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

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MAY 2018

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

Farming Out Fitness: Lamb Yoga is Near

Yoga Instructor Jesse Muzzy

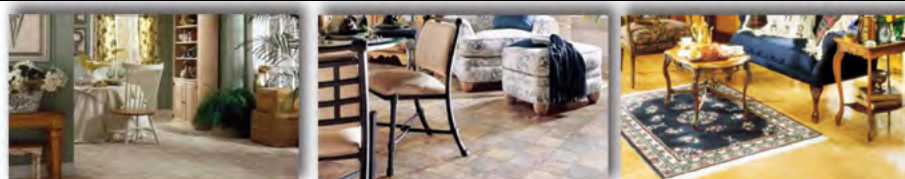
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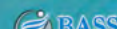
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The Concord Fire: Reactions When You're Threatened

by David King



Concord should let out a huge sigh of relief as the recent fire downtown could have been a disaster for Concord and many residents. It was Concord's most dangerous event in recent memory. Although it resulted in an estimated \$55 million in damages and the loss of 180 future housing units, there were no serious injuries, and only temporary housing displacements. The city departments and officials and community worked harmoniously to provide safety and comfort to those in affected and averted a real tragedy. And as Mayor Birsan stated, "We rebuild".

Most of us watched this from afar on our devices. It was a much different experience for those who's lives and livelihoods were at stake.

Gabriel Freitag is owner of Alpine Pastry and Cakes. She texted at 2:25AM.

"The construction building behind Alpine caught fire around midnight. The fire department is working hard to save Alpine! So far so good!"

After the fire was out she was not permitted to enter her building for days for fear that the burned structure could collapse or reignite. Alpine Pastry survived with some smoke and water damage.

Later she wrote, "We had to stop our clean up when part of the burned structure roof collapsed. The demolition specialists are now trying to safely break down the burned structure. Hopefully, they can succeed without damage to our building. We are very worried. It is very upsetting."

"I have called all my customers that had orders with us for today and tomorrow, informing them that we cannot fill their orders. It is very stressful to call and disappoint customers. Most were very kind and understanding. We are so grateful that they were able to save our

building and hope that they can clean up without damaging Alpine. We are overwhelmed with people's kindness and prayers, it is heartwarming how much people love Alpine."

The business was saved, and Alpine Pastry has reopened.

In the Renaissance Square Apartments across the street, it was even more frightening as lives were in jeopardy. Jocelyn Jensen shared what she went through during their evacuation.

"It was awful, it's the scariest thing I've been through. I was sleeping, Norbert (husband), was watching TV. He heard the alarm and tried to wake me up." Norbert went outside to look but couldn't get back in.

"I looked out the window and saw big huge orange flames and I thought we were on fire and thought 'I have to go now!' People were running and screaming down the hall. 'This is Real! This is Real! Get Out!' And they were knocking on doors."

"I was in my nightgown, my flip flops and a jacket, that's all I had." She grabbed a back pack, and quickly packed makeup, her cell phone, and some valuables. She closed windows and starting unplugging appliances. She tried to round up her cats, but they wouldn't come. She had to leave them behind.

"I grabbed whatever I could and ran out the door. By then nobody was around, and the fire doors had closed."

Still thinking that it was her building on fire she started running trying to figure out where to go, she was on the second floor and knew not to take the elevator. She was alone, she opened a door that led outside and saw big pieces of burning wood falling from the sky.

"I started running down the hall. The whole sky was black with those towering flames and raining pieces of fire. It was all surreal."

They waited until about 3:30a.m. until they heard that the fire was under control and wasn't going to jump to their building. Then they left the Todos Santos Park and went to hotel. For the next two days they were allowed 5 escorted minutes to go back inside to grab any essentials. When they returned on Friday, she was happy to see her cats were fine. Jensen still sheds tears when telling her experience.

Resident Kyle McClay

and family live on the end of the building in a two-story unit overlooking the new construction.

"I have two kids and the alarm is right inside of my room. It went off, the kids freaked out. There had been false alarms before, so I'm just moseying along. My wife went to cover the alarm with a blanket. Then she sees the fire and starts screaming, 'Kyle get up, it's a real fire!'"

I go upstairs to look out the window, and I see police running and evacuating people. And I see this big wave of flames towering over the top of our apartment building. We grabbed some blankets and gathered the kids. Once outside, then I realized that it

wasn't our building." McClay also noted the burning ashes dropping into the street.

"We went straight to hotel. We knew we weren't going to be let back in. By the way, the city did a good job handling this. The Firetrucks and Concord Police were there quick. They did a great job."

County Supervisor, Karen Mitchell concurs in her office's press release. The fire was contained to the construction site and did not spread to other structures. ConFire remained on site since the incident started and put out hot spots during the demolition process.

While the remaining structure is being demolished, ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm, from the US Department of Justice) agents along with ConFire will be investigating the cause of the fire.

The Concord Police Department evacuated the neighboring Renaissance Square apartment building and helped manage the public safety and street closures. 250 people were evacuated from

their homes with only two people treated for smoke inhalation.

The Red Cross set up a disaster shelter at First Presbyterian Church of Concord at 1965 Colfax Street to house those who were displaced. On 3pm Friday April 27, Contra Costa Fire lifted the evacuation order. Families were able to return to their apartments.

Local businesses in Concord donated meals to the displaced families: Umpqua Bank, The Veranda, Whole Foods 365, Super Duper Burger and Mod Pizza. They also received donated Starbucks lunches from White Pony Express.

Contra Costa Health Services managed health advisories during and shortly after the fire. The Contra Costa Crisis Center shared information with the public during the crisis via 211.

All the departments came together to provide safety and security to our community.

"This was a true inter-governmental community effort," Mitchell noted.

As the clean-up efforts and demolition continue, there is still ongoing investigation. The Concord Police Department would appreciate hearing from anyone who may have information related to the structure fire. Anyone wishing to remain anonymous can call the Concord Police Department Tip-line at (925) 603-5836.

below photo credit: Claycord/Korie Kiester



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Lamb Yoga is not Too Baa-ad!

By Jill Hedgecock, Program Coordinator, Mount Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club. www.jillhedgecock.com

Sixteen lambs and several ewes grazed peacefully while Hidden Villa's certified yoga instructor, Jesse Muzzy, asked yoga class participants if anyone felt uneasy about the animals. Not surprisingly, no one raised their hand because all had signed up for the unique experience of practicing yoga in the midst of these gentle creatures. The lamb yoga class was a first for Hidden Villa Ranch, a non-profit organic farm located at 26870 Moody Road in Los Altos Hills, a little over an hour drive south from Concord.

The participants comprised an eclectic mix of first timers to certified yoga instructors. The novelty of the class drew people from all across the Bay Area – some from San Jose, while others hailed



inside thigh to form the number four. Being sensible creatures, however, as the day grew warmer, even the temptation of alfalfa proved less desirable than the shade at the pasture's edge, so the class concluded without the up-close proximity of our hooved entertainment.

The yoga practice lasted 60 minutes followed by 20 minutes of playtime with the adorable lambs. The minimum age of 12 years proved a bonus for youngster Audrey Lang because she received some

special time with her mother, Liz, away from her younger sister. I don't know what ground-breaking yoga-animal experience Hidden Villa might offer in the future. Piglet yoga? Don't laugh, but I think I might just want to try that class, too.

Hidden Villa was founded by Frank and Josephine Duveneck in 1924 and they offered it as a gathering place for discussion, reflection, and incubation of social



reform. It houses the first hostel on the Pacific Coast (1937), the first multiracial summer camp (1945), and Hidden Villa's Environmental Education Program (1970). The Trust for Hidden Villa was established as a nonprofit in 1960. Casual visits to the farm during open hours do not require a reservation and guests can view farm animals through fences, wander through the education garden, and explore eight miles of wilderness trails. Parking is \$10 per vehicle. Check their website for additional farm yoga classes at <http://hiddenvilla.org/programs/>

Lamb yoga is a spin-off from the increasingly popular craze of goat yoga—the brainchild of freelance photographer and farm owner Lainey Morse who offered goat yoga in conjunction with a birthday party in Oregon in 2016. Her recreational event blossomed from a fun activity to a full-time job. Though goat yoga is not as popular in the Bay Area as it is in southern California, goat yoga classes have been offered in San Francisco, Half Moon Bay and Santa Rosa. In contrast to baby goats that enjoy jumping on the backs of yoga participant's and munching on clothing, the lambs at Hidden Villa were quite content to nibble hay as people transitioned from plank to cobra poses.

After a series of relaxation exercises, Jesse Muzzy, encouraged participants to embrace the class theme of fun and play. Jesse then guided the students through a series of poses from the classic strength pose of downward facing dog to high lunges to happy baby, where participants lie on their backs with bent legs and grab the soles of their feet. The occasional bleat of a ewe added to the charm of the class and sent a wave of smiles through the group. People were challenged to complete balance poses like tree stance that involved standing with one foot planted and placing the other foot on the

calendar-of-events. For those interested in goat yoga, Goatlandia in Santa Rosa is an alternative location with a regular program, but be forewarned, their classes sell out fast (<http://www.goatlandia.org/events/>).



Photos by Diane Walsh: Endlesspaws28.com



Jennifer Stojanovich

Realtor, Better Homes Realty

Sell or Renovate

You are at a crossroads. You know your house doesn't quite suit your needs anymore. Should you find a new home, or renovate the one you have? While there's no obvious answer to this question, here's what you should consider when making your decision.

How much will it cost? When trying to decide whether it's better to remodel or move, affordability is a key issue. Do you have enough resources to make the needed renovations? Get estimates from contractors on what your renovations might cost. Conversely, if you do decide to sell, will you need to make any repairs or upgrades before listing? It could be worthwhile to hire a home inspector to find out just what issues will need to be addressed. Once you have all the data, you can crunch the numbers to see which scenario makes the most financial sense.

How long will renovating take? If you haven't done any serious renovations lately, you may have forgotten just how long that can take. Remodeling a central room like a kitchen can seriously cramp your style for weeks or months on end. Do you have the patience to live in your home while it's being remodeled? If not, can you afford to relocate while the renovations are taking place?

Do you like your neighborhood? Even if your home isn't exactly what you need, how do you like your neighborhood? Being in a great location has a huge effect on your well-being. Do you have great neighbors or live in an excellent school district? If you really

love your corner of the world, it could make sense to renovate your current home instead of looking for a new one.

