

The Diablo Gazette™

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Communities
Concord, Clayton, Walnut Creek, Martinez, Pleasant Hill
www.diablogazette.com | www.facebook.com/diablogazette | (925) 298-9990

DECEMBER 2018

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
from The Diablo Gazette



Miwok Mt. Diablo Trails page 16

Photo: Mayor's Community Service Award goes to all 3rd graders in Concord, "In many ways, they represent the future of Concord" - Mayor Edi Birsan

Photo by CSK Photography

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Secret Service: A Farewell to President George Bush
 - Best Organizations to Donate Locally
 - Artsy-Fartsy Tacos in Concord
 - Lime Ridge Turkey Attack
 - Rain: Beware Deadly Wild Mushrooms
 - Holiday Tips, Recipes, and Events



FALL FLOORING DEALS AND SALES !

Over 100 rolls of Carpet including Remants at Discount Prices

Save up to 50% on Carpet Installation! UP to 60% on Carpet Tiles!

Save on Vinyl Flooring, Carpet Remnants, and Overstock

McCurley's
Carpets • Hardwood • Laminate • Stone
2395-J Monument Blvd., Concord
(Next door to Harvest House Shaw Carpet)
925-680-4433

Email: info@macfloor.com
www.MacFloor.com

3191-J Crow Canyon Place, San Ramon
(Next to Sprouts in the Crow Canyon Plaza)
925-866-2200

SINCE 1978, CONTRA COSTA'S ORIGINAL
TAKE-OUT & HOME DELIVERY GOURMET PIZZA



NOW FEATURING
GLUTEN-FREE CRUST

SPECIAL DEAL
Buy any size Cheese Pizza,
Get 2nd Pizza of equal or lesser value at
50% OFF !
(925) 671-2777
4702 Clayton Rd. Concord
Tax and delivery additional.



cleanAIR
HVAC
925-689-7017

**Installation,
Service,& Repair**

- Maintenance Agreements
- Insured and Bonded

www.cahvac.com

CA Lic. 829011

Business Cards In 1 Hour!

925-825-4623
Call or Come in for details



UPS Store Digital Printing Is the perfect solution for the small business that needs it now!

Flyers, Brochures, Presentation Materials, Posters, Letterhead, Postcards, Invitations, Banners, Menus, Newsletters, Calendars, Shredding

Fast, Efficient and Friendly
Best Service in Town

Notary & Livescans
available without appointment during normal business hours

Store Hours:
Monday-Friday 8:00am - 6:30 pm
Saturday 9:00am-4:00pm

The UPS Store®
Treat at Clayton Rd. Concord
4425-C Treat Blvd.
email: store0854@theupsstore.com



the concordian

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

Going Forward Through the Past

By Edi Birsan

We cannot change what we had for breakfast, let alone history. The focus should always be going forward with some reminders of what the past pointed to. Always look forward, after all, only 3rd grade teachers and Moms of little kids have eyes in the back of their heads.

There: Backward to Go

Forward - After the horrible divisiveness of the 2016 election and the shocking continuation of it in 2017, the lack of civility in our civil discourse needed to be countered. Taking the 150th Anniversary of our city's founding and adding the literal interpretation of the name Concord, I set the theme of Concord as "Living in concordance and harmony with others."

To remind people how the survivors of the town of Pacheco relied on each other in their establishment of our city, I worked this theme into every public speaking opportunity regardless of the topic of the event whether speaking to the Cub Scouts or a remembrance ceremony. My goal was to stay on message to tone down the discord within Concord.

Going forward, it will be to the new Mayor to pick her theme. I suggest two possible themes: "Concord Means Business" or "Education Leads the Way".

We should get the message out that we are a business-friendly community seeking growth through a good mix of economic sustainable businesses. This would bring large benefits to us all; namely, reducing traffic and improving the health and quality of life simply through one aspect: bringing your job closer to you.

Also, we need to broaden the public's perception that quality education is more than creating higher property values, but that it is also a fundamental and vital aspect requiring family support. Students in schools who feel involved and part of the community become better residents. Students that look forward to going to school, make teachers able to teach better.

I love talking to kids in schools. I want to do more of it. Maybe this should be my theme. What do you think?

The transformation to a more open government. We had a major change in politics with the introduction of Council Districts. One of the effect of this was obvious in that the amount of money spent on campaigns came way down. There may be other effects or grimly worded consequences, but on the whole, I hope we will get a wider pool of candidates and closer links between the council members and the residents of Concord. However, more needs to be done, including some issues avoided this year.

1. Directly Elected Mayor - The existence of Districts screams out

for there to be a citywide elected Mayor. This will put the decision in the hands of the voters not just three out of five council members. We need this on the ballot in 2020 to go into effect 2022.

2. Defined Rotation of Mayor - As of now, the Mayor is chosen by the majority of the Council. In Concord, we do not have the tradition common in many other jurisdictions to simply rotate among all council members so each will become Mayor at some point. In Concord, it is a blood sport. Many may be aware that I was skipped over twice for Mayor/Vice Mayor for not supporting the re-election of the incumbents in 2014.

What you do not know is that up until September of last year, the backroom politics had someone else as the anointed one for Mayor. Only a sequence of missteps led to the conclusion of a majority that maybe they should let me have a shot at it. But they also simultaneously shifted the Mayor's term from two years down to one.

We need an ordinance to define the rotation procedure of the Mayor. It should be a legal ordinance, so it cannot be arbitrarily altered. It should not be simply a policy, since policies can be ignored on a whim. (This is exactly what Walnut Creek Council did to one of their less popular members.)

3. Transparency: Under the Brown Act, the Council may not discuss (nor take action) on issues that are brought forth in public comment for items not on the agenda. In addition, we may also not have a full discussion of what items to put on a future agenda. We are not allowed to discuss these things either in or out of a council meeting, with or without public participation. We need to have open transparent access to talk about what goes on in the future agenda with both ourselves and the Public.

4. Police and safety - For eight years, I have been fighting to get a police substation in the Monument. Having closed substations is what motivated me to run for council. This needs to be done.

5. Housing/Rental - For several years I have been advocating for a series of Best Practices in our rental field that would provide some reasonable stability for a major portion of our renters in our older and larger apartment buildings. Past councils have refused to take this up and pass even the most modest of ideas. For example, no rent increases allowed if you are in default on city code enforcement orders. As this article goes to press, this issue has finally been scheduled for discussion on December 11th, and we will see if the Council elects to continue its delaying actions.

There is much more to be said, but only so much room. Stay in touch, remember that government is either listening to you or to someone else.

Ice Sculptures Are Just Plain Cool

by David King

Move over Frosty the Snowman, Concord has Mr. Robert Chislett, our renowned ice sculptor of Chisel It Ice. He's one of the best in the country, trained and mentored by world renown ice sculptor Vivat Hongpong. Recently, the Golden State Warriors called upon him for this season's opening night celebration, the night the Warriors received their NBA 2018 Championship rings. For this event, Chisel It Ice built a fully stocked ice bar, an ice throne, and ice basketballs, and several frozen Warrior Jerseys. In 2016, Chisel It Ice had been called upon for NBA Championships, NHL Finals, NFL Superbowl, and the MLB World Series.

The holiday season is the busiest time of year for Chisel It Ice. They deliver up to 20 deliveries each day. I toured his freezer warehouse where 15 tons of ice sculptures were waiting to be shipped.

Many corporations and Holiday events will request custom sculptures of all shapes, sizes and colors. The overall economy has been stronger this year, resulting in an increase in demand for frozen statues, furniture and centerpieces each customized to fit anyone's needs.

No project has been too big. He has sculpted a full-size convertible Lexus, a piano, palaces, and a Wells Fargo stagecoach. Each is an intricately detailed masterpiece.

The Lexus weighed in at 10 tons.

Robert makes his own ice blocks and his tools are chainsaws,



chipping tools, torches and a 20'x12' freezer. The rest is up to the creative minds and hands a small team of designers including his CIO, Chief Inspiration Officer, his 13-year old-daughter, Claire.

"There's over 100 years of ice sculpting experience working here," Robert stated. "My more senior designers, Andrew Martin, Jason Adams, Devin King, Jack Mackey each have eight plus years." Robert has 27 years of experience.

Even if you don't need an ice sculpture, you will be amazed at the artistry and colors an ice sculpture can have. Visit his gallery online at chiselit.com. I think you will agree, they are just plain cool.



Build the Bench: Campaign Training for Future Candidates Know how to win in the next election.

Now that the elected candidates have assumed their respective local offices, it is time to start making your plans to run for public service. Afterall, being the best person for the job doesn't always win elections, don't we know. It also takes a savvy campaigner.

Build the Bench was launched by the East Bay Leadership Council (an employer-led public policy advocacy organization) in 2017 with a mission to help more people who care about this community receive the tools, know-how, and connections needed to run for office.

Launched in 2017, Build the Bench connects people with an interest in public service with effective tools and local campaign experts who will help them run and win. They are already seeing results. Their first four graduates of the East Bay Leadership Council (EBLC) led program ran for office in the region and won.

A healthy democracy and a thriving East Bay require participation from those who care and are equipped to make our region a better place to live and work. Unfortunately, the pile of government forms and intimidating campaign process leaves too many people on the sidelines.

This is a nonpartisan organization and there is no political litmus test to participate. Just live in Contra Costa or Alameda County and care about strengthening the economy and improving quality of life in the East Bay.

You'll learn from campaign professionals who have worked on all kinds of campaigns and know how to win in the East Bay and in your



Photo by CSK Photography. Concord's newly elected officials were sworn in on December 5. L-R: Patti Barsotti, City Treasurer; Councilmembers: District 1 Laura Hoffmeister, District 5 Tim McGallian, and District 3 Dominic Aliano

neighborhood. Key parts of the program will include: assessing your chances of success, building a campaign team, managing financial filing and governance,

creating a policy platform that will resonate with voters, and what it will be like when you win.

This nonpartisan program is designed for busy professionals to learn what is needed to pursue offices from city councils and special districts to the state legislature and higher. No matter your political aspirations, they are

there to help.

Completing this program will take time, but no more time than being an elected official. The program will last 10 weeks with training scheduled on Tuesday from 6PM - 8PM. A similar time slot as many elected offices in the region.

Not quite convinced to run for office yet? Maybe you know of a friend or colleague who is or could make a strong public official. Contact EBLC by sending them a quick email to info@buildthebench.com or stop by their office to pick up a postcard to put in the mail to help their recruiting process.

Applications are online. The 2019 session schedule is still in the works and depends on the class of applicants. All applications are expected to be reviewed by end of December 2018, set up in-person interviews in early 2019, and start training in the Spring. \$1,000 sponsorships may be available.

To learn more and apply for the program visit www.buildthebench.com.

East Bay Leadership Council is located at 1615 Bonanza Street, #324 in Walnut Creek. Phone (925) 246-1880.

LIMITED TIME ONLY!

14 month certificate

2.75% APY*

What are
YOU
saving for?

 **SafeAmerica**
Credit Union

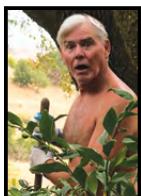
safeamerica.com | (800) 972-0999 |  

*Annual Percentage Yield. Minimum balance requirement is \$1,000. Rate subject to change without notice. Once a certificate is opened, the rate remains fixed through maturity.

Offer subject to change or cancel without notice. SafeAmerica membership is required.

 **AMERICAN SHARE INSURANCE**

Your savings insured to \$500,000 per account. By members' choice, this institution is not federally insured, or insured by any state government.



David George THE NAKED GARDENER

Do you drink coffee? My lovely wife and I down two mugs each morning. We grind our own Peet's Coffee beans and drip brew the delicious elixir. A mug of steaming coffee wards off demons from the night before. Before we realize, we are socially and professionally productive again.

Research has shown that coffee has more benefits for humans than just the caffeine kick. You've probably read about those. What you may not know is that used coffee grounds are a fabulous source of nutrients for your garden. We deposit our morning's spent grounds in our compost bin. None get thrown into the trash (smelly!) or down the drain (clogs!).

Used coffee grounds are rich in nitrogen and other beneficial minerals for the garden. Nitrogen is your basic green garden rocket fuel. Dumping grounds into your composting bin will increase the nitrogen percentage of your compost mixture from around 2% (grass and leaves) to 5%. The acidity (or pH) will be nearly neutral 6.5 (acidity in coffee beans is water-soluble and ends up in your mug, not your garden).

Used coffee grounds improves your soil's structure, making it more "loamy" or easy to dig in, increases healthy water



A Java Kick for your Garden

drainage and aeration, and attracts beneficial earthworms and microscopic bugs that make the nutrients available for plants to absorb.

Do you have pests? We certainly do. If you don't have a compost bin, coffee grounds can be directly spread around flower or vegetable beds to ward off unwanted visitors. The grounds form a barrier that stops snails, slugs, and ants (that carry aphids onto your plants), and earwigs. The spicy aroma also repels rabbits, skunks, raccoons, and unwelcome cats.

If your acid-loving plants are languishing, grind some fresh coffee beans, or buy the cheaper stuff that comes in cans. Spread these unused grounds around the base of your acid-loving plants like

azaleas, rhododendrons, roses, berries, or carrots, then water the grounds to release the acid. Hydrangeas in particular will love their fresh Java kick and reward you with bright blue flowers, no matter what their original bloom color. Grounds are less expensive than packaged fertilizer at the local nursery.

You say you don't drink coffee? Tons of used coffee grounds surround you. Ask a local coffee shop or restaurant to set aside a few pounds for you each week. You can also ask your coffee-drinking neighbors to donate their used grounds. Tell them the Naked Gardener sent you!

Wild Mushroom Warning

by Dave Mason, East Bay Regional Parks

Each year, mushrooms come out after the first fall rains, which we had November 20. Mushrooms are ecologically important and can look beautiful – but some of them contain dangerous toxins. The Death Cap (Amanita phalloides) and Western Destroying Angel (Amanita ocreata) are two of the world's most toxic mushrooms, and both can be found in East Bay Regional Parks during the rainy season.

