your headshot and resumé.
Production dates are November 2018. Rehearsals start in mid-September.
Visit ClaytonTheatreCompany.com for info and audition forms.

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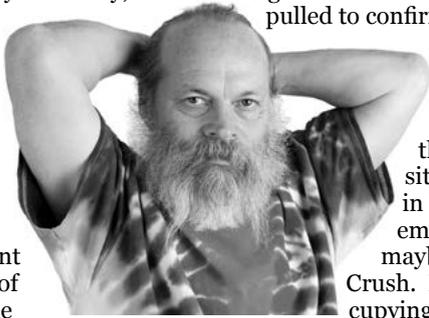
Tie Dye Guy, the Mouth, and Ms. Buxom

by Robin Gigoux

I'm back at the gym after a long hiatus. Trying to get here every other day, so far, so good. Five weeks and counting, I feel virtuous.

Free weights scare me. I'm afraid I might drop one on my foot or wrench a muscle because I don't know what I'm doing—and I don't want to learn. I'm not fond of classes either. I like the circuit machines. I set the weight that's right for me, do three sets, five to ten repetitions each, and move along like a zombie in harmony with the universe.

Unless I look around.



asked if my naturally curly hair was a wig. When I said no, he grabbed a bit and pulled to confirm!

I have a beef with males and females who can't work out without cell phones in their hands. People who sit at machines engrossed in long conversations or email between sets, or maybe they're playing Candy Crush. Regardless, they're occupying machines longer than necessary. I really only care when I want that machine.

There's the eighty-five-pound female waifs with their tight, perfect little bodies in painted-on leotards who can bench press my three-hundred-pound cousin



little to the imagination down there. I wondered if her boyfriend was proud to show her off, or did he resent other men seeing her so ... vividly?

She and I passed each other and exchanged smiles. I smiled because I'm not usually such a bitch, and I couldn't let her think I was jealous. Her smile seemed to say, "Thanks for noticing. Aren't they amazing? And the guys just love 'em. I'm so happy."

And then there's the buff, young and beautiful he-man, wearing a long-sleeve, royal-blue, knit shirt edged in black, stretched tight across his broad shoul-

ders and perfectly formed pectorals. I sigh thinking about Captain Kirk, and then I realize people are lined up for this machine.

Beam me back, Scotty.

Robin Gigoux, Author, Chronicles of an Occupational Prostitute, a Workplace Survival Story, as Peechi Keane, Insight, Hindsight & Flights of Fancy, an anthology, contributing author of "The Fridge", "Once Before I Die", "The Ghost of Joseph Martini", and "What a Waist". Member, California Writers Club - Mt. Diablo Branch and Shadow of the Mountain Writers Guild.



Given the resting between sets for muscle recovery, there's plenty of time to check out the place and the people. As a heterosexual female, I usually check out the men. That is, when I'm not zoned out by the ever-playing loud rhythmic music; the background noise of machines, dropped barbells and masculine grunts; the silent flickering TV screens mounted along the walls above the ten-foot-high mirrors that give everybody the chance to check everybody else out, including the bouncing bodies in the fishbowl studio suspended over the main floor. I can also be lulled into a coma by the slowly spinning, twenty-foot-diameter, propeller-like fans suspended from the ceiling thirty feet overhead.

Tie Dye Guy wears undershirts that look twenty years old and created by middle-school children: a really nice gesture if they were created by his kids. Most often he wears the shirt with a few holes and red splotches faded by innumerable trips through the laundry. The shirt looks startlingly like it's been splattered with blood. When I first saw him in it, I thought he might be a hatchet murderer.

Then there's the Mouth. The guy who likes to complain...to anyone who'll listen... loudly, about all the people he has a beef with. And always with a generous peppering of profanity. That "f—ing b—". "What the f—". "Who the f— does he/she/they think they are anyway?"

Then there was my encounter with an otherwise nice enough guy who offered me advice about using the leg press. He

Vinny. I have to ignore these women or I'd never come back to the gym.

And women who've had enhancements they apparently want to show off. One came in with her boyfriend the other day, a dark haired, brown-eyed hunk. She was pretty enough, also brunette, maybe 5'4", with a body taken from the pages of Who Wants to be a Buxom Babe.

Wearing the skimpiest black leather bikini top that had to be glued on, contrasting nicely against her bronzed skin, she seemed at risk of advertising her enhancements more than she planned to by wearing stretchy pink tights that left

Why Age 7 is the Right Time to See an Orthodontist...

By the age of 7, the first adult molars erupt, establishing the back bite. During this time, an orthodontist can evaluate front-to-back and side-to-side tooth relationships. For example, the presence of erupting incisors can indicate possible overbite, open bite, crowding or gummy smiles. Timely screening increases the chances for an incredible smile.



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- DANCE IN THE RAIN
- SING IN THE SUN
- SHOW YOUR HEART
- HUG A FRIEND
- SURPRISE A LOVED ONE
- TURN UP THE MUSIC
- PERFORM A RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS
- TAKE A CHANCE
- MAKE A WISH
- EMBRACE LIFE
- FULL CUP OF HOPE
- BE FREE

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 "Eat butter first, and eat it last, and live till a hundred years be past." ~Old Dutch proverb
BUTTER
 Read my blog at www.butterrequired.com

Creamy Lemonade Pie



- 1 3.4-oz box of instant lemon pudding mix, (the small box)
- 2 8-oz packages of cream cheese, softened
- ¾ cup frozen lemonade concentrate

Preheat oven to 350° if making your own crust.

In a medium mixing bowl, combined all crust ingredients and whisk together until well combined. Press graham cracker crust into a greased 9" deep dish pie dish and make sure to go up the sides. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Remove from oven and let it cool.

In a small mixing bowl, combine the evaporated milk and the pudding mix and whisk/beat for 2 minutes (the mixture will be thick).

In a separate mixing bowl, beat the softened cream cheese until smooth and fluffy. Slowly mix in the lemonade concentrate. After it's well combined, mix in the pudding mixture. Pour the filling into the cooled graham cracker crust. Cover and place in the fridge for 3-4 hours to set. Don't forget to lick the spatula though:)

Gluten Free Variation

Now for those who are gluten-free, they do sell gluten-free graham crackers to use for the crust. As far as the pudding mix goes, I've found that the mix made by Kraft (Jell-O brand) is gluten-free, non-brand names may not be the same, so check the ingredients first.

This pie is one of my all-time favorites. It's creamy and tart and frankly, I'd probably eat a shoe if it was served on a buttery graham cracker crust. Now, I do admit that I've been on quite the citrus kick lately - but with Springtime here, lemon anything just feels right. You can serve this with whipped cream, but it's fantastic just on its own. Happy Spring!

Crust:

- 2 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup butter, melted

Or you can use one ready-made 9-inch graham cracker crust; however, when you make it from scratch, there's more butter involved, which personally makes me happy.