Can you use your current home in a new way? Sometimes it just takes a little imagination to update your home to suit your needs. For example, clear the clutter. If you do a major cleaning, you may discover that you have more room than you thought. Turn that guest bedroom into a much-needed office space. Maybe you can invest in some new furniture that fits the space better and doesn't make it feel so cramped. Sometimes, all you need to do is look at your home with a new set of eyes to see the possibilities.

Will renovations add value? Sometimes your home is perfect as is, even if it isn't exactly what you want. If you find that your renovations will suddenly make your home the biggest and best on the block, that isn't always a good thing. You can over-improve your house to the point where it may be difficult to sell down the line.

Ultimately, you will need to take into consideration both financial and emotional factors when deciding whether to sell or renovate. Over the years, I've helped many clients find clarity by exploring these questions and other critical circumstances. A realtor's experience can guide you through this evaluation discovering the best decision and avoiding disappointment or costly mistakes. Feel free to give me a call.

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parentfootprints

by Dr. Dan Peters www.DrDanPeters.com

21 Must-Reads for Moms, Dads and Caregivers

Below is a list of books by top parenting industry experts that have inspired me, all of us at Parent Footprint and many of my patients. These books have helped me define Parent Footprint's "Vision of Successful Parenting" and "Parent Footprint Awareness Training" video series and I hope they help your family too.

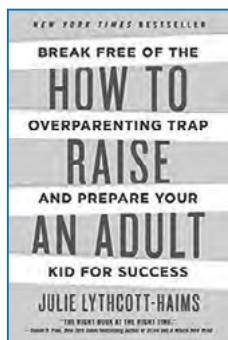
1) **The Awakened Family** by Shefali Tsabary, Ph.D. "The Focus is always on the Parent's awareness rather than the child's behavior."

2) **The Conscious Parent** by Shefali Tsabary, Ph.D. "Despite our best intentions, we enslave them to the emotional inheritance we received from our parents, binding them to the deliberating legacy of ancestors past."

3) **Teach Your Children Well** by Madeline Levine, Ph.D. "It is important to keep the bar high for our children, but we need to make sure that we are keeping our eye on the right bar."

4) **Daring Greatly** by Brene Brown. "Imperfect parenting moments turn into gifts as our children watch us try to figure out what went wrong and how we can do better next time."

5) **How to Raise an Adult** by Julie Lythcott-Haims. "I've come to the conclusion that we define success too narrowly and what's worst, this narrow, misguided definition of success has led us to harm a generation of young adults – our children."



6) **Parenting with Presence** by Susan Stiffelman. "How a child turns out if a function of infinite number of variables, but parents can influence their children to become fulfilled and joyful grownups."



7) **The Whole-Brain Child** by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.

"What do you really want for your children? What qualities do you hope they develop and take into their adult life? Now think about what percentage of your time you spend intentionally developing these qualities in your children."

8) **Whispers Through Time** by L.R. Knost. "It's not our job to toughen our children up to face a cruel and heartless world. It's our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless."

9) **No-Drama Discipline** by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D. "You really can discipline in a way that is full of respect and nurturing, but that also maintains clear and consistent boundaries."

10) **The Explosive Child** by Ross W. Green, Ph.D. "For things to improve, your kid needs you to be at your best."

11) **Playful Parenting** by Lawrence J. Cohen, Ph.D. "In order to be fountains of helpfulness and enthusiasm for our children, we must find ways to replenish ourselves."

12) **The Available Parent** by Dr. John Duffy. "Through judgment and

the emotional baggage they themselves bring to the relationship, parents too often limit their ability to communicate with influence and enjoy the relationship with their child."

13) **Take Back Your Kids** by

William J. Doherty, Ph.D. "Without respect, no sustainable warmth between a parent and a child is possible. During the first six years of life, the template for later years is set down."

14) **The Self-Aware Parent** by

Cathy Cassani Adams. "Self-awareness begins by monitoring your mood when you are with your children."



15) **Mindset** by

Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. "The power of people's belief strongly effects and permeates every part of life."



16) **The One Thing** by Gary Keller with Jay Papasan. "Extraordinary results are directly determined by how narrow you can make your focus. Who we are and where we want to go determines what we do and what we accomplish."

17) **The Body Keeps Score** by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D. "It takes tremendous energy to keep functioning while carrying the memory of terror and the shame of utter weakness and vulnerability. Long after a traumatic experience is over, it may be reactivated at the slightest hint of danger."

18) **The Kazdin Method for Parenting the Defiant Child**, by Alan E. Kazdin, Ph.D. "There is a way to establish what actually works. It's called science. Obviously, few parents have the time or training to get up to speed on the latest research in psychology, so my emphasis is on what to do and how to do it with basic principles that underline why this approach works."

19) **What Do You Really Want for Your Children?** by Wayne W. Dyer. "We want them to feel successful rather than having some external factors determine their degree of success."

20) **Your Self-Confident Baby** by Magda Gerber. "Respect means accepting, enjoying, and loving your children and not expecting them to do what they cannot do. It means allowing your child the time, the space, and the love and the support to be themselves and to discover the world in their own unique way. It means trying to understand their point of view."

21) **What All Children Want Their Parents to Know** by Diana Loomans. "Kids seem to instinctively know that a happy, well-adjusted adult has much more joy, attention, energy and love, so the first and foremost pivotal way to be a role model for children of all ages lies in the healthy, consistent care of you."

You will find the complete list of these book with links to purchase online at <https://parentfootprint.com/training/vision-of-successful-parenting/>.



concordmayor

by Edi Birsan, Email me CityCouncil@cityofconcord.org
Add EDI in subject line

3-Alarm Public Response, We Can Be Proud

The recent 3-alarm fire at the Renaissance II site in downtown Concord will attract a bunch of headlines and story threads. As Mayor this is what I went through.

The house phone rang around 5:50AM and woke me up from a rather disturbed night of poor sleep having fallen asleep on the futon in the study. Just as I realized it was ringing it went to voice mail in the living room. I could not hear the message clearly from the back of the house being half asleep, but it came across as from the Assistant City Manager and I made out the words: "I am at City Hall...fire...downtown." My mind went straight to the thought that City Hall was on fire and it had spread to downtown.

The body generated an ocean of adrenalin as I grabbed my cell phone and called her back. She told me that the City Manager was on site with the Fire Department, Police, Public Works, and outside help had arrived from the surrounding cities as a command center had been set up. I said that I would be right down only to be told "please don't, wait" and to talk to the City Manager who said quite rightly that it would be a distraction until all the teams had time for a general briefing with me and others and the first public press conference.

While I wanted to head straight down, not only did I recall the crisis training you get on Council about what the role of each position, I also recalled my experience in the 1989 Earthquake when the President rushed to Oakland at the collapsed Cyprus Expressway and the operations were stopped for security, unaware that there was still someone trapped in the rubble. They were delayed hours getting to him and while pulled alive, he eventually died shortly afterwards.

I am not a patient person, but she was right, I needed to wait till the team briefing and we went to the public with a clear unified message. A short time later, I got the call and headed down for the briefing and preparation for speaking to the public and press. At the Fire Department's new mobile command center, we had their

Public Information officer running the meeting along with the Assistant Fire Chief, Police, County Health, the City Manager, and head building inspector. There was a discussion of what we knew, what we were doing, what people needed to know, what they wanted to know, what the anticipated questions would be and how to lay out the answers in what sequence with questions back and forth on what next. My part was to figure out and communicate the impact on the city and set a tone.

The FD gave the details on the fire, the PD talked about the road closures and the evacuation, health department gave the all clear on the environmental dangers, and then came my message: While this was the largest fire in memory here, we must keep perspective that it was 180 apartments in a city of over 46,000 dwelling units. Much needed housing construction continues. Concord is open for business. 150 years ago, we built this city as survivors from the total destruction of Pacheco in the 1868 earthquake. We go forward, we rebuild, we come together in concordance with one another and we can take pride in the way the public services and the community responded. That is who we are.

Afterwards, I continued as before to thank the folks for their dedication and response and asked if they needed anything else, other than a winning lottery ticket. A second briefing later that day was more of the same only with the ATF there to add their resources to the research on what was going on and what can be learned.

That night I attend the City Council meeting and then make a midnight follow-up visit to the Church where some evacuees were sheltering. Finally, I go home to have another in a long series of conversations with my cat Trixie, who had stolen one of my socks that morning as I hastily dressed. That's when I discovered I was wearing a brown and blue mismatched sock. Normalcy prevails in Concord.

Golf Tournament Rescheduled

This summer, Ygnacio Valley Christian School is moving their entire K-8 campus to a new location. The move will take a great amount of resources and be a heavy strain on the school's finances. To help with the costs associated with that move, as well as to continue to provide for tuition assistance, they are hosting their first annual Golf Tournament fundraiser.

For the last 45 years, Ygnacio Valley Christian School has provided an academic environment while discipling students in servant leadership of the Christian faith. The school has created a positive impact for our local communities

and a few international ones as well. For example, through their partnerships with other organizations, students applied what they've learned by helping build wells in Ghana.

Originally scheduled for April 4 but was rained out, the tournament has been rescheduled for June 16 at Boundary Oaks Golf Course. YVCS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Participating as a golfer or as a sponsor will help fund these causes and is tax deductible. For more information, see our ad on page 4 or go to www.YVCSchool.org/golf

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Out to Lunch

A Local Guide to Burger World

by Richard Eber

Back in the day scoring a cheeseburger at a local haunt was no big deal. All one had to say was "Double cheese, fries, and a coke". Nowadays when one gets ready to order, there are a myriad of other PC and cultural considerations to take into account including:

Will regular beef suffice, or do I want grass fed and/or Angus?

Are regular buns OK or is wheat or gluten free desired?

Were the cows humanly slaughtered? If they took downers prior to being executed, will the chemicals be present in my burger?

Are the workers in the restaurant being paid livable wages?

Is there a better place we can go online?

Is there a Groupon available for me to look-up?

Enough! Let's go and survey cheeseburger world from the perspective of what we want and how much is to be paid for America's favorite sandwich.

When it comes to value locally, In-N-Out Burger on Contra Costa Blvd is the undisputed champion. The long lines at this drive in attest to this. Their burgers and non-frozen French fries stand up well against more expensive competition. Coupled with In-N-Out's secret menu including animal fries, their success speaks for itself.