The Death Cap and Western Destroying Angel mushrooms contain amatoxins, a group of molecules that inhibit cellular metabolism in many animals. In mammals, the liver and kidneys are typically the first organs affected after ingestion. Symptoms don't usually appear until up to 12 hours after consumption, beginning as severe gastrointestinal distress and progressing to the liver and renal failure if treatment is not sought immediately.

"Both the Death Cap and Western Destroying Angel grow near oak trees," said East Bay Regional Park District Naturalist Trent Pearce, who is based in Tilden Regional Park and documents the fungi in East Bay Regional Parks. "They can be lethal to both humans and pets if consumed."

The Death Cap is a medium-to-large mushroom that typically has a greenish-gray cap, white gills, a white ring around the stem, and a large white sac at the base of the stem. Though the death cap is mainly associated with oak trees, it has been found growing with other hardwoods. It was accidentally introduced to North America on the roots of European



Unlike the death cap, it is a native California mushroom.

"Collecting mushrooms in East Bay Regional Parks is not allowed," said East Bay Regional Park District Public Information Supervisor Dave Mason. "The Park District urges the public to be safe and be knowledgeable about toxic mushrooms."

The Death Cap and Western Destroying Angel can also be dangerous for pets.

"Dog owners should keep a close watch on their dogs during the winter months," said Mason. "Pet owners should contact a veterinarian immediately if they suspect their pet may have eaten a toxic mushroom."

While the Death Cap and Western Destroying Angel mushrooms are responsible for most cases of mushroom poisonings in California, deadly toxins can also be found in Galerina and Lepiota mushroom species, both of which occur in the Bay Area as well.

The public can learn more about the fungi of the East Bay Regional Parks at the annual Tilden Fungus Fair, Sunday, February 3, 2019, at Tilden Nature Area's Environmental Education Center.

Happy Holidays

\$549,000
1399 Shell Lane, Clayton

\$1,099,000
1871 Laurel Place, Concord

COMING SOON!
6005 Golden Eagle Way, Clayton

\$1,025,000 Sold!
1050 Pebble Beach Dr., Clayton

BETTER HOMES REALTY
6160 Center St., Suite E, Clayton, California

jenstojanovich@yahoo.com
Jennifer Stojanovich
Broker Associate
(925) 672-4433
925-567-6170 - cell
Cal BRE #01446062
www.jenniferstojanovich.com

georgevujnovich@sbcglobal.net
George Vujnovich
Broker
(925) 672-4433
925-348-5700 - cell
Cal BRE #0933393
www.georgevujnovich.com

Alpine
Pastry & Cakes

Celebrate the Holidays with Alpine



Order Early!

925-689-7220

www.alpinepastry.com

Old Fashioned
Fruit Cake

Holiday Wreath
Coffee Cake

Ribbon Cookies,
Gingerbread, and more!

Monday - Friday 6 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday-Sunday 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

1848 Willow Pass Rd. Concord



Jennifer Stojanovich
Realtor, Better Homes Realty

Holiday Moving Tips

Moving can be stressful, and so can the holiday season. If you're putting the two together, then you may be wondering how you'll survive. Although moving during the holidays is not an easy task, it can be done without turning you into the Grinch. Here's what you need to know if you're moving during the most wonderful time of the year.

Strategize the timing. If you have any wiggle room with your timing, then you can be strategic about it. Try to hold off on moving until the week between Christmas and New Years. That tends to be the least hectic week during the holiday season, and most of your celebrations will be behind you.

Keep one room decorated. Do you love decking the halls? There's no reason you have to give it up just because you're moving. While you may not want to unpack every last elf and angel, you should consider decorating one room. This allows you to still enjoy the spirit of the holiday without making too much extra work for yourself. If you need to move any of your normal decor out of the way when you decorate, just go ahead and pack those items up so they're ready to be moved.

Purge and donate. The holidays are a season of giving, so now is a great time to purge and donate items you no longer need. There's no reason to drag unused items to your next place. Instead, pack them up and donate them to your favorite charity. It will lighten your load and help out an organization that could use your

support.

Consider dining out. If you normally host a big holiday dinner, Maybe this is the year to dine out. You already have enough on your plate without having to plan and cook for your whole crew. If nobody else is able to host, you can either plan to have dinner at your favorite restaurant or order takeout and eat at home. If you use your special holiday dishes, you can pack them up for moving as soon as you've finished cleaning. To really save time and energy, consider using disposable plates and utensils just for this year.

Be ready for the weather. Don't let bad weather derail your moving day. Follow the weather report so you're prepared the day of the move with all the proper supplies to keep them warm and dry. Keep a pot of hot coffee or hot chocolate available. Have waterproof materials on hand to cover up any valuable furniture or other items as you unload them from the truck.

Tell Santa. Remember to let Santa know if you're going to be in your new house before Christmas. Moving is tough on kids, especially in the middle of a school year. Let them write letters to Santa with their new address, and maybe even leave a present from Santa in your new home for the kids to discover the day you move in.

Compliments of [Virtual Results.net](#).



computercorner

by William Claney, Tech Writer, Computers USA

Tech in English

My Holiday Shopping List

It happens every year. What special computer related gift should we get for our family, how much should we expect to pay and is it worth all the bother? There are at least two answers to those questions that concern us. The first is how much of a budget do I want to allocate to new computer hardware and second, what do I want to do with my new computer?

I hope I can shed some light on the products you should consider and those that don't live up to their hype.

The first decision is desktop vs. laptop or tablet. If you are considering a tablet, be careful and stick with a name brand. It is likely that you are going to replace it within two years anyway. I know that sounds crass, but let's face it, tablets are the odd man out. They don't have the power, storage or features that laptops and desktops (workstations) have and they are not as durable.

Laptops are great especially when portability is key. If taking your computer everywhere is appealing to you then the mobility of a laptop can't be beat. Stick with a name brand like Dell, Lenovo, Apple, Asus, Microsoft or Acer. Don't be tempted by the oddball brands as they are simply not worth the effort or your money.

In a laptop it is important to have a screen size that works for you. The most popular display size is 15.6 inches. At that size it fits nicely in a backpack or tote, is large enough you don't need to squint at the screen to see the information, and resalable if you need to. Choose an Intel i-series CPU, for example i5, 4 to 8GB RAM, and a 256GB or larger SSD as your storage device. Hard drives

are being quickly replaced by solid state drives (SSD) because of their speed and durability. Laptops are limited in their ability to dissipate heat so slower components are used to keep heat down and battery life up. Upgrades are limited to RAM and drives.

If mobility is not a primary factor, we suggest a desktop for several reasons. They are larger, which means they can dissipate heat better. Heat is created by components working at their maximum speed meaning performance is better. Desktops have more options because they have expansion slots where you can choose specialized components, like graphics cards. In addition, if maintenance is required they are much easier to work on.

If you want a desktop, there are many choices and a few hints are in order. First don't buy the HP brand. HP makes lots of great stuff, but not desktops or laptops. They use every trick in the book to make them cheap... err, inexpensive. Skip the HP brand this season and stick with those mentioned above.

When it comes to desktops there are other choices like custom and semi-custom computers. Built to order (BTO) custom built computers have better durability and will outperform anything coming out of a factory. In addition, you get to spend money on the features you want and need. Provided you are not trying to build one less expensive than a factory one, these computers are the best. Choose a good builder, or relearn the old saw, "you get what you pay for."

Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas to all.

LAW OFFICE OF DOUGLAS A. PRUTTON
Personal Injury
Labor & Employment Law
NO FEES UNLESS WE WIN!

Almost all cases are handled on a contingency fee basis.
33 Years' Experience – “One of the most well-respected, successful lawyers in the East Bay.”

CALL US FOR A FREE CONSULTATION

925-677-5080

1985 Bonifacio Street Suite 101 Concord email:doug@pruttonlaw.com

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE!

NO HIDDEN FEES

reddirooter.net
REDDI-ROOTER
925-676-6722

Concord Plumbing Repairs
Drains, Pipes, Water Heaters, Sewers

Bonded and insured
CA Lic #613193

Oh Crap

Now what?

It happens.
You get hacked.

We remove it,
prevent recurrence,
repair the damage
and back you up.

Find out more. Call today.

CUSA CARE

ComputersUSA
5433 Clayton Road Suite M
Clayton, CA 94517
925-672-9989

The Diablo Gazette
is the BEST WAY for LOCAL
BUSINESSES TO ADVERTISE
NOW AND IN THE FUTURE
CALL TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP
YOUR BUSINESS (925) 298-9990
HAPPY HOLIDAYS from the
DIABLO GAZETTE

SECRET SERVICE

INSIDER

by Eric Enos
Stories from a Former Agent

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

Interview with Eric Enos:

With the passing of former President George H.W. Bush, I reached out to our Secret Service contributor, Eric Enos, who was on an extended traveling assignment, to share his thoughts, anecdotes, and experiences with the President during his years at Secret Service.

Enos was a former Secret Service Agent that served under three Presidents. Even though President George H.W. Bush was not one of them, he had left a deep imprint on Enos, nevertheless.

"During my panel interview at USSS, (US Secret Service), I was asked to cite three role models in my life. I listed President Reagan, President George H.W. Bush, and my dad," Enos said.

That was a good answer as the agency was also very fond of President Bush for his patriotism, his service to the country, and his humanity. He had a reputation of being very honorable and showed pride, dignity for the Office. Bush also showed incredible respect for the military and law enforcement and treated the personnel as such. He truly appreciated their service to the country and to society.

"Ask any group of retired agents who their favorite protectees were and you will find Reagan, Barbara Bush, and George H. W. Bush were at the top of the list."

Even though Bush exemplified patriotism, George and Barbara were humble, down-to-earth souls. They interacted with staff at a personal level as one would with any friend, or sometimes as your parent.

"On one golf outing at the Kennebunkport Bush Compound, Bush rode up to my agent friend in a golf cart. 'Hop in, I'll give you a ride,' Bush said to the agent.

Thank you, sir, I'll walk, I'm just heading to the command post.' To which Bush replied, 'What are you, ... you think I'm going to crash? Hop in.' That was just the kind of guy he was."

"One agent told me when Bush was Vice President, he would hold tennis matches between the Bush's and Secret Service. Bush would describe them as great kids and treated them as members of the family.

"When President Bush learned that wine tasted better if it is allowed to breathe, he asked his agent, 'What do you think, is there any truth to that or is that just a bunch of BS?' He related to them as just one of the guys."

Enos had protectee assignments with both George and Barbara which we are sharing, including this repost of his Barbara Bush article from May 2018.

"I was the lead agent on a detail when Bush came to California for a re-election fundraiser for Governor Schwarzenegger," Enos begins. "After which, Bush spent three days at a retreat. At the end of the retreat, we motorcaded to the

The Passing of a President

airport. As I was separating his gear from ours in the trunk of the limo, I handed him a humidor which included a bottle of wine and two etched wine glasses. All items contained the Governor's official seal. It was given to him from Governor Schwarzenegger.

'What's that?' Bush asked. 'Oh, I get so much of this crap. Keep it.' He then looked at some Governor official seal golf club covers. "Keep it."

Per USSS policy, I presented the items to my supervisor. He stated he wasn't interested in any of the items either because he doesn't smoke cigars, didn't golf, and didn't drink wine. He told us to split the items amongst those who worked the detail."

Like Enos said, Bush was down to earth, unpretentious, unmoved by status or lavish gifts. By the way, the humidor remains under the protection of Enos.

Former First Lady Barbara Bush - A First Class Lady

Secret Service Agents are constantly asked about the personal lives of protectees (a protectee is anybody protected by the Secret Service).

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).

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.) 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. 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 an agent appeared followed by Mrs. Bush 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 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 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 head 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 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 sponsoring corporation 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. 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. -end-

"Twice, I heard Fox News anchor Chris Wallace (a Democrat) say, 'For years I have felt George H.W. Bush was the greatest living American.' I couldn't have said it better, myself," says Enos.

IN MEMORIAM
George H.W. Bush
June 12, 1924 – November 30, 2018

U.S. Secret Service

The Secret Service sends our heartfelt condolences on the passing of Former President George H.W. Bush. Timberwolf, you defined patriotism and leadership throughout your life of service to this country and you will be sorely missed.

34.4K 10:31 AM - Dec 1, 2018

Your 2018 Guide to Bay Area Events

The Diablo Gazette's

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Views of the Valley

with Tillie Turner

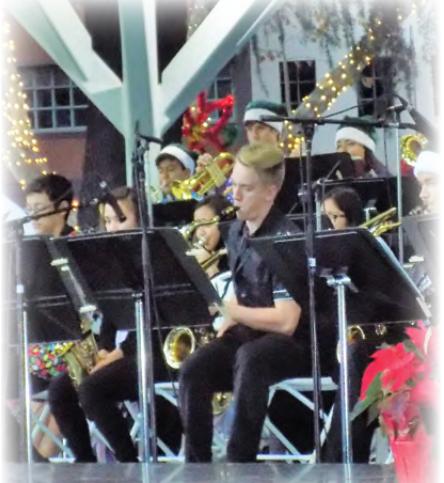
Photos by Micah & Tillie Turner



Reindeer await Santa's grand arrival at Concord's Official Tree lighting ceremony on December 1.



Dia de los Muertos Festival in Martinez



Concord High Jazz band performed at Concord's Tree Lighting Event at Todos Santos



A candlelight vigil at Todos Santos Park held in the memory of transgender citizens lost due to violence



Carolers from Clayton Valley prepare to sing at Pleasant Hill Senior Center Holiday boutique.



Holiday Gift and Craft Faire at Concord Senior Center



Skaters line up to enter Walnut Creek Holiday Ice Rink.



925-808-5851
ANDIE.MCCLAY@
BHHSDRYSDALE.COM
WWW.ANDIEMCCLAY.COM
Realtor ® | DRE#02046441

Six Reasons TO LIST YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY
HomeServices
Drysdale Properties

REASON NUMBER
One

LESS INVENTORY

THERE IS LESS INVENTORY IN THE WINTER MONTHS WHICH MEANS BUYERS HAVE FEWER HOMES TO CHOOSE FROM.