Filling:

- 1 5-oz can evaporated milk



farmerfresh
 by Debra Morris, Pacific Coast Farmers Market
<http://www.pcfma.org/concord>

Fresh Eggs

in a Rainbow of Colors

Ever wondered why shells on chicken eggs are different colors? The shells range in colors from the usual white, to shades of cream, tan and brown, to light and dark turquoise.



A chicken's genes determine their egg shell color. You can tell what color of egg they will lay by looking at their earlobes. A hen has earlobes, you say? Yes, even though their ears are covered with feathers, the chicken's earlobes are visible and come in different colors. White-feathered chickens with white earlobes lay white eggs; red or brown chickens with red earlobes lay brown eggs; blue to green chicken eggs come from the Araucana, a breed of chicken developed in Chile. Araucanas have also been crossed with other breeds to produce the Ameraucana, sometimes called the "Easter egg chicken" because of multicolored eggs.

The color of a chicken's feathered coat is irrelevant to the color of eggs; chickens actually come in a wide range of shapes, colors, and sizes which run the gamut from the strange-looking Frizzled Cochin to the sleek black and white Lakenvelders.

Originally, all chicken eggs were probably brown. Over time, selective breeding for white eggs became the norm. It wasn't until the late 20th century when brown eggs were reintroduced, and then came the return of those breeds with bluish-colored eggs, although breeders and farmers were obviously familiar with them.

Eggs of different colors are essentially identical in flavor, with the taste itself determined by the chicken's diet. Have you ever cracked open a farm-fresh egg to discover a deep rich yellow yolk? Compare that to the pale yellow yolks you get in supermarket eggs! Pasture-raised chickens

are free to roam and eat insects, grass, and other natural foods in their environment. They are free to consume the dietary minerals they need, which is passed down to the eggs and the shells.

Some really beautifully-colored eggs can be found at the farmers' market. Visit Great Valley Poultry in Manteca, Clara's Egg Farm from Royal Oaks, or Nojaba Farms from Gustine. Their birds offer some of the best eggs around.

- Asparagus and Egg Salad
- 1 dozen medium eggs
- 1 pound asparagus
- 1 tablespoon dill, or other asparagus-compatible herb like basil, chervil, chive, scallion, thyme or tarragon
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- Salt and pepper to taste

Hard boil a dozen eggs. Cool completely, peel, and dice. Prepare asparagus while your eggs are cooling by washing and snapping off the hard ends. Cut off the tips and cook separately, reserving for garnish. Slice the stalks into thin rounds; blanch in boiling salted water for 20 seconds. The tips are larger, so let them blanch for 30 seconds to 1 minute, until tender but not mushy. Cool in cold running water. Drain and mix with the diced eggs, dill, mayonnaise and salt and pepper to taste.

Recipe: Chef Marisa Ades, *Cookin' the Market*, PCFMA. Find out how to make your own mayonnaise at pcfma.org/eat/recipes.



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

DIY Candle Party Favors

These frug-elegant party favors were created for Carol's granddaughter's baptism. So easy to make, they are perfect for birthdays, weddings, graduations and so many other celebrations.

First, we would like to share with you how to personalize the candles and what items are needed. Afterwards, we have some recommendations and shortcuts. So, if you think something like maybe the embossing isn't what want to do, don't be discouraged there are other options.

Items Needed:

- 2.5-inch Circle Punch Cutter (to cut



the tags and pictures)

- Gold Embossing Powder
- Embossing Heat Tool
- Light Pink Ribbon
- Hole Punch (small size hole, for tags)
- Light Pink Card Stock
- Wallet size photo prints (we ordered at our local Walgreens photo dept)
- Jar Candles

Scented candles are a real bargain at \$1 each at the Dollar Tree and make a



great gift for your guests. They just need a little personalizing. To cut the baby pictures into circles, we used a circle punch cutter. A little rubber cement works great to attach the circular baby picture onto the plastic top that come with the candle.

To cut the card stock into circles for the tags, we also used the same circle punch cutter. The sentiment was added to the tags by using a glue pen, gold embossing powder and embossing heat tool (directions per the embossing tool). Punch a hole in the tag using the hole punch. Next tie the tags to the candle using the pretty pink ribbon. Beautiful!

Some options: Dollar Tree has a variety of candles to choose from. They also have adorable mini mason jar candles with metal lids which are



also great for attaching a picture. Another option is to tie the pictures to the jars instead. We do recommend gluing them to the card stock to help keep the pictures from bending.

If you don't want to emboss the tags, there are some amazing, easy to use paint pens to choose from.

Don't have a circle cutter? There are lots of circular items around the kitchen, like jar lids, baby food jars, etc. Trace around the circle and using a scissor carefully cut your circle. Come to our original blog post for more tips, pictures and links to products used.

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 Online at www.frugelegance.com. FrugElegance is where Frugal and Elegance come together.



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“Heart of Home” TV Show Looking For Local Kitchens to Remodel

There may be a newly remodeled kitchen in your future. American Kitchen Company of Concord has entered into an agreement with KRON 4 to produce six kitchen remodel reality shows. Now, they are beginning the process of determining just whose kitchen will be remodeled.

At least two of those kitchens are expected to come from the Concord – Pleasant Hill- Walnut Creek communities, assuming they can find a home in need. That shouldn't be a problem if the right quality of applications come in.

“Heart of the Home” is a show conceptualized by Kyle McClay, a partner in American Kitchen Company. About six months ago, he presented the idea to KRON 4. After going through legal and financial scrutiny with them, McClay says they are going full speed ahead.

“Heart of the Home” will be a show similar in format to the former ABC's “Extreme Makeover” reality show that aired for nine seasons starting in 2003. The theme of “Heart of the Home” show is to help hard luck cases with kitchen remodels.

“We believe there is a story to tell about the Bay Area. It is such a beautiful place to live, but with the housing competition, locals are being driven out of their communities. I do not want to see that happen here. I think that to have good communities, you need to have rooted families,” McClay stated.

McClay says that they are not looking for homes where somebody wants to fix it up just to sell it. “We are looking for somebody who has maybe fallen on some hard times and just needs a little bit of encouragement and a kind act to get them through a tough time. Maybe it's a disabled person, somebody who needs help and doesn't have the means to solve the problem.”

There should be no shortage of finding such cases. Especially in some of the East Bay communities in places like Oakland where outside buyers are driving local housing pricing up. The locals can no longer afford to stay in their community but also can't afford to remodel. They are being forced out of their homes and out of their community. “I feel like I have a solution to that problem. I would like to use the expertise that we have acquired over the years and showcase those skills while helping out a few of these people.”

With the first show schedule to begin at the end of May, there is much to do in the meantime.