At the top of the burger food chain we find restaurants who serve expensive cuts of beef. The Burger Lounge off Oak Grove in Walnut Creek offers Grass Fed Angus beef to their customers. It is juicy and delicious but, in my mind, lacks the taste of the good ol' high quality grain fed Mid Western product. Another restaurant in the deluxe class is Mona's Burgers who use Nieman Ranch Angus Chuck for their patties.

If one has the bucks, both of these places do an excellent job. Surprisingly neither of these establishments, nor their numerous competitors can lay claim to having the best quality beef. That distinction goes to Kobe Japan on Oak Park in Pleasant Hill who offer a Kobe Beef Burger on their bar menu whose rich taste and flavor speaks for itself.

In the midrange genre of fast food

burgers there are too many places to venture to mention the different offerings to be enjoyed. It is hard to go wrong at one of the local Habit's who have a full menu of burger options and even some decent salads. At the store on Concord Ave, I especially like their fresh pink lemonade.

Another good place to consider is Way-back Burgers on Clayton Road. They are a decent value. I like dipping their well-cooked, non-greasy fries into a choice of complimentary sauces including Chipotle Ranch, Buffalo Bleu and Ranch. Way-back, a franchise with its roots in Connecticut, serves thick milkshakes from their own dairy that match up well with all comers.

Concord's Red Onion off Monument Blvd. resides in mid-level fast food heaven. In addition to offering respectable burgers, this small chain serves the best onion rings in the region. They are large, dipped in beer batter and fried to perfection. The location could be better, but The Red Onion always seems to be busy.

Five Guys, at Ygnacio Valley and Clayton Rd. offers free peanuts while you wait on your order. It serves large portions of fries that the younger set especially like.

Nations Burgers in Concord and Pleasant Hill offers an excellent selection of pies if one still has room.

For family and special occasions, where a large amount of seating is required, Fuddrucker's in the Willows and in Walnut Creek off Ygnacio, have proven to be popular gathering places. In addition to having one of the best topping stations, they also offer Kobe Beef, Elk, Buffalo, Ostridge, and every other sandwich animal known to man.

Mooyah in Ygnacio Plaza in Walnut Creek serves their burgers on potato buns. It is always popular. The kids will love scribbling on their large, walled chalkboard while you wait.

In the evening, Eureka's on Diamond Blvd. is the fun place to go for an excellent burger with fries. Actually, they're good at any time of day.

I can't name them all. There are many choices to be made in this food genre locally. Finding a "Cheeseburger in Paradise", in this area is a piece of cake.



The Husky Burger Burger Lounge



computercorner
by William Claney, Computers USA

Tech in English

So What's In A Name?

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" – Romeo and Juliet. Perhaps it's a bit of a stretch to apply this Shakespearean quote to computer components like CPU's, but knowing what the name really means is important and could guide you, or misguide you.

I delivered a computer recently and a passerby made a disparaging comment to our customer about the chip we used. Normally I just shrug off these comments because most consumers have really no idea of the technical side of "chips". So on this occasion, that inspired me to set the record straight.

There are several chip manufactures these days including Intel, AMD, Qualcomm, Samsung, etc. to name a few of the larger companies that make processors. The name CPU means central processor unit which is the brain, the heavy lifter, the big kahuna of chips in your computer. But, the CPU doesn't stand alone, there are support chips that allow the power of the CPU to be unleashed. Bad or weak support chips means the CPU just sits there idle, nothing gets done until the CPU receives data.

If you were to buy a computer with only the CPU information disclosed, you are making a big mistake. Let me say it again. Relying only on the CPU information is a BIG mistake. It would be much like buying a car based solely on engine size, thus ignoring horsepower, gears, manufacturer, make, model, color, consumer ratings, gas mileage,



durability... You get the picture.

It is important to understand that a computer is the sum of its parts, not just a CPU. As in life there are those with pedigrees and those that "wanna-be". Intel is the best by far with Qualcomm

and Samsung producing really great products, and AMD not so much.

Intel CPU number scheme will assist in choosing a CPU processing power. For example, i3, i5, i7 and i9 are the families of chips in which they belong. (The "i" stands for Intel.) In this case the larger the number the more powerful the chip. HOWEVER, the chip must be fed data from support chips around it. If they are performance weak then having a great CPU number means little.

In my case, we delivered an i3 CPU linked with tons of exceedingly fast RAM, world class ASRock motherboard, and a superb solid state drive from Samsung. The thru-put, or amount of work that comes out the other end, is terrific and far better than a i7 CPU without good support chips. For those doubters, I can prove it. Less expensive too.

In summation, don't rely only on the CPU information, ask some questions about other components in the computer like video/graphic processors, motherboard chipsets, storage (SSD) and RAM. Now go do the right thing... Ask questions.

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Your 2018 Guide to Bay Area Events

The Diablo Gazette's

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

FUNDRAISERS

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

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. 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.

May 12
Swedish Pancake Breakfast
Featuring Swedish pancakes, ham, lingonberry preserves and a variety of other pancake toppings, fruit, juice, coffee and tea 8:30 am–12:30 pm. Hosted by Sveaborg Lodge #449at Odd Fellows Hall. 4349 Cowell Road, Concord. Donations \$10: Adults & Youth 11-17; \$5: Children Ages 4–10;Free: Ages 3 and Under

May 12
The Annual Clayton Valley Garden Club Plant Sale! Endeavor Hall parking lot. 6008 Center Street, Clayton 8-1 p.m. Color bowls, succulent bowls, blooming native plants, sachets from garden herbs, butterfly and bird houses, decorated rocks, and more. Think Mothers Day gifts. Proceeds enable CVGC to support our schools, local community projects.

May 12
AAUW 6th Annual Art, Wine and Beer Walk. 1-4PM. Todos Santos. \$27 Wine (advance purchase), \$30 Beer. Tickets, Go to www.concord-ca.aauw.net.

May 24
Bingo Night-Clayton Valley Charter High School Parent Faculty Club (CVCHS PFC) Reserve tix as limited seating. \$20.00 includes first set of Bingo Cards, light appetizers, ice tea and water. No host bar, raffles and silent auction. The Greenery, 1551 Marchbanks Drive Walnut Creek. http://rmd.me/oY507Ggp_wM

June 1
Jazz Cafe 6pm-9pm. The Stanley Jazz Crusaders, Jazz Messengers and Watermelon Men are slated to join the Campolindo High School Jazz Band and Acalanes High School Jazz Ensemble. Door Prices (cash only) General Admis-

sion: \$10; Elementary Students: \$5;Children Under 6: Free. Food, raffle drawings and silent auction.(cash only) Stanley Middle School, 3455 School St, Lafayette. Tickets also sold online at ww.stanleymusic.org.

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

May11
Wild@Nite Decades Party. Lindsay Museum. 21 and Over. Travel through time with Lindsay as we celebrate the 50s through the 90s! Admission covers your beer, food, and wine! For more information call (925) 935-1978 or email registrar@lindsaywildlife.org.

June 2/3
Walnut Creek's 37th Annual Art & Wine Festival 200 arts and crafts booths, live music, concessions, Craft Beer Garden, Premium Wine Tent, Kids Zone and Festival Train. Indie Craft Marketplace Opens 11AM each day. Heather Farm Park , 301 N. San Carlos Drive, Walnut Creek. Parking is \$8.

CLUB/SUPPORT GROUPS' NEWS AND EVENTS

May 5/6
Clayton Gardens Tour 10AM to 4 PM.



See 5 beautiful gardens. Proceeds benefit the Clayton Historical Society. The tour

is self-guided and begins at the Clayton Historical Society Museum, 6101 Main Street in Clayton. For more information, call the Clayton Museum at (925) 672-0204 or email museum@claytonhistory.org.

May 9
Diablo Valley Mayor's Summit 11:30 AM–1:30 PM. Contra Costa Country Club. 801 Golf Club Rd., Pleasant Hill Chamber Members—\$50; Prospective Members—\$60.

May 12
Veronica Rossi New York Times best-selling author will present "Life is Fiction and Fiction is Life" at the next meeting of the Mt. Diablo branch, California Writers Club. Her debut novel "Under the Never Sky" has been published in over 25 foreign markets. Sign-in 10:45AM. Registration is \$25 for CWC members, \$30 for guests. Reservations required. Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. To reserve, go to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/>

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

Concerts in the Grove

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

Summer Music Camp

July 9-13 9AM-noon. All children in the community entering K-5th grades are invited to this secular music camp. Learn music basics including rhythm instruments and their voices. 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.

May 5
Cole Swings Cole at The Jazz Room
Long Live the Music re-creates the sound and style of the original Nat Cole Trio. Opening is 13-year old Jazz Pianist James Hall. The Jazz Room at Village Theatre, Danville. 8pm. Ticket Info: www.villagetheatreshows.com. Group Discount of 10 or more call 925-314-3400

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 May 9th at Rossmoor Event Center (For residents and their guests) 1021 Stanley Dollar Dr., Walnut Creek. 7 PM May 11th at Walnut Creek United Methodist Church 1543 Sunnyvale Ave., 7 PM May 12th at Hillcrest Congregational Church 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. *Free Admission .

May 19
"The Rhythm of Life" The Diablo Women's Chorale Spring Concert 2:00 p.m. Purchase advance tickets by calling 1-800-838-3006 or online at www.DiabloWomensChorale.org. \$25.00 General Admission; \$15.00 Student. \$30 at door Hillside Covenant Church, 2060 Magnolia Way in Walnut Creek.

June 10
Ms. Betty Reid Soskin, Activist, Author, Composer, Singer and National Park Service Ranger will speak about her life and new book: "Sign My Name To Freedom: A Memoir Of A Pioneering Life" at the Martinez Historical Society meeting at 1PM. Light refreshments. bserved. Veteran's Memorial Hall, 930 Ward St. Martinez.

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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 Virtuoso
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

Views of the Valley



Trainers of all ages gathered on April 15 downtown Clayton for Pokémon Go Community Day looking to capture a special Pokémon, move or evolution. Photo by Herbert Lee



New Batting cages have been built and are open near the JOBL ballfields near the Tesoro refinery on Solano Way in Concord. Clayton Valley/Concord Sunrise Rotary Club funded the batting cages project and teamed up for construction with volunteers from Rotary District 5160 and JOBL. Club President Dr. Tommy Wolf, D.C. conceived and managed the project. Nearly a thousand children all over Contra Costa County use the baseball fields.