REASON NUMBER
Two

HIGHER SALES PRICE

SUPPLY AND DEMAND DICTATES THAT LOWER WINTER SUPPLY MAY TRANSLATE INTO MORE MONEY FOR THE SELLER.

REASON NUMBER
Three

BETTER BUYERS

BUYERS OUT SEARCHING IN COLD WET WEATHER TEND TO BE MORE SERIOUS OR ON A DEADLINE. CORPORATIONS PREFER TO TRANSFER THEIR EMPLOYEES ON THE FIRST OF THE YEAR. MANY TRANSFEREES CANNOT WAIT UNTIL SPRING TO BUY.

REASON NUMBER
Four

FEWER SHOWINGS

IT'S ALL ABOUT QUALITY OVER QUANTITY. EXPECT FEWER SHOWINGS BUT SERIOUS OFFERS FROM QUALIFIED BUYERS. FEWER SHOWINGS ALSO MEANS LESS DISRUPTION TO YOUR HOME LIFE.

REASON NUMBER
Five

THE COZY EFFECT

BUYERS MAKE EMOTIONAL DECISIONS WHEN PURCHASING A HOME. OUR HOMES USUALLY LOOK THEIR BEST DURING THE HOLIDAYS WITH SEASONAL DECOR, COZY FIREPLACES AND THE SMELL OF PUMPKIN PIE BAKING IN THE OVEN.

REASON NUMBER
Six

BETTER POSITION TO BUY YOUR NEXT HOME

IF YOU CAN WAIT UNTIL SPRING TO BUY, YOU WILL HAVE MORE HOMES TO CHOOSE FROM AND THE ADVANTAGE OF NEGOTIATING WITHOUT A CONTINGENCY FOR SELLING YOUR FIRST HOME.

SALE
The Perfect Gifts

Handmade home decor items, gem water bottles, fossils, statuettes, large and small precious stones, pendants, bracelets, jewelry, tumbled stones, minerals, beads, sage bundles, incense, bath and body soaps, abalone shells, bath salts and bowls, diffuser oils, wood carvings, seasonal items and many decor accessories.



925-270-3175

Aquarian Era New Age Shop
Feel the Energy!

Metaphysical Supply Store
2803 Main Ave. Ste. A Concord

RESERVE YOUR AD SPACE TODAY!

The Diablo Gazette is Growing!

Call Today for more information

(925) 298-9990

info@diablogazette.com



Turkey

by Ron Glas

I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving. Our turkey feast was particularly special this year after having a surreal encounter with one of our local wild turkeys. Let me explain.

It was just another ordinary but hot day walking with my wife and my two Chihuahuas. We had just crossed the wood pedestrian bridge that connects the Contra Costa Canal bike path to the dirt trail that circles the Lime Ridge open space. We were heading up the hill towards the

cul-de-sac at the end of Via Montanas. Having seen several coyotes in the area recently, we were cautiously anticipating seeing one cross our path. After all, coyotes will attack small dogs. The four of us were walking up the trail, when out of a grove of trees comes the charging nemesis. But it was not a coyote, it was a TURKEY!

A raging bushwhacking, squawking turkey with wings flapping was assaulting us. I'm not certain, but it appeared that it was trying to land on my head.

I didn't know exactly what to do but I had heard that it is best to stare down rather than run from an attacking



critter. We stood our ground and faced the turkey.

This turkey had apparently not read the memo and just kept coming. To make things more chaotic,

our two dogs decided that the best defense was a good offense. Straining at their leashes and barking uncontrollably, they added to the calamity.

Staring wasn't working, so I looked for



Fortunately, my wife was able to grab it, and I managed to pick up the second dog while fending off the turkey with the twirling leash and harness.

With both dogs in our arms, we finally backed slowly away and was able to get past the turkey by giving it as wide of a berth as we possibly could. Claiming victory, it lost interest in us and slowly retreated into the trees.

Thinking back on the episode, we believe that most likely this was a momma turkey protecting its nest. To this day, whenever we walk that portion of the trail, we think back on this little adventure hoping that momma and her babies are alive and well in the open space.

How to Fend Off a Turkey

Turkeys can become aggressive during the breeding season, occasionally even charging, threatening, and acting aggressively toward people. If they do get in your way, you can most often shoo them away if

you're aggressive about it. Use an open umbrella or water, turkeys dislike water. If they refuse to budge, give them a good spraying.

You can prevent problems by discouraging wild turkeys from becoming too comfortable on your property. If turkeys begin feeding under hanging bird feeders, remove the feeders until the turkeys leave the area.

Some homeowners can't resist feeding them. That's when trouble begins. A few stray visitors soon become a flock of permanent residents that have lost their natural fear of humans. Adult wild turkeys, which can weigh upwards of 20 pounds, can destroy flowers and vegetable gardens, leave their droppings on patios and decks, and roost on cars, scratching the paint. If turkeys are causing problems in your yard, install motion-detecting sprinklers. Wild turkeys typically will not enter yards with dogs.

Wild turkeys were introduced in California around 1877, and subsequent stocking programs continued from 1928 to 1951, results were poor, and the program was eventually stopped. However, in 1959 the program was reignited, and over a 40-year period nearly 3,800 wild turkeys were released in more than 200 locations throughout the state.

Now, wild turkeys are present in nearly all of California's 58 counties. Estimated population is reaching 240,000.

Note: Depredation permits are required to kill wild turkeys that are causing property damage. To get a depredation permit, contact a Regional CDFW office.

Merry Christmas
Mt. Diablo Self Storage
Corner of Ygnacio Valley Rd/Alberta Way CONCORD
(925) 685-2222 FREE USE OF MOVE-IN TRUCK

R	E	B	M	E	C	E	D	B	O	B	U
Z	B	R	X	M	L	I	F	E	L	Z	N
F	E	U	P	J	A	C	O	B	I	P	C
A	N	D	K	L	R	R	D	E	V	U	L
G	E	O	R	G	E	C	Y	I	E	E	E
I	Z	L	I	Y	N	S	Q	V	R	L	B
N	E	P	T	K	C	A	J	O	X	G	I
H	R	H	S	J	E	L	O	M	S	G	L
C	R	Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	I	U	L
T	A	B	U	D	D	Y	T	N	R	N	Y
A	G	T	H	E	K	R	A	N	K	S	X
W	E	Q	L	U	F	R	E	D	N	O	W

DECEMBER
CLARENCE
MARY
GEORGE
UNCLE BILLY
JACOB
EBENEZER
BOB
JACK
SALLY
RUDOLPH
BUDDY

KRIS
OLIVER
FAGIN
THE KRANKS
IT'S A
WONDERFUL
LIFE
SNUGGLE UP
WATCH
HOLIDAY
MOVIE



calendar of events

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>

Volunteer Opportunities - Food Bank. 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. Children ages 5-10 can volunteer at Family Food Sorts with an adult. Families will bag fresh produce for the Community Produce Program. Teenagers 16 and older can volunteer independently. To volunteer, visit: <https://volunteer.foodbankccs.org/>

Monument Crisis Center in Concord is accepting donations for several of their programs through the summer including Summer Camp and Senior Moments primarily toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, dish soap, sponges, pot holders, dish towels, foil, Saran wrap, baggies, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, unscented body wash, body lotion, cotton balls, Q-tips, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes in single or 2 packs, unscented conditioner, mens' shaving cream, mens' razors, unused hotel toiletries. For more information, please visit: <http://www.monumentcrisiscenter.org/>

FUNDRAISERS NOVEMBER 1- DECEMBER 20 Frozen Turkey and Food Basket Drive.

The Salvation Army on Clayton Rd. in Concord is holding their annual Holiday Frozen Turkey and Food Basket Drive to provide food baskets and frozen turkeys for the families they are serving. 10-15 lbs. turkeys works best. Peanut butter, canned meats, and other staples are useful too. Mon.-Fri. 9:30am - 4:30pm. 3950 Clayton Rd. and West St. Concord.

OUTDOORS

USS Hornet Museum

DECEMBER 15 Officers' Holiday Tea. Two seatings 11AM and 3 PM. Join us for tea in the Officers' Wardroom. Includes General Admission to the Museum. We will be serving a Fixed Menu: Adult Ticket: \$30; Youth Ticket (17 and under): \$20
707 W Hornet Avenue, Alameda. (510) 521-8448. For more information on all USS Hornet events go to www.uss-hornet.net.org

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. Wiggett Lane and Mitchell Dr. Also, from
Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market - North Locust St between Giacoma and Lacassie St. Sundays 9 am - 1 pm, Year Round, (925) 431-8361 <http://www.cccfm.org>

THE VERANDA

November 9-February 18:
ICE AT THE VERANDA Ice skating in front of Luxe theater. All dates & times are weather permitting. Follow @ ShopTheVeranda on social media for up-to-date info. To contact the Ice at The Veranda, please call (925) 434-8466 or email them at theveranda@icerinkevents.com. Hours and prices go to www.shoptheveranda.com. 2001 Diamond Blvd. Concord.

NOVEMBER 17-JANUARY 6 DC Solar Downtown Holiday Ice Rink. A family friendly 50'x80' ice rink will be located at the corner of Marina

Vista Ave. and Ferry St. in Martinez. Open 7 days a week. Hours vary. Weather permitting. <https://downtownholidayice.com/>

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARKS

Love Parks? Think about a Career at East Bay Regional Parks. Explore careers in your East Bay Regional Parks! Currently hiring: Building/Grounds Aide, Fuels Reduction Coordinator, Interpretive Student Aide, and Police Officer. Learn More

Featured Activities:

- Dec. 15**, 1:30-2:30pm, Victorian Winter Holiday Decorations, Ardenwood
- Dec. 16**, 1:30-3pm, Mudflat Birding Bonanza, Crab Cove
- S Dec. 23**, 1-2:30pm, Winter Wonderland Walk, Sunol
- Dec. 23**, 4:30-6:30pm, Winter Solstice and Moon Hike, Coyote Hills
- Dec. 29**, Noon-1pm, Meet the Rabbits, Tilden Nature Area. Discover even more fun! Search online by park, date, or other keywords.
- Dec. 30**, 10am-noon, Coal Town Boom and Bust, Black Diamond
- Dec. 30**, 9:30am-12:30pm, Year's End Hike, Del Valle

Club/SUPPORT GROUPS' NEWS AND EVENTS

NOVEMBER 8 - DECEMBER 24 SANTA'S FLIGHT ACADEMY -

Become an official member of the flight crew and enjoy a special visit with Santa. Receive a personalized Cadet Badge, try on a virtual flight suit, dance in the snow, and more! Santa's Flight Academy is free, and a variety of photo packages are available for purchase. Santa's Flight Academy ends on December 24th. Admission: Free Sunvalley Shopping Center, Concord, 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM

DECEMBER 5-15 Contra Costa Animal Services

Free Adoptions During Home for the Holidays Promotion at CCAS' Martinez & Pinole Adoption Center. CALL 925-608-8400.

**DECEMBER 12
HOLIDAY CRAFTERNOON** -all ages event. It will be an afternoon full of holiday crafts and fun! Drop-in anytime between 3:30 and 5:00 to participate. Open to everyone! Concord Library 2900 Salvio St. Concord, CA 94519 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM. Phone: (925) 646-5455

DECEMBER 13 Holiday Women's Networking Luncheon

Join the Concord Chamber for our special Holiday Women's Networking Group at Lido Bar & Grill, located at the Concord Clarion Hotel! We will be playing some holiday inspired games, be sure to bring your holiday spirit! 11:45 am - 1:00 pm Lido Bar & Grill at Concord Clarion Hotel 1050 Burnett Ave. Concord, CA Chamber Members - \$10. Prospective Members - \$25.

VISUAL ARTS/ THEATRE/MUSIC

**November 4-December 13
The Lafayette Community Center** artists exhibit at John Muir Hospital in the Auxiliary Gallery at Aspen Center, 133 La Casa Via, Walnut Creek. Shop for your special holiday gifts.

DECEMBER 10

Contra Costa Jazz Band free concert Monday, 7:30 p.m. Alhambra High School auditorium. Martinez

DECEMBER 13-16

THE STORY -This Christmas Art comes to life. 12 Historical paintings are reenacted to tell the story fo the Bible. A Christmas must see. NorthCreek Church **Showtimes** -- 12/13 7PM; 12/14 7pm; 12/15 3PM & 7PM; 12/16 2:30 PM & 6:30 PM. For more info, go to www.northcreek.org. 2303 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek.

DECEMBER 15

SYNC OR SWIM - presented by Mountain Shadow Film Society. "Swimming with Men" is a delightful comedy out of the UK based on the 2007 Swedish Men's Synchronized Swimming World Champions. A group of middle-aged men attempt to stave off their midlife crises by forming a synchronized swim team, the first rule of which is: "Don't talk about swim club." Accompanying the feature film is an animated short, "Coin Operated," that won the Palm Springs and Brooklyn Film Festivals among others. Walnut Creek Library, 1644 N. Broadway St., Downtown Walnut Creek. General admission tickets are available on a first come, first served basis for \$12. More information about the program as well as Mountain Shadow Film Society is available at <http://mountainshadow.org> or by contacting Mountain Shadow's director, John Bennison, at jb@mountainshadow.org or 925.787.6965.

DECEMBER 28 8 PM - 10 PM Walnut Creek Model Train Show

Tickets \$3 Adults, \$2 seniors and Children 6-12 years, Under 6 are free. 2751 Buena Vista Ave., Walnut Creek. For more info: 925-937-1888 or wcmrs.org.

Lesher Center for the Arts

Showtimes and ticket prices, go to lesherartscenter.com. for listed shows below. 1601 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek. 925-943-7469.

DECEMBER 6-16

"A Christmas Carol" Brimming with music and dance, love and laughter, spectacular special effects and scary ghosts, it's no wonder the critics have called it "THE Christmas Carol to see in the Bay Area." Presented by Center REPertory. Hoffman Theatre, Walnut Creek.