“We need to find these people. We want people to submit their stories to us. We are looking for stories of their grandmothers, or of somebody in need who have fallen on tough times, within the Bay Area communities that we service.” Once the storied applications start coming in, they will be reviewed for their appeal to the heart. Of those, AKC will meet with them and review their kitchen to learn more about their situation. “We will explain what we can do for them. If it is a good fit, we will remodel their kitchen.”

“In order to be considered for this, you have to have a story that fits our story. We specialize in kitchen remodels. I can't tell you how many homes I've been in where literally the cooktop doesn't work. That is not a functional kitchen. If you can't cook, it's just not a home. It sounds so simple, but a beautiful kitchen, with a functional oven, and a nice environment where people want to come visit and enjoy a Sunday together... we feel this small act will have a ripple effect in these families.”

McClay realizes he's not solving world hunger but believes these little acts of kindness will have a big positive effect in a community.

During April, it will be a mad rush to choose two homes to be remodeled. American Kitchen Company is funding each remodeling project and expects to complete each one in as little as four days by doubling his crew and working 12-hour shifts.

They anticipate East Bay communities to be the likely area where the right cases will be found.

McClay will host the show. He is no stranger to the camera. He performs in his own TV commercials and hosts a video home improvement tips column



on Thursdays on Claycord.com called “Bay Area Home Improvement.”

To be selected you will need to fill out an online application on at www.KRON4.com which will ask you to provide some personal information. The information is used solely for the use of the program and will not be shared with any other third party. Applicants must also submit a signed filming release for it to be accepted. Applicants will be selected based on urgency of need, and availability of material, labor, and time.

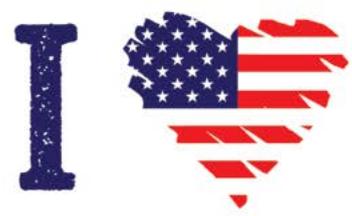
McClay has been in the East Bay for 6 years. He now calls Concord his home.

“We run TV ads from Napa to Palo

Alto. My warehouse is by Costco, my kids go to school in Concord. I am a big believer in Concord, I would like to see a local family win this. I see a huge upside in the economy here.”

McClay says he grew up in a low-income household with a poor diet, which is what helped inspire this project.

“Some of these people need help. Our business is really growing. We've done very well. It's one of those things that feels right. It makes sense to help them out,” McClay says. “The kitchen is the ‘heart of the home’. If you don't have the kitchen, it's hard to have a home.”



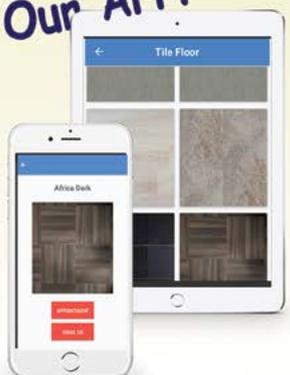
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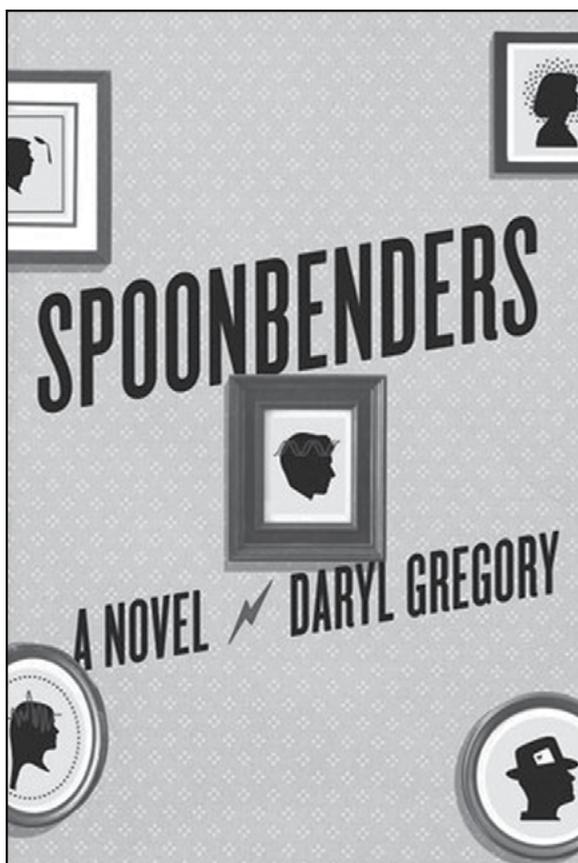
Spoonbenders

Imagine having a daughter who can tell if you're lying. Imagine your son, Buddy, can see the future, but not all the details. Imagine your other son, Frankie, can move things with his mind, but because he is a chronic failure as an entrepreneur, he has gotten involved with the mob to solve his business investment debts. These are just a few of the issues that the patriarch of the family, Teddy Telemachus, must grapple with in *Spoonbenders* by Daryl Gregory (2017, Knopf, hardcover, 416 pages \$19.00).

Teddy, a card shark and con man who married Maureen – the real deal when it comes to supernatural powers – fathered three children with special gifts. His children's unique talents are both a blessing and a curse. His daughter and eldest child, Irene, has also passed psychic traits on to her child (Teddy's grandchild), Matt. Matt is 14, though his family seems to have forgotten a year and constantly calls him a 13 year-old, is a typical preteen boy in many ways. But when he accidentally discovers that his consciousness can travel outside his body and confides in his Uncle Frankie, he's soon recruited into Frankie's plot to steal mob money from a safe in a nearby tavern.

Meanwhile, Buddy, a grown man of few words, can't see the whole future is trying to control the future to avoid a disastrous event called "The Zap." As a widower, Teddy spends his free time trolling grocery stores for lady friends. Enter Graciella, a mob wife and object of Teddy's latest infatuation. But it soon becomes apparent there's more to this story—a lot more, and the reader soon discovers that Buddy's visions and mobsters are inexplicably intertwined.

Amid exploring all these varied characters and their unusual lives, the backstory of how Teddy met his wife and how the government recruited her to spy on the Russians round out the



story. Enormously creative and crafted, *Spoonbenders*, is a one-of-a-kind read filled with humor, and despite all its quirks manages to explore the depths of family bonds and the extraordinary resilience of humanity amid chaos.

Spoonbenders was a Nebula Award Finalist, one of NPR's Best Books of the Year, and an Amazon Best Book. Paramount and Anonymous Content are developing it for television.

Daryl Gregory lives and writes full-time in Oakland. He is an award-winning writer of genre-mixing novels, stories, comics and even a video game. Some of his other works include a young adult novel *Harrison Squared* (Tor, March 2015), a Locus Award finalist, *Afterparty* which was an NPR and Kirkus Best Fiction book and *Pandemonium*, a finalist for the World Fantasy award. His novella, *We are All Completely Fine*, won the World Fantasy award and the Shirley Jackson award and is in development for television by Universal Cable Productions.