Cheers to another successful Spring Brews Festival at Todos Santos Park, a benefit for the TSBA Arts Foundation to fund summer music programs and youth music programs around Concord. Photo by Micah



At a Coffee and Conversation gathering, Assemblyman Tim Grayson speaks with residents at Diablo View Middle School. Photo by Micah



Diners compete for Silent Auction prizes at The Concord Art Association's Second Annual Pasta Feed Fundraiser at Old Spaghetti Factory in Concord. Over \$1000 was raised for CAA's community outreach programs, Photo by Lisa Fulmer



Sexy Trees found these babies squirrels from a vine they were removing. The pups were placed in a box with nesting material and set aside in hopes their mother finds a new home.

CONTRA COSTA BALLET PRESENTS

Alice

in Wonderland

FRIDAY MAY 25 & SATURDAY MAY 26

Leshar Center for the Arts
TICKETS: 925/943-SHOW (7469)
www.contracostaballet.org

This Memorial Day weekend, follow Alice down the rabbit hole as she embarks on a topsy-turvy journey in Contra Costa Ballet's whimsical, one-hour version of "Alice in Wonderland." Choreographer Robert Dekkers of Post:Ballet brings new vision to an old-fashioned tale in which Alice explores a fantastical world where an elusive rabbit dances with his pocket watch and a Cheshire cat disappears...only to reappear where least expected!

"Alice in Wonderland" features an original score by Bay Area composer Daniel Berkman, who brings a fresh concept to the production by highlighting each character with a unique musical instrument. Berkman's eclectic combination of musical styles and tempos mimics the atmosphere of the surprising world in which Alice finds herself.

Filled with luminescent, animated flowers and marching playing cards, "Alice in Wonderland" is a visual treat for audiences of all ages. Created by costume designer Marlowe Bassett, Alice's rose-colored Victorian dress, the Caterpillar's vibrant larger-than-life head-

piece, and the White Rabbit's and Queen of Heart's unique steampunk-inspired costumes, add to the wonder of a magical production punctuated with unexpected visual surprises.

"Alice in Wonderland" features the dancers of the Contra Costa Ballet Centre with Tara Henrikson dancing as Alice, Alina Gonzalez as the Queen of Hearts and Nancy Griswell dancing the part of the Mad Hatter. Guest artist Christian Squires will dance the role of the White Rabbit, and Michael Wells will appear in the roles of the Joker and Cheshire Cat. Wells, originally from Atlanta, Georgia, has danced with notable companies including New York Theatre Ballet and Smuin Ballet. Originally from South Carolina, Squires has danced with such renowned companies as Boston Ballet and Oregon Ballet Theatre. Both dancers currently dance with Diablo Ballet.

Contra Costa Ballet's production of "Alice in Wonderland" will be on stage at the Leshar Center for the Arts on May 25th and 26th. Tickets are available at www.contracostaballet.org or by calling 925-943-SHOW (7469).

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Paint Parties Make Crafty Entertainment

If you are looking ways to spice up a party with a fresh activity, paint parties are a popular trend. Online, you can find several small companies in the area that make them easy to organize. While many of them have locations to hold such events, Board and Brush in Walnut Creek (see frugelegance article this page), Concord's Dovetails and Sash specializes in DIY (do it yourself) paint parties that you can host in your home. Paint parties are appropriate for all different ages and occasions including birthdays, bachelorette parties, fundraisers, holiday events, or a simple party of friends. The parties are for anyone willing to be creative and learn a new skill. It's not necessary to be artistic, crafty, or experienced with any of my materials.

Concord resident Becky Rhines owns Dovetails and Sash. Growing up in Walnut Creek, art has been her passion throughout her education.

She is also a DIY kind of person. "I now can operate anything from a drill to a table saw and anything in-between. If I don't know how to do something, I take the time to teach myself and expand my skills," Rhines says.

She began painting furniture and

making signs for friends and family. Soon she was presenting her work at local events and opened up an Etsy shop online. While you can find plenty of her rustic farmhouse home décor on her website to purchase, her real specialty is Home DIY Paint Parties. Rhines will lead the group through a hands-on wood sign workshop with each guest parting with a completed project they can proudly take home.

"Making signs and being able to be creative in my own ways as well as fulfilling what others envision is a true passion of mine," she claims.

Rhines will bring all the supplies and the host

is encouraged to supply snack and drinks (most often wine). Hosts can choose 1-3 stencils and 1-3 size signs to allow their guests to choose from or they can customize their own.

"Each party is different. Projects can vary from a single wood sign to rustic home decor, to heart felt gifts that are all handcrafted by you," she explains. Best of all, everyone enjoys creating and completing their project which is quite rewarding for Rhines.

Photo: Becky Rhines of Dovetails and Sash leads home paint party.



frugelegance

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

Making Our Own Sign Art at Board and Brush

You know we love to share with you "easy to make" home decor projects. This time we would like to share where you can go to make beautiful personalized wood signs. Many of us don't do this ourselves because it involves tools, supplies and possibly some skills mixed with fears of all those things. No worries, we found a place that has it all ready. The Board and Brush Creative Studio is new in Walnut Creek and we are in love with it. They provide everything you need while you enjoy making your project.

Kristin and Brendan Clarke bring their passions for wood working into their creative studio. They have regular classes for adults. You can sign up individually, or in a group. However, you must be 21+ to participate.

When we first arrived, all the tables were set up with supplies for each per-



Marcy, Carol, Carolyn, Randi, Pam proudly reveal their work.



son's wood pieces and stencils. The design was chosen in advance when we registered for the class. Throughout the class, Kristin and Brendan explain and demonstrate each step. Starting with a little sanding, then some hammering, and of course, staining and painting. You won't believe how easy it all comes together.

A big "Thank You" to our friend Marcie for hosting this party. We had so much fun and have a beautiful sign to always enjoy. We must go back again because there are other signs we need to make. We took lots of

photos, so come on over to our blog to see more. If you give them a try, remember to share with us what you make.

Carol and Randi, the Fru-Girls, 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.



Studio owners, Kristin and Brendan Clarke guide the classes..

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Strawberry Shortcake



Filling:
1 pkg. 3.4 oz. vanilla instant pudding
1 container of whipped topping, thawed

Topping:
4 cups sliced fresh strawberries
1/3 cup sugar

Preheat oven to 425°F. Whisk sour cream, 1/2 cup milk and 3 Tbsp. sugar in large bowl until blended. Add baking mix and stir just until moistened. Lumpy is okay. Spread the batter onto the base of 9-inch round cake pan sprayed with cooking spray. Bake 12 to 15 min. or until golden brown. Remove to a wire rack. Let it cool completely for about 10 minutes.

Whisk pudding mix and remaining milk in medium bowl for about 2 min. Whip in the whipped topping. In a separate bowl, toss strawberries with the 1/3 cup sugar. Before assembly, drain a little of the strawberry juice out to prevent soggy. Cut the cake horizontally in half; place 1 layer on your serving dish, spread 1/2 of the whipped topping/vanilla mix, then place 1/2 of the strawberry mixture. Repeat the layers again. Enjoy. It's berrylicious!

Note: For those who are gluten-free, they do make a gluten-free baking mix. Bisquick brand is pretty darn awesome. As for the pudding mix, Jell-O brand is also gluten-free.

Shortcake:
1/4 cup sour cream
1-1/4 cups cold milk, divided
4 Tbsp. sugar
2-1/4 cups all-purpose baking mix (Bisquick)



farmerfresh

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

Five Ways to Enjoy California Sweet Cherries

Have you ever seen a cherry orchard in early spring? It is one of the prettiest sights there is. Rows of trees show off their pink blossoms, quickly followed by bright green leaves and then – drum roll, please – the season's favorite fruit – cherries appear!

By the handful or the bagful, cherries are the perfect late spring/early summer fruit. California grows the sweet variety of cherries, as opposed to the tart varieties grown in the Pacific Northwest. There are many different varieties available at the farmers' market. Our small farmers grow a nice variety of sweet cherries with subtle taste differences. Many offer select boutique varieties that you won't see in any supermarket. Think Coral Champagne or Lambert or Royal Anne. Bings, Burlats, Brooks, Rainiers and other tasty varieties can be found at Cipponeri Farms from Turlock, J&J Ramos out of Hughson, Smit Farms from Linden, Gotelli Farms of Acampo, Lujan Farms from Hughson, and several other farms at your area farmers' markets.

Do you really need five reasons to enjoy California's sweet cherries? Not really, but here are some ways to use them in May and June. The season for sweet cherries is very short, so gather them quickly, eat fresh by the handful and prepare to store away for the coming months.

1. Make cherry jam, cherry berry jam, or cherry pie filling.
2. Dehydrate them in a dehydrator or oven, after pitting, for use in baked goods or trail mix.
3. Pit them, then freeze them on a big tray; bag for later use in sauces or baked



goods.

4. Make cherry ice cream in your ice cream maker.

5. Run frozen berries through the blender with some lime juice and pour into popsicle molds.

Dream up your own ways to use May's favorite fruit. We think the best way is to just eat out of the bag as you walk the farmers' market.

Fresh Cherry Popsicles
2 cups fresh frozen pitted cherries
1 cup water
1-2 teaspoons honey agave, maple syrup, or sugar
1 lime, juiced (optional)

Mix all ingredients in a high speed blender and then place into an ice pop mold.

Freeze ice pops for 4 hours or overnight. Enjoy! Recipe: Debra Morris, PCFMA.

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Happy Mother's Day
from The Diablo Gazette

How to Save Big on Major Remodeling Projects



When looking to remodel a home, the bigger the projects, the greater the costs and an increase risk of costly damages from hiring the wrong contractor. With major projects, there is a tendency to lean towards larger contractor companies. After all, you want someone who can handle the diversity of the work. If you don't already know your contractor, then you take on that risk. One idea to minimize making the wrong decision is to break the project into smaller phases. You may find extraordinary savings as well.

The advantages can be significant. One, you get to stay in your home during the work. Two, you manage your risk, by getting to see first hand if you picked the right contractor. Three, you manage your money. That's what the Mullins decided to do in Moraga.