DECEMBER 12-14 Holiday Happenings

Presented by Concord High School Choir featuring the Choirs of Concord High School and the El Dorado Singers. Diablo Valley College Performing Arts Center, Pleasant Hill

DECEMBER 13-16

"The Biggest Gift" - Did you send your letter to Santa? Then why has he not received it? No letters - No Christmas. Join the fun and laughter as Tucker the elf and the toys set out to save Christmas. Presented by Fantasy Forum Actors Ensemble. Margaret Lesher theater, Walnut Creek.

DECEMBER 20

A VERY "FOLLIES" HOLIDAY - Presented by The Golden Follies Featuring San Francisco Chanteuse, Wiggy Darlington. The Golden Follies are talented and energetic senior performers, ages 60-88. Lively choreography, heart-warming music, Reindeer, Snowflakes, Frosty, Christmas Trees, Brightly Colored Packages, and more.

DECEMBER 22

'TIS THE SYMPHONY - Presented by California Symphony. Anderson—A Christmas Festival. Holiday Selections featuring the Pacific Boychoir Academy Tchaikovsky—Selections from the Nutcracker Suite. Blake—The Snowman (Film viewing with score performed live) Various—Audience Sing-Along Anderson—Sleigh Ride

DECEMBER 29

"Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show" - Presented by Worst of Durst. A look back at the major news stories of 2018 using stand up comedy, improvisation and loosely written sketches. We will mock and scoff and taunt with taste! Margaret Lesher Theatre, Walnut Creek.

JANUARY 5

**Conservation Icons Speaker Series:
Featuring Dr. Wade Davis** - Presented by Lindsay Wildlife Experience featuring Dr. Wade Davis, world-renowned anthropologist. Davis is a premiere presenter in the second annual speaker series. His presentation, "The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World," will captivate and educate!

DECEMBER 6-JANUARY 6

"Paintings, Prose and Poetry" Featured Artist, Samantha McNally. Samantha McNally has been painting in watercolor for about 25 years. She is active in the California Watercolor Association and has paintings in both the Benicia Plein Air Gallery and the Valley Art Gallery. Samantha's favorite subjects are the ocean, sea lions, flowers and Benicia landmarks. During the month of December we have a Christmas Tree filled with original mini paintings for sale as ornaments for the art lovers of Benicia. Samantha will have lots of minis on the tree along with the other Benicia Plein Air Gallery artists' minis. Reception: December 15 from 3 to 5. The Benicia First Tuesday Poets and Benicia Literary Arts Authors will read ekphrastic poetry and prose during the reception Benicia Plein Air Gallery, 307 1st St., Benicia. www.samanthamcnally.com 415-828-4991

DECEMBER 14

DANCE PARTY - Dance to the 50's, 60's, and 70's music on the restored hardwood floor of the Concord Historical Society Event Center. Water will be available for \$1.00 with free parking behind the Galindo Home Concord Historical Society Event Center. 1928 Clayton Rd. Concord, 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM Phone: (925) 827-3380 Admission: \$10

DECEMBER 15-16

THE SNOWMAN- 2 PM Sat. & Sun. Presented by Diablo Symphony Orchestra. A special showing of the classic British holiday silent movie "The Snowman," famously introduced by David Bowie. The Diablo Symphony provides the beautiful live soundtrack by composer Howard Blake. We will also perform holiday favorites, and there will be an opportunity for a sing-along too! Diablo Valley College Performing Arts Center. Pleasant Hill.

DECEMBER 22

Fleetwood Mask: The Ultimate Tribute to Fleetwood Mac Fleetwood Mask is the ultimate Fleetwood Mac tribute band! The band performs the greatest hits of Fleetwood Mac from the 1960's blue band with Peter Green, through the Village theatre and Art Gallery. 233 Front Street, Danville

LA DI DA to perform December 11



Pictured L to R: Rose Jenson-bass, Lucy Williams-tenor, Mary Martin-baritone and Diane Copp-lead Photo courtesy of LA DI DA.

The Clayton Valley Woman's Club will hold their annual Holiday Luncheon at Oakhurst Country Club, 1001 Peacock Creek Drive, Clayton, CA, on Tuesday, December 11, 2018. Gathering will be at 11am, Lunch at 12pm and 1:15pm will be the entertainment.

The four fabulous ladies of LA DI DA have been entertaining the Bay Area with 'a cappella' vocal music for the last six years. Their music spans 90 years of the great American songbook and beyond and ranges from Barbershop to smooth Jazz, Do Wop and some surprising contemporary pieces. They strive for close harmony in a fun program of the familiar and the not so well known.

The four friends met at Diablo Valley College Masterworks Chorale although the origins of LA DI DA more truly rest in a piano bar in Danville. Visit them at www.ladidaquartet.com

LA DI DA will be performing a collection of holiday songs.

If you would like to attend this wonderful event, please contact Rosemary Harwood at: rharwood@sbcglobal.net for cost and further information.

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



americanKitchenCompany.com



High level design with old school craftsmanship at affordable prices

CALL TODAY
For a free in-home estimate
925-265-6750

2045 Mount Diablo St Ste 203 Concord



Caring and Professional Help in the comfort of your home

Services Include:

- Bathing and Dressing
- Meal Preparation
- Exercise & Companionship
- Shopping & Errands
- Light Housekeeping
- Transportation

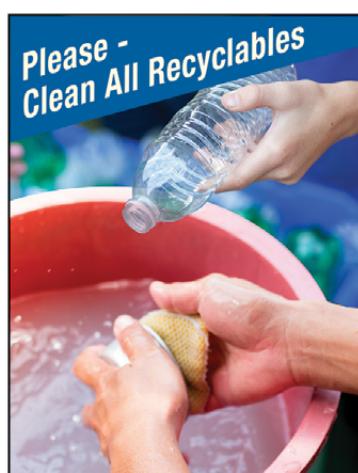


Ask about our
CNA & HHA School
hillendalecñaschool.com

Family Owned & Operated Since 2002
1777 N. California Blvd., #210, Walnut Creek

www.hillendale.net • Call 925-933-8181

When you recycle
please remember...



it also needs
to be clean.

Did you know that when you place soiled items in your blue recycling cart, those items are **NOT** recyclable and could potentially contaminate your entire cart?



4080 Mallard Drive, Concord, CA 94520 • (925) 682-9113

www.mdresrec.com

Miles App Converts Any Mode of Travel Into Rewards

Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), 511 Contra Costa and Miles have teamed up to make commuting more rewarding for all who travel within Contra Costa County. Miles is a unique, easy-to-use smart phone app that seamlessly and automatically logs the miles you travel on all modes of transportation including biking, walking, transit, and rideshare. The miles can be redeemed for rewards from national retailers like Vudu, HelloFresh, Cole Haan, NatureBox, Silvercar, Atom Tickets, Getaround, and local event venues like Cal Bears, Saint Mary's College Athletics and the Viansa Sonoma Winery.

"511's interest in the App is to help verify trips and mode of transportation taken. The app will provide more accurate data than the old system of surveys to collect such data. The app will also allow us to provide incentives to use alternative modes of transportation," stated Peter Engle, CCTA Director of Programs.

CCTA and 511 Contra Costa have been working together for years to offer incentives for cleaner, greener trips. The ability to provide real-time, earned rewards is now easier with the Miles app. The information will provide important guidance to CCTA's engineers and planners as they design the transportation infrastructure of the future.

The Miles app is now available as a free download in the App Store, and the first 5,000 users will get exclusive access to the app within 24 hours. Users who are not in the first 5,000 can still download the app but may have to wait a few days before they are given access. Each user will be automatically awarded 1,500 bonus miles at sign-up. To learn more about Miles and its rewards partners, visit <https://www.getmiles.com/>

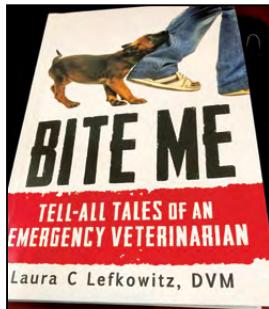
Android users can sign-up for the Android waitlist and will be notified when the app is available in the Google Play store to redeem the 1,500 bonus miles.

A KILLER LIST OF BOOKS TO GIFT THIS CHRISTMAS

From international, bestselling, crime author, Peter James, New York Times bestselling suspense author, Steena Holmes, international, bestselling, science-fiction author, Robert J. Sawyer, to bestselling non-fiction author, Laura Lefkowitz, you will find a huge list of books to buy on the Books 'N Pieces Magazine Website.

Compiled into an easy to read, hyperlinked list, there is an author for everyone. Print and digital books make a terrific holiday gift, easy to give, affordable, and interesting.

Check out the "Killer List" at bit.ly/XMASbooks.



Perry's Knife and Tactical The County's Largest Cutlery Store



Knife Sharpening! 3 for \$15.00!

with this ad, Maximum Value \$28
Single Knives \$7 - \$11 each
One coupon per customer. Expires 12/23/18

925.270.3812
1776 Arnold Industrial Way #K
Concord, CA 94520
www.knifeandtactical.com



BEST IN EAST BAY 2015
Carol van Vaerenbergh
Realtor BRE#01221965
6200 Center Street
Clayton, CA 94517
(925)683-2568
cvaeren@aol.com
www.carolshomes.withwre.com

Windermere
REAL ESTATE
Windermere Lynne French & Associates



Mrs Butterbanks

"YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE, LICK THE BOWL!"

BUTTER NET WT 4 OZ (113g)

Read my blog at www.butterrequired.com

HOLIDAY BAKING: BUTTER SUGAR COOKIES



The most loved tradition in our family, at this Holiday time of year, is baking all kinds of different cookies, bars, fudge, peppermint bark and delivering to family and friends. The house smells divine all month long, and let's be honest, the kitchen floor is constantly a bit on the sticky side. That just means happiness is present. Happy Holidays!

BUTTER SUGAR COOKIES

1 cup butter, softened
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 eggs
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp butter flavored extract (pic below, can be purchased in craft stores on the baking aisle)
3 1/2 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt

Cream butter and sugar. Add the eggs, vanilla and butter extracts, and mix well. In a separate bowl, whisk, flour, powder and salt together. Add this to the batter and mix well.

Roll dough into a ball and double wrap in plastic wrap. Chill 3-4 hours or overnight.

Roll out the dough using dusted powdered sugar instead of the usual flour (the extra sugar makes them especially yummy). Cut into your favorite shapes.

Bake cookies using parchment paper on your baking sheet, at 350° for 8-10 minutes or just until the edges are a touch brown. Let cool and decorate away with royal icing or just plain store-bought vanilla frosting, throw some sprinkles on and chow-down! However, these are buttery and sweet enough to just eat plain!



frugelegance

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

Easy Holiday Gift Clips

'Tis the season for shopping, holiday cards, and lots of gift wrapping. We have created some unique gift tags that we like to call Holiday Gift Clips. They're fun, crafty, easy to make, and a great activity for the kids too. After being used on a gift, they can be reused in the holiday decor and be a small keepsake. Decorate them by writing holiday messages or names to identify gifts.



Afterwards, use them to keep ornaments in place on the Christmas Tree, or use to hang and display holiday cards.

Begin by painting plain wooden clothespins in your favorite holiday colors. We like red, metallic silver and metallic gold. Sharpie markers work great too if you prefer not to paint. We love metallic sharpies. After the paint is dry, using a glue gun (or a tube of E6000 craft glue), attach assorted charms, stickers, mini-size jingle bells, erasers, etc. Basically, anything small and decorative will work. Here are some gift clip ideas that we created:

Mini-Jingle Bells are quite pretty and inexpensive to make. We glued bells on the gift clip and the red gift bag to match. It is fun and festive.

Hanukkah Gift Clip, we glued a metallic plastic Hanukkah Gelt (coin). Other options can be mini-dreidels or small

Hanukkah charms would also look fabulous.

Wine Charms. Remember those charms used to snap onto a wine glass stem so guests remember which glass is theirs? We made use of our old wine charms. Check out how cute it works on our wine gift bag.



Mini-Holiday Erasers work perfectly. We purchased assorted mini-Holiday Erasers from our local Dollar Tree store.

Holiday Clips can also be used to hang holiday cards. We display our family holiday cards from years past on a large wired frame. Using a sharpie marker, each clip has the year easily handwritten that matches the holiday card it holds. As the kids get older, they will appreciate this clever and fun display of all the holiday cards of yesteryear.

Wishing you a very Happy and Wonderful Holiday Season!

Carol and Randi, the FruGirls, are local home stagers and decorators. You can also find them blogging about many other ways to live an elegant life for less online at www.frugelegance.com. FrugElegance is where Frugal and Elegance come together.





Jill Hedgecock's bookends

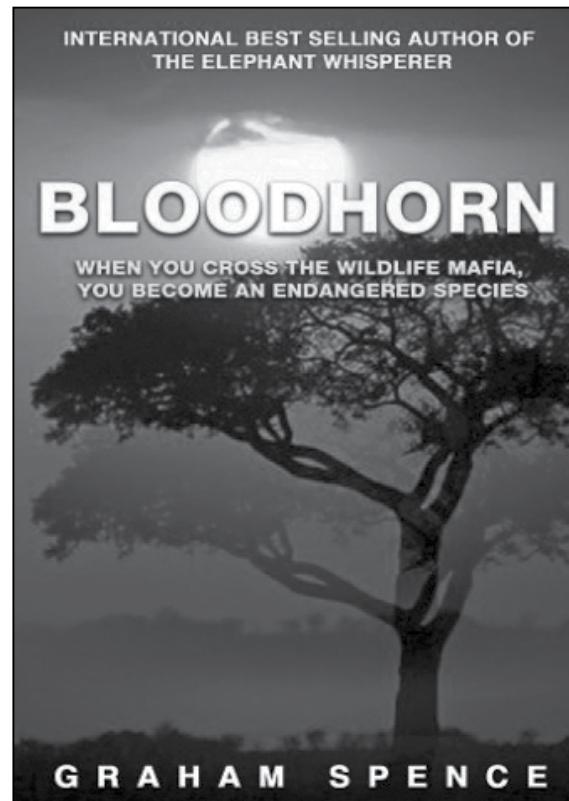
by Jill Hedgecock, Program Coordinator Mount Diablo California Writer's Club jillhedgecock.com Blog: <http://writersotj.wordpress.com>

BLOODHORN by Graham Spence

In "Bloodhorn" (2017, CIPP, 304 pages, \$10.00) by Graham Spence, main character, Chris Stone, is a war veteran trying to live a quiet life as a fisherman's guide in Alaska with his fiancé, Debra. But his contentment is shattered when across the globe, Debra's sister, Josie Gordon, a park warden in South Africa, is kidnapped. Josie had grown reckless while trying to identify who has poached a rhino on the game reserve where she works. Her suspicions had led her to spy on an isolated high-end safari lodge run by a notoriously corrupt hunting guide where she was captured by thugs. Upon hearing of Josie's disappearance, Chris and Debra board a plane headed for Africa.