Eugene O'Neill's Tao House, Danville

**moviemavericks**by Jason Rugaard www.moviemavericks.com

Game Night



I'm a huge fan of the writing by director's, John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein, their work on *Horrible Bosses* and *Spiderman: Homecoming* shows their versatility and massive talent. So, why does *Game Night* not make the most of its comical concept? This is a picture that promises a great deal of fun and laughs but quickly runs out of both. Here, is a comedy that contains one laugh-out-loud scene, and about a half-dozen action/violent scenes. It's an odd mixture that proves to be unsuccessful by the time the film reaches its (action-oriented) climax and resolution.

A middle-class suburban couple (Jason Bateman and Rachel McAdams) are thrown into a dangerous situation when

their 'game night' goes awry. When their evening is interrupted by thugs who kidnap their relative (Kyle Chandler), the couple and their four friends, embark on a mission to get him back. The joke is that the players are unaware that this is a deadly mix-up that could cost all of them their lives.

There is a strained tone of desperation that permeates throughout the would-be comedy, *Game Night*. Sure, it's a satirical take on middle-class malaise, but the film itself has no arc, excitement, or big laughs. Bateman is now in danger of becoming a caricature of himself, with the exception of Netflix's *Ozark*, and his style of underplaying has long grown mannered and obnoxious.

Daytrip - Historical Tao House: Home of Eugene O'Neill

by Harry Stoll

Looking for an interesting day trip? Consider the Tao House in Danville, once the home of Eugene O'Neill, and now a National Historic Site.

America's only Nobel Prize winning playwright, Eugene O'Neill, lived in Northern California at the height of his writing career. Of all the places Eugene O'Neill called home during his restless life, Tao (pronounced "Dow") House was the one that held him longest, the refuge where he wrote his last plays.

In early 1937, he and his 3rd wife Carlotta, a Bay Area native, were drawn to the privacy and climate of the San Ramon Valley. They purchased a 158-acre ranch near Danville. They designed and named it Tao House. It is a striking white two-story structure; a spacious house in the Monterey Colonial style with touches of Chinese architecture. O'Neill called it his harbor (the sea was always on his mind) and said, "It's absolutely country, without a taste of suburbia...yet only three-quarters of an hour motor car ride to Frisco."

Isolated from the world and within the walls of this home, O'Neill wrote his final and most memorable plays; "The Iceman Cometh", "Long Day's Journey into Night", and "A Moon for the Misbegotten". His main concern was with the anguish and pain experienced by sensitive (easily hurt or damaged) people. The adage, "Keep it real," is what O'Neill did in his plays. His plays won four Pulitzer Prizes and eventually the Nobel Prize for literature.

Carlotta Monterey brought a sense of order to O'Neill's life. O'Neill had a life battling alcohol and depression. Almost half of his published plays show his interest in the sea. In 1912, after O'Neill's first marriage broke up, he tried to kill himself. He also developed tuberculosis. When he was released from the hospital, he had decided to become a dramatist.

His demons were clearly resurrected in the autobiographical play "Long Day's Journey into Night". In it, he calls the

family the Tyrones. During childbirth, his mother was given morphine, a common practice at the time. She became addicted and remained so. The play is set as Eugene, (renamed Edmund, the name of his brother who had died at an early age) has returned from the sea. His mother tries to hide her continuing addiction, his brother Jamie drinks heavily (Jamie O'Neill died of alcoholism) and father James Tyrone has become a miser (O'Neill's father, actor James got rich playing the lead role in the melodrama "The Count of Monte Cristo" but worried excessively about money). During the visit Edmund is diagnosed with tuberculosis.

The Tao House offers guided and self-guided tours. One can explore the house including its furniture. Some of the original high-end furniture that O'Neill had purchased from Gump's in San Francisco was repossessed. Period pieces are in their place now. However, O'Neill's bed and desks remain original. The bed had also been repossessed by Gumps, but later donated to the Tao House at the behest of Katherine Hepburn.

In addition to Tao House, explore the courtyard gardens and historic pathways, his swimming pool, and historic black walnut and almond orchards. A 19th century barn serves as a performance venue where, in collaboration with the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, plays are presented at different times of the year.

The 13-acre grounds of the site are accessible from hiking and mountain biking trails in the Las Trampas Regional Wilderness. This area and the park itself are excellent for wildlife and bird watching.

Now doesn't that sound like a fulfilling daytrip of American history?

Information about performances can be found on their website at www.eugeneoneill.org. For tour reservations, visit www.nps.gov/euon or call Reservation Line: (925) 838-0249

April Brings Out the Beauty in Area Parks

by Dominic Aliano

This is the month when trees and flowers begin to bloom. While March is the start of Spring, April is known as the month of the growing season. April is derived from the Latin word April which means "to open."

This is our cue to enjoy our "open" space where the nature around us begins to bloom. We live in a special area because we have the ability to enjoy our preserved rolling hills. I say this because I have experienced urban jungles. My sister moved to Los Angeles for college. The one thing that I have noticed about Los Angeles is that it is the definition of an urban jungle. There are hardly any parks or preserved rolling hills that separate the streets, neighborhoods, or cities. You could hardly tell when you drive into a different city because there is nothing that separates them. It is just a continuation of concrete and buildings.

But here, Contra Costa County and the City of Concord have parks and preserved land that separates our streets, neighborhoods, and cities. We have these natural luxuries due to the leadership of our elected officials, residents, and land preserving organizations.

The local parks and preserved land are either owned and operated by your local city, Save Mount Diablo, East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), the John



Muir Land Trust, or the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Some of my favorite parks include Newhall Community Park, Mangini Ranch, Black Diamond Mines, Mount Diablo, and the Contra Costa Goldfields.

Newhall Community Park, located in Concord off Ayers near Ygnacio valley Road, is filled with ponds, a dog park, and a Vietnam Memorial that sits on a vista point. My favorite thing to do at this park is to run up to the vista point and enjoy the view of the City of Concord.

Mangini Ranch is owned by Save Mount Diablo and sits between Concord and Walnut Creek and is next to Mount Diablo. One of the cool things about the Mangini Ranch is that there are views to Sonoma and Solano Counties.

For me, my favorite regional preserve is Black Diamond Mines. I say that because it is one of the regional preserves that still has a visual connection to its past. The East Bay Regional Parks District began acquiring the property in the early 1970s and is

located south of Pittsburg and Antioch. I would suggest that you take the mine tour that the EBRPD offers.

Then there is Mount Diablo State Park, that big mountain that sits between Concord and Los Vaqueros Reservoir. It offers the greatest view that you will get to experience in this area. You can even see Yosemite National Park on a clear day.

Lastly, the Contra Costa Goldfields are another beautiful preserve that is filled with vibrant golden daisy-like wildflowers. This preserve can be seen from Highway 4, by Rodeo, and is owned and maintained by the John Muir Land Trust.