Rich and Laura Mullins bought a home in Moraga on top of a hill that they paid roughly \$900,000 for less than two years ago. They had a new baby and one on the way. They were nervous about the purchase because they were buying a house completely outdated to keep within their budget. It was affordable for them.

"The whole house needed to be renovated," said Laura Mullins. "It needed everything."

It needed new windows, a kitchen remodel, they wanted to convert a small bedroom into a master bathroom, exterior work, doors, the list goes on.

They began meeting with contractors to do all the work, but bids were coming in as high as \$400,000. They were new to Moraga and weren't expecting those kinds of estimates.

"Many contractors, sub-out their labor, and bid based on home value. So affluent areas tend to cost more since

home values are higher. If you have a million-dollar home then they bid, for example, in a range of 10% for a major kitchen remodel. They sub-out the labor, upsell on materials where they can get high margins," says Kyle MacClay of American Kitchen Company (AKC).

Realizing that they didn't have the money, they decided to just start with the kitchen. They went online to Home Advisor to look for kitchen remodelers, and after talking to more than a dozen, one contractor came in much lower than the rest - American Kitchen Company.

American Kitchen Company invests in his own labor and bids to keep them busy. They bid on projected labor costs. His bids are often coming in at half in the affluent neighborhoods. "I don't look at the home value when we do our bids."

American Kitchen Company also didn't try to upsell by making major design changes such taking out walls. Instead, they made some simple layout changes with the appliance by relocating the refrigerator and cooktop and spent their attention on detail work.

"What makes a kitchen pop is the attention to detail; the trim, the tile, and molding. We left the island where it was. It was simple plan. We went all out on the finishing," McClay said.

About halfway through the kitchen remodel, the Mullins asked that AKC to do the master bathroom conversion as well.

"We had talked to dozen or so contractors, but after seeing the work in the kitchen, their work ethic, and the attention to detail, we just kept asking them to do the other jobs," admits Laura.

For the windows, the Mullins took a risk with an unlicensed window contractor. The contractor didn't pull



permits, and the work failed inspection. American Kitchen Company came to the rescue there. AKC did most of the rest of the renovation, except for the roof. Mullins hired a different contractor for the roof.

After it was all said and done, the Mullins spent about \$100,000 to achieve its dream home status.

Recently, a realtor just offered \$1.4 million to buy the house. So, in just two years of purchasing an old, outdated home for \$900,000 and adding \$100,000 in renovation costs (dismissing an earlier \$400,000 bid), the Mullins strategy of phasing in the work to find the right contractor is paying huge dividends.



Win **FREE** Kitchen Remodel for TV Show

"Heart of the Home", a planned TV series coming to KRON4 in June hosted, by American Kitchen Owner Kyle McClay, is actively looking for kitchens in the Bay Area (and hopefully one or two from Contra Costa County) to remodel and be featured on the show. McClay says this show is about helping those family within our community who may be going through hard times. He anticipates remodeling six kitchens. If selected, the remodel is free but there are limits. You can upload your entry, read the complete rules and application instructions at www.KRON4.com. KRON4 and American Kitchen company will judge entries and meet with finalists before selecting the winners. Good Luck.



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aRt Cottage

by FROgard www.aRtCottage.info

DVC Student Art Featured at aRt Cottage

The AAUW wine, beer and art walk will be on May 12 from 2 - 4 and aRt Cottage is the last stop on the map. Tickets can be purchased at aRt Cottage in advance for \$25 each. This is a regular event for aRt Cottage and we are proud to have you come visit us. The walk is to raise scholarship funds for women in need to attend college and is sponsored by the Concord AAUW (American Association of University Women). Wine will be available for sampling for those with their wine walk tickets.

This year there will be special music by a local ukulele group. Singing along and dancing is welcomed. The gardens at aRt Cottage are in full bloom and waiting to be enjoyed.

The art in the gallery is there for your perusal and will also be for sale. There will be plenty to look at from local artists and the Diablo Valley College students who are under the training of Professors Leo Bersimina and Amy Wilson. aRt Cottage has now been in Concord for seven years, if you haven't been, this would be the perfect reason. It truly is a hidden treasure. Once you come to aRt Cottage, you are sure to return.

Go to www.artcottage.info for more detailed information and class registration.

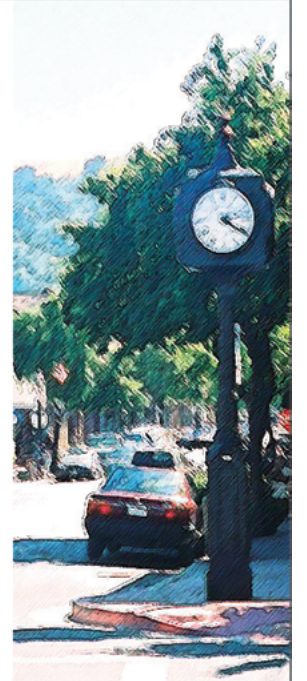


What's UP? in downtown Martinez

June 9 Downtown Summer Wine Stroll
June-Oct... 2nd Sunday Open Air Market
July 4..... Hometown 4th of July Parade
July 12-Aug. 16 .. Thursday Music & Movies
Aug. 18..... Vintage Market



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Thanks for Reading the Diablo Gazette

DIABLO GAZETTE FUN ZONE

Project Crazy

by Robin Gigoux



It's spring. The weather is sunny and warm. I get project crazy in spring.

For years, I enjoyed big projects, like removing my

lawn with a hammer, chisel and shovel, and painting the outside of my stucco house with a three-inch paintbrush. Not so much anymore. Nevertheless, this spring, feeling fit from working out, I'm preparing to remodel my fireplace and paint my kitchen and dining room floors.

I'll replace the mantel and paint the brick fireplace and hearth first. An on-line estimate of time needed to paint the fireplace, assuming one has everything needed, is four hours. Replacing the mantel increases this a bit, and I have yet to decide upon and acquire the new mantel.

The on-line estimate does not include time to decide what color or colors to use; does not include time to visit the home improvement store to acquire tools and materials; does not include time to research and acquire a new mantel and remove the old one; and does not include time to repair damage to the wall behind the old mantel that won't be concealed by a new mantel.

I already removed the old one, leaving its outline on the wall surrounded by different colored paint. What remains is the supporting strip upon which the old mantel was mounted. Three nail-like spires, that impaled it from below, rise from the strip fixed to wall studs with twelve recessed screws.

I have to scrub the fireplace clean with tri-sodium phosphate. I also have to remove adhesive gunk along the edges of the hearth that held rubber bumpers that protected crawling babies and toddlers. I'll probably have to remove that mounting strip and recessed screws and install new hardware. Painting will be the easy part.

Then I'll tackle the floors. Having painted items from flower pots to interior walls and the exterior of my house, I'm

a confident fool who believes I can paint anything and do it reasonably well.

I've painted these floors several times over the years. The first time, I did so because they were ugly, damaged linoleum; because my budget was tight; because I like change; and because I wanted to prove people wrong who said, "You can't paint linoleum." "Watch me," I said.

Not just a coat of paint. I'm talking faux treatment. I've sponged; I've replicated tile; I've replicated grass cloth. I haven't decided what the floors will look like this time, but I must decide soon. Makes me wonder if I should paint the walls first. (I did say I get project crazy in the Spring.) I've already begun moving furniture, lamps and stuff out of the kitchen and family room, resulting in chaos in other rooms and making me claustrophobic.

For those like me who get excited by a challenge like painting floors, be aware that water-based primer and paints work well for artsy layers, but a top-coat of water-based poly-urethane doesn't hold up. Three layers of oil-based poly-urethane will hold up for years but could hurt you. I'm sure breathing those toxic fumes too often over the years has hurt me. I'll wear a chemical mask this time.

So, what started as a small, four-hour painting project, growing by the day, will likely take me weeks—a good chunk of time escaping from fumes that threaten to destroy what's left of my lungs and shorten my life expectancy even more.



Readers Rants & Raves

I really enjoy reading "The Diablo Gazette." Very attractive with positive articles - Good Job! -- L. Cruz Clayton

Just saw the Gazette Saturday morning (Ron Leone showed it to me at the book store) and I wanted to say "Thanks." You even included the bit about the Panoramic Dr. extension to Willow Pass, very good! -- T. Carr, Concord

[Regarding the Contra Costa Water District Calendar Coloring contest.] I wanted to let you know we've screened the top entries and voting is open to the public (through April 27). There are a lot of great entries from our local kids! Thanks! -- Oliver S., C C Water District, Livermore

[Regarding having our kitchen remodeled for the TV Show "Heart of Home"] I went to KRON4 website and do not see anywhere to apply. Can you help me find where? It is not on the contest tab or under search engine. -Rochelle, Concord

DG: Rochelle, We broke the story a week before KRON4 posted the application and rules. Try again. <http://www.kron4.com/heart>.

Just received my first issue of "The Diablo Gazette" and wish to thank you for the interesting articles. Wishing you continuing success with your new enterprise in our community! Life is good. -- Doris B. Gill, Author, Rossmoor

Robin Gigoux, Humor and Reflection, inspired by personal experience. Novel author as Peechi Keane: "Chronicles of an Occupational Prostitute, A Workplace Survival Story" (Amazon), and contributing author of "Insight, Hindsight & Flights of Fancy", an anthology.

Below: Illustration by Sarah Szeliga.

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movie review

by Sandie Angulo Chen, Common Sense Media



“I Feel Pretty”, a Ladies’ Night at the Movies Movie

“I Feel Pretty” is a comedy starring Amy Schumer as Renee, an insecure New Yorker who, after a head injury, wakes up believing that she’s been magically transformed into a “hot” beauty -- No one in the movie (or anyone watching it, for that matter) can see how Renee imagines herself, but her new sense of confidence empowers her to live boldly and without fear of rejection. She starts to charm others, who believe she simply has an outsized ego, and she lands a new job for cosmetics heiress Avery LeClaire (Michelle Williams), as well as a new boyfriend, Ethan (Rory Scovel). But eventually Renee’s belief in her own beauty begins to affect how she treats and perceives others, including her best friends (Aidy Bryant and Busy Philipps).