Chris, recognizing the extent of the danger when he discovers the depth of involvement of big game mafia, enlists a South African private detective and a former Vietnam Green Beret. Chris and his cohort pose as big game hunting enthusiasts as well as wealthy investors interested in the illegal rhino horn trade and contact Venter, the lodge owner. The ruse works. Once inside the heavily-guarded compound, they soon discover that the reclusive mastermind of the supposedly legal hunting lodge is running a corrupt business and exploiting women, essentially turning them into prostitutes once they are employed. Recognizing the need for inside help, Chris befriends one of Venter's women who has been assigned to "entertain" Chris, promising to help her escape for inside information.

Chris soon discovers that Josie has been smuggled out of Africa on a barge headed to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. He and his men follow her to this country, where rhino horn is revered for its supposed medicinal qualities, when in fact, the material is nothing more than fingernails. Josie is rescued, but the danger is far from over. The group flees through the jungle to escape the



mafia. Our unlikely heroes then return to Africa, where game rangers using traditional old-school rifles must defend themselves against the Venter's thugs.

"Bloodhorn" is an important book about the corruption of big game hunting, particularly the exploitation of rhinos in Africa. It also pays homage to the heroes trying to save wildlife. Graham Spence is a journalist who was born in Zimbabwe, grew up in Mozambique, and lived in South Africa. His other works include "The Elephant Whisperer" and "The Last Rhino" (both co-authored with Lawrence Anthony), "Keepers of the Flame", and "The Apocalypse Chase" (Chris Stone series Book 1).

He says of "Bloodhorn", "It combines my love of fly-fishing and wild spaces – not only in the wilderness, but in the anarchy of the mind." Readers who enjoyed Robert Ludlum's Jason Bourne series and, of course, fans of "The Last Rhino", "The Elephant Whisperer", and my very own "Rhino in the Room" will likely enjoy this book.

Christmas presentations such as "The Nutcracker", "A Christmas Story" or "A Christmas Carol", and a few others are offered by a number of ballet and theatrical groups in a variety of theaters in just about any community. However, the living art performance of "The Story" is a one-of-a-kind Christmas spectacle exclusive to Walnut Creek's NorthCreek Church. With six years of productions and over 22,000 in attendance, "The Story" has become a Christmas tradition for many local residents. It is a must see.

Each year, NorthCreek's production staff sifts through thousands of pieces of historical art searching for works that can be arranged to tell the story of the entire Bible as biblically as possible, from creation through today (and tomorrow)



in a performance of "living art."

This year's presentation will feature 12 works from artists including Leonard DaVinci, Michaelangelo, Carl Bloch, Antonio Ciseri; and contemporary artists including Ron DiCianni, Max Greiner and Morgan Weistling. Combine that with a 30-piece orchestra, large choir, and biblically accurate narration, and you have an amazing production.

"The Story" includes painted or sculpted works of art that have been rebuilt by volunteers in three dimensions at life size, populated with cast members painted to mimic the careful brushstrokes of the original. Once on stage the art is carefully lit with complex stage lighting so that when the curtain opens to reveal the scene, it appears that you are looking at the flat, two-dimensional piece, or the original

movie review

by Sandie Angulo Chen, Common Sense Media

GREEN BROOK

4/5 STARS

Inspired by a true story, "GREEN BOOK" takes place in 1962 and follows Tony "Lip" Vallelonga (Viggo Mortensen), a white, Italian American New York City bouncer who takes a temporary job driving black concert pianist Dr. Don Shirley (Mahershala Ali) as he travels throughout the Midwest and the Deep South on a concert tour. The movie's title refers to a (now historical) guide for what Tony calls "traveling while black": The Green Book is a directory of restaurants and accommodations that cater to African Americans throughout the segregated South. As the vulgar, working-class, and admittedly racist Tony and the incredibly well-educated, intelligent Dr. Shirley get to know each other on the road, they challenge stereotypes and grow to form an unlikely friendship. But the farther into the South they travel, the more they're forced to deal with everything from Jim Crow laws to hate crimes.

Mortensen and Ali both give fabulous performances in this feel-good road-trip drama that's part buddy comedy, part history lesson, and part social commentary on friendship and race. Director Peter Farrelly, best known for raunchy comedies like There's Something About Mary, brings out the humor in Tony and Dr. Shirley's interactions; he allows the actors to shine in completely opposing ways. Mortensen, who reportedly gained more than 30 pounds for the role, immerses himself in showy Bronx bravado, while Ali is a picture of nuanced restraint, with plenty of emotion simmering beneath the surface. Both portrayals are award-worthy, as are Ali's musical performances (he went through extensive piano training to pull them off).

It's not easy to revisit a time in history when gifted black artists could entertain all-white crowds but not sit or dine among them -- or even use the same bathroom. Dr. Shirley refuses to lower himself via vulgarity or even by listening to popular music (he can't tell Aretha Franklin from Chubby Checker), and he fully understands that the moment he steps off stage, he's just another black man to the white audiences who moments earlier applauded his talent. While Tony isn't in the role of the dreaded "white savior," Green Book's story is more about him than Dr. Shirley,



who's infinitely more self-aware -- and also more of a mystery. It feels like a bit of a missed opportunity that Dr. Shirley's personal life isn't explored via more than a couple of references to his estranged brother and a failed marriage and one poignant monologue about not fitting into either white or black society. Especially considering that viewers meet nearly all of Tony's large Italian family, including his more open-minded wife, Dolores (Linda Cardellini), to whom he writes (with help from Dr. Shirley) increasingly poetic love letters from the road. Really, the entire movie is a love letter of sorts -- to a friendship that's a reminder that the world needs more empathy and human connection ... not to mention mind-blowing music.

Parents need to know that characters get beaten and threatened (including with a shotgun), there's a fistfight, and two people are handcuffed after being caught engaging in sexual activity (nothing sensitive shown). There's also quite a bit of language (including "s-t," the "N" word, and more) and drinking/smoking. But the film's messages about empathy and the danger of prejudice and stereotypes are important and thought-provoking. And the story is a timely reminder of how, just a few decades ago, there were whole parts of the country where segregation kept African Americans from fully participating in civic life.

In theaters November 16, 2018.
Cast: Viggo Mortensen, Mahershala Ali, Linda Cardellini
Director: Peter Farrelly
Studio: Universal Pictures
Run time: 130 minutes
MPAA rating: PG-13,
thematic content, language including racial epithets, smoking, some violence and suggestive material



"The Story" Returns to NorthCreek Church

Christmas presentations such as "The Nutcracker", "A Christmas Story" or "A Christmas Carol", and a few others are offered by a number of ballet and theatrical groups in a variety of theaters in just about any community. However, the living art performance of "The Story" is a one-of-a-kind Christmas spectacle exclusive to Walnut Creek's NorthCreek Church.

With six years of productions and over 22,000 in attendance, "The Story" has become a Christmas tradition for many local residents. It is a must see.

Each year, NorthCreek's production staff sifts through thousands of pieces of historical art searching for works that can be arranged to tell the story of the entire Bible as biblically as possible, from creation through today (and tomorrow)

in a performance of "living art."

For 11 months, more than 300 volunteers including artists, seamstresses, construction, and fabrication teams along with the NorthCreek Church's orchestra, choir, vocalists, cast, stage crew and production team collaborated on the recreation of each scene. Often a single piece can take between three and four months to design, build, and paint to meticulously recreate the original.

Cast members are painted, airbrushed, and costumed to look like marble, bronze, oil paint, ivory, and other materials that make up the original pieces.

Running time is approximately two hours with a 15-minute intermission. It is not recommended for children under the age of seven. However, childcare is provided at the Saturday and Sunday 3PM shows only by RSVP only. Email thestory@northcreek.org.

One audience member said it best, "I would expect to see something like what



I just saw in a theater in San Francisco, or even New York, but not a church in Walnut Creek. Well done! Amazingly professional and well presented!"

"The Story" should be part of your family's Christmas tradition.

Showtimes:

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13 AT 7PM
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14 AT 7PM
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15 AT 3PM
(Free Childcare Available)
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15 AT 7PM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16 AT 2:30PM
(Free Childcare Available)
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16 AT 6:30PM

NorthCreek Church, located at 2303 Ignacio Valley Rd. in Walnut Creek.

For ticket information go to www.thestoryinart.org.



farmerfresh

by Debra Morris, Pacific Coast Farmers Market
<http://www.pcfma.org/concord>**10 REASONS TO GO NUTS FOR WALNUTS**

Each year, as the holiday season comes around, we scramble to put together baked goods, family meals, and gifts for all those on the wish lists. One of the favorite items this time of year is nuts. Their versatility makes them a must have. Nuts are included in baking, side dishes, salads, appetizers, and as snacks.

Walnuts are the oldest food trees we know of. The Romans called them "Jupiter's royal acorn." They were traded along the Silk Road, eventually traded along the sea routes to other nations. The walnut was first cultivated in California by the Franciscan fathers in the late 1700's and planted next to the missions. They flourished in this Mediterranean climate and by 1870 modern walnut production began.

Walnuts are considered one of the healthiest fats that should be incorporated into your daily diet. They are filled with omega-3 fatty acids. The walnut is a fantastic source of protein, fiber, magnesium, and phosphorous. By adding a small handful of fresh California walnuts to your diet every day, you'll get the nutrition your body needs in a tasty package. Here are 10 ways to get an ounce or two of walnuts into your meals.

1. Toss a handful of walnuts on a pear, goat cheese, and spinach salad.

2. Make pesto with walnuts instead of pine nuts for a delicious earthy taste.

3. Make walnut butter to spread on crostini or use as a dip for veggies.

4. Grind them in the food processor



sor to give salmon or other fish a crunchy crust.

5. Sprinkle walnut pieces into your yogurt or cereal in the morning for a burst of energy.

6. Add walnuts to stuffing mix for the holidays.

7. Use them in baking for a crispy healthy crunch.

8. Stuff dates with walnuts for a quick, energy boosting snack or a tasty party appetizer.

9. Toss with a tiny bit of melted butter and sprinkle with brown sugar, roast at 350°F for 10 to 15 minutes.

10. Make your own trail mix with raisins and other dried fruits, and a bit of salt.

You can find an assortment of nuts at the Concord Farmers' Market. Every Tuesday Winters Fruit Tree brings an array of flavored and plain almonds, pistachios, and walnuts all ideal for you to add to your favorite recipes. Plus, you support your local farmers' market.

Find more recipes at pcfma.org/eat! Think nuts when you're doing your holiday shopping. Your guests and family will approve. Happy Holidays!

Out to Lunch

Puesto at the Veranda

by Richard Eber



Surveying the culinary scene in close proximity to the Veranda LUXE Cinema & IMAX, in Concord, one question comes to mind, "Are patrons willing to pay more for a finer dining experience?" The place is inundated with upscale dining options one expects to see in Walnut Creek, Danville, and even San Francisco.

Puesto opened in Concord on November 13. Recently, I rounded up my party to give this Mexican artisan kitchen and bar a try. My question was answered with a resounding "Yes!" It was well attended, packed with eager diners already aware of this small San Diego restaurant group's reputation. Puesto is a three-time winner of LA Weekly's Tacolandia in 2015, 2016 and 2017 and deemed "Best Tacos" by San Diego Magazine year after year.

Puesto's General Manager Jesus Trevino contributes its success to serving "a cuisine that can be described as Mexico City style street food using better quality ingredients." This is not your usual enchilada, burrito, tamale, rice and beans combination #5 faire.

Once seated inside this colorful, postmodern art deco eatery, there are a wide variety of starters to select from including three types of guacamole;

a classic variety, the classic plus Parmigiano-Reggiano, and our favorite, the Nogada-style creation which includes pomegranate seeds, chile de arbol, and candied walnuts.

Sharing different dishes is an intricate part of the Puesto

temptation to kickstart your festive mood before ordering Puesto's signature tacos. We shared a couple margaritas including a Cadillac and a Puesto Perfect model. However, if one prefers not to drink the hard stuff, they offer a large selection of wine, local craft beers and nonalcoholic fresh fruit drinks.

When it becomes "taco time", Puesto offers handmade, maíz azul stone-ground tortillas with sustainable meats, local produce and scratch salsas.

Each order is individually prepared in an open kitchen. Watching the production line of 10 cooks through a glass window is a culinary adventure of its own.



My party shared eight types of tacos. Trying to determine which one was the favorite became a subject of controversy. The Baja fish taco with beer-battered wild cod reminded me of beach vacations from a different time. Puesto's popular filet mignon tacos and Maine lobster

tacos are both off the charts with delicate flavors. I really liked the Tamarindo Shrimp with crispy shrimp, tamarindo, guacamole and cilantro - delicious. This was also the confided favorite of Concord's new Mayor, Carlyn Obringer and her husband Justin who have already visited Puesto twice.

Vegetarians can enjoy their vegetarian combination Verduras taco or a grilled Portobello mushroom offering. If one prefers a non-taco format, Puesto offers different bowls that feature similar ingredients.

Ala carte sides include black beans and herbed lime rice, each prepared as if they are the featured entre. One thing is for certain, Puesto's chefs make choosing a favorite taco a difficult decision.