This is the time of the year to go and experience our parks and preserved lands. It is the time of the year that truly brings out the beauty in our area because of the blooming trees and flowers, but be sure to take your allergy medicine.



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Sci-Fi Great Shares Insight: Robert J. Sawyer

by William Gensburger

Robert J. Sawyer is one of only eight writers in history — and the only Canadian — to win all three of the world's top Science Fiction awards for best novel of the year: the Hugo, the Nebula, and the John W. Campbell Memorial Award, and he's the first author in thirty years to receive a Lifetime Achievement Aurora Award.

Unless you are a science fiction reader, the name may escape you, that is unless you watched the ABC adaptation of his novel *Flash Forward*, which survived a season despite being an excellent show.

"As a writer, I do like to know how what I'm writing is going to end, but in the particular case of *FlashForward*, I didn't. I had to work it out as I went along, trying to find the opening in my own rigorous logic that would let the characters actually have a chance at evading their predetermined fates.

I do want each story to have several successive pullbacks to wider angles. Adding to what I said earlier, I usually start with a pretty tight focus on the intimately human and keep pulling back until we're immersed in the grandly cosmic. Not just *FlashForward*, but *The Terminal Experiment*, *Starplox*, *Factoring Humanity*, *Calculating God*, my *WWW* trilogy of *Wake*, *Watch*, and *Wonder*, and, most recently, *Quantum Night* all follow that template."

How much enjoyment is there for him in the plotting and writing, and what is



the worst aspect of it? And how much time does he typically spend developing an idea before he starts penning it?

"Although I think science fiction is an important vehicle for social comment, and a test bed for possible futures, nobody will read it if it isn't fun, engaging, and a page-turner. I enjoy plotting, but I am adamant that the plot should progress by asking what a really bright person would do in the current circumstances, not what would be the easiest—but stupid—thing to have my characters do just to buy me the next plot turn. The movie *Prometheus*, I'm looking at you.

These days, I spend a full year re-researching and preparing before I begin writing a new book. It's a wonderful time of invention and discovery, and I love every minute of it."

Read the complete interview from *Books 'N Pieces Magazine* at www.Bit.ly/BNP-Sawyer

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CVCHS Lacrosse



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The Appraiser Can Make or Break Your Home Sale

You've chosen the right Realtor, done your inspections, made reasonable repairs, primed and primed and staged your home for the market and planned for offers. Ready, set, go...multiple offers and a high sales price, and you are in, right? Well, if your offer is all cash, maybe.

One 45-minute visit with an appraiser can make or break your transaction. While your efforts intend to present a home in good condition, the appraiser notices the value of those preparations. An appraiser's opinions are affected by condition and amenities, and they look for the minutiae that can add or subtract thousands of dollars from your purchase price in one fell swoop. The gloss-over flip does not escape their attention. In fact, it can backfire, as they may wonder what else you cut corners on or worse.

Let me explain. If the buyer is not an all cash buyer, your home needs to appraise for the price offered for the buyer to get the loan. If the market is hot, the buyer might offer an amount over the appraised value as one technique to be the winning bid for that property. Others will remove the appraisal contingency altogether. Buyers who don't have the extra cash to do this can be out of the running for your home. It is difficult to know how often the first offer falters when this technique is used, or how willing the buyers really are to pay an unlimited amount over appraised value. Some buyers like to win, but soon lose interest when they do, because they feel they may have paid too much.

Because of this, we are beginning to see Back-on-the-Market (BOM) properties that have to sell two and three times. BOM homes can get a bit of a stigma after a failed sale. The buyer begins to wonder what is wrong with a property that was once so coveted. It can negatively affect 2nd and 3rd offers and offering prices.

For appraisals, lenders require that comparable sales be within a one-mile radius of your property, sold in the last three months, and must be within 20% of the square footage of your home. If the home receives multiple offers and sells over the asking price, and/or over the price of the comparable home sales, you could have an appraisal that comes in at less than your sale price.

Currently, homes are beginning to experience appraised values lower than selling price. This may mean the market is shifting toward more balance between the buyer and seller, requiring negotiations with each other, vs. sellers calling all the shots (which has been the case for the last several years.)

A good Realtor has an understanding all the factors that go into helping buyers structure a good offer and can be invaluable in finding that sweet spot that will obtain multiple offers for the seller. Your Realtor is the expert ... don't go it alone.

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Candidates Forum for District Attorney Announced

A free public forum for candidates running for Contra Costa County District Attorney has been scheduled for Tuesday April 24 at the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek from 5:30 to 7:00 pm.

Presented by the Contra Costa County Bar Association and the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, this forum will be moderated by Gail Murray, former mayor of Walnut Creek, former BART

director and a long-time member of the League of Women Voters. It will include brief statements by the candidates and set questions from the moderator. The public will have an opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. All questions will be screened for appropriateness. Make reservations online at <http://bit.ly/2EW07ZU>.

Clayton Valley Woman's Club Treats Silverwood Elementary to Dr. Seuss Birthday

Each year on Dr. Seuss's birthday, March 2, the National Education Association (NEA) promotes an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate his birthday with readings of the beloved authors books. The day is called "Read Across America".

Across the nation, teachers, teenagers, librarians, politicians, actors, athletes, parents, grandparents, and others develop NEA's Read Across America activities to bring reading excitement to children of all ages. Governors, mayors, and other elected officials recognize the role reading plays in their communities with proclamations and floor statements. Athletes and actors issue reading challenges to young readers. And teachers and principals seem to be more than happy to dye their hair green or be duct-taped to a wall if it boosts their students' reading.

In Concord and Clayton, it was the vol-

unteer members from the Clayton Valley Woman's Club who read to 1st through 3rd grade classes at Silverwood Elementary in Concord, then donated the books. Judging from the animated responses of the students, it is a toss up who enjoyed the readings more, the students or the readers according to Aleta Huck, VP of Programs for the chapter. Nicely done ladies.

Clayton Valley Woman's Club is a non-profit organization of community-minded women who volunteer their time to such community projects and do fundraisers to donate to community organizations and towards a woman's scholarship to Diablo Valley College.

Guests are invited to club meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at St. John's Episcopal Church 5555 Clayton Rd. in Clayton. For information about the club call Linda at 415-652-3503 or Sheila at 925-672-7947.

Readers Rants & Raves

"I picked up today's Gazette in the driveway and the first thing I look for is the article from the secret service guy. And it's not in there."

– Richard B. Concord

| Inside Secret Service should return in May's Edition. He'll be happy to know he's missed. |

"I just received my first edition to the Diablo Gazette, I live here in Rossmoor. and I thought, oh, another piece of junk mail, but you know what? It's not. It's pretty good. And on the back page, there's a little poem "Winter Rain", I read it and re-read it ...it's a beautiful little poem. I love it, thank you. It just made my day." –Amira, 92 - Rossmoor

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"I enjoy reading the Diablo Gazette, but I find the city stuff kinda stiff. Is there any way that the Mayor can write more casual things like he used to before he became Mayor?" –Robert Jackson, Concord.