Schumer’s considerable physical comedy skills, paired with standout supporting performances, make this “go girl” comedy a fun pick for a ladies’ night at the movies, despite some inconsistency. It’s hard not to laugh when Schumer is so good at making an insecure, at times even unlikable character transform into what seems like a woman who’s very comfortable with her body and herself. The problem, of course, is that the audience can’t tell whether Renee is seeing her true self and just now believes she’s hot as-is, or if her obvious concussion has magically caused some kind of “Shallow Hal” situation in her mind, making her see herself like her fellow SoulCycle classmate, a model played by Emily Ratajkowski.

Williams is hilarious as Avery, a cosmetics CEO who must impress her grandmother who started the company. Avery’s employees initially balk at the



idea of a size 10 woman being in their presence, until Renee wins them all over with her charm. The romance between Renee and Ethan is adorable and easy to buy into, but there’s also a somewhat off-putting, difficult-to-believe chemistry between Renee and Grant (Tom Hopper), Avery’s womanizing brother. The movie works best when Renee is with Ethan or her best friends. The two besties, who don’t share in Renee’s crippling insecurity and don’t understand why suddenly she’s acting like she is, are the real beauties of the film.

What Parents Should Know.

Expect strong language, some kissing, flirting, and racy conversations, as well as one sex scene with implied nudity and pillow talk. Characters also drink, at least once to excess. Despite some raised eyebrows about the movie’s concept/story, its ultimate message is that self-assurance and self-esteem -- not outward appearance -- are what’s important and that everyone is attractive in their own way.

Cast: Amy Schumer, Michelle Williams, Busy Philipps; Directors: Abby Kohn, Marc Silverstein Run time: 110 minutes; MPAA rating: PG-13

“Under Pressure” Art Exhibit

Main Street Arts Gallery will be showcasing etchings, linocuts, woodblock prints and multi-media prints of Lamorinda Art Alliance artists until June 2nd in an exhibit titled “Under Pressure.”

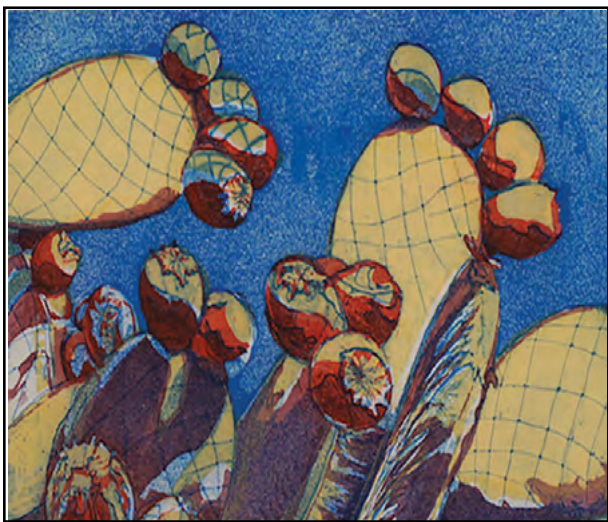
The talented group of printmakers include: Donna Arganbright, Karen Baden Thapa, Donna Brown, Marian Harris, Joanna Davenport, Danguole Kuolas, Carol Levin Brent, Joanne Lieberman, Harry Liedstrand, Gail Morrison, Pat Prosek, Arline Reimann, Don Rooney, Stephen Schumm, Joani Share, and Hallie Strock.

Jan Cook, a local printmaker and member of the California Society of Printmakers juried the artwork for the exhibit. The featured print “Sonoma Cactus” by Marian Harris, is a hand-pulled three-plate colored etching.

Join the artists at the Cinco de Mayo Reception on May 5th from 2-5 pm. Light refreshments will be served.

Main Street Arts Gallery, 613 Main Street, Martinez, is open 12-5 pm, Wednesday through Saturday and 10am-2pm on Sundays.

Lamorinda Arts Alliance is an organization of local artists and friends striving to enhance the



cultural development of Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda and the surrounding communities. Their goal is to provide coordination, and education to promote knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts. The Alliance seeks to foster a better understanding of art and encourage the exchange of ideas for the mutual benefit of all through its programs, exhibits and other activities within the community.

Lamorinda Arts Alliance: www.laa4art.org

Attached artwork: “Sonoma Cactus”, Marian Harris, hand-pulled three-plate colored etching



bookends

by Jill Hedgecock, Program Coordinator Mount Diablo California
Writer's Club jillhedgecock.com Blog: <http://writersofj.wordpress.com>

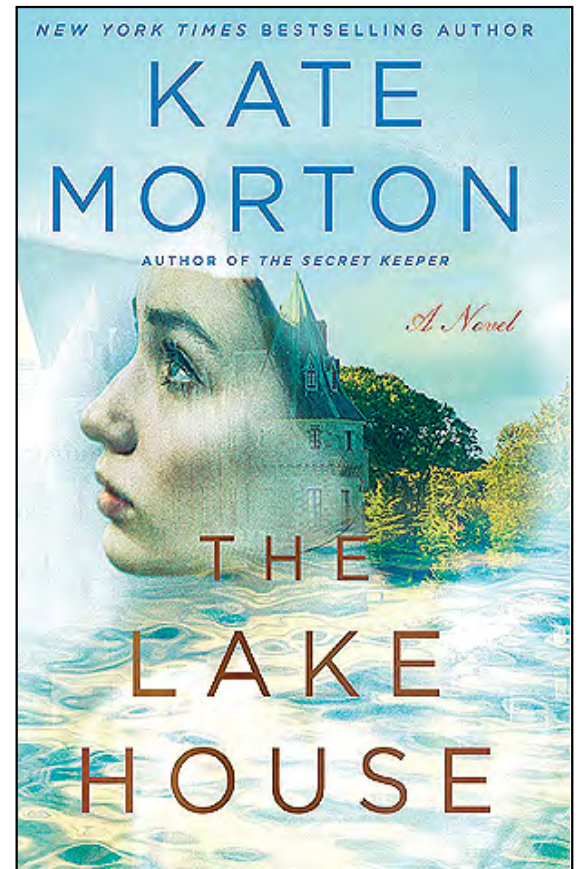
The Lake House

What happened to little Theo? Was the toddler kidnapped? Murdered? This is the major premise of *The Lake House* by Kate Morton (2016, Washington Square Press; Reprint edition, paperback, 512 pages \$12.02.) Theo had disappeared from the Edevane estate in Cornwall, England, during the Edevane’s annual Midsummer party in June 1933. The case has remained unsolved for 70 years.

Fast forward to 2003 in London when Sarah, a former policewoman who has been put on leave and has returned to Cornwall to stay with her grandfather, stumbles upon the abandoned Edevane property while out running. The derelict house intrigues Sarah because it appears that the former occupants up and left without packing a single possession. When Sarah learns about the tragedy of Theo’s disappearance, her detective skills kick in. She contacts one of Theo’s sisters, Alice. Theo’s sister wants to bury the past, but through Sarah’s prodding, Alice learns that one of her assumptions about what happened on that fateful evening in 1933 has been wrong.

The story unfolds in pieces between Alice’s childhood and the Edevane family saga in 1933 and Sarah and Alice’s current lives. Red herrings tucked into the novel keep the reader guessing about Theo’s fate. Several nannies, a retired medical doctor, and a handsome young groundskeeper could have played a role in Theo’s disappearance. Then there’s the backstory of Theo and Alice’s parents: Eleanor, a fiercely devoted wife, and Anthony, a nature lover, war veteran, and loving father.

The Lake House received a Woman & Home Reader’s Choice Award for Best Historical Thriller (2016) and a Goodreads Choice Award Nominee for Historical Fiction (2015). Readers who enjoy a compelling mystery, learning



about the effects of World War I on servicemen, and poetic prose will love this book. The mystery of what happened to Theo launches this otherwise quiet book into a page-turning frenzy.

Kate Morton is an award-winning, New York Times bestselling author. Her five novels are published in over 40 countries, in 34 languages, and have all been number one bestsellers around the world. Kate grew up in Queensland and now splits her time between London and Australia. She has degrees in dramatic art and English literature with a focus in nineteenth-century tragedy and contemporary Gothic novels. Morton says of her experiences as a reader and novelist, “I fell deeply in love with books as a child and believe that reading is freedom; that to read is to live a thousand lives in one; that fiction is a magical conversation between two people - you and me - in which our minds meet across time and space.”

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- L. Cruz Clayton



legalbriefs

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

The Law and Overtime Pay

The law involving overtime pay is complicated, but I will try to simplify it as best I can. Before the 1930's, there were very few laws regulating work conditions. In 1938, the federal government (led by President Franklin D. Roosevelt) passed the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Addressing the problem of long working hours, the federal government decided that it would not limit the number of hours that employees could be required to work in a day or a week. Rather, the government decided that it would combat the problem of long working hours by requiring employers to pay employees "time and a half" for working more than 40 hours in a week. In other words, employers were free to demand that their workers work long hours – they just had to pay them extra. This is still the basic law today (in California workers are entitled to one day's rest per week).

The states also passed similar overtime laws. Although these state laws primarily duplicate the federal laws there are differences. In California, for instance, employers must pay time and a half not only when an employee works more than 40 hours in a week, but also when an employee works more than 8 hours in a day (double time for working more than 12 hours in a day). If an employee, for example, works 10 hours on the first day of a pay period, she is entitled to 2 hours of pay at time and a half under California law (but would not be entitled to extra pay under federal law). It is well-settled that states can enact laws more generous to employees than provided by federal law. These differences between state and federal laws can be a trap for employers who think they are complying with one law only to find out that they have violated another.

Many legal battles are fought over the issue of whether an employee or group of employees are "exempt" from the overtime pay laws. The three most

common "exemptions" are employees who are classified as salaried "executive, administrative or professional" employees. I experienced this exemption first-hand when I graduated from law school, became a "professional," got a good job in a large law firm, and proceeded to work lengthy hours without getting paid additional amounts for all the extra hours – my salary remained the same no matter how many hours the partners demanded that I work. "Executive" employees are those whose primary duty is management, and who supervise two or more employees, and who have authority to hire and fire (or to recommend hiring and firing). Many employers have been hammered in class action lawsuits for mis-classifying employees as "managers" and paying them salaries when in fact they were just regular production employees who were entitled to overtime. For example, Taco Bell paid millions for classifying its counter help as assistant managers and not paying them overtime.