Should there be any room for dessert, trust in their pastry chef Erik Aronow. We tried their Mango Cremux that consists of a ball of a mango coulis. It is covered in dark chocolate with a mixture of chocolates, nuts, candies, potato chips, and dried fruit. We also sampled a Coconut Crème Trifle, a Bavarian kitchen sink concoction of devil's food cake with layers of a peanut butter crunch bar and Mexican chocolate gelato. Yum!

Puesto is open seven days a week 11AM to 9PM, and until 10PM Friday and Saturday. GM Jesus Trevino and Chef de Cuisine Joey Lavada have instituted a special \$3.00 Taco Tuesday, half priced bottles of wine on Thursday, and a 3-6 PM Happy Hour Monday thru Friday. Reservations are recommended to be made on line or at (925) 334-7794. Puesto is located at 2035 Diamond Boulevard.



Give a little TENDERNESS®

Save 75%* on Omaha Steaks



The Family Gourmet Feast

- 2 (5 oz.) Filet Mignons
- 2 (5 oz.) Top Sirloins
- 2 (4 oz.) Boneless Pork Chops
- 4 Boneless Chicken Breasts (1 lb. pkg.)
- 4 (3 oz.) Kielbasa Sausages
- 4 (4 oz.) Omaha Steaks Burgers
- 4 (3 oz.) Potatoes au Gratin
- 4 (4 oz.) Caramel Apple Tartlets
- OS Seasoning Packet

55586NWF

\$199.91* separately **Combo Price \$49.99**

Plus, 4 more
Burgers
FREE



experience. From their Snacks & Shares menu, they offer a melt-in-your-mouth Esquite which is a mixture of fresh corn, chile, lime, queso cheese, and cream. Also noteworthy were the pork rinds (Chicharrones), an ideal partner for the guacamole dips.

The Mexican Street fruit bowl of mango, pineapple, watermelon, cucumber with a Chamoy sauce provides an excellent contrast to offset any spicy selections. The Civiche Acapulco with white shrimp, lime onion, pepper, avocado with a little squid thrown in reminds one of prime Baja "beach food". And the Spicy Shrimp Cocktail features perfectly blanched large prawns and, of course, avocado. It too is a recommended winner.

By the way, Puesto has a full bar offering tropical drinks with top shelf liquor and fresh juices, a convenient



*Savings shown over aggregated single item base price. Limit 2 55586 pkgs. Your 4 free burgers will be sent to each shipping address that includes 55586. Standard S&H will be added per address. Flat rate shipping and reward cards and codes cannot be used with this offer. Not valid with other offers. Expires 2/28/19. All purchases acknowledge acceptance of Omaha Steaks, Inc. Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Visit omahasteaks.com/terms-of-use and omahasteaks.com/info/privacy-policy or call 1-800-228-9872 for a copy. ©2018 OCG | Omaha Steaks, Inc. | 18M1531

1-855-567-6383 ask for 55586NWF
www.OmahaSteaks.com/cheer40



aRt Cottage
by FROgard www.aRtCottage.info

Art is Alive in Concord

Wrapping gifts for Christmas?... aRt Cottage is also wrapping it up for the year. Our 7th annual Christmas craft fair is doing extremely well. You're not too late to purchase that one-of-a-kind item for your one and only. Everything you find at aRt Cottage this December is handmade by local artists. Please stop by and purchase something to help support your local small business and



your local artist as well.

We're excited to share the aRt Cottage with the community for special events. Local groups and nonprofit organizations can inquire about renting the space for meetings potlucks, networking and receptions. For example, Neto Community Network is hosting their annual volunteer celebration here at the end of December with a potluck, surrounded by art.

Other events coming up are art and craft workshops.

These workshops are hosted by aRt Cottage and run by local artists demonstrating their techniques in a comfortable environment. Pat Viera, Concord artist, will be giving a Gel Plate Workshop on January 19. This is open to the first six who register for this three-hour workshop. Contact the aRt Cottage for more information or to register (925) 956-3342. The cost is \$80 and includes your gel plate and other materials needed. To secure your spot, mail your fee to aRt Cottage at 2238 Mt. Diablo St. Concord 94520.



Affordable Art for the Holidays

Are you looking for art to purchase during the holidays? Consider a visit to Main Street Arts in Martinez. You will find a strong selection of creative works in a variety of mediums from local artists on their "Small Wall". Here are just a few examples that we found interesting. Main Street Arts is located at 613 Main Street in Martinez.



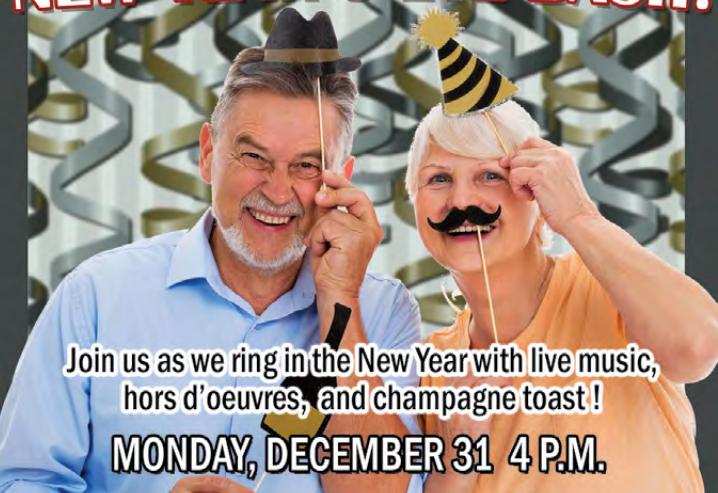
Discover the Difference



Be Sure to
"Like" Us on
Facebook



NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH!



Join us as we ring in the New Year with live music,
hors d'oeuvres, and champagne toast!

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31 4 P.M.

- 2 outstanding meals served daily
- Concierge style service
- Chauffeured transportation
- Weekly housekeeping & fresh linens
- Abundant program of diverse recreational and cultural offerings
- On-call 24-hour professional staffing
- Community gardens for green thumbs
- Full service beauty salon
- Library and computer center
- Workout Room along with regular exercise classes
- Arts & Crafts Area
- Community Theatre Room

**Call
for Rates**

**Affordable Retirement
Living Your Way**

**Spacious 1 and 2 Bedroom Apartments
with Rent and Services INCLUDED**

DIAMOND TERRACE
A 55+ RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

6401 Center Street, Clayton, CA. 94517

(925) 524-5100

TTY 711

www.diamondterrace.net



To Whom to Donate

by Nik Wojcik

The holidays give us a chance to be our best selves to lend some love to our fellow man and woman. When so many people need help, how do you choose one person or group over another? Can you still be charitable if you yourself are living check-to-check? Can you trust the organizations? We've done some research and offer you the following sampling of accountable and transparent local charities and make some suggestions for people on tight budgets.

Monument Crisis Center

Fifteen years ago, the Monument Crisis Center opened its small food pantry and served 84 hungry families right away. They now serve 15,000 households annually, with up to 120 families on each day in food. They have expanded their operation to offer adult education, homeless support and a myriad of additional referrals and services to help local youth and seniors.

According to their website:

\$25 will feed a family of five for one week

\$50 provides textbooks, dictionaries and other educational resources

\$100 will fund lunch for 120 seniors through the Senior Moments Program

\$500 buys 25 sleeping bags crucial to our homeless population during cold temperatures

\$1000 enables MCC to transport students to and from their Youth Summer Camp Program

They also organize hosted food drives and accept food donation boxes and birthday bags.

Monument Crisis Center is located at 1990 Market Street in Concord and can be reached by phone at 925-825-7751 or through their website at monumentcrisiscenter.org.

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region

This organization has some solid name recognition after 50 years of service, but many are not aware that the scope of their services. Meals on Wheels delivers food to local seniors, and they also offer fall prevention education, minor home improvements, volunteers to keep our elders company, Care Managers for assessment and advocacy, and provide workshops to promote longevity, including nutrition and Tai Chi classes.

According to their website, the MOW can provide seniors with "a home-delivered meal each day for an entire year for the same cost as one day in the hospital." They state that over 60 percent of their senior clients "are functionally impaired or live alone, without the support of family or friends" and that 40 percent of those same seniors live on less than \$15,000 a year.

They look to the community to help vulnerable seniors by way of donation or volunteering. They will happily accept any amount.

Maybe you have an old clunker in your

driveway. MOW has teamed up with Able Auto Charity Donation Corporation where they will gladly take any vehicle regardless of age or condition. Vehicle donations can be arranged by calling (877) 977-9577.

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is located at 1300 Civic Drive in Walnut Creek and can be reached by phone at 925-937-8311 or through their website at mowdiablorregion.org.

The Gift of Hope After Fire

The Camp Fire in Butte County destroyed nearly 12,000 homes and resulted in approximately 50,000 displaced people, many of whom are sheltering in tents. Under the threat of flash floods, mudslides and a dismal shortage of vacant shelters, our neighbors can use every little bit of help you can give. We suggest you donate through one of the several Camp Fire relief funds set up and facilitated by Golden Valley Bank where 100 percent of your donations will stay local. www.goldenvalley.blog/camp-fire-relief.

Giving While Broke

Even the most cash-strapped among us have opportunities to give what feels like unnoticeable amounts. Checkout charities and bell ringers don't judge if you can only hand out a buck at a time. Collectively, those bucks add up to big money. Forbes Magazine reported in 2015 that three out of four people have donated to various charities by tacking on minimal amounts to their grocery totals. Engage for Good, a corporate fundraising consultant, estimated that the top 73 checkout charity campaigns raised \$441 million in the U.S. in 2016.

Care Packages or Blessing Bags

If you want to give directly (in the literal sense) and make a huge difference in somebody else's life, instead of money, hand one of our homeless neighbors a small care package.

The basics are simple: put needed items inside a waterproof, non-breakable container and hand it to someone in need. A large freezer bag or reusable water bottle, both of which will come in handy for those on the streets or in shelters, and fill it with items like dry socks, a toothbrush and paste, feminine hygiene products, deodorant, granola bars, Chapstick, gloves and instant hand warmers, baby wipes, toilet paper, gift cards for coffee or food, and so on. These "Blessing Bags" really are a blessing for those most in need.

We hope you'll take this little guide as a jumping off point to do a good deed. Before donating to any organization, you can check for its reputation at www.CharityNavigator.org.

We wish you the happiest of holidays and hope you will remember that sometimes giving is the best of gifts.

Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue



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

Stanley



Adopt Stanley!

and from shelters. Ozzies is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization funded by donations. You can help by fostering, adopting, volunteering or donating. If Stanley isn't a good fit, perhaps Ozzies has another dog that meets your needs.

UPDATE:

I am pleased to announce that November's Vegas, a black lab, is "adoption pending."

February's pug, Bear, has also been adopted. Congratulations to these two "pawsitively special dogs."

[*Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram celebrity Doberman with more than 63,000 followers. Instagram.com/rubydooby_Do. Column written by Jill Hedgecock, author of *Rhino in the Room*, Program Coordinator, Mount Diablo branch of the California Writers Club, www.jillhedgecock.com.*]



The Diablo Gazette
is the **BEST WAY** for LOCAL
BUSINESSES TO ADVERTISE
CALL TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP
YOUR BUSINESS (925) 298-9990



**JOURNEYMAN'S JOURNAL**

by Scott Feuer

Tales from the Trail

Hiking Mt. Diablo's Eastside: A Window into the Past

One of the many pleasures of hiking amongst the Black Hills in Mt. Diablo's eastern range is exploring the numerous Native American bedrock mortar sites. For thousands of years the Black Hills were home to the Volvon tribelet of the Bay Miwok Native American people who lived and enjoyed the abundant natural resources of the region until Spanish-American Franciscans extirpated them from their homeland 200 years ago. Today the Black Hills' oak woodland/savannah landscape is virtually untouched by modern development and includes a series of hiking trails stitching together Morgan Territory Regional Preserve to the east and the sacred peak of Mt. Diablo to the west. Hundreds of bedrock mortars can be found trailside. Bedrock mortars, or circular depressions inscribed into natural rock outcroppings, were once used to crush, grind, or tenderize food ingredients, such as nuts, meat, and fish, into fine pastes and powders for cooking. One mortar site in particular, Riggs Canyon Rock Camp, contains 113 bedrock mortars and is easily accessed and is a perfect place to stop for lunch and contemplate the daily life of a time long gone.

The Riggs Canyon Rock Camp mortar



Bedrock Mortars-Riggs Canyon Rock Camp

crossing. If attempting during the rainy season like I did the weekend after Thanksgiving, be prepared for sticky clay mud that will cling to your shoes like the weight of bricks. Oh, the joy of winter hiking! To overcome this, try walking on the edge of the trail on dead leaves and grasses. Once reaching the crest, observe the incredible views towards the Delta and follow Highland Ridge Road south, but do not descend down Old Finley Road as this will be your return route. Continue on Highland Ridge Road for about 0.8 miles to Crestview Road. Descend Crestview Road to the single-track Amphitheater Trail and meander about another half mile until you reach the large group of rock outcroppings. You have arrived at Riggs Canyon Rock Camp mortars!

Explore the sunny rock outcropping to your left and notice the 40 plus bedrock mortars speckled about the surface. Choose a spot on the rock to lie down and imagine what life was like just a couple of hundred years ago as this is where Native Americans prepared their food. This site is certainly a window into the past, an amazing place to experience firsthand the many bedrock mortars used by the Volvons for thousands of years.



Black Hills - Mt. Diablo Range

site is typically accessed via Finley Road from San Ramon on the south side, but a more enjoyable and secluded five-mile loop hike is from the north off the winding one-lane Morgan Territory Road trailhead. To reach the non-descript trailhead, exit Marsh Creek Road and precede on Morgan Territory Road for 4.6 miles (about a half-mile pass the two one-lane bridges). The trailhead will be on your right and parking is limited to the road shoulder. Bring your own trail map and extra water as there are no services at this remote trailhead. Allow for about three hours for completing the five-mile loop trail.