The Diablo Gazette looks forward to all comments from our readers. Please email: diablogazette@gmail.com

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Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue *Pokémon*

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

Pokémon would have been better named Harry Potter. His unique black-stripes forehead resembles Harry's lightning bolt scar. But to date, Pokémon's magic has been overlooked. This pawsitively special dog has been searching for his forever home since December after he'd been rescued from life on the streets in Kern County. If you are looking for a happy-go-lucky guy that offers kisses and loves the outdoors, then this 3-year-old pit bull mix could be your new best friend. This sweet charmer is up for anything whether it be playing fetch or making toys squeak. His ideal placement would be an active home that is looking for a doggie companion to take on awesome adventures.

Please fill out a matchmaker profile (<https://www.arflife.org/files/pdf/arf-matchmaker.pdf>), then visit him at Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) facility at 2890 Mitchell Drive, Walnut Creek on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday Noon - 6 pm or



Friday Noon to 7 pm. His adoption fee has been sponsored.

Founded in 1991, ARF has rescued more than 38,000 cats and dogs. This privately-funded 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization received the highest rating from Charity Navigator for the 10th year.

Editors Note: Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram celebrity with more than 54,000 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.

Mt. Diablo Unified Collaborative Awarded \$189K Grant to Create Healthy Food Culture

The REAL Food in Schools Collaborative, is a partnership between the Mt. Diablo Unified School District; Life Lab, a Bay Area pioneer in garden-based science and nutrition education; Eat REAL, a non-profit dedicated to a rigorous healthy food certification, and Wellness in Action, a community-based wellness education and advocacy organization. The collaborative has been awarded a grant of \$189,430 from Battery Powered, a member-funded giving program established by The Battery, a San Francisco social club. Battery Powered's giving 'theme' for this 2018 grant cycle was childhood nutrition, challenging grant applicants to propose solutions to barriers that prevent children and families in the Bay Area from enjoying a sufficient, healthy diet.

The REAL Food in Schools Collaborative goal is to integrate hands-on garden, nutrition, and cooking education and REAL Certified healthy food to support lifelong wellness for 32,000 Mt. Diablo Unified students. In their grant application, the Collaborative asked for funds to allow leading nonprofit food access, education and community partners to collaborate with MDUSD and each other for two years to scale and institutionalize new food service and education programs, including moving to REAL Certified food service, turning cafeterias into learning spaces for cooking and nutrition, using garden classrooms to integrate healthier food knowledge and culture into the school day, and expand afterschool programs with family involvement.

"We are very excited about the oppor-

tunity this grant will provide to improve students' understanding of the importance of good nutrition, as well as their access to healthy foods," said Dr. Nellie Meyer, Superintendent for Mt. Diablo Unified.

"From seed to the family table, our students and families are embracing this new curriculum and focus on healthy nutrition," said Jennifer Sachs, Mt. Diablo's Executive Director of Instructional Support. "We have built out several outdoor education spaces, where students spend time during the day, growing their own food, preparing meals, creating recipes, and trying them at home with their families."

Food service staff trained as culinary educators will turn cafeterias into classrooms for cooking and nutrition for students and their families. Parents are invited to the school cafeteria after-hours and are taught culinary skills. Multifaceted garden, nutrition, and cooking education programs are expected to inspire a love of fresh, healthful foods in children to establish lifelong eating habits.

"It is gratifying to see this level of coordinated effort to benefit families in each of the eight communities which are part of the Mt. Diablo family," said Debra Mason, President of the Board of Education for MDUSD.

Under the new grant, MDUSD will implement new garden programs across 10 or more elementary schools that will connect to Next Generation Science and Common Core standards.

6 Million Pounds of Surplus Food Rescued

White Pony Express (WPE), a volunteer-powered organization headquartered in Pleasant Hill has delivered 6 million pounds of surplus produce, deli and meat products, to those in need in Contra Costa County—all free of charge. It's a fantastic milestone for the organization.

"When we first started WPE, no one could have imagined that someday, we would have achieved such thing," said Gary Conner, Executive Director of WPE. "When we first started, we had nothing but a dream, dedicated volunteers and a Google telephone account. It is thrilling to know what can be done if you can just say 'Yes' to serving others."

Each day, WPE's trucks are sent to supermarkets, restaurants, and farmers markets to pick up 5,000 lbs. of fresh produce, milk, and deli meats that would otherwise go to the landfill. The food is taken to WPE's distribution facility in Pleasant Hill where it is sorted. Then, the food is distributed free of charge the same day to nonprofits who feed the hungry in Contra Costa County. Starting with just one food donor four years ago, WPE now has 50 regular food donors, 70+ nonprofit recipient partners, and 400+ volunteers.

Carol Weyland Conner, PhD, founded WPE in September 2013 when she was troubled that scores of thousands were going hungry, while at the same time food retailers were throwing out huge quantities of healthy, fresh food. Her idea was to create a Food Rescue Program, where this good surplus food could



be picked up directly from food retailers and delivered to local service organizations, who serve those in need. Dr. Conner continues to serve as WPE's Advisor.

"We are delighted that our remarkable success is being recognized," said Gary Conner. "We recently received word that the California Air Resources Board has given WPE a grant of \$115,000 to support its work in reducing greenhouse gasses through its Food Rescue program." WPE's work has reduced greenhouse gasses by 11,528 metric tons over a four-year period.

WPE also has a Free General Store which distributes surplus new and like-new clothing, primarily through innovative and joyful events called Mobile Boutiques. To date, the FGS has given away more than 300,000 items of clothing and more than 100,000 children's books, games, and toys in underserved parts of the county.

This work has been accomplished strictly from local volunteers. "We always need dedicated volunteers to help WPE further this important work in the county," remarked Gary Conner. For more information on WPE, visit www.whiteponyexpress.org

Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery Is Revamping It's Annual Family Earth Day Celebration

Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery, a Garaventa Company, is hosting its 6th Annual Family Earth Day event on Saturday, April 21, from 10am-1pm, with several new activities added this year. This is a free drop-in event fun for the whole family.

A Tour of the recycling facility (90,000 square-feet) starts at 10:30. You will learn about "Big Blue" and "Big Wall-e" recycling machines, the 5 R's (Reduce-Reuse-Recycle-Respect-Recover) and then go on a walking tour. Afterwards, you can have fun on the new jumpy houses, race recycling carts, see the trucks, have some food or make a craft made from recyclable items. If you are interested in the

tour, get there around 10:15.

"There is no better time than Earth Day to share our passion for recycling and recovery with the entire community," said Joseph Garaventa, MDRR's Chief Executive Officer. "Participating in our Earth Day Celebration is a great way for families to explore the many ways they can make a real difference in the quality of our environment."