"Administrative" employees are those whose primary duty is performance of office or nonmanual work directly related to the management or general business operations of the employer (as opposed to, for example, working on a factory line or being a salesperson in a retail establishment) and whose primary duty involves the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance. Examples of this include Accountants, Human Resource Managers, Purchasing Agents, and some Executive Assistants. If an employee performs one or more administrative or executive duties and is paid more than \$100,000.00 per year he or she is also exempt. To be exempt under California law, the employee must be salaried and earn more than twice the minimum wage (under federal law the employee must be salaried and earn at least \$455.00 per week).

New Voting Equipment Needs Test Drivers

Contra Costa County poll workers are invited to test drive Contra Costa County's new voting equipment.

Concord is partnering with the Contra Costa Elections Division to host opportunities for poll workers to practice with and learn about the County's new ballot scanner and ballot marking device.

The equipment will be available Tuesday and Wednesday, May 15 and 16, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in

the Council Chamber at Civic Center, 1950 Parkside Dr. No appointment is necessary and Elections staff will be available to answer any questions.

The equipment will be at all of Contra Costa County's 271 polling places for the June 5, 2018 Primary Election and at all seven Regional Early Voting locations from May 29 through June 2.

For more information about the June election, visit www.cocovote.us.

Pearl Harbor Survivor Kohler's Valor Inspires Respect

by Dominic Aliano

Memorial Day is for remembering the men and women who have died while serving in the country's armed services. I thought it would be fitting for me to share my deep appreciation for those who have given everything to protect our freedoms.

Not so long ago, Sam Richards, who writes for the East Bay Times, wrote an article about Earl Kohler's service during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. This article mentions that Mr. Kohler was given permission from his parents to enlist in the United States Navy at age 17. He enlisted in 1941 and was stationed at Pearl Harbor. On December 7, he was writing a letter to his parents when a Japanese bomb exploded near him. Immediately, "Kohler was pelted with flying glass from blown-out windows; he and a fellow sailor refused orders to take cover and instead grabbed a machine gun and started firing at Japanese planes." Mr. Kohler is then quoted saying, "There was just all this death and destruction all around me, bodies floating in the water, sunken ships, all of it. But we did the best we could... We were going to go down fighting."

I mention this article because Mr. Kohler's valor made me feel several different ways. It first inspired me to never give up and to always stay true to who I am during times of adversity. I then felt humbled and that is because I needed to give myself a reality check by remembering that I am able to pursue my dreams in life because of the sacrifices of the people serving in the armed forces. Lastly, it made me value my life a whole lot more.

Mr. Kohler at age 17, faced death head-

on because he knew it was what needed to be done in that situation. I mean, how many of us would answer that call? After reading this article, I asked myself if I would be able to do what he did at such an early age and honestly, I don't know. Most of us don't know or know we definitely couldn't.

Today, there are men and women who do answer this call and put themselves in harm's way. Unfortunately, not all of them survive and because of that, we must do our part in always remembering their sacrifice.

For me, it is very disappointing to see many Americans use this federal holiday only for their own personal pleasure, forgetting why we have it. Have fun on this three-day weekend but remember why we have it and at some point, show your respects to these men and women that have sacrificed their lives for us. We wouldn't have the individual liberty we have if it wasn't for these brave people to defend it.

Thank you to all our veterans, those currently serving, and to the families who have endured through difficult times.

Read Richards entire article go to <https://bayareane.ws/2KgbvzO>



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LUCKY

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

Lucky is a 6- to 7-year-old senior male Rat Terrier mix. Sadly, his owner became ill and could no longer care for him so he was surrendered to Paws and Pooches. This "pawsitively special dawg" is neutered, micro-chipped, current on vaccines, and had dental work at the end of

2017. He is a total gentleman that loves to chill beside you. He also lives for his walks. He is crate trained and is house trained after a short acclimation period. He has a positive history with both big and small dogs and appears fine with cats. At adoption events, he has behaved appropriately with children. If you're interested in giving this spry little senior boy a permanent home, email Barbara at pawsandpooches@yahoo.com or call her at (925) 565-7670.

Paws and Pooches is located in Concord. It is a small family run 501C-3 Non-Profit. They hold adoption events at the PetSmart in 2891 Ygnacio Valley



Rd, Walnut Creek from 12 -4 on the 1st and 2nd weekends of the month and the PetSmart at 1700 Willow Pass Rd in Concord on the 3rd and 4th weekend from 12 -4. Call in advance to make sure Lucky will be there. Visit <https://www.adoptapet.com/pet/21298237-concord-california-rat-terrier-mix> and get Lucky! Lucky's adoption fee is \$300.

Editors Note: Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram celebrity with more than 58,000 followers. [Instagram.com/ruby-doobydo](https://www.instagram.com/ruby-doobydo). 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.

Concord Library to Close in May!

The Concord Library will be closed for three weeks in May to complete a renovation project to remodel and update the public restrooms. The library will be closed from Sunday, May 6 through Monday, May 28, and will reopen on Tuesday, May 29.

During the closure, patrons are encouraged to use neighboring libraries in Pleasant Hill or Clayton to return books and can request to pick

up holds at other branches while the Concord branch is closed. The book drop and pick up services will not be available at the Concord branch.

The City of Concord is renovating the restrooms, adding ADA-compliant features, and installing new wall and floor tile, trim and fixtures. The restrooms will also be painted.

12 Week Senior Fitness Training

The Concord Senior Center offers adults ages 50+ a new way to learn the skills necessary to become and stay physically active. Thanks to an instructor training grant from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Senior Center will offer the Active Living Every Day (ALED) program to the Concord community. Concord is one of 46 park and recreation agencies to receive the grant.

"This grant from NRPA and the CDC allows us to help the older adults in our community, and adds a new way Concord residents can work to achieve a healthy lifestyle," said Avis Connolly, Senior Center Manager.

The ALED program will be offered once a week beginning May 3 for 12 weeks by certified and trained instructors on Thursdays from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. The classes are suited for anyone interested in achieving a healthy lifestyle through moderate-intensity physical activity that fits in everyday life. Discoveries show that physical activity need not be strenuous to benefit

health. The ALED program emphasizes appealing alternatives to traditional fitness programs and appropriate skills to improve the overall quality of life of adults.

For more information, contact the Program Coordinator Dario Sanchez, (925) 671-3017 or dario.sanchez@city-ofconcord.org. To register, visit www.ConcordReg.org.



2018-2019 Contra Costa County Teachers of the Year Finalists Named

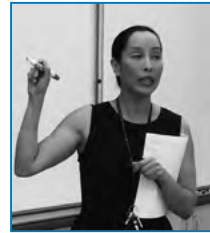
Four teachers have been named as the 2018-2019 Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year (TOY) Finalists: Shanna Gagnon, San Ramon Valley Unified School District; Kelly Perkins, Mt. Diablo Unified School District; Rosie Reid, Mt. Diablo Unified School District; and Andrea Salas, Martinez Unified School District. Two of these four finalists will be chosen in late September and will represent Contra Costa County in the California State TOY Program.

Shanna Gagnon has been teaching at California High School, San Ramon for the past five years. Previously, she taught History for two years with the Martinez and the Acalanes School districts.

Kelly Perkins, a life skills and remedial math and language arts instructor, chose teaching special education classes because she enjoys guiding her students to become independent thinkers and learners. For the past 10 years, Perkins has been a special day class teacher at Ygnacio Valley High School, in Concord. Her 27-year teach-



Kelly Perkins



Andrea Salas



Rosie Reid



Shanna Gagnon

ing career includes special education instruction for two elementary schools, as well as continuing to serve as an adjunct professor for the Education Specialist Program at St. Mary's College, in Moraga, since 1988.

Rosie Reid has taught English/ELD at Northgate High School, in Walnut Creek for the past two years. Her 16 years of instruction includes teaching high school English courses at Piedmont High School, in Piedmont and John O'Connell High School, in San Francisco.

Andrea Salas began her teaching career with Teach for America before the Los Angeles native brought her education love and skills up north to the Oakland Unified School District's classrooms for five years. Next, she began teaching mathematics, statistics and computer science at Alhambra High School, in Martinez, and has been there for the past 19 years.

The county's TOY program is directed by the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCCOE).

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theRIGHTmove
by Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate
Your Most Recent Market Data

The Art of Matchmaking: Buyers and Seller

Yes, you heard this right, buyers and sellers can meet each other's needs, without even having met each other. After all, you both have the same goal; simply, sellers want to sell and buyers want to buy. You aren't really at odds. It's just that the negotiation process has to be a bit arm's length for the best interest of all involved.

Sellers: The marketing process is designed to allow those buyers who are most likely to be attracted to what you have, to find it. Often buyers are attracted to your home for the same reasons you were; they love the location and/or share your design and lifestyle preferences. Expert marketing will highlight and embellish those features, particularly through amazing photography (not a cell phone photo) after a proper home staging. This is not decorating but demographic, theory and staging concepts. We recommend a CSP (Certified Staging Professionals have had hands on training, pass rigorous tests and participate in staging cases to become certified). With luck, planning and proper marketing, you could enjoy multiple offers and solid offers that close.

Buyers: Of course, first and foremost, it's all about the MONEY when you are selling or buying. The winning bid must also be the best offer, often higher or highest in price (compared to the other offers, usually in the top 3) with good terms and quick closing timeframes. Also, meeting a seller's other needs can

be a tipping point in your favor. Seller considerations worth noting would be things like desired close date, flexibility with move date or rentback, contingency timeframes to accommodate another purchase and the like.

Don't forget the details. Have a true preapproval with a reputable lender that has verified your employment and income. Pre-qualify means you have put in an application. There is a BIG difference between the two. The buyers who do better getting offers accepted have DU (direct underwriter) approval which is the ultimate preapproval.

Lastly, have your offer well written with details noted and have all the documentation attached. Avoid strange contingencies or conditions. Think like a seller. Sellers want to feel confident about the offer they choose. To make a seller feel confident about your offer, provide proof of your funds to purchase, a preapproval letter, a "love letter" to the seller about why you love their home and a little about yourselves, and a receipt for the reports and disclosures you've reviewed. Any one of these missing, in a multiple offer situation, could mean your offer is put to the bottom of the pile.

Matching your situation with the sellers in as many areas as possible makes it easier for them to see the merits of your offer. Do your best and always make the offer; you surely won't get the property if you don't. Happy House Hunting.