Prep yourself for an initially steep hike up the Morgan Creek Trail to Jeremiah Creek Trail and continue your climb to Old Finley Road/HIGHLAND RIDGE ROAD



View atop Highland Ridge Road toward the Delta

Pondering the prehistory of the Black Hills on the return hike, head onward along the Amphitheater Trail to Old Finley Road. Once at Old Finley Road turn right and trek up Old Finley fire road back to the ridgeline. Once to the top, veer left to the Jeremiah Creek Trail you climbed earlier and descend back to Morgan Creek Trail fire road down to your car for the return drive home with a new appreciation of our local Bay Area foothills.

parentfootprintby Dr. Dan Peters www.DrDanPeters.com

4 Ways to Make Your Holidays Happier

Happy Holidays! Happy Hanukkah! Merry Christmas! The holiday season is here. It's a time full of cheer and fun (and, yes, stress, too). To help you make your holidays happier I created this list of four ways you and your family can maximize the joy every minute.

Make a list and check it twice. Creating a personalized TO DO plan will reduce your stress. Try to focus on what you have to do and what you want to do: who will shop, you want to bake, decorating goals, entertaining, wrapping gifts -- and then just do it. Stick to your list, cross things off, and I promise you'll reduce your stress and enjoy your holidays more this year.

Just Say No. Remember you don't have to do everything. Pick and choose what is important: baking with family, singing in your church choir, volunteering in your community, helping a loved one, buying less stuff. Maybe skip the ugly sweater party or cookie swap. Prioritizing will increase your joy.

Your real life (not your online life) is

PEACE
GRATITUDE

you for, what bake, decorating

entertaining, wrapping

gifts -- and then just do it.

Stick to your list, cross things off, and I promise you'll reduce your stress and enjoy your holidays more this year.

Find Peace in the PRESENT (not in a present). Pleasing people is exhausting so take time to breathe and marvel in the present moment. Focus on what you are doing right now, in this very moment.

Start a daily meditation practice. The

gifts we embrace in our hearts are the

most priceless of all. Enjoy the merry!

The holidays are an opportunity to pause and be grateful for family and to reflect on another year coming to an end.

Wishing you all a healthy and very happy holiday season!

LICENSE #1007759



WE GO OUT ON A LIMB FOR YOU DAY AND NIGHT

- Tree Trimming & Pruning
- Tree Removal
- Stump Grinding • Yard Overhaul
- Firewood Delivery
- Emergency Services

FREE ESTIMATES**925.497.5787**



theRIGHT move
by Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate
www.BuyStageSell.com

Do You Have a Selling Plan? We Do.

As interest rates rise and buyers pull back, the pressure to adjust price is more prevalent in order to obtain a faster sale, or a sale at all. Believe it or not, there are expired listings in the Multiple Listing System. BUT don't be discouraged. It's the gap between what you are selling and what you are buying that is important. With a Selling Plan, including professional home staging, you can still sell a home for whatever top dollar is in the current market.

As this happens, buyers become more discriminating, want more for less and their criteria doesn't change much. Most still want move in ready homes. This includes the BOOMERS and ZOOMERS, Millenials and everything in between. Buyer tolerance and budget for fixing up diminishes as price range increases.

Decorating involves likes, style and color preferences for the people living in the home. Staging doesn't. A survey shows that 75% of home owners THINK their personal décor is current. A glance at the MLS shows you that this is a big misconception. A recent National Association of Realtor Survey states that 90% of people cannot visualize beyond what they see! If that is so, then perception is everything when you are selling. Ask yourself (or your Realtor) a few questions:

Does your home look current in the eyes of the target buyer? (Buyers most likely looking for the home floor plan,

location and amenities you offer.)

Does your home have obstacles that can be remedied to enhance the appeal to the target buyers? Are there neighborhood obstacles that you must accommodate for in price?

One of the significant and often overlooked impressions of how well people take care of their home starts at the front door. DO you have three different keys to get inside? Does the door lock work easily? Does the door stick? Is the door hardware discolored and/or rusted? Is the door freshly painted and inviting? While Realtors open (or try to open the door) buyers are standing by our side, watching, noticing and viewing your home from the front door. Make a good impression here and they enter with anticipation and an open mind vs wondering what else might not be work so well. Some of the SMALL things make BIG differences to overall impression. Let your Selling Plan start there.

BTW, Thanks for the call, Gita in Crystal Ranch, I'm always happy to help with kitchen update questions.

Terrylynn Fisher Broker Associate, Dudum Real Estate (DRE#01882902), Awarded 2018 - 5 Star Professional, Senior Real Estate Specialist, Reach Terrylynn at 925 876 0966 or Terrylynn@BuyStageSell.com (DRE#00615420).

EVEN in a Slow Market

TWO REASONS HOMES SELL **PRICE and CONDITION**

I evaluate your home's assets, It's what I do...

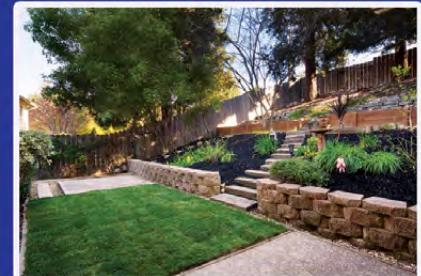
I create a **SELLING PLAN**, whether you have a week, a month, or a year to get ready. One client says, "Terrylynn is our Real Estate therapist." I reduce stress by giving you a plan you can follow. With your input and budget, or **NO** budget, there are things you can and should do to prepare your home for sale.

Backyard - You be the judge.

BEFORE



AFTER



CREATE your SELLING PLAN, Call TERRYLYNN



Terrylynn Fisher
REALTOR® | DRE # 00615420 | CRS, CDPE, SRES
925.876.0966 | Info@BuyStageSell.com | BuyStageSell.com
Dudum Real Estate Group, DRE#01882902



White Pony Express Sends Ready-to-Eat Meals Daily to Paradise Fire Victims

Since November 14, White Pony Express (WPE), began sending a refrigerated truck with perishable ready-to-eat food and envelopes of donated cash daily to aid the fire victims in the Paradise area. WPE intends to continue making these runs until there is no longer an acute need for area fire victims.

WPE volunteers Jim May and Eric Cox drove a refrigerated van with food and donations to a little-known town called Brownsville where the manager, Kathleen, has been putting up about 50 evacuees in her small motel.

"She fixes food for them in the morning and the townspeople do it in the evening. The ready-to-eat sandwiches and salads that White Pony Express brought were enough to provide them with lunches for several days. In Brownsville, we handed out envelopes of money, which is desperately needed for necessities," May recounted.

The ready-to-eat meals come from the regular donations made daily to WPE's Food Rescue program. These donations



White Pony Express Delivers Ready-to-Eat Meals and Cash Donations to the Butte County fire victims at the Pacific Motel in Gridley, CA (from left to right: Debbie Pease, WPE volunteer, Jennifer Redmond, co-manager of the Pacific Motel in Gridley, CA, and Jan Nuno, WPE volunteer)

have been providing a substantial amount of food that is distributed by WPE to the hungry in Contra Costa County.

"Going on to Oroville, we found people camped out in parking lots. Fortunately, we were able to provide food to all of those who needed it. It was a wonder-

ful experience to be a part of this," May added.

These food and cash donation trips to the impacted areas are being carried out by WPE's Food Rescue program staff and volunteers. The Food Rescue Program picks up quality surplus food each day from supermarkets, restaurants, and farmers markets and then sorts and delivers that food to shelters, churches and other facilities that feed the hungry in our communities. All of this is done free of charge. In 5 years, WPE has rescued more than 7,500,000 pounds (equivalent to about 6,300,000 meals) of fresh, nutritious food that would otherwise go to waste.

"Although we principally serve Contra Costa County, White Pony Express is most grateful to be able to send needed food to the families in the Paradise area, who are now coping with survival in the aftermath of the fires. It is important that we remember and help serve our brothers and sisters in Paradise, many of whom have lost everything," WPE Executive Director Gary Conner said. . In the near future, WPE intends to send its Mobile Showers unit to the Paradise area.

WPE is a mostly-volunteer powered organization headquartered in Pleasant Hill but serving all of Contra Costa County and has done extraordinary service to our communities.

Most recently, WPE was chosen by California Senator Steven Glazer to be the 2018 Nonprofit of the Year within his

district. WPE has also been the recipient of a number of certificates of appreciation given by elected officials for its work and achievements. In addition, WPE earned the 2018 Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar, the world's largest source of nonprofit information. WPE has also been awarded the East Bay Leadership Council's Outstanding Collaborative Project Award, the Sustainable Contra Costa's Innovation in Food Systems Award and the Silver Spoon Award, by Diablo Valley Dietetic Association in honor of its work in supporting the health of those in need by providing them healthy, nutritious food. In 2015, WPE received the prestigious The San Francisco Foundation's John R. May Innovation Award.

Carol Weyland Conner, PhD, spiritual director of Sufism Reoriented, founded WPE in September 2013 when she was troubled that in a county of such abundance, thousands were going hungry, while at the same time food retailers were throwing out huge quantities of healthy, fresh food. Her idea was to create a Food Rescue Program, where this good surplus food could be picked up directly from food retailers and delivered to local service organizations which serve those in need. Dr. Conner continues to serve as WPE's Advisor.

Conner has been recognized as a "Local Hero" by the Contra Costa Times, named a "Visionary" in the Diablo Magazine "Threads of Hope" issue, and received the "Jefferson Award" from KPIX Television.

Immigration Reform: A Possibility or a Boondoggle?

by Franklin T. Burroughs, Ed.D.

Having gone through the Islamic Revolution, I am able to emphasize with individuals and families who fear for their lives and want to escape the torture through which they have gone. Caravans of immigrants and violent responses to the participants do neither side any good. I believe that the application process should be orderly and uplifting. However, I have personally experienced the difficulties involved in the immigration process that I hope will shed light on the situation.

My sister-in-law, Esmat Molavi, who is now deceased, came to the United States in the early 1960s with Exchange Visitor (J) visa under the sponsorship of the World Health Organization. She had been trained as a midwife at the University of Tehran, had practiced midwifery in rural Iran and wanted to apply her skills here in the United States while learning about the American culture. She served successfully as a midwife in both New York and Los Angeles for four or five years before deciding to return to Iran when my wife and I determined to visit the country for a year, a visit that continued for some fifteen years.

After the Islamic Revolution, my wife and I knew we could no longer remain safely in Iran and returned with our two children to the Santa Rosa area and later to Walnut Creek.

Soon afterwards, Esmat expressed a strong desire to join us. She came to the United States on a Visitor Visa but realized the process of obtaining a "Green Card" while staying in the U.S. on a Visitor Visa would be difficult. So, she and returned to Iran thinking we could obtain a "Green Card" for her within a few months.

My wife and I completed the necessary application and provided the necessary documents within a few days and submitted the application to the Department of Immigration. We waited and waited but received no response. The Department of Immigration lost the documents we had submitted in support of Esmat's application twice. I would visit the Department frequently and telephone the U.S. Embassy in Switzerland almost every night.

Finally, after several months the Immigration Department informed me Esmat's "Green Card" was ready and I should meet her at the U.S. Embassy in Berne, Switzerland. That was the location the Department had chosen to issue the "Card."

Esmat and I met in Berne about ten days later. She was allowed in the Embassy, but my entry was forbidden. According to the Embassy personnel, I had been too persistent.

Immigration reform has long been a concern in the U.S.; efforts at reform have been many and have generally proved to be controversial, ineffective and inadequate.



The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-603) made the recruitment and hiring of undocumented workers illegal. Employers were required to discover and attest to employees' immigration status. The Act granted amnesty to illegal immigrants who had entered the United States prior to January 1, 1982 and had resided in the country since their entry. Several million undocumented individuals took advantage of the amnesty.

Since the passage of the 1986 Act, some six other amnesties have been enacted: the 1994 Section 245 (i) Amnesty, a temporary reprieve for some 578,000 illegal aliens; the 1997 Section 245 (i) Amnesty, which extended the 1994 rolling amnesty; the 1997 Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act, which provided the path to legalization for some one million undocumented immigrants from Central America; the 1998 Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act Amnesty, which allowed some 125,000 illegal Haitian immigrants to become legal; the 2000 Life Act Amnesty, which made provision for some 400,000 illegal immigrants who were not legalized under the 1986 Act; and, the 2000 Life Act Amnesty, which represented a reinstatement of the 245 (i) amnesty and involved another estimated 900,000 illegal aliens.

In 2013 a bi-partisan group of United States Senators presented a draft of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act to the entire Senate for consideration and a vote. The bill passed the Senate but failed in the House of Representatives and expired at the close of the 113th Congress. In 2014 President Obama issued an executive order providing temporary legal status and work permits for some five million illegal aliens. (www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/nov/20/obama-offers-amnesty-to-millions-of-illegal-immigr/

Democratic House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has expressed her determination to pass legislation to allow Dreamers, youthful undocumented immigrants who entered the United States as children, to discover a pathway to citizenship. Leader Pelosi believes the United States becomes stronger with each increase in the number of immigrants, including those who may enter the country illegally.



CLAYCORD® NEWS & TALK

In case you missed it...

Panera Bread Coming to Clayton Valley Shopping Center

Panera Bread is planning to open a restaurant in the Clayton Valley Shopping Center on Ygnacio Valley in the vacant unit directly across from Round Table Pizza, just two doors down from Wing Stop, on the Ygnacio Valley Rd. side of the center. The building still needs to be remodeled. Opening date is unknown.



Contra Costa Supervisors Outline Process, Timeline for Permitting Marijuana Businesses

Martinez - The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors outlined some of their ideas for regulating commercial cannabis operations. It will be a two-step RFP process starting sometime in January. Applicants would begin with a letter of intent, which would help staff determine whether a given location meets zoning requirements. That letter of intent can also be helpful for applicants seeking licensing with the state, as they will be able to go through both permitting processes simultaneously and potentially get their business operations going sooner.

If the letter of intent "passes muster," the county will invite them to submit a full proposal in February. They'd be scored on factors such as plans for business, security and operations, including odor control. The county would also evaluate the proposed location and any benefits of allowing a cannabis operation there.

A full list of qualifications is available on the county's website. A committee of personnel from multiple departments would be responsible for reviewing proposals.