Mt. Diablo Recycling is located at 1300 Loveridge Road in Pittsburg. To reserve a space today, contact Adriana Medina at 925-771-2721 or email: recyclingcoordinator@garaventaent.com

SEE OUR AD ON PAGE 8

Concord Updating Sewers, Downtown Streets Affected

A major sewer improvement project has started in the downtown Concord area near Todos Santos Plaza. The good news is that much of the work will take place at night. Sewers in these areas are over 70 years old and need to be replaced.

Streets impacted with night work include Salvio Street (between Galindo and Grant streets), Mt. Diablo Street (between Salvio Street and Concord Boulevard), and Willow Pass Road, (between Colfax and East streets).

Streets that will see work during the day include Colfax Street (between

Bonifacio Street and Clayton Road), Concord Boulevard (between Grant and East streets) and Clayton Road (between Grant and East streets).

The project will also include installation of fiber optic conduits, minor concrete improvements, and street resurfacing. Detours will be implemented on the streets during construction. Night work in downtown will continue through mid-June. The project is schedule to conclude at the end of October.

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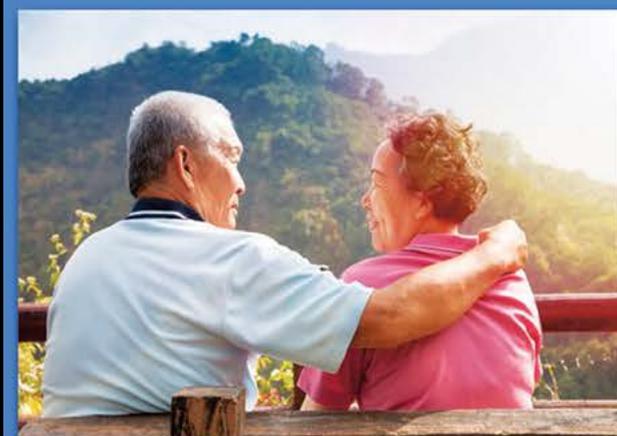
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Concord Residents Suggest BART Land Swap

by David King

Concord City Council is in the process of approving a Transit Village proposed by Transit Oriented Development (TOD) at the North Concord BART Station. The project is to include mixed use of parking, commercial, three eight-story high rises, housing, and retail. The goal of all of this is to increase ridership of Bart and boost the connection between Bart and the community. The attraction of adding new affordable housing, increased tax revenue for the city, easing of traffic, and improving air quality all are tempting carrots to rubber stamp the proposal, right?

Not exactly. The nearby houses on Dumbarton and Dormer streets have a 10-15ft. wall in their back yard shielding their homes from the current parking lot. But when the development replaces that with eight-story high rises, their privacy will be compromised.

In discussing the problem, Concord resident Randall Horton casually suggested why not propose a land swap and move the development back away from existing homes. Concord resident Tim Carr overheard the idea and ran with it. He has drawn up a proposal and informally presented to Concord City Manager Guy Bjerke as well as other Council Members. He also shared with Diablo Gazette.

"I am trying to get the property line and new high rises moved back 200 feet to keep those new high-rise apartments from being able to peer into the existing homes," Carr conveyed. "Concord previously has created 325-foot setback spaces they call 'green space' in the southern end of the Concord Naval Weapons Station. The ordinance was approved for these southern spaces just recently. And I doubt the south is going to get three eight-story buildings being added in their back yards," Carr stated.

Land Swap to get a green buffer in North Concord.

"I spoke about this idea of Randall Horton's at the CAC (Community Advisory Committee) meeting on March 13. So, I drew on a Google maps printout, measured distances and drew up this land swap deal. I believe the map explains my intent. (see map).



"The concept we are proposing is swapping a 150-300 ft. wide swath of land along the western side of the North Concord BART. This piece would need to be approximately 1315 ft. long."

"The land would be exchanged for the same amount of land on the eastern side of the BART property providing a green belt or buffer area for the backyards of the houses on Dumbarton and Dormer streets. This is assuming the tall concrete block wall already shielding the homes from the BART parking lot would remain.

"A 200-ft. buffer zone could contain trees, bike and autonomous bus paths directly to the BART station. It would also reduce the view from the new BART high rise buildings into these neighbors back yards, pools and of course, hot-tubs.

"Also, the BART parking lot lights would be moved away from the wall so they would not have so much light in the neighbors windows all night.

"The parking lot lamps currently

are clearly peering over the backyard wall in the Google street view photos I saw (thanks, Google). So I drew a 200 ft. x 1315 ft. extension of land onto the eastern side of BART on the map. The existing four-lane Panoramic Dr. is a large part of this parcel. I would think BART would want their property contiguous, so Panoramic Dr. would need to relocate to the east so that Panoramic again wraps around the eastern side of the BART property line as I drew in black on the map.

"I would think BART designers would enjoy the land swap as they will not need to be so concerned about the height limitations of their new high rises."

Carr suggests that 200 ft. width is sufficient. To test it, he drew on Google maps a 200 ft. perimeter around his home and looked out the window to get an idea what he could see. "At that distance, I couldn't see through anyone's window."

Carr cautions if the buffer were much larger, it would attract homeless encampments and create a larger area to maintain.

Panoramic extension to Willow Pass shortcut.

After all this planning, Carr then realized that this would be an opportune time to connect Panoramic Dr. south one mile to Willow Pass Rd. at Clayton Way. This would create a shortcut as an alternate path made to carry large amounts of traffic in/out of BART and TOD. It would not cut through a neighborhood such as E. Olivera Road does.

"This idea of course is a separate proposal that I have already presented but hoping it too gains traction. The left turn from southbound Port Chicago onto E. Olivera has a large amount of traffic. E.Olivera homes are not set back away

from the roadway, so these people have major arterial traffic in their front yards. I feel it is vital that it be constructed ASAP, definitely Phase 1. This bypass would carry much traffic immediately, before any TOD or BART build out."

Carr also has presented ideas for some ways to increase parking at the station by allowing parallel parking on both sides of Panoramic Dr. and down at the southern dead end. Large amounts of unused pavement are available.

You can view the Bart development proposal at

<http://concordreuseproject.org/DocumentCenter/Index/254>

"They would only need to move their plans 200 ft. to the east to get it to work. There is plenty of space out there to make the swap," Carr summarized.

Carr says he does not know what the council members think of the idea, but it gained traction from the residents from Dumbarton St. who were at the March 13 meeting also looking for a set-back.

"It would be good to get others to get behind the land swap deal. I am the only speaker," Carr said.

What do you think of Horton's idea? Whether the idea resonates or not, this is extraordinary effort by a couple of community members who simply just want to help build a better community. For that, we should all be thankful.

Map: Green box is the BART planned construction area, white box is the proposed area after a land swap. Black box is Carr's proposed extension of Panoramic Dr. to Willow Pass Rd.

[This article has been updated from its original printing.]