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"I almost sold my home off the MLS to a neighbor, but I received multiple offers and \$20,000 more after going on the market. I know the beautiful staging made a big difference to my price. Thanks Terrylynn (and her team)." - Nancy

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Join White Pony Express in Meeting a \$250,000 Matching Fund Challenge by End of May

As White Pony Express (WPE) moves closer to meeting its mission, it needs more support than ever before. In 2018 White Pony Express increased its financial needs due to the capacity building its done in the past two years. Its budget in 2018 is triple what it was in 2016—with more and more lives uplifted. Through our new School Pantry Program, we are in the process of doubling our food distribution to 10,000 pounds a day over the next two years, reaching 12,000—15,000 of those suffering from hunger that we are not reaching today.

Fortunately, WPE has received an incredible opportunity! Luis Gerardo del

Valle Torres and Heart's Path Foundation have pledged \$250,000 in matching funds for all financial donations, grants and pledges received between April 1 and May 31, 2018. This means that WPE can raise \$500,000 in the next two months, taking a HUGE step toward achieving our annual fundraising goal.

If you are interested in making a contribution to help WPE with this matching opportunity, please send your contribution to White Pony Express at 1966 Tice Valley Blvd., #101, Walnut Creek, CA 94595, or online at www.whiteponyexpress.org/donate/

37th Annual Walnut Creek Art & Wine Festival June 2-3



The 37th annual Walnut Creek Art & Wine Festival offers two full days of FREE family entertainment with over 200 arts and crafts booths, live music on two stages, a wide variety of food and drink concessions, Craft Beer Garden, Premium Wine Tent, interactive Kids Zone and famous Festival Train. The

event is presented by the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce throughout beautiful Heather Farm Park.

The popular outdoor Sports Bar returns with a big screen TV broadcasting live A's and Warriors games (depending on schedule). The Indie Craft Marketplace has expanded this year with more local artists featuring jewelry, handmade leather goods, photography, and hand-crafted furniture.

Saturday, June 2, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, June 3, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Heather Farm Park at 301 N. San Carlos Drive, Walnut Creek. BART-able with free shuttle ride to the festival from the Walnut Creek Station. Parking at Heather Farm Park is \$8.

More information: <http://www.walnut-creek.com/artwinefestivalwc>

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



Secret Service Agents are constantly asked about the personal lives of protectees (a protectee is anybody protected by the Secret Service). I am happy to share "inside" stories, especially when they reflect protectees' kindness and compassion. No ulterior motives, no press coverage, no political undertones. Their human side, if you will.

All politics aside, one protectee who was admired by all agents is Former First Lady Barbara Bush. Her kindness is legendary within the agency. Stories of her baking cakes or cookies for agents on their birthdays are well known. Agents often describe her as grandmotherly. I have never met nor heard of an agent who ever had anything negative to say regarding Mrs. Bush (nor her husband for that matter).

I remember working with an agent on the road somewhere (you traveled so much in the Service that you would often lose track of where certain things occurred. They just happened "on

the road somewhere") who was "reprimanded" by Mrs. Bush.

Agent John was standing post at a door just outside the south lawn side of the White House. It was the middle of the night and snowing when the call came over the radio that Mrs. Bush was moving down from the 2nd floor residence to the south lawn with the First Dog, Millie, the Bush's beloved Springer Spaniel. Evidently, Millie had to answer the call of nature. Agent John was wearing a suit, but no coat in the bitter cold when Mrs. Bush, who was in her robe and slippers, and Millie stepped outside. Mrs. Bush looked at him and in a stern voice and said, "John, where's your coat?!" John told her he was fine and only had ten minutes remaining on his shift. Mrs. Bush curtly replied, "You get a coat on right now!" After leading Millie to the lawn, she gave John a glaring frown and proceeded back into the White House.

Seconds later, out stepped Mrs. Bush with a coat. She handed the coat to John and ordered, "Now you put this on and I don't want any arguing!" Mrs. Bush meant business and who was John to argue with the First Lady? He thanked her, and she told him good night and went to bed. John reluctantly slipped the coat on as ordered. He was stunned when he noticed embroidered over the left breast, the official presidential seal. On the right was embroidered, "President George H. W. Bush." So, for the remaining minutes of his shift, John stood, in the snow, wearing the jacket of the nation's 41st President.

Former First Lady Barbara Bush

A First Class Lady

My first encounter with Former First Lady Bush was in San Francisco. I was a new agent and she was one of

my first protectee assignments. I had always been a fan of hers (well, at least the warm persona that came across on the T.V. screen) and I was looking forward to working her detail. I had hoped she would be as warm and kind as I had heard, a protectee who seemed to appreciate our presence.

Mrs. Bush was coming to San Francisco to be the surprise keynote speaker at a large corporation's annual awards banquet which was being held at the Parc 55 Hotel. She would also be staying overnight there. My assignment was as a Post Stander both in front of her hotel suite door and at her event site - a boring assignment for veteran agents, but pretty cool when you're the new guy. We owned the wing of the floor where Mrs. Bush's suite was located. In addition to the suite, her traveling assistant's room was on this wing, as well as our Secret Service Command Post (operation cen-

ter). All remaining rooms were assigned to agents. Other Secret Service rooms were strategically located on other

floors of the hotel. Upon arrival at the hotel, Mrs. Bush was scheduled to spend some down time in her suite to rest and freshen up before speaking at the banquet that evening.

The Command Post made the notification over the radio to all agents that Mrs. Bush's motorcade had arrived at the hotel. Our wing/floor was secure, bomb sweeps completed, and agents posted. I was at the end of the hall, posted at her suite door. A few minutes later, down the opposite end of the hall and around the corner, the "ding" of

the elevator bell broke the silence. Then came an agent, followed by Mrs. Bush, her assistant, and several other agents. At this point, Mrs. Bush was out of the public eye.

This is often when a protectee will lose the smile and you notice the exhaustion in their eyes; but not Mrs. Bush. She had a big, warm, smile on her face and her eyes sparkled. She was wearing a



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conservative yet classy sky-blue dress, her white hair was neatly done exactly like I had seen a hundred times before in pictures and on T.V. and around her neck she wore her famous fake pearls. As she came down the hall she said hello to each agent. Then she came to me at her suite door and said, "Hello, how are you?" I replied, "Hello ma'am." She looked and acted exactly how I'd hoped she would. She and her assistant entered the suite. I closed the door behind them and continued to stand post at the door. She had about an hour-and-a-half of downtime in the suite before she was to speak at the awards banquet.

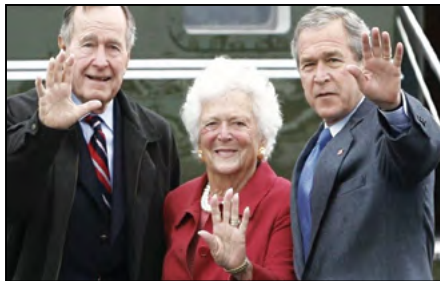
Approximately 20 minutes before Mrs. Bush was to depart her suite in route to the banquet room, I was reassigned to "push" (relieve) the agent posted at the Hold Room, located directly behind the banquet room. It was actually a wide hallway where Mrs. Bush would wait before being introduced and take the stage to deliver her speech. The area was secured, meaning it had been closed off to the public and swept for explosives. I relieved the agent and held the area.

Several minutes later the command post radioed that Mrs. Bush would be departing the suite momentarily in route to me at the hold area. I informed that all was clear. Shortly thereafter, an agent, followed by Mrs. Bush, her assistant and several other detail agents entered the area. She had the same sparkle in her eyes and beaming smile as when she arrived at her suite earlier.

Unbeknownst to her, the CEO of the corporation that she was about to speak to had a surprise for her. Knowing Mrs. Bush was a dog lover, he had prearranged with Mrs. Bush's assistant and the Secret Service to bring along his own Springer Spaniel, which looked much like the Bush's dog, Millie. So, as Mrs. Bush stood talking with her

assistant and her Secret Service Detail Leader, the CEO entered the hold area with his spaniel on a leash. A surprised Mrs. Bush saw the dog and did a double take, her eyes widened, and she immediately shouted, "Oh, aren't you cute?!" She then dropped to one knee, clapped her hands together twice and shouted "Come here! Come here!" The CEO let go of the leash and the spaniel shot over to Mrs. Bush and jumped with her front paws onto Mrs. Bush's knee. The dog wiggled frantically with excitement as Mrs. Bush cradled the dog's head with a hand on each side of its cheeks and kissed it on the top of the head. "I have one at home just like you!" she said still on one knee. She then hugged the dog as the dog excitedly got a few licks in on Mrs. Bush's face. I don't know who was happier, Mrs. Bush or the Springer Spaniel.

Here, the Former First Lady of the United States was about to give a presentation to 500 people. Yet with total disregard to the possibility of dog hair and/or slightly smudged makeup, she was on one knee sharing a heartfelt moment with man's best friend. I was amazed and totally impressed. For my first protectee assignment, I couldn't have been more delighted. She was that same genuine person in true life as she was on T.V., the person I had hoped she would be; unpretentious, kind, warm and caring -- a true first class Former First Lady.



A Country Mourns

A tribute by Eric Enos

A country mourns and sheds a tear, for its white-haired matriarch is no longer here.

The warm soft light has flickered but it has not gone out. For it shines from sea to shining sea in memories throughout.

The twinkling eyes were the reflection of a wise soul. Devout, loving wife, mother, grandmother, first lady. All were her role.

And like my mother, an angel still amongst us, she was a rock amidst pebbles and the most colorful flower in the bouquet. She was the warmth and sunshine of a bright and brilliant day.

Although always in her captain's shadow, a foundation of family, strength, honor, and stern guidance all did see. In all His glory it was evident, God truly did shed His grace on thee.

A three-year old little angel who has patiently waited 65 years, takes her mother's hand to show her the glory of heaven. No more worry, pain, or fears.

Now in His kingdom and able to touch God's face, our Lord has spoken to us through her dignity, wisdom, and grace.

The tired and lonely old captain has but few pages remaining to enter in his log. Blue skies have darkened and given way to a dense fog.

When eyes are closed he sees her, but her hand he can hold no more. Adrift in his life's boat, he awaits her beaconing light which will soon guide him home to shore.

An oyster sacrifices its pearl, the Lord takes what He gives. The world is a better place for in our hearts the white-haired lady's example lives.

Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow. That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

Your warm soft light has flickered but it has not gone out. For your life's role has helped pave our paths to eternity, via your route.

Thank you and God bless you Mrs. Bush.

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