Measure R proposed a 4 percent tax on gross receipts at cannabis businesses in unincorporated parts of the county and \$7 per square foot of garden canopy for growing operations. It needed majority approval to pass.

Fish Skin Used to Treat Wildlife at Lindsay Wildlife Rehab Hospital

Walnut Creek - In a recent research breakthrough, a veterinarian from University of California at Davis and a veterinarian from the Lindsay Wildlife Rehabilitation Hospital in Walnut Creek have seen remarkable results when using fish skin to treat the wounds of raptors, officials at the wildlife center said.

The technique of using tilapia skin for burn wounds was first used in Brazil to successfully treat burns on people. Dr. Jamie Peyton from UC Davis developed the use of tilapia skins as a biological bandage for animals suffering from burn wounds starting last December during the Thomas Fire in Southern California.

"This could really benefit not only the animals here at Lindsay, but animals at other wildlife rehab centers," Peyton said.

Tilapia skin contains high levels of collagen, promoting skin growth, faster healing and stays in place as the wound heals. Dr. Allison Daugherty from Lindsay Wildlife says the tilapia skin could mean that a bird gets back in the wild in a matter of weeks rather than months.

Peyton anticipates additional patients injured in the recent Camp Fire in Butte County and Woolsey Fire in Southern California.



(Photo courtesy of Claycord.com)

Contra Costa Sheriff's Office Search & Rescue Team Assists with Finding Missing Victims of Deadly Camp Fire (photo)

The Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff Search and Rescue Team responded to Butte County to assist public safety agencies. The team, along with many others from the Bay Area, was requested by California Office of Emergency Services to search the properties of reported missing persons to help the Butte County Sheriff's Office with recoveries.

According to Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea, as of December 3, 2018, the list of unaccounted for people is at 11. However, the number of fatalities has been reduced from 88 fatalities down to 85 fatalities.

Sheriff Honea explained that there was an instance where remains that were believed to belong to three individuals were collected into three separate bags. DNA has now confirmed that the remains in those three bags were in fact one individual.



U.S. Post Office Kicks Off "Letters to Santa" Program in the Bay Area

The 2018 Letters to Santa program is underway at the Oakland Main Post Office and the San Francisco Post Office Processing and Distribution Center.

Individuals and organizations can peruse children's letters to Santa from around the region and then go pick out a gift to match a child's request, said Augustine Ruiz, postal service spokesman.

Many letters ask Santa for toys, but the post office also gets requests from needy children asking for items like blankets and coats for family members.

The letters to Santa, sorted by a core group of postal staff, are available for viewing from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursday until Dec. 20 at the San Francisco Evans Avenue postal lobby, 1300 Evans Ave.

In Oakland, letters will be available for viewing from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Oakland Main Post Office, 1675 Seventh St.

Individuals and organizations can pick out a letter and bring back a packaged gift with proper postage up until Dec. 20.

Life in Postwar in East Germany

Ingrid Hempell: Escape From Communism

Ingrid Hempell is now retired living in Clayton. Many may remember her French restaurant, La Cocotte, which is now Moresi's Chop House. She is concerned that the horrific history of WWII and its human toll is getting lost on today's children.

Hempell's own life experiences reveals a dark side not taught in history books. She lived in Berlin, Germany, and was only three years old during the allied bombing of Berlin and the eventual surrender of Germany.

The end of Hitler's "One thousand Year Reich" in May of 1945 followed one of the most diabolic human atrocities in history, because it included the willful murder of innocent men, women, and children, and the development of a brutal blitzkrieg war machine.

As a result, her childhood was spent in a desperate world of ruins, of hunger and cold, and the loss of her father.

Etched in her memory are the terrible sounds of the sirens and explosions from allied bombing. At night, her mom would pull her out of bed and race to the bomb shelter in the cellar of the four-story grandparents house.

The building they were in was spared, but all others on that street were completely demolished.

Berlin became East Berlin where she lived. Her father was forced to join the war effort. He came home for a short period in December of 1944 but he had to leave, otherwise be declared a deserter and executed. She never saw or heard from her father again.

When the war ended on May, 1945, Berlin was a wasteland, as was most German cities. The allies had divided Germany and Berlin into four occupation zones, the American, the British, the French, and the Russian sectors. When the Russians arrived in Berlin in 1945, they took a terrible revenge on the German people. It is still called the "Rape of Berlin" with about 130,000 victims. Banks, farms, industries were seized and re-organized. Natural resources, equipment, and even their scientists were taken to Russia.

In school, the main subjects were all about the Great Russian October Revolution of 1917. Russian language studies became mandatory. The state controlled the press, churches, and education.

Western news, radio, or papers were not allowed. Trade and travel was restricted. The Iron Curtain cut off East Germany and of course, East Berlin from the rest of the world.

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



East Berlin was considered a crime deserving of jail or even death. In one infamous case, a young man named Peter Fechter attempted to climb over the Berlin wall. Border guards shot him without warning. He fell back to the Eastern side, agonizing in pain, crying for help, but no one would. He bled to death. In all, approximately 240 people

would ride the train to the outskirts of Berlin. After two or three days, she would return from bartering with farmers, perhaps bringing a few eggs, slice of bacon, bread, or some potatoes.

In time the Russian became upset about the way West Berlin was governed and prospered and so blocked all access to West Berlin.

That year the American Marshall Plan gave \$13 Billion dollars (\$132 Billion in today's currency) to jump start the economies in Germany, England, and France. The Soviet Union refused to accept the help. After eleven months, the Russians gave up and ended the blockade.

"On the few occasions that her mother took her to the West, they marveled at all the things that were available in their stores: oranges, bananas, chocolates, clothing, shoes, pastries, even toilet paper. She had none of that, not enough food stamps, and regular water and electricity outages.

In 1949, at eight years old she had already spent a lot of time with various care homes.

Food was rationed. There were shortages of everything. Communist oppression increased until in 1953 strikes and riots broke out. Overnight, Russian tanks and troops were everywhere and there were shootings in the streets.

There were thousands of different scenarios where children were taken from uncompliant parents, sometimes right after birth, and then given to communist adoptive parents.

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

In 1960 Ingrid's mother defected with her two half-brothers to West Germany and found a refugee shelter. Ingrid had stayed behind to continue her schooling and work in a hospital.

In May of 1960, after the Russian shot down an American spy plane, the Russians enacted Martial Law in East Berlin and placed troops everywhere. For fear that the Russians may close the Berlin border permanently, her mother plead for Ingrid to defect. Fortunately, her mother convinced her to leave.

Leaving

Rudy Hempell Passes Away

Remembering Clayton's La Cocotte Restauranteur

Rüdiger Hempell was born in Minden/Germany on May 4th, 1940. He had an early passion for cooking and at age fourteen became an apprentice at the well-known Hotel Restaurant "Detmolder Hof" in the city of Detmold, Westfalia/Germany. After successfully completing his chef training, he worked for several years in Switzerland where he obtained his bartender license in Finland, then two years for the Holland/America Cruise Line, and on for two fun years on the island of Bermuda.

Along the way, he collected a big number of mostly German friends, all successful in the restaurant and hotel business.

In 1965, he arrived in NY City, always working at well-known establishments. In 1968 he met his future wife Ingrid; the wedding took place in 1970 at West Portal Lutheran Church in San Francisco.

In 1972, Rudy and Ingrid opened their first restaurant "The Recovery Room" (German cuisine) on Judah Street, two blocks down from the UC Medical Center. All medical staff, out-patients and visitors needed recovery and the restaurant was always busy. However, the landlord was not willing to sell the premises and there was no way to enlarge the business. In 1974, son Christian was born, and it was time to look for something else. In fall of 1965, there appeared an ad in the San Francisco Chronicle: "French Restaurant for sale, owners want to retire". The name of the place was "La Cocotte", owned by Josef and Marjory Salas.

Claude Le Jeune, a French chef, and his wife Dominique also had a new baby and decided to leave San Francisco and work at "La Cocotte". The Hempells' new



ownership started January 1, 1966 and the restaurant became pretty well known in the county.

In 1977, a second son, Markus, was born and the family enjoyed life in rural Clayton, summertime, and the swimming pool.

Over the years, clouds appeared and the Hempells divorced in the year 2000. Ingrid was now sole owner/operator of the restaurant until she leased the restaurant in December 2002 to John and Sharon Johnston.

Rudy moved to Hawaii in 2006, married Marishka in 2009, and had a severe stroke in January of 2010 that disabled him severely. Marishka took good care of him until he passed away on November 22, 2018.

Soroptimist International of Diablo Vista (SIDV) presents check to Monument Crisis Center

Soroptimist International of Diablo Vista held a fundraiser to honor the memory of long-time member, Ginger Marsh, who recently passed away. Ginger was also a founding board member of the Monument Crisis Center and was instrumental in helping many local non-profits throughout the community.

Soroptimist International of Diablo Vista (SIDV) was chartered on March 2005 when Soroptimist International of Concord, Soroptimist Diablo Sunrise



SIDV President Gloria Utley presents a check to Sandra Scherer, Executive Director of the Monument Crisis Center, while Soroptimist members, volunteers and staff look on.

and Soroptimist International of Pleasant Hill merged. Its Mission is to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. Its Vision is to ensure that Women and Girls have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

Soroptimist International of Diablo Vista has raised \$4,270 so far in her honor and if you would also like to donate, please visit www.sidiablivista.org.

died trying to cross the wall to reach freedom.

Before the wall was built, you could cross the border by foot, train, or subway. But border guards were fierce. You had to leave all your belongings behind.

Ingrid planned her escape but her attempt was thwarted. Her neighbor's brother was a young East German soldier. He had discovered her plans and felt it was his duty to the Vaterland to stop her. He pulled his gun to take her to the police station. This meant she would never see her family again. She begged and cried and fabricated a story of a fiancé in West Berlin. She convinced him that he would be ruining her life. Fortunately, the very young soldier let her go. And at 17, Ingrid found her mother in a West Berlin refugee camp and was free again at the age of 17.

From then, she finished nursing school in Bavaria in May 1963 and in June 1965 she immigrated to America to New York with no friends, no money, no English, (speaking Russian was no help).

"I don't know if I was too courageous or just ignorant, or both. But I was 23 years old and wanted a new life. And this country was very, very good to me. God Bless America!" Ingrid says.

In time, Ingrid met her husband, operated restaurants, and eventually moved to Clayton where she and her husband, Rüdiger Hempell, owned and operated La Cocotte, a lovely French restaurant until they retired.

[This is an abridged update from a 3-part series from Diablo Gazette Oct-Dec. 2017 editions.]

 **Clayton Valley Charter School**
Scheible Says...
Clayton Valley Charter High School Executive Director

Tisa Talks



Leaving his previous job in the East Bay to teach at Clayton Valley Charter High School, was no easy task for Nick Tisa. He had been the varsity football team's head coach. He worked with his wife, a fellow teacher at the same school. He was leaving a job where great friends surrounded him for more than five years. But, the chance to try something new in a flexible, autonomous environment was an opportunity he could not pass up.

Ask him today if there are any regrets and Tisa will show you one of the biggest smiles on the CVCHS campus. "It's awesome here," Tisa said. "I have absolutely no misgivings. I now live 10 minutes away so the commute is ideal. I get to see my daughter more and the kids at CVCHS are incredible. There is a great sense of community here."

There is a continuing theme when anyone talks about Tisa – a superb role model and an educator who understands his students. That's because he takes time to build a relationship with each of them. He makes himself available to talk with individual students about more than just his class. "The kids will try harder if you show a personal interest," Tisa said. "I want to take the time to get to know each student and know what is happening in their lives. They can talk to me about a difficult family situation or simply ask advice about their friends. I can relate to my students and I am confident that it makes a difference in their education."

If a student needs help with an assignment or to talk about anything going on

in their lives, they have a "Tisa Talk." Top high school teachers naturally put their greatest effort into planning and teaching students the content specific to their course, becoming experts themselves. What makes CVCHS so special is the willingness of the faculty to go beyond being content experts. Teachers here know the power of relationships and so they all positively engage in the lives of our students, ensuring each is surrounded with support.

In addition to being a terrific Social Science teacher, Tisa is the defensive backs coach for the Ugly Eagles varsity football team. He welcomed the challenge of stepping away from the head coaching position because it allows him to learn a specialized approach to the game. While he may have visions for returning as a head coach, Tisa is satisfied learning from a coach who knows how to win games, respects all players, and holds everyone to the highest level of sportsmanship.

"He's outstanding with the kids," Ugly Eagles varsity Head Coach Tim Murphy said. "Other people who have been a head coach elsewhere can't come into a new system and thrive. Tisa works great in our system and works really well with our kids."

Students at CVCHS are better served with teachers like Nick Tisa. Teaching positions for next year are posted online and we are always looking for great people so check us out today at claytonvalley.org. Come experience Nick's enthusiasm – it's awesome here.

Why Age 7 is the Right Time to See an Orthodontist

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

Timely screening increases the chances for an incredible smile.

H. DIXON TAYLOR, D.D.S., M.S.D.
(925) 689-9350



4501 Cowell Road Concord

www.dixontaylorortho.com

We Buy, Sell, and Trade LEGO®



LEGO® THEMED BIRTHDAY PARTIES
PREVIOUSLY OWNED LEGO® SETS FOR SALE
NEW AND RETURNED LEGO® SETS IN THE BOXES
THOUSANDS OF MINIFIG CHARACTERS FOR SALE
FREE GIFT WRAPPING WITH ANY PURCHASE OF \$25 OR MORE
20% OFF ALL PREVIOUSLY OWNED LEGOs®

**BOOK A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JANUARY THROUGH MARCH
AND GET A \$10.00 GIFT CARD.**



Open 11A-6P M-F, 10A-7P Sat, 12-5P Sun
2250 Commerce Ave. Concord

ABCmouse.com®
Early Learning Academy

#1 learning program for kids 2–8

Special Offer
FREE
FOR 30 DAYS!
Visit ABCmouse.com/gift92
to redeem this offer.

More Than
10,000 LEARNING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES
On Computer or Mobile Devices!

TM & © 2018 Age of Learning, Inc.