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- Multi-modal transit plaza at BART station
- Possible replacement of existing station building

Concept A

Concept B

Walnut Creek Professor's Escape From the Islamic Republic

by David King and Frank Burroughs

Having been unsuccessful in introducing Mohammad Reza Shah's proposal for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Iran to President Jimmy Carter, Franklin Burroughs returned to Iran and assumed his duties at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Tehran. (Diablo Gazette, March 2018). Several months passed and unrest in Iran became more and more evident. With the increasing discontent and threat of violence, the Shah became convinced that he could no longer hold back what he saw as a developing revolution and departed Iran on January 16, 1979. The hero of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini, made his triumphant re-entry into Iran on February 1, 1979.

Burroughs began to visit Qum and the much-revered Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari. A voice of moderation in the Islamic Revolution, Shariatmadari became disenchanted with Khomeini's radicalism. Late one Friday evening when Burroughs and Shariatmadari were chatting in the Ayatollah's bureau, four Iranian military officers entered the bureau and asked if Ayatollah Shariatmadari would support a coup against the

Khomeini regime. After the officers left, Ayatollah Shariatmadari asked Burroughs if he thought the U.S. might back a coup and suggested that Burroughs approach the U.S. Embassy about the possibility. Burroughs approached the Embassy about the possibility of supporting an Iranian-military coup against the Khomeini regime but quickly realized the U.S. Government had no interest in becoming involved in an anti-Khomeini action or becoming aligned with Shariatmadari.

A few weeks later, on November 4, 1979, Burroughs watched the siege of the U.S. Embassy and the abduction of 52 American hostages from his seventh-floor office that overlooked the Embassy compound.

The day after the attack on the Embassy, a group of revolutionaries stormed the offices of the United States Information Service (U.S.I.S.) and took additional American hostages. During the latter attack, the Iranian Chair of the Fulbright Commission, which had an office next to the U.S.I.S., heard one of the revolutionaries remark that their next stop was the U.S.-Iran Chamber of Commerce. The Chair telephoned Burroughs' wife, who immediately got in touch with Burroughs, warning him of the upcoming danger.



Burroughs literally exited the backdoor of his office building as the revolutionaries entered the elevator that would take them to his office. He quickly beckoned the Chamber driver, got into the car, and headed for residence of his wife's cousin. At the cousin's home, Burroughs dismissed the driver, walked quickly through the house, got into a second automobile, and headed for his final hiding destination.

a rather remote condominium provided by his brother-in-law.

In just a few short weeks, Burroughs had gone from being an emissary between the leaders of two powerful nations to protecting himself from imprisonment or even death.

"I didn't know how long I would have to stay in this small condominium to avoid prison or if safe passage from Iran could be arranged for me. I loved my adopted home, Iran, but I felt I was too young to continue hiding indefinitely or dying. I was eager to find a safe way home, and I knew that the Chamber secretary was working hard to discover my best means of escape," Burroughs said. He was nearing 40 years of age at the time.

The curtains on the condominium windows were kept closed to

protect Burroughs' privacy; he remained in hibernation most of the time.

"I stayed away from the windows, even though the windows were covered, and kept in the middle of each room to avoid any detection from the outside," he recalls. "I didn't shave for two weeks to grow a beard that would help disguise my American-European features, but the result was more stubble than a real beard."

Despite his attempted seclusion, a man who identified himself as a member of the British Secret Service in Iran knocked on the condominium door and declared he had a vital message to convey from the U.S. Government: Would Burroughs ask Ayatollah Shariatmadari to inter-vene with the revolutionaries on behalf of the American hostages. Burroughs had to respond in the negative. The U.S. had denied any support for the proposal by Shariatmadari and the Iranian military for a possible coup against Khomeini's regime.

Burroughs admits, "My love for Iran had blinded me to the reality of the developing political situation. I had felt more independent and accepted in Iran than I had in the U.S. during the first twenty-five years of my life. I had loved my work as a consultant to the Government of Iran and my plush life, which I hoped would continue after the Islamic Revolution."

But each day after the establishment of the Islamic Republic the stress levels ratcheted up a notch. At night, Burroughs would wrestle with nightmares. Even though he knew the Chamber secretary was working with the Iranian Prime Ministry to quietly obtain an exit visa for him, he remained uncertain as to whether her efforts would eventually free him or result in his incarceration. Finally, the secretary informed him the Prime Ministry had granted him an exit visa.

Burroughs quickly informed his family that the Government of Iran had granted him an exit visa and that he planned to leave Iran within a few days. He bade goodbye to his family and



friends and readied himself for whatever he might encounter at the Tehran Airport.

At the end of November 1979, Burroughs boarded a plane to Switzerland and began to cry. Only after boarding did he realize the pressure under which he had been operating. From Switzerland he flew to the United States. His family joined him a month later, unharmed.

We live among fellow Diablo Valley residents who have had extraordinary and fascinating experiences during their lives. Burroughs is currently working on a book "Patterns on a Prayer Rug" which details the experiences of living in Iran including this dangerous and suspenseful chapter. I look forward to reading it someday as well as see the movie, if one should happen.

Walnut Creek resident, Franklin Burroughs has an extensive writing background. His op-ed pieces have been published in the Wall Street Journal, the San Francisco Chronicle and the East Bay Times. His articles have been published in the "Muslim World", "Peabody Journal of Education", a Russian publication known as "ILIN", and the "Journal of the American Association of Junior Colleges". His books include: An Historical Outline of Education in Iran, Europe 1992, and E.C.-U.S. Trade Flow and The Pepper Tree Kingdom: A Memoir. He has contributed stories to two anthologies: Tremors and Insight, Hindsight and Flights of Fancy.

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MY GRANDFATHER, THEODULE NADEAU

A Poem by Resident Donald Maynard

I knew him only in my school-age years,
A hero model sent to shape my life.
He showed the wear from years of heavy labor
Before he faced the slowing down of time.

Sitting in his maple platform rocker,
Spittoon nearby, he quietly puffed his pipe,
His piercing eyes would stare beyond the present,
Inscrutable, in peaceful solitude.

What are the thoughts of aging men, I wondered.
Past or future? Perhaps some day I'd know.
I had observed in his reflective moments
He radiated stoic inner peace.

Short, stocky, hunched, deliberate in pace,
Blacksmith hands curved stiff from holding steel
And heavy hammer pounding red-hot horseshoes,
Thick callouses now smooth from gentler use.

He raised eleven children without fanfare
In northern Maine where even summer is cold.
Each family member helped with chores as needed,
They spoke the French from old Acadia.

In later years his children came to visit
And laughed at jokes and tales retold in French.
With beer and snacks and animated gestures,
The one who spoke the loudest had the floor.

His manner brusque, yet gentle with a child,
He earned the admiration of us all.
May we in turn live by his rules and values.
He walked God's path and gave to life his best.